



KNOT
For Hire

VIOLET FOX

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Foreword

Knot for Hire is a contemporary omegaverse that takes place in an alternate world where all characters exhibit animal like traits. Therefore, there will be no shifting in this series.

This book should only be read by mature readers as there will be knotting, bite marks, heats, MM and MMFM, and mentions of past abuse.

CHAPTER 1

Lark

The lights of the chandelier twinkle above as the city's elite celebrate all around, and I'm so out of my depth. But so long as I look the part, then I know I will swing it.

I am wearing a six thousand dollar dress. Not bad for a former jailbird...

If only the other omegas at the compound could see me now.

Tonight, I accompany the host of the ball as he currently talks with several of his guests. It's his sixtieth birthday, and he only wanted the best omega as his date tonight. I work for one of the top escort agencies in the country, and I have entertained many alphas over the last several years. After all, Daphne trained me herself, one of the most well-known omega escorts in the country.

She mysteriously vanished ten months ago, and no one knows what happened to her. Even the police are stunned by her disappearance.

And I haven't had a night off since. Now that Daphne is no longer available for hire, my workload has increased. I'm in high demand now.

I'm the new hot thing in town, and it's not a bad life.

I just wish I didn't have to feel like one of those top breeds at those God awful dog shows.

"My, what beautiful red hair your omega has, George."

I smile like the perfect little pedigree that I am, sipping my champagne flute like it's an art form. Just smile and be charming, and only speak when spoken to.

That was what I was taught.

George chuckles, peering down at me appreciatively. After all, I am wearing his six thousand dollar dress, so he wants to show me off.

I'm proof of his wealth and status in the city.

"Why, yes, she is..."

The alpha steps forward and grabs one of my locks, and inhales deeply. I stiffen, but only for a second. As a general rule of thumb, only the alpha who has purchased me for the night can touch me, but I don't comment on it.

Just hold your tongue like a good little omega...

My disciplined attitude has saved my life countless of times. It was how I got out of that hellhole and earned my freedom again.

I may be a prettied up doll, but it sure as hell beats being dead.

One day, we omegas will all be free. That's the only reason why I go through with this shit. Pardon my language — an omega shouldn't cuss.

I plan to make the world a better place for omegas and earn them their rights back. I don't know how, but I will find a way.

The other omegas at the compound thought I was a pushover, but they were wrong.

I will be the one to change our society.

They'll see.

“Hmm, chocolate... with a hint of strawberry...” the alpha hums, closing his eyes.

That's my perfume. I'm nothing but a chocolate drizzled strawberry. Tempting indeed.

George laughs again, but there's no denying the low rumble coming from his chest. He may be sixty now, but he could still wipe the floor with the alpha, who currently sniffs my hair like I'm a scratch and sniff page from a magazine.

He throws his arm around me, holding me close. After all, he wants my chocolate all to himself.

“Yes. Lark is quite the beauty, isn't she?”

All the alphas agree, leaning forward to sniff me from a distance, and I have no choice but to stand there and be the object of all their desires. Still, my heart is pounding. George

may have a firm grip around me, but I'm still not safe. After all, I am no one's omega. Not really. I'm a lone wolf in this world.

No one has my back. The agency may care, but they only care about the money I bring them. All that could change tomorrow once a newer, hotter omega comes around and takes my place.

The agency will pick me up later via private car to take me back to the apartment. They have an apartment complex in the city, and I have the penthouse.

I'm one of their most prized possessions. They can't have me being kidnapped now and sold at one of those illegal heat farms.

I always wonder what it would be like to have a real pack or alpha. One who actually gives a damn about me and will risk their life to protect me.

Unfortunately, I read too many romance novels as a teenager, and as a result, I dared to let myself dream. Only a little, though. I still know how to remain level-headed.

I have to be if I want to be the harbinger of chance in this society.

I've had several heats now. Luckily, the agency had me covered for my very first, and I had many alphas lining up to give me their knots.

I don't think an omega ever forgets her first heat, and that had been an experience indeed. I had some of the most

desirable alphas in the country at my beck and call, yet I still wasn't satisfied.

Something still felt missing. It's not a tangible thing you can touch, but feel. And I felt none of that with those alphas.

The night wears on, and all the while, I continue to smile and laugh at George's jokes. It's what the agency pays me to do after all.

Happy client, happy life...

It beats being kicked out on the curb.

"I need to use the powder room," I whisper to George when we get a moment alone.

He looks me up and down, a warm light in his eyes. Honestly, he's a silver fox at sixty, with his silver-streaked hair and beard. Sure, he's thirty-seven years my senior, but I'm not one to complain.

Still, he purchased me tonight. I am merely his possession, and he will never care about me in the way I truly crave.

"Of course. I'll be here waiting, sweet Lark."

That's my cue to leave. It's quite rare that an alpha will let an omega out of his sight, and the agency normally warns us to never to go off alone.

But I just need to breathe. For a moment. It's getting stuffy at the party.

My cheeks hurt from smiling too much.

I nod my head and scurry off to the powder room. There are several ladies already when I arrive, all doing their makeup.

They're betas, and most of them don't care to acknowledge my existence.

Other women tend to not like me, so I'm used to it. I wasn't even popular amongst women of my own designation back at the compound.

I was the model omega. The prison used me as an example for the others. Considering that I was a late bloomer too when I awakened at eighteen, I ended up being one of the best. The only friends I ever had were my two former cellmates, Dove and Ravyn. While the first was too shy and placid for my lifestyle, the other couldn't hold her tongue to save her life. I think that was why the compound kept the three of us together; I think they thought I could teach Dove and Ravyn somehow.

Oh, I did try. But only for their own sakes.

I didn't want to see them get hurt or worse. I have no idea what happened to them, and I try not to think about either omega's fate as I search inside my clutch for a napkin.

Sweat has formed along my lip, and it looks as if I'm going to have another heat soon. I think George has even put his name down for my next one.

The agency hosts bidding wars for an omega's heat. I went as high as ten million for my first, and I haven't seen a single penny since.

It all goes to the agency...

The other women keep a wide berth from me, as I must be perfuming. My scent may be addictive to alphas, but to other designations, it's sickly.

A tall beta woman steps up beside me to fix her lipstick, and I hardly recognize her at first. I'm used to seeing famous faces, but when I turn to look at the woman, I almost squeal like a little fangirl.

Shit. That's Delilah. One of the most famous super models in the world.

She may be a beta, but I would kill for a set of pins like hers. She has legs for days, and I suddenly don't feel so glamorous anymore in her presence.

Delilah catches me staring and smiles. Fuck me.

I feel so stupid.

She puts her lipstick away, placing her hand on her hip. "My, you are beautiful. Such gorgeous red hair."

She reaches out to grab my hair, and holy fuck... Delilah is touching my hair. *My* hair! I hold my head down. "Thank you, m-ma'am."

Crap. Did I just call her ma'am? I mean, she is thirty years my senior, but I don't mean to make it sound like she's old.

She's a legend from the 90s. She literally dominated catwalks with that famous jungle cat stride of hers, and I'd be wise to show her the respect she rightly deserves.

She's married to the head of state now, so she hasn't done too badly for herself. Her husband was only elected several weeks ago, so I can imagine her life has been pretty hectic since she became the first lady...

"It's okay, darling. You don't have to be so tight-lipped around me. You are free to talk."

Why is she being so nice to me? I honestly thought she would have been a bitch. People say she is one of the more gracious supermodels.

I look her way at last. Hot damn. If I could still look half as good as her at fifty-five, then I'd be one happy omega. Daphne herself was in her late forties before she went missing, and she still had alphas drooling all over her. I'm only twenty-three, so I still have a while to go before I have to worry about aging, but this woman just makes aging look so beautiful.

There's no missing the high cheekbones, which she's famous for, and the little beauty spot just beneath her left eye.

I believe she was first scouted when she was just sixteen on the streets of London, and I'm not surprised.

The woman has it all. Great bone structure, great legs, great hair, great skin...

Her lips part as she takes in my face, and would you look at that? I have left her spellbound.

"Such sad brown eyes you have, sweetheart..."

Something comes over me when she calls me sweetheart. She has a lovely, soft British accent, but there's just something

so motherly about her tone.

Delilah reaches out and grabs my chin, and her touch is so gentle. Now it's like she's gazing deep into my soul as she assesses my eyes, and then something glints in her own.

It's not every day you can say that a literal supermodel grabbed you by the chin and looked you in the eyes.

“Who are you here with tonight?” she asks, her voice soft.

I try to wrack my brains. I can't even remember.

“Um... George. The... the host.”

Did I just say “um”? Not good. The agency *hates* that. We omegas need to be eloquent.

Delilah nods, never taking her sparkling green eyes off me. She even caresses my cheek with her thumb, and it takes me by surprise.

I never had a loving mother growing up. My own abused me. Mommy dearest sold me to the OCC in the end when I awakened, and I haven't seen her since.

She used to call me *fat*.

Delilah grabs a napkin and dabs at my forehead. Then she lets go of my face. “Well, you best go back to him then.”

I nod, turning my back to her so I can leave the powder room. By now, we're the only two people left. I think all the other women bailed the moment Delilah stepped in.

“What's your name, darling?”

I turn back to the glamorous woman, my mind in a haze.
“Lark, ma’am.”

Delilah smiles, and again, she has a gleam in her eyes. I suppose it is an unusual name. I think my mom heard a lark singing once when she was pregnant with me, and so, she named me after the bird with the beautiful song...

Too bad I turned out to be such a disappointment.

Delilah smiles. “Well, when we next meet again, Lark.”

My heart flutters. Wow. On her lips, my name actually sounds heavenly. I always hated it.

I bid her an awkward farewell, then fumble with the door. George will be waiting for me after all.

I can’t keep my client waiting. Happy client, happy life.

CHAPTER 2

Colt

“Colt, wake up.”

Ah, what time is it? Fuck, I need a drink.

An *alcoholic* drink.

“Colt, get up. Your mom just called. She’s on her way.”

That was Gabriel, and holy shit on a bun. Did he just say that my *mom* was on her way? God, I’m going to need an aspirin *and* a shot of vodka.

There’s movement in the corner of my eye, and it looks as if a lump of clothes has just come to life on the couch.

“Delilah’s coming here? Right now? Fuck!”

That wasn’t a pile of clothes. That was Elliot, my partner in crime. He likes to drink all of his problems away, too.

Gabriel sighs in that huffy way of his. “That’s what I just said...”

Elliot gasps. “Shit! I need to wash my face!”

He jumps off the couch, tripping over his own clothes. I don't even know how he even ends up naked through the night, yet he does. Now he rushes around the living room in his birthday suit, and I roll my eyes, getting up for myself.

I gaze down at my hands. It looks as if I fell asleep spooning a bottle of vodka again.

“Bryce! Wade! Get up! The *MILF* is coming!”

I growl, and the sound rumbles inside my throat. “For fuck’s sake. I told you not to call my mom that, asshole!”

Elliot doesn’t hear me. He just panders about upstairs from room to room, and at times I feel as if we’re still in college.

We’re thirty, yet we still act like frat boys. That’s why our dads hate us. We’re future senators, so we need to behave.

I’m still wearing my clothes from last night. I didn’t get back until six am. I spent the night at some rock star’s after party, and I’m paying the price for it now.

I’m getting too old for this shit, but what else is there to do? I was discharged from the army, and alcohol is all I have now.

My pack tries to help, but there’s only so much they can do. After all, the only one who can help me is myself. I want to change, but it’s hard.

I’ve tried, yet the nightmares slowly creep back into my dreams whenever I stave off the drink. In my dreams, I’m five years old again, carrying a knife as I gaze down at a bloodied corpse.

A splitting headache cracks my skull in half, and I unscrew the bottle, downing that vodka like it's apple juice. Gabriel watches sadly, and I avoid looking at his blue eyes.

He's our pack omega.

Yeah, a *male* omega. Male omegas are rare in our world, yet here he is, in the flesh.

We've been friends since boarding school, yet he lost touch with the pack once he awakened. His parents had no choice but to pull him out of school. If the government had found out what he was, then they would have sent him to one of those omega prisons to be 'trained'.

Gabriel's father is a senator, yet he still would have had no choice but to surrender his son. All omegas are to be reported to the government from the moment they awaken. They don't have many freedoms in our world.

Not even the son of a senator.

It made sense why I always felt attracted to him. Even now, with all his scent blockers and pills to hide his designation, I feel the draw.

We have what they call 'shared trauma'. He's the only one in my pack who understands what I went through as a kid.

He gets night terrors, too.

He came back into my life six months ago, and I guess we kind of rekindled our affection for each other.

He has helped to fill a hole in my life. A hole that was created ever since that piece of shit Brady Shaw stole me away from my parents, and...

No. Won't go there.

Gabriel kneels beside me, holding his hand out for the bottle. I sigh, passing it to him. He sniffs the offending drink and gags. "Wow, that's strong."

I suppress a snort. Gabe has a weak omega constitution. He's small, so he can't handle his drink like an alpha.

He's lucky Elliot is around to help him pull off being a beta. Elliot is our pack beta, as he helps Gabe maintain his fake identity. Pretending to be a beta is the best Gabe can hope for. There's no way he could pull off being an alpha.

He's too delicate.

He may be small, but he's still big in the only ways that matter...

Even just a sniff of vodka is enough to mess with his head, and he's adorable at times. I appreciate his glasses then, his freckled nose, and his shaggy, strawberry blond hair.

What would I do without him?

Still. Something feels missing. I adore Gabe the world over, but there's just something we need to balance us out.

We're both broken.

He helps me to my feet, and he's strong for an omega. He's five foot ten, so I tower over him at six foot two, yet he can

still hold up my weight just fine.

“There’s no time to get you in the shower, but if we can get some coffee in you and get you out of those clothes, then you should be good.”

We stumble toward a bar stool, and there I wait while he fusses around the kitchen to make us coffee. My knot swells as I check out his tight ass, likening it to a peach until the knock comes at the door.

My heart sinks to my stomach.

I can smell her designer perfume from here.

My mother has arrived.

Fuck.

CHAPTER 3

Gabriel

I leave Colt at the breakfast island as I go to let his mother inside. Her Chanel perfume lingers at the back of my throat as I take a few deep breaths, trying to maintain my composure.

It's okay, Gabe. You got this. Delilah loves you...

Elliot is still running around upstairs like a headless chicken, and I roll my eyes. "Betas."

Elliot was supposed to keep an eye on Colt last night, making sure he didn't go off the rails. Some pack beta he is.

He's a bad influence on Colt.

Colt was discharged from the army. He had a *drinking* problem, his commanding officer had said. Go figure.

Finally, I open the door, and for a moment I forget that I'm an omega and I'm supposed to be attracted to alphas when she steps inside.

Just... wow. It's so easy to forget how beautiful Delilah is. It's not all airbrushing in the magazines. Sure, she has had some Botox, but she could still walk circles around girls more than half her age.

"Gabriel, darling," she says, kissing me on the cheek, and I stifle a nervous laugh.

"Hi, Delilah."

She hangs up her coat on the rack, then follows the scent of booze toward the kitchen. There, she finds her son at the breakfast bar, shaking her head.

"Colt... have you been out drinking again?"

Colt shrugs his shoulders. His hair is disheveled, and he has a little stubble on his face, but he looks good, despite everything.

I'd be a mess if that were me right now. Colt and Elliot didn't get home until six am.

"You got me." Colt holds up his hands, taking a sip of his coffee as he tries to sober up. He's lucky he has no board meetings today.

Ever since he got discharged, his father has made a point of making him attend some of his meetings at work.

Colt can't just drink his life away now.

It is Saturday, so his dad will give him the day off. His dad controls every aspect of his life these days. In fact, it's been that way since he was a kid. Even when he joined the army,

the man controlled him. He told him what base he could work on and what missions he could undertake.

Colt is a former missing child. Four years, he spent at ALPHA — an underground organization that trains young alphas to become assassins. The police presumed him to be dead, but then he turned up out of the blue one day with about a dozen other boys, and the rest is history.

It's why he drinks. I've heard him talking in his sleep, and his dreams transport him back to that miserable time in his life. I noticed it when we first met at fourteen. He was cold and distant as a kid, yet I always knew there was a crying child deep down who just wanted to be rescued.

That was how I became so drawn to him; I just wanted to rescue him. Pull him out of that dark place.

Unfortunately, I awakened at sixteen, and then I had to become home-schooled by my parents.

I take hormone suppressants every day to hide my identity, and to this day, I have never had a heat. I'm twenty-nine, and quite frankly, the idea of my first terrifies me.

I can't allow it to happen. It's bad enough that I crave a knot all the time. My teen years were rough. I feel so alone being the only male omega that I know, but I know with the right help and support, I can get through this.

Colt is friends with the head of a mafia pack, and their enforcer hooks me up with a good dealer.

Delilah steps over to Colt, whacking his shoulder.

Colt yelps. “Ow. What the...”

“You ended up in the tabloids again. Your father is through the roof!”

I go about my business as usual as I proceed to make my own coffee, and I feel as if I’m intruding.

I don’t think Colt has told his parents that we’re mated yet. It’s only been a few months, but it’s one of the reasons why I want Delilah to like me so much.

Will she deem me good enough for her son? He’s not her biological son, but she still treats him like he is.

Delilah couldn’t have children of her own. So her husband purchased an omega from the compound, got her pregnant, and then Colt was born nine months later.

I can’t help but feel for that omega. I can’t imagine what it must be like to have your child ripped away from you...

Omegas have no choice. They are treated like breeding machines. They’re the only designation who can give birth to alphas. I myself could produce an alpha if I bred with a female alpha, but they’re just as rare as male omegas.

Some scientists believe that male omegas could evolve in the next couple of hundred years, developing the ability to carry an alpha’s baby for themselves, yet that’s a long way off.

It won’t happen in my lifetime, anyway.

A shame. I really would suit that *pregnancy* glow.

Footsteps crash down the stairs, and then Elliot arrives in the kitchen, a bright smile on his tanned face.

He's dressed himself up as he smooths back his hair, giving Colt's mom a wink. "Delilah..."

Delilah pouts her lips. "Don't you wink at me, Elliot. You were supposed to keep an eye on him last night. Wait until I tell your mother..."

Elliot's face falls. I think he forgets that his mom and Delilah are tennis buddies.

Rich kid problems.

"Oh, shit, please, no..."

Elliot's mom is pretty strict, and she will wring his neck for sure. What do you expect from a bunch of trust fund babies?

We're adults, yet our parents still have us tied around their fingers. They govern our futures, pretty much, tell us who to marry and who we can be friends with.

I think that's why Bryce and Colt joined the army at eighteen. They wanted some sense of control in their lives.

Their parents weren't happy. I'm just glad that I met them before they left.

We may have become friends at boarding school because of our parents, but I still regard them as family.

Pack Steel will always stick together.

That's the name we adopted for our pack. It's quite normal in our society.

Delilah ignores Elliot, focusing her attention on Colt again, and I watch from the corner of my eye as Elliot walks away with his tail between his legs.

His long-time crush has just disowned him, and it must be tough. He's had a crush on her since we were kids.

I guess betas are naturally drawn to each other.

Delilah reaches across the breakfast bar and takes Colt's hand, and the alpha can barely look his mother in the eye. Again, I pretend as if I am not present.

The woman turns to me. "Gabriel... could you give us a moment?"

That's my cue to leave. A part of me wants to shout out and demand that I stay. Colt is my partner; we are bonded. But I respect her wishes and leave the room.

That doesn't mean I won't eavesdrop, though.

Delilah takes a moment to speak. Meanwhile, the clock ticks in the kitchen, and it's driving me nuts.

"Colt... you know how much your father and I love you..."

Colt scoffs. His mom maybe, but his dad is an ass. Honestly, all of our fathers are assholes. Mine only kept me out of the public eye because he was ashamed of me.

He wanted an alpha for a son, but in the end, he got an omega. It's bad enough that I have to pretend to be a beta.

Elliot is in the same boat as me. His father doesn't like him all that much either, since he didn't awaken as an alpha. There

is no guarantee that an omega will give birth to an alpha. That's the risk our fathers take when they mate with an omega. There's just a higher possibility that their child will be born alpha.

“We've been thinking... that it may be time for you to settle down. Find a mate.”

My heart cleaves in two, and then I forget the simple process of breathing.

Colt growls. “I don't *want* a mate.”

Delilah continues. “There are plenty of eligible omegas...”

The stool behind Colt flies backward, and my heart pounds as the tension shifts. His parents have badgered him about finding a mate for a while now.

Either a beta who he can settle down with and marry, or an omega with whom he can breed and produce an heir.

After all, his father wants him to carry on his family's legacy...

Colt has no desire to have children, which is the reason why he is with me. We can fuck and fool around as much as we want without the risk of me falling pregnant.

It hurts at times, but I understand.

Children aren't for everyone...

I'm still not sure how I feel about them myself.

I only romanticize the possibility of carrying Colt's baby so that his parents will leave us alone. Plus, the thought of him

with some other omega just makes me want to...

Fuck.

“I am not interested in an omega.”

Well, that’s not entirely true. He is interested in me.

Delilah sighs. “Colt... I understand your feelings about children, but your father’s legacy...”

“Screw his legacy. I told you I will not give him grandkids!”

I can hear Delilah’s heart breaking from here. I understand her own history with children, since she struggled to get pregnant herself, but at the end of the day, this is Colt’s choice. Sure, he’s rich, so he wouldn’t even have to spend time with the kid. The *nanny* would, just like his own nanny took great care of him.

That was sarcasm. His nanny didn’t take great care of him at all.

Colt suffered as a child. So he doesn’t want to willingly bring one into this world.

It’s a cruel world we live in, and children are not always safe. Senator’s children are at an even greater risk. It’s like we have a target on our heads.

I do like to believe that the reason why my father pulled me out of school was to protect me.

The world is not kind to omegas.

Delilah rises from her stool. Then she clicks toward the door in her Jimmy Choo heels.

“Just think about what I said, Colt, or we will have no choice but to intervene. I am at least giving you the option of finding an omega of your own choice. If not... then your father and I will have to find someone for you... or you risk losing your inheritance.”

Colt growls and ice spreads through my veins. I've never heard him sound so livid.

If he doesn't do as his parents say, then they will find someone for him to mate with. If he refuses to comply, then they will cut him off.

No more parties, and no more private jets to Bali. That sucks.

She finally leaves, and I wait a moment for Colt to adjust to the news. He grabs a vase and throws it at the wall, and it may be best to leave him.

Once he cools his jets, I will go in.

Some time passes. Then, when he's quiet, I step into the kitchen. He can't even look at me, and my heart breaks when he gives me his stone cold silence.

I guess it was only a matter of time. We knew it couldn't last between us, but I refuse to back down while some other omega takes my alpha.

I will claw her fucking eyeballs out.

We omegas are possessive, after all.

Colt is *mine*.

I go over to him, sitting on the breakfast bar opposite.

“So, what now?” I ask.

Colt sighs, and he still won't meet my eyes. I want to reach out and grab his hand, but I keep my distance.

He's still seething.

Someone steps into the kitchen, and we turn to find Bryce's hulking form. He tends to take up a lot of space wherever he goes. He's covered in tattoos, and he looks as if he should belong in a motorcycle gang.

He got the tats to piss off his dad. It seems members of Pack Steel just *love* to defy their parents.

The big alpha takes a seat beside me. Elliot sneaks into the room, and it looks as if his hard-on has gone down. I bet he had a good jerk off indeed while thinking about Colt's mom.

Then Wade strides in, looking as if he just stepped out of a vampire romance novel. The guy is somewhat of an *artist*. He's into art and poetry, and is forever dressing in black.

Again, it irks his father.

Then there's me, the nerd. I love reading books about science, and we're all so different.

I'm just finishing my PHD in omega biology. It wasn't easy getting into college with my history, but through my hard work and determination, I eventually succeeded.

Yet as different as we may be, we're all united.

“So, your mom and dad want you to get an omega?” Wade asks, his tone airy and ominous.

“Yes,” Colt replies. “And you can bet your ass that your own folks will expect you to mate with this omega, too. Fuck.”

A quiet settles over the kitchen.

There’s nothing else to say. This just sucks.

Elliot laughs, and we all look at him.

Colt rolls his eyes. “What’s so fucking funny?”

The beta beams like the sun. “Well, what are we waiting for? Let’s go out and get our omega!”

We toss him a dirty look. Bryce growls. “What the fuck have you been smoking now?”

Elliot shakes his head. “I’m not high this time. I’m serious. There are plenty of omegas you can hire. The city has plenty of agencies. Let’s just find some bimbo and make her *pretend* to be our omega. And then when we’re done with her, we toss her out onto the street. Simple.”

We all think it through. I like the idea, especially the part where we kick her out onto the street, but then what happens after that? Will it placate our parents enough to leave us alone? Or would we have to keep her around so they don’t find us some other omega? At least this way, we can choose someone we want. We can pay her to say exactly what we want her to say.

When it comes to mating with her, well... I guess we can cross that bridge when we finally get there.

As it stands right now, she has to hold back while I get fucked by my alpha. Simple.

Well, it's time to find our omega.

CHAPTER 4

Lark

My alarm goes off at six am precisely, and I groan, rolling out of bed.

Time to do my hair and makeup. Just as the agency taught me. I have to look like a million dollars after all. Even from the moment I wake.

I sit at the edge of my bed, rubbing the sleep from my eyes. A morning bird chirps outside my window, and to my surprise, it's a lark.

My namesake.

A yawn splits my mouth in half just as a small, furry lump hops toward me.

I smile. "Well, hello, Potato."

Potato is my pet rabbit. I house trained him myself, and now he's the only one who keeps me company on lonely nights. The agency allows us one pet, and I decided to be different and go for a bunny.

I don't see why not. They're pretty cute. Also, he has a habit of thumping his foot when he wants attention.

I pick him up and place him on my lap, stroking behind his ear. He closes his eyes, and if only I could stay inside all day and watch movies with him.

The only movie he hates is *Watership Down*. That one is just a little *too* real for him.

Or maybe I'm just crazy, thinking that my pet actually likes movies.

Whatever.

I place him back on the floor, then head to my vanity, going through the motions. I apply all my skin lotions for that perfect omega glow. Then I sweep back my hair with a bristle brush ten times to ensure that maximum shine.

The agency told me that my hair is a major moneymaker, so I have to keep it in top condition.

Redheads are in popular demand right now. So many omegas are dying their hair right now just to get that flaming look, and why bother? Just be yourself, whether you're blonde or brunette.

I lose myself in my vacant brown eyes as I brush and brush, and I look like a zombie.

When did it all come down to this? I knew from the moment I awakened that if I just complied and did as the government dictates, then I would be free. Not only would I be free, but I would be safe, too.

But this doesn't feel like freedom. I saw what happened to omegas when they refused to comply. The guards would drag them away kicking and screaming, and then the poor girl would never be seen again.

I saw an alpha snap an omega's neck with his hand once, and I had never been so frightened in my life.

Just concede and do as they say. Then you will be safe...

I apply my foundation. Porcelain. The lightest shade. I have to have the fair skin to match my flaming hair.

My skin is naturally pale. Every day I have to wear sunscreen, and in the sun I must wear a wide-brimmed hat or a parasol.

There's nothing wrong with a bit of a suntan. Or freckles. Dove had them, and she had been beautiful.

Most of what I know is what Daphne taught me, and at times, I feel as if the woman is still by my side. She was harsh, but she was nowhere as tough as my mother. In fact, the omega was pretty considerate with her advice.

Without her guidance, I probably wouldn't have even gotten this far. And now I stay in her old room while she is still missing.

The police don't seem all that interested, and I bet she got involved in some shady shit indeed.

I hope she doesn't expect her old room back if she ever does turn up. I've kind of made myself comfortable here, and the agency has handed me all her things.

Her ghost still lingers.

I step back from the mirror and admire myself. I wear a cream day dress and small heels. Don't forget my wide-brimmed hat, too.

It's a sunny day, and I need to take care of my complexion. As I slip on a pair of lace white gloves, I turn to Potato. "Wish me luck, Potato. I'm going for *brunch*."

Every Wednesday morning, the agency makes us all attend a special brunch. It's a meet and greet with the city's most eligible bachelors.

They're all filthy rich.

Just before I leave, I apply a small spritz to my neck. It's an odorless perfume. Its purpose is to bring out my natural scent. So hopefully, I will smell like a chocolate drizzled strawberry when I arrive at the brunch at 11 am.

My next heat is just three weeks away. I mark my heats down on a calendar, and they almost work like clockwork now.

That's why the agency wants me there...

They hope that some alphas will choose to purchase me for my heat.

I head toward the elevator at the end of my hall. I have the whole upper level to myself, while the other omegas have to live beneath me.

None of them even bother to ride with me when they see me. They're afraid of me. I never abuse my power, but that's what power gives you in this city.

It makes people fear you.

“Oh, I'm so sorry, Miss Lark. We... we will wait...”

I gaze at the girls behind my designer sunglasses. They're around my age. In fact, one may be older, and I can imagine that she hates me. There's nothing worse when someone younger than you is more successful and popular. I'm only twenty-three, yet I've achieved so much already.

Trust me, they don't want my life. It's hard trying to look this perfect all the time, and I wonder if this was how Marilyn Monroe felt.

Who knows?

Besides, I would say I was more of an Audrey Hepburn kind of girl. I already have the Holly Golightly look.

The elevator stops, and I cross the front foyer of the luxury building toward the glass doors. The kind man at the door tips his hat at me on the way out, and I smile.

Several alphas stop and stare as I pass on the street, and they're all old and so, so rich. We are in the Upper East Side, and when these men see something they like, well...

In fact, I know a few of them already.

“Why, good morning, Lark.”

“You're looking ravishing today...”

Their praise fuels me. I worked my ass off just to get to where I am today, so I bask in the moment.

I have everything I could want and more.

Yes, perfectly happy...

It's not a far walk to the venue, and I manage to get there in no time. I give my name at the front desk and the maître d' ushers me inside. Then she sits me down at my designated table and asks if I would like a glass of water.

"Yes, please. Filtered, with just a little lemon squeezed inside."

I sound like a diva, but the agency says that I can only drink filtered water. Lemon just gives it that extra *pizazz*.

The maître d' walks away. Just before she leaves, I call out, "Oh, and a straw, too, please! Steel! I want to protect the environment."

Okay. I *am* a major diva, but what can I say? I care about the earth. I'm vegan too, and I try to walk whenever I can.

She turns back with a smile, and it's one that hides her teeth. It looks like I have her at the end of her tether. I do make quite the demands.

"Of course..."

She leaves at last, leaving me alone to my devices. I glance around. I have the center table in the sunlit atrium, and it's a good thing I wore sun protection. The sun's rays gleam

through the glass, but despite the warm temperature, it's a beautiful in here.

The atrium has been reserved for the agency's brunch. They book it every Wednesday. Unfortunately, that means other agencies have to miss out.

Midweek is the most popular meeting time for the city's eligible bachelors. And my agency always gets their claws in first. The mistress of our agency is a ruthless bitch, and anyone would be a fool to cross her. That's why omegas from rival agencies leave me alone.

Well, for the most part.

I have my fair share of enemies in this city, and that's why I have to ensure I have eyes on the back of my head.

The atrium fills out while I sit alone at my table, and where is my lemon water? I'm parched.

The other omegas gather on separate tables, and I won't pretend that I'm not a little envious. As I said, other women hate me. I once had *girlfriends*, but I had no choice but to leave them. I don't even dare let myself think about them most days. In my head, they got out of the compound, and now they are living with an alpha or a pack.

The pack doesn't particularly have to be kind or care about them, either. They just have to be safe. Anything is better than dying in that miserable place.

The alphas finally arrive, and every omega inside the atrium gets into character. I spy several fixing their hair, and others

checking their teeth in a silver spoon.

Meanwhile, I barely have a hair out of place. I have to be the best, after all. I am the face of my agency.

I have to be next to perfect.

Voices increase all around as the atrium fills, and did I just hear someone scream?

Seriously. They need to conduct themselves better. They are representing our agency. We have to be on our best behavior.

That's when I cast my eyes to the entrance, and the most gorgeous looking alpha I have ever seen walks inside. My heart thumps.

Fuck. They don't make them like that every day...

I'm not the only omega who is smitten with him. Several others try to catch his attention, and I think I hear someone shout, "Colt!"

Colt? I beg to differ...

That alpha is more of a stallion.

It appears he's someone famous. Unfortunately, I hardly keep up with popular media as I'm too busy with my life.

I bet he's some reality star. Oh, no. He's not from that one show everyone is currently raving about, is he?

No. He doesn't have bleached teeth or sun-baked skin. He's from old money. Not like those reality show wannabes.

The other omegas strive for his attention, but he hardly pays them heed. He does not look at all interested. In fact, he slips

his hand into his designer jacket and pulls out a flask, and honestly... It's barely noon.

The other omegas are free to have him. I don't want a day drinker, thank you.

Another guy arrives by his side and scolds him for drinking, and I have never seen a more delicate looking male. He has a gentle air about him, and he has definitely caught my eye.

He's a redhead, too. Maybe more on the strawberry blond side, but he's definitely in the red category.

He's gorgeous, and my palms sweat the more I look at him.

I should have thought twice about wearing gloves. Yet they do make me look elegant.

Three more males arrive. Two alphas and one beta, and it appears they're a pack.

I just can't figure out what designation the redheaded male is.

I want to say beta, but it doesn't seem to fit. I feel I should know what he is. He's familiar, even though this is the first time I have ever seen him.

Finally, he fixes his speckled gaze on me, and the world seems to freeze.

Now I understand why he seemed so familiar.

He's an omega, just like me. And he has to be one of the most exquisite looking creatures I have ever seen. Now I finally understand why alphas are so drawn to me...

I'm like Cinderella when she first laid eyes on Prince Charming for the first time.

So, I guess this is *love* then.

Fuck.

CHAPTER 5

Gabriel

I can't take my eyes off her.

The most beautiful looking woman I have ever seen stares straight back at me. Was this how Jack felt when he saw Rose for the first time aboard the ship of the Titanic?

She even has a similar wide-brimmed hat and pallor complexion, and my balls clench when I get a look at that perfect oval face.

Now, that is the epitome of female beauty. She's definitely the most beautiful omega in this room. I thought coming inside here would be hard. I almost wanted to rip out some bitch's throat when she cast her eyes on my alpha, but now I forget all about dear Colt as I can't take my gaze off the redheaded omega.

Red hair, just like mine. My hair is more on the orange spectrum, but hers is a deep auburn.

Like Autumn leaves...

She even has the big brown eyes to match, and I was not prepared for a brown-eyed, red-haired omega today.

“Gabriel...” someone says beside me.

I swallow. “Y-yes?”

“See anyone you like?”

“Um...”

Suddenly, I feel the eyes of my entire pack, and I finally glance away from the beautiful omega, meeting Colt’s gray eyes.

He raises a brow. He’s not the only one who looks confused. The others watch me curiously, too.

Colt glances at the omega, and his brow rises even higher. The others follow his gaze. Elliot gives a low whistle, and I ball my fists, resisting the urge to punch him in his stupid face.

How dare he. She is not some cheap floosy to be ogled at!

What the heck is coming over me?

“Damn. Check out the rack on *that* one...”

A low growl rumbles in my throat, and I glare at the beta. Colt catches the change, clearing his throat.

“Elliot. Stop.”

The beta stops regarding the omega like she’s a piece of meat, and then his eyes widen when he sees me. “Woah, what’s with that face?”

Even Bryce and Wade study me carefully, peering back and forth. A knowing smile crosses Wade's face. "It appears our omega has found what he's looking for..."

What I'm looking for? No. She is not what I am looking for. I am devoted to Colt and Colt only. He is the only one for me...

Still, I can't take my eyes off her. She has stopped to powder her delicate nose, and I do not know what is happening right now. My palms sweat whenever I look at her, and is it possible to be attracted to another omega?

It makes no sense.

I have studied omega biology my whole life, and not once have I seen this phenomenon. I'm supposed to like alphas. Well, I *do* like alphas. I like Colt.

But I like her too.

Man, I'm greedy.

And here I was, worried that the omega we would pick today would steal my alpha. Yet it looks as if she only went and stole me.

This is ridiculous. Still, the idea of walking away and never seeing her again fills me with grief.

I can't leave her. There was sadness inside those big, beautiful brown eyes just now, and I just want to take the sadness away.

She has been hurt in the past, and I swear... I will hurt the one who did that awful thing to her...

Bryce sighs, shaking his head. "Well, what are we waiting for? Let's talk to her."

Colt glances at the other alpha, then peers at me. "Are you sure about this, Gabe? We don't have to do this. We can just stand firm against our parents, telling them *you're* our omega. Your call."

I meet his eyes, giving him a nod. I have never been surer of anything in my life. I just want to get her away from here. The way all those alphas regard her like she's some pretty doll.

I may be an omega, but I will still fight for her honor. I'm a black belt, after all. My father paid for all kinds of expensive martial arts classes growing up. He did it to ensure that I could protect myself after what happened when...

No. Won't go there.

Elliot fusses next. "Fuck. We're really doing this then? Shit. How's my breath?"

The beta breathes in Bryce's face, and the alpha grunts, pushing him away. "It smells like shit, as usual. Well, let's go."

I speak up. "Hold him back for me, Bryce. I... don't want him fucking this up."

Wade whistles. "Look who's found his *balls*. Never thought I'd hear the day you would cuss, sweet Gabe."

I throw the other alpha a pointed look. “Why, thank you, Wade. I appreciate the observation, but... I just know that she’s the one...”

Wade raises a pierced brow. “The one to convince our parents that we’re ready to settle down and play happy families?”

I sigh. “Yes. *That* one...”

This is so messed up. We’re bringing her back with us, just so we can pay her to be our omega. This is going to suck. She may not even agree to our terms, but still. I will ensure that they are as fair as possible.

“Well, let’s do this,” I say.

CHAPTER 6

Lark

They're actually coming over. Shoot. I hope my hair looks okay.

That's a stupid statement: of *course* my hair looks okay. I brushed it at least ten times this morning.

The pack arrives at my table just as I put my round compact mirror away into my purse, and their scents catch me off guard.

Colt smells of Italian leather, while the hungry-looking beta beside him has a faint hint of wild berry. The large alpha with the shaved military cut and tattoos smells of saltwater and brine, while the other alpha reminds me of cedar. My perfect male omega, however? Well, he smells of peaches and cream, and I would *love* to take a bite out of those peaches...

Woah, get it together, Lark. You are an omega, not an animal.

Same difference, I guess. But while most other omegas act like savages, I conduct myself with dignity and grace.

I'm a professional. The face of my agency.

I can't mess this up.

Colt cuts straight to the chase, and his brazen honesty takes me by surprise. "Let's not beat around the bush and just forgo the pleasantries. You know exactly why we're here. You're an omega for hire, and we want to purchase you."

The silence that falls over the table next is deafening. I'm sure the rest of the atrium glances our way, and he's pretty smart-mouthed for an alpha, isn't he?

