

Two Years Gone Novel

Chapter 6

ELLA

After crashing into Zane and Mariah, I made my way back to the kitchen, fuming. It seemed like nothing had changed after all this time.

“What happened?” my mother asked, looking at the ruined food.

I rolled my eyes.

“Someone opened a door into me.” My mother huffed and we went back to work, replacing the dropped tray.

“Hun, can you take this water out to Declan? He’s almost out.”

“Yep,” I replied. I rolled the cart of water to the ballroom and up to the bar.

“Here’s your water, Dec.”

“Thanks, Ells, you’re a lifesaver. These guys are going through drinks faster than I can make them.” I gave him a warm smile before making my way back out of the ballroom.

Suddenly, I crashed into a brick wall of a man.

“I’m sorry, excuse me.” I lowered my head in submission, hoping whoever it was would let me by.

I was met with a grunt and looked up to meet Zane’s gaze. My eyes widened, and I involuntarily recoiled.

“Excuse me, Alpha,” I said quietly before rushing out of the room.

I ran out of the ballroom and back to the kitchen, hyperventilating. My mom ran to me, worry in her voice.

“Ells Bells, what’s wrong? What happened?”

“Not again,” I managed to stutter, rubbing my hands on my face and through my hair. I slid down the side of the island and sat on the floor, my knees at my chest.

“Not again?” My mom was confused.

“Ella, what is going on?”

"I-I c-can't do this again. I am over him! My mate pull is g-gone!" I stammered, trying to control my breathing.

"But he's everywhere!"

My mom bent down in front of me, placing her hands on my knees.

"You knew it would be hard, even after two years. Just take a deep breath and remember that you aren't mates."

I took a deep breath, remembering the pain Zane had caused me.

The excruciating pain of the rejection and the months of verbal abuse from pack members afterward. He didn't have to deal with it, he got to run away for two years.

"Nobody wants me, Mom. I'm nothing. Just a little omega," I mumbled.

"Ella; you are not nothing! Who told you that?" Sophie asked sternly.

"Everyone, Mom! You've seen how some of these people treat me. My whole life, the pack has shown me my place. It's why Zane rejected me. I wasn't good enough."

I could see the anger flash through my mother's eyes. She took a deep breath and stroked my hair.

"Sweetheart, you will always be enough for the one who is right for you."

After a while, I decided to pick myself up and continue my work. The night ended without any more crazy events and I sent my mom home.

"I can close down the kitchen, you go home and rest. I'll be home soon." I gave my mom a kiss and sent her off.

I washed and packed up the trays, sorted the leftovers into bins and put them in the fridge, washed the dishes, and straightened up the kitchen.

Finally, I stacked all the boxes in the corner to take down to storage in the morning. I took off my apron and made my way out of the pack house.

As I opened the door and stepped outside, I almost crashed into him again!

"Hello again, Omega." Zane looked down at me, a smirk on his face.

I was tired and so not in the mood.

"I have a name." I pushed past him and began to walk down the hill.

“Your point is?”

I turned back to him.

“Are you following me?”

“Yes.”

“Well, stop it.”

He grabbed my hand, and I flinched.

“I thought we already went over the way you’re supposed to speak to your alpha.”

I rolled my eyes.

“I’m exhausted, can we get this over with? Or better yet, just do this tomorrow...”

“Get what over with?” He looked at me confused.

“Zane, you’re obviously here to throw some more insults my way. You already rejected me, just leave me alone,” I groaned.

“Ella”—he looked me straight in the eye—“I’m not here to be cruel.”

I laughed bitterly.

“Of course you are. Why else would you be speaking to me?”

Zane shrugged. I tore my hand from his grip and walked away again.

“Exactly. So unless it’s about your breakfast tomorrow, please just leave me alone. You’ve done enough.”

Zane growled before making his way back up the hill.

I could hardly believe it. I lay down in my bed and stared at the ceiling.

“Can you believe the nerve of that guy?” I thought out loud.

I could hear my wolf whining softly in my head. Why won’t he leave us alone? Maybe he wants us!

