

A woman with long, wavy red hair is lying down, wearing a black leather jacket. Her eyes are closed, and her hand is resting on her forehead. The background is dark with a subtle pattern of small white dots, resembling a starry night sky or a textured surface. The title 'Dancing & Drama' is prominently displayed in the center, with 'DANCING' in a teal, glittery font and '& Drama' in a white, gothic-style font. The authors' names are listed at the bottom in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

OMEGA BESTIES
BOOK TWO

DANCING
& Drama

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHORS
JARICA JAMES
SUKI WILLIAMS

DANCING & DRAMA

OMEGA BESTIES BOOK 2

JARICA JAMES
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NOTE

We would like to remind the reader that one of the harem main characters, River, is non-binary. What this means for you as a reader is that we use the pronouns ‘they, their, and them’ when referring to River throughout the story.

You might be asking, what is non-binary?

Non-binary is an umbrella term for anyone who is not *solely* or *only* male or female. Some people use the terms bigender, genderqueer, or agender among many others under this umbrella. None of these terms mean the exact same thing, but each term speaks of a gender experience that is not simply male or female. In River’s case they use the pronouns ‘they, their, and them’.

If these definitions are wrong in any way or offensive please let us know and we will update or change it ASAP. My intent is to let readers know this information before jumping into Sienna’s story so you can fully enjoy it while being informed of what these words mean.

Please be aware this is a very basic definition for this term. Gender is a very nuanced and personal experience for every individual. This story reflects River’s experiences and views for themselves.

CHAPTER
ONE

Sienna

Nothing was more chaotic than an omega in heat. Not only did I feel sticky with sweat like a fever was overtaking me, my body was aching something fierce. To top it all off, I was craving so many different foods that I couldn't make sense of it. No one except a heat-addled omega would long for a spoonful of peanut butter and wasabi.

I'd already called into work and rented my room. I just had to get there in time, which meant getting as many snacks as I could in the next few minutes.

By the time I arrived at the checkout line with a crazy messy bun and more snacks than an entire pack could consume, I could feel my heat ramping up. Thank fuck I hadn't hit the point that I was too horny to think.

The beta at the counter gave me a knowing look, and I resisted the urge to flip him off. I was usually a people pleaser, but the closer I inched to this fucking heat, the more filters and niceties flew out the window. I just wanted to snuggle up in an igloo with some weed, snacks, and maybe a knotting dildo or five. Was that too much to ask for?

I didn't take the time to put the groceries in my trunk, unceremoniously shoving them in the passenger seat of my trusty gold Toyota Corolla. I had a bag in the back with my heat necessities and a room waiting at one of the Omega

Clinic's heat centers. It was a glorified hotel, but it had added security to keep the omegas safe.

As I drove up to the address the lady had given me over the phone, my jaw dropped. It was *huge*. This place looked like a five-star hotel, complete with a gaudy chandelier visible through the lobby's giant windows. When I'd called to book a room, the receptionist had mentioned I was lucky to snag a spot, and now I understood why. Sure, I'd be holed up in my room once I hauled all my stuff there, but I felt a little more settled after seeing the building, like I would be taken care of and pampered. I hadn't paid for extra services or anything like that, but my heat always brought out the little princessy parts of me that I usually kept stuffed deep down.

"Welcome to The Den. Solo or pack?" the woman behind the counter asked as I approached. I felt very out of place with my tank top, duffel bag, and five grocery bags full of snacks. Or maybe it was because I was on my own in a strange place. The idea of belonging to a pack and not having to suffer through a week of hell sounded amazing, and I couldn't help but long for that life I might never have.

"Solo, Sienna Rivers," I told her quickly.

"Ah, our lucky caller," she joked while tapping away on her keyboard. "You already paid, so here's your key. Take the elevators to the sixth floor. You're room 612."

"Thanks," I said as I shifted my stuff and took the key card. She tried to say something, likely an offer to help with my stuff, but I had already walked to the nearby elevators. Without looking back, I smacked the call button with the back of my hand and bounced from foot to foot as I waited for the shiny gold doors to open.

The wonders didn't cease once I made my way to my room and slid the card through the reader to open my door. The room was bigger than an average hotel double, with a spacious jetted bathtub, a pack-sized fluffy bed, and windows that overlooked the city. I figured it was safe to assume their tint kept any curious onlookers from the surrounding buildings from seeing in.

Everything was white or gold, with black accents. If I didn't feel like I was seconds from combusting, I'd appreciate it more. It wasn't often that I spent money on myself, but since suppressors were out of the question for this heat, I figured it was time.

I'd tried to take them, but they did nothing to quell the rising tide of my heat, which, I'd learned, was likely thanks to that drug I'd been dosed with. My bestie Hazel had mentioned that suppressor-resistant heats were a consequence many of the omegas had experienced in the cult she'd grown up in.

I dropped my bags on the floor and crossed the room to the thermostat, eagerly tapping the down arrow. Once the vents started pumping cool air into the room, I was finally able to breathe and take another glance around.

A stack of brochures on the bed caught my attention, and I picked it up, laughing at the name.

Rent-An-Alpha.

The man on the front was a mountain of an alpha that made my toys seem *very* inadequate. As I flipped the pages, I realized the service was heavily discounted thanks to a deal with the Omega Clinic. Call it a crazy moment of heat impulsivity, but seconds later, I was dialing the number.

“Rent-An-Alpha, I see you are in room 612 at The Den. Do you want one alpha or a pack?” The man spoke in a rushed tone as if he already had other calls waiting on the line. Maybe these alphas were a hot commodity. I couldn't believe I'd never heard of them before, but then again, I had always taken suppressors. Since I had been drugged at Neon Nights, this approaching heat had felt more intense.

“One alpha,” I said in a quiet voice, my eyes wide at the thought of a whole pack barging in. I might be a lot more *giving* during my heat, but there was no way I was ready for an entire damn pack. I'd unfortunately overheard some of my bestie's exploits with her pack, and there was no way my vagina, slick or not, could handle *that* without breaking.

“Charged to the card on file?” the man asked.

“Yes,” I groaned, trying to breathe through the sudden surge of heat.

“Do you have a preference?” he asked. Thank god the man was still using his professional voice. The embarrassment might have killed me otherwise. My brain froze, and I couldn’t figure out what to say.

“Uh, a man?” I sounded uncertain enough that he chuckled.

“Alright, so we’ll just choose our next available alpha if that’s alright with you?”

“God yes,” I begged.

He quickly gave me the total for the week and specified the discounted rate. At this point, I would have agreed to selling my personal stash of weed if it meant relief, so I’d be lying if I said the numbers clearly made it into my brain.

“Before I hang up, I want to let you know our new policy,” the guy said after clearing his throat. “In the bathroom, there is a pheromone blocker wash. Please use it before the alpha shows up and during the time he’s there. The man we send your way will also be using it. Just to prevent any unnecessary... entanglements.”

I hurriedly agreed and rushed to the bathroom after ending the call. Jumping into the shower, I rushed through a quick wash in the ice-cold water. Neither the temperature of the water nor the sterile scent of the pheromone blocker bothered me. I was beyond caring about those details at this point, and besides, I had to use a similar body wash at work every night, so the sterile smell wasn’t startling. A few minutes later, I was out of the shower, wrapped up in a fluffy cotton towel that would do for now. *No use in getting dressed if it’s all going to come off in a few minutes.*

Now that I was alone and had a brief moment of clarity, I set up my snacks in the kitchenette and grabbed a few cookies. Luck was still on my side, so I found a balcony attached to my room. I pushed open the curtains and the door then stepped out, letting the crisp breeze cool my heated skin. It was oddly

peaceful, the city quiet this time of night, especially since I was about twenty minutes away from the bustling downtown center.

A loud knock on the door forced me to leave my pocket of peace. I rushed across the room and checked through the peephole before opening the door. A muscled man was standing there, dressed entirely in black, with a bag in one hand. His face had to have been chiseled from fucking stone, and he had gorgeous sharp gray eyes that studied me as a small smile quirked up his lips. His skin was sun-kissed, but it looked natural, like he'd spent countless hours outside.

"Uh, hi," I squeaked out as I stepped aside, *very* aware of how dressed he was and how little I was wearing. His nostrils flared as he walked past, and for some reason, his low groan had me biting back one of my own. The soap blocked as much of my scent as possible, but it couldn't counteract the full power behind the scent of an omega in heat. Usually, I wasn't affected by men, but apparently I was going all in on this dude. "Snacks are in the kitchenette if you need fuel before it fully hits."

"Water?" He raised an eyebrow when I didn't answer.

"Uh, maybe there's a vending machine? Or the tap," I suggested with a shrug. He looked like he wanted to say something more, but he walked past me instead and started to make himself at home by ordering room service. Of course, he couldn't just order water; he ordered food too. I couldn't even complain since he charged it to his tab instead of mine.

He took a deep breath before settling in the armchair and leaning back, his eyes on me. They raked over my nearly naked body, and I could already feel the fog of heat rolling back in, ready to pull me under and consume me.

"I need air," I gasped out as lust coursed through me, then I practically ran to the balcony again. This time, the crisp air did nothing for me, not even a ghost of relief to soothe my skin. A strong ache pulsed between my thighs, and I knew this was it. There was no more pushing off the heat.

For a moment, I was almost worried about the stranger I was handing my life over to for the next week, but then I reminded myself that this was clinical, nothing more than a transaction. He'd make sure I was safe and my needs were met, knotting me until I passed out before doing it all over again.

No strings, no connections.

I can do this.

KING

This wasn't what I'd signed up for. I mean it was, but from the moment this omega opened the hotel door, I knew this wouldn't be like any other job. The uncertainty in her green eyes as she stared up at me and her nerves as she rushed around the apartment... It woke up all my protective instincts.

As she stood outside on the balcony, I could hear her whimper, and that was about all I could stand. I didn't have it in me to listen to her suffering alone. Walking over to where she stood, I snagged her around the waist and pulled her inside the room before hitting a button on the wall to close the curtains. Her small hands were fumbling around, trying to undress me, as I walked her back to the bedroom.

I had been hoping to talk to her before her heat fully took over, to see what her limits were or if there was anything she didn't like, but it was too late for that. I'd have to tease out some answers during her moments of lucidity and keep things tame until then. She dropped her towel and fell backward onto the bed, her body on display for me. It took everything in me to keep from jumping her right then.

Sienna Rivers was gorgeous. Petite, with small curves that were just enough to make my mouth water and my dick throb. Another wave of heat hit my senses, so I quickly undressed and joined her on the bed, covering her small body with my own. Her pupils were blown wide, her cheeks flushed, and those beautiful lips of hers parted when our skin touched.

"Please," her husky voice cracked.

I slanted my mouth over hers, sliding my tongue along hers as she pulled my hair tie out, making my hair fall around us. She hummed into the kiss, her hands yanking at the long strands to pull me even closer. I teased her clit, my fingers easily sliding through the slick that drenched my hand as she tried to fuck herself on my fingers.

“Shhh, micetta,” I teased as I pulled back. Unable to resist, I lifted my fingers to my mouth and licked her slick off of them. A deep purr rumbled in my chest when the sweet, refreshing taste of her hit my tongue. “I’ll take care of you.”

“Hurry the fuck up before I take what I need, alpha,” she taunted, challenge flashing in her eyes. There was a dangerous grin on her face, and it fit her perfectly. I had a feeling she might not show off that smile all the time, there was something quieter, softer about her nature beneath the heat currently driving her, and it made me feel *privileged* to see it directed at me.

“So bold, omega. I’ve got what you need.”

“Then give it to me,” she countered, rocking her hips in search of the knot only I could give her. I teased her a bit more, wanting to watch the lust and need build inside of her. The strain on her face as I played with her clit, easing up each time her climax came too close, was such a delicious promise of what was to come. She was cursing me out by the time I slipped the condom on and lined up my cock at her entrance, but my hungry anticipation was immediately stopped by her scream when I slowly thrust inside of her.

Looking to where we were joined, I checked for blood but found nothing. *What was going on?* Her eyes were just a touch too wide, her small breasts shaking with the heaviness of her deep breaths.

“Micetta? Talk to me.”

“I’ve never... God, you’re huge,” she whimpered, and her body shifted under me as if trying to decide whether it wanted more of me or not.

“You’re a virgin?” I choked out. That was a fact I really would have liked prior warning about, but there was no turning back now. Oh, if she changed her mind with a definitive *no thanks*, I would muster every bit of will power I had and get myself the fuck out of this hotel room, but if she gave the signal to continue, despite her shaky breath and the untouched tightness of her clenching around me, I wouldn’t be

able to resist. My hips were already rocking, prepared to slowly, gently fuck my way inside of her.

“Not once you keep going. Please,” she groaned, digging her fingers into my back.

“King,” I grunted as I slid in another inch.

“What?”

“My name. When you cry out this week, scream my name,” I demanded, feeling uncharacteristically jealous. “My name is King.”

How had this omega gone so long without being tended to by anyone? What made this heat different enough that she'd called in someone like me to see her through it? Another wave of her heat hit us, and my instincts took over, slamming me balls deep inside of her. Her back arched, a cry falling from her lips as my knot immediately started to swell, stretching out her needy pussy.

I couldn't have stopped myself if I tried. My need to fuck her took over as she met every thrust with one of her own, nonsense spilling from her lips when I reached between us to circle her overly sensitive clit, determined to make this good for her. When she came, her pussy squeezing my cock unbelievably tight, she screamed my name. Masculine, alpha-driven possessiveness filled me, and my hips sped up, thrusting in and out of her hot wetness as much as my knot would allow until my cum filled the condom.

If I was a different kind of alpha or another man, I would wish that we had met under different circumstances. The soft look in her eyes and the way she cuddled into me as I fucked her... She was perfect. *Gorgeous*. But relationships weren't my thing, and certainly not relationships with a doe-eyed, no-longer-virgin omega.

One week.

I'd drown myself in her for one week.

Then I'd never have to see her again.

But I wished I knew what she smelled like because when I dreamed of her later, it would be a shame that I didn't have every detail about her.

CHAPTER
TWO

Sienna

My heart sank with the flash of my sister's name across my phone screen. Her calls were never good news, and I could already feel my anxiety rising with every buzz.

"Hey, Sam," I finally answered, using the same falsely cheerful voice that she never bothered to call me on. Mom's care was obviously taking its toll on her. She couldn't get enough hours at work thanks to the constant need for time off—largely due to Mom's appointments and issues. I was working myself to the bone to help where I could, but my feelings were the least of her concerns.

"Sienna," she said in a relieved whisper. "I'm on break at work, and I wanted to tell you the doctor just called."

"Oh god," I breathed out. She hadn't even told me the news yet, but a vise was already settling around my chest, slowly tightening until every erratic breath became painful.

"They said her results came back and they didn't want to wait to call. The cancer is spreading faster than they thought, and there's a new medication that's supposed to help slow it down, but it's..." Sam didn't need to say the words for me to put the pieces together.

"More money," I finished.

She let out a long sigh. “I’m sorry, Sienna. I’m doing what I can here, but another five hundred a month is impossible when I’m carting her back and forth and being a full-time caretaker. I can only take shifts when Dad’s not working.” The pathetic tone of her voice bordered on a whine, and I wasn’t aiming for a full-blown breakdown. Sam was what you’d call a bit of a princess. She always got her way, and when she didn’t, well, let’s just say her teen years were rough.

“I’ll try to pick up a few extra shifts, but I’m barely staying above water here, Sam,” I said. My own voice was hollow, numb. As the strange yet familiar feeling settled in like my body was its home, my fingers inched toward the weed waiting next to me.

“Do what you can. I just don’t want Mom to suffer. She’s been really bad lately,” she admitted, breaking my heart in two. From Mom’s latest emails, it’d been rough, but I didn’t know it had gotten worse. The up and down was starting to really worry me.

“We’ll figure it out, Sam. We always do,” I promised. She said a quick hushed goodbye before hanging up on me. I barely managed to set my phone on the table before the tears broke free. Thank fuck I was still in the hotel room alone, getting ready to check out, so I had no witnesses for my moment of weakness.

By the time the tears dried and the weed had been smoked, I was in a comfortable state of numbness.

“Get it together, Sienna. You can handle this,” I reminded myself as I packed up the last of my bag and zipped it up.

The only thing I could do was go back to work and dance my heart out. At least there I felt somewhat normal and in control of my life. Even if it was a smoke screen, I’d fucking take it.

Picking my phone back up, I called my boss’ line. He was an intimidating alpha when you first met him, always dressed in perfectly tailored suits, looking like he belonged on a magazine cover. But after working for him, I knew he was fair and cared about his workers. It didn’t hurt that he was

heartbreakingly handsome. He had dark hair and rich brown almond-shaped eyes, a jawline that could cut glass, and muscles that pushed against his tight-fitting suits. To top it off, he had a slight accent from his years spent in Japan, which only made his smoky voice more alluring.

Okay, maybe he was a huge part of the reason I loved my job, but it was definitely more than that. Dancing cleared my mind and kept me strong, gave me a chance to get out of my shitty situation and become someone else. It made me feel confident which was something I hadn't experienced much in my life.

Though if I really felt so confident, I wouldn't be lying to my best friends about where I work. Now was *not* the time to be thinking about that.

Yuri answered on the first ring. "Sienna. I hope you are well?" I smiled at that, and my heart skipped a beat. He'd greeted me by name, which brought a little warmth to the edges of my numbness.

"Yes, thank you. The heat is over, and I'd love to get back to work. Can you get me on the schedule?" I practically pleaded.

"You're already on it. I booked an extra girl for the next few days just in case you couldn't make it, but I made sure there was room for you," he reassured me. "Alice's heat is hitting early, so we might need you to help fill in for her if you have the time."

"I'll pick up any shifts you can give me, Yuri," I said quickly. He let out a soft hum of acknowledgement, then I heard the clicks and taps of his keyboard.

"We will see you tonight at six, Sienna," he said before hanging up. He was a busy man, so he rarely wasted time on pleasantries outside of checking in on us.

For once, it seemed like the world was working with me and not against me. I clung to that hope as I walked out of my room and headed for the lobby.

As I left the bubble of peace that room had provided, I still didn't regret my choice. In my moments of lucidity, King had been wonderful, and I couldn't stop my brain from drifting back to him. The flashes of him thoroughly fucking me would give me wet dreams for months to come.

Maybe it was the fact that he was the first alpha to help me through a heat, but it wasn't *only* that. He was a *genuine* alpha, and I was just glad it was him. Even if I never saw him again, I would hold on to how he'd made me feel—cared for and respected and *safe*.

But thoughts like that would get me nowhere. It was time to get back to reality and let my besties know I was alive. They would never believe me if I told them about King since I wasn't usually the type to ask for help, let alone give a strange alpha free access to my body during a heat. But I'd kept enough secrets from them that I knew I couldn't hold back the moment we talked.

Speak of the Devil.

Eliza's name lit up my screen, and I ignored it just long enough to return my key card. I managed to answer right before the call ended.

"Sienna!" Eliza's voice was tired but full of motherly concern. "How was it? Are you okay?"

"Of course she's okay, Eliza," Teagan drawled, letting me know I was on a group call. "She's on the phone!"

"Maybe we should let her talk because so far we've only heard you two," Hazel said dryly, making me snort in amusement. I had the most amazing best friends.

"I'm fine, better than fine actually." I bit my lip as I turned the key and let myself into my car. Tossing my bag into the passenger seat, I locked the door and made myself comfortable. "The hotel I stayed at is like five fucking stars! You wouldn't even believe it. I think it's the nicest place I've ever been, to be honest."

"What else?" Teagan demanded, and I sighed. "I knew it! There's something else you need to tell us. Because you don't

sound like an omega that rode out the bitch storm on drugs and dildos alone.”

“Teag!” Eliza scolded her as Hazel burst out laughing. A few male voices started talking in the background.

“Apparently, the clinic’s connected to some rent-an-alpha thing.” I fought to keep my voice nonchalant, but when Teagan whistled, a huge grin filled my face. “It was... I have no words. I can see why you have all those guys, Hazel.”

“They do come in handy sometimes,” Hazel allowed as a growl sounded behind her words. “Alright, I’ve gotta go. I have to soothe some wounded egos. Very touchy here today. Breakfast tomorrow?”

“Sounds good to me,” the rest of us answered at the same time before she hung up, laughing at whatever her husbands were saying on the other end.

“Lucky bitch, she’s *so* getting railed because of that,” Teagan said, her voice uncharacteristically sad before it brightened up. “But I gotta get going. I’m heading to California for a few days. My flight leaves tomorrow afternoon, so I need to pack. I have some places that my dad wanted me to check out. Something for his work, but hey, it’s paid! I’ll catch up with you later. And Sienna? Details tomorrow. Everything you remember.”

I let out a breathy laugh. “You got it.”

Teagan hung up, leaving just Eliza and me on the line. “You coming home?”

“Yeah,” I responded. “I called my boss, and I have a shift tonight. I’m going to nap and eat before I head in.”

“Right after your heat is over?” Eliza seemed incredulous.

“Yeah. I asked for something soon. I need to get right back in the groove of things. You know how I am,” I said, trying to downplay it. My best friends knew I worked a lot, so it was unusual for me to basically rush back there.

My stomach still twisted in knots though whenever I had to lie though so I tried to keep it as minimal as possible.

“I have some leftover breakfast I can’t manage. I’ll plate it up, and you can heat it up when you get here. It will be in the microwave. And no complaints! It won’t save, and I don’t want to waste it,” Eliza told me firmly. “I had a long shift at the bar last night. One of our extra bartenders quit, so I had to do double the work.”

“Thanks,” I told her. “I’ll make sure to stay quiet when I come in.”

“I’ll see you this afternoon,” Eliza said before yawning and hanging up.

I took a deep breath as I started the car, ready to get home to eat, shower, and nap before heading into work. It had been a great week, a break from the shitty reality of my mom, money, and responsibilities, but it was time to get back to the grind.

Honestly, I was excited to be back at the club. I’d missed my work friends and the fast-paced evenings that helped me feel alive.

I had showered here, changing into the leggings and sweatshirt I kept at the club so they wouldn’t have my natural scent all over them. As a safety precaution, all workers had to use special soap to get rid of our scents. It kept regular clients from getting too attached to us, omegas from breaking out into heats, and alphas from getting territorial.

“There’s my favorite dancer!” River called out. I made my way to the bar before my set started. Luckily, I had plenty of time before I needed to change into lingerie for my set. I loved chatting with River. There was just something about them that drew me in.

River was about as un-alpha-like as an alpha could get. They owned their sexuality, which was vibrantly pansexual, with the same passion that they owned every part of their identity. Non-binary and genderfluid, they dressed in what struck them at the moment. Tonight, they had on low-rise black jeans and a black harness that covered their lithe form.

At some point in the night, they'd sprayed glitter all over their body, and, like I had almost every time I saw them, I wondered what they truly smelled like, but it was club policy that everyone used scent blockers before their shift, including the boss.

I wished in many ways that we'd met outside of work because while we were friends, I was interested in more. That attraction was something I honestly hadn't felt for many people.

"Hey, Sienna! Just a heads up, one of your regulars is back. Watch the stray hands," Nash said as he turned around on his stool, taking me in with his usual cocky grin. He tipped his coke back before hopping off the bar stool and returning to his post by the door. Nash was our head of security, so he drifted to different spots throughout the night, keeping an eye on us dancers. He was one of the main reasons I felt safe here.

It helped that he was built like a damn brick house, looking exactly as you'd picture a bouncer to be. Nash was covered in tattoos, his arms and hands fully decorated, and despite myself, I was curious just how much more ink lay beneath his clothes. He leaned against the door, pushing the long hair on top of his head back, showcasing his freshly buzzed undercut. When he noticed I was still watching him, he gave me a friendly wink that made me laugh at myself for getting caught.

"Are you going to give all your attention to the sexy lumberjack and ignore me?" River sassed as they wiped down the bar where Nash had been.

"Are you always this demanding?" I joked, purposefully not looking at River.

"I am an *alpha*," they reminded me, still teasing, but there was a hint of a growl underneath the niceness. A grin slipped out as I turned back around to my friend. It was nice to feel comfortable enough around alphas to joke around with them like this.

"I'm glad to be back," I said as I grinned. My body was still a bit achy, and the exercise would help work the rest of it out.

“Then start the evening right, a River special,” they said with a wink, holding out my favorite espresso shot. They were a bartender extraordinaire; everything they made tasted amazing. I took the shot and hummed at the rich taste and its hint of sweetness.

“You’re the best,” I told them, blowing a kiss before rushing backstage. Yuri was giving me extra shifts, and I wasn’t about to fuck it up by being late for my own.

With the buzz of espresso and alcohol in my system, I was ready to get through a long night on stage.

First, I had to change.

CHAPTER
THREE

Nash

As soon as ‘Girls, Girls, Girls’ by Mötley Crüe filled the air, my attention went to the stage. Sienna strutted out like she owned the place, and the patrons lost their minds, and wallets, while she danced. Every movement became a tease as she spun around the pole. Sienna started the set in a tight fitted tank top and shorts, but that didn’t last long. Soon, the tank top was gone, then the tear-away shorts disappeared shortly after. The patrons were here for the main show, so they weren’t a fan of big build-ups.

I was the only one drinking in every detail I could. Everyone else’s attention was on the black lingerie set she was wearing. Black boy shorts with cutouts on the sides revealed enough to tantalize the customers, and her mesh cut-out cami showed a bit of underboob while keeping her mostly covered. There was a strip around the middle that went around back to keep the cami in place.

She gave herself over to the music, and it took every bit of self-control I had to make myself focus on my job. Sienna was a quiet woman, but once she was comfortable with you, she lit up. I could see the spark of a rebel in her just dying to break out and cut loose. Even though it was against every club policy, I wanted to be the one she let loose with.

“Nash...” The cool voice interrupted my thoughts. Glancing to the side, I saw Yuri, the club owner and my boss,

coming to a stop beside me. “Any issues tonight?”

“None,” I told him, grateful he had come by to rein me in. Looking around again, I saw that Sienna’s regular was sitting right by the stage. He wasn’t so close as to earn my intervention *yet*, but the feverish excitement in his gaze concerned me. “But I’m keeping a close eye on that guy. Last time, he got too handsy with Sienna.”

Yuri nodded a few times, his eyes on the guy in question. “Even a hint of something wrong, take him out. You have my support. I’m going to see if River has everything they need. Do you need a drink?”

“No, sir. I’m good,” I told him with a nod. Even though we were friends, we kept things formal at work. His professionalism was something I respected.

Yuri clapped me on the back then made his way through the crowd. The people around us quickly shifted, no one daring to stand in the alpha’s way as he made his rounds through the club. It was a reaction I’d seen many times, though I’d never been the one stepping out of his path. Yuri could be standoffish and cold to some, but he was the best boss I’d ever worked for since getting out of the military. I’d been out of the service for a few years now, but I still had occasional difficulty with the transition. He was always understanding whenever something happened, and that was all I could ask for.

River and Yuri talked for a bit before the boss went to his office, settling in to do whatever he did back there. Focusing back on the stage, I saw another dancer, Cassie, had started her set.

Time to focus.

I had no business thinking about the petite redheaded omega.

None.

SIENNA

With a frustrated growl, I kicked one of the back tires of my car. The damn thing was flat. I tried to check it over, but I didn't see a nail or anything else that would explain it. I had no spare because the spare tire was already on the car, and I didn't have the money to get another one yet. My mind was racing, trying to figure out how the hell I was going to get home, when I felt someone approaching.

“Sienna?” Relief filled me when I realized it was River. Spinning around, I tried to smile, but they saw through it right away. “What’s wrong?”

“Flat.” I glared at my car. “I don’t have a spare, and it’s too late to get it taken somewhere.” I knew River lived on the opposite side of town, or I’d ask them for a ride, but I didn’t want to cause a hassle. I didn’t know them well enough to feel comfortable being an inconvenience.

Pulling out my cell, I found Bane’s name in my contacts and sent him a short message. Bane was part of the Reapers MC, and he helped run Neon Nights where my bestie Eliza worked. He would be a safe ride back to the apartment, and I knew, if I asked, he would keep quiet about my job until I finally broke down and told my besties about my career change.

When we first arrived in Alexandria, I had gotten a job at a fancy casino in town as a waitress, but the customers were awful, and the pay was somehow even worse. A few weeks into the job, a friend of mine quit, said she got a job stripping at Prestige, and got me an interview. The next day, I quit as well and started dancing, making three times what I did at the casino.

“Do you need a ride?” River asked.

I shook my head just as my phone buzzed with a reply from Bane, asking for the address. I punched it in and added a quick thanks. “No. One of my brothers is coming to get me.”

After he had helped me at the bar when my drink was spiked, I started calling him brother as a joke, and it stuck. Bane didn't mind, and he even got territorial if someone else tried to claim the status—except Loki. Both the beta and alpha were so wrapped up in Eliza that I knew nothing more would ever be felt between us, so the title was nice, safe even. My twin sister would never be the kind who took care of me, but these two men, my brothers by choice, would give me that protection and care that I wouldn't get elsewhere.

"I'll wait inside with you until he shows up," River insisted, snagging my arm and gently leading me back to the side door. Three sharp knocks, then Nash was standing there with a frown. "Sienna has a flat, so I'm waiting with her until her ride gets here."

"Do you need help putting on the spare?" Nash offered as he moved aside to let us back into the building.

"No spare," I told him, happy to snag one of the back tables and sit down. "But I'll get the car tomorrow and figure it out."

"You said your brother is coming to get you," River said, their eyes curious. They sat down on my left as Nash snagged the chair on the right. The club was closing down, with everyone else gone but us, and probably Yuri in the back. "I didn't know you had a brother! Look at you with all of your secrets. Naughty!"

I burst out laughing until tears ran down my face, imagining River and Bane meeting each other. Nash looked between the two of us, his brow furrowed.

"Let's just say my brother is a bit rougher around the edges than you are, River," I teased. "He fits Nash more."

"Wait," River scoffed. "Are you saying I'm not rugged?" Their gasp and the way they dramatically clutched at their chest was answer enough.

"Just wait," I hummed. I heard the rev of a motorcycle and knew it had to be him. "He's here."

Both alphas followed me outside, and River's laughter had me grinning back at him.

"You're telling me that your brother is a biker? You *do* have secrets," they teased.

Bane drove up and stopped directly in front of us. When he pulled off his helmet, Nash shocked me by stepping up and holding out his hand.

"Bane, what are you doing here, brother?" the bouncer asked, clapping Bane on the shoulder before stepping back. Nash wasn't exactly forthcoming with smiles or greetings to anyone, but he was greeting Bane like an old friend.

Bane chuckled and pointed at me. "When my sister needs me, I show up." He gave a noncommittal shrug like it was no big deal, and River burst into laughter.

"Oh my god, this is the best entertainment I've had in years, and I work at a fucking strip club! You're related?" Their cackle had Bane's eyebrows rising, but I was too stunned to speak. *Nash and Bane are brothers?! Like literal brothers? I thought they were just using dude-speak.*

"Wait... Is there something I should know?" Nash looked so horrified that I couldn't guess what the hell was running through his head. Bane leaned in and whispered something to Nash that had him glaring back, muttering under his breath, before the biker started laughing at his brother's expense.

River leaned in. "I think you traumatized Nash," they teased in a low whisper.

"He's not my *actual* brother," I said loudly enough for Nash to hear. His face went through a whole array of emotions including relief. *Interesting.* "Meaning we aren't related by blood or anything," I tacked on after Bane shot me an affronted look.

But the fact that Bane was here, at my job, was enough to keep me from having any real reactions. If he told my best friends and that's how they found out I'd switched jobs... let's just say it wouldn't be pretty. We promised no more secrets and I felt terrible that I was breaking their trust like this.

I just couldn't bring myself to tell them yet, but I would. It was nice to have something that was just mine. I shared money with my family and every other aspect of my life with besties. This was the one thing I had for myself.

Eventually.

Bane gave me a mischievous grin as he held out his hand to help me climb on. Silently, I put his helmet on me, and with just a wave to his brother and River, we were gone. I wrapped my arms around him, cursing him for not giving me a warning. Even over the roar of the engine, I could hear his bark of laughter. He knew damn well he'd just caused chaos.

When we pulled up in front of my apartment, he was the first to break the silence as I climbed off and handed over his helmet.

"Hey, you know you don't have to be embarrassed about what you do, right?" he asked quietly. There was a glint in his eye that told me he was ready to fight me on the matter, and I appreciated him even more for that.

"I'm not," I promised. He raised an eyebrow and waited for me to sort out my words. "I know they won't care, but it will lead to a lot of questions I'm not really ready to answer. Please don't tell the others. I'll tell them when I'm ready." The last thing I needed was for them to question why I pinched pennies even though I made great money. They knew I sent money home, but if they knew just how much? Yeah, they'd flip at that information.

"Will you?" he challenged.

"Look, *brother*, don't be a brat," I grumbled.

"You know, Nash is actually my brother?" he mused. "Half. We have a... complicated history. But he's a good guy."

"Nash is great," I agreed. He gave me a *look* like I was purposefully being dense, but he didn't press me. Bane was not the sit down and chat about feelings around a campfire type, and neither was I, so I appreciated the mercy.

"I'll keep your secret," he said, "but don't let it eat you up, or I'll kick your ass."

With those words of wisdom, he drove off, leaving me on the sidewalk feeling both touched and amused. As I walked inside to get the food Eliza left out and some much needed sleep, I checked my phone. No missed messages from Sam. *Thank goodness.*

I needed a break before the next emergency hit.

CHAPTER
FOUR

Sienna

“We need three pitchers of mimosas today,” Hazel told one of our favorite waitresses. Crystal had taken care of us enough times to not question the seriousness in her tone. She just tossed her blonde hair over her shoulder and readied her pencil over her order pad.

“Rough week, huh?” she teased. “So what’ll it be?”

“Classic orange juice, of course,” Hazel ordered.

“Oh, and pomegranate,” Teagan added before Hazel could choose for us all.

“And blood orange,” Hazel finished. “Plus the usual breakfast spread.”

Crystal took the menus and ran off to put our order in. The moment she was out of earshot, they were like hounds on a trail.

“Details. Now,” Teagan demanded. “Tell me about this Rent-An-Alpha.”

“Was he hot? Was he *big*?” Hazel asked, holding her hands apart as if I didn’t understand the question.

“Was he nice to you?” Eliza finished the round of questioning in her usual sweet mother-hen way.

“His name was King,” I started. “He was nice to me. In fact, I was shocked at how great he was. Though I don’t remember most of it, obviously, I do remember he was a fine

specimen of an alpha, chiseled but not overly bulky. And his knot was what dreams are made of. I'll never look at my heat the same."

"That's all you're giving us?" Teagan complained playfully.

I snorted. "Well, seeing as how I was desperate for his knot and remember only half of it, yes. It's not like I'll see him again anyway. It's a fairly anonymous service. I mean, he said his name was King, but I doubt it's even his real name."

"Could be short for Kingston," Teagan mumbled, tapping away on her phone.

I gasped. "Don't you dare look him up!" Part of me felt like it was an extreme invasion of privacy to seek him out, and another part of me just didn't want to share King with anyone. There was something in me that hoped I'd see him again one day, but it was a delusional pipe dream. He was just doing his job, not giving me a second thought.

"So what's the job, Teag?" I asked. She laughed at my obvious subject change, but she gave in. She loved talking about her work.

"Apparently, Dad is trying to get involved in some big music scene, so he's scoping out venues for a festival. That means I get free merch, tours, and a stipend for travel expenses."

"She'll be laying on the beach after work every day, living her best life," Eliza said. "I'm not at all jealous." I was right there with her. My anxiety could never handle what she does, but I'd kill for a vacation and some extra money just for myself.

"It's okay to be jealous," Teagan joked.

"So you'll never guess what Valentina did," Hazel jumped in. "We went out last week because she was dying for a burger. She bags three phone numbers in the first twenty minutes."

"I'm not even surprised. The woman has style!" Eliza laughed. "Is she really giving alphas she finds at burger joints a chance?"

Hazel snorted. “You think we went to fast food?”

“Oh right, it’s Valentina,” Eliza said, shaking her head. “Gourmet burgers?”

“Yup, and they were *disgusting*,” Hazel said. “They were trying way too hard, and it was dry as hell. I made her stop at a drive-thru on the way home. And yes. She has a date next week.”

“With?” I asked curiously. “What was he like?”

“Literally half her age, tall, dark, and handsome, with money to throw around. They’d be a match made in heaven,” Hazel said before she downed half her mimosa. “Can you imagine him being introduced to the Family?”

“If he even made it past Maximo,” I said. “He’d run for the hills the moment he opened his mouth.”

“I don’t know,” Teagan countered. “If there’s one person that can soften Maximo up, it’s her.”

“Hey!” Hazel protested.

“He’d rather pull out the brat in you,” Eliza said. “I think he’d say no just to fuck with you.”

Hazel couldn’t even deny it. Laughter was bright in her eyes as she smirked. “Then I’d get punished, and who doesn’t love a good old-fashioned spanking?”

Crystal made a choking sound as she walked up at the worst possible time, but Hazel wasn’t the least bit embarrassed. Instead of even acknowledging it, she reached out and took her plate from our waitress.

I’d never been more grateful for a stack of pancakes and bacon in my life—not because what they’d said bothered me. I was fucking hungry as hell from working all night. Plus, coming down from a heat meant I’d be spending the next few days eating a ton. Crystal set everything down and after checking to make sure we had everything moved on to her next table.

“How was work last night, Sienna? The casino busy?” Eliza asked, and I was happy I’d just shoved a forkful of

pancake into my mouth.

With a wave of my hand, I motioned for her to wait, and once I chewed a few times, I managed a quick, “Went great. Very busy.”

It had been a busy night. A big group of regulars had come out, and by the time I finished my last dance, I had made about fifteen hundred in tips. It was a great first day back at work.

When the girls found out where I worked, I knew they’d want to come visit, but there was some selfish part of me that wanted to keep this for myself for a little bit longer. My job, the love of dancing that I’d discovered... It was mine.

I had grown up sharing everything—clothes, toys, books, even boys.

My twin sister Samantha hadn’t left one stone unturned. My besties hated her and would be livid if they knew I was talking to her on a regular basis, let alone sending her the majority of my income. But she was my sister and my mom’s caretaker. How could I *not*?

Another secret.

Apparently, I was just piling them on lately.

“Earth to Sienna!” Teagan called, waving a hand in front of my face. “I would have let you daydream about the King himself, but I gotta get going. My flight just got bumped up which means I need to leave now to make it.”

“Sorry—”

“Eat my food so it doesn’t go to waste.” She pushed the plate in the middle so we could all get to it. She stood up and tossed back the rest of her drink before handing two twenties to Eliza. “For my part! Just give the leftovers as part of the tip. I’ll let you all know when I land!”

