

Fated to my Enemy by Diane Doherty Chapter 31-40

Chapter Thirty-One

Alpha Blake

I didn't expect Ryley to pull out a couple of air pop guns or to hog all the ammunition. And even those foam balls stung and that woman had great aim. Seeing Ryley laughing and carefree made up for the hit to my forehead. Even though the boys were now here and Beta Walter, which I didn't expect.

Ryley was trying to run away when I shot her in the a*s cheek and she let out a yip. I couldn't help but chuckle at the glare she gave me. I'm sure I have a red mark on my forehead and she's glaring at me.

"That's what you get woman."

"Did you just call me woman?" She huffed.

"I did," I smirked as I stalked towards her.

"Now, do you want to tell me what the former beta of the shadow moon pack is doing her?" I asked when I was standing in front of her. The pack borders this property.

"That's Walter. Yes, he was the beta but he's just been like an adopted father to me. Is that a problem?" She scuffed, crossing her arms over her chest.

"No problem, Ryley. I just didn't expect it. Now it makes sense that the pack would be so close. And if you are under the beta's protection, it's why the pack hasn't bothered you." I told her.

"Maybe Walter but I'm sure his sons would love nothing more than to
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bother me. But they are smart enough to stay away." She mumbled.

I didn't ask her what she meant, as we walked back around the cabin. Walter was helping the boys unpack the truck.

I've met Walter's oldest son, Beta Chris. He's the current beta of the Shadow Moon pack. But I haven't met his other sons. I wonder why Walter has a great relationship with Ryley but not his sons.

"Walter!" Ryley called out before wrapping him in a hug.

"My girl," he kissed her cheek before wrapping her in a tight-hug.

"We may need to think about that addition," I heard Walter chuckle.

"I was thinking the same thing. The boys need longer beds." She told Walter. What addition? Was she planning on having us here more often with her and

Channing? The thought made me smile.

“Alpha Blake, it’s good to see you. Even though it’s a surprise to see my girl being nice to an alpha,” he said, shaking my hand and Ryley smacked his chest.

“I’m nice,” she huffed.

“It’s good to see you again, Beta Walter. I was just as surprised to see you here. I didn’t expect Ryley to have a beta family.” I told him.

“I’m right here, you two.” She scuffed and we both snickered.

“Mom, where are all the snacks,” Channing called out from the porch.

“Yeah, Mom, where are all the snacks,” Aspen echoed him.

“Really? The kitchen isn’t that big!” Ryley exclaimed, moving toward the cabin. She was muttering as she stomped her way into the cabin.

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Chapter Thirty-One

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“Now that we have a moment, Alpha Blake. What are your intentions with my daughter and grandson?” Beta Walter got straight to the point.

“Daughter?” I questioned:

“Ryley may not be my blood but she is every bit my daughter. And I don’t trust her with another alpha.” He growled.

“I don’t know the entire story but I have no intentions of hurting Ryley or Channing,” I told him. Beta Walter watched me.

“Then tell me what your intentions are with her. She won’t join your pack. I’d been asking her for years to come live in mine so I could protect her. I still can’t believe she went to yours, let alone have you here at the cabin.” He confessed.

“Ryley and I are friends,” I said.

“Friends? A man doesn’t look at a woman like that who is just his friend. I may be old but I’m not blind.” He chuckled.

“Even if I wanted to be more to her and Channing. That would have to be her choice. I know her mate claimed another. I don’t know the whole story but I know he broke her.” He let out a growl.

“That piece of s*it didn’t just break her. What he did could have started a war. It should have. Ryley is stronger than any alpha I have known. And she won’t let anything happen to Channing. That boy saved her life.”

We didn’t get to finish our conversation as the boys came out of the cabin. Both of them laughing as they carried the cooler together.

"We got the snacks!" Aspen exclaimed.

"More like everything in the kitchen!" Ryley called out, coming out of

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the cabin behind them.

"I'm going to have to go grocery shopping again." She chuckled.

"We can go after fishing. I don't want you going into that town alone." I told her and she rolled her eyes.

"What happened in town?" Beta Walter questioned.

"There were a few guys at the fuel station who wouldn't take no for an answer. But it's nothing I couldn't handle." She answered.

"Mom, are you okay?" Channing asked, concerned.

"Sweetie, of course, I'm okay. They were human. Nothing I couldn't handle." She reassured him.

"It's okay, Ryley, I'll protect you," Aspen wrapped his arm around her shoulders and squeezed her into his side.

"I'm so lucky to have all these strong wolves protecting me." She giggled, pulling Channing in for a hug as well. Ryley looked so small between the boys. There was no doubt Channing is an alpha's son.

"Oh come on, worthy protectors, it's time to go fishing." Beta Walter said, taking the cooler. The boat is already at the dock. Both the boys and Beta Walter kissed Ryley on the cheek before walking towards the dock.

"Bye boys, have fun," Ryley told them.

"Ryley, I mean it. No going into town. It's not safe." I told her and she looked at me. She let out a sigh before giving me a nod.

"Thank you," I breathed out the breath I was holding.

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"Have fun fishing with the boys." She smiled.

"Stay at the cabin. I know you are strong. Ryley. But you can't take on a group of rogues."

"I'll be fine. Blake. Go have fun." She places her hand on my chest. I surprised myself by kissing her on the cheek before following the others. I was feeling anxious about leaving her here alone. When I turned around, she was standing in the doorway of the cabin. She waved before entering, closing the door behind her.

"Come on. Dad."