“I doubt that,” I replied as I drifted off to sleep.

Chapter 7

ZANE

I had been fine all night after scratching that itch with Mariah. I had missed her.

After sending everyone off, I turned around just as the door opened and once again met Ella.

Is this girl everywhere? I thought to myself. She smelled so good.

I shook my head, not understanding why she still seemed to affect me. I followed her down the hill, trying to speak to her, to figure out why there was such a pull to her.

But she fought me the whole way. Her insolence almost verged on open defiance. She wasn't the meek little omega I remembered.

When I grabbed her hand to stop her, I felt her warmth radiate through me. I never had that feeling when I touched Mariah. But it stopped the moment she flinched. She was afraid of me.

I stormed into my room after our encounter. Throwing myself on the bed, I looked up at the ceiling.

"Why am I being pulled to her?" I thought out loud. My wolf was pacing, still angry at me for rejecting my mate. Maybe he was the reason I still felt the pull.

I rolled over to try and sleep. I could look into it in the morning.

My father pushed open my bedroom curtain, letting in the sunlight. I gave a grumpy groan before turning over.

"Rise and shine, sleeping beauty!" my father called out before pushing me off the bed.

"Dad!" I moaned.

"What if I had been with a girl?"

My father laughed.

"Boy, if you had a mate, I'd leave you alone as much as you wanted. But we both knew you were in here alone."

Two years ago, I didn't have the heart to tell my father I'd found Ella and that I had rejected her. I just left, hoping the mess would sort itself out and everything would be right when I got back.

“Get up, Zane.” My father prodded me through the sheets.

“We’re due at the training grounds in an hour.”

“Yes, sir,” I groaned.

When I made it downstairs, I was overwhelmed by the smell of breakfast.

“Sophie, it smells amazing! You’ve outdone yourself!” I exclaimed as I turned the corner, only to be met by Ella.

“Oh, uh... Ella?” I rubbed my head.

“What are you doing here?”

“I’m a little omega. I cook your meals,” she said flatly.

“Where’s your mom?” I asked.

“She’s running a few errands this morning,” she answered, not even looking up. Her cold attitude was starting to irritate me.

“Good morning!” my father hollered as he entered.

“Good morning, Alpha!” the pack echoed.

“So you...made breakfast?” I continued.

“Yes. As lead cook, I am in charge when my mother is not here,” she responded.

“And Ella, it looks amazing as always,” my father cut in. He took a plate of food and walked to the table.

I was about to say something when Mariah walked in.

“Hi, baby,” she said sweetly, wrapping her arms around my neck and kissing me hard.

“Did you make my breakfast, Omega?” she spat as she turned to Ella.

I almost let out a growl, stopping myself before I did. I really needed to figure out what was going on in my head. I felt like I was going crazy.

“Yes, it’s here,” Ella responded, pulling a covered plate from the back. I glared down at her.

“Alpha Zane.” She lowered her head again. I walked off with my food and sat beside Mariah. For some strange reason, hearing her call me Alpha got on my nerves.

“Morning, Ells!” a pack member I didn’t know greeted her. I watched as the guy made his way around the counter and hugged her.

He began helping her clean up the kitchen, and then they both stood against the counter eating their own breakfast. My wolf suddenly felt jealous.

I had never felt like that before, and I didn’t like it one bit. But whoever this guy was, he was making her smile and laugh.

I shook my head and kissed Mariah on the lips, hoping it would make me feel better. It didn’t. After I turned back, I continued to watch them be friendly with each other. It was aggravating.

I got up and made my way into the library, hoping to find a book on mates. After finding one and getting ready to sit down and read, I heard Ella let out a laugh from the next room.

I growled, knowing it had been because of that guy. I grabbed my book and walked to the pack offices, hoping to find some peace.

I opened the book and flipped through it until I found something interesting...

...when one half of a mate pairing rejects his or her mate and their rejection is accepted the mate pairing is severed. The mate bond will fade over time until it has disappeared.

Sometimes the mate bond can stay intact if one of the mate’s wolves does not accept the rejection.