“Bye!” we all called out as she rushed from the restaurant.

“She’s gotta slow down eventually,” Eliza said with a shake of her head.

“It works for her.” Hazel shrugged, not looking concerned. “Plus, this means more alcohol and food for us. Oh wait!” Hazel grabbed her purse as a vibrating sound caught my ear. Pulling out her phone, she started texting, a wide smirk filling her face.

“What is it?” Eliza asked as she took a bite of bacon.

“Valentina is joining us. Something about needing to fill us in on something?”

“Fill us in?” I asked just as the woman herself came into view. The older omega strutted into the restaurant like the drama queen she was, waving off the staff as she headed straight for us. She settled into the seat Teagan had vacated just a few minutes before.

“Ladies!” Valentina grinned, a wicked gleam in her eyes as she ran her long nails through her gray hair. “I need your help.”

“Help?” Eliza asked, her eyes a touch too wide.

“Don’t worry, it would be after breakfast.” She snagged a fresh glass from a waiter as they walked by to set up an empty table near us. “Pour some for me, dear.”

I gave her a generous pour of mimosa, and she tossed it back, downing it one swallow before she filled us in on her plans. She wanted to have a girls-only night out on the town while Maximo had a big meeting with a new client. A few drinks, clubbing, and then ending the evening at Neon Nights. Eliza looked unsure, but Hazel was already nodding along.

“Done! We need some girl time for sure.”

“Spa day before we go out then!” Valentina clapped her hands. “I won’t be taking no for an answer. Eat up. It’s all on me, girls. It was my idea after all, so we can go to my place. Hair color, cut, nails, massages, waxing...” She wiggled her eyebrows at that.

“Oh my god,” Eliza muttered, her face beet red. Valentia wasn’t exactly soft spoken, so I was pretty sure everyone here was now updated about the imminent bikini waxes.

I snorted, unable to hold it in, and the older woman winked at me. “Loosen up, Eliza. You gotta keep those bikers on their toes! Make them work extra hard tonight.”

Eliza’s face somehow got redder, but this time there was an unmistakable spark of happiness in her blue eyes. She was the happiest I’d ever seen her since getting together with the two bikers. They treated her like gold, and I was so fucking happy for her. She deserved it.

Of course, *that* just made me think of my lack of a love life. The closest thing I had to that was the Rent-An-Alpha who I’d never see again.

Yeah... I’ll take Valentina up on that spa day.

I needed some self-care.

KING

Neon Nights was one of my favorite places to unwind. It was the kind of hole-in-the-wall bar where nobody asked you questions or bothered you. As long as you kept to yourself, at least. Between the burly bikers and the questionable patrons, it would be stupid to step out of line.

After the week I'd had, helping more than one omega through their heat, I needed a solid drink or ten to unwind.

It was that damn omega.

Sienna.

I'd spent a week with her, and now she was all I could think about. Spending a heat with an omega was literally my job, and I'd never had this issue before. I was detached and professional.

But she was different.

Each time, I wished it was her in their place. Of course, I did my job well, attended to their every need, but I'd caught myself almost saying her name more than once.

"Rough night?" Bane asked. He was behind the bar already pouring me a whiskey on the rocks.

"Make it a double," I answered with a tired smile. "It's been one hell of a week."

"Well, hopefully you won't give a fuck after a few more of these," he replied unhelpfully. I chuckled as I took the second whiskey.

"Keep these coming. Just throw them on my tab," I said as I took the last bar stool, letting the shadows keep me out of sight. One of my fears was running into a prior client. Shit could get real weird, real fast. I loved the idea of giving omegas power over their heats, but I wanted no strings attached. At least until I met Sienna... She was crossing my mind too often for me to ignore the attraction I felt for her. *God, I wish I knew what her scent was.* I tossed back my

drink, savoring the bite of the alcohol as it went down. I needed to get my shit together.

Too bad life had other ideas.

A procession of heels clicking their way to the bar drew everyone's attention.

"Bane!" The drunken cheer and subsequent laughter had the man shaking his head while he gathered a tray of shots for them. From the half-lidded eyes and giggling, I had a feeling they'd started the party early with more than just alcohol. They were definitely having more fun than I was tonight.

As the group started walking away with their drinks in hand, I noticed a petite redhead at the end of the procession. I'd recognize her anywhere. I was out of my seat before the action could be a conscious choice.

My eyes caught on a tall man over her shoulder. *Yuri*. He was a friend from business school, but he'd apparently chosen the worst possible night to run into me. I didn't give him a second glance, focused on reaching my target.

"Sienna," I called out, gently tapping her on the shoulder. She turned around, and her jaw dropped at the sight of me.

"Holy shit. It's you!" she breathed out. She seemed panicked, so I wasn't surprised when she lifted the shot glasses in her hand, downing one then the other, before saying anything else. "I thought I'd never see you again."

We both froze when someone walked past, stirring the air between us so her scent filled the air. The omega was a mix of citrus, pear, and patchouli. It was bright and woodsy. A strange combination for anyone else, but her... With Sienna, it just fit. Her scent was downright intoxicating, and it stirred my alpha pride to realize she was breathing me in just as deeply.

"You smell so good." She blurted the words out then slapped a hand over her mouth like she could shove them back in. A smirk ghosted across my face. Unfiltered Sienna was proving to be fun.

"Normally, I wouldn't approach a previous client, but I couldn't help myself," I admitted. She smiled softly as if she

could understand where I was coming from. “Can I buy you a drink?”

“Sienna?” We both turned as Yuri approached, looking suspiciously from me to her then back again.

“Yuri?” Sienna asked, confusion on her face as she looked around the bar. “What are you doing here?”

“I could ask you the same thing,” he asked pointedly, gesturing at the bar.

Sienna rolled her eyes at the other alpha as some of the women she had come with started to laugh behind her. “My brothers work here, Yuri. I didn’t realize you were so judgmental. Besides, they have the best drinks around.”

“That’s not—” Yuri started to protest, his eyes narrowing. The door opened again, and another breeze stirred around us. His nostrils flared, and whatever he was about to say was cut off.

“Oh my God, you smell good too!” she practically accused him, her mind jumping to another subject without warning. *That’s drunk omega logic for you.* “What is it tonight? Come on. Where’s River?! They might as well not miss this too.” She threw up her hands and looked around for Yuri’s cousin. I’d met them a time or two, and I knew the cousins were close, so I wasn’t surprised when they pushed into her view with a flourish.

“I’ve been summoned!” They threw their hands up and spun in a circle, showing off their outfit for the evening. Personally, I couldn’t pull off the chain harness or the sheer layer on top of it, but they looked good. Their skin sparkled, standing out against their deep tan and dark clothing.

She pulled them close and breathed in, smiling as she ran her nose over their chest.

“See, I knew it! You smell the best out of all of them,” she blurted out. Yuri let out an annoyed huff, and jealousy flared within me at the sight of her throwing herself on another alpha. Even seeing Yuri standing too close was making me

want to scream. Apparently, I was the possessive type. It seemed I'd never had anyone to truly be jealous over.

"Well, this night took a strange turn, but I shouldn't be surprised," River said. "You smell incredible and look absolutely ravishing, my dear." Sienna grinned and showed off her outfit, matching their energy.

"I was just about to offer Sienna a drink," I said pointedly. Of course, the others didn't back away. We stared off with each other in silence. It wasn't overly aggressive, but it felt like a very 'me against them' moment.

"Okay, boys, everyone tuck it back in your pants. There's enough Sienna to go around," she said, doing a little twirl while laughing. The joyful sound ended in a hiccup, and she turned to me, her emerald eyes sparkling with amusement. "Can we make that first drink a water, King?"

"Of course we can," I said, offering my arm. She didn't hesitate to put her arm through mine so I could lead her back to Bane.

"My hero," she cooed. This personality was a far cry from the nervous woman I'd met the night of her heat. Though heat was never a good show of personality, it stripped an omega down to instinct and left them half feral.

The problem was that now that I'd seen a glimpse of the *real* Sienna, without any constraints, I wanted even more of her.

CHAPTER
FIVE

Sienna

What the hell was going on tonight?!

First, I ran into King, fucking *King*, the alpha I thought I'd never see again. Hell, he took my damn virginity. *Nope, no, I'm not thinking about that.* I pushed those thoughts aside to focus on the alphas King was leading me away from.

Yuri and River, my boss and coworker, both of whom smelled so fucking fantastic. I could feel slick on my upper thighs. The only person missing from this damn scene was Nash. King settled me on a barstool and sat down beside me, ordering a water, and Bane gave him an approving look while handing me a sealed bottle.

“So is your name really King?” I asked, then immediately started to blush. *I can't believe that's the first thing I asked him.* I cracked open the water and immediately started to chug it down. I needed something to sober me up.

He chuckled, thankfully amused by my question. “Yes, it's my real name. No one believes me, so it was easier to just keep it for work. And no, it's not short for anything, much to everyone's disappointment.”

I threw my head back and laughed at his resigned answers. I could feel not only his gaze on me, but Yuri, River, and my besties' too. *Oh shit, they're going to have so many questions.* A shit ton of questions. Nope. Tonight was fun Sienna.

Tomorrow, responsible Sienna could take over and deal with the fallout.

“I didn’t think we’d see each other again. I mean, that’s kinda the thing with—” I waved my hand around, and the corner of his eyes crinkled. The deep sound of his chuckle made me bite my lip.

“My job? Yeah, true. If you don’t want to talk, we don’t have to. I just—”

“No, I want to,” I told him, reaching out to lay a hand on his arm. I loved the feel of his muscles beneath the soft cotton of his shirt, and that wasn’t the booze or the weed talking. Flashes of his bare skin, soft praise, and the rasp of his beard against my fevered skin filled my mind. The heat in his gaze had me wondering if the same memories were coming to him, but he cleared his throat before I could muster the bravery to ask.

“Good, that’s good.” King reached for the drink Bane must have set down for him while we were lost in each other. He sipped it before speaking again. “So... You know Yuri and his cousin?”

“Cousin?” I asked before it clicked. *River*. “That makes a weird kind of sense, actually, now that you said it.”

“Should I be offended, darling?” a well-known sing-song voice asked by my ear. I felt the alpha settle on the seat on my other side. King growled, but once my hand was on his, he stopped. The cocky grin *River* shot his way probably wasn’t helping him settle his instincts. “If only Nash were here, then we’d have an all-out party.”

“Nash is on his way,” Bane unhelpfully, in my opinion, supplied. “He said he was going to stop by to see me.” There was a teasing glint in his eye as he said it. The brat was enjoying every minute of this craziness.

“Well, that will be interesting,” Yuri’s cool voice joined in. I didn’t know if I wanted to curl up and hide or jump with joy at being the center of so much attention—alpha attention at that.

The door opened, and a familiar voice yelled out Hazel and Valentina's names. I started laughing before I could help myself, and the alphas around me moved so I could see Maximo and Loki walk in, followed by the rest of Hazel's pack.

"Sienna!" Valentina yelled out across the bar, making every head turn to her, then me. "Get your cute ass over here! We got plans tonight. This was the first stop, not the time to collect every available alpha in the bar."

It felt like my entire body was on fire, but I grabbed the water Bane had given me. "That's my cue. It seems we're having a party tonight."

"You want company?" all three asked at the same time. While Yuri and King were glaring at each other, River looked calm as can be. *Asshole.*

"What did I miss?" Nash's gravelly voice broke the tension between the guys, but it did nothing to stop the pressure teasing between my thighs.

We all turned around, finding him standing beside his brother. He must have snuck in a back entrance; there was no way I would have missed him coming in. He took a deep breath and instantly zeroed in on me. Cedar, cypress, and a hint of nutmeg hit my senses, making me feel warm and safe. *Nash.* What the fuck?

"Girls' night has just started." I swallowed hard and gestured to my friends waiting for me. "Guess this was our first stop."

"Go with them," Bane told his brother, bumping his shoulder. "These other alphas were just asking to join, and it seems like Hazel's pack is going, so you won't be the odd ones out."

I turned to find the twins, Emiliano and Alessandro, grinning wickedly at me. They waggled their fingers in unison, giving me mocking waves that said they'd clearly noticed my predicament. They liked gossip just as much as the girls did, and if they knew Hazel wanted the story of what was going on,

there was a fair chance they'd jump into the conversation to get her the details. Glaring at them, I flipped them off before hopping off the seat.

“Come on, then. Just ignore the twins. They're never up to any good.” I made sure I raised my voice for the last part, and they clutched their chests as if I had wounded them.

Maximo, who had an arm wrapped around Hazel, nodded sagely. “Finally, someone who understands.”

We all filed out of Neon Nights. Of course, Valentina insisted on a car service for the night, which was a stretch limo, so we all climbed inside as she gave the driver our new location.

I barely listened, so I honestly had no idea where we were heading. I was sandwiched between Nash and River, both of whom smelled so fucking good I could barely breathe. As much as I was enjoying the pheromone coma, my brain was itching with the thought that there was something important happening here. The booze wasn't letting me connect all the thoughts, so I just had to hope I remembered that nagging feeling in the morning.

“So how did you end up among this group?” Yuri asked conversationally. From the greetings between him and Hazel's men, I had a feeling my boss knew far more about them than I did.

“Hazel is one of my besties,” I said with a shrug. “But the guys are awesome. Where are we going, Valentina?”

She turned down the music she was shimmying to in her seat so she could answer. Her eyes were already dancing with mischief, and I prayed to whatever gods were listening that she wouldn't take us to the strip club. Because I certainly wouldn't put it past her.

“There's a new spot in town that I wanted to check out,” she said.

“What have I gotten myself into?” King asked no one in particular, and it was Eliza who answered.

“Don’t try to figure it out. Just go with it,” she said. “It’ll be more fun that way. Plus, there are really no words to describe this crowd.”

“Chaos?” Hazel supplied. “Horny? Blazed?”

Valentina laughed. “All accurate descriptions.”

“Tell us where we’re going,” Emiliano demanded before they could keep going.

“Is it a strip club?” Alessandro asked with a laugh, but my breath hitched when I heard his question.

“You haven’t told them where you work, have you?” River whispered in my ear. I swallowed hard, worrying that they would judge me for hiding it.

“No,” I hissed as panic seized my chest. The brownie had worn off, and my buzz was doing nothing for the growing anxiety. “And I’d like to keep it that way for tonight.”

River pretended to lock their lips and throw away the key. “Even torture wouldn’t make me tell them, but you should.”

“What’s wrong?” Nash’s voice became even deeper when he whispered, and I was suddenly very thankful that Valentina had turned up the music to drown out the twins’ incessant questioning.

“Sienna here is keeping her dancing under wraps,” River said quickly. Nash raised his eyebrows before whispering something to Yuri. He shot me a disapproving look but gave me a slight nod in acknowledgement. I had a feeling I’d have to answer more than a few questions tomorrow night at work, but for now, I exhaled with relief. My secret was safe.

“We’re here!” Valentina announced.

“So stop conspiring with your sexy alphas over there, Sienna!” Hazel called out ruthlessly.

River grinned. “This group is way more fun than you, Yuri.”

“I like this guy,” Emiliano said as we piled out of the stretch limo. “You should keep him, Sienna.”

“Keep them,” I corrected him loudly, making River smile at me.

“Them,” Emiliano replied easily.

“She better,” River teased, but there was a hint of vulnerability there.

“Not like you’d let me run away without a trace,” I deadpanned, bringing River’s grin back to its full force.

“True. Yuri would hunt you down. He’s a mother hen like that,” they sang out. Yuri groaned and shook his head, but he didn’t seem mad. Apparently, he was used to his cousin’s antics.

It was so interesting to see them outside of work. Yuri was more relaxed, or at least his form of it. He still wore his usual suit, but the tie was missing and the top button was undone. My boss was definitely more stiff than the others, his jaw clenched tight, but I had a feeling it had to do with the other alphas having claimed spots around me more than actually being angry or frustrated.

It was Nash who seemed to stick out the most. He was acting strange, almost unsure, and I didn’t know what to make of it. Hopefully, they’d all loosen up after a few more drinks.

“The Ballroom?” Hazel read out. “Is this a fancy club or something?”

“Not exactly.” Valentina grinned as she walked up to the bouncer. He immediately opened the rope, letting us bypass the long line wrapping around the building. Other than the neon sign on the dark brick building, nothing gave away what was inside. The windows were tinted to the point that I couldn’t make anything out.

We made our way into the club, and at least the pulsing music was familiar. A long bar was in the back, looking like it was carved from marble, stretching from wall to wall. The DJ was in a corner booth that overlooked the dance floor below. Dancers shined on risers around the dance floor, their glittering outfits catching and reflecting the lights.

My favorite part was the giant crystal chandelier in the middle of the room, looming above everything. The lights caught on the crystals, sending little rainbow splashes of light onto the dancers and everything else in the room. The space was a mixture of a dance club and high-end lounge, which was totally Valentina.

“I want to dance!” I yelled out over the music.

“Shots first,” Valentina countered, and what she wanted, she usually got. Knowing she’d drag me there if I protested, I followed, letting her dole out shots to everyone, including our newer additions. Everyone raised their glasses to her while she beamed, then we all shot them back.

“To the dance floor!” Alessandro bellowed like a war cry, dragging both Eliza and Hazel out there. Following their lead, I grabbed Nash and River, yelling for the others to follow.

After that, it was a blur of booze and dancing. Our bodies writhed together as the world became a little too hazy. I was in a euphoric bubble of strong alphas, their heady scents, and the sweet buzz of alcohol.

I’d had an unexpected but amazing night, forgetting about the fact that I’d have to deal with the consequences tomorrow.

CHAPTER
SIX

Sienna

Ring.
Ring.

Groaning, I reached out a hand until it landed on my phone just as the call ended. A few seconds later, it started again, making me groan in frustration.

Who the hell was calling me?!

I answered and didn't even get to say hello before my sister's shrill voice made me cringe.

"Sienna! Where the hell have you been?!"

"I was asleep, Sam," I tried to reason with her calmly as I sat up and looked around. It was pitch black outside, and a glance at the clock told me it was only three in the morning. No fucking wonder I was struggling. I'd only managed an hour or so of sleep before she woke me up.

"Ugh, this stupid time difference," Sam huffed before her voice became serious. "Sorry, there's just a lot going on. I didn't mean to take it out on you."

"What's going on?" My heart instantly started pounding as I thought of Mom.

"I had to call an ambulance last night to take Mom in. She had a bad reaction to the new prescription the doctor gave her, and now she's going to be in ICU until further notice. Dad got called away for the next few weeks with work, and I just..." I

heard sniffles, then Sam started choking up. “I don’t know what to do. I hate to ask for more because you’re giving so much, but the ambulance... Sienna, it was like fifteen hundred dollars! We don’t have that kind of money!”

I swallowed hard, my racing mind trying to break through the buzz that was still riding me. “We can figure this out. Look, I’ll ask for more shifts when I go into work tonight and look at my finances tomorrow. We can figure this out.”

On top of the ambulance, the ICU bills were going to be insane. There was medical insurance but they were pretty useless once the cancer hit. After that, it’s been a constant fight. Letting out a shaky breath, I tried to remain calm until Sam spoke again.

“They want a thousand dollars *today*, Sienna. What am I going to do?”

“Let me check my account, sis.” I opened my phone, and my stomach dropped. I’d just gotten paid, but even with the cash I’d earned and deposited, I only had a little over a thousand dollars in my bank account.

Thinking of my mom and her warm smile, the way she’d always rushed to my side to be there for me, I transferred the money to my sister. Once she got what she’d called for, Sam was pretty quick to get off the phone.

After the call, I just sat there, blankly looking at my account with five dollars to my name. It was a good thing I was working tonight. Fuck, I’d need to scrounge up some leftovers for dinner before my shift because five dollars wasn’t going to get me anywhere.

Then it hit me.

My car.

If I was going to use it at all, then I needed a new tire. Hell, it was still sitting at the club because I’d totally forgotten about it after being swept up in V’s plans.

What the fuck am I going to do?

Tears stung my eyes, but I kept quiet, not wanting to wake up Eliza, who was probably asleep. I wiped away the tears as I sat up on my bed, then I reached for the stash of weed in my bedside table. Grabbing a lighter and a packed bowl, I took one hit, then two, letting the drug help calm me down.

Bits and pieces of the night came back to me—dancing between River and Nash then being spun over to Yuri and King. God, they all were delicious, their smells so fucking amazing I was getting wet from just the memory. Four alphas. *Four. Alphas.*

I knew we were meant to be a pack, but how the hell was I supposed to wrap my mind around four alphas, couldn't I have had a beta too? Someone to keep the peace a bit.

A hysterical laugh fell from my lips as I tipped my head back against the wall. I couldn't get in a relationship with three of them because we worked together; I needed my job more than I needed a pack.

And King... King helped omegas through their heats. Hell, I couldn't judge since he'd helped me, but that was a whole damn basket of complicated that I wasn't ready to open.

And now I was horny, high, and hungry.

Groaning, I forced myself out of bed and stumbled into the kitchen to search for something to eat, but we were wiped clean. Nothing was in the fridge or cabinets besides random ingredients, and I honestly had no desire to attempt making something from scratch right now.

A beeping sound caught my attention, and I looked down, realizing it was my phone.

River: Hey! Last night, you gave us all your cell phone number and said we could text you. But since you were more than a little drunk, I want to make sure that's actually okay.

River: Talk to you tomorrow.

Sienna: It's fine.

River: You're up? Right now? How? You were barely coherent when we got you upstairs. When King had to carry you into your apartment, I almost wanted to faint so he'd carry me, sweetheart.

I laughed at their comment as my entire body heated. God, how drunk had I been?

Sienna: I randomly woke up and smoked a little bit. Now, I'm starving, but we have zero food.

Sienna: And I'm not cooking.

River: Say no more.

River: I'm on the way.

Sienna: What?

I furrowed my brow in confusion when they replied with an order to get ready. Motivated by the prospect of getting some food, I went to my room. A quick shower, teeth brushed, and some Tylenol popped, I was almost ready by the time my phone beeped again.

River: I'm downstairs. Don't want to wake your friends.

Sienna: Be right down. Just leaving them a note.

Grabbing some sweats and a cami, I tossed them on and grabbed some flip flops before jotting a quick note and putting it on the fridge just in case Eliza woke up. I was out the door a moment later with my wallet and phone in hand.

River was downstairs, waiting a few feet from the entrance, and I stopped dead at the sight of them. Instead of their usual clothes, they were wearing gray sweats and a black t-shirt, their long hair pulled back in a ponytail. As if they could sense my attention, they looked up from their phone with a smile as I finally got my legs working again.

"I didn't know you even owned sweats or a plain t-shirt," I joked, hoping to break some of the tension rising between us.

River grinned and wrapped an arm around my shoulders, leading me out to the parking lot. "Everyone has sweats, sweetheart. We all need to let loose sometimes."

I had started to ask them something else when I saw a car that had to be theirs and almost fell over laughing. River's grin grew as they watched me, good humor brightly shining in their pale blue eyes. "That's... *That's* your car?"

River pulled me forward and patted the roof of it. "Meet Gomez. He's vintage, Sienna. You should feel lucky to grace his presence."

"Gomez? The hearse?" I sputtered out, imagining the Addams family. River helped me into the front seat, and I buckled up as they came around and joined me.

They pulled out while telling me they were taking me to their favorite all-night breakfast spot for some food. God, breakfast sounded amazing. Grease. Bacon. It wouldn't be Waffle House, but it would have to do.

The front windows of the Sunrise Café boasted about their world-famous bacon and five-star cinnamon rolls. My stomach growled loudly at the sight of the larger-than-life food adorning the ads as River parked and turned off the car.

"Is their bacon really that good?" I asked with a laugh. The high from the weed was still here, but it wasn't as strong as before. I was still in that zone where I felt relaxed and the world felt like a nicer place than usual, the sharp bite of reality having a softer edge. River held out their arm for me after they opened my door. I wasn't really used to those little displays of chivalry, but I'd take it if they were offering.

"It's orgasmic," they confirmed as I wrapped my arm in theirs. "Just wait. I'm excited to finally share this place with someone."

"Yuri doesn't come with you?" Now that I knew they were cousins, I couldn't help but wonder what their relationship was really like. The two were night and day. Where Yuri was the strong and silent type, always all business, River was boisterous and loud, drawing attention to themselves like it was their job.

River let out a deep chuckle. "Absolutely not. It's too simple for his tastes. I love my cousin, but he's a bit of a snob

when it comes to treating himself.” As if they’d considered how that sounded, they quickly added on a reassurance. “Apparently, he’s not afraid to branch out for *you*, though. Neon Nights isn’t his usual hangout.”

“You were there for *me*?”

“In part. Yuri also needed to speak with someone, and then we overheard a conversation between brothers that it was girls’ night,” they admitted. “We just wanted to make sure you were alright.”

It was such a strange feeling to have someone looking out for me in that way. Sure, my friends were amazing, and Eliza, in particular, was a mother hen. But having an alpha worry about making sure I was safe... It was foreign but nice.

I was saved from having to reply by the hostess. The woman, dressed in a bright red apron, her white hair tied up in a messy bun, promptly came over after we stepped foot into the restaurant. “Welcome back again, River... Oh, and who is this?” Gertrude gushed. I snuck a peek at her name tag while her attention was focused on the alpha by my side. I had a feeling Gertrude and I might be getting real friendly, real fast. The omega had more energy than I had on a normal day, and it wasn’t even sunrise.

“Gertie!” they greeted, rushing up to kiss her on both cheeks before releasing her. “This is Sienna. She’s fantastic. And hungry. I know that’s your favorite kind of customer.”

“Yes it is, honey!” she agreed with a loud laugh, waving us over to a booth. “What can I get you to drink?”

“I need to sleep after this, so let’s go for tea,” River answered before looking at me. I was in the same boat. If I drank coffee on top of smoking, I’d never get back to sleep before work.

“Same,” I agreed even though I could hardly find it in me to care. I was pleasantly buzzed and ready to eat. Just being in River’s presence was calming in its own way.

When Gertie rushed off to get our drinks, River leaned in. I breathed in their heady scent for a second before flinching

back with the realization of just how obvious I was being. I couldn't do this with them. My job could be on the line.

"What was that for?" they asked. Hearing them use a serious tone had me sighing. For some reason, I couldn't lie to them, but there had to be some kind of middle ground. I wasn't about to dump my whole shitty life on them.

"We work together, River. This can't be a thing," I said quietly. Hurting their feelings was the furthest thing from what I wanted, but... "My job? I can't lose it. Too much depends on it."

"Alright, madam of mystery," they teased, but I could see tension in their eyes now. "What makes you think eating breakfast with me would make you lose your job? If you hadn't noticed, I've got an in with our boss. Plus, I think he's more than a little interested in you."

"Again, he's my *boss*. It's against his own rules," I reiterated. "Don't take this the wrong way, but it's not just breakfast with you. We all know what's going on between us after last night."

They frowned but let the conversation drop when Gertie brought over our drinks and two giant steaming cinnamon rolls.

"It seemed there were some heavy conversations happening, but no one should talk so seriously on an empty stomach. These are on the house, and I'll give you a few moments since you haven't even cracked the menu," she said, rushing off before we could respond.

"Eat, Sienna. We can keep things light for now, okay?" River reassured me. The pleading look in their eyes had me taking a deep breath. They nudged the bigger of the cinnamon rolls in my direction, probably their way of caring for me in the simplest, least pressuring way they could.

"Okay," I agreed. The prospect of spending time with them without my job being on the line was enough for my nerves to settle down.

With the first bite of cinnamon goodness, the light mood was back. River waited to take a bite, watching for my reaction. Of course, I couldn't help but let a moan escape as the rich flavors burst across my tongue.

“If the bacon is orgasmic, how do you describe this?”

“Well, I can't answer that because we're pretending we're just friends right now,” River deadpanned with a smirk. I rolled my eyes and popped another bite in my mouth.

“Shut up and eat, River,” I ordered, finally opening the menu. They took a bite of their cinnamon roll and followed my lead. By the time Gertie came back around, we were ready. Not gonna lie, we ordered more food than two people should eat.

River pretended to be distracted, but I caught them watching me a few times. I'd never seen them hold themselves back, and I hated that I'd brought this strange aspect to our dynamic. It almost had me opening my mouth to say something, but then my phone dinged.

Pulling it out I realized all over again why my job was so important. Mom was too important to risk all of this.

Sam: She's resting well. They said she'd be out most of the day while they get the reaction under control. Thanks for helping.

Sienna: Always. Can I call her soon?

Sam: They're afraid visitors and calls will stress her out. Leave a voicemail at home, and I'll make sure she listens.

Sienna: Okay. Let me know if I can do anything else.

My heart ached for my mother suffering in the ICU while I was out having breakfast and club night with my girls. I wanted to call, but it never seemed like the right time. Sam promised she'd try to get her to call, but Mom was always tired.

“You okay?” River's voice had me tucking my phone away and putting on the mask I usually wore for everyone in my life.

“Of course,” I lied, hoping my scent didn’t betray me. River struck me as an observant alpha. “Especially when my bacon arrives.”

Food wouldn’t fix everything, but it was a good step in the right direction. Especially since it looked like I wouldn’t be eating until tonight at work—something I had to hope none of the alphas noticed. As I looked up at River, I realized that the possibility of that happening was probably none.

I was in such deep shit.

CHAPTER
SEVEN

River

Just as I dropped Sienna back at her place, my phone started to ring. I ignored it, watching Sienna until she was safely inside her apartment before checking my phone. Luckily, there was no one around to hear the resigned sigh that slipped out when I saw my cousin's name pop up with several missed calls. This was going to be an *interesting* conversation.

Hitting his number, I pulled out onto the road again, heading back to the house.

“River...” Yuri’s cool voice filled the hearse. “Where are you?”

“I just dropped Sienna off at her place after taking her to Sunset Café.”

There was a long, heavy pause before the alpha on the other end of the line growled, “What?”

Typical possessive Yuri.

“It’s not like that!” I shook my head even though he couldn’t see it. “I texted her last night when I was getting ready to go to sleep. I let her know she’d given us her cell number and said we could text her. Just wanted to make sure that she was still okay with it after the alcohol was out of her system. She messaged me back, said she was hungry but had no food, so I took her out. That was it.”

Yuri didn’t respond beyond a click of his tongue before I heard the beep of his coffeemaker starting in the background.

“This is going to be complicated.”

“It is,” I told him. My mind was filled with memories of the red-headed omega dancing against not only me, but three other alphas last night. “Especially, as Sienna pointed out this morning, since your rules mean no dating coworkers. She was very adamant that our meal be a *friends only* thing.”

What I wouldn't pay to see Yuri's face right now. My cousin was a quiet man, always so self-contained, but I would bet anything I could read him if I were in front of him right now. As it was, I just listened in silence as he made his coffee.

“I'll talk to her. Tonight. I'm not letting her push me away because of some arbitrary rule.”

“*Us* away, Yuri,” I shot back dryly. “There are four alphas interested in her, and that means we are all going to have to figure out how to work together—for Sienna's sake. She doesn't strike me as an omega that's going to deal with any bullshit.”

“Yes, yes...” Yuri sounded a bit distracted, though that could have been thanks to our conversation, a message from someone about the club, or even him running low on his coffee fixings. “I got it. Pack and whatnot, right? I still have King's number. After we talk to Nash tonight, we can set up some time to meet with King, figure out how all of this is going to work.”

“Smart. Save some coffee for me. I got no sleep, and I need something to keep me going today. I'll be home in five.”

“See you then.”

Click.

It was insane how quickly everything changed. Sienna had always interested me. There was something irresistible about watching her bloom from a timid girl into the confident, sassy dancer I knew now. We'd become friends at work, and the moment I scented her, that was it for me.

I never had to question if she'd accept me as I was. Sienna had always complimented what I wore and loved how I acted. Reading people was a specialty I'd developed long before I

started bartending at Prestige, so I already knew we'd be perfect together.

A few minutes later, I was at the house and making my way to the kitchen. The whole place looked like it should be in some fancy architecture magazine. Everything was in its place, every surface clean and spotless, with minimal decorations all over. It was the opposite of the guest house that I lived in out back. I thought my cousin might actually have a heart attack if he came in without warning, a sentiment he must have agreed with because he always asked me to meet me here instead.

Yuri was sitting at the breakfast bar, reading something on his iPad as he sipped his coffee. He was already dressed for the day in an impeccable all-black suit, and I greeted him before making myself some espresso to add to the coffee waiting for me. *Make that two shots.* Quickly setting everything up, I grabbed some half and half then doctored up my drink before leaning across the island and staring down my cousin.

“So...” I dragged out the word before I started to drink my coffee through the stirrer to piss him off. “What ya thinking?”

Yuri glared up at me. “Why do you do that?”

“It’s a straw,” I told him with a cocky grin.

“It’s to stir your drink, River. *Not* a straw for hot coffee. You’re a damn psychopath.”

“Says the man that lives in a house that looks like no one even lives here,” I replied snarkily.

We glared at each other until we cracked. These little everyday arguments were a common feature of our relationship, and we both got a sense of delight from it.

“This is going to be difficult,” Yuri said, finally answering my question. “She works for me. She works with you and Nash. I don’t even know how she met King. Somehow, all four of us alphas have to get along and share her.”

“We could always hope she finds a beta to add some calm to the mix,” I pointed out diplomatically. “I’m just saying that

not everyone in the pack shows up at once. Sienna could meet someone else that she's drawn to."

Yuri looked at me blankly. "I don't think that would be a good thing to adjust to either. We need to figure out how to approach her before we do anything official or overwhelming."

"We could meet with King before tonight's shift," I suggested as I took another sip through the mini straw. "Omegas have to consent to people courting them, so it would be better for all of us to reach an understanding before we talk to Sienna." Laws had changed in omegas' favor. If an omega felt unsafe or like their choice had been taken away, alphas could be fined or, in more extreme cases, arrested. Not one of us would want Sienna to feel pressured into this. That was no way to start a pack.

Yuri closed his iPad and gave me his full attention. "You think I should reach out to King today instead of tomorrow? There's no rush."

I hesitated, but in the end, I figured it would be best to put all the cards out on the table. "Yuri, Sienna doesn't want to lose her job. That's her main concern right now. She is aware of the fact that we are her pack, but we have a lot of convincing to do to make sure she feels secure. Not to mention, we're going to have to figure out how to deal with the fact that our omega is stripping for a bunch of other people."

"We'll watch over her and make sure she's safe," Yuri pointed out, not the least bit upset by the idea of strangers seeing Sienna half naked. I wasn't so sure it was going to be that simple, but I'd keep my skepticism to myself for now. "I'll call Nash and King. We can meet up for lunch or something and talk."

This is going to be fun.

NASH

The wind whipped past me as I rode my bike out to the location Yuri had sent me. All of the alphas from last night were coming to talk about Sienna. It was obvious to all of us that she was our mate, but four alphas? That was just asking for a disaster.

Complications went far beyond just the alphas with one omega. Everyone but King worked together. Yuri wasn't just Sienna's boss, but mine as well. But outside of that club, he wasn't the only alpha and would have to accept our status was the same as his own. We wouldn't have a beta to keep the peace, and I had a feeling not one of us would submit to the other's authority as a 'leader' in this pack.

This wasn't about us as alphas, but about Sienna as our omega. She was the one who got to call the shots. Sienna was fiercely independent, and that wouldn't be changing just because she'd found a pack.

As I rounded the curve, heading for the coffee shop, I wondered about the significance of this particular place. It was on the edge of a row of small businesses that looked out on the lake. Customers could make their purchases then stroll along the small bench-lined boardwalk that overlooked Lake Sloane. There were no trees or anything since we were in Nevada, but the scenery was a nice change of pace from the city life.

The parking lot was fairly empty this time of day, so I snagged a spot right in front. When I pulled my helmet off and started up the sidewalk, I clocked the new alpha, the guy I didn't know, sitting on a bench by the waterfront. *King*. I wasn't in the mood for coffee yet, so I headed his way instead. It couldn't hurt to get a measure of what he was like one on one. The previous evening's activities hadn't really been conducive to learning more about the newcomer.

King glanced up as I approached and nodded his head in greeting. "Did you get the same cryptic text I did?"

“To meet here to discuss Sienna?” I questioned as I sat down beside him. “She’s not going to like it when she finds out we met up to talk about her.”

He chuckled at that. “I had the same thought, but I don’t know her as well as you guys do.”

“She’s a pretty private person. You’d be surprised how little we know,” I admitted. “But if she gives us a chance, I hope to change that. She deserves everything we could give her. I’ve never met an omega who looked more like she carried the world on her shoulders the way Sienna does.”

“So... all alphas?” King questioned with a raised eyebrow. “That should work well.”

“I’ve never seen four in one pack without betas involved,” I agreed, glad I wasn’t the only one with that concern. “But if anyone can handle it, it’s Sienna. Does it bother you?”

He thought it over for a second. “I’m not sure,” he admitted. “I’ve got my own shit with ‘normal’ dynamics. It’s almost easier to consider this because of the alphas involved.”

“You know Yuri, right?” When we met at Neon Nights, it was obvious that the two men were familiar but not close.

“Yes. We’ve crossed paths a few times. Sex work, in all its forms, is a small industry,” he mused, and that took me by surprise.

“Are you a stripper?” I asked. Objectively, he had the build for it, but I hadn’t expected that from a man who seemed as quiet as King. Really, I should be the last to judge, every stripper at the club worked insanely hard. Pole dancing wasn’t for the weak, that was for fucking sure.

“Not exactly,” he hedged, then he sighed. “In any case, I might as well get it out there now. I’m an omega escort. I get omegas through their heats with no strings attached.”

“That’s interesting. I didn’t even realize that was a thing. Good on you,” I said. “I wonder if that would be an issue for Sienna...” I wasn’t really expecting an answer since I was just thinking out loud, but he responded anyway.

“She knows what I do, but we’ll see. It’s not a job I assumed I’d have forever, but I wouldn’t even know what else to do if she had an issue,” he admitted.

“There you guys are. No coffee?” River called out. A few steps later, they came to a stop in front of us and loudly sipped their drink. It was cool today, so they were actually clothed, wearing a sweater, skinny jeans, and a huge scarf around their neck to finish the look off. It was probably the most clothing I’d seen on the alpha in all the time I’d known them.

Yuri, of course, was in his usual business attire. He stood in front of us and crossed his arms in front of his chest.

“We need to discuss Sienna. What are everyone’s intentions with her?” he demanded more than asked.

“Let me stop you right there,” I said, holding up a hand. “If we want to have a conversation at all, this *top alpha* bullshit has to stop. You are my boss, and I respect you, but I won’t go into a pack *under* you. There are no leaders in this. If she even decides we’re pack material, that is.”