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Chapter Thirty-Two

Ryley

“Someone is happy.” my wolf chimed in as I walked into the cabin after saying goodbye to the guys. I was surprised by Blake’s protectiveness. And I was even more surprised by my willingness to obey him. And why would he kiss me on the cheek?

“Same reason he didn’t murder us when you shot him in the forehead,” Lily chuckled.

“Hey, that was a great shot. And he got me back. I’m sure I have a bruise on my a*s cheek. But seriously, you know we could never be with Blake. That’s a sure way for our ex to find us.” I told her.

“Ryley, the man doesn’t want you to go to the store with humans without him. Do you think he wouldn’t protect us and Channing from him?” She asked.

“Lily, this isn’t his fight. And what if he got hurt for protecting us? I don’t want it to affect Channing’s friendship with Aspen. If anything were to happen and then we broke up, it would hurt the boys.” I sighed.

It’s the reason I never joined Walter’s pack. I didn’t want to bring him into this and I was also hiding. I didn’t need my ex to be visiting the pack and sniff me out. I know he would finally kill me. And I don’t want him getting his hands on Channing.

I turned on some music before cleaning the cabin. I needed to busy my mind and my body. There are things in my life I can’t change. And I won’t risk Channing. Even though I am taking a risk by being in a

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pack

“When he gets his wolf, he’ll be stronger than his father. We could have the life, the family we always craved. We don’t have to do this alone.” Lily said.

I understand what Lily is saying but I don’t know if I can trust Blake with my heart. And it’s not just mine now, it’s Channing’s and Aspen’s. I was willing to give everything to someone who killed my family and took over my pack, who was going to kill me. The person who said he loved me. Blake may not be anything like him but how do I risk that kind of pain again?

Lily whimpered as I finished cleaning. I know she craves a mate. She is only half a wolf without him. But she wasn’t there when I went through everything. And that pain was still so raw, even after seventeen years.

When the cleaning was done, I made an iced tea before going to sit on the back porch. The afternoon sun was still high in the sky. Now it was time to sit in the shade and read the book I’d been trying to finish. This is my favorite place to relax. And when Walter was with Channing I felt even more relaxed knowing he was safe.

A few hours later, the sun was slowly starting to set. I had just finished my book and knew the guys would return soon. It was time to get dinner ready. And I was going to enjoy cooking for more than three people. Even though Channing cats enough for three, himself.

I was just finishing grilling the steaks when the boys came brawling into the cabin. The table was set and ready for a feast.

"Boys, how was fishing?" I asked as they stumbled into the kitchen area.

"It was great, Mom. Thank you." Channing said, stepping beside me,

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and giving me a side hug.

"Man, it smells good in here." Aspen said, inhaling. He took Channing's spot, giving me a side hug.

"How can you smell anything over the smell of you?" I asked, scrunching up my nose.

"That's my hot man smell," he grinned and I chuckled, shaking my head.

"I would hate to smell your not-hot man smell."

"Aspen, go shower," Blake scolded him.

"Fine." he whined.

"Me first." Channing exclaimed, rushing off toward the bathroom. I turned around to pull the steaks off the grill, chuckling as they fight over the bathroom. Blake stepped up to the kitchen sink to wash his hands.

"Sorry, I should have thrown them both in the lake," he shrugged and I chuckled.

"Did you boys have fun," I asked him.

"I did. I don't remember the last time I'd been fishing with Aspen." Blake answered and I smiled.

"And both of you are welcome out here anytime you can get away, Alpha," Walter offered.

"Thank you, Beta," Blake said, taking a seat at the table.

"It's Walter to you young man," he scolded him and I chuckled, placing the steaks on the table.

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"Only if you knock off the alpha B.S." Blake retorted.

"Deal," Walter confirmed as he walked over to the sink to wash his hands.

"Channing, hurry the f*ck up, I'm starving," Aspen yelled, banging on the bathroom door.

"I think it's time to get some quotes on the expansion," Walter said, taking a seat at the table.

"I think you might be right. We definitely need another bathroom. And another bedroom would be nice as well. I'll be taking the couch tonight." I told him.

"Like hell you are. I'll take the couch," Blake corrected me.

"I'm the smallest. It's not fair to have the biggest person in the cabin sleep on the tiny couch," I retorted and he crossed his arms over his chest.

"Are you calling me fat?" He raised an eyebrow, and I couldn't help but laugh.

"Only your head."

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Chapter Thirty-Three

Alpha Blake

If this trip taught me anything it is how little time I spend with Aspen these days. When he was younger, I would make more time for him but it became less and less over the years. I believe he needed me less when he grew older, but I was wrong. And it was something I was going to change.

I learned how much Ryley does for Channing. She has never missed a hockey game or anything important. Channing is her top priority and even though I have a pack to run, it's no excuse for missing things with Aspen. It also proved how much I craved a mate and family. I was missing Mia the entire weekend but it hurt less that she was no longer here. It was like Ryley pulled together the pieces of my broken heart. It may still be cracked but it hurts less. And being with Ryley and Channing felt natural. Like we've known one another for years.

Now that the weekend is over and it's Monday morning, I'm feeling the loss. The alpha floor felt so empty without them. A part of our family was missing and even Aspen noticed how quiet it was.

I was cursing Mondays as I sat in the boardroom. The CFOs Ryley requested lined the table on either side. We were just waiting on Ryley to arrive.

"You sure picked a winner, Alpha. Can't even be on time for her own meeting," one scoffed. I was about to say something but Ryley walked into the room. She was carrying a bunch of files.

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“Actually, I’m right on time.” She announced, dumping the files on the table. She took the seat across from me.

