

# SIENNA

As I drove us back to our hotel, Aiden called room service and ordered apple pie to be delivered to our room.

I was giddy—joy singing through my body as I led the way.

We grabbed our plates and forks and sat together on the bed, grinning like idiots as we ate our victory pie.

I was too happy to be careful, and before long a dollop of pie filling plopped on my shirt, right on the swell of my breast.

Aiden's eyes went to it, and he tossed his pie aside, the plate hitting the foot of the bed frame with a clink. He leaned forward, a low growl sounding from his throat.

My heart began to race as he licked the drop of filling.

Then, in a flurry of clothing and hands, we stripped each other naked.

I was hotter than the haze could ever make me.

My mate.

# My love.



Forever.

No one could ever tear us apart.

His mouth was on my bare skin, my collarbone, my breasts, my stomach.

He moved lower, then spread my thighs and plunged his tongue inside me, running it along my folds as I dug my fingers into the covers, arching my back.

My hand dove into his hair, my breathing coming in fast gasps as he pleasured me.

Then he withdrew his mouth, replacing it with fingers as he raised his body over mine.

I drank him in with my eyes—his strong shoulders, wide chest, the ripple in his muscles as he lifted me at the hip.

"You're mine," he murmured. "No one can take you from me."

"No one," I agreed, hypnotized by the intensity of his gaze.

I felt the tip of him pushing against my sex.

I widened my legs, inviting him in.



Needing him.

He hovered a little longer, his eyes traveling over my naked body—I could feel them like a caress.

My flesh responded, tingling with goosebumps.

"Take me, Aiden," I begged. "Please take me now."

"You're mine," he said again as he buried himself in my core in one deep thrust that made me gasp for air.

Both of his hands cupped my ass as he drove into me, harder with each thrust.

I wanted him, all of him, and I wrapped my legs around his hips. My arms around his neck, I pulled myself flush against him, skin against skin.

As my rapture built, I dug half-shifted claws into his back.

I was his, yes.

But he was mine as well.

A wave of bliss tore a scream from my throat, and

I clung to him.



"Mark me!" I panted.

He looked at me in shock.

"Do it again," I begged. "Please!"

A hunger flashed in his eyes, and in an instant, I felt his canines pierce the flesh of my neck. I cried out as a warm liquid dripped down my chest.

I could barely breathe.

But I wasn't done. Keening my pleasure in a guttural howl, I used my remaining strength to shift my own fangs and pierced my mate's neck in return.

He let out a moan of pain and pleasure and bit down on me even harder as he thrust into me one last time.

The thrill rippled through me as we moved back and forth, quaking with euphoria.

I shattered, and a moment later, Aiden did as well.

We convulsed as one, ecstasy burning through the things that separated us—flesh, bone. We were one soul, blended.



# I want to be like this forever.

One with him, forever.

And it occurred to me-Aiden was right.

This connection was divine.

When at last the bliss abated, we curled up together. We lay on our sides, and he wrapped his arms around me, cupping my breast from behind. Aiden fell asleep almost immediately.

I soon followed, safe at last.

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We spent the rest of the day holed up in our hotel room, ordering room service.

The next morning, however, all that rich food had caught up with me—not to mention all the pie. I felt queasy as I showered and got dressed.

Aiden smiled and kissed me as he did the same, and too soon, we went our separate ways for the day.

He had pack business, and I had some painting to do.



I shrugged off the nausea and hurried to my gallery.



As I mixed color on my palette, glancing around my studio, a profound sense of well-being warmed me.

What a good life I had.

I was so very, very grateful.

And for the first time in a long time, I couldn't wait to see what the future had in store.

# JOSH

Inhaling deeply, I pushed into Aiden's office.

He was reading through the stack of documents I'd collected for him at the meeting he'd opted to skip.

Annoyance at his irresponsibility warred with satisfaction that he'd asked me to take his place.

For a little while, sitting at that table, I'd had a taste of what it would be like if I was the Alpha of the ECP.

But it was short-lived, and now, here I was, having to petition Aiden to do something about what I'd





learned concerning Konstantin and the bones.



"What can I do for you, Josh?" he asked at last.

"I don't believe that Konstantin is really dead," I said.

And then I sat down and told him everything I'd learned. All about Jalwitz Museum, the stone box grave, the clones at Morgantown Theatre, and what Eve had said.

I may have left out the part about the sludge and the watch. After all, I didn't feel like getting fired on the spot.

Aiden shook his head.

"Konstantin is dead," he asserted, despite everything I'd just told him. "I killed him with my own jaws."

"Aiden-"

He held up a hand. "Josh, you can relax now. Michelle can relax. Sienna, too. We're safe. Konstantin is dead."

"But the clones-"

"You said yourself there were mirrors everywhere. And honestly, Josh, you have been drinking too

# much-"



I scoffed and stood up.

"I say this as your friend," Aiden pursued, standing as well. "Talk to a healer. Maybe look into a rehab program..."

"This is unbelievable!"