Yuri’s eyes flared in annoyance, and I could practically see him biting his tongue. I’d never known him as anything but calm and collected, so my words must have struck a nerve. He was used to being the boss, the leader, but this wasn’t the club he owned or his family. If Sienna accepted us, we would come together in a shared pack.

“Oh, it’s getting spicy today.” River laughed and took a pointed sip of their drink. “I’ve had a whole lot of coffee and no sleep, so let’s just get it all out in the open. I like Sienna, she’s obviously my mate, and I want to present the idea of courting to her. But she’s afraid her job would be at risk, and that’s a hard line for her.”

“Then it sounds as if Yuri needs to address that policy,” King stated easily. “That’s the only way to make it not an issue.”

“I’m assessing our policies when I get to the office,” Yuri said. “I made it a point to protect the omegas working for me, and the no-dating policy was in place long before the laws

came into effect. No one needs workplace drama messing with business.”

“I’m on River’s wavelength. I’d like to tell her we’re interested and let her decide from there. But only after a policy change. If that’s a boundary for her, we respect it.”

Yuri jumped back in, but his tone was calmer this time, like he was speaking to equals. “Sienna has to be our focus. We respect each other and talk about issues as they arise so they don’t become a bigger problem. As her potential alphas, we owe her that much, at the very least.”

We would have to adjust and allow other alphas to take point from time to time, but as long as there was mutual respect to keep Sienna safe and happy, we could make it work.

“Splendid. I’ll start a group chat, and Yuri can inform us when policies are updated,” River sang out before handing their phone over to King. “I have theirs, so I just need your number. And when Sienna is on board, because I know we’ll win her over, we can add her, too. No secrets, no grudges. We’re all adults, so let’s act like it.”

On that, I could definitely agree. Now, we just needed Sienna to give us a chance and put down her walls. I had a feeling that would be easier said than done.

CHAPTER
EIGHT

Sienna

What the hell am I doing?

That was my first thought, though not about last night and the alphas I'd have to see tonight, but about the outfit I was trying on. I was ignoring the fact that it probably should have been about my usually nonexistent love life. Really, I needed to figure my shit out, but I had way too many curve balls coming my way to even *attempt* that right now. Instead, I was questioning my new lingerie choices.

Turning to the left, then the right, I looked over the outfit I had on. It was a neon green lace set. The bra hooked in the front, with a small cut out to tease more of my cleavage, and the straps crossed over my chest before wrapping around my neck. The thong had high hip straps that highlighted my small waist. It was gorgeous, and I knew it would look amazing if Yuri ever did one of those black light nights that we had all discussed with him.

Fuck. The lingerie was going to be mine by default if I didn't stop thinking about them. No way could I hand the assistant a slick-covered thong and tell her no thanks.

Get yourself together, Sienna.

Just then, my phone started to ring. I grabbed it and took a steadying breath when I saw Hazel's name on the screen. "Hey!" I said, but Hazel was having none of it.

"Sienna Rivers, you bitch!" she cried out, and I heard Eliza let out a long-suffering sigh. "You need to tell us who those

alphas were. *Every. Detail.* Or I'll sic Teagan on you and get answers that way!"

"A threat before I even attempt to evade the question?" I joked, my racing mind trying to figure out how to *not* answer her question. But then my mind focused on King.

"Sienna," Eliza prompted when I was silent for too long.

"King, the guy who bought me water, was the alpha who helped me... *you know.* I waved my hand even though they couldn't see it.

"Oh my god! No way! That hunk of alpha was the man who helped you through your heat?!" Eliza asked, her voice uncharacteristically high.

"Fuck yes. Congrats, Sienna. He looks like he'd know exactly what to do with a knot." I could practically envision the wicked smile on Hazel's face as she said that.

"He was... I'm not going to lie, he was amazing." *Not that I have a lot to compare it to, but I think it's safe to say King was unforgettable.*

"What about the others?" Eliza followed up.

"Uhh... Nash is Bane's brother?" I offered up, hoping they would assume that I had met him at Neon Nights.

Luckily, that sent us on a tangent about Eliza and Bane and Loki, which made her go deep into deflection mode. The three of them were together, at least in some way, but she was hellbent on not giving us any juicy details about their relationship. Like any good friend, I was totally willing to use that to get out of answering any more questions.

After a few more minutes and a reminder from Hazel about pole dancing classes, we hung up. I changed back into my clothes and bought the new lingerie before hurrying out the door. Since my car was still parked at the club with a flat, I needed to catch the bus to work.

As I rushed down the sidewalk, the bus I needed was pulling away from the bus stop. I stumbled to a stop and swore loudly enough that nearby pedestrians made a point to walk

around me. The bus schedule gave me no good news. The next one wasn't coming by for another twenty minutes, which was ten minutes past my deadline to clock in at work. *Son of a bitch.*

Reluctantly, I called Yuri, praying I'd get his voicemail and not the quiet alpha himself, but, of course, he picked up after the second ring.

"Sienna—" Yuri started, but I cut him off.

"Hey, Yuri." I licked my lips, cursing the breathless way I said his name. "I'm going to be a little bit late tonight."

A beat of silence.

"If this is about last night..."

"No." I shook my head. "I just... My car is still stuck at the club, and the bus I was going to take just pulled away. The next one won't be here for another half hour."

A few papers rustled in the background, then I heard the jingle of keys. "Where are you?"

"Uhh... Why?"

"I'm coming to pick you up. It's a completely reasonable thing to do, Sienna. Where are you?" Yuri pushed, and before my brain realized what was happening, I told him the cross streets in view. He ended the call with a strict order for me not to move.

Picking me up is a reasonable thing to do. He's my boss. It makes sense to ensure all employees are there to help you make a profit.

But flashes of him staring at me with heated possessive glances, his body moving against mine, filled my mind. Yuri was always calm, cool, and collected, but last night I had seen the possessive, jealous alpha he kept so carefully reined in. Part of me wanted to tease it out of him, make him lose that hard-earned control, just to see what he would be like.

I had no business having these thoughts about my boss.

My alpha.

Fuck, I was so totally fucking screwed.

The moment Yuri pulled up in his fancy car, I felt my body tense. It was so frustrating to know that these men were perfect for me, but I couldn't get my shit together long enough to give them a chance.

As if she couldn't fucking help herself, my phone lit up with a text from Sam. I refused to read it. Over the past several months, my family had gotten more of my checks than I had.

"Is everything alright?" Yuri's voice was so close that I dropped my phone, but he grabbed it before it hit the ground.

"Yeah, I'm fine," I lied. For once I had the urge to spill my guts. Everything felt like it was coming to a head, like I'd explode if I didn't let some of that internal pressure out. Too bad my nerves were making me tongue tied. *Fuck, I need a damn drink before I try to dance tonight.*

"Hm," was all he offered as he opened my door. He helped me get settled in before walking around to get in the driver's seat.

The ride was tense; I could tell he was fighting with himself to keep his silence. Just as I was about to dive out of my door to escape the rising pressure, he pulled over to the side of the road.

"You aren't going to kill me or something, are you?" I joked as I glanced out at the trees lining either side of the road. "I'm not the best runner, but I'll fight."

He blinked at me when I finally turned to face him, then he laughed, the sound loud in the small space. "Did you just ask if I was going to *kill* you?"

"I mean, most alphas don't just pull over in the middle of nowhere, Yuri," I said before my laughter joined his.

"I wouldn't say we're in the middle of nowhere." He gestured at the city around us. "Clearly, I haven't done a good enough job conveying how I'm feeling about things. Sienna, we know that it's ultimately your decision to start our pack, and with four alphas, it will be complicated. Before we really

get into any of that, I want you to know that I've revised our staff rules."

"What?" I asked, shock making my voice go high. "You can't just change rules like that!" It was a strange stance to take since it benefited me. But everyone at work would know that I was the reason it was changing. Sure I didn't have any close work friends outside of River, but the last thing I wanted was everyone to hate me. Even if we tried to keep our pack under the radar at work it would eventually come out. Scent blockers didn't take away instincts.

"I can, in fact," he mused dryly. "I'm the owner. There was a reason for the rule, but that no longer applies, so it's time to make a change."

Now he had my curiosity. "Okay, I'll bite. What was the reason?"

"Nothing too exciting. One of the bouncers I had before Nash had a girlfriend who he brought in for dance tryouts. She was *bad*. I'm not trying to be mean, either. The girl truly couldn't dance. Think of a really bad reality show audition with jerky movements and strange facial expressions. She actually looked like she was in pain. You can imagine how well River hid his amusement."

At the same time, we began to laugh. "So you just made up the rule to get out of hiring her?" I asked when I finally regained my composure.

"In part. The rest was because I didn't want to make either of them feel bad. I could have just said she was in desperate need of rhythm, but the way he looked on, so proud, as she did whatever it was... I couldn't break the man's heart."

"Aw, the tin man *does* have a heart," I joked, then the car descended into silence as the reality of it all sunk in. "I do like you guys, ya know. I'm not the dive all in type, but I'm willing to give you a chance. You'll just have to understand that I'm not a submissive omega. Nor am I going to tell you every single aspect of my life right away. I've got shit in my life I'm not willing to share just yet and that will have to be okay."

“For now,” he agreed. “I’ll give you your space, but if this stretches on, you can’t expect us to sit by as you shoulder everything without clueing us in.”

I sighed heavily, knowing he was right. “That’s fair.”

“Shall we, then?” he asked, veering back onto the road again. “The new contract is waiting for you in my office. The other girls have already signed theirs. You’re the last since your shift hasn’t started yet.”

“And the other guys?”

“We talked,” Yuri explained. “We’re all on the same page, so the ball is in your court, Sienna. You’re in charge.” I liked the sound of that, probably more than I should. Something started to spark inside me, a little hint of hope that this might be something in my life that actually had a chance of working out.

True to his word, a contract was waiting for me at the club. I signed the new one before heading to the locker room. My heart pounded in my chest as I pushed open the door. The chatter died down for a second before one of the other dancers, Bailey, came over to me, and I bit my tongue as I waited to see what she’d say.

“So, we’ve all talked. It has to be *you*. Which of the guys did you snag?” Her eyes danced with anticipation, but I could tell it was simple curiosity so I answered truthfully.

“A few of them,” I replied after a moment of hesitation. “Nash, Yuri, and River.”

Their jaws dropped, then the dancers were on me like lions at feeding time. Everyone was talking a mile a minute, lobbing question after question with such speed that I had no hope of answering them. As if she could tell I was getting overwhelmed, Bailey blew out a shrill whistle.

“She can’t give us the tea with all you hens cackling at her at once. And I, for one, want details!” she growled.

“We haven’t really started anything yet. I refused to let anything happen because of our rules here. I need this job,” I told them honestly.

“This job is pretty great,” Valorie agreed as she added a fresh layer of lip gloss and pulled on her heels. “I’ve worked at a few places, so I can definitely vouch for that. Yuri doesn’t steal our tips like a lot of other guys. I used to lose half my money to those asshole alphas.”

Her mentioning how great Yuri was had warmth spreading in my chest. I’d met enough alphas like the ones she’d described to appreciate the pack that I was about to let past my walls.

“You’re on in five, ladies! June is finishing up her set!” River’s voice echoed down the hall to us, and Bailey shouted back a reply on our behalf. There was no more time to muse about alphas and packs; it was showtime.

I couldn’t help but wonder if Yuri had spread the news to the other guys. I’d finally told them I’d give them a chance, and that meant everything would change now.

How would they react to so many eyes on *their* omega?

I guess I’m about to find out.

CHAPTER
NINE

Sienna

“**W**atch out!” Eliza yelled. There was a loud squeak, then Eliza’s sweaty skin had her sliding down to the floor, hitting the hardwood with a thud.

“That was at least a seven on the style scale,” Valentina called out. “You need more flourish as you fall.”

“I’ll work on that next time,” Eliza sassed back breathlessly. She was splayed out on the floor, making no attempts to move. A grin slowly broke out as I walked over and glanced down at her. “I did it though!”

“Hell yeah!” Teagan cheered. She stepped away from her own pole and took a long drink of water. Pole dancing class was about the only time any of us actually hydrated properly.

“Yeah, you did,” I agreed, holding out a hand and helping her up. “Way better than last week.”

“That was amazing!” Hazel agreed as she dabbed at her neck with a towel. “Holy hell, all of this exercise might kill me.”

“Nah, you’ll be as agile as I am when you’re this old,” Valentina said. “Now, drinks?”

“Don’t we always?” Eliza countered. “Thank god there’s a locker room here.”

“You just like to see me naked,” Hazel shot back as she shook her ass at us.

“Your lack of modesty doesn’t count as us ogling you,” Eliza sang out. The other women in the class had already walked out, leaving us behind.

After we all showered, I pulled on my new lingerie set for work and threw on clothes over it. Of course, as I was pulling on my shirt, Valentina walked into the changing room.

“Oh, sorry, Sienna,” she said before raising an eyebrow. “Now, I know that’s not simple lingerie. What are you getting up to?” Her mood had started off as playful, but it changed the moment she saw my panic.

“It’s... Uh...” I tried to choke out, but she stopped me and leaned in close.

“First, that green is striking on you. Second, I don’t spill secrets, Sienna. I’ve got a good guess where you’ve been working, and good for you! But that’s not my news to share, so I won’t,” she whispered.

While she walked away, I could feel my stomach churning. It was stupid of me to hold so tightly to my secrets when my friends wouldn’t care, nor would they use it against me. Hell, they’d been hyping me up to dance ever since I got my first job at the casino. But dancing burlesque and being a stripper were two very different things.

“Sienna, get your cute ass out of there!” Hazel yelled. “I’m starving!”

“You’re always hungry,” I called back as I zipped up my hoodie and shoved my sweaty clothes in a bag. She flipped me off when I opened the curtain to my dressing area, but I laughed, following them out to our usual café after dropping our bags in the car. Valentina insisted we take instead of walking.

Hanging out with her always felt the right amount of frivolous. She lived her life to the fullest and spoiled us in the process. With my mom sick and me working my ass off, I appreciated these moments more than she’d ever know.

I ordered some comfort food, French toast and extra bacon, before Hazel and Eliza started a ridiculous argument about

what was the superior breakfast drink, orange juice or coffee. My phone dinged, and I smiled down at the group chat notifications coming in.

River: So I hear we're giving this thing a go now?

King: You know I'm in Sienna.

I bit my lip as thoughts of my heat came rushing back. Good thing the girls were already diving into mimosas.

Yuri: Everything on the work front is taken care of.

Nash: Good. When are we taking our omega out, then?

Sienna: I'm working tonight, but I'm off tomorrow. Anyone else?

River: I've got a shift, but I heard the other bartenders talking about wanting overtime. I can switch.

"What's got you smiling, Sienna?" Teagan asked. She never let things go, and one look at her narrowed eyes had the truth finally coming out. Now that the guys and I were diving into this, it felt wrong to hold back. I had enough secrets. It was time.

"I have something to tell you guys," I said. They all put down their glasses while I nervously twisted my hands. "You know my job at that casino?"

"Yeah?" Eliza's brow furrowed when I didn't continue. "Did something happen?" Mama hen was in full effect now, which meant I was out of any stalling time.

"I had to quit. The customers were horrible, and some asshole accused me of stealing, so I walked out. I found a new job, and I've been working there for a few months. That's how I know Yuri. He's my boss. River and Nash work there, too."

"What assholes! You'd never steal!" Teagan growled, but I wasn't lucky enough for all of them to be stuck on that part of my explanation.

"Wait, isn't Nash a bouncer at a strip club?" Eliza questioned. I nodded and gave them a minute to let that information sink in.

“So you’ve been lying to us?” Hazel clarified, disappointment clouding her features. “I thought we weren’t keeping secrets. That was a huge conversation we had when I got with my pack, and we said we’d stick to that policy from now on.” The hurt in her voice was exactly what I’d expected, and the guilt that had been gnawing at me for months reared its ugly head.

“I’m sorry,” I said quietly, tears making my eyes burn. “Life has just been so crazy, and at first I wasn’t trying to keep it a secret. We were dealing with the wedding, and I wasn’t going to ruin it with my drama. Then the new job turned into something I did for me and didn’t want to share. It wasn’t that I thought you’d be assholes and judge me. It was just that it was *my* thing.”

“That is bullshit, Sienna,” Eliza said, downing the rest of her drink in one go. The way she was blinking told me that I’d fucked up.

“If that counts for anything, I’m sorry,” I offered sadly, and the tears spilled down my cheeks. *Fuck*. “I dance, and I love it. The pole dancing classes helped a lot.”

“We do those with you,” Hazel said in a huff. “You could have brought it up at any point. Why hide it?”

“I told you why,” I said honestly. “It was just a big deal for me, and I wasn’t ready to share when the time came. I don’t really get a lot of things that are just mine... Maybe that’s shitty, but it’s true.”

Teagan let out a breath. “You genuinely didn’t think we’d be bitches about it or look down on you for it?”

“Of course I didn’t,” I defended.

“Is there anything else you need to tell us?” Eliza asked. She pursed her lips and stared me down. The others, including Valentina, who had been silent this entire time, waited to see what I’d say.

Part of me knew that I should mention how things had gotten worse with my mom—the constant updates from Sam, who currently held medical power of attorney, the money I

was sending over every few days... Obviously mom's condition was only getting worse and I hadn't even been able to talk to her in weeks. But I also knew revealing that my sister was my only source of information would only cause tension to flare up again and I didn't think I could handle that today.

"No," I told them firmly, shaking my head. "Well, actually... You originally asked why I was smiling. I'm going to start seeing the alphas that joined us for girls' night."

Valentina choked, shock making her sputter, and Hazel threw her head back with laughter. "The alphas?! All of them?"

"Yes." I smirked, feeling oddly proud that I had been able to garner that kind of reaction from the older omega.

"Four alphas?" Eliza shook her head. Her blue eyes were still slightly guarded, but she did smile at least. "Good luck to you with that. I couldn't imagine. Loki is enough to put up with, and he's just one alpha."

"Yeah, I couldn't imagine having more than Maximo and Sutton. I'd never get to do anything."

"That's not true." Teagan nudged Hazel with her shoulder. "The twins would still sneak off with you to do all kinds of crazy things."

Hazel laughed, her cheeks heated with the thought of her two mates.

I shook my head as we all calmed down and went back to eating. My phone buzzed again, and I saw that Yuri was telling King that he should stop by the club tonight. He mentioned something about a business proposition and talking about date ideas. The others agreed, and I gave my own approval before turning my phone over so that I could focus on my friends.

I was just glad no one was holding on to any grudges about my secret keeping, but given the spark of mischief in Valentina's eyes, I knew things were about to go off the rails.

"I take it from the sexy green number I saw you slip on earlier that you work tonight?"

All of a sudden, Teagan was signaling for the check while Hazel and Eliza were glued to their phones. “What’s going on?”

“We are going to support you and show you why you should have told us about this amazing job in the first place,” Hazel replied archly as Eliza reached out to pat my hand.

“Exactly.”

Valentina perked up. “Oh, does this mean I can dance on stage with you?”

“I don’t know if Yuri—”

“Of course I can!” Valentina replied haughtily. “Let’s go.” She threw a couple of bills on the table, and before I knew what was happening, they swept me into the car. A few minutes later, Valentina whipped into the parking spot beside my Toyota that was still stranded there. *I really need to save some money from my next check to get a new tire.*

“Uh, guys? I don’t start work for another two hours,” I told them as they all spilled out of the car.

“Perfect, then you can hang out with us until it’s time for you to dance!” Teagan threaded her arm through mine and marched us up to the strip club.

“The guys are going to be here soon,” Hazel announced with a wide grin. “Alessandro and Emiliano said they would come prepared with ones. Did you message Loki and Bane, Eliza?”

“No.” Eliza’s cheeks reddened. “I just asked the new guy to cover my shift tonight so I could come.”

“I messaged them.” Valentina held up her phone proudly. “They’re on the way.”

“Valentina!” Eliza protested as we showed our IDs to the daytime bouncer and made our way inside.

I didn’t work during the day, so I didn’t know anyone that was here, but we wasted no time grabbing a large table up front and cheering on the dancers. My phone buzzed again, and I saw it was the group chat.

River: You're mighty quiet, Sienna. Everything okay? We didn't overwhelm you, did we?

Figuring a picture was the best way to answer, I turned on the camera and grabbed a selfie of all of us. My smile grew into a grin when I really looked at it. Eliza and Teagan were cheering on the dancer and handing her money. Valentina and Hazel were leaning on each other, laughing, with Hazel's men seated into seats behind her. Just as I sent the picture to the chat, Loki and Bane entered the club. They each raised a hand in greeting and walked straight over to Eliza, who greeted them with a shy smile.

River: You never said you were coming to work early!

Sienna: I wasn't planning on it, but then I told them I work here, and they wanted to see it.

Nash: I'm on my way now.

King: I'll bite.

River: Oh, do you really?

Yuri: River. Focus, please.

River: I am focused. Trust me.

River: Not going to answer me, alpha?

King: I do. Do you want to find out?

River: Kinky. Just remember, I bite too.

Sienna: Does that mean you're all coming to join us?

Yuri: I'm already here.

I jerked around at that and found Yuri watching me from the back of the club. Snagging a nearby chair, I motioned for him to join us. He stared at me for a moment before he pushed off the wall and accepted my offer. Carefully, he slid an arm around the back of my chair and scooted closer until I was pressed to his side. The scent of him surrounded me, making me undeniably aware of the lingerie I was wearing.

“So you decided to tell them?” Yuri's hot breath on my ear made me shiver.

“Yeah. I told them when we went to lunch.”

“After our pole dancing class,” Teagan cut in. She leaned past Valentina to get a good look at Yuri. “Which alpha are you? I wasn’t with the others when you all went out.”

“Yuri,” he answered smoothly, not the least bit bothered by my friend butting into our conversation. “You must be Teagan.”

“The one and only,” she cockily replied. “Now, Sienna, you need to start your shift so we can see you shake your ass off up there!”

“Yeah, come on!” Hazel clapped her hands. “Show us all the dirty stuff!”

“Please don’t,” Bane griped, laughter dancing in his eyes when Loki started coughing. Eliza elbowed him, and the biker tugged her into his lap in retaliation.

“I’ll pay you to show her how to do all the dirty stuff for us,” Alessandro yelled out, and Emiliano heartily agreed.

“Stay for my shift then.” I shrugged, happy about how supportive they were being. Before I started dancing, confidence had never been my strong suit. Now, I was proud of how far I’d come and how hard I worked.

Valentina pulled Yuri into a conversation about her dancing a set. He looked slightly panicked, especially when Maximo purposely avoided meeting his stare.

“I see you started the party without us,” River called out as they entered the club, with Nash and King following shortly after. All three alphas grabbed seats near me while Teagan fanned herself.

“And you were worried about telling them where you worked,” River tsked as they leaned back in the chair. “Your friends are awesome.”

“You didn’t mention you had so many connections.” King nodded subtly at Maximo and Loki.

“Blame Hazel for meeting both of them,” I replied with a roll of my eyes. “Loki broke into our moving van when we got

here.”

“You asked me to!” Loki called out. “I didn’t just break into it.”

“Sienna, you locked the keys in the van,” Eliza pointed out.

“Not on purpose,” I huffed as Hazel snorted.

“So then Hazel waltzed up to the MC and got them to help us out.”

“I still have the picture saved on my phone. The MC has some delicious members.” Teagan smirked when Eliza groaned. “What? It’s not like it’s just Loki in it! Not everyone has your sex life, E. Or you other two bitches apparently.”

“Shut up.” Eliza rolled her eyes.

“Oh my god.” I rubbed my face, hoping like hell it wasn’t burning up. “With that, I’m going to go to the back and get ready.”

I felt everyone’s stares on me as I stood up. There was still plenty of time before my shift started, but I needed a thorough shower before I got on stage to get the pheromones off of me. Hopefully, my lingerie was still good. I didn’t have anything clean in my locker as a backup.

When my phone buzzed, I ignored the new message from Sam with a twinge of guilt. She could wait until later. I didn’t want to ruin my happy night.

CHAPTER
TEN

King

Watching Sienna dance was something else. The way her body moved and the teasing glances she shot my way had me struggling to remember that she was working. The only thing that kept my alpha tendencies in check was the fact that her scent was gone, washed away like it had been the first time we met.

A throat clearing beside me had me turning to my old school friend Yuri. He was looking at me with a small smile curling his lips. “You have no idea what I just said, do you?”

“No.” I laughed roughly. “Blame an omega who is very, very fucking good at her job.”

Yuri quickly glanced at Sienna, and although he didn’t react outwardly, I saw the heat in his gaze when he looked at me again. He might hide it better than the others, but he wasn’t unaffected by our omega.

“Your current job could create an issue with you becoming part of a pack,” Yuri said with a click on his tongue. “Sienna might have a problem with it when she finds out about it, but I have a solution.”

I took a deep breath, unsure if I should share this information or not. At the moment, I couldn’t really see a way around it. “Sienna knows what I do. I, uh, recently helped her out during her heat. That’s how we met.”

Yuri froze, his head tilting slightly as I nervously rubbed the back of my neck. “She called the clinic services, and my

name was up. I didn't see her again until we were at Neon Nights."

He didn't even blink, wrestling with whatever thoughts were running through his mind. Before he could respond, River ambled over. He slid three drinks across to us as Nash joined us, then leaned on the bar to talk to us all.

"What did I miss? Why are you so tense, Yuri?"

"Nothing," Yuri growled, making River raise their eyebrows. Nash did the same when he closed the distance between us. "Honestly, it doesn't matter. I was just about to offer King a job."

"Doing what?" I asked, curious about what the job could be.

"We can discuss the details another night, but I have some other investments. I know you can help me maintain them."

His answer was elusive, and part of me wondered about the vagueness in his response. Was it because the others were around, or was this because I had slept with Sienna? Either way, I nodded, agreeing that we should talk about it later.

Right then, loud whistles and cheers filled the room just as "Cherry Pie" by Warrant finished playing, marking the end of Sienna's set. Her friends threw money, the grinning twin betas handing their omega stacks of dollars to toss on the stage. Sienna gathered it all while laughing.

Once she exited the stage, the older omega that was here with Sienna's friends climbed onto it, working it in some leather pants and a tight tank top.

"Oh god," Yuri muttered as he shook his head. I was grateful for the distraction. The unexpected show put the shadow of a smile on his face, taking off the edge of uncertainty that had made the air between us heavy.

"Get it!" River yelled out. One of the alphas stood up, motioning for her to get down, but she ignored him and danced to the Lady Gaga song blasting through the speakers.

“I don’t work here yet,” I told him with a wide grin when Yuri eyed me. “Nash, I think this is a job for you.”

“Nope. That’s Maximo’s issue.” Nash remained seated. “Not getting involved in that one. The girls will get more of a break this way.”

“Oh my god.” The breathy voice behind me had us all turning. Sienna was standing there in the clothes she’d had on earlier. Sweat trickled down her temple, and River promptly handed her some water. “She’s amazing.”

“Valentina is a force of nature,” Nash agreed, making Sienna smile at him. “Good luck to Maximo.”

“I heard that!” the older alpha growled out while the bikers started coughing. “I could use some help here, *bouncer*.”

“I’m on my break.” Nash held up a drink. “Luke, you’re up! Help the customer out.”

As the bouncer on door duty reluctantly approached the dancing omega, I focused on Sienna again. She was swaying to the music, slowly drinking her water.

“About that date...” River prompted. “Anyone have any ideas?”

“Somewhere that’s not a bar,” I said dryly. “We’ve spent too much of our time together in Neon Nights and here. Our omega needs a change.”

“I can get behind that,” Sienna said. Her fingers tangled in her fiery red hair as she thought it over. She’d never looked more beautiful, but that was a thought I had every time I saw her.

“Dinner?” River suggested. “It’s freezing outside, so I’m going to slap anyone who suggests a walk or something cheesy like that. Save that shit for spring or summertime.”

“Agreed,” Sienna said quickly. “I get enough exercise by doing this.”

“I’ll make reservations,” Yuri said, pulling his phone out. “Italian, Mexican, or French?” His attention was on Sienna,

but she glanced at Nash, then me, before facing the two cousins.

“I’m not really the fancy type of girl, and I have a feeling that not all of us would be comfortable at the French restaurant,” she started carefully.

“I clean up nice,” Nash argued gently. His cheeks tinted pink, and she groaned.

“I’m sorry, it really wasn’t that I didn’t think you’d fit in. I was worried that I wouldn’t,” she reassured him.

“Everyone fits in here,” River said easily. “How about we all agree to be adults and speak up if something is out of our comfort zones so no feelings get hurt?”

“Deal,” Nash said.

“I can agree to that,” I said. “Is now the time to say I don’t do heights? I’m out if someone gets the wild idea to rock climb or something like that.”

Sienna’s laughter filled the space, and I doubted she noticed how she seized our complete attention in that single moment.

“If we’re going to air that kind of thing... I refuse to go to health food restaurants. I’m incapable of hiding when I don’t like something, and if I’m forced to eat only vegetables, you’ll have an angry omega on your hands.”

“Somehow I’m not surprised,” Yuri drawled as he raised an eyebrow. “Am I going to have to beg you to drink smoothies with hidden vegetables?”

“Oh, I can drink them if they don’t taste like grass,” she countered with a smirk. “But if you hide veggies in my food, that’s a deal breaker.”

River groaned. “I’m on Sienna’s side. He’s tried that shit with me for years. Trust me, Si, just drink the smoothie and call it a day. They’re not all bad.”

“Noted,” she said before turning her attention to the stage; Valentina had finally gotten down, letting the next girl start her set. She was openly happy to see her coworker get the

admiration of the crowd, whistling and cheering with no reservations. Sienna was just so open and accepting, the kind of person I couldn't imagine harboring ill will toward anyone. It had my mind drifting to my own family. Imagining my sister doing this and the resulting reactions of my family was almost comical if it wasn't so sad.

My dad was a macho alpha who thought "true alphas" asserted their dominance and lorded over their family like royalty. He never coveted my omega mother, who was as submissive as he'd forced her to be. She didn't complain; she simply followed her orders like a *good omega* should. He wouldn't even allow betas to be in the pack despite how desperately they were needed.

I thought that was why Sienna called to me the way she did. She was fiercely independent and had a strong enough personality that I knew she wouldn't stand for the misogynist bullshit that my family thrived on.

They'd disowned me long ago, which was something I still thought about even though I hated how I was raised. In the end, I had been the outcast, but that wasn't something I could be ashamed about. I'd helped so many omegas and strived to be a better man than that arrogant alpha ever could be.

I'd always said I wouldn't be a part of a pack. The idea of letting myself get boxed in like that, forcing me to take on the role of the alpha, was terrifying. But the universe seemed to know better. It must since it had given me, given *us*, something so completely different from what I'd lived and had tried to avoid.

"That's a whole lot of thinking," River teased as they shifted closer. Despite the light words, their eyebrows were pulled down in concern.

"Sorry." My voice was quiet, which did nothing to calm their worry, but they didn't get the chance to push me thanks to Teagan's ringing phone.

She frowned down at it. "It's our landlord," she muttered before answering despite the noise level around her.

“What the heck would he want this late?” Hazel wondered, but all four girls were closing in on Teagan, waiting. Their friend’s face paled, and her mouth fell open.

“Oh my god,” she breathed out. “We’re on our way.”

“What happened?” Eliza asked.

“Fire. Our apartment building is on fire!” she gasped as she snatched her purse and ran out, everyone else on her heels. We simply followed the omegas, ready to help. All thoughts of my family fell away, and a sense of rightness replaced it. This was how alphas responded to their omegas, with concern and the intent to protect, not with anger or resentment.

Everyone piled into the limo and a few SUVs with surprisingly little chaos. Maximo and Yuri both stepped in to make sure everyone was accounted for.

The angry flames were spilling out of open windows and climbing up the outside of the building when we arrived. Firefighters were already working hard to save the structure while police officers corralled the disgruntled residents, trying to keep them away from the building.

“Oh god, everything I own is in there,” Sienna said. Her voice cracked, and the girls gathered around, forming a close knit group.

“I’ll go ask for information,” Teagan said, breaking away to approach a nearby officer.

“This is nuts,” Hazel breathed. “We’ll figure out where you guys can stay. Don’t worry.”

“We can definitely help,” Maximo said.

River and Yuri hissed something to each other.

“As much as I’d like to, I can’t help. My apartment is gone the moment I change jobs,” I admitted. Yuri heard me, his head snapping up, eyes narrowed, before he went back to chatting with his cousin.

“We’ve got room for Sienna if she wants it,” River offered. Sienna sagged in relief at the prospect.

“Thank you,” she whispered. “I’ll figure something out when we see what we can salvage.”

Yuri’s lips formed a thin line, but he didn’t argue since Teagan was running back to our group.

“It started in the lower levels. Something about wiring, or at least that’s their preliminary guess. I didn’t understand everything they said. They’ll be fighting this for hours, and he suggested if we have somewhere to go, we go. We’ll get a call tomorrow with more information,” she said solemnly. “But we’re only on the fifth floor, so I doubt much of our stuff will be salvageable.”

No one said a word, our attention turned back to the flames. The fire was dwindling thanks to the firefighters working their asses off to minimize damage, but I had no doubt that the girls had lost everything.

“My mom’s necklace was in there. I never wear it to work,” Sienna said quietly.

“My pictures are too.” Eliza’s words cut off into a sob, and Bane and Loki surrounded her. Hazel watched them with pain on her face. She knew she couldn’t fix this, and it didn’t make me feel any better to know that we all shared that sentiment.

“I leave tomorrow,” Teagan said. “I won’t be here to see if my stuff survived. I’ll grab a hotel by the airport tonight and order some things. But you guys need to find somewhere to stay. I doubt you guys want to stay with me just for one night.”

“Eliza’s with us,” Loki said firmly. She opened her mouth, but it snapped closed when he raised an eyebrow. “There’s room at the compound for anyone else who needs it.”

“I’ll stay with River and Yuri,” Sienna said, glancing at them nervously, but that didn’t get my hackles up. It was more of an anticipatory feeling, the edges of her nerves frayed by what she’d gone through tonight. I didn’t get the sense that it was *them* truly making her nervous, though it would have been nice if I’d had her scent to back up my assumption.

“King, you’re welcome too,” Yuri said. “You’ll need a backup.”

“You better add another room on then,” Nash said. “I won’t be the only pack member not there.”

Yuri nodded and gestured at the cars. “Let’s go. There’s nothing we can do here.”

I took Sienna’s hand and led her to Nash’s SUV, wedging her between me and River while Yuri climbed into the passenger’s seat.

The ride was quiet, all of us unsure where this new twist would take us, but I was certain about one thing. As long as our omega was safe, we’d figure out the rest.

Because there was no way in hell we’d let her go back to an apartment like that.

Not now.

CHAPTER
ELEVEN

Sienna

It went from one of the best nights I'd had in a long time to the worst. I couldn't shake the images of the flames from my head. The knowledge that they were destroying everything I owned was bad enough; adding in the sentimental value of some of those items was almost too much.

"This is your house?" King's gasp had me glancing up at the modern mansion in front of us. It was just barely out of town, so it was surrounded by trees on all sides, and the giant structure was gorgeous, like something out of a magazine. Windows lined most of the surface, with black and white brick showing through on the framework outside of all the glass. The driveway led to a large garage door, and Nash navigated the SUV inside the garage with a familiarity I expected.

"I'll be moving into the main house now," River told Yuri as he helped me out of the car. My first impression of the house, and its clear meaning that they were out of my league, was only made worse by the news that there was a *guest house* too. Seriously, what kind of money did they have to make a guest house a totally normal thing?

They'd seen my apartment building. How were they not second guessing this relationship from that alone?

My thoughts were a tumultuous jumble, but thankfully not one of the guys said anything. River led me inside and sat me at the kitchen island, and a distant part of my awareness cataloged what it saw as we walked there. The entire place

looked more like a series of showrooms than a home. Nothing was out of place, not as far as I could tell, anyway, nor did anything look remotely used. Everything was shining and cleaned to absolute perfection. Did anyone actually live here? The black and white theme had continued inside the home, with pops of red here and there to break it up.

Everyone was talking in hushed tones, and the more whispers I heard, the more I wanted to scream. With the worst timing ever, something only my sister could perfect, my phone buzzed again, and the sight of her name, in combination with everything else that had happened in the last hour, tipped me over the edge. I was done.

“Stop!” They all froze, staring at me with wide eyes as I stood up and fisted my hands at my sides. “I’m not fragile or going to fall apart. I’ve dealt with worse, alright? I’ll still be working like normal. I’ll get some new clothes and eventually find a new place to live. It’s all under control.”

Yuri was less than amused when he came over and helped me sit back down. “I’m going to get you some hot tea, and you’re going to take a breath, omega. No one is here to kick you out or make you do anything you don’t want to. You’ll have your own room, and I put you in a suite so you’ll have room for a nest as well. Omegas need that space, so it’s yours. I have no intention of rushing you out of my house, Sienna, nor do I expect you to be chipper right now.”

“No one would expect that,” Nash said as he went to Yuri’s fridge, poking around and pulling out a few things. “She needs to eat before shock sets in.”

“Maybe she would like you to stop talking around her as if she weren’t here,” River mused as they sat down next to me. “It’s like you alphas have never had a woman in the house.”

“I’ve been a bachelor, so I haven’t, actually,” Nash shot back with a rough laugh. “Hell, outside of my grandma, who was a real spitfire, Sienna’s the first I’ll have lived with.”

“I didn’t realize your grandma raised you,” I said, grasping onto anything that would change the subject.

“She’s great. The only family that was there for Bane and me,” Nash said. There was clearly more to his story, and I realized that I wanted to know more of it. They were all still a bit of a mystery to me, even River. They might seem like an open book, but everything I knew about them was surface level. I needed more than that if I was going to really consider tying myself to them in a pack situation.

Maybe living with them, even if it wasn’t thanks to the best of circumstances, would be a blessing in disguise. Even if I hated admitting it, being with them felt so easy. Having them surrounding me, caring for me, made this whole nightmare a bit easier to swallow.

The hardest part was having all of them so close that their scents were everywhere. River and Yuri were the strongest. but that would quickly change with everyone staying here. It definitely made it harder to resist them, experience be damned.

“So, where are the rest of us sleeping?” King asked. “You sure about this, Yuri?”

“I’m always sure. I don’t say something if I don’t mean it,” he countered as he slid over a mug of tea, then a small jar of honey and lemon wedges.

“Thanks,” I said as I doctored up the cup. When I was done, I took a sip, letting the warmth fill me.

“You’re welcome,” Yuri said in a low voice before addressing King again. “Look, we’re all adults. We work together, and we’re forming a pack. This arrangement makes sense.”

“It does,” River agreed with a huff of laughter. “But your insane need for a perfect house is going to fall away fast.”