This can happen even if the human part of the mate speaks the rejection, but the wolf part of the mate does not...

I looked up and then furrowed my brow.

“This is your fault, isn’t it?” I spoke aloud to my wolf. I could hear him growling.

That’s a yes, then, I replied internally.

I continued reading, hoping there was a way to fix it. But of course, there wasn’t. My wolf didn’t accept the rejection I had given to Ella.

I was stuck until my wolf finally woke up and realized they weren’t going to be mates. Even though I was attracted to her now, I knew it was just the mate bond.

I got up and walked back out of the office when I heard Ella laugh again. I growled, my irritation almost unbearable.

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Chapter 8

ELLA

I made my way out of the kitchen to get more plates from the pantry when I was grabbed and pushed against the wall.

"What are you doing?" Zane snapped.

"I'm getting more plates from the pantry." I kept my head down, not wanting a repeat of our last encounter.

"No, I mean in the kitchen. What do you think you were doing?"

"Alpha, I don't understand—"

Zane punched the wall next to me.

"Stay away from me, Omega. I rejected you. End of story. I don't want you."

Anger flashed through me. I was getting in trouble for just doing my job! I was being the submissive, gentle omega I was told to be, and it still wasn't enough for him.

"I understand, Alpha," I replied darkly.

He walked away, and I stood against the wall, wiping the few tears that had dared to fall now that he was gone.

I walked back into the kitchen with the plates and met Declan.

"Follow me," he said quietly. I set the plates on the counter and followed him to the hallway behind the kitchen.

Declan stared at me.

"What happened?"

My eyes snapped open, and I looked up at him.

“What do you mean?”

“You came back into the dining hall visibly upset. You’ve been crying. What happened?”

“Nothing. I just dropped something on my foot,” I lied. It was none of his business.

Declan stepped closer to me before knitting his brow. He took my wrist in his hand and I yelped.

He let go at my yelp and stepped back, eyeing my arm where the bruise was from last night.

“Who did that?”

I took my arm and hid it behind my back.

“It’s nothing. Don’t worry about it. We should head back in, we both have work to do.”

Declan gave me a worried look before throwing his arm over my shoulder.

“What do you think they’d do if we just quit?” he joked.

I couldn’t help but chuckle.

“They’d starve.”

We both laughed as we walked back into the kitchen. Zane was there, and of course he started staring at me again. I shook my head and continued with my work.

My mom came in a while later, holding some bags in her arms. She smiled, saying hello to the kitchen staff and to Declan.

I wiped my hands on my apron.

“Mom, I’m all done, I’m going to head back to the house and do some laundry before lunch prep.”

“Sure, hun. I’ll be down in a bit, I’ve got a few things to do as well.”

I made my way down the hill and was once again ambushed by Zane.

“We really need to stop meeting like this, Alpha,” I huffed as I yanked my arm away from him.

“Who is that wolf you keep flirting with?”

I took a step back.

"I'm pretty sure you lost the right to ever have an opinion on that when you rejected me," I snapped.

He grabbed my arm again, and I gasped at his tight grip.

"You are mine."

"No!" I yelled at him.

"You didn't want me! You rejected me. You don't get to take that back!"

"I'm Alpha, I can do what I want!" He crushed his lips to mine, and I bit him hard, drawing a bit of blood. He recoiled, then came at me again.

"You are not my mate, Zane Davis!" I screamed at him.

Suddenly, Declan was by my side.

"Ella, are you okay?" I looked up at him, and he wiped a tear from my face. I hadn't even noticed I was crying. I was so grateful he was there.

Declan turned to Zane, who growled and advanced on us.

Declan lowered his head in submission.

"Alpha, I do not wish to challenge you. But Ella is my friend, and she is upset."

Zane straightened himself.

"What is your name?"

Declan kept his gaze down.

"Declan Black."

"Well, Declan Black, is she your mate?"

"Excuse me?" Declan looked up at him in confusion.

"If she is your mate, then take her. Otherwise, you have no claim to her, and your Alpha is demanding that you let us finish our conversation."

I was furious.

