



MY SECOND
CHANCE
MATE

ANNA GONZALES

All rights reserved. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse-engineered, or stored in, or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known, hereinafter invented, without express written permission of the publisher. For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed "Attention: Permissions Coordinator," at the address below.

Typewriter Pub, an imprint of Blvnp Incorporated
A Nevada Corporation
1887 Whitney Mesa DR #2002
Henderson, NV 89014
www.typewriterpub.com/info@typewriterpub.com

ISBN: 978-1-64434-109-4

DISCLAIMER

This book is a work of fiction. The characters, incidents, and dialogue are drawn from the author's imagination and are not to be construed as real. While references might be made to actual historical events or existing locations, the names, characters, places, and incidents are either products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

MY SECOND CHANCE MATE

ANNA GONZALES



| type
writer
pub

Table of Contents

[CHAPTER ONE](#)

[Rejected but Moving On](#)

[CHAPTER TWO](#)

[New Friends, New School, New Guy](#)

[CHAPTER THREE](#)

[Seriously, Shoot Me Now](#)

[CHAPTER FOUR](#)

[Sucker Punch to the Gut](#)

[CHAPTER FIVE](#)

[Reasons Revealed](#)

[CHAPTER SIX](#)

[Comfort of a Wolf](#)

[CHAPTER SEVEN](#)

[Best Intentions, Worst Outcome](#)

[CHAPTER EIGHT](#)

[Sudden Clarity](#)

[CHAPTER NINE](#)

[Unwanted Visitor](#)

[CHAPTER TEN](#)

[Expect the Unexpected](#)

[CHAPTER ELEVEN](#)

[Dinner with Two Mates](#)

[CHAPTER TWELVE](#)

[Mouth, Insert Foot Here](#)

[CHAPTER THIRTEEN](#)

[Pushed to the Limit](#)

[CHAPTER FOURTEEN](#)

[Completion](#)

[CHAPTER FIFTEEN](#)

[Sealed with a Bite](#)

[CHAPTER SIXTEEN](#)

[Horny Males and Fast Rides](#)

[CHAPTER SEVENTEEN](#)

[Switching Packs](#)

[CHAPTER EIGHTEEN](#)

[Douchebag Alpha's Return](#)

[CHAPTER NINETEEN](#)

Coming Clean

CHAPTER TWENTY

Buzz Kill

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

Alpha vs. Alpha

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

Loving This Life

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

A Close Call

CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR

Lashing Out

CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

Screwed

CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

Be Careful, She Bites

CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN

Brutal Lessons

CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

Lessons Learned

CHAPTER TWENTY NINE

Meeting The Parentals

CHAPTER THIRTY

Double the Surprise

CHAPTER THIRTY ONE

Goodbye High School

CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

Delivery Ready

CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

Twin Surprises

EPILOGUE

*To my Wattpad fans,
who have supported my writing journey and inspired me
to reach for a higher goal.*

FREE DOWNLOAD



Get these freebies when you sign up for the author's mailing list!

bit.ly/AnnaGonzalesWEB

CHAPTER ONE

Rejected but Moving On

HARMONY

Waking up in the morning has never been easy for me and now it feels as if there's no point in doing it at all. I didn't always feel this way. I used to love life. I enjoyed hanging out with friends and even going to school. That changed the day I met my mate. What is a mate? It's supposed to be the best part of being a werewolf, which is what I am. We are born in human form and can transform into a wolf at the age of twelve. From that point on, it's a waiting game until we find our mate. A mate is a special someone who completes you; the one you was made for and vice versa. I should be happy to have found mine. Unfortunately, my story is unique and I don't mean that in a good way.

* * *

One Year Ago . . .

I met him at the age of sixteen. He was everything I could've hoped for. Seventeen years old, 6'1", gorgeous gray eyes, dark black hair, nicely tanned skin, washboard abs, and strong long legs. Perfect, right? I thought so too. We found each other outside the airport baggage claim area. Our eyes met and it was electrifying. We moved towards one another as if pulled by some force until we were only a foot away.

"Mate," we both whispered. He reached out to touch my cheek and I leant into his palm. It felt right; like home. I was so happy that I closed my eyes to savor the moment when he suddenly tensed and dropped his hand. I opened my eyes to ask what was wrong just as he took a big step back. I stared at him in confusion and was about to ask what made him move away when the sound of a familiar voice made the words freeze on my lips.

"Babe, I see you've met my sister. Isn't she adorable?" My older sister, Megan, gushed as she gave me her usual too-tight, can't breathe type of hug.

"Did you say babe?" I asked.

"Yes, silly! Aiden, you didn't introduce yourself?" She laughed while playfully swatting his chest. "Harmony, meet the best thing to come out of this whole mandatory wolf camp that mom and dad sent me to. My boyfriend, Aiden James," she announced happily while grabbing his arm.

My wolf growled at the sight of her touching my mate, but I couldn't say anything right

now. I love my sister. She's my best friend and she looked so happy. I couldn't do anything to ruin that. Don't get me wrong; I had some serious questions to ask but I would get my answers when the time was right. Even if I had to tie Aiden to a chair to do it. There was a satisfactory rumble from my wolf just by picturing it. I couldn't believe that, out of all people my sister could have met at this camp, she had to meet and fall in love with the one wolf meant for me.

The camp they attended was a first of its kind. It was created for two types of wolves. The first was for someone like Aiden, a future alpha. These types of wolves would one day be the leaders of their pack and had to be taught to control their added power and authority so that it wouldn't be misused. The second was for wolves born from two werewolf parents who both carry the recessive gene. It causes their child to be born completely human, and my sister was one of those children. The whole thing was complicated enough as it is, and finding out I was the mate of a future alpha my sister was currently dating only added to the complication.

Aiden and I quickly exchanged hellos as if the spine tingling encounter between us never happened. We grabbed their bags and headed to the car. The ride was uncomfortable mainly because the love birds decided to share the back seat and cuddle. I exchanged looks with Aiden a couple times in the mirror, and though he would smile at my sister, the looks he gave me seemed sad and resigned. His mood confused me but I expected to get an explanation soon.

We made it to our pack house where they were having a big barbeque to welcome my sister and Aiden back. Aiden is the only nephew of our alpha, and because our alpha's mate is human, she could not conceive a child. Our law states that the next male in line would be the alpha's younger brother, Aiden's dad. However, he was killed by rogues when Aiden was thirteen so by law, Aiden is the next heir. It is strange that we never had the opportunity to meet before but that's due to the fact that Aiden's mother took him back to her pack shortly after his father's death. She was unable to deal with the memories of her lost mate that surrounded her wherever she went. Her story was sad and was still used today to teach young pups the ups and downs of mating.

After about an hour into the barbeque, my sister made a run to the store with our mom, and it finally gave me a chance to get Aiden alone. I dragged him to a clearing, a little far down from our pack house, and laid above him.

"So, what are we going to do? I love my sister to death but we're mates. We can't deny that. I don't want to hurt her but the pull I feel for you is so strong I can't ignore it," I started rambling.

"I can," he said.

I continued, not quite hearing him. "I mean, I know this is going to be difficult and create a lot of drama but I'm so happy I've found you a—"

He cut me off and repeated those two words, loud enough so I could hear them. "I can."

"You can? Can what?" I asked, confused.

"I can ignore it. This pull between us," he stated. He proceeded to rip my heart out of my chest with the rest of his words. "I never had a choice in many things in my life. I didn't choose to lose my dad, or have to leave my pack, or be put into the role of alpha but I chose your sister. I fell in love with her all on my own with no influence from anyone. I refuse to change how I feel just because my wolf wants me to. I want to be with the one I love because I say so and not because a bond is forcing me to."

I stared at him. I was shocked and hurt. "Are you saying what I'm thinking? Are you

rejecting our bond?"

He sighed. "Look, I don't want to hurt you, Harmony. I spent time with your sister, and I got to know her and fell in love all on my own. If I'm with you, it's not by choice anymore but by fate. I refuse to let fate control anything else in my life. I'm sorry but that's just how it has to be."

To say I was hurt was an understatement. What came next was just anger. "You refuse? What about me? Do you know how long I've dreamed of meeting my mate and finally feeling the love only he can give me? Only you can give me? And now you tell me I can never feel that because fate has dealt you a cruel hand and you're rebelling? And so I'm the one who has to pay for your misfortune? I have never done anything in my sixteen years of life to deserve that, but does it matter to you? Obviously not!" I cried out.

"Look, Harmony. I—"

"No, you look. I'm sorry you had to go through all that but that's what I can be here for. I can help heal the pain you've been through and support you through the role that was forced onto you. No one will be able to understand you like I, your mate, can. Let me do this for you. For us," I pleaded.

"I just can't, Harmony. I've already chosen the future I want, and that future is with your sister," he replied firmly.

"What about our bond? It's going to be hard to fight it. My wolf is trying to get through, and I'm sure so is yours. How are you going to deny him?" I questioned.

Nothing. And I meant nothing could have saved me from the pain his answer caused. "Well, I'll fight him off until I completely mate with Megan. Once I mark her, he will be easier to control, and as more time passes, our bond will eventually weaken."

"True, but you forgot one important detail. Or maybe it's not so important to you since you won't be affected but what happens to the rejected mate, Aiden? What will happen to me? Let me remind you, being that I don't have a choice in the rejection," I lashed out in anger, "my wolf will weaken. When you mark Megan, I will feel as if my chest has been ripped open. You will have your love for Megan to help get you through the weakened bond, but I won't be able to find another wolf mate since we are only given one in our lifetime. Even though the bond will deteriorate, I will still hurt every day. I will have to see you together and be reminded of my rejection time and time again. Is that really what you want for me? I know you feel something for me. I saw it at the airport. Are you absolutely sure this is what you want to do?"

"It's what I want," he whispered. "I've thought about this my whole life."

I tried one last plea. "What about kids, Aiden? Megan is human. You won't be able to have a pup with her. How will you carry on your alpha line?"

"I'll deal with that when the problem arises."

"So you'll give up your mate and any future blood children just to spite fate?" I asked, hurt and shocked.

He nodded. "Yes. I'm really sorry. I just can't be with you." There was a hint of sadness in his voice.

"It's not that you can't. You just chose not to," I whispered in defeat. "So you're finally getting to choose for yourself, and that choice forces me into a life of pain and misery," I said as I looked him in the eyes. I thought I saw some indecision and pain, but it was quickly replaced by resignation and determination. I looked away as the tears started to fall. "Fine." I turned back to

face him. "I will accept your rejection of the bond but only because like a mate should; I only want your happiness. You see, that's what mates are supposed to do: Protect each other, care for one another, and put each other first. I will endure the pain of the future for you, and I hope that it haunts you every night while you live your happily ever after with my sister." And with that said, I shifted into my light brown wolf and ran further into the darkness of the woods.

* * *

Shaking my head of the unwanted memories, I think about my life since then. I haven't done anything drastic to my appearance. I still wear my brown hair long and straight, no contacts cover my light green eyes, my full lips are still only covered in clear lip gloss, and I haven't changed from skinnys and tanks to ripped jeans and grungy t-shirts. No, the only change is my attitude. The sweet carefree nature is gone. I now know how real life can be and it isn't a fairytale. My enthusiasm for life is gone. When you look into my eyes, you'll see emptiness that hides the constant pain.

I no longer live with my pack. Six months after my rejection, Aiden marked my sister and the pain was unbearable. I couldn't be around him and see him happy anymore. Yes, there were times when I was near him and could feel his wolf fighting for control but Aiden always pushed him back. I begged my parents to let me leave the pack and join my maternal aunt's pack— Her mate's pack in Hawaii, to be specific. My parents didn't understand why at first because I never told anyone about my rejection. I made up the excuse of it being hard to be around Aiden and Megan knowing I haven't found my mate yet. At least it was half true.

That's where I am now. A new pack, a new school, and hopefully, a new life. I should have an optimistic attitude, but I no longer have the illusion of happily ever after. Hope is something I seriously lack in the present. There is one good thing to come from all this.

"Harmony, get your lazy ass up so we can get to school. I don't want to miss all the fresh meat awaiting me. My game is on fire today. Just don't stare too hard at me 'cause you might be blinded by all this hotness."

There it is. My cousin Jared. He's the only one who knows about my rejection because, unlike my aunt and uncle, I can't hide the pain from him. He knows me too well, and it took all of my wolf strength to stop him from jumping on a plane to beat the crap out of Aiden. It's good though because he constantly takes my mind off of things with his crazy man whorish ways and wise remarks. His friends are awesome too. And are total eye candies. A few tried hitting on me when I was first introduced to the pack, but Jared gave all them death glares. He warned his player friends that I was completely hands off unless any of them were planning on putting a ring on my finger. I laughed at all the deathly ill expressions in the room after that announcement. Commitment is equal to a bad case of crabs in their minds. I can't wait 'til they meet their mates. It'll be fun watching them get tamed.

I get dressed in some black skinnys and an off-shoulder white top with a black tank underneath. I put my hair in a loose bun, gloss my lips, and slip into a pair of black gladiator sandals. As I'm tucking a fly away hair behind my ear, the opening of the front door announces Jace, Nate, and Brad's arrival. I make my way to their voices and find them in the kitchen as usual.

"Bro, I'm telling you. This year we're gonna score so much pu—"

"Lady in the room!" I shout, interrupting what I'm sure was gonna be one of Nate's more colorful terms for *vajayjay*.

“Right. Sorry, Harm. As I was saying, we’re gonna score so much chicks because we’re now seniors,” Nate corrects himself excitedly.

“Well, I know I will, but I’m not too sure about you ugly mutts. Just don’t stand too close to me and you’ll have a chance since my sex appeal is just too massive,” Jared boasts, a 1 in his usual arrogant self.

“Really, Jared? I know what’s massive about you, and it’s not your sex appeal or your weiner. Don’t try to deny it. Our moms showered us together when we were little, and if I remember correctly, which I do, it was very, very, very tiny,” I say, making sure I emphasized the size with my thumb and pointer fingers.

“Hey, that’s because I haven’t changed yet. Trust me. Massive isn’t even a big enough word to describe it now,” he argues, a tiny bit offended.

I cringe. “First of all, gross. And second, your ego is the only thing that’s massive. I’m worried if you don’t bring it down you might not be able to fit your fat head out the door.”

“She’s right. Besides, we all know my sexiness outshines all of you,” Brad informs them.

“No way. I score the most ass . . . I mean chicks every year,” Jace argues.

“That’s only cause you don’t have standards and will screw anything with two sets of lips,” says Nate with a raised brow.

This sets off a whole new conversation about what’s doable and what’s not, followed by pushing and headlocks. These boys are too much and, even though I’m not excited about the day ahead, it promises to be entertaining.

CHAPTER TWO

New Friends, New School, New Guy

Although I don't have the brightest outlook on life after what I've been through, I can still appreciate the beauty of Hawaii. I mean, isn't it perfect to wake up almost every day to clear skies, a brightly shining sun, and trade winds? It's amazing! Almost amazing enough to bring back the old me . . . almost.

After a quick breakfast of bacon and eggs with some delicious guava juice, something I have become obsessed with, I follow the boys to Jared's car. I don't have my own car yet, but my Aunt June promised we could check out some cars this weekend, courtesy of my parents. It's a little missing you gift, which I am totally stoked about.

It's important that I get one right away because the ride with the boys would make any sane person want to pull their hair out. If the *constant size vs. performance* debate isn't bad enough; the spitting, the farting, and burping ractically push me to commit murder. After the rules were set that none of them could score with me, I instantly became an honorary sister. I'd rather be the hook up because at least they'd leave me alone after that instead of being blown off. I have to answer questions like *Why do girls have to be so bitchy while on their monthly period?* or *Why can't girls just put out and shut up?* I give Nate a hard smack to the back of his head for that one. I explain to them that they'd be pretty bitchy too if they have to stuff a cotton plug up their *vaj* for five days a month. As expected, they all gagged in disgust.. I can't resist giving Nate some crap, and tell him that if he's able to do the deed right, his girl of the moment will be so content she'd pass out, eliminating any sort of talking. I point out that he must not be handling his business right and probably needs more practice. This causes the others to crack up just as we reach the school and find a spot in front.

The guys get out of Jared's Tahoe, still laughing which makes heads turn and girls drool. I understand them because the four of them together are drool-worthy. Jared with his black shiny hair, Jace and Brad with their light brown hair, Brad's ending a little past his collar while Jace's is shorter with a bit of a wave to it, and Nate with his blond hair and the cutest dimples you'd ever see. Their eye colors are another draw. Jared has green eyes similar to mine, Jace has blue eyes, and Brad has black which he says makes him seem mysterious. I definitely rolled my eyes when I heard that. The egos on these guys are ridiculous. My fave of them all is definitely Nate's. He has the prettiest hazel eyes any girl would easily succumb to. All the guys are pretty tall, between 6' and 6'2, with hard bodies and even harder heads. Yes, they're hot, but I'll never admit that to them. They get enough flattery as is, which is proven as we make our way inside.

“Hi, Jared. Looking good today!”

“Nate, baby, can I touch your dimples?”

“Jace, you want me to massage those sexy shoulders?”

“Oh my gosh, Brad. Your hair looks awesome today! Can I run my fingers through it?”

Are these girls serious? I glance at them in amusement and I get some glares. Whatever. These girls have nothing to fear from me. There's no way I'd be stepping on their territory. I'm done with guys. Aiden made sure of that. Shaking away thoughts of he who shall not be named, I remind myself there is to be no more unnecessary thoughts of him. They only bring pain, and I refuse to feel anything for him anymore. I have a hard enough time dealing with the physical pain I feel every time he makes love to my sister, and I can live without the emotional scars the thoughts of him are causing. The distance between us has minimized it quite a bit but I still feel it. It's not unbearable, just uncomfortable. Another blow to my heart.

I leave the boys to their admirers and follow the sign directing me to the office. I pick up my schedule and locker assignment and head to my homeroom. Once there, I recognize a girl I met at the pack welcoming party that was thrown for me. She sees me and waves me over to the seat next to her.

“Harmony, right?” she asks.

“Um yeah, and you're . . . Michelle?” I question.

She smiles and says, “Yeah, but you can call me Shelly.” She's pretty with her curly short brown hair and brown eyes.

“And this is Katie.” She gestures to a girl with strawberry blonde hair and light green eyes who's sitting in front of her.

“Hi!” Katie gives a slight wave.

“So, how do you like it here so far?” Katie asks.

“It's alright. The weather's great.” The weather. Seriously? Do I want them to think I'm boring?

Shelly chuckles. “That it is. And do you know the best part about it? The sun highlights all the hot male bodies that go to this school especially during lunch when they take their shirts off and toss a football around. Sooo yummy,” she says dreamily.

I laugh. Oh yeah, I think I just found my new best friend. As luck would have it, I share a lot of classes with my new bestie, Shelly. Of course I have the boys in a few of them too, which earns me even more glares since they always choose to sit next to me.

Shelly was right about lunch. The view is definitely yummy, but something catches my attention as I'm scanning the lunch crowd. A little to the side of the courts is a set of trees and two tables with a group of guys sitting there. They look athletic, but none of them are in the ball game. One guy in particular peaks my interest because he's looking right at me. His eyes are covered with Oakleys, so I can't see the color and he has chocolate brown hair, just long enough to run your fingers through, and nice full lips . . . That last thought catches me off guard. *Why am I noticing his lips?* Strange. I catch their scent with just a quick sniff of the air. Werewolves. I don't remember seeing any of them at the pack party. Trust me, he would be hard to forget. That unexpected realization creates a slight frown to form.

“Who are they?” I ask Shelly, nodding in their direction.

Turning to see where I'm looking at, she catches sight of the group and stiffens before answering, “That's the Dark Mountain Pack. They run the northern territory while our pack runs the Southern territory. This school equally divides the two.”

“Who is that in the center?” I wonder curiously, still unsure why he's having such a strange effect on me.

Shelly becomes even more tense and turns back to face me, looking straight in my eyes and says, “That's their alpha, Trevor Hanes. Don't get any ideas about him. He's cold and heartless. He uses girls for one thing, then treats them like trash after he's done. Stay away from him, Harmony. He's nothing but heartache.”

I'm no stranger to heartache. She'd know this if I was ready to blurt out my sad story but I'm not, so I assure her instead. “I'm not going anywhere near him. I'm just curious who I'm going to school with.”

She relaxes instantly and turns away to watch the boys throwing the ball around. I take one last look at the table off to the side, and I see Trevor saying something to the big bulk of a guy sitting next to him. Then they both turn my way as if they are talking about me. I quickly shift my eyes away and continue eating my lunch, but I can't deny wishing my wolf hearing could pick up what they were saying. *Are they talking about me?* If so, why do I care? I'm done with guys. There will never be another for me unless I choose a human, and Trevor definitely isn't human. Still, why do I feel drawn to him for some reason? I'm awakened from my thoughts just as Jared plops his butt next to me, stealing half of my sandwich and stuffing it in his mouth.

“I was going to eat that, you pig!” I grumble.

“Oh come on, cousin. I'm a growing wolf. I need all the fuel I can get.” He pouts.

Puh-leez, that face isn't going to work on me. Punching him in the arm, I tell him, “You owe me twice as many sandwiches tomorrow to make up for the *fuel* you've taken away from me today.”

“Yeah, yeah, sheesh. So territorial about your food, aren't you? I thought girls were always worried about their figure and crap like that.” He smirks.

Shooting him a deadly glare, I ask, “Are you trying to imply that I need to watch my figure? Are you saying I'm fat?”

Choking on my stolen sandwich, he starts saying denials when he catches the smile on my face. “Frick, Harm. You had me worried for a minute. I thought you were going all girly on me.”

My smile vanishes and gives a pokerface. “So now you're saying I'm not feminine?”

He tenses even more. “No. That's not . . . I didn't mean . . .”

I let him stumble over an explanation before I can't hold it in any longer, and I burst out in laughter. “You are too easy,” I say between breaths.

“Well played, Evans. Well played. The student has finally become the teacher,” Jared praises while doing a terrible impression of a wise karate master. I'm about to punch him again when his next comment stops me. “I saw you checking out Hanes. Stay away from him, Harm. He's a player.” That came out of nowhere.

I retract my arm and place my hands on my lap. “I was not checking him out, and you're one to talk. You're practically two of a kind then, right?” I tease, trying to lighten the suddenly tense moment.

He gets serious. “We're nothing alike. Yeah, we both have our fair share of girls. The only difference is I don't treat them like crap. They're still people to me. To Trevor, they're just toys he plays with. He barely asks their names before he humps and dumps.”

“Lovely choice of words?” I state sarcastically before reassuring him. “Don't worry. Like I was just telling Shelly, I was only curious who he was. I don't want to jump his bones or any guys's bones, and you should know why better than anyone.”

“I know, Harm,” he says gently. “I just don't want you to get hurt more than you already are.”

“Well, you have nothing to worry about because I have zero interest in this Trevor guy, okay?” I reassure him.

“Ok, so . . . are you going to eat those cookies my mom made?”

Relieved he's dropping the subject, I warn him, “Touch them and lose a finger.” He just laughs. I meant what I said. I'm not interested in Trevor, but I still can't resist one last glance in his direction, only to see him chatting with a brunette and leading her into the trees. I guess he found his next toy. *Why does that bother me?*

CHAPTER THREE

Seriously, Shoot Me Now

It's finally almost the end of the day, and I'm now on my last class, math. I groan internally. Numbers and I do not get along well. Unless there are dollar signs before them, I just don't see the need to study. I make a quick stop at my locker to drop off my unneeded books when I suddenly smell the most delicious aroma, warm milk chocolate with a hint of smooth, creamy, caramel. Shutting my locker door, I turn to search out the source, and come into direct eye contact with a pair of eyes that match the delicious smell; brown pools of chocolatey goodness. So that's what's hiding behind Trevor's glasses.

He's about 6 ft., walking, talking version of a Twix bar which happens to be my favorite candy of all time. Only noticing how quiet it is just now, I tear my eyes away from his. I see that the hallway is empty. Classes must be starting.

Giving him a pointed look, I say, "Excuse me." When he didn't move, I huff in irritation and start to make my way around him, only to have my back pushed against the lockers as he runs his nose up the crease between my neck and shoulder, inhaling deeply. I want to push him away, but I can't seem to make my arms follow that command. My wolf won't let me. Trevor looks up, and I can see his eyes are shining so his wolf is taking over as well. We stare mesmerized with each other, as if we're in a world of our own. The last time I felt like this was . . . *NO!* This can't be. It's not possible! The sound of a door closing breaks us out of our trance.

Shaking his head, he looks at me with eyes that are back to their beautiful brown color. It's now filled with disgust. He shoves me roughly away from him. "This can't be. I don't want this," he states angrily.

It's like a case of *déjà vu*. I can't go through this again. Not another rejection. *How is this even possible?* I already have a mate. I can't have another. It's a good thing I already learned to harden my heart, or this encounter might have broken me again. I'm not going to lie, I could already feel cracks forming, but I fight against it.

So he doesn't want this. Well news flash Mr. high and mighty, neither do I. I already traveled down this path, and I sure as hell didn't want to make the journey again.

"Don't worry. I already have a mate, so this must be life's cruel way of kicking me when I'm down," I say, my voice laced with ice.

A sudden growl leaves his throat, eyes glowing once again. This time in anger as he face me. "MINE."

What? Did he not just say he didn't want me? He must be bi-polar and in need of his meds.

“He rejected me just like what you're about to do, so don't bother. I already know the drill. You don't want me blah blah blah. I'll live,” I say roughly, with every intention of walking away, but of course he has a different idea.

Grabbing my arm, he forces me to face him as he says angrily, “You don't understand.”

“I don't want or need to. I think I can figure it out myself. You enjoy the single carefree life, with a different girl warming your bed every morning. No problem. Continue on as if this little meeting never happened. I couldn't care less,” I tell him even though it upsets my wolf to say that.

“That's not it.” His voice still holds anger but there is something else there too. Something sad and . . . broken. What pain is lurking in his past?

“It doesn't matter. I don't want this either. Been there, done that, and so over it. You just stay away from me, and I'll stay away from you. We can go on living our lives as if we've never met. I refuse to move again because of an immature, selfish wolf.” I successfully break away from him and walked away holding myself together until I make it to the girl's restroom, and let the tears fall. *How can one person be rejected twice? What is wrong with me? Was I so unlovable that it's forcing two different guys to fight the bond? And why do I even have two mates?* I've never heard of this happening before, but of course I would have to be that one of a kind. Unbelievable.

I can't allow it to matter, though. I will get through this. I did it once before, and I can do it again. I'll just avoid him like the plague. We're from different packs who live in different areas. The only time we'll cross paths is in school. Easy peasy, right?

Turns out easy is far from what it will be, because after washing my face and heading to class late, who do I see sitting in the seat right next to the only available desk in the room? A lifesize, brown eyed, Twix bar with a scowl firmly planted on his face. The universe truly has it out for me.

Class is a tension filled experience. I feel his beautiful brown orbs glancing my way the entire time, but I try my best to ignore it. I keep my focus on the teacher as if he is the most interesting person on the planet. He definitely isn't. He has a dull voice and no personality. Typical math teacher who's all about the numbers. He also has a very bad comb over, so I concentrate on that and try to figure out if he is wearing a toupee or is using one of those hair treatments for men that went terribly wrong. I'd probably need to touch it to be sure. *What the heck am I thinking? Gross!* This mate thing is screwing me up big time.

As soon as the bell rings, I grab my bag and run out of the classroom before anyone else which is quite admirable because I was sitting at the backmost part of the room. I am in such a rush to get away from a certain Alpha, that I don't see the big bulky body in front of me as I exit the door. It causes me to crash into a hard chest. I start to apologize as I look up at my victim and see the black hair and eyes of the guy that was sitting next to Trevor during lunch.

“My Alpha would like a word with you,” he says as if it's an inconvenience for him to stop me.

Oh did he now? And what? He mind linked his little lap dog here to come be his muscle? Seriously? Give me a break.

“Not gonna happen, bucko!” I say, kicking him in his shin and catching him off guard long enough to get away.

I run as if the hounds of hell were at my heels, which judging by the pounding footsteps behind me, they were. Turning around the corner, I am ready to make a mad dash for the exit but is brought up short by yet another hard chest. What am I? A magnet for collision or something? I ready

myself to bolt when I catch my new victim's scent, allowing me to relax into the familiarity of it.

"What's the rush, hot stuff?" Nate laughs.

"Oh, thank God. It's you," I whisper, relieved.

"Thanks but you're not the first female to tell me that," he smirks.

I swear these boys will be the cause of my immediate imprisonment if they don't tone down their arrogance. I punch his arm, and he quickly puts his arms around my back, holding my wrists in his much bigger hands. He effectively stops me from delivering any more blows. Then he whispers into my ear, "Honey, I know you like it rough, but not in public."

I am gonna kill this butthead. I have every intention of kneeling him in the balls, when he is suddenly yanked away from me as I'm pushed behind a hard body.

"Don't touch her again!" Trevor growls, glaring at Nate.

What the hell does he think he's doing? I try to get past him to see if Nate is alright, but Trevor turns to me with glowing eyes and warns, "Unless you want me to go wolf in the middle of school, you should stay exactly where you are."

I want to disobey him in the worst way, but the safety of our existence relies on the secrecy of our kind so I stay where I am. I peek around his shoulder to see that Nate is fine and is getting up to dust himself off with a scowl on his face. By this time, Jared, Brad, and Jace have joined us, and they look equally pissed. You can definitely cut the tension with a knife.

"Let my cousin go, Hanes. She's not one of your play things, and I won't let you make her one," Jared says with more anger than I've ever seen in his eyes before.

"No, she's mine." Trevor glares menacingly at my cousin. Jared must've understood what he means, because his eyes widen in shock.

"That's not possible. She already has one douche bag of a mate. She doesn't need another," he blurts out.

Shock ripples through our little group and I cringe, embarrassed by it. Trevor's wolf must've sensed this, because he brings me close to his side as if to comfort me. These mixed signals he is sending are totally messing with my already messed up mind.

"Sorry, Harm. Just let her go so I can take her home. Look at her. This has obviously been a long day, and she's had enough." Jared tries to reason.

"No, she's coming with me. We have unfinished business to deal with first. I'll personally bring her home if your dad will allow me onto your territory to do so," Trevor growls.

This causes the boys to tense, and I know a battle is coming. We are already starting to attract more attention. Trying to avoid disaster, I say, "It's alright, guys. I'll go with him and get this settled. He'll bring me back later. Isn't that right, Trevor?"

"I said I would," he hisses through his teeth. *Was he angry? What did he have to be pissed about?* I'm the one being forced to do something I don't want to. What an irritating man!

Jared starts to object, so I give him my most serious look and tell him, "It will be ok, cousin. Just ask your dad to allow him onto our territory to drop me off."

"Yeah, okay. But if he does anything and I mean ANYTHING you don't like or want, don't hesitate to mind link us, and we'll come get you. Boundaries or no boundaries at that point won't matter," he tells me with so much conviction, I know he means it. "Hurt her, Trevor, and I swear I will make you pay," he adds.

"Whatever, pup." Trevor smirks before grabbing my hand. He pulls me to the exit, big and

bulky right behind us.

He leads me to a big black four door Chevy Silverado and picks me up, placing me in the passenger seat. His friend walks further into the parking lot, most likely heading to his own car. I start to grumble as he buckles my seat belt, but he cuts me off again which I was getting sick and tired of. "Don't give me a hard time. I can smell him all over you, and it's taking all my control not to pin you down and mark you right here and now."

That shut me up. I so didn't want that happening. What was he smelling? I discretely sniff myself, but all I smell is the Hawaiian Ginger lotion that I used this morning. There's no way I smell like a he. As if reading my thoughts or maybe he caught me sniffing, he grumbles, "Nate. I can smell him on you. He was holding you when I yanked him off, was he not?" I can see how much this angers him. His body is starting to shake.

"He wasn't holding me, you dummy. He was stopping me from hitting him a second time. In fact, I was just about to knee his man berries before you interrupted me. I'm still gonna follow through with it as soon as I see him. It'll be even sweeter because he won't be expecting it." I smile, getting lost in thoughts of all the possible ways to make Nate pay for his little remark.

I feel Trevor relax next to me, and I'm so lost in my thoughts that I almost miss the smile playing on his lips while he listened to my plans for Nate. Trevor is hot with his constant scowl on his face but that smile, be it a tiny one, is devastating. I can only imagine what a full blown grin will do. It will probably stop my heart. Seeing him smile does funny things to my insides. Almost as if my wolf knows happiness is a rare occurrence for him, and it's our job to fill his life with it.

Yeah, right. As if I have the power to do that. He's rejecting me. That's all he wants out of this meeting. I was about to face another heart breaking conversation. I didn't want to go through this a second time, but the sooner I get it over with, the sooner I can move on with my sad excuse of a life. I glance at his face again and the remnants of the smile he had still lingers there. I feel my heart warm at the sight then shake myself. I can't let this happen. He's about to formally reject me, and I can't forget that. I reinforce the walls I built around my heart after Aiden, and make sure there is no chance of it crumbling. I have a suspicious feeling that if I were to let myself fall for Trevor, the resulting pain will be much worse than what Aiden caused. Not only will it put the finishing touches to my already broken heart, but it will kill me in the process. I refuse to let that happen. I may not believe in happy ever after, but that didn't mean I wanted my life to end. So my mission now was to let him say what he had to, get out of his territory as fast as I can, and stay the heck away from him. A niggling feeling had me guessing that it was going to be easier said than done.

CHAPTER FOUR

Sucker Punch to the Gut

We travel along a gravel road surrounded by trees. They look eerily similar to the kind you see in scary movies right before the killers jump out and stop the car. *Is that a premonition of things to come? Am I headed to my doom?* I am probably acting a bit dramatic, but with the way things were going, what else should I expect but more craziness?

After about a twenty minute drive, we finally arrive at a huge house. It has two levels with a wrap around porch, and a pathway lined with flowers of all colors leads the way to the front steps. There are more flowers surrounding the house, but the feature that quickly catches my attention is a little white gazebo set off to the side. It's beautiful, and the last thing I expect to see in a house belonging to Trevor.

"It was my mother's dream to surround her home with a garden. When my father set out to find our pack house, he brought this one with her in mind, knowing she would have an endless amount of space to do what she wanted. This is what she came up with," Trevor says raising his arms to indicate the garden.

"She did a beautiful job," I acknowledge.

He opens his door and gets out, but before he can get to my side, I unbuckle my seat belt and jump out.

"You could have waited for me to help you," he complains.

"I'm not helpless. I like to do things for myself without relying on anyone else. If you remember nothing about me after this day, at least remember that."

With that said, I march towards his front door. The sooner we get this awkward moment over with, the better. He follows behind me, and when we reach the steps, the door opens. It reveals three half dressed males. My jaw drops, and I'm pretty sure I have drool dripping down the side of my mouth. Ever buy a male clothing catalogue just to stare at the models? Well, I have. And the three males in front of me could have come straight off the pages of that catalogue. They were obviously related to Trevor because they share the same chocolate brown hair, build, and bone structure. The only difference is their eyes, which were mixed shades of green and hazel. They have great bodies with enough six packs to give me a good buzz and nice, long, muscular, toned legs. I can't see their backsides since they're facing me, but I'm pretty sure it's just as great as the front. Maybe I can find some way to make them turn . . .

A growl from my left side startles me from my thoughts, and I turn to look at Trevor with a sheepish smile on my face. *Did he catch me checking them out?* By the glow in his eyes, I can

assume so. And if he noticed, that must mean . . . Yep, busted.

Three sets of eyes are studying me with identical smirks on their faces. I feel myself blush as another growl comes. This causes the guys' smirks to drop as they face their Alpha. Silent words must be exchanged because they stare at each other for a few seconds. Then their confused looks turn understanding as a fourth male makes his way onto the porch.

"Well, well, well, if it isn't big and bulky. So how's the shin? Did you ice it yet?" I taunt.

He's about to say something when Trevor stops him. "Austin, are you guys ready to patrol?"

So that's his name. He seems more like a Vince or Tony. A rugged name, not something so sweet. His mom obviously got the name wrong. My thoughts must show on my face because Austin shoots me a dirty look before answering Trevor.

"Yes, we were just on our way, but we had a few things to go over with you first."

"Yeah, sure. Harmony, why don't you wait for me in the family room while I take care of pack matters? It's straight in and to your right. You can't miss it," Trevor directs me.

Shooting the delicious specimens on the porch one last glance, I nod and do as he suggests. The inside of the house is just as beautiful as the outside. It's surprisingly clean for a bunch of young guys. Their mama raised them right, that's for sure. I reach the family room and one word comes to mind. Big. Big couches, coffee table, end tables, matching recliners, and lamps in warm earth tones. I guess it makes sense because they are all huge guys, over 6 ft., and full of muscles. As I scan the room, a picture on one of the tables peaks my interest. It's of a smiling Trevor. I pick it up and am right about a being full blown smile from him is devastating. My breathing hitches just seeing it, but it's the other person in the picture that stops my breath all together. She's a pretty blonde with gray eyes and a happy smile on her face. They are both sitting under a tree with her in between his legs, while he holds her and they smile at the camera. They look so perfect together. Is this why he brought me here? To have me meet the reason why he was rejecting me? Did he, like Aiden, already find someone to love?

"She's pretty, isn't she?" I'm startled from my thoughts by a tiny voice, almost dropping the picture in the process. I return the picture to its spot and face the source of the voice. It's a boy about the age of five, who looks like a male replica of the woman in the picture.

"Yes. She's very pretty," I reply. "Who is she?" I can't resist asking.

"My mommy," he answers.

Sucker punch to the gut. Not only does Trevor have someone he loves, but he also has a family. I feel as if my feet are kicked from under me, like there's no solid ground to stand on. The world starts to tilt, and I begin to fall. Two strong arms catch me before I hit the floor, and the last thing I remember is seeing two chocolate eyes looking at me with concern before the blackness takes over.

* * *

TREVOR

"Trevor, there were some signs of rogues in the northern section of our territory the last time we patrolled, but the scent wasn't very strong so we'll start there and work our way back to make sure they haven't returned," Austin informs me.

“Alright, let me know if you find anything,” I order.

I sense the question in all of their minds, but they respect me too much to ask. They know what I’ve been through these past five years and didn’t want to bring up any bad memories but they are my best friends and cousins, so they deserve an explanation.

“She’s my mate or so it seems. The signs are all there. Her intoxicating scent, the sparks when we touch, my need to protect her and make sure no other male touches or even speaks to her,” I share with them.

“But how is that possible?” My cousin Jeremy asks.

“I think I may have an idea, but I need to look more into it to know for sure,” I reply.

“But Sarah . . .” Everyone stiffens as Greg mentions her name.

“Harmony doesn’t know about that,” I state firmly. “That’s why I brought her here. To make her understand why I can’t be with her.”

“You’re going to reject her?” Austin asks incredulously.

“I already kind of did. I just need her to understand why so she doesn’t fight it. Although according to what she said to me earlier, I don’t think she’s planning to,” I say still confused about her attitude towards this. She mentioned having a mate and being rejected. Her first mate must be an idiot to reject someone as amazing as her. I’m no better, but I have my reasons. Not wanting to waste anymore time on the chance Harmony might change her mind and run off, I remind them to be careful and send them on their way. As they leave, my closest cousin of the three, Craig, pauses. I can tell he’s got something to say to me.

“Have you thought this through completely, Trevor? I mean, you just found out. Are you sure you’re doing the right thing?” He asks, his voice laced with concern.

“I’m sure. I never want to go through that again. My life is fine the way it is. She’ll just mess that up,” I inform him.

“Or she may bring back the man you used to be. She’s your second ch—”

I cut him off before he can finish. I know what he was going to say, and I don’t want to hear it.