I've finally figured out who he is. He's the son of Senator Charles, the current head of state, and supermodel Delilah. It seems I'm dealing with a bigshot indeed. I've already met his mother, and she turned out to be a sweet woman. Yet I'm failing to see the same sweetness in her son.

While classically handsome in every way possible, I can understand why the tabloids like to slander his name so much.

Quite frankly, he's rude. The handsome omega beside him grinds his teeth, glancing at me apologetically. My heart flutters when I spy the adoration in his eyes, and no one has ever looked at me like that before.

I'm used to the approval of men, but he looks at me like I hung the moon...

He makes me feel special.

"Sorry about him," he says, taking a seat at the table. The rest of his pack follows suit. "Let us re-introduce ourselves. I'm Gabriel."

Like the archangel. I thought he looked as if he fell from heaven.

“And this is Colt.”

Gabriel inclines his head at the rude alpha beside him. Colt slips on a pair of sunglasses as he leans back, folding his arms, and he really doesn't look as if he wants to be here. So rude.

Gabriel continues. “This handsome chap is Elliot. Don't let that innocent baby face fool you, though. He's nothing but trouble.”

Elliot wiggles his thick black brows, and he's pretty easy on the eye, too. He has black tousled hair and sun-tanned skin, and dresses as if he's on vacation. I was never a fan of the Hawaiian shirt, but I like it on him.

The beta extends a hand, and I take it and shake. I'm so glad I wore gloves today; I'm pretty sure he just had his hand in his pants.

“Pleased to meet you, milady,” he says, kissing my knuckles.

“Y-yes. You too.”

The beta gives a wolfish grin, and that's a nice set of teeth. They really contrast with his tanned skin.

“And this big guy is Bryce. He may look ruthless, but deep down, he's as soft as a Care Bear.”

Bryce cracks his knuckles to demonstrate Gabriel's point, and I'm failing to see the soft Care Bear. However, my heat

flutters when I spy that gleam in his handsome green-gray eyes. I'm not normally into tough military guys, but he's lush. He's what you call cartoonishly handsome. He has a square jaw with a prominent dip on the chin, and one day...

I'm going to stick my finger there...

Keep it together, Lark. That alpha could snap you like a twig. Look at those military tags around his neck. And those arms...

"Last but not least is Wade. He's... somewhat of an artist..."

I look at the last and final alpha. Again, I don't normally go for guys with facial piercings, but Wade is hot, too. He has ice-blue eyes and long, black hair, and he kind of reminds me of a vampire.

One side of his mouth quirks. "*Somewhat of an artist, Gabe?*"

Gabriel corrects himself. "Sorry. The genuine article. No one paints like Wade does..."

"I do more than just paint, idiot..." Wade casts his icy blue eyes on me again, and he kind of reminds me of a Siberian husky.

Now I liken the whole pack to different dog breeds. Colt would be a steadfast German Shepard. Elliot is an excitable collie, and Bryce a bullmastiff. My handsome Gabriel would be a golden retriever: loving, good-natured, and adorable.

What breed of dog would I be? A sweet cocker spaniel? An overly pampered poodle?

I guess this is the part where I should introduce myself. “I’m Lark, and it’s a pleasure to meet you all, Pack...”

Gabriel widens his soft blue eyes. “Oh, Pack Steel.”

Pack Steel. Good, strong name.

Quiet spreads across the table. Meanwhile, everything continues around us. I see my fellow omegas from the agency wooing several alphas, and it looks like they’ve all got plans tonight.

Who knows where I will be tonight? We seldom get days off at the agency. Every day, I have to put on my perfect facade just to entertain alphas, and it gets tiring.

From Monday to Sunday, I’m some alpha’s companion, and for once... I would just like to be *me*. Whoever that may be.

I barely know who I am. Maybe I did lose myself a little along the way of becoming the *perfect* omega. At first, I did it to buy my freedom. I also did it on the notion that I could one day change things.

I was always a bright kid, and if I hadn’t awakened as an omega, then I would be working in politics. Or academia. A place where I could use my brain rather than my beauty.

Unfortunately, Mother Nature had other plans for me, and I have no choice but to sell my looks in order to thrive in this world.

I'm a high-class prostitute. Men pay me for a good time, whether that's to keep them company, or to offer them my body when I'm in heat. At the end of the day, it ensures a roof over my head.

So it can't get any worse than this, right?

Whatever they have to offer me, I'll do it.

Gabriel looks at me, and it's like he can read my thoughts. I school my emotions then, sitting up straighter. The agency tells us to hide our feelings.

Bottle it all up inside. Just make the client happy.

But I have big, expressive eyes. So I can't help it at times. In fact, they're my trademark, as well as my luxurious red hair.

"Big Bambi eyes and hair as red as Autumn leaves..."

That's how my brochure describes me.

Gabriel sighs. "Lark... we have a proposition for you..."

My heart clenches. I've had sex with five guys at once before. Sometimes more, and they are easy on the eye...

Still, my heart thumps hard against my chest. There is just something so despondent about them. They all look trapped, and it's easy to tell they don't want to be here. Someone is making them do this, and I bet it's their parents.

Rich kids often get mollycoddled by their parents. They all look about thirty, yet their parents still tell them what to do.

They are no freer than I am. The agency tells me what to do too and where I should go.

I suck in a deep breath. “I’m all ears.”

Gabriel’s eyes pierce me again, and there’s no missing his guilt. Something burns behind my eyes, and it takes me a moment to realize what I’m feeling.

I am crying.

I thought I forgot how to cry.

It seems I still have some emotion left in me. I’m not a complete empty shell.

“We would like you to be our omega. You will give you everything you need. A bed, food, a roof over your head... so long as you are willing.”

Another bout of silence travels across the table. Glasses clink all around as the noise continues.

I know what he’s offering. They want me to pretend to be their omega, so their parents leave them alone for a while. They don’t actually want me. Not in the way I want, yet they still need me.

After all, any mother or father would be proud if their son brought an omega like me home.

Gabriel gives me a price, and I maintain my composure.

I have never seen that many zeros in my life. It’s more than triple of what I earn at the agency.

Well, I guess I have no choice. Any omega would be a fool to turn down money like that. Not all omegas are so lucky. Some end up dead, or worse...

At an illegal heat farm.

A shudder works its way up my spine. It's a lot of money, but I still have to think it through. After all, I have to protect my heart. It's a fragile thing. My mother ensured that.

It's why I act so aloof. It's my armor. It's protects me from the world.

The world isn't kind to omegas. Not even the lucky ones, like me.

“So, as I understand... you want me to come and live with you and be your omega? You want me to clean and cook for you? Is that it?”

All five men pause. Well, all except for Colt, who I think has fallen asleep. It's hard to see his eyes behind the sunglasses.

Still rude, I see.

Gabriel exhales, and his cool breath wafts my way. My heart skips a beat.

“That's right.”

“And... nothing else?”

It takes each man a while to respond. Even Gabriel takes a moment. Then his eyes bug, and then shame colors his cheeks.

He's adorable when he blushes.

“No. Cooking and cleaning would be all. We wouldn't expect anything more from you, Lark.”

I nod my head. I knew it. They want to hire me, so their parents leave them alone. That way, they're all free to do as they please.

After all, they already *have* an omega. While he may hide his designation, he has already adopted the role of an omega in his pack. The alphas dote on him, and even the beta, Elliot, respects him, too.

Omegas are the glue that holds a pack together.

I take it he's sleeping with them all? Or maybe just one of them.

That's when my eyes find Colt again. He still looks as if he's sleeping. However, he has his arm draped around Gabriel's chair, and I finally see.

They're dating, but they want to keep it a secret.

That's why they need me.

My heart plummets to the darkest parts of my soul. They truly look happy in each other's presence. I wouldn't want to come between that, yet still...

It would be nice to be just as wanted. So in love to the point where you're prepared to take advantage of another just so you can find some peace.

I am no one's first choice.

Whatever arrangements we make today, it can't last forever. One day, someone will see through the ruse.

After all, an omega is only good for one thing...

Babies.

One of them will be expected to put a baby inside me. They already have three alphas. So the chances of us producing an alpha are very high.

Colt finally wakes from his nap, focusing his undivided attention on me again.

“So, are you willing to help us out or not? We haven’t got all day.”

I bite the inside of my cheek. Gabriel gives him the side eye, and I can tell by the clicking of his jaw that he’s just as incensed as I am.

I offer Colt my sweetest smile, batting my eyelashes, and the whole pack stares at me. Even Colt slips his sunglasses off.

“It’s a deal. I’ll be your omega. I just have one condition...”

Wade smirks, and I can see he approves of me. “And what’s that, sugar lump?”

Sugar lump? I shake my head, meeting Colt’s gray eyes. “That Colt will stop being such a rude prick.”

The table freezes. Colt deadpans me as I make a fool of him in front of his pack. Maybe he should think twice the next time he speaks down to me.

Alphas do it all the time, but something rubbed me the wrong way with Colt.

I get it. He doesn’t like me, and that’s fine. He doesn’t have to like me for our arrangement to work, but he should at least

respect me.

But he already has his omega. Why should he go out of his way to impress me?

Why should any of them?

They're all so perfectly happy...

They just need me to keep their parents away.

Gabriel chuckles, and the sound makes my heart flutter. I could listen to that pealing laugh all day.

“Then it’s a deal. Welcome to the pack, Lark.”

CHAPTER 7

Lark

I'm quite sad to say goodbye to my room at the agency.

As I stand by the door, carrying Potato in his carrier, I stop a moment to reminisce.

This was my own private sanctuary. After a long night standing on my feet at formal functions, I would come home and wipe my make off and then crash on the bed.

It was quite rare when I got nights off, but on the rare occasions I did, I would snuggle up with my bunny and watch some movies.

But now I will have an even bigger and better room. So, I can't complain.

I'm not sure who the room will go to next. After all, it had belonged to Daphne before it became mine.

May she rest in hell.

She was always kind of a bitch.

“Well, let’s go, Potato. We have a new life to start elsewhere.”

The rabbit fixes his beady eye on me, wiggling his nose, and I don’t think he can really understand me. He’s not happy about being in the cage. He stomped his foot and then attempted to dig his way out of the plastic bottom.

Bunnies...

I guess now he will have an even bigger room to do his night time zoomies. Maybe then he won’t wake me up at 3 am when he runs across the walls Matrix style.

It’s time to leave.

I finally shut the door, saying goodbye to my old life. In a way, I’m kind of glad that I don’t have to impress these five guys...

It gets tiring being pretty and charming all the time, and I guess I will have every night off for the foreseeable future now.

My heart thumps in my chest.

I finally get to live like a normal person. I can’t wait.

It’s like I’m reclaiming an old part of myself. I’ve always been an introvert, and would honestly prefer staying at home reading a good book over a night out. When I lived with my mom, I always stayed in my room. So when I moved into the compound, life threw for a loop. Sharing a cell with two other omegas had been a nightmare at first. But then when I finally

got my own cell after an excellent report from a prison guard, everything just went up from there.

We are rewarded for good behavior, and it tends to work. Most of the time.

I go down to the lobby where Elliot, Wade, and Bryce are waiting. Gabriel and Colt weren't available to help with the move, and my heart dips.

I miss my omega already, but I will be with him again soon. I can't say I feel the same way about Colt.

Elliot has nothing but a smile for me when I step out of the elevator, and he even offers to take Potato from my hands.

“Hey there, bunny.”

Bunny? That's new.

I offer him the pet carrier, and the beta grins when he spies the real bunny inside. “Aw, hey, little guy.”

The rabbit grunts when he sticks his fingers through the bars, and I roll my eyes. “He doesn't like strangers.”

Honestly, the rabbit doesn't even like *me* at times. Sometimes, he looks at me as if I'm going to murder him. Other days, I'm his best friend.

Elliot chuckles as he peers inside the carrier at the rabbit again. “That's all right. I had a rabbit too as a kid, but then he had to go to the special farm in the end...”

I smile tightly, wondering if he realizes that the special *farm* is just a metaphor for... Never mind. I bet his mom just told

him that so he wouldn't cry.

Elliot is nothing but a big kid in the end. How sweet.

Bryce rolls his eyes. "Well, let's get this show on the road."

He leads the way out of the building, and it comes to my attention that no one has bothered to come down to say goodbye.

We never really were friends. The other omegas regarded me as competition. I know several of them even hated me, but were too scared to show their true feelings.

We exit the building. The guys hired a moving truck for all my things. I've had a lot of admirers these past several years, so I have acquired a few possessions.

I would hate to give it all up.

I have beautiful, bespoke furniture handcrafted especially for me, and I have also accumulated a number of garments. There's also my crystal chandelier.

Bryce drives the truck while I ride in the car with Elliot and Wade. The *artist of sorts* drives, while Elliot offers me shotgun.

Again, I am impressed by his chivalry. I've always liked betas. They can be quite charming when they want to be, even though they don't normally go for an omega.

It turned out that not all of my things could fit inside the truck. So several had to go on the backseat of the car. Elliot

struggles a little as he maneuvers around boxes. Luckily for me, the boxes are cryptic. One has my ‘toys’ inside.

An omega has to *practice*, after all.

Happy client, happy life.

That’s our agency’s mantra.

He keeps Potato on his lap as he grins up at me and Wade. “Well, let’s go! You’re going to love it back at the house, Lark. We have a pool and a gym, and even a sauna!”

“Ooh, I do love a sauna. Good for the pores,” I note.

Elliot laughs. “Right! It’s done wonders for me. Check out my forehead. Soft, right?”

I smile, and he’s right. That’s one baby-soft forehead, and shiny too. I can almost see my reflection.

Wade sighs as he slips on his seatbelt. “Are you girls done talking? We need to keep up with Bryce and the truck.”

I look across the street where the truck is parked. Bryce nods his head to tell me he’s ready, and I glance at Wade.

Again, those icy blue eyes catch me off guard. They seem to glow in the dark of the car, and maybe he really is a vampire.

“We’re ready.”

Wade starts the engine, pulling away from the curb, and I cast one last look at my old home before we leave.

Well, here’s to a new chapter in my life.

We drive up a long, tree-lined road at the edge of the city, and my heart thumps in my chest.

My new home is at the end of this drive.

Elliot fell asleep on the backseat after we played a lengthy game of eye spy, and I'm grateful for him. He treats me like an old friend, and I feel at home already.

Even Wade played along too, and maybe I will enjoy my time with this pack. While I will never be their omega, I'm still going to make the best out of this arrangement.

It sure beats going out every night in a pair of heels. I don't even have to try with this pack. In fact, I'm going to forgo the heels tonight and wear my bunny slippers.

I earned it.

Wade taps his fingers on the leather steering wheel as Elliot snores behind us. He's pretty loud; I hope my room will be far away from his.

I keep stealing glances at the alpha beside me. I've felt him tense several times in my presence, and it's hard to read his feelings. He's pretty guarded, but he's been nice enough through our interactions. I recall him calling me sugar lump when we met at the atrium yesterday.

It's crazy how your whole life can just change in a day.

I chew my lip. This silence is painful. I'm normally good at ice breakers, but I am stumped with this alpha.

I never met many artsy *goth* types at my functions. Just the rich jackass types who own yachts and private jets.

“So, what do you like to paint?” I ask.

Wade stiffens, and did I go too far?

He shrugs. “Fantasy creatures, I guess.”

“Like elves? Middle Earth?”

He raises a pierced brow. “Yeah... you could say that...”

It doesn't look as if I am going to get any more from him, so I peer out the window, casting my eyes over the green fields. We're inside a large, gated community, and it almost feels as if we're out in the sticks.

But truth be told, we're still in the city. Just along the outskirts. We've passed several homes worth millions.

The guys live in the center of this gated community, and it has me thinking...

“Does this land belong to you?”

Wade taps his fingers on the steering wheel again, and it must be a nervous habit of his. “No. It belongs to our dads.”

Of course. I should have known. It appears their dads like to keep them in check. It mustn't be easy being the son of a senator.

I wrack my brains for something else to say, and Wade really is a tough nut to crack. He acted a little strange when I asked what he liked to paint. He was almost secretive.

A shame. I wouldn't mind taking a gander at one of his paintings someday. If he would allow me.

Something runs out onto the road. A shriek bursts from my lips when I realize it's a wild cottontail.

"Look out!"

Wade hits the brakes, and the car skids forward several inches. Unfortunately, the car lurches, and one of my boxes crashes into Elliot's lap.

"What the fuck?!"

Wade and I don't answer him. We just gaze out the windshield at Potato's wild equivalent. The rabbit has frozen on the road, and it looks as if one of us is going to have to get out and move it along.

Poor thing. It almost became roadkill.

"Um... Lark?"

I don't take my eyes off the frightened rabbit. All I can imagine is Potato being in the same position, and my heart breaks. He may be a pain in the ass, but I would be heartbroken if anything happened to him.

"Guys!" Elliot shouts.

Finally, Wade loses his patience. He couldn't tear his gaze off the rabbit either, and in fact, he almost looked as distraught as I feel.

Maybe he isn't a secret vampire after all.

“What?!” Wade turns to look at the beta. His breath hitches, and I finally tear my own gaze away from the rabbit.

“What’s wrong...?”

The blood drains from my face when I spy that large silicone dildo on Elliot’s lap. It’s a perfect imitation of an alpha’s cock, and it even has the knot.

I die of embarrassment next as I cover my face, wishing I could switch places with the rabbit on the road. The little creature has finally hopped away, and at least it had a happy ending.

Not a good start to my first day with Pack Steel.

Wade goes through the motions next as he drives the car on autopilot, and he’s too embarrassed to look at me.

However, there’s no denying the erection in his pants, and I should have just put those toys in the truck.

Poor Elliot picks up the dildo, slipping it back inside the box, and at least it’s been cleaned, I guess.

Nice going, Lark. You made a fool of yourself.

CHAPTER 8

Lark

Elliot and Wade didn't speak for the rest of the way to the house, and it had been the worst twenty minutes of my life.

I hope they don't tell the others what happened. Especially Gabriel.

He's the last person I want knowing that I enjoy my alone time with a silicone knot. Trust me, it's not the same as the *real* thing.

Honestly, the real thing isn't what it's cracked up to be either. I was sorely disappointed when I had my first knot, and my first had been with a Latin supermodel.

It was just the way I heard other omegas talking about knots at the compound, and then later at the agency, and I guess I just expected something more.

The earth didn't move. I stayed perfectly motionless, and the experience was hardly anything to write home about.

Wade parks the car, and I cast my eyes at the small country chateau outside.

How pretty. I will feel like a princess for sure in this fairytale castle.

I hope they have stables with horses...

It's not the biggest house I have seen. I have entertained billionaires around the country, so I have been in some pretty expensive homes. But this one is just the right size for a pack of five.

It has a limestone façade with perfectly trimmed hedges, and there's a duck pond by the front of the house.

It's hard to believe we're still in the states. Have I gone to the French countryside?

Wade sucks in a breath, regarding me from the corner of his eye. "Well, we hope you like your new home, Lark."

I inhale myself. "I will. It's beautiful. Thank you for bringing me here."

A moment of silence from the alpha. Then he turns back to check on the beta. Elliot has been as quiet as a mouse since the whole debacle with the dildo, and I wish I could see his face.

I don't think I am going to be able to look Wade or Elliot in the eye for a while.

I shouldn't be ashamed. It's more than just about seeking pleasure for me. It's my livelihood. That silicone knot ensured a roof over my head.

Happy client, happy...

Oh, you know how it goes now.

I think men just get a little weird around female arousal. As if it is something *taboo*.

Wade unbuckles his belt then steps out of the car. We lost Bryce along the way. I think he got caught up in some traffic, so we had no choice but to go on ahead without him.

I just hope he arrives soon. I can't wait to move my furniture in.

Finally, I brave a glance at Elliot. He's still quiet. Potato is getting restless on his lap. I can hear him scraping his claws against the bottom of the carrier, and we need to find him somewhere to run.

"Here, let me take him from you."

I lean across the gap between the front seats to take the carrier off him. Our fingers brush, and I flinch when our skin touches. Elliot finally looks my way, and I think I understand the emotions running through his eyes.

That was a pretty big knot on that dildo, after all.

He's a beta. He will never have a knot.

I hope he realizes that knots aren't everything. Sure, they help to ease the emptiness and the pain that an omega experiences during her heat. Yet I've had knots from some of the world's most eligible bachelors, and I still wasn't very impressed.

Something was missing...

Elliot's mouth curves into a smile, and my heart swells. Thank goodness. I thought I lost my cheerful beta there.

No. He's not *my* beta. He may be paying me to live with his pack, but I am not his mate.

The same with the rest.

So why does my heart ache?

The rabbit tries digging his way out of the plastic carrier again, and he's going to ruin that bunny pedicure I gave him last night.

I step out of the car, taking the rabbit with me as I balance his carrier on my hip. It's a beautiful, sunny day with just the right amount of breeze. So I stop a moment, breathing in.

It's so nice to get out of the city. I may have lived in the upper class district, but it still got noisy.

I love the countryside. I feel like a character in an old romance novel.

I'm Jayne Eyre.

The double oak doors of the chateau open, and my heart somersaults when Gabriel steps down the stairs. He's wearing a loose white shirt today with dark jeans, and I can't resist checking him out.

He's slender but compact. There's no missing the strong biceps as he rolls his sleeves up to his elbows, and it looks like my omega works out.

Unfortunately, my mood sours when Colt steps out behind him, and he's wearing his cool guy "I don't give a fuck" sunglasses again.

Rude alpha.

Wade and Elliot take my boxes inside the house as Gabriel and Colt welcome me to Chateau Steel. Elliot even takes my box of 'toys', and I'm glad we can move past that embarrassing episode.

Gabriel smiles, and I swear the sun shines brighter. "Welcome to the chateau, Lark. We hope you love it here."

Again, I take another look at the house. "It's beautiful."

His grin widens. "It sure is. You should see it at sunset. It's like the limestone brick is on fire!"

That does sound enchanting.

Colt comes up beside Gabriel, and I try meeting his eyes behind the sunglasses. I know they're gray. I saw them briefly back at the atrium. Also, I researched his picture online, and I also happened to stumble upon his history.

I needed to know what I'm getting myself into. He may be rude, but I don't want to be too harsh on Colt.

After all, he was kidnapped when he was just four years old, and then trained to be a killer by an awful man named Brady Shaw.

There really are some vile people in this world.

He wasn't found again until he was eight, and I can't imagine what horrors he must have endured during his four years at ALPHA.

Colt was kidnapped before I was born, so of course, I wasn't aware of his past.

So I try to be gracious, extending my hand. "It's... lovely to see you again, Colt."

Colt gazes down at my hand, unimpressed. Then he puts his hand inside his pocket, pulling out a flask.

I bite the inside of my cheek.

We had an agreement; I would be willing to be his pretend omega if he stopped being such a prick. Child assassin or not, it doesn't give him an excuse to be so insolent.

Gabriel glares at Colt and then leads me into the house. He's careful not to touch me the whole time since his mate will most likely get jealous, but screw Colt.

Well, screw them both, really...

They're both hot, but right now, I would have to say that Gabriel is my favorite. There was no denying our attraction when we first met, which I still can't wrap my head around.

He's an omega, yet we are drawn to each other.

That's not how it's supposed to be. We are supposed to repel each other, like when you're in science class at school, and you place the northern ends of two magnets together.

They simply cannot touch, no matter what you do.

I should be Gabriel's biggest threat right now. I am an omega moving into his home, yet he willingly shows me around. I could steal his alphas and beta, yet he leads me into the spacious foyer with winding stairs and pretty checkerboard floors, and I am in awe.

It's so clean in here, and to quote my fellow redhead, Annie: I think I am *definitely* going to like it here.

It screams of old money.

"This house belonged to my late great grandmother. So I hope you like it here, Lark."

I can't stop grinning. "I'm sure I will."

Potato hops inside his carrier, and I roll my eyes. It's time to get him out. It's okay; I have a little lead for him.

I place the carrier down onto the clean polished floor, peering up at Gabriel and Colt. "Do you mind if I get him out? He hasn't been for a walk yet, and he gets restless."

Gabriel startles. "Sure... I didn't know you had a pet."

Well, we only met yesterday, but I don't point that out. It would be rude of me. But I get his tone. It feels as if we have known each other forever.

It's strange.

Maybe we were lovers in a past life.

As I pull the rabbit out of his carrier, Colt scoffs. "That's one weird looking cat."

I roll my eyes. “That’s because he’s a rabbit, Colt. However, baby rabbits are referred to as kittens, too. So I understand your mistake.”

Gabriel snorts, but the alpha doesn’t seem impressed. In fact, he looks as if he would rather be somewhere else than giving me a tour, and that’s fine by me.

I clip the rabbit’s lead and collar around his neck, and he hops along the floor, taking in his new surroundings. He even gets up on his back legs and wiggles his nose, and how adorable.

He looks like a person.

Gabriel gushes. “God, I’ve never seen anything so adorable.”

I giggle. “I know, right?”

I meet his soft blue eyes, and the two of us share a moment. It seems he has an affinity for small, furry animals like me, and we really are going to get along.

Unfortunately, Colt has to spoil the mood. “I think I will pass on all the mushiness. You can show her the rest of the house, Gabe. I’m going for a nap.”

I glare at the back of his head as he leaves, and I guess he’s just going to continue being a prick then.

“Oh, and your *cat* left some little brown balls on the floor. Pick it up.”

I turn back, spying that round rabbit poop, and I guess the long journey here really took its toll on him. He's not used to being locked up for hours.

It's fine. I don't mind picking it up.

I lean down to pick up that round bunny poop with a napkin, but then Gabriel stops me. "It's okay, I got it, Lark. You just relax."

My heart skips, and I rise back to my feet, fixing the creases of my dress. "Okay."

Gabriel finishes cleaning away Potato's poop, then returns to my side once he's finished. "Well, ready for a tour? I think Wade and Elliot have dropped your stuff off in your room."

My heart pounds when he mentions my room. "Oh, can I see it now? Please? Then you can take me on a tour of the house after."

His smile reaches his eyes, and I spot a pair of cute dimples. Shit. I want to reach across and squeeze them.

How can one man be so adorable? And he thought Potato was cute.

Gabriel leads me up the winding stairs, and I observe the paintings along the wall. I wonder if Wade painted some of these, but he said he painted fantasy creatures.

These are of woodland and country scenes, and that's when I recognize the scenery...

It's the surrounding fields of the chateau.

Gabriel follows my line of sight. “Oh, my great grandmother painted those. Now, she was a *real* artist. Don’t tell Wade that I said that, though. He would kick my ass.”

I giggle. “Note taken. They’re breath taking. Her brush strokes were gorgeous.”

“They were. She had an eye for softness. She was an omega, like us... I mean, *y-you*...”

His cheeks flame as he realizes his mistake, but he needn’t bother around me. I get it. He just feels so comfortable in my presence.

I grab his hand on the guardrail, and Gabe peers at me. I smile. “It’s okay, Gabriel. You can tell me anything.”

Something shimmers inside his blue eyes, and I can tell he’s afraid to share his secret. It’s fine, though. I would never tell a soul.

I understand why he wishes to keep his designation secret. He’s a male omega. He’s rare. So the world will treat him like a circus freak.

Also, he will lose his freedom. I doubt he would have had it as rough as a female omega if he had ever been discovered, but his life still wouldn’t have been pleasant. Life isn’t kind to us omegas.

Gabriel sighs. “I guess you already figured it out. It would be hard to hide it from you, anyway. You’re an omega. You’ve been around them for the last few years...”

I bend my head. I don't want to point it out that I could scent his designation from the moment he stopped at my table, but it will only scare him.

He may ingest pills and use scent blockers, but his perfume had still been strong when he came to my table. Did it have to do with my attraction to him?

Who knows, but I squeeze his soft hand to let him know that I've got his back.

"It's okay, Gabe. I understand."

He takes several deep breaths. Then he meets my gaze, and my heart can't take it anymore.

One day, I have to kiss this man...

"So, you don't hate me?"

I blink. "Why would I hate you?"

He rolls his eyes. "Omegas tend to hate each other. They think they will steal their alphas or something. But you don't hate me?"

I shake my head. "Of course not. If anything, I should be asking you. I'm intruding on your pack, your *territory*. Yet you're showing me your great grandmother's paintings..."

His eyes twinkle as he takes in my words. Then he squeezes my hand, and the electricity that runs up my arm makes me appreciate being alive.

Where has he been my whole life?

"I could never hate you, Lark."

All the air leaves my lungs, and there's just something so passionate in his voice. He almost looks at me like an alpha would, and if I'm not mistaken... his gaze is possessive.

His eyes fall to my lips, and they tingle beneath his burning gaze. Now his blue eyes burn like liquid fire.

I think I'm going to fall down the stairs.

Luckily for me, Potato brings me back to my senses as he nibbles on his lead, and it looks like he's getting impatient. He will gnaw himself free if he has to.

Gabriel shakes his head then proceeds to my room, and excitement thrums through my veins.

I can't wait to see my new crib.

CHAPTER 9

Bryce

Elliot and I push Lark's furniture up the stairs like a pair of idiots, and we look like an old Laurel and Hardy skit.

But it's mostly just me doing all the work, though. The most the beta can do is shout, "Pivot!"

I lose my shot at the tenth pivot. "Will you stop saying fucking pivot!"

Elliot chuckles. "You know it's comedy gold, Bryce..."

I mutter under my breath as I drag Lark's fancy furniture up the winding stairs, and we need to install an elevator in this house.

Damn, that omega has a lot of stuff. I could feel the weight of it all in the truck as I drove on the highway.

How much does one tiny omega need?

It seems she has a lot of admirers out there, and the sweat drips down my face in shame as I wonder what I have to offer her.

I'm no pretty boy Ken doll, after all. I'm more of an Action Man; I even have the scar on my cheek. I've been through some scary shit during my missions, making sure Colt stays the fuck alive. I'm his second-in-command, so it was my job.

But from the moment he was discharged, I decided to take some annual leave. I have to ensure he doesn't go over the deep end again.

That Whitefang guy from Whitefang Industries keeps checking in on us, and I don't fail to hear the disappointment over the phone when I tell him that Colt still drinks.

I get it. He's known Colt longer than any of us, but does he have to be such a judgemental prick? I suppose he's just worried.

He was like Colt's big brother back at ALPHA, but I find the guy unnerving. I have fought some terrifying battles, but that blond, blue-eyed alpha disturbs me. He's too cold. Too serious.

But I'd prefer him over Colt's parents any day. I'd prefer him over *any* of our parents.

The only reason why we are dragging Lark's furniture up these fucking stairs is because of them.

We need an omega, so they back off and leave us alone.

Colt seems to want to be with Gabriel, and who are we to judge? Whatever makes him happy.

While Gabriel isn't my omega specifically, I still cater to him like any alpha would. He's the center of our pack, so it

can't be helped.

But now it looks as if we may have a new omega to protect.

I don't even know what I want out of life. I'm thirty now, but do I really want to settle yet? I'm pretty much a nomad; I've traveled all over the world.

The reason why I came back home was to help Colt.

He is not coping well lately.

But whenever I gaze into that omega's beautiful brown eyes, I think I understand why they write so many corny love songs.

Well, heartbreak songs. Most love songs are about pining.

Lark is from a whole different world from me. She comes from soirees and balls, while I've spent most of my adult life deployed on the field.

Would she even want a rugged alpha?

Does she want a Ken or an Action Man?

“What ya thinking about?”

I glare down at that smiling beta, and is he even pushing this goddam thing? He's leaning over the dresser as he bats his eyes at me.

I grind my teeth. Sweat drips into my eyes. “Will you shut up and just focus on the task?”

Elliot's shit-eating grin widens, and I will smash those pretty white teeth. “You were thinking about the omega, weren't you? Admit it. She's hot.”

I growl as I lift the dresser up another step, and I hope she's not looking.

Not that I care.

I just want her to see me as someone she can depend on.

That's always been my role in this pack. I look out for the others. Elliot is a dipshit, and Wade lives in his own head. Colt is Colt, and Gabriel is too hung up on taking care of him.

So it's up to me to be the foundation that holds us all together.

I'm like an army tank, helping us navigate this rough terrain called 'life.'

Elliot's face darkens, and if he makes another goddamn Friends reference, I will kick his ass! I'm more into old-fashioned comedy myself; I'd take the Three Stooges over Friends any day.

"You will never guess what Wade and I saw in one of her boxes earlier..."

I drag the dresser up another step, and he's just lucky that this enormous chunk of wood is between us. "Don't care."

I really don't, and neither should he. Lark is entitled to her privacy.

Elliot sniggers like a creep, and it's about time we got him neutered. For a beta, he really does have a high sex drive. He thinks about it every day.

He thinks about Colt's *mom* every day...

He chuckles again. “Take a guess.”

I growl. “Unless you want to keep both of your balls, Elliot, stop talking and help me carry this goddam thing up the stairs!”

The beta’s face whitens as he looks at me in shock. Then he tightens his lips, holding back a snort, and why did I have to open my trap?

He’s going to make some dirty joke now about me and his balls, and fuck this shit.

At least we only have a few more steps to go.

This was the last of Lark’s furniture and thank the moon and stars.

We get the dresser to the top step at last, and then the two of us drop back and rest. All we have to do is drag it to her room at the end of the hall, and then we’re done.

I wipe the sweat from forehead, resting my back against the wall. Elliot gasps for breath as if he actually pulled some weight, and I roll my eyes.

He never would have survived in the army.

“R-remind me not to drag furniture up a winding set of stairs again...”

I shake my head. “You barely lifted a finger.”

Elliot shrugs. “Yeah, well, we can’t all be as tough and strong as you, Bryce. Look at you. You’re built like a tank.”

He's not wrong there, yet still. I hope it's enough to impress our new guest.

My nostrils flare as I pick up on her chocolate strawberry scent, and then a purr rumbles in my chest.

Fuck. She smells so tantalizing. My mouth waters, and then my knot betrays me as it swells in my pants.

“Oh, you brought it up! Thank goodness. I couldn't live without my vanity.”

I look at that chunk of wood. That was a vanity? There must be a missing mirror somewhere.

Elliot leans over the vanity, offering the pretty omega a wink. “Anything for you, bunny bun.”

I groan, and then my toes curl as I cringe at his pet name. Does he realize how stupid he sounds?

Lark doesn't seem to mind his cheesy nickname for her. Instead, she offers us both a sweet smile, and the world stops spinning.

My heart skips a beat.

That is one beautiful smile...

Again, how is she real?

Lark turns around, giving us both a view of her firm, round ass, and both Elliot and I watch as she heads back to her room.

I wonder if her ass tastes as good as she smells...

I shake my head to get the thought out of my mind. That's when I catch Elliot grinning down at me.

I hike a brow. “What you smiling about?”

“Nothing,” he singsongs. “You just look so handsome when you’re in love, Bryce.”

In love? Now he’s tripping.

“What drugs have you been taking now?”

Elliot titters like an idiot again. “No drugs, I’m afraid, Bryce. I’m drunk on that omega... just admit you find her hot.”

I rise back to my feet, wiping down my camouflage pants. Even when I’m off duty, I still wear combat clothes. “Just shut up and help me with this fucking vanity.”

Elliot’s still sniggering when he bends to lift the vanity, and then we rise at the same time as we move down the hall. At least we’re on even ground this time.

Those stairs were a pain in the ass.

Terrible design.

Lark is nowhere in sight when we reach her room, and I guess we have to wait until she arrives.

She can tell us where to put her vanity.

She got one of the bigger rooms in the house with an excellent view of the gardens, and I’m sure she will enjoy her time here.

It bet it beats being in the city with the sounds of traffic outside her window.

A black and white rabbit hops toward me, and does it want food or something?

It has a bejeweled collar around its neck, and I didn't even know you could get collars for rabbits.

Elliot moves toward Lark's fourposter bed to peer into a box marked 'toys'. I go to tell him not to snoop, but when he lifts that silicone dick out, I stop.

You call that a knot? Please...

Elliot wiggles the fake dick, and what is wrong with him? He shouldn't be going in that box anyway—a box that really should have been kept somewhere more private.

Why did Lark leave it out?

“See? What did I tell you?”

He extends the dildo, wiggling it at my face, and I push his hand away. Then I sigh, exiting the room as I leave him to his devices.

I'd hate to be around when Lark comes back and finds him holding her fake dick.

“It's huge, right?” Elliot calls out.

It's my turn to be smug now as I look back. “No, not at all. Mine's *way* bigger...”

The beta's face darkens, and then he throws me a pointed look. I toss my head back and howl with laughter.

Anything to wipe the smug look off his face.

Maybe next time he won't feel so inclined to snoop around a woman's things.

That ought to show him.

CHAPTER 10

Lark

“Just by the window, please.”

I give the guys instructions as they push my furniture around the room, and the musky scent of male perspiration fills my nose.

That smell... I could dowse myself in a pool of that scent.

Focus now, Lark.

Bryce and Elliot place my vanity before the wide windows, and I'm going to enjoy gazing out of that every morning while I apply my makeup.

Will I even bother to wear makeup still? After all, I don't have to impress these men. My job is to pretend to be their omega, so their parents back off.

Things will definitely change. I'm so used to my morning routine of brushing my hair ten times so it gets that natural shine. Or flossing my teeth.

Will I even still brush my teeth?

Ew, scratch that. Of *course* I will still brush my teeth.

No one is a fan of *plaque* after all.

Still, when the sun reflects the sweat off Bryce's face, bringing out the sculpted muscles of his chest, I want to do more than just continue to brush my teeth.

My eyes find another cryptic box. That's where I keep my underwear...

His camisole shirt is soaked right through. Maybe he should take it off?

Bryce isn't the only one who has caught my eye. Even Elliot is looking fine today as he helps Bryce move my furniture.

Who am I kidding? I bet that guy looks good every day.

He looks like a cartoon prince with the dashing white smile and tousled black hair, and I bet he uses a bristled brush like me too.

Anything for that natural shine...

The beta wears a bright yellow shirt today, which he has left wide open, and I spy that happy trail disappearing into his pants.

The rest of his chest is bare. Not a single hair in sight, and it looks as if he likes to wax.

I'm not sure what he does for a living. I think he said he was a freelance photographer or something. I suppose a trust fund

baby wouldn't have to worry about a regular income, and whatever floats his boat.

That's why they all need me here. So they can all continue to receive their inheritance.

Elliot catches me looking at his happy trail. He sucks his abs in, wiggling his brows at me. I glance out the window, stroking Potato on my lap.

I know he snooped into my box earlier.

To be fair, I hoped he would. I kind of left it out on purpose.

A sigh whooshes from Bryce's lips. Then he wipes the sweat from his brows. I don't normally like sweaty guys, but I will make an exception for this one.

Elliot snorts. "Christ, Bryce. You're sweating like a pig."

Bryce's gray-green eyes fall on me, and I don't fail to spy the shame. But when I smile, he relaxes, puffing out his chest.

That's one giant wall of a chest. I want to place my head between his pecs and listen to his heartbeat.

The alpha is built like an ox.

It looks as if they're looking for further instructions from me. I bite my lip, and their eyes track the movement.

I think I spy Bryce's knot growing a little beneath his pants. Even Elliot is hard.