“Alpha, I have nothing else to say.” I turned to Declan and took his hand.

“Take me home please.”

I could hear Zane growl as we walked away. But I wasn’t about to let my best friend get eaten alive.

Zane was an alpha, which meant he was stronger and faster. He could take Declan down in seconds, and I didn’t want to see that.

As we walked back to the house, I could feel my body shaking. I knew it was partly because of the fear I had of Declan almost becoming ground beef.

But part of it was because I had not only stood up to Zane, I had yelled at him. I didn’t know where that had come from, but it had felt good to finally let it out.

When we entered the house, I sat down on the couch, my head in my hands.

“What was that all about, Ella?” Declan asked, sitting beside me on the couch.

“I, uhm...” I struggled to find the words.

“Is he the one that hurt you?” he asked tenderly.

If only you knew, I thought to myself. I took a deep breath.

“Two years ago, Zane was my mate.”

He was kind to try to hide the shock on his face. He had moved to the pack after Zane had left, so he didn’t know anything about it.

I continued, “He rejected me that day. On my birthday, no less. He didn’t want me. He didn’t want an omega as his mate, as his luna.”

I lowered my head.

“I’m nothing,” I whispered.

“You are not nothing.” He smiled at me.

I smiled back before tossing my hair to the side.

“Anyway, he got back yesterday from his two years of alpha training. The two years were good for me. The mate pull we had is gone.

“At least, it is for me. He’s been mean and possessive since he got back. I think he still thinks I belong to him, even though he rejected me.”

“Did he say that?” Declan asked.

I nodded, and Declan squeezed my hand.

“Well... ice cream?”

I laughed, glad my friend was here.

Chapter 9

ZANE

I paced around my room, wrestling with my thoughts. I knew I was better than this, getting frustrated and jealous over some girl. My wolf was angry that I continued to scare her off.

She didn’t seem affected by the mate bond at all. It was like she really was over me. Was it so easy for her to get over an alpha? That stung my ego. Shouldn’t I be stronger than that?

I decided I needed to calm myself down, maybe find a distraction. She might not be affected at all, but I was about to lose my mind.

I made my way back downstairs into the common area, grabbed a bottle of water from the fridge, and took a long drink.

“Zane.”

I looked up to see Mariah standing in front of me, scantily dressed and offering herself to me. I rushed her, my lips crushing hers as I lifted her onto the counter.

We lost ourselves in a fury of grinding and sucking until I heard a cough off to the side.

ELLA

Mom joined Declan and me from the other room, laughing as she saw us delving into a quart of ice cream.

“We should probably head up. I need to check on the pulled pork and you need to finish those salads.”

We all went back to the kitchen together, where we were surprised to see Zane and Mariah going at it right on the counter, half-naked and in the throes of lust where anyone could walk in and see them.

My mom let out a cough, and they looked up to see the three of us standing there. They both straightened themselves out and Mariah gave me a wicked smile.

“Jealous?”

“Not in the least,” I replied.

“You really think you’ll ever find another mate? You tried to get your hands on this one, but you were nothing to him,” she huffed before hopping off the counter.

I glared at her.

“Oh, so you’re his mate?”

I saw Mariah’s eyes brighten and then fill with disappointment when Zane looked away.

“She’s a friend.”

I smiled as I heard my mother try to stifle a laugh.

Mariah glared at Sophie.

“How dare you—”

I stood tall and, with every bit of confidence I possessed, berated her, “No. How dare you! Coming in here and making a mess and a scene where we have to work. Have you no decency?”

The look on Mariah’s face was priceless. She stammered for a minute before finding herself and yelling at me, “You have no right to speak that way, Omega! Zane, do something!”

I glared at Zane and Mariah, my anger reaching new heights.

“And you have no right to be in here making our job more difficult! Do you see this mess? Pans and dishes all over the floor, spilled water—do you seriously think of no one but yourself?”

Mariah began to speak again before I interrupted her.

“Leave.” I waved my hand dismissively before meeting Zane’s eyes again.

Zane stepped forward, growling, and I immediately realized what I had just done. He stood before us in an aggressive stance.