“No, I will not accept her. You should hurry and catch up with the rest of the guys,” I order, putting some of my alpha power behind my words. He gives me one last worried look before running off to join the others. None of them understands. They didn’t have to deal with the things I have. Heck, none of them have even found their mates yet. I know I’m doing the right thing no matter how much my wolf is against it. I just can’t have a repeat of what happened before. Especially not with Harmony. She’s beautiful and warm even though there’s a deep sadness within her. Being tied to me will only hurt her more. I’m damaged goods. I won’t be able to give her the love she needs no matter how much I want to.

Shaking myself of those thoughts, I make my way inside and head towards the family room. I see Cody behind the couch, facing Harmony, just as he says, “My mommy.” And she starts to fall.

I get to her quick as lightning, thanks to my wolf speed, and catch her before she hits the ground. Her pain filled eyes look into mine for a moment before they shut and she faints.

“Is she okay, Uncle Trevor? Did she have too many of those brown bottles that Uncle Jeremy drinks? Cause the last time he fell down like that, Uncle Greg said he was drunk off his a—”

“Cody Scott Tanner, if you finish that sentence, you won’t play your Xbox for a whole week,” I warn him while carrying Harmony to the couch and gently laying her down.

“But that’s what he said,” he argues.

“And what happened to Uncle Greg after he said that?”

“Um, you hit the back of his head . . . “

“And what did I tell you afterwards?”

“Never to say that word or re-rep-”

“Repeat.”

“Yeah, repeat anything that comes out of uncle Greg’s mouth!” he says excitedly.

“Exactly. Why?” I test him.

“You said because Uncle Greg’s brain is smaller than a pea. I don’t like peas. They taste nasty, and I’m smarter than him.”

I cough to hide a laugh and ask, “Right. Remember that. So, what happened?”

“This lady. She’s really pretty, Uncle Trevor.” Cody points out.

I smile. “Yes, she is, but you were saying?”

“Oh yeah,” he takes a big breath then continues, “this lady was looking at the picture of you and mommy and she looked kind of sad so I asked her if mommy was pretty and she said yeah. Then she asked who mommy was so I told her it was my mommy. Then she got a funny look on her face and started to fall before you came in and caught her and now she’s sleeping on the couch.”

He releases the last of his breath with a dramatic drop of his shoulders, and looks back up at me and smiles, showing his two missing front teeth. I swear. Cody is the funniest little kid and the brightest spot in my messed up past. We both turn to look at Harmony as she starts to stir. I can only imagine what was going through her mind while staring at the picture. She must’ve gotten at least a part of it right. I am going to have a tough job making her stay long enough to hear me out. I plan to make her understand, though. Then I’m going to take her home and never speak to her or see her again, no matter how much it will hurt me to do so.

CHAPTER FIVE

Reasons Revealed

HARMONY

I wake up to unfamiliar surroundings. Slowly looking around, I see that I am lying on a couch. There's a coffee table next to me and a little to the side is an end table with a picture on it. Then it comes back to me in a flash of pain. Trevor. The blonde. Their son. I feel the need to get out of here as fast as I can. Bolting upright, I fight the sudden head rush that move causes me. I swing my legs off the couch, coming face to face with a blonde haired, gray eyed, heartbreaker in the making.

"She's up! She's up, Uncle Greg. I guess you don't have to kiss her to wake her up anymore because she already is!" he shouts, running out of the room towards wherever his Uncle Greg is. An "Ow Trevor, I was just joking around," is heard, followed by male laughter.

Deciding that is my cue to get out of here, I stand up ready to run.

"You can try but I'll just catch you, and I really don't feel like chasing you right now." A familiar deep voice warns.

"Then don't," I say, taking a step towards my get away route.

"I have no choice. There's too much I need to tell you so unless you want me to throw you over my shoulder and tie you to a chair to make you listen, I would suggest you sit back down."

He wouldn't. On second thought, the determined look in his eyes tells me he would. Knowing I was fighting a losing battle, I turned around and sit down but not without grumbling. I wouldn't be me if I didn't give him a hard time. "I don't see what we have to talk about. I'm pretty smart and can put two and two together. You already have a mate and an adorable son, who by the way thank goodness he takes after his mom, because I don't think we need anymore little yours running around. And you're rejecting me because you already have your perfect little family. The end. So there, I'm all filled in. Can I please go home now?"

"You're absolutely right," he says.

Words every female wants to hear, though it stings in this situation.

"He does take after his mom," he continues.

See that knife in my back, Trevor? Go ahead and twist it some more, why don't you?

"And he's nothing like me."

Clearly. Cody is a sweetheart. His father far from it.

"Because he's not my son."

Yeah, yeah, yeah. "What?" I ask, surprise all over my face.

“Cody is not my son,” he clarifies for me.

“But . . . then . . . how . . . I’m confused,” I state.

“To make you understand, I need to start at the beginning. Sarah was my mate,” he starts to explain.

It hurts me to hear those words, but something else in that statement catches my attention.

“Wait, did you say was?”

“I’m getting there. Will you just let me talk?” he growls in frustration.

“If you must.” I can’t help taunting him.

He gives me a disciplinary look, as if scolding a child then continues. “As I was saying, Sarah was my mate. I met her five years ago when I was thirteen. The bond was instant, and I was head over heels for her immediately.”

I didn’t know how much of this I could take. Each word is like a dagger to my heart. Here we go again, right? I let him continue regardless.

“The only problem was she was two years older, and already loved someone else, and was carrying his baby. She felt the bond with me but because she carried another wolf’s baby, it wasn’t as strong as it should have been. I told her it didn’t matter to me. I would love and raise the baby like he were my own because I already loved her. Pretty deep stuff for a thirteen year old, but I have been prepared from birth for this so I was ready. She seemed to be happy with that so we decided to wait until she had the baby before I marked her, that way we could all start fresh together. We got to know each other during the last three months of her pregnancy. There seemed to be no interference from the baby’s father, and every time I asked about him, she said he was out of the picture. Cody was born, and I bonded with him right away. Sarah loved Cody very much, but would always make excuses to go back to her pack and visit with her parents. I couldn’t go because my alpha duties required me to stay here. Most of those visits, she left Cody with me, saying it was too far of a drive for such a small baby. I didn’t mind because all the guys helped me care for him.”

Suddenly his expression changes to something dark as he continues with his story. “It was on one of these visits that tragedy struck. Sarah’s car plunged off a cliff into the ocean below, killing her instantly. She wasn’t alone. Cody’s father was with her, and he died in the accident too. It turns out that she had still been seeing him, and used those trips to spend time with him. The diary her mother gave me after her funeral revealed that though Sarah and I shared a bond, she only stayed with me so her son would have a good life while deep inside, her heart belonged to her first love.”

I can’t believe what he’s telling me. I thought my story was bad but his is horrible. It breaks my heart to see the pain etched on his face caused by another woman. If she were alive, I would kill her myself for doing this to him.

“Sarah’s parents were older and couldn’t care for an infant, not that I was willing to let Cody go. His father’s family had all been killed in the same battle with rogues that took my parents so he remained with me. I knew I couldn’t raise him as my son because he didn’t have alpha blood in him, so I became his uncle even though in my heart he is my son. It was scary. I was only fourteen, an Alpha with no parents, and only young adult cousins to help me but we made it work,” he finishes.

Wow, now it all makes sense except for one thing. “So, if you’re mate passed on, that means you’re rejecting me so you can sleep around?”

“No, that’s not it at all. I know what the pain of losing your mate does to you. I could barely get anything done. I was weak with loss and as an alpha, I can’t let that happen. The pack depends on

me. Cody now depends on me. I can't risk having you as a mate then losing you. You already said you had a mate. That just doubles the risk of you leaving, whether by choice or fate. I refuse to be weak ever again," he states, steel resolve lacing every word.

This is unbelievable. My first mate rejects me because he doesn't want to love me, the second because he's scared to. My veins buzzed with hot, molten rage, as my eyes begin to shine. "So you're saying you're scared to love me, is that right? I expected at least a little more from you, Trevor. You're an alpha, for gosh sake. You're supposed to be smart, strong, and fearless!" My body starts to shake as I feel a mixture of anger and pain. "But I guess you're nothing but a coward."

Trevor's eyes start to glow as well. Our wolves are out for blood. "What did you call me?" he asks with a deadly glare.

I stand up and get in his face. "You heard me, you coward! How ridiculous. A big, strong, alpha afraid to love. Are you sure you are even qualified to be an alpha? Because I was always told a true alpha faces his fears no matter what they may be." I emphasize each word with a finger poke to his chest. I hear a few *oohs* from the next room. Trevor is vibrating with anger but who cares? So am I. I look him in the eyes, ready to give him more grief, but when my green eyes met his, what I see shocks me. The anger is there but something more as well. Pride, amusement, and lust . . . definitely lust.

Suddenly, he grabs my arms just above the elbows and before I can argue, he crashes his lips to mine. I want to fight it. I was angry but it feels too good. Sparks fly between us, and I melt into his chest. His hands slide down my arms to rest on my waist as mine wind themselves around his neck. He teases my lips with his tongue, and I easily grant him entrance. As our tongues tangle, my hands weave their way into his hair and it feels as if a thousand fireworks are going off between us. Just as I'm getting really into it, I'm pushed away from him. Dazed, I look at him and see the lust vanish and is replaced with disgust. Somehow, I knew it isn't me he's disgusted with but himself. Probably because he sees his lust for me as a weakness.

Shaking myself out of my desire filled haze, I take a good look at him. There's no changing his mind. It's written all over his cold, dispassionate expression. Feeling weary, I slump my shoulders in defeat, huffing a small laugh that is anything but humorous. "You know, when you're a kid being told stories about true mates and happily ever afters, the world is your oyster. The future possibilities are endless."

Trevor stares at me with a frown, not sure where I'm going with this as I continue on. "Never in a million years did I think I wouldn't have any of those possibilities, nor could I have ever predicted I'd be rejected by not only one but two mates."

I see his hands clench, almost as if he wants to reach out and comfort me. I know better though, he made that clear. Tears begin to well in my eyes, but I refuse to let them fall. I need to leave with at least some dignity in tact. Gathering as much courage as I can, I look once more into his eyes before saying, "I accept your rejection. Now, can you please take me home?"

Trevor nods solemnly. I make my way to the door, each step is heavier than the last, but stop suddenly when a tiny hand tugs on my shirt.

"Are you leaving, pretty lady?" little Cody asks.

I crouch down to his level. "Yes, I am. But not before meeting such a cutie!"

The guys stand a little to the side watching our interaction.

"Cutie? You mean me?" he asks shyly.

I pretend to be shocked by his question. “Of course I mean you, who else could I be talking about?” Cody's smile grows as he looks over at his uncles, clearly thinking I'd be referring to one of them.

Playfully rolling my eyes as I glance their way, I assure Cody. “No way, clearly you got all the good looks in this family.”

He is practically glowing from my praise, and I return his smile, falling in love with the little guy more with every second I spend in his presence. My smile slips as I realize he's just another guy I have to give up. He sticks out his hand for a shake and says, “My names Cody and I'm five.”

I shake his hand and reply, “Nice to meet you, Cody. I'm Harmony.” Definitely gonna miss not getting a chance to know such a cutie.

Standing slowly, I start to move again. I direct a quick wave to our audience and notice a thoughtful expression on Trevor's face. Before I reach the door, Cody asks, “Are you going to come back again to visit?”

“I don't think so, bud. But I'm glad I got to meet you. Very glad.” Truthfully, I am. Anyone would be lucky to know such a sweet little boy. His expression falls, and I can see he wants to ask why but is quickly distracted by one of his uncles. He waves once before being lead into the kitchen as Trevor and I make our way to his truck. The ride is silent. We said all that needed to be said. The whole time I keep a lock on my emotions, knowing soon the dam will burst. As was the plan, he's allowed into our territory, and drives me to our pack house. As I get out, his hand on my arm freezes me but I refuse to look at him and risk letting him see my tears.

“I am really sorry, Harmony,” he quietly says.

“Yeah, I know. I've heard it before.” Tugging my arm out of his grasp, I open the door and jump down. I hold my head high all the way to the door and don't turn around as I hear him drive off. Once inside, I close the door as the first tear falls. More follow and soon I'm falling and sobbing into the comforting arms of my cousin.

CHAPTER SIX

Comfort of a Wolf

Jared picks me up bridal style, and I bury my head in his neck while continuing to cry silently. He doesn't say anything, and turns to carry me up the stairs, past his worried parents and to my room. As we pass the game room, I hear the boys arguing over whose turn it is next to challenge Nate to a game of Madden. Evidently, they're having a major Madden Master competition. I can't bring myself to care at the moment.

Jace spots us and shouts, "Hey, what happened to Harmony?", effectively ending their argument.

"Not now, Jace. Just let me get her to her room," Jared replies in a stone cold manner.

They all shuffle after us curiously with threats of bodily harm to Trevor if he was the one who caused this to me. Jared opens my room door and walks to my bed, sitting down with me, still in his arms. He makes us comfortable and leans back against the headrest, tucking me into his side. I look up to see three guys awaiting by the door with anxious expressions, and I nod to them to let them know it's okay to come in. They quickly stumble inside and sit around Jared and I on the bed. Anyone looking at the scene from the outside would consider me the luckiest girl in the world to be lying on a bed surrounded by four hot guys, but I fail to see the luck while my heart hurts too much. Besides, they're like brothers to me. I don't think I will ever be able to see them in a romantic way. They wait patiently for my tears to slow down, and when I'm finally able to speak, I fill them in on what happened. I tell them everything; Aiden rejecting me then marking my sister, Trevor's troubled past and his nephew, and finally Trevor's rejection and reasons. To say they're angry is an understatement. Calming them down is no easy feat, but I remind them that any harm done to Trevor hurts me. The misery surrounding me is almost tangible, and I know the guys feel it. Suddenly, Jace suggests, "Why don't we go for a run? We'll go to the clearing north of our territory, and just lay there for a while. Sometimes it helps to share our body heat in wolf form. It's supposed to be comforting or something."

"Really? I thought that was just a line you used on unmated she-wolves to get them to take off their clothes?" Nate questions suspiciously.

Jace smiles sheepishly but replies, "Well, it is. But it actually works, and it might be just what Harmony needs right now."

They all look to me as I let that sink in. It sounds like a good idea so I agree. "Alright, Jace. We'll try it, but if you're doing this just to get me naked, I swear I will chase you down and hang you in the trees by your balls. Is that clear?"

Everyone is silent until Jace replies, "Crystal."

We get up and make our way out the door but Jace can't resist adding, "Besides, getting you naked didn't even cross my mind. Well, not at first, anyways."

No one is surprised when he gets cuffed in the back of his head by Jared. A small smile curves my lips. It's hard not to love these guys. Before we leave, Jared steps into his dad's study to assure him I'm alright and explain a little of the situation. He promises not to tell him of Trevor's rejection. He'll just tell his dad about Aiden and my new response to Trevor. Otherwise my uncle will not let me leave until he knows every last piece of information. Once that's done, we make our way to the tree line, and I breathe a sigh of relief that my uncle was going to wait to discuss things with me. I walk down a little farther to undress in private. Allowing the change to take over my body, I relish the feeling of transforming. My muscles relax and my body contorts until my two arms and legs became four and my rich brown wolf stands proudly. Shaking off the last effects of my shift, I scurry over to the boys. They're equally impressive in wolf form as they are in human form. Jared stands a little bigger than the others being he's of alpha blood with black shiny fur. Jace and Brad are at his sides with their light brown fur that looks so soft and comforting, and finally there's Nate, golden boy through and through with his sandy fur with hints of red here and there. The color of our wolves directly matches the color of our hair while in human form. It really is a beautiful sight to see. Jared approaches me and nudges my side before signaling to his left.

"Let's go, little cousin." I hear him say in my mind.

I nod and we're off. It feels good to run and let the wind blow through my fur. The boys nip and wrestle with each other along the way, causing a few pile ups here and there but we eventually reach the clearing. It's beautiful. Rich green grass, flowers of purple, yellow, and pink scattered here and there. There's even a butterfly or two floating around. It's a very romantic place. Somewhere you would bring a boyfriend, girlfriend, or . . . mate. That thought brings me up short, and I feel the sadness slowly start to return. Sensing my distress, Nate nudges me from behind, effectively getting me to lie down. He places his body close to me. Jace takes the other side, a little behind Brad, resting his head on my back, and finally, Jared places himself horizontally in front of me, allowing me to rest my head on his shoulders. Jace was right. It is comforting.

We stay like that for a while, just taking in the scenery when Brad speaks, "I'm sorry you had to go through all that, Harmony. If you were my mate, I would've had trouble stopping myself from marking you right away. You're mega hot!"

"Stop perving on my cousin, Brad!" Jared warns.

"I wasn't," Brad defends in mock outrage. "You didn't let me finish. I was going to say she's even more beautiful on the inside and any wolf would be lucky to have her."

"Oh. That's okay then," Jared concedes.

There are equal grunts of agreement from the other boys, and I thank all of them before returning to admire the clearing. We lie like that for a few more moments before the boys get restless and start wrestling with each other. I just enjoy watching them. After some time passes, we begin making our way home when my uncle's voice floats into my head. "Harmony, why don't you head back now so we can talk about your situation. I think I understand why you have two mates."

It puts a little dent in my mood to be reminded of reality, but I'm curious to know how this was all possible, so we pick up our pace and run back home. After shifting and redressing, the guys leave to get something to eat. They promise to bring me back a strawberry shake while Jared and I head to the study. There we find my uncle behind his desk. He is a handsome man in his forties, with

black hair like Jared's that shows early signs of gray above his ears. He has brown eyes and was well over six ft., with broad shoulders and strong arms. Very intimidating if you messed with him but a big teddy bear if you were his favorite niece. My aunt stands behind him with a hand on his shoulder. She's a petite little thing with blonde hair and green eyes similar to mine.

He gestures for us to sit in the chairs in front of his desk and begins to explain. "I've been doing some research while you were out and, according to our history, it seems there were rare cases of second mates. It is instinctual for species of our kind to mate and replenish our withering population caused by hunters, rogues, and other causes. That being said, if a wolf loses a mate to rejection or death, our wolf will call out to another in a similar situation and a new bond is formed. As is the case with you and Trevor. You were rejected and he lost his mate to death. Therefore your wolves recognized kindred spirits in one another and bonded in sympathy."

It's a lot to take in but it's understandable. I just wish I didn't have to go through it.

"If that's the case and Trevor is now my new mate, why can I still feel my bond with Aiden?" I ask, confused.

"Well, the old bond of a rejected wolf is not severed until both wolves are marked by someone new or they mark another. Which in your case would mean that you would have to mark a human or have Trevor mark you to disconnect your bond with Aiden, seeing as he has already marked Megan. Trevor's bond was broken when his mate died," Uncle John explains.

That answers why I can still feel when Aiden is in pain or more often, pleasure.

"Why can't I feel Trevor's emotions?" I question.

"It's because you are still bonded to Aiden. Trevor won't be able to feel yours, either. But he can sense certain feelings if he's close enough to you. Once he marks you, every emotion, as well as pain, that you or he feels will immediately be felt by the other."

I sigh. "Well, we won't have to worry about that happening."

My aunt Judy raises her eyebrow questioningly. "And why is that?"

"Because he rejected her," Jared huffs out angrily.

"HE WHAT?" my uncle shouts.

I look at Jared and plead with my eyes for him to tell my story. I just can't do it again. Understanding me, he immediately begins filling my aunt and uncle in on all the details. After he's done, they're furious. My uncle wants to declare war on Trevor's pack, but I tell him the same thing I told the guys. He'll hurt me in the process, so he lets it go. He does warn me that he won't be able to control himself if Trevor ever steps over our territory line. We all get up, and I accept hugs and words of comfort from them before heading downstairs in perfect time to meet up with the guys.

Happily grabbing my shake, we make our way to the entertainment room where the boys offer to watch a chick flick with me in support of my heartache. I decline to their amazement and suggest we watch an action film with lots of violence and explosions which causes whoops and hollers as they hurry to find a good one. They settle on Rush Hour because they insist I need a little humor to cheer me up. Then we spread out around the room to watch the movie.

I laugh along with the guys and enjoy the action all the while psyching myself up for school tomorrow. I will have to see Trevor, but I'm not going to run away like I did with Aiden. I can do this. As long as I don't have to see him hooking up with other girls. Because if he does, I don't know how I'd cope with that.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Best Intentions, Worst Outcome

The next morning dawns bright and sunny for most people. For myself, not so much. There's a big, gloomy, and gray rain cloud hanging over my head, but I refuse to let Trevor see how badly his rejection hurts. My plan is to put on all the armor I can both physically and emotionally. Inhaling a few deep breaths, I make sure to lock up my pain. Then I jump out of bed to take a long relaxing shower, washing away the events of the day before. When I'm done, I brush my teeth, blow dry my hair, and go to choose an outfit; I settle on a cute denim skirt that ends about two inches above my knees, I want to look sexy not skanky. I pair it with a cute, green, tank top that brings out my eyes, and hugs my body. Then I put on a loose, white, see-through top over it, that has a habit of falling off my shoulders, but I figure the more skin that plays peek-a-boo the better. I finish the outfit off with a pair beige wedge sandals. Heading back to the bathroom, I put my hair into a messy bun, with a few strands coming loose around my face, gloss my lips, and enhance my lashes with mascara. I take a look in the mirror for a final inspection, and I like what I see. *I look hot*. From my shoulders up, I have that just-got-out-of-bed look the guys seem to love. From the chest down screams sexy but classy. Trevor is going to regret rejecting me.

With that thought in mind, I skip down to the kitchen to meet up with the guys. As I enter, I'm greeted with wolf whistles and a, "D-A-M-N, girl!" from Nate. My armor is going to be very effective today, judging by their reactions.

"Morning, guys!" I say cheerfully as I get a bowl down from the cabinet. I fill it with some cinnamon toast crunch, add milk, and sit down on a stool at the center island. After crossing my right leg over my left, I start to eat, but notice it's unusually silent which isn't the norm for these boys. Tearing myself away from my breakfast, I glance around and see they were all staring at me with wide eyed expressions, and I knew they were having some naughty thoughts right now. All except for Jared who has a scowl on his face.

Knowing how protective my cousin is, I cut him off before he could say anything. "I'm not changing, Jared!" I tell him defiantly.

A movement to my left catches my eye, and I notice Nate staring at my legs. Glancing around to Jace and Brad, I see that they are equally stunned by me as well. I have to hide a giggle. Boys are just too predictable.

Jared must notice the guys' wandering eyes, because through clenched teeth he says, "YES. YOU. ARE."

"What is so wrong with what I'm wearing?" I ask exasperated.

“Your skirt is too short, your shirt too tight, and you look like you just got out of bed after a sex-a-thon. Go change,” he orders.

My humor in the moment evaporates. “For your information, my skirt is long enough to hide the goods. Only my undershirt is tight which is why I have the white one over it, and we both know I wasn’t having a sex-a-thon, because I was crying my eyes out all night long.” My last point softens the scowl on his face. “I need to show Trevor I’m fine. I can’t let him see what he’s done to me. I refuse to be broken. Can’t you understand that?” I plead with him.

I can see him caving. He takes one last look around. It seems like the guys are all trying to shake themselves out of their lustful thoughts, and put on impassive expressions as if my appearance isn’t affecting them, even though it is. I look away quickly as I notice Nate attempt to adjust himself behind the island. I hope Jared didn’t see that.

“Fine but if anyone tries to touch you, or say anything sexual to you today, you’re explaining to my dad why I shifted in public to tear them apart.”

“That won’t happen. I’ve got all you guys to take care of me.” I smile at him confidently.

We resume eating, but I hear Jared mumble, “That’s what I’m worried about,” before saying out loud to the guys, “that includes you. Hands off my cousin.” They all put said hands up in surrender, but Nate shoots me a mischievous wink. *What's that about?*

Once at school, the morning passes by with no sight of Trevor. It isn’t odd because we only share one class, math. And that’s the last period of the day. I did see a few of the guys that sat at his table yesterday, and when they saw me, they all did double takes before quickly averting their eyes. Ah, so the cowardly alpha must’ve filled them in on our little situation. Oh well, no biggie. I pass by Austin on the way to my last class before lunch. He looks at me in surprise. His eyes travel from my head to my toes and back up, before he runs a weary hand down his face and mutters, “Oh hell. Lunch is gonna be a shit show.”

I give him a confused look, but he just waves and continues walking in the opposite direction. Having one goal while getting ready this morning, I forgot to consider an important fact. More than half of our classmates were male. Horny, teenage males to be exact. Though none of them got physical as they knew who my close circle of guys were, that didn’t stop the lecherous stares or flirty comments. I stopped counting the number of times I got asked out after eight. By the time lunch rolled around, both the guys and myself were over this day. *Why did I put myself in this situation?* It will serve as future reference for me to never make decisions while heart broken.

After grabbing our lunch, we make our way to a table that just happens to be across Trevor and his group’s table. Being Jared and the guys were in super overprotective mode thanks to all the attention I was getting, they decided to skip their football game. They put me in a little hot guy circle instead. With Jared and Nate on either side of me, and Brad and Jace directly across. It was a bit much but my wolf appreciated their support and protection. The heat Trevor’s stare starts burning a hole through me, and I look up to see him looking intently at my body as I sit down. His hands are fisted as he rigidly stands next to his table. Austin grips his shoulder and says something to him, causing him to relax a little and take a seat while he continues to stare. Hiding a small smile of satisfaction, I’m finally feeling what I’m doing pay off. I begin to pick at my food until I’m nudged by Nate. Turning to him, I see that same mischievous look from this morning return. “What’s with that look?” I ask.

“Do you really want to make Trevor regret his stupidity?” He questions with a grin.

“You know I do. Thus, the outfit. HELLOOOOO,” I state.

“That’s a great start. But what pisses off a male mate more than unmated males looking at what’s supposed to be his? Them moving in on his territory.”

And with that said, he gets up and turns to straddle the bench we are sitting on, caging me in between his legs. Then he gently tucks a wayward hair that has fallen from my bun behind my ear. Jared shoots him a murderous look, but Nate quickly mind links him, “Chill, bro. It’s only an act. Check out douchebag over there.”, and discreetly nods towards Trevor.

Nate’s actions are definitely pissing Trevor off. He's shaking again, and now Austin and another guy are holding him down by his shoulders. Jared smiles and leaves us to it. Nate and I chuckle, then he leans close to my ear and starts whispering nonsense things. His breath on my ear tickles and I try stifle my giggles. To anyone else it would look like he's saying naughty things to me. That is so far from the truth. Nate being the clown he is, starts telling me he's going to have to shift to the side in a little bit because his boxers are riding up his crack, suffocating his balls. I can't help but crack up laughing at that.

Abruptly, Trevor stands and starts to head in our direction. My wolf perks up from where she's been quietly hiding in the background, hoping that our mate has changed his mind and is coming to claim us. The guys tense up, expecting a fight. Then as suddenly as he started going towards us, he changes direction to a table on our right filled with girls scantily dressed with lots of make up. He stops next to a brunette, similar in size and appearance to me and whispers something in her ear, causing her face to light up and takes her by the hand. He then tosses me one last look before heading off to the trees, the brunette eagerly following behind.

It hits me. A hot stabbing pain in my chest. My little plan just backfired. It definitely worked Trevor up, but instead of getting him to regret rejecting me, he chose a downgraded version of me as a substitute. Now they were headed into the woods together, probably to do what Trevor is known for. My vision blurs with the thought. I don't realize I'm crying until I feel Nate wipe a tear, and pull me into his side so no one else gets to witness my pain.

“He's a freakin idiot,” Jared says, rubbing my arm.

“Sorry, baby girl. I thought he was smarter than that,” Nate says while rubbing my back.

“Let’s get out of here,” Jace suggests. We grab our trays and start to leave.

I glance back once more to the trees where I last saw Trevor. Then to the table where his pack is sitting, shaking their heads. Finally, my eyes land on Austin who is staring in the direction Trevor went angrily. Feeling my stare, he turns and his eyes meet mine. He has an apology written all over his face. I give him a small tear filled smile with a shrug and follow the guys.

I appreciate the sentiment but he isn't the guy that needs to apologize, and I don't want one from the guy who should.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Sudden Clarity

TREVOR

I was going crazy. I knew it was going to be hard to stay away from her, but it isn't supposed to be this hard. Cody's not making things any easier for me either. It's bad enough that I have to resist her at school, but to constantly be reminded of her by a five year old who at the moment convinced himself I'm the reason his pretty Harmony isn't coming back is torture.

He makes sure to talk sense into me before I drop him off at school. "You should go to the doctor and find out what's wrong with you, Uncle Trevor."

"There's nothing wrong with me." At least not physically. Emotionally, I'm screwed up. That's not exactly something I can explain to a precocious five-year-old. "Why would you think that?" I ask him.

"Because you make Harmony *lergic* to you. So you have to get fixed, so she'll come back," he states as if it were obvious.

Lergic? He still thinks she fainted because of me. Which is correct, except not for the reasons he's come up with; First, it was because I was ugly. Then he said I must've smelt funny. And now he's decided there's something wrong inside of me.

"She's not allergic to me, Cody. She's just not coming for grown up reasons, okay?" I offer lamely.

"But I—"

"Just let it go already, Cody. Now hurry before you're late," I scold.

He huffs, "Fine. Grown ups are so silly sometimes. I hope I never grow up.", and then hurries into the school.

Once I reach our High School, I walk to the back where the rest of my young pack members hang out. I catch the tail end of their conversation.

" . . . I'm telling you. She is hot. I just passed her in the hallway on my way here, and she has some mighty fine legs!" A junior, Lenny, is saying.

Not really caring what random girl they're talking about since all my thoughts are consumed with a certain brown haired, green-eyed beauty, I ignore them until his next words make my blood boil.

"I swear. She's the hottest new girl our school has ever had! Too bad she's not in our pack. I would so do her," he boasts.

Grabbing him by the collar, I push him against the wall and ask, "Who is this girl you're talking about? What's her name?"

Shaking, he replies, "I th-think it's H-Harmony, Alpha. Yeah. Harmony Ev-vans."

"SHE'S MINE! STAY AWAY FROM HER," I order and notice the fear in his eyes, as he drops his gaze in submission.

Releasing his collar, I let him drop to the ground and turn to face the rest of the boys. "That goes for all of you. Don't even look her way, because if I find out you did, you'll answer to me." They nod and scurry off to their homerooms.

"Funny. For someone who rejected her, you seem to be very possessive." Austin observes with amusement.

"Don't start with me, Austin."

"I'm just saying. You may have control over the pups in our pack, but what about the ones in hers? Not to mention the three closest to her besides her cousin. Then there's the human guys, too. It's only a matter of time before a girl as amazing as her is snatched up," he continues.

I feel my wolf wanting to be let loose, but I control him and look at Austin. "That's fine. It's what I want for her. To be with someone who can love her like I can't. But I'll be damned if it's one of my own pack members. Other than that, she's free to be with whoever makes her happy." I force that load of bull crap out of my mouth.

Austin smirks. The asshole actually smirks and says, "Yeah. Keep telling yourself that. Let me know when you actually believe it." Then saunters off.

Dickhead. When lunch arrives, I'm boiling with anger. Not only did I smell her intoxicating vanilla and honey scent everywhere I turned, but I had to listen to constant chatter about how hot my mate is and how this or that jerk wants to make her theirs. She's mine, damn it! I'm standing with my pack at our usual spot when I feel her presence. Looking in her direction, it's as if my ability to breathe is taken away. She is beautiful. Her legs go on for days, a skirt covers what I know to be a very firm butt, and the sun glistens off her lightly tanned shoulder that's peeking out from her white top. Her hair is pulled up, showing off her elegant neck and her face has a dreamy expression as if . . . Wait a minute . . . SHE LOOKS AS IF SHE JUST ROLLED OUT OF BED AFTER A NIGHT OF HOT, STEAMY SEX! I'm going to murder someone! Suddenly, I feel Austin's hand firmly on my shoulder.

"Relax. Sniff the air, Trevor. Her scent hasn't changed. It's still pure. No one else has been with or in her," he reassures me.

Releasing my fists, I sniff and realize he's right. I allow him to push me to a seated position, but I keep my eyes on her the entire time. God, she's gorgeous. My body calms until the blonde idiot at her side cages her in between his legs and starts whispering in her ear. She's giggling and a slight blush is appearing on her cheeks. *What the hell kind is he saying to my mate?* This time I feel two sets of hands on my shoulders, and I am distantly aware of Austin and Lenny trying to get me to calm down, but it isn't working.

My wolf is trying to take over. He wants me to throw her over my shoulders, take her into the woods, and mark her. I get up to do just that and head toward her when realization hits. I can't do that. It will make her mine and the pain of losing her will kill me. Quickly changing directions, I head over to what we called the *easy* table. It's full of fake, overly made up skanks that are fast to give it up. I grab the one resembling Harmony and whisper, "Come with me.", and pull her toward the trees,

throwing one last look at Harmony over my shoulder. My wolf whimpers at the pain etched in her features, but I can't give in. I have to stay strong, and this little brunette holding my hand is going to help me with that. Moving deeper into the woods, I grab her by the waist and shove her against a tree, crashing my lips to hers. I start to move my hands to her butt, bringing her closer all the while thinking of Harmony. She moans and it should make me hard as steel, but it has the opposite effect. Visions of Harmony fill my head, but the voice of the girl in front of me is nowhere near my mate's beautiful tone. Opening my eyes to see her flushed face, I start noticing other differences. Her hair isn't as shiny, her green eyes lack the brightness and warmth found in Harmony's, and her scent is all wrong. There's no vanilla and honey. This slut's smell is overloaded with expensive perfume. She finally notices the lack of enthusiasm in my member, and looks up confused.

"Do you want me to help you with that?" her irritating voice asks as she gets down on her knees.

Filled with immediate disgust at having someone other than my mate offer me this, I pull her up and push her away. "I've changed my mind. Leave," I order. It's only then that she bows her head in submission that I realize she's an unmated member of my pack. *What was I doing?* I never mess with anyone from my pack. I always satisfy my needs with humans or she-wolves from Jared's pack. Every player knows not to mess with someone a little too close to home. It's a recipe for disaster. I need to get myself under control and fast. Walking back to my table, I take a seat opposite Austin and scan the area for Harmony.

"You won't find her. She already left," Austin informs me angrily.

I look at him surprised by the animosity in his eyes.

"Was it worth it?" he asks with a raised eyebrow.

"Was what worth it?"

"Hurting someone as innocent as Harmony to satisfy your own needs?" he continues.

I'm too stunned to speak. I knew he was upset with my choice to reject Harmony, but I didn't realize how much.

"I've been your Beta for a while and I've never questioned the judgment or choices you've made, until now. Yes, if you lose her it will hurt. But what if you don't? What if you both live 'til you're old and gray with your children and children's children surrounding you? What if you have years of love ahead of you. What if you can be happy?" he pauses to let his words sink in. "You could have all of that. You got lucky. You had a rotten first mate but the fates blessed you with an amazing second one, and you're too scared to grab on to that. It makes me sad for you."

Angered by the truth in his words, I stand toe to toe with him, forcing him to bow his head in submission before saying. "Who the hell are you to tell me what could be? You can't see the future. You're no psychic. You haven't even found your mate yet. How can you expect me to take a risk like that when you haven't gone through the pain I have?"

With his head still downward, he says softly but with conviction, "I was there by your side when you went through that pain. I saw what it did to you, but I also see the life that's been brought back into you when you're around Harmony. She's awakened a part of you that you've kept locked up for far too long. You need her."

Stepping back from him as if his words struck a blow, I turn my back, ashamed that I had acted the way I did when Austin was only trying to help. I hear movement behind me, and I know it's Austin leaving but not before he makes one more point.

“We, unmated males, wander through life having meaningless sex with random girls. Always being left with a hole inside that can only be filled by our mates. We bide our time ‘til the day she comes into our life and completes us. And here you are, having already met yours and lost her. Only to be granted with an even better one, yet you choose to give her away. That’s like a slap to the rest of our faces.” He pauses as if gathering courage to say what he does next.

“Do us all a favor, Trevor, and grow a pair. Be the mate she needs and deserves before it’s too late.” Done saying his piece, his steps retreat as he leaves.

I sit for a moment and think about it. I’m sure I can do as he suggests. I’m still terrified at the thought of loving her then losing her, but I can at least apologize for what happened at lunch. That’s a start. My next two classes drag on and finally, it’s time for math. I make it there in record time, and sit in my seat at the back. I’m the first one there, much to Mr. Donovan’s surprise. I watch the door intently. Almost a second before the bell rings, she arrives looking beautiful but sad. Our eyes meet, and I feel the sparks instantly but notice hers were red, rimmed, and puffy as if she’s been crying. Hating myself for causing her pain, I smile sadly in her direction, but she ignores it and sits down next to me. She smells amazing. I just want to put my nose in her hair and inhale the intoxicating aroma, but I know she’d probably have my nuts for that, so I settle on grabbing her hand.

She yanks her hand away, and I flinch at the hatred in her eyes. “Don’t touch me,” she says through gritted teeth.

“Just let me explain,” I tried to convince her.

“I don’t want to hear any more of your explanations,” she argues.

“Just give me a chance,” I plead.

“Let me think about it . . . “ At this, I was filled with hope.

“Hmmm. . . how about you meet me at the time never gonna happen and leave me alone?” she hisses.

Damn this girl is mad. I am about to try again when she raises her hand suddenly. Was she going to tell on me or something?

“Mr. Donovan!” she shouts.

We were seniors in high school, but she was going to tattle on me like we were still in kindergarten.

“What is it, Ms. Evans?” Mr. Donovan asks clearly irritated that his lesson is being interrupted.

“May I be excused to see the nurse?” she asks sweetly.

Oh, so she’s not going to tattle. She’s going to run. Well good luck, honey. Mr. Donovan never lets anyone leave his class unless they were practically in a body bag.

Then, with all seriousness, she says, “It’s kind of personal. You know, female issues. The kind we get only once a month.”

Freakin’ sneaky little mate. Hit him where he’s most uncomfortable. It works too because he turns bright red and scribbles out a note for her to be excused. She shoots me a triumphant grin, grabs her stuff, and leaves. I’m upset that she’s getting away, but I have to admire her quick thinking. Just one more thing to love about her. That thought combined with the things Austin hammered into my head make it official. There would be no more denying it. I’m ready to fall in love with my mate. The only question now is, what am I going to do about it?

CHAPTER NINE

Unwanted Visitor

HARMONY

After that horrible episode in Math, all I want to do is get out of school. I convince the nurse that my cramps are so painful that aspirin won't be enough, and I need to go home to my bed to rest. She caves. I'm an excellent actress. She writes me an off campus pass. and sends me on my way. I'm majorly relieved, until I arrive in the parking lot and realize, I don't have a car. Not wanting to take Jared away from his Chemistry class, that boy needs all the help he can get in that subject, I decide to wait on the bleachers by the football field, knowing it will be empty.

I find a seat at the top, and lay down letting the warmth of the sun soothe my aching heart and allowing the breeze to blow away any unwanted thoughts. After about ten minutes, I feel relaxed and almost in a light sleep, when someone sits next to me. Tensing for a minute, fearing that he too has escaped Mr. Donovan and found me. I open my eyes and am surprised to see Austin.

I sit up quickly. "What are you doing here? Don't you have class?" I know I'm being rude, but the last time words were exchanged privately between us, he was following orders from his Alpha. I didn't want a repeat of that.

"Don't worry. Trevor didn't send me. Although if he knew I was talking to you and sitting this closely, you would most likely be attending my funeral tomorrow," he says wryly.

"Oh." Is my awesome reply. Wow, aren't I miss articulate all of a sudden?

"Truth is, I have a free period and was sitting in front of the school when I saw you walk by and decided to follow you."

"So, you were stalking me? Creeper alert," I say standing up.

He puts a hand on my arm and says, "Wait. It's not like that. I just wanted to say something to you."

I take a peek at my watch. School will be done in about fifteen minutes, so I guess I can give him that. Sitting back down, I face him. "Well, go ahead then."

"I just wanted to tell you how sorry I am about what Trevor did."

"That's nice of you, but it's not your apology to make, Austin," I state.