“Now, since you are so eager to get this meeting over with, Mr. Clarke, you can pass me your financial reports first.” She demanded and I was rock hard. The way she demanded the attention of others was se*y as hell. She knew she was in control and she wasn’t going to let these f**ks intimate her.

“Alpha, is this meeting really necessary?” He complained.

“Miss Halliwell was hired to do a job. And if she wants the records from the beginning of each company, you will hand it over.” I told him. He gritted his teeth, glaring at her before sliding the folder in front of him over to her.

She stopped it with her hand, giving him a sickly sweet smile. I know. Mr. Clarke was the CFO Ryley had a suspicion about.

“That wasn’t so hard, was it?” She smiled and I cleared the laughter from my throat. It was fun watching grown men squirm.

Ryley grabbed a pen off the desk before opening the folder. She looked deep in thought as she looked through and marked the papers. I readjust myself, as watching her bit her lower lip was driving me crazy. I haven’t spoken to her since I dropped her off last night and I’ve been craving her attention.

“Satisfied?” Mr. Clarke questioned as she closed the file.

She didn’t answer as she slide the file across the desk to me. I stopped it, my eyes never leaving hers. I knew something was wrong, I didn’t have to open the file.

“Everyone leave your files on the desk and leave. Mr. Clarke, you will stay.” I ordered. The room quickly emptied while, Ryley, Mr. Clarke,

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and myself stayed seated. I opened the file to see Ryley had circled a few numbers. I looked up at her and she slid down another file.

“Whatever she thinks she found is a mistake.” He growled. I looked up to find him glaring at Ryley.

“And what is it I found?” She asked him, crossing her arms over her chest.

“Nothing, important, I’m sure, sweetheart,” he retorted.

“That’s enough,” I growled. I picked up both files and stood up from my chair.

“Miss Halliwell, let’s discuss this in the hall,” I told her.

“Mr. Clarke, stay,” I commanded, as I led Ryley into the hallway, closing the door behind me.

“Now, what have you found?” I asked her.

“Before I asked you to call the meeting, I made copies of all last month’s financial reports. I wanted to see if they were being changed when the reports

were demanded. And I was right. I suspect Mr. Clarke because the numbers would never add up. I went back months.” She explained.

“And how much are we talking?”

“Thousands. But I won’t know unless I look through everything.” She answered.

“Look over the reports the others brought with them and then focus on Mr. Clarke. I’ll deal with him personally and if I need anything, I’ll let you know.” I told her. She gave me a nod before I opened the door to the conference room. She collected all the files and her things before

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leaving the room without a word.

“Alpha, you know I would never steal from you or the pack. Are you going to believe this lone wolf bi**h or a loyal pack member?” He exclaimed. I let out a growl and he blanched. I wasn’t messing around this time. One of my friends was stealing from the pack and I wasn’t going to put up with anyone stealing again.

“She noticed thousands were going missing, now you will explain this to me,” I demanded, taking my seat and sliding the files over to him. She may not be a member of the pack but I trust her.

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Chapter Thirty-Four

Ryley

It’s been a hell of a week after our little getaway to the cabin. I was feeling conflicted about Blake and everything that had happened between us over the weekend. Thankfully, I’ve been drowning in work this past week to keep my mind off of Blake. I knew nothing could come of us and there was no point in trying to figure out how to make it work.

Now it’s Friday afternoon and my friend Isabelle has been text begging me to go out with her tonight. She started this uphill battle on Tuesday and she hasn’t let up. My phone chimed on my desk and I groaned. I wasn’t one to go out. I never had time or people I wanted to hang out with. I do like Isabelle. We became instantly friends but I don’t know about going out to drink.

Before I could look at my phone there was a knock on the door. I called for the person to enter ignoring my phone. I watched as an excited Isabelle walked into my office. She let out a squeal as she looked around.

"This office is beautiful!" She exclaimed, sk**ping to the front of my desk.

"Isabelle I was just about to text you," I said and she sat down in a chair in front of the desk.

"No you weren't," she rolled her eyes.

"Okay, maybe, but it's not because I don't want to see you. I'm just not sure about the location you chose," I shrugged.

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"Then how about we just go out for dinner and we can see where the night takes us," she smiled.

"Fine," I breathed out. She let out a squeal before rushing around the desk to hug me.

"I'll pick you up at your place for eight!" She exclaimed before leaving my office. Eight, I thought, confused. Shouldn't people be getting ready for bed not dinner? And what do I wear?

"F*ck," I mumbled before slamming my laptop shut. I already hate that I said yes to this.

I decided since it was already four in the afternoon that I would pack up and head home. I had to get myself m**tally prepared for this, especially after the week I just had.

Blake has had to deal with Mr. Clarke when I found he was stealing consistently over the last year. It's not as much as I originally found, but stealing is stealing. And I know how much Blake pays everyone. It's really good money. And he is fair with time off and insurance. All of these companies would be great to work for. I'm not sure what he's going to do with him, but I'm sure it's nothing good. He is a powerful alpha after all.

When I got home Channing and Aspen were watching tv in the living room. Aspen has been here all week after our weekend together. Even if Channing wasn't here, Aspen was now living with us and he took the other bedroom. I didn't mind, I love the kid. And he was great company.

"Mom, you're home early?" Channing asked as I walked into the living room.

"I guess I'm going out with Isabelle tonight for dinner," I shrugged, flopping down on the loveseat.

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“Everyone seems to be going out,” Aspen said and I furrowed my brows.

“Everyone?” I questioned:

“Yeah, my dad is as well.” He answered and my heart sank. I know I shouldn’t be jealous, I have no right to be. But I didn’t want to think of Blake being out with anyone else.