Suddenly, Alpha Daniel walked in.

“What is going on here?” he boomed.

None of us answered, refusing to be the first to break the silence. Alpha Daniel stood straight, radiating power and authority.

“In my office. Now!” he commanded.

We followed him to his office. Zane and I stood in front of his desk as he sat. Alpha Daniel motioned for us to sit, but neither of us accepted.

“One of you better start speaking,” Alpha Daniel said sternly.

I straightened myself, attempting to suppress my frustration.

“Alpha, Mariah attempted to speak offensively to my mother. I will take a lot of things but not that. Alpha Zane and she were in the middle of an intimate moment when we entered the kitchen and—”

“Zane, did you find your mate?” Alpha Daniel interrupted

I continued, “I asked. She wasn’t his mate, so I gave her a piece of my mind. If she was his mate, then I would have given her the respect deserved of a luna. Zane didn’t appreciate my words.”

Alpha Daniel turned to Zane with anger in his voice, rubbing his temples.

“You started this fight over a silly girl who isn’t even your mate? What the hell are you doing Zane? What if your true mate had walked in and seen you with her?”

I scoffed and looked at Zane.

“Wait, does he not know?”

Zane glared at me, daring me to speak.

I shook my head in disbelief.

“Alpha Daniel, Zane found his mate.”

Alpha Daniel’s eyes widened in shock as Zane yelled, “Shut up!”

“I was his mate,” I stated bluntly.

Alpha Daniel turned to me, shock and confusion written on his face.

“Ella?”

I stood and lowered my head.

"It was two years ago, before he left. He..." I took a deep breath. I could feel all of my newfound confidence fading.

"He rejected me."

Alpha Daniel let out a growl.

"He what?"

"He rejected me. But apparently, he seems to think he still has a claim on me while he messes around with her."

Alpha Daniel sat down and let out a long breath.

"Ella I am so sorry. I had no idea this had happened. Obviously, you accepted his rejection?"

I nodded and he turned to Zane.

"Zane, apologize to this girl."

Zane's head snapped up with a furious look at his father before submitting.

"I apologize for any offense I caused."

"If you don't mind, I need some time with my son," Alpha Daniel said, turning to me.

"Yes, Alpha." I gave him a tight smile before leaving the room.

Declan met me out in the hall.

"So?"

"So what?" I responded innocently.

"So what happened? Are you being punished? Is he? I can't believe you spoke to them like that."

I sighed. Neither could I. I must have lost my mind, talking like that to an alpha.

I joined my mom to work on dinner and Declan watched us from the other side of the island, making jokes about Ella the fearless omega.

Chapter 10

ALPHA DANIEL

"What the hell is going on with you, Zane?" I boomed above him. Zane was sitting in his chair in front of my desk with his head lowered as I stood above him.

"I don't know, Dad," Zane replied quietly.

I stood with my hands on my hips and shook my head. Zane looked up at me, and he knew I was disappointed in my son.

"You will stay here until I return. Don't you dare move," I growled as I walked out of the room, slamming the door behind me. I stood outside the office and took a deep breath, exhaling slowly.

We need to speak to that girl again before we decide what we are going to do with him, my wolf said.

"I agree," I mumbled as I made my way down the hall and out to the kitchen.

"Do you have a moment, Ella?" I asked from the entrance of the kitchen. She turned to me with a surprised look.

"Yes, Alpha." She wiped her hands on a towel and took off her apron to follow me outside to the front porch of the pack house. I sat down on a chair and motioned for her to do the same.

"I need to get some clarifications on a few things, if you don't mind."

I could see she was hesitant, but she nodded.

"What happened when Zane rejected you?"

She took a deep breath, trying to choose her words carefully.

"It was my eighteenth birthday. We caught each other's scent in the cafeteria, and we both knew. He ignored it, so I went outside to eat my lunch. I was less likely to be bothered sitting out there.

He came outside, almost angry, and informed me that we were mistaken, I wasn't his mate. Then Mariah butted in, and he dropped it. Later at the pack house, he pulled me aside and rejected me."