"I know it's not, but on behalf of my pack I'm apologizing for the stupidity of my Alpha," he tries again.

"Okay, then. Apology accepted. Is that all?" I'm ready to escape this awkward conversation.

"No. I wanted to tell you that I don't think Trevor did anything with that girl at lunch."

“Really? Did he tell you that? He was probably lying. Anything else?” I am kind of over this whole situation already.

“No. Geez, are you always this frustrating to talk to? My god, being your mate is not gonna be easy,” he grumbles, frustrated.

A little hurt by this, I stand once again and say, “Well, I guess it’s a good thing I was rejected by two of them, isn’t it?” Then I start to walk off.

Realizing his mistake, he jumps up after me, and gently takes my hand. He begins to apologize. “I didn’t mean to offend you. I just meant that your mate will have to work very hard to win an argument with you. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean anything bad by my comment.” Finally looking into his eyes, I see that he’s being sincere, so I once again sit back down.

Having my heart somewhat soothed by his words, I tell him, “Alright. Apology accepted. Again.”

“Thanks. Now I don’t think he did anything other than kiss that girl, because they came back five minutes after they left, and she only had a little bit of Trevor’s scent on her. Just enough to be transferred through a kiss or embrace,” he explains.

“Even if that were the case, Austin, a kiss with someone other than your mate when you know who he or she is is still disrespectful. Besides, regardless if he did or didn’t, his intentions were obvious,” I state sadly.

Austin takes a breath. “I know. I’m not making an excuse for what he did. I just wanted to assure you that he didn’t take things too far. He’s changed since he met you. I know it’s only been a day, but before you arrived he walked around like a shell of a person. He wasn’t completely whole. Yeah, he slept around, but I don’t think he ever really saw any of those girls for who they were. They were just puppets to him. When he met you, a spark lit up in his eyes.”

“Yes, I know. It’s called a bond, and as my first mate so kindly informed me. It is forced on a wolf so he may not have wanted it to begin with,” I argue.

“No, it was more than that. He had no real purpose in life. Just his duty being alpha, and his responsibility with Cody. Meeting you gave him something to fight for, or in your case, against. But the point is, it awoke him from this fog he was suffocating in.”

“Well, that’s good to know. I guess,” I respond with a lack of enthusiasm.

“Look, I know for a fact you’re all he thinks about. He wouldn’t have a chance not to, with Cody hounding him every second he’s home to do something to get you back there.” At the news of Cody, my face brightens.

Noticing this, Austin smiles. “I see you’ve already fallen in love with the little guy. It’s hard not to. That kid’s a charmer. You should know the feeling is mutual. You’re all Cody talks about, even though he barely knows you. There’s something special inside you. We all noticed it; Jeremy, Greg, Craig, and myself. You’re the best thing that could have happened to Trevor. You just have to give him some time to pull his head out of his ass long enough to realize it for himself.”

I think it over a minute before responding, “I know what you’re saying. But I’ve been rejected twice already. I’ve made myself vulnerable to two males that were supposed to cherish me, and it ended badly both times. I’m just not sure if I can put myself there again. It’s too risky.”

“All I want you to do is wait. Don’t jump into any relationships or beds yet.” I shoot him a dirty look at the latter statement. “I’m not saying you were planning to, so don’t go getting mad again. Just keep an open mind about things. Trevor may be clueless, but he’s not brainless. It will eventually

sink in, and he'll make things right with you. Deep down he's a good person. I wouldn't respect him as much as I do if he wasn't," he reasons with me.

He then stiffens, and I know Trevor is speaking to him through their mind link.

"He knows I'm talking to you, and he's not happy. He wants you to wait here for him, and if you're not ready to face him, I suggest you leave quickly before he orders me to keep you here," he informs me.

Giving him a thankful look and surprising him with a peck on the cheek, I say a quick, "Thank you, and I'll think about it," then I hurry off.

I make it to Jared's car just as I see Trevor heading towards the bleachers. Ducking behind the SUV, I watch as he meets up with Austin, and gets angry. They're arguing, and I notice Trevor point a finger at Austin's cheek, the cheek I kissed. *Did he see me do that?* Or can he smell me on him? Austin rubs the back of his neck, and starts waving his arms around as if explaining something to Trevor. I'm so engrossed in the conversation across the parking lot, that I don't notice someone sneaking up behind me until it's too late.

"Whatcha doing, cousin?" Jared shouts, causing me to jump a mile high and clutch my chest.

"Jared, you jerk!" I emphasize each word with a slap on his arm.

"Ouch. Dang, you hit like a guy. And didn't your mom ever tell you it's not polite to spy on people?" he asks with that irritating smirk on his face.

"Since when did you care about being polite?"

"I don't. I just wanted to irritate you. Is it working?" he teases.

"Very effectively. Now stop and drive me home, chauffer!" I playfully order as I duck his head lock attempt, and jump in the car.

When we arrived at the pack house, I notice an unfamiliar car parked outside, but my uncle must be taking care of some pack business. We grab our bags, and make our way inside. As we enter the house, we smell my auntie's famous snicker doodle cookies, and fight our way to be the first one in the kitchen. Before we can get there, a shriek was heard, and followed by a "Harm, bunny!" And then I'm tackled by the familiar firecracker that is my sister.

Untangling myself from her and smiling because I've missed my best friend, I ask, "Megan, what are you doing here?"

"I missed you, and Aiden suggested we come here and visit since it's been too long already," she explains.

The smile drops from my face. "D-did you say Aiden?" I ask wearily.

His scent hits me before I see him. That woodsy pine scent that never fails to remind me of Christmas morning. "Hello, Harmony," he says in that sultry voice of his.

Aiden is here, and he's with my sister. In a place where my new mate lives. Who's also an alpha. Just when I think my day can't get any worse, fate has yet another curve ball to throw my way, and I know there is no way to avoid getting hit by it.

CHAPTER TEN

Expect the Unexpected

Quick as a flash, I grab onto Jared's hand to both calm him and prevent him from ripping into Aiden's throat. I see my aunt doing the same thing with Uncle John. As much as I want Aiden to get what he deserves, I can't risk hurting my sister, and let her know what Aiden is to me. She's innocent in this whole situation, and I know in my heart if I tell her Aiden is my mate, she will let him go no matter how much she loves him. It will break her heart to do so, and that's the last thing I want.

"Hello, Aiden," I say with as straight a face. while my heart practically pounds out of my chest due to our close proximity. It's been a long time since my wolf was this close to our first mate, and she's fighting to get closer, especially after the heartache she suffered today. I won't allow it. She may have forgotten what he did to us because all she wants is to have her mate, but I haven't. I don't plan on ever forgetting it.

Megan rushes to give Jared a hug, which he returns, still glaring at Aiden. "Aiden, honey, this is our one and only cousin, Jared," she says, facing him with a smile on her face. I take this moment to examine my sister. She's glowing with happiness. As much as I hate Aiden, I'm glad to know that at least he can make one of the Evans sisters happy.

Aiden reaches out to shake Jared's hand, and after a discreet nudge from me, Jared accepts it, gripping a little tighter than necessary. Aiden raises a brow, then glances at me, understanding immediately that Jared knows the truth about us. Sensing the unspoken tension in the room, my peacemaker of an aunt suggests we go out to dinner, since she wasn't prepared to cook a nice meal for our guests. Everyone disbands, and I make my escape to my room. As I pass the first guest room at the top of the stairs, I notice Megan and Aiden's things there, and I say a silent thank you to my aunt for setting them up in the room farthest from me.

Once in my room, I lock the door, not sure if it's to keep me in or Aiden out. That's how mixed up my emotions are right now. I head to the shower to hopefully calm my nerves. I scrub myself with my milk and honey body wash, and wash my hair with vanilla scented shampoo. Feeling like myself again when done, I quickly dry my hair and go to my closet to find something to wear. I'm not trying to impress Aiden, but I still want to look nice so I settle on a black strapless dress that hugs my breasts, making sure to show just a hint of cleavage. It's difficult being the size C that I am. The dress flows out from under my breasts, ending just at my knees. It has the right amount of coverage with a hint of what's underneath. I throw on some red heels for color, a long red beaded necklace with matching bracelet and earrings, gloss my lips, fluff my hair, and leave the room to meet up with the rest of my family.

They're waiting by the door; just finished getting ready as well. My sister looks nice in a blue off shoulder dress, that makes her blue eyes sparkle. She got those from my dad. She also has her blonde hair up in a twist. When she sees me, she gushes about how pretty I look, and turns to Aiden. "Doesn't my baby sister look beautiful, honey?"

Aiden is dressed in black dress pants and a gray long sleeve button up shirt. His hair is still a little damp from his shower. I hide a grimace at my sister's use of a pet name for my mate, and I am shocked when he replies, "Stunning," not because of his choice of word, but because of the intense look in his eyes as he says it. Feeling a little uncomfortable, I look for my safety net, Jared. I see that he noticed the same look Aiden gave me. The anger in his eyes suggests he doesn't like it one bit.

"Why is he looking at you like that?" he questions in my head.

"I'm not sure, but it's making me uncomfortable," I inform him.

He puts his arm around my waist and we turn to leave, but are momentarily frozen in place when we hear a quiet growl from Aiden's direction. Because my sister isn't a werewolf, she can't hear it, but the rest of us can, and the shock of it is deafening. I shoot Aiden a glare, because who is he to be possessive? I drag Jared the rest of the way out the door and push him to the car, before he can beat the crap out of Aiden.

It's decided that we'll be taking separate cars. Jared and I, Uncle John and Aunt Katherine, and Aiden and Megan. That way we can all do what we want afterwards. I think my aunt and uncle knew I wouldn't want to spend time more time that's necessary with Aiden, so they eliminated the chance of me being stuck in a car with him. Did I mention they are my favorite aunt and uncle in the whole world? We decide on a popular American Fusion restaurant near our school, which is considered the neutral zone between our pack's territory and Trevor's. Trevor. That name brings up some of the things Austin said. *Am I willing to wait for Trevor?* And if I was, will it make a difference, or will he continue to be the stubborn, cowardly ass that he's been so far?

"We're here," Jared announces, breaking me out of my thoughts.

"Let's get this over with," I say as we head toward the entrance.

We're seated at a table near the windows, which allows me to distract myself with passersby if needed. I catch a whiff of the caramel chocolate goodness that surrounds Trevor, but it's gone in an instant. Probably means he was here at one point, but not now. Feeling a mixture of relief and disappointment, I study the menu silently, all the while feeling Aiden's eyes on me.

After ordering, I excuse myself to go to the restroom. Luckily, my sister doesn't follow. I need a few minutes to collect myself. I wash my hands, splash some water on my face, and add more lip gloss. Probably pointless since it would only come off while eating, but I'm a girl. It's what we do. I exit the restroom, surprised to see Aiden leaning against the wall in front of it. The hallway is tight, making it hard to keep my distance from him.

"Aiden, why are you here?" I ask, not liking the breathlessness in my voice. "I didn't see my sister pass by me in there."

"No. I waited for you, so we could have a few moments alone," he says, with that same intensity in his eyes.

"Alone? Why would we need to be alone?"

"So I could do this."

Before I can object, his lips cover mine. I want to push him away, but our wolves are calling out to each other, and I give in for a minute. A growl somewhere to our right brings me back, and I

push him away.

“What the hell was that?” My anger laced on every word.

He tries to touch my face, but I slap his hand away. “I’ve missed you so much. I thought I could fight the bond, but I can’t. You’re all I think about. All my wolf wants. When I make love to your sister, it’s your face I see. I marked her hoping these feelings would go away, but they haven’t.”

“You jerk,” I say with so much animosity. “How could you do that to my sister? You said you loved her. That’s why you rejected me!”

His shoulders slump. “I do love her. Very much. And I would never want to hurt or leave her, but I can’t stop how I feel for you. That’s why I had an idea,” he says, taking a breath before continuing, “come back home with us, and we can be together in secret. I’ll stay with your sister for her sake, but whenever we have the chance, you and I can be together. Please say yes, I can’t fight the bond anymore. It’s too hard,” he pleads with me.

I’m shocked and disgusted with the man in front of me. How could fate get it so wrong to pair me with someone so selfish? Distraught, I don’t object when two familiar arms encircle my waist, surrounding me with its chocolate caramel goodness, and the feeling of being safe and loved. Reluctantly needing his support, I lean into Trevor. I’ll be scolding myself for this later, but for now I rest my back against his chest as he says with a possessive tone, “Well, I guess it’s a good thing I’ll be marking her soon, so you won’t have to fight it anymore.”

You've got to be kidding me.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Dinner with Two Mates

TREVOR

I finally have her in my arms. Well, at least for now, because by the look in her eyes, she's ready to dismember me. It doesn't matter, because after the day I had today, all I need is her soft body close to mine.

From the minute she left class, I was dying to follow her, but there was no getting away from Mr. Donovan. Unfortunately, I couldn't use the same excuse that she did, so I was forced to wait out the remainder of the lesson. As soon as the bell rings, I am out of there. I am anxious to get to her. And when I checked in with Austin, I find out that she was with him for almost the whole period. Already ticked beyond belief, I head to the bleachers to find she had left. Then I smell her on Austin, making me almost lose it. She kissed my beta on the cheek, and he had let her! What the hell? I am about to teach Austin a lesson when he points out that my mate is getting away. As I turned, I see that sure enough, her cousin is already pulling out of the lot, towards their house.

I jump in my car to follow, but I had too late a start and is stuck waiting at the boundary line of their territory. I was prepared to wait all week if I had to. Finally, I see them head back towards town. They left in three cars all together, and I follow a short distance behind, until we reach the American Fusion restaurant. Not wanting to be caught stalking her, I park around back and sneak in. Luckily, I know the chef here, who happens to be a member of my pack, so he sneaks me in through the kitchen.

I have a perfect view of them from behind the kitchen doors, and I notice their group consists of Jared, Harmony, the aunt and uncle, and two others. Not sure who they are but I don't really care either. I watch the one person I now know I want to be my world. As she sit, I see her sniff the air and tense. Can she smell me as strongly as I could smell her? She shakes her head and studies the menu. I am safe from being discovered. I watch as she excused herself and head to the restroom.

I quickly follow, but she goes in before I can stop her. I hide in the darkest corner of the hallway, in case her cousin come looking for her. As I was standing there, I see the black-haired guy that is with them, casually lean against the wall, waiting for her to exit. My possessive instincts kicks in. Harmony emerge from the rest room, and is surprised to see him waiting there. The conversation that follow had me clenching my fists so tight, I am leaving fingernail marks on my palms. Suddenly, he kisses her. Tiny hairs started to sprout all over my body. I see the future I could have with her slip away. There were flashes of our wedding, her bearing our first born, and the rest of our beautiful

children, us growing old together, the happiness and love I felt with her, and I knew right then and there . . . Even if being with her means facing the possibility of losing her too, I still want to have that future. A future he is trying to take away. As soon as that thought crossed my mind I let out a growl. It breaks them apart, and seeing the anger on her face helped me gain control of my wolf. They continued to talk and Harmony was getting madder by the minute. Listening closely, it all fell into place. This was the idiot mate that gave up someone so amazing. The same someone I almost lost and still might lose because of my foolish thinking. I was set to let Harmony handle things for herself. She was doing an excellent job so far but when the douche bag made a proposition to my mate, I had enough.

Walking towards them, I put my arms around her waist, enjoying the tingles flowing through my body, and growl satisfactorily when she leans onto me. I know she is in a weak state, and I am taking advantage of it, but this is probably the closest I'd be allowed to get to her, so I relish the moment before shocking them both with my next words, "Well, I guess it's a good thing that I'll be marking her soon so you won't have to fight it anymore."

Thus, the reason why I am now standing with my arms around an angry mate with an even angrier soon to be alpha in front of me. Sensing the anger radiating off of him, I gently shove Harmony behind me, and prepare myself for a brawl.

"Get away from her," he orders me.

Who does he think he's talking to? My wolf is begging me to kill him now. Not only did he hurt our mate, but he's also trying to take her away. My eyes blaze with a golden brown color as I stare him down. "She is mine, and no one tells me what to do."

Surprise registers on his face as my words sink in. "You're her mate too? How is that possible?"

I smirk at him, but my anger remains. "When you made the biggest mistake of your life and rejected her, it gave me the best gift in the world. A second chance at a mate. Yours to be exact."

"That won't be happening. She's coming home with me. She is mine," he threatens as he takes a step toward me.

Breaking out from behind me, Harmony quickly steps between us, placing a hand on each of our chests and pushing us away from each other. Her touch has a calming effect on our wolves until we both realize where her other hand is and almost lose it again.

"Harmony, get your hand off of him," the asshole orders.

No one talks to her like that. "Listen, mutt. Y—" the rest of my sentence is cut off as we are joined by a fourth person.

"There you are, guys. We were wondering if there was some kind of back up with the toilets here since you were both gone for so long," the newcomer who I'm assuming was Harmony's sister by the similar facial structure, teases with a playful smile on her face.

I'll admit she's pretty, but she's nowhere near as beautiful as Harmony. Not only is the idiot over here stupid but he must be blind as well. Tension still hangs in the air. Harmony's sister is unaware of it which is made evident by her next enthusiastic question. "So, Harmony, are you going to introduce me to your handsome friend here?"

By the death glare Harmony is shooting my way, I can tell she's about to say something nasty and ruin all my hard work in getting this dumb ass over here to believe I plan to mark her so I quickly reach over to shake her hand as I say, "I'm Trevor. Harmony's mate. I'm assuming you're Harmony's

sister, Megan? Harmony's told me a lot about you!" I sneak a glance at Harmony, and if looks could kill, I'd be swimming with the sharks with weights tied to my ankles. I'm in big trouble.

* * *

HARMONY

I'm going to kill him. I'm about to be put in jail for a very long time for murdering one Trevor Hanes. How can he tell my naïve, romantic-at-heart sister that he's my mate? Especially with her thinking that the only reason I left home was because I longed for a mate of my own. There is no getting out of it. The smile that lights her face after hearing Trevor introduce himself as my mate is so radiant that it's giving the sun a run for its money.

I, on the other hand, am probably resembling something more like a volcano about to erupt. I am that mad. Regardless, there is nothing I can do about it because to reveal the truth of Trevor's reason of being here will reveal that Aiden is my mate. I admit I'm stuck in this situation for now, but Trevor better wipe that smug look off his face because he is so in for it.

Aiden is still trying to hide the glare on his face and calm himself while Trevor is looking at me with such love. I'm blown away. Either he's a really good actor or something happened to make him do a complete one hundred eighty from yesterday. I'm betting on him being a good actor. Resigning myself to this charade, I let Trevor take my hand as we follow Megan and Aiden back to our table.

After Trevor's revelation, Megan immediately invited him to join us. I try to ignore the tingles shooting up my arms and decide to start my payback now by stepping hard on his toes as I move around him to take my seat. I see him flinch and grunt as I sit down and feel the first hint of satisfaction. Jared's eyes are on me in question and I quickly fill him in on the action he missed five minutes ago. He makes the mistake of drinking while I tell him and ends up spewing water all over himself and his side of the table. My uncle has to pat his back while suffering a coughing fit and when my aunt worriedly asks if he's okay he mumbles a, "Yeah, mom. Just went down the wrong pipe." His choice of words oddly resemble my life at the moment.

Our food arrives and Trevor declines, saying he ate before he came. If that's the case, why is he at a restaurant? Fortunately for him, no one questions it. He easily chats with my uncle about pack matters all the while Aiden aims glares his way from his place at the opposite end of the table. I see Trevor glance at him from his side eye. He then smirks and puts his arm around the back of my chair, and starts to play with strands of my hair. Aiden stiffens and Trevor covers a laugh with a cough. I'm enjoying Aiden's discomfort, but I can't let Trevor think I'm okay with him touching me. Slowly sliding my arm under the table, I place my hand on his thigh causing it to tense and catch his breath. I move my hand a little higher up, closer to his groin, and when I feel his body relax in pleasure, I pinch the inside of his thigh hard enough to leave a bruise. His knee jerks so hard it hits the table, causing everyone to look at him. He smiles sheepishly as if it were a twitch of a nerve or something and they buy it returning to their conversations, but I can see the discomfort it causes him. I have to bite my lip hard so I don't laugh out loud. He sees this, and gives me a disapproving look as if

warning that I'll pay for that later. Yeah right.

The meal continues on like this. I'm doing everything in my power to annoy him. I put salt in his water while he isn't looking, but he drinks it as if it's the most delicious beverage. I tap the male waiter's butt when he's directly behind Trevor, causing him to jump with a glare on his face as he turns. Though that one backfires, because when the waiter sees the offender is Trevor, he smiles and winks, later slipping his number to him which makes Trevor whisper in my ear, "I'm so hot, even guys want me!" My cousin enjoys the show from his front row seat at the table. I know his ribs are going to hurt tomorrow from all the laughter he's been stifling.

Finally, the meal comes to a close, and Trevor cons his way into getting my uncle to agree to let me leave with him, promising to drop me off later. Hello? Doesn't anyone over here realize I have a mind of my own and can make my own decisions? Evidently not, with all the plans being made without my consent.

I keep my smile in place until their headlights vanish from sight, and then proceed to hit Trevor in the chest, all the while cussing him out for his lie and unwanted hands on my body. I'm getting really worked up, but to my disappointment, my hits weren't even affecting him. It's like hitting a rock wall. A very sexy, tall, great smelling rock wall. AARGH! The bond is already starting to intensify. I try to back away when he grabs my smaller hands in his bigger ones. He then holds it to his chest and says, "You know you're really hot when you're mad." I'm going to punch that smile right off his face! *Or kiss it off* . . . NO NO NO definitely punch!

"Let me go, Trevor. It's been a long day and an even longer night. Just take me home," I grumble.

"No. Please, Harmony. Just come with me to my pack house. I just want to talk with you. I have some things I need to say," he pleads with me.

"I don't think so. The last time we did that, you ended up rejecting me. So, I'll take a pass thank you very much."

"It will be different this time. I promise. I've come to realize some things and I need to tell you about them," he tries again.

"I don't know . . ." I say on the verge of giving in.

"If you won't come for me, will you come for Cody? He's been dying to see you again. I swear we're a step away from having surgery done on me to cure me of whatever is keeping you away," he says with a smile on his face.

Thinking of little Cody, I return his smile and feel myself give in. "Alright, but only for Cody."

His face lights up with the most gorgeous smile I've ever seen. Note to self, do not make Trevor smile. The effects are dangerous to my heart.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Mouth, Insert Foot Here

The ride to his place is quiet and filled with questions. He glances my way more than once, but I refuse to look at him. I'm still angry. For the rejection, the lie he told, the dinner, and the brunette. Finally arriving at the house, I take a minute to admire the garden in the moonlight. It is so dreamy. I can see myself here. Shaking away that silly thought, I follow him inside.

We hear laughter coming from the entertainment room so we head to that direction. All the guys are in there, lounging on the couches with little Cody on the floor playing with some trucks. I wonder to myself if they owned shirts at all, because this is the second time that I've been in their presence while they're half dressed. If they do, I'm tempted to throw them out because I don't mind the view. My thoughts must be plastered across my face because Trevor's stance becomes rigid and is followed by a growl. Rolling my eyes at him I say, "Oh stop. I'm just looking. It's not as if I was doing something like, I don't know, dragging them into the woods to get my hots off." He flinches and is about to come back at me when Cody notices our arrival.

"Harmony, you came back!" he shouts while running to hug my legs.

I bend down to scoop him up as if it is the most natural thing in the world and say, "I sure did, buddy. I guess I just couldn't stay away from such a handsome guy like you."

He smiles and says, "I have that effect on the ladies," causing me to burst out laughing.

"You've been spending way too much time around some flirts," I say shooting the boys a reprimanding look and causing a few sheepish grins and one unrepentant one from Jeremy. Ahh. . . so he must've taught this particular line to Cody.

"Are you not *lergic* to uncle Trevor anymore?" he asks in all seriousness.

"*Lergic*?" I ask.

"He means allergic," Trevor says taking Cody from my arms. "I told you there is nothing wrong with me, you knucklehead."

The room fills with Cody's giggles as Trevor blows raspberries on his stomach. The sight of my mate playing so carefree with the little boy that has already stolen my heart causes a crack in the shell around me that I'm trying so desperately to keep intact. Needing a reminder of why that's a bad idea, I force myself to conjure up images of Trevor and his groupies, the most recent one from today fresh in my mind. Shell firmly mended.

I reply to Cody's question. "No, there's nothing wrong with your uncle but he should be making a trip to the clinic soon to get tested for some STDs."

Trevor's playing ceases, the slight twitch of his jaw showing his unease. The guys burst out

laughing ,and Austin tells the others. “You see why I like this girl?” Earning him several nods of agreement and a scowl from Trevor. The laughter dies as we're all taken by surprise with Cody's next question.

“What’s an STD?”

Awkward didn't even begin to describe the silence that follows. Noticing Jeremy is about to answer him and almost sure the response won't be good, I rush to say the first thing on my mind. “Small toe disease.”

What did I just say? I guess I'm not too good at thinking on my feet. It's definitely something I should work on. Of course the guys burst out laughing again, only this time it was at my expense.

Everyone starts to calm down when Cody follows up with, “What’s that?” Which starts a new round of laughs. Someone save me from curious five-year-olds.

Shooting the guys a death glare, I start to explain this non-existent disease to Cody. “Well, it’s when someone’s baby toe is just a tad bit smaller than the normal size and needs to be treated before it makes the rest of the toes smaller too.” Like I said, not a good thinker.

At this point, even Trevor is having a hard time containing his laughter.

I'm about to join in when Cody looks at his toes and shouts, “Oh no, All my toes are small.”

When I dig a hole, I really dig it deep.

I rush to take him from Trevor and reassure him. “No, honey. Yours are still growing so you have nothing to worry about.” Seeing the look of panic on my face, Trevor does laugh but he quickly shuts up with my next words.

“Besides, only sleazy people like your Uncle Trevor need to be checked for it.” I can see I've hit a sore spot with the anger that crossed his features, but I'm not prepared for the hurt lurking behind it. I'm about to apologize when Cody, seeming to be over the whole small toe issue, asks me to read him his bedtime book. I follow him upstairs and help him change into his pajamas. He chooses *Where The Wild Things Are* and gets under his covers, patting the spot next to him. I sit and start reading. He curls into my side and after a few pages, fell fast asleep. Putting the book aside, I take a minute to examine his face. It's relaxed in sleep, his eye lids twitch every so often as if he's dreaming, his cheeks still hold some of his baby fat, and his mouth is hanging wide open. He truly is adorable. I feel a sudden sadness that he's growing up without a mommy. I snuggle a little closer to him, keeping my arm under his head. If things were different I could definitely see myself being one for him.

* * *

TREVOR

After Harmony and Cody head upstairs for his bedtime story, the shit stirring begins.

“So, Trevor, would you like me to make an appointment for you? You know, to get yourself checked for SMALL TOE DISEASE,” Greg hoots.

“Yeah. I hope it’s not contagious or anything,” Jeremy teases.

“Man, Harmony is great. I agree, Austin. I like her too,” Craig says with a smile.

That reminds me of Austin’s earlier statement. “Yeah, what was that about huh, Austin? You like my mate? In what way? And what exactly happened at the bleachers?” I ask angrily. All humor vanishes with my statement as the guys take notice of the shine to my eyes.

“Chill, Trevor. It’s nothing like that. I think she’s amazing and totally hot but I see her in that kid sister sort of way. And before you go jumping to conclusions, I spent my whole free period trying to convince her not to give up on you. No matter how much of an idiot you were being,” Austin states. “She’s good for you and being that you brought her here tonight after all that went on today, I’m guessing you finally figured it out for yourself.”

Pushing my wolf back, I allow myself to relax. “Yeah, I did.”

“Well it’s about time. You should’ve known from the moment you met,” Craig complains.

“Not saying I ain't happy for you but why the sudden change? What made Mr. No Strings Attached want to become Mr. Tied Down?” Jeremy questions.

Understanding how they could be confused by this, I relay my night causing more laughter to erupt especially the part about the waiter. They are definitely loving my mate. They’d never known anyone to get the better of me, until her. Surprisingly that doesn't bother me at all. Leaving the idiots to themselves, I decide to go up and check on my mate and nephew.

Silently approaching Cody’s doorway so as not to disturb them, the sight that greets me is like a vision of the future I could have. They're fast asleep on the bed with Cody cuddled up to Harmony’s side, both her arms are around him. I'm almost jealous of the position. I want to be the one she puts her arms around. I want her to love me as much as I know she’s come to love Cody. I need to do anything I can to make her feel that way about me.

Moving to her side, I don't want to wake her. I know it has been a very trying day for her, but if I left her here, she would start to cramp up on the tiny twin bed. Carefully untangling the two, I lift her into my arms. She mumbles something in her sleep before snuggling into my neck. I relish the feel of her body on mine. Nothing ever felt so right, and I want to live the rest of my life with this feeling; with my arms surrounding her. I know the bond is getting stronger, and it will eventually be too hard for her to fight, but I want her to come to me of her own free will first.

I carry her into my room and pull back my black sheets, gently placing her in the middle of my king-sized bed. She'd already taken off her shoes at the front door, which is customary in houses here in Hawaii. All that was left to do was cover her. I took a moment to stare at her beautiful face before giving her a kiss on her forehead and leaving the room. I want to stay with her, but I know it will only make her hate me more. So with heavy feet, I head next door to the guest room. I strip down to my boxers and get under the sheets. Lying on my back with my hands under my head, I think over the events of today.

How could I have been so stupid to even try something with a random girl today? No one compares to Harmony, and no one ever will. And her mate, Aiden. He better think twice about coming anywhere near her, because if he tries to make her his mistress again, no one will be able to stop me from killing him. We may not have completed the mating yet, but I already feel bonded to her for life.

No one, especially me, will ever hurt her again. I plan to make sure of that. I'll give her time to love me on her own, but I will be marking her. No ifs, ands, or buts. I’ve already chosen my future path. All that’s left to do is wait for her to choose the same one.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Pushed to the Limit

HARMONY

The cocoon of warmth I'm in when I woke up is wonderful. I roll over loving the softness of the sheets beneath me. I roll once more, spreading my arms and legs wide, enjoying the coolness. I roll— hey! With all the rolling I'm doing, I should have ended up face to face with the carpet, falling off the edge of my full size bed. So why am I still in bed? Then it hits me. The scent that never fails to make my wolf sigh with content while burning with lust. I sit up ready to punch him if he's in this bed with me, but I'm greeted with silence and rumpled sheets. The side where he might've been is cool to touch.

Rubbing my eyes, I take in my surroundings. It's a typical male's room. There's a big king size bed with black sheets, a desk set up with a computer in the far corner, a masculine looking lamp, a 32" plasma TV mounted on the wall with a pretty killer stereo system below. Then I glance to my right and see there are floor to ceiling windows currently covered by drapes. Ever the curious one, I get up to check it out only to find that it isn't a window exactly, but sliding glass doors that lead to a balcony overlooking the lake at the back of Trevor's pack house. The sun is just above the horizon. If only I had my phone with me to capture this moment. Having your closest contacts only a mind link away makes the purpose of a phone a little redundant so I don't carry it around. I'd have to settle for a mental pic instead. The stillness of the morning gives me a moment to think. He never got around to the talk he wanted to have with me last night, but a part of me senses his change in feelings. The things he said at the restaurant proves that. I can't deny my feelings are changing as well. It's hard to deny the pull I feel every time he's around. Can I really trust his complete turnaround though? What if I give in to him and he changes his mind again? That will crush me. How can I be sure this won't blow up in my face? Then it hits me! I have to make him work for this mating. Give him a chance to prove that he's all in. As ideas begin to form in my mind, the man himself walks in the room wearing nothing but a pair of boxer briefs. My eyes wander from his long, muscular legs, to his very impressive package, then landing on his finely toned chest and eight pack. Oh yes, my feelings for him are definitely changing. My eyes then follow a path to his sensual lips that beg to be tasted. The smirk that grows on those very tasty lips force me to look away, hating the blush blooming on my cheeks.

“No need to turn, babe. You can look all you want. After all, this . . .” he makes a sweeping motion with his hands from head to toe, “is all yours.”

“Who said I wanted it to be mine?” I protest.

“Your eyes, they're practically eating me whole. I don't mind. It's a huge turn on. Do you have an itch you need me to scratch?” he taunts me.

“Nope,” I unconvincingly deny. “no itch at all. I'm completely itch- free.”

He chuckles, then makes his way towards the bathroom. “Denial isn't working for you, babe. Your attempt is cute though. I'm going to shower, then I'll take you home so you can get ready for school.”

How is it possible to want to slap and kiss him at the same time?

Just before he closes the door, he sticks his head through the crack to say, “You're welcome to jump in with me, and save some time and water.”

Laughing at my irritated expression, he wisely shuts the door before the remote I send flying his way can hit him. He seems to be feeling pretty confident. Probably thinks my agreeing to come to his house then falling asleep here is some kind of win for him. Time to bring him down a notch. Rushing downstairs, I see Cody eating his cereal at the table, and luckily he's alone. I get him to help me find an empty plastic shopping bag, give him a quick kiss on the forehead promising to visit soon, and run outside. Moving further into the trees, I undress and put my things in the plastic bag tying the handles together. Shifting as fast as I can, I grab the bag with my teeth and run as fast as I can straight across Trevors land, past our school, and into our territory. Making it to the tree line surrounding our pack house, I shift back and get dressed. I enter through the kitchen and am met by five sets of curious eyes.

“Doing the walk of shame, I see,” Jared says jokingly, knowing for a fact my scent hasn't changed.

“Geez, that must've been one lousy lay if you had to run all the way home to get away from him,” Nate offers.

The laughter ensues until Megan tells them to leave me alone and drags me upstairs for all the juicy details.

Once in my room, I turn on her in exasperation. “Seriously Megan, nothing happened. I fell asleep while reading a story to his nephew and that's it. We didn't even share a bed.”

She doesn't seem like she's going to let it go, but I have some serious prepping to do if I want my plan to be successful. I'm not ready to tell her the truth, but I do need her help so I convince her that I need to feel more confident in my mating, and an armor to deal with all the skanks after my mate. She works her magic on me and when she's done, I almost booty dance in excitement. Trevor is going to flip! Megan loans me a pair of her short, black denim shorts which is much shorter on me, since I have a whole three inches on her. They end a little below my butt cheeks so still barely passable for school. She pairs it with a cute strapless top I had buried in the back of my dresser. Deciding my hair needs a little *pizazz*, she curls it before pinning part of it back, leaving a few tendrils of hair loose, then adds a smokey effect to my eyes making them look sultry. She finishes my face with some rose colored lipstick. I add some dangling silver earrings and slip into a pair of beaded flip flops. She suggests dropping me at school, because if the guys see what I'm wearing, there's no way I'm making it out of the house. We sneak out the front door while they're still in the kitchen, roll her car down away before starting it and drive off. Stealthy is our middle names. Once we are safely on our way, I realized someone was missing this morning.

“Hey, where's Aiden?” I ask.

“He had to return home earlier than we planned because some unexpected pack business

came up, but I'm not ready to leave yet so he left last night without me. I'll be here through the weekend so I'll be able to help you find your car," she says excitedly.

It's a little odd that she's not even bothered by his leaving, but I've got my own mate issues to deal with right now. If she needs me, I'll be here for her though. We finally make it to my school and seeing all the people milling about, I start to chicken out.

"Don't even think about it, Harmony. You get in there and you show that alpha just who his mate is. You make him see that just because you belong together, doesn't mean he can do whatever he wants and wrap you around his finger. Show every she-wolf in there that you aren't the one to mess with," Megan orders passionately.

I can't help but laugh. This is why I love my sister so much. She's my main supporter in everything. She's always there for me when I need her. I realize in that moment that if I had it to do over, I would still go through all the pain of rejection if it meant keeping her happy. I give her a big hug, being careful not to mess my sexily messed up hair, and get out of the car as gracefully as possible without flashing anyone. I wave her off and strut. Yes, strut up the walkway as if I were walking in a NY fashion show. At the entrance, Shelly and Katie are waiting for me.

"Damn, girl. You look hot," Shelly says in friendly appreciation.

"Who you all dolled up for?" asks Katie.

"Trevor," I reply, stunning them silent.

Shelly breaks out of her shock. "Harmony, I warned you about him. He's a heartbreaker."

"Yeah but he's my heartbreaker. He's my mate. My second one." Once again, I leave them speechless. I explain my whole sordid past while keeping an eye out for Trevor. They're sympathetic and happy that I've been given another shot at it. They just hope Trevor is a good mate. I do too. We make our way inside and the attention is immediate.

Guys are saying hi and asking if I need help with my books. They check which class I have first in hopes of walking me there. I'm building quite a following, and by the time I make it to my locker, there's a decent size group of guys surrounding me. I laugh at their lame jokes, pretend to shy away from their compliments, and fake interest in their conversations. Suddenly, the entrance doors open and my desired target steps inside.

He scans the hallways, finally noticing the group gathered by my locker. I lean towards the guy closest to me, dusting off a piece of nonexistent lint from his shoulder as I see Trevor make his way through the crowd. I softly ask the guy his name, knowing he'll have to bend down to hear me clearly. Our lips are nowhere near one another but from Trevor's view, it looks like a kiss. I sense his anger even before I look at him, but there's also hurt. I do not enjoy his pain, but it's too late to back down now. He needs to know what it feels like to witness something like this. It's all part of my plan to make sure Trevor appreciates what we have so neither one of us will have to feel heartache again.

* * *

TREVOR

I was losing my patience. Not only did she leave my house before I was done with my shower, but I arrive at school in time to witness my mate lip locked with a male wolf who isn't me. Seeing red, I break up the circle of drooling vultures to see they aren't kissing but pretty damn close to

it. I shove the kid far away from Harmony and lock my angry gaze on her.

“First you leave without me, then you get all cozy with some mutt. You're mine, Harmony. That means you stick with me, and don't let anyone else touch you.”

Eyes blazing, she gets in my face. “You don't control me, Trevor. And I have no idea why you think you do. The last time we had a serious conversation, you were rejecting me.”

Gasps can be heard throughout the hallway. We are so caught up in our battle, we fail to remember we have an audience. That doesn't stop Harmony from continuing her tirade. With a finger to my chest to emphasize her point, she continues, “You can't just flip flop between wanting or not wanting me. I'm not some play thing you can have your fun with till it's old and dull, then toss away. And it's definitely not okay for you to walk off into the woods with random skanks.”

Tears fill her eyes after her last statement. I didn't have a chance to work this all out with her after we got to my house last night. Cody took all her attention. I got too comfortable with her staying with me, it felt right and I let that calm feeling dissuade me from setting her straight. She takes a step away from me, and I know she plans to leave. It's then I get a good look at her outfit. She barely has anything on and looks hot as hell. My nostrils flare picking up her scent, but before I can react, the overwhelming flood of arousal around me brings my attention back to the crowd full of horny males wanting a piece of my mate. That shit ain't happening, and I'll kill every single one of them for even looking at her. A snuffle brings my attention from murder to concern as I realize Harmony is hurting. That trumps any plans I have for the dead wolves walking around me. I gently place her face between my hands. “I think it's time we had a good and long talk, babe.”

Defiance lurks behind her watery gaze, and I know she's preparing to fight me, so I do the only thing I can. I drop down, placing my shoulder to her stomach and lift. I make sure to cover her sweet cheeks from wandering eyes and head for the exit.

“Put me down, Trevor. I don't want to go anywhere with you right now!” she shouts while pounding on my back. We're causing quite a scene, which is why I need to get us somewhere private. What I have to say needs no audience.

“Not happening, sweets.”