Yuri glanced around and grimaced. “I’ll handle it.”

“Sure, sure,” River said knowingly. “Continue, dear cousin.”

“How about a tour? That makes more sense,” Yuri offered. I set my tea cup on the counter and stood, letting him lead us around. To the left of the kitchen was a dining room and den. To the right was a hall with several doors. My space was at the

end of the hall, with the others each receiving a room somewhere along the way. We simply took a peek into each of their assigned spaces along the way.

“And your room?” I asked. His heated eyes stared down at me. Being the curious sort of person, I definitely wasn’t suggesting anything, but now that he was looking at me like that...

“Downstairs is mine.” He gestured to a staircase off of the kitchen. “I’ve got my room and my ‘man cave’ I guess you could call it. It’s my little sanctuary.”

“If it wasn’t dark, I’d show you the backyard. It’s what wet dreams are made of,” River said as he waved a hand to indicate the windows lining the kitchen area. I couldn’t make anything out except the glow from the windows of a smaller house out back—River’s house, apparently. “I think I’m the smallest of us, so I’ll grab some clothes for Sienna to sleep in tonight. We can go shopping tomorrow if you need us to.”

“Thank you,” I told them gratefully. “A shower sounds phenomenal, so I appreciate the fresh clothes.” In fact, any kind of alone time sounded phenomenal. I had so much to process and no time to actually do it.

As River left to do what they’d said, Yuri brought me back to the rooms he’d given me.

“We’ll get some dinner started.” Nash nudged King, who nodded in agreement, and both alphas hurried off to get something together.

“Take your time, Sienna. What happened tonight was awful.” Yuri stared at me for a moment, hesitating, before he gently tucked a loose strand of hair behind my ear. “You don’t have to be strong. We’re here to help.”

I swallowed hard, not quite sure what to say, but I found myself unable to deny the relief that filled me. How could I feel so at ease around someone I barely knew? I’d had people in my life that cared, my parents and my besties, but this felt different. It was a more intimate connection that was building,

and I didn't know if I was quite ready for the emotional side of things.

Lust stirred inside of me as I recalled his reaction to my innocent question about his bedroom. Fuck, now was *not* the time to be thinking about that.

“Thank you,” I choked out before trying to smile. “I think the shower will help for now.”

I let myself into the room, leaning against the door as my heart pounded in my chest. I had absolutely no business being with these men, these alphas... Hell, I'd just lost my virginity to King during my last heat. I had no idea what I was doing, especially since dating had never really been a priority for me.

For the past few months, all my focus had been on working and sending money to help my mom out.

Ring.

Ring.

Fuck... speaking of my mom.

Sam's name flashed on the screen, and I knew it wasn't going to be an easy phone call.

“Sam,” I tried to greet her with an upbeat tone, but it was instantly doused.

“Sienna! What the fuck is wrong with you?! I've been calling for hours!”

“Sam...” I sighed, my voice cracking with exhaustion. “Sorry, I've been at work, then there was a fire—”

“I don't care about that.” Sam sharply cut me off, her irritation palpable. “*Mom* doesn't care about any of that either. I was calling so you two could catch up, but she's out again. Don't say I didn't try to get a hold of you.”

Guilt took my breath away, and a sob broke free as I slid down the door to collapse on the floor. Outside of a few emails here and there, where she always reassured me that she was in good enough hands that I shouldn't fly home, I hadn't talked to my mom in months. Missing my chance because I was too

selfish and wrapped up in my own head to answer the damn phone was downright painful.

“Look, Sienna...” Sam sighed heavily. “That wasn’t fair of me to say. It’s been really hard here. She was actually up, and I know you’ve been wanting to talk to her. I shouldn’t have taken it out on you. I’ll text you next time you miss a call, just so you know what’s going on.”

“Thank you,” I managed roughly, not bothering to wipe at the tears running down my face. “It’s been a bad day here, too.”

“You said something about a fire?” Sam asked after a beat, her voice uncharacteristically soft.

“Yeah,” I hiccuped. “We have to wait to hear from the fire department as to whether anything is salvageable, but it doesn’t look good for our apartment or our stuff.”

My sister made a sympathetic humming sound, and I heard her walking around on the other side of the phone. “I’m sorry, sis. I’m sure everything will be okay. On the bright side, it looks like the payment plans I set up for Mom are working. This wasn’t a call for more money.”

What in the world did we even talk about if Sam didn’t need to talk about money? Every phone call I’d had with my twin had been about Mom and needing money to cover medical bills. I couldn’t remember the last time we had just talked.

“How are things going there?” I asked.

“Going okay. Balancing Mom and my job at the moment, which, as you know, isn’t easy, but it was a good day today. I knew you’d want to know. Do you have a place to stay?”

“Yeah,” I reassured her, letting out a shaky breath. “I’m good. Got a place to stay until I can figure things out. Thanks for trying to call me.”

“Hey, we’re sisters. Of course I’d call you.”

“Thanks, Sam.”

“I’ll let you go. I know it’s late there.”

“Bye.”

Click.

I scrubbed at my face just as there came a soft knock on the door. Hoping like hell I didn't look as shitty as I felt, I forced myself to stand up and answer it. River stood there with a smile that immediately turned into a concerned frown once they got a good look at my face.

“Sienna?”

“I just—” Tears pricked my eyes again. I was overwhelmed by the fire, my mom, this pack... Everything was hitting all at once. River wrapped me up in a hug and kicked the door shut behind them as they whispered reassuring words in my ear.

I lost it.

Falling into their embrace, sobs wracked my body. I couldn't stop shaking as they squeezed me close. River ran their hands over my back and started to purr. The deep rumble slowly broke through the pain and anxiety twisting in my chest until I quietly clung to them, wishing like hell I could hide away.

“Hey, hey. None of that.” River shook their head as they pulled back. Their warm hands cupped my face and gently tilted my head up to meet their gaze. “You had a lot of big things happen today. You're allowed to break down and cry. That doesn't make you weak.”

“Says the person whose face isn't red and swollen from crying,” I joked, and a small smile tugged at their lips. “I need to shower. It might help me calm down before I have to brave the cooking happening right now.”

“If it's bad, we can hide out here later and eat pizza while we watch some TV,” River promised me. “I'll even let you pick out the movie since you've had a hard day.”

“Any movie I want?” I asked, trying and failing to suppress a smile.

“Unless it’s *Titanic*. No one wants to watch a ship sink for six damn hours.”

“It’s not a six-hour movie!”

“You’re right. It just *feels* like six hours of my life I’ll never get back again.”

“River!” I gently smacked their shoulder as I burst out laughing.

“Go clean up,” they urged. “We’ll be in the kitchen when you’re ready.”

River pressed a soft kiss to my forehead, and I closed my eyes, feeling treasured and comforted by that simple gesture. They pulled back and left soon after, but I didn’t move an inch for a few minutes. I wished I had kissed them.

After a quick, steamy shower, I changed into the black t-shirt and sweats River had brought me and joined them in the kitchen. Nash and King could actually cook, which was a pleasant surprise. They’d whipped up some delicious BBQ that did a better job of waking up my appetite than I would’ve thought possible. No one talked about the fire, so we spent the meal bullshitting over random topics, and although we didn’t dig into anything deep, that was just fine with me.

Later that night as I curled up in the giant king-sized bed alone, I made a mental note that I needed to talk to my besties. I had agreed to date four alphas, and I had no clue what to do with them.

The ball was completely in my court, but I couldn’t tell you if I was playing basketball or football at this point. Most importantly, why did my brain have to go with some horrible sports analogy?

CHAPTER
TWELVE

Sienna

“Bestie emergency. Brunch. Today,” I said once Hazel answered the phone.

“Si,” Hazel started, but I shook my head, not caring that she couldn’t see me.

“It’s not about the fire,” I told her. “I need help! *Relationship* help, Hazel. I have no idea what I’m doing. There are four of them, Hazel! Four! Alphas!”

“I need you to breathe, babe,” Hazel coaxed, then I heard some rustling and a door closing. “We can totally do brunch. It will do us all some good to not think about last night. Our usual place?”

“Yes,” I told her, “I called an Uber.”

“Cancel it. I’ll pick you up. Send me the address, and I’ll be there in fifteen.”

“You’re the best.”

“Call Eliza!”

The call ended.

I called Eliza and filled her in on the plan for today then quietly headed out of my room and toward the front door. I didn’t want them to freak out about me being gone, so I grabbed a post-it from the kitchen and left a note.

Not letting myself overthink things, I rushed out the door just as a black SUV pulled up. The back window rolled down

to reveal Hazel waving me on, so I climbed inside. Zaven was driving, and thankfully, he seemed to sense I needed girl time more than anything right now. He dropped us off at the brunch place, reminding Hazel to call them when we were done, then accepted a goodbye kiss and took off. We snagged a table while we waited for Eliza to show up.

“Spill.” Hazel leaned in close to me. “What’s the emergency?”

“I’d like to know that too,” Eliza’s voice sounded from behind me. “I slept like shit, so I’m going to need coffee. Lots of it.”

“I—” My voice cracked as I wrung my fingers hard enough that my skin turned white. How could every aspect of my life feel so out of control? “I need advice and help. I don’t know what I’m doing.”

Hazel and Eliza shared confused looks before the latter spoke up. “Advice about what?”

“Well, you guys know I don’t date. I *never* dated, and now I have four alphas...”

“Delicious alphas,” Eliza joked, and Hazel nodded in agreement.

“I just lost my virginity during my last heat, but I’ve never even dated someone! I need any and all the advice you can give me.” Panic made me hiss the last part, and my besties stared at me like I was insane.

“You mean to tell us—” Hazel started.

“You were a *virgin*? And you went from dating no one to being with four alphas?!” Eliza finished for her.

“Don’t make fun of me,” I huffed. They tried to not smile, but they burst out in uncontrollable laughter until Hazel fell off her chair and Eliza started to snort.

“I hate you both.”

“You need some weed,” Hazel managed between chuckles while she started to dig around in her purse. She still worked at The Happy Herb with Sutton, one of her husbands, and they

had the best damn pot. “It will make eating easier, and you’ll calm down a bit so we can talk you through this.”

“Wait... You lost your V card to the rent-an-alpha?” Eliza asked, her eyes wide. “Was that?”

“King, yes.” I bit my lip, but it wasn’t from nerves. Thinking about my time with King, not to mention his sexy smile when he’d flirted with me last night, was starting to heat me up... until I realized something important. “Which I’m not sure the others know, and honestly, I don’t know what to do.”

“Take some deep breaths first,” Eliza encouraged, waving off the waiter who tried to approach.

“Let’s go to the Naughty Peach after this,” Hazel suggested. “Trust me, you’ll find all kinds of amazing things there to give you some confidence.”

“Any advice on how to handle four alphas?” I joked.

“Stand up for yourself and don’t let them dictate everything,” Hazel said calmly. “They like it when you know what you want, but they’ll want to take care of you regardless. It’s just part of who they are, so *you* need to set the boundaries.”

“But initiating is what’s making you nervous, I’m guessing?” Eliza hazarded as Hazel lit the blunt, taking a deep first hit.

“Yes.” My voice was small, and my hands were now tracing random patterns on the table. “I mean, I’ve never done anything...”

“Just tell them that,” Eliza said gently, reaching over to put her hand on top of mine. “They want to be your pack, and sharing this is part of that. Communicating is one of the most important aspects of being in a pack.”

“I don’t know how to do anything! I’ll be like a fumbling fucking teenager,” I groaned. Hazel’s answer was to give me the blunt and wait until I’d taken two hits to speak.

“Look, there’s no class you can take to learn how to fuck, Si. You honestly can’t go wrong, and despite the macho

bullshit some alphas try to cling to, you'll know when you make them feel good. Just follow their cues, and you'll be okay," Hazel promised.

"And the beauty of alphas is that they love to be dominant," Eliza said with a smirk. "They'll have no problems taking the lead while you figure out what you like."

"The nice thing about being in heat was that I was too far gone to overthink things," I muttered. "I don't even know what cues to look for."

"Watch some porn," Hazel suggested. "Hell, that would be an awesome girls' night! We can help you with some of the basics, but the actual doing... We aren't *that* good of friends."

Eliza snorted, and a surprised burst of laughter escaped me. *Fucking Hazel*. She smirked at me, clearly happy she had made me laugh.

"How have the new living arrangements been so far?" Hazel changed the subject as she took a hit, offering me another before putting the blunt out and tucking it away.

"It's only been one night, so not super intense yet. Yuri's house is fucking huge. I think I've seen Pinterest boards made of that shit," I deadpanned. "He gave me my own bedroom *and* a nesting room."

"Shut up! That's adorable," Eliza said with a laugh. "I can't imagine the stoic alpha being so sweet."

"Oh, he said it fairly clinically. He's caring, but I don't think he's the sappy type."

"Not yet, at least," Hazel disagreed. "They all change once they snag you. Not in a bad way, but they'll get way sappier than you anticipate."

"You can't tell me the twins are sappy," I shot back.

She chuckled and nodded at me. "You're right about that. They're the kings of innuendo and would much rather have a laugh than some mushy, emotional moment. But honestly I love that about them. You may have four alphas, but I've never seen four alphas with such a range of personalities."

Like... Sutton and Maximo? They're not the exact same, but they're both protectors who'll go feral if they need to. At least you've got River and Nash, for instance, one rugged and intense, the other crazy and fun."

"River is definitely fun, but I've seen them shut down fights with one look. They're a force to be reckoned with. Nash, I'm still getting to know since he's fairly private. I think he might be a closet romantic, honestly," I admitted.

"No," Eliza said, "I can't even imagine him being the wine-and-dine type."

"Romance isn't strictly wining and dining," Hazel said. "Hell, that sounds more like Yuri. Nash seems like the rub-your-feet-while-watching-a-movie type. In which case, sign me up!"

"He made sure I ate last night. He and King cooked dinner," I told them as I bit back a smile. "I'm not used to someone taking the reins like that."

"Get used to it," Hazel said as she shoved a menu my way. "Now, pick some food, I'm starving, and Eliza's going to give our waiter a complex if she sends him away again."

"Okay, fine," I agreed. I already felt lighter, and we hadn't even ordered yet. Even if my life was chaotic in every aspect, at least I had these girls to keep me grounded.

We ordered our food and talked about random stuff while we ate our breakfast. With no secrets or any other bullshit between us, this was the most calm I'd felt in forever.

"I think one of your alphas figured out where you are," Eliza sang out as she pushed her empty plate away. We'd all dug in the moment our food came out.

"What?" I asked as I scanned the sidewalk. My gaze stopped on Nash, who was standing next to his bike. He was doing everything he could to pretend he wasn't keeping an eye on us, but I knew better.

"We'll get the check. You go on," Hazel said, shooing me away. For once, I didn't argue.

“Thanks, guys,” I squeaked out. It was silly to feel so light and giddy just from seeing my alpha outside, but before I knew it, I was out the door and walking toward him, barely managing to keep a calm look on my face.

“Fancy meeting you here,” he joked. “You can’t just leave like that, omega. You got all of us alphas worried.”

“In my defense, I did leave you all a note. I didn’t just leave without telling you all what I was doing.” Nash quirked an eyebrow as if silently asking me if that was really supposed to placate them. *Alphas*. “Did you come out just to follow me?”

“No. I was actually out early this morning to check on my grandmother when I got a text asking if I’d heard from you. Yuri filled me in, so I came here to wait for you.”

“The grandma you said raised you?” I asked.

“One and the same.” A warm smile brightened up his face. I could practically feel the love he felt for this woman, and damn if that wasn’t a wonderful feeling.

“I love that you guys are close. Family is important,” I replied softly, a pang of sadness hitting me as I thought of my parents.

Something flashed in his eyes, then he shrugged. “I’d give her the world, but the rest can fuck right off,” he said simply. “You free now?”

“Until work,” I agreed as I glanced at the time. “That gives us about four hours. What did you have in mind?”

“Well, our group date was delayed. I have a feeling River is impatient, so we’ll be doing that soon, but I thought I could take you out for the afternoon?” Hearing Nash sound unsure was so strange, but it helped me feel at ease. Maybe I wasn’t the only one feeling a little overwhelmed by what to do next.

“Sounds good to me,” I said with a grin that made him smile again. His face was bright with happiness, and I was just about ready to make a promise to myself that I would do whatever I could to make him look like that every day.

He grabbed the helmet that was sitting on the back and plopped it onto my head, tugging and adjusting its positioning until he was satisfied. Once that was secured, Nash got on the bike and held out a hand, helping me climb onto the bike behind him. I wrapped my arms around his waist, holding him tightly as he started up the bike.

“You don’t even want to know where I’m taking you?” he teased.

“Nope,” I said. “I trust you. Surprise me.” I was content to just hold on tight as he revved the engine and took off. The ride was cathartic. Wind whipped around us, and the scent of Nash under my nose was enough to make the rest of my reservations fall away. Sure, I was inexperienced, but the girls’ words had stuck with me. I had to stop overthinking and live in the moment instead.

And it wasn’t just my inexperience with dating and sex that had me tripping up. I couldn’t keep letting my family obligations stop me from living my life.

My eyes stayed closed throughout the ride, and when he stopped, I was reluctant to burst the bubble I’d created. When he didn’t say anything, though, I finally opened my eyes to see where he had taken us.

“What is this place?” I asked as I glanced around. He took off his helmet and hopped off the bike before helping me off.

“I figured that was obvious,” he said as he gestured at the building. It was half rundown and looked like it had been there since the eighties, but the signs clearly labeled it as a pizza place with an arcade.

“Okay, this has to have some significance. Hit me with it, softy,” I said as I turned to him.

“You’ve got me all figured out, don’t you?” he said with a chuckle. It sounded slightly off, so I slid my hand in his. I was strong enough on my own, but my moment with River had shown me that I could still lean on others’ strength sometimes. Maybe alphas needed some borrowed strength too, the kind

only an omega could provide. I could be a safe space for him to share more of himself.

“I’m observant,” I said. “Now, spill.”

Nash didn’t say anything for a minute. He shifted his weight back and forth as he stared at the arcade.

“My dad disappeared a lot when I was a kid, leaving no money or food. The old man who runs this place noticed me sitting out here, and one day he pulled me inside and gave me a job. I wasn’t old enough to work a real job, but he let me sweep the floors for a free pizza. I could come in any day I wanted. One time, though... Dad never came back. My grandma found out he had run off without me two weeks later, and she stepped in, which was life changing. But this man? He’s the reason I’m alive. This place is sort of home for me.”

My heart shattered for him. “I’m sorry your family was trash.”

He shrugged. “Me too. I guess this was my way of saying I know life can suck sometimes, but there’s always that person, or people, that will help keep you sane.”

“Meaning I need to let you guys in,” I said with a low chuckle. “I’m working on that. I’m independent for a reason. I work so my mom can have her meds. That’s why my job is so important.”

It was the simplified version of the story, which I think he sensed, but he just squeezed my hand back.

“Are we going in?” I prompted. “I just ate, so I’m out on the pizza, but you had me at arcade.”

“Oh, we’re getting pizza. You’ll need to eat before work,” he ordered. “Roland makes the best.”

“Fine, but let me kick your ass at a few games first,” I said, pulling him inside. I’d never seen Nash smile so freely, and I was touched that he was sharing this with me. If I had any doubts about them truly going all in on this pack, he’d wiped them all away.

Well, most of them.

CHAPTER
THIRTEEN

Nash

I should have known that Sienna would turn into a trash talker the moment our hands were filled with game tokens.

“You going to lose to an omega, soldier?” she called out as she hit the air hockey puck back to me, landing another goal. I’d like to say I was letting her win, but Sienna was determined and not holding back in the least.

“Who is this, Nash?” Roland’s voice had me dropping everything to turn around and give him a hug. “It’s been too long. I’m an old man, you know.”

I laughed. “You’ve been an old man since I was ten. How’s Nona?”

“As ornery as ever.” Roland chuckled. “The usual pizza? If you’re going to stay a bit, I’ll call her down here.”

“Sienna, what kind of pizza do you like?” I asked, realizing I didn’t even know her favorite food.

Of course, she just shrugged. “It’s pizza. You can’t really go wrong unless you throw fruit on it,” she said.

The old man smiled at that. “I like her. You better snag that omega or I will,” he said without bothering to lower his voice. Sienna blushed and laughed it off, which earned me Roland’s favorite smirk before he walked away.

“Sorry about him,” I muttered, but she’d only managed to open her mouth before Nona came barreling into the room. For

an eighty-something-year-old woman who was barely five feet tall, she was *fast*. She slammed into me and squeezed hard before snatching my ear and pulling me down to her height.

“You haven’t been here in *months!*” she chastised. “How do I know you’re eating if you don’t come see me? You look thin, Nash! My boy is too good for his nona now?” The thick Italian accent hit me with nostalgia, and I laughed despite the pain in my poor ear.

“I’m sorry, Nona. I’ve been busy with work and finding an omega.” I had no qualms about throwing Sienna under the bus if it got this crazy old bat to let go. Nona gasped and did just that, stepping back before rushing toward a wide-eyed Sienna.

“Oh, you’re perfect! I can tell you don’t let this alpha walk all over you,” she said approvingly. “You eat pizza?”

“I eat pretty much anything. Food is amazing,” Sienna said quickly. Nona clicked her tongue and nodded in approval.

“Yes, but you’ve never had Nona’s cooking. I’m going to the kitchen so you can put some meat on your bones too. You’re petite like me, but we can eat heaps of food and still not be full enough.” She chuckled to herself as she patted Sienna on the cheek and rushed out.

“Watch, she’ll send us off with two of her famous lasagnas, spaghetti and meatballs, fresh bread, *and* Roland’s pizzas,” I warned.

“She’s intense,” Sienna said, “but I like her. Her energy is everything.”

“Nona has always been like that. They’d have adopted me if not for Grandma stepping in,” I admitted. “They’re like family.”

“They aren’t *like* family. They *are* your family. Just like Hazel, Eliza, and Teagan are mine,” she said evenly. “Now, are you going to cop out of losing the next game, or are you going to try?” The taunt had me moving back in position.

“Alright, omega, I’ll kick your ass this round,” I promised. She grinned back before starting the game again.

After I lost two more rounds, we switched to the other games, earning more tickets than I'd ever had. I loved that Sienna wasn't holding back, but that wasn't the only thing kicking my instincts into gear. Being alone in the arcade, surrounded by her orange, pear, and patchouli scent was driving me mad. Even worse, in so many delicious ways, she was no longer curling in on herself. Every chance she got, she'd rub against me or touch me, though I wasn't sure whether she realized it. She was seeking me out, consciously or subconsciously, and that was a positive sign about the connection growing between us.

"What do we do with these?" Sienna asked, her fists full of tickets. I led her to the prize counter and called out for Roland.

"This is more tickets than Nash here has ever won," he teased. "What can I get you?"

Sienna studied the wall of prizes, her green eyes full of excitement.

"Oh, I'll take the tiara. The green one!" she said with a grin. Roland pulled it down and handed it over before giving us a bag of candy for the remaining tickets.

"Are they done?" Nona's raspy voice yelled from the kitchen, and Roland chuckled to himself.

"We are!" I called right back.

"Good, good," she said. A moment later, she appeared, carrying a staggering stack of to-go containers and a pizza box. "I've got you covered."

"Nona!" I protested. "This is too much!"

"No, when she tastes my cooking, she won't be able to stop," Nona said stubbornly, setting it on the counter.

"What do I owe you?" I asked. I knew it was probably a useless question, but I had to try.

"Stop that, you don't pay to eat," Roland practically growled. It was easy to forget he was an alpha until he got annoyed.

“Alright, alright. Thank you. We’ll definitely be back,” I promised. We said a quick goodbye before heading for the motorcycle.

“Well, I did need food before work.” She grinned. “But you do realize you have a motorcycle, right?”

“Fuck,” I cursed. “Guess we need to call for a rescue.”

Sienna already had her phone out. “Hey, King, can you come help us out?” She gave him the details before hanging up. “He’s on his way.”

Part of me hated the idea of having someone else interrupt our time, but seeing Sienna call on one of us so easily had me biting my tongue. The same way that I wanted her to be drawn to me, I needed her to develop that push and pull with the others in order to help us build a real pack rather than a bunch of separate relationships. She put on her tiara, a happy smile on her face while she did a small dance to a tune only she seemed to know. It hit me then that this was the most relaxed I’d ever seen her. She was completely at ease with herself and me.

“Hey, Nash?” Sienna broke through my wandering thoughts when she placed a hand on my arm. “Thank you.”

“For what?” I asked gruffly, clearing my throat.

“For bringing me here.” She smiled and leaned up on her tiptoes to press a kiss to my cheek. “I had a lot of fun.”

That simple kiss broke my restraint. I’d been surrounded by her scent all morning, every brush of her body against mine fueling the flames of desire until this very moment. I stepped back to place the food on a nearby table before crowding Sienna, cupping her face and tilting it back so she had to look me in the eye.

The nerves I saw there gave me pause, but when she licked her lips, those green eyes dipping down to look at my lips, I knew she wanted me. Moving slowly, I brushed my lips along hers with a barely there kiss, savoring the feel of her and the sound of her whimpers.

But she didn’t kiss me back.

Dropping my hand, I moved away, uncertainty taking over when she stared at me with wide eyes. Did she not want this? *Me?* Had I crossed the line?

Before either of us could break the sudden tension, a car pulled up. King slowly got out as if he could sense the strain between us.

“Should I wait in the car?” King offered, which I was grateful for.

“Nash—” Sienna started, but I shook my head and turned around to grab the food.

“Here, can you take this back to Yuri’s?” I handed the huge stack of containers over to King. “And give Sienna a ride? I’ll meet you guys there.”

“Uhhh...” King fumbled with the boxes as I walked over to my bike.

“I just need to clear my mind for a bit. I’ll be back,” I told them with a tight smile before climbing on my bike and riding off.

I needed to get her scent out of my mind and catch my breath. *Fuck, I hope I didn’t mess this up.*

SIENNA

Nash riding off so abruptly made my chest tight. I had fucked up. Not even an entire fucking day into this relationship, and I'd messed it up. Leaving breakfast, I had been so damn confident, and now... Now, I was just a girl who had been too scared to kiss her boyfriend.

Such a damn idiot.

“Micetta?” King’s question was soft. “What happened?”

“Nothing.” I tried to evade the question, but the way my voice cracked betrayed me.

“Come on,” King said after a second of silence. He neatly put the food on the floor in the backseat then snagged my hand, leading me to the front passenger door. Automatically, I got in and buckled up while he settled in next to me.

Instead of starting the car, he turned to me, hazel eyes intent and patient.

“Are we going to go?”

“Once you talk to me,” he replied, tilting his head. “That level of awkwardness isn’t something I thought I’d be walking in on with you two.”

A few tears slipped down my cheek, and I rubbed at them roughly. “It’s stupid.”

“I highly doubt that,” he said gently. With a soft touch, he wiped away the fresh tears that slipped out. “Talk to me.”

“I just...” I fumbled with the words, trying to figure out how to say it. Nash had introduced me to a part of his damn family, and I’d already fucked up with him. Maybe the stakes were lower with King right now, but that didn’t mean I wouldn’t screw this up too. Honestly, I shouldn’t be allowed to date.

Wait a minute... I was sitting here with *King*. King, the rent-an-alpha who had probably been with countless omegas.

The possessive side of me rose up, jealous of all the omegas that had been with *my* man, but then the practicality of it hit me. He helped women like me get through heats safely. All of that added up to someone who was experienced, which was exactly what I needed.

I turned to focus on him completely, and King just sat there, his expression open and concerned while I took a few deep breaths. There was no judgment or pity. He was the perfect person to talk to about this... if I could just find the words.

“Nash kissed me.”

“Okay...” He dragged out the word, confusion making his brow furrow.

I bit my lip. “I didn’t kiss him back.”

“Were you not expecting it? Or did you not want him to?”

“I’ve... I’ve never done *this* before.” I waved my hands, pointedly ignoring the tremble in them.

“Kissing?”

“Kissing, dating... sex.” I stared out the window, hoping like hell I could get through this conversation. “I mean, besides with you, the heat... You know what I mean. I just...”

“Sienna.” King’s voice was deeper and more serious than normal, and his long fingers wrapped around my wrist. “Look at me.”

Moving slowly, I did as he’d ordered me. “Just so I’m clear,” he started, “you’ve never dated *anyone*? At all?”

“No,” I whispered, self-consciousness making my leg start bouncing up and down. “I left my hometown with my best friends. We all wanted a fresh start. Now I’m focusing on working to help my mom get her medicine. I’ve never had the time or found anyone that made me interested in dating.”

King didn’t say anything as he turned my wrist over and moved his hand up to thread his fingers through mine. Gently pulling it toward him, he pressed a kiss to the back of my hand.

“Do the others know this?”

“No,” I told him honestly. “You’re the only one that knows all of it. Do they know about your job and us?”

“Yuri knows about my job.” King took a deep breath. “And that I saw you through your heat, but the others don’t. I’m quitting and taking Yuri up on that job offer though, so it won’t be an issue going forward. In case you were concerned.”

“That’s probably for the best,” I told him, recalling the instant jealousy I had felt when I thought of his profession. There was nothing wrong with it, but there was no way I wouldn’t go after another omega for being with my alpha.

King’s husky laugh filled the car, and I blushed, knowing he could tell exactly what I was thinking.

“Micetta, I think I can safely speak for all of us when I say this. We’d *love* to teach you everything, but you definitely need to tell them what you just told me. It will help get rid of some of the misunderstandings that could happen.”

“Like with Nash?” I asked with a half smile.

“Exactly. Unless you didn’t want him to—”

“I did,” I told him, squirming in my seat with the thought of the quiet alpha. “I was just surprised. My brain was yelling at me that I should kiss him, but then I started to worry that I’d be awful at it. What if I bit him? Or slobbered all over him in one of those awful teen romance movie kisses?”

King’s shoulders shook as he laughed, and I narrowed my eyes to glare at him. “Don’t laugh at me, King! I’m serious.”

“As someone who has kissed you, I can vouch that you don’t do either of those things, though nipping isn’t a bad thing, Micetta.”

“You keep calling me that. What does it mean?”

King smiled. “Kitten... It suits you. The way you *purred* under me, so nervous and curious at the same time.”

His words made my face heat, and I knew that I was fucking beet red, so I looked away. I swore these alphas were

going to be the end of me. King let go of my hand, and I thought he'd take mercy on me and start driving. Boy, was I wrong.

His large hand threaded through my hair, and he turned me to face him. He slanted his lips over mine without giving me a chance to think about it. His scent of clove, chestnut, and vanilla filled the car as he took control, his lips demanding an answer until I slowly kissed him back. After a bit, he pulled back, satisfaction in his eyes when I followed him, trying to prolong the kiss.

“You should talk to them, especially Nash, to prevent future misunderstandings. Plus, knowing we need to be a bit more slow but direct with certain things can be helpful. For all of us.”

“Okay.” I licked my lips, savoring the taste of him.

We rode back to Yuri's in silence, but King made sure to keep his hand on me the entire time. My knee, upper thigh, my hand, it didn't matter so long as he was touching me. I needed all the grounding I could get to try to have this conversation; I was tired of running away from stuff.

CHAPTER
FOURTEEN

Sienna

Nash wasn't at the house when we pulled up and neither was Yuri. River told us that they'd gotten called into work early. They seemed to have sensed something had happened, but I deflected. The nerves rolling around in my stomach were making me feel sick. It was going to be hard enough to have this conversation once. I didn't want to have it with each of them separately.

Luckily, River and King let me relax in my room until it was time for work. I explored my new space. There was nothing of interest in any of the drawers or the closet. The bathroom was like a hotel, with nothing but a few extra supplies, like towels, under the sink. I assumed the door on the far side of the room led to the nesting area, so I opened it cautiously, hoping like hell no other omega's scent was going to be in it.

What I found was almost worse. It was empty. Completely blank.

Four white walls and wooden floors—no carpet, blankets, rugs, or any furniture at all. Something inside of me was completely affronted that this was considered a nesting room at all. Instantly, my nervous brain hyper-focused on fixing this. I was stressed beyond belief, and I needed this.

Rushing out of the room, I entered the kitchen to find River and King talking, though the conversation came to an abrupt end when they saw me.

“Sienna? What’s wrong?”

“I need to call out of work tonight.”

“What?! Why? Is something wrong?” River asked, and King raised his eyebrows to second the question.

“Did you see that ‘nesting room’ Yuri gave me? It’s empty, River. *Empty!* I need to go shopping.”

The alphas stared at me until I huffed in frustration. They totally didn’t get it. “Fine. I’ll go by myself.”

“No, you’re not,” they both growled.

“Look, I won’t be able to stop thinking about it, and after the fire, I desperately need something that’s mine. I didn’t realize it at first, but when I saw that room, it clicked. It will help me feel more in control if I can make this space into something that feels like *me*. So, are you coming with me or not? I can afford one day off! I’ve never missed a day of work.”

“Let me call Yuri and let him know the change of plans,” River said after a beat. “He’ll want to talk to you.”

“I’ll make sure the SUV is empty, so we have room for everything,” King offered, already heading toward the garage.

“Thank you,” I told them, grateful that they weren’t calling me crazy or anything. There was no part of me as an omega that could rest while knowing that my comfort space looked like a damn prison. No way could I let it stay that way.

King and River were probably the best for the job since they were more go with the flow than Yuri and Nash. After a quick back and forth with Yuri, we were on the road. As alphas, they probably didn’t know what would really make a good nest, so they let me direct them to the nearest department store.

“Yuri and Nash said they’ll join us as soon as they can,” River noted as they stepped out of the car and opened my door for me.

“This place has such good hot dogs.” King groaned. “What are the chances I can eat first?”

“God, the innuendos I would say if Sienna weren’t in crisis.” I burst out laughing at River’s words, thankful for the two alphas by my side. Their easy demeanors and the way they joked and teased were already making this feel so much easier. By the time we met back up with Yuri and Nash, I’d hopefully have my shit together.

If that’s even possible.

“Grab it and walk around with it,” I told King. “I’m heading for the blankets and pillows.”

“Yes, ma’am,” King said with a small smile. “You two want anything?” He didn’t seem to mind me going into bossy omega mode, and I could appreciate a man who didn’t try to alpha-splain something like furnishing a nest. I didn’t usually have too short of a fuse, but neither of us would have enjoyed it if he tried to take control of this mission.

“Get our omega a drink,” River said, giving me a pointed look. I absently rattled off my drink order, and River whispered a few more words before following me. I grabbed a shopping cart and power walked through the store until I got to the pillow aisle.

“River, help,” I grunted as I tried scaling the shelves to reach the prize at the top. It was a body pillow that had a cute boho pattern, and I needed it like I needed air. When they didn’t respond, I turned around to find the alpha leaning against the opposite shelf, staring at my ass. My cheeks warmed at the attention. For a girl with relatively no curves, it was nice to have alphas appreciate my body for what it was.

“Sorry, the view was too good to pass up,” they teased with a heated look before pressing themselves to my backside and reaching up. I felt the bulge in their jeans, and the scent of juniper, mandarin, and saltwater surrounded me. This was far too intimate a moment for the middle of shopping.

“Well, this isn’t what I expected to walk up to,” King deadpanned, “but that seems to be my specialty today.”

That had me laughing, and River slowly stepped back. Not upset in the least, King handed over my drink. I took a sip

before setting it in the cupholder on the cart while River deposited my new pillow in the cart.

“Thanks for the snack,” River said as he grabbed his hot dog, taking a suggestive bite that had both King and me swallowing hard. I was as interested in River’s actions as I was by King’s reaction to them. *Adding that to my list to talk to Hazel about later.* They knew exactly what they were doing by riling us both up. I really needed to have this conversation before they made me spontaneously combust.

“So, we have a pillow. That’s as far as you got?” King asked, getting us back on track.

“Blame River! They were too busy watching my ass to help me at first,” I said with a fake huff. River laughed, completely unapologetic.

“Is there anything we can help you find?” they asked.

I sighed, realizing the crux of the issue. “No. This stuff will help, but I’m eventually going to have to find furniture for it. The room is bare.”

“When I texted Yuri, I mentioned that. If you tell him what you want in there, he’ll get it. That was the original plan anyway, but life ended up getting hectic with the fire and you guys moving in.”

“I don’t need him to buy me furniture,” I protested, but River’s bark of laughter had both King and me freezing.

“Need? Of course not. But will the alpha be absolutely stubborn and personally offended if you don’t let him take care of you? Yes,” they explained.

“Micetta, at some point you have to let us take care of you too,” King said gently. “It comes with the territory. We love your independence, but we also want to spoil you. The same way that you felt this urgent need to fix the nest, we experience a similar drive to care for you in whatever ways we can... if you’ll let us.”

I swallowed hard. “I’m not used to that,” I admitted. “Another item for our chat, I guess.” The miserable quality to my voice was impossible to hide.

“What I’m hearing is that we need to text them to meet us back at the house after this,” River said easily. “Yuri and Nash can handle dinner, then we can talk without any distractions between us. Less intense and no crowd to listen in.”

“You can’t just do that,” I grumbled.

“Do what?” they asked, clearly confused.

“Be so perfect!” The alphas laughed as I stalked away and started shoving blankets and a few more pillows into the quickly filling cart.

“You need this,” King said as he tossed something inside. I glared at him for picking out my nesting stuff before I saw what it was. The little squishy stuffed animal was a king, complete with a plush golden crown.

“Okay, I’ll allow it,” I said.

“Aw, adorable,” River said dryly. “Now you need something to remind you of me.” They walked away with purposeful strides.

I continued adding soft and fluffy items to the cart, going a bit more overboard than I usually would, but I was willing to spoil myself a bit. I hadn’t needed to send the extra money I thought my sister would be calling for, and the image of the plain white room kept haunting me, mocking my omega instincts.

We didn’t run into River again until we’d finished the nesting items. I was in the process of grabbing a few snacks to stow away in my new bedroom when I heard their voice.

“Found it,” they announced regally as they walked up with a sequin-covered pillow. With a swipe of their hand, they revealed ‘My alpha is better than yours’ underneath.

“Definitely fitting,” I said, shaking my head. “It’s going to be a competition with you guys, isn’t it?”

“Absolutely,” they both said together, and I grabbed the pillow from River’s hands, tossing it on top of my loot.

“Are we going to need rock, paper, scissors to figure out who gets to pay, or can we be adults about it?” King asked.

“It’s my stuff,” I protested.

“How about three ways? Split evenly,” River suggested. King’s previous words replayed in my head, and I bit back my immediate urge to argue. This was my chance to give away some of that control, and as much as I’d struggle with it, he was right. I had to let them in. They would likely be helping me through my next heat, so contributing to my nest made sense, right?

No matter how I tried to justify it, bile rose in my throat as I agreed to splitting the bill, but the smiles on their faces told me I had made the right choice.