Slick drips down my thigh, and my eyes widen. Shit. I normally have better control than this. I am not myself around these guys.

That's when Wade enters the room, carrying a Monet painting. It's not a replica. It's the real deal. One of my billionaire companions bought me the painting when I accompanied him to an auction.

"Where do you want this Monet to go?"

I love how Wade knows the artist. Most men don't.

Elliot titters. "Monet? Is that the guy who ripped off his own ear?"

"No, that was van Gough," Wade and I say at the same time.

Wade gives me a half smile, though, and it makes my heart flutter. Again, tattooed, pierced men aren't usually my thing, but I would happily run my fingers over the tats of his chest.

I glance around my new room. Well, it's more of a small apartment. My bathroom is *huge*.

"Put it in the bathroom."

So long as I keep the painting away from any steam or moisture, it should be safe. Also, it has a protective sealant.

Wade nods, and then he disappears to hang up my painting. Now I can look at it while I shower.

When he finishes hanging up my painting, he stands by the others, and all three of them wait for further instruction.

They're like a pack of well-trained dogs, and I guess that's just the power an omega has over males. Even Elliot, as a beta, can't resist my charms.

I can't resist breathing them in. Their cedar, brine, and wild berry scents make an interesting cocktail of aromas indeed, and I want to sandwich myself between all three of them.

Maybe, one day...

"Do you need anything else?" Wade asks in that cool, silent tone, distracting me from my wicked thoughts.

The hair rises on the back of my neck. It's like he just whispered into my ear...

I suck in a breath, brushing my hand over Potato's smooth, black ears. They feel like silk. "No, I'm fine. Thank you, guys."

Each of them perks up at my praise, and now all three men stand a little taller. Bryce is the tallest at six foot six. Wade is a little shorter at six foot two.

That just leaves Elliot at six feet.

Gabriel, my perfect omega, is five feet ten, and just the right height for me. When wearing heels, I could still reach his lips...

I'm five foot. No, five foot *one* if my recent measurements are anything to go by.

"We have bad news, guys..."

My heart skips when I hear that soft, angelic voice, and then Gabriel steps into the room. Colt walks in behind him, and the grumpy alpha sucks all the joy from my new crib.

He's still wearing his sunglasses. I suppose he doesn't want anyone to see how bloodshot his eyes are.

We all look at the male omega. He balances on his feet, wondering how best to break the bad news to us.

Elliot loses his patience. "Come on, Gabe. Spit it out."

Gabriel fixes his sapphire blue eyes on the impatient beta. Then he swivels them toward me.

My stomach clenches. "What is it?"

I hold my rabbit closer. It's the reason why I got him. Small, furry animals help to placate my nerves. I had a rabbit plush as a child that I carried everywhere. My mom took it away from me when I was ten, telling me, "I was too old for toys..."

That plush's name was Potato.

Gabriel sighs, and the look of guilt that crosses his face next hurts my heart.

I hate that expression on him.

"Delilah just called. She wants to come around later and meet you, Lark."

We all fall silent. Elliot mutters, "Shit." Then he runs out of the room to get ready, and that just leaves the five of us.

Who was I kidding? Of course I still have to wear makeup and brush my hair. Because it's not these guys I have to impress. It's their parents.

Fuck.

I've barely unpacked, and already I'm playing housewife with Gabriel as we prepare roast duck for Delilah.

I'm just checking the roasted potatoes. I smothered them in goose fat, so they should be nice and crisp.

As a supermodel, is Delilah even allowed carbs? I know I'm not allowed. The agency gave me a specific list of things that I could and couldn't eat.

I suppose she's a retired supermodel now, but still. I don't want to offend her.

Gabriel said it was fine, and the meal was more for appearances. I guess I kind of forgot that I'm dealing with rich people.

They make food for the sake of it.

It's also to show off our culinary skills. Delilah knows Gabriel is an omega, and I don't fail to see him running around the kitchen as he checks on the gravy, adding herbs.

Is she aware of his relationship with Colt?

"Could you stir the gravy for me, Lark? Delilah likes her gravy thick and smooth."

I bet she does.

"Okay."

I rush to the pot to give it a stir, and I wonder why I even need to be here. Gabe is doing all the work himself. I offered

to help, but the most he let me do was baste the potatoes in goose fat.

I'm all dolled up, per usual. My lips are cherry red as I wear a house skirt and small heels, and I was looking forward to just wearing my bunny slippers tonight.

Maybe tomorrow.

Even my hair has been blow dried to perfection.

I'm not the only one who dressed up for Colt's mom. Before, Elliot couldn't decide on what color of shirt to wear as he asked for my help. I decided he should go for the light blue.

Blue will complement his brown eyes.

Even Bryce and Wade wore a nice shirt. The first even took off his military tags and combat boots. The latter unscrewed a piercing from his eyebrow and covered up his tattoos. He even tied up his long, black hair.

I've met Delilah before, so I know she's a nice person, but I do think they are trying a bit too hard to impress her.

Besides, it's me who has to impress her. She seemed to like me when I met her at George's birthday a few weeks back, but I wasn't living with her son back then.

Would she approve of me this time?

Well, only time will tell.

It's funny. While I have had all kinds of cooking classes paid for by the agency, I have never once had to cook for any of my clients.

Why would I? They have chefs. They can afford to eat anywhere in the world. Taco Tuesday? Well, they fly me to Mexico...

It's more of an expectation that we need to cook and clean. It makes us desirable.

Still, it's strange to be back in a kitchen. And with my perfect omega too, no doubt.

Does Gabriel even know how I feel about him? Would he even care? He is in love with Colt. I see the way he looks at him. But sometimes I think he looks at me the same way too.

He currently has his back to me, chopping fruit at impeccable speed, and it seems he's a natural in the kitchen.

Or maybe he's just working overtime. He needs to be careful. That knife looks pretty sharp.

"Fuck!"

I drop the spoon into the pot, rushing to his side. "Oh my, God, Gabriel. Are you okay?"

He clenches his teeth, hissing in pain as he holds his finger. Yet he still looks at me and smiles. "It's... fine. Just nicked my finger a little."

I grab his hand to check his finger. Thank goodness it was just a little nick. It could have been more serious.

"We need to get this cleaned up. Then you go and wait at the table with the others. I will finish cooking the food, Gabriel. It's okay."

He chews his bottom lip, and I can't look away. His teeth puncture the plump flesh, and he shouldn't torture such a beautiful set of lips.

They're naturally red, naturally heart-shaped, and Gabriel truly is beautiful in every way.

Now that I'm up close, I see that he has all the classic omega traits. Soft skin, round eyes, and a small nose. Yet he still manages to look so masculine.

He's the epitome of male beauty...

Gabriel's eyes track my own face, and they linger on my lips. His pupils bloom.

I don't know why he looks so impressed. He doesn't even need to wear makeup to make that mouth pop. His Cupid's bow is naturally pronounced.

Oops. I got so distracted by his beauty that I forgot to clean up his finger. We should be good for five minutes. The gravy was thick and smooth enough for Delilah, anyway, and the potatoes are still roasting.

"Come on, take a seat."

The omega does as I instruct, sitting on a bar stool as I tend to his finger. I found a first aid kit in the cupboard, and now I apply an Iron Man Band-Aid to his finger.

He rolls his eyes. "It's Elliot's. He loves Marvel. He thinks he *is* Iron Man..."

I laugh as I picture Elliot dressed up as Iron Man.

“Does he cosplay?”

“Every year. He makes me go to Comic Con with him.”

“I always wanted to go to a comic book convention. I don’t think they allow omegas to go.”

Gabriel sighs. “Yeah. I have to wear a lot of scent blockers at those events. I can’t have all those nerdy alphas drooling all over me now.”

I giggle. “No, you can’t. They’d eat you *alive*...”

He laughs along with me, and I swear I hear bells ringing. Even his laugh is perfect, and how is he real?

I catch a whiff of his peaches and cream next, and it looks as if he’s spiking. I’m aware he’s twenty-nine. So, eight years would have passed since his first heat.

I wonder if it was unbearable for him. Did he have everything he needed too?

I could never give him a knot, but I would still do everything I could to take his pain away.

Gabriel sighs. “Lark, can I ask you a personal question?”

My heart thrums. “Of course.”

He looks me squarely in the eyes, and I can tell he’s grappling with his own fears. A sigh slips from his lips. “What’s... what’s it like?”

Sweat drips down my spine as I adjust myself on the barstool. I know he isn’t asking about a knot. I’m sure Colt has given him his knot *plenty* of times.

I think I understand.

Gabriel has never had a heat. He has never experienced that excruciating pain that makes you feel *empty* inside.

Damn. The idea of him going through that pain is too much to bear...

I shrug, trying to be as blasé as I can about an omega's heat. While I don't want to scare him, I also don't want to sugarcoat it either.

"Well, it's not the best feeling in the world. But once it's gone, you feel *reborn*, I guess."

He furrows a brow. "Reborn?"

"Yes. To put it simply."

Gabriel twiddles his thumbs. Vegetables boil on the stove, filling the room with steam.

"Did you have someone there for you for your first? I hear that one is a real killer..."

He's not wrong. It *is* a killer. Also, I don't want to tell him about Enrique. That man knows his way around a woman's body for sure, but something still felt missing.

"Yes. I had several alphas, actually. Some were pretty high profile, too."

Gabriel gives me a mischievous smirk. "Well, care to share?"

I offer him a smirk of my own. Then I lean across to tap his nose, returning to the stove. I will tell him about Enrique

another time. For now, I will just give him the short version.

Yes, I *did* have alphas at my beck and call, and no; my first heat was not all that satisfying. Just enough to get me through the pain, but not enough to make me feel complete.

My next heat should be due at the end of this month, and that's going to be fun indeed.

I wonder who will help me through *that* pain?

CHAPTER 11

Elliot

F'uck, fuck, fuck, fuck!

My palms are sweating. I can feel my pulse on my tongue!

Delilah just makes me so nervous. I have tried to impress that woman ever since I was twelve, yet she always gives me the cold shoulder.

One of these days, I am going to make her like me.

It's funny. I used to picture her face when I jerked off at night, but lately I have been picturing Lark. I envision her dropping to her knees, opening that pretty red mouth so she can eat my cock, and then I come all over my sheets.

I know we purchased her just so we could get our parents off our backs. We promised we would not take advantage of her, but I can't help but envision her pretty face at night.

From her deep, red hair, to her soft fair skin, and don't get me started on her body. Curves in all the right places, and that booty should have its own zip code.

It should be illegal to be as hot as Lark. I forgot how much I always loved redheads. Even back as a kid.

She's my own Jessica Rabbit.

Well, I'll be the Roger Rabbit to her Jessica Rabbit. It's just a shame she already has a bunny, and I never thought I would be jealous of a rabbit.

The doorbell rings, and I take a deep breath. Delilah's perfume hits me like a wave when she steps inside, and it catches me off guard. I normally used to love the scent of her Chanel, but I would take Lark's sweet chocolate strawberry any day.

Delilah doesn't look my way as she throws her mink coat into my arms, then disappears into the dining room.

She never liked me. I was always a bad influence on her son, and as a result, her relationship has become strained with my own mother.

The two women can't stand one another, yet they pretend to like each other when they meet at soirees.

Grown-ups.

I guess I'm supposed to be a grown-up now, too.

I am. I have my own photography business. But my parents still don't approve. I've photographed top models all over the world, yet they still wanted me to go to college.

My dad wants me to be a senator like him one day.

No, thank you. I don't want to become some old, stuffy bald bastard who sits in an office all day. I don't want to be my dad.

I would rather photograph beautiful ladies...

I want to photograph Lark. *Naked*.

I guess I should hang up Delilah's coat then. Or maybe it should hang itself up. It was alive once. An American mink.

No, that would only spell disaster for us all. We have to impress this woman. That way, we will impress *all* of our parents.

It's like a domino effect. The rest will fall into place.

CHAPTER 12

Lark

We all rise the moment Delilah enters the room, and once again, I am spellbound by her beauty.

Now I don't feel so pretty anymore.

This sucks.

It's bad enough that I have to seek her approval. Now I have to feel inadequate too.

She's fifty-five years old, yet looks better than most of the twenty-year-olds I have met.

She looks better than me...

I do not have a supermodel's figure. I'm too small and curvy. My booty is like a planet in its own right.

Colt slips off his sunglasses for his mother's sake, and she has nothing but a wide smile for him. She kisses his cheek, then looks across at me.

Gabriel stands by my side, placing a reassuring hand over my shoulder. I'm so glad he is here right now. Delilah smiles

at me sweetly, but there's no denying her suspicion. After all, she knows what I am.

An omega for hire.

Convincing her that I genuinely love her son is going to be hard work indeed. I don't love him at all. In fact, he's my least favorite person in the pack.

To put it lightly, he's an asshole.

"Lark... it's lovely to see you again..."

The room stills. I bite my lip. Maybe I should have mentioned that we have met before...

I extend my hand. "It's nice to see you again, too, Delilah."

She waves off my hand, then moves in for a hug. "Call me *mom* instead."

Colt gazes at his mom in disbelief. Our eyes meet briefly, and I don't fail to spy the threat in his eyes.

He is telling me to lie. Also, he is telling me that if I screw this up, then I am back on the street.

Asshole.

Fine, if we wants me to charm his mom, then I will.

I'm a seasoned *pro* after all.

Unfortunately, to keep up the ruse, I have to sit by his side at the table. I am his *omega*, after all. If he wants to pull this off, then we need to look as if we actually like each other.

This is going to be hard.

We all take our seats. I pass on the duck and the potatoes since I'm vegan. Instead, I eat my tofu. Sweet Gabriel cooked me my own separate meal, and I am grateful to him.

I hate that I have to take his place at the table. He should be sitting by Colt, not me. I'm really not trying to take his man.

I may look like a typical Jolene, but I don't play that kind of game.

“So how are you enjoying life at the Chateau, Lark?”

I startle, meeting Delilah's gray eyes.

She just asked me a question.

I peer at Colt. He deadpans me, but there's no missing the tic in his jaw.

“It's wonderful. This is my first night here, but so far, so good. I *love* my room.”

Delilah raises a perfectly plugged eyebrow. “You just moved in today? Interesting. Just a few days ago, I was here berating my son about how he needed to find an omega. Yet here you are... It almost seems too good to be true...”

Everyone stiffens. I seek Gabriel's eyes for reassurance. His face blushes hot pink as I try to think of something to say. Colt seethes beside me, and I can hear those pearly whites grinding as he clenches his jaw.

“Well, s-sometimes fate works in mysterious—”

“It's all right, darling. You don't have to lie to me. I know they hired you. George is an old friend. It would be hard to

miss you on his arm.”

It’s as if someone sucks all the air from the room, replacing it with something stale. A dark cloud gathers over Colt, and I can almost sense the thunderstorm brewing on the horizon.

Elliot breaks the tension next when he looks at me. “Wait... who’s George?”

I palm my face, wishing I could disappear under the table. This is embarrassing.

None of us eat. Even Bryce chews slowly as he works his teeth around his roast duck. Wade has blown his cheeks out. Elliot, meanwhile, is still trying to figure out who George is.

Gabriel hangs his head, gazing up at me apologetically. He barely even glances at Colt. It’s Colt who needs him the most.

His mom just caught him out.

I guess I’m just lucky that Delilah is so gracious. She does not look down on me for my profession. She is angry at her son for trying to lie to her.

I’m a prostitute her son hired pretty much. A high-class prostitute, but even so; Colt should be ashamed of himself.

She finds her son’s eyes. “I don’t live in a cage, sweetheart. Even if sweet Lark and I hadn’t crossed paths before, I think I would be able to tell who she was. This is no ordinary omega. This one is special. All the most eligible bachelors want her...”

Again, she looks at me and winks, and she really is kind. She uses her words carefully so as not to offend me.

Colt grinds his teeth again, and he ought to be careful. Bruxism is no walk in the park.

He swivels in his seat to glare at me. “You could have at least told us you already met her.”

I don’t answer. I just lean across and grab my wine glass. I guess it slipped my mind. At the end of the day, they offered me a proposition, and I took it.

All the zeros I could dream of and more.

Does he have any idea how many omegas would dream of figures like that? Most of them don’t even dream of numbers at all because money is so out of reach for them.

He should have picked a less famous omega, yet here we are.

Besides, it’s not as if Delilah wouldn’t have figured things out. She’s a smart woman.

She cuts up her duck, placing it between her lips, and I’m just amazed to see a supermodel eating.

“Don’t worry. I won’t tell your father, Colt. But I will warn you. He will figure it out one day. You can’t fool him forever.”

No one speaks. We just continue to eat in silence.

Finally, Delilah stands, wiping her lips with a napkin. She doesn’t even smudge her lipstick. “Well, I guess I should be leaving. Elliot, my coat.”

Elliot scrambles to his feet, and he's like a well-trained collie. "Right away, ma'am."

Colt doesn't even bother to see his mom out the door. He just scowls at the candles flickering in the middle of the table.

I guess I failed to convince his mom then, after all.

Well, there's always his father. Now that is a meeting I'm dreading the most.

"Goodbye, sweetheart, and the duck was simply *marvelous*, Gabriel. You have outdone yourself yet again. I will let your mother know..."

Gabriel jumps, stumbling for words. "T-thank you, ma'am."

Well, it seems the jig is up. At least where Delilah is concerned.

She only came here to warn Colt.

When she finally leaves, Colt storms out of the room.

Gabriel runs after him. "Colt, wait up! Let's talk."

Then it's just me, Wade and Bryce. The latter doesn't peer at me. Wade, however, offers me a smirk. "I bet you regret signing up for this..."

No, I don't. I'm glad to be here. Something just feels right. It's more than my attraction to Gabriel. I feel it with them all. Even Colt. As much as I hate him.

This is where I am meant to be. After all, I didn't fail to see the pleading look in Delilah's eyes when we were at the table.

"Please take care of my son," she'd asked me.

It appears she did approve of me.

With a wide smile, I rise to my feet, collecting my dish. “So, who wants to help me do the dishes?”

I won’t ask Gabriel. He cooked the meal, and he needs to cheer up Colt. I may not be the omega Colt needs right now, but one day, maybe I can be.

I will keep my promise to Delilah. For some reason, she likes me, and she thinks I would be a good match for her son.

Bryce and Wade meet each other’s eyes. Then they shrug, helping me clear the table.

We’re all getting along already.

CHAPTER 13

Gabriel

I rush up the stairs after Colt, and the guy is fast.

Has he been working out again? His ass does look toned lately.

“Colt, let’s discuss this!”

His bedroom door slams up the hall, and I pick up the pace.

It may be best to leave him to his own devices for a while, but I just want to offer him a reassuring hug. It’s my omega instincts; I want to be there for my alpha and make him feel better.

Also, I can sense his anger through our bond. His emotions echo in my chest, and I grab my bite mark that links us both.

He has nothing to worry about. His mother may have caught him out, but I genuinely believe that she liked Lark. Who wouldn’t? You’d have to be heartless to despise that beautiful omega.

I just hope the woman approves of me one day.

I hope I can make Lark mine one day too. I would want nothing more than to be bonded to her forever...

Shaking the thought away, I race to his door, rapping my knuckles against the wood.

“Colt, open up. You know brooding isn’t good for you. It gives you *wrinkles*.”

The door opens at that remark, and now Colt stands there looking at me affronted. “What?”

I sigh. “That’s right. I didn’t know how to tell you this, but you’re getting wrinkles on your forehead. I told you all that frowning isn’t good for you.”

The alpha reaches up to pat his head, only to find that it’s smooth and wrinkle free.

I snort, and he rolls his eyes. “Shut up, idiot.”

I poke him in the shoulder, trying to make him feel better. “Well, you are thirty now, Colt. So that makes you *old*.”

The alpha growls, yanking me inside the room. Then he shuts the door and throws me against the wall, and my heart thumps like a rabbit in my chest.

His rich leather scent surrounds me, and I just want to rub myself all over him.

He’s smells so fucking good.

I love it when he’s rough with me. It makes me feel alive.

“I warned you not to tease me about my age...”

I hold my hands up. “Oh, sorry, Mr. Sensitive.”

“Besides,” he growls, leaning closer until our noses brush. “You’ll be thirty in a few months’ time, too.”

He’s right. And then we will *both* be old. So long as we’re old together, though, then I don’t care. I want to grow old with Colt. We’ll be that elderly married couple in the nursing home.

However, he’s not the only one I would like to grow old with. There’s a certain redhead who I would love to spend my life with too.

Lark.

She’s the reason why I came up here, after all. I’m going to tell him to lay off her and not be so harsh. Well, I suppose she could have given us a heads up about Delilah, but why are we surprised?

Lark is the face of her agency, or *was*. There were plenty of lesser known omegas we could have chosen from, yet we decided to go with the most well-known.

Lark is the hottest omega in town right now, but that’s not why I was drawn to her...

I can’t explain it, but whenever I catch wind of her strawberry chocolate scent, I worry less about the future. She grounds me, reminding me to live in the now. I was almost tempted to kiss her back in the kitchen. She looked so perfect in her skirt, and the way she had curled her red hair.

And those cherry-red lips. So heavenly...

I know Colt feels the same way about her, too. That’s why he wears his sunglasses around her; he doesn’t want to let it

slip that he's attracted to her.

I really am not jealous. If I had to share my alpha with another omega, then it would be her. In fact, Colt may have a bit of competition.

Right now, I can't decide who's hotter. Him or Lark. Colt is a stallion, for sure. He has a strong bone structure, and a full set of lips that could put Marilyn Monroe to shame, but he can be a real douchebag. A sexy douchebag, but still...

Then there's Lark, who looks as if she stepped out from the pages of a book. A real timeless beauty. She definitely takes care of her skin, and right now I can't help but wonder what she would feel like sweating and panting between me and Colt.

Colt would take her from the back while I take her front, and that's when my dick decides to betray me.

Colt purrs when he spies my erection, and I shudder, closing my eyes. He steams up my glasses, and now he's just a blurry silhouette.

“What's my sexy little carrot top thinking about?”

That's what he calls me in the bedroom. He called me carrot top when we first met. We were kids in boarding school, but even then I knew I had fallen for him.

That was back before I even knew I was an omega.

However, Colt wasn't the only alpha I caught the eye of. I went to an all-*boys* boarding school, and teenage boys can get pretty frisky...

I shiver, trying to push the memory out of mind.

No. I won't be haunted by that day. I have had all kinds of counseling since.

I am not fourteen years old anymore.

I peer into Colt's handsome gray eyes, and there I spy my whole future. One day, I will get both of his parents to like me. Then they will finally see that I am perfect for their son.

They will see that Lark and I are perfect for him.

"Just shut up and fuck me, Colt," I state, and the alpha hikes his brows.

He shrugs. "If that's what you want..."

Without warning, he wraps me up in his arms, running his strong fingers through my hair. He yanks, and I gasp, biting his lower lip. A purr rumbles in his chest, and my omega instincts take over.

I may never have experienced a heat, but I still get pretty horny from time to time.

I push Colt back onto the bed. He likes it when I take control. I often play the role of the dom in the bedroom. I think it stems from his dark past, but he loves to be tortured.

I think it helps him to forget. Or it's what he thinks he deserves. Being tortured and humiliated.

After all, the alpha had a kill count in the hundreds before he was eight, and I can't even imagine what he must have gone through.

He's an asshole, but he has a reason to be.

He was kidnapped at four. And a season killer before he was ten years of age. It's no wonder he rose so high in the ranks when he joined the army.

The alpha held no qualms when it came to holding a gun. He held no qualms when it came to killing threats overseas.

He's almost built like a machine.

But now and then, I spy the terrified little boy. The child has his hands over his eyes as he weeps and cries for his mom, and that's why it is my duty to help him.

If he wants me to tie him up, so be it.

I grab some rope and tie him to the bedrail. Then I grab a blindfold and cover his eyes, and the alpha's purr vibrates through the mattress.

My dick leaks at the sound, and I reach down to lubricate myself. It's my slick, so to speak. It comes when I'm especially aroused, and right now I'm going to suck on Colt's dick until he's roaring my name.

His own dick has hardened. After all, I can take him, knot and all.

One of the perks of being an omega.

I untie his pants, then run my tongue up and down his shaft. His taste explodes inside my mouth, and then my perfume spikes. Now the scent of peaches and cream fills the room.

"F-fuck, Gabriel..."

Now I wrap my whole mouth around him, taking him all the way to the back of my throat. I grab his knot and squeeze, and he comes into my mouth in seconds.

He loves it when I caress his knot. His arms tug on the rope as he gasps for air. All the while, I continue to slide my mouth up and down, and he releases string after string of hot cum into my mouth. I swallow every last drop.

Now it's time for him to give me what I want.

I go to untie the ropes. "Ready, Colt? Once I unleash these restraints, there will be nothing holding you back."

His chest heaves as he's dying to get out of those ropes. The moment he is free, he will pounce on me and fuck me until I'm raw.

"Just set me free..." he growls.

Well, if it's what he wants.

"So long as you ravage me, Colt, then I will give you whatever you want..."

Colt is still heaving. Sweat soaks his face, as he doesn't even fight the urge to rut me.

The ropes come loose, and he's on top of me in seconds. He grabs my ass, and it's a good thing I'm already so wet with slick.

He slips right in, burying himself to the hilt.

Colt finds that empty spot inside me. The one that is made for his knot. Then he thrusts, rolling his hips, and the heavenly

sound of skin slapping skin echoes through the room as he rides me to my peak.

Just before we jump off that mountain, Colt fists my hair, angling me slightly so that he can look into my eyes.

He likes to gaze into my eyes when he makes me come.

With one last thrust, Colt releases, and his leather-scented cum fills me, merging with my peaches and cream. Then his knot swells, filling out that empty space that lives inside of me.

It's always there. More of a dull ache these days, but when I first awakened, it was absolutely unbearable. I couldn't eat or sleep.

All I wanted was an alpha's knot, and I was forever rubbing my backside against things just to seek that friction.

But with Colt in my life now, I will always feel whole. Always feel complete.

I just hope we can invite a certain redheaded omega over one night. Now that would really spice things up.

I'm hanging on the edge of my precipice, waiting for him to give the order.

I only release when he tells me to.

After all, he is my alpha.

He leans close to my ear, wetting the shell with his hot breath. His hand wraps around my dick, stroking it tenderly. "Release, Gabriel..."

With a final cry, I throw my head back, and the lights shatter me. Colt massages my cock, running my slick up and down the shaft, and then he sinks his teeth into his bite mark on my neck.

I feel that invisible thread burning between us, and then I squeeze my eyes, releasing again and again.

He marked me a while ago, and it had been the most magical experience of my life.

Now our souls are intertwined forever. Nothing could ever break our bond. Not even his parents.

I just can't stop thinking about what Lark would look like with my bite mark on her neck.

CHAPTER 14

Lark

Well, my first night at the chateau will certainly be memorable.

Colt and Gabriel went at it like rabbits for hours, and I had to reach for one of my toys.

The disappointed look on Potato's face said it all, but it wasn't as if I had a choice. I don't have a doting alpha at my beck and call anymore.

I won't have for a while now.

My next heat is going to be intense, and maybe the guys can help me prepare. I'm sure they will be more than willing. I already have everything I need.

Blankets, pillows, scented candles.

I just hope it's not too much to ask the guys to leave their house for four days, but I'm sure Elliot and Gabriel can help out there.

The alphas can't go anywhere near me. The last thing we want to do is break the terms of our agreement.

No sex.

I have been told that my perfume is highly addictive to alphas, and in the end, the agency used a small sample of my sweat and sold it on the market.

I gave consent, of course. There were forms and everything. Yet I only received three percent of the profits.

In the end, I didn't have a choice. It was one of the terms and conditions of the agency, pretty much. They could exploit me in any way they saw fit. So long as it was in the interest of the agency.

I hear my perfume has improved the sex lives of couples all over...

It still couldn't hold a candle to my real scent, though.

The gray light of dawn filters through the curtains, and the chances of me getting any shut-eye now are slim to none.

So I discard my silicone cock with its silicone knot and head for the shower. Maybe that will help.

I turn the dial and stand beneath the soothing jets. Then I circle my clit with my index finger, imagining myself in that room with Colt and Gabriel, wrapped up in their Italian leather and peaches and cream scents, respectively.

They have been quiet for a few hours, and they must have finally fallen asleep.

Lucky bastards.

Meanwhile, I'm still seeking my pleasure, and a cool shower always does the trick. I pinch on the swollen nub between my legs, and lights tease the corners of my eyes.

It's not enough.

That's when I imagine Bryce stepping into the shower behind me, pushing me up against his solid chest. His hardened pecs rub at the smooth skin of my back, hot water trickling down his well-defined abs as it moistens his skin.

The sparks flash brighter.

Then Wade comes in and takes me from the front, rubbing his knot against my stomach. Elliot lies beneath my legs, his mouth reaching for my heat as he sucks my clit, and the lights explode.

My legs tremble as I lean against the tiles, hooking my finger all the way inside. It gets even better when Colt and Gabriel join the mix, and for once, the miserable bastard doesn't wear a scowl on his face.

Instead, his gray eyes scold me as he looks at me with wanton desire, and one day... I am going to crack that alpha. I'll make him love me in no time.

That's my job, after all. To woo alphas.

I won't rest until that alpha has been thoroughly wooed.

I shuffle down to breakfast late morning in my silken nightgown.

Even though I said I wasn't going to make the effort, I still powdered my nose. I still curled my eyelashes.

When you live in a house with five hunks, you're not going to ditch the eyelash curler either. I'm not even sure if men notice the difference, but if I want my fantasy in the shower to become reality, well, I have to make the effort.

At least I actually like these guys, sans Colt. So it's not too much of a pain.

I have wooed men old enough to be my great, great grandfather. So cut an omega some slick when she finally meets some guys closer to her *own* age.

Did I say slick? I meant slack.

Gabriel is chipper when I arrive at the breakfast table. Everyone is present, and it appears they'd all been waiting for me.

They needn't bother. It's eleven thirty. They could have had breakfast without me. Judging by the hangry look on Colt's face, he isn't pleased by my late arrival.

"You're late," he remarks.

I raise a brow, approaching the coffee pot. "Sorry. Must have forgotten to set my alarm clock."

I don't see the big deal. I tend to sleep most of the morning away. It was one of the privileges an omega of my standing

had.

Besides, I'm mostly out late at night, anyway, so my circadian rhythm is totally whacked. No wonder I couldn't sleep until dawn. That's just what my body is used to.

Also, it didn't help with the sex noises coming from a certain *bedroom*.

They were loud, but through it all, it was easy to determine whose sex moans belonged to whom. Colt's voice is deeper and more gravelly than Gabe's, while Gabe sighs like an angel...

Gabriel scowls at his lover, then greets me when I reach the table. It looks like Elliot saved a spot for me as he pats the breakfast mat with his hand.

"Lark, we're so glad you could finally join us," Gabe rushes to say. "I hope you're not mad, but I didn't want to wake you."

"It's fine," I reply, taking a sip of my coffee.

That's when I realize all five of them are staring at me.

"What?"

Do I have something on my face?

Bryce is the first to break the silence. "How the fuck do you manage to look so incredible in the morning?"

"Yeah," Elliot agrees. "I bet you don't even get morning breath."

I don't. Not to *brag* or anything...

I snort, pointing at my eyes. “Please, look at these bags. I look *terrible*.”

There are no bags under my eyes; I placed some cold spoons on those bad boys before they even had a chance to show. An omega never shares her secrets, after all. Especially to an alpha.

An omega’s morning routine is sacred.

“You’ll have to teach me your secrets,” Elliot continues. “What night cream do you use?”

Wade gripes. “Leave her alone, Elliot. She just woke up.”

Again, I shrug, sipping my drink. They don’t even bother to eat their breakfast, which has probably gone cold. They all have pancakes.

I can’t have pancakes. The agency never allowed it. The best I could have at this table is granola. Maybe a bite of an apple too. I have to maintain this perfect *butt*, after all.

The guys all dig in. Bryce and Wade proceed to fill my plate and bless them. They just can’t help it. They’re alphas, and they want to feed me.

It’s just a shame I have to pass on the pancakes.

They look amazing.

“I hope you like them, Lark. I made them especially for you,” Gabriel announces. “They’re vegan. I knew you would appreciate that.”

My heart swells to the size of Jupiter. I can't believe he thought about me again.

Well, so long as they're vegan, I guess I can have *one* bite. Besides, how can I disappoint Gabriel? He would be upset if I didn't try his pancakes.

Carefully, I cut up a piece with my fork, and a groan slips out of me when I place it on my tongue. "Oh, God..."

Every guy freezes. Even Gabriel and Elliot, and they're not even alphas.

That's when the three alphas growl, and they all sound so possessive. Bryce's muscles flex, and I bet he gets up early every day to do press-ups.

I would like to watch him do some press-ups some time.

Gabriel glances around the table, rolling his eyes. "Guys!"

Each alpha stops at the sound of his voice, and I bet this omega has them wrapped around his little finger.

They crash back to earth. Bryce palms his face, running his fingers over his temples. Wade returns to drawing on a napkin. I don't see what he's doodling, but his face is sweating.

Colt scowls, then gets up and leaves. Gabriel throws his back a disappointing look. Then his eyes find me. "Sorry about that, Lark."

I sigh. "It's okay. I wish I could tell you I wasn't used to it."

Gabriel offers me a sympathetic smile.

Elliot chuckles, returning to his porridge. He's the only male at the table who doesn't eat pancakes. Is he watching his waistline too?

"Alphas, hey? Can't live with them, can't live without them."

Bryce scoffs, moving his hand away from his face. He looks awful. Well, awful for him. I think he's still recovering from my delicious pancake moans.

Gabriel's vegan pancakes just tasted so good. I couldn't help myself.

"Please, you can hardly keep it in your pants half the time," Bryce remarks.

Wade snorts. "Yeah. Tell us *again* what you do for a living, Elliot?"

All eyes fall on Elliot. He shrugs, returning to his porridge. "What can I say? I'm a photographer. I have a certain eye for beauty. It comes with the territory."

Wade smirks, and his ice-blue eyes give off a flash. "Yeah, *naked* beauty..."

Something strange comes over me next, and I think I even growl a little.

What the heck?

The idea of Elliot photographing all those naked women just doesn't sit right with me.

He's *mine*.

Only Gabriel seems to notice the growl, and then he reaches across, passing me some maple syrup to distract me.

Maple syrup. How could I forget that?!

It's nice to have another omega around, I suppose. He will understand my weird quirks.

The guys bicker back and forth. It's all banter, but it appears Bryce and Wade often gang up on Elliot.

"All those beautiful *naked* women," Wade says. "Yet you still couldn't get Colt's mom. She turned you down ten *times*..."

Bryce guffaws. Elliot grinds his teeth, peering up at me. "He means in the studio. No matter how much I tried, Delilah just never wanted me to take her picture."

"Gee, I wonder why," Wade jokes yet again.

Bryce whacks his hand on the table, making it shake. "You fucking brute!"

Elliot finally snaps at Wade. "Ah, return to your napkin porn!"

Napkin porn? What the heck *is* Wade drawing over there?

Wade scowls at the beta. "It's not porn, idiot. It's art."

They continue arguing, and I see the life slowly slipping away from Gabriel's eyes. I bet it's like this every morning.

They sound like school boys.

"Enough!" I demand.

All three of them stop, returning to their breakfast. Elliot bats his eyes at me. “Sorry, Miss Lark. We promise to be good boys from now on.”

A quiet passes over the table. That’s when Elliot has a lightbulb moment. “Hey, maybe I can photograph you, Lark?”

Wade glances up from his napkin. “That’s probably the last thing she wants.”

Elliot sighs. “I wasn’t talking to you. You have your art, and I have my photography. And Bryce has his...”

Bryce stops eating, looking up at the beta. “What do I have?”

Elliot shrugs. “Your weights?”

Bryce thinks for a moment. Then he nods his head in approval, returning to his breakfast. “Someone needs to be the muscle around here.”

Wade glances up at that comment. “Oh, yeah? I think we’ve got some jars that need opening. Care to be a dear and open some for us, Brycie?”

Bryce swallows his pancakes. “I will shove that napkin porn down your throat.”

A tense pause merges between the two alphas. My heart pounds.

I don’t like where this is leading...

But then they smile at each other, returning to their tasks, and my shoulders sag. I guess this pack really is close. They

joke about each other, yet they're still the best of friends.

I envy that kind of relationship.

Women aren't quite like men. They have to walk on eggshells when they're around each other.

Elliot rises. "Meet me in my studio in ten minutes. It's just on the second floor. Come as you are. You don't have to change."

His dark eyes rake me up and down approvingly, and my nipples harden beneath my silk bathrobe. I gasp, covering them up, and a devilish smirk crosses Elliot's face.

I know he saw. Bryce and Wade freeze as they sense my arousal, and even Gabriel stops eating.

That's because I just *perfumed*, and the breakfast table now smells of chocolate drizzled strawberry. Fuck. Pardon my language. But it can only mean one thing...

My heat is coming a little earlier than I thought.

Stupid omega body. You really know when to pick the best of times.

CHAPTER 15

Lark

I find Elliot's studio upon Gabriel's instructions, and there's music playing and candles burning when I arrive.

Oh, lord. Maybe Wade was right. Maybe I do need to be careful around the beta.

Still, I wouldn't mind baring it all for him one day too. Does he often photograph nudes? I always wanted to photograph nude.

The agency always treated my body as something sacred. I am more than a common whore, after all. I have to save all my best parts for the most prestigious of clients (a.k.a. the richest).

That way, they are prepared to pay the agency a fortune just to take a gander at my creamy skin.

I take great pride in my skin, and I consider it one of my best assets. I don't have a scar or a mole to be found. I'm smooth and alabaster all over.

The only thing I have are emotional scars. I was always careful not to anger the guards back at the compound. I

couldn't have them ruining what could one day be my main source of income.

This body of mine is valuable. I even knew that at eighteen.

Elliot is just setting up his camera, and I gaze around the studio. It's nice in here. There are photographs on the walls that I guess he must have taken, and a white backdrop where he does his photoshoots.

There is also a plush velvet couch, and complementary wine and chocolate.

“Well, here I am.”

The beta has nothing but a wide smile when I arrive, handing me a glass of wine.

It's a little early for wine, but I'm not one to look a gift horse in the mouth.

I swallow back the drink and smile. “So, where do we start? I haven't been to a photoshoot before...”

Elliot glances up from his camera. “You what?!”

I shrug. “I've had headshots done, but that was about it. I have never been to a photoshoot like this.”

The beta looks at me in disbelief. “That's insane. People should be taking pictures of you all over the world. Not to sound creepy or anything...”

I bring my glass to my lips again, hiding a grin. He can be a little overly flirtatious at times, but that's what I like about him. Hence why I left the toys out yesterday.

I wanted to see if he took the bait. He's ridiculously attractive, and I can't help but want him.

My perfume spikes again. Elliot stops to sniff, but he doesn't comment on it. Instead, he continues setting things up.

“So, Lark... about what Bryce and Wade said earlier...”