She continues to pummel me as I make my way to the woods. Once under the cover of trees, I run as fast as my wolf speed allows while in this form. I heard her loud and clear in the hallway. She's afraid what I feel is fleeting. She doesn't want to be controlled nor treated like just another fling for me. She isn't. She's in fact far from it. It's time I make sure she knows it.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Completion

I make my way through the house and up the stairs with her still grumbling on my shoulder. I kick my room door open then repeat the process once inside to shut it, making sure the lock clicks into place. Job done, I gently toss her on the bed, following her down and making sure to keep my weight on my arms as I loom over her. My wolf wants to lay claim to her right this very minute, but I push him back needing to assure her of my feelings first. I caress her cheeks still flushed from anger.

Framing her face, I begin, “Harmony, listen to me. I don’t want what I’m about to say to scare you, but I need you to understand what you mean to me. My heart beats so strongly for you that every time you’re near, it feels as if it’s about to jump out of my chest, just to be closer to yours. I want you as my mate for now and forever.”

Not being one to hold her tongue, she interrupts my declaration of love to argue. “You’re singing a different tune today from the other day. Y—”

I stop her with a finger to her lips. “I know what I said. That was the scared kid in me talking. The one too scarred by loss to appreciate what he still had and could have in the future. Sarah was a —”

This time she cut me off by pushing my finger away to say softly, “I don’t want to be a replacement for Sarah. I don’t want to have to live up to the memory of your first love and I really don’t want to worry you’ll start looking for something from some other willing female if you can’t get it from me.”

I sit, bringing her with me and holding her closely in my lap. Lifting her chin so that she’s looking into my eyes, I beg her to believe my next words.

“You aren’t a replacement. Not to shun the memory of Sarah, but you’re an upgrade. Yes, I had a bond with her first, but it never had a chance to grow into anything. She didn’t love me. It wasn’t even a fraction of the bond I have with you.” A little of her uncertainty fades away, so I continue, “Sarah was an important part of my past. Without having met and lost her, I wouldn’t have had a chance to know you and for that I will be forever grateful to her.”

“Not to mention she brought an amazing little guy into this world,” Harmony adds.

“That, she did.” I agree. “As for your other worry, no one will ever make me stray. You are worth more than ten thousand easy lays.”

She raises a brow. “Wow, Trevor. That’s such a romantic sentiment.”

Realizing how that sounds, I mentally slap myself. “Sorry, I’m not really good at saying the right things. What I mean is that I don’t want anyone but you. Won’t ever want anyone but you. You’re

amazing. Sweet yet sassy. No matter what I throw your way, you give it right back to me. Life will never be dull with you. You'll never just submit to me without a fight.”

She can't resist pointing out. “If I even submit at all.”

My eyes flash at the challenge. “Trust me, there will be times you'll submit to me, but I promise to never force anything you don't want.” I'm filled with pride and assurance seeing a similar flare of arousal in her eyes. I know exactly how to seal this commitment, but we need to cover one more thing.

“I want nothing more than to lay you down and claim what is mine, but first I need to ask how you feel about Cody. We're a package deal and though I know you didn't sign up for an instant family, that's what you'll be getting with me.” I'm sure she can hear the uncertainty in my voice.

To my surprise, she moves to straddle me before placing her palm to my cheek. “Are you kidding me? That little boy is the whole reason I'm listening to what you're saying right now. He's definitely a bonus!” There's a teasing glint in her eye, but I can't help but to notice that while I've been pouring my heart out, she has yet to reciprocate my feelings.

She stares at me intently before saying, “I want a future with you. I want you to claim me. That whole act today was about you. I needed to be sure you really wanted me, that we want the same things. Your words just proved that. For someone who isn't good with saying the right things, you did a good damn job.”

The love and elation that fills me is like nothing I've ever felt before. It's all consuming and I can feel the bond between us strengthen. Not wanting to waste any more time I say what my heart feels, “I love you, Harmony. I know it may seem too soon but my wolf has been hurting for a long time and knows what a blessing you are to us. If that isn't enough reason to love you, then the fact that you're accepting Cody without complaint is. Not to mention your fiery strength and even your stubborn ways. There's so much to love about you, I never had a fighting chance against it.”

Tears fill her eyes but this time I know they're happy ones. “I love you too,” she says. “After Aiden my world was cold and lonely. Filled with nothing but heartache. You've changed that for me. We had a rocky start thanks to you,” she always has to bust my balls so it seems, “but we're finding our way now and it feels good. Being here with you feels like I'm finally where I'm supposed to be.”

No more words need to be said. It was our bodies' turn to talk. I seal my lips with hers, pouring every ounce of emotion I had in me into our kiss. Like I knew she would, Harmony gave me the same right back. I laid her on the bed, gently this time and began kissing her everywhere I could reach. Her forehead, her nose, her eye lids, and finally ending up where I started, her lips. I bit her bottom lip asking for entrance which she easily allows and let my hands roam her body. Her hands are doing the same with mine and things start getting very intense. She lifts the hem of my shirt and I break away from her lips long enough to take it off and throw it somewhere in the direction of my desk. I do the same with her top, needing to feel more of her skin and continue to devour her mouth. When her hands reach the button on my jeans I still and look deeply into her eyes.

“I have the intense need to claim you but we don't have to do anything more right now. Not if you aren't ready. We can keep this completely PG13 if that's what you want.” Both my wolf and boner disagreed with that, but I had to think with my heart and if Harmony isn't ready then it isn't happening.

She gave me a look of both irritation and affection before saying sarcastically, “I'm lying under you practically naked, trying to remove your clothes, which your sudden need to talk is making very difficult by the way, and kissing you back as if my life depends on it. Yet you think I might not be

ready?"

I smile, "Just making sure. Trying to be a gentleman and all."

She rolls her eyes and laughs, then places her lips against my ear and shocks me. "You're being sweet and it's turning me on so much that right now I want you to be anything but a gentleman."

No more assurance is needed as I give in to the lust I'd been fighting since the day we met. We kiss and explore every inch of each other's bodies as I spread her legs, slowly joining us together as one. It's beautiful and passionate and the last thing I remember before passing out contentedly is whispering, "Mine," in her ear and having her reply, "Yours," with the same contentment I feel.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Sealed with a Bite

HARMONY

Slowly opening my eyes to check the time, I see that it's only one in the afternoon, meaning we dozed off for about an hour. Trevor's breathing lightly behind me being the big spoon to my little one. Having his arms around my waist feels right. It feels good. I feel good. Lying there in comfort, I realize I also felt different. Not just because I'm mated but because I can no longer feel Aiden. It's as if he never held a place in my heart and I like that feeling. I'm free from an unwanted bind that I have carried around for too long and it is all thanks to the virile wolf beside me. Grabbing onto the hand Trevor has over my waist, I think about what we just did. It was amazing. There was a bit of pain in the beginning but he was so gentle and sweet. Not to mention H-O-T-T, hot. It makes me wonder, "Is it always that good?"

"Actually, it gets even better," Trevor says out loud answering my quiet thoughts, causing me to jump.

"What? But . . . how? Huh?" I ask confused.

Continuing to speak through our bond he replies, "We are mated now. We can speak with each other without anyone else having to know. Which will come in handy when I want to send you little ideas of all the things I plan on doing to you." He starts to run his hands up and down my leg.

"Already?" I ask shocked.

"Babe, now that you're mine, I'm going to want you even more. All day and all night. I won't be able to control it." He laughs at the mixture of awe and weariness on my face. "Don't worry, the only reason the feeling is so strong right now is because I haven't given you my mark yet and my wolf is restless to do so and yours probably is too."

He's right. Though sated, my wolf is not completely satisfied. Not wanting to have to deal with an out of control mate and a little curious, I ask, "Why didn't you mark me? Don't mates usually do that while having sex?"

Trevor grunts before turning my body and pulling me into his arms. Placing my hands on his chest, I look at his face and see a frown forming. He rubs his thumb over my bottom lip. "First of all, what we did just now was make love. Every time I am with you it will always be that. You're too special to me for it to ever be just sex, got it?" Warmth fills me with every word and I nod in agreement.

Trevor smiles and kisses me lightly on the lips before continuing, "It was your first time,

babe. I wanted to be gentle. Once I mark you, my wolf will take over and gentle is the last thing I'll be. I'm just sorry I didn't make it more special for you. You deserve the whole rose petals and candle light set up and all I had to offer you was clean bed sheets.”

His thoughtfulness and concern for me is sweet. Not to mention a major turn on. Looking deep into his eyes I say, “It was special, Trevor. Because it was with you. I didn't need all that extra stuff. Just knowing you love me and care enough to want it to be special, makes it so.”

Relief washes over his features as he pulls me closer, kissing me lightly on my forehead while continuing to run his hand along my leg. It instantly reignites my desire for him. I kiss his jaw before saying, “I think I'm ready for the not so gentle Trevor.”

Trevor is on me in a flash, his lips devouring mine. I am being consumed by his wolf. It's raw and intense. He's in no way rough with me but every touch is purposeful and passionate. I meet his every move with my own, matching his intensity. Our bodies once again come together as one, only this time Trevor sinks his canines into the curve of my neck and shoulder at the exact moment he enters me. I'm shocked out of my passion as the pain hits but it's immediately replaced with pleasure so powerful I almost pass out. We move together in sync, our emotions blending together allowing us to feel what the other is experiencing. It's a beautiful moment that results in the both of us reaching our climaxes together. After taking a few moments to catch his breath, Trevor untangles himself from me and rests against the head board, once again pulling me into arms. I run my fingers over the spot that Trevor bit causing both of us to shiver slightly. There's nothing but smooth skin there, no sign of his bite except the feelings it invokes in us as I touch it. “That's going to take some getting used to.” I giggle.

Trevor chuckles. “Why do I have a feeling you're going to use that as one more way to torture me?”

I turn to him. “Because you now know me so well, inside and out.”

He smiles at that, leaning in for a kiss. We talk about everything then. Me officially joining his pack. Talking with my family about the changes to come. My responsibilities as a luna. That one will be the biggest adjustment. All my life I only ever had to worry about the how the decisions I made would affect me. Now I'd have a whole pack of people to worry about. Of course Trevor will be making the actual decisions but every alpha relies strongly on his luna to help guide him and reach said decision. It's a lot of pressure but Trevor assures me I'll be able to do it. The confidence and pride I feel coming from him through our bond shows me that he truly believes this and it's reassuring. It fills me with my own confidence that I'll rock the heck out of this luna thing. His desire sparks again, flowing strongly through the invisible wires that connect us.

“Again, Trevor? You're insatiable.” I laugh.

He growls playfully. “I can't help it. Seeing you so ready to accept our future and secure in my belief in you is sexy.”

I don't think I'll ever get enough of him. He not only makes me feel desired and loved but he supports and believes in me. I won the mate jackpot. We reach for one another again, hands roaming, legs tangling, kisses intensifying, when we're interrupted by a knock on the bedroom door.

“Uncle Trevor, you in there?”

Not remembering whether Trevor locked the door or not, I screech loudly enough that there is no way Cody couldn't have heard me. I push Trevor off me a little harder than intended in my rush to cover up that it causes him to fall over the edge of the bed landing with a thud on the carpet. I would

have laughed at the expression on his face if I wasn't so panicking about Cody seeing something he shouldn't. I wrap myself the best I can in the sheets just as Cody turns the door knob only to find it . . . locked.

My shoulders collapse in relief until I hear him ask, "Hey what are you guys doing in there?"

Dropping my head in my hands, I feel a blush forming when he repeats the question, only this time to someone else. "Uncle Jeremy, what are Uncle Trevor and Harmony doing in his room? And why is the door locked?"

This is not going end well. I look to see what Trevor is doing and want to punch him in his gut. He's lying on the ground clutching his stomach in silent laughter. He laughs even harder when our eyes connect and he sees the blush on my face. I settle for beaming him with a pillow and anxiously await Jeremy's response. He clears his throat and coughs as if he is also trying to hide laughter and stumbles with an answer.

"They . . . um . . . are . . . a . . . wrestling. Yeah, that's it! They're wrestling with each other in there."

"Awww, they're playing? But I wanna wrestle too! Uncle Trevor is bigger than Harmony. She's gonna need my help," he argues protectively.

By this point I feel like banging my head against the head board repeatedly.

"Uh... no, you can't do that kind of wrestling. It's too... dangerous. You could get crushed in the madness and trust me, I think Harmony has your uncle well under control," Jeremy chuckles.

He's a dead man. I'm going to kill him when I get the chance after I take out Trevor.

"Come on, little man. Let's go get you a snack. You can see Trevor and Harmony in a little bit," Jeremy coaxes Cody and then with a shout he yells the rest of his sentence. "Preferably after you both shower to wash the... uh... sweat off. Especially Harmony so the rest of the males in here won't want to wrestle with you too!" At this statement, Trevor's laughter dies and quick as a flash he's by my side protectively growling at the door.

"Go on, Cody," Jeremy says probably pushing him toward the stairs. He then says closer to the door so only we can hear. "Chill, Trevor. You know we wouldn't purposely want that. It's just the nature of our species. Take as long as you need, we'll keep the little guy distracted," he says with a smile in his voice.

Once he's gone I ask, "What did he mean by that?"

Trevor sits beside me and takes my hand. "When I mated with you, it awakened the hormones inside you that laid dormant until brought out by your mate. So for the first twenty four hours after mating, your body will be in heat which is why I needed to mark you and stake my claim so that my wolf would be satisfied and it would keep any unmated males from losing control around you. The smell of your heat will still affect them though. It's out of respect for your mate that their wolves won't let them do anything about it."

That means I was going to be like a tall glass of water in a dry desert to these guys? Great. Just freaking fantastic. Who knew mating could be so complicated?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Horny Males and Fast Rides

After learning that interesting piece of information, I rush to the shower alone. I'm still a little irritated with Trevor for having such a good laugh at my expense, and I am not about to let him eye screw my body any longer . . . Well, not yet at least. I'm a newly marked female, and I can't deny my hormonal needs nor do I want to. I scrub myself as hard as I can, hoping to wash off as much of my heat scent as possible, and think I'm doing a good job of it until Trevor invades my head. "You can scrub 'til your skin burns, babe. That smell still isn't coming off. We're both just going to have to deal with it, or if you want I can just keep you locked in my room with me until tomorrow."

Stupid, irritating, smug, alpha mate. As if I would let that happen. Although it did sound appealing . . . No way. I am not giving in. I will face this new obstacle head on as with everything else in my life. Besides, how bad could it be?

Thirty minutes later . . .

Bad. It could be very bad. If I have to see one more lustful look or licking of lips, I am going to castrate these males myself. As soon as I get downstairs I can smell the desire in the air and it's really uncomfortable. Especially because Trevor's desire is the only one I want to smell. The guys aren't doing anything to purposely make me feel this way, except Jeremy that is, who keeps commenting on how good I smell and asking if he can sniff my neck. Butthead. Trevor's handling this all very well. His body is tense, always aware of the atmosphere in case one of the guys has trouble controlling their urges but other than that he's letting things happen. He did mention through our link that he doesn't want to jump down the guys throats for every thought and feeling my being in heat is causing because he knows it's only the nature of the beast. I think that shows how great an alpha he is and of course I didn't want any of the guys hurt.

"Really, Harmony. You smell fantastic! You should have that scent bottled. You could make a fortune," Jeremy teases.

Well, maybe I could make an exception for Jeremy...

"Jeremy, enough." Trevor orders, though he tries to hide a smile. He clearly finds Jeremy's actions amusing.

"Alright, cousin. I'll stop. It's just so funny to see the blush on little Harmony's face. She's just so sweet and innocent, although we know she wasn't so innocent an hour ago. Right, Harmony?" he asks me while bobbing his eyebrows up and down.

Jeremy has been testing the limits of my patience and he just hit it.

His face registered surprise before crumpling up in pain holding onto to his family jewels and

dropping to the floor at my feet. He never even saw the knee to the balls coming before it was too late. The guys all wince in commiseration as he starts to roll back and forth on the floor while groaning.

When he rolls in my direction, and I say with a satisfied smile, “That’ll teach you to tease me about my se—”

“Little ears in the room,” Austin warns.

Yikes! I’m really going to have to learn to filter myself. I quickly amend my statement. “Ah, right. As I was saying, that’ll teach you to tease me about my *wrestling*. I may be sweet, but I pack a punch or in your case, a knee.”

After saying this I turn to the guys and say, “Anyone else have anything to say about it?”

They all shake their heads still in shock, but I see the humor in their eyes. I smile at Cody who is bending down on the ground teasing a still recovering Jeremy about his facial expression. “I swear, Uncle Jeremy. Your eyes were all funny looking and your face got so red.”

He’s oblivious to the reasons behind me kicking his uncle, but being a carefree five-year-old used to the rough housing of males, the only thing he’s interested in is how funny his uncle looked before he fell.

Trevor wraps his arms around me from behind. I lean into him as he whispers with a small laugh, “That was hot, babe. I think I need to take you upstairs for more one on one time.”

I’m about to give in when I feel a nudge in my mind. I realize it’s probably Jared worried about me since I was taken away from school so suddenly. I’m sure he knows what was about to happen, but I had been gone a while now and my aunt and uncle would start worrying about me. Not wanting to open my mind to him on the chance he might come across some of the my recent intimate thoughts, I search my pockets for my phone to call him. Then I realize I left it with the rest of my things when Trevor pulled his cave man routine.

“Can I use your phone to call my cousin? Then I need to get back home so I can let my uncle know what’s going on,” I say to Trevor.

“Yeah, no prob. Make sure you ask permission for me to come in with you. There’s no way I’m leaving you alone in a house full of unmated males in your condition.” He smiles while handing me his phone. I slap his hand and make the call.

“Hello?” Answers Jared’s curious voice, not recognizing the number.

“Hey, Jared.”

“Harmony? What’s happened? Are you ok? Are you hurt? Is that why you weren’t answering my calls?” He rushes on, definitely worried.

“Relax, Jared. I’m fine. I just had some things going on in my head I didn’t want you to find out,” I reassure him.

“Things. What kind of things? We tell each other everything. Well except for the sexy stuff cause that would just be . . . wrong,” he asks and I can picture him shiver on the other end of the phone.

I smile and say, “It’s one of those. A sexy thing.”

“Huh?” he questions. I swear I love him but sometimes he’s not the brightest crayon in the box.

“You know, with Trevor?”

Finally realization dawns. “Oh, OH! That type of thing. Gross, Harmony. I mean I know he’s you’re mate and all but you could do so much better.” Trevor, who has been listening to my conversation, growls, causing Jared to laugh out loud.

“Touched a nerve in lover boy, did I? Well, good. He should have asked my permission first. Did he claim you then?”

Was he serious? Does he even know how offending part of that was? Man, the guys around me were seriously batting zero today, that’s for sure.

“First of all, Jared, don’t talk about my mate like that.” Trevor grunts in agreement.

“Oh crap. I’ll take that defensiveness as a yes,” Jared mumbles into the phone.

“Be quiet asshat and let me finish. Second of all, what makes you think he has to ask your permission? Mine is all that’s needed. This isn’t medieval times and third, yes, he did claim me and unless you want me to gross you out with all the juicy details, you better not give me a hard time and go and ask your dad if Trevor can be allowed onto our territory and into the pack house so we can speak with him,” I scold.

“Man, being mated has made you feisty,” he teases.

“JARED! Just do it.”

“Fine, I’ll do it. Let me guess, you smell of female goodness right now and he doesn’t want to let you out of his sight, right?”

“Something like that?”

“Alright, I’ll do it. Give the phone to Trevor for a minute,” he asks but when I remain silently on the phone, he adds, “Please.”

“Much better. Why?” I wonder suspiciously.

“Just do it. I need to say something to him, from one person who cares about you to another.”

Hearing the seriousness in his voice, I hand Trevor the phone and step away, giving them privacy for their man to man talk.

They talk for a few minutes with Trevor scowling every once in awhile but finally ending with him saying, “Yeah I got that, mutt. We’ll be there soon.” And then he hangs up and walks toward me placing his phone on the counter.

“Your uncle gave me the ok so we can head there now but you’re coming back with me tonight, no matter what he decides,” he says sternly.

“Don’t panic. I already agreed. What did Jared want to talk about?” I can’t resist asking.

“Nothing much. Just made it clear that if I hurt you, he would make it his personal mission to do something to my *third leg*. His words, not mine. That sounded pretty painful,” he grimaces.

I can’t help it. I laughed. That’s Jared for you. Creatively protective. Giving Cody a kiss on the forehead, I assure him that I will be back later, and I suggest he tease Jeremy as much as he wants. Then we head outside. We make our way to Trevor’s truck but he stops me, grabs my hand, and leads me to the garage on the side of the house.

“Now that you’re almost officially my alpha female, you’re gonna need a ride of your own,” Trevor says as he opens a door and switches on the lights.

As my eyes adjust to the change in lighting, I’m shocked at the sight before me. There are five cars and two motorcycles lined up side by side. There’s a Hummer, Range Rover, Yukon, and Escalade. These boys like to ride big and in style. The cars are beautiful but it’s the last car that catches my eye. It’s a brand new Ford Mustang in a gorgeous blue color, and it’s love at first sight.

Seeing the look on my face, Trevor turns me away from the beauty before me and says while smiling, "Earlier today when I chased the guys out of the house, I sent them on a mission to buy this for you. I wasn't sure what exactly you would like but judging by the look on your face, I did well."

"Are you kidding me? This is mine? All mine?" I jump in excitement which is kind of hard to do with Trevor's arms still around me.

"Yeah, baby. It's all yours," he laughs.

"Thank you. You are so gonna get lucky tonight. I need to ask two things though."

He chuckles motioning for me to go ahead. "First, where are the keys?" he reaches in his pocket to pull a pair out.

"Yes!" I cheer grabbing it from his fingertips and start toward my new beauty.

"What was the second question?" he asks with a raised brow.

I toss a look over my shoulder and say with a smile before unlocking the car and getting in. "What are you waiting for?"

All that could be heard after that was the deep rumble of the engine mixed in with the deep laughter of my mate. There is no sweeter sound than that.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Switching Packs

AIDEN

Sitting at his pack meeting which he's supposed to be running, he's hardly paying attention. His mind keeps replaying that awful dinner over and over again.

Harmony sitting so close to that ass of an alpha with his hands in her hair. She was his, damn it! Yeah, he knew he rejected her but he changed his mind. He wants her back and plans on getting her. Second mate or not he really couldn't care less. He would have been there right now, claiming her this very moment if it weren't for this pre-scheduled meeting with their neighboring pack over land of all things. Who cared about that when he has a mate to get back?

Having decided which portions of land to trade, he adjourns the meeting and starts to leave. He's anxious to get back to her before that idiot tries to mark what is his. Aiden was almost out free when he's stopped by Mr. Evans, Harmony's dad.

“Hey, Aiden. I've been meaning to ask you. How was Hawaii?”

Aiden really isn't in the mood for small talk so he tries to brush him off. “It was beautiful. Now I really have to g—”

“How was my daughter? Harmony. Was she alright? Has she met her mate yet? You know girls, they don't talk to their dads about stuff like that,” he interrupts him. Ordering your future father in law to leave you alone isn't the best idea when trying to win over your mate so no matter how much he wants to do just that, he refrains.

“She was fine and as far as I know she is still mateless but who knows, maybe her mate is closer than she thinks and he's just trying his hardest to get to her but keeps getting interrupted by irritating people.”

Mr. Evans looks a little taken back. Aiden wonders if he's being too abrupt. Quickly covering his slip up, he tries to appease him. “Sorry. It's just that I've been away from Megan for too long, and I want to get back to her,” Aiden lies.

Mr. Evans nods his head in understanding eventhough he really doesn't understand anything. He pats Aiden on the back and says to please send his girls his and their mother's love. Finally free, Aiden rushes to his room to grab a duffel bag when a sharp pain hits his chest. At first he thinks something happened to Megan, being that they're bonded, but soon after the pain turns sharper with a hint of passion mixed in.

“No!” he shouts to the empty room.

She couldn't be. She's his! Suddenly, it feels as if a thousand knives are being jammed into his heart followed closely by an emptiness so deep, he falls to his knees. Catching his breath as tears pour from his eyes, he allows himself to calm down and search for that sweet presence of Harmony that he keeps in the back of his mind, only to find it's no longer there. Trying again to use their bond to sense her, he gets nothing. This could only mean one thing. Their bond is gone. His body convulses as an effect of the loss. She mated with him. That stupid Trevor guy. This wasn't supposed to happen. She was supposed to come back home with him and be his mistress. Aiden is hit with an anger so strong it vibrates through his body, filling the emptiness with burning rage. Harmony is his. No ones but his. And it's time to bring her back where she belongs.

* * *

HARMONY

We're enjoying the smooth ride in my new car when Trevor says, "Harmony, I want to throw a party at our house this Saturday to introduce you to my pack as my mate and their new luna. Does that sound okay to you?"

"Hmmm. Will there be food, alcohol, and dancing?" I ask.

"Of course. It wouldn't be a party without it," he replies with a roll of his eyes. Such a playful move looks odd on his striking face, but it's adorable and causes me to giggle.

"Then I'm all for it. Any excuse to go shopping for a new outfit is a good idea, and now that I don't need to buy a car, my sister and I can go on a girls only shopping trip. Unless you want to come too?" I tease.

He shudders. "I love you but no thanks. Shopping is like torture. Walking around for hours, going into almost every store even though they practically sell the same thing in different colors, only to walk back out with nothing. No thanks."

"What if I wanted to try on some lingerie for you?" I tease with a wink.

He grabs my hand. "Well then. Maybe I could be persuaded."

I yank my hand away. "Too late. I've already rescinded my invitation. Besides, it's supposed to be a girls only day and you don't have the right body parts." I laugh as he shoots me that I'll get you for this later look.

Pulling up to my pack house, I'm reluctant to get out of my new toy but Trevor reassures me that the sooner we get this taken care of, the sooner I can return to it. I give the dash board one last kiss then let Trevor help me out, and we head inside. My uncle is waiting for us in the family room and so are Jared and the guys. As soon as I enter the room, the boys tense as if being hit with an unseen electric current. Having already experienced that once today, I know what it means. They caught my scent. Trevor takes an intimidating step in front of me, having a silent face off with Nate, Brad, and Jace. Being related to me, Jared and Uncle John aren't affected but the boys sure are if the desire in their eyes is anything to go by. It takes them a couple minutes but they eventually get their wolves under control and Trevor relaxes. I know they're still thinking things I'd rather not know so I decide to warn them. "Just so you guys know, I already kneed one wolf in the nuts today for his unnecessary comments, so think twice before saying anything."

That sobers them and they relax but not before checking out my goods as I turn to follow my

uncle into his office. He already knows we mated, and he's happy for us. That changes when I tell him our plans. He's like my dad away from home, and I know his anger is only because he doesn't want to let me go. Seeing the happiness on my face, he stands and with a hand on each of my shoulders he says, "Harmony Evans, I formally release you from your pledge to the Midnight Moon Pack." And just like that, I feel a clearing in my mind as the links that were in place with my now former pack members disappear. It feels a little lonely, but I know I will get a new batch of links when I pledge myself to Trevor's pack tonight. After that's done, I call my parents to fill them in and they're really happy for me. They promise to come down as soon as possible to meet Trevor and we hang up. Trevor and I then head to my room to pack up my stuff. It's pretty easy since I haven't been here too long, therefore never had a chance to build a collection of things. I tell everyone goodbye, reminding them we'll be seeing each other in school and can still hang out. I receive a never ending pass to enter Midnight Moon Pack territory whenever I want but Trevor will always have to ask permission first. Just before heading to the car, I let my sister know that our car shopping date has been changed to clothes shopping, and that she's invited to the party Trevor is throwing. I then elbow a still silent Trevor telling him through our link to invite Jared and the guys. He resists at first until I send him a mental image of the reward I will give him later tonight and the guys were invited instantly. I found my new bargaining chip. Something to store away for the next time I want something from him. By the time we get back to Trevor's, it's late and Cody is already asleep. I make us a quick breakfast for dinner meal which the guys decide to join, not quite filled from the raviolis they had with Cody for dinner. I'm going to have to make some adjustments around here. Good thing my mom taught my sister and I to cook at a young age. Once we're through with dinner, we go up to Trevor's room where the guys brought my bags earlier. I grab my toothbrush and steal one of Trevor's shirts from his drawer before making my way to the bathroom. I undress down to my underwear and slip into Trevor's shirt. I brush my teeth then return to the room. There I find my handsome mate in nothing but flannel pajama pants, lounging on the bed with his hands behind his head. I jump onto the bed and cuddle into his side. After a few minutes like this, I sit up and looking deeply into his eyes as I say, "Alpha Hanes, I, Harmony Evans, pledge my allegiance to the Dark Mountain Pack."

His face lights up with happiness and pride. "Pledge accepted."

The rush of new links filling my head is instant and it makes me feel a little more complete. I enjoy the feeling a little while more before blocking them out and concentrating on Trevor.

With a sexy smile I ask, "Ready for your reward?"

By the end of the night, I can't help but feel that I'm the one who was rewarded.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Douchebag Alpha's Return

Spoiled. A word that perfectly describes what the guys are. I've only been a part of their pack for a few days but from that day they've been getting home cooked meals three times a day, help with their laundry, and tons of girl advice. I don't mind because it feels good to be needed by others. I feel like I was born to fill the role of Alpha Female. Despite all I do, they never take advantage of me and even help with everything. The only one allowed to help in the kitchen is Austin after the disastrous breakfast the day after Trevor and I mated. When it comes to the kitchen, the only appliance they know how to work is the microwave. I had to explain everything to them, and their concentration was shot because they could still smell that I was in heat. Due to these issues, the breakfast we made was inedible. The pancakes were flat and burnt because Greg added too much water, and Jeremy kept staring at my butt instead of watching them on griddle. The eggs were only half cooked because Craig kept the heat on the lowest setting, removing the eggs only a couple seconds after pouring it in the pan. When I asked why he did that, he said, "I didn't want to burn the eggs like Jeremy was burning the pancakes." So instead of having us choke on a burnt egg, he put us at risk of salmonella. The only thing that came out decent was the bacon Austin was in charge of but only because it was one of those that you could cook in the microwave. *Where was Trevor during all of this?* He was kicked out shortly after we started because unlike the guys, he didn't have to control his wolf's reaction to me being in heat, so he was on me like white on rice making it hard to get anything done. After making them wash all their dishes, I kicked them out and found a box of blueberry muffin mix in the back of the pantry. I whipped it up and we ate bacon and muffins. All in all it was a good week.

By Thursday, I was completely done with my heat and the guys relaxed around me. I found that they were just like my guys, Nate, Jace, Brad, and Jared. It helped me with missing them. I still saw them in school and tried to hang out as often as possible, but it wasn't the same. I'm excited for today, because I will get to hang out with them for a little while before my sister and I go on our girl's day. After having a tickle war with Cody, I kiss him on the forehead, following with a heated kiss for Trevor and promise them I'll be back soon. The identical frowns on their faces are adorable and almost too hard to resist but I've been smothered with an overload of testosterone lately and I need a break. I'm worried I'll start burping and farting like mad, even growing an extra body part, if you know what I mean. So it's definitely time for me to do all things girly. Besides, the guys are planning on taking Cody out to play in the surrounding woods before they set up for the party tonight, after they do their daily rogue patrol. Rogues aren't really that big a problem for us right now. Eversince the battle that took the lives of Trevor's parents, they seem to have kept to themselves. There have been

some signs of them in the area over the last week, but Trevor says it seems they were just passing through and not to worry. He still insists that I never go for a run alone like I did the other afternoon and to make sure Cody only plays outside when one of us is around. Giving my boys one last wave, I jump in my car and drive to my old home. As soon as I get out of the car, I'm picked up off my feet in a bone crunching hug from Jared, then passed down the line of guys to receive similar hugs. They act like they haven't seen me in years when we hung out at lunch the day before. That's something that has changed. Lunch. It seems the mating between Trevor and I has brought our packs together. We aren't one big pack or anything like that but a few of us, Trevor's and my friends to be exact, will eat lunch together and other members of both packs will at least converse with one another every so often. After spending some time with them and catching up with everything I missed in the past twenty four hours, yes, they seriously made me sit and listen to such fascinating things like how Nate found an ingrown hair on his thigh, and how Brad was thinking of switching from boxer briefs to just boxers because he was tired of his junk feeling confined, I finally broke away to look for my sister. I find her upstairs in the same guest room fixing her eyeliner for what looked like the second time. Walking up closer to her, I notice the used tissues on the dresser and see that she's been crying. Lightly touching her shoulder, I turn her towards me with concern. "Megan, what happened?"

She starts to tear up again. "Nothing, really. I'm just being dumb."

"I know you and you're never dumb unless you count the time in that candy shop when we were eleven and twelve and I dared you to do something wild but instead of grabbing a piece of candy to eat without paying like I thought you would. You tried to grab one of those tubes filled with gum balls used as decoration only to fall flat on your butt while pulling it not realizing it was bolted to the ground." I smile at the memory.

She starts laughing. "And then we got kicked out because you were laughing so hard you fell into the chocolate display causing a chocolate shower."

My laughter joins hers, and soon it's uncontrollable. Finally composing ourselves, we wipe the tears from our eyes and get back to the topic at hand. "So, what is it?"

She shrugs. "I can't explain it. It's just a feeling I woke up with today. I felt kind of empty. Like something has happened to my bond with Aiden. I know we're not true mates, and it worries me what he'll do if he ever finds his but I love him so much. To tell you the truth, I didn't really want him to mark me because I knew the pain it would cause if he ever did find his mate, but Aiden insisted saying it was necessary because he loved me so much. What if that's what I'm feeling now? What if he's found his mate while being back home?"

I don't know what to do. Should I tell her it wasn't possible because he already found his mate and rejected her? Or do I just comfort her and hope Aiden comes clean soon?

"I mean, he hasn't even called me since he left. I know he's busy with pack stuff, but a simple phone call isn't hard to make. What if he's with her right now? What if he marks her? Will I feel it?" she continues starting to get worked up. I knew then that I need to tell her because if she finds out I knew all along, she will be hurt and upset. Just as I'm about to confess, her door slams open and Aiden bursts in with a dark look on his face. He doesn't even take notice of Megan. He just stares at me intensely while sniffing the air until she jumps up wiping her tears to rush into his arms.

"Oh Aiden, I missed you. Why didn't you tell me you were coming back?" she questions, laying her head on his chest.

He flinches slightly when she makes contact with his body but covers it up by putting his arms around her. A movement like that used to bother me, but now I feel nothing. It has no affect on me whatsoever and realizing that brings a smile to my face, and a surge of happiness fills my body. This means from now on I won't have to keep my distance from my sister, because it no longer hurts to be around Aiden.

Watching my reaction closely, Aiden gently but abruptly moves Megan from his embrace and says, "Honey, why don't you go wash up and you can explain to me later what this is all about?"

Megan looks a little taken aback by this sudden change in him. So am I. Aiden never talks that way to her. *What's his problem?* Still in a bit of a daze, Megan shoots me a *you see what I mean* look and heads to the bathroom. I turn to tell Aiden off but am suddenly pushed against the wall behind me. Aiden has his hands on my arms and the look on his face chills me to the bone. His eyes start to shine, and I know his wolf is taking over.

"I can smell him all over you. Inside you. You bear his mark now, don't you?" he gets out through gritted teeth, glancing at the slight indentation of teeth marks on my shoulder from Trevor's claim on me. It's an honor to bear the mark of your mate, but Aiden is staring at it as if it's a piece of rotting flesh.

"That's none of your business or concern, Aiden. Now let me go!" I growl empowered by my wolf and push him away from me. I then walk past him toward the door. "You are nothing to me anymore so I suggest you worry more about your relationship with my sister and less about my relationship with my mate."

He flinches at my use of the word mate and starts to stalk towards me again. "He is not your mate. I am," he sneers right to my face.

I push him away again. "Not anymore." Then rush out the door before he can say something else. I knock on the bathroom door letting my sister know I'll give her a few minutes to talk with Aiden, and then we can go shopping. I remind her it's a girls only day so she won't bring him with her. I don't know what is up with him but he better think twice about putting his hands on me again, because if I didn't kick his ass first, I'm pretty sure there is a line of guys willing to beat me to it. My mate at the front.

* * *

AIDEN

Anger. That's all that consumes me. Trevor marked Harmony and she let him. I want to rip Trevor apart. I need to remove that idiot's mark and replace it with his own. My wolf is lurking just below my control, ready to take over the minute I allow it. The door opens and I whip around, still seeing everything in an enhanced state telling me my eyes are flashing. I come face to face with Megan. She isn't my given mate, but she's the one I chose. At this moment, I can't remember why I marked her but I have to go easy on her now if I wants to have a future with her sister. That's what I decided on the long flight back here. I no longer want Harmony as his mistress. I want to mark and make her mine for good. She needs to take her rightful place at my side as alpha female. Megan will just have to understand this is how things are. She's already aware there's a chance that I will find his mate, she just doesn't know that I already found her. Now is the time to tell her.

“Listen, Megan. I—” I start before she cuts him off.

“No Aiden, wait. I think I have an idea of what you want to say so let me go first.” She surprises him.

“I’m guessing you found your mate, and I’m okay with that because I always knew that was a possibility. It makes me sad to lose you, but I want you to be happy. I want us to remain friends if that’s okay with your mate because I still care a lot about you. Do you think she would allow that?” she asks Aiden.

I realized then that this is the reason I originally fell in love with Megan. How good and pure she is. It’s what blinded me from my bond with Harmony. I thought that I could fight the bond if I surrounded myself with her pure heart. Her desire to love me and only me was supposed to be enough to create a mated bond between them. It’s sad to think that I was wrong.

“Yeah. I think she’ll be okay with that,” I say laughing to himself because I know Harmony will be more than okay because Megan is her sister. Things are looking good. I thought I was going to have this big dramatic scene, but it’s going quite smoothly. All I need to do now is inform her who my mate is.

“Can I just ask you one thing, though? Can you come with me to this party at Trevor’s tonight? Harmony will most likely be with Trevor, and Jared and the guys will be on the prowl for single females and I don’t really want to be left alone. I won’t have to worry about you ditching me since you’ve already found your mate so it will work out perfectly. I was actually going to leave now to go find something to wear. Harmony and I are going shopping. It will give you some time to rest up after your long flight.”

I thought this could work in my favor. Megan will most likely fill Harmony in on their split. Then Harmony can break it off with that loser and be reunited with me at the party tonight. “Sure. That sounds fine,” I replied.

She turns to leave but stops to ask, “Aiden, what about the mark you gave me? What’s going to happen to it?”

“Well, when I mark my true mate, it will disappear from your shoulder and reappear on my mate. It shouldn’t hurt you at all,” I say reassuringly. She nods and leaves the room. I sit down with a smile on my face. I can’t wait for tonight. No more emptiness. No more fighting my feelings. I will have my mate and enjoy the crushed look on Trevor’s face. It’s going to be great!

* * *

MEGAN

“. . . It shouldn’t hurt you at all.” Aiden’s words keep replaying in my head. I just had my heart ripped out of my chest but don’t worry, it doesn’t hurt at all. *Ass wipe!* Why could I never see before just how he really is? After I tell Harmony what happened, Harmony looks pissed but I also feel like she’s hiding something from me. I want to ask her what it is but she quickly rushes me to the car and says some retail therapy is just what I needed. She was right. We got our nails done first. Manicures and pedicures were always an instant cure all for heartache. Then we hit the shops in a frenzy. Both of us bought shorts, pants, tops, bikinis, and of course lingerie. Judging by the amount of lingerie Harmony is buying, Trevor is going to think Christmas came early, I think with a smile. I’m

truly happy for my sister no matter how my own life is taking a downward spiral. After stopping at the car to drop off our purchases, we make our way back inside the mall to find outfits for the party. It takes a while but we finally buy something. I choose a thin strapped silver dress that hits mid thigh. It sparkles as I turn from side to side. I grab some gold bangles and a matching necklace to go with it. I'm planning on using the diamond earrings dad and mom got me for my last birthday to finish off her accessories. I find a cute pair of strappy sandals that match the dress and know my look will be stunning. My sister is going to be a knock out as always with her purchase. It's a halter dress in a deep green that molds to her body ending just at her knees. The front makes a V at her breasts, allowing the tops of her breasts to peek out with a valley of cleavage showing. I don't know if Trevor will even allow her to wear it. That's how hot it is on her. Knowing my sister and the effect she has on her mate, she will get her way. She's only going to wear green hoops on her ears with no necklace or bracelet because she says Trevor always ends up removing them because they get in the way. They are too cute. After paying for our purchases, we realize we're hungry so the two of us head to the food court. Harmony chooses a pizza while I settle for some Chinese. We sit down and eat in silence.