I met his eyes and glared at him.

"You can't stand the idea that you might have been wrong! That he tricked you again! Trying to make me out to be an alcoholic—"

"How many drinks have you had so far today?"
Aiden asked, his eyes cold.

I gritted my teeth, refusing to answer.

"It's ten o'clock in the morning, Josh, on a goddamn Thursday."

"Fuck you, Aiden," I breathed.

His eyebrows went up. "Excuse me?"

I was too angry to try to take it back, but I knew I'd crossed a line. He was my Alpha—still.

He made his way around the desk, drawing closer. "I'm going to say this once, Josh, and it's an order now. Talk to a healer. See about rehab. Or I'll find a new Beta."

I threw up my hands and turned away, stalking out of the room.



# Jocelyn

I'm told that I'll soon be well enough to come home.

> Sienna That's wonderful news!





#### Sienna

i dont know if i ever got the chance to properly thank you

## Sienna

If it wasn't for you, Michelle wouldn't be

## Jocelyn



#### Sienna

I'm so happy you're feeling better. I'm glad the healers took good care of you...



## Jocelyn

Yeah, well...they're not the only thing that's brought me back to life.

Sienna

?

Sienna



#### Sienna

(Sienna waits in suspense)

## Jocelyn

Let's just say there's someone back in my life.

## Jocelyn

that i'm really happy is back in my life



## Jocelyn

Anyway, we're not really supposed to be on our phones!

## Jocelyn

Just wanted to say hi, and that I was alive.



## Sienna

Okay! It was great to hear from you!

#### Jocelyn

You too. Talk soon.



I was so happy to hear from Jocelyn again. I don't know what I would have done if things had taken a turn for the worse.

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That evening, Aiden and I drove to my parents' house for a family dinner.





Mom greeted us at the door with hugs and kisses.

She beamed at Aiden. "I was so pleased by everything you said at that meeting, Aiden," she said. Tears glistened in her eyes. "It meant so much."

Then she grabbed me and hugged me again.

"I had no idea they were trying to oust you," she said into my hair. "I'd have skinned that Monica Birch alive if I'd known!"

"I know you would have, Mom," I said, even as she squeezed the life out of me.

Extricating myself, I saw my father waiting behind her.

I grinned at him and gave him a big hug.

"How are you, sweetheart?" he asked softly. "Has it been really hard?"

I took his hands in mine and met his eyes. "It was hard for a while, but things are so much better now."

"I'm glad," he said, breathing out.

Selene and Jeremy came into the hall. Jeremy was holding baby Vanessa, showing her off to Aiden.









The Millennium Wolves Book 4 - Chapter 30





"You never stop worrying about them," Dad said to Jeremy, wrapping an arm around my shoulder.

"You just worry about different things," he added with a chuckle.

I was smiling too, but a spark of anxiety prompted me to slip my hand into Aiden's.

Will we ever get to know the joys and challenges of parenthood?

"Come on, everyone, let's eat," Dad said, herding us into the dining room.

My stomach turned at the smell of the food, though, and I hung back.

The nausea had been hitting me off and on all day.

"You okay, sis?" Selene asked, taking my arm as I released Aiden's hand, letting him go so he could offer to help bring in food from the kitchen.

I smiled at her as we stood in the entry hall. "I guess. Just feeling a little woozy today. Probably the aftermath of all that stress."

Selene lifted a golden eyebrow. "You think so? Or could it be something else?"

I frowned at her, genuinely unsure of what she meant.

"Could you be pregnant?" she leaned in and whispered.



My throat tightened. "No," I said.

Selene shook her head. "Hanh wasn't sure... Maybe you should take a test."

I scoffed, but my eyes were fixed on hers.

"You know you want to," she grinned.

"I don't-I don't have a test to take ... "

"I do. An old one that's been sitting in the side pocket of my purse for like, a year, but..."

She grabbed her purse and produced a stick, still in its wrapper.

I blinked at the thing. In its wrapper, it looked like a tampon.

But this was not a tampon.

This little stick would tell me something very, very important.



What if it comes out negative?

Then it doesn't mean anything. Take a deep breath.

I did, catching a whiff of fried fish as Aiden carried it out. My stomach lurched.



"Okay, fine," I said. I snatched the stick from her hand.

As I stalked to the downstairs bathroom, I heard her faint chuckle.

This is stupid. I locked the door and pulled down my jeans. I'm just feeling queasy. I'm not pregnant!

The grumbling seemed to help soothe my nerves, so I kept doing it even as I peed on the stick.

Selene is just baby crazy. She's seeing babies everywhere. I'm not pregnant.

Setting the stick on the counter, I refused to look at it as I washed my hands.

The test is probably ruined from riding around in Selene's bag for a hundred years anyway. It won't show anything. And anyway, I'm not pregnant.

But then, after another minute, I looked at the



pregnant!

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But then, after another minute, I looked at the display.

A pink plus sign.

Holy shit.

I AM pregnant.

**Next Chapter**