"How did he reject you? What exactly did he say? How did you feel afterward?" I asked, hoping there was an easy explanation for all of this.

Ella straightened.

“He said ‘I, Zane Davis, reject you Ella Matthews, as my mate’. It just about killed me. It was the worst pain I’d ever felt in my life.

“Then I stood and said ‘I, Ella Matthews, accept your rejection.’ And even though he tried to hide it, I could tell it hurt him as well.”

“That’s it?”

“That’s it. Why?” she asked.

I shook my head, my brow wrinkling in thought.

“You did everything right, but I don’t see why his mate pull still exists.”

She looked shocked.

“How is that possible?”

I shrugged.

“You were supposed to be his luna. But he messed up, so he will have to live with the consequences.

“I don’t see how he’ll be able to be alpha without one. He might just have to take a Luna and deal with the fact he’ll never have a true mate.”

“Is there anything I can do?” Ella asked.

She was such a sweet girl. I liked to think she was treated well, but after seeing the last few days and knowing what I did now, I knew she hadn’t had it easy.

I smiled and reached over to squeeze her hand.

“I don’t think so.”

Ella nodded her head and stood to leave.

“Ella.” I looked up at her with genuine sadness in my eyes.

“I thought I raised him better. I thought I taught him the importance and meaning of a mate. I am so sorry that he was too blinded by his pride to see just how good you would have been for him.”

“Thank you, Alpha.” She gave me a warm smile and made her way inside.

I watched her walk back into the house before doing the same. I made my way to the office and was pleased to see my son sitting exactly where I left him.

I sat behind my desk and stared at my son in silence for a few minutes.

“Dad—” Zane broke the silence but was quickly hushed when I raised my hand.

“Zane, I thought your mother and I raised you to appreciate the importance of a mate. You rejected that girl without even the slightest thought at the implications of your actions.”

Zane looked up at me, his guilt showing in his eyes.

“Dad, I know I messed up. But I didn’t want her. I want Mariah.”

I glared at my son.

“Did you ever think that maybe that girl isn’t what you want, but what you need? What did we teach you? What are mates?”

“Mates are two halves of one soul. They complete each other,” Zane mumbled.

“Did you think about that when you rejected her? That she is part of your soul? Something about her is meant to complement you, and you her.

“But in your pride, you lost her, and I don’t know if you’ll be able to get her back.”

“I know why I feel it and she doesn’t,” Zane said quietly.

“Well! Do enlighten me,” I replied, not attempting to hide my sarcasm.

“My wolf didn’t accept my rejection of her. He still believes she is his mate.”

“I guess we know who is the smarter of the two of you,” I clapped back.

Zane looked down at the floor again, and I let out a sigh.

“Son, I don’t understand what happened. If you still feel the pull toward her, if your wolf still wants her, then why are you messing around with Mariah?

“I know that girl. She isn’t anything near luna material, even if she is beta-born. Which means you weren’t thinking with your brain when you chose her, am I right?”

“I don’t know what to do. Ella makes me so frustrated. She doesn’t want me. She doesn’t want anything to do with me, and I don’t know how to fix that.”

Zane shrugged. I could see he was bothered by the fact that she wasn't as affected as he was.

"Have you maybe tried being nice?" I replied.

Zane looked up at him with his eyes wide.

"Instead of what?"

I snorted.

"Zane, I saw the marks on her arm. I saw how she responds when you are near. You've been cruel to that girl. She is afraid of you. I wouldn't be surprised if she thinks she hates you."

"Well then what do I do?"

"Change." I looked my son in the eye.

"What do you mean, change?" Zane looked confused.

"Become the alpha I know you are meant to be. Be kind. Be protective. Listen to your pack.

"Act from clarity, not anger. Don't demand respect and fear, earn it. Do you see me grabbing pack members' arms and yelling at them for every little thing?"

"Well, no...", Zane replied. I could see those wheels turning.

"Show Ella and everyone else the amazing man you are."

I stood and hugged my son.

"Until then, I won't be stepping down and giving you the leadership of the pack. They are good people and deserve the very best alpha."