Once finished, I get the feeling Harmony wants to tell me something by the way she keeps fidgeting in her seat. "Spit it out, sis. I know something's on your mind," she pushes.

Harmony bites her lip, an obvious sign that she's nervous. "Come on, Harmony. We tell each other everything," I urge.

"I just don't want you to be upset with me when I say this," she whispers.

"Whatever it is, it can't be that bad. Come on, just say it," I assure Harmony. I really can't figure what would have her sister so worked up. I certainly didn't expect what Harmony says next.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Coming Clean

HARMONY

I fidget in my seat with my palms starting to sweat. My heart is trying to beat out of my chest. This is so hard. How do I tell my sister that I'm the reason Aiden no longer wants to be with her? And that she's the reason he rejected me? Aiden really is the king of all jackasses. Gathering all the courage I can, I begin what is the hardest confession I ever had to make and pray my sister will understand my choice to spare her the knowledge.

"What's up? Why do you look so worried?" she asks curiously.

I'm hoping I still have my sister after this. I reach for her hand. "Megan, there's something I need to tell you but before I do you need to promise to listen to everything without storming off and no matter how mad or hurt you are, you can't give me the silent treatment. Not being able to talk things out with you is the worst."

Confused, she asks, "What could be so bad that I'd storm off?"

Shrugging, more like stalling, I look into her eyes and plead. "Please, just promise me. In fact, let's pinky swear on it like when we were younger. You never broke a pinky promise."

"Come on, Harmony. We're teenagers, not five year olds," she's getting irritated with me but pinky swearing is sacred to us, whether five or seventeen. You don't go back on a pinky swear.

I give her the look that says I'm not going to budge on this and she finally gives in. "Oh, alright." She raises her pinky to mine and the deal is made.

"Okay. So you know how Aiden has found his mate which is why you can't be together? Well, there's a huge problem with his story. He couldn't have met her while he was back home this week because he already met her a year ago."

She lets it sink in for awhile. "What? He had a mate for a year and you knew about it? Why didn't you tell me?"

"I knew he didn't want to be with her. He loved you and wanted only you. You have a good heart and would've made him choose her even though you loved him. I didn't want you hurt, Megan. You're always trying your hardest to make others happy. Aiden made you happy, and I thought it was about time you had that for yourself." I try to make her understand.

"Seriously, Harmony. That's sweet but you had to know I would never want someone else to be hurt by my actions and by staying with Aiden when he was meant for her must have been heartbreaking for her. That poor girl. The pain she must have felt when he rejected her. I wouldn't

wish that on my worst enemy. How could Aiden do that and why?" Megan asks, maybe seeing Aiden's true colors for the first time. I let her think about the info I just gave her, silently praying she won't want to know who his mate is and I won't have to break her heart even more. My prayers go unanswered with her next question. "Who is this girl? Do I know her? I need to apologize for everything."

Pulling up my big girl panties, I start to explain, "He said he was tired of having his future chosen for him, moving away from the pack and becoming alpha. You were the only choice he ever made in his life, and he wasn't going to let fate choose who he would be with. It was the only control he had in his life."

"What a jerk! A selfish pig headed jerk. I can't even believe I was in love with someone like that. How could you let me stay with him?" she questions angrily, glancing at a couple people eating at the tables around us who are startled by her outburst.

I wait until she turns back toward me before I continue, "He was different with you, Megan. I saw how he looked at you. He really does love you. It's kind of hard not to. You are pretty amazing, and I just wanted you to have the happily ever after you've always dreamed of. You would have wanted the same for me. Tell me, if the roles were reversed, wouldn't you have done the same?"

I can tell she wants to deny it just to prove me wrong, but Megan is honest to the core. She nods before once again asking the one question I'm trying to avoid.

"So, who is she?"

Her question has me stalling, taking in our surroundings as she did a minute ago. With a sigh, I meet my sister's curious look and reply, "Me, Megan. It's me."

Her face fills with a look of such horror and hurt that I have to look away. I knew she might be angry but the pain that fills her eyes makes me feel so horrible. She's going to hate me for keeping this from her. My head drops into my hands, awaiting the volcano that's about to erupt all over my relationship with my sister, but am shocked when her chair is pushed back and her arms come around me, embracing me in one of her famous hugs. Not sure what's happening, I remain stiff until my brain starts working again and I put my arms around her in return. We stay like that for a while. I don't want to say anything, because I'm not sure what this means. Then she whispers, "You really are an idiot sometimes, you know that?"

O-kay, what is going on here?

"How could you put yourself through that just for me? That's why you seemed so sad and withdrawn after Aiden and I got back from camp, right? When did you find out? Was it at the airport? It was! That's why you both had such strange faces on." She's doing a good job figuring things out so I let her continue to put the pieces together on her own.

Then I see tears gather in her eyes as she asks, "He broke your heart, didn't he? That's why you had to leave and come here with Uncle John and Aunt Katherine."

I nod, catching a few tears with my fingers as I remember the pain of his rejection. Megan pulls me in for another hug and whispers, "I'm so sorry, Harm."

We remain embraced for awhile, not giving a crap about the curious eyes on us. Just balling our eyes out until I ask myself, *why the hell are we wasting our tears on Aiden's worthless ass?* Sitting up straight, I tell my sister exactly that and the crying stops. We're cleaning our faces when she finally remembers Trevor.

"So if Aiden is your mate, how does Trevor come into the picture?"

“That’s a long story, sis.”

“I’ve got time,” she says with a smile and I know we are going to be okay. The secret that I kept from her is overshadowed by the pain it caused me to keep it. Megan is too kind hearted to be upset with me for something I hardly had control over and she would have done herself. So giving her one more smile in thanks, I suggest we get away from prying eyes and nosey ears and finish this conversation in the the car. Once there, I start the car, crank up the AC, and fill her in. She's captivated by all that Trevor and I have gone through in such a short time. She's also anxious to meet Cody and the guys in Trevor’s pack. She'll have to wait to meet Cody since he will be spending the weekend at a sleepover but she'll definitely be meeting the guys tonight. She was ready to skin Trevor’s fur and make a coat out of it when I told her of the brunette who’s name is Candy. I did some digging after Trevor and I mated. I wanted to make sure I knew what name to issue my death threat to if she ever come near my man again. Megan eventually cools down after I tell her what happened afterwards. When I'm done, she has a dreamy look on her face. I know she's wondering if she has a mate out there. Human and werewolf mates are rare but because Megan is a human child of two werewolves, her chances at having a mate are high. I hope she does have one because she deserves to have a love like the one I found with Trevor. After all is revealed, we decided it's time to get back to our uncle’s house and prepare for tonight. On the ride there, Megan warns me that she invited Aiden before she knew of his dirty little secret. I don’t want Megan or I to have to see him, but I also don't want to explain why to the guys or Trevor, so I figure I’ll just let it go. I hope he won’t be stupid enough to try something on Trevor’s territory.

When we reach the house, my door is practically ripped off in Trevor’s attempt to get to me. He pulls me from the car into his arms as if I am light as a feather and buries his face in my neck inhaling deeply. I giggle as his breath tickles where he breathes. He pulls back to look at me with a smile on his face. “I missed you, babe.”

“I was only gone for a few hours,” I state.

“It was a few hours too long,” he says as we stare into each others eyes. Everyone else seems to disappear and it's like we were the only two people in the world.

“There they go again, zoning out on each other like usual.” Our bliss is broken by none other than Jeremy.

“Shut up, Jeremy. You’re just jealous!” I growl.

“Oh yes. I want to spend all my time staring at the millions of pores on my mate’s face. Fascinating,” he says sarcastically.

This brought about a laugh from the car and reminds me that my sister is here. Before I can apologize for being distracted by my mate, Jeremy perks up to the presence of a female and I see the shit stirrer transform into the charmer.

“So, who is this lovely creation?” he asks helping my sister from the car.

She giggles. She actually giggles and says, “I’m Megan. Harmony’s sister.”

“Wow, your family has amazing genes. Two one of a kind beauties from the same pack. It’s amazing.” He's laying it on a little thick and I'm worried my sister will be pulled in easily, seeing as she's coming off a break up.

“What do you say we go for a walk in the woods and get to know each other better?” Jeremy offers. I can’t believe he's hitting on my sister not five minutes after he met her. Total playboy.

I'm worried my sister would miss that important fact seeing the blush on her face and I am about to warn her when she flashes a wicked smile in my direction before facing Jeremy to say, "Sorry but I'm looking for someone who wants to spend all their time staring at the pores on my face and as you've just admitted, that's not you. So I think I'll pass." After saying this, she puts her finger to his chin, shutting his mouth, pats his cheek and heads toward the house leaving a stunned Jeremy behind. She then shouts over her shoulder. "Harmony, I'll meet you inside. Oh, and if you see any more flirts like this one on your way, send them to me. I eat guys like that for breakfast." Before shooting Jeremy one last triumphant look and heading into the house.

In the quiet that follows we hear the shutting of the door, the wind blowing through the trees and the blow to Jeremy's ego.

With laughter in his voice, Trevor says, "I've never seen my cousin speechless. I think I like it. How do you think your sister would feel about joining our pack?"

Returning his laughter as I stare at a still confused Jeremy, I say, "After the day she's had, I think she'd love it but not as much as me if this is the result."

Trevor grabs our bags from the trunk smiling when he sees the Victoria's Secret one and we walk past Jeremy who's mumbling, "That was some of my best stuff."

Laughing and nodding toward Jeremy, I ask, "What's he doing here any way?"

Rolling his eyes Trevor answers, "He insisted he come with me to make sure I'd be able to drive back home. He didn't trust me to keep my hands off you and not wreck us."

I raise my brow. "Seriously?"

"No. That was his lame excuse. The real one is that he wanted to be the first to scope your sister out. He was holding me up from coming to see you so I let him get in the passenger side to avoid the delay."

I can't help but melt at his eagerness. Poor Jeremy, that plan backfired. Just wait till my sister meets the rest of the guys. It's going to be awesome.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Buzz Kill

TREVOR

Two is the number of the night. Two beers, two shots, two hours. That's all it takes for my mate to get wasted. I don't mind because she is a really cute drunk. She's laughing and dancing, just having a good time. Something she deserves after what Aiden and I put her through. Speaking of that jerk, I've been watching for him all night but haven't seen him yet. He's around here somewhere and the minute I don't have to watch over my mate, I'm going to find him. We have some unfinished business to handle.

Right now I'm shooting pool with Jeremy, Craig, and Greg. Austin is doing a quick sweep of the territory to check for any signs of territory breach. I have a perfect view of the make shift dance floor on the other side of the room where Harmony is dancing with Megan. When the guys met Harmony's sister, it was pretty much a repeat of Jeremy's encounter. Greg struck out immediately after asking her, "Someone better tell heaven they're missing an angel. Want me to take you there myself? I've been told I have the skills to do just that." Even I knew that wouldn't work. Craig tried the sensitive approach by asking a bunch of questions about her but messed up when he suggested they finish talking in his room because his bed was much more comfortable than the couch. I couldn't believe some of the best players I knew were striking out so bad. I need to make sure I have a front row seat for Austin's shut down. The night has been good so far. I introduced Harmony to the pack and they all showed her their respect by bowing their heads in submission. She quickly made them get up, a blush covering her face, letting them know that they didn't need to do that. My mate is adorable. I had to explain to her it's expected of them to show their Alpha Female the same respect they show their Alpha. She informed me she knew that. She just wasn't comfortable with it. Given time I knew she would be. The guys are kicking my butt in this game, but I don't care because the view I have trumps it. Harmony looks hot in her deep green dress. I'm clueless when it comes to fashion, being a tshirt and jeans guy myself but the way the material of that dress hugs every one of her curves seeming to have been made for her and her alone. I almost feel like becoming a fan of the designer who made it. The front of the dress comes up around her neck in a halter style showing the tops of her gorgeous breasts and the hem ends just above her knees. The back though, that's what has me missing more than a few of my shots. It's tempting enough to rush her and untie the halter but seeing her back completely bare all the way down to just above the top of her ass cheeks and watching her sway said ass cheeks to the music has my junk ready to act as my pool stick. Don't even get me started on what is under the

dress. If it were possible to die of a massive boner, Harmony would be planning my funeral. The unmated males are staring at her lustfully, but I know they won't try anything because she is mine. That thought fills me with pride. I really do have the most amazing mate, inside and out. I'm so busy drooling over her while trying to control my hard on, that it takes a moment for me to realize someone next to me is touching my arm. Turning to the right, I meet the face of someone I never expected to see near me again.

“Hey there, Trevor. Want to sneak away with me and finish what you started the other day?” Candy purrs.

Two thoughts cross my mind as my weary eyes meet Harmony's angry ones across the room. One, this skank's touch disgusts me and two . . . Oh shit!

* * *

HARMONY

Oh alcohol. The taste is not so great, but the feeling after is A-MA-ZING! My sister just laughs after I tell her this very same thing for the fifth time. She keeps replying, “Yeah, let's see if you're still feeling that way in the morning.” I'm dancing like there's no tomorrow. My body feels weightless. There are no thoughts in my head other than moving to the beat and having a good time. I've been flirting with Trevor the whole time, and I know he must be losing his game of pool but judging by the sly smile on his face, he doesn't even care. All of a sudden my sister stops my sexy movements, at least I hope it's sexy because I can't really feel my arms or legs. For all I know, I might be doing the funky chicken.

“Uh-oh, looks like someone is trying to poach on your territory,” Megan warns.

I whip my head in Trevor's direction to see what she's talking about. Fighting sudden nausea at the movement and feel the effects of the alcohol wane. The numbness disappears completely as my eyes take in the scene before me. Candy, the brunette that Trevor took into the woods, has her arm on my mate. She is leaning onto him, letting her breasts make contact with his chest. My eyes flash and my wolf is not pleased. Quick as flash I'm across the room with Candy's neck in my hands, her feet two inches above the ground. I'm vaguely aware of the music stopping and the room being silent as I glare at the face of the she wolf I'm about to kill. My breathing is heavy and heart beat erratic, all I can focus on is the thrum of the pulse under my fingers that I want to make stop.

“How dare you touch my mate,” I snarl, practically spitting with each word. My face ripples, meaning I'm on the verge of shifting and tearing into her flesh. Her eyes are down in submission but she's still trying to fight my Alpha authority. I feel a hand on my shoulder and growl at the intrusion. Snapping my head to see who would dare try and stop me, I meet brown pools of concern as Trevor says, “Harm, baby, let her go. You're going to kill her.”

My anger elevates. How dare he worry about her! He should let me punish this bitch for disrespecting me and having the nerve to touch my mate. “Unless you want to be next, I suggest you step back,” I say, now directing my anger towards him.

He's shocked by my reaction and is about to protest when someone, might've been Craig, warns him. “Trevor, her wolf is taking over. She thinks you are defending Candy and trying to protect her.”

Realization dawns on Trevor's face and he quickly apologizes. "No, baby. I don't care about her. It's you I'm worried about. If you do this, you will hate yourself in the morning. You have too much compassion in you to be alright with taking a life, even though Candy should have known her place." He sends a glare in Candy's direction. "I think she knows it now, though."

I shift my gaze back to Candy and see she has fully submitted and is shaking. Both from fear as well as the loss of oxygen. My wolf smiles with satisfaction and I loosen my grip, causing Candy to fall to the floor and gasp for breath. "Stay away from him or the next time I won't hesitate to kill you," I say with steel in my voice.

Trevor pulls my back against him, wrapping me in his arms as my breathing returns to normal. My eyes slowly lose their glow and the ripples in my body stop. I have control again and let my legs give way as Trevor scoops me in his arms and leads me to our room shouting over his shoulder. "We'll be right back. I need to assure my mate that she is the only one I want to protect." With that said, he runs up to our room, shuts the door, and removes our clothes. Then does an expert job convincing me that I am the only one for him.

* * *

MEGAN

After my sister is rushed upstairs by an only too eager Trevor, the music is turned back up and the party rages on. The guys escort Candy out, warning her not to return to the pack house until she is permitted. I decide to get a drink, preferably one without alcohol and make my way to the kitchen. I'm bending over to reach the last Coke on the bottom shelf when I hear the kitchen door open, followed by a whistle. This must be the fourth member of playboys that I haven't had the pleasure to meet. Feeling a smile spread across my face in anticipation of putting yet another male in his place, I turn around ready to chop him down to size and freezes as our eyes connect. The smirk on his face drops and he inhales sharply, taking a step back in shock. I can't explain the feelings running through me. I have never felt anything like this before. His eyes travel my body from head to toe, causing me to shiver with delight. *What the heck was that?* He takes an intimidating step forward, and I should be afraid but isn't. I feel a pull toward him, like my body is connected to a string he's pulling. Not sure quite how it happens, I am now standing inches away from him as his black eyes meet my green. He's gorgeous. Tall with a body rippling with muscles and black hair touching his collar. I want to run her fingers through it. He gently takes my face in his large hands and says one word that will change the path my life is on, "Mine."

Before I can react, he takes my lips with his and I am hit with a heat so powerful it makes me burn where he touches. Sparks hit my skin everywhere our bodies meet. As I lean into him, he drops his hands from my face only to wrap them around me, never breaking their kiss. I raise my arms, wrapping them around his neck and does what I've been longing to do since I first laid eyes on him. I run my fingers through his hair. It's amazing and I never want to stop.

* * *

AIDEN

I followed Jared to the party in his my car, both because I wanted to leave alone with Harmony once our problems were settled, and because Jared and his friends still didn't like me. I will have to fix that once things are handled with my mate. As soon as we got there, the guys left me at the door. Douchebags. I ignored their obvious brush off and decided to get who I came here for. Hopefully by now Megan let Harmony know of our break up. I am searching for my mate when the music suddenly stops and everyone gets quiet. I walk to the corner where the pool table is and sees what's happening.

"How dare you touch my mate," Harmony is saying as she holds a brown haired girl up against the wall by her throat. My body tenses at her use of the word mate, knowing she isn't referring to me. Trevor then tries to convince her to stop, only making her angry at him. I smile and begin to relax at that, only to feel my body ripple as she eventually lets the girl drop and Trevor takes Harmony in his arms. This isn't right. She should be fighting for me, not Trevor. Megan must not have told her. I watch as Trevor sweeps her up the stairs and smells the lust Trevor is emitting. There's no way I'm letting him do what he's planning. I start to walk toward them, body tense, eyes flashing, only to be stopped by four figures.

"Where do you think you're going, Aiden?" Jared asks.

"Because you have no business with either one of the two people that went upstairs," Brad growls.

My body begins to shake. I'm about to shift but I know that if I do, I won't get a chance to convince Harmony to come back with me. Using all the control I can muster, I takes a deep breath and close my eyes to calm down.

"Maybe you should take a break outside," Jace suggests with a scowl.

Nate then adds, "We would throw you out ourselves but then that would ruin Harmony's party so consider yourself lucky."

"Maybe you should just get in that rental car of yours, jump on the next plane, and head back home. Leave both my cousins here. You don't deserve either of them," Jared suggests, starting to shake as well before Jace puts a hand on his shoulder to calm him down.

Sensing my chance with Harmony slipping away, I turn to do just as they suggest. It's the hardest thing for my wolf to do considering the blood of the Alpha runs through my veins but I have to fight through it. The future I want with Harmony depends on it. Reminding my wolf of our goal, to get our mate back, he gives in and walks out the sliding doors onto the back porch. I'll let Trevor have my mate one last time even though it's killing me inside. Then I will convince Harmony to come back to me. To give me the chance to make up for the biggest mistake I ever made. Rejecting her for her sister.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

Alpha vs. Alpha

HARMONY

After burning off the last trace of my alcohol in my system thanks to Trevor's help, I was starving. I kiss Trevor who is in a light, exhausted slumber and I say with a smile, "I'm hungry so I'm going to the kitchen to look for something to replenish all these calories I'm burning."

A chuckling Trevor replies, "Sounds good. Bring something back for me."

"You threw a party for me and it's still on going on downstairs. We can't just stay up here all night."

"Why not?" he grumbles as he catch my raised brow so he gives in. "Alright, you go ahead. I'm gonna grab a new shirt because the other one smells like that skank."

As soon as he says that, a flash of anger hits me. He kisses me on the nose. "Stop, babe. Let's just forget about it. I don't want our night to be ruined by thoughts of her, okay?"

He's right, I already made my point. The rest of the night is for our friends and pack. I have a lot more people to meet. With that thought, I give Trevor one last kiss and head to the kitchen. I push through the swinging door and I come to a sudden stop, frozen in place. Austin. Austin and Megan. Austin and Megan kissing. I want to scream in excitement but stop myself before I startle them. They're so wrapped up in each other that they don't even notice I'm there. I want to ask how this happened. Is this a random hook up or is it something more? I realize they're blocking the refrigerator, so how am I going to get some food? I'm really hungry but I don't want to stop them. I remember the table we have set up out back with some snacks. Yeah it was just crackers, veggies, and some sausages but that should be enough to hold my hunger for now.

I quietly make my way to the kitchen door that leads to the back porch. I try to open the door as slowly as possible and I tip toe out, breathing a happy sigh of relief as I make it out unnoticed. The relief vanished when I see that I'm not alone out here.

"Harmony, I've been looking for you all night. I smell you've been busy," Aiden sneers with anger.

"How does it concern you, Aiden? Haven't we been through this already? I know you and my sister ended your relationship so I don't understand why you're still here," I say in irritation. All I want to do is get something to eat. I don't have the time or patience for this. I start to go around him to get to the food waiting for me just around the corner, when he grabs my arm and pulls me to his side. "Let go, Aiden," I protest through gritted teeth.

“I need to talk to you, Harmony. I want you to come back to California with me and take your place as alpha female. I want to mark you and rid you of that mutt’s scent,” he says while looking at me in the eyes with so much determination, it scares me.

“Trevor, Jared, guys? Anybody?” I try to reach out to them with my mind.

“Aiden, you need to understand that our bond is gone. I have a new mate who loves me how I should be loved. You need to accept that and move on,” I plead with him.

“Harmony, where are you?” Trevor asks through our link.

“Back porch, just off the kitchen. Aiden’s here,” I reply quickly. All I hear in response is a furious growl.

“No!” Aiden shouts, “We are supposed to be together. You just have to be reminded of our spark and you’ll forget all about him,” he tries to reason with me.

“That will never happen because I love him.” It’s probably not the smartest thing to say at a time like this but it’s the truth and he needs to accept it so we can both move on.

His eyes harden. “We’ll see if you still feel that way after this.” He then steps in for a kiss, but I turn away. At this point, he’s holding me firmly in his arms. Not liking my disinterest, he grabs my face and tries again only to be knocked away by someone slamming into him.

Aiden falls flat on the ground with Trevor on top of him. With his fists flying, Trevor hits Aiden twice in the face before the latter bucks him off. They stare at each other with flashing eyes and shaking bodies.

“You are dead,” Trevor promised with a deadly glare before rushing to Aiden again, only this time Aiden’s ready and ducks just as Trevor reaches him. He then grabs Trevor by the waist and slams him into the ground. I call out to Trevor and was about to rush in to stop them, when two strong but familiar arms grabbed me from behind.

“You need to let them go, Harmony. They need to settle this once and for all. Their wolves are challenging each other for the right to keep you,” Jared whispers close to my ear.

“But I’m already Trevor’s,” I argue.

“We all know that. Aiden won’t accept it so it is forcing Trevor’s wolf to fight and protect what is his. Just let them finish this,” he tries to convince me. I understand what he’s saying but my body is shaking with fear. I don’t want Trevor hurt. I can’t lose him.

The tension is rising as they battle for control. They exchange blow after blow before Trevor gets a good right hook to Aiden’s jaw, causing him to go down. Trevor steps back, ready to let that be the end of it but Aiden isn’t done yet. He starts to shake and I know what’s coming. He’s about to shift.

Within seconds, clothes are ripping and the air changes as a brown and black wolf now stand in the places of Aiden and Trevor. They lunge at each other and collide, the force of their impact causing them to crash through the railings of the back lawn. They roll in a heap of brown and black fur before standing, only to rush to one another again. Jaws are snapping, teeth are bared, and finally contact is made. Aiden catches Trevor on his hind leg and bites down hard enough to make Trevor howl. Twisting quickly, Trevor is able to latch onto Aiden’s right ear and pulled, bringing forth a whimper from him and that allowed Trevor to get his leg out. Regaining their fighting stance as they breathe heavily, they stare each other down, snarling before lunging again. This time Trevor takes out Aiden at his legs, causing him to go down, skidding for a bit and ending up on his back. Before Aiden can get his bearings and stand, Trevor is over him with his jaw clamped around Aiden’s neck, ready for the kill. Blood is pouring out of Trevor’s leg and Aiden has a gash running down his side from the

fall he just took, not to mention his ear is hanging by a thread.

Sensing his defeat, Aiden gives up the struggle, lying still in submission. The surrounding crowd is silent as we absorb what this submission means.

Not only did Trevor win the rights to have me as his mate, but he just took the alpha position from Aiden, making him the alpha of two packs. Aiden whimpers as Trevor clamps his jaw down tighter, ready to end this once and for all.

“Trevor, wait!” Austin shouts.

This causes Trevor to pause but not release his hold, as he listens to what Austin has to say.

“That’ll be too easy for him. Instead, allow him to live and suffer the consequences of his actions. He has lost his pack, his mate, and his mate’s sister. Let him live every day knowing this. It is a much greater punishment than death,” he persuades.

I can tell Trevor’s wolf is thinking it over. After a minute, he removes his jaw and changes back, ordering Aiden to change as well. Trevor stands over him in all his naked glory and says, “I don’t want your position of alpha. I want you to keep it, knowing that it was my mercy that allowed it to be that way. You will go back to your pack and never return. You will forget you ever knew my mate or her sister, and you will leave them both alone and never speak to either of them again. Do I make myself clear?”

Aiden looks up at Trevor, before his gaze meets mine then my sister’s. There is so much sadness there that I almost feel sorry for him but he brought all of this on himself. Now he has to pay his dues. He returns his gaze to Trevor, and nods his head in agreement. Satisfied with his surrender, Trevor orders someone to get Aiden some clothes and escort him off our territory where he's to take the first flight off the island and fly back home where he belongs.

Then Trevor’s eyes meet mine and the fire in them burns me to my core. His face is bruised and starting to swell. I rush into his arms, happy that he's alright. His arms come around me a little too tightly but I know he needs the comfort of his mate so I don’t stop him. After a minute, he eases up a little and takes my face in his hands. We are in our own world again, not noticing Aiden being led away or the crowd clearing and returning to the party. All we see is each other. We stay like this for awhile until Trevor finally speaks, “I think it’s your turn to assure me that I’m the only one for you.”

I smile. My heart is so full of love for this man before me and I reply, “I think you’re right, but not before we clean and patch up your leg. I want to wash the battle off of you and make sure you’re back at one hundred percent, before I show you that you are and will always be the only man for me.”

His eyes narrow in thought before the smile I love so much spreads across his face. “I guess you’ll have to prove it to me in the shower then because I don’t plan on waiting one more minute.”

I laughed and help an injured Trevor into the house and up to our room. Once there, I patch and clean him and myself, in the sexiest shower I've ever had.

* * *

TREVOR

As my mate lay in my arms, I am content with my life. I'm happy but I'm also terrified. The rage I felt tonight at seeing Aiden touching Harmony is nowhere near the fear I felt at never being able to touch her again. I can't explain this worry I have that something is going to happen to her. I know

Aiden is completely out of the picture. There is no way he can disobey my order to stay away. Rogues aren't that big an issue, too. The scent we found indicate that they were just passing through our territory. I will still have a close eye kept on Harmony and Cody while they are in the woods, though. Hunters are a dying breed, with more knowledge being made about the true nature of werewolves and humans are starting to understand that we aren't a threat to them.

So what has me so shaken? It must have something to do with the way Sarah was taken so suddenly. Even though I didn't feel as strongly about her, she was still a part of my life and the sudden loss was overwhelming. If I were to lose Harmony like that, I don't know what I'd do.

She turns in her sleep, snuggling closer to my neck. I feel her breathe out, and it sends shivers down my body. Why am I wasting time worrying about the what ifs, when I should be appreciating what is happening right now? I have my mate in my arms and that's all that matters. I just need to concentrate on that and we'll be fine.

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

Loving This Life

HARMONY

Life after Aiden is good. I'm getting comfortable in my new role as alpha female and aunty/mommy. The former is a work in progress, but the latter is surprisingly easy. I'm used to taking care of kids, because I baby sat many of the younger children in my old pack. I'm becoming quite domesticated, but I don't mind. I actually like being able to take care of the guys, especially my mate. Even now, I'm preparing a beef stew that I plan on cooking in the crock pot. Trevor, Austin, and Craig are heading to a state wide pack meeting and will be gone for two days so I want to make sure I get to spend the whole day with him. That's why I chose a crock pot dinner. How awesome is it to put a bunch of ingredients into a pot, hit the on switch, then do whatever you want while your food cooked itself? My sister is supposed to be helping me but once again, she's nowhere in sight.

She and Austin have been inseparable since the night of the party. Lucky for them, they didn't have any of the obstacles that Trevor and I had. She was marked the very next night and couldn't be happier. The other guys are a little bothered that their charm wasn't enough for her but they quickly got over it. For them, there is always more ass to score. Though I'm working on changing their ways, it's going to take a lot of work. I need to start prepping them for their mates so they don't make the same mistake Trevor did. As I'm chopping the carrots, the kitchen door opens and judging by the awareness of my body accompanied by the scent I'm now addicted to, I know who it is. "Hey, babe. I was wondering where you were. I thought you were gonna spend the whole day with me, possibly in bed?" Trevor hints as he wraps his arms around my waist planting tiny kisses on my neck.

My body is tingling but if I don't finish this now, we'll be eating toast for dinner. "That's why I'm doing this now so we can spend the rest of the day together while it cooks."

"Good thinking. I knew you were more than just a hot body," he jokes. I elbow him, causing him to grunt while laughing. Just then, my second favorite man enters the kitchen. "Hey, bud. What's up?" Trevor asks Cody.

"I got hungry. Can I have a cookie?" he pleads with a puppy dog look on his face. It's still a couple hours away from lunch so it won't hurt.

"Sure but just one, okay?" I say as he dashes over to the cookie jar to take one of the freshly made snicker doodles Megan and I baked earlier. Everyone is happy that my aunt gave me her famous recipe. They ask me to make almost every day. Speaking of my sister . . . "Hey, have either of you two handsome guys seen Aunt Megan?"

Trevor shakes his head. “Nope, I haven’t seen Austin either.”

“I did. I saw them both,” Cody chirps.

“Where were they?” I ask.

“By the lake. Uncle Austin was taking Aunt Megan’s temperature again with his mouth,” he rattles while chomping down on his cookie.

Trevor looks at me with a raised brow and I offer a sheepish smile in return. “Oops.”

“Hey, Cody. Do you think you could run and call them? Tell them Uncle Trevor and Aunt Harmony need them,” Trevor asks, and Cody runs off to do as he was asked. I want so badly to follow him.

“So . . . “ Trevor starts, “since when are temperatures taken with mouths?”

“Well . . . er . . . um . . . you see . . . Cody saw them kissing the other day when we were passing by their room, and he asked me why they were always doing that. I couldn’t tell him the real reason, so I said the first thing that popped in my head,” I confess.

Trevor’s quiet for a moment or two. Then he steps closer and says with a twitch on his lips, “Babe, what did I tell you about doing that?”

I look down. “Not to do it but what was I supposed to say? And why does he always ask me the hard questions?”

“Oh, you mean the little double underwear, shorts, and pants incident?” Trevor asks not bothering to stifle his laugh anymore.

“That wasn’t my fault. If Jeremy got dressed before coming out of the woods, Cody wouldn’t have seen him naked then he wouldn’t have asked me why Uncle Jeremy had hair down there, and I wouldn’t have told him what I did,” I defend myself.

A new voice enters our conversation. “Ah, about it being so cold down there that hair grew to keep it warm? Now he wants to double up on clothes to make sure his wiener never gets cold.”

I throw a carrot at Jeremy. “Shut up, you should’ve dressed in the woods.”

“Are you guys talking about Harmony’s famous cold weather excuse?” Austin asks entering the kitchen with my sister close at his side. They are all laughing uncontrollably now.

Clutching his stomach, Trevor answers, “Y-yeah but she’s got a new one now. You’ve been checking Megan’s temperature . . . with your lips.” My face is probably the color of a cherry as the laughter increases and more bodies join us in the kitchen, Cody the last to enter.

“Why’s everybody laughing?” he asks.

I keep my mouth shut, not wanting to risk causing another fit of laughter with my on the spot answer.

“We were just talking about Uncle Austin and Aunt Megan’s temperature check,” Greg tells him.

“Oh, yeah. That’s gross. Yesterday at school, Tiffany said she wasn’t feeling good and her head felt hot. I told her she better go ask the teacher to check her, ‘cause no way did I want to eat her face like my Uncle Austin does to my Aunt Megan,” he says while making a funny face.

The room is booming with laughter. Trevor looks like he has a bad case of side pain from laughing so hard, Greg and Jeremy are on the floor with tears in their eyes, Craig is bent over his chair with his body shaking, while the two causes of this whole fiasco laugh still holding on to each other. As for me, I’m quiet. I now know why Ms. Edwards wanted to meet with Trevor and I before school on Monday . . .

After everyone calms down, Megan helps me finish the prep work while the guys go outside for a game of hide and seek with Cody. Of course I had to promise Trevor to hurry so we could have our alone time. While I have my sister by herself, I decide to see how things are going with her. “So Megan, how are you and Austin?”

She gets a dreamy look on her face that I know very well. I get it every time I think of Trevor. “It’s good. Really good. I thought I loved Aiden but it was nothing compared to what I feel for Austin. I know he feels the same about me too, and I don’t have to worry that he’ll find someone else because he’s my mate.”

You can feel how happy she is, and it's really nice to see. I was worried that the break up with Aiden was going to crush her, but I guess finding Austin helped a lot with that. I'm curious about something, and know if there was ever a fall out between them because of it, the whole pack might be affected. So I ask, “Have you two discussed children? About not being able to have them together?”

She looks sad for a minute, before a beautiful smile lit her face. “The very first night before we mated it came up. I didn’t want him tying himself down to me if he desperately wanted children of his own. I told him I wouldn’t hold it against him if he ran for the hills.”

“What did he say?” I question, aching for my sister. I can imagine how hard that conversation must’ve been to have.

She turns to me with tears in her eyes. “He grabbed my face and said, ‘I won’t lie and say I’ve never wanted children of my own. I’ve never really thought about it until now but I love you and want to be with you. That’s all that matters to me’, then he kissed the tears from my face.”

Talk about swoon worthy. If I wasn’t so in love with Trevor, that just might have made me fall in love with Austin. Megan continues, “He said if we wanted children in the future, there were always children in packs around the world that had lost parents and needed someone to care for them. We could be those someones.”

Wiping the tears from my eyes, I hug my sister. “I’m so happy you found Austin, sis.”

She returns my embrace. “Me too.” We stayed in each others arms for a minute more, then got back to our dinner prep.

After we finish chopping up all the vegetables and giving them a quick browning in the frying pan, I layer them in the crock pot, pour the beef broth over it, and cover it. Now I had six full hours of alone time with Trevor. While Cody took an exhausted nap after their adventures outside, Trevor and I have a little nap ourselves. Although there isn’t much sleeping involved. After a quick lunch, we grab Cody and head out for a movie. We decide to watch the latest kid friendly movie. We have a blast and it feels like we are a happy little family. I like that feeling. We stop at the ice cream shop on the way home to grab a five gallon tub of chocolate chip ice cream. Yes, we love ice cream that much. At home we eat some beef stew. It's a good night but so was every night since Trevor and I mated. I'm sad that he has to go to this meeting but he'll be back before I knew it. Besides, Jeremy, Greg, Megan, and Cody are still going to be here so there won't be a lack of entertainment. It's only two days and there will be many more times when he will have to leave to carry out his duties as Alpha. I need to get used to it now, no matter how much I'll miss him.

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

A Close Call

Waking up the morning after Trevor left is hard. I miss him so much, and he's only been gone twelve hours. I don't want to get out of bed, but I have a little man depending on me. Thinking of Cody brightens my mood and gives me the push I need to get up and get moving. Kicking off the sheets, I sit up then immediately lay back down.

Major dizziness. It's a little strange because I always get out of bed like that and have never felt dizzy. Must be the lack of sleep due to missing Trevor's body next to mine. I try again, but slowly this time. I get up and I test out my legs before totally standing. I feel fine so it must have just been a freak moment.

I brush my teeth and wash my face, then slip into some comfortable shorts and a cute halter top. Cody and I are going to lounge around the house today, so there's no need to dress up. I grabbed my favorite body spray and am about to spray it when the smell made me nauseous. Dropping it, I run to the bathroom just in time to spew in the toilet but being that my stomach is empty. All that comes out is phlegm and what tastes like stomach acid. Brushing my teeth for the second time, I take a moment to breathe. This day isn't starting out so well. First, I have to wake up Trevor-less and now I'm coming down with something. I seriously have the worst luck.

Sucking it up, I wipe my face and head downstairs for my day with Cody. Lucky for me he's satisfied with some cereal for breakfast so I won't risk puking over a hot stove. I try not to sit too close to him and risk having him catch what bug I must be coming down with. As the day goes on, I feel much better. Deciding to test my theory, Cody and I go outside to sit on the dock by the lake. The sun works wonders and my stomach settles.

As we are sitting, Cody gets a curious look on his face causing me to panic. "Please don't ask me a question I'll have to make up an answer to," I said to myself.

He then asks, "Do you think Uncle Trevor would want to be my daddy?"

I'm blown away. That was the last thing I expected him to say. Lucky for me, I already know the answer to his question. "I think he already thinks of you as his little boy but it wouldn't hurt to ask him when he gets home."

He smiles at me brightly and I can't help but return it. "Really? Awesome!" He shouts, raising his fist in the air. Then he gets serious again.

"What is it, bud?" I ask.

"Well, if uncle says yes, will you be my mommy?"

That makes it twice in a few minutes this little guy has blown me away. I knew he liked me,

but I didn't realize how much. My heart expands with love for him, and I'm honored that he wants me to be his mom. The waterworks start then.

"Why are you crying? Did I do something bad?"

Not wanting him to think that, I grab him up into a bear hug, trying not to squeeze the breath out of him and say, "No, honey. You made me so happy." I set him back down beside me. "We have to talk about this with Uncle Trevor first, but I would love to be your mommy." I smile as I wipe the tears from my eyes.

"You're crying because you're happy?" he asks, his brow creased in confusion.

"Yes."

"But I cry when I get hurt. Not when I'm happy."

"Well, girls sometimes cry when they're really happy," I try to explain.

"Oh . . . girls are weird."

I laugh. "Yeah, I guess we are. But you won't think that forever. Someday, way in the future when you're like, forty, you're going to meet a girl that you think is special and you're going to like her a lot."

He makes a face at me. "No way! Not me, never, eeeeeww, girls are gross."

It's going to be so much fun watching him change that thought. Feeling like we need to celebrate this moment, I get an idea. "Why don't we go get some ice cream to bring back home and then we'll make some snicker doodles together? Sounds fun?"

"Will I get to roll them into little balls?" he asks, his face lighting up again.

"Of course. That's only the most important job of the whole cookie making process," I answer in mock seriousness.

He jumps up. "Then what are you waiting for?"