The house smelled amazing when we walked back in. From the scent of garlic and fresh bread, I had a feeling they were heating up Nona’s food.

Nash was still refusing to look at me, busying himself with the pasta he was pulling from the oven. His tense shoulders gave it away. Yuri glanced back and forth between us like he was trying to figure out what was going on. I glanced at King, who just gave me a small smile.

“I have to talk to you guys about some things while we eat,” I called out. “It’s probably going to get awkward fast, so prepare yourselves.” I tried to make light of it, but all I got back was a soft, nervous chuckle from River.

After putting my bags away and helping set the table, we all sat down. When no one made a move to eat, it became very clear that I was going to have to talk about this first.

Great.

“Just lay it out there, Micetta,” King encouraged softly.

“My mom is sick,” I started. “I’ve been sending money home to help with her meds and stuff that insurance won’t cover. That’s been going on for some time, and before that, we helped Hazel get out of our hometown. Life was hectic, busy, and full of uncertainty for a while. In that time, I’ve never

found anyone I wanted to spend time with... romantically.” I hedged around the wording, hoping they wouldn’t make me spell it out.

“Meaning?” Yuri asked, not allowing me to tiptoe around it. Freaking alphas and their demanding ways.

“Meaning I’m inexperienced. I never had sex before my last heat, which King kindly helped me through. Before that, I’d never even been kissed.” Finally, I looked up and met Nash’s eyes. The realization was starting to dawn there. “That’s why I didn’t kiss you back. I’m sorry. I got in my head and worried I’d be bad at it.”

Shame had my cheeks rapidly heating up, so I looked down at the empty plate in front of me.

Yuri was next to me, and he gently tapped my chin with his finger, silently begging me to look up at them. I met his eyes first because I was being a coward, then I turned to King, who looked almost proud of me, then River, who seemed shocked. Finally, I looked at Nash, whose body had completely sagged with what must have been relief.

“Holy shit. I thought I’d really fucked up with you today,” he breathed out.

“No,” I said as I reached over and rested my hand on his. “I was into it. I just didn’t know how to respond. God, that sounds so pathetic.”

“So you’re telling us that we get to be the first alphas to taste you, experience you?” Yuri asked as he stared at me with those intense brown eyes of his. I nodded, and I swore the man lit up like it was Christmas. “Good.”

“Wait... King helped you through your heat?” River asked as if they’d finally caught on to that part. Yuri sat back, crossing his arms and watching everyone to see how this was going to play out.

“Yes. She called the service, and it was a moment of luck that she got me. We both used scent blockers, so we didn’t realize how compatible we were until we met again at Neon Nights,” King explained. “I’ve also decided to take Yuri’s job

offer because helping omegas in that way won't work for me any longer for obvious reasons."

"Will you miss it?" River's question had the rest of us a bit surprised. "Not the sex, but the helping part."

"I come from a very traditional alpha father, so the job was my way of saying fuck you to the universe, and I loved the idea of being able to help someone without strings. My job let me give omegas the control my mother never got," he summarized. It was probably the insanely glossed over version of his family history, but we didn't push.

"Good for you," River said with a nod of their head. "Now, are we eating or having more heart to hearts?"

"Fuck, can we eat? I'm starving," I groaned. Yuri stood up and served food to everyone at the table, then himself, before sitting back down.

I took a bite of my lasagna and let out an involuntary moan. Ignoring the other alphas' heated looks, I met Nash's gaze.

"Nona is amazing."

"She is," he agreed with a chuckle before everyone dug in. It was such a simple moment, a new pack figuring each other out and learning how to live together, but to me, it was everything. My life was calm for once. I felt cared for, accepted, and seen. I just hoped it stayed that way.

CHAPTER
FIFTEEN

Sienna

Trying to get ready for my day with limited clothes was getting really fucking old. I'd ordered a few things, but after River noticed how little I had, they handed over their card and asked me to order even more.

Of course, my protests had fallen on deaf ears. I was quickly learning that I was severely outnumbered, so the only person who flinched at their offers to pay for something was me.

Apparently, this was a pack thing I'd have to adjust to, but they'd need to adjust to me finding a way to spoil them right now. Those stubborn alphas would get some kind of repayment from their omega even if I wasn't quite sure what form it would take yet.

And if they protested? Well, we'd just call that foreplay.

A knock on my door had me pulling on the same hoodie and sweatpants I'd worn yesterday before I opened the door.

"Uh oh, that's a grumpy face," Nash teased. "What's wrong?"

"I miss my freaking clothes. I have some more coming, but I'm tired of looking like a mess."

"But you're an adorable mess!" I tried to move past him, but he blocked me, pressing me into the wall of the hallway. "Do I get a redo for that kiss?"

I swallowed hard, refusing to let my brain start up once he leaned in to capture my lips with his.

Nash started slow just like last time, which was fine with me, but the moment he deepened the kiss, I was overcome with anxiety about the logistics of it all. We clashed teeth, and I tried to pull away, realizing I was just as awful at this as I thought I'd be.

“Stop,” he growled. “Get out of your head, omega.” The demand had a whimper slipping out when his hands trailed down my sides to rest on my hips. This time, when he kissed me, I tilted my head, trying to match his energy. It was crazy how easy it was once I stopped overthinking and let him take the lead.

My body thought so as well. Slick pooled between my legs, and by the time he finally pulled away, we both needed several long minutes to calm down. Not that we got that time.

“Stop pawing at each other in the hallway. I just had the best idea!” River called out. Nash and I chuckled before going out to see what they were up to.

“Well, what’s your grand idea?” I asked as I plopped down next to them on the couch, which was a much less imposing move than it would have been on my first tour of the house. Yuri, to his credit, was learning to let us into his oasis. The kitchen looked well used, with some sort of baked goods on the counter since the guys had picked up on my sweet tooth.

From a drink on a coaster to the remotes being out of place, the living room was showing signs of actual *living* being done there. There were even blankets and throw pillows breaking up the monochromatic color scheme; red wasn't the only pop of color anymore.

None of us had ventured downstairs yet. I had a feeling it was now his sanctuary, a pristine cave to get away from the rest of our collective chaos.

“Well, we never got our date night,” River said as Yuri and King settled on nearby chairs. “So I figured there was no time like the present. We have reservations for an hour from now.”

“What? Where?” I asked, excitement and nerves building up when River’s eyes sparkled with mischief.

“Telling you where we’re going would defeat the surprise part of this date. Everyone get ready! Nothing too fancy, just something comfortable. There will be food there!”

“What kind of food?” Nash asked, leaning forward to see past me to the other alpha.

“Delicious food,” River quipped, not about to let their secrets out just yet. “Now, get moving because we leave in fifty-seven minutes. Hop to, alphas. Sienna, darling, you’re coming with me.”

“I am?” I asked, but they just grabbed my hand and tugged me up to standing.

“Yup,” they replied with a wink. “Some of your new clothes came in, and let’s face it, none of these other alphas will know anything that can help you get ready.”

“I can help take those clothes off!” King offered jokingly, tugging laughter from Nash’s lips. Even Yuri looked amused, though of course his reaction was more understated—a glimmer in his eyes and the upturn of the corner of his lip. Yuri and Nash walked off to their rooms, but King stayed behind as if part of him wanted to see how his comment would be received.

“Is that offer for just our omega or for me as well?”

King licked his lips and ran a hand over his short beard. “Both. I’m a very hands-on kind of person. But if you don’t *want* my help...”

“Maybe next time, gorgeous. This time, I’m keeping Sienna all to myself.”

“Now, who’s the tease?” King growled, though I didn’t sense any angry heat behind it. He let out a long, drawn out sigh and stood up to go get ready.

River didn’t let us linger long before they pulled me outside and past a pool to a small white guest house.

“That man is going to drive me insane,” River muttered under their breath before turning to me with a big smile. “But right now, we are going to focus on *you*.”

“Why not you and King instead? I could use some distraction so my overthinking won’t kick in again,” I told them jokingly, but the thread of truth couldn’t be denied.

River opened the door to let me into their home, and I stopped dead in my tracks. My jaw dropped as I turned around in a circle, trying to take everything in.

The entire place was a giant closet. Clothing of every kind was neatly hung up and organized, with all the shoes and boots put away. A huge makeup vanity with a big lit-up mirror was on the far side.

“Holy shit! This is amazing!”

“Thank you,” River rumbled, their long, slender fingers running down my arms until they came up behind me to wrap me up in a hug. “Since I moved into the bigger house with you being there, I converted this into my closet. Cleaned it up a bit since Yuri damn near had a heart attack every time he came in here.”

I chuckled, leaning back into them and taking a deep breath so their scent surrounded me completely. “Sounds about right. My friend Teagan would kill to have a place like this, though she doesn’t own this much since she travels a lot for work.”

“Your packages were delivered here by accident, and I won’t lie... I left them here as an excuse to spend some time with you. Just us.”

The hint of vulnerability had me slowly turning around in River’s arms. Pale blue eyes studied me as I brushed away long strands of black hair so I could see them. “Why would you do that?”

River didn’t reply right away, petting my arms as they collected their thoughts. “You’re living in Yuri’s home. You’ve spent one-on-one time with Nash and King, but we haven’t

really had time together since we've become a pack. And unlike all the other alphas, I'm... me."

"Hey..." I reached up, cupping their face in my hands as I smiled gently at them. "I like you for who you are. You're loud, chaotic, and so fucking confident in who you are. I admire that about you. I like that you aren't like the others."

A smile curled their lips, and they rested their forehead against mine. "Thank you."

"I'm not the only one who likes what they see when they look at you, either. You and King are heavy on the flirting lately."

River snorted, but when I pulled back, I saw a hint of a blush on their cheeks. "Friendly flirting. That's just who I am."

"Fair." I dragged out the word as they stepped around me to grab the bags on the bed and began pulling out the clothes I had ordered. "But King doesn't strike me as the kind of guy to flirt that heavily without being interested. Just because I have no personal experience in this department doesn't mean I'm completely naive. My besties aren't shy about sharing details."

River hummed, setting out a few outfits and ordering me to try them on. They settled on the edge of the bed, holding out a set of clothes for me to start with. When I didn't take it, they forced themselves to meet my inquisitive stare.

"Two alphas together? I'm not sure how that would work in the long run. Especially since we're both with you..."

"Seems like you also need to have a conversation," I told him softly. "But honestly? I don't care if you two start something."

"Oh really?" River cocked an eyebrow.

"Yeah. In fact, I think it's really hot. Just imagining the two of you together..." I bit my lip. River's pupils were blown wide.

"For someone so fucking innocent, you sure know how to tease," River muttered.

“Well, that *is* my job,” I joked, making River snort, then I snagged the outfit and went behind a Japanese folding screen they had set up.

I tried on a few different outfits until we finally decided on some black fishnets under a pair of dark-washed blue jean shorts and a black crop top. I also found a pair of black ankle boots that looked and felt amazing, so I slipped them on while River got dressed. They snagged some short black shorts that I didn’t think I could have pulled off and threw a long sheer black skirt over top of it. That was paired with a fitted silver short-sleeved shirt and a wide boho hat that would have made Teagan green with envy.

River looked fucking amazing, not that they let me check them out for very long. They quickly got to work helping me with makeup before doing a little bit for themselves. They grabbed a pair of black boots on the way out and swept me away, back to the big house, yelling as soon as we were through the door. “Five minutes!”

“River,” Yuri deadpanned from not two feet in front of us. “We are all right here. No need to yell.”

Nash grinned when King looked at me, then River, before his eyes moved to the floor. From where I was standing, I could see him swallow hard. Damn alpha had no idea what to do with his attraction to River, and it made me feel better that I wasn’t alone with having new feelings.

“River, why don’t you and King take Gomez?” Yuri suggested as he approached me. As soon as he came close, I gravitated toward him, humming happily when he wrapped an arm around my waist and tucked me into his side. “The SUV is getting some maintenance done, and we won’t all fit in my car. Nash and I can drive with Sienna and just follow you.”

River narrowed their eyes, and King looked between the two of them. “Gomez?”

“I feel like you need to experience Gomez.” I smiled at the unsure alpha. “You’ll love him though.”

“You’re not subtle at all, cousin,” River huffed, but they gestured for King to follow them outside.

“Is the SUV in the shop?” Nash asked after the front door closed behind them.

“No.”

“Always meddling,” Nash teased the other alpha.

“I could make you take your bike instead of riding with us,” Yuri shot back dryly. I coughed, trying to hide my laugh, but it was no use.

“Did River say where we’re going?” Nash asked as he stepped up to my other side.

I shook my head. “They didn’t reveal any details at all.”

Yuri nodded a few times. “This should be interesting then. Let’s go.”

He kept an arm around me, leading the way out of the house with Nash not far behind. Yuri opened the front passenger seat and made sure I was set before closing the door and going around to the driver’s side. Nash slid into the backseat, his legs spread wide to give himself as much room as possible in the small space.

River waved to us, then, without waiting long, they whipped out of the driveway. Yuri followed after them as if this were an everyday occurrence.

“Do we have any guesses about what they’re up to?” Nash asked, looking to Yuri.

“Knowing River, it could be anything.” A hint of a smile softened his face, and his next words were directed at me. “If you want to put on any music, feel free.”

“I’m good,” I told him honestly. I’d much rather talk to them than listen to music on the radio.

Nash started trying to guess where we were going, and just as I was about to add in some ideas, my phone started to ring. Reaching into my back pocket, I saw Hazel’s name on the screen and answered with a grin.

“Hazel! What’s going on?”

“Sienna! Are you working tonight?”

“Noooo,” I answered slowly, feeling an equal mix of confusion and suspicion. “Why?”

“Because I need you to help me out with something.”

“Is it just us on the call?” I asked. Yuri and Nash kept looking at me as if trying to figure out what was going on.

“Yes,” Hazel huffed, then something slammed on her end of the line. “It’s Eliza’s birthday tomorrow, and with everything going on...”

“Shit,” I whispered, anxiety starting to take me over.

“Exactly,” Hazel agreed. “We need to meet up today and figure out what the fuck we’re doing.”

“When are you free?”

“Now,” Hazel answered. “We need time to plan this out.”

“I’m actually headed out on a date...” I glanced at Yuri, who was watching me intently. Looking around, I realized he had parked the car at some point without me noticing. “I can call you afterward?”

“Yes! Perfect! Don’t cancel plans with your pack. We can totally figure this out afterward. We have plenty of time left in the day. Just save the fucking for later when you get home.”

“Oh my god! Hazel!” I protested, my cheeks hot with embarrassment.

“We can get some surprises for our packs when we go out later today to get stuff for Eliza. Go have fun and do all the things I would do!”

“That doesn’t mean much,” I muttered sarcastically.

“Means more than if Teag was saying it,” Hazel sang out.

Click.

Well, shit. Guess it was time for a surprise date then birthday planning with Hazel. It was going to be a busy day.

CHAPTER
SIXTEEN

King

Sienna was right; Gomez was a work of art, though the car didn't hold a candle to the alpha beside me.

River was humming along to the music playing on the radio as they drove to wherever the date was going to be, but I could tell they were nervous. Their hands clenched the steering wheel hard enough that their knuckles were turning white.

I knew exactly what this was about since Yuri was about as subtle as a bull in a china shop. Needless to say, we hadn't been subtle about our attraction for each other.

Being attracted to River was unexpected. I'd never met anyone like them, and my interest, until now, had only been in women. My name had never been called on to service a male omega, so I felt like a fucking schoolboy with his first crush—nervous and completely unsure with what to do.

"Your nerves are making mine worse," River joked, their voice tinged with anxiety.

Rubbing the back of my neck, I smiled weakly. "I'd say sorry, but I can't exactly control how you make me feel."

River glanced over at me as if they were trying to assess how serious I was. When I just stared right back, they nervously laughed, then pulled over, parking on the side of the road.

“We need to figure this out,” I said into the charged silence,

“We do.” River nodded, then took a long, deep breath.

“I’ve never done *this*.” I motioned back and forth between the two of us.

“You’ve never been with another alpha?” River asked with a small smile, a spark of humor lighting up their pale blue eyes.

“Well, that and being with someone who isn’t a woman.” I tried to ignore the trembling in my hands, forcing myself to not break their stare. “And things with Sienna are still getting figured out...”

“Sienna is pretty high maintenance,” River teased with an exaggerated groan. “To be fair, I am as well.”

I let out a husky laugh, knowing that might be the biggest understatement ever. They grinned at that and ran long fingers through their long black hair as they studied me for a moment.

“Letting the pack settle and getting everything figured out has to be our priority, but I don’t want you to think that this connection between us isn’t important.” River reached out, their fingers slowly gliding up my arm until they reached my face. “Given your inexperience, I think I can make a sacrifice and go slow.”

“A true martyr,” I deadpanned.

“I am,” River countered cockily, and then their lips were on mine.

A groan escaped me before I could fully register that they were kissing me. Long fingers threaded through my hair, pulling me closer, as their tongue slid along mine. River kissed me like they wanted to possess me, and it was intoxicating.

Finally, I started to kiss them back. They tasted amazing, and the hint of cherry chapstick made my dick harden in my pants. *Fuck*. I questioned our easy acceptance of taking things slow, focusing our energy on establishing the pack first. It was

smart, but now that we'd kissed, I wouldn't be able to think about anything else when I saw them.

River broke the kiss and rested their forehead against mine, our shuddering breaths the only sound in the car. "How sure are we about taking things slow? I have a hearse, so there's *plenty* of room back there."

"You want me to fuck you in a hearse?" I asked incredulously, arching an eyebrow.

"Who said you'd be doing the topping?" River snarked back.

I just chuckled while I helped River fix their hat. "We can figure that out later. As fun as it would be to fuck in the back of the car, I think taking it slow is the right decision."

"You're right." River sighed, and after a check for any oncoming cars, they pulled us back onto the road.

"But only if kissing is always on the table now. I think that still counts as slow," I added gruffly.

A deep laugh and wink from River was my only answer. "Kissing is definitely always on the menu. How else will I be able to accurately dream about those lips wrapped around my cock?"

Fuck.

I shifted in my seat, hoping my erection would be gone by the time we got to wherever we were going. Damn tease.

CHAPTER
SEVENTEEN

Yuri

I wasn't surprised to see River pull up in front of Hail Mary's. Even though they were spontaneous by nature, everyone had their favorite spot, and this was River's.

"Hail Mary's?" Sienna snorted at the name. "What is this place?"

"It's a drag brunch spot," I explained. Nash made a surprised grunt behind us. He wouldn't be getting out of this; judging from the excitement already bubbling on Sienna's face, River had made a good choice.

"This is perfect," Sienna squealed, then she climbed out of the car before anyone could even open her door for her.

Nash chuckled as I glared at the offending door. "Having a hard time adjusting to her independence?"

"I'll adjust," I said, taking a calming breath. My need to protect the people I cared about was something I struggled with in a regular setting. With Sienna, it was so much harder. She was tough as nails and forever taking care of herself.

"She still needs you, Yuri," Nash said quietly before climbing out and leaving me alone. Glancing out the window, I could see both Sienna and River looking at me, worry on their faces. That wouldn't do. I wasn't going to make some kind of a scene and ruin our first date as a pack, so I climbed out as well and joined the group.

“Everything okay?” Sienna asked. River hung back to wait for my answer.

“Everything’s perfect. How could they be anything else when we get to spend the day with you?” I said, brushing a kiss over her forehead before River locked their arm through hers and led her inside.

Seeing our omega accept River was healing. We came from a family that expected nothing less than perfect. I’d had my first taste of pain after failing one test in school. The mental punishment that followed was way worse than the physical one, and longer lasting. River’s came earlier than that. Our alpha fathers were brothers, identical copies of one another.

Our family name spoke of money and privilege, and that world came with its own set of constraints: be perfect at all times, keep your image pristine, and don’t step out of line.

And River? They danced right over that line by merely existing.

The final straw was when we were about to graduate. I’d gained a full ride to an Ivy League school, something my parents thought they deserved bragging rights about. River, however, wanted to do something different with their life, and neither of our families were happy about that.

When they tried to use my supposed success to berate them, it was over for me. My uncle had raised his cane to hit River, but I stepped in between them. I’ll never forget the look on my cousin’s face, a mix of relief and pain that they never deserved to feel. Ignoring everyone’s protests, I took River, ripped up my acceptance letter, and forced my cousin to walk out with me.

We never looked back, and I vowed to never let anyone I cared about, including myself, get hurt again. It had taken years for us to open the club, but luckily, we had trust funds on our side that our parents had no control over.

River loved to manage the bar and talk to people, which made it easy for others to overlook that he was just as

intelligent and business savvy as I was, but if they were happy, I was happy.

It was crazy how one simple comment from Nash could bring up these old memories. I forced them back into the dark hole they'd come from. Today was a date with our omega, and I wasn't going to let toxic people take that from me.

"Hey, what's going on?" It was King who asked this time.

"I'm good," I reassured him. "Interested to see how River handles this little gathering. Want to place a bet on how long we've got until they're up there with the performers?"

King laughed. "That would be a ridiculous bet to take. We might be smarter to worry if Sienna even gives the rest of us the time of day. Between River's excitement and the entertainment, we might be an afterthought."

It was a joke, and I was glad to see there was no real jealousy behind it. King seemed like a level-headed alpha who was far better at words than I was. Thank god Sienna had picked a pack of alphas who complemented each other well.

Nash was the strong protector who would do anything to keep her safe. I was the kind of alpha who made sure her needs were met and our pack was stable. Sure, I was more than that, but at my core, it was my top priority. King could easily keep her emotionally happy, and River, they brought her out of her shell, which was something Sienna seemed to crave.

The background music had River and Sienna singing along as they followed the hostess to our table. Nothing like a little Britney Spears to get you dancing and pumped up.

"This place is amazing," Sienna practically shouted over the music. The owners of Hail Mary's had turned an old theater into a production. The stage was extended with a runway that ran halfway down the middle of the room. Instead of a red carpet, it was decorated with a hot pink runner that also lined the stage. The tables were a mix of hot pink, black, and white, and the centerpieces showed off just the right amount of extra.

“I’ve never seen a pink bar,” King noted. “I think the high heel shot glasses are a nice touch though.”

“Just wait, you haven’t seen anything yet!” River promised as they handed out menus. “Get your orders in quick. It’s about to be packed.”

River was right; the moment we put in our order, the crowd started to grow, one table at a time, until the hostess was turning people away at the doors. Finally, the overhead lights dimmed before the stage lights flared to life. A curvy version of Pink walked out onto the stage.

“This is going to be so good,” Sienna whispered.

“Shes, gays, and theys! Welcome to Hail Mary’s! Say your prayers, clutch your pearls, and get ready for an amazing time!”

Laughter and catcalls filled the room, and Sienna and River joined in. Pink was the first performer of the show, singing “Raise Your Glass” while putting on a stunning show. We quickly got our food and drinks thanks to the efficient, polite staff.

The performance was phenomenal, but what really captured my attention was Sienna. The omega glowed as she watched the performers with rapt attention, laughing and singing the entire time. Her green eyes sparkled with happiness as she joked with River and King who sat near her.

“Man, you’ve got it bad,” Nash’s deep voice growled near my ear.

“Don’t we all?” I asked him before I took a sip of my Bloody Mary. He wasn’t fooling anyone.

“True.” Nash grinned then took a bite of his breakfast sandwich. “Do you have any plans after this?”

I shook my head, curious about what he was going to suggest.

“Since she’s going out with Hazel to plan for their friend’s party, I figured we could do something for Sienna.” Nash leaned toward me, trying to make sure the omega didn’t hear

us. “The furniture she picked out gets delivered today. She’s been talking about paint and stuff, too. I don’t know how long she’ll be out, but I bet we can get it all together between the four of us. We can set it up, and if she wants anything moved around, that’s easy enough to do.”

“Four alphas putting together furniture...” I smirked. “That should be a good pack test.”

Nash chuckled and eyed the others. “We all are trying to find ways to provide for her and this definitely falls under that category. Sienna will probably love it because then she can rearrange everything how she likes it when it’s all together. Nothing overwhelming or anything.”

“When we get the paint, we can get those furniture pads too. That way she can move most of it around herself instead of asking for help.”

“Look at you begrudgingly accepting her independent streak.” Nash nudged my shoulder, and I growled at him. There was no heat behind it, but it still caught the others’ attention.

“What are you two plotting over there?” River asked, their eyes narrowed on me and Nash.

“The only one of us who plots things is you, cousin,” I deflected dryly.

“Any guesses on who the next performer is going to be?” Nash jumped in, taking the attention off our conversation. “We’ve had Pink, Adele, and Lady Gaga so far.”

“Britney?” River guessed.

“Christina?” Sienna tossed out as I gently pushed her untouched water toward her. She looked down at it then up at me. With a small smile, she picked it up and took a small sip. I quirked an eyebrow, and she huffed before taking a longer drink. I swore, the sass on this woman... She was going to drive me to distraction.

“Uhhh...” King said, dragging out the word. “Lizzo?”

“Oh my god, that would be amazing!” River pressed a hand to their heart as if they would faint from the mere suggestion.

“I’ll be right back,” I said, getting up and heading toward the bathroom.

As I was coming back, I stopped short when I found Sienna waiting nearby. She was leaning back against the wall, texting someone, but when I came closer, she looked up, a big smile on her face. I instantly relaxed at the sight of it, which was a little bit of a wake-up call. Why had I been tense in the first place? Was I already so attached to having her in my line of sight?

“I can wait with you—” I started to offer, but Sienna shook her head and tucked her phone back into her pocket.

“I just wanted to see if you were okay.” Her brow furrowed, and I felt a pang. She was worried... about *me*? “You seemed tense for some reason.”

Reaching up, I rubbed the back of my neck, feeling a bit self-conscious. “I stay in the background at the club for a reason. Crowds aren’t really my thing, to be honest, but I’m still having fun,” I rushed to reassure her.

She didn’t respond beyond a slow nod and a careful step closer, moving into my personal space. “When we do something just for us, we’ll make sure it’s quieter.”

“I’d like that,” I husked, reaching up to brush away a long strand of hair that had fallen on her face.

Sienna licked her lips, her eyes flicking down to my lips, and a blush heated her face. Slowly, so she had time to back away, I cupped her face and leaned down to kiss her. She didn’t pull away; she tipped her face back in silent acceptance of my advances.

When my lips touched hers, my entire world fell apart and was remade. I’d always thought it was bullshit when people said that the first kiss with a mate was earth shattering, but in this moment, I realized I’d just never kissed the right person. Sienna responded hesitantly, and I was glad she’d shared her

worries about her lack of experience. I didn't want her to overthink and start to freak out, so I made a choice. Taking control, I gently tilted her face to the right and deepened the kiss.

I was hit with a taste that made my head spin, the lightness of the sugary syrup she'd eaten mixed with the unique hints that were just Sienna. There was no way to prepare for how her closeness would hit me. All I could do was give in and accept the way she made my body and heart come alive. I repositioned us until her back hit the wall then picked her up, unwilling to let the contact between us break. Sienna whimpered against my lips, wrapping her legs around my waist and arms around my neck.

Fuck, I could feel the heat of her core against my pants, and the smell of her sweet slick was making me lose all reason. Hopefully, someone didn't walk up to us because I might not be able to control my reaction. Sienna was all mine, and I could get drunk on that feeling.

We broke apart, and the sound of her ragged breathing filled the space between us as I trailed kisses down her neck. Sienna didn't tell me to stop or push me away; she squeezed my shoulders to urge me closer.

“Fuck, omega, you have no idea what you do to me.”

“I think I do,” Sienna replied shakily. “But we're in the middle of a club...”

If not for the pack waiting for us, I'd go home right now and bury myself inside of her all day. Though looking down at her kiss-drunk expression and pink swollen lips, I couldn't deny I was tempted.

“I can't fuck you here, Sienna,” I whispered roughly, “but it *is* my duty to take care of you.”

“What? I don't understand—”

I kept a hold of her and strode to a nearby door, happy to find it was a supply closet, and locked it behind us.

“I'm fucking starving, omega, and the only thing I want is you.” I kissed her again before she could say anything else.

She groaned, her fingers digging into my shoulder as she ground her pussy against me.

It was going to take every ounce of my self-control to not fuck her right here and now, but she deserved more than a quick fuck in a closet for our first time, especially given how inexperienced she was.

“An alpha’s job is to take care of his omega, his pack,” I told her as I put her down. I slowly dropped down to my knees in front of her, reaching out to play with the hem of her shorts and tights. Her breathing grew shaky as her body began to tremble. “Let me take care of you and that needy pussy of yours. I want to feel you come apart while I taste you on my tongue.”

CHAPTER
EIGHTEEN

Sienna

Yuri on his knees, a position I never thought I'd see an alpha in, was a sight to behold. His usually cool gaze was warm as he teased my skin, waiting for me to do... something.

As if he could sense my rising panic, his long fingers moved to the button of my shorts. He watched my face as he slowly undid them then pulled the shorts and tights down until I was standing in front of him in my underwear and a crop top.

My legs began to shake with nerves when he tugged the small piece of fabric down my legs. He inhaled deeply and began to purr, and the sound made slick gush between my legs. I swore I was wet enough that I almost thought I'd peed myself. Talk about fucking embarrassing.

Despite what I had been thinking, Yuri seemed to love it. He wasn't much of a talker, but the way he constantly checked on me was so sweet. This man took care of people. It was clear in everything he did, and even though I was fighting it, some part of me wanted to let go and surrender to him.

He grabbed one of my feet and rested it on his shoulder.

“What?”

I didn't have time to be embarrassed about what I looked like or wonder if I had waxed anytime recently. Suddenly, Yuri was there, his hot breath against my pussy, then his tongue licked me from my drenched hole to my clit. A cry fell from

my lips and my back arched. His large hands on my ass kept me from pulling away from his skilled tongue.

Yuri rolled his eyes up to look at me, and I was fucking mesmerized. I couldn't look away if I wanted to. He held my gaze as he slipped one finger inside of me, then two, while sucking on my clit.

Fuck, this was amazing. I felt my orgasm building inside of me, and I knew I wasn't going to last long.

“Fuck, Yuri... I'm going to—”

He pulled away from my core to say, “Let go, Sienna. Don't fight it. I want you to fucking drench me.”

Then he was back at it, mercilessly teasing me with his fingers and tongue. I thrashed my head back and forth, trying to hold on, but when he slipped his thumb into my ass without warning, I fell apart.

Not caring where I was or who could be outside, I cried out his name, my body tensing and trembling as I rode out my orgasm on his face. Yuri began to purr while his tongue lapped at me. I looked down, shock filling me when I saw just how soaked I had made him.

His face and neck glistened like he had spilled water all over himself, and I covered my face with my hands. *Oh my god. I peed on him. I'm going to die. I'll never live this down. I wonder if Hazel's husbands could help me find a place to hide.*

“Sienna?”

I shook my head, unable to look at him because I was sure I would die right then and there.

“Hey.” Clothing rustled as Yuri moved, then he grabbed my hands, gently but firmly, and pulled them away from my face. “What's wrong? Did you not—”

“I loved it,” I told him, my embarrassment making my voice high. “I just... I didn't mean...”

Yuri stared down at me, clearly not understanding what was going on in my head. I gestured at his face and mumbled something about how much was all over him.

“Sienna, love...” He shook his head and cupped my face. “It’s fine.”

“How is *that* fine?!” I asked sharply.

“Omega,” Yuri purred, placing a finger under my chin so I looked up at him, “you came so hard that you squirted. It’s completely normal, and love, I’m not complaining. I fucking loved it.”

“Squirted?” I asked.

“Female ejaculation. Not all women can do it.” He licked his lips, those brown eyes molten, and his purring became louder. “You taste even better than I thought you would.”

My lips parted in shock, my curiosity getting the best of me. “How do I taste?”

“Why don’t you see for yourself?” Yuri rumbled before slanting his lips over mine. He swept me up into his arms as my knees buckled. I didn’t think it would be like this with the usually stoic alpha, but damn, I was a fan—of the possessive way he handled my body to the way he demanded I let him take care of me.

I could get used to this.

When we broke apart, his phone dinged. With an annoyed glare, he checked the incoming message while I grabbed a nearby roll of paper towels, cleaned up, and pulled up my clothes.

“That was the others.” Yuri sounded smug. “They said I missed the rest of the show and asked if I had seen you. Where did you tell them you were going?”

“The bathroom,” I said, biting my bottom lip.

Yuri laughed softly as he wiped at his face and licked up the last bit of my slick. “Let’s get out there before they burst into the ladies room to look for you.”

I threaded my hand through his and let him lead the way back to the table. As we got closer, Nash’s eyebrows rose. River’s jaw dropped, showing they were also surprised, but King just smiled knowingly.

“You dogs! At the drag place!!! At *my* place! I hate you.” River pouted dramatically. “Don’t tempt me any more or I’ll fuck her on your desk, Yuri.”

“You wouldn’t dare,” Yuri growled, but after what he’d just done to me, the alpha couldn’t pull off any kind of even pretend anger.

“I think I would,” they huffed right back. “Try me.”

“Come on, I have plans. Keep it in your pants, alphas,” I teased as I gathered my purse and started walking out. Nash and Yuri were on my heels, not letting me out of their sight for even a moment. It was kind of nice to have that level of protection. We waited on the sidewalk for the others while I texted Hazel.

Sienna: We’re leaving now. They took me to a drag brunch. It was so much fun. We have to come here for our next girls’ night. But River might demand an invite.

Hazel: River is like one of the girls. I think we could handle that. Points to them! That’s a phenomenal date idea

Sienna: Once we force River back into the car, we’ll be back.

Hazel: Text me, and I’ll swing by for you. We need to hit the store

Thirty minutes later, I was stepping outside, shocked to see Hazel standing in front of a sleek black Tesla.

“Did they buy you a new car?” I gasped. Inside, I was more than a little jealous. I’d all but forgotten about my poor clunker *still* stuck in the parking lot of the club.

She grinned. “They did. Isn’t she pretty?”

“Gorgeous,” I agreed.

“Now, get in. We’ve got shit to do!” Hazel ordered as she ran around to climb into the driver’s seat. The moment I buckled my seatbelt she narrowed her eyes. “What happened? Why are you so glowy?”

“Is that even a word?” I asked with a raised eyebrow. She pursed her lips in response, and there was a hint of a warning in her eyes, telling me not to fucking lie to her again.

“I’m just feeling good. Yuri helped me relax a bit... in the storage room at Hail Mary’s,” I said casually.

“First, *that’s* where they took you? So jealous! They’re hard to get into because they fill up so quickly. Second, he fucked you in public?! Get it!”

“No, he used his mouth on me in public,” I said as heat flared in my cheeks.

Hazel’s squeal had me letting out a nervous laugh, but I was still pretty relaxed. We were past the point of being embarrassed around each other.

“Just wait, it’s only up from here,” Hazel said. “Now. Birthday plans. Bane said we can take over Neon Nights if we want.”

“She might be tired of being there,” I mused, then we made eye contact and laughed. Who were we kidding? Eliza had made that place her home. “Oh, what about a karaoke night? Can you imagine Loki’s face?”

“He’d never say no,” Hazel agreed. “Oh! We should do nachos since they’re her favorite.”

“Alcohol, karaoke, nachos, and we can get her something extra to wear like a boa and tiara,” I said excitedly. “She’ll protest, but she loves being extra.”

Hazel parked in front of the party supply store before texting furiously. She had just climbed out when notifications started beeping. “Loki and Bane are in. Bane said he’ll grab the food if we take care of the rest.” She grinned, proud of the way the plan was already coming together. Eliza might be the mother hen, but Hazel was very much the older sister who would bully everyone into making events like this perfect.

We’d hit this store once before, but it was for Hazel’s bachelorette which obviously had a very over the top sexy theme.

Eliza would literally murder us and hide the bodies if we did something embarrassing for her birthday, especially in front of Loki and Bane, who she was very obviously in love with.

“Has she said how living on the compound is going?” I asked while we walked the aisles. For a moment, I felt a pang of guilt about not reaching out to check on her, but I didn’t let it take hold. I was just as busy after being displaced and shouldn’t beat myself up over it.

Hazel rolled her eyes as she looked at a display of balloons. “You know how she is with those men. I think she’s lying to herself about them for some reason, but as far as I know, she has her own room there now.”

“We both know why, but I just wish she’d stop punishing herself for a fertility issue she can’t change,” I said with a sigh. Our bestie deserved a pack who would do anything for her, and Loki and Bane were already there and willing.

“Oh my god, look!” Hazel sprinted down the aisle toward a huge neon display of birthday decor. “Tell me she wouldn’t love a rave theme!”

“Valentina would supply the brownies to get everyone in the mood to party,” I added. “Oh shit, what about a cake?”

“Valentina said she would handle it,” Hazel said with a hint of nerves.

“Are we sure she isn’t going to do anything crazy?” I asked. We both knew the woman would do something no less than over the top. The main question was whether it’d reach the level of insane.

“Absolutely not, she’ll definitely do something we might regret, but at this point, we’ll take all the help we can get. Teagan should be flying in by late morning, so she’ll be able to catch a nap at a hotel before joining us.”

Hazel’s phone rang, which was the only thing stopping her from grabbing another handful of streamers.

“Hello?” She listened for a few minutes, and from the frown on her face, I worried it was something serious. “We’ll

come by Saturday afternoon. Thank you.”

“What was that? Where are we going?”

“The apartment. Apparently, I was listed as the primary contact still since Teagan is always traveling. The fire marshal cleared it for us to gather anything salvageable before the cleaning crews go back in. He’s not promising we’ll have an apartment again, but at least we might be able to grab a few things. I doubt our clothes survived, but you never know.”

My thoughts immediately went to the necklace from Mom that I’d left there, and I sent a prayer out to the universe that it would be one of the things I could take home with me.

As far as the apartment went, I had no desire to go back. It was probably a bit crazy, but Yuri and River’s place was officially my home now. We hadn’t spoken about it beyond them providing me a place to stay, but with the entire pack now living there, I had a feeling that wouldn’t be changing.

“Now, we have one more stop,” Hazel said triumphantly. “And don’t worry, we aren’t shopping *just* for Eliza at the Naughty Peach, Sienna.”

Oh shit. I might be in trouble.

CHAPTER
NINETEEN

River

The moment that Nash opened the paint can, I wrinkled my nose. I might have the most style of our little pack, but this type of work wasn't for me.

“Look, I'm not the painting type. I'm going to run out and do something else for Sienna. I'll pick up food on the way back. Deal?”

I didn't wait for their responses before I was power walking out of the room and scheduling an Uber to pick me up. I'd ordered new tires for Sienna's car and had it towed to a nearby shop. While Sienna and Yuri were busy at brunch, I got a text saying it was finally ready. It was the perfect excuse to avoid painting or fighting over furniture assembly directions.