“Well, I should go get ready. Are you boys going to be okay to get dinner yourselves?” I asked, standing up from the seat.

“We’ll order pizza. Don’t worry about us.” Channing said before I headed up to my room.

Inow had three hours to get ready and I didn’t want to. I wanted to call and cancel just in case we run into Blake with his date. I don’t think I’d be able to handle that.

“It would seem you are falling pretty hard for the alpha.” Lily chimed in and I sighed.

“I just don’t want to see it. I enjoy his company but I can’t be what he needs. And if I were to cross that line. I don’t think I’d be able to leave him. And then I would have to face my ex again and all that would come to light. And you know how alphas are, Blake would want to fix it and he can’t.” I told her.

“But he will protect us. We could be a family. And you could work for the pack. And Channing would have Aspen. It would be a win-win for everyone. We could all be happy,” she exclaimed.

“Lily, I know but it’s more complicated than that. What if he was to leave? I have Channing to worry about.” I breathed out. She whimpered before returning to the back of my mind. Tears filled my eyes. I risked everything for a man who was my mate and he killed

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everyone I loved. He almost killed me and Channing. How do I risk that again? I want Blake to love me, but if I fall, there’s no coming back up for air. And if he were to break my heart, I would die.

Chapter Thirty-Five

Alpha Blake

After Ryley exposed Clarke, I’ve been working hard to unravel his scheme within my company. I wasn’t going to let him live for his deceit. But I wanted to know how two people I believed I could trust thought it was okay to steal from

me. From our pack. I hadn't seen Ryley all week and that's probably for the best. I didn't want her to see me like this. I was furious and I made sure to call a meeting with the other CFOS. If anyone was stealing, I wanted to be told to my face. I shouldn't have had to bring in an expert. If anyone of them were having financial issues, they should have come to me.

No one else admitted to stealing but I have Ryley looking through everything. If someone is, I told them the outcome would be more severe if I have to find it. They all swear to me they aren't. I could have commanded them but I want them to come clean. I don't want to have to force members of my pack to tell me the truth. It will all come out soon enough.

There was a quick knock on my office door before Luca stormed into my office. It was late on Friday and I was still going through paperwork.

"Dude, get ready. We have to meet the girls in an hour," he exclaimed, standing in front of my desk.

"I'm not sure this is a good idea. It's been a f**ked up week," I told him, leaning back in my chair.

"And a great way to unwind is to have a few drinks with Ryley. I'm sure she is feeling the pressure as well. And Isabelle was able to get

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her out so let's go." He demanded.

"Fine but if this doesn't go well, I'm blaming you," I retorted.

"And what do I get if you get laid?" He chuckled and I growled.

"Okay, fine," he held up his hands in surrender.

"I'll meet you out front in thirty minutes," I told him.

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"Maybe dress not so stuck up," he called out after we had left my office and I was heading away from him towards the stairs. I just shook my head as I headed up the stairs. F**ker. Just because I have style doesn't make me stuck up. And besides, I still have to look professional. I'm the alpha.

I was waiting outside for my beta. I was dressed in dark jeans and a Henley shirt. I trimmed my beard and made sure my hair was styled. Luca pulled up in his car with Aiden riding shotgun.

"F*ck Alpha, don't you look s*xy," Aiden purred, leaning out of the window.

"F*ck off, get in the back," I told him, shaking my head.

"Oh, you like to be the little spoon?" They both snickered.

"I can tell you both neither one of you is good enough for me," I said, as Aiden moved to the backseat and I took the passenger seat.

"Awe, that's not fair. I'm pretty se*y," Luca whined

"You have a mate, you idiot," I chuckled.

"I'm sure she would give me up in a second. No challenge needed," he groaned.

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"I wonder why," I told him as he pulled out of the pack house driving way.

"Luca, I'm sure she would fight for you. Maybe not very hard but she would try," Aiden tried to reassure him.

"She would pay Blake to take me off her hands," Aiden and I both laughed.

"I don't think she has enough money." I chuckled. Luca looked over at me, shocked.

"F*ck, I need new friends." He exclaimed. And that just made us laugh harder.

"We can find you some tonight," I grabbed his shoulder, as he cursed us under his breath.

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By the time we got to the bar, I finally felt relaxed. It had been a long stressful week. And after one of the best weekends I had in a long time. Nothing should have been able to kill my happy mood but Clarke did.

Luca parked the car and we headed inside. The first person I noticed was Ryley. She was in light blue jeans and a navy V-neck shirt. Her shoulder-length blonde hair was curled and her makeup was light. She was se*y as hell as she danced with Isabelle on the dance floor.

"Hot da*n," Aiden whistled beside me. We were both stuck in our spots watching the woman as Luca went to greet his mate, Becky. He jokes about her leaving him but I know she loves him. She wouldn't have spent the last twenty years with him if she didn't.

Isabelle noticed Aiden and rushed off the dance floor, into his arms. Ryley was watching from the dance floor. She had stopped-dancing and was watching me intently. She glanced over at the table where

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Luca and his mate were sitting. She turned her attention back to me with a smirk on her face as she crossed her arms over her chest.

"Really," she mouthed. I just shrugged, acting innocent. I was a part of this entire plan but she didn't need to know that.

Thank you, everyone, for reading. Follow my FB page for all updates. I'm on vacation until next week and regular updates will follow.

Chapter Thirty-Six

Ryley

I shouldn't have been surprised when Blake showed up with Aiden and Luca. I was out with their mates but was told this was a girl's night out. And here was the alpha that has been avoiding me all week.