We run to the house so I can get my keys and wallet. Brad and Jeremy are doing a patrol with some of the other guys, and Megan is still sleeping, so I leave them a note letting them know where we went. Trevor's only order to me was to make sure Cody and I weren't alone in the woods. He didn't say we couldn't go for a drive.

I follow Cody out to the car and buckle him into his car seat at the back. Then I drive in the direction of the ice cream shop. I've got the radio playing some pop song that Cody knows all the words to. We stop at the light and I'm watching Cody in the mirror, singing and dancing his little heart out. The sight is so adorable that I'm fighting giggles, and it takes me a moment to realize the light has changed and the car behind me is honking. I take my foot off the brake and slowly make my way forward when my wolf hearing picks up a distant screech of tires. Taking my foot off the gas a little, I turn to my right and see a car headed towards us at a pretty fast speed. I step on the brake just as the car hit our front end, shattering the windshield and causing us to spin. I can hear Cody crying and smell rubber burning as we spin repeatedly. My chest hurts from where the seatbelt is pushing against with the force of our spins. We finally come to a stop at the other end of the intersection. We are lucky the only other car on the road is the one that was originally behind us, or it could've been fatal.

I turn in a panic to see Cody's little body wrecked with sobs, his eyes full of tears. From what I can tell, he had some scratches caused by the shattering glass, but is otherwise unharmed. If I hadn't stepped on the brakes when I did, the car would have slammed into Cody. I rush out of my seatbelt, ignoring the sting I felt from my left shoulder to my right hip, and climb out, heading around the car to grab Cody. I wrench his door open using all the werewolf strength I can muster to get him out. I hold

him close to me in a tight embrace as my heart and mind race with all the thoughts of how horribly this could have turned out. I look at the smashed front end of my car and cringe. Hugging Cody tighter to me, his sobs quiet down and his shaking stops. The adrenaline is still coursing through my body, not allowing me to calm down.

“Harmony, are you okay?” I hear Jeremy say through our pack link as the sirens of a coming ambulance near.

“Yeah, we got into an accident but Cody and I are alright. Just some bruises and scratches from what I can see but the ambulance is on the way. How did you know?”

“Trevor. He called out to us and ordered with his Alpha tone to find you. He said you were in trouble but he couldn’t get through to you,” Jeremy says, his voice shaken.

The shock of what is happening must have caused a wall to form in my mind, blocking Trevor out. Not wanting to cause him any more panic, I keep it shut so he won’t feel my fear and pain but instruct Jeremy. “Let him know we’re okay but I need to concentrate on Cody right now so he’ll have to wait for me to contact him. Oh, and please make sure the pack doctor is at the hospital to meet us so we don’t get placed to a human doctor.”

“Will do, but he’s not going to like that. He’s really freaked out right now,” Jeremy warns.

“I know he is but he’ll only be more freaked if he talks with me. It was a pretty bad crash, Jeremy. And could have ended so much worse than it did.”

Hearing the fear and pain in my voice, he agrees, letting me know that they will meet us at the hospital, and assuring me that the paramedics on their way were werewolves and would know how to treat us. As we sit there assuring the people around us that we were fine, I hold Cody, worrying about Trevor's reaction. An attack from rogues he probably could have handled but an accident will be tough. Not only will it remind him of Sarah’s fatal crash, but the fact that Cody was with me will freak him out even more. Not to mention he probably felt the pain that the seatbelt caused me. He's going to be worried, but what scares me more is the anger that is sure to follow once he knows we are okay. The whole reason he objected to our mating was the fear of losing another mate. I survived. I'm still here, but will Trevor see this as a blessing or a reminder of the possible loss he fears?

* * *

TREVOR

I'm pacing back and forth in my hotel room. My blood is cold as ice. Why didn't she answer my calls? Was she unable to? Was someone stopping her? What was that pain I felt to my shoulder and chest?

“Trevor, she’s okay. They both are.” Jeremy's message to me stops me in my tracks.

“Where is she? What happened? What do you mean both?” I roar in his head.

“Calm down so I can explain. She and Cody were on their way to get some ice cream and were hit by an out of control car. Harmony stopped in time to prevent a full body crash, so the car just caught the front end, causing them to spin. They have some scratches and Harmony’s got some bruises, but they are otherwise okay.”

With each word he speaks, my heart bleeds. It feels like the walls of the room are closing in

on me. She was in an accident with Cody in the car. She could have been killed, and I was nowhere near her to stop that from happening. My body is shaking and I can barely breathe. Austin sits me on the bed and puts my head between my legs, but the fear keeps coursing through my body. I could've lost the two most important people in my life.

"Where is she?" I shout aloud and through the link.

"We just entered the ER now. Dr. Shadow has already seen her and Cody and informed us that they are fine and will be able to come home with the promise of twenty four hour bed rest for the both of them," Jeremy responds immediately.

"Make sure they do it. I'm gonna start heading back now. Austin and Craig can represent me. My family needs me right now," I decide.

"We'll take good care of them till you get here. Drive safely, Trevor. They're okay now and we don't need you getting into an accident too," Jeremy assures me.

I just grunt and begin packing my bag. All that matters is getting to Harmony so I can hold her in my arms and see for myself that she is alright.

CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR

Lashing Out

HARMONY

“You’re pregnant.” The words keep replaying in my mind. How could a simple blood test administered in the ER cause so much turmoil? When the Dr. came in the room asking the guys and Cody to give us a few minutes alone, I was confused. I felt fine. Cody had been checked and although he's still a little shocked, he's good as well. So what could be so wrong that she needed to speak with me privately?

That’s when she gave me the news that struck fear in me. I'm pregnant. I'm only seventeen years old. How can I give birth and care for a newborn child when I just recently agreed to be a mother to a five year old? How am I going to go to college as planned? How could I have let this happen and what will Trevor say? Trevor. For some reason, telling him is what I fear the most. I'm not sure how he will react to this news after what just happened today. Will he be happy? Or will the thought of a son or daughter strike up all those fears of loss again? I don’t realize the doctor is still talking to me, until she gives me my release papers, advising me to pick up some prenatal vitamins as soon as I can. We will also be in a twenty four hour bed rest, followed by an immediate shifting to heal the last of my cuts and bruises. She then leaves the room, allowing the guys to return. They are curious as to why she needed to speak to me alone, but don’t ask about it. Cody and I are then released and free to go home.

Greg and Jeremy take the doctor’s orders very seriously, not allowing me to walk anywhere including the bathroom. Every time I have to go, they will rush to my side and carry me there. They wait till I'm done then carry me back. Cody is no help. He wants to stay in the room with me so we lay next to each other and watch cartoons. As soon as I start to get up, he'll yell to one of his uncles, tattling on me. That little stinker. He enjoys the look on my face every time I get busted and scolded by one of the guys. I assume he likes seeing me on the other end of a scolding. Being that I don’t take it very well and practically turn into a five year old myself with the mini tantrums I'm throwing. It's just annoying not being able to do something as simple as a bathroom break on my own because of alpha’s order to take care of me. If I wasn’t so freaked out over the accident and my pregnancy, I probably would’ve found the whole thing amusing. I mean, it’s every girls dream to be taken care of and catered to by two handsome, well-built, sex on legs, right? Apparently, I don't share that same dream at the moment.

I’m not only against them carrying me because I don’t like being helpless, but I'm also afraid

the more they get close to me, they'll pick up a change in my scent and find out the little secret I haven't shared yet. Luckily, they haven't so far. Maybe because they're so concerned for me.

After reading Cody the fifth book of the day, he falls asleep next to me, and I start to follow him when I hear the roar of an engine immediately followed by a screech of brakes and a door being flung open. Trevor is home. My body tingles in anticipation and uncertainty. Will he be upset with me? Will he be able to tell I'm pregnant? If not, I don't plan on telling him yet. I want to let him get over one crisis before having to deal with another. It's not that I regret the baby growing within me, but I'm so young and so is Trevor. We just found each other. Are we even ready to take this step? I haven't even had a chance to talk to him about Cody yet.

Just then, he rushed into the open bedroom door and stops just inside to stare at me. His eyes are intense as they roam my face, shoulders, and chest which are the only parts of me not covered by the sheets. Emotions flicker across his features. Fear and relief being the two most prominent. As if deciding I'm real, he rushes towards me, picking me up as gently as possible and cradling me in his arms. It feels so good to have him here like everything will be alright now. Just like that, all the fears I have are shoved to the back of my mind as I enjoy the warmth and comfort Trevor offers.

"I was so worried, baby. For a minute there, when I felt the pain and couldn't reach you, I thought I lost you," Trevor whispers into my hair.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare you. There was just so much happening at once and my main priority was making sure Cody was okay. I must've had my block in place and didn't hear you."

"It's okay. I'm just so relieved you're both okay," he says placing me back on the bed and running a hand over Cody's head.

"We are. We were lucky," I state.

"What did the doctor say?" he asks.

I pause for a minute. Should I tell him about the baby? No, now isn't the right time. I'll give it a day or two for him to let this sink in and then I'll tell him.

"Just to rest for the next twenty four hours and to shift when that time is up so I can heal fully."

He stares at me for a moment, a strange look appearing on his face before he shakes his head and gets up. "Good. I . . . ah . . . need to call Austin and see how things are at the meeting. I left in a rush, neglecting my pack duties so I really should find out what I missed."

His sudden mood change has me confused, but I just assume he's still trying to process things. I feel bad for being the reason he had to rush back home. "I'm sorry you had to leave. I know it probably doesn't look very good to the council but I'm sure they'll understand."

He just looks at me for a moment before shaking his head and saying with irritation, "Yeah, We'll see."

I can't hide a flinch at his tone. Noticing this, he tries to soften his features as he leans in to kiss my forehead. "Sorry. It was just a long drive, and I really need to get a hold of Austin. Rest as the doctor ordered, and I'll have your sister make you something to eat."

I'm not even hungry. But did he ask me? No. With that said, he leaves just as fast as he came. Why the change in his mood when he brought up having to call Austin? Feeling suddenly weary, I lay down next to Cody and fall into a deep sleep. I will give him some time to come to terms with things then I'll confront him about his reaction and tell him of our pregnancy.

Two days later . . .

Trevor is pissing me off. It seems as if he's doing everything he can to stay busy with pack business and keep me confined to the house. He has me staying home from school, bringing my work home for me, and won't let me do anything for myself. To call him over protective is putting it mildly. He didn't even know about my pregnancy yet. That's not the big problem. His protectiveness I can handle. It's the distance he seems to be putting between us and the angry looks he's been giving me. I didn't even get to discuss Cody with him. I'm searching for him to do just that when I hear them both talking quietly in Trevor's study. I stop just outside, not wanting to interrupt. Cody is asking him if he will be his daddy like I suggested. Trevor agrees right away. I knew he would. However, when Cody brings up me being his mommy, he tells him, "Let's wait awhile on that, okay? Give Harmony time to get better."

What the hell is he talking about? I'm already better. Their conversation mixed with his changed attitude is the straw that breaks the camels back for me and I decide enough is enough. Entering the study, I smile at Cody. "Hey, bud. Can I talk to your uncle for a minute?"

He nods his head and smiles. "Sure, you can talk to my dad. I'm done with him." He then scrambles out but not before stopping at my legs and hugging them tightly.

As soon as he's out the door I take a step toward Trevor and see him stiffen. That hurts and angers me at the same time. "Trevor, what's been going on with you lately?"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Hmmm . . . let me be specific. Why have you been avoiding me? Why are you so distant?"

"I've had a lot of pack business to catch up on."

"Every single day, all day long?"

He moves some papers around on his desk before saying, "Well, yeah. If you remember, I missed an important meeting this past weekend."

Is he seriously still upset about that? And is he blaming me for it?

"I already apologized for that. It's not like I planned to have that lady's breaks give out and ram into us now, did I?" I say angrily.

He stands up and looks at me, anger brewing there as well before replying, "I never said you did. That has nothing to do with it. I just have a lot to make up for. It looked bad. A young alpha leaving his beta and omega, to take his place so he could rush home to his mate."

I'm irritated by this but decide to pick my battles, and I have a bigger battle to deal with so the issue Cody has just brought up. "Why did you tell Cody what you did? I'm already better. I want to be a mommy to him and for the both of us to raise him together. Why are you acting like I'm some helpless female who can't handle a few knocks and challenges? Why are you keeping me practically locked up in this house?"

"For your own safety. Look what happened when I was away for just one day. You got into an accident." His voice is getting louder.

"It wasn't something I could have controlled. Why do you keep bringing it up like I caused it or something? Why'd—" He cut me off.

“Because it could’ve been avoided if you just stayed home like you were supposed to. The kitchen was stocked with food yet you still went to the store. Why? Because you had to make some stupid cookies? That was worth practically getting yourself killed as well as Cody?”

My heart is hit with the blow of every word. He's blaming me for the accident. I want to make him stop, but my lips won't move. I doubt he would have heard me anyway. He's really on a roll now.

“That’s the kicker, Harmony. Cody was with you. Do you know what pain it would have caused me to lose him too after I already lost his mother?”

The words keep slamming into me like physical pain hits my body. My wolf is trying to assure me that it's his fear talking. He's having a breakdown after the stress of the past few days. She argues that he doesn't mean what he's saying but the human, insecure, part of myself is telling me, “I told you so. He’s never going to get over Sarah. No matter what he said about not loving her as much as you.”

He turns his back on me, his shoulders heaving with every breath. Then his head drops as he whispers, “That’s why I didn’t want another mate.”

In the silence that follows, if you listen closely enough you'd be able to hear the shattering of my heart. There it lies at my feet, in broken pieces. He couldn't have hurt me more if he struck me with his own hands. Did he think I wouldn't hear that? Or is he so angry that he doesn't care if I did? I try to stop the tears from falling, but it's no use. The pain cuts too deep. So the truth comes out. He still doesn't want me. After all we've been through, he sees me as a burden. The room shrinks around me suddenly. There is a roaring in my ears. I know I have to get out of here before my body follows my heart and crumbles, leaving me vulnerable to more of his anger.

Trevor seems to be lost in his thoughts, so I take this as my chance to get away quietly. Wiping my tears, I slowly back up, leaving my tattered heart on the floor and make my way to the door. As soon as I feel it against my back, I reach behind me and turn the knob, thanking the heavens that it doesn't make a sound. I back out all the way shutting the door once again and turn into a hard chest. A flash back of the very first day I tried to escape Trevor flashes through my mind as I look up into the same black eyes, this time they are filled with sadness.

“He didn't mean it, Harmony. He’s just got a lot on his shoulders right now,” Austin tries to assure me.

“That doesn't give him the right to say those things to her,” I hear my sister say from behind him.

I look at her and I know my devastation is etched on my face. “It doesn't matter. He’s entitled to his feelings and I got it loud and clear.”

I start around Austin to the stairs. “Where are you going?” he asks.

“I think Trevor and I need some space. He’s already made it clear to me that he doesn't want the hassle of a mate, and I don't want to be where I'm not wanted. I just need to go back home for awhile to get myself together,” I say every word like it's acid on my lips.

“This is your home,” My sister says.

“This is your pack now,” Austin adds.

I shrug. “No, this doesn't feel like my home anymore, and I know that, Austin. I'm not leaving for good, just for now. I know I have a responsibility to this pack. I will do what is needed and asked of me unless Trevor decides otherwise. Right now, I'm a bit of a mess and I'll be no good to anyone like that. Megan, you'll know how to reach me if something comes up,” I continue walking down the

stairs, knowing any minute now, Trevor will start to feel guilt for the words he said. I don't want to be around for that. I don't want him coming after me to ease his conscience. It will only hurt more. As I step into the family room, I see Cody with his uncles. Their excellent hearing no doubt allowed them to hear our heated argument. The guys all turn to look at me and Cody follows, running to me with a smile. "So, did you and uncle Trevor finish your talk? Did he say you could be my mommy?" He asks as I drop to his level holding his arms in my hands.

If I hadn't left my heart on the study floor, it would have dropped right here. "No, honey. We didn't get to that yet." His face falls, and I hate myself for causing him any sadness. "Listen, handsome. I've gotta go for a little while. Just grown up stuff, but I promise I'll be coming back. You know I can't stay away from you for too long." I don't care what Trevor decides to do about us. I'm not abandoning this little boy forever. Besides, Trevor may not know it yet, but we were going to have to raise our child together, even if we had to do it in separate houses.

"Can I come with you?" He's killing me here. I know everyone can tell what it's doing to me, and I hope they understand why I have to leave. I assume they do when Jeremy jumps in to help me out.

"Not this time, buddy," he tells him as he scoops him up. "Harmony's gotta go visit her old pack for awhile so you have to stay here."

"Oh, because I belong to this pack?" he questions with wisdom far beyond his five years.

Jeremy looks sadly at me for a minute before replying, "Yeah, something like that. Give her a big kiss goodbye so it'll last until she gets back. Which will be soon, right?" he directs the last part at me with a look telling me it better.

I nod and accept the big sloppy kiss to my cheek before saying my goodbyes and walking out the door. I place my hand on my flat stomach, assuring my child it will be okay, and run for the woods. Once there, I shift, not caring that my clothes are shredded and run as fast as my legs will carry me. I know I can't stay away forever. I can't always run from my problems but I need some time to grieve.

Cue the dramatics, but Trevor's words wounded me deeply and I can't see logic past the pain. All I know is that for the first time since Aiden's rejection, I felt complete happiness. Now it, too, was ripped away from me. As the trees become a blur, so does my vision. My wolf is crying, fighting against the separation from our mate, but I need to push forward. My legs burn as I increase my speed and the tears dry in the wind.

I just keep running all the way through the town, past the school that divides our territories, and finally arriving at the woods surrounding my uncle's pack house.

There, at the tree line, stand four wolves. One black, two brown, and one sandy. Megan must've called ahead to let them know I was coming. Feeling exhaustion hit me, I fold my legs under me, resting my head on my front paws as Jared comes to me and licks the side of my face. He can't speak to me, being I'm no longer in his pack, but I know what he's saying. "It'll be okay. We're here."

He lays next to me and the rest of the guys follow, mirroring our position in the woods not so long ago. I feel the same comfort as before. Happy to know that there are a few guys who don't make me feel like loving me is so hard to do.

CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

Screwed

TREVOR

All I keep seeing in my mind are the cuts and bruises that covered Harmony's body when I first entered that room and the look of absolute trust she had on her face when I held her in my arms. That look is what has me avoiding her. The fear and the overwhelming feeling of inadequacy are eating away at me. Not only did I almost lose my world, but she seems to think that she's safe with me. I can't handle the pressure and am afraid of failure. That's why I not fully aware of the words leaving my mouth as I say, "That's why I didn't want another mate." It isn't true. I don't really feel that way. If anything, having a second mate is the best thing that could have happened to me. She makes my life fuller.

That thought brings to the forefront of my mind the other hurtful words I said regarding Sarah. It came out all wrong. I didn't mean it to sound like I still loved Sarah, but it did. I don't even know why I brought her up. What is wrong with me?

I'm so lost in my thoughts that I don't even know she left until the door is slammed open, causing it to crash against the wall and split partially from it's hinges. I turn to tell whoever it is to leave us alone, only then realizing Harmony isn't one of the four people currently entering the room. Where did she go?

Jeremy gets right in my face, trying to stare me down as long as possible before his natural instinct to submit kicks in. "What? Looking for someone? Well, she left as fast as she could to get away from a poor excuse of a mate, you!"

I recoil at the anger and venom in his words. Austin pulls him back before he can continue to stare me down, which would result in a challenge for my position. Jeremy shirks him off and turns to stand by the window on the other side of the room, clearly trying to calm himself down. Having escaped his anger, I look to the other men in the room and see the challenges are far from over. They all share equal looks of anger, disappointment, and resentment. *They resent me?* Jeremy's words finally register in my head. *Harmony's gone?* I begin to panic. Surely she just went to our room to let me cool off. She couldn't have taken me seriously, could she?

I start to rush out of the room only to stop suddenly as a new, smaller figure stands in my way with fire in her eyes. Before I can say anything, her hand connects with my cheek with a loud *THWACK*. I growl menacingly. Doesn't she know it's disrespectful to raise a hand to her alpha? It's a punishable act. Quick as lightning, Austin is in front of me protecting his mate, ready to challenge me

if need. The rest of the guys watch in horror at what is about to happen, until a little voice broke us of our stance.

“What’s everybody doing? Why do you look mad? And why did Aunt Megan hit you, daddy?” Cody asks innocently.

No one can answer. Everyone is reeling from the events of the past five minutes, and Cody’s referring to me as daddy. Craig rushes to pick Cody up. “Nothing, Cody. Don’t worry about it. They’re just gonna have a little talk, so let’s go see if there’s anymore of your favorite cookies downstairs while they do that.”

“How come Aunt Harmony is the only one that tells me what’s happening?” he grumbles.

Remembering some of Harmony’s more colorful explanations releases some of the tension in the room, then fills me with sadness and worry as to where she is and what she must be feeling. Deciding I’d deal with Megan’s punishment later, I continue to make my way to our room, only to find Harmony isn’t there. Figuring she must’ve needed some fresh air, I start to head down the stairs until Megan’s words stop me. “You won’t find her. She’s gone.”

My gut twists like a pretzel. *Gone?* What does she mean gone?

“Where did she go?” I shout.

“Don’t yell at Megan!” Austin shouts back.

“I don’t have time to worry about how I talk to your mate, Austin. I need to find mine.” Anger is bubbling up inside me.

Megan starts coming toward me, but is stopped short as Austin gets a good grip on her arm, shaking his head at her when she shoots him a disgruntled look. She submits, but the look on her face says she was out for blood, mine to be precise. I have never seen her so mad as she spit her next words at me. “Why do you care, Trevor? From what she told us mixed with what we heard, you don’t want her as your mate. You practically blamed her for the accident. Topped it off by saying she almost took Cody from you. Let’s not forget the little reference to Sarah, real award winning speech there, asshole.”

Everything she says is true. I did say all of that and in my haze of anger and fear, I couldn’t stop the words from leaving my mouth. Now that I’m replaying our argument, the hurt look on Harmony’s face as I said these things appears clear as day. Her pain is deep, and I was the cause of it. As I’m silently going over my thoughts, Megan jumps in with another blow.

“I know my sister well, and the fact that you accused her of almost taking Cody away from you has to have hit her to the core. She already loves that little boy like her own. To know that you, her own mate, have so little faith in her would damage even the strongest of people.”

I have so much hate for myself right now. Why didn’t I let Cody ask her? I want her to be next to me, raising Cody as our own. Then we can have more kids when we are ready. I can see Harmony glowing with my child growing within her. That sight nearly brings me to my knees. Why am I being such a coward? Why can’t I be the man Harmony sees when she looks at me with so much trust? Do I really want to lose everything I have with Harmony because of my insecurities? Or can I be her hero?

I have to get her back. But first, I need to find out where she went. She’s blocking our link, but I’m pretty sure I know where she’d go. To know for sure, I need to make nice with her sister.

“I know, Megan. I’m sorry for what I’ve done, but I need to find her,” I plead with her.

She sniffs in irritation. “I’m not the one you should be apologizing to.”

“I know that but how can I apologize to her if I don’t know where to find her?”

“It’s not going to be easy. She’s somewhere you can’t get to without permission, and the only person who can grant you that is our very protective uncle. I don’t see that happening.” She doesn’t hide her enjoyment of this fact.

Realizing Harmony is exactly where I knew she’d be, I understand Megan’s satisfaction. I won’t be able to enter their territory unless the alpha allows it, and considering how much I hurt Harmony, he isn’t going to give me the permission I need. That doesn’t matter. I will wait on the borderline for months if I have to.

Decision made, I once again make my way down the stairs to the front door. Just as I’m about to open it, there is a knock. Could it be Harmony? Wrenching the door open, the hopeful look on my face falls when I see it’s only the pack doctor. Ignoring my disappointment, she smiles before saying, “Sorry to bother you, Alpha. But I came to check up on Ms. Evans and drop off these vitamins.”

Confused, I ask, “Vitamins for what? I thought she was alright?” Then I grab the brown bag to see what is in it. She tries to stop me, but I already have the bottle out and am reading it. “Prenatal Vitamins. Why would she need those?”

“That’s really something that you need to ask her directly. If she’s not here, I’ll just come back another time when it’s convenient.” She tries to take the vitamins back from me.

I yank my hand out of her reach as I begin to put the pieces of this puzzle together. Harmony hasn’t been taking anything to prevent pregnancy. And before the accident, we were going at it like crazy. When she was in the ER, they would have taken a blood test. Then it clicks.

“I’ll see you later, Alpha. Please tell Harmony I came by and to come see me if she needs anything,” Dr. Stevens rushes to say as she backs up.

“Stop,” I order using my alpha power. “Why does she need these vitamins?”

“T-that’s doctor patient privilege.”

“Answer me!”

Lowering her eyes to the ground, she answers, “Your mate is pregnant.”

Megan gasps behind me as the doctor’s words hit me like a ton of bricks. Harmony is pregnant, and she didn’t even tell me. Anger consumes me. How could she keep something like that from me?

“She must be so scared,” Megan whispers.

Just like that, my anger fades to be replaced with guilt. Of course she didn’t tell me. I’ve done nothing but avoid her lately. Then today, I blame her because of my own issues. Megan is right. She must be scared. We’re only teenagers barely out of high school. How are we going to care for a newborn and a five-year-old? These are things we need to talk about but that would have to wait.

This news only solidifies how much of a jerk I am and I wouldn’t blame her if she never wants to forgive me. I still need to tell her how sorry I am and promise for the second time never to hurt her again. During my daydreaming, the doctor scurries off. No big deal. She already told me what I needed to know. Now, I have to go get my mate back.

“You’re going to be a dad . . . again,” Craig said in awe.

“Man, you are so far up shit creek and none of us are willing to give you a paddle after the way you treated Harmony,” Jeremy states irritatingly.

“Yeah man, not only did you tick off your mate but your pregnant mate at that. You’re gonna have to do a whole lot of hoop jumping to get her to even talk to you. If I know her, she just might chop your balls off and feed it to you before she even considers forgiving you,” Greg adds.

“You better make this right, Trevor. The future of our pack depends on it.” Austin, always the voice of reason.

They weren't saying anything I didn't already know. Not wasting anymore time, I drop my clothes where I stand and shift. I make sure to grab my jeans in my mouth before tearing up gravel and dirt, heading towards my mate.

I'm filled with the anticipation of seeing her and the worry that she's too filled with hate to give me a chance to apologize. I make it to town in no time. Then double my speed past the school, coming to a dead halt at the border of Shadowland territory. Standing just on the other side of the line is Jared in a pair of basketball shorts, with two brown wolves who I know to be Brad and Jace, flanking him. He's standing with his arms crossed in front of him and an angry scowl on his face. The two wolves growl at me.

Harmony's bodyguards are ready to tear me apart if I make the slightest, threatening movement. Part of me is proud my mate has such loyal protectors, while the other part of me is irritated that they are standing between me and my mate.

“Where do you think you're going? I'm sure you have no business here since you no longer have a mate,” Jared says, his voice laced with contempt.

That pisses me off. Yeah, I hurt her but I'm here to beg forgiveness. No matter what happened between us, she is still my mate and I will never let her go. I can't let her go. I concentrate on my human form and feel my paws turn to hands and my arms and legs lengthen until I'm standing on two feet. I slip my jeans on and confront Jared.

“That's bullshit and you know it. She is my mate and I've come to take her back with me.”

“It's gonna be pretty hard to do since she doesn't want to be anywhere near you right now. She plans on coming back after she's had time to rid herself of your stink. After all, my cousin is too good a wolf to abandon her pack or Cody.”

“She plans on coming back?” I ask with all the hope I feel.

“Don't get too excited, dog face. She's not coming back to you. She has other plans but that's for her to tell you when she's ready.”

“I'll wait right here till she is. I don't care how long it takes.”

“Why don't you just leave her alone? Haven't you hurt her enough? Let someone else take care of her,” A new voice asks.

“Nate, I told you to stay with Harmony,” Jared scolds as we all turn to the tree line to see him heading towards us.

“She said she wanted to feel sorry for herself in peace. There were major waterworks involved. It was . . . awkward,” Nate replies.

I could care less of their conversation. All I heard were the last words, ‘let someone else take care of her’. *Over my dead body*. Was he volunteering? I'm spitting mad and ready to charge across the line and rip his throat, but doing that will bring war between our packs. I can't let that happen, so I gather all the strength I can to reign in my wolf but can't resist saying, “Why, Nate? You have your eye on my girl?”

He freaking smirks at me and says, “Sure do. With you out of the way, I could get a lot more than just my eyes on her.”

I'm ready to charge at him before Jared steps over the line, pushing a hand against my chest as he shouts, “Shut up, Nate! And stop baiting him. You know Harmony would hang you by your balls if

she heard you say that.” Then he turns to me and says, “Calm down. He’s just messing with you and if you cross this line, things will be much worse than just a ticked off mate. You don’t know how badly I want to beat your ass right now, but the good of the pack comes first. A war is the last thing we need.”

Letting his words sink in, I back down. Nate has to get one last word in and mumbles loud enough for all of us to hear, “She should be hanging her mate by his balls.”

“Shut up, Nate!” Jared yells.

Tired of these games, I say, “I just need to see her to know she’s okay. I’ll give her the time she needs but after what I found out before getting here, my wolf needs to hold his mate. We’re no one without her. I love her so damn much.” I don’t care how pussy whipped I look in front of these guys. I want them to tell Harmony how I feel so she’ll know I love her. I want to tell her I already love our child too, but I can’t.

“What did you find out?” Jared asks.

“That’s between me and my mate.”

“Oh shit. You know, don’t you?”

“What are you blabbing about?”

“Crap, she’s really not gonna like this. Is that why you’re here? Not for her, but for your future line?”

“What? Wait. You know? She told you? How could she tell you and not her own mate?” I shout in disbelief.

“Easy. I’m her cousin. She tells me everything,” Jared boasts.

“That and she was a mess once we got her inside and blabbed everything to our Alpha Female, loud enough for the whole house to hear. You really did a number on her, you ass wipe,” Nate interjects. He’s really getting on my nerves.

“Nate, you’re really not helping things here. Just go tell Harmony that Trevor knows. She needs to decide what to do next and I’m not leaving him here unattended so he can sneak into our territory and harass her before she’s ready.”

“No,” Nate protests. “Don’t make me do it. This pregnancy is making her scary. Before I left, I suggested she take a warm shower to feel better and she blew up on me. Started asking me if I was trying to say she stunk. Then went into a ten minute rant about how girls always have to go out of their way to keep themselves hot for us guys and we don’t even know how to put down a damn toilet seat and blah, blah, blah. My ears were seriously bleeding. Don’t make me go back there, please!”

His little break down eases some of the tension in the air, and we all relax a little. I hear a huffing sound from the two brown wolves as if they were laughing. “She has been a bit high strung since she got here but too bad. Do it, Nate. That’s an order.”

Nate slumps his shoulders dramatically and turns to head back to the pack house. I would have found enjoyment in the situation if I wasn’t so torn up about causing her the added stress.

“You really are in for it, you know. If you thought Harmony was a handful before, that’s nothing compared to now. She’s only been with us for an hour, but I swear we’re all guarding our manhood with our lives. She’s already attacked each one of us for one thing or another and she actually likes us. Imagine what’s in store for you. I almost pity you, but I know you deserve everything that’s about to come your way. She’s gonna make you pay, and pay big,” Jared warns.

“If it means I can have her back in my life then I’ll take whatever she throws my way. It shouldn’t be too bad, right?” I ask unsurely.

“Famous last words, Trevor. Famous last words,” Jared says with a shake of his head and anticipation in his eyes.

That look instills fear in me. Not only the existing fear of losing my mate but now the fear of what she’ll do if she agrees to come back. After all, hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. Crap.

CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

Be Careful, She Bites

HARMONY

They're doing it again. Peeking in the crack between my door and door frame that my aunt insists I keep partially open before I shut myself off from the world. I'm not that depressed. At least I don't think I am. It's hard to tell with all these different emotions swirling in me. Then there are the constant mood swings I'm feeling. One minute it seems that I'm too shattered to move and the next I feel empowered with a 'Who needs Trevor?' attitude.

I'm beginning to get frustrated. I literally lost it with myself when I started bawling over the dog food commercial. Seriously, dog food? All because they did a little montage of the dog's growth from pup to adult and I felt like I could somewhat relate. Pathetic is my middle name. Then there are the moments I'm not too proud of. Those usually involve the guys which explains the whispering going on outside my room right now.

"You tell her. You're her cousin," Nate is saying, trying to keep his voice down. Of course I can hear everything so there's no use for him to be so quiet.

"No way. She threw her brush at me the last time I went in there. I didn't even see it coming. One minute I got her to smile, the next she was trying out her throwing arm on me. I was the most recent victim so it's your turn. Besides, you lost the coin toss. Now get your ass in there," Jared argues just as softly.

"I'm afraid of what she'll do to me when I tell her what he's doing now. She really doesn't understand the concept of not shooting the messenger. Couldn't we just send her a text?" Nate tries to reason with Jared.

"No, you idiot. Plus, I already tried that. I got a text back from Megan saying Harmony left her phone there. She also told us to stop being pussies and get it done. If she only knew how bad it was then she wouldn't be saying that."

"It's been two days. How long is this supposed to last?" Nate asks, exasperated.

"My aunt said she'll be pregnant for five months so that means we could have about one hundred forty eight more days of this."

"What?" Nate whisper shouted. "As much as I hate the guy right now, we really need her to take him back. That way she can torture him. I love her like my very own sister but I can only take so much."

Ridiculous. I'm not that scary. "You guys know I can hear every word you're saying, right?"

Absolute silence.

“You should just come in here and tell me whatever it is you think I’m going to blow up about and get it over with.” I advise them, sitting up in bed. I know I look like a hot mess. I’ve been living in some old pajama’s that I never packed when I moved and my hair probably resembles a birds nest judging by the knots I encountered when running my fingers through it. I can understand why they are scared of me. I think I’m starting to smell funky too. I haven’t brushed my teeth or washed my face since yesterday morning.

It’s been two days since the blow up with Trevor, and I know he’s been waiting for me at the borderline of my uncle’s territory, but I refuse to see him. I’m hoping he’ll eventually give up and go back home. His words hurt me, whether he mean them or not. He’s been trying to talk to me through our bond, and I can feel him nudging the blocks in my mind. If I’m honest with myself, I’m getting weary of keeping the block in place. With the morning sickness and fatigue, I’m not sure how much longer I can hold him off.

Nate and Jared finally work up enough courage to enter the room and stand side by side in front of the bed, trying to hide their twin grimaces when they see the state I’m in. I raise my brow in question and they replace it with charming smiles that I can see through completely.

“What is it? What did he do now?” I ask.

Jared bumps Nate’s arm with his, causing Nate to shoot him a dirty look before answering, “He’s made his stay at the borderline permanent.”

Confused, I ask, “What do you mean permanent?”

Jared taps him with another bump and a dirty look, before Nate visibly swallows as if fearing the worst from me before answering, “He’s setting up a camp with a tent, sleeping bag, lanterns, canned goods, the whole bit. He’s not leaving until you go back with him. He even said to tell you Cody will be with him this weekend. They’re gonna make a guys only camping trip out of it unless you decide to join.”

He’s looking anywhere but at me while he’s explaining so he doesn’t see the fury building within me but Jared does and he starts to slowly back away as Nate makes the mistake of continuing, “I think it might be good for you. You know, to see him. Maybe it will make you feel better. Your wolf probably misses his and Trevor looks worse than you. I think he’s really sorry. Don’t you think you should at least let him explain?” After he suggests that last sentence, he finally looks at me and winces at my expression. Then he looks to the side for help from Jared, but he has already made his escape and is halfway out the house by now.

Nate takes a step back for every step I take forward as I say, “Really, Nate? So you think I should forgive him so easily after all he’s said to me because you think he’s sorry and he looks bad?” Another step forward from me, and one back for Nate. “You think I would feel better and my wolf would be happy to go back to the idiot that accused me of causing an accident I had no control over, blamed me for almost losing him his son, and brought up his ex-mate as an example?” We take the final steps for both of us, bringing Nate’s back to the wall and me up in his face. “You want me to forgive him for turning his back on me when he promised he would love me and never hurt me again? Is that what you think is best for me, Nate?”

He looks so worried and sad that the anger I feel dissipates, leaving only a heavy weariness in it’s place. I shouldn’t be taking it out on him. He’s just trying to help. Why am I being so horrible? Transferring my hurt onto others? That thought causes me to lose my strength completely, and I feel

myself fall, only to be picked up immediately by Nate's strong arms.

I stare into Nate's eyes, wishing for a moment they were the familiar ones of the guy I love and feeling even worse that Nate is so sweet to me after all I've put him through these past couple days. That's when the sobs hit me. Full, body wracking sobs. I'm probably getting snot and tears all over Nate right now, but he continues to hold me tightly to his chest.

He carries me to the bed and sits down on the edge while cradling me in his arms and rubbing my back, letting me cry till there's nothing left. After about twenty minutes of this, my sobs become sniffles, and he pulls back to grab my chin, forcing me to look at him. Before he can say anything, I force out through a scratchy throat, "I'm so sorry, Nate."

He smiles a sad smile and says, "Don't be. I get it. Sort of."

I can't help but return his smile with a small one of my own when he continues. "Look, Harm. I don't really know much about all this mate stuff and after these past two days I don't think I ever want to." Seeing the look on my face, he quickly covers with, "I don't mean anything bad toward you. I'm just saying it all seems so hard. To love someone so much that you can so easily hurt them with stupid words. Trevor is an idiot but before you, he was a heartless idiot. You changed him and from what I can tell, he loves you a lot and regrets what he said. You won't know that for sure until you talk to him."

I think about what he's saying. I know I will have to go back eventually. I'm just not sure if I'm ready to do that yet. Can I live with him and raise a child together knowing there are so many issues between us?

Nate, unaware of my thoughts, continues, "I think you should talk to him, but make him sweat a little. Dangle yourself in front of him, just out of his reach. Where's the strong Harmony we've come to know that would bust our balls for looking at her funny? She's the one that needs to find Trevor and make him pay. Just remember, you guys have a baby to think about and a little boy too. As much as I hate to say it, you guys belong together."

He's right and being serious for the first time since I've met him. I'm shocked that such sound advice is coming from this self-confessed player. Twitches of the first real smile since the accident play at the corner of my mouth as I tease, "Wow look at you, Nate. Being all sensitive."

He scoffs, "What? I'm not being sensitive. I'm a man. We don't act sensitive." He puffs out his chest as he says, "And I'm all man with excellent observation skills. That's all it was. Pfft, me sensitive? No way."

Seeing how bothered he is I let out a deep, belly aching laugh that shocks him enough to let go of me, causing me to drop on the floor. It doesn't phase me. It only makes me laugh harder, almost maniacally, as he stares at me confused. After my laughter finally subsides he says, "Remind me never to get my future mate pregnant. The effects are scary and confusing." The worried look on his face brings about another round of laughter but he joins in this time. When I'm all laughed out, I realize I feel a little better.

Better enough to face Trevor but if he's expecting me to accept his apology right off the bat, he has another thing coming. I'm going to make him work hard for my forgiveness. If he wants a life without a mate, I'm going to give him one. I will go back to his pack house but I will stay in one of the guest rooms. I'll only talk to him when needed. I plan to treat him like a stranger in his own home. I know deep down that he didn't mean the things he said, he just let his fear and whatever other idiotic reasons he had get in the way of us. I'm going to make sure that never, ever happens again. It's time he

grew up. We have a little boy to raise, a new life on the way, and a graduation around the corner. We aren't allowed to be careless teens anymore. This pregnancy forces us to be adults, so it's time we start changing. After I play a little childish game of revenge, that is. Payback certainly is a bitch. A pregnant one to be exact.

With that thought in mind, I give Nate a peck on the cheek and head for the shower. If I'm going to do this, I need to be in top form. Once I'm done, I'll give Trevor what he wants. I'll come back but I'm going to make him wish he never messed with me.