If I thought Sienna would ever allow it, I'd have bought her a new car, but she'd likely cut my dick off for even attempting it.

The moment I climbed in and greeted my driver, my phone went off. I figured Yuri was trying to bitch at me for bailing, but to my surprise, it was King.

King: Really? You're going to leave us to do the painting?

River: Trust me, this is not where I'm needed today. Plus, I'm handling something else for our omega.

King: Oh yeah? And what's that?

River: You'll see, and you'll be jealous you didn't think of it first.

With that, I left him to contemplate what they'd missed and tucked my phone away. The shop was only ten minutes from home, so I put in an order to pick up Chinese food. I'd just grab it on the way back to the house in Sienna's car.

It was fairly painless to get everything paid for and taken care of, but Sienna's car was not Gomez, and as I sat behind the wheel, driving over to get the takeout, I missed him terribly.

The things I do for my pack.

Unfortunately, I'd chosen the closest garage which meant they'd barely had time to paint while I was gone. As I stepped through the front door with food in hand, the scent of paint and sounds of their cursing filled the house.

"Honey, I'm home. Why are we so angry?" I sang out, amused when the cursing got louder and I heard my name tacked onto the end of it.

Nash was the first to find me, his scowl bigger than I'd ever seen it.

"Fuck this," he grumbled, then he practically slammed himself onto the stool at the kitchen island. "Putting together furniture with Yuri is worse than any training drills I did in the military."

"Oh, I could have told you that," I said as I unpacked the food. "Sienna's car is here now."

He raised his eyebrows. "New tires?"

I hummed. "Four of them. All brand new. *And* an oil change. I figured anything more would be a gamble, and I don't want her to hate me."

He chuckled. "She'd kill you for it, but she's working on that independence."

"What was so important that you had to leave?" Yuri's words were harsh, but I was no stranger to my cousin under pressure. He let out a long-suffering sigh when I refused to answer or acknowledge him. "I'm sorry. What did you do?"

I finally explained to him as he sat down, earning his nod of approval—not that I needed it, but it felt nice all the same.

The front door opened right as King sat down, and Sienna rushed in, breathless, then came to a stop next to us.

“How is my car here?” She tried to seem upset, but I could easily see the relief in her eyes. “And why does it smell like paint?”

“Remember that conversation about letting us spoil you?” King mused. She narrowed her eyes at him, then her gaze circled the room, landing on each of us in turn.

“We just got a head start on the nest. Same color you picked out, don’t worry. But it’s not done yet, so don’t go in,” Yuri explained.

“And your car got an oil change and new tires. I knew you’d hate relying on us or the buses for rides, so that hardly even counts as spoiling you.”

“I’ll pay you back,” she said, but I held up a hand.

“No. I’m not worried about it. I needed it fixed properly, so I knew you were safe. It was for me, really,” I said. “Now, sit your cute ass down and have some lunch with us. We need to hear what you figured out for Eliza’s birthday.”

It amazed me how quickly she obeyed, eagerly launching into the story. I had been prepared to fight her more about the car, but it appeared I didn’t need to. As she talked, I noticed her scent was even stronger now, sweeter, and from the looks on the other alphas’ faces, they’d noticed too. Maybe it was her good mood or just that we’d just missed her. Either way, if we didn’t distract ourselves with food soon, this would turn into a much different kind of dinner party, and I wasn’t too sure that our omega was quite ready for that.

“I guess the drag show had an impact if you’re suggesting karaoke,” I mused. “You’ll have to ask Yuri to sing. He’s got the best voice, but he never lets anyone hear it.”

“Fuck you, River,” Yuri growled, but Sienna looked like I’d given her a gift.

“You’ll sing for me, won’t you?” The puppy dog eyes she turned on him were downright impressive, and his armor began to crack before my eyes.

“No,” he said dryly, but I could see right through him. My cousin was just as taken by this fiery little omega as I was, and we’d give her the world if we could. What was a little karaoke if it made her happy? Okay, it was a lot, actually, since Yuri didn’t like to be in the spotlight, but I knew he would do it for Sienna.

“What else were you up to today? You coordinated a karaoke night at a biker bar, but there’s no way that’s all you did while you were gone.”

Sienna shifted uncomfortably and mumbled something about shopping before stuffing a huge helping of lo mein into her mouth. I chuckled, amused by her avoidance tactic, but the others started talking about work and other things.

Yuri started discussing the new job with King, and I eavesdropped, surprised when I heard him discussing keeping the books for the strip club and a few other investments that Yuri had throughout Alexandria. King nodded along and said he could come down tonight to sign all the paperwork and take a look at everything.

Once she finished her food and slid off the stool, Sienna started cursing.

“What’s wrong?” Nash asked, his brow furrowed, as he watched her head toward the hallway.

“I forgot that Alice called me while I was out. I said I’d take her shift tonight because she had a problem finding a babysitter.”

“One of us can take you,” Nash said immediately.

“I need to grab my bag real quick while you guys figure out who’s giving me a ride, then.”

“King and I can take her,” Yuri said, gesturing at the other alpha. “I’m going to show him the ropes for the club anyway.”

“I told Bane I’d meet up with him tonight, so I’ll have to pass.” Nash took a long drink of his Coke. “Whenever we’re done, I’ll message to see if you’re all still there.”

“I’ll tag along. Make sure the new bartenders are doing a decent job of keeping the bar up to par when I’m not there. Plus, I’ll get to watch Sienna dance, so it’s a win in my book!” I grinned, not the least bit put out about going to work on my night off.

Sienna wandered out while we started cleaning off the counter. A few minutes later, she came back holding a black duffel bag with a bottle of water tucked into the side. She was texting someone as she came to a stop by Nash.

“So, who’s taking me?” she asked when she finished typing.

“They are,” Nash replied, wrapping an arm around her shoulders. “I’m meeting up with Bane.”

“What are you and my brother up to tonight?” Sienna asked, a wide grin lighting up her face.

Nash groaned, but there was equal parts amusement and frustration in it. “Don’t call him that. He’s *my* brother, so it’s just weird.”

“It’s not if I’m a step sister. Our relationship would just be some sexy taboo roleplay,” Sienna teased. A wicked gleam lit up her green eyes when Nash choked on air. I coughed, trying to hide my laughter.

Sexy taboo roleplaying... definitely not something I envisioned her suggesting, but I filed it away for later.

“Anyway...” She dragged out the word. “Tell my brother I said hi.”

“I’ll do that,” Nash managed, his voice rough enough to sound like sandpaper.

He leaned down and kissed her goodbye. As she responded to him, her scent intensified, the sweetness of orange and pear filling the air. The strength of her scent made my cock harden,

and I could feel the other alphas zoning in on our omega as she pulled away from Nash.

“Sweetheart,” I growled, my voice deeper than normal. “You just had your heat, didn’t you? I didn’t make that up.”

“Yeah,” Sienna replied breathlessly. “Why?” Then she looked around the kitchen at all of us.

“You definitely are acting like you’re about to hit another one,” King commented. “Maybe it’s because we’re forming a pack?”

“I don’t think going to work tonight is a good idea,” Yuri said, his voice harsher than he probably intended. He softened his expression when Sienna instantly looked pissed off.

He reached out and snagged her hands. “I’ll get someone else to come in, or maybe the girls can each dance an extra song or something. You don’t want to have this hit when you’re at work, and we aren’t going to be able to control our responses if you’re this close to a heat, omega.”

“I can handle it!” Sienna pursed her lips, unhappy about the sudden change of plans.

“Sienna...” I licked my lips. “What Yuri is trying to say is that you staying home right now would help *us* out. You wanted the caretaking to be a two-way street? Then do this for us. Because there is no way any of us want to rut you in the middle of the club.”

Sienna glared at me, but I could see her stance soften before she let out a long sigh. Yuri mouthed a thank you in my direction as she tossed her bag down.

“Fine, but I don’t see my heat hitting anytime soon. I haven’t really nested—”

“You created an entire nest from scratch,” King pointed out gently.

“Our scents are all over it from getting it prepped for you today.”

“Mine is all over the stuff since we went shopping together, and I got the new clothes for you,” I added on, not

about to be left out.

“It was an empty room! I had to get it set up,” she huffed, she then turned to look at me. “So, if I’m *not* working, then what are we doing tonight?”

“Movie night?” I suggested.

“Do I get to pick the movie?”

“Sure,” I replied, my eyes narrowed. What was her plan?

“We’ll be back later,” Yuri said, clapping me on the shoulder.

King lingered for a little bit, his eyes darting between me and Sienna. “Mind if I join you guys when I get back? Don’t feel obligated—”

“I’d like that,” Sienna and I answered at the same time.

King swallowed hard, his cheeks flushed. “Okay then.”

He waved awkwardly then hurried out of the room. Sienna and I watched him leave, staring at his ass before looking at each other.

“Is it bad that it makes me feel a little better knowing he feels nervous around you, too?”

Satisfaction filled me at her admission. I smiled smugly at her and walked closer, invading her personal space. “I make you nervous?”

“Yes, but in a good way.” She licked her lips, her gaze flicking down to look at mine.

“Keep that thought in mind for later, Sienna, when King gets back. Anticipation will make the wait worth it,” I told her softly, teasing my fingers down her arm to grab her hand. “Let’s get that movie set up.”

She whimpered as I tugged her along after me.

Fuck, I can’t wait for later.

CHAPTER
TWENTY

Sienna

River said they weren't sure why their cousin had a projector, but it would be perfect for a movie night under the stars. While they were setting that up, I went through the house, collecting a bunch of blankets and pillows to make a mini nest to snuggle up in.

After that, I popped some kettle corn, grabbed two waters, and settled into the warmth of the nest with River beside me.

"What are we watching?" they asked, smiling over at me. "Yuri has pretty much any movie we could ever want to see."

When I told them, they stared at me incredulously before grinning. Laughter and happiness sparkled in their blue eyes, and it transformed their face. They flipped through the menus until *Howl's Moving Castle* started playing on the side of the house.

River laid back in the blankets, and I refused to let myself overthink my next move. I decided to go with what felt good, *right*, so I scooted closer, snuggling into their side. They still wore their sheer skirt and shorts from earlier, while I had opted for sweats and a t-shirt for comfort.

They wrapped an arm around me, tugging me close.

"I love this movie," they commented.

"It's one of my favorites," I told them.

An easy, comfortable silence settled between us as we watched the movie. When it was over with, we debated what

to watch next, but River won since I'd had first choice. King showed up just as David Bowie showed up on screen. He studied the movie for a few seconds before making his way toward us and standing by the nest.

“*Labyrinth?*”

“This is River’s pick,” I informed him. “We watched *Howl’s Moving Castle* first.”

The confusion on his face told me one dire thing. He had absolutely no idea what it was!

“Oh god!” I clutched at my chest. “River, help! There’s no way he doesn’t know what I’m talking about.”

“*Ponyo? Kiki’s Delivery Service? Spirited Away?*” King’s confusion and amusement only deepened. “*Totoro?!?*”

“My heart!” I cried out dramatically. I dropped my body against River, “fainting” from sheer disappointment, but I could barely keep a straight face when River groaned with dismay.

“I don’t know if this can ever work out now,” River joked dejectedly. “How can you have never seen any Studio Ghibli movies?!”

“We have to fix this!” I sat up. “We’ll need to coordinate with the others and watch them all.”

River nodded, their face serious.

“Oh my god, we should make the food from the movies when we do. They have dedicated cookbooks and everything!” I added.

River chuckled. “You mean we’ll make Yuri figure it out.”

“That works too.” I laughed before side-eyeing poor King. “I can’t believe you. This is a travesty!”

“Okay! Okay!” King held up his hands in mock surrender. “I can be persuaded to watch whatever those movies are, but do you think I can still join you for this one? I love David Bowie.”

“As you should,” River and I said at the same time, making King chuckle as he settled in on my other side.

“How was the club?” I asked, curious about what King would be doing as his new job.

“Good. Signed the paperwork, and Yuri showed me my office. I’ll be doing the books for the place. I guess he’s been doing them himself, so this will help take some stuff off his plate.”

“Where is Yuri?” River questioned.

“He got a phone call and said he had a business meeting to go to. He dropped me off before heading off.”

Nobody else said anything as we switched our focus to the movie. Eventually, the movie faded into the background as my senses homed in on the two alphas beside me. Their blended scents became an almost tangible thing. I swore I could feel it like a physical aura surrounding them.

Hands absentmindedly petted my legs and my arms, and each touch made my arousal build. My nipples hardened as slick wet my inner thighs. They must have been able to sense the shift in me because they turned to me at the same time, the movie forgotten.

“Sienna... Fuck, you smell fantastic,” King growled, his pupils wide with arousal as he breathed in deeply.

“If you don’t want to do this, now would be the time to say so, sweetheart. We don’t want to push if you’re not ready,” River said softly. Their body was now completely still, like they were physically holding themselves back.

I was too far gone to figure out words thanks to the all-consuming need inside of me, so I answered in a way that couldn’t be misinterpreted. Leaning forward, I brushed my lips against theirs, smiling when they started to purr. There was a rough edge to it that somehow spoke to me so clearly. It was everything alpha, full of possession that was somehow directed at *me*.

King’s beard and lips brushed along my shoulder as he trailed kisses over my skin. He started to purr too, matching

River's tempo, then they led me to River's room. They'd short circuited my brain so thoroughly that I didn't have the cognizance to be nosy and look around.

The scent of King's citrus and chestnut scent mixed with River's juniper and saltwater scent was intoxicating. The underlying alpha musk was strong tonight, and the way their pheromones mixed with mine was driving us to the brink of insanity.

River was the first to act, confidently removing my sweatpants and shirt to reveal the bralette set I had on underneath. Shoutout to my past self for choosing the emerald lace today.

"Fuck," King growled as he moved in, tracing the lace against my pale skin. Goosebumps erupted, following his feather-light touch, showing him just how much control they had over my body.

"Our omega looks good, doesn't she, King?" The way they said the other alpha's name had a low growl erupting. River had the ability to make any word sound dirty with the inflection of their voice. It was impressive and unnerving.

"Sienna, can I blindfold you?" King asked gently. My eyes widened at the request, and he chuckled. "I think it might keep you from overthinking. For now, your only job is to feel."

"S-sure," I stuttered out. Nerves and excitement were at war within me, but relief had also entered the battle. This was the perfect way for them to take control.

"Here," River said, pulling off their sheer skirt and folding it until it could be tied around my eyes.

Finally, I stood before them without my sight. My anxiety spiked until I felt strong hands leading me back to the bed. I laughed when River, it had to be them, threw me back on it. The giggle cut off once the alphas began to peel off my lace.

Low groans filled the air, and my pussy throbbed in response. More slick leaked down my thighs until they were unceremoniously pulled apart.

“Brace yourself, Sienna. I’ve been dreaming of this since our first encounter,” King husked. I whimpered at the sound of his lust-filled voice. It had taken on a gravelly tone that promised pleasure, and I had a feeling I could love a man who kept his promises.

“Fuck, that’s hot,” River groaned, and I could practically picture them watching King inhale my scent.

At this point, I doubted I’d care if they ravished me, taking me hard and fast, but King wouldn’t be rushed. He started with a long, languid lick over my pussy that had us both groaning for different reasons. He maintained that torturous pace as he teased his tongue over every inch of my pussy, diving into my core and sucking hard on my clit. There was no real rhythm to it, but it felt amazing.

Every second he spent focused on my needy cunt had me creeping closer and closer to an orgasm. My body tensed as pleasure coiled in my stomach; my legs were shaking, and my hands grasped at his hair. I had no idea how rough I was being, and a distant part of me worried about hurting him, but the more present part of me said that he deserved it for taking his time. They had said they wanted to spoil me, well, guess what? Right now, I wanted to fucking come.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck,” I whined, and if I sounded extra pitiful, I wasn’t going to feel bad about it.

I nearly jumped out of my skin when River whispered in my ear. “Let go, sweetheart. I want to hear you scream.”

As if King was under their command, he slid two fingers into my center and gently nibbled over my clit. The mix of sensations had my orgasm slamming into me with enough force that I could only cry out and clutch at him.

King continued to eat me out, giving me no ounce of mercy, forcing my body from one orgasm into another until he pulled away, finally satisfied. I collapsed on the bed, covered in sweat and slick, completely boneless.

“Good little omega,” King purred. The deep rumble echoed in the room, warming my chest. It said care, safety, and

belonging. It said that I was wanted and needed and... *loved*? Was it too soon to be hearing something like that? I had no idea and no relationship milestones to compare it to. As suddenly as I had that thought, my body seized control from my brain. *Nope. We are not thinking about that when there are more orgasms to be had.*

“My turn,” River sassed, then the shift of the bed indicated that King was probably moving to let the other alpha take the lead. “Sienna, are you going to let me knot you?”

“I’ll be angry if you don’t,” I joked. “Don’t be gentle. Please.” The pleading obviously did nothing since River lined themselves up then pushed in.

“I’m not trying to break you this soon.” They chuckled. “Be patient, omega.”

“I don’t do patient,” I snapped back. “Just fuck me, River. I’m not that delicate.”

“Aren’t you?” King taunted. “We could take our time, drive you to the edge of your limits then back away, edging you until you’re begging us to come.”

I whimpered at the picture he’d painted, and River didn’t hesitate to join King’s game.

“I could move so slowly you feel every inch of my cock when I pull out and push back in, torturing you with each shift of my hips,” they taunted. To punctuate their words, River pulled out, leaving me lifting my hips, silently begging him to thrust back inside of me. They did, so fucking slowly, until they pulled out again, stopping right at the tip before moving forward again. I shivered, and they filled me over and over again, their torturous movements made the aching stretch take over my every thought.

King tasted me with his tongue, running it along my neck and over my collarbone, then teasing around my breasts. They were another insecurity of mine, but with my alphas, I forgot all about it.

King claimed one nipple with his warm mouth while his fingers found the other, playing with them in tandem. He

lacked River's control, but I soon learned that wasn't in my favor. The quick flicks of King's tongue mixed with River's steady pace had me writhing between them, my fingers scraping at the sheets until I felt like I couldn't take any more.

"Please, I can't, I'm so close, and I *need* it," I begged helplessly. The fact that I could form words was astounding.

"Shall we have mercy, King?" River asked in an "innocent" voice that had me growling and slamming my hips upward. I wouldn't plead with them anymore; this had turned into a demand.

"She's been such a good omega so far," King said as he considered it. "Maybe we should."

As if that gave River's knot permission, it started to swell. My orgasm was out of their hands at that point; their knot inflated until it pushed against every sensitive spot inside of me, forcing me to shatter.

My pussy clenched around them, and hearing River's groan of defeat was so satisfying I couldn't help but chuckle.

"You're a brat, Sienna, aren't you?" they asked breathlessly. "Fuck, I can't."

Just when I thought my body couldn't take it, his knot locked us together, allowing them to continue moving with shallow thrusts.

My alpha was close to their release, so I forced myself to tighten around River, taunting them in the same way they had tortured me.

They cursed and pushed their hips against mine one last time before I felt their warm seed filling me. My name was both a prayer and a curse on their lips as they finally gave in to my demands.

"Some day, I'm going to take River while they take you," King promised as he climbed up next to my head and took off my blindfold. "For now, I can't hold back anymore, Sienna."

His cock teased my lips, and I opened obediently. My fingers brushed over the spot his knot would soon swell, and

my tongue swirled over his cock. When I swallowed him down, his fingers tightened in my hair as the other hand steadied on River's shoulder.

Seeing my alphas lose control had me feeling both sexy and powerful, two things I'd never thought I'd feel in bed, but with this pack, I had little to fear. They knew my history and embraced it. Hell, they loved that they were my firsts for all of this, no matter where I might stumble, fumble, or doubt myself.

Maybe running away and hiding from the world was truly a thing of the past.

CHAPTER
TWENTY-ONE

Sienna

The building looked like it should be condemned. The windows were blown out, and black char lined the brick on the outside. Cinders and ash could still be scented in the air, like even the atmosphere had been scarred by the fire.

“Do you think there’s anything left?” Teagan asked as she stared up at the building with an adorable crinkle to her nose. She never could hide her true feelings, so I knew she was nothing but skeptical.

“Not much, if anything, but I want to see if Mom’s necklace survived,” I admitted with a sigh. I couldn’t risk losing one of the only sentimental items I had.

“We’ll see. Let’s stick to optimism,” Eliza said with more confidence than she likely felt.

“Do you want us to go in?” Bane asked gently. I turned to face him, Yuri, and Nash. They’d escorted us here and had stayed for moral support. Ok, so it was also likely the alphas couldn’t let us out of their sights.

“Yes,” Eliza said firmly. “Let’s go.” She marched up to the front doors just as someone stepped out.

“You’re apartment 342?” the alpha asked without looking up from his clipboard. “Right this way. Grab a hard hat from the table.” He tipped his chin toward a table where bright yellow hard hats were stacked high. I handed one to Yuri and Nash before putting mine on while the others grabbed theirs.

Seeing Yuri in a hard hat would have been hilarious if not for how fucking anxious I was. As if he could sense it, the alpha took my hand, holding on tightly as the fire marshal led us upstairs to our rooms.

The smell was overwhelming enough to tell me this would be a quick search, and that was only confirmed when I saw our former home. Our apartment was a shell. Our table had been reduced to a few pieces of wood and metal angrily sticking up from a pile of rubble. What was once a couch was now just remnants of singed fabric and coils.

“I should feel sadder,” I admitted.

“Same.” Eliza let out a strained laugh. “I kind of like where I’m at now, though.” Bane gave her shoulder a squeeze, and Nash leaned in, kissing my head.

“You’re both where you belong.”

Such simple words, but they settled something within me. He was right. I *did* belong with this pack, and every day I spent with them continued to prove it.

Seeing my friends just as happy made me feel even better. Teagan was traveling and living her best life, and Eliza was with the MC, who treated her like a queen. How could I be upset about that?

We parted ways to check out our respective rooms. Pushing open my door, I felt a bit of hope settle in. My dresser was old and thick, something I’d picked up at a thrift store. Apparently, it was also built differently than the shitty pieces of furniture we had throughout the rest of the apartment because it was somehow the only structure still standing. The outside was covered in black, and the layers of wood were peeling away, but it had survived.

I pulled it open to discover that my stuff was not quite as lucky. My collection of old tickets and stickers had curled in on themselves, their edges burned—if they weren’t totally melted down. I wouldn’t even attempt to check out the clothes, but when I finally opened the top drawer, a small sob of relief broke free.

The small chain had melted, but the pendant looked intact. Snatching it out, I held it in my palm and studied it before turning to show the guys.

“The chain is ruined, but this survived,” I said excitedly.

Yuri and Nash gave me matching smiles. “We can find a new chain,” Yuri promised.

“It’s pretty,” Nash offered awkwardly. His attempt at being sweet was cute, and I nodded as I glanced down at the small rose gold heart. It was inlaid with diamonds and had my mom’s name engraved on the back. When I moved away, I admitted how worried I was. My mom gave it to me so I’d always have her with me.

“This survived,” Yuri said, handing over a small photo album I hadn’t noticed in the back of the drawer. The cover was a melted mess, but the pictures inside had made it. There were a few that had become discolored, but the images themselves were mostly clear.

“Then I have all I need,” I said, tucking it under my arm and walking out. Eliza and Teagan were both waiting, their hands empty.

“Tell me it survived?” Teagan said. I held it up, and she sighed with relief.

“Oh, thank god. At least we got the important stuff,” she agreed. Bane held up the fireproof case that Eliza had insisted we buy when we moved in. “Our documents are safe too. Mother hen strikes again.”

“You’re welcome,” Eliza huffed as we walked back out. The fire marshall was waiting in the hall.

“Finished?” he questioned.

“We are. We won’t be needing anything else,” Eliza confirmed. “Thanks for allowing us to gather these.”

“Of course. I’ll mark you off my list. If you need further information for your rental insurance, here’s my card. You can email anytime,” he offered before leading us back downstairs.

The moment we were outside, I took a deep breath, glad the scent of the fire was less intense. We only lingered for a second, gathering our stuff out of the fireproof box before heading to our separate cars.

It was hard to look down at the small stack of personal documents, photos, and the pendant in my hands. They were all that was left of what felt like another life. I'd worked so hard to be independent, yet I'd lost almost everything. If not for my pack, I knew I'd never be able to replace the things that were gone.

"What now?" I asked as I glanced over at Yuri. His hands were resting on the steering wheel, but he had yet to pull away.

"Let's go find a chain," he suggested. "Then I believe we have a party to prepare for. Do you need something to wear?"

I perked up at that. We'd gotten a few things, but I didn't have a huge variety.

"River might kill us if we go without them," I pointed out.

"Text them on the way. We've got time," Yuri said simply. I pulled out my phone and opened the group chat.

Sienna: We're done at the apartment and heading to the mall for clothes and a replacement chain. Anyone else want to join?

King: I'm getting a bit of work done, so I'm out. Have fun.

River: You had me at shopping. Tell my cousin to pick me up, I'll be ready

Sienna: On our way.

"We have to swing by for River, but King is working," I announced to the others as I settled in my seat. It was more comfortable already, now that the anxiety that had plagued me all morning was gone. I didn't realize I'd drifted off until River nudged me awake. They chuckled as I blinked open my eyes and struggled to focus on them.

"Tired, omega?"

“I don’t know why,” I muttered. I’d been sleeping like a damn baby on the bed Yuri had given me. It was even better when I went to my nest.

“Then coffee is in order. Stop by Caffeineaholics Anonymous,” River ordered their cousin. Yuri switched lanes without complaint, for which I was very grateful.

“Wait, that’s their actual name?” Nash questioned.

“Yes,” River said. “They have support groups on Wednesday nights, but they’re basically just a bunch of people who drink coffee and gossip.”

“I don’t believe you,” Nash huffed as if River were just being sarcastic.

“It really is called that,” I muttered around a yawn. “I have a shirt from there. Or rather, I used to.”

“I didn’t realize you were a vintage tee type of omega. I’ll have to find us some fun new ones,” River said absently as Yuri pulled up to the window. “Double shot of espresso in a caramel latte.”

“Same, but make it triple,” I added. Maybe the guys were right about my heat coming again soon.

Yuri muttered something since he and Nash weren’t into death by caffeine like we were, but he placed the order nonetheless. When he passed my drink back, I took a sip, ignoring the burn. It was worth it for the wake up. By the time we reached the mall, I was feeling semi-human again, which was a major improvement.

“Jewelry first. Otherwise, we’ll never get to it,” Yuri said, then he turned the car off and climbed out. He was at my door in a few moments, helping me out. He leaned down and brushed his lips over mine before a small grimace took over. “You don’t taste the same with all that coffee.”

“I’d apologize, but it’s my precious right now.” I downed another long pull, hellbent on finishing it before we got to the main doors.

“Leave her alone. It’s been a day,” River teased their cousin before linking their arm through mine and pulling me away.

“I’m hardly being mean,” Yuri grumbled, half amused, half exasperated. I was starting to realize that was his constant state when River and I were together.

“You can’t win with River,” Nash said with a hint of sympathy. When I glanced back, he winked at me. Something inside me warmed at the sight. They were joking together like a real pack would, which gave me this cozy sort of feeling. I wanted to curl up between them and just soak up all the good vibes, but we were on a mission.

When we reached the entrance, River and I clinked our cups together, then upended them, racing to finish. I was first, tossing it in the can with a triumphant cry. They laughed as they finished and tossed theirs away as well.

“Come on, children,” Nash teased. “I have a store I want to check out.”

“Which one?” I questioned.

“There’s a leather shop,” he said with a shrug, almost looking embarrassed.

“Oh please, no blushing over liking to shop. We’re experts at spending money here,” River said, waving off the other alpha’s hesitation.

“Oh, do they have leather jackets?” I asked. “I always wanted to own one. Maybe I can see what they have and save up.”

“They do,” Nash agreed, “but Yuri might kill us if we don’t follow his plan.”

“Oh, my cousin is working on that whole rigid structure thing. Leather shop, then jewelry, then you turn us loose in the clothing shops,” River challenged.

“Sold!” I grinned. “Lead the way, Nash.”

We followed the tattooed alpha through the crowd and into Iron and Leather. The store was much bigger than I

anticipated, and it smelled amazing inside. It looked like they carried everything from belts to boots.

“Oh, we should all get one. You think Loki would take issue if we started our own biker gang?” River joked as they pulled on a fringed leather jacket that only they could pull off.

“You’d need a bike for that,” I pointed out. “We would just be a stylish pack.” They grinned as I pulled on a form-fitting jacket that was cinched at the waist. It hugged what small curves I had and felt great, so I walked over to the mirror.

“It’s perfect. Let me buy it for you?” Nash purred in my ear. “Then you can pay me back by letting me peel it off you and fucking you next time you wear it.”

I bit my lip as a surge of heat spread through me. Yeah, that idea would do quite nicely.

“Oh, you getting me one too, big boy?” River teased. They obviously weren’t expecting anything, but Nash surprised us both by plucking River’s out of their hand, then mine off of me, and taking it all up to the counter. I had no chance to protest, and River could only laugh with delighted shock. Nash threw a new belt and something else on the pile before paying.

“You’re getting better at this, Sienna,” Yuri said gently. I glanced over at him and swallowed hard. In truth, them making purchases for me still made me uncomfortable, but when Nash turned around with the happiest smile on his face, I let it fall away.

This was what it felt like to be in a pack, to take care of each other.

Maybe I could get used to this.

CHAPTER
TWENTY-TWO

Sienna

Neon Nights was almost unrecognizable. Hazel and Teagan had put up all the decorations, and there was a full buffet set up.

What I hadn't expected was for Loki to shut the club down for the night to host our private party, though I definitely wasn't going to complain about the lack of handsy patrons.

Usually, we only saw a member or two of the MC at a time, or just Loki and Bane, but now the club was crawling with men in leather jackets.

And they were all here for Eliza. She was living a whole new life that we barely knew, it felt so strange how far apart we could grow, yet staying close friends. I guess that was adulting in a nutshell. Hazel was too. Her pack was amongst them talking with ease to all the people there.

A motorcycle club and the mafia... who would have thought?

The music was already blaring, but our birthday girl was missing, which provided the perfect opportunity for my other besties to pounce on me while we waited.

"How is the pack?" Teagan questioned. "Who has the biggest dick?"

"Oh my god, Teag!" I hissed, glancing behind me to see if my guys heard. From the red faces and choked laughter, they *definitely* had.

“You can’t ask that when they’re right here,” Hazel said before dragging me away from my pack. “But really, bestie, how are you holding up? I know it’s overwhelming sometimes, and I can’t even imagine how it is with so many alphas and no previous experience...”

“I think the most overwhelming part is letting them do shit for me.” I groaned. “And I didn’t think early heat was a thing when you formed a pack, but they swear I smell like it. They won’t even let me leave without using scent blockers.”

Hazel’s eyebrows dipped down in concern. “Not to alarm you, Si, but you *did* get drugged with Rapture. Some of the omegas in THC would get more frequent heats outside of the norm,” she explained. “Did you talk to your doctor?”

“Not since that first visit,” I admitted. “Do you think it’s permanent?”

“I don’t know, but you haven’t had many other issues since. Maybe it’s just a temporary thing? Every girl reacted differently. I don’t have additional heats, but they are *way* more intense than they’re supposed to be.”

“Let’s not worry tonight. It might not even happen,” I said quickly, refusing to let my anxiety bubble up to the surface. “I’ll talk to my doctor this week, okay?”

“I bet it’s River. It’s always the unexpected one.” Hazel and I both blinked at Teagan as she stared down my pack. How was she still thinking about that?

“Are you thinking about my pack naked right now?” I demanded. My tone was a bit sharper than I intended, and I winced.

“Sorry,” Teagan said immediately, though she didn’t hide her accompanying smirk.

I wouldn’t admit it, but I had to hide a smirk of my own. From my experience so far, she was right. River *was* the biggest.

Eliza’s arrival saved me from any awkwardness. She squealed with happiness when she took it all in. She was always an easy one to surprise, and no matter what they were,

she appreciated the small things in life. A private gathering with her besties and the pack she wasn't formally claiming was definitely the best way to honor her.

“You guys!” she gushed. “This is so fun!”

“Just wait,” Bane called out, then he hit a button on a remote. The lights dimmed, and a disco ball lowered down. Someone else clicked on music, turning the club into some kind of highschool dance, but with booze and pot brownies. Bane looked so proud that I couldn't help but grin. My brother was such a damn softy.

Eliza walked over to us with a pout in full force. “You guys had me fooled.”

“I know you didn't think we had nothing planned,” Hazel teased. “We'd never forget our favorite biker bestie.”

A deep blush colored her cheeks, and we all stepped closer in a silent bestie demand for an explanation.

“Loki and Bane got me a present,” she admitted. “It's a bike of my own.”

“Oh my god, that's perfect!” I said excitedly. “You can't tell me you didn't miss racing or at least riding.”

A flicker of sadness went across her face. “I haven't even gotten on yet. It just doesn't feel the same. Thankfully, they still have a few touches they want to add, so I can deflect for a little while. I want to get brave enough to ride again.”

Losing her dad, the man who'd introduced her to racing, had put a permanent damper on that part of her life, but it was inevitable that she'd climb back on someday, especially with a pack of bikers.

“I'm starving,” she said suddenly. It was a deflection for sure, but the moment Hazel pointed out the nacho bar, all bets were off.

“This is such an Eliza party,” Teagan said with a grin.

“It was Sienna's idea,” Hazel said. Eliza immediately narrowed her eyes at me, but I just blew her a kiss and took

Teagan and Hazel with me to the bar where they'd set up the karaoke.

“Oh my god, no, you didn't!” Eliza cackled when the first few notes of “Eye of the Tiger” by Survivor started playing. We were off key, but we made up for it with our enthusiasm. More than once, I caught my pack laughing and chatting while they watched us. Even my ever stoic Yuri had a small smile on his face. Hazel's crew and Bane and Loki had joined them. My heart warmed at the sight of them all getting along so well.

Once Eliza finally admitted her feelings or whatever she, Loki, and Bane had going on, I knew they'd be added to this group. The three of them were in this weird limbo of being together yet not... I couldn't really keep up with it. But rarely did a group have only two pack members outside of an omega. Maybe they were missing the last members of their pack.

Now, Teagan... She would be the odd one out. She wouldn't settle for just any old pack. They'd have to be as fabulous as she was and live up to her high-energy lifestyle because there was no way in hell our bestie would settle down and stop traveling.

“My turn!” The words caught me off guard. We'd just cleared the area by the karaoke machine, and I didn't recognize the man calling out.

Eliza laughed and gave him her full attention.

Interesting.

“Who is this?” Teagan asked, ever the blunt one.

“That's just Romeo. He's a beta and one of the funniest guys I've met at the compound. He's Loki's cousin, meaning he was always around playing music. This should be good.”

“She's blushing,” Hazel sang out as we all settled at a table. Loki magically appeared with a round of shots which we clinked together and downed as the beta made Gotye's “Somebody That I Used to Know” his own.

Not a damn one of us missed the eye contact he was making with Eliza or the jealous rumble coming from Loki. Eliza shot an arched look at the alpha, who picked the omega

up and sat her down on his lap, deliberately rubbing his face into her neck to breathe in her scent.

Oh man, the possessive glint in his gaze as he stared at the beta put me on high alert, but Eliza didn't seem bothered by it. Bane, for his part, just sighed and shook his head as if this competition was nothing out of the norm. Romeo shot them a lazy grin before turning that attention of his on the rest of the room.

I was so glad that I didn't have to sort that out. Given the grin on her face as Loki nipped her neck, she loved the attention.

"So, Sienna..." Maximo leaned forward, his intense brown eyes on me. "How are things going with you all over there?"

"F-fine," I stammered, caught off guard. "Why?"

Hazel lightly smacked her alpha's chest. "Don't scare her, Maximo."

He caught her hand and brought it up to kiss her knuckles. "When you married into the De Luca Family, I knew that your best friends came as part of the deal."

"What does that mean?" Teagan asked, lifting her hand for another drink.

"It means you're all part of the Family, and I'm the head of that Family."

"Besides Aunt V," Alessandro and Emiliano tacked on with huge smiles.

"Where is Valentina?" Zaven asked as he looked around with a furrowed brow. "Wasn't she supposed to be here?"

Right at that moment, one of the best moments of my life happened. The doors to Neon Nights flew open, and in crashed not only the missing omega, but a biker as well. The two were butt-ass naked and in the middle of doing the deed. The alpha flipped them around so he hit the floor instead of Valentina, but that just meant we all got to see quite a bit of both of them.

"Oh. My. God," River whispered from nearby just as Hazel burst out laughing.

We all moved in slow motion, except Maximo, who closed his eyes and took a deep breath before he looked at me again. “So, Sienna, you’re happy?”

“Are we not...” Sutton started to ask.

“Nope!” Maximo insisted, cutting him off.

“Fucking weak ass door!” Valentina bitched as she shifted around on top of Kraken, who I finally recognized. He stared up at the older omega, his face completely red. “President, you need to get that shit fixed. Kraken, what the hell are you waiting for?”

“Uhhh... We should go and—”

“Fuck me, damn it. I was too damn close for you to back out now.”

“We are in front of—”

“They made me marry them mid-heat. They can consider this karma.”

Valentina rolled her hips, and despite his protests, Kraken groaned, but that was the last I saw before a hand clamped over my eyes.

“No way are you going to see this,” Yuri growled in my ear, grabbing me and pulling me onto his lap.

“Hey!” I tried to protest, but as I wiggled around, his dick hardened, pressing against my ass.

He hissed. “Settle, omega. You want to celebrate? I can help you out with that when we get back to the house.”

My breath caught in my throat, and I deliberately shifted around on his lap, needing him to follow through on that promise. Yuri purred in my ear, making goosebumps break out everywhere.

“Do you like that idea, omega?”

“Yes,” I whimpered. Lust was heating me up from the inside out, and what Hazel had said earlier hit me like a ton of bricks. Heat... I was going into fucking heat.

I moaned, moving Yuri's hand aside to stare at my bestie. She was watching me with a knowing gaze that confirmed I needed to have a talk with my pack ASAP.

"We gotta go." I abruptly stood up, making the others move backward.

"Si, is everything okay?" Eliza asked before her eyes went wide.

"Do you need me to help?" Hazel jumped in, her gentle voice making me chew my bottom lip.

"Maybe after. If—"

Ring.

No... Why now?!

Ring.

"I need to get this," I fumbled for my phone and stumbled away from my pack and friends who all were watching me with various levels of concern.

I wound my way through the bikers toward the women's room, locking the door. I managed to answer by the last ring.

"Hey."

"Sienna!" Sam choked out, my name barely recognizable thanks to her sobs.

"Sam! What happened?! What's wrong?!" I asked, my heart pounding in my chest.

