

AIDEN

When Sienna came home after refilming with Monica and the others, she was quiet but otherwise seemed okay.

I asked her several times if she was alright—or if she wanted to talk—and eventually she shot me a “just leave it alone” look, so I let it go.

But I couldn't help feeling as though I was doing something wrong.

Like I wasn't being the mate to Sienna that she needed right now.



Fuck, how should I know what a good mate would do?

My parents prefer to never to mention their personal feelings.

And I had never gotten to know Aaron and Jen as mates...

The only thing I knew to do was to keep Sienna as close as possible.

I should never have left her for so long, and I had no intention of doing so again.



Series

The Millennium Wolves
Book 4 - Chapter 19

Dark Mode



Chapters

We curled up together in our huge hotel bed and fell asleep spooning.

It was one of my favorite things to do.

But when I woke up, I noticed that Sienna's pillow was damp, as if she'd been crying.

My heart clenched. After our conversation yesterday, I'd hoped she was feeling better about her talk with Hanh, but clearly it was weighing on her more than I knew.

Sienna needed me right now, and I had to be there for her.



To protect her and keep her safe and happy. Like a mate was supposed to do.

I headed to the Pack House in search of my Beta.

It had been wrong to cut Josh out of the investigation.

Yes, he was volatile.

Yes, he was too close to it.

But putting myself in his shoes, I realized how upset I would be if someone tried to stand between me and finding Konstantin.



Besides, if Josh took over some of the responsibilities of finding the vampyre, it would give me some much-needed time with my mate.

But when I arrived at Josh's office, his assistant Elijah said, "He hasn't come in yet."

My brow furrowed. He should have gotten back from Winston-Salem last night.

Maybe he's sleeping in?



Worry nagged at me, but I decided to give him an hour.

There was plenty to do in the meantime—work had piled up while I'd been focused on finding Konstantin.

Around ten o'clock, I called Josh's office.

"Still not in," Elijah answered.

My mouth went dry. I had a terrible feeling in the pit of my stomach.

"Did he tell you where he was going to be?"

"I'm sorry, my Alpha, he did not."



I got out my phone.

Aiden

Josh where are you

Aiden

I need to talk to you and we have things to do

Aiden

Call me when you get this.

I glared at my phone, but Josh didn't respond.

After a moment, I tried a different tactic.



Aiden

Hey Michelle. I need to talk to Josh. Can you tell him to call me?

Michelle

...

Michelle

Ur the one thats got him driving all over the country

Michelle

idk where he is

I frowned.

Where the hell are you, Josh?

SIENNA

I'd had two cups from the hotel's little coffeemaker, but I got another grande as I made my way through downtown to my gallery.

I hadn't slept much the night before.

Even lying in the warm security of Aiden's arms, I hadn't been able to stop the tears that had slowly trailed down my cheeks onto the pillow.

I felt exhausted. Wrung out.



And at the same time, completely wired. My hands shook as they held the paper cup.

The caffeine wasn't helping. I dumped the half-full cup in a trash bin as I approached the door of my gallery.

I hadn't been back here in over a week.

Part of me wanted to stay away, but I was desperate.

My inability to shift, my likely infertility, my failures, my inward rage...



I had to find a way to process it all.

Get it out on canvas.

Letting myself in, the familiar scent of lavender and sweet orange from the candles on the front counter greeted me.

For a moment, my heart lifted, and the tension in my shoulders eased.

I looked around and spotted the series of art deco paintings on the south wall that had earned me that call from Miami.

My breath caught looking at them.



They *were* good.

Without thinking, I stepped closer, my eyes traveling over the lines.

I can't believe I turned that commission down.

Will I ever get another chance like that again?

I pressed my hands to my cheeks, rubbing over the bones of my face.

My brain felt hyperactive, bouncing wildly from thought to thought.



I had to find a way to paint again. I couldn't stand all these feelings locked inside me.

Maybe if I try a new method.

Use a sponge instead of a brush.

Or pastels instead of oils.



I pushed into my studio, not letting myself hesitate, and marched up to the easel with the canvas I'd dabbed some color onto last time.

I took it off and put a blank canvas in its place.

After staring at the blank canvas with an equally blank mind for a full minute, I let my eyes wander.

They came to rest on the painting I'd done of a pacifier.

It was a messy, expressionist piece that had come about after Selene's baby shower—back when I'd thought I might be pregnant.

Back when Konstantin had invaded my life and manipulated my mind.

I shivered, turning away from the painting.

It all felt so far away—I'd been so scared of *being*

pregnant. Now I was scared I never would be.

It had taken the threat of infertility to make me realize how much I wanted to be a mother.

I dug my nails into my palms as I stared at the blank canvas.



How can I paint anything that expresses any of this?

Overwhelmed by the gravity of it all, I grabbed the jar of white gesso and uncapped it, then threw it across the room.

A white splatter hit the floor and walls.

I screamed and knocked over the easel, then stomped on the canvas, which tore.

Losing all sense of control, I threw paints, brushes, palettes—

I trashed my studio, tearing paintings off the walls and knocking the ones stacked on the floor all over the place.

When the back room looked like a hurricane had destroyed it, I finally stopped.

JOSH



I waited until the moon was bright, then went back to Jalwitz.

I banged on the door until an elderly woman opened it.



“You can’t be here,” she said with a frown.

“Step aside,” I ordered, shoving past her. “I’m here on official ECP business.”

She sputtered with outrage.

“What’s with the crime scene tape?”

“There was a robbery!” she exclaimed. “The police haven’t finished the investigation.”

“Lady, I *am* the police,” I said, swaggering into the foyer.

“You need to leave right away, or I’m calling the cops,” said the old lady.

I blew her off and marched into the next room.

None of the lights in the cases were on, but I could see that this room was devoted to Native American art.

The opposite side of the room had been made to



The opposite side of the room had been made to look like it was made of dirt and stone. Above the door was a sign that read: *Stone Box Graves*.

Crime scene tape crisscrossed it.



I stopped and scanned a sign that hung at eye level next to the doorway.

“Stone box graves were a method of burial employed by Native Americans of the Mississippian culture in the American Midwest and Southeast...”

A creeping sensation tingled across my back as I entered the room, ducking through the tape.

They’d unearthed graves and put them in glass cases.

In the case closest to me, stone slabs had been arranged into a rectangular box in the dirt. The material at the bottom of the box looked like cracked ceramic.

Bones lay within it, arranged in a fetal position, with small objects beside them: arrowheads, figurines, and freshwater pearls.

I couldn’t believe they’d dug up people’s resting places and put them under glass in this museum.



It was chilling.

What was worse, one of the cases had been smashed.



I approached it slowly, rubbing my thumbs against my fingers, feeling queasy.

As I looked inside, I could tell immediately what was missing.

This definitely can't be good.

The sound of sirens grew nearer as I covered my mouth with my hand.

Hours later, I was grinding my teeth and itching to break the goddamn doors down.

I didn't have time for this shit.

Konstantin was up to something.

And I had to find out what it was.

But of course that would have to wait.

This hangover was a bitch. I shivered on the thin



And I had to find out what it was.



But of course that would have to wait.

This hangover was a bitch. I shivered on the thin pallet bed.

I lay as still as possible, hoping I was finally done puking into the aluminum toilet that stood in one corner.

I'm sorry, Michelle.

I shouldn't be here.

I should be at home with you. My body curled around yours.

But no. Instead, I was in a filthy cell that smelled like decades worth of spilled urine.

“Hey jailer, I want my phone call!” I shouted.

Next Chapter