* * *

TREVOR

Jace and Brad aren't bad guys. I could actually see myself being friends with them as soon as I have my mate back. Ever since the day of our fight, they have been alternating shifts with Jared and Nate to watch me. It's more like a bunch of us hanging out. Them on their side, me on the other. Sometimes Austin or one of my cousins will join us. They all see the pain being away from Harmony is causing me, so I think they are cutting me some slack. That and from the stories I've been hearing. My little mate has been somewhat a handful. They keep asking me if I'm sure I want her back. Are they serious? Even if she makes me cook, clean, and cater to her every need, I won't care. I just want her with me.

Nighttime is the hardest. I got so used to having Harmony by my side that I can't sleep without her. After the first night, I decided I'd bring camping gear since it didn't look like she plans to give in anytime soon. I miss her like crazy.

I'm lying on the grass in front of my tent throwing a football up in the air and catching it when I think I smell her scent. I jump up immediately, sniffing the air. Was it just another one of the guys carrying her scent with them? After a minute I realize it's too strong not to be her and look frantically into the surrounding trees.

Finally, she emerges, looking more beautiful than I remember. Her hair is flowing down her back and she has on a white sundress that's tight at the top before flowing out from the waist down to her knees. I soak up her presence like a man dying of thirst. She blows me away and my heart starts to beat faster. She looks like an angel that's coming to save me from the misery I've been in. Then my gaze reaches her face, and I realize that's a pretty far-fetched notion.

There's no heavenly expression to match the vibe the rest of her gives off. With the way she's looking at me and striding forward as if on a mission, the only angel she resembles is the angel of death. That hard look softens as she grace Jace and Brad with a smile and tells them they can have a break while she talks with me. They study her for a moment and something on her face makes them smile wickedly before nodding and walking off. Her back is facing me so I miss whatever it is they saw, but I don't really care. I'm just happy she is finally going to let me explain myself and try to bring her back.

"Harmony," I say as her gaze snaps to me and I have to take a step back at the fury in her eyes.

"What, Trevor?" she spits at me.

The guys weren't kidding with that talk about her being scary. Here I am, an Alpha in charge

of a pack of two hundred fifty and counting, yet I feel like a pup ready to whimper. Of course my wolf won't allow that to happen. Can't say the same for the human part of me, though. Her whole stance is intimidating, and it speaks loud and clear to me that she isn't going to take any crap from me.

"I miss you," are the first words I get out. My brain is having a hard time functioning at the moment. I'm happy to see her but shocked by her demeanor. Where was my fun loving, always ready for a laugh mate? The Xena warrior princess in her place is freaky as hell.

"Really, Trevor? I should care, why? Do you want an award for that? If you do, I've got one being made for you. It's for the biggest douche of the year. Congratulations Trevor, you won by a landslide!" she says with a mocking smile and clap of her hands. Oh she's definitely pissed.

"Babe, I know you're mad but you need to know that I didn't mean any of the things I said. I was just scared and overwhelmed. I didn't handle it well. I'm so sorry. I need you to come back with me. I want to make it up to you," I plead.

A thoughtful look crosses her face giving me a tiny sense of hope but then she crushes it when she tauntingly raises her brows in an 'Oh my god' expression and starts doing exactly what Greg predicted. Chopping my balls up and feeding it to me. "Oh really, Trevor? You're sorry? You need me to come back? You want to make it up to me? All I hear in that little speech of yours is you, you, you." She takes a breath and her anger is once again at the forefront. "Well, where were you when I was recovering from the accident? Where were you when I was worrying about how to tell you I was pregnant? Where were you when I needed you the most? You were busy worrying about you instead of talking to me. You shut yourself off and avoided me. Then you controlled what I did before topping it off by blaming me for all of it. You know what hurts the most? After all the insecurities I felt about Sarah, you had to go and bring her up when I was at my most vulnerable. You said she wasn't as important to you as I was but then you said what you did about losing her. Was it all a lie, Trevor? Do you expect me to live up to her memory? Do you?"

Her last question is laced with so much pain even though she's trying to hide it behind her anger. I feel it. Deep in my own heart and I don't know how to make that pain stop. "I didn't mean it. That was just my own insecurity and fear talking. I lashed out on you because I was afraid I couldn't be what you believed me to be. You looked at me with so much trust and I wasn't sure if I was worthy of it. I didn't protect you from the accident. Hell, I was hundreds of miles away. What good is an Alpha Male if he can't protect his Alpha Female?" I let all the self-hate I have for myself show in every word I speak.

Her anger subsides a little but her determination to make me pay is still driving her. "That's your problem, Trevor. You're strong and confident in your role as Alpha but when it comes to your role as my mate, you let your fear lead you. We can't be anything together if you're always going to be afraid of what the future holds."

She walks a little closer to me so she can look me in the eyes. I stare into their beautiful green depths as if she has all the answers I need, which she does. Then she says, "You don't have to stay here anymore."

"I'm not leaving until you come back with me," I argue.

"I will be coming back but things are going to be different."

At first all I hear is that she's coming back and I want to pick her up in my arms and rejoice, then the last part of her statement sinks in. "Different how?"

"The only reason I'm coming back is because I made a commitment to the Dark Mountain

Pack when I became their Alpha Female. I also made a commitment to Cody when I agreed to be his mommy. I don't take those lightly. I also have our child to think about but you know that already, don't you?"

"Dr. Stevens came by with some prenatal vitamins for you and I put it all together. I won't ask why you didn't tell me. I know I didn't make it easy for you but I want you to know that I'm really happy about it. I was scared at first but I love you and I know we can do it together."

"That's assuming we will be together . . ."

This has me panicking. "What? Why wouldn't we be? Harmony, I said I'm sorry. Please forgive me so I can spend the rest of my life making it up to you." I'm getting pretty cheesy here. If any of the guys are hiding in the trees I definitely just lost my man card, but I can't help it. I mean every word I'm saying and am worried I'm losing her.

"That was pretty much the reason I didn't tell you about the baby. I wanted to but your avoidance made it hard. It's going to take time before I'm ready to forgive you. You need to get over your issues, and I need to get over mine. We have a five-year-old and soon a new born to take care of. We can't act like kids anymore. Plus, you need to be taught a lesson and I'm more than willing to teach it to you," she says, some of her playful side returning.

"What kind of lesson?" her sudden change of attitude worries me.

"Nope, no cheats. You'll just have to find out for yourself." She starts backing up as she continues, "I'm going to tell everyone bye and give them my thanks. Meanwhile, you really should start packing up all your gear. I'll meet you back at the pack house, and don't bother arguing with me. You may be the alpha in our pack, but you are not the alpha in our mated relationship. If you so much as try to use your dominating tactics on me, be warned. I may be forced to submit to you, but I won't surrender myself to you unless I want to. I'll always come up fighting, making sure to permanently remove your manhood on my way up." Then with a toss of her hair, she's off and out of sight.

I stand there speechless until I'm once again joined by Jace and Brad, this time with Jared and Nate in tow as well.

"We did warn you," Jace says.

"That is one pissed off female. She practically left scorch marks in her wake," Brad adds.

I just shake my head at their amusement.

"You really are in for it, you know," says Jared. "My cousin was always the toughest out of herself, Megan and I. Your mess up and her pregnancy have made her one scary she wolf. She's going to make your life hell till she's ready to forgive you."

"I can see that but it would be nothing worse than the hell I would face everyday without her, and I have a funny feeling that's the exact lesson she wants to teach me. It may be painful and hard as heck to take, but if this is what I need to do to prove to her that I never plan on messing up again then I'll do it," I swear. Yup, definitely lost my man card.

"She really means that much to you?" Nate asks.

"Yeah, she does."

"Well, in that case, give this to her for me will you?" Nate requests, handing me a small square glass box that you would use to display an autographed baseball in.

"What is this for?" I ask, confused.

"It's where Harmony can place your balls for display because I'm sure once she's done with you, you won't be needing them anymore." This causes a ruckus of laughter from everyone except me,

and I throw the box back at him. It's not that I'm bothered by what he said. I'm not. I'm more so scared by the truth of his words. She's definitely going to bust my balls and a love sick idiot that I am, I'm going to let her.

CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN

Brutal Lessons

Having Harmony back in our home is great. Her being pissed at me while living under the same roof is not. It started with the silent treatment and evasion. She didn't willingly speak to me, and every time I enter a room, she'll leave. She'll give me short answers to whatever questions I can think of, but those are the only words exchanged. She isn't mean to me, but I almost wish she was because at least it would be some sort of interaction. She's her normal self with everyone else. She jokes around, goes for runs, cooks, and cleans for them but she treats me like a stranger.

At school, she'll hang with her cousin and his friends. I have to sit across the lunch area, because if I try to join her she'll give me the evil eye and that eye shoots daggers. Even though I can't sit with her, lunch is my favorite part of the day. Harmony's appetite is getting bigger. She hardly ever gets sick now, and I love watching her put food away. Her tray is always filled with one of everything and she's constantly stealing food off of the other guys' trays. None of them try to stop her after Nate almost lost a finger after keeping her from one of his fries the very first day she came back to school. It had been awhile since I laughed as hard as I did after witnessing that. I'm almost disappointed that he was able to dodge her so quickly.

Her increased appetite and food thievery is getting so bad, I notice the guys are doubling up on their meals just to make sure there's enough for them after Harmony gets to it. Every day when school is done, we ride home together since her car was totaled in the crash. I tried to suggest we get another one together but she just gave me a dirty look and said, "Are you sure you want to do that? We wouldn't want to risk me getting into another accident, now would we?"

She's feisty, alright. And just as good at payback as everything else in her life. She never lets a moment go when she can use my hurtful words against me like that moment in the car. She also found other ways to get back at me. On her usual laundry day, I entered my room and stopped dead in my tracks. On the bed was a basket full of my folded whites. The only problem was they weren't white anymore. I am now the owner of five pink T-shirts, six pink undershirts, and three pairs of pink socks. I found a note in the basket that read:

Trevor,

Sorry.

One of Cody's red t-shirts accidentally made its way into your load of whites. Don't worry though, a real man can rock pink. The only question is, are you a real man or still just a little boy?

Harmony

I could imagine the smirk on her face as she deliberately threw Cody's shirt in with my whites. That wasn't the worst of her payback though. That honor belonged to dinner time. She's an excellent cook. The kitchen smells mouth-watering every time she's in there, and not just because of her enticing scent alone. I wouldn't be able to tell you how it tastes though, because she'll always prepare me something different. One night I had Ramen while they ate roast chicken and vegetables. Another night she fried me some spam while they ate steak and potatoes. The worst was when she made a delicious homemade lasagna, but served me one of those TV dinner ones. It's a little extreme, and I may have called her out on it if I didn't over hear the conversation she had with Megan after lasagna night.

"Harmony, I know what Trevor did was wrong, but I'm having a hard time with the dinners. I think you're being too cruel," Megan said quietly.

"I know. It's killing me to do this to him. I'm not a mean person, Megan. I'll stop after a couple more meals. I'm just trying to teach him a lesson."

"And what lesson is that? How to enjoy a crappy meal while everyone eats a delicious one?"

"No, wise ass. I'm trying to remind him what it would be like if he didn't have me in his life. He'd be forced to go back to his bachelor meals of anything microwavable. I just want him to appreciate what I can do for him so he'll stop worrying about the future and just accept things as they come," Harmony explained.

"Oh, I see. Well . . . I hope he learns that particular lesson soon because his puppy dog faces are killing me. I think I even saw some of the guys trying to slip him some scraps every time you're not looking."

Harmony laughed. "I know, I've seen it too. I promise I'll stop soon. I think he's starting to get it. I can tell by the way he just accepts it without throwing a fit."

Then they both giggled like school girls.

I grimace at the reminder of Megan knowing about the scraps the guys have tossed my way. I thought we were being discreet. Knowing that she isn't treating me the way she is out of hate is a big relief and I decided to take the punishment like a man. I suffered through one more horrible dinner of Vienna sausage, then she surprised me with a huge fried chicken with mashed potatoes and corn on the cob dinner with an apple pie for dessert. I sat down, looking at the delicious spread before me with longing and wondered what I was having. When she set a plate full of everything down in front of me and gave me the first smile I'd seen since before our fight. I returned it knowing that I had gained some footing with her.

It's now been a week of her payback and I'm going upstairs to shower. I walk past Cody's partially open door to peek in on his and Harmony's nightly bed time story. She's nearing the end when Cody's sleepy eyes turn to her and interrupt. "Mommy, when are you gonna stop being mad at daddy?" I love hearing him call her that. It seems so right, and it makes my heart full to see how comfortably they fit together. I just wished I could be a part of that again.

"I'm not mad at him, honey. I'm just trying to help him learn something new."

"Like when Ms. Edward teaches me to write my name?"

"Exactly. I'm just trying to teach daddy something new about mates."

“Oh, Uncle Jeremy was teaching that too.”

That's not good. Jeremy and teaching of any kind is an accident waiting to happen. By Harmony's wince I can tell she agrees. “Really? What did he tell you about it?”

“That when I get older I'm gonna find my mate and check her temperature. Then we're gonna wrestle and then I'm gonna have a baby just like you and daddy,” he says with his eyes getting droopier.

It immediately shoot wide open when I burst into the room and shout, “He told you what?”

Cody jumps and snuggles into Harmony's side while she holds him to her, giving me a reprimanding glare.

“Calm down, Trevor. Didn't anyone ever tell you it's rude to eavesdrop?” she says still glaring.

I walk to the foot of Cody's bed and place a hand on his blanket covered leg before saying, “Sorry, buddy. I was just surprised that Uncle Jeremy told you that.”

“It's okay,” he replies, rubbing his eyes and relaxing.

I take a quick peak at Harmony before asking my next question. “So, why did he tell you about that?”

“Cause I asked him about mommy's baby.”

“Yeah. We never really got a chance to talk about it. Are there any other questions you want to ask us?” Harmony delicately asks while running her fingers through his hair. I know it's wrong but I'm a bit jealous of my son at the moment.

“Nope. I know all about it now,” Cody says perking up a little again.

“That's what I'm afraid of,” Harmony mumbles and I silently agree with her. I need to find out from Jeremy just what he said.

I'm about to ask him what he knows when his brow furrows before asking with a sleep heavy voice, “But can you make it a boy? My friend Ricky has a little sister and he says they're the worst.”

Harmony and I both smile. She did probably due to his words while my smile is because of the vision in my head of a little girl with brown hair and green eyes just like her mommy. I would love a girl. Bringing myself back to the conversation, I hear Harmony tell him, “We'll try but we can't make any promises, okay?”

Cody nods before Harmony continues. “I just want you to know, we both love you very much and boy or girl, we'll love them too but you were our first and that makes you a very special little boy. You're gonna be a big brother soon. You'll have a little brother or sister to help look out for. Are you ready for that?”

He suddenly perks up again and says, “Yeah. We can play trucks and legos, and uncle Jeremy and uncle Greg can give us horsey rides, and it's gonna be fun!” After saying this he plants a big, sloppy kiss on Harmony's stomach before whispering to it, “Just be a baby brother, okay?”

I laugh at his determination and suddenly hope, for his sake, that it is a boy. Although I know that no matter what he wants, he'll still be a great big brother to a little sister if that's how things turn out. I just hope Harmony and I can work through this rough patch before the baby is born.

“You might not be able to play those things right away because he or she will be really tiny but the baby can join you and mommy for your bed time stories,” I offer.

“Oh,” he thinks it over. “I guess but I'm gonna pick the storiEs because babies can't read, daddy,” he says as a matter of fact. I was going to point out that he couldn't exactly read yet either but

feared the mama wolf in Harmony would come out and bite me so I settle for, “Good idea.” Harmony then helps him lie back in bed and we both kiss him goodnight.

When Cody is settled, I lead the way out of the room. Once in the hallway, I turn around and come face to face with my love. Not expecting my sudden stop, she bumps into me shooting tingles everywhere our skin touches, causing Harmony to jump back. My wolf whimpers at the loss of her until my eyes finally take in what she is wearing and we both start whimpering at the sight before us.

Harmony had been under the covers while on the bed with Cody, so I didn't get a chance to take in her choice of pajamas. I knew she had been running a little hotter than normal due to her pregnancy. That probably explains why she is dressed in only a thin strapped green top that hugs her newly enhanced chest and judging by the lack of straps or lines, she didn't have a bra on. It's paired with green and black striped pajama shorts that end just below her delicious butt cheeks. Her hair is up in a messy bun with a few strands slipping out here and there.

I'm hit with such a jolt of lust and arousal that it's nearly impossible for me to hold myself back from her. She looks at my tight features with big doe eyes before catching the scent of my arousal in the air and a wicked grin spreads over her face. She steps closer to me, causing her chest to lightly brush mine, and send shivers through my body. I clench my hands so tightly together I'm probably leaving nail marks on my palms. My wolf is growling at me to take her now while my human is arguing that now isn't the right time.

While I'm having this battle with myself, Harmony takes the opportunity to place her hands on my shoulders and use me for balance as she gets on her tip toes to whisper in my ear, “Are you hot, Trevor?” To which I can only nod causing her to get closer. Her lips are touching my ears now and whispers, “Now you know what I feel like every night while trying to sleep. Tense and hungry for the satisfaction of a cool breeze . . . “ She's really working me up here. I feel as if I'm going to bust a nut as she continues, “yearning for the relief my body craves after this endless torture that consumes my body.”

I'm losing oxygen to my brain as it all rushes south and just when I'm about to lose complete control, she steps back and to the side of me and starts to walk off, throwing over her shoulder, “The only cure for me when I feel heat like that is a very, very cold shower. I suggest you take one as soon as possible.” Savage.

She just worked me up to the point of no return then left me burned by my own heat. She's good. Very good. When she decides to pay someone back, she gets the job done. If I didn't already know it, I surely knew it now. I'm never gonna mess up again. The punishment is far too painful. Shooting one last longing look at my mate's retreating figure, I turn toward my room, hoping her payback will end soon. I need her back in my arms and bed but first I need a cold shower. A very, very cold shower.

* * *

HARMONY

Walking away from an aroused Trevor is so hard to do. Especially since my wolf is screaming at me to turn around and hump that boy till I can't feel my legs. I have to stay strong. I have done well this week in my torture of Trevor and judging by the emotions on his face, all the lessons I

want him to learn are embedded in his brain.

I thought he would have blown up at me about the whites becoming pinks, but he took it with a grain of salt, heading out to buy a bunch of new shirts and socks and even rocking one of the pink undershirts at one of the training sessions. It makes him look like a yummy, mouthwatering cotton candy on a stick. Fighting my urge to give in to him that day took all of my energy. Not only is this pregnancy making me emotional, it's also making me horny and denying my cravings is torture.

The dinners were tough to get through, but I admired how he just accepted things for the way they were, no questions asked. He could've used his alpha authority to make me or any of the others bring him some of the food I made, but he never did. He just sat there eating as if nothing was amiss.

Then tonight, the gentle way he was with Cody and the look that crossed his face when Cody mentioned a baby sister finally did it for me. I can't continue on my path of payback without hurting us both and taking a step back in my goal toward maturity. Besides, continuing on is just plain petty. I wanted him to learn a lesson and judging by his reactions to my schemes, he learned it well. It's time I give my man a much deserved reward. I'll let him sweat it out one more night. Tomorrow I'll surprise him with a big breakfast in bed while persuading him to have me for dessert first. I think my wolf just did a little happy dance.

CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

Lessons Learned

TREVOR

After another night of tossing and turning, I give up on getting any sleep and just stare at my ceiling. I watch the moonlight change to sunlight and miss the warm body of my mate cuddled next to me. I miss watching her eyelids flicker while she dreams, or the way her nose twitches when I run my finger over it. I even miss the occasional hand to the face when she turns to search for me next to her. I just plain miss her. As I contemplate sneaking into the guest room to watch her sleep, I hear movement outside my bedroom door. I listen quietly for a few moments, wondering if it may be Cody coming to wake me up when the door opens and shuts quietly. I sit up abruptly to tell whoever it is to knock next time and am met by the smiling figure of my mate.

She's dressed in one of my white button up shirts that falls to her knees and the sleeves are rolled up to her elbows. In her hands is a breakfast tray. I'm so shocked I forget to take a breath and wind up having a coughing fit as soon air rushes into my lungs. I'm literally hacking up my lungs and she quickly puts down the tray to rush to my side and pat my back.

“Trevor, are you okay? Do you need some water or something?” her sweet voice asks, filled with concern.

All I can do is nod and she runs to the bathroom, returning shortly with a glass of water. I gulp it eagerly, clearing the dust from my throat and turn to look into the worried green eyes of the woman I love. “Thanks,” is my brilliant first word to her.

She smiles and says, “You’re welcome. I knew my appearance would be a surprise but I wasn’t planning on causing you to almost lose a lung.”

I return her smile. “It wouldn’t matter. I already lost my heart to you, why not add another organ to it?”

Her face scrunches up though the smile is still there. “Awww, that was really sweet. Cheesy but sweet.”

I can only smile back and revel in the warm vanilla and honey scent that clings to her skin. I want to grab her in my arms and never let go but I'm not sure of her purpose for being here. After the progress I made last night, I can't risk messing up again. Plus, I don't want to have to go through another cold shower and if I lay any part of my body on hers, that will be exactly where I'm headed.

Just as I'm about to ask her what brought her here, she jumps up off the bed. She must have read the lust on my face and decided to leave. That's not the case though as she surprises me by

picking up the forgotten tray and bringing it to the bed. She motions for me to scoot up to the head board and then she places the tray on my lap. There's a plate of eggs, bacon, ham, and toast with some cut up fruit in a bowl to the side. She filled a mug with coffee just the way I like it and has a tall glass of orange juice as well. I look from the tray to her, back to the tray, and finally rest my confused eyes on her amused ones.

“This is a peace offering. Sort of. I’ve tortured you enough over the past week and I think you’ve learned your lesson. No matter what I threw your way, you never complained or used your alpha authority on me. You let me do what I needed and understood why I needed it. Your words hurt me deep, Trevor. I understand it mostly came from your fear. I hope now that you’ve gotten a taste of what life without me as your mate could be like. You’re no longer going to worry about the what ifs and start concentrating on what is.”

I stare at her in awe. I probably look like a little lost puppy in a shop window who’s finally found someone who wants to take him home. I'm afraid to believe this is real. What if it's just another part of her payback? A trick to reel me in then crush me?

“It’s not a trick, babe.”

I feel a huge weight being lifted at her silent message to me. Her blocks are finally removed and I can sense the truth in her words. I bring my hand up to cup her cheek.

“You’re letting me back in?” I ask through our newly restored link.

“Yes and as an extra reward that’s not the only place I plan on letting you back in,” she replies with a sultry smile on her face.

Every single part of me rises to attention at her words. I have to reign my dirty thoughts in. She probably meant her heart, right? After what I did, there's no way she's letting me anywhere near the promised land anytime soon.

Reading my thoughts again she says, “You never left my heart, Trevor. You were always in there no matter how much you hurt me.”

My whole body relaxes hearing that she never stopped loving me then tightens again as her meaning sinks in. “You mean, yo-”

She cuts my words off as she crushes her lips to mine while weaving her fingers through my hair. It takes me a minute to get over the shock of it, but once I do, I fling the tray aside and bring her over me so that she's straddling my hips. All that separates us is the cotton of her underwear and the thin sheet covering my otherwise naked body. I grip her hips tightly and nearly lose myself completely at the moan that action brings from her. I move my hands slowly up her torso to the top button of my shirt that still covers that glorious body I've been missing. I pull back from our heated kiss to be sure that it's okay for me to go further. She stares back at me through glowing green eyes, letting me know her wolf is very much with her at this moment. I feel my eyes flash as well and in the next moment she rips the shirt open herself and brings our lips together once more. This kiss is filled with all the longing and pent up desire we feel for each other during our separation. Each time our lips touch, the sparks get stronger and when our tongues blend our tastes together, it's euphoria.

Our hearts race together as if in competition with one another to see who can out race the other. Our hands wildly roam the other’s body, remembering all the dips and turns along the way. As lust recedes and passion takes over, our strokes and kisses becomes gentle. I flip her so that she's lying under me and break away from our kiss so that I can look into her eyes for a moment before letting mine travel down her body to rest on the two rosy buds seeking attention. Not wanting to deny

my mate anything, I eagerly grant their wish and send Harmony into instantaneous ecstasy. When she gradually returns to me, she's met with my look of surprise and she blushes.

“Yeah, um, they’re really sensitive now. Dr. Stevens said it’s normal. All part of being pregnant,” she explains with a shy smile.

The reminder of my child growing within her is like a mental ice cold shower. My body, however, is not deterred one bit being that it's so close to her center. I do have to pull back a little so I can ask, “I’m sorry, babe. I just got carried away. You’re too irresistible and it’s been so long without you. Is it even safe for us to be doing this? What if I hit him or something?”

She looks at me for a moment then bursts out laughing. Her laughter at my serious concern causes me to lose all enthusiasm in parts down south. Feeling me soften against her thigh brings Harmony out of her laughing fit, and she quickly tries to soothe my ego. “No, no, no. Don’t think I was laughing at you. It was cute that you were worried you’d hit him, but even though you are massive in that area, there is no way you’re long enough to do any damage.”

My brows furrow at her use of words. I'm a little offended. I'm damn well long enough to do damage. She starts giggling again at my expression, but reigns it in to say with a smile and twinkle in her eyes. “Yes, honey. You can do wonderful, fulfilling, extraordinary damage to me which you know I love but our baby is completely safe in his little cocoon, high up in my body and far enough away from your massive hammer.”

I feel myself start to harden at her words of praise. “Really? Extraordinary? I think hammer is too small a tool. More like mallet.”

Rolling her eyes she says, “Oh my gosh. Someone really needed an ego boost, didn’t he?”

I blow a raspberry on her neck to show her what I think of her teasing. She squirms and giggles at my actions. I love hearing her laughter once again. I stop so I can look at her and be sure. “So, what we’re doing is okay?”

The smile I missed so much forms on her lips. “It’s totally okay so stop wasting time talking about it and get to it. These pregnancy hormones have been wreaking havoc on me lately, and all I want to do is tie you to this bed and have my way with you till you can no longer walk on two legs.”

Cue the return of my stiffy, definitely at full attention now. I bring our lips together once more as I rest my weight on my left arm and move my right hand down her body to make sure she's ready for me. When I reach my destination, I feel the evidence of her arousal and know there will be no resistance. Bringing myself once again to her entrance, I ready for the promised land and stare deeply into her eyes as I ease into her. She moans my name and I catch her gasps with my mouth as we start an easy rhythm. Our bodies move in sync with one another and tingles shoot from where we are connected, traveling up my back, through my arms, and filling me with the sweetest adrenaline rush I’ve ever felt. As our pace increases, I sense her nearing completion. I trail kisses from her mouth to my mark. As my lips meet her skin she explodes, milking me of my own explosive release. “I love you,” I whisper in her ear.

After we both catch our breath, I move my weight off of her, but keep her hand firmly in mine. I turn to lie on my left side so that I can look at my beautiful mate. Her eyes are closed but a smile still lingers on her lips. I bring my finger tip to them and trace their fullness. She opens her eyes and looks into mine with love and forgiveness reflecting from them.

“I really am sorry, Harmony. Thank you for giving me another chance. I love you so much.”

She touches my cheek before replying, “I know you are. I love you too. Just promise you

won't do something like that again.”

“I can't promise I won't ever say anything stupid, but I can promise to think things through and talk to you about it instead of holding it in and blowing up. I'm not going to let my fear of losing you control me anymore. I can promise you that. As long as you believe in me, I'll always do my best to protect you,” I vow.

“I know that, Trevor. But you also have to understand that I can take care of myself. I'm glad I have you to protect me but I'm not helpless. I've had the same training all the other wolves had and I've had Jared to practice on. He's one of the best fighters, I know. You don't always have to look over your shoulder to make sure I'm okay. Just love and be there for me, Cody, and our baby. That's all I really need from you.”

“I can do that,” I promise, rolling on to my back and pulling her with me. We started kissing again, but have to stop when I feel something poking my hip. I reach under me to grab whatever it is. Once I have it, I bring my hand up between Harmony and myself and see it's a piece of bacon. Then I remember the breakfast she made for me and turn to my right to see the mess of food and drink on the floor and the edge of my bed. “Oops. Sorry, babe. I guess I really messed up breakfast,” I say with a guilty expression.

She looks at the same mess I'm seeing and smiles sheepishly. “About that . . . “ Then there's a banging on the door. I shoot up in bed for the second time this morning and am prepared for a fight when I hear Megan's familiar voice shouting through the door. “Harmony, you are so dead. I know you're in there! I could hear you moaning from outside.”

There's another voice. Probably Austin trying to calm her down but she isn't having it. “No way. She's going to get it. I cooked that breakfast for you and she conned me into helping her look outside for a supposed cat that she swore had been meowing all night. She sent me on a wild goose chase around the house, checking if her mysterious cat was hiding in any of the flower beds and when I come back in after finding no such thing and hearing her moans, I see that she's stolen your breakfast. I am so gonna strangle her, pregnant or not.”

I growl at the threat. Even though I know Megan would never follow through with it. I turn to look at my mate who is now sitting as well but has her face buried in my arm as she shakes. Worried that Megan is actually scaring her, I start to tell Austin to take Megan away when Harmony lifts her head and I see she's shaking with laughter. “Megan, I'm sorry but you're such a sucker and I needed breakfast in a hurry. You provided that for me. I promise I'll make it up to you. I'll be down in a few and I'll cook you and Austin the biggest, most delicious breakfast. I promise.”

“See? Come on, babe. It'll give us a few more moments in bed,” Austin coaxes Megan.

Harmony is still giggling next to me. She looks every bit the mischievous little sister I know her to be.

“I hear you laughing in there, Harmony!” Megan shouts, causing Harmony's giggles to turn into full belly laughter. I can't help but join in. The thought of Megan walking around the house saying, “Here kitty-kitty” is a funny visual.

Austin's small chuckles can be heard through the door. He's probably picturing the same thing. “Don't you dare laugh, Austin. Or you're joining that imaginary cat out there!” Megan warns.

Austin's laughter stops. He obviously recognizes a serious threat when he hears one. “Sorry, babe. Why don't I give you a full body massage while we wait for that breakfast?”

“Fine, whatever. But only because I love them so much,” Megan says before storming off.

“Thanks, Austin!” Harmony shouts.

“No need to thank me. Any excuse I have to get my hands on my mate is a welcome one,” he replies. “Just don’t take too long on that breakfast. Your sister is going to be very hungry once her massage is done.”

“Eeeew. TMI, Austin. TMI!”

Through the door we hear the retreating the sound of Austin’s laughter. Moving my laughing gaze from the door to my mate, I see the happiness that lights her up once again and feel good knowing that it's back. “So, I guess you've got some cooking to do now, huh?” I say a little bummed by this.

She smiles wickedly and says, “Not yet. Knowing Megan and Austin, they’ll be at it for at least another forty five min. That’s plenty of time for us to continue making up.” Then she pounces on me like she can’t get enough.

It's the greatest feeling having my mate back and as she gets more and more enthusiastic and impatient, I realize something else. I'm really liking these pregnancy hormones.

CHAPTER TWENTY NINE

Meeting The Parentals

On second thought, I only like SOME pregnancy hormones. The ones that make Harmony want me with a passion. Those are awesome. The ones that make her a crying mess one minute then a raging animal the next, I can do without. I hope she's not linked with my mind right now.

“What do you mean a crying mess? Are you saying I’m too emotional?” she asks through our link.

“No, honey. I’m saying it’s a crying mess that we have to sit in the hot sun while we wait for all two hundred forty eight of our classmates names to be called at graduation this Friday.” I try to cover up.

“Oh, okay then. That’s true but we only graduate from high school once so I think you can handle a little sun.”

Dodged a bullet with my quick thinking.

“And honey?” she continues.

“Yes, babe?”

“If you refer to me as a raging animal again, whether out loud or in your mind, I’ll be sure to permanently cut off all those hormones that make me hot for you, understood?” she asks with a devious smile on her face.

I guess I wasn’t completely in the clear. “Got it. It wasn’t a bad thing. I think you’re cute when you’re all fired up about something.”

“Sure, nice save. I’m going to wait with Cody in the truck for you. Hurry, okay? I haven’t seen my mom and dad in months and I can’t wait any longer.” She kisses my cheek and does a slight waddle out of the room.

It’s been three months since our separation and make up. We’re due for our first ultrasound tomorrow to tell us the sex of the baby. We’re a little anxious because the doctor said she heard something strange with the heart monitor at our last visit. Nothing to worry about but she wanted a closer look at the baby to see what might have caused it. Harmony insists we’re having a boy because she says she’s way bigger than she should be, meaning she’ll be pushing out a mini me. All will be revealed tomorrow. I’m a little nervous about it but not as nervous as I am about meeting Harmony’s parents.

They flew in for our graduation and to see their daughters. I’m really worried what her dad will say when we finally meet. He knows all about her pregnancy and my first rejection of her. I’m not sure if he knows about our short separation. I hope not. I’ve already got too many strikes against

me. And though I know Harmony will stay with me whether they like me or not, it will be best if we all get along. I keep getting a bad feeling her dad is waiting for me with a shotgun loaded with silver bullets.

A horn honking lets me know my mate has reached her patience limit. Something that has been extremely short since the start of her pregnancy. I finish buttoning my blue collared shirt and spray some cologne to hopefully mask the nervous scent I'm no doubt drowning in. As I make my way to the door I hear the Jaws theme coming from the family room. I stop there to see my cousins looking at me with silent laughter. On the tv is exactly what I thought, Jaws. They have been teasing me all week about Harmony's dad's arrival and I bet they've been sitting here for the past twenty minutes just waiting for my footsteps on the stairs so they could hit the play button. I give them all a dirty look followed by a two finger salute and turn to leave. Their raucous laughter following me all the way out the door.

As I open the truck to get in, I see the amused expression on Harmony's face telling me she knew what they had been planning and found it funny as well. I shake my head and sit down, only to jump back up when something hard pokes my butt. "What the hel- I mean heck was that?" I shout, remembering just in time that Cody is in the back.

"Oh no, my pickles! Hurry. Get off," Harmony shout alarmed.

"Don't worry, babe. It's in a glass jar. I don't think my butt, as solid as it is, will break it," I say exasperated.

"Not the jar but I set my hot cheetos next to it and that will definitely smash."

"Pickles and hot cheetos?"

"Yeah and check under your left butt cheek. My peanut butter should be there too."

I do as she asks and sure enough, I come up with a jar of pickles, a bag of hot cheetos, and another jar of peanut butter. "What happened? Did your aunt need these for lunch or something? What's she making? Sandwiches?" I ask.

"What? My aunt would never make just sandwiches for a get together this big. She's probably making a roast or something. These are for me." She then proceeds to open the cheetos bag, pop a few in her mouth, then have me open the pickle jar so she can take one out and dip it into the peanut butter before taking a gigantic bite and moaning with delight. Any other time I would have found the action of her moaning after sticking a pickle in her mouth a turn on but the combination she just ate has me feeling like I want to hurl.

"Seriously, babe. That can't be good," I say not bothering to hide the disgust on my face.

She gives me a deadly look before saying, "It totally is. Besides, it's what the baby wants." Then repeats the process and takes another bite.

"Yuck, mommy. Even I think that's gross and I ate my own boogers once!" Cody chirps from the back.

"It may seem gross, honey, but I really like it. And don't you ever eat your own boogers again," she scolds while trying to hide a smile then takes another bite of her peanut butter dipped pickle.

I'm really going to have to have a talk with my son or daughter when they get here about their food choices. Until then, I'll just let Harmony enjoy her snack but can't resist asking. "Aren't you worried you'll ruin you appetite for your aunt's lunch?"

"Uh-oh," Cody whispers from the back.

You'd think I'd have learned my lesson, but nope. I walked right into her next question. "Is that your evasive way of trying to say I'm getting fat and eating too much?"

Oh crap. That is the farthest thing from my mind but of course it's the first thing on hers. "No, babe. You know I think you're beautiful and not fat at all. I was just checking to make sure you weren't going to give yourself a stomach ache, eating that so close to lunch."

"Oh, so you're saying my judgment isn't so great? That I don't know what is good for myself?" She asks with a raised brow.

"No, no, no! I wasn't thinking that. I was ju-" I cut myself off at the hint of laughter in her eyes. "You're messing with me, aren't you?"

She breaks into full on laughter, Cody giggling with her. "Sorry, you're just too easy."

"Ha, ha, ha, very funny you clowns. Now what do you say we go meet these new grandparents of yours Cody?"

"Yipee!" he cheers.

I lean over to give Harmony a quick kiss on the cheek, making sure not to get any of her weird concoction on my lips and risk tasting it and start the car.

It's a short drive and when we pull up to the pack house, Megan, Austin, Jared, John, Katherine and two others who I assume are Harmony's parents are sitting around outside on their porch. Her dad is a tall man, about my height, with Harmony's hair color. Her mother is just a little shorter with the same blond hair as her sister Megan but with Harmony's bright green eyes. They share similar features. Small noses and full lips. Even the almond shape of their eyes are the same. Her father shares Megan's eye color. I only know this because they burn into me as I get out to open Harmony's door. They met their daughter half way as I get Cody out of the back. I turn to see Harmony in between them with an arm around both their waists as she says, "Trevor, I'd like you to meet my parents. Daniel and Emily Evans."

Her mother gives me a quick once over before enveloping me in a lavender scented hug. Her father sticks out his hand for a shake, never breaking his glare. Being an Alpha and not having it in my nature to back down to anyone, I look him boldly in the eye and accept his hand receiving a bone crunching shake. His grip would have crushed a normal humans hand. For me it just causes some discomfort but I never once wince or return the pressure. Liking my attitude, he smiles before releasing my hand.

"Glad to finally meet you. Though I would have liked a ring on my daughter's finger before a bun in her oven, you seem like an okay guy."

"Daddy!" Harmony scolds.

"Oh, ignore him. He's just being an old fuddy duddy," Emily assures me.

"I'm not old. I'm only thirty-eight."

"Exactly. Which would make you their age when we had Megan and I don't remember getting a ring on my finger until the month before she was born."

"Damn, almost twenty years together and I still haven't learned how to avoid your traps. I walked right into that one, didn't I?" Dan asks with a smile.

"You sure did but then again, you always do, Dad." Harmony laughs. I'll never get tired of her laugh. It only enhances her beauty.

Seeing the look of pure adoration on my face, Emily says, "Oh look. He even has the same lovesick look on his face that you used to have."

"He still gets that look, mom," Megan adds from where she's standing, curled into Austin's

side.

“So, you’ve been through this already?” I ask Austin through our pack link.

“Yeah. Minus the whole bun in the oven thing but I was told to make sure Megan has her ring before we consider any baking,” he chuckles back.

“You must be Cody. Aren’t you a cutie?” Emily coos, bending to Cody’s level.

“Yeah. I’m five,” Cody informs her.

“Wow, so big. It’s nice to meet you, Cody.”

He studies her for a moment before stepping forward and giving her a huge hug. “It’s nice to meet you too, grandma.”

Everyone holds their breath at Cody’s easy use of the word and awaits Emily’s reaction. I’m worried she’ll be overwhelmed and push him away but she surprises me by scooping him up and saying, “You really are the cutest grandson.”

“Mommy says I’m handsome. More handsome than daddy.” At this I shoot Harmony a questioning look to which she just sticks her tongue out and laughs.

“Well, that certainly is a tough competition.”

“Nonsense. No one’s more handsome than your grandpa,” Dan adds, taking Cody from his wife and tickling him.

It makes me feel good to see how easily they accept him as part of their family. “I think we need to get to know the two new men in Harmony’s life. Let’s head inside,” Emily suggests, looping her left arm with my right, including me in their family as well.

As we head inside, we now have a newly formed family. Everything feels right for me. I have my mate, my son, another child on the way, I’m graduating from high school, and now I have an extended set of parents.

