

Know Your Place

It had been a whole year since Declan joined Green Ridge. I had just been promoted to lead cook, working directly under my mother. And I was good, even surpassing my mother in skill.

Zane was returning from two years away at alpha training and the pack was hosting a gala event, inviting alphas from all over to introduce Zane as the future alpha of the pack.

We worked hard all day making hors d'oeuvres and desserts for the party. I knew I couldn't attend the gala, which was a little disappointing, but I had a job to do.

Besides, everyone I didn't want to be around would be at that party.

"Hey, Ella, do you know where they hid the booth for the bar?" Declan called out as he walked into the kitchen.

Declan had become my best friend and almost like an older brother. He was an amazing bartender and always worked the big pack parties with us. He was kind and funny and the best person I knew.

"It should already be in there," I replied, not looking up from my work.

"I told them to leave it until I knew what I needed." He shook his head in irritation. "Leftovers date after the party?" He asked, smiling as he walked away.

"Mhm," I hummed, concentrating on piping some filling into some desserts. I continued to bustle around the kitchen with my mom and the other cooks, trying furiously to get everything finished.

"You look good," a voice in front of me said.

I looked up to see Zane. He had grown up a lot in two years. He was taller and had clearly been working out. Even his muscles had muscles.

"Zane," I replied, my voice flat. The two years apart had let the mate pull vanish completely, leaving me only with my hurt feelings.

"How have you been?" he asked politely.

I looked up in anger and confusion. "You mean how have I been since you rejected me?"

He recoiled, and anger flashed through his eyes. "I was being polite. Is that the way you speak to your alpha, Omega?"

I had forgotten my place. Again. I was really going to get myself in trouble one of these days. I lowered my head and groveled. "I forgot my place. Forgive me, Alpha."

Even though he wasn't officially alpha yet, he still had the power and the presence. He walked on, leaving me festered and angry.

I left the kitchen and hid in the hallway, closing my eyes and leaning back against the wall. Suddenly, there was a large hand on my arm. I yelped and turned to see Zane standing over me, his eyes burning.

"You should watch yourself. De ance doesn't do well in this pack, Omega. Know your place!" he growled before throwing me to the floor.

"Yes, Alpha." I didn't look up at him, knowing that the de ance in my eyes would betray my words.

He stood above me silently, almost like he was waiting for me to get up. I finally looked up to meet his eyes, and it looked as though he almost felt bad.

I wasn't going to let him get inside my head. I stood and bowed slightly before turning to walk away.

"You really do look good though, Ella."

His statement made me freeze, and I shook my head before walking away.

My arm was tender, and I knew there would be a bruise later. I made my way back to the kitchen, my mom giving me a reassuring look before we continued with our work.

I worked intensely, channeling my frustration. *Who does he think he is, coming here and acting like that?* I thought to myself. I could feel my wolf pacing, angry that he had hurt us like that.

A few hours later, my mom and I rushed back to the house to quickly shower and change into better clothes. Even though we weren't allowed at the party, we still had to look presentable.

I chose to wear a pair of black skinny jeans with a loose, coral blouse. I threw on a pair of flats and tied my hair up into a messy bun.

Applying a bit of makeup to make myself a little less of a hot mess, I stepped out of my room and walked back to the pack house with my mom.

As I stepped out of the car, I looked up at the pack house and smiled. I was finally home after two years. Soon, my father would retire, and I would take over as Alpha. I felt ready.

As I stepped into the house, I smelled something I hadn't in a long time: apple cider. I walked into the kitchen to see Ella; her face flushed from working in the heat.

She had stray hairs falling on her face and was smiling brightly at something someone had said. I felt a slight twinge, an unexpected vestige of the mate pull, but shrugged it off.

Two years should have been plenty of time for the mate pull to disappear completely. I had rejected her. I didn't want that little omega as my luna. She was below me, and she was weak.

But as I watched her, for a moment I didn't see the little omega from school. This girl was a woman. I shook my head and walked over to her.

"You look good."

The disgust on her face as she realized who I was upset me. When I saw her in the hallway afterward, leaning against the wall, I wanted to take her right then and there.

Instead, I had frightened and threatened her.

I paced around my room, running my hands through my hair. I had rejected her. Why was I feeling like this? My thoughts were interrupted by a knock on the door.

"Come in."

In walked Mariah. Just the beautiful distraction that I needed. "Welcome home, baby." She gave me a sweet smile and immediately dropped her dress on the floor.

I just about ran over to her, picking her up and throwing her on the bed. My lust and passion took over.

I plunged into her and rode her rough and hard, hoping to find the release I needed to get that omega off my mind.

Mariah left my room to get ready for the gala, and I took a long shower before getting dressed up in my tux.

"Not too shabby," I muttered as I stopped in front of the mirror before heading downstairs to the party. I walked through the kitchen, and Ella caught my eye again.

Her dark hair was pulled up in a knot on her head, leaving her neck bare. My wolf moaned at the sight.

My wolf had been angry at me since the day I rejected her. But I couldn't take that weak omega and make her a luna. She was nothing.

I made my way into the large ballroom, which was filled with high-ranking pack members and visiting alphas.

My father, Alpha Daniel, took me around and introduced me to all of the visitors. I wasn't a fan of having to play politics, and I could tell some of the visiting alphas felt the same way.

I saw Mariah walk in looking real sexy in a cherry-red dress that hugged every inch of her body.

I knew she wasn't my mate, but she was good for a little fun. If I didn't find someone better, I would make her my luna. I excused myself and dragged her onto the dance floor.

"If I hadn't just finished with you earlier, I would take you right here," I whispered in her ear. She smiled and pushed her body closer to mine, her hips rubbing against me.

I growled as she took my hand, and we snuck out of the ballroom and down the hall to the pack offices. I closed the door behind me before unzipping her skin-tight dress and peeling it off her.

I picked her up and set her on the desk, ripping her panties off and thrusting into her, taking her hard and fast, spurred on by her moans.

When we finished, we opened the door to the office and were met with a crash. I looked down to see Ella on the floor, a tray of food scattered everywhere.

Mariah groaned. "Clean this up, Omega."

We walked away, leaving her on the floor. I suddenly had the urge to turn back and help her, but I shook the thought away and rejoined the party.