I think back to the awkward conversation at breakfast. I thought it was a little unfair the way they ganged up on him. Elliot just has a strong preference for photographing women naked. Besides, it's not as if he is too gratuitous about it. The girls on his wall look like works of art, despite the fact they have no clothes on.

I hold up a hand. “Elliot, it's fine. You're a photographer. It's what you do...”

He sighs in relief, then returns to his camera. “I don't expect you to take your clothes off. You can stay as fully clothed as you like.”

Well, where's the fun in that?

I always play by the rules, and it gets so boring. Other people have told me what to do ever since I awakened. It's been five years since I could make my own decisions. Five long years.

It's time I started to live a little.

I down my wine like it's lemonade on a hot summer's day, and then the room spins.

That was probably a little too fast. The agency always told me how much I could drink and how many units I could have in one given night, so I have never been what they call “wasted.”

Not even as a teenager, and I was still free to live my life how I wanted back then. I was the textbook good girl in school. And then I became the textbook omega.

Elliot is just finishing up with the lighting when he returns, and that’s when I decide to disrobe.

Bare it all...

“Well, it seems we’re all set up. The camera’s waiting, L-Lark...”

The beta cuts off mid-sentence when he gets his fill of me. I was naked beneath the robe, after all. Not a single ounce of clothing remains on my skin, and it seems I have rendered him speechless.

His face freezes, and then his eyes rove up and down my body. His erection grows in his pants. “Fuck.... you’re naked...”

I pop my chest out, and my tits bounce freely. “Yeah? You never seen a naked woman before, Elliot?”

He shakes his head, and beads of sweat form along his lip. “No... I... just never seen a naked *you* before...”

I hike a brow, then step toward the white backdrop. I lay across a velvet covered stool. It’s white to match the background.

I face the camera, tossing my hair aside. “Well, you going to take my picture or not? Some photographer you are.”

Elliot crash lands back to earth, and he really does suit that name. He looks at me like I’m an extraterrestrial, and it makes me feel so special.

He mumbles next, readying the camera, and then takes several shots.

I do various poses. I pop out my breasts in one, and then I stick out my butt in another.

The beta is drenched in sweat by the time he’s finished, and maybe the lightning just got too much for him.

Or maybe it’s the omega who just bared it all in front of him.

I feel so liberated. It’s like I can be myself around these guys. Sure, this body of mine is sacred. But it’s also mine to do as I please with.

It’s my temple and no one else.

I get up to join Elliot’s side, and for his sake, I decide to put my robe on again. I peer over his shoulder at the shots on his camera. “Ooh, I like that one. Would you be able to frame it for me?”

Elliot’s still recovering. His erection hasn’t gone down, and now he appears to have lost all his previous gusto.

“S-sure...”

I lean closer, running my finger over his exposed chest. He has his shirt open again. He shudders.

“Also... keep one for yourself.”

The beta regards me with disbelief. Then a slow smile forms over his face. “You’re really not at all like I’d thought you would be.”

I raise a brow? “Like a stuck-up high society bitch? Well, I *am* a stuck-up high society bitch, but I’m also many other things too...”

Elliot still seems a little unsure and confused by everything that just transpired. Then I move closer, whispering into his ear.

“It’s okay, Elliot. I have given you permission. I *want* you to look at my picture when you’re alone at night.”

He swallows, and I spy his Adam’s apple. His pupils blow twice their size. “If... you insist.”

The two of us share a quiet moment. That’s when my gaze falls on his lips. His bottom is slightly bigger than his top lip, and all I want to do is suck on that plump skin.

Elliot can’t take his eyes off my own lips, and I lick them invitingly, letting him know that the offer still stands. I’m horny, and I need some help for my next heat.

He may not have a knot, but he can still satisfy me in many other ways.

Before I can stop myself, I kiss his lips, taking him by surprise. Elliot stands in a state of total shock as I stick my tongue inside his mouth, having my taste of him.

Not that I mind the whole gentleman act, but he doesn't have to hold back with me. I am not made of porcelain. I can handle a rough fucking.

I let go, smiling when I see how swollen I have left his lips. He's still bewildered when I turn and leave the studio, letting one side of my robe fall ever so slightly so he can see more flesh.

One beta down. Just two alphas to go.

I will get the help I need for my heat.

CHAPTER 16

Lark

I find the gym down in the basement.

I hear it's Bryce's favorite hangout, after all. It just so happens that I need to work on my lunges.

I have to maintain this perfect body. I once lifted a pen off the floor with my butt, and the client was very impressed.

I've done all kinds of freaky things for my clients, and I've worn all sorts of strange garments. I've worn full body bondage suits, and then I've worn hardly anything at all. I've even worn nipple clamps, and a horse's saddle at one point.

The agency always told me that I didn't have to do anything that I was uncomfortable with. They still respect their omegas to a degree and would never put us in any direct danger.

I've just been lucky that I haven't met any psychopaths yet. Well, real psychopaths. So far, just stuffy old men with creepy fetishes.

There's no denying I have stepped into a gym when I climb down the stairs. Fluorescent lighting, dingy walls, and the

strong musky scent of male perspiration.

Plus, it *reeks* of Bryce's saltwater brine.

Now this is a real gym. Not the fancy air-conditioned suites that they have at the agency. Plus, what's with the glass windows so people on the street can watch us?

Gross.

I don't spy Bryce yet, but then I hear the sound of a bench press. I walk around a bend, and there he is, my handsome, muscled Adonis.

He's breaking a sweat, lifting the weights up and down, and I lean across the wall and watch for a while. I'm aware he was in the army with Colt, and it doesn't seem as if he's going to go back anytime soon.

Good. I want him near me instead.

I spied his swollen knot the other day, and I know he's *packing* down there. I bet he's even bigger than my silicone toy, and I can't wait to try him out.

My perfume spikes when he makes those sexy breathing sounds, and then he stops, noticing me at last.

I wave.

He tightens his jaw, and then with one last thrust, he lifts the weights, settling them back onto the bracket again.

He's sweating from head to toe when he rises from the bench, and I just stare at his perfect chest. He has muscles

everywhere. Even around the cut V of his pelvis, and I start to salivate.

He looks better than he did in my fantasy.

Bryce points at a towel hanging beside me, one that is saturated with his saltwater scent. “Could you pass me that towel?”

“Sure.”

I take the towel off the hook, and I’m almost tempted to steal it and make it a part of my nest.

I toss it, and he grabs it in one hand, wiping his face. That’s when I step back, raking my gaze up and down. He won’t be as easy to crack as Elliot.

Bryce truly is built like a tank, but I will melt him into putty soon enough.

I have my best yoga pants on, after all.

Bryce peers at me again. “So, you work out?”

I shrug, unscrewing my water bottle so I can take a sip. “Just a little.”

He snorts, and I glance up from my water.

“Trust me, no one has a body that good who works out just a little...”

I place the lid back on the bottle. “Well, having a pretty limited diet helps too.”

Bryce stops laughing and then crickets chirp between us. It seems I said the wrong thing. Now he looks sad.

I indicate my head at the bench press. “I’ve never used a bench press before. Care to show me?”

The alpha stretches a brow, and I hope he can’t see through my lie. I’ve used most of the machines at the agency’s gym, so I know what I’m doing.

“Sure, lay down.”

I do as he asks. Before I lie down, he wipes the sweat off the leather bench, and what a gentleman. I don’t mind if it’s his sweat, though. I’d gladly lick the sweat from his pecs.

Calm down, Lark. You’re only seducing him for now. See if he takes the bait. Your heat is just around the corner...

I get into position on the bench as Bryce helps me lift the weight. I try to act clueless and pretend that it’s heavy, just so he can help me lift.

Eventually, I get the hang of it, lifting it back and forth. Meanwhile, he holds my head steady, and I know he’s gazing at my tits. They must look fantastic right now, going up and down with the weights. His own pecs looked amazing before, heaving and sweating. It’s any wonder his shirts fit him at all.

“See? Told you, you’d get the hang of it.”

I nod, trying my hardest to look like a novice at the bench press. I may be a pro at the gym, but I still need to take a break.

I’m sick of looking at the fluorescent beams above. One has a dead moth inside.

For a bunch of rich guys, they really do have a shabby gym.

From what I've gathered, the gym is mostly Bryce's domain. He designed it himself, so maybe he likes the grubby underground basement look.

I actually do need a little help with placing the weights on the brackets, and I sit up to take a swig of water.

I'm breaking a sweat.

Bryce flips the towel around his neck, pressing his lips together for something to say. "You know... if you ever want to come down here and use any of the equipment, just give me a call. I tend to come down here at 6 am."

I cringe at that. "That's just a little too early for me, Bryce. No offense."

He shrugs, thinking his options through again. "Well, I'm down here pretty much three times a day, so how does noon sound?"

I chew my lip. While I may have already had breakfast by then and won't be so ravenous, I guess noon works just fine.

I glance around the gym. "So, Elliot said you guys had a sauna? It's the reason why his skin is so baby soft."

Bryce scoffs. "Yeah, it's just at the end of the hall. He made me put it in here. This is a *man's* gym."

I throw him a pointed look. "What? Men can't enjoy the sauna?"

“They do, it’s just that it doesn’t fit with my grungy aesthetic.”

“Speaking of grungy aesthetic... why does this place look so...?”

“Like a shithole? Because I designed it that way. It looks like my old trainer’s gym downtown. I used to go to him as a kid just to get away from my dad. He helped me train for the army.”

Well, that’s rather sweet. He designed this gym to be grubby on purpose, just to honor his old trainer. I wonder if he even bought the dead moth inside the light.

“Where is he now?”

“Dead.”

Wow. He holds no punches. Just... dead.

I suppose Bryce is just an alpha of few words.

“Okay.”

Another bout of silence.

I glance at the rest of the equipment. All I see are weights and dumbbells. I bet this guy is all about the muscles.

A treadmill would be nice. You can’t go wrong with a bit of cardio.

I jump off the bench press at last. “Well, if you don’t mind, I’m going to head for the sauna. I need to clear my pores after all.”

I kind of hope he offers to join me, but he just picks up a small dumbbell. “Sure, go head.”

It seems he really is harder to crack than Elliot. Still, I’ll make him mine before my next heat.

I step toward him, leaning down to plant a kiss on his cheek. Then I wipe a drop of sweat from his temple. “Thank you for showing me how to use the bench press, Bryce...”

I move away from him at last, and I spot him gazing at my ass in the mirror.

Two down, one to go.

Now I just have to tempt a certain *artist* of sorts.

CHAPTER 17

Wade

I just finish the last brush stroke of my painting when there comes a knock at the door.

I'm currently in my art gallery. The guys know not to disturb me when I'm in the *zone*, but judging by the thick strawberry chocolate scent seeping through the door, it's not one of my pack brothers who has arrived to see me today.

"Wade? You in there? It's me, Lark."

Well, I can't pass up a visit from the pretty redheaded omega now, can I?

I just don't want her to see what I'm painting, and I can't cover it up since it's wet. So I decide to lift the canvas and face it toward the wall. I don't mind Lark glancing at all my other paintings.

I just hope she likes them.

I told her I painted fantasy creatures, but really I paint the creatures that live rent free inside my mind. They're a manifestation of my inner feelings. They help me cope with

my depressive feelings. Having a senator for a father isn't all that it's cracked up to be. It can make you dark, depressed.

I went through a deep depression as a child, and the man only made it worse. It was around the time my mom died. I just switched off. Rather than helping me get through the pain, he just admonished me and made me feel like a liability.

Sure, he got me counseling, but it was still not enough. The dark fog never completely left. Instead, it left fragments in my mind, these so-called creatures that I need to set free and put on a canvas.

They are pretty disturbed. Honestly, I don't think I want Lark to see that side of me. I would scare her away for sure. She exudes happiness and sunshine while I snuff it out.

I wrap my hair up in a top knot then approach the door. Lark waits on the other side, wearing a bright red polka dot dress. It's as I said, she exudes happiness wherever she goes, while I suck it away.

She has a plate of chocolate chip cookies, and it's like she walked straight out of the 1950s.

"I made you cookies. Well, Gabe helped, but I thought you might like to try some."

I gaze down at the plate. Damn. They do look good. That's when I notice the chocolate chips have legs, and are they spiders? Lark notices my questioning gaze.

"Oh, Gabe said you may be more prone to eat them if I made them *spooky*..."

Well, it that isn't the most thoughtful thing I ever heard.

I take a cookie from the plate, and Lark watches eagerly as I take a bite.

Her big brown eyes say it all. She really wants me to enjoy this cookie. It feels wrong to shut the door on her just so I can return to my painting. Fine. If anyone had to come into my gallery today, then I would rather it be her. So I open the door wider to let her in, and she clicks inside in her shiny red heels.

I don't think I've seen the omega in anything flat.

She casts her big eyes around the spacious room. The patio doors are open, leading out into the gardens to bring in the sound of birds. I may be dark, but I still love the sound of nature. I would rather that than music.

Lark glances at my art. She finds one that I painted back at fifteen, and I cringe when she moves closer.

Fuck. I had been in a seriously bad place then. The eldritch looking horror in question depicts a boy with a tentacles monster sucking the joy from his face.

Fifteen-year-old me was pretty disturbed. I think that was the year I first cut myself. I don't do it anymore, but I still have the scars...

It was also the year I started dying my hair black and growing it out. Black to match my soul...

My hair is naturally blond. It pissed my father off.

Lark reads the title of the painting. "Consumed."

Yeah... those tentacles surely did consume me as a kid. There was a point where I forgot what happiness was.

“I understand the feeling. That’s exactly what it feels like being an omega in the city. Everyone and their *dog* just wants to consume you to the point where you cease to be...”

She trails off and I watch her, fascinated. So, I guess the perfection is all just a façade. The omega isn’t chipper and sunny all the time. That’s just what she wants the world to believe.

It mustn’t be easy being such an omega. I would die if I had to fake a smile every day of my life. It’s takes a very strong person to create a shield like that, and I’m amazed by her strength.

I look back at the beautiful redhead, having a newfound respect for her. I’m an alpha, so of course, I couldn’t deny her allure before, but now she just became so much more stunning.

She just became real.

I hate to say, but I thought she was a typical Mary Poppins when she first arrived. Practically perfect in every way.

Lark peers back at me. “Is it okay if I come and paint with you from time to time? While I may be nowhere to the level you are, I did used to love drawing as a kid...”

I smile. “What did you draw?”

She bares her teeth. “Little suns in the corner of my notebook, but trust me... they were *awesome* suns...”

I incline my head toward a whiteboard. It's where I jot down my ideas. "Show me your sun."

I decide to put her on the spot. I want to see if she has what it takes to be an artist. She definitely caught the vibe that fifteen-year-old me was trying to portray.

My dad blamed it on all those Alien movies I watched as a kid. I think he thought that I was trying to join a cult at one point, too.

He may have even called in an exorcist.

Lark chews her lip, and I ignore the swelling inside my pants as she makes her way over to the whiteboard. She grabs a yellow marker pen and draws a circle with lines in the right-hand corner. Then she looks back at me and beams. "Ta da!"

I cover my mouth, hiding a laugh.

She shrugs. "Okay, it's no Mona Lisa, but I still think it's pretty amazing."

She proceeds to give it a smiley face, and wow. I have to say, I'm impressed. There's no way I could ever draw a smiling sun. I barely even know what the sun looks like these days. I don't get out much.

"So, what do you think? You prepared to have me?"

I think it through, teasing her a little. Then I smile, nodding my head. "Sure. I'm pretty much in here all day. So just come around at any time..."

“Good. I will pop over after my gym sessions with Bryce. I hope you don’t mind if I’m a little sweaty.”

No, I wouldn’t mind that at all. In fact, I think I might pull up Bryce later and tell him to work her extra hard. I want to see how good she smells after she breaks a sweat.

“Just come around when you’re ready. There’s no rush.”

Lark grins and then takes the plate of cookies out with her. I stop her. “No, you can leave them. Thank you again, Lark.”

Her grin widens, and something lights up inside me when I see that grin. That smile could divide a nation.

“Well, see you around, Wade. I look forward to our next art session.”

I watch the door a moment after she leaves. I’m no idiot. I know the signs of an omega coming into her heat.

That darling little creature is after some mates, and I wonder if my pack brothers and I will take the bait.

Only time will tell. I know I’m losing control already.

Bryce and I have already placed bets to see who will be the first to cave.

We both placed money on Elliot. The beta wasn’t pleased, but if he loses, he owes us five hundred dollars.

I look forward to seeing him lose.

CHAPTER 18

Elliot

Lark is coming around again, and I rush around my studio, trying to get the lightning right once again.

I cannot cave today. If I lose, then I owe Bryce and Wade five hundred dollars each.

The bastards.

I will get them back one day. As much as I would love to be the first to fuck that omega and rub it in their faces, I have a weird thing about losing. Especially where those two are concerned.

I never had brothers. I was an only child, so I guess this is what sibling rivalry would have looked like.

Heels click in the hallway, and I flex my muscles without thinking, cursing myself.

I cannot lose.

Lark arrives in my studio, wrapped up in a luxurious bathrobe. I have to focus.

Think of unsexy thoughts...

The news, politics... my dad typing at his boring ass desk all day...

Yep. That ought to do it. My balls shrivel up, and thank god. There will be no sex with the omega today...

Yeah. I'm the *real* winner here.

"So, do I get into position?" she asks, her voice breathy, soft.

I bite my lip.

"*Yeah*, under *me*," I want to say, but I keep the thought to myself.

I just dread what she's wearing beneath that robe. If she's naked again, I don't think I will be able to hold back.

It was hard enough last time, but that body...

Why the hell hasn't anyone photographed that perfection before? Never mind my photography studio; Lark could have been sculpted by Michelangelo himself.

I sigh. "Yeah, just on the stool."

Lark finds the stool, and I really hope she has clothes on beneath that robe, or I will be giving five hundred dollars each to Bryce and Wade.

She disrobes, and I groan when I spy the lingerie.

It may not be her naked flesh, but it still doesn't help. That red, lacy underwear just accentuates her perfection.

“Ready?” She looks up from beneath her red hair, and she really has that Jessica Rabbit vibe.

I get into position myself, knowing I’m going to regret this later. “Ready.”

I take several shots, and Lark does the most beautiful poses. In one, she sticks up her butt like a 1940s pinup model, and in another she throws her head back and parts her full red lips.

Yep. I’m losing here.

I mean, what’s one thousand dollars, right?

When we’re finished, she comes over to my side, and I hold my breath. Her chocolate strawberry scent will tempt me for sure. The girl literally smells like an aphrodisiac.

No wonder the world loves her.

“Ooh, this is a good one.” She points at a shot of her with her butt up.

She does look tempting in that photo. I’ve barely looked at the other photos we did the other day, even though she gave me permission. How the hell is any man able to resist?

“Yeah... v-very sexy...”

Silence trickles between us. Lark grabs my right bicep, and I’m trying so hard to keep it together.

“Thank you, Elliot. You really do have a way with the camera. I look beautiful.”

Honestly, it took very little effort to find her most beautiful angle. She is gorgeous all over. Every edge and curve is utter

perfection.

I don't look at her, as I know I will cave the moment I lose myself in those soft brown eyes. I feel her looking at me, though. Her scent spikes, and my fingers turn bone white as they grip my camera.

“Elliot?”

Fuck. Resist, bro. Or you owe Bryce and Wade five hundred...

Lark grabs my cheek, and I melt beneath her soft fingers. She turns my head slowly, and I meet those brown eyes. She has flecks of amber in those brown eyes, and she truly is stunning.

I'm slowly losing the battle.

Lark runs her smooth finger down my neck, then over my chest. Then she finds my happy trail, and fuck, fuck, fuck. I have to do something to distract myself, but the more she moves her fingers, the more I lose the battle.

Heat blooms across my skin where her fingers brush, sending shivers down my spine, and then my dick throbs. She cups my balls, and that's it. I'm gone. Deceased.

The beautiful omega has me right where she wants me.

Lark leans closer and whispers into my ear. “It's okay, Elliot. Just do what you want to me...”

Yep. Totally lost.

It looks as if I owe Bryce and Wade five hundred each.

I scoop her up, throwing her down onto the backdrop. Lark coils her legs around my waist, wrapping me up in her addictive scent me, and I don't care anymore.

I'm going to enjoy making her scream my name.

That backdrop is looking a little empty after all.

Lark

I knew Elliot would cave in the end.

After all, I'm an omega, and I have a mission.

I have never spent a heat alone, so my next is going to be torture. So I have to tempt these guys as much as I can. I am using them for my own sick, twisted games, but I have heard horror stories about omegas who've endured the pain of their heats alone.

I've been lucky so far. I've had men the world over bidding for my heat, but not this time around.

Well, I guess I could always give Enrique a call, but it just feels so wrong to seek out other guys for my heat.

I don't know. Nothing in our contract said that I couldn't. I only have to pretend to be this pack's omega, but if we want to put up the ruse, then we need to act like a pack.

Fuck, Elliot is good with his tongue. He rolls it around my mouth, massaging it with my own, and it's like he has lit a spark in me.

His wild berry taste explodes in my mouth, and I want more. With feverish hands, I yank off his Hawaiian shirt, and he groans, sucking on my tongue harder. I nip his lip, and then he growls like an alpha.

It doesn't vibrate in my pussy like an alpha's would, but the sound still sets me on fire.

I rake my French manicure down his spine, loving the way he shivers when I leave grazes on his perfectly tanned skin.

No hair on his back to be found. Just smooth, lean muscle. The only hair he has is the dark happy trail leading down into his pants, and I run my fingers down that path again, stopping at his bulge.

Elliot works out. Maybe not near as much as Bryce, but he's toned. His body tapers around the hips, and he really is one beautiful male specimen.

I've had sex with betas before, and I never quite found them all that satisfying. Many of them tried too hard to be like an alpha in the bedroom, yet Elliot doesn't go to such lengths. He knows his limitations, but then he also knows his strengths, too. His tongue, for example.

His wild berry is doing crazy things to my head. It's tangy, rich, and I just want to roll around in a puddle of it and make him *mine*...

Screw all those models on his walls. *I* am the only woman he can photograph naked from now on.

Finally, I unzip his pants, cupping his balls beneath his boxers. The beta pauses our kiss, his dark brown eyes rolling into the back of his skull. I give him a squeeze.

“F-fuck...”

So I roll them around in my fingers, and his dick bounces up to his stomach.

He’s about to come, but I stop him in time. “Nope. Not until you’ve entered me.”

His dark eyes find mine, and a smirk crosses his face. Now he shows me those pearly whites. “With pleasure, bun bun.”

Elliot lies above me, and the moment his heated head finds my pussy, I shudder. He runs it up and down my sensitive lips, and the slick drips down my thighs.

“Damn, you’re wet.”

No shit, Sherlock.

I can’t believe this; I am about to have sex with Pack Steel’s beta. They are not my pack, nor am I required to have sex with them or bond with them.

But that doesn’t mean we still can’t have fun.

I do not want to spend my heat alone. I need someone with me, and I like Elliot. He’s rather sweet beneath all the cheesy jokes and flirtatious winking.

There is no bad bone in his body. Elliot is just sunshine and good vibes, and we all need a bit of sunshine from time to time.

Elliot enters me slowly, treating me like a delicate doll made from china, though he needn't bother. Only my skin resembles porcelain.

I am tougher than I look.

The beta buries himself to the hilt. I slide along his dick, rolling my hips.

We build a rhythm together. Elliot thrusts while I push, seeking each other's release. He may not have the knot, but I know I will be satisfied. I honestly feel a stronger connection with Elliot than I ever did with any of the alphas who knotted me. So I push harder, lights teasing the edges of my vision.

It looks like I'm close.

Elliot is too. I can feel him growing and throbbing inside me as he races toward his peak.

Maybe we can come together.

He reaches down and seeks my lips with a kiss. One of his fingers reaches between us, and he finds my clit, massaging small circles around me.

The lights grow brighter, but they're still not enough to blind me. Not completely.

My nipples are getting harder though, more sensitive. So I unclasp my bra at the front, then throw it over my head. Elliot's eyes bug when he gets his fill of them.

I rub them against his chest to seek that friction, and they're almost as hard as steel.

“H-holy fuck...” he pants as he pushes back and forth, angling his hips.

He hits a sensitive spot. The lights blind me now as an orgasm tears me apart. I squeeze on his cock, shutting my eyes as waves ripple across my flesh. I don't let go of his cock, and maybe my pussy is like a knot in its own right.

He is locked to me pretty much, and he won't be able to pull free until I am fully satisfied.

Elliot releases after me. His abs clench, and then he jerks his hips, emptying his seed inside me.

He drags another release from me, and again I throw my head back, crying out my pleasure as I rock back and forth. The blood rushes through my head, and it's one of the benefits of being an omega...

The ability to come multiple times. The extra slick helps when it comes to locking an alpha's knot inside me, but I needn't bother with Elliot.

He's perfect as he is.

We both collapse, breathing on top of each other as our bodies are spent. I don't want to feel guilty, but I do. I just used Elliot for my own pleasure, but I'm terrified of spending my heat alone.

Also, I really want him by my side. Truly. He makes me feel warm and happy, like a kid again.

I just hope I can have a relationship like this with the others too.

An omega can dream.

Fuck. I've only been with my new pack for two days, and I've already fucked their beta. I really am a classic slut.

But I'm an omega. It's in my nature to seek intimacy. Even the fake, loveless kind.

But it doesn't feel fake with Elliot. It feels... natural. He's my fellow *berry*, after all, and his scent mixes perfectly with my strawberry chocolate.

He laughs, and his breath tickles my throat. I brush his sweaty hair out of his face. "What are you laughing about?"

He meets my eyes and smiles. "It looks like I just lost one thousand dollars."

I raise a brow. Then I roll my eyes, hugging him close. He's still locked inside of me, as my pussy still hasn't let him go. I kiss his neck, breathing him in, and my heart melts.

This was the right choice...

CHAPTER 19

Call

My phone rings, and I groan, rolling over to pick it up from the nightstand.

6 am.

There's only one person I know who would call me at such an ungodly hour, and I grind my teeth as I mentally prepare.

Fuck. I haven't even had my morning coffee yet. I'm still drunk from last night, and my mouth tastes like a toilet.

Gabe stirs beside me. "Who is it?"

I curl my fist beside me. "My dad."

He takes a moment to respond, his eyes still bleary as he tries to process. Then he groans, throwing the quilt over his head.

"Do I have to be quiet?"

"No. One day, he's going to have to find out about us, babe."

Gabe snorts. "Yeah, when *pigs* fly..."

I ignore his snarky remark, picking up on the tenth ring. My father is relentless today.

“Yes?”

“Son... you took your time answering. I take it you were busy entertaining that new omega of yours?”

I'm really not in the mood for his condescending attitude. I have what they call a love hate relationship with my dad. Sometimes I wonder if he even loves me.

Mom says he was distraught when I was missing for four years, but I find that hard to believe. My dad was just worried about his heir.

After all, I was expensive to produce. Do you know how much my father paid to have sex with an omega? That's all every alpha father wants: an alpha son.

And being the head of state too, he's no exception.

So, it was in his best interest to hire the best detectives in town. Four years he'd searched, and his gamble paid off. But I still wonder what would have happened if he had given up and just purchased another omega.

What would my younger brother's name be? Would he have looked like me? Maybe he would have been the son that my father could have finally been proud of.

“I don't think that's any of your business, Father,” I say through gritted teeth.

Gabe snorts, and I shove him.

My father hears our small exchange. “Was that her just now?”

I chew my lip. “Uh, yeah...”

I’m really not comfortable speaking about my sex life with my father, but he’s always up in my business. It’s in his best interests, after all, if I fuck with an omega.

Oh, I found myself an omega to *fuck* all right. Just not in the way he would have hoped.

The man wants grandkids. *Alpha* grandkids.

Gabriel pulls the sheets down, running his fingers down my cheek. “Oh, Colt, you magnificent beast.”

He puts on a feminine voice, and what the fuck is *wrong* with him? My father will never buy that.

Luckily for me, he fucking falls for it. He tenses over the phone. After all, you can’t deny that Gabriel sounds exactly like a satisfied omega.

“Well, then. I can see that your mother wasn’t bluffing after all. It seems you do have an omega...”

Gabriel leans closer to nibble my ear, and I really don’t want to do this right now.

“Before I leave, Colt, I would like to remind you that you are expected at my estate this weekend for my annual charity ball. You will also be expected to bring your omega too. I may as well meet this young woman myself.”

My gut clenches as a cold sweat rushes up my spine. It was only a matter of time. My father is obsessed with parties. He has one every month, and they're boring as fuck.

My thirtieth birthday was an epic disaster.

"We will speak again soon."

He hangs up, and I'm tempted to throw my phone at the wall.

I take a moment to compose myself, glaring up at the fancy moldings on the ceiling. Gabe is silent. He heard everything over the phone after all.

"So, I guess you and Lark should decide on something to wear?"

I roll my head around to look at him. To my surprise, he isn't as jealous or upset as I would have imagined. He seems to understand why Lark has to be the one to attend my father's stupid charity event.

It was the reason we hired her, but still. I wish it could be him hanging off my arm instead. Any alpha would be proud to have him as an omega.

"You're not mad?"

Gabe purses his lips, deep in thought. "No. After all, this was why we hired her. Did he say that my own dad would be there?"

I think back. "No. He only asked for me and Lark. So there's no need for you and the others to come. You're safe."

He breathes a sigh. “Thank God.”

Yeah, lucky bastard. They’re all so lucky. Their dads tend to leave them alone for the most part, while mine constantly badgers me.

A grin crosses my face. He raises a brow. “What?”

“That was a shit impression of Lark.”

He blinks. Then he laughs, snuggling closer. “So, he’s never met her before. How does he know how she sounds?”

“Well, he’s about to meet her this weekend. He’s going to expect to hear a man’s voice coming from her pretty lips now.”

Gabe smirks. “So you agree? You think she’s pretty?”

I stop a moment. She is. Anyone with eyes could see Lark was a stunner, but she’s not the one for me.

Gabe holds my heart.

I glance his way. “Not as pretty as you.”

He rolls his eyes, disappearing under the sheets. “Give me a break...”

The omega reappears between my legs, and I forget all about the phone call with my dad now as he unties the string of my pants, a smirk crossing his lips.

If only I could stay in bed with him forever. These stolen moments are all we have, after all.

I just can’t help but imagine Lark between my legs, too. What would she look like sucking on Gabe?

I lay my head back on the pillow, losing myself in an image of them both as Gabriel wraps his mouth around me.

It doesn't take me long to come.

I arrive for breakfast around 10 am.

Everyone is already spoken for at the table. Well, everyone except for Lark.

Why am I not surprised?

“Where's Lark?”

Gabe shrugs, eating his cereal. “I guess she'll be here later. You know how she likes to get up late.”

I roll my eyes. “Yeah, we need to have a talk with her about that. What if we need her for a morning function?”

Wade glances up from his own cereal. “Do we need her for a morning function?”

“No, Colt was just making a point. It's no big deal. Just let her rest,” Gabe answers for me.

The others study me carefully, and what the fuck is their problem?

“What?”

Elliot smirks, returning to his oatmeal. “Nothing...”

I cast my eyes around the table. Wade focuses on his napkin art, while Bryce squeezes a hand grip.

“Come on, spill it. We don’t have secrets in this pack.”

Bryce meets my eyes. He shrugs. “It’s nothing. We’ve just seen the way you look at her...”

“What about it?” I hedge.

Wade glances up from his art. “Are you really that dense, Colt? We’re *alphas*. We know how your mind works. Well, your knot, more specifically.”

Elliot gripes. “Three out of the five of us are alphas, actually, but even I find her hot. I’ve seen her *naked*. Hey, I’ve fucked her. Trust me, she’s looks even better without clothes on.”

No one says anything after his confession. In fact, no one’s surprised. I know we agreed to not have sex with her, but it’s Elliot. The guy has always been a horny bastard.

Besides, I saw what she was doing. Her perfume lingers all over the house.

She’s in pre-heat, and therefore, she’s after some mates.

Wade and Bryce purr, and I can’t deny the rumble in my own chest. I bet she’s very lovely without clothes on, but I am dedicated to Gabe. I will not dishonour him.

Still. My knot swells when I think about her naked, and now I grunt, focusing on my toast. I rip a piece off with my teeth, gazing out the window.

Gabe’s warm voice reaches my ears. “It’s okay, Colt, if you find her attractive. I would understand. After all...”

He trails off, and I glance at him. Come to think of it, I've seen how he looks at her, too. Also, I have sensed his attraction to her through our shared bond.

At first I dismissed it, only because I didn't want to address the issue or call him out or anything.

Gabe's affections have gone elsewhere, and it appears I'm not the apple of his eye anymore.

Why aren't I more jealous? Is it because I feel the same way about her?

The sound of footsteps grabs our attention next, and every male at the table changes position. Bryce postures more than usual, and Wade broadens his shoulders. Elliot puffs out his chest while Gabe fixes his hair.

Meanwhile, I place my sunglasses over my eyes, and just like that, I become a douche.

"Hey there, bun bun. Looking good as usual..." Elliot croons.

Lark finally comes into view, and my knot swells the moment I spy her outfit. She wears a skin-colored bathrobe that almost blends with her complexion, and I swallow a growl.

Maybe the others are right. Maybe some primal part of me is attracted to her. I'm an alpha, so it only makes sense that I would be attracted to an omega.

But I have Gabriel. I even gave him my mark, as he gave me his. We're devoted to each other.

Yet there is just that something missing. I can't quite put a name to it, but it's there. I know Gabe feels the same way too.

Lark smiles at Elliot as he gets up and pulls the seat back for her. Bryce and Wade fill her plate like a good pair of alphas, showing me up. I snatch Gabe's plate, and he raises a brow at me.

I shrug. "Just making sure my omega is taken care of."

He rolls his eyes, greeting Lark with a smile. "Once again, you wow us all, Lark. Not a hair out of place."

The beautiful omega blushes at his compliment, and my knot expands again.

"Thank you, Gabriel. You're sweet."

All the affection leaves her big, shiny brown eyes when she looks at me. She hates me. As that was my intention. Still. I wish she would look at me the way she looks at Gabriel.

"Colt."

I nod. "Lark."

The table silences at our awkward exchange. Then Wade sighs, returning to his drawing. Bryce continues to squeeze his hand grip. Elliot chuckles.

I snap at him. "Oh, shut up."

I suppose now would be a good time to tell Lark about this weekend. I have no doubt in my mind that she will impress my dad, but I still need to ensure that she realizes how important this is.

“So, Lark... do you have any plans for this weekend?”

She glances up from her oatmeal. “Not that I know of. I guess I will help Gabriel clean the house.”

I shake my head. “That won’t be necessary. You will be attending a charity event at my father’s estate instead. He will be expecting you.”

An awkward pause befalls the table. Lark tightens her lips while she butters her piece of whole grain bread. “Of course. That’s why I’m here, after all.”

“And you have to be on your best behaviour. No funny business. My dad needs to be convinced that you and I...”

I trail off. The others study me carefully. Elliot has a shit-eating grin on his face.

Finally, she looks up at me, batting her long eyelashes. “Yes, *alpha*. Your wish is my command.”

The table freezes when she whispers *alpha* in that seductive tone. Elliot groans, whacking the table. “*Damn*. I think I just started puberty all over again...”

Bryce squeezes his grip. “Yeah, well, go and start puberty somewhere else.”

Wade chuckles as he continues to draw on his napkin.

Lark doesn’t look my way again. Instead, she returns to her breakfast, a worry line etched between her brows.

Gabe asks her if she’s fine, and she answers him with a sweet smile. Meanwhile, she treats me as if I’m the devil.

I was only telling her to do her job. I am her *boss*, after all.
That is why we hired her. To impress our parents.

Well, only time will tell if she was worth the investment.

It's going to be a long weekend indeed.

CHAPTER 20

Lark

Screw Colt.

Who does he think he is, bossing me around?

Well, he is my boss, but that doesn't give him an excuse to be an asshole.

I get ready alone in my room. Tonight I wear an elegant black gown with a diamond trail. One of my rich clients gifted me the dress last fall, so it should suffice for tonight.

I need to impress Colt's father after all, and I hope he approves.

Well, time to get this show on the road.

I head downstairs. The others are all waiting by the door when I arrive.

Elliot wolf whistles. "Damn, Lark."

I smile. "Thanks, Elliot."

I gaze around. Only four of them are present.

“So, where *is* my handsome prince for the night?”

They share awkward glances.

“Well?”

Gabe sighs. “He’s ready, he’s just…”

He indicates his head to the left. That’s when I spy the alpha lounging in a chair in the corner. He raises a hand when he sees me staring. A wide beam crosses his face, and that’s the first smile I have ever seen on him.

Too bad it’s a drunken smile.

“Lark!”

My blood boils. “Is he drunk?”

Gabe sighs. “I’m afraid so. I’m so sorry, Lark. I was supposed to be watching him, but then Elliot thought it would be a good idea to lock me in the pantry.”

I scowl at Elliot. The beta shrugs. “Hey, don’t thank me just yet, but trust me. You will prefer him when he’s drunk. He’s *much* nicer.”

A growl claws its way up my throat, and the others look at me, stunned. “This is ridiculous. You are his pack. You need to intervene when he gets ahold of a drink!”

Bryce holds up his hands. “Hey, we can’t babysit him all the time, but we’re sorry, Lark. This one is on us. Actually, no, this one is on *Elliot*, but still, we apologize.”

Elliot rolls his eyes. “Come on. Just let him have his fun.”

Gabriel seethes “See, this is why Delilah doesn’t like you...”

Elliot makes a sound like a wounded puppy, and I grind my teeth. Lord, this pack is insufferable.

What the hell did I sign up for?

“Someone, fetch him water. We are not leaving until he is moderately better.”

Wade stalks off to get Colt a glass of water, and I can’t believe this. I am supposed to be meeting his father later, but then Colt had to go and get himself shit-faced in the end.

Tonight is going to suck.

Bryce and Wade manage to get some water down Colt’s throat, and then once he can stand on his own two feet, we call for a car.

Stupid, stupid, stupid!

It’s not as if I haven’t dealt with my fair share of drunken alphas, but Colt needs to pull himself together. Gabriel told me he gets like this when it comes to his dad, and how strained does their relationship have to be to get him in this state?

He can barely look at me straight.

I manage to get him into the private car when it arrives, and I just hope Colt doesn’t throw up on the leather seats.

Tonight is going to be *extra* fun now.

I laugh with a group of men as we gather around the head of state.

He's much better looking in person than he is on TV, and I still can't believe it. The actual head of state. This guy is pretty much in charge of our country. He was elected just a few months back, so he's a very important figure right now.

I'm just glad I wore my Sunday best.

I have no idea where Colt ended up. He said he was going to the toilet, but he hasn't been back since. I squeeze the handle of my glass.

Do I have to get that alpha a leash or something? I am not his babysitter. He's just lucky that I am good at socializing at these events. Let's just say that his father has been thoroughly wooed, and the gentlemen around him, too.

Once again, I am nose blind to all their scents. It's a trick I have learned at these formal functions.

I can't be distracted now.