"And looking s*xxy as f*ck," Lily purred. I rolled my eyes and shook my head at her comment. She wasn't wrong but I couldn't go there.

"Well, isn't it the invisible alpha," I mocked as I walked over to him. Isabelle and I were just dancing, when she noticed her mate.

"Invisible?" He c**ked his eyebrow.

"Or have you just been avoiding me all week?" I questioned.

"Didn't think you'd notice," he shrugged. And his comment hurt. I thought we had a great weekend together. That we were friends. Aiden smacked Blake in the chest.

"He's been busy," Aiden corrected him. The alpha let out a groan from being hit.

"Uh-huh. I'm sure he has been." I told Aiden. I went to turn to walk toward the table but Blake stopped me by grabbing my hand, he whipped me around to face him.

"I've been dealing with Clarke." He said, stepping closer. Aiden and Isabelle went to sit at the table. His scent was intoxicating as I stared up at him.

"It would seem you need a drink," I said, as soon as he nodded, I pulled

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him over to the table. It was a circular booth. Luca was sitting on one end with Becky tucked into his side. Isabelle moved in beside Becky and Aiden slid in beside her. I sat beside Aiden and Blake sat beside me. I ensured I was closer to Blake to avoid getting my scent all over Aiden. Isabelle may not be a wolf but I didn't want anyone else thinking the worse.

"Does anyone else feel like a groupie?" I asked the table as a few people stopped to say hi to the alpha.

"The joys of being friends with the alpha," Luca chuckled.

"Oh, you poor thing," I cooed. Becky started laughing.

"It must have been so hard to have all those women following you around." All of us girls started laughing. Not only do women want to be Luna, but there is also a sense of safety when with an alpha.

“And I got stuck with the most amazing one,” he defended.

“I think she’s stuck with you, Luca. You just got incredibly lucky,” I chuckled.

“That too,” he shrugged, pulling her closer.

A waitress came over to take our drink orders. I’ve had more drinks tonight than I’ve ever had at one time. Being a young mom, I didn’t get to go out. And then when Channing grew older, I just didn’t want to. I would rather spend my time with him.

“Alpha, it’s good to see you.” The waitress purred, grabbing his shoulder. She was pretty, I’ll give her that. She was dressed classy with light makeup. Her dark hair was in waves down her back. He greeted her and after we order our drinks, she left.

“Friend?” I asked him.

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“Jealous?” Luca asked and Becky elbowed him in the ribs. He let out a groan and she mouthed sorry to me.

“Actually, I was going to say she’s beautiful,” I told him.

“Oh, thank goodness I wasn’t the only one who noticed,” Isabelle breathed out.

“What?” Aiden,” stammered.

“You would have to be blind not to see how beautiful she is,” I chuckled.

“I saw nothing,” Luca exclaimed, smashing his eyes shut. We all laughed at his antics. He was so sweet not wanting to make his mate worry. He clearly loved her.

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“She’s a little young for the alpha, don’t you think?” Aiden asked.

“Yeah, maybe more the future alphas age?” Luca chimed in.

“I thought you didn’t look,” Becky rolled her eyes.

“Aiden, you and Isabelle are the babies at the table. And she’s too old for Aspen.” I said.

“And how do you know? Aspen loves older women,” Luca chuckled.

“First, Aspen hasn’t gone all the way with anyone. And second, he will most likely be mates to an alpha’s daughter, since his mother wasn’t one.

Randomly it will s*ip a generation to bring in new blood.” I explained.

“Wait, how do you know Aspen is a virgin?” Blake looked over at me.

“I walked in on a very awkward conversation.” I cringed at the

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memory. There are things a mother should never hear. I'm okay with answering questions but I don't want to hear the stories.

"Do I want to know?" He asked and I shook my head.

"I don't want to repeat it. Teenage boys are weird." I said and Becky chuckled.

"Grown-a*s men are weird." She mumbled and I laughed. She isn't wrong.

"Only for you, baby," Luca smiled before kissing her cheek.

"Aren't I lucky," she groaned.

The waitress came back with our drinks and after she left, I stared at Blake, who immediately took a swig of his whisky.

"Ryley?" He questioned.

"I didn't say anything," I answered. Bringing the straw in my drink to my lips.

Maybe it's the alcohol talking since that's the only explanation I can think of for trying to h*ok Blake up with another woman.

"Do it and I'll rip her apart," Lily growled in my head. What the hell was I doing?

Chapter Thirty-Seven

Alpha Blake

I looked over at Luca and then Aiden. I didn't understand what was happening. Was Ryley trying to set me up with the waitress? But why would she do that?

"Dude, I got nothing," Luca said through the link.

"It's a trap. Don't do it! I repeat, it's a trap," Aiden exclaimed through the link.

Maybe she only looks at me as a friend and I was wasting my time trying to be more to her.

"Don't you dare give up! She is perfect for us." Gunner growled.

Four drinks later and we were all dancing. All my drinks were doubles so I was starting to feel the warmth from the whiskey. The girls on the other hand were tipsy, especially Isabelle who didn't have a wolf.

I pulled Ryley against me when she stumbled. She was in a fit of giggles as she grabbed onto me. She looked up at me, her eyes were a drunken haze.

"Are you okay?" I leaned in and asked her. She started grinding up against me and I held in a groan.

"So okay. I think I'm drunk," she yelled. She pushed her breast against

my

chest as she gripped my shoulders. My hands were on her hips as she ground her p**sy against my thigh.

“Going good?” Luca was in my head.

“She’s drunk,” I sighed.