"The hospital... Mom... The insurance is saying they won't cover anything else."

The breath was knocked out of my chest as I fell back against the wall. My vision narrowed, darkness crowding in as I tried to handle what my sister was telling me.

"That's not possible—" I started, but Sam cut me off with a scathing huff.

"How would you even know, Sienna?! You aren't here doing this day in and day out. I've been with Mom for every test, every day in the hospital. I've talked to the doctors and

the insurance people. Did you offer to call? Not fucking once!”

“I’ve been working my ass off to send you damn near every penny I had to help take care of Mom!” I shouted back, finally snapping. “I’ve barely been scraping by—living off of ramen noodles, food pantry boxes, and meals at work. If I eat at all! Hell, I couldn’t even afford gas half the time to get to work. Don’t you *dare* fucking tell me I don’t care or that I’m not doing anything. If I came back to New York, I wouldn’t be able to help with the bills, so fuck you!”

“Don’t you dare—” Sam started to yell, but I hung up anyway.

I’d call her back. This was about more than just our shitty relationship. It was about Mom, so I knew I’d be the one crawling back to apologize, but right now, with my hormones running high and her horrible attitude, I couldn’t take it anymore. There was a reason we’d barely talked before all this, and she clearly hadn’t changed a damn bit.

“Sienna Rivers, you get your fucking ass out here right now!” Eliza called through the door, her firm, cold tone making me freeze.

They’d heard me. They *knew*. Oh god, everyone was out there. My pack. My besties. My family. Part of me wanted to climb out of the window and run away Julia Roberts style, but I knew that would be dumb. My heat was on the verge of taking over, and my emotions were all over the place with everything going on. No, I had to be an adult and face whatever was on the other side of the door.

I wished I felt more confident in what I was facing because anger, I could handle, but disappointment... That was a bitter pill to swallow.

CHAPTER
TWENTY-THREE

Yuri

Sienna slowly opened the door to the restroom, her gaze trained on the ground. Her friends were pissed off and upset, but most of all, I could sense their concern for their friend. Sienna's shoulders were slumped like she was ready for a scolding. Eliza, the one that had demanded she come out, sighed and rushed her with a huge hug.

Our omega broke down.

Sobs wracked her body as she collapsed into her friend. Hazel and Teagan were there a second later, holding my omega. It took every ounce of my control to keep from storming over to take care of her. She was *my* omega. I should be the one holding her together when she was falling apart.

I could tell the others felt the same way; they were nearly vibrating with the need to do *something*. I shot my cousin a glance, knowing they'd be as upset as I was but not nearly as in control. King reached out and rested a hand on their shoulder, which had my cousin releasing a shaky breath and a soft thanks. Nash was being calmed by his brother, Bane, who also looked ready to rip someone's head off.

My omega pulled back from her friends, furiously scrubbing at the tears that still fell down her cheeks. That was my undoing. My restraint snapped, so I strode forward, intent on comforting my mate. One of the friends, Teagan I think, opened her mouth to say something, but Eliza pulled her out of

the way. Sienna blinked up at me, then her face crumbled again. The exhaustion in her gaze was so fucking clear.

There was only a quick moment of hesitation before she threw herself into my arms and wrapped her arms around my neck. My fierce, independent omega needed me, and fuck, if that wasn't a heady feeling.

“Sienna,” Hazel said softly. She didn't try to approach us, but there was a thread of seriousness under that tone that couldn't be ignored. “We can talk about all this later. After. But as I'm sure you've realized, this stress is likely going to push you into your heat again. And I have no idea how that is going to look for you but... it won't be normal.”

“What does that mean?” King growled.

“I was drugged a while back,” Sienna choked out. “It was... It changed my heats. Last time, it was just more... I don't know how to describe it. This time feels like it's going to be different. It's hitting out of nowhere and coming on again so soon. I doubt it will be an easy one.”

“It could come more frequently, or there could be other things that happen. Mine don't happen as often, but the strength feels like each heat is making up for lost time. They're so damn intense... I just have to ride it out then recover.” Hazel shivered, and Maximo tucked her into his side while Sutton rubbed her back.

“Who the fuck would do that?!” Nash seethed before taking a deep breath. He stilled, and I realized he could smell what I did. Sienna's orange and pear scent had been intensifying the longer we'd stood here. “Right now, that doesn't matter. We are taking our omega home, and we can discuss *everything* after. Okay, Sienna?”

“Yeah,” she moaned. She was so close that her lips rubbed against my neck when she spoke, and I instinctively started to purr. I needed to soothe my omega; that was the only thing that would soothe me in turn.

“We need to leave now,” I ground out when she started to nibble on my neck. Without explanation, I rushed out of the

bar, but the rest of the pack was close behind.

“I’ll drive,” River offered grimly. “Yuri and Nash, you guys can help keep her calm so we get home without me crashing the damn car.”

King hopped up front with River while Nash joined me in the back of the SUV. Sienna pulled back and grabbed my face, boldly slanting her lips over mine in a heated kiss. *Fuck, she is going to be the death of me.*

I fell into it, kissing her back, to the soundtrack of my cousin cursing up a storm from the front seat. One car filled with four alphas, an omega whose heat was taking control, and all of us reeling from the snippet of conversation we’d overheard—this was going to be fun.

NASH

River broke at least ten traffic laws to get us back to the house in record time. Sienna was too distracting for anyone to really care. Our girl unbuckled her seatbelt the second the vehicle came to a stop, then started trying to peel her clothes off.

“Omega. Inside. Now,” Yuri groaned.

“No,” Sienna countered breathlessly.

“We don’t have room in here for the two of us, let alone the five of us. Nash, grab her.”

I snagged her around the waist and pulled her out of the SUV to rush her inside. Everyone but Yuri was close behind me, and a quick glance back showed him taking a deep breath of the fresh air before pulling out his cell. He was probably calling the club to let them know we’d all be out for Sienna’s heat.

Once we were in her nest, Sienna tugged at my clothing, and I eagerly tossed each item aside. As I started with my pants, River and King said they would prep some food for later and hurried out. I didn’t mind an audience, but I was happy to have some time alone with Sienna for our first time.

Tugging her clothes off, I almost came from looking down at her naked body in my arms. *She is gorgeous.* Then I finally did what I’d wanted to do since the first time I saw her dance.

I worshiped her.

Carefully, I urged her to lay down before dropping to my knees between her splayed legs. I started kissing my way up her legs, savoring every mewl and whimper that passed her lips. Those sounds were *mine*, no one else’s. At this moment, I was the sole cause of her pleasure. Kissing, licking, nibbling, I made my way up her body. I purposely avoided her pussy and breasts until she was humping the air, begging for me to touch her where she needed me.

“Nash. Fuck... Fuck me!”

“You’ll get this knot, omega, don’t you worry about that, but I’ve waited too long to rush this.”

“Worry about that shit when I’m not in heat, alpha,” Sienna growled, roughly threading her fingers through my hair then shoving my face into her pussy. She lifted a leg and rested her foot against my back, fucking my face in her desperate pursuit of relief.

Not about to be outdone, I started to purr, placing quick teasing licks around her clit before fucking her with my tongue. Her thighs tightened around my head, and I could feel her slick wetting my beard as she cried out my name and came with my tongue in her cunt.

God, she was fucking perfect.

Her legs went limp, and I surged up, looming over her as I smoothly thrust inside of her. She just felt too good. I clenched my jaw and tried to think of something, anything, that would help me keep from putting myself to shame. Arcade games. The nick on my bike that needed fixing.

Her pussy squeezed my cock as she orgasmed again, violently tugging my brain away from its useless distractions.

“Nash, please.” Her nails dug into my ass, and she rocked her hips. How was I supposed to stand up to my whimpering omega? I did my best to keep my composure, but I had been rendered powerless. I needed to give her what she wanted.

“So damn pushy,” I growled teasingly, then I started to move. Fucking her slow and hard, my hungry eyes drank in the way her back arched while cries fell from her parted lips. Her body was burning up, with sweat trickling down her temple, and she stared up at me with wide, dazed eyes.

My knot began to swell, locking us together, but my shallow thrusts were no less tortuous for her. She kept pleading—to come, for me to slow down, for more. I didn’t think she even knew what she was saying.

I thrust in and out of her until she came, setting her nails into my back hard enough that I hissed. The sound and feel of her pleasure, the little bits of pain where her nails threatened to

break my skin, the clench of her pussy around me, were too much for my self-control. I came with her, but before I knew what was happening, Sienna flipped me onto my back. She started riding me, her small breasts rocking with her movements, and sought out more, using my knot to seek relief.

She was a wild woman, my omega. This beautiful creature, who was so fucking sensual and powerful, used me as a tool to *take* instead of asking for what she wanted. I was just as fucking lost in this maelstrom of pleasure as she was. How long had we been locked together? Minutes? Hours? All that mattered was her.

This was the omega that called to me, this fierce woman who seized control. Her domination of the situation *and* of me... I never thought I'd find it attractive, but I couldn't stop the second orgasm that hit me with no warning. Sienna groaned, another orgasm rolling through her body before she collapsed on top of me.

My knot slowly went down, and I slipped out of her. I tucked her into my side and rolled us over so we were cuddled together. Her hypersensitive body shivered with each touch.

There was a small knock, then the door opened to reveal Yuri. His dark gaze raked over us before he joined us and shut the door.

“River and King?” I asked as he started to unbutton his shirt.

“Cooking everything in the kitchen from the looks of things. Barely keeping it together, but they're trying since we need food.”

“We can take turns,” I told him. I'd barely finished the sentence before Sienna's legs started to scissor together, already looking for more attention.

“Her friend said something about her heat potentially being... off,” Yuri mentioned. The other alpha took off his shirt and started to remove his pants while he kept talking. “Did you notice anything?”

I shrugged. “She’s more bold, *a lot* more bold, but that could be normal for her. I’ll ask King since he helped her with the last one.”

“Yuri,” Sienna murmured, a soft smile curling her lips when he strode over. “I didn’t know you had tattoos.”

Yuri was usually dressed to the nines, but underneath all of that, he was covered in tattoos from his chest down. I rolled away as the smirking alpha promised that she could appreciate them all later. Grabbing my pants, I threw them on then walked out to join the others.

As Yuri had said, River and King were getting things together, but they stopped moving the moment I walked into the room. I knew they had to be smelling Sienna; there was no way I wasn’t drowning in her scent. King had already helped her through one of her heats, so there was a part of me that wanted to purr with the victory that, this time, *I* was the first to give our omega pleasure. I wasn’t normally a jealous or competitive bastard, but I’d allow myself to revel in this little win for a few minutes.

“I’m not bothering with a shower. She had barely a few seconds of downtime before she homed in on Yuri,” I informed them. “But I have a question for you, King.”

“Yes?”

“When you helped Sienna through her last heat, what did she act like?”

A confused-looking King wiped his hand with the dish towel he’d been holding. “Like a normal omega in heat. Did you have something specific—”

“Bold.” I cleared my throat roughly. “In charge, not the unsure omega who has no experience with sex.”

“A bit, yes. She didn’t have time to tell me she was a virgin before it hit her,” King answered after a thoughtful pause. “Are you trying to keep an eye out for things that are abnormal because of what her friend said?”

“Yes,” I told him, and a sense of relief rolled through me. “Hazel said she had no downtime at all during her heat. Here,

let me help you with the food stuff. The more we get done now, the less we have to do later when we're exhausted."

"Think we can joke to Sienna about adding a beta?" River suggested, making King roll his eyes.

"No," I replied dryly before walking around the kitchen island. "What can I do to help?"

"Suck my dick so I can focus?" River batted their eyelashes at me.

"You're hot, but you're not my type. King, that's all on you," I deadpanned, going to the fridge.

"You think I'm hot?" River placed a hand over their heart, and King's face flushed red with embarrassment.

"We all know you are. Now, focus, alpha, or we won't have food to eat in between fucking Sienna over the next few days."

CHAPTER
TWENTY-FOUR

Sienna

My heat was a blur, with my body going into hyper-drive and my mind feeling oddly fuzzy. I wanted rest and to take a break, but there was a disconnect between what I was thinking about and what my body was doing. I couldn't control my physical reactions at all, so all I felt was a constant need for sex. My body craved their knots more than it needed air. My brain, however, felt like it was trapped.

My instincts had taken the driver's seat, and there was nothing I could do. I wanted them, it wasn't as if they were fucking me without my consent, but it sometimes felt like I was watching it happen. This was different from any heat I'd ever had, and it was downright scary.

It had to be the Rapture, like Hazel had said, which was even more frightening than my out-of-control heat. I'd only been exposed once! How the fuck did Hazel, and others like her who'd been exposed for *years*, deal with their heats?

I whimpered when I felt hands gently push my legs apart, then River was looming over me, kissing me, and my hips tilted, seeking their knot. Another set of hands pinned me down, and I broke away from the kiss, breathless, to look at King sitting near my head. River grinned down at me and lined their cock up, thrusting into me smoothly, and my sore body welcomed them.

Our first heat as a pack and I wasn't even part of it. My first times with both Yuri and Nash I remembered clearly, but I couldn't really recall how they felt or smelled or anything after that. It was like I was in a bubble, present yet not.

I wanted to cry, to scream, but my body kept seeking the relief only they could provide.

When I woke up in a puppy pile of alphas, I couldn't tell how much time had passed. My body ached, especially my pussy, and I was surprised when it actually listened to my command to move. My muscles throbbed as I gently wiggled my body out from between King and River. Yuri and Nash weren't anywhere in sight, but I carefully shuffled out of my nest and into my bathroom so I could avoid being noticed.

I need to pee and shower.

Flashes of my alphas checking in slowly processed as I started to stand up. They had asked if I was okay, what I wanted to eat—all of this flooded my mind as I let the water heat up for a shower. I took care of business and tried to ignore my trembling hands.

Refusing to let myself think too hard, I rushed out of the bathroom and tore through my room instead of returning to the nest, looking for my phone. It was sitting on the bedside table, hooked up to the charger. Hurrying back to the bathroom, I locked the door and ignored my notifications. I needed to call Hazel.

It rang a few times before a male voice answered. They had to say my name a few times before I realized it was Zaven.

“Where's Hazel?” I asked, my voice cracking when I said her name.

“I'm getting her,” he reassured me. “She was with the twins. Just give me a—”

“Zaven, what the—” I heard someone yell in the background.

“It’s Sienna.” A few seconds later, Hazel was on the line.

“Si—”

“It was—” I hiccuped, feeling myself start to lose it. Tears were streaming down my face. “I don’t know how to begin.”

“Where’s your pack?” she asked, then I heard the rustling of clothing. “Did they hurt you?”

“No,” I replied harshly. “They were perfect.”

“Then get them,” Hazel encouraged. “You’re coming down from the high of your heat and whatever the drug did to you. I’m assuming that’s why you called me?”

“Yes.” I hiccuped, rubbing my face.

“Get them. Let them help you. We’ll be there in thirty minutes.”

“Hazel—”

“Hush. It will be easier to talk about in person, and my guys can help yours out with how to handle all of this. Plus, have you all even eaten since the heat hit? All alphas would make it hard to focus on making sure everyone eats.”

Zaven started muttering in the background, then I heard the twins mumbling something about talking to the alphas.

“Did you call Eliza or Teag?” Hazel asked.

“No.” I swallowed hard. “I just wanted... You’re the only one who will understand some of what’s happening right now.”

“Hey, hey. You got it. Just us, okay? I’ll be there ASAP. Get your alphas, Si. You don’t want to do this drop alone.”

Click.

I set the phone down, and right then there was a soft knock on the door.

“Sienna?”

It was King.

When I opened the door, his eyes went wide with concern. The tears hadn't stopped, and the moment I saw him, I collapsed. I wasn't sure if it was from fear, exhaustion, or relief at the sight of him, but it didn't matter.

He caught me before I hit the floor then sat me down on the toilet lid. He watched me like a hawk as he turned on the shower, undressed himself, then did the same for me.

"Talk to me, Sienna," he pleaded. He gave me a minute to think while he silently shuffled us into the shower. A few deep breaths later, he gently started to clean us both off. "Your heat is over. Is something else happening? I've seen exhausted omegas post-heat, but they don't collapse."

I opened and closed my mouth, trying to figure out what to say, but I was at a loss. When I didn't say anything, he yelled out for the others. Within seconds, they burst into the bathroom, out of breath and gazes wild with panic.

"Maximo just called me," Yuri said. I sobbed with relief, and he took that as a go ahead to give them a rundown of what Hazel thought was happening.

"Okay, everyone else, shower and change. We should also air out the house," River ordered. "King, I'll be back to help with her."

They swept out of the room as quickly as they'd come. My alphas were stepping up when I needed them even though I couldn't articulate what I wanted. That was the best feeling. Now, if only I could get my raging emotions to calm the fuck down.

I was shaking, not from cold but from whatever this was. My body was a stranger to me right now, and the uncontrollable tremors had me ready to scream.

In just a few minutes, River was back. How they'd managed to shower so quickly, I had no idea, but they were there, and they helped King move me to my room and dry me off.

I could barely dress myself, so they had to guide my limbs into loose-fitting clothes, making sure I was covered up for company.

Nothing like another pack knowing all about your heat and sex life, but at least I could trust Hazel's pack with this kind of information. They were family, just like Maximo said.

Clearly, Hazel's pack was comfortable ignoring speed limits because they'd reached Yuri's house in twenty minutes, not the thirty Hazel had estimated.

My bestie immediately ran to my side and curled her body around mine, holding me tight. She and the others had been my safe haven for so long that I instantly felt at ease. I closed my eyes, focusing on the familiar shelter of one of my best friends. Someone draped a blanket around us.

"I hate this," I managed to get out despite the trembling making my brain feel just as rattled as my body.

"I'm so sorry. This is my fault," Hazel whispered in a broken tone.

My hand wrapped around her arm in protest. "No, stop," I stuttered.

"Don't do that, Hazel," Sutton told her from somewhere in the room. "This was *not* on you. Neither of you asked for what the assholes in the Humble Creed did to you."

"Has she eaten anything?" Zaven asked.

"We've gotten some food in her, but not enough," Nash admitted. "It's been a struggle to get anything down, and, well, let's just say she wasn't really interested in cooperating." From the tight confines of Hazel's arms, I swore I could picture the alpha blushing when he said those last few words.

"Well, let's see if this helps," Hazel said as she pulled out a blunt..

Hazel took the first hit, getting it ready for me before holding it to my lips. She was patient as I attempted to breathe it in, but it wasn't until River wrapped their arms around me that I was able to fill my lungs successfully.

We went back and forth several times before the shaking subsided and I felt semi-human again.

“Fuck this. Tell me it won’t be this bad every time?” I begged.

“I don’t really know,” Hazel admitted gently. “Mine are a hot mess too, but it seems like the weed helps with the drop.”

“We’ll keep that in mind,” Yuri said. “We can prepare better now that we know.”

“The last one was so normal,” I said tiredly, leaning back into River. Their long black hair fell over my shoulder, smelling of shampoo and their scent, which helped bring me a little more peace. “This was horrifying. I was completely aware the whole time, but I couldn’t control my body. It was like an out-of-body experience. Being completely cognizant through that, I don’t want to do it ever again.”

This time, I shuddered from the memory, not the heat drop.

“That’s horrifying. I’m so fucking sorry,” Hazel said, offering me the blunt again. I breathed in deep and held it, letting the slight burn of the smoke ground me. I held the smoke in for as long as I could before slowly blowing it out.

My body was no longer shaking, and the fear that had accompanied the trembles was down to a dull roar.

“Should we get you to a doctor soon?” King asked. I wanted to say no but I knew after this situation, that was not an option. I needed to see a doctor instead of panicking about it. “This isn’t something that you should let fester without talking to someone.”

“I will,” I promised. “Just give me a bit to recover first. If anything else concerning happens, we’ll go sooner.”

“You’ll keep that promise, Sienna,” Hazel said firmly. “Don’t make me Eliza you.”

“Okay,” I groaned. Any fight in me fell away as my stomach screamed in protest. “But can we feed me now?”

“We brought food just in case you guys needed a hand,” Alessandro said. “It’s on the kitchen island.”

“Thank you,” Yuri said, shaking his hand formally.

“We’re family,” the twin said with a shrug before grinning at me. “Right, little sister?”

“She sure has a lot of older brothers,” Nash teased. The mood lightened as we laughed with them, and River squeezed me close, breathing in deeply as they nuzzled their face into my neck.

“I do, but it’s nice to have family,” I admitted.

“We’re always here for you,” Maximo said. “But now that she’s stable, we’ll leave you to it.” It was as if he could tell that things were hitting a point where I had to talk to my pack. We all knew what happened at Neon Nights, what they’d overheard between me and Sam, and I had a feeling that conversation was coming sooner rather than later.

“Here’s something to tide you over, Si,” Hazel said, pulling a small case from her purse and handing it over. It held several perfectly wrapped blunts, and my eyes instantly began to water. Call me a sap, but there was something amazing about having a best friend who dropped everything to be there for you. It wasn’t really the weed that was our love language, but, as silly as it sounded, that represented it. As besties, as family, we cared for each other and took care of each other in whatever form was needed. Right now, that form happened to be a bunch of blunts.

“I love you, Hazel.” I sniffled. She chuckled and pulled me in for another hug.

“Love you too, Si. Try to keep your heat in your pants for a while, okay? I have a feeling that your emotions are going to be on high for a little bit,” she said with amusement.

“You’re right about that,” I grumbled. “Not to mention I’m exhausted.”

“Food, nap, then you guys can talk. And us? We’re fine, Sienna. But we *will* be talking about Sam and her bullshit after you have some time to breathe.”

I nodded miserably. “That’s fair. Mom’s really bad, Hazel...”

“We’ll figure it out—*without* starving yourself,” she said quietly.

“Good,” I said. “I can’t lose you guys.”

“Never,” she promised. “Don’t even think that way. Besties that smoke together, stay together, remember? We’ve survived cults, arguments, fires, everything.”

She gave me a quick wave before she and her pack headed home, leaving me in River’s arms wondering just how I’d managed to get so damn lucky.

Though one glance around told me this next conversation was going to be hell.

CHAPTER
TWENTY-FIVE

Sienna

My pack didn't ask a single question while River led me to the kitchen and settled me on a stool at the island. They stood on one side while Yuri took up position on the other. Nash and King went through the food the De Luca pack had brought.

"Okay, looks like tacos, french fries, authentic ramen, and brownies?" Nash's confusion had me cracking up. They all looked a bit too relieved at the sound. I'd clearly worried them a bit too much the last few days.

"She got my favorite foods," I said. "Though if the brownies aren't from a bakery or store, put them away for now. I've had enough weed."

King opened the plastic wrap and sniffed before he snorted out a laugh and followed my instructions.

"Well, what do you want?" Nash questioned. "The tacos? Noodles?"

"Yes," I deadpanned as my stomach growled loudly enough I was surprised the house didn't shake.

He slid over the boxes and let me dig in. The first bite of my taco had me moaning, then, with a single breath, I dove in full force, barely breathing between every bite I could get my hands on. Someone pressed a drink in my other hand at some point, and I downed it before slowing to a more reasonable pace.

Not one of them touched my food. Instead, Nash heated up some leftovers from the fridge.

We all ate in silence, and by the time my stomach felt like it would burst, they had finished as well.

“Damn, not a single bite left,” River noted. “Guess that makes up for the lack of food during the heat.”

“Now, I can’t walk,” I complained, clutching my stomach. I’d reached that point of no return where I was sated yet slightly miserable.

“I’ve got you,” Yuri said. My alpha gently lifted me and carried me back to the couch. He settled in the middle of the couch, holding me in his lap as he ran his fingers up and down my arm. I snuggled back into him, humming when he pressed a kiss to my temple. Once the rest of the pack got comfortable around us on the huge sectional, I knew it was time.

“I guess you guys need some answers,” I said softly.

“A few,” King agreed.

I took a deep breath and tried to figure out where to start. Did I talk about the heat, or did I start with my mom’s situation? Chewing my bottom lip, I twisted my fingers together hard enough that Yuri pulled them apart so I’d stop. *Better to start with my family.*

“My sister and I are twins, but we’ve never been close. She’s my opposite, and I’ve always found her a bit too narcissistic and petty. When I left our hometown with Hazel, I thought the space would be nice. Instead, she called me before we’d even gotten to Alexandria.”

“To say your mom is sick?” Nash asked. His voice was soft and sweet, which made it a bit easier to choke out the answer.

“Yeah. It’s cancer, and it’s been spreading,” I managed to get out as a tear escaped. “Dad is working insane hours to help pay for what insurance doesn’t cover. Mom is exhausted and too sick to talk often, and I’m struggling with that.”

“And Sam?”

I shrugged. “She’s on the front lines, taking Mom to appointments and fighting the insurance company. She’s basically doing everything she can so Mom is taken care of.”

“That’s so hard. I’m sorry you’ve been dealing with that,” King said. “But when did it turn into starving yourself?”

“She needs the money. What else could I do? When Sam calls and says Mom needs meds that cost two thousand dollars, I work my ass off and get that money.” There was a challenge in my voice. They could say what they wanted, but my mom was my priority. If they even *thought* that they could say she wasn’t worth it, I’d be punching some alphas in the throat.

Finally I was brave enough to look up at them, expecting to be met with a mix of frustration and pity. Instead, I found compassion. Every one of them seemed to understand.

“No more,” Yuri said firmly. “I understand you want to help, and I won’t stop you. But if you’re going to do that, we get full permission to provide all food, transportation, and any other needs you have.”

My mouth started to open in protest, but River cut in.

“That means stuff like clothes and extras as well,” they added on with a confident tone.

“*And* we get to pay for dates,” Nash said as he crossed his arms. “We mean *anything*.”

“Not only that, but we want to know you’re eating what we provide,” King said.

Somehow, my alphas had come to an unspoken agreement on how to handle this, and I had no clue how to process it.

They were giving me a solution to my biggest stressor. Their kindness and acceptance wouldn’t save Mom, but it sure as fuck would save me. That alone would provide more for Mom than I could alone. They were gifting me a way to survive while still doing what I had to for the woman who’d taught me to be the person I was today.

“Alright.” I could tell my easy agreement had them completely stunned. They’d expected a fight, or at least some

small protest.

Did I want to take advantage of them?

Absolutely not.

But I would find my own ways to contribute, and I would do what I could.

“Thank you. You have no idea what this means to me,” I said. I knew there was more we needed to talk about, but they were kind enough not to push me for more tonight.

“Come on, omega, time for rest,” King said as he helped me up. “You coming, River?”

That invitation felt like it meant so much more than just a nap, and when King put his hand in the other alpha’s, I nearly cheered. The heat had brought them closer together.

The moment the two alphas got me in bed between them, my eyes snapped shut. I was safe, warm, and protected. It was everything I had craved for so long, and after this experience, I knew I’d never take it for granted.

YURI

“Thank you for your assistance,” I told the alpha on the other end of the line.

“You’re all family,” Maximo replied.

“Remember you said that when we have future business dealings,” I told him, smirking at his groan.

We said our goodbyes and hung up. Silence filled the house, leaving me with thoughts that were way too loud. It had been two days since Sienna’s heat ended, but we were still recovering from it—physically, mentally, and emotionally. Sienna had filled us in about her experience during the heat, and it felt like a dagger to the heart.

I felt sick to my stomach just thinking about how Sienna described her heat as an out-of-body experience. She reassured us that she was on board with everything despite not having control of her body during the heat, but it was still hard to swallow.

I rubbed my face, groaning at the mounting pressure I was facing. We’d all talked and tried to work through all our feelings together, but I was used to being able to fix things, and this... I couldn’t fix this.

So I dove head first into coming up with solutions for other things, like her mom’s situation. Calling Maximo made sense given his connections and influence. We put together a list of nearby hospitals with some of the best oncologists on staff. They’d work with the insurance companies to help take some of the stress off Sienna’s family.

I checked the time on my phone and realized she wouldn’t be home for another two hours. She and River had gone out shopping, with plans for King to meet up with them. I shook my head at the unexpected pairing of my cousin and King, but oddly enough, they fit together well. The two of them were going slow, not rushing into anything, for both the sake of Sienna and our pack. That, if nothing else, said how much

River cared for our omega and how they might care for the alpha. The lack of impulsivity was a tell-tale sign that my cousin was taking these relationships very seriously.

Nash was visiting his brother, Bane, meaning I was alone for what seemed like the first time in ages. My home felt oddly empty without all of them here, and that was what it had become—a *home*. The place looked lived in, cozy. River left their coffee mug on the edge of the sink, King and Nash kicked off their boots in random places, and Sienna had arranged blankets and pillows all over the living room, making me think one nest just wasn't enough for my omega.

I thought I'd hate it, having my personal space intruded upon, but with the silence all around me, I missed them. Of course, that didn't mean I wouldn't take advantage of my solo time. Standing up and stretching, I headed downstairs to my personal sanctuary. My escape.

My gaming space was packed with every high-end product you could imagine. I had every game system set up and on display. On the other side of the room was a huge gaming computer I had built myself. It was set up with lighting that was programmed to match the aesthetic of whatever game I was playing.

Settling onto the sofa, I grabbed my headphones and started up the Xbox to play *Elden Ring*. Surround-sound speakers started up, and I felt myself truly relaxing for the first time in weeks. Loving having them here didn't change the need to recharge on my own sometimes.

I lost track of time while I played. People I knew virtually popped in and out, playing for a bit then hopping off for one reason or another. I kept going until I heard a soft knock that immediately drew my attention.

Sienna was at the bottom of the stairs, looking at the gaming haven I'd set up with surprise. I finished up the round and signed off, shoving off my headphones.

“Sorry, I get sucked in while playing. How long have you been standing there?”

Sienna gave me a half smile that didn't reach her eyes. "Not long. This is amazing. For some reason, I never pictured you as a gamer."

"Oh really?" I asked, arching an eyebrow.

She just shrugged, padding over to where I was still sitting on the couch. "Mind if I join you?"

"Of course not." I snagged her around the waist and pulled her onto my lap. Nuzzling my face into her neck, I breathed in deep, relishing that blend of orange, pear, and patchouli before kissing her shoulder. "How was your time out with River?"

"Fun, even though they insisted on paying for everything. River didn't even let me buy my own bottle of water while we were walking around the mall." I could practically hear her eyes rolling, but it made me smile. "I can feel that grin, Yuri."

"We said we'd take care of you," I replied unapologetically, pulling away so she could fall back into my arms. I wanted to see her face while we spoke.

She looked tired and a bit fragile along the edges somehow, and every alpha instinct inside of me went on high alert when I scrutinized her face. She'd been quiet lately, but now there were circles under her eyes, and something was just... off, like her reactions were slower than normal.

When we pointed it out she just brushed it off as recovering from her heat or it being a long day, but something inside of me just didn't believe that was all that was going on.

"What's wrong?" I asked, reaching up to brush a stray lock of hair off her face. "You seem down."

Sienna sighed, squeezing her eyes closed as she snuggled into me. "My sister called when River dropped me off, so I talked to her. Not the easiest conversation ever, but I think we've moved on from the other night."

Biting my tongue, I kept myself from mentioning the list I had gotten together for Sienna to look at. All of us had agreed to bring the options to her as a pack, hoping the gesture wouldn't come off as controlling or overstepping. Taking care

of our omega was one thing, but stepping in to take care of her mom... Well, that was something else entirely.

“I don’t want to talk about my sister right now,” Sienna whispered as she opened her eyes. The lust simmering in their depths was unmistakable, as was the gorgeous flush to her cheeks as she moved to straddle my lap and put her arms around my neck.

“Oh really?” I kneaded her ass, loving the way her breathing hitched. “What do you want to talk about?”

“How the hell you have those gray sweatpants yet I’ve never seen you in them,” she rasped. “Better yet, what do I need to do to get you out of them?”

“That can be arranged,” I growled, leaning forward to capture her mouth in a heated kiss.

She’s so fucking perfect.

CHAPTER
TWENTY-SIX

Sienna

The list of turn ons I didn't know I had now included Yuri in gamer mode, totally absorbed in the game, with a headset on and low-riding gray sweats that made it very obvious he wasn't wearing anything underneath them. H'd pulled me onto his lap, so I was surrounded by the green tea, papaya, and bergamot scent that made slick wet my upper thighs.

The stress of dealing with Sam and sucking up to her to smooth things over had put me in a shitty mood. Being near Yuri helped calm my anxiety, his presence enough to make me feel safe. When I gently pulled the headset off his neck, he gripped the bottom of my shirt and smoothly took it off, revealing the fact that I hadn't been wearing a bra today. *Definitely a bonus of having smaller boobs.*

Yuri started to purr as he leaned down, teasing one nipple with his tongue and teeth while his other hand smacked my ass enough to smart.

"Omega, don't tell me you walk around for anyone to see you like this."

"I had a shirt on," I pointed out, hissing when he spanked me again. "People didn't notice—"

"There's no way they didn't notice." He growled and lightly nipped my breast before moving to the other one. I arched my back, begging him for attention, as he tugged at the skirt I was wearing until he got to my underwear. Without

warning, he ripped them off of me, making my slick surge between my thighs. I wouldn't be surprised if there was a fucking puddle on his sweatpants now.

“Yuri!”

“Sienna,” he purred, then he leaned away so he could tug his sweatpants down. His hard cock stood at attention, but I didn't get to admire it for long. He grabbed its base and lifted me until I was lined up, then he pulled me down, shoving himself inside of me.

“Fuck,” I moaned, so fucking turned on by the possessive heat in his dark gaze.

“So fucking hot and wet,” he praised me, his large hands gripping my hips, helping me rock against him.

He let me set the pace as he played with my nipples then reached down to tease my clit. His alpha purr filled the room, and the sound only made me wetter. Every thrust in and out of my pussy echoed with a squelching sound that would have embarrassed me if not for the pride taking over his sharp features.

“I love that I can get that reaction out of you. I still remember how much you squirted when I fucked you with my tongue...” Yuri groaned, the sound a deep rumble in his chest. “Fuck, I'm going to love figuring out everything that makes you moan and scream and squirm.”

Without warning, he flipped us, slamming my back onto the couch. He scrunched my skirt around my waist, taking control, fucking me hard enough that I swore the couch was going to be moved across the room. There was nothing I could do now but ride it out and meet him thrust for thrust until his knot started to swell. He stretched me to the limits, and tears stung my eyes when his knot became almost too much.

“You can take it, omega,” he rasped darkly. Thanks to his knot, his movement was limited, but that had no effect on his strength. He shoved into me, slow and steady, with hard thrusts that tore gasps from my lips upon every impact. “Fuck... You're so fucking sweet like this.”

“Yuri, I need—”

“I know, baby,” he whispered. “Play with your clit for me, omega. I want to watch you play with yourself and come all over my cock. Do it.”

I whimpered, too turned on to be embarrassed, and reached down between us to play with myself. His purr increased, deepening into a rumble I felt in my bones. It wasn't long before I was coming, my body stiffening as I called out his name.

Yuri grunted mine as his hot seed filled me, then our harsh breathing became the only sound in the room as he collapsed. I hummed, rubbing his back as I savored the heavy feel of him on top of me.

YURI

We lay there on the couch for several minutes. It was nice to simply exist together, just the two of us. With how exhausted Sienna looked, I thought of suggesting a shared nap, but then she'd never sleep tonight. There didn't seem to be an easy solution to this problem of how tired she was, and none of us had a damn idea of how to approach the topic with her. Sienna could be more than a little fiery when she felt cornered, and that would be exactly how she felt if we brought it up.

“Are you hungry?” Sienna yawned and languidly stretched out before looking over at me. Instead of answering with words, her stomach loudly growled as if it had heard the question. Thankfully, it teased a chuckle out of her.

“Apparently.”

“Come on. Let's get dressed, and I'll cook something for us. Are the others home?”

She shook her head. “River had a shift tonight, and King said he'd go with them to get some sort of paperwork done.”

“Good, then I get you to myself.” I knew I was smirking, but I couldn't help it. My time with Sienna already had me... floating. The worries that something was wrong with my omega were now accompanied by a relaxed happiness that refused to let this time between us be overshadowed by concern.

“So you're telling me I got to see you in those delicious gray sweatpants, you fucked me senseless, and now you're going to cook me something to eat?” she teased.

“I am,” I agreed. “Does anything in particular sound good?” I'd give her the world at this point in hopes it would bring my Sienna back.

She thought it over as she snatched up my discarded shirt and pulled it on. The hem brushed the top of her thighs, and she looked almost irresistible in my clothes. I was tempted to

drag her back down to the couch for round two, but my instincts pushed me to care for my omega in other ways first.

When she was as dressed as she planned on getting, she finally answered. “I need some comfort food.”

“Now, I feel like that’s a complicated answer. Comfort food for River would probably mean something bougie like brunch. Nash would probably want Nonna’s cooking or some wings and beer. For me, I’m a sucker for some ramen. What’s your comfort food?”

She snorted at my words. “You know, I think you’re way more observant than anyone gives you credit for. The fact that you already know most of our favorites off the top of your head is impressive,” she said with a raised eyebrow. She stopped talking as I pulled on my clothes, her green eyes full of heat as she watched every move. Her gaze lingered on the sweatpants, and I made a mental note to buy no less than six more pairs. If this was the reaction I’d get, I’d wear them around the house every fucking day.

“Pizza is always a solid choice,” she said once my cock was covered up. “The cheesier the better. But oh my god, my dad used to make this *amazing* fried chicken and homemade fries. It was so good. He made it for lunch every year for my birthday. But that’s way too complicated.” She let out a long sigh. I could hear the sadness in it, and that had me moving without thought, needing to wrap my arms around her. She sniffled, then chuckled, but the sound was hollow. “I think I’m just really starting to miss my family, especially considering everything going on with Mom. I’m working as hard as I can, but making extra money for them isn’t the same as actually *seeing* them.” Her voice broke a little as she explained, and the pain beneath her words caused a pang in my chest.

“I can give you time off so you can visit them, Sienna,” I promised, but she was shaking her head no before I finished my offer, which wasn’t even a little surprising. I knew she wouldn’t do it. She’d never risk losing the pay, even if we covered her family contribution for a week. Sienna was too proud, and our relationship was still too new for us to be pushy on that level. Getting her to let us cover food and other

expenses was enough of a milestone. I knew it would take more time, more trust, and deeper feelings for each other before she would let us do something like lessening her family's financial burdens from our own pockets.

"I'm so scared that she's going to get worse while I'm here working my ass off. I know I should go, but what good am I there? Taking time off isn't going to pay for her medicine or their bills."

"It's not," I agreed. "But have you thought about the fact that she's probably missing you just as much? And your dad is probably in the same boat you are, right? Seeing him might help."

She nodded miserably before turning and walking toward the stairs.