"My, Charles, your son has picked himself a real looker. You're going to have handsome grandchildren for sure."

I bat my eyes at the old rich man who just complimented me. I think he said he was a banker. I don't really pay that much attention at these events.

I back catalogue the information for later use.

Charles looks me up and down, and he definitely approves. I know these men know who I am, but I reassured them that

what Colt and I have are real. At first he hired me, but then we fell in love, and the rest is history.

All the women gushed and said it was like something straight out of a movie. I suppose I am like Julia Roberts. I'm not a street prostitute, like the one she portrayed on screen, but still close enough.

I need another drink.

“Yes, it seems you're exactly what Colt needed. After all, the man is like a *brother* to me...”

I glance at the alpha who just spoke. He's much younger than the others, and fucking beautiful—pardon my language.

He has smoothed back blond hair and ice-cold eyes that seem to penetrate my skin. I didn't catch who he was. I think he said he was the CEO of his own company.

Honestly, I tend to switch off at these events. My brain just has a knack for helping me remember the info when I need to.

I sip the rest of my champagne. “Like a brother, you say?”

The angelic alpha smiles. His eyes flash. “Of course. The two of us go way back.”

Way back? Did he know him in childhood? Colt didn't have much of a childhood because he was abducted at four. So...

My gut clenches. The alpha means back at ALPHA. He must have been one of the boys who Brady Shaw took. The man kidnapped many young alphas, after all.

Now I can recall his name.

Killian Whitefang.

Killian smirks, and my blood runs cold. That is one chilling smirk. I know he isn't interested in me, though. I see the bite-mark around his neck.

It looks like an omega already claimed him.

That must have been one ballsy omega. This guy terrifies me. I need some air.

"If you'll excuse me, gentlemen, but I need to pay a little visit to the ladies' room."

"Of course."

"Go ahead."

I leave the men and try not to rush too much. I walk with dignity and grace. After all, they're all watching me. Especially Killian. I bet he knew I was lying through my teeth the whole time.

The bastard.

Men like that are only trouble.

I find the ladies' room, and to my horror, a *bear* stands guard outside. My heart pounds when I meet his scarred eye.

A white scar runs down his left eye, and I wonder what happened to him to get him in that state. It's a pretty deep scar.

The alpha stares me up and down as he inhales my omega scent. Then he grunts, looking away, and he clearly isn't interested in me. "You're good to go in, omega."

Well, I'm glad that I passed his assessment. Does the head of state have surly looking guards outside all of his bathrooms or just this one?

I nod to the alpha, who, oddly enough, smells of fresh oven-baked cookies beneath that powerful wave of diesel.

“Why, thank you, sir.”

He grunts again, and I guess that's just how he likes to communicate. He'd be *good* at parties.

I enter the ladies' room at last, and the beta women who stand by the mirrors snarl in disgust.

“Ugh, *another* one?”

“Let's go.”

I raise a brow when they leave. Another one of what? Is there another me walking around that I should be worried about?

Never mind.

I run the tap and just decide to breathe for a while. The sound of running water always helps. I just wonder what Gabriel is doing right now, and Bryce, and Wade, and Elliot.

Do they all get together for movie nights? Before I left, they'd all decided to have a *Shrekathon*.

Just as I take a deep inhale, I catch a familiar cinnamon scent. Suddenly, my mind transports me back to a different time in my life. I see myself once again back at the compound, arguing with one of my fellow jailbirds.

Ravyn.

Now I understand why the beta women had to leave.

A stall opens behind me, and there she is, my long-lost friend and ex-cellmate.

Who was I kidding? We never really got along. Dove was the one who glued the three of us together. Ravyn and I just tolerated each other.

Ravyn smirks, and still sassy as ever, I see. She leans against the frame of the stall, crossing her arms.

“Well, well, long time no see, *Lark*. I see you’re not dead after all.”

I smile. “Likewise.”

We pause a moment. Something pricks at the back of my eyes, and are those tears? That’s impossible. I never saw eye to eye with this omega.

She drove me crazy, and she never listened to a thing I had to say. I was only trying to help her. I didn’t want to see her killed in that awful place.

The guards liked it when you conceded and did as they said.

That was how I managed to get out. I was determined not to leave that place in a casket. Well, at least I think they put the omegas in a casket when they die.

Honestly, I don’t even know what they do with the bodies. The government disposes of them allegedly, and then they’re never heard from again.

It's enough to freeze the blood in my veins.

Day in and day out, I told Dove and Ravyn to be the perfect omega. Just stand still, don't look the guards in the eye, and do as you're told. Then you can get out and get your lives back.

It may not be much of a life. I'm a well-trained mutt. The agency tells me where to go, who I should see, and what I should eat, but I would take it over being dead.

I remember why I wanted to leave the OCC. I wanted to change the world one day and ensure a better place for omegas, but I seemed to have forgotten about that dream.

I've just been going with the flow and losing myself in all the riches. Omegas love comfort. No, they need it. It sustains our very being. But it was still not enough. Something was always missing.

I had it back at the compound for a while. Ravyn and Dove were like sisters to me. It hurt the day I had to leave them.

Well, at least I know one of them is safe. *More* than safe. That forest green gown she wears looks as if it cost a hell of a lot of money.

Ravyn looks pampered, taken care of. She's practically radiant, and that's when I spy the mark around her neck.

She has been bonded.

A little green-eyed monster awakens inside me, and I wonder if this was how all the other omegas felt about me back at the agency.

I seemed to have it all, yet I really didn't. I am alone in this world. A thousand admirers mean nothing when you don't really have someone who truly cares about you.

I see it between Colt and Gabriel. They love each other, and I want that too.

I see it will all members of Pack Steel. Elliot, Wade, and Bryce have a brotherly bond, like I had a sisterly bond with Ravyn and Dove.

Ravyn's hazel eyes shine as she looks me up and down. "I see you finally became the perfect omega then."

I nod. "I did."

She continues. "And are you happy?"

I stop to think. "Yes. I am."

She knows I'm lying. She's just like that alpha Killian back at the party; she can see right through people. In fact, his peppermint scent is all over her. I don't miss the diesel of the grumpy alpha outside, too. She also has a citrus smell about her too, and one that makes me think of cherry blossom trees.

It looks like she got herself a whole pack.

I have no idea what happened next. One moment, we were staring at each other, and then the next, we were crying in each other's arms.

I will mess up my makeup, but who cares?

I honestly never thought that I would see this omega alive ever again, but why am I surprised? She was always a fighter.

She may not have been willing to concede, but she had spirit. I understood her reasons to rebel, but I knew that the only way to fight was to just do as you were told.

Make them think they have gotten the best of you. Then you strike when they least expect.

“It’s so good to see you again, Lark. You look incredible.”

I sniff. “You too.”

She laughs. “It seems we have some catching up to do.”

I smile. “Tell me everything.”

CHAPTER 21

Lark

Ravyn and I spent hours in the ladies' room in the end. We found ourselves a comfy couch in the corner, and that is where we currently lounge.

She told me not to worry about Colt. Apparently, her alpha, Killian, has me covered. It seems Killian has been taking care of Colt since he was four, and how sweet.

Also, it seems I wooed his dad enough. Delilah texted me (yeah, I have her number), and apparently, he *loves* me. The model had to go to Milan for a fashion shoot, so she couldn't be here tonight.

But that's fine. I have my old pal Ravyn instead.

I forgot what it was like to just have a girlfriend. Other women hate me. The other omegas at the agency hate me, and omegas from rival agencies hate me.

Then there's the rest of the female population.

The beta women who left the bathroom earlier were a perfect demonstration of how most women react to me.

Ted, one of Ravyn's alphas, stands guard outside. He even got a waiter to fetch us a bottle of champagne each, and that's when we kicked our heels off and decided to lounge back on the couch.

"I don't know how you do it," Ravyn says, swigging back her bottle.

Her up-do hairstyle has fallen out of place, and now she has brown flyways. Still, she looks magnetic.

A part of me is glad she decided to be a rebel instead of a good girl omega like me, because then I may have had some *real* competition.

Ravyn looked sick to her stomach when I told her what the agency expects of me, and when I said I couldn't have carbs, she almost cried.

We had a restrictive diet back at the compound. Well, if you can call slop restrictive. They never gave us real food. They did it to break us, pretty much. Starve us into submission.

The agency told me to watch the carbs because they feared I would put on weight. But it can depend.

Some days, curvy comes back into fashion, so we omega can eat all the potatoes we want. But other days, *skinny* is trendy again, and then we have to eat celery sticks.

I swing back my own bottle. "You've gotta do what you've gotta do..."

Ravyn snorts. "Did you read that on a bathroom wall?"

I roll my eyes. “Look, I know I was hard on you back at the compound, Ravyn, but I didn’t want to see you dead. You pissed off one too many alphas during my time there, and I saw the way they looked at you.”

Ravyn studies me carefully, and I wonder when she will give me her smart comeback.

“Well, it turns out you were right. They *were* going to kill me, but I escaped.”

I sit up, and my heart pounds. “How? The compound was impregnable.”

“Trust me, it really wasn’t. I managed to dig myself a tunnel inside the wall beneath Dove’s bed. Then I jumped into the sea and swam my way to shore. Not long after I escaped, my heat hit, and... well... that’s a tale for another time...”

I blink, amazed. “You swam across the sea?”

She swigs back her bottle. “Yep. It wasn’t that far. And so did Dove, too. You remember Derrick?”

I shiver when I remember that slimy guard. “Yes?”

“Well, Dove stabbed him with a shiv. You can thank her another time.”

My jaw hangs loose.

Sweet, gentle Dove stabbed a guard with a *shiv*? Wow. I guess the quiet ones really do surprise you the most.

“Would you believe she’s an assassin now? She found herself a pack of hitmen, and now she lives with them in their

big country house. That's my girl."

Ravyn cackles, and I'm still blown away by her words.

Dove is a *what* now?

"Wait... were these hitman hired to hunt her—?"

"The toilets are off limits!"

I jump at the sound of Ted's angry voice outside. It seems he won't let anyone inside at all. He has already turned away a number of people.

"This is an outrage. I demand to use the lavatory."

Ravyn giggles at the sound of the woman's frustrated voice, and she really shouldn't be so proud.

"Is he just going to turn everyone away?"

"Oh, yeah. That's just *Teddybear*, after all. Highly protective. I'm surprised he even let you in. It looks like you passed his test. You should be honored. He has a history with omegas, but I soon changed his whole perspective..."

She speaks so fondly of him, and the way she calls him *Teddybear*. If only I had my own big, strong alpha to depend on. I kind of see Bryce that way. He's like a big tank, and maybe one day...

"So, you say Colt's pack hired you to convince his parents that he's settling down and ready to give up the party life?"

I nod. "Not just Colt's parents. Each of them has a dad who works in the government. I believe they're all a part of Charles' inner circle."

Ravyn shakes her head. “They’re not as powerful as you think. Charles is even scared of Killian. That alpha pretty much runs the capital. He has connections in all sorts of places...”

Why am I not surprised? Killian was terrifying. Like some fallen angel. Or a devil in disguise.

“If that’s so, then why doesn’t Killian run for head of state?” I ask now.

Ravyn thinks a moment. “I guess he doesn’t have to. He already has power. The law does *his* bidding, and the government doesn’t touch him...”

It must be nice to be the omega of such a powerful alpha, but all I want in the end is to just belong.

I don’t care who has what kind of power. I want what Ravyn has.

I want a pack.

She looks me in the eye. “Do you think things could develop between you and Colt’s pack?”

I sigh. “The rest of his pack, maybe. But... not with him...”

She rolls her eyes. “Right... because he already *has* an omega, Gabrielle. It makes no sense. Why would they need *two* omegas? They already have this Gabrielle bitch, so why bother hiring you? I’m surprised she even tolerates you. If Killian brought another omega back to the penthouse and then told me that I had to get along with her, then I’d have torn the place down. I would have torn her eyes out. We’re territorial.

We never share our alphas or our packs. How are you still even alive?” She laughs. “Did you beat her ass? Is that it? Fuck, she must be weak if even *you* could beat her...”

I hold my tongue. So far, the lie has worked in my favor. If you want to tell a convincing lie, then you sprinkle in a bit of the truth.

Yes, Pack Steel does have an omega, but not in the way I have led Ravyn to believe. I don't know why I hide his identity. I trust Ravyn, but for some reason it doesn't feel right.

Gabriel wants the world to believe that he's beta. He hasn't even had a heat before. If the government found out he'd lied about his designation, then they'd execute him. His father is a senator, but I'm not sure how much that would protect him.

I will not give away Gabriel's secret. I care about him too much.

“I'm sorry, Lark, but something doesn't add up. It seems pointless hiring you if they already have her.”

I sigh, sprinkling in a little more of the truth. I fear I may say too much, but there are no hidden cameras or vents in this room. Well, not any that I can see, anyway.

I bet Teddybear debugged the place before Ravyn even stepped foot inside, but you can't be too careful.

“That's because Gabrielle is pretending to be a beta.”

Ravyn's eyes widen, and then she finally understands. She pretended to be a beta too when she worked at that strip club, and I just hope she lets the matter drop.

“I see. Still, you seem to care a lot about her. And you don’t even sound envious or resentful whenever you talk about her. I’d be crushed if Killian and the guys already had an omega when I arrived. I am no one’s sloppy seconds and I don’t share. Colt doesn’t even sound interested in you, because he has this *Gabrielle*. Ugh, even her name makes me want to punch her in the face for you...”

I run my finger around the rim of my bottle. “She’s hard to hate, Rae. She’s actually been very nice to me, and makes me feel like I belong...”

Ravyn narrows her eyes. “Really? Well, she sounds like a real gem. Maybe you got lucky. Maybe she would be willing to share Colt with you. Maybe the three of you can come to some compromise. That’s what I did with Ted and Fionn.”

I lose all sense now, getting lost in the fantasy of it all. “I sure hope so... God, you should *see* her, Ravyn. Strawberry blond hair, blue eyes the color of the sky, and the voice of an angel... I swear the moment we laid eyes on each other, I just... knew...”

Ravyn freezes. It takes me a moment to realize what I said and shit. I can’t backtrack now.

“Wait... are you in *love* with her?”

My heart thumps as I chew my lip. I suppose it’s better to admit that I’m attracted to another woman rather than spilling Gabriel’s secret.

“Yes.”

She takes a moment to respond. Then she downs her drink. “Well, that’s a surprise. I never got that vibe from you back at the compound, but an omega liking another omega? That’s rare.”

It is. We naturally despise each other. The only reason why I tolerate Ravyn right now is because we shared a cell for a couple of years. But she’s also like family to me. Some omegas do hit it off, while others don’t.

The same could be said of alphas, I guess. Naturally, they shouldn’t even like each other, yet they do. They form packs, and even share mates. They can even love one another, as seen with Ted and Fionn.

Ravyn continues. “Personally, I’m drawn to alphas. Well, Hiroshi *is* a beta, but an omega and a beta isn’t entirely unheard of either. You’ve even fucked their beta, right? But *two* omegas? I just hope she feels the same way about you, Lark.”

I think back to my interactions with Gabriel. “I think he does...”

Ravyn laughs. “Well, it seems Colt’s the one who’s in trouble...” Her hazel eyes pop. Then she jerks upright and stares at me. “Did you just say *he*?”

I stumble. “N-no, I... I said *she*... Gabriel... I mean, *Gabrielle!* Fuck.”

Ravyn’s chin hits the couch. Then the realization dawns inside her eyes.

“Gabrielle is actually a *Gabriel*...”

Without thinking, I move across and slap my hand over her mouth.

“Please... you won’t tell a soul. Not even Kilian!”

Her eyes widen in shock. I must look like a madwoman right about now, but I don’t want anything to happen to Gabriel. I will take his secret to the grave.

“I promise,” she says, and I can tell she’s earnest.

Finally, I let her go, lying back on the couch. I’m shaking. I just wonder how much Ted heard outside, but I know I can trust him.

Ravyn is still processing. “I guess it’s not completely unorthodox. I’ve met female alphas. I knew a real bitch back at the strip club.”

My blood boils then as I imagine a female alpha getting her claws on my omega. I would scratch her eyes out.

I don’t care how much she wants to ’rut’ my omega, or how he could give her alpha babies...

Gabriel is *mine*.

“Well, good luck with it all, Lark. I truly wish you the best. You deserve only the best. You were the poster girl back at the compound. After you left, they made you an example for the rest of us.”

I smile at the ceiling. “Glad I could leave some kind of legacy... just... don’t let it fool you, Ravyn. Trust me. Inside, I

was fighting too...”

She doesn't answer right away. But then she grins, looking across the couch at me. “I know. I was just too stubborn to agree with you.”

“You were...”

She rubs me with her foot, getting her cinnamon scent on me. It's not a territorial marking, but it's just something omegas do from time to time to show that they care about each other.

Gabriel has done it to me now that I think back, and why haven't I noticed before?

Maybe he *does* want me.

“Still glad you didn't die after all,” Ravyn jokes.

I laugh. “Likewise.”

CHAPTER 22

Colt

I must have passed out on the bathroom floor for some time, and I only hope Lark is okay. I left her with my dad.

Unfortunately, I don't make it to her side as I bump into a familiar face out in the hall, and I backpedal when his sharp peppermint rubs off all over me.

Well, if it isn't my oldest, dearest friend—Killian.

“Drinking again I see, Colt?” he says, sipping his own drink, and what a hypocrite.

I brush down my suit and try to move around him. “I have somewhere to be.”

“Oh, yeah. Your omega. She's a real beauty, Colt. I'm proud. How much *was* she?”

I freeze, balling my fists. I haven't got time for this shit.

“A lot. Not enough to make *your* eyes bug, but she cost a few zeros.”

“Well, your investment seems to be working. Your father *loves* her. I’m afraid your lie won’t hold up for long, though. You’ve been gone an awful long time. For all you know, your omega could be in trouble. She could have been kidnapped...”

My heart pounds, and then I rush forth to check on Lark. Killian stops me. “She’s fine. Colt. Ted’s keeping an eye on her. She’s currently camping out in the ladies’ lavatory with Ravyn. You’re good.”

I whirl around and glare at him. “She’s what? She’s supposed to be charming my dad! That’s not what I paid her to do.”

His grip tightens around my arm, and is he mad at me for abandoning my omega? She’s not even my omega. She’s just some woman I hired.

“Says the asshole who spent the last two and a half hours passed out on the bathroom floor. I see you still haven’t changed.

What? He knew I was out for that long, yet he still didn’t care to wake me? What a fucking asswipe.

I growl, trying to dominate him, but Killian doesn’t budge.

“Look, Colt. I’m only looking out for you. It’s a dangerous world out there for an omega, after all. I’m just saying you need to take better care of yours, even if you did hire her.”

I get he’s just being cautious. His own omega was kidnapped herself a few months back, and by that prick Brady Shaw, no less.

I do need to be more careful. It's just...

Sure, she's trained in these kinds of situations, but it still looks shitty of me to leave Lark alone. An alpha should never leave his omega's side. If she were Gabe right now, I'd be glued to her hips, proud to show the world that she's mine...

It's not that I have anything against Lark... I'm just not in love with her. Yet.

Fuck, I don't know how I feel about her. I was genuinely terrified for a moment when I thought something bad had happened to her, and I was prepared to rip out the throat of the alpha who touched her.

Maybe I do feel something for her, but it's hard right now. Just too hard.

Killian lets go of my arm. "Well, off you go, Colt. And take it easy. You don't want to pass out again."

I scowl at him as I fix my cuff links, then stalk off down the hall.

"My old offer still stands, Colt. Sooner or later, we're going to track down Brady, whether you're with us or not. After all, that man took so much from us. It's time to make him pay."

I don't bother answering him. He knows my feelings on the matter. It's not as if Brady's death would stop the nightmares. It's why I drink so much. It helps me black out.

One moment I'm awake, and then the next I'm waking up with the worst hangover. It's a small price to pay for a good night's sleep.

Gabe tries to help as much as he can, and the rest of the guys, too, but the nightmares are just too much.

In my dreams, I'm a kid again, and in my hand, I carry a knife. Blood drips down that knife, and I shiver, reaching inside my jacket for a flask. It's always good to carry extra around, after all.

Anything to numb the pain.

Anything to stop the memories.

CHAPTER 23

Lark

I finally leave Ravyn's side as I head out the bathroom, fixing my hair in a mirror down the hall. I may have drunk a little too much, but at least I can stay steady on my feet.

It's time to return to the party. Colt must be looking for me.

Fortunately, we bump into each other as we meet at a crossroads at the end of the hall, and he helps steady me on my feet, grabbing my shoulders.

"Lark, are you okay?" he asks, genuinely concerned, and I meet his shining gray eyes.

They look a little bloodshot.

I close my eyes, feeling a little dizzy. It seems I am a little tipsy, and screw that Ravyn for getting me drunk.

"I'm... I'm fine..." I breathe, reaching up to pat my forehead. I'm clammy to the touch. Plus, I'm perfuming.

One of these days, my heat is going to creep up of nowhere, and I will be so unprepared. I've already started building my

nest back at the house. I dragged the mattress off the bed and put it inside my walk-in closet. Then I added pillows, stacking them high to create a fort.

I just hope I get company for my heat.

Colt's nostrils flare as he inhales my scent, and I watch as his pupils explode. It's like a switch goes off inside him as he leads me back to the party, placing his hand on the small of my back.

A shiver goes up my spine at his soft touch, and what's happening? Why is he being so nice? I'd have thought he'd have passed out somewhere by now.

"Come on, let's get you some fresh water. You like ice, right?"

I blink, trying to think. "Uh, yeah... I guess I do."

Colt stops a passing waiter. "Could you bring me a fresh glass of spring water, please, with ice?"

The waiter looks at me and nods. "Right away, sir."

We stand for a while as the waiter goes to fetch my drink, and Colt's hand never leaves my back. In fact, his eyes sweep the room as if he is waiting for some hidden danger. An older alpha waves to me, and he growls, stepping in front of me.

What the fuck? Why is he being so protective all of a sudden? Did someone give his head a good wobble?

I glance across the room, spying Ravyn getting a little frisky with Killian. He mutters, telling her to stop, and then his eyes

land on me. He smirks, and I look away, pretending that I wasn't staring at them.

They look so happy.

No alpha even dares to look at Ravyn the moment they see who she belongs to. Instead, they all cast their eyes on me, and Colt isn't happy.

“Ah, Colt, there you are...”

We turn around to find Charles, followed by a small party of his devout followers, and a rumble sounds in Colt's chest.

I snap him out of it. “Colt, it's fine. He's your dad.”

Yeah, that doesn't seem to make him feel better. It just makes him worse.

The man stops before us, assessing his son carefully. His nose wrinkles. “I see that old habits are hard to break? You smell like an old alehouse.”

A few alphas laugh behind him, and how can he make a fool out of his own son in front of his cohorts? Doesn't he hope for Colt to take his place one day as the head of state?

Colt bares his teeth. “You're the reason why I drink so much. You... you're the reason why... why he...”

Colt trails off. He speaks in a lower register, just enough for the guests not to hear.

However, his father heard everything.

The man steps closer, yanking a hold of Colt's upper arm as he growls into his ear. “Don't you dare blame me for what

happened that day. I had that nanny carefully vetted. I did all I could for you...”

It’s clear the man harbors some guilt for what happened to Colt the day he was kidnapped, but he won’t admit to his mistakes.

Sure, you can’t watch your children all the time, and being an important figurehead, he must have been very busy during Colt’s youth. Yet he still should have done more research on the nanny who was responsible for his abduction.

Colt was taken away by someone he thought he could trust. Someone his father had employed, and it must have hurt.

Colt trembles, shutting his eyes, and I have no idea what’s coming over him. I do the only thing I can think of. I take his face in my hand, and he calms down. Then he opens his eyes again, peering down at me.

Charles smiles, approving of me once again. “Well, it appears I was definitely right about you. You are the one for my son. Don’t ever let this one go, Colt. You found yourself a special one here.”

Finally, he lets Colt go and returns to his cohorts. Colt and I just stand in the middle of the floor. The waiter returns with my iced water, and I down it in one go.

So fresh.

The night draws on. People begin to leave. All the while, Colt and I stand to one side like wallflowers. I’m usually more

sociable at these events, but something tells me to stay by my alpha's side.

He's probably one of the least sociable people I have ever met.

It's just past 2 am when Colt calls a car. His father stops him.

"There's no need, Colt. I had the maids prepare your old bedroom for you. You and Lark can stay the night."

There's no missing the innuendo in Charles' voice. He wants his son to stay, so he can score with his omega, I bet, but I think it's a test, also. I have a feeling the man didn't buy my story. He isn't wholly convinced that Colt and I have fallen for each other.

So he's testing us. I doubt he means for us to have sex, but he wants us to share a bed, making life awkward for us.

This sucks.

Colt goes to argue, but then he glances down at me. His eyes warm, and then he sighs, nodding his head.

It seems he is willing to play his father's game. "All right. We will stay."

I bite my lip. Shit. What about poor Gabriel, waiting at home for Colt? We can't do that to him.

"Are you sure? I didn't pack an overnight bag."

Charles waves me off. "I will have the maids prepare some pajamas for you. We have some spare toothbrushes, too. I tend

to have a lot of overnight guests after all. So, it's good to be prepared. Right, Colt?"

Colt gives his father the stink eye. Charles laughs as he steps closer, pulling his son close. I still hear everything he says.

"I'm just looking out for you, Colt. You're my son. I want you to be happy. So, go and have some fun for once."

Finally, he exits the room to go and say goodbye to some of his important guests, and I guess that settles it.

We're staying the night.

CHAPTER 24

Lark

“**I**’m so sorry, Gabriel. I don’t mean to steal your alpha away from you.”

I’m genuinely crying over the phone as I speak to Gabriel via video call. To my surprise, the omega is very understanding.

Colt paces up and down the room, muttering curses under his breath, and I can tell he is anxious about the whole situation, too.

It’s fine. Just so long as we make Gabriel aware of what is going on. Colt already agreed to give me the bed while he takes the couch in the corner. It’s fine. Nothing to worry about.

The room is beautiful. Wooden paneling, fancy chandelier, and fourposter bed. Yet nothing about it showcases Colt’s personality. There are no posters from his childhood or school trophies. It’s just your average stately home suite.

The only thing in the room to show that it once belonged to a child is the giant teddy bear in one corner.

Maybe Charles is a little sentimental after all and actually wants to hold on to something from his son's childhood.

But I also have to remember that Colt spent four years at ALPHA. His innocence died the day he was taken.

That giant teddy bear is probably one of the few remnants from his life before ALPHA.

“Lark, it's okay. I know Colt. You have nothing to worry about.”

Does he have nothing to worry about? His alpha is staying in the same bedroom with another omega. It's not right. He should be here, not me.

I should be the one back at the house having a “Shrekathon” with the guys.

Seriously, I can hear it in the background. Elliot laughs at the movie, and Wade shushes him. Gabriel rolls his eyes. “Lord, he's insufferable. He laughs at every scene!”

I snort. “It is a funny movie.”

“Yeah, the first few dozen times. I don't know why he keeps making us watch it.”

I smile. I always personally loved the Shrek movies because of the depiction of a badass, redheaded princess, but that's just me.

The movie continues to play in the background while Elliot can still be heard laughing.

Colt steps forward, sitting down on the bed beside me. The mattress shifts under his weight.

“Are you sure about this, Gabe? I swear, nothing will happen between us.”

Gabriel peers over his shoulder to make sure the others aren't listening. Elliot shouts: “Man, I love donkey!”

Bryce and Wade tell him to shut up.

I guess we know who the donkey of the group is then. Elliot is a bit of a jackass, but he's a loveable jackass.

Gabriel leaves the room to head up the stairs, and Colt and I just look at each other.

Why has he gone somewhere private? Weird.

He finds his bedroom, throwing himself down on the bed. “Okay, I'm alone...”

Colt raises an eyebrow. “Why do you need to be alone?”

Gabriel bites his lip, and a jolt of pleasure shoots down to my pussy. Colt growls beside me.

Fuck. I was not expecting this...

The omega squeezes his eyes shut. “I'm sorry, but.... just the thought of you two together makes me... Look, I'm hard, okay?”

My eyes pop from their sockets. Then I shift uncomfortably. My perfume spikes, and Colt tenses. Gabriel watches us on the screen, fascinated.

“You just smelled her perfume, didn’t you, Colt?” he asks, his voice breathy. “Fuck, I wish I could smell her perfume, too. I wish I could smell you *both*....”

He digs his teeth into his bottom lip again, and this is so awkward. But I won’t deny; I’m getting aroused. I know Colt feels the heat, too. The rumble won’t stop in his chest.

The camera starts to shake.

“Gabe, what’s happening?” Colt asks. “Fuck, are you jerking off?!”

Gabriel’s eyes roll into his head, and a whimper escapes me. Then I start gasping for air as sweat gathers on my lip.

Holy shit, this happening.

Colt snaps. “Gabe? I demand to know—”

“Oh, just fuck her already. I want to come while you knot her. Make her *come* for me, alpha.”

Okay, this just got weird, but I am totally down for this. Anything to get Gabriel off. Sure, they may be using me in their stupid sexual fantasies, but anything to be a part of this.

Colt still looks unsure. “Are you—?”

“Just do something!”

Finally, Colt looks up at me, and the heated gaze in his gray eyes sets my body on my fire.

I part my lips, letting him know that it’s fine. He can have me. They can *both* have me. Fuck. I am so starved of attention right, it’s made me needy, but screw it. Let’s do this.

Suddenly, Colt is on top of me, sucking the air from my lungs as he kisses me.

I almost lose my grip on the phone as I wrap one hand around his head, running my fingers through his smooth, dark hair. He tastes so good. His rich, Italian leather washes over me, and I suck on his tongue, digging my nails into his scalp.

Colt growls, spreading my thighs with his knee. He presses it against my hot, throbbing pussy. I grind into his knee, seeking friction, and my nerve endings are on fire.

I only wish Gabriel were here for real, but I won't deny that I'm enjoying this video call.

Colt licks the inside of my teeth, and I groan, nipping his bottom lip, and I know he's enjoying the kiss too. This isn't all for Gabriel's benefit. His purr continues to rumble in his chest. It vibrates against my pussy, so I wrap my legs around him, letting him know that I want him.

The alpha nips at my neck, and my body stills as I think he's about to mark me. He continues that low purr, and it vibrates against my pulse. Lights spark in my periphery as my body shakes.

I'm still holding onto the phone. This won't be easy, but I want to do this for Gabriel. I will honor his trust in me.

He knows I am not trying to steal his alpha, and it means the world to me.

I would never do anything to hurt him. I just want to make him happy.

Colt unties his buckle and his belt comes loose. It drops onto the floor beside the bed as I slip off my panties. Then he unbuttons his pants, pressing his inflamed head to my pussy.

I shudder when he brands me. My legs throb with need as I bite my lip, gazing up up into his eyes. His have darkened with lust. Only a small ring of silvery gray remains around his pupils.

Gabriel huffs on the camera, and I peer up, seeing the same lust in his own eyes. And I thought he looked endearing before. Now his eyes look even bigger once his pupils blow out like Colt's.

Colt still doesn't take his gaze off me, even though there's a gorgeous omega on the other end of the phone watching us.

I wonder who this is really for now. Why are they making me the center of this strange video call three-way?

Colt smirks. "Ready?"

Gabriel nods. "Yeah. Fuck her, alpha."

Colt slips inside with one fluid motion, and I gasp when his girth fills me. Damn. He feels even better than my silicone cock, and if his dick feels this great, then I can't wait to see how his knot feels.

He pulls back out, then slams into me hard. The blood rushes through my head as every nerve ending goes on fire. I tug Colt closer, wrapping my legs around him as I slide up his length.

I meet his thrusts, and we continue our steady rhythm. Then we go faster as I slide up and down, rolling my hips. Tingles blossom across my flesh, making my hair stand on end as Colt continues to ride me.

All the while, I can feel Gabriel watching us, his hand moving up and down his own cock as he matches the speed of our thrusts.

Colt is the first to release. His eyes slam shut, sweat dripping down his temples as jerks his hips, and I wish I could see beneath that shirt. I want to know how his abs look when he comes inside me.

The lights appear, and I clench around him, reaching my own peak. His knot explodes as he locks himself in place, ensuring his seed reaches its destination.

I just hope he doesn't get me pregnant.

He shouldn't. I am on the pill.

The pill may stop my fertility, but it doesn't stop my heats. Those things just won't leave me be. An omega's curse.

Still. At least I got what I wanted in the end. Colt and Gabriel have let me in. I just hope it doesn't end up being a one-time thing.

Gabriel's moan of satisfaction bleeds out the speakers of my phone, and it looks as if someone else has found their own release.

Now the only sounds that fill the room are our labored breaths, and boy, do we sound good together. Like a beautiful

symphony.

Colt is still locked inside me, and it will be a while before he is able to pull free. He's wedged in their pretty deep, breathing hard on top of me. I can feel his heart pounding against my chest. Even his sweat seeps into my clothes, sticking to my own skin, and he smells so perfectly alpha.

Rich, Italian leather with a hint of basil. The basil is new, but I can't help but want to bask in that herby scent.

Hardly any of his cum escapes, which is the purpose of a knot, I suppose. But it just feels so goddamn good to have a knot in me. I hate that emptiness. It's always there, even when I'm not in heat.

I just wonder if he knots Gabriel like this, too. But on the *other* end...

Now that I have to see one day.

Gabriel is the first to speak. "P-put the camera down there. I... want to see."

I do as he asks, placing my phone at my entrance where Colt locks me. I can no longer see the camera, but I hope he enjoys the sight of Colt's dick inside me.

"I'm gonna screenshot this. Do you mind, Lark?"

I laugh. "Not at all."

Gabriel takes a few snapshots. All the while, Colt's knot still doesn't budge as he's silent above me. He places a gentle kiss on my pulse, inhaling deeply, and I savor the moment.

It's just so nice to be desired by an alpha again. Especially by an alpha who I thought hated me.

It was really damaging my psyche for a moment there. Omegas just can't help but seek the approval of alphas, and it made me question my attractiveness.

I'm still desirable, it seems, and now I can sleep easier at night knowing that Colt *is* attracted to me.

I'm never going to let him forget this...

Things may not change all that much between us, but our relationship will never be the same ever again.

CHAPTER 25

Bryce

Lark finishes up her tenth bench press, and by the time she's finished, she's drenched in sweat. Her chocolate strawberry perfume fills the gym, and I resist the urge to rut her. She just makes it so damn hard.

I could fucking punch Colt in the face right about now. He has no idea how lucky he is that he got to knot her. He says it was all for Gabe's benefit, but he's not fooling me.

I've seen how he looks at her. Hell, I've seen how Gabriel looks at her. I don't know how to break it to the alpha, but I think his omega has the hots for an omega.

He was the first of us to lay eyes on her back at the atrium. I don't know how anyone could resist her. Even now, she looks good enough to eat as she bends forward to pick up her gym bag. She sticks her ass in the air, and fuck... is she presenting to me?

Shit. I can't lose focus. We agreed in the contract that we wouldn't mate her. Colt, Gabriel and Elliot have already broke

those terms, but I won't lose my self-control.

I'm not an animal like they are.

Honestly, I don't know what Colt and Gabe were thinking the other night. The poor thing must have felt so used, but she didn't seem to mind. In fact, she seemed to like it.

"Will you pass me a towel, Bryce?"

I shake my head, momentarily distracted by the shape of her perfect ass. It reminds me of an apple, and lord do I want to sink my teeth into those delicious cheeks one day.

"Sure."

I grab a towel from the rack, throwing it to her. Lark starts patting her sweat soaked face, and I look the other way before she realizes my knot has swollen.

Now I stare at her in the mirror.

She has tied her red hair up into a high ponytail, and that thing could take someone's eye out if she swung it hard enough.

Lark sighs, placing the towel around her neck. She swigs her water. That's when her eyes trail toward the sauna.

"So, you want to try out the sauna?"

My knot almost bursts inside my pants. Being inside a hot, wooden room with her? Actually, that doesn't sound half bad.

I just don't want to breach the terms of the contract (which are muddy at best). I'm supposed to be the pillar of strength. I am Pack Steel's tank.

I suppose spending some time in the sauna wouldn't hurt. Not that I would ever admit it to Elliot, but I did see an improvement in my pores after the first time I tried the sauna.

“All right. But don't tell Elliot. I don't want to see the shit-eating grin on his face when he finds out that I used the sauna again.”

She snorts, screwing the cap back on her water. “You know he is bound to notice when you arrive at breakfast with skin as soft as a baby's.”

Damn, she's right., but I suppose half an hour in the sauna won't make a difference. My skin will still be just as hard once we're finished.

It just means I have to strip down in front of her (sans the towel).

Lark will be naked and sweaty right along with me.

She drags me toward the sauna, and once we're inside, we grab a fluffy white towel each and strip down to our birthday suits. If only it really was my birthday.

It's fine, though. I'm sure I'm about to get plenty of cake.

What am I saying? No having sex with the omega. It was what we agreed in the contract. I'm a pillar of strength. I've fought many battles and won.

And I will win this one.

I lay back on the bench and just relax. Already, I can feel the heat working on my pores. I've placed the towel around

my lap to hide my knot. It's about the only thing I can cover.

Lark lays down on her front across from me, placing her towel around her ass. I resist the urge to peek. I bet she looks so hot right now, melting on top of the bench.

Just one look.

Slowly, I open an eye, and my cock makes a tent out of my towel the moment I spy her on the bench.

She's not wearing her towel at all. She is completely naked.

Her creamy white skin is slick with sweat, bringing out the curves of her body. Sweat drips down her shiny hips, and I grunt when my knot swells yet again.

She has her eyes closed as if she's asleep, but I don't fail to spy the small smile on her face.

She knows I'm watching. Shit.

I shift on the bench, trying to reposition my towel.

"What's the matter, Bryce? Getting too hot?"

"Yeah, you can say that."

"Well, that's what saunas do. They make you hot."

Her eyes flutter open, and then she covers her mouth.
"Geez, Bryce. Seriously. You all right?"

I'm panting, resisting the urge to lock myself between her legs. My vision is hazy.

Lark gets up off her bench, stepping toward me. She places a soft hand against my cheek. "Hey, it's fine. You can step

outside if you want.”

Why on earth would I want to do something stupid like that? All the good stuff is going on inside here.

The heat of the sauna has only strengthened her perfume, and now all I can smell is chocolate covered strawberries.

“Bryce, you can open your eyes.”

If I do, I may not be able to control myself. A low purr rumbles in my chest as I know the omega is near, and all I want to do is make her mine.

Mine.

Slowly, she runs her finger down my temple, wiping away a drop of sweat. Then she starts a new course down to my chest, wiping away the drops that have gathered there.

She positions herself over my lap, straddling my hips. Then she leans closer, whispering into my ear. “It’s okay, Bryce. Just open your eyes.”

Her hardened nipples scrape against my chest, and my purr intensifies. Then she grinds into my cock, and I wish that stupid goddamn towel weren’t in the way. It’s keeping me away from my omega.