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“Ryley, if you’re drunk, I should take you home,” I said against her ear. She shivered.

“Are you coming home with me, Alpha?” She purred. F*ck, I screamed in my head. I wanted nothing more than to take her home but I didn’t want to be the regret in the morning.

“Or would you rather have the hot waitress?” She scuffed. I could hear the frustration in her voice at my hesitation.

I untangled our bodies before taking her hand and leading her off the dance floor. I didn’t stop until we were outside the bar. The cool night air was welcome on my hot skin.

“Blake, what are you doing? Slow down,” she cried, trying to get out of my grip on her hand. I whipped around to look at her.

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“I’m taking you home,” I told her and she scuffed.

“Why? Are we not having fun?” She demanded.

“We are but you are drunk. And I won’t be the regret in the morning.” I exclaimed.

“Do you regret all the women you have slept with?” She pulled her hand from mine and crossed her arms across her chest. I was taken aback by her comment.

“Do you regret all the men you’ve slept with in the morning after a drunken night out?” I growled. I didn’t want to think of Ryley with anyone else.

“Nope, this would have been the first time.” She confessed.

“What?” I stammered, confused.

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“I was a young single mom with very limited money. This is my first time being drunk.” She said. She closed her eyes and swayed on her feet. I grabbed onto her hips to steady her.

“You never got drunk as a teenager?” I asked her, stepping impossibly close

to her. She shook her head.

“I had to be an example. Not that that’s bad, but I didn’t do the normal teenage things. I was too busy helping my dad with our pack.” She shrugged. I don’t think she meant to give me that piece of information so I didn’t question her.

“Okay, let’s get you home,” I whispered, leaning my forehead against hers. She just nodded. I could feel the people around us, watching. So I quickly hailed a cab, helping Ryley in the back seat.

As soon as I climbed in beside her, she rested her head against my shoulder. I told the driver to drive to the pack house. He looked at Ryley and then at me before nodding. Before I could say anything to defend myself, not that I should have to, my pack should know I would never take advantage of anyone in this state; Riley called out to me.

“Blake?” I looked down at her, she had her eyes close.

“Yeah?”

“Thank you,” she mumbled.

She had fallen asleep by the time we had made it to the pack house. I directed the driver to the front of Ryley’s house. I had mind-link Aspen, and he was waiting on the porch with Channing. I paid the driver before stepping out of the vehicle. I lean back to scoop her lifeless body into my arms. I closed the door with my foot before walking up to the porch. Channing was snickering to himself as I approached them.

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“Well, this is a first.”

“Just open the door,” I demanded.

Once in the house, I carried Ryley up the stairs to her room. I laid her on the bed before taking off her shoes and her jeans. I tried not to look as I covered her up with her blanket. Before I moved away from the bed, Ryley’s hand grabbed my arm.

“Stay?” She mumbled. I leaned down and kissed her forehead. Her eyes were still closed but there was a smile on her lips.

“Not tonight,” I whispered. I quickly left the room. I wouldn’t have been able to say no a second time. I hurried in the kitchen.

stairs to find the boys

“Didn’t expect to see you again before morning,” Channing said,

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leaning on the kitchen island.

“Why’s that?” I questioned.

“I see the way you look at my mom. I’m not blind. A lesser man would have

taken advantage of her.” He shrugged.

“Does she do this often?” I asked him.

“This is the first time she has been drunk. And I’ve never seen her with a man before. And she gets hit on all the time but she has never taken an interest in any of them. Until you.” He told me. I didn’t know what to say.

“Come on Aspen, we should get home.

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Chapter Thirty-Eight

Ryley

was pounding and the thought of

I awoke with a groan. My opening my eyes made me want to vomit. I haven’t felt like this since I was pregnant with Channing. Not only was I sick a lot but I would get the worst migraines, making me sick. My limbs felt heavy as I tried to roll over. Why do people enjoy getting drunk? I don’t even remember drinking that much.

“Do you remember asking the alpha to stay the night? Or to have sex?” Lily snickered and I groaned.

“F*ck. I can’t believe I did that. I’m never going to be able to look him in the eyes again. What the hell is wrong with me?” I cried.

“Do you remember trying to get him to notice the pretty waitress?” She asked.

“I remember that. I don’t know why I would do that. I can’t be with him but I don’t want to see him with anyone else. I’m such a selfish bi*ch.” I sighed.

I crawled out of bed, thankfully for the bottle of water someone left on my nightstand. I stumbled to the bathroom to shower. I f**ked up big time and thankfully Blake wasn’t drunk or I would have woken up beside him. Or maybe he didn’t even want me and I was overthinking this.

I swallowed down the feeling of being unwanted. I have no right to be upset. I can’t be with Blake and there’s no point in pretending. I can’t risk Channing’s life by being with a wolf, let alone an alpha. He would

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Chapter Thirty-Eight

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find me and I can’t let that happen.

After I was done showering, I felt better. The bottle of water also helped. I wrapped my robe around me before walking downstairs to the kitchen.

Channing was sitting on a stool beside the kitchen island with a mug of coffee.

“How are you feeling?” He dragged out, teasing me.

“I’m sorry about last night. I should have never drank so much.” I told him, getting another bottle of water from the fridge. I needed more water before I could have some coffee.

“Mom, you don’t need to apologize. You deserve to go out and have some fun. I am surprised that the alpha brought you home but didn’t stay the night.” He chuckled and I almost choked on my water.

“You were still up?” I breathed out.

“Aspen was here as well. But as soon as you were in bed, they both left.” He shrugged.

“F*ck.” I leaned against the island in front of him.