"Can we not discuss this right now? I can't do it. I know I brought it up, but I just... Let's go back to food."

My instincts had me wanting to argue, to fix this, but I did what was best for my omega right now—I did as she'd asked. I might have never made homemade fries before, but I sure as hell was going to attempt it. *At least River isn't home to mock me if it goes terribly.*

"Alright, you can be in charge of picking the music, but I've got the food taken care of. It may not be exactly what your dad can make, but I'm a fairly good cook when I put my mind to it."

That had Sienna grinning wildly before she rushed up the stairs. She was perched on her favorite bar stool when I walked in behind her, already scrolling her phone for music. Soon, she had her favorite playlist playing over those speakers, the volume low enough that we could still talk but loud enough that we could sing along if we wanted to. She hummed along before resting her head on her hand and watching me cook.

"So, how did you get into being a businessman?"

Talking about myself was never something I enjoyed, but with her, the words practically spilled out without a second

thought.

“When River and I left home, we weren’t sure where to head. It wasn’t long before we remembered that we weren’t the first in our family to be shunned, for lack of a better word. My uncle Solas was the first. When we showed up at his doorstep, he didn’t seem surprised. He also didn’t turn us away, which was nice.”

“Was he the one that got you into your business?” she questioned as I started slicing the chicken breast into strips.

I laughed at that and shook my head. “No, actually. That’s why he was considered the black sheep. My uncle *hated* everything about owning businesses, always had. Even after graduating with a similar degree, he refused to learn the ropes. Of course, my father and River’s dad didn’t take that well. Solas didn’t want anything to do with the nine-to-five lifestyle. He was an amazing artist. He would paint murals to make rent, then took commissions in his spare time.”

“Did he do the paintings I’ve seen around the house?”

My eyes drifted to my favorite painting in the living room, an abstract piece. I’d based our decor off of it.

“Yes. When he died, River and I inherited everything.”

After that, she was quiet. I prepared the flour, egg, and breadcrumbs for the coating, adding spices until I was satisfied. She’d say more when she was ready. If she had other questions to ask about Uncle Solas, I’d answer them, for her anyway, but I wouldn’t mind if she changed the subject.

“So... the club?” she asked, getting me back on track.

“That came about after some talking and probably a little bit too much tequila one night. River and I came up with the idea, and we didn’t expect it to take off like it did. We were a good team though. I’d taken all of the knowledge my father passed on and used it, while River kept the structure from being too rigid.”

“You just got drunk and came up with a strip club?” There was no judgment in her tone, and that was exactly why I’d fallen for Sienna. She was genuine and never quick to dismiss

something because of ‘social stigma.’ There were some women who didn’t approve of what River and I did, of the way we made our livelihood, and that was something we’d had to consider on the rare occasions that we’d ever thought about an omega. But Sienna, she knew who we were, and that was more important than how we made our money.

“It was a little more complicated than that. There was an attack at a local strip club that night. An alpha went into a rut when an omega started an unexpected heat. It wasn’t pretty. We talked about what we’d do differently while we watched the news, then River looked at me and said we should open one but do it right, and it kind of spiraled from there.”

“And then they hired me.” Nash’s voice had both of us turning around; he’d come in so quietly we hadn’t noticed him.

“We did need someone to keep the alphas in line,” I agreed, giving him a warm smile. I might not be the type of alpha that showed my emotions often, but Nash had been a real friend, especially through the club’s beginning years.

“What’s going on here? It smells amazing.”

“Comfort food,” Sienna said happily as she skipped through the playlist to another song she liked. “Join us?”

Nash dropped his coat on a bar stool, rolled up his sleeves, and washed his hands. He dove right in after I gave him a rundown of what I was making. He took over the fries, slicing potatoes with far better knife skills than I possessed.

The conversation flowed easily. I might have appreciated the quiet earlier, but it was nice to have noise back in the house.

I was finally realizing what being in a pack meant and embracing it, something I never really thought would happen for me.

Talking about my past used to be painful, but since finding Sienna, I had never been more grateful for leaving them all behind. Everything we’d struggled with, everything we’d fought for, it had led us here.

To them, and more importantly, to Sienna.

CHAPTER
TWENTY-SEVEN

Sienna

After days of feeling nauseous and more exhausted than I'd ever felt in my life, I was hoping that pole dancing class would be the boost that I needed. I'd danced at the club, but there was something much more healing about spending the afternoon with your besties, dancing away.

Valentina strutted in wearing a neon pink leopard print leotard and tights. She looked like she'd walked straight out of an eighties magazine cover. Every week, I looked forward to seeing what outfit she'd picked out. Last week, she wore a black sparkly tutu. I didn't know how she was going to manage the pole, but of course Valentina did just fine.

"I give this one a solid ten out of ten," Hazel announced.

"No, I don't think so," Eliza disagreed. "That unicorn outfit was probably my favorite. I mean, shiny rainbow pants, come on!"

When I opened my mouth to add my take, a yawn took over. My besties turned and put all of their attention on me.

"What's going on? Is your pack keeping you from sleeping, or is this a residual effect from the heat?" she asked. Her voice was low enough that the rest of the class couldn't hear, and the two of them had moved close enough that I wouldn't be able to escape. If Teagan were here, the conversation likely would have been even more intense, but she was on another adventure. And wasn't I goddamn grateful for that.

“I guess?” I answered with a shrug. “Ever since the heat, I’ve been nauseous and tired, and no,” I cut them off with a sharp look when their eyebrows raised, “I am *not* pregnant.”

“You never know,” Hazel sang out.

“Actually, I do,” I sang back mockingly. “I tested myself already.” It felt stupid to take a test, knowing damn well I was on birth control, but I took it anyway. It seemed like the logical, albeit silly, option when pregnancy was at the top of Google’s suggested causes.

“Is exhaustion something that usually happens because of the Rapture?” Eliza directed the question at Hazel instead of me since she was the one with more experience.

“Honestly, I wish I could tell you. That shit was no joke. This could be something you have to deal with just this once, or it could be something that reoccurs.”

Eliza immediately looked worried, and her voice dropped into her soothing tone. “I know that you have a pack now, but it might not hurt to take suppressors again. They might help.”

“I’ve got an appointment set up,” I said absently as the instructor stepped up to her pole.

“I trust everybody warmed up already?” There was a murmur of agreement from around the room.

Eliza, Hazel, and I immediately started stretching when the instructor zoned in on us. At least she looked amused. We were always the last to do this part because we usually got caught up in some kind of conversation.

When she was satisfied, she clicked on the music, and I felt the familiar anticipation buzz through my system. Dancing could take my mind off pretty much anything, and I had plenty on my mind to forget about. I was ready for an escape.

In truth, I could use a vacation from my life, but that was obviously out of the question.

We always started the class with basic moves, which were practically a mindless task for me, but instead helping me ease into the workout, I started feeling worse and worse. My hands

shook when I tried to grip the pole, and they quickly became too clammy for me to hold my weight up as easily as I should have been able to. More than once, I had to take a break to shake out my arms and legs.

Part of me wished that I could find the bastard who'd drugged me just so I could beat his ass, and now that I had a pack, I knew I'd have to race them to it. Hell, Hazel would kill him with some shibari rope and her bare hands.

The song transitioned to a faster paced one, and I groaned under my breath, knowing things were about to amp up. My legs shook at even the thought of trying to support my weight for another routine. Taking a deep breath, I made a mental note to grab a snack right after class was over—no way did I need to have my pack scold me for not eating—but when I grabbed for the pole, I stumbled, and my shoulder slammed into the metal.

Not wanting anyone to worry, I waved off the concerned questions and looks from the teacher and my friends. I shook my head, trying to get the world back into focus, but black spots started to appear in my field of vision. No matter how many times I blinked, I couldn't get them to go away. In fact, my vision just kept getting more blurry.

What was going on?

I didn't want anyone to think something was wrong, so I got on the pole, ignoring my inner voice telling me it was a terrible idea.

I had a shift to work tonight! I couldn't afford to be sick. Too many people depended on me to keep going, so whatever this was could just fuck off. I didn't have time for this.

Too bad my body wasn't on the same page as my brain. The room started to spin, but I didn't think I was moving. My vision darkened, and squeezed my legs around the cool metal pole when my hands started to fail me.

“Sienna?” Valentina's voice sounded far away.

“Yesss?” The word sounded off, slurred and almost indistinguishable. I was taken over by a wave of weakness,

and that was when I lost my grip on the pole.

“Sienna!”

A hard cracking sound filled the air as pain exploded in my shoulder and head, then there was nothing but darkness.

NASH

I was in the middle of talking to my brother when my phone rang, and my brow furrowed. *Who could be calling?* Yuri was at work with King, and River had been asleep when I left the house since they'd worked the closing shift last night. Sienna's class wasn't out for another half an hour... Maybe they'd let out early?

"Hello?" I answered right before the last ring.

"Nash! Thank fuck." The woman's voice cracked before she cleared her throat. *Hazel.*

"Hazel?! What's wrong?" I asked, immediately on edge thanks to the panic in her voice. Beside me, Bane tensed, and he pushed his newly opened bottle of beer away from him.

"It's Sienna! She— She—" Hazel stuttered, then I heard some shuffling on the other end of the line before Eliza's calm voice took over. I immediately switched the call to speakerphone so Bane could hear as well.

"Sienna passed out during class," the omega said matter of factly. "She fell onto the floor, and it looks like she hurt her shoulder. Paramedics just arrived, and they're taking her to the hospital."

"Which one?" I growled, desperately trying to keep my emotions in check. My brother would probably play off my cues. I needed to be calm so that he could remain calm as well. He had a major soft spot for Sienna, which made him almost as vulnerable in this situation as I was.

"University," she replied. "I need to call—"

"I'm here, Sunshine," Bane interrupted softly. "I'll tell Loki, and we'll be there when you arrive or soon after."

"Good. I'll call Hazel's pack next because she seems to be on the verge of a panic attack."

Click.

My mind was racing. What the hell was going on? What the fuck had happened? I was glad Eliza had her shit together because I felt frozen. My mind and heart were anything but calm.

“Nash, give me your keys. I’ll drive the truck, so you can call your pack on the way. I just messaged Loki about what’s going on.” Bane grabbed me by the jacket and dragged me along after him while I dug around for my truck keys.

“Thanks,” I told him roughly as I handed over the keys. Just as I was about to call Yuri, River’s name flashed on my screen.

“Nash, where the hell is everyone?”

“Sienna passed out and fell during her class,” I told them grimly. “She’s on the way to University.”

“What?!” River asked, their voice so cold the hair on the back of my neck stood up.

“I just found out. Hazel called,” I explained, but the call had ended. *Fuck, that’s not good.*

I knew there was no point in calling River back, so I tried Yuri. The alpha answered on the first ring. “Nash?”

“I’m on my way to University. Sienna passed out in class, so an ambulance is taking her in,” I told him, desperately needing to get to the point. “I told River, and they seem—”

“I’ll get King. Try to keep River in line until we get there.” His voice was tight with concern.

“What—” I attempted to ask, but Yuri hung up. “This is going to be fun?”

Bane hummed, shooting me a questioning look.

“River is beyond pissed off, and Yuri ordered me to keep an eye on them until he gets to the hospital. No idea what that’s about though... Is the club coming? Honestly, it seems like we might need the help.”

“Yeah, and Maximo is coming with the Family,” Bane answered quietly. “Hope the doctors are ready because

everyone is showing up to support Sienna and get some answers.” Nothing like a crew of ten plus people filling the waiting room to terrify everyone with their presence.

I shakily breathed out, relieved that I wouldn’t have to do this alone. Between all of us, we’d get answers.

Sienna had been tired, thirsty, and generally exhausted. Between her heat recovery and how much she worked, we thought it was normal. Every now and then she’d smoke with River, watching movies outside in a nest she had set up for a movie night a while back. She just wanted to relax, destress... at least that’s what she said whenever we asked.

She was accepting us taking care of her and providing for her. No one wanted to take steps backward by pushing about how tired she was. We didn’t want her to close herself off again.

I just hoped that mindset didn’t bite us in the ass. Something could be seriously wrong with our omega.

My wandering thoughts slammed to a stop when my brother pulled up to the hospital. I didn’t even wait for him to park before I was unbuckled and running for the emergency entrance.

The doors automatically opened for me, and I rushed toward the check-in.

“My omega is being brought in by ambulance,” I huffed. “Sienna Rivers. Is she here?”

“Sir—” the beta behind the desk started.

The blood drained from their face as more people entered behind me. Bane was there with Loki, Kraken, and Romeo. A few other bikers lingered outside, setting up like they were security.

Maximo strolled in with a serious expression, his bodyguard and twin brothers right behind him.

Not far behind them was River, Yuri, and King, their expressions matching the concern rising inside of me.

“Any updates?” Yuri asked, pushing past people to get to me.

“I just got here,” I replied.

A bunch of people started rushing around in the back, and through the window, I saw Sienna being wheeled down the hallway to an elevator. She looked pale and definitely wasn't awake.

“We need a private waiting room,” Maximo informed the beta in front of me. “We're all family, and these four are her pack.” He motioned to Yuri, River, King, and me.

The beta studied the growing crowd. “I'm not sure we have a big enough area. Let me see where they're going to put her, and I'll get a place set up as soon as possible. In the meantime, please sit down so we can assist other patients.”

“We will not—” River started, but King grabbed them by the shoulders.

“We are going for a walk.” King looked at Yuri and me. “Call me when they get that sorted out?”

“You got it.” I watched King escort the other alpha out of the emergency room.

“What the hell happened?” Yuri asked right as the doors opened. Sienna's best friends and Valentina came rushing inside.

Hazel ran right to Maximo, wrapped her arms around her alpha, and buried her face in his chest. He hugged her close as Eliza walked over to Bane and Loki, and I didn't miss the way Romeo looked her up and down to make sure she was okay.

“It was just a normal class. Nothing was out of the ordinary,” Eliza started, though I didn't miss the concern in her blue eyes as she gazed at Hazel. “Then she started yawning a lot, taking lots of breaks during class.”

“Si usually doesn't take breaks,” Hazel mumbled.

“Then she started shaking and blinking a lot,” Valentina added. The usually upbeat and bubbly omega was speaking quieter than I'd ever heard her. “I called her name to see what

was wrong, but her speech was slurred and slow, then she fell.”

“They’re taking her up for a CT and x-rays because she hit her head and shoulder when she fell. The paramedics said something about her blood sugar and heart rate seeming concerning, but I couldn’t follow everything,” Eliza wrapped up.

Please be okay. Please just... fucking be okay.

I’d finally found my pack, my family, and now that I had them, there was no way I could even contemplate the idea of a life without all of that.

CHAPTER
TWENTY-EIGHT

Sienna

Beeping woke me up. I blinked a few times, feeling super groggy.

My face screwed up as I tried to lick my lips. Cottonmouth was never a pleasant feeling. Did I smoke too much? What was going on? I shifted around, trying to get comfortable, and hissed as pain shot down my left arm.

“Sienna?! Don’t move, micetta.” King’s normally smooth voice sounded rough.

“King? What’s going on? Why am I— Why am I in a hospital room?” I asked when I finally looked around. Horrible beige walls, machines, an IV, and a small uncomfortable bed with a thin blue blanket. Yep, definitely a hospital.

“You passed out and fell during your dance class,” King replied, reaching over to offer me a cup of ice chips. He carefully put some on my tongue and ran his hand through my red hair, comforting me.

“Where is everyone else?”

“Taking up an entire waiting area.” King smiled, though it didn’t reach his eyes. “Between the mafia, MC, and our pack, it’s complete fucking chaos.”

“Ms. Rivers?” The warm voice filled the room, and I looked over to find a doctor watching us. It was an older alpha

with dark graying hair, glasses, and a warm smile. “I’m Dr. Stevens.”

“How bad is it?” I asked, hoping whatever I heard wasn’t going to be crazy or super serious.

“Let me check your vitals, then we can go over everything, okay? Do you want to get the rest of the pack to join us?” King nodded at the subtle order and pressed a kiss to my temple before rushing out of the room.

The doctor made small talk as he checked my blood pressure and my pupils, then he squeezed my hands and did a bunch of other tests I didn’t quite understand. By the time he was done, my pack stood at the door, all of them watching with different levels of concern and relief.

Thankfully, no one said anything until the doctor finished writing in his chart. I didn’t think I could handle their concern and this at the same time.

“I’m glad to see you’re up now,” the doctor said as he sat on a stool and wheeled closer. “We have a few things to discuss. First, did you know you are diabetic?”

Diabetic?

It seemed so crazy that I could go from healthy to this, though I guess it couldn’t have been all that sudden. I didn’t know much about diabetes, but it didn’t seem like something that would just happen overnight. Was it an underlying condition that my other doctors just never found?

“No?” I managed. He gave me an understanding smile.

“Your blood sugar was dangerously low.” He launched into an explanation that I admittedly heard only half of. When he finished with a promise of sending in a specialist to see me, I could only nod.

“Could this be due to her erratic heat?” Yuri asked. When the doctor glanced at me, I gave a quick explanation. Hiding what happened wouldn’t do me any favors. His face grew concerned, but he was nothing but professional as he nodded along.

“I’ll have to consult on this one since it’s not something I have experience with. I can, however, send in some food for you, and that specialist will be by to talk with you. We’ll focus on what we can for now and find information for the rest. Regardless, this issue was likely lying in wait, and had it gotten worse, the outcome might not have been so pleasant. Your episode today might have saved your life,” he said in a fatherly tone. His eyes panned to the men behind me, and a small smile pulled at his lips. “And it seems you have more than enough support to get you through this.”

“I do,” I confirmed, finally turning to them again. My poor pack looked exhausted and worried. I’d officially put them through hell.

The doctor walked out then, and I waited for someone else to take the lead. I was far too exhausted and in too much pain to be the one.

“Sienna,” Nash said. His voice was strained, and my heart clenched at the sound. “I’m so sorry we didn’t realize something more was going on.”

“You’re not a doctor, Nash. There’s no way we could have known this was going on. Besides, everyone was processing that hell of a heat. This isn’t on anyone, except probably me. I really haven’t been eating properly, but I had no clue about this.”

“We’ll be here for the specialist,” River said emphatically. “We’ll figure out how to manage it.”

“I’m out on giving you shots. I can’t live that life,” King said. “But I’ll help in other ways.”

I snorted. “No one is giving me shots. I’m an independent omega, remember?”

“Not anymore,” Yuri argued. “We’re a pack, and we’re going to start acting more like it. We’ve already had this discussion, Sienna.”

My instinct was to protest, but what could I say to defend myself now? I’d landed myself in the hospital. Not to mention I loved how they thought of me and picked stuff out for me or

treated me to stuff. I'd never been treated that way before. The only thing I didn't want to admit was that I liked his bossiness. I needed to make sure that our relationship continued to grow at the pace I was comfortable with, and that meant keeping a few little secrets to myself until I was in a less vulnerable position. Those alpha instincts might go nuts if I said I liked him taking charge while I was laying in a hospital bed.

"Okay, but you guys have to let me take care of you too," I said as I snuggled back in bed. The exhaustion was something I was eager to get rid of so that I could better take care of myself *and* them.

"We can do that," King agreed for the pack

"Did I traumatize everyone at dance class?" I asked, attempting to lighten the mood a bit.

That had them relaxing and moving to sit down in the nearby chairs. They told me about Hazel calling and Eliza filling them in. Nash also informed me that my entire family was out there, waiting for updates, and warmth filled me. Everyone I cared about was here to support me... well, almost everyone.

"Sienna!"

My entire world came to a slow stop. How could she be here?

"Mom?" The confusion and pain in my voice had her rushing over, and a moment later, I was wrapped in her arms. The familiar scent of her perfume and the feel of her tight hug broke down every dam inside me. What the hell is going on?!

My sobs were loud and wet, and fat tears rolled down my cheeks as I babbled to her in words I wished she could understand.

"I think she's asking why you're here, and how you look so healthy," River gently explained. I nodded against my mother before she pulled away. She looked equally as confused as I felt.

"What are you talking about? She looks the same as always," my dad protested from where he stood in the

doorway. For the third time that day, reality was here to stun me.

“No, that’s not right. The cancer,” I protested brokenly. Despite the wet cries, they were able to hear the words.

“Did she hit her head?” My dad’s voice was so full of concern I started to get a terrible feeling. Why were they acting like *I* was the sick one? What the fuck?

“Yes, but this isn’t from that,” Yuri started to explain, but I interrupted. Anger was starting to spark inside me, and the blaze was growing quickly, shoving aside my other emotions. Sam had answers, and I was going to get them.

“Who has my phone?”

“Here, Eliza gave it to me,” Nash said.

I dialed Sam’s number and put it on speaker. “Don’t say anything,” I warned my parents before my sister picked up in true Sam fashion.

“There you are! I’ve been calling for two days, Sienna. You’re so fucking selfish. Mom’s over here barely surviving, and you ignore us?”

“I have to work sometimes. You just got my last paycheck, Sam. You can’t tell me the three thousand are gone already,” I protested. She’d insisted I give her even more on our last call when we reconciled, thanks to me not sending anything during our fight. I’d managed a few shifts post heat even though they had nearly killed me.

Yuri’s eyes narrowed at that, and River’s temper flared in their eyes, silently promising me a thorough talk when we were alone. Nash and King didn’t respond outwardly, but given the tense line of their shoulders, they had feelings about this as well. However, right now, I needed answers.

“You think your shitty paychecks cover all of this? I’m spending hours every day slaving away to keep Mom comfortable and fighting with insurance and all you do is send some fucking money,” she snarled. “You’re doing the bare fucking minimum while I handle the day-to-day pressure of being Mom’s caretaker.”

My eyes finally met my parents'. They looked completely horrified. Sam kept going on about how she was overworked and had given up her social life to take care of our sickly mom who was standing here perfectly fine. I was getting angrier with every word that spewed out of my sister's mouth.

"Samantha Rivers." My dad's voice was a warning that my sister recognized immediately. Sam's bitching cut off, then she ended the call. The silence was deafening. "I need more of an explanation. I've never been more confused in my fucking life."

"Richard, language!" Mom gasped. She sat down on the side of the bed, staying close to me, and admittedly, I was soaking in her presence. I reached for her hand, and she held mine tightly, patting the top of it.

"I thought you were dying and I wouldn't get to say goodbye." My words had both of us sobbing again and holding each other tight.

"I'm here, baby, and I'm not going anywhere. Healthy as can be," she promised. The equal forces of anger and relief were keeping me conscious, giving me the power to resist the throbbing pain in my shoulder.

"Can I summarize, Sienna?" River offered. This would likely be the most colorful explanation I'd ever heard, so I eagerly gave them the go ahead.

"Your other daughter has been lying to Sienna for months, extorting her for every penny she has to the point that she's barely managed to pay her bills, couldn't afford tires when she had a flat, and was surviving off one meal a day... maximum," they explained, cold anger in every word. "Her twin demanded thousands upon thousands of dollars, I would guess, all in the name of your cancer medication. She claimed insurance wouldn't cover treatments. Really, to my understanding, she fed Sienna pretty much any excuse to get more money."

They let silence fall, giving Mom and Dad a chance to think about what they'd heard. Mom had let me go to listen and was now shaking her head.

“No, how could she do this? I’m fine! I haven’t even had a scare,” she explained, looking at my pack then at me. “Why didn’t you call?”

“She always told me you were too tired and that Dad was working insane hours. There was always an excuse, and the one time I avoided her call because I couldn’t cough up more money, she punished me by saying I’d missed a chance to talk to you,” I said. There was no point in holding back now. Sam’s lies had come to light, and there would be no sugar coating anything. I owed my sister nothing.

“I’m... appalled,” Dad managed. He came over and hugged me tight, only releasing when I flinched as my shoulder tweaked. “Sorry, Sienna. We would never ask something so unfair of you. I’m so sorry she did this. I don’t understand why. Needless to say, I will be taking care of this when I get home.”

“She’s been on a spiral lately. Partying. Shopping...” My mom trailed off with a wince. All while I was killing myself to help them, *she* was living her best life.

“Should we press charges?” Yuri asked.

“You should,” my dad said. “She’s plenty old enough to face consequences.”

“It wouldn’t stick. I willingly sent money,” I argued.

My dad’s phone dinged, and his growl of anger was followed by him pulling up his doorbell cam.

“Samantha Rivers. What the hell are you doing?” I could barely see my sister beneath the stuffed bags she was carrying out to her car. I knew she could hear our dad’s voice through the intercom, but she didn’t bother to answer.

She was running.

The bitch had caused nothing but pain and suffering, and now, she was going to run away from it.

“Maximo could find her,” River huffed. I glanced up to see my entire pack hovering behind Dad, their eyes locked on his

phone screen. She went in and came out again with a box of her shoes.

“If she takes my dog, I’ll hunt her down myself,” Mom said. The deep sadness in her voice nearly killed me. They’d always tried to treat us equally and see the best in us, and this was not the first time Sam had disappointed them. This was just the worst.

But I didn’t want to focus on my bitch of a sister right now. I didn’t think pressing charges would matter, and while the idea of getting Maximo to track her down had its appeal, it wouldn’t change anything. The money was gone, and I’d lost enough time with my parents. I wanted time with them more than I wanted her to pay for what she’d done.

“Are you staying in town for a bit?” I asked.

“We have room at the house,” Yuri offered.

Dad finally looked at my pack, truly looked at them.

“Who are all of you? Is this...” He turned to me, waiting for me to explain.

I smiled softly as I looked at them. “This is my pack. Yuri, River, Nash, and King. They’ve been with me through a lot lately. They’re amazing. I’m a lucky omega.”

“Then we’d love to accept your offer. I’d like to meet these amazing people who have taken care of my girl,” Mom said with a smile. “We’re your emergency contacts, so when we got the call, we ran out with a few outfits and no plan. Dad and I both have time saved up. We could use a vacation, and I can send Uncle Gavin over to check on the house. In fact, let me do that now so he can make sure my dog is still there and take care of her until we get back.”

She walked out, her phone already up to her ear. My uncle Gavin looked like a bodybuilder, and since he lived a few blocks away, he’d be at the house in no time. Sam wouldn’t stand a chance if he confronted her.

Despite my anger telling me I should involve Maximo or the cops, I knew I wouldn’t. Sam was going to get her karma coming back to her soon. Now that she was running away, this

would be the first time she'd have to face the real world. She'd lived the best life for years thanks to me, but now, she'd have to pay her own bills and find a job.

It would be a slap in the face for my princess of a sister.

“Shit, I had a shift tonight. Yuri, can you handle that for me?” My alpha smiled down at me, looking proud that I'd actually asked for help.

Okay, maybe I *was* that bad. I needed to let go a little more often if it made him feel that good. Now that my life was back in my hands, with no dying mother, no manipulative, lying sister, I regained the control that I had been desperately hanging onto for so long. It felt like I could finally let go. Life wasn't some insurmountable obstacle anymore. I could breathe for the first time in goddamn months. With nothing dire weighing down on my shoulders, why couldn't I fucking live a little? Loosen up a little?

“We already handled your job, Sienna,” he promised, totally unaware of the epiphany I was having. “You need to get some rest.”

“You guys should go get some sleep. I'll be alright here.” There was no chance in hell they'd just walk out and leave me here, but I had to try.

“I'll stay,” King said. River sat down on his lap and gave me a smug smile.

“So will I.”

My dad snorted, but the look on his face said he already liked them.

“How about we show you to our place and get some food in everyone?” Yuri offered. “Call us when the specialist is coming in.”

“Of course,” River said.

When the room was empty, save for the three of us, both alphas snuggled into the bed with me, and I couldn't help but drift off.

My hell was over, and now all I had to do was live my life. Wasn't that a comforting thought to fall asleep to? For the first time in months, I truly slept easy.

EPILOGUE

Sienna

Laughter escaped as Nash snagged me around the waist, burying his nose in my neck and breathing in deeply.

“Sienna, enough running.”

“Doc said I needed to stay active,” I told him with some amusement, but I let him pick me up. My legs wrapped around his waist in a motion that had become effortless. Every part of me craved to touch him, all of them, when they were near, and the closer we could cuddle together, the better.

The specialist had filled me in on my new normal, which included checking my blood sugar, insulin shots, and regular doctor appointments, and I was already feeling so much better. I’d been out of the hospital for a month, and there was a lot to keep an eye on, like my heats, but we had figured out a few tricks to help keep me happy and healthy.

My pack had taken to storing snacks in every spare crevice of the house, their cars, and even at work. They had alerts on their phones to remind me when I was supposed to be checking my blood sugar, and they’d text me to check in if they weren’t there in person.

Yuri and King had read up on everything about diabetes, so they knew things even I didn’t know. It was an intense way to care for someone, but their intentions were so sweet that I never complained.

As for all the other drama in my life, I had started seeing a therapist. She was really helping me deal with the trauma my

sister had given me about money and my mom's health. I found it surprisingly easy to lean on her and confide in her, and she'd helped me continue to embrace the new Sienna who let her alphas treat her in the way she deserved. Although she didn't have firsthand experience with the Humble Creed, she was experienced in helping omegas work through heat-related trauma. My situation was unique, but together, we were figuring out how to make my next heat less scary.

Nash nipped my neck, making me gasp. "Where is your mind wandering off to?"

"Just everything." I smiled and leaned back to press a kiss to his lips. "Don't you have work tonight?"

"Yes," he grumbled, and the pout on his face only made my smile turn into a grin.

I hadn't gone back to work yet. Yuri had overridden my protests, saying he wanted to make sure I was one hundred percent ready before I started dancing again. I still visited the club to spend time with my pack, though, in between longingly watching the other girls dance.

One time, Nash caught me trying to dance and took me to a private room so I could perform just for him during his break... Needless to say, his short break turned into a happy ending. That was the day I learned Yuri loved to watch. I'd ended up sucking off my quiet alpha after riding Nash through two orgasms. When they found out what had happened, River and King weren't about to be outdone. They claimed me on the stage after closing, making that night into one I'd always remember.

Eliza had asked if we were thinking about getting married like Hazel and her pack, but right now, our main focus was my health. That might eventually be in the cards for us, but we had other things on our minds, and soon, we'd have even more.

Nash and I showered together before he kissed me soundly and headed off to work. I waved him off then hurried to get my surprise ready.

I had been feeling a little off for the past week, so I'd made a call to my doctor who urged me to come in. After my recent hospital stint, they wanted to keep a close eye on me and any changes I felt. My pack had been busy with work, so I told them I was just going in for a check-up.

The positive pregnancy result was a shock, but also a relief. It meant that my symptoms made sense and weren't related to Rapture. How I felt now was different from anything surrounding my heat, and they reassured me they'd watch the pregnancy closely. The doctor sent in a referral for an OB specialist, and my first appointment was in a week.

Part of me had thought about doing some huge reveal with all of our friends and family, but while River might really enjoy that, I thought my other alphas would much prefer a private moment, at least at first, so I decided to provide for the people who took care of me every day.

I made a spread of their favorite things—ramen for River and sushi for Yuri, poutine for Nash, and I even made some chocolate peanut butter moon pies that King had mentioned loving during one of our movie nights. My stomach grumbled its desire to eat all of it even though I wouldn't be able to have any of the sushi.

My pack messaged me a few times to check in and ask if I was coming to see them at work, but I just replied saying I was just going to relax and at home watching TV. Cue the many texts asking if I was okay or feeling tired. I reassured them I was fine, just didn't feel like going out tonight.

By the time they got home, everything was ready. I was sitting at the kitchen island in a pair of Yuri's sweats and one of King's shirts.

River and King were talking as they strode in, and River stumbled to a stop as soon as they saw the food, causing King to nearly topple like a set of dominoes.

"What—" He stopped when he saw me sitting there with a shy smile. "Did you make all of this?"

“Yes.” I replied, hoping they liked it. River came right over and wrapped their arms around me, squeezing me tight. I hugged them back, rubbing their back, and a moment later, I heard the front door open again, telling me Yuri and Nash were home, too.

“Sienna!” Nash called out.

“We’re in the kitchen,” King answered. River picked me up and plopped me down into their lap.

Nash and Yuri walked into the room, doing an impeccable repeat of River and King’s reaction.

“I figured you all take care of me all the time, with the snacks and checking in... You all deserve the same thing too, so I made your favorites. An odd spread, I admit, but I hope you like it.”

“I love it,” River rasped, their voice rough. They pressed a kiss to my cheek, and I nuzzled closer, wanting as little distance between us as possible.

“This looks great,” Nash said with a happy sparkle in his gray eyes, “but what the hell are those things?”

King let out a mock gasp of outrage. “Only the best dessert ever, you heathen. Moon pies!”

“What the hell are moon pies?” Nash snarked back, enjoying giving the other alpha a hard time. It was nice to see them all blending together into not just a pack, but a genuine friendship.

Yuri came over to kiss the side of my head then asked River if they were okay. Their cousin nodded silently.

“This is perfect, omega.”

I tilted my head back and smiled, closing my eyes when he kissed me, not the least bit bothered by his cousin holding me.

“Oh god, this is perfect,” Nash praised, the words nearly unintelligible thanks to the poutine he’d crammed into his mouth.

King scrunched up his face. “You made fun of my food, but you’re eating fries with chunky gravy?”

“Those are fighting words.” Nash leveled a stare at King, who just gave him a lazy grin in response.

“Before the fighting begins,” I cut in, trying not to laugh at the two of them, “there’s one more thing I have for you all.”

“You didn’t need to do anything else,” Yuri said. He picked up one of the sushi rolls and ate it, humming in appreciation.

“Don’t listen to him,” River countered. “What else did you get?”

I bit my lip and slid off River’s lap to grab a box I had stashed away in my nest. My excitement built as I brought it back into the kitchen and gently set it down on the counter.

“It’s for all of you.”

“Just one for all of us?” River asked incredulously.

“Yes.” I rolled my eyes and crossed my arms. “Do you want me to take it back?”

“No!” River exclaimed. They tried to grab the box, but King beat them to it. He smirked at his boyfriend and carefully opened the box.

His head jerked up, and he stared at me in shock, making the other alpha grab the box and look inside. One by one, they peeked inside, but everyone was silent. I rocked back on my heels, nerves filling me as I waited for them to say something, *anything*, at this point. Were they even breathing?

“Is this...”

“You’re pregnant?!” King choked out.

“Yes,” I answered hesitantly, still trying to figure out the mood. “I found out when I went to the doctor last week, but I wanted it to be a surprise. I have my first OB appointment next week.”

Yuri pulled out his phone and started texting someone. “What day? I’ll make sure we’re all there, even if I have to

close the club to do it.”

“Wednesday, and it’s in the morning, so it should be fine,” I told him. Now that I was getting some excitement back, I was able to calm down.

“This is amazing!” Nash came over and hugged me tight.

“Are you happy?” I asked, directing my question at all the alphas.

“Hell yes!” River’s face lit up as they brushed long black strands out of their face. “King is happy, hun. I think he’s just processing.”

Yuri looked up, and my breath caught in my throat. He seemed so damn happy, his eyes bright with unshed tears. “Very, *very* happy, omega. In fact, I think we should celebrate.”

“Hmmm...” I tried and failed to hide my smile as I tapped a finger on my chin. “We haven’t watched *Spirited Away* yet. That could be fun?”

“Try again,” Nash replied, his hands possessively running along my sides.

“You know, I could take a nap. Always a great reward.”

“I can think of something better,” Yuri purred, stalking closer. It was then that King seemed to finally come back to himself.

He glanced at River, then me, tears running down his face before River pulled him close and kissed him gently.

When he pulled away, King’s gaze met mine. There was love, excitement, and a bit of fear in his eyes. None of us knew how to do any of this, but we weren’t alone.

“Nest. Now,” Nash growled. He picked me up as I burst out laughing, and Yuri wasn’t far behind us. River and King separated and scrambled to keep up.

We spent the night wrapped up together, losing ourselves in each other and our future.

Tomorrow, we would share the news with everyone, but tonight... Tonight was for us, and I couldn't be happier. I'd fought so hard and gotten my happily ever after with not one, but *four* alphas.

I couldn't wait to see what else the future had in store for us.

A YEAR LATER

Pregnancy with four alphas had been a mess, but parenting with them was amazing. Unlike other omegas, I didn't have to worry about teetering on the edge of sleeplessness and losing my mind while I healed and navigated being a new mom.

Right now, my sweet baby boy was snuggled into my arms while Nash and Yuri made us dinner. River and King were making a supply run, one of the few times they'd really left the house during these first few weeks.

Yuri had hired extra help for the club, so he could manage all of his other businesses from home. It was strange to see him wearing sweatpants more than suits, but I loved having him close.

River had temporarily quit bartending to stay home with me and the baby, but with the way they mooned over our son, I was unsure how temporary it would be. They were already so in love with Killian, like we all were.

King was working from home as well since Yuri had converted an extra room into an office space for King to use whenever he needed. The house was easily becoming our pack house, not just Yuri and River's.

Nash was in full papa bear mode. He would hear one grunt of protest from Killian and would be there in a second. And since I was breastfeeding and diabetic, he'd made himself my personal chef to ensure I kept up supply and my blood sugar. Nona had also made it her personal goal to feed us daily, and carbs were her favorite offering, something I refused to let Nash put a stop to. I had a feeling she'd whoop his ass for protesting, so the guys made it a point to eat everything I couldn't.

It was strange to feel so cared for after everything that had happened in the year leading up to all this, but I'd finally found a way to live my life without worry as my constant

companion. I'd found a pack I loved, and I'd gotten my parents back.

Sam, of course, was still missing. She hadn't bothered to call or check in, and Dad predicted that once the money she'd stolen from me ran out, she'd come crawling back, tail between her legs. He'd been mad enough to want me to compile evidence and hire a lawyer, but I refused.

She'd hurt me, but I didn't want to waste my energy on her anymore. I was ready to move on and leave her exactly where she should stay, in the past.

"He's awake," I called out to the others as my sweet boy blinked up at me with the prettiest green eyes I'd ever seen. Between his shock of red hair and petite frame, the guys called him my little clone.

"Good, because Hazel just texted me. They're on their way now. Apparently, she was having baby withdrawal," Nash called out from the kitchen.

"Prepare yourselves. Teagan comes back in the morning. She'll be here every day," I countered with a chuckle. She'd only been able to hold him a handful of times before work called her back on the road, but she checked in every day.

"Just like Auntie Eliza," Yuri cooed as he took Killian from my arms. The little giggles that filled the air were one of the best sounds I'd ever heard.

Eventually, I'd have to figure out what I wanted to do with dancing, but that was a problem for many months down the road. For now, I was content being surrounded by my pack, my besties, my family, and my sweet baby boy.

The End

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[Power of Fate, Mystic Harbor Book 1](#)

[Masked by Chaos, Mystic Harbor Book 2](#)

Omega Besties

[Secrets & Stoners, Omega Besties Book 1](#)