Again, she starts a tortuous path down my chest, running her fingers through the grooves of my abs. They stop just above my towel.

Lark peels it away, exposing me at last, and a gasp leaves her lips.

“Holy shit... you’re... big...”

I smirk. “You’re damn right I am.”

“Even bigger than my silicone knot.”

“Much bigger...”

Lark nips my ear. “So, what are we waiting for? Let me try it out. See if it fits...”

The purring doesn’t let up in my chest, and it almost becomes a hum now. It soothes the omega, and I can tell she is desperate.

One more knot can’t hurt her, right?

With a feral growl, I push her flush to my chest, running my hands down her curves. A sound of pleasure escapes her lips when I brush my hands over her plump ass.

She grinds into me harder, rolling her hips, and it’s time to give her what she wants.

I lift the omega, then slam into her hard. Her mouth forms an ‘O’ when I fill her with my cock, and then her eyes roll back into her skull.

I’m going to give her my knot all right.

Lark.

Glitter flickers across my vision as Bryce spears me like a sword, and the sudden instruction takes me by pleasant

surprise.

This was what I wanted, after all.

All I have thought about since I entered his gym today was how good his knot would feel inside me. He's twice the size of my silicone knot, and thank fuck I've had a lot of practice with toys.

Thank fuck indeed. I know I can take all of him.

He guides my hips, burying himself deeper and deeper until he's buried at the hilt. His shaft scrapes my walls, making my heart flutter, and then he finds my G-spot.

The glitter explodes into fireworks, and now I throw my head back and come. Strawberry scented slick fills the sauna as I ride his cock, chasing another release.

I scream again, my voice rebounding off the wooden walls. No one can hear us. It's just me and Bryce, tucked away into the safety of the sauna.

My hunky action man. He even has the scar to match as I reach up, exploring his face with my fingers.

I revel in his fresh, saltwater scent, breathing him in as I envision us at the seaside.

I'm getting sand in my ass, but who cares? It's just me, Bryce, and the waves.

Bryce grunts below me, and I open my eyes the moment he comes. His abs flex, and then he works his hips, shooting string after string of hot cum.

Finally, the magic happens. His knot grows at the base, and my walls stretch to accommodate his size. The blood rushes through my head. My ears ring, and then my whole body shakes as liquid fire pours down my spine.

It spreads to every part of me, and soon I'm burning like an inferno as I release again and again.

Bryce places his finger between us, circling my clit with his callused thumb. More sparkling dust sprinkles across my vision.

He's locked inside me, and even if I wanted to, I couldn't move. We're stuck to each other, fused at the hips.

Bryce holds me to his chest, and his purr echoes deep into my soul. "Your ours now, Lark. Our omega. Screw the fucking contract. I'll rip it up myself."

A tear slips from my eye. I guess this is what I wanted. I can't stand the thought of not being wanted or pursued. It is a foreign concept for me.

There's no denying it anymore. I want Pack Steel.

One day, I'm going to become their omega. Well, their second omega.

Mark my word.

CHAPTER 26

Wade

Lark joins me in my gallery once again, and it's still so weird having company while I do my art.

Normally, I prefer to be alone when I work.

It helps me to get "in the zone," so to speak. Art is also a healing process for me. It's a way for me to get my feelings onto a canvas via the medium of paint.

The stuff I paint this day and age isn't so fucked up. Teenage me was very angsty, but I still paint some serious shit from time to time.

At first, I was insecure with Lark seeing my most intimate thoughts. To most people, they're just your standard nightmare creatures, but Lark seems to have a knack for interpretation.

She knew exactly what fifteen-year-old Wade was trying to convey with 'Consumed'.

Most people don't realize that Consumed was very therapeutic for me. Sure, my art isn't pretty, but neither is life.

I keep stealing glances at Lark. She seems lost in her painting, her tongue sticking out as she slashes at her canvas.

She looks like she's stabbing it to death.

I smile. Lark looks even more beautiful when she's "in the zone" too, but I won't ask what the violent brush strokes are for.

For once, she wears something simple, a long coverall. She's even tossed a bandana over her hair. We promised to show each other our paintings once we were finished.

"Stop watching me."

I return to my canvas. "I wasn't watching you."

"Yeah, you were. I felt your gaze."

I raise a brow. "I'm sorry?"

Lark peers up with a grin, returning to her painting. Now her nose wrinkles in the most adorable fashion, and then she attacks the canvas with tiny blobs.

Okay, now I have to intervene. That's just an abuse of art.

"What in the...?"

"We agreed. No bothering the other artist while they're in the zone..."

"But... why blobs?"

She stops painting, putting her hand on her curvy hip. "Do you question my methods?"

I blink. "Not at all."

“Well, then, let me continue with my blobs.”

Lark continues with her painting, and I can hardly focus on my task now. She’s way more interesting. The omega is a work of art in her own right, and I can’t take my eyes off her.

Instead of blobs, she does little dabs as she pokes at the canvas, and I can’t help myself anymore.

“Seriously, what are you painting?”

Lark looks up, chewing her lip. Then she rolls her eyes, moving her canvas around for me to see. I raise my brows, rather impressed.

Wow, it’s a... a thing...

I don’t know what it is.

“You could at least try to look impressed.”

“I am, it’s just... what is it?”

She shrugs. “Nothing, really. Just me experimenting with colors and paint strokes.” She sighs. “Look, I’ll be honest, I suck at art. I took a class back at the agency, but I was bored out of my mind. They made me paint a bowl of fruit.”

I chuckle. “Nothing wrong with a bit of fruit.”

“No. If only there was a naked man holding it or something... I don’t know.”

A rumble sounds in my chest. “Naked men, hey? Do you *like* painting nudes?”

She hikes up a brow. “Do you?”

I blink a moment, stupefied. Then I throw my head back and laugh. “I’ve honestly never tried. I’m not *Elliot*. And despite what he says, I don’t draw porn.”

“Why not?”

“Honestly? I don’t find it all that inspiring. If I wanted to have sex, then I’d just go out and have it. I reserve my art for my darkest thoughts. I like sex. I can’t paint what I like after all.”

She nips her bottom lip again. “So, you paint what upsets you?”

“That’s right. It’s therapeutic.”

Lark grins. “So, what do you draw on your napkins?”

I sigh, stepping over to the stack where I leave some old napkins. I tend to keep them all, since it doesn’t make sense to throw them away. I should probably get a sketchbook, but I find I’m more inspired when I’m the least prepared.

“Nothing, really. Just cartoon strips.”

I pass her the napkin, and she narrows her eyes when she sees the drawing. “Is that Elliot arguing with Bryce?”

“Yeah.”

“But... they’re squirrels...”

I shrug. “I have to improvise.”

She glances up and giggles. “So, you like to draw your pack as cartoon rodents over breakfast?”

“It depends. Sometimes they’re people, and other times they’re foods items. I just draw what inspires me in that moment.”

Silence passes between us. A part of me wonders whether I should have shown her the cartoon doodles. I have no aspiration to even be a cartoonist or comic book artist.

“They’re good. Especially for just something you doodled over breakfast. You should turn them into comic strips. You’ve got one of Elliot pining over Delilah. That made me laugh.”

She’s talking about the one I drew of him looking like a cartoon wolf panting over Delilah. He still wears the Hawaiian shirt and sunglasses.

“Yeah. She was all he ever talked about until you came along. Now it seems he’s forgotten she exists.”

Lark’s mouth hangs open. Then she returns to her painting, a blush coloring her cheeks.

I didn’t mean to embarrass her, but it’s obvious my pack is falling for her. I am too. For once, I can’t even concentrate on my art. All I want to do is watch her.

She really is the most beautiful thing I’ve seen. My complete opposite. She exudes radiance and sunshine while I consume it.

Once again, I return to my painting.

After a few moments, Lark reaches her paint brush across and paints a blue dot on my face.

“Boop. Ha, got ya.”

I sigh, wiping my nose. “You’re supposed to paint the canvas, not my face.”

Lark shrugs. “Well, I decided to paint your face instead. Boop.”

She dabs another blob on my cheek this time. I sigh, grabbing a tube of green paint as I squirt it all over her.

Lark gasps, covering her face. “What the...?”

I laugh. “Two can play that game.”

She purses her lips. Then she grabs a tube of bright pink, and I honestly have no idea why I even had pink paint in my gallery.

She squirts it all over my black hair, and now I look as if I got to third base with Barbie.

Lark and I fight in an epic paint battle, and it’s only a matter of time until one of us gets hurt. I manage to corner her toward the edge of the room, and she waves her hands.

“Stop, stop! I surrender!”

My brow rises as I extend the tube of paint. This one is cherry red, like her lips. She’s covered head to toe in paint, and it looks as if a rainbow has spat up all over her.

“Too late. You instigated the battle.”

She blinks at me in surprise.

I go to squirt the paint, but she screams, covering her head. Instead of squirting it on her, though, I squirt it over myself,

and the red paint feels gross on my hair.

So freaking cold.

Lark's yelp rebounds off the walls, and it takes her a moment to realize what I just did. Then she starts to laugh. It's nervous at first, but then tears form in her eyes.

"You... you got me for a moment!"

I grin, tossing the tube aside. It's empty now. Honestly, we managed to get through several tubes, and I'm going to have to pick up some more.

I tower over her, and a purr rumbles in my chest when I realize how close we are. She smells even better when covered in paint, and I love seeing this side of her.

When I first met her, I thought she would have been a priss, but it turns out she's pretty cool.

It appears she isn't afraid to get her hands dirty.

I wonder what else she likes to get dirty.

The purr deepens in my chest, and I don't miss the moment she hears it. Her pupils blow out. Then she parts her lips, and her breathing accelerates.

I place my hand over her cheek, and she nestles her face into my palm like a cat. Then I reach my thumb across to her full bottom lip, wiping away green paint.

She looks so starved for attention, and I mean the real kind. She has many admirers, but none of them really care about her.

Not in the way that a pack could.

Lark wants to belong.

Well, I will show her what it means to belong. She is afraid of ending up alone. It's not hard to see in those giant Bambi eyes.

I lean down, catching her lips in my mouth, and she freezes instantly. But then she closes her eyes, wrapping her hands through my hair as she finally kisses me back.

She unties the band, letting my hair fall loose over my shoulders. Then she rakes her fingers through my scalp, making me growl.

I push her up against the wall. This section of the studio is pretty bare, as I have yet to hang up some art. But that's okay. We're still covered in a fair amount of paint.

We can create our own art.

Lark

Wade's purr vibrates against my chest, and the sensation shoots straight to my pussy. His knot swells, and I rub against him, seeking friction.

The scent of strawberry grows stronger when he slips his pierced tongue into my mouth, and I have never kissed a guy with a tongue piercing.

The alpha tucks his hands beneath my knees, pressing me up against the wall, and now he holds me with his weight.

Quickly, I unzip his pants, searching for his cock.

I stroke his knot tenderly, and he shudders. It grows beneath my fingers, and I smile against his mouth.

“Ready, Wade?”

He pants. “Yeah. I’ve been waiting for this moment ever since I first laid eyes on you, sugar.”

“Then what are you waiting for?”

He reaches up and removes my coverall. The denim slips from my shoulders, exposing my shirt beneath, and he proceeds to remove that, too.

My heart pounds when he rips the shirt away, leaving me in nothing but my panties and bra.

It’s strange. We’re all wet and sticky with paint, but I don’t mind when I’m with Wade. It just feels natural.

He is in his element here, and it humbles me how he lets me be a part of his temple, so to speak.

Wade tugs off my panties. They slip down to my ankles, leaving my pussy exposed.

My slick drips down my thighs, and Wade wipes it away with a finger, tasting it between his lips. A satisfied rumble sounds in his chest.

“You taste just like strawberry, sugar lump. I look forward to eating you.”

My heart skips. Did he just say what I thought he said?

Wade drops to his knees, throwing one of my legs over his shoulder, and now the *artist of sorts* sucks my pussy. He presses his face in deep, slipping his tongue inside, and fuck...

His piercing grazes my walls as lights flash and my leg trembles around his shoulder. I grip fistfuls of his hair, pulling at his scalp, and he pushes in deeper. His nose presses against my clit as he curls his tongue, scraping me with that stud.

I unravel around his tongue, yanking his hair at the roots, and he sucks harder, grazing his teeth around the nub.

Wade swallows my come as I release into his mouth, and then he pushes his finger inside, curling it until I see stars. I wrap my other leg around him, and now I'm practically sitting on top of his shoulders as he eats me out.

My breath echoes through the room as he sucks, nips, then sucks again, placing two more fingers inside.

I buck toward his eager mouth, and he licks up every last drop, his hands gripping tightly around my hips. When my orgasm fades to an ember, he rises back up, keeping my legs securely around him.

He's hard, and it doesn't take him long to fill me up, expanding me with his girth. I squeeze tightly on his cock, and he releases, throwing his palms flat against the wall.

He locks me in place, and we stay that way, our foreheads pressed together. He kisses me gently, and I taste myself on his lips.

"That... was amazing..." I breathe.

His piercing blue eyes scorch me, and who knew he had so much fire in him?

He chuckles, kissing me again. “No, you were, Lark. I... just want you to know that we have you. All *five* of us. Even Colt when he stops being such a jackass.”

A tear escapes my eye.

“Hey, don’t cry. It’s all right. We got you. We got you...”

He hugs me tight. So I place my arms around his neck, breathing in his scent, and it was the happy ending I needed.

I just hope he’s right about Colt.

CHAPTER 27

Lark

It's movie night with the pack. Colt and Gabriel take the chair while I sit wedged between Bryce and Wade on the couch.

I lay back against Bryce's broad chest, and his purr vibrates down my spine. I have my legs across Wade's lap. He massages my feet, purring along with Bryce, and I shut my eyes, basking in all the male attention.

Elliot sits beside the couch, reaching his hand up to stroke my arm. Goosebumps pop along the skin.

This was what I missed the most. I know we agreed that there would be no sex or mating, but who were we kidding? Of course there was going to be some sex down the line.

I knew from the moment I laid eyes on the pack that I was attracted to them. It was as if their scents called to me. I have become pretty nose blind to most scents these days, which takes some serious skill.

All scents blend together eventually, and it can be hard to pick them apart. I guess the same sort of thing happens to a person who works in a perfume store.

Bryce's sharp saltwater envelopes me like a warm ocean breeze. Wade's woody cedar calms my nerves. It's like I have the forest *and* the sea with those two, and it couldn't get any better than this.

I close my eyes, imagining myself walking along a woodland path with the woods on my right and the beach to my left. Don't forget to add some wild berries to the mix too.

Elliot's wild berry is enough to make my toes curl in the good kind of way, and I reach down, running my fingers through his tousled black hair.

That's when I catch the scent of Italian leather and peaches and cream. I glance across, spying Colt and Gabriel. The two manage to fit on one seat, but it's mostly Gabriel covering Colt's lap.

The two make the perfect alpha/omega duo, and I would love nothing more than to be a part of it again. They haven't approached me again since the night in question, and I wonder if it was a one time thing.

Do I feel used? No, not really. Because I knew that night had meant a lot to them both, too. They barely even looked at each other. All the focus was on me.

They looked at me like I was the only thing in the world. Colt and Gabriel were the ones getting me off, and Gabriel

was all too happy to let his alpha knot me.

“Colt, stop,” Gabriel laughs, pushing his alpha away when he nibbles his ear.

Elliot chuckles. “Aye, aye, take it upstairs, you two.”

Gabriel rolls his eyes. “Shut up, Elliot. You’re the worst out of the bunch of us.”

The beta smirks, meeting my eyes. “Well, he’s not wrong there, is he? Bun bun?”

I smile, and it just feels so good to smile for real for once.

My smile fades the moment I feel a sharp pinch in my lower belly. It doesn’t stop, getting worse by the second, and then my perfume clouds the room.

All three alphas act immediately, jumping to attention. Even the pack beta and the pack omega rise to their feet, staring at me in shock.

Gabriel is the first to speak. “Shit. Lark... are you—?”

I don’t answer as another cramp seizes me, and now I double over, biting my lower lip. The pain never gets easier; your body just becomes better equipped at handling the excruciating pain.

I thought I had at least a few more weeks. So why has my heat come so early?

That’s when each of their individual scents surrounds me, and I think I have found the answer.

It's the pack. It seems my omega body just knows that I have found the right one. Maybe they are even my scent matches?

I always believed it was possible, but only for other omegas. Not for girls like me.

I have been lucky in every other aspect of my life. But not when it comes to love.

Gabriel moves to my side, and having him around will make this process easier. Even though he has never had a heat, he still understands what an omega has to go through.

He has to ingest a number of pills just to hold off his own heats, and it breaks my heart.

Another cramp wrings me like a wet cloth, and then the slick pours down my thighs. Bryce scoops me up, rushing me out of the room. Wade follows closely behind. Elliot scrambles after us.

Colt and Gabriel stay behind, and I want so badly to call to them.

Why won't they join?

Bryce finds my room and rushes me toward the nest I made inside my closet. It may be cramped, but I made it especially the way I like it.

The walls and ceiling are covered in soft pink sheets, and there are decorative fairy lights everywhere. I also covered the floor with pillows and a number of blankets.

It's perfect, to be honest. It's small, cozy, and just the right size for me. It could easily fit three alphas, one beta, and two omegas.

Potato runs around the room when Bryce bursts inside, and I do not want him to see what happens next.

"Elliot..." I cry.

The beta nods. "On it."

I don't get to see Elliot pushing the rabbit toward my bathroom. Bryce places me down on the piles of soft blankets. All gifts from my old clients.

Soon they're going to be wet with my slick.

Another cramp, and I bite my lip, whimpering.

Wade nestles my head against his lap, whispering sweet nothings into my ear as Bryce spreads my legs.

"It's okay, sugar lump. We got you."

He runs a soothing finger down my temple, and I close my eyes, relaxing beneath his touch. The sound of Bryce unzipping his pants catches my attention, and then he yanks down my panties.

It's happening.

The alpha places the head of his cock at my entrance, and I sigh when his heat kisses my lips. Oh, yes. Just like that.

He slips inside, and I stretch around his thick shaft, looking forward to the moment he swells inside me.

Wades lifts me up, sandwiching me between him and Bryce. He reaches his hand down to my pussy, dipping his finger inside as he gets it nice and wet.

Elliot returns just as the *artist of sorts* places his finger at my backside, slipping it gently inside.

It's fine. I can take him from behind. I've had a lot of practice. Well, mostly with fake knots.

That's when I notice a familiar shape in Elliot's hand and is that my toy?

“So you went through my things...”

It's more of a statement. It's obvious he went through my stash of sex toys. Do I care? Not really. I was the one who encouraged him to begin with.

Once again, he takes the bait, extending the toy toward my mouth. I lick around the tip and he groans.

“Fuck, bun bun. You look so fucking hot.”

“Yeah,” Wade agrees. “I'm looking forward to seeing what he can make you do with it, sugar.”

Bryce takes my face in his hands, running his callused palms down my cheeks. I shiver beneath his touch. “Are you ready, princess?”

Princess? I guess that will be his nickname for me. Elliot calls me bunny, and Wade calls me sugar.

Princess Sugar Bunny. It sounds like a stripper's name.

I close my eyes, bucking into his hips. “Yes.”

Sweat drips down my spine, as all I can think about is his knot. I'm simply ravenous for him. The first wave of the heat is always the worst. So I guess it's up to the alpha with the biggest knot to chase away the familiar, aching emptiness.

I don't know how the heck I was going to get through this alone. In the end, I probably would have called the agency and had them send Enrique over.

Bryce places his hands on my hips, pushing inside me further, and I close my eyes, leaning against his broad shoulder.

Wade removes his finger, and now he places his cock at my back entrance.

The artist pushes his way through the tight ring of muscles of my ass, and soon he meets Bryce in the middle. I bet they can feel each other between the thin membrane of skin that separates my anus from my pussy, and this will be magical.

I just need a third knot.

Elliot wiggles the dildo toward my lips, and I suck on the end, moving my mouth up and down its grooved shaft.

The grooved edges of the dildo help to stimulate an orgasm, but they will never compare to the feeling of having a real alpha's knot inside you.

Bryce's purr vibrates down my front and all the way to my pussy, while Wade's purr sends trickles of pleasure straight to my anus. Then Bryce thrusts his hips, pushing me up onto Wade, and the artist repeats the action.

They go back and forth as I become putty in their arms. My peak is almost in sight. If they keep up this slow, tortuous pace, then I may just get there.

Slow and steady at first.

Elliot reaches between me and Bryce and pinches at my clit. Glitter sparkles behind my eyes, and I'm tempted to sink my teeth into Bryce's shoulder.

I want to sink my teeth into all of them. I wanted to be bonded with them all.

But I guess that can come another time. For now, I just want companions for my heat.

Bryce and Wade move faster, and the three of us move like liquid. They rock me back and forth, pushing me closer and closer to the edge. I continue to suck on the toy as Elliot fucks my mouth.

The first orgasm crashes through me like a wave. I toss my head back and yell, and I don't care who hears me. Let the world hear that I belong to Pack Steel.

Bryce and Wade follow suit, and now they both release. Their knots grow as I squeeze on them simultaneously, and ripples of pleasure shoot down my spin.

Fuck. I've never felt so full, so complete. Who knew it could feel this good? I can barely even remember all my past heats now as it feels as if I have always been with Pack Steel.

Was this what I was missing out on? Damn.

No time for regrets.

I gaze at Elliot. He nods, pressing the button on the toy, and now I have three knots inside me.

I can't move, as I'm locked in three places. The knot in my mouth feels so garish and fake compared to the real knots inside me, but it makes all the difference when Elliot is the one at the end of it.

He's giving himself a hand job, and I peer down, raising an eyebrow.

His eyes widen. "For real?"

I nod, unable to speak with the toy inside me. It was fun for a while. But it would never compare to a real cock.

The knot deflates as Elliot presses the button again. Then he rises to his feet, slipping his perfect cock into my mouth.

Now that's what I was talking about. His sharp, tarty taste fills my mouth, and I groan. My voice vibrates up his shaft, and then he comes without my even trying.

"Fuck, bunny. Your mouth feels so good."

He grabs my cheeks, fucking my mouth as I take him all the way to the back of my throat, breathing through my nostrils. He fists his hands into my hair, and his abs flex as he releases yet again.

That's when I reach out to pet his happy trail, and he shudders, closing his eyes.

One day, I'm going to lick a path down that trail.

But for now, I just want to be. I got what I wanted. I have three eager men helping me through my heat.

I just hope two more join us.

Then my heat would finally be complete.

CHAPTER 28

Lark

I'm woken the next morning by the smell of cookies, and my mouth salivates. They smell like Gabriel's cookies.

I open my eyes to find his bright blue eyes gazing down at me. "How you feeling, Lark?"

Well, pretty fantastic. I'm sandwiched between Bryce, Wade, Elliot. The four of us lay beneath the sheets of my nest, and the closet reeks of sex.

There's my strawberry, and then Bryce's briny ocean breeze. Then there's Wade's cedar and Elliot's wild berry.

Gabriel's nostrils flare, and his eyes almost appear black as he breathes us in. He may be taking hormone suppressants, but he's still an omega.

They're more sensitive to sex smells.

He holds the plate of cookies toward me. "I thought you would like something to eat. Omegas can get pretty hungry when they're in heat after all."

I bet he knows that from personal experience. You don't even have to have had a heat to know that universal fact.

As an omega, horniness and hungriness go side by side.

I grab a cookie off the plate and start munching. Fuck. He makes them just how I like them. Soft on the inside, and crunchy on the outside.

Gabriel leans back against the wall as I munch on my plate of cookies.

"I love what you've done with the closet."

I smile, peering around. It may not be the biggest nest, but I still love it, regardless. Honestly, I'd be happy with a shack in the woods, so long as I had Pack Steel.

I've had heats in all kinds of fancy nests. It all starts to get boring after a while. It's the company that matters the most.

"It seems we were ill prepared for your heat. I promise, Lark. Next time, we'll be ready. We can change one of the spare rooms into a nest, and you can decorate it any way you want."

I glance up at him. He looks so earnest, and it warms my heart. I swallow my cookie. "What about *your* nest?"

His eyes widen. Then he sighs, looking away. "It's... fine. I don't really need one. Colt's bed is big enough."

Damn, it breaks my heart when he talks like that. He can't fool me; I hear it in his voice that he craves a nest and comfort.

He does have the most pillows and blankets out of all the guys, but he deserves a nest too. Why the hell did he think he wouldn't?

Is he afraid of embracing his true omega instincts? He is pretending to be beta, after all. How much power does his father have in the government? Could he protect his son if his secret got out?

Another cramp seizes me, and I groan. Not again. I was enjoying my cookies.

Bryce and Wade stir, and they purr before they even open their eyes. They scent their omega in need, so they react accordingly.

Am I really their omega now? Things just happened so quickly between us. I didn't even have time to blink.

"Morning, sugar lump," Wade stretches. "You ready for round two?"

My body answers him with another cramp, and then I seize his lips, slipping my tongue between his teeth.

Bryce and Elliot are awake now too, and the three of them are on me in seconds. Elliot is peppering kisses down my chest, sucking on my breasts, while Bryce nips my ear.

Wade unzips his pants, pulling out his cock. Gabriel gets up to leave. "Well, I guess I should leave the four of you alone."

I don't even think. It's like my arm moves of its own accord as I reach out, gripping his wrist. "No. Stay."

The omega stares at me, completely stunned, and it's like I'm the only thing he can see. There are two gorgeous alphas next to me and a sexy beta too, yet he sees me.

His instincts should be drawn to the three of them, yet his blue eyes focus only on me. It still makes no sense why we are so attracted to each other.

All I know is that I don't want Gabriel to leave. His peaches and cream is driving me crazy. My senses are heightened now that I'm in heat, and fuck, he smells so good.

Really good.

Gabriel stammers. "You... you want me to stay?"

I meet his gaze with hooded eyes, and it tells him everything.

A small, sweet smile grows across his face, and now he unbuttons his shirt. A groan escapes me when I spy that lean, muscled chest. He is one ripped omega, and I have no doubt in my mind that he works out.

The others make way for him as he crawls toward me, disappearing with me under the blankets. We kiss, and his taste explodes inside me, taking me to places I have always dreamed of.

Now the whole universe suddenly makes sense. Gabriel was the missing piece I needed all along, yet he's an omega. His body is built for an alpha's knot, just like mine, yet we fit together so perfectly.

My fingers find the taut muscles of his chest, and he snorts when I run them down to his belly.

“You’re not ticklish, are you?”

He opens his eyes. “Maybe. Just a little...”

God, could he get any cuter? Somewhere, Elliot chuckles, and Gabriel growls, kicking his leg out.

His foot makes contact with a body that I assume belongs to Elliot. “Shut up, dork.”

Gabriel returns his attention to me, kissing a path from my neck to my breasts. Bryce leans close to my right, kissing my ear again, as Wade kisses my neck. He sinks his teeth in, but only a little.

It’s okay. I did liken him to a vampire when I first laid eyes on him.

Elliot massages my feet, nipping gently at my baby toe, and it looks like someone has a thing for toes. He tickles the sole of my left foot, and I giggle, making them all stop.

Gabriel smirks, and a mischievous light flashes through his eyes. “You know what to do, guys.”

They seize a limb each, pinning me down to the blankets, and I scream with a mixture of fear and excitement.

“No, no!”

Bryce and Wade purr to assure me that their intentions are good. They only mean to make me laugh.

Gabriel tickles my ribs, and the sound of my laughter rebounds off the walls. Honeyed heat spreads from my head to my toes, and it's one of the best feelings I have ever had.

How I have yearned for this. This is what it means to be a part of a pack.

I can't even remember Enrique's face anymore. It's all a blur. The only thing that matters is being here with these guys right now.

This is how it should have always been, laughing like this.

Gabriel kisses another path down my body until he reaches the apex of my thighs. My hips buck when he places his mouth at my entrance, slipping his tongue inside.

He brushes a soft sigh against my wet lips, and I squeeze my eyes. Lights flicker, and lord does he feel good there...

Wade and Elliot spread my legs as the omega tastes my pussy, groaning in deep satisfaction. The sound vibrates against me, and just like that, I come.

Gabriel freezes when he tastes my slick, and I can almost see the stars flashing behind his own eyes.

His mouth is wet with my arousal. Even his glasses have steamed up, and he should have considered taking those off first.

“Fuck, Lark...”

I gasp for air. “Don't stop.”

He meets my eyes, and I can't even see the blue of his anymore. His pupils have taken over.

Gabriel dives between my legs once again, showing me no mercy this time. He buries his face all the way in, licking and biting my clit, and I shake from head to toe.

More of that honeyed pleasure spreads across my skin, and the cramps have finally subsided. I don't even feel the urge to be filled or knotted. Gabriel's tongue is enough.

He unbuckles his belt, placing his cock at my entrance. He pushes deep inside me, gazing into my eyes the whole time, and I spy a tiny version of myself inside his rounded pupils.

The omega picks up his pace, fucking me back and forth, and I watch, fascinated, as his muscles flex.

Like a typical omega, he releases in no time, and soon the nest is filled with his seductive, peachy scent.

I don't care if he doesn't have a knot. The pain has gone inside me, and it looks like he has got me through the second wave.

My pussy clenches around his cock, and he shudders, coming inside me yet again. He sure does come a lot, but it's to be expected.

I'm the same way, too. In fact, I feel another climax coming.

Stars crackle, and then I explode like a supernova. The sheets are soaked with both of our scents, and we smell so good together.

Strawberries and peaches.

I don't care what anyone says. Gabriel is mine.

All mine.

CHAPTER 29

Lark

Someone knocks at the door of the nest, and I raise my head to see who has arrived.

Well, well, well, if it isn't Colt. It appears someone was getting lonesome.

"Sorry, just thought I'd let you know that I finished walking your weird cat like Gabe asked me to."

My weird cat?

He means Potato.

I roll my eyes. "Thanks. He's a rabbit, but I appreciate it, Colt."

Colt presses his lips together, giving me one of those awkward smiles with no teeth. Gabriel texted him earlier on my behalf because I was worried about poor Potato being alone in the bathroom.

Since Colt's the only one not joining my heat, then he can take my rabbit for a walk. The others are a little preoccupied.

My head currently rests on Bryce's chest, and even in his sleep, he purrs. The sound soothes me as I close my eyes, snuggling in to him. Wade lies on my other side, draping a protective hand over me. Elliot and Gabriel rests a head on my legs each.

Colt still stands at the door.

"Was there something else you had to say?" I ask.

I hate to sound rude, but he's just lingering there.

The alpha opens his mouth. Then he sighs, shaking his head. His nostrils flare as he takes in the scent of my nest, and there's no denying that he's aroused.

His eyes fall on Gabriel and then on me, and his eyes almost look black. A faint rumble sounds in his chest.

Gabriel stirs then, opening his eyes. He peers up at me and smirks sleepily. I don't know what he's smirking about, but darn, he looks cute. He gets dimples on his cheeks, even when he tries to smile evilly.

Is the evil smile because of Colt? The omega seems to be telling me something.

"Just wait for it..." he mouths quietly, and I arch an eyebrow.

He knows Colt much better than I do after all, but even I can tell he's conflicted.

"So, I guess I should go then."

My heart dips to my toes. “Yeah, I guess you should. Don’t forget to fill Potato’s bowl with rabbit pellets. He likes those.”

Colt shuts his eyes. “Yes. Whatever you need...”

No. That’s not what I need; I need him by my side again. I want him to fill me with his knot while Gabriel watches. I want to watch as *he* knots Gabriel.

Another awkward silence, and Gabriel has finally had enough. He jerks upright, glaring at his mate. “Oh, for fuck’s sake, Colt. Just get in here. I can *smell* how aroused you are.”

Yeah, I can smell that too. Colt’s leather has a tang to it now, and it makes my mouth water. There’s no missing the hard-on he’s sporting in his pants, either.

Colt wants me.

He watches his mate intently. “Are you—?”

“Just get in here!”

The alpha heaves a sigh, and then he finally steps into the nest. My heart pounds in excitement.

He’s joining us...

The others rouse when he kneels beside me and Gabriel.

“Well, look who finally found his balls,” Wade remarks, yawning.

“Yeah, even I have more balls than he does,” Elliot chuckles.

Colt snaps his teeth. “Shut the fuck up!”

“Knock it off, you two.” Gabriel meets Colt’s eyes. “Colt, it’s good. You’ve fucked her already. I’ve fucked her now. It’s fine.”

Colt meets my gaze, and there’s no missing his fire. It makes my heart flutter again.

“All right.”

The alpha moves toward me, and I can’t believe this. Colt is in my nest. All *five* of them are, and it looks like my dreams came true.

Gabriel watches hungrily as his alpha unzips his pants, and his cock is weeping already when he yanks it out. The others sit back while they offer Colt some space, but they can always join in later.

There’s enough of me to go around.

“Gabriel... get behind her,” Colt orders his omega, never taking his heated gaze off me the whole time.

My heart thumps. Fuck. It’s like the video call all over again, but better. *Way* better.

“Yes, alpha...” Gabriel purrs, getting into position behind me, and my nipples are hard already.

Another wave hits me, and I moan, needing to be filled ASAP. Gabriel lifts me onto his lap, parting my thighs for his alpha.

Colt runs his finger down the lips of my sex, making me shiver. Shooting stars streak across my vision as I buck toward

his hand, and this is going to be pure bliss.

Slowly, he reaches his hand back up, placing it between my lips. I taste myself on his fingers. Then he lets Gabriel have a taste behind me.

“Fuck, you really do taste good, Lark,” the omega whispers, breathing against my neck.

He massages my right breast, and I bite my lower lip. “Please...”

Gabriel meets Colt’s eyes. “You hear that, alpha? She said “Please.”

A dark light ignites inside Colt’s eyes, and then he leans closer. “I heard. You look so pretty when you beg, omega. Beg for me one more time.”

I watch him through a haze as the blood whooshes through my head, and this is torture. But I do as he asks and beg. “Please, alpha. Please...”

Colt smirks. Then he grips my thighs, parting them further, and now he buries his face deep between my legs.

His mouth finds my clit. I arch my spine, crying out my release the moment he nips me with his teeth. Colt sucks, nips, and then sucks again, and what a mouth. What a fucking mouth.

I could tell when I first glanced at those chiseled lips that he knew how to use them. So good, in fact, that I come once again.

Colt opens his wider, swallowing every last drop of my come. Then he slips two fingers inside of me, curling them all the way until he finds that sweet bundle of nerves.

My hips buck toward his mouth. Gabriel wraps his arms around me, holding me close. He nips and licks my earlobe, and I can't take it anymore.

I need them both inside me of. Now.

“P-please... just... please...”

Colt purrs, leaning up to kiss me on the lips. He covers my mouth with my slick. “Please, what?”

I sigh, closing my eyes. Lights flash. “*Please*, alpha.”

Colt grins. “Good girl.”

His praise fuels me, and there's no denying what I want now. Gabriel spreads his own slick up and down his cock, pressing his head at my back entrance.

Colt places his dick at my pussy, pushing me back into Gabriel. He lays us both down, and my breath shakes.

That way, he can fuck us both.

Also, he will be able to feel Gabriel between the membrane of skin that separates my ass from my pussy.

They have put me right in the middle, and I have never felt so touched. From the first night I heard them going at it, all I wanted was to be a part of their union.

I definitely got my wish.

Colt rolls his hips, pushing me back against his omega. Then Gabriel responds in kind, passing me back to his alpha.

The only difference here is that I am *both* their omega now. This is all about me and no one else.

I am the center of their affections.

Back and forth, we go, and my orgasm shoots straight from my core, spreading honey to my fingers and toes.

Gabriel and Colt are relentless, and it's almost like they're trying to outdo each other. Gabriel definitely has the stamina to match any alpha, and it seems he knows how to match his alpha's pace, too.

My head rolls around my shoulders as I lose myself in total bliss. Another release, this one much bigger than the last. Then another follows, and soon they spread through me like ripples across a pond.

Colt roars, slamming into me hard as he empties his balls. Then his knot follows suit, filling out the empty parts of my soul. I clench around him as he locks himself between my legs, and all I want to do is reach my mouth across and claim his neck.

I want to claim all their necks.

The sound of heavy breathing reaches me next, and I spy Elliot jerking off. He's not the only one. Even Wade and Bryce are loving the sight of me getting knotted and fucked.

I love the sight of me getting fucked. It's almost like I am having an out-of-body experience. My soul floats above the

three of us, watching things as they play out.

I. Never. Want. This. To. Stop.

Gabriel bottoms out inside of me too, but nowhere to the extent of his alpha. Still, he seems to reach parts of my soul that no one else could.

He's a part of me now, and he has my back, literally. That's how the three of us stay, and I never want this moment to end.

This heat definitely tops my others by a longshot.

I'm woken by a buzzing sound the next morning.

It sounds like someone's phone.

We all lay in a tangled heap inside my nest/closet, and to my relief, my heat has come to pass. My body is fully satiated, and now I can function once again like a normal person.

I just wonder what happens after this. Am I a part of the pack now? Have I become Pack Steel's second omega?

So many questions, but right now, I don't want to think about them. I just want to enjoy my five guys.

I snuggle up closer to Gabriel, placing my head against his chest. Colt lays at my back, and it appears they fell asleep protecting me.

The buzzing sounds again, and one of the guys huffs. "Someone shut that thing off."

Wade.

“It’s not my phone,” Elliot yawns, stretching his arms.

The buzzing continues, and I have no choice but to open my eyes.

Well, it was wonderful while it lasted.

“Hey, Colt, your phone’s buzzing!” Elliot shouts.

The alpha doesn’t stir, too lost in dreamland. Gabriel stretches beneath me, and I’m with Colt; why get up?

The outside world sucks. The six of us should just stay in here forever.

“Gabriel, shake him a little,” Bryce groans next, his voice husky from sleep.

Gabriel wiggles himself out from beneath me, sitting up to shake his alpha. “Colt, your phone.”

Buzz, buzz, buzz.

“Colt!”

Finally, the alpha wakes, peering up at the omega bleary eyed. “Wha...?”

Gabriel sighs. “Your phone is buzzing.”

Colt narrows his eyes. Then he gets up and I guess it’s all over.

I open my own eyes, watching Colt as he steps across the nest buck-naked. His dick swings loose, and I bite my lip.

I suppose one more morning session wouldn’t hurt, right?

He slides the button on his phone, covering his manhood.
“Hello, mother.”

I don’t know why he covers himself. It’s not like she can see, but I suppose it would be awkward talking on the phone to your mom while you’re naked.

Delilah’s voice garbles over the phone. Colt’s face falls slack. “Sure... I’ll be there as soon as I can.”

He hangs up, and now all five of us are awake. We watch him.

“Everything all right, babe?” Gabriel asks.

Colt blinks. “I... I don’t know...”

The mood blackens inside the nest, and you wouldn’t think that this was a place of total pleasure just twenty-four hours ago. It’s as if Delilah’s call has sucked all the joy away.

“You fine, bro?” Bryce asks Colt.

Colt looks right through him. “I... I have to go.”