“Mom, what are you doing? Do you like Alpha Blake?” He asked me.

“Sweetie, even if I did. I couldn’t be with him, you know that. Last night, nothing happened and it won’t happen again. I would never put your life in jeopardy.” I answered.

“I’m happy here, Mom. I feel more normal than I ever have. And the faster we deal with Dad, the faster you can move on with your life and be happy. And it would be better to face him with an alpha and pack on your side.” He said. I took some deep breaths. Channing may be right but I would never forgive myself if my past got Blake hurt or even killed.

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Chapter Thirty-Eight

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“How about we head up to the cabin for the night? I can call Walter to see if he can take us fishing.” I asked him.

“Can Aspen come with us?”

“As long as it’s okay with Blake, then he can. Tell Aspen to be here within the hour. We can get some snacks before driving up.” I said and before I was done speaking, he had already pulled his phone out.

“Thanks, Mom. He’s on his way. I’m going to go get ready,” he stood up from the stool. He came around the island to kiss me before heading in the direction of the stairs.

“Also, Alpha Blake dropped off your purse this morning. You had left it at the bar.” Channing pointed to where my purse was now sitting on the chair by the door.

“Thank you.” I smiled.

“Alpha Blake is a good man, Mom. And I see the way he looks at you and the way your face lights up for him. Dealing with Dad may be a pain in the a*s but it shouldn’t steal your happiness.” With that, Channing retreated up the stairs.

“Our boy is right you know. Blake is a good man. And the one person you care about more than anything just told you as much.” Lily chimed

in.

“I’m scared, Lily. Blake could break me all over again. And there would be no coming back from that. And how can I prove myself worthy of being his Luna? I would never be able to hide again. And I don’t know if it’s worth it. I don’t know if I could go back to that lifestyle.” I sighed.

“Just think about it. We could have everything. I know with an alpha there comes more responsibilities but we are a Luna wolf. If anyone

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can handle a pack, it’s us.” She said before retreating.

I filled up a mug with coffee before heading up to my room to get ready. I needed the great outdoors to clear my head. Even if it’s just for the night. It’s been only a few weeks and I feel it’s been forever since we were home, in the house I bought for us. But now it doesn’t seem like home. This house feels like home. And it feels even more so with Aspen here.

I’m terrified to open the box and release the possibility of me being with Blake. And if I tell him how I feel and he doesn’t feel the same, would feel like a fool. And no man will ever make a fool out of me again

Chapter Thirty-Nine

Alpha Blake

“Dad, you like Ryley,” Aspen said as we walked back to the pack house. It wasn’t a question but a statement.

“If I did, how do you feel about that?” I asked him.

“I think it would be awesome. They could join the pack and she could be the Luna. And we could all live under the same roof. It would be so great.” He exclaimed and my heart twisted painfully. I wish I could have given him those things earlier. He was so excited to have a family. Now I just have to convince Ryley that she is safe here with us.

When we arrived on our floor of the pack house Luca was waiting by the door. He was holding a purse in his hand.

“Ryley’s,” he held it out to me.

“Thanks, I’ll make sure she gets it back,” I told him. Then he switched to the mind-link.

“You okay?”

“Just something Ryley said. Her father was an alpha.” I told him.

“Are you sure?” He asked me.

“She told me she never got drunk as a teen because she had to be an example for the pack. And then she was pregnant with Channing. And she

didn't have the desire or the money to drink after that." I explained.

"That would make sense. She is incredibly strong. But what happened

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to her pack?" He questioned.

"I don't know. But I'm going to find out." I told him.

Aspen and I said goodnight to my beta and then we entered into our apartment. Aspen said goodnight to me before heading to his room. I placed Ryley's purse on the counter before heading to my room. I stripped off my clothes before climbing into bed. I didn't want to wash Ryley's scent off just yet. I thought it would help me sleep but I think it kept my thoughts awake. I kept thinking about her, even more than usual. I wanted her to be mine. And I wanted Channing to be my son, be a brother to Aspen. But I didn't know how to break through the wall Ryley had built. I understood why it was there and I also understand why she doesn't trust anyone. But I wanted her to trust me. I was trying to piece together the snippets of information she has given me. Her father must have been an alpha. And I think her ex was also an alpha. But how would I not know about something happening like that? How an alpha was killed and his daughter gone missing? I was just about ready to take over for my father and was in the loop but I don't remember anything like that happening.

"It was also around the time when Mia was pregnant. We were focused on different things. You should call your father and ask him. Maybe we can track down her ex and have a chat with him." Gunner said.

"And by chat, you mean kill, right? There's no way I'm letting that f**k live after what he did to Ryley. And we don't even know the entire story. We don't know how she met Walter. We know why she never joined a pack. She was afraid her ex would find her. But then why would she come here?" I said.

"Maybe, she figured it had been seventeen years or she knows alphas

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take the summers off from business with other alphas. In most cases, unless there was an emergency, we wouldn't be hosting another alpha. Or this ex is too far away." He shrugged.

"I wish that made me feel better. But now I'm worried about another alpha coming into the pack while she is here. I know she is strong but is she strong enough to take on an alpha?" I sighed.

"If it came to protecting the boys, I have no doubt. She would do anything to protect them. And she doesn't have to for Aspen but I know she would." I

agreed but I was still worried. I didn't want anything to happen to her. I wanted her to trust me.

I must have fallen asleep, my phone ringing on the nightstand woke me. I groaned before throwing my arm over to reach for it. It was early in the morning.

"Alpha Blake," I answered, not looking at the screen to see who was calling.

"Good morning son, I didn't wake you did I?" My mother asked.

"Mom, is everything okay?" I questioned, sitting up.

"Of course, everything is okay, can I not call to talk to my only son, she scuffed.

"

"Mom, it's early on a Saturday morning. If nothing is wrong then why are you calling?"

"I'm calling to let you know your father and I are coming for a visit. Aspen has been telling us all about his friend Channing and his beautiful mother and I want to meet them. Are you finally in a relationship and didn't bother to tell your mother?" She scolded, and I internally groaned.

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"I don't know what Aspen has told you but Ryley and I are friends." I corrected.

"Well it doesn't matter what label you put on your relationship, your father and I will be there Monday. Love you," she said before ending the call.

"F*ck," I breathed out to the empty room.

Now awake, I got up to get ready for a run. I needed to clear my head. My mother was overbearing at times, and I hope Ryley could handle her. I know she means well

she just wants to see me happy but I wish she would stay out of my love life.

Before leaving, I grabbed Ryley's purse. I was going to drop it off before I run around the lake. Stepping outside the pack house, the sun was just starting to rise. I took a deep breath before walking in the direction of Ryley's house.

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Chapter Forty

Ryley

The boys and I made it to the cabin before noon. I felt better just breathing in the cool air of nature. This is the place I needed to

be to clear my head. Walter wasn't able to stop by until later this evening to take the boys fishing. So after everything was unpacked I decided to go for a walk around the property. And the boys came with me.'

They walked ahead as we walked around the cabin to the back. I was also going to check the fence for any damage. The pack knows to stay away but this will make me feel better. I've never had any trouble here and I wasn't going to start now.

"Ryley, are you okay? You've been quiet." Aspen asked me, concerned. He slowed down so he was now walking beside me. Channing was typing away on his phone ahead of us.

"I'm okay. Just glad to be out in nature again." I told him.

"I like it out here as well," he said. We walked in silence along the fence as I checked to make sure there were no gaps.

"So, Ryley, can I ask you something?" Aspen asked. I looked over at him and he had his hands in his pockets. He seemed nervous as he looked anywhere but at me.

"Of course, you can. What's up?"

"Well, my grandparents are coming to visit and I would like for you to have dinner with us?"

"Blake's parents?" I questioned. And he nodded. Blake never

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mentioned his parents were coming into town. Or maybe he didn't want me to know?

"I don't know. If Blake says it's okay, then I will be there." I told him, trying to push it onto Blake. I didn't want to say yes and have him not want me there.

“I’ll ask him. He told me this morning that they were coming for a visit,” he said before we were interrupted.

“Well, well, well, looks like the whore came for a visit,” Chris, Walter’s son called out from behind the fence. It was chain link and I was able to see him with a few of his warriors.

“Chris, fancy seeing you here. Didn’t think you still went on patrol,” I mocked.

“That’s beta to you, whore,” he growled.

“Don’t fucken call her that,” Aspen growled, defending me. Chris jumped over the fence, landing in front of me. I pushed the boys behind me as I stood my ground.

“Or what? What the hell are you going to do about it? This is my land. And you three are trespassing. All three of you rogues could go missing and no one would care.” he scuffed. Aspen was about to say something but I held up my hand. I didn’t need Chris to know about Blake.

“I own this property, Chris. So the only person trespassing is you. And was that a threat? I don’t think your father would take too kindly to you threatening people he views as family.” I told him.

“My father is an idiot to believe anything that comes out of your mouth. And you’re lying, my father would never sell this place to you.” He growled, getting closer to me. I stepped back, shielding the boys as best I could.

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“Call him. If I had my phone with me, I’d show you the property deed. This property and cabin are mine. And I’d like you to leave.” He stepped even closer to me.

“Or what? What’s a rogue bitch like you going to do? And you don’t even have help. You have two wolfless bastards.” he chuckled.

“I guess it’s a fair fight then,” I growled. And Chris smirked down at

1. me.

“Channing, I’m just on my way to the cabin,” hear Walter say.

“Granddad, Chris is on the property,” Channing told him. He had called Walter and had him on speaker.

“Head to the cabin, I’ll be right there.” Walter growled before the call ended.

“If you think my dad is going to make it here in time, then you are sadly mistaken.” He said as the warriors jumped the fence.

“If you kill me, you will start a war with the Orion pack,” Aspen exclaimed, and Chris c huckled.

“I’m sure the Orions don’t care about three rogue wolves.”

“It’s okay, boys, head back to the cabin. I’ll handle this.” I commanded.

“Mom, I’m not leaving you.”

“And neither am I,” Aspen said, determined to help protect me. But it was me who had to protect them. And if I died, I know Blake would take care of Channing.

“Now. Both of you.” I demanded, not taking my eyes off Chris. Both boys squeezed one of my hands before moving back toward the cabin.

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“Chris, they are kids, leave them.”

“And why would I do that?” He taunted. Chris whipped his head around to face one of his warriors.

“You’re sure?” He demanded and the warrior nodded. He turned his attention back to me.

“So, that’s how you operate? You find an alpha or a beta to protect you.”

“If that were true, I would have joined a pack.” I scuffed.

“Well the boy may be off limits but you aren’t. And I’ve been waiting a long time for this,” he growled.

Lily didn’t wait, she shifted. She was now standing in front of them. She was almost the size of an alpha. She had black fur with a white undercoat. She was magnificent. And a killing machine. She was going to do whatever she needed to do to protect the boys.

“Let’s see what you got, rogue,” he said before he shifted into a grey wolf. Lily let out a deep growl before she lunged at the beta.