Gabriel throws the blankets aside. “Want me to come with you?”

“N-no... you stay. I’ll be fine...”

Colt bends to grab his pants, and I crawl toward him, taking his arm in my hand. “Are you sure you’re going to be fine? We can all come with you if you want?”

He doesn’t look at me, keeping his gaze on the blankets instead. When he finally glances up, it’s as if he’s not even

there anymore. There is no life behind his eyes; I don't think he would even be able to see Gabriel right now.

“No, I'm fine, Lark. You stay with the pack. They will take care of you while I'm gone.”

I let go of his arm, watching as he leaves.

Silence follows, and it's like a black cloud has gathered above us all.

Elliot finally speaks. “What do you suppose that was about?”

I peer round. Bryce balls his fists while Wade's face is somber. Gabriel won't stop staring at the spot where Colt vanished.

I try to reassure him as best as I can. “He'll be fine, Gabriel. Colt is strong. Whatever it is, he'll pull through.”

He meets my eyes. “Yeah. Come on, let's get up. We can watch a movie after breakfast or something.”

“Anything but Shrek,” Bryce replies. “I'm sick of fucking Shrek.”

Elliot chuckles. “You're just pissed because you look like his twin.”

The alpha growls, shoving Elliot's head as he gets up to put on his pants.

The beta flips him the bird. “Ass!”

Wade laughs, pulling on his faded black jeans.

Gabriel smiles, glancing at me. “How about you pick the movie?”

Ooh, I know just the movie...

Breakfast at Tiffany’s. It would be a great way to end such a perfect heat.

It’s one of my personal favorites. I just relate to Holly so much. Like me, she lives the glamorous life in the city, and she has even been my style inspiration several times.

So I take Gabriel’s hand as he helps me up to my feet, and then I dress into a clean pair of PJs. I even wear my bunny slippers. I don’t even bother to put makeup on.

I just wish Colt could be with us, but I’m sure he’ll be fine.

One can hope.

CHAPTER 30

Colt

My stomach has completely bottomed out by the time I pull up outside my family home, and already I know that something is wrong.

There are police cars around the house, and shit. This isn't good.

Fuck.

I get out of the car, and the police outside don't even question me when they see my face. They know who I am. The sad and pathetic son of Senator Charles.

I storm through the house, only to crash first into a figure I know all too well.

Killian and his bodyguard Ted form a wall in front of me, and I don't even ask why they are here. Killian just seems to be everywhere I look these days.

"Colt, stay back. You don't need to see this."

I grind my teeth. "Move out of my way, prick."

Killian keeps his calm, and once again he puts up an icy front, trying to chill me to the core with his stare alone. Even Ted doesn't flinch at the insult. In fact, the large alpha only looks sorry for me. I know he plays poker with Bryce now and then, so he's a pretty cool guy, but right now, I just want him out of my fucking way.

"Colt," Killian warns, and it's not a threat. He just wants to protect me from something, and if he doesn't move soon, I will kill him.

Tears are leaking from my eyes. I already know that there's a body on the floor of my father's living room. I saw a brief glimpse before Killian intervened.

I meet the alpha's piercing cold eyes. I have known him even longer than his own pack has, and vice versa. But right now, he is my worst enemy.

I bare my teeth, getting close to his face. Killian barely winces. His face remains a frozen mask. "Get out of my way."

Ted sighs. "Boss... maybe you should just let him look. You don't have to mollycoddle him. He's not the same kid anymore..."

It's hard to believe that Killian can actually be a caring guy deep down. I wouldn't even be alive without him. He saved my life many times back at ALPHA.

Finally, his face cracks as he loses the battle with his conscience, and then his eyes shimmer when he looks over at me. The bastard has to realize that I am not that four-year-old

kid anymore. I'm a seasoned killer myself. I killed hundreds of men by the time I was eight.

I even saw some ugly shit back at the army.

I can deal with whatever is waiting for me on the living room floor of my father's mansion.

Killian sighs, stepping back, and I rush into the room. I regret it the instant I do.

My father's body lays mangled. Someone gouged his eyes out, and the bubbling starts in my stomach. Then it travels up my throat as I spew my guts all over the floor.

Killian is at my side with a bucket, but it's a little too late now.

My father is dead. Someone murdered him.

I know those gouged eyes. That was how Brady taught me how to kill, too. It's a message from him.

A detective comes over and speaks to me, but I hardly hear his words. I'm too numb, too shocked to take any words in. That's when I realize.

"My mom."

The detective stops talking.

I grind my teeth. "Where is she?"

Fuck. Did she come back from the airport yet?

That's when the front door opens, and I smell her Chanel perfume before she even steps foot into the house.

Our eyes meet. There's no mistaking her tears.

After all, I'm all she has left in the world now.

I rush to her side, holding her in my arms, and we don't move from that spot for hours.

It's up to me to take care of her now. I won't let Brady get to her, too.

It seems I don't have a choice anymore. Brady is sending me messages.

He wants me to fight him, and so be it...

I will take him down.

CHAPTER 31

Lark

The funeral comes around quicker than I would have liked, and it was a sad, solemn affair.

Many important figureheads and dignitaries attended from all around the world, and there was heavy media coverage too. The pack has been hounded by the press since the head of state died, especially Colt.

The alpha hasn't been the same since he received the news of his father's death, and he hardly talks to us. Even Gabriel.

It's my duty to be there for him. I am his omega. Well, only on paper. I'm the one he gets to showcase to the world.

Still, no one seemed to question why Gabriel was by his side throughout the service. Colt needed us both in the end. He needed his whole pack with him.

Everyone thinks Gabriel is a beta, so at the most, he just looked like a supportive beta helping his alpha out.

After the service, we returned to the estate, and the six of us now stand in line with Delilah as we shake hands with all the

guests.

“Thank you for coming,” I say, over and over.

The guys repeat the same line, and it almost becomes a mantra.

That’s when an alpha I haven’t seen before stops before Colt. While he’s unfamiliar, he has a familiar scent about him. It clings to his clothes, merging with his own whiskey chocolate.

That familiar scent is coconut, and my heart rate spikes.

It can’t be.

“My condolences, Colt. Truly. I know this must be hard for you,” the dark-haired, brown-eyed alpha says, shaking Colt’s hand firmly.

Colt closes his eyes, breathing in steadily through his nose. “Thank you for coming, Roman. It’s good to see you again. You... look well.”

Roman studies him for some time. While the alpha may look like a typical badass with his cobra tattoo and the shaved undercut, he has nothing but sympathy for Colt.

That’s when he glances at me, and his eyes warm in an instant. “You must be Lark. I’ve heard so much about you.”

I raise a brow. He has? That’s when the scent of coconuts becomes stronger, and I smile.

“I’m sure you have...”

Roman's grin widens. "I believe you know my omega. She has been dying to meet you again."

Roman steps aside, and a small, doe-eyed blonde takes his place. The sight of her takes my breath away. Ravyn already told me she became an assassin, but wow...

I was not expecting such a drastic change. Dove is no longer the shy, meek omega that I knew from the compound. For one, she has a cobra tattoo on her neck, similar to the one Roman has.

And her dress, too. It may be a little too much for a funeral, but whatever makes her happy.

"Lark!" she cries, throwing her arms around my neck. I hold her close.

My tears come freely. It was hard not to like this omega. She was just too sweet, and I hated it when the other omegas ganged up on her. That was why Ravyn taught her how to fight.

Damn. She has muscles in all the right places. I can feel them on her back.

I would love to know who her trainer is.

Next, I'm introduced to Isaac, one of her other alphas. He definitely has a screw loose.

"So, my little kitten says you were like her *mom* back at the OCC. That true?"

Dove shoves him with her hand. "Zack, stop it."

I meet Isaac's vivid green eyes. He wiggles his brows. "Well?"

I smile. "Yes, I was. Someone had to look out for her."

He chuckles, and he's quite the character. Pack Cobra are hitmen, after all. Before they met Dove, they hunted and killed omegas who escaped the compound.

Who do they hunt and kill now?

"Well, I hope you gave her plenty of *spankings*. I know I do now..."

Isaac purrs, pressing Dove close, and she giggles. "Zack..."

Again, jealousy bubbles inside me. I felt it when I saw Ravyn with Killian too. I want what they both have. And I think I have that now.

While Pack Steel helped me through my heat, I know I want more. I want to be bonded to them like Dove and Ravyn are bonded to their packs.

Isaac steps aside, and I finally meet Sebastian.

Dove has three alphas in total.

"A pleasure to meet you, and my condolences."

I shake the alpha's hand, and it's hard to tell if he meant what he said. He's just so stoic.

"You too, Sebastian, and thank you."

A shiver rushes down my spine when he rakes his eyes over me. "You remind me of someone I used to know..."

That's a rather strange thing to say. I meet Dove's bright blue eyes. She shrugs.

I smile, putting on my usual charm, even though it has no effect on this alpha whatsoever. He really is a tough nut to crack. "Well, what can I say? I just have that type of face."

"Did you know Daphne? She worked at your agency."

My heart pounds when he mentions my old mentor. I swallow. "I... I did. She was the one who trained me. I... *hated* her..."

I don't know why I felt the need to be so frank with Sebastian, but it's true. I hated Daphne with a passion. While she was nice to my face, I knew she was saying shit behind my back.

She was afraid that I was going to steal her place at the top.

Thank goodness she's gone now. Her tyranny has finally come to an end.

Sebastian grins, and fuck... that is one creepy smile. His eyes flash. "Don't worry. I wasn't a big fan either. But you don't have to worry about her anymore..."

My blood runs cold, and again I look to Dove for reassurance.

I know what these men are. So it doesn't take a genius to put things together. I always wondered why Daphne disappeared without a trace.

Dove giggles nervously, whacking Sebastian with a gentle pat of her hand. “Nonsense. Lark looks *nothing* like Daphne. She is way more beautiful.”

An awkward silence follows. More people are waiting in line, so it’s best we cut this reunion short.

I can always catch up with Dove later.

Finally, she starts pulling Sebastian away. “We will talk again later, Lark.”

I’m still a little freaked out by Sebastian’s confession of sorts, but I honestly can’t say that I am sad about Daphne. No one at the agency really missed her.

The world is a better place without her.

May she rest in hell.

“S-sure... you too, Dove.”

She leaves with her pack. Isaac puts an arm around Dove and Sebastian, while Roman leads the way, and holy fucking cow.

I’m going to need a drink after this. A *strong* drink.

What a long day.

Colt.

I sneak off when I finally have a moment.

It just feels so great to get away from it all. There are just too many people around for my liking, people who hardly cared for my father.

I've been completely numb since the night he was murdered, and the police have yet to find the one who killed him.

That's all right. Because I have decided to take matters into my own hands.

Seeing Roman again after all these years just brought back so many memories, and for a moment, I was convinced we were back with Brady.

The other alpha is a grown man now. So he's not the same little boy, but his eyes are the same...

I have those eyes too. Killian does, to a certain degree, but he hides his pain well. The man is hard to read at the best of times, but I know Brady still haunts him.

That is why he is determined to take him down. After all, he has the coordinates to Brady's island. There is nothing stopping us now. It's time to get revenge.

That's why I am meeting them both in private.

I find the stairwell to the basement. I used to be terrified of this place when I was really small. But that was before I realized that real monsters don't have fangs and claws...

I have no qualms about going down there now.

Besides, I won't be alone.

Killian is already there when I arrive. A half smile grows across his face as he fixes his tie. “I knew you wouldn’t disappoint, Colt.”

I shake his hand. I don’t think he even told the rest of his pack that he would be here. I know I haven’t. I decided it was best to tell them later. No doubt Gabriel would try to talk me out of it.

Besides, this is just between me and Killian. And Roman when he arrives.

“How have you been holding up?” Killian asks.

I suck in a breath. “What do you think?”

I hate to be rude, but small talk doesn’t suit him.

Let’s just get this meeting over with before anyone realizes the three of us are missing.

We have guards and police around the estate. We were even careful about who we invited to the service. The last thing we need is one of Brady’s spies watching us from the shadows.

Killian reaches across, squeezing my shoulder. “You know it’s the right thing to do. There’s no telling who that man will go for next.”

He’s right. I paid the best bodyguards in the city to look after my mom. She has been worse than I have. Much worse.

The basement door opens, and I pick up on Roman’s whiskey scent.

Now we’re all spoken for.

“So, what did I miss?” Roman says, coming to a stop before me and Killian.

Killian replies. “Nothing yet.”

Silence passes between the three of us, and it’s hard not to envision us as boys again. Of course, they were both taller than me back then.

Also, Roman had an identical twin. Rome.

May he rest in hell. The traitorous fucker.

Kilian sighs, leaning back against the wall. “Well, let’s not beat around the bush any longer. We leave in three days.”

Roman nods, and it doesn’t take him much convincing. He was always on-board from the start.

Both alphas glance at me.

I shrug. “Well, what are we waiting for? Let’s go kill that motherfucker.”

The three of us fall silent, thinking about our lost loved ones. Brady took them from us all, and it’s time to make him pay.

Maybe then we can all get the justice we deserve.

CHAPTER 32

Lark

Colt vanished a half hour ago and when I asked Gabriel about it, he'd shrugged.

I peer around. We seem to be missing one alpha as my heart pounds.

Fuck. I hope Colt isn't up to too much trouble.

Ravyn arrives with Ted. She offers me a playful punch to the arm, and I really wish she wouldn't do that. She's going to leave a bruise.

"How you holding up, Lark? How's pack life treating ya?"

I sigh, and once again my eyes peruse the room. "Can't complain."

She gives me a knowing smirk, and I can tell she is dying to ask.

Yes, my heat *was* phenomenal. I don't even know how she knows about my heat; I guess I just look different since she saw me last.

More satisfied. Well, as satisfied as one can be at a wake.

“You must be Ravyn. I’ve heard so much about you.”

Gabriel extends a hand toward Ravyn, and her brows jump in surprise. “I am. I’ve heard a lot about you, too. *Gabrielle*.”

She snorts, and Gabrielle... I mean, *Gabriel*, looks at me in confusion. I roll my eyes.

Ted doesn’t even bother to give Gabriel a thorough sniff before he lets him touch his omega, and I guess he’s hard not to trust. You would only have to look at him to know he was innocent.

“Well, likewise. It’s nice to finally meet you, Ravyn. Lark only speaks fondly of you.”

Ravyn glances at me again with a smirk. “She does now? That’s a surprise.”

I throw her a pointed look. I thought we put our past differences aside. The OCC was a million years ago now.

A redheaded, bearded alpha who smells of lemons rushes up behind her next, scooping her up in his arms. They cause a commotion, and the whole room stares in disappointment.

We are at a wake, after all. Even Ted growls at him to stop.

The alpha drops my former cellmate back to her feet, then looks over at me. His blue eyes widen. “Hey, who’s the redhead?”

Ravyn laughs, meeting my gaze. “This is Lark, and her beta Gabriel.”

I smile at her appreciatively when she refers to Gabriel as my beta. I knew I could trust her. We may have been frenemies back at the OCC, but we always had each other's backs.

The redheaded alpha glances at Gabriel. "Permission to shake your omega's hand?"

Gabriel stutters, pushing his glasses up his nose. "Oh, um... sure. Go ahead."

The alpha grins, and now he takes my hand and squeezes it tightly. "Pleasure to meet you, Lark. I'm Fionn. Ravyn's favorite and most *handsome* alpha."

Ted scoffs, and Fionn glances up at him and purrs. "Well, *second* most handsome. Am I right, Teddybear?"

The larger alpha growls, turning his back on Fionn, and the sexual tension between them is palpable. They do make a cute couple, though. Ravyn told me all about the things the three of them get up to, and wow... just wow.

I finally meet Ravyn's beta, Hiroshi. He's extremely quiet, but he has the most intense dark eyes I have ever seen. His scent is highly pleasant too, like blossoms in spring.

"It's an honor to meet you, Lark."

I smile, taking the beta's hand. "You too, Hiroshi. You have a beautiful name. What does it mean?"

He answers. "It means generous. My condolences for your pack's loss. I don't know Colt personally, but he and Killian were very close as children."

A heaviness grows over me, and that's when my eyes skim the room. Where *is* Colt? Bryce, Wade, and Elliot shake hands with other guests, but he is not in sight.

That's when my eyes find Dove. She waves at me, and I notice that one of her alphas is missing, too.

Roman.

Killian is MIA too.

Something fishy is going on here. But I don't care to comment on it. It's best not to draw attention as to why the three of them are missing.

Dove bounds over to us, throwing her arms around me and Ravyn. It just feels so good to have them back. I honestly never thought the three of us would be in a room together again.

It's funny how death brings people together again. Colt lost a father, but I regained my sisters.

Ravyn and Dove were like sisters to me. And now it appears we all have a pack each. It almost brings a tear to my eye.

If only all omegas could be so lucky.

"Hey, Dove. Do you know where Roman is?" I ask.

The blonde shrugs. "He said he had to step out. Why?"

I glance at Ravyn. "And Killian?"

The brunette doesn't speak. She closes her mouth firmly, and it appears I have missed something.

I step closer to her. "Do you know where they—?"

Ravyn grabs my arm, whispering in my ear. “Not here. Colt didn’t want you or the rest of the pack to know... but... he’s meeting Killian and Roman in private.”

My heart pounds, and I look up at Gabriel. He’s standing close enough to hear what Ravyn just said. None of us speak. Isaac laughs in the background, telling Fionn how he beat him in a game of pool, and the two start play-fighting. They offend several guests.

Ted snaps at them to stop. Sebastian and Hiroshi watch in mild amusement, and I would love to hear a conversation between those two. What would they even talk about?

They’re both so quiet.

Dove is the first to break the silence. “Well, it’s about freaking time. He won’t get away with this. That man has hurt too many people in this room.”

She and Ravyn share an empathetic glance, and it takes me a moment to process what she’s saying.

Dove is talking about Brady Shaw, and my mind swirls. Colt is going to go after the man who murdered his father, and I just... fuck. I need another drink.

If I’m not careful, I’ll become an alcoholic at this rate.

That’s when my eyes land on Delilah. The poor woman has barely had enough time for herself all day. She’s been super busy saying thanks to hundreds of guests, and I haven’t had the time to talk to her.

She looks so broken. She has lost her husband, and I can't even imagine what she is going through. I can't even imagine what thoughts must be spinning through Colt's mind.

Roman sneaks up behind Dove, making her jump. Then he plants a soft kiss to her cheek.

"I missed you, angel," he purrs, burying his nose into her blonde hair.

I take it Killian and Colt will be arriving soon, then.

They do it in stages. Killian enters the room ten minutes later, and Ravyn excuses herself, moving toward him. The rest of the Whitefang Pack follows her.

It looks as if they all already know.

Dove waves me goodbye, and then she leaves with Roman, Isaac, and Sebastian.

It seems Pack Cobra are in on it too.

Colt arrives at last, stopping beside me and Gabriel. The omega watches him warily. "Are you all right?"

The alpha sighs, and his eyes land on his mother. He clenches his jaw, determination flashing through his eyes, and I know there is nothing I can do to stop him.

He is going after Brady.

Bryce, Wade, and Elliot join us at last, and they don't even need to ask. It seems the three of them noticed he was missing for a time, too.

“Not here. When we get back home...” Colt answers, speaking to no one in particular.

The five of us fall absolutely silent. Now isn't the time nor the place. There are too many people around. Still, I can't help but notice how everyone has the same resolved look.

The guys aren't going to talk him out of it either. They understand Colt's reasons.

He has to do this. Not just for his father.

But for everyone...

Brady has caused too much pain.

Bryce squeezes Colt's shoulder and nods, and it looks as if he is on board. Then the rest of the pack does the same. Poor Elliot looks a little terrified, but he's supportive all the same.

Gabriel doesn't speak, and I can tell he's conflicted. He doesn't want his alpha to leave and possibly get himself killed. It's a dangerous mission, after all.

I guess I can just take comfort in the fact that Colt and Bryce are trained for these kinds of missions specifically.

I just hope they can take Brady down before he hurts anyone else.

CHAPTER 33

Colt

Killian seems confident that he knows the exact location of Brady's island. After all, he has the right coordinates, so I put all my faith in him.

His pack enforcer Ted joins us too, as well as Sebastian from Roman's pack. I also have Bryce, my second in command. It only seemed fitting that he would join me on this mission.

The six of us should be able to take Brady down.

I can't help but think of Rome. If the bastard hadn't betrayed us, then he could have been with us now; he could have been fighting by his brother's side.

But he decided to join forces with Brady in the end.

I used to get Roman and Rome mixed up all the time back at ALPHA, but after a while, it was easy to tell them apart. Roman was always the more confident of the two. He used to take Rome's place whenever Brady made us fight.

There was the time the bastard made me fight with Rome at one point, and Killian and Roman had no choice but to fight each other just to protect us.

Fuck Brady. He is going down.

No more drowning my sorrows with alcohol. I will not find any answers at the bottom of an empty bottle.

The only thing to do now is to fight. I am trained for this. I was the captain of a special ops team.

We set off at dawn in one of Killian's helicopters. The alpha has several, being one of the richest men in the city, but this one, in general, is used for stealth operations.

Does Whitefang industries have shares in military warfare now? I didn't question Killian. All I know is that we have the best men possible for the job.

Killian and Roman are trained killers, like me.

I'm tense on the back seat of the chopper, gripping my gun tight. I'm all decked up in my usual military gear. I have shells, bullet-proof vests, and grenades, too.

Yet I'm still nervous.

I was four when Brady took me from my parents. Fucking four. But then my dad's face swivels up before me, and I get my shit together.

Brady will terrorize me no more.

I will kill him.

For my father.

“You okay, man?”

I look at Bryce. He’s decked up in his own gear, and he’s the picture of calm. He’s always been the dependable one in our group.

The alpha is built like a tank. So I know he will have my back now. Just like he has had my back since we were kids.

I suck in a deep breath. “Yes.”

Bryce nods, returning his gaze out the window. Ted flies us over the ocean. Sebastian helps him navigate.

“Not long now,” Killian remarks on my other side, and I close my eyes.

“Yes.”

Silence passes through the helicopter. Only the spinning sound of the blades keeps us company.

Killian slaps my back next, and despite how tense I am, I smile. “So glad you’re here, Colt. I was starting to think you were a hopeless case. When was the last time you had a drink?”

I think for a moment. Not since before my father died. I have been sober for over a week. It’s a miracle.

Even though Brady stole my father from me, he still gave me a cold slap of reality. He encouraged me to fight and to take action, and that’s what I’m going to do. He’ll be fucking sorry.

“Ten days,” I reply.

Killian nods his head in approval. Then he reaches across and pats my shoulder. Roman is silent opposite us as he looks at me with understanding. I was always closer to Killian back at ALPHA, since Roman never left his brother's side, but right now, he gives me the same brotherly look that he always gave Rome.

"It gets easier," Roman remarks. "I was the same way. I turned to drinking and gambling too in order to forget about ALPHA, but I turned it all around in the end. You'll get there too, Colt."

I wonder what his kick on the ass moment had been. He has a smaller pack than me, but I suppose his pack brothers were there to help him. He also has his omega and his grandmother too, if I recall.

I swear, when this mission is over. I am going to fuck Gabriel until he sees stars. And then I'm going to fuck Lark too.

I can't deny it anymore. I want her. I can't imagine my future without her anymore. I know what was missing between me and Gabriel. Even though I love him, we were still broken and empty.

What we needed was someone warm, like Lark, to balance us out.

All I have to do is blow Brady's brains out, and then I can return to my omegas. As far as I'm concerned, I'm the luckiest alpha in this helicopter.

Not only do I have one omega, but I have two now.

“Brady’s island is finally in sight,” Sebastian intones darkly in the cockpit, and the fucker could have been an air hostess in another life.

Roman nods his head at his pack mate. “Thanks, Sebastian. Well, it looks like we’re finally doing this then.”

His brown eyes shine in the dim light as he looks across at me and Killian. Killian tenses beside me as he becomes that cold, unfeeling bastard we all know and love again.

I tighten my grip around my weapon. “Yeah. Let’s do this. I get to be the one who blows his brains out, okay?”

It’s not that it’s a competition. But my wound is still fresh. My father’s body hasn’t even decomposed yet.

His corpse will still look like him.

Brady also killed Killian’s mom and sister, and he also killed Roman’s parents too. Yet the two alphas don’t argue.

They nod their heads in answer to my question, and I guess that settles it. I will be the one to deal the final killing blow. I don’t even remember much of my life before that asshole took me.

I vaguely recall my father. Most of my memories are of my mom and the nanny. The same nanny who betrayed our family and sold me to Brady.

May she rest in hell.

So, in effect... Brady is the only father figure I can recall from my early youth. In a way, it's like I'm killing my dad...

The one who abused me.

How sad.

I was just too young when he took me.

I gaze out the window, and a distant island finally comes into sight. A tear drips from my eye.

Tonight, my suffering will finally come to an end.

It's been twenty-six years.

CHAPTER 34

Lark

I try not thinking about Colt and Bryce.

They embarked on their mission early this morning. Gabriel has been fussing all day, and I have tried to reassure him that they will be fine.

Colt and Bryce have been trained for this very purpose. They will survive. They will find Brady and kill him once and for all.

And then they can finally return home to us.

We gather in the living room. Elliot has us all watching the sequel to Shrek, and once again, he can't stop laughing.

The part comes up where the cat pulls its cute face, and Elliot is in tears. "Damn, I love Puss..."

Gabriel rolls his eyes. "I thought you loved Donkey?"

Elliot stops chuckling, wiping his eye. "I do, but I relate more to Puss. He has a way with the ladies."

The beta winks at me, and despite how worried I am, I smile. Even in the darkest of times, Elliot can still make me laugh.

Wade scoffs. “You think you’re like The Mask of Zorro? Give me a break.”

Elliot scowls. “No, I said I was like Puss in Boots. You know, the cat from Shrek?”

He points at said cat on the TV.

“Yeah, who is voiced by the Mask of Zorro. Get your head out of your ass, Elliot. You’re no ladies’ man...”

Gabriel chuckles and I think they’re being a little mean. Why do they all pick on poor Elliot?

“Well, I think Elliot’s quite the ladies’ man,” I announce.

Elliot does a perfect impression of Puss in Boots next. “For you baby, I could be...”

Wade and Gabriel glance at me in disapproval. “Come on, Lark. He photographs women *naked*...”

I shrug. “So? That’s his passion. He photographed *me* naked, and I had no problem.”

Both Gabriel and Wade fall still. Meanwhile, Shrek continues to play in the background.

Finally, Gabriel speaks. “Yeah... we’re going to have to see those photographs...”

“Ditto,” Wade replies.

Elliot smirks. “Who’s the creep now, hey?”

Wade tosses popcorn at him. “Just watch your stupid ogre movie. I don’t even know why you’re so obsessed with it.”

Elliot shrugs. “I don’t know. I guess it just takes me back to that innocent part of my childhood, you know. My old man used to watch Shrek with me all the time. I don’t know, it’s stupid. You’re right, I’ll switch it off...”

He switches off Shrek, and silence befalls the four of us. My heart goes out to him. That green ogre obviously means a lot to him. I know he isn’t so close with his father now, but it seems he was at one time.

I speak up. “Put Shrek back on, Elliot. I love these movies too. I always looked up to Fiona, a feisty redhead.”

Elliot smiles, and the movie goes back on. Elliot laughs at all the stupid jokes again, and I won’t lie, but human Shrek is pretty *fine*...

A crash sounds in the house. We all jump.

“What the fuck was that?” Gabriel whispers.

Shrek plays in the background as we all listen. Wade is on his feet in seconds. He’s the only alpha in the room, after all.

“Elliot, switch that off.”

The beta puts the movie on pause, and once again, we listen for the sound. The crash doesn’t return. Maybe some racoons just got into the house.

Yet Wade doesn’t look so convinced. I’ve never seen him like this before, so pumped up and ready to fight. He may be

an artist, but he's still an alpha.

I'm seriously turned on right now. His tattooed, muscled arms flex as he reaches into his pocket for his gun. Ever since Bryce and Colt took off this morning, he's been carrying it around.

"Gabe, Elliot. Take Lark to the panic room."

Wait. They have a panic room? That's new.

Elliot gets to his feet. "Why? Do you sense something?"

The alpha doesn't reply. He's more in tune with his surroundings than the rest of us.

"Yes. Now go. I will investigate."

Elliot meets Gabriel's eyes. They nod and start leading me away.

I turn back to Wade. "Wait! Will you be okay?"

His blue eyes fall on me, and then he smiles. "Of course. I'm your alpha, sugar lump. It's my duty to make sure you're safe. Now go, the three of you."

Gabriel and Elliot do as he says, and the last glimpse I have of Wade is him tying his hair back, flexing his muscles.

Let's just hope he will be all right.

CHAPTER 35

Colt

Ted lands the chopper, and we jump out of the doors immediately, rushing toward the house.

It's pouring with rain as we race toward the enemy, and this is it. We can finally get our revenge on the man who destroyed our lives.

Killian and Roman rush up beside me, and I can almost taste sweet victory on my tongue. The two promised me that I would get to be the one to deliver the final blow, and that's why I take the lead.

Bryce runs ahead of us, scouting out the area for any potential danger.

So far, so good.

Lightning strikes, and then a clap of thunder follows. But I won't let it deter me. I'm no longer that scared little boy.

I'm a full grown alpha.

“All clear!” Bryce bellows from the door of the mansion, and I just hope he’s right.

I would have expected there to be guards around the house, or some kind of security feature. This has almost been too easy, but I don’t dwell on it.

“Where is everyone? I would have thought this place would be teeming with guards,” Roman says.

Killian clenches his teeth. “I don’t know. It’s best we remain on our guard. Stay close.”

We follow Bryce into the house. There are signs that someone was here pretty recently, maybe early this morning. There’s a half drunken glass of scotch, and a burned out cigarette in an ashtray.

The TV has been left on, and the screen depicts an old music video. It’s a song that came out the year I was taken, and I push the memory away, focusing on my task.

Find Brady, blow his brains out, and then head back home so I can fuck my omegas.

I’m sure Killian and Roman feel the same way. We all have someone waiting for us back at home, so we best make this quick.

We whirl around, pointing our guns when Sebastian enters the house. He left Ted back at the chopper. As big and strong as that alpha is, we may need to make a quick getaway.

Besides, I’ve only met Sebastian a few times, but I can tell he’s a fucking psychopath. It’s that look in his cold, black

eyes. That alpha kills wantonly, and nothing holds him back.

He and Roman have the same look. Honestly, I have the same kind of animal living inside of me, too. I'm a murderer. I've been killing people since I was four-years-old.

Killian's no exception, either.

We're all killers here.

Brady will regret the day he made killers out of the three of us.

Bryce comes down the stairs. "No one upstairs. The place is deserted."

Killian scoffs. "Or so that's what he wants us to believe. We need to split into two groups. Colt, you go with Bryce. I'll search with Roman and Sebastian."

The three of them head off, and now it's just me and my old second-in-command. We are both trained in special ops. Finding someone and executing them is nothing to us. But it's personal for me.

Bryce watches me carefully, the light dancing in his gray-green eyes. "Are you ready for this, Colt?"

I suck in air through my clenched teeth. Then I ready my gun. "Yeah. Let's search."

Once again, we search the house. It's pretty large after all, but so far we come up empty. We don't even run into any staff, and what the fuck is happening?

I'm starting to get agitated.

“Fuck, where is he? He should *be* here...”

“Relax, Colt. We’ll find him. This is his house. We had his exact coordinates.”

I don’t think I’m so sure anymore. Something is extremely off. Killian says he got those coordinates from the belongings of one of Brady’s old accomplices, but why is the place deserted?

This is his island. This is where he brought his stolen omegas, so he could sell them on the black market. Omegas like Gabriel and Lark, and my blood boils. He’s just the worst kind of person.

I wonder how far he’ll stoop.

“You guys may want to see this...”

Bryce and I jump, pointing our guns. It’s Sebastian. The fucker just came out of nowhere. He ought to be more careful.

We’re carrying guns. Yet he doesn’t look perturbed by that fact. He just gazes down the barrel of my gun, then turns back around, motioning for us to follow him.

Bryce shivers. “Fuck, that guy gives me the heebie-jeebies...”

I shake my head, following Sebastian. I’m guessing from his blasé attitude that he found nothing of interest. Well, nothing that will lead me to Brady.

Sebastian leads us to a bedroom, and my stomach gurgles when I see all those images of naked omegas.

Some are young enough to be in high school.

Killian stands over the bed, assessing me carefully. Roman's not too far behind. In fact, they both look as if they pity me.

Sebastian, on the other hand, looks cool as ever, and nothing fazes that guy. I know he's not completely cold because I've seen him interacting with that angelic omega of his.

It was like watching a zombie coming back to life.

I ball my fists when no one speaks. "What is this? For fuck's sake, Killian. This isn't the time to joke around."

"He's not joking," Roman says.

Again, I see nothing but pity in their eyes, and now they both regard me like I'm their pathetic little brother.

Killian sighs, holding out a letter. I step forward, snatching it from his cool fingers. It's like someone pours a bucket of ice-cold water over me the moment I read the text.

I go completely numb.

Dear Colt.

By the time you read this, I will have already taken your omegas.

Sorry about your father, by the way, but I needed to provoke you somehow. You have become far too lenient over the years, and I am sorely disappointed in you. I trained you to be an efficient killing machine after all, not some drunken, lazy bum who doesn't know his elbow from his left knee...

I hope you understand one day. I was only looking out for you. That man you called your 'father' never had your best interests at heart.

Yours sincerely,

From the only father who ever cared about you...

I scrunch up the letter, my mind spiraling out of control as the anger works its way up my throat. It bursts from my lips in the sound of a strangled, frustrated scream, and then everything goes black.

I don't remember much of anything else.

This had all been a trap to lure us away.

Brady has them—Gabriel and Lark.

I fucked up.

CHAPTER 36

Gabriel

I hunker down in the panic room with Lark and Elliot, and everything is quiet.

Too quiet.

What the hell is Wade doing out there?

Elliot paces back and forth, growling in frustration. “This is ridiculous. I should be out there with him. Why does he have to be the hero all of a sudden? Alphas.”

I sigh. “He has a gun, Elliot. Wade is fine...”

Elliot looks across at me then, and a dark light flashes inside his bright brown eyes. “Yeah? Well, so do I.”

He drags out a small pistol, and where the hell was he hiding that?

Lark gasps. “You’re not thinking about going out there, are you?”

The beta winks at her. “Don’t look so worried, bunny bun. I’m your man. I’ll take good care of you. I’m not completely

useless. Don't let these pretty boy looks and the cool Hawaiian shirts fool you."

"They're really not that cool..." I note.

Elliot raises a brow. "Yeah, well, tell that to the ladies."

He winks at Lark again, and I shoot up to my feet. "Elliot, just stay put. Wade is fine. It was probably just a racoon."

Elliot's dark gaze settles on me, and I have to give him some credit. He's not a complete idiot.

"You know it was no racoon," he whispers, so as not to frighten poor Lark.

She's hunched up in the corner, her arms wrapped around her legs, and she looks so small and fragile. How I wish it was just racoons for her sake.

But it looks as if some other diseased ridden vermin has broken into our house.

After what happened with Colt's father, we can't be too careful. We need to be on our best guard.

"I'm going out there."

Elliot moves toward the door. Lark stumbles to her feet. "No."

Elliot stops, his hand on the door. Then he glances back at the omega, showing her his shiny white teeth. "I wanna fight for you, bunny. I want to keep you safe."

Lark bites her plump lip, words hovering on the tip of her tongue. Then she strides toward him, planting a big kiss on his

lips. Poor Elliot looks as if he's about to pass out. He's sporting a huge hard-on right now.

“Then go. Protect Wade. Just be careful.”

He nods, then peers at me. I hope he isn't expecting a kiss from me too. He's great and all, but I don't like him in that way.

“So long, Gabe.”

I sigh, stepping closer to wrap my arm around his shoulder. “You too, Elliot. Just... don't die, all right?”

Again, he nods, then opens the heavy door. With one last look at the two of us, he disappears out the door. Then it shuts heavily behind him with a click.

Now it's just me and Lark.

If anything happens to Wade or Elliot, I can keep her safe. I'm a black belt, after all. Also, I may have my own gun stowed away.

Lark shivers, and I step closer, taking her in my arms. “Hey, it's fine. I'm sure Wade and Elliot will chase the bad guys away.”

She giggles, resting her head against my chest, and her breath wets my clavicle. I may be an omega, but I'll still keep her safe.

From the moment I laid eyes on her, I knew she was the one for us. The one to complete me and Colt.

As an omega, I should hate her; she's a threat to me and has encroached on my territory. Omegas are crazily territorial, but I'm so glad we decided to pursue her that day, because I can't imagine my life without her now.

Lark is everything I dreamed of.

Some time passes. Maybe an hour, I don't know. But it's awfully quiet in the house. This panic room was designed to be soundproof, but still, the suspense is killing me.

How's Wade? What's Elliot up to?

Shit.

"Maybe I should check on them."

Lark tightens her arms around me. "No. S-stay here...."

She's afraid of being left alone, but something is very off. And the more time we spend in here, then the more I realize that it's more than just racoons that broke into our house.

I'm not sure what to do. I have never felt so conflicted.

She sighs. "Fine. But I go with you."

Blood simmers in my veins. "No. Absolutely not."

"I have a gun."

Lark lifts her dress, and lo-and-behold... it's a gun. It sits inside a holster around her thigh, and fuck if she isn't the sexist thing I have ever seen right now.

She shrugs. "I took a page from Dove's book. She can't be the only badass omega. I know how to protect myself."

I snort. “That you do. I swear, when all this is over, I’m going to fuck you in your nest. *Again.*”

She smirks. “That a promise?”

I chuckle. “Yeah. Maybe one day, we can make a nest together. What do you say?”

An omega sharing their nest? Pretty hard to image. But I would share all my comforts and blankets with this omega.

Her beautiful smile reaches her brown eyes, and my heart pumps faster. “Nest merger it is.”

I pull her forward and kiss her lips. Then I yank out my own gun and open the door.

Not bad for a pair of omegas. We’re usually so helpless, depending on alphas, but not us two.

We’re going to kill these racoons.

We sneak out into the kitchen, tiptoeing across the tiled floor. Everything’s quiet. The wind blows outside, and it looks like a storm is brewing.

We stop outside the living room where Shrek is still on pause, and I’m going to make the fucker who broke into our house pay.

He ruined movie night.

Just... where the hell are Wade and Elliot? Why is this house so goddam quiet? We should have bumped into one of them by now.

That's when a groan sounds from the floor, and Lark points at a slumped figure in the corner. Her skin is pale. My heart drops to my stomach.

It's Wade, and he's barely conscious.

I drop to my knees to check on him. His face is all bruised, but he's alive. It looks as if he has been drugged with something.

Just what the fuck happened to Elliot? Where's our clown of a beta?

"Gabriel, look out!"

A shadow looms over me, and instinctively, I jump up to protect my omega. But then something stabs me in the neck. A syringe.

What the fuck?

A gun goes off, and then everything turns black. Just as I pass out, I hear Lark whimpering, and I failed to keep her safe.

They're going to take her away.

CHAPTER 37

Colt

My phone buzzes to life, and we all jump in the chopper. Well, all but Killian and Sebastian.

It's Elliot, and I pick up on the second ring?

"Speak to me, Elliot. Where are Gabe and Lark? Are they safe?"

It takes the beta a while to speak, and I roar down the phone. "For fuck's sake, just speak, man!"

"I-I'm sorry. But... I couldn't protect them. They're... they're gone. I tried to go after one of them, but they're gone. Wade... he's..."

My blood runs cold as my worst fears come to light, and I just want to fucking scream. When I find Brady, I will kill him.

"Relax, Colt. We will find them. His boat can't have left that long ago. The embers were still warm on his fire," Killian assures me.

While that may be true, it still doesn't change the fact that Brady has my omegas. It doesn't change the fact that I failed to be there to protect them.

I am their alpha, yet I was too hell-bent on my personal revenge. Not only have I lost my father, but I have lost my omegas.

Elliot continues on the phone. "I'm sorry, man. I tried to go after them... I thought they were safe... Wade is only just waking up..."

I take comfort in the fact that Elliot and Wade are safe. They're still my pack, my family.

Brady has only taken my omegas.

Killian and Roman checked on theirs, and both Ravyn and Dove are safe. I'm glad for them. I'm not that selfish to the point where I want to put others in danger too, but a part of me wishes we were all still on the same page.

When we departed for Brady's island, our motives were all the same. We all had a reason to go after Brady. While their omegas may be safe now, at one time, that man had tried to take them. I have to take comfort in the fact they got to their omegas before Brady could take them.

What are the chances that we could be lucky the third time?

I try to calm myself, speaking gently on the phone. "It's... it's fine, Elliot. We'll find them. Hang tight."

"You... you too, Colt."

I love Elliot like a brother. He got me through some tough times. He's my wingman, so to speak. He participated in all my recent benders.

He finally hangs up the phone, and I squeeze it between my fingers. Now the only sound that fills the chopper is the spinning blades.

At least I have Bryce with me. Lark is his omega too, and he's just as determined to get her back as much as I am. He's determined to get Gabe back.

We're all family, all pack.

Maybe one day, we can all look back on this and laugh. One day..

I have to have hope.

That's all there is to do now.

CHAPTER 38

Lark

I come to, wincing in pain when my head splits in two.

A distant gun goes off, and I realize it's a memory. My aim had been useless in the end. The bastards still got to me.

I failed to protect me and Gabriel.

There's a faint whir beneath me, and a slight rocking sensation. I know that rocking sensation. That's the sensation you feel when you're on a boat.

My eyes snap open, and at first, I don't register where I am. I'm in a small, dark cabin. Everything is cloaked in shadow. There's a window in the room that shows a bit of starry sky, or a porthole, to be exact.

I *am* on a boat.

I try to move, but my hands are tied behind my back. My ankles have also been restrained, too. My heart pounds against my chest.

I have to get off this boat.

There comes a groaning sound beside me, and I look across.

It's Gabriel. Thank God.

"Gabriel!"

I wiggle closer to his side, and by the faint moonlight dripping in from the porthole, I see his face. He looks so peaceful right now. But it won't be long until he wakes and realizes where we are.

This isn't good. Someone must have realized what he was. It makes sense why they kidnapped us both.

"Gabriel, wake up..."

He stirs, and my heart calms down. Thank goodness he's all right. I don't care what these bastards do to me, so long as my beautiful omega is all right.

I'm used to alphas pawing at me, yet he isn't. This will be harder for him.

The door swings open, and a figure steps into the room. I don't see them at first since it's still too dark. That's when they flick on the light switch.

It's a man in his fifties or sixties.

He's wearing a suit.

A small figure steps in behind him, and my blood reaches boiling point when I realize it's an omega. The bitch.

The man kneels down beside Gabriel, completely ignoring me. Judging by his deep bergamot scent, he's an alpha. A pretty powerful one, too.

He checks his pulse, and I growl. “Don’t touch him.”

The alpha glances at me. He has red hair and a thick beard, and cold, blue eyes. “Oh, so you do have some fight in you, Lark.”

So, he knows my name. No big deal. Still, I’m not afraid.

“Why did you take us? Who are you?”

He raises his brow. “Have you seriously not figured it out yet?”

I wrack my brain. Then I clear my voice, looking at him, unimpressed. Deep down, I am terrified. I have heard so much about this man, after all.

“Brady Shaw.”

He grins. “Clever girl.”

I don’t have to ask what he wants. I already know of his past. Once, he kidnapped young alphas, then trained them up to be killers. But now he steals and traffics omegas around the world.

He’s nothing but a criminal.

Brady peers down at Gabriel. “Who would have guessed that my dear boy Colt had been hiding this little gem away? A *male* omega. He will sell for a good price...”

He leans down and sniffs Gabriel’s hair, and I wriggle in my restraints. “Don’t you fucking dare! If you want to sell someone, then sell me. Leave him out of this.”

Brady scoffs, standing back to his feet. He steps up to the omega, taking a box from her.

“You may find this hard to believe, Lark. But you’re not as desirable as you think. While the alphas may desire you back at home, abroad... not so much. They don’t like compliancy. They like their omegas with a bit of bite...”

I glare up at that pig, wishing my hands weren’t tied.

Oh, he thinks I don’t have any bite? How about he unties me, and then we’ll see...

“You’ve been indoctrinated by our government, Lark. They’ve already turned you into one of their perfect little pedigrees. My clients like their omegas wild, untamed...”

“We aren’t fucking mutts! We are people!”

He looks back at me, a dark twinkle flashing in his eyes. “Keep talking like that and I may just change my mind about you.”

Oh, well, that’s a relief. I was worried that I wasn’t good enough for a moment.

“Don’t get me wrong. You *are* beautiful. That red hair alone should be enough to suffice on the black market, but I have something way more valuable. A *male* omega... They’re so much rarer...”

Bile bubbles in my stomach. He’s disgusting.

I look up at the omega. “Don’t just stand there. Do something!”

“Oh, she won’t help you. She works for me now. In fact, you may recognize her... she used to work for your agency.”

Again, I try to think back to when I have seen her, but my mind comes up empty.

She finally looks at me, and if looks could kill.

“I knew it. You don’t even remember me.”

I growl. “Who are you?”

Brady chuckles. “Apparently Neveah was once a rising star. But then you came along and took her place, and she has resented you ever since. It’s a cutthroat world out there, after all.”

I glare at Neveah. So, she is only doing this out of spite? The girl needs to grow up.

“You’re pathetic. The both of you.”

Neveah steps away from the door, and once she reaches my side, she kicks me in the ribs.

“Shut up. You took everything from me, so now I am going to take it from you.”

I laugh. “You know he will only end up selling you, too. You’re not that bad to look at, Heaven, or whatever your name is...”

She gives a frustrated growl, reaching her leg back to kick me again.

Brady stops her. “That’s enough, Neveah. Save your strength for later.”

Neveah stops, smirking down at me, and that's a really unfortunate name choice her mother gave her in the end.

There is nothing heavenly about her.

Brady withdraws a needle from the box, extending it towards Gabe's neck.

My heart pounds when I realize what's inside that syringe.

He's going to put him into an artificial heat. It could destroy him!

I wriggle. "No, no! Stop! Inject me, inject me!"

Neveah and Brady ignore me, but I don't stop. I can't let them inject Gabriel.

Tears pour from my eyes as I beg now. "Please, inject me. I can handle a heat... he can't..."

Brady looks at me from the corner of his eye. "What can I say? My clients love a green omega. I can see the dollar signs already."

That's all we are to him. Money. He truly is a bastard.

How badly did he have to fall to go from training alphas and then selling omegas later?

A lot, I bet.

Finally, he sticks the needle inside Gabriel, and I have no choice but to watch as he convulses violently.

A scream splits from his lips, and I swear...

I will kill Brady myself.

CHAPTER 39

Gabriel

“*W*here do you think you’re going?”
“Come back here.”

No, this can’t be happening again. This memory happened years ago, back when I was still in school.

“Hey, pretty boy. You got something in your pants for me? Think you can take my knot?”

My body is feverish as I can’t think straight. This has to be a dream, surely. There is no way I’m back at school, surrounded by those dickheads again.

Those bastards molested me, all just because I had come into my perfume. No matter how much I tried to hide my designation, some alpha assholes still tried to take advantage of me.

The pricks.

“Yank his pants down...”

“No, no!” I scream, thrashing my arms and legs.

The heat still doesn't subside. There's a dull, continuous cramp in my lower region, and I have no idea what is happening to me. The worst part of all, I feel so empty.

The urge to be filled and dripping wet with an alpha's cum has never been so strong, and I realize to my horror that I have gone into heat.

How is that possible? I take all kinds of hormones suppressants. There is no way...

Another wringing cramp, and I double over, crying out in pain. It doesn't even sound like my voice. I sound like a dying animal.

"It's okay, it will all be over soon..."

A foul-smelling alpha hauls me away, and if I wasn't in so much pain, I would kick his fucking ass. The fucker has another thing coming if he thinks he can take advantage of me like those asshats back at school.

Because of them, I had to say goodbye to my friends and leave school. I was always ashamed of my designation, but not anymore. I am one proud ass omega now, and I'll be damned if this prick uses me for his own sick game.

But the pain, the heat... It's all too much, and what the hell has he drugged me with?

Shit.

I try to shout, but then a blinding hot pain steals my vision, and finally, I pass out.

Lark

Hot tears leak from my eyes as Brady drags Gabriel away.

“Please...” I beg. “I will do anything. Just... don’t hurt him...”

“Shut up, bitch!”

Neveah kicks me in the ribs, and I bend forward, gritting my teeth. The bitch got me with her sharp toenail.

She kneels in front of me, and I meet her eyes, clenching my jaw. “You’ll regret this.”

Neveah smirks. At that moment, she is one of the ugliest people I have ever met. It’s hard to believe that she had ever been a rising star.

“Damn...” she whispers. “I can see what everyone is talking about now. You simply are gorgeous.”

I roll my eyes, and she glares at me next. “What? You’re even above a simply compliment? Fuck you.”

She goes to kick me again, but then she stops at the sound of my voice. “I will give you anything you want. More than whatever Brady has promised you.”

Neveah cocks her head, keeping her leg bent backwards. The last thing I want is to be at the mercy of her sharp toenail again.

“I’m listening.”

Oh, thank God. She's as stupid as she looks. This may actually work.

"Look, you can have it all. I will back off and let you have the limelight again. I don't care about that life anymore. I never did. So, it's yours."

She smirks. "Even your clothes?"

What? Is she serious?

"Okay. You can have my clothes."

Fine. If that's what it takes to swindle her. This was almost too easy, but I know what omegas crave most.

Shiny, pretty things.

Just when I think I have her, she reaches her leg back, then kicks me hard in the stomach again.

"Sorry. You will have to find some other omega to bribe, sweetie. I don't want that life anymore. No, I want so much more..."

I glance up, studying her. All the while, I'm aware of Gabriel as Brady drags him away somewhere, and time is ticking.

"You want Brady?"

Neveah falls silent. Then she looks away, glancing out the porthole. Waves splash against the glass outside.

"He won't ever want you..."

"Shut up," she whispers.

“But you know I’m right.”

She growls, whirling back around, but she keeps her jagged toenail to herself. “I said, shut up!”

It looks like I found her weak spot. Sure, omegas like nice things, but what they really want is to be loved and cherished.

They want a pack. An alpha.

I always wanted that, too. But I didn’t think it was ever possible. Well, until I met Gabriel and the gang. I felt the connection the instant they came to my table. I even felt it with Colt. We may have started off as enemies, but we still had that spark.

“Neveah, just let me go. This is pointless. You know he will never give you what you want. But that doesn’t mean you can’t find someone else.”

The omega keeps her back to me, wiping her eyes. I think she knows deep down that Brady will betray her.

All the other omegas who’ve worked for him have ended up dead, yet Brady couldn’t care in the slightest. There was Daphne, my old mentor (no surprises there), and Beatrice, Ted’s old girlfriend.

Does she want to be the third?

“I never wanted this, you know. I never even wanted to be an omega. My father sold me once I awakened.”

I sigh. “Yeah. I know the feeling. My mother sold me to the compound at the first whiff of my perfume.”

Neveah looks at me now, raising a bow, and I finally see her. Deep blue eyes and ebony hair. I'm sure she would have thrived if I hadn't come along.

“That sucks.”

Silence. Only the whirring of the boat accompanies us now.

Neveah drops beside and unties the rope around my wrists. Then she unties my ankles, setting me free.

I rise to my feet, rubbing my wrists. “Thank you.”

She smiles. “You're welcome. Try the room at the end of the hall. I'll set off a flare.”

A flare?

Neveah meets my eyes. “We're going to make sure he goes down.”

I just hope someone sees her flare. I have no idea where we are. We're pretty much alone on a boat with that disgusting alpha.

“Go,” she says, and I sneak out of the room, tiptoeing down the hall.

Fuck. I really need to work on my sea legs. I can barely walk straight as I sneak up the hall. In the corner of my eye, Neveah vanishes as she goes to set off the flare, and it's obvious she has had more practice walking on a boat than me.

I just thank our lucky stars she is on our side now.

There's an axe inside a glass cabinet on the wall. I have to break the glass in order to get inside. I just hope no one hears.

I manage to break the glass as noiselessly as possible with my fist, and now I grip the handle in my hands, slinking up to a door at the end of the hall.

I peek inside. Gabriel lies on the floor, barely conscious, and the underneath of my arms prickles in dread. But then I spy his chest, and he's alive.

Thank God.

Unfortunately, Brady is alive too, but not for long. It's a shame I no longer have my gun, but I don't care. I am prepared to take his life.

I have never killed anyone before. I have always been the "perfect omega."

My perfect record will definitely be tainted after this, but I'm prepared to darken my soul for Gabriel.

I'm prepared to do this for Colt, and for all the other people Brady has hurt, too.

The alpha has his back to me. It looks as if he is setting up a camera, and bile bubbles in my stomach. He was going to record my perfect omega for some sick fucks out there.

I bet the highest bidder would have won.

He's a dead man.

Finally, I sneak up behind him as quietly as possible, my arms shaking. I can do this. Just one blow to the back of his head, and Brady is dead.

"What do you intend to do with that axe, Lark?"

Brady's cool, silent voice makes me freeze and fuck. My heart thumps in my chest as the alpha turns, peering down at me like I'm some insolent little girl.

He raises a brow when he glances at the axe. A smirk curves his lips. "I guess Neveah let you go, then?"

I grind my teeth. "No. I just happened to get the better of her. She's currently unconscious in the storage room."

She's not, but it's best that's what I lead him to believe. Neveah should be setting off a flare right about now.

It may be our only chance to get away from this man.

He is dangerous, after all.

Brady's eyes rake me up and down, and a purr rumbles in his chest. "Maybe I was wrong about you. Maybe you are worth something after all."

I hold the axe higher. I'm not even sure if I'm holding it right, but if he takes a step closer to me or Gabriel, I will kill him.

He chuckles, moving closer. I swing the axe, and he grabs it swiftly in his hand. Then he snaps the wooden handle across his knee and drops it to the ground.

What was I thinking? This man kidnaped and trained young assassins. As if I had any chance of killing him.

Brady seizes me by the throat, pushing me back against the wall. My feet rise off the ground as he presses his body against me, sniffing my hair. He hums in pleasure. "Damn. Your

perfume smells even better when you're rebellious, Lark. It looks as if I may fetch a good price for you after all. When good girls go bad. That will be your selling point..."

Brady lifts a syringe, and I thrash my legs, trying to pull his hand away from my neck.

N-no.

A shadow moves in the corner of my eye, and I don't have time to see what is happening. Someone plunges an axe deep into Brady's neck and he yelps, dropping me back to my feet.

I glance up, meeting Gabriel's fierce blue eyes. He doubles over, staggering on the spot, but he's alive, though barely.

His teeth are clenched as sweat drips down his face, and it's the effects of his heat. But then a wave of his perfume hits me, and I'm almost blinded.

Fuck. Peaches and cream. With a hint of something else. Something I can't even put a name too. Gabriel in heat is one of the best things I have ever smelled.

Brady yanks the axe from his neck, using the last of his strength to punch Gabriel in the face. My omega goes flying.

"Gabriel!" I shout.

"Shut up, whore. You're next!" Brady screams, keeping his hand around his neck.

For a moment, I worry that Gabriel didn't hit him hard enough, but then I spy the blood drenching his fingers. Brady

won't last long. At the most, he will have a slow, agonizing death.

He's already losing consciousness. His movements become sluggish as he tries to grab me, but I kick my leg forward, sending him flying. I was always good at high kicks, after all.

The alpha lands on his back, trying his best to stop the blood pouring from his neck. Just then, a flare goes off outside, and I jump. It lights up the cabin for a brief second until everything goes black again.

Now I can't see Gabriel.

I just hope Brady doesn't get up again.

I move to Gabriel's side once my vision clears. He's awake, but barely. It looks as if that bastard broke his nose.

Brady wheezes several feet away, and it looks as if his time is up. I can't say I feel sorry.

Well, it looks as if I never got to be the one to deliver the final blow after all.

"Gabriel," I whisper, taking his face in my hands. His skin is hot to the touch and my heart breaks.

I had no idea it could even be this bad. I've seen an omega in heat. Heck, I have been in heat myself, but never like this.

Whatever was in that syringe has fucked with Gabriel's hormones. He coils like a shriveled shrimp on the frying pan, and then he cries out as another blinding, white hot cramp seizes him.

There is nothing I can do. Gabriel needs an alpha. Though I don't think Colt's knot would be enough right now.

This heat isn't natural. Nothing would ever satiate this pain.

He needs to get those drugs out of his system.

"L-Lark... it hurts..."

I hold back a sob. "I know, Gabriel. But I promise, I won't leave your side. Someone will find us soon."

"B-Brady..."

"Dead."

Well, not just yet. But I don't want to worry him. Gabriel just needs to relax.

"Lark, I... need you to take the pain away..."

I meet the blue slits of his eyes. "What?"

He clenches his teeth as another cramp wrings him dry like a wet cloth. "It... may just help..."

I blink. Is he serious? I'm an omega. I don't have a knot. I have everything that he has, sans the penis. But then something comes over me when he gives me that seductive purr, and then his perfume strengthens.

"Oh... god... Gabriel... your perfume..."

He tries to laugh. "Yeah. You don't smell too bad yourself."

I glance across at Brady. His eyes are closed, but he's still breathing. He's going to die pretty soon, anyway.

So let him watch.

“O-okay.”

I unzip Gabriel’s pants, and he sighs, closing his eyes. He already looks so much better. Fuck, he is hard. Also, that is a *lot* of slick. I have seen plenty of dripping cocks, but not like this.

I hope his slick tastes as good as he smells.

I wrap my mouth around his swollen head, and Gabriel whines in deep pleasure. So I lick him all the way to the base until I reach his balls, and his slick fills my mouth.

It’s like taking a pill of ecstasy. I see nothing but pretty colors as Gabriel’s delicious slick drips down my throat, and I finally understand.

No wonder alphas go crazy for us. This is pure heaven.

I move my mouth up and down his shaft, lapping up every last drop of his slick. My own slick drips between my legs.

When I’m done sucking his cock, I straddle his hips, leaning down to kiss him on the lips. I slide down his length, and soon the cabin is filled with nothing but the scent of peaches and strawberries.

When I come, he comes, and soon our slick pools between us as we ride each other to our peaks. I squeeze on his cock as my walls close around him, locking him in place, and that’s how we stay.

I won’t ever let him go. I may be no alpha, but I can still be here for him and all his future heats.

The lines around Gabriel's face have vanished, and it looks as if the pain has finally subsided.

I pick up on the sound of a distant helicopter, and I look out the window. I cry out, reaching down to kiss Gabriel. He can most likely taste himself on my lips, but he's in too much bliss to care.

"It's fine. Gabriel. We're saved."

He doesn't seem to hear me. He's still locked inside me. It's strange. My pussy seems to know what to do, acting like a knot in its own right, and who knew?

It turns out I can satisfy Gabriel's heat after all.

"L-Lark."

"Don't worry. We will get you to a hospital soon."

"I... love you."

My heart almost stops when I hear those words. Then my eyes swell with tears as I bend forward, kissing him once again.

"I love you too."

CHAPTER 40

Colt

A flare goes off in the darkness, and it's a bloody miracle.
Please be them...

“Hurry, we've got no time to lose,” I say.

Ted grunts, speeding towards the flare. The helicopter lurches slightly, but I'm more than prepared.

It's time to take Brady down and rescue my omegas.

As the chopper flies closer, I spy that dark shape above the waves, and my heart jumps to my mouth. “It's Brady's boat!”

A moment of silences passes through the helicopter. I glance at Killian and Roman. Their eyes are set on that distant boat as they prepare their weapons, ready to take on Brady.

There's no getting away from us now. We have the bastard right where we want him.

My heart won't stop pounding when Ted circles the chopper around the boat, lowering it toward a landing pad.

The moment we land, we jump out of the helicopter and then storm the boat. We find a brunette omega with large blue eyes waiting for us on deck.

I don't know who she is, but we can ask questions later.

Was she the one who set off the flare? It doesn't matter now, we're here.

“They're inside the cabin. He's in there too... Brady...”

My heart thumps, and then we all move as one unit. We race through the halls, and I pick up on Gabe's scent immediately.

It hits me like a wave. It has never smelled so strong.

I can sense Lark's strawberry too, and my mouth waters. Fuck, they smell so good together, like a delicious fruit cocktail. A rumble sounds in my chest as I make my way to them.

My omegas scents don't have quite the same effect on the other alphas in our rescue party, but Bryce is just as taken.

While only one of them is his mated omega, he still feels the draw. Two members of our pack are in trouble, and we need to rescue them.

We storm into the end room of the hall, and I do a double take when I spy the scene before me.

Gabriel is a mess, his eyes closed as he lies on the ground. Lark protects him, and they are both covered in each other's scent.

I give off a low, vibrating purr, and both of my omegas lift their heads.

Only Lark seems to have her senses about her. Tears slip from her eyes. “I knew you would find us, Colt.”

I rush to their sides, barely paying attention to the slumped, dying figure across from me. I caught his sharp bergamot scent.

But I have more important matters at hand.

Fuck, Gabriel looks awful. His face is flushed bright red, as his perfume has never been so strong. I can taste his peaches and cream on the roof of my mouth.

“Gabe, it’s me...” I place my hand over his cheek. “I’m here now. I’ve got you both.”

Gabe leans his face into my hand, opening his eyes. I gaze into a pair of blue slits. He smirks. “What took you so long?”

I laugh, leaning down to kiss him. Then I sit back up and place a hand over Lark’s soft cheek. She shivers beneath my touch.

“Thank you, Lark.”

She smiles sweetly, and those beautiful brown eyes fill with tears. “Don’t mention it.”

Without thinking, I move across and kiss her firmly on the lips. She gasps in surprise.

“Screw the contract. You are no longer our hired omega. You are one of us now, Lark. You are pack. You and Gabe, I

want you both.”

She whimpers, and I wipe her cheeks, purring so low that only she can hear now.

“You are mine. I promise. I won’t ever let anything happen to you again, Lark.”

“So you promise to stop being such an epic douche, too?”

I think for a moment. “Yeah, I promise...”

She giggles and kisses me back, slipping her tongue into my mouth. Meanwhile, Killian and Roman circle the slumped form on the other side of the cabin.

“Well, well, look who it is...” Killian remarks, a light flashing in his ice-blue eyes.

That’s my cue to get up. I have some unfinished business to resolve. I stagger to my feet, joining my brothers from ALPHA.

We were like brothers at that awful place, and now we are forever united by the trauma we share. Brady took so much from us.

He is going to pay once and for all.

Bryce stays with Lark and Gabriel as I face my childhood tormentor.

He’s still the same. Except his hair is a little grayer. Ted and Sebastian join Killian and Roman for moral support, but they needn’t bother. The bastard is dying, and there is nothing he can do to stop us.

He glares up at all three of us, a sneer crossing his face. He laughs. “My, wh-what a reunion. I... never thought I would see all three of you ever again. Yet... here you are... I’m so proud...”

The three of us growl, and we sound like a pack of vicious wolves. There’s just so many crimes that this man has committed.

He is responsible for the deaths of our loves ones. Roman lost his mom and dad, and his twin brother Rome too. Killian lost his mom and his little sister, Daisy, and I lost my dad...

That wound is still fresh, and our truce still goes.

I get to be the one who kills him.

“Well, Colt. Would you like to do us the honor?” Killian intones, his voice flat.

I smirk, grabbing a small handgun. Just one bullet should do the trick. “With pleasure...”

Roman chuckles darkly, and he truly is a sick bastard. We all are.

This man made us that way.

“I’ve been waiting a long time for this...” Roman growls, and I bet he’s thinking of Rome.

It’s a shame Rome couldn’t be here with us now. Instead, he went to the dark side.

“Well, your wait is finally over, Roman,” I reply.

I pull the trigger. Lark yelps behind me, holding onto Bryce and Gabe. However, I don't look away from Brady.

The bullet goes straight through his head.

A moment of silence passes between the three of us. The boat continues to rock over the waves, but the deed is done.

Brady is dead.

We all release a collective breath, closing our eyes as we think of our lost loved ones. A tear drips from my eye as my father's face flashes before me.

This was for you, dad.

I know he loved me deep down. My mom tells me he never gave up on finding me, and when the police called to tell him they'd found me, he had cried.

I find it hard to believe. I never once saw my dad cry. Even when I finally reunited with him, he was stern.

We had a complicated relationship, but now... he's gone. He will never come back, and I will never get to tell him all the things I wanted.

But there's no point in having regrets.

Twenty-six years of suffering have finally come to an end.

For the three of us.

Now we can all move on.

A couple of weeks pass.

The country is about to host another election. Someone needs to take up my dad's role as the head of state, and I just wonder who the lucky candidate will be.

That's why I take my seat at the head of the council. The rest of his inner circle is here too.

Gabriel's dad sits beside me, and Elliot's sits opposite him. They're both strong, dependable alphas, and I am sure they would make admirable leaders.

Bryce's father is seated beside Gabriel's, and Wade's dad takes up the chair beside Elliot's father. None of them look at all like their sons, and I guess that is something Pack Steel all have in common.

None of us take after our fathers. We never followed in any of their footsteps in the end. Not one of us became a senator, and I can imagine we are all of a great disappointment.

Honestly? Politics just never called to me. It was not my path, but I do know of one person who is interested. She sits beside me at the table, wearing a smart black suit, and Lark is the picture of grace and intellect.

Apparently, she's more than just a pretty face. It turns out she has a high IQ and knows a lot about, well, everything. It was how she was able to escape the OCC.

She told me a few weeks back that she would have loved to have gone into politics if she hadn't manifested as an omega. In fact, it was the reason why she bowed down for so long and

took all the abuse so she could rise through the ranks and one day make a difference.

Well, it looks like her gamble paid off.

It's time the council learned about the truth of our world.

They were a little hesitant at first, but after some careful coaxing from Gabriel's father, they all agreed to listen to what she had to say.

"Well, we're listening," the alpha in question says.

It's obvious he wants to make a difference, too. After all, this concerns his son.

It's time we changed our treatment of omegas. It will take a while, but I know that one day our efforts will be worth it. These men at the table right now are currently at the top, and I know they will be the ones to make a difference.

Lark glances at me. I nod and finally, she tells them her story.

The first step.

CHAPTER 41

Epilogue

It's crazy how many things can change in just a few months. Ever since I told the council about my life at the compound, they have upped their game.

They have freed all the omegas living in the OCC. They have sent them to several halfway houses across the country, where they can hopefully gain the skills they need to integrate back into society.

They will no longer be treated as baby-making machines. From now, the omega will pick an alpha or a pack of her choosing.

Omegas are no longer deemed property of the government.

It's a small step, but we're getting there.

It is now a criminal offense to abuse an omega, period. No one is to treat them like second-class citizens anymore, and those who do will be arrested.

Many people have been arrested already. The police stormed every heat farm in the country, rescuing all the poor

omegas who lived inside.

Apparently, all the horror stories were true, and I just thank God that I didn't end up in one of those places.

Gabriel no longer has to pretend to be beta, and as a result, he threw away his hormone suppressants and embraced his true nature. The same goes for every omega in hiding.

No one should have to hide who they are anymore.

Best of all, Colt finally got to declare him as his omega. Colt has *two* omegas now, and his mother couldn't be more proud. She'd confessed she had known about the two of them all along, but she never wanted to mention anything in case the news got to Colt's father.

While we may never know of the man's approval of Gabriel, at least we can rest now, knowing that Delilah gave him her blessing in the end.

Gabriel couldn't be happier either. Even his own father gave Colt his blessings, and he has been on top of the world since.

The moment he stopped taking the pills, his natural hormones kicked in. He is hornier than ever now, always wanting a knot or friction of any kind, and maybe the day will come when he can experience a real heat.

The two of us are baking cookies in the kitchen, putting our omega training to good use. Gabriel is self taught, but the agency paid for all my cooking classes.

As a result, our pack never goes hungry.

We're both covered in flour as we work at the counter, rolling dough back and forth over and over.

It's almost like a work out section.

I keep stealing glances at him as he stands to my right, and that's when I notice the flour on his nose. I snort.

He stops rolling his pin. "What are you snorting about?"

I grin. "Just you. You have flour on your nose."

Gabriel goes to wipe it off his nose, but I step closer, wrapping my arms around his neck. I rub my nose against his. "Now I have flour on my nose."

He laughs, pressing me flush to his chest, and his hard-on brushes between my legs. Then he places his mouth to my lips, stealing a kiss from me, and I melt beneath his caress.

My breath fogs his glasses, and he grumbles, taking them off so he can look at me. "Damn, you really do get prettier every day, Lark. What *is* your secret? Tell me."

I smile, tapping his nose, and his warm sigh brushes against my cheeks. "Maybe. One day."

A giggle escapes me, and I never would have believed I could be this happy. All my smiles and laughs are genuine now because I no longer have to entertain clients just to keep a roof over my head.

I quit working at the agency. Most omegas have quit around the country. What would be the point in continuing to work for them?

We have way more opportunities now where the job market is concerned, and I hear that my old agency has gone near bankrupt.

I can't say I'm sorry.

Colt hired the best lawyer in the country, and in the end, the agency was forced to pay back all the money I made. I earned that money fair and square, and it's only right that it should go back into my pocket.

As a result, I have become filthy rich. I made the agency a lot of money after all, even in my short time there.

All the proceeds from the perfume they made from my scent now go straight into my charity. I started a foundation, "Help for Omegas," and it's going pretty well.

I'm even an ambassador for omegas worldwide, and I am more famous than I ever was before.

Ravyn and Dove have joined me too in spreading awareness, and the three of us are making a real difference.

We're like super heros now.

I couldn't be any happier.

Gabriel winces next, and I reach up, brushing away his strawberry locks. "What's wrong?"

He grits his teeth, sweat dripping down his face. "Nothing, just... fuck..."

He doubles over, and my insides loop when it dawns on me.

Gabriel is going into heat. I had noticed he was perfuming a lot lately, but it's only been a few weeks since he stopped taking suppressants.

Could it happen that quickly?

That's when I receive a pinching cramp in my own belly. I grip the counter, reaching my hand for my phone.

I have the guy's numbers on speed dial. They promised they would rush straight to my side when my next heat arrived.

It's just funny that our heats have aligned like this.

Is it some strange omega biology? Maybe Gabriel can tell me when he stops writhing in pain.

He's the one with the degree in omega biology, after all.

"Shit... Lark..."

I grab his hand. "It's okay, Gabriel. We'll get through this."

He's sweating like a faucet as he looks up from his bent position, and he's in a worse condition than I am.

I have had more practice. His only experience with a heat was the artificial one that Brady injected him with, so he shouldn't be too hard on himself.

The phone picks up, and now Colt's voice can be heard down the phone. "Lark, are you okay?"

"No. Gabriel and I have gone into heat!"

He falls silent over the phone. Then he releases a shuddery breath. "Fuck."

“Get here right away. We’ll be in the nest.”

Colt hangs up, and now I try to get Gabriel up the stairs. It’s no simple task. He stops to cry out now and then, and all I can do is whisper him sweet nothings.

“It will be okay, Gabriel... we will get through this together.”

He can barely hear me, as he’s in too much pain. I suppose I can help him until Colt arrives.

We turned the attic into a nest. My closet was just a little too cramped in the end. Also, it reminded me too much of that awful morning when Colt got that call from Delilah.

Now it’s used for storing bags and shoes again.

Potato does zoomies up and down the hall as we pass, and I roll my eyes. “Not now, Potato.”

I find the stairwell to the attic, and why so many stairs?

I somehow manage to get him up, and now I push him back onto the rounded mattress that takes up the entire space.

The mattress is draped with white gauze curtains.

Gabriel and I designed the nest for ourselves. The room looks like a lounge, as there are plush cushions everywhere. It’s our own little paradise.

Sometimes we just disappear up here for hours and don’t come down. All we do is watch rom-cons and eat food. There’s a wide screen TV on one side of the room, and maybe I should put something on to help him feel better.

No. All he needs now is a knot.

And someone who loves him to take away the pain.

I unzip his pants, then remove my panties. Then I slide down his cock and he's already rock hard. Gabriel shudders when I meet him at the hilt, slumping back onto the mattress.

He opens his eyes. "I knew I could count on you..."

I grin, squeezing my pussy around him. It will just be enough until Colt arrives.

Voices echo through the house. Then the guys storm up the stairs to the attic.

"Gabriel, Lark!" Colt shouts.

Gabriel sighs in relief. "It looks like our shining knight has finally arrived..."

I laugh just as the guys appear. The four of them freeze at the sight of us. So I give Gabriel's cock another squeeze, and he melts into putty.

"Holy fuck..." Elliot breathes. "You have no idea how jealous I am of you right now, Gabriel. I wish I could go into heat..."

The omega opens his eyes at that asinine remark. "Trust me... you... you really don't..."

Colt pushes his way past Elliot, dropping by Gabriel's side. He takes his cheek in his hand. "How you holding up?"

Gabriel rolls his eyes, gasping for breath. "Just fucking dandy."

Colt smiles, looking at me. He grabs my own cheek. “And you?”

My heart flutters at his delicate touch, and he really is a changed alpha. He’s no longer a douche, but a dotting mate to the both of us.

I let go of Gabriel, and now I pull myself loose as Colt tends to the omega.

Gabriel pushes him away. “No, Lark first. I can wait.”

Colt glances at me.

I shake my head. “No, Gabriel. *You* take the first knot. Besides, I’m sure one of the guys will give me theirs.”

Bryce and Wade have already undressed, and now I spy both of their hard cocks as they step forward. Elliot’s not too far behind.

Bryce aligns himself above me as Elliot and Wade take my left and right. Now Gabriel and I lay side by side as we get a knot each. We even hold hands.

I barely pay attention to the knot that grows inside me, as all I can focus on is the look of pure bliss on Gabriel’s face.

My heart pounds. I think it’s time I finally told them all.

“I have decided I want your bites. All five you.”

Every male in the rooms freezes. Elliot stops nipping on my left breast as Wade removes his finger from my clit.

Even Colt and Gabriel pause. Colt’s still knotted inside of Gabriel as he looks across at me. Gabriel lies on his front, a

cushion propped up beneath him as he peers at me stunned.

“Did... you just say...?”

“I did. I want to be bonded with each of you. And I want to give all of you my own bite in return.”

A silence falls over the nest. Then Bryce purrs, leaning down to kiss my chin. “We would love nothing more.”

“Ditto,” Wade says, burying his nose into my hair.

Elliot sniggers. “I already know where I plan to mark you...”

Now I await Colt and Gabriel’s answer. They decide as one, nodding their heads.

“As soon as I’m done knotting Gabe, I’m going to claim that pretty neck, baby.”

Gabriel whispers. “We’ll have matching bite marks, babe...”

He and Colt have started calling me babe and baby. It makes me feel loved and so special.

Colt and Bryce unlock and once I’m free, Colt drags me closer.

Gabriel wraps his arms around me, breathing in my red hair. His peaches and cream fills my nostrils as he enters my behind, and all I want to do is bathe in his sweet scent.

I want to bathe in all of their scents.

Colt’s rich Italian leather grows stronger when he slips his cock into me, and now he meets Gabriel’s thrusts.

He sinks his teeth into my neck the moment his knot expands.

Gabriel finds a spot beneath my ear, mimicking his alpha's actions, and an invisible thread connects the three of us.

I've never felt more connected to anyone than I have in my life. It's as if an extra sense of awareness has formed amongst the three of us, and I finally know what I want to be when I grow up...

I want to be Colt and Gabriel's omega. I want Gabriel to be *my* omega, and I want Colt to be my alpha.

The same with the others, too. I want all *five* of them.

I want three alphas, one beta, and one omega, and when did I get so greedy?

I plant my teeth into Colt's neck, solidifying our bond. Gabriel leans his head over my shoulder, presenting his neck to me, and I take a bite from him too.

He tastes even better than a peach.

The three of us don't move from our position for a while. Colt has to wait until his knot loosens until he can release me again.

The moment he softens, he passes me over to Bryce, and the alpha catches me in his arms. Once again, he and Wade knot me in two places as they give me their bites.

One on my left shoulder, and another on my right.

Another thread connects me to each of them. Elliot claims my left breast with his teeth, and it looks like he found his mark. He bites into the plump flesh, and another thread joins me to him.

I yank him up to my lips, claiming his neck with my own teeth. Then I do the same with Bryce and Wade.

I find a spot on each of their throats, solidifying our new bonds.

It's as if a pathway has formed between the six of us next, and I don't know how the hell I managed to go twenty-three years without this sort of bond.

At one time, I was just happy to go with the flow, going where ever life may take me. Be that as some alpha's chaperone or hired omega, I didn't care.

I thought it was enough. Honestly, I thought that was the best I would get from this life.

But I say *hell* to that old life.

Every omega deserves this, and I'll be damned if they don't ever get to experience this special connection.

It's time for some serious change in our world.

This is only the beginning.

Afterword

Thank you so much for reading my trilogy! Please keep a look out for any future Omegaverse stories from me.

Would you like to read a deleted scene from *Omegas Don't Cry* featuring all members of the Whitefang Pack? Download [here](#)

Come and join my reader Group Violet's Foxy Readers for updates on my books or sign-up to my mailing list Don't be shy... we don't bite. Well, Potato might, but he's harmless...

Thank you for reading and please take a moment to leave a review on Amazon! It would be greatly appreciated.

About Author

Violet Fox is a UK-based author who lives in the middle of the Welsh Mountains.

When she's not fighting dragons with swords, she's writing about hunky men who possess feral, animal-like qualities. Expect all of her fictional men to become major simps for their ladies by the end of each book/ series.

She loves to write about all kinds of women, be they shy, snarky, a diva. She believes they all deserve a chance in the limelight.

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