Lunch is what Harmony expected. A pot roast with veggies and some rolls. There’s cheesecake for dessert which my mate didn’t want to share at first until her aunt informed her of the second one she had chilling in the fridge for Harm to take home. It’s amusing for everyone to watch Jared get railed on for commenting on the amount of food Harm put on her plate. He made the mistake of asking her if she was sure she could eat all of it, which led her to a lecture of how comments like that lead teenage girls to believe they should only eat crumbs when around guys and ended up with her teaching him the proper and improper ways to talk to a girl about food. By the time she was done, Jared’s eyes looked glazed over. It was really funny and it took all my strength not to burst out laughing.

Once dessert is finished and all the questions and graduation arrangements are made, Katherine gives Harmony her cheesecake and we say our goodbyes.

Harmony and Cody fall asleep on the way home and I link ahead to have one of the guys meet us outside so they can carry Cody in while I handle Harmony. I also ask them to put her cheesecake in the fridge and leave it untouched or suffer her wrath otherwise. I scoop her up, making sure to grab her cheetos, pickles, and peanut butter, then carry her inside and up to our room. Once there, I gently lay her on the bed and remove her sandals. I make sure to place her snacks on the bedside table so she’ll see them when she wakes up. I strip down to my boxers and join her in bed, pulling the covers over us and bringing her into my arms. As she faces me, she lets out a little burp filled with the scent of pickles and pot roast. I laugh lightly before kissing her on her nose and forcing myself to sleep despite the anxiousness I felt for our doctor’s appointment tomorrow. Meeting her parents went really

well and now we will be finding out if we we're having a little boy or girl. I can't wait.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Double the Surprise

HARMONY

The day is finally here. We are going to find out whether we're having a boy or girl. I only have two months left of my pregnancy. One of the perks of being a werewolf is I won't have to endure a full nine months of aches, pains, and mood swings. On the flip side, I'll have the responsibility of a newborn sooner and though I'm still scared, I'm also excited. I can barely keep still on the reclined seat Dr. Steven's set me up in.

Trevor sits beside me in the exam room. There's an ultrasound machine next to me and a big screen above us so that we will be able to see the images as the doctor scans my belly. I was asked not to pee prior to my visit because it makes it easier to see the baby with a full bladder. I'm about to burst, which adds to my fidgeting, but I can handle it if it means seeing our baby for the first time.

Dr. Stevens pulls down my maternity shorts and tucks a paper napkin in the waist band, informing me it will prevent the ultrasound gel from getting on my clothes. Then she squeezes the gel on my stomach before positioning the scanner just below my belly button and starts moving it around. Trevor and I watch the screen intently and I know he's wondering what the heck we're looking at until the doctor moves a little to the left and angles the scanner and we are able to see a hand. She moves it again and we see another hand, she moves it once more and there's a third hand. Wait, there shouldn't be three hands.

"Oh no. Is my baby deformed doctor?" I ask worried. It doesn't matter to me as long as my baby is healthy. Trevor squeezes my hand supportively and looks at the doctor with the same question in his eyes.

"Hold on a moment. Let me just check a few more angles before I can give you an answer," Dr. Stevens says as she continues to move the scanner around my stomach.

I lie there nervously waiting, Trevor a solid rock beside me. Silently letting me know whatever happens we will handle it together. I already love this baby so much and I hope that whatever the case, he or she isn't at risk health wise.

Finally, after what seems like hours but is only a minute or two, Dr. Steven's finally speaks, "Just as I thought. That's why there was a funny heart beat. Trevor and Harmony, you did see three hands and if you look here you'll see there is a fourth one." She uses the cursor to circle the mentioned area.

"Our baby has FOUR hands?" Trevor asks worriedly.

Dr. Stevens smiles. Does she find this amusing? My hormones beginning to fire up and my mama bear instincts about to kick in. If she thinks this is funny, I'm going to permanently remove that smile from her face. Nobody laughs at my baby. As I start to get up, I'm stopped by Trevors grip on my hand, his eyes asking me not to do anything rash before she's able to explain. Then she says, "I'm sorry. I keep forgetting you're first time parents because of already having Cody. Let me explain. The reason you're seeing four hands is because you are having twins." She then uses the cursor to show us the four sets of hands, arms, feet, and legs that seem to be entwined with one another. It looks as if our babies were holding on to each other. I'm in awe of the picture before me. Trevor's expression mirrors my own. I soak up the blissful and amazed feeling before reality sinks in and the doctors words penetrate my thoughts. She just said twins. As in two babies. Two newborn babies that I will need to push out of my tiny little hole down there. Then I'll have to take two babies home to care for along with our five-year-old son. Trevor and I are going to be parents of three children. I think I'm about to have an anxiety attack when Trevor says, "Hey, babe. Look at me. It's going to be okay. Yeah, it's a lot to handle but we can do it. We're lucky enough to have a great family and pack. I'm sure they'll help us as much as we need it."

"I know that, Trevor, but I don't want to always have to rely on others. We're their parents and we can't expect everyone else to raise our kids," I say, voicing my fears.

"They won't. They'll just be there to help when we get overwhelmed. We can do this, honey. I know we can," he says with assurance and a happy smile on his face.

I know it will be tough but seeing Trevor's determination and knowing everyone will be there for us allows me to release the pressure that started building in my chest. "So, I'm guessing by the huge smile on your face, you're happy we're having twins?"

"One hundred percent. I can't believe you're carrying two of my pups. You're amazing," he says while kissing the hand he's still holding.

"I hope you still think I'm amazing when I'm calling you every bad name in the dictionary while I push them out. It was bad enough thinking of pushing one out. Now I have to push two? That's pure craziness!" I shout.

"You can do it, babe. I know you're strong enough. I promise I'll be holding your hand the whole time."

"Hmmm, based on some of the stories I've heard, I'm thinking you're hand isn't the part of your body I'll be holding on to. I have to make sure you're there with me all the way, feeling every contraction I feel," I inform him.

Catching what I mean, Trevor pales slightly before saying, "I better make sure I wear a cup on that day."

This causes Dr. Stevens to chuckle before asking if we'd like to know the sex of the babies.

We both nod eagerly as she once again moves the scanner around my stomach, trying to get the babies into a separate position so she will have a clear shot of their goods. It takes some doing but they eventually untangle themselves enough that she can see what they are sporting. "Congratulations, you are going to have twin boys."

"They're both boys?" Trevor asks excitedly.

"From what I'm able to see, yes they are," she replies.

Trevor then lets go of my hand as he jumps up with a whoop. He turns and picks me up in his arms, not caring that the gel is getting all over his shirt. "Thank you so much, baby. For making me the

proud daddy of three little boys.”

I can't help but share his enjoyment.

I bask in our happiness for awhile then realize my bladder has reached it's limit. “Doctor, are we all done here?”

“Yes, just let me clean up your stomach.”

“No need. Just direct Trevor to the nearest bathroom so he can drop me there. I'm seriously about to wet my pants here.”

TREVOR

When I saw the extra hand on the monitor, I was worried. I never expected what the doctor revealed to us. Though now I'm on cloud nine. We leave the office shortly after Harmony's mad dash to the bathroom. Anxious to get back and share the news at the barbeque our family is having to celebrate. I know Harmony is just as happy as I am though she still had some worries. I do, too. It's going to be challenging but nothing we can't handle. I look over at my mate, so amazed that she's a part of my life. I catch a thoughtful expression cross her features. “What are you thinking about?”

“I just wondered what's going to happen when the time comes to pass leadership of the pack to your first born son. I hope it won't cause a rift between the boys,” Harmony muses.

“We'll just raise them to know the ways of the pack and not treat any of them differently. They'll all share the same responsibilities, regardless of future pack roles.”

“I know. It's just that if they share the same ego as you and the rest of the men in your family, things could get tricky,” she teases with a smirk.

“Very funny.”

“I think so,” she said as she laughs.

We pull into the garage and go around back. Everyone is there. Cody, Jeremy and the guys, Austin and Megan, Jared and his friends, Harmony's aunt and uncle, as well as her parents. All the important people are here for us to share the news with first and later the rest of our pack will be joining us in the celebration.

The grill is going as the guys hang around talking. It's strange seeing our packs mixed but it seems right. The women are busy setting up the food table when Megan turns and notices us. She immediately drops what she's doing to rush over to Harmony, curiosity bright in her eyes.

“Okay. Tell me first before any one else notices you're here,” she coaxes.

Harmony laughs. “Sorry, sis. I love you but do you know the drama that will cause if I do?”

Megan frowns but accepts that and calls out to everyone. “Hey guys, since my sister refuses to tell me whether I'm getting a niece or nephew without the rest of you hearing it with me. Hurry up and get over here cause I'm dying to know.” I guess lack of patience is more an Evan's girl thing rather than a pregnancy thing.

“No need. We'll come to you,” Harmony says to everyone.

“That's gonna take too long. Trevor, do you think you can carry her there? The suspense is killing me and I really don't think I'll be able to wait while she waddles to the rest of the gang,” Megan grumbles.

I hide my laugh with a cough before picking Harmony up. She hits Megan in the arm causing her to grunt. “Ouch, well it's the truth,” Megan admits.

There are quiet chuckles throughout the group as we make our way there. “Alright, cousin.

Tell us whether we're gonna be dealing with a mini Harmony or a mini Trevor. Although, I'm not sure which is worse," Jared jokes.

"As long as it's not a pregnant mini Harmony, I think we're all safe," Jeremy offers causing everyone to laugh, even Harmony herself.

Emily sets down a lawn chair for Harmony and I place her on it. Sitting next to her, we face the group of eager faces. "So, you're all wondering what we're having, aren't you?"

"No shit Sherlock," Jeremy shouts, then leans towards Nate to mock whisper. "Let's hope the kid inherits his mama's smarts because the daddy is seriously lacking." They share a laugh. The two of them together is not going to be a good combination.

"Shut up, Jeremy. Anyways, we have some surprising news for you." I look at Harmony and I see her nod to signal that I could go ahead and spill. "The doctor found something while doing the ultrasound."

"Oh no, is the baby okay?" Emily asks worriedly.

"Yeah, the baby is fine. Both babies are very healthy in fact."

"Thank goodness. For a minute there I wa-, wait, what? Babies, as in plural? More than one?" she asks confused.

"No freaking way. You guys are having twins?" Megan squeals in excitement.

"Yup, we are," Harmony says proudly causing an eruption of cheers and congratulations. After everyone calms down, John asks, "So, was the doctor able to tell the sex of the babies?"

This time I let Harmony share. "Yes, she did." She motions for Cody to come and sit with us. Once he's on my lap, she grabs his hand and says, "You little man, are going to be the big brother of two little boys." More cheers erupt, high fives are given, and hugs are shared amongst the ladies. Cody is silent as he stares at Harmony's stomach. "What's the matter, buddy?"

"So, you have two babies in your tummy?" he asks.

"Yeah, I do."

"It's not a cow then?" he asks confused, causing Jeremy to spit out the ice tea he just drank all over Nate's shirt.

"What's your deal, man?" Nate grumbles, pulling his now wet shirt away from his body.

Ignoring their antics, I ask Cody, "Why would you think that mommy has a cow in her stomach?"

I notice Jeremy slowly trying to make an escape.

"Because when Uncle Nate was asking Uncle Jeremy if mommy was still acting crazy, he said she wasn't that bad anymore but she was getting so big she must be having a cow. I thought mommy was having a baby not a cow," Cody says so confused. By this point Jeremy is halfway to the house, Nate not too far behind him. Before I can explain things to Cody, Harmony is up and out of her seat. The guys start to make a break for it, but in a flash Harmony shifts into her wolf, shredding her clothes in the process and chases them, pouncing on Nate first, who gets a hold of Jeremy's leg on the way down bringing him down as well. Quicker than they can scream mercy, Harmony lies her heavily pregnant wolf over the two of them so that they can't move, pinning them face down on the ground. They can shift but won't try in case they hurt Harmony, so they just lie there ready to take their punishment.

Laughter spreads throughout our group at the sight before us. Harmony's beautifully rounded brown wolf is lying across the backs of Jeremy and Nate while they're practically eating dirt. Only

being able to communicate with Jeremy, Harmony asks for my help relaying her message.

“Can you tell them that the next time they refer to me as being crazy and big, not only will I tackle them down but I’ll also step on their balls with my big wolf paws until they scream for mercy.”

I laugh before repeating her words, verbatim, to them.

Not being able to talk with their mouths full of grass and dirt, they nod to show they get her message loud and clear. Harmony grunts one last growl before slowly getting up and off of them. They roll over almost in sync with identical groans. probably regretting they said anything with Cody in close range.

I know I’ll need to get Harmony some clothes so I pick Cody up and let everyone know we’ll be back. Then I motion for Harmony to follow me inside. Once in our room, I set Cody on the bed letting him know I’ll explain it to him, then go to grab a simple maternity dress for Harmony. She takes it in her mouth and goes to the bathroom to shift and change. When she's done, she joins us on the bed with a satisfied smile. She's most likely remembering Jeremy and Nate’s faces when she pounced on them.

We direct our attention to Cody, and I begin to let him know there's no cow and that mommy will be having two baby boys for him to help take care of. He's happy to know we followed his wishes and aren't giving him a girl. As soon as Harmony's ready, I hope she'll want to try for a little girl too.

Things are clear now so we rejoin our family. Soon the rest of our pack arrives and the good news is shared with them. They're all extremely happy to know the Alpha bloodline will soon have heirs to carry the pack on. It's a great night filled with fun and laughter. Our next step will be graduation then we can start the rest of our lives. Harmony only has two months left in her pregnancy and we’ll be meeting our sons. Thinking of that reminds me of Harmony’s warning at the doctor’s office and I shudder. I can’t forget to buy a protective cup for my family jewels or else I might not be able to have any more kids after the birth of my twins.

CHAPTER THIRTY ONE

Goodbye High School

HARMONY

The morning of graduation dawns bright and sunny, which is a good thing since the ceremony is being held outside on our school's field. Trevor and I get dressed in our black cap and gowns, and meet with the rest of our classmates in our auditorium where we're all supposed to gather to get in our assigned places before heading out to the field. When we get to Jared and the guys, they all have mischievous looks on their faces, as if they're up to no good, which I'm sure they are. I'm too excited to finally be getting out of high school, that I don't dwell too long on just what that is.

"Okay, babe. I gotta get down to my letter group. Will you be okay?" Trevor asks.

"Yeah. You're only a few letters down, Trevor. It's not as if you're at the very back or anything. If I need you, all I'll have to do is lean forward and I can see you. I'm not due for another three weeks, so stop worrying," I say, exasperated. Ever since we found out we are having twins, he's become even more protective than normal. I had to fight him just to let me walk up the steps when it's time to receive my diploma. He insists that he should carry me. He's cute but annoying.

"Don't worry, Trevor. I promise to keep a close eye on her," Shelly promises. Though we haven't talked all that much since my first day here due to my constant mate drama, we reconnected during our commencement rehearsals. Her last name is Everett, placing her right next to me in line. I realize I miss girl chat. I always have my sister, but it's nice having someone separate from my family and pack to talk with.

Trevor studies us both apprehensively before, I give him a don't- you-dare-give-me-a-hard-time-on-this-or-I'll-make-you-regret-it look, and he thanks Shelly. He kiss me sweetly on the lips and stomach before heading to his seat.

"He is so whipped. I never thought I'd see the day that mean, man whore Trevor would walk around like a love sick puppy all the time," Shelly states with shock written on her face.

I giggle, remembering how he was when we first met, and the horror stories I had heard about him. He really has changed his attitude, and I don't doubt I have the same love sick look on my face as well.

"What can I say? I keep my man mighty satisfied and well loved," I brag shamelessly, so happy with my life, I think I might burst.

"Ummm, over share. I know we're girls and everything, but could you keep the details to

yourself before I get visuals? Unless you want to describe that sexy body of his, then please continue. I would love to know the details of all that,” she teases.

“Hey, stop ogling my future husband!” I shout in mock outrage.

We both laugh before our principal instructs us to take our seats and be ready to file out. As we walk toward the field, we can see our families in the bleachers anxious for the ceremony to begin. There are balloons and signs with our pictures on them, so we can find them once we're done. As we sit, I feel a little pain shoot from my back to my front as my stomach tightens. It has been happening every once in awhile over the past few days, but the books I read said it was normal, something called Braxton hicks. It is my body's way of preparing for birth. This one is a little sharper than usual, but it must be due to all the walking I've had to do to rehearse for this day.

Speeches are made, scholarships are announced, and the valedictorian gives an emotional speech about starting our journey through adulthood, and leaving the tracks of our teenage years behind. I cry, of course. Darn hormones. It causes Trevor to glance my way nervously, but Shelly waves him off, mouthing the words hormones to him and he relaxes as if that explains everything. I swear. They should just rename me that, with how much they blame my every emotional reaction on it.

It's finally time to go up and receive our diplomas. As I get up, I feel another painful twinge that actually causes me to stumble a bit, but Shelly is right there to steady me. Luckily, Trevor missed it, or he would have been at my side in an instant.

“Are you okay? Do you want me to call Trevor?” she asks.

“No, it's fine. That one was just a little more painful than they usually are. Don't worry him. I walked all on my own to get to this point. I want to take the final steps the same way.”

“Alright, but lean on me if you need to.”

“Thanks, Shelly.”

She smiles at me, and we head toward the stage.

“Harmony Evans,” the vice principal calls my name and I make my way up to the stage, hearing the cheers of my family and friends as I shake the principals hand and accept my diploma. Funny how twelve years of school brought me to this one final walk to receive a piece of paper in a fancy folder. If someone told me when I was five that this is what I was working toward, I probably would've said thanks, but no thanks. I can get my own paper. That sounds exactly like something Cody would say. I better make sure to make a big scene about receiving this, since I know he's watching from the crowd. I walk to the other end of the stage and hold my diploma above my head as if showing off a giant trophy, and find Cody sitting atop Jeremy's shoulders, clapping his hands with a huge smile on his face. I am so in love with that little boy. We maneuver our way back to our seats, but I jump up to cheer when Trevor is called, causing him to wink at me. Then four more times for Jared, Nate, Brad, and Jace. With all the jumping, my back and stomach are starting to feel a little more uncomfortable, so I decide to try and relax until the pain subsides.

After the last name is called, and the closing speeches are being made, we hear a small commotion in the back, and people are starting to turn and look. Just before our principal advises us to move our tassels from the right to the left, four familiar bodies shoot up from their various seats and run to the stage. We all stare at Jared, Nate, Brad, and Jace with shock and confusion as they face us. Then, they open and drop their gowns to reveal nothing but their birthday suits and streak out into the crowd throwing their caps in the air on the way. Our entire graduating class and some family members break out in laughter, while our principal tries to calm everyone down. I think I see a slight

smirk on her face as she does it, though. I'm stunned silent. Hot or not, it's the equivalent of seeing your brother naked and it's horrifying. Shelly has a disgruntled look on her face.

“What’s wrong?” I ask.

“They could’ve at least stood there long enough for me to snap a picture with my phone. What a tease,” she grumbles.

Now I burst out laughing. This girl is just too much.

After everyone calms down, we move our tassels and are announced as the newest graduating class before everyone throws their caps in the air and exchanges hugs and handshakes.

I meet Trevor in the crowd and share a very passionate kiss with him before he takes my hand and leads me to our families. Once there, Cody is the first to spot us, being he's a head or two above everyone else while still on Jeremy's shoulders. He instructs Jeremy to put him down, and he runs over to us, jumping into Trevor's arms.

“Congrats!” he shouts.

“Thank you so much,” I say, kissing his little cheek.

My mom and dad come over to us and share their congratulations. Everyone follows and does the same. It feels as if a gigantic milestone has been reached, and I'm excited for what's to come. Speaking of something being gigantic, so is my sudden urge to pee. I turn to let Trevor know just as his aunt and uncle, Jeremy, Craig, and Greg's parents join us. Not wanting to disturb their mini reunion, I let my sister know I'm heading to the restroom real quick. She's about to ask if I want company when I give her a look similar to the one I gave Trevor earlier and she backs off, promising to let Trevor know where I went.

As I make my way there, the pains start up once again. I figure it's probably the strain of having to pee so I speed up a little in a hurry for release. Once I'm done, there's a little less pressure, but the pain has increased in my stomach. I finally accept that it's probably more than simple Braxton hicks and head out the restroom door to find Trevor.

As I swing the door open, two things occur. I bump into a hard body and then clear fluid starts gushing out of places they shouldn't be gushing out of when I already emptied my bladder.

“I think my water just broke,” I say shocked.

A familiar voice that I hadn't expected to hear again says, “Is that what just soaked my new jordans?”

I look up and am shocked once again as one name escapes my lips.

“Aiden?”

CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

Delivery Ready

TREVOR

I can't believe my aunt and uncle flew all the way down from Vegas for my graduation. It's nice to see them, and I'm about to introduce them to my mate when I notice she's no longer next to me.

"She had another bladder attack. She didn't want company," Megan informs me.

"She went by herself?" I ask panicked.

"It's only at the other end of the field, Trevor. She'll be okay."

"What if she falls or someone bumps into her? I have to go find her."

"It's okay, daddy. That man is carrying mommy," Cody says pointing in the direction of the restrooms.

I turn to see what man he's referring to when my blood begins to boil. What the hell is he doing here? And why does he have Harmony in his arms? My eyes flash as my wolf yearns to get out and rip him away from her.

"Cody, go with Aunt Megan," I say, handing him over to Megan, and rushing to meet Aiden, not caring who I push out of the way. Jeremy and the others follow right behind me.

As we reach the pair, he quickly sets Harmony down and raises his hands in surrender. "I'm not here to cause trouble. I followed Harmony to the restroom so that I could apologize to her privately. She bumped into me on the way out, and her water broke on my shoes."

"Yeah right, you're not here to cause trouble? Why am I not convinced? All you did from the beginning was cause trouble," I say, gently pulling Harmony behind me as I take an aggressive stance, ready for another fight.

"Trevor, he's telling the truth," Harmony soothes, trying to pull me to face her.

"I still don't trust him not to try and take you from me. I won't let that happen."

"Trevor, we should really get going," Harmony tries again, but I'm too consumed with anger that he had the nerve to put his hands on her again after I specifically told him to stay away. Intended apology or not, he went against my instructions.

"You shouldn't have touched her. I warned you about that," I say, ready to rip him apart.

"I already explained why. You really should start heading to the pack doctor," Aiden advises.

What is he talking about? Why do I need to go to the doctor? He's the one who will be needing medical attention when I'm done with him. I take a step forward, but Harmony tugs on my arm again.

“Babe, he’s right. We need to get going.”

I tear my gaze away from Aiden to look at Harmony. The strain in her voice is breaking down my anger. She looks a little pained. “What did you do to her?” I ask, turning back to Aiden.

“Not me, dude. What she’s going through is completely your fault. Like I said, when she bumped into me her water broke. She’s about to have your baby.”

“Babies, actually. We’re having twins,” Harmony says proudly.

“Congratulations,” Aiden replies sincerely.

“What? Oh shit! We gotta get to Dr. Stevens. Hurry, Jeremy. Go get the car and bring it right up to the field. I’ll carry her there,” I say in a rush placing my arms at her back and under her knees, before lifting while Jeremy runs off to do as I ordered.

“Trevor, relax,” Harmony says calmly.

“Why are you so calm? We need to get moving. No arguments.” I’m seriously freaking out here. What if I don’t get there in time? I can’t deliver these babies myself.

“Honey, there’s time. My contractions aren’t that close together yet. Aiden helped me time it on the way here. They’re still about ten minutes apart.”

“They’re that close together? Oh crap, maybe I should just run you there. No. All the bumping around might speed things up. Shit, let’s just get to the car.”

She laughs at me. I’m seriously freaking out, and she’s laughing like I told the world’s funniest joke. I stare at her in shock. Seeing the panic in my face, she smiles sweetly and says, “Trevor, it really is okay. I’ve been reading about this, and though things will start to speed up now that my waters broken, we have time to get to the doctor. It’ll be okay but we won’t get there safely if you’re panicking like this.”

I look closely at her face and though she’s feeling some pain, she doesn’t look too stressed. I relax a little. “Sorry. I just don’t want anything to go wrong. I love you so much, and though I love my boys, your safety comes first.”

She cups my cheek in her hand. “I know, honey. But I’m fine. It’s uncomfortable right now, but it’s nothing I can’t handle.”

“Alright, let’s go meet Jeremy. Oh wait, we were supposed to give Megan and Austin a ride to the restaurant for our graduation dinner,” I remember.

“Forget the dinner. We’re all going to Dr. Steven’s clinic with you. We wouldn’t miss this for the world,” Megan announces, everyone nodding in agreement.

“Is it alright if I come too?” Aiden asks.

I’m about to say hell no when Harmony answers, “Sure. It would be nice to have you there. Later, you can tell me all about your new mate.”

“A what?”

“Thanks,” Aiden and I both say at the same time.

“Turns out Aiden has his own second mate. He found her after returning home. She’s the one who suggested he come back here and apologize for everything he’s done. She would have been here too, but she thought it was best if he get closure on his own. We did a lot of talking on the way from the restroom,” Harmony fills me in.

I’m relieved to know that I won’t be having a fight on my hands. “Well, in that case, I guess you could come too.” I give in. Besides, it wouldn’t be a good idea to go against Harmony right now.

“I could give Megan and Austin a ride, that way Cody can ride with you guys,” Aiden offers.

I check to see if said party is alright with that, and although Austin has a bit of a glare on his face, Megan nods in agreement. That's going to be an awkward car ride.

We all finally reach the car. It's a good thing we decided to take Jeremy's car today instead of my truck, since it's been harder for Harmony to get in and out of it lately. I squeeze in the back, placing Harmony between Cody and myself. There's no way I was riding in the front while she suffered in the back. I promised I would be there every step of the way, and I'm determined to start now. "Let's go, Jeremy."

I see Cody staring at Harmony worriedly. "It's okay, buddy. The babies are just shaking mommy's stomach up. They're getting ready to come out and meet their big brother," I assure him. He relaxes and looks out the window, getting over it as easily as young kids do.

"Sure thing, cousin. Fasten your seat belts and let's see how fast this baby can go," he jokes.

"You do remember Cody and I were in an accident not too long ago, right?" Harmony asks through gritted teeth as a stronger contraction wracks her body.

Jeremy's apology is drowned out by my sudden shout as Harmony grips the closest thing to her in an effort to help ride out her contraction. Unluckily for me, her hand was resting on my thigh when it hit, leaving my manhood vulnerable to her torture.

Through the ringing in my ears and stars in my eyes, I see Jeremy wince and smile in the mirror as he teases. "Yikes, Trevor, I guess not expecting Harmony to go into labor so soon, you didn't get a chance to put on your cup."

Gee, you think? I can't speak through the pain but if I could I would've told Jeremy where he could shove it.

"Sorry, babe." Harmony apologizes. "I was just kidding when I threatened you, but the pain hit so suddenly. It was a knee jerk reaction."

All I can do is nod to let her know I heard what she said. When feeling once again returns to the rest of my body, I make sure to move my hands to hold hers. I don't think I can survive the next contraction if I didn't. "Oh man, my brothers are being naughty. I'm gonna scold them when they come out," Cody says, meaning business.

"It's not their fault sweetie," Harmony reassures him.

He doesn't seem convinced but he lets it go. We're almost to the clinic when another contraction hits. This time I'm prepared, allowing Harmony to grip my hands and wishing I could feel the pain for her. When we arrive, the doctor is waiting for us at the entrance. Jeremy gets Cody out while I carry Harmony. We're set up in a room quickly and the nurse gives Harmony a gown to change into before leaving the room. Harmony does as she's asked, and I have to help her through another contraction as she does so. Once in bed, the nurse hooks her up to a monitor that lets us hear the heartbeats, then starts to examine Harmony under her gown.

"Hmmm, it seems you're already dilated to an eight. It shouldn't be too long now," she informs us.

"An eight? Isn't that high?" I ask, about to have another freak out.

"Yess Once she reaches ten, we'll be ready to catch those babies."

"Catch, you mean, they're gonna come shooting out of her?" I ask totally horrified.

The nurse smiles apologetically. "Sorry, hun. I was just kidding with you. I didn't mean literally catch. They won't shoot out. They'll actually be coming out gradually, but your mate may wish for them to shoot out once the pain gets more intense. She's too far along for an epidural, so

she's going to feel every little thing.”

That worries me. I eye Harmony in the bed and notice that standing next to her, she's at the same level as my still pained member. I quickly sit in the chair next to the bed. Catching my sudden movement, Harmony smiles before bracing herself for the next contraction. I give her my hand before she can find something else and talk her through it. Dr. Stevens comes in and I ask, “Doctor, is this okay? She's not supposed to deliver so soon.”

“It's alright. She's carrying twins so this tends to happen with multiple births. Being that werewolves pregnancies advance faster than humans, the babies are already developed enough to come out safely. Everything is going according to plan. In a matter of hours, you'll be meeting your new sons.”

Harmony and I share matching smiles. Our boys are about to make their grand entrance. And we're ready to welcome them.

CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

Twin Surprises

“Breathe, baby.”

“I’m trying. Every time a contraction hits, I can’t think past the pain. Shouldn’t this be easier being that I’m a werewolf?” Harmony grumbles. She has been pushing for twenty minutes already, and we’re getting closer to the arrival of our first child, but the pain she’s going through is killing the both of us. I hate seeing her in so much pain. I want to bear it for her. I originally wanted a big family, but if this is what she’ll go through every time, then I’ll be happy with the three that we already have.

“Sorry sweetie, but it doesn’t matter if you’re human or animal. Birth is a painful process and you’re doing great. The head is crowning. Just a few more pushes,” Dr. Steven’s assures Harmony.

I brush her hair back from her sweaty face. The doctor is right. Harmony is doing great, and she hasn’t even grabbed my balls once.

“Okay, Harmony. We’re almost there. When the next contraction hits, give me one big push,” Dr. Stevens instructs.

Harmony looks at her exasperated. “Every single push I’ve been giving you has been a big one. If I push any harder, my whole stomach is going to come out with the baby.”

Sensing her frustration, I lean close to her ear while still brushing her hair back. “You can do this, baby. You’re amazing. I’m here for you every step of the way.”

She stares into my eyes and they mirror the love I have for her. She turns back to the doctor and pushes with all her might as the contraction hits her. I watch in awe as I see a tiny head full of black hair peek out, then recede once again. “Holy crap, I just saw the head. Keep it up, babe. He’s on his way out.”

She takes a few breaths and pushes again, this time the whole head appears. After a couple more tries the room fills with the most beautiful wailing sound I ever heard and my first son, Hunter Hanes, is born. The doctor lets me cut the cord and after her assistant helps clean and weigh him, he’s put under the warmer as my second son starts charging right after his brother. Another head full of dark black hair begins emerging and just as quick as his brother, my second son is born.

“Umm, it seems there was a little bit of a mix up with the ultrasound,” Dr. Stevens says surprised.

Tired and a little alarmed, Harmony asks, “What’s wrong, is he okay?”

“Oh, the baby is fine. It’s just that he is actually a she. Trevor and Harmony, meet your daughter,” She says holding the baby closer as we examine her baby parts. Sure enough, our second twin is not a boy, but a girl.

Harmony's eyes water as the tears fall, and I notice my eyes getting a little blurry themselves. We're blessed with a son and a daughter. I kiss Harmony on the lips and it's filled with love, trust, and appreciation. She just brought my children into the world. And besides her and Cody, they're the best things in my life. After the doctor and assistant finish tending to Harmony and the babies, they bring them to us and leave the room to give us some privacy.

I hold Hunter, and Harmony holds our daughter. "We haven't planned on a little girl. Do you have an idea of what you'd like to name her?" I ask while staring intently at my children, so filled with happiness.

"Well, we were going to name our second son Hayden. Why don't we stick with the H's and name her Hayley? Do you like that?"

I think about it before running it through my lips. "Hayley. I like it," I say with kiss her on her forehead.

"We'll have to wait till their natural eye colors show, but they look like mini replicas of you already," Harmony says admiring our children's features.

I study them closely and see that she's right. They have the same skin color as I do, but their features are softer, more like Harmony. My children are beautiful just like their mother. At that moment, Hunter starts wailing, causing Hayley to join him.

"What's the matter with them?" I ask.

The doctor returns. "They're probably ready for their first feeding. Do you think you're up to it, Harmony?"

"Sure. What do I do?"

For the next few minutes, the doctor helps Harmony nurse our twins, one after the other. They both take to it like champs, Hunter going back for seconds.

"I guess he has your appetite as well," Harmony jokes.

I want to stay like this all day, just watching my mate care for my pups, but Harmony reminds me, "You better get out there and let everyone know there's another surprise for them. Let me know Cody's reaction."

"I almost forgot about them. Alright, but you know once I do, they're going to want to charge in here to meet them and see you."

"It's okay. Just stagger the visits so the babies and I don't get overwhelmed."

"Alright, be right back. Hunter and Hayley, don't do anything too exciting while I'm gone. I don't want to miss it."

Harmony laughs. "I promise if they start to say their first words, I'll cover their mouths to stop them."

I spare a very funny look, kiss her once more, and head out to the waiting room. As soon as I push through the doors, the huge group of our family and friends stands up asking a million questions.

"Are the babies here?"

"How's Harmony doing?"

"Do you need ice for your balls?"

"Hold on everyone. Mommy and babies are doing fine, but something did happen during the delivery," I shout so I can be heard above the questions.

Megan rushes to my side. "What? Did something go wrong?"

"No, no, nothing like that. It just turns out that our second born son is actually our daughter.

Harmony and I are the proud parents of a little boy and girl. Cody, you have a brother and a sister,” I inform them, kneeling down to say the last part to Cody.

He scrunches up his face. “But I thought it was two brothers.”

“Yeah, well the doctor mixed it up, so now you have one brother and one sister.”

His face scrunches up even more. “Girls are yucky!”

“I know you feel that way, but she’s going to need her big brother to protect her. Your sister won’t seem yucky to you like other girls. Would you like to meet her?”

After thinking about it, he nods his head. I pick him up. “Okay guys, you can all meet the twins in a little, but first, let me introduce them to their big brother.”

I carry Cody into the room. When we enter, Harmony is just covering herself up from feeding Hunter. Both babies are lying side by side on the bed, sleeping peacefully, now that they're full. I place Cody on the bed next to Harmony and he gives her a hug before turning to inspect his brother and sister. He studies them for a moment, his eyes darting back and forth between the babies. Then he looks at Harmony and asks, “Do I have to help change their diapers when they poop?”

“You don’t have to, but you can if you want to.”

“No way, that’s gross!” He looks them over again, and suddenly a little milk comes out of Hayley’s mouth. “What is that?” Cody asks curiously.

“It’s just a little milk. That will happen sometimes,” Harmony answers.

“That . . . is so cool. I think I like my baby sister. Will my baby brother do cool stuff like that too?”

“He probably will,” Harmony replies amused.

“Really? I guess having a baby brother and sister won’t be so bad. Can I get them to do it whenever I ask?”

“Sorry, bud. It doesn’t work like that. Why do you ask?” I wonder.

“I was gonna tell them to do it on Uncle Jeremy. That would be so funny.”

Harmony and I laugh. Our son is already a little jokester in the making. “Well, you can’t make them do it when you want, but I’ll promise to have Uncle Jeremy help me burp one of them every chance I get, then it’s bound to happen eventually.”

“Yes!” he cheers, waking Hayley up.

“Oops, sorry mommy.”

“It’s okay, honey. Now that we have babies coming home, we’ll just have to work on our noise when they're sleeping. Do you want to hold her now that she’s awake?”

“Um, will she poop or do that milk thing on me?”

“No, I think you’re safe.”

“Okay.”

Harmony puts her arm around his body as I lift Hayley into his arms, showing him how to cradle her. She fits perfectly within the crook of his arm, and though not able to really focus on his face, she looks up at him. He stares back at her with a smile on his face, and I see Harmony tearing again at the sight. I pick Hunter up and sit on the other side of her. She looks into my eyes and says, “I love you, Trevor. Thank you for giving me the happily ever after I never thought I would get.”

“I love you too, Harmony. Thank you for giving me the second chance I never imagined possible,” I reply then kiss her as passionately as I can with three kids between us.

Just then, Cody informs Hayley, “Don’t worry about them. Daddy’s just checking mommy’s

temperature. He does it a lot. I guess that's why mommy never gets sick."

Our laughter once again fills the room, happy in our little family circle that's quickly interrupted by our anxious family. I put Hunter in Harmony's hands as I get up to open the door and let the stampede in.

They *oooh* and *aaah* over the babies and congratulate us. I take it all in from my position next to Harmony. My heart is full of love for my mate and children. I'm happier than I ever thought possible. As various members of our family all fight for their turn to hold the babies, Jeremy finally gets his turn with Hunter. He had just put Hunter on his shoulder when the baby let out a little burp and some spit up came with it. Jeremy's face takes on a look of horror. "What the hel- I mean heck was that?"

Everyone laughs so hard at his expression, but it's Cody who answers, "That was my brother being cool." It takes awhile for us all to calm down after that.

* * *

HARMONY

As the laughter dies down, the fatigue starts to hit me. Trevor being the ever attentive mate, notices and tells everyone that the babies and I need our rest. It's decided that they're all going out together for a double celebration dinner. For our graduation and birth of the twins. Cody will head back home with Megan and the guys.

As everyone leaves, Aiden stays behind. "I just wanted to apologize to you both once more before I head back home. I really am sorry for rejecting you, Harmony, but I'm happy to see that it all worked out in the end. Thank you Trevor for allowing me to keep my pack with my mate beside me. I promise to make the most of it everyday."

We both accept his apology and thanks. He shakes Trevor's hand and gives me a quick kiss on the cheek before saying, "Congratulations on your babies and when you guys are ready, bring them by to see some of your old pack members. You will all always be welcome in my territory." Then he's off to follow the others.

Once he leaves and the babies are put in their basinetts, Trevor climbs into the bed next to me, holding me from the back. He hugs me in silence for a moment before saying, "I'm so happy you came into my life, Harmony."

I turn over so that I can face him, our faces inches apart. "I'm happy you came into mine too. Although you gave me such a hard time in the beginning," I tease.

He grimaces before apologizing. "I know. I'm sorry for being so stupid when we met. I didn't know then but I know now that you're the best thing to ever happen to me. I know you're tired but there is something I need to do. Could you sit up for a moment?"

I nod and he gets out of the bed, before helping me to sit up with my legs hanging over the edge.

He seems a little nervous as he sticks his hand in his pocket. "I know we're still young but we're mates and we love each other. When werewolves mate, they mate for life. That's exactly how I feel. You, my children, and my pack are my life for now and forever. You've given me the gift of your love and our beautiful children. Now I want to ask you if you would give me one more thing forever."

With that said, he gets down on one knee, removing a small black velvet box from his pocket, opening it and holding it out to me. “Harmony Evans, will you marry me?”

I try to see the ring through the tears in my eyes. It's a beautiful gold plumeria with a one carat diamond in the center. It is so beautiful and different from the usual engagement rings. It's unique, just like the relationship between the two of us. I look from the ring to my mate, and feel my heart fill to bursting. This silly Alpha, looking so unsure, as if he's worried I'll say no.

I touch his cheek with my hand, tears once again falling down mine. “You gave me everything I never thought I would have after Aiden. You are my second chance mate but in my heart, you're the only mate that was made for me. There's no one else I would want to share my forever with but you. Yes, I will most definitely marry you.”

The smile that lights his face could rival the sun. He slides the ring onto my finger, stands, and picks me up in his arms before sitting on the bed with me in his lap. We share a kiss full of love, happiness, and our mixed tears. Who would have thought that a rejection could turn into a happily ever after? Thankfully, that's exactly what happened for us.

EPILOGUE

Five years later...

“Mom, she’s doing it again.” Ten year old Cody shouts from the family room.

“Doing what, Cody?” Harmony asks while resting a hand on her baby bump.

“She’s teasing me again.”

“Hayley, leave your brother alone.”

“But mama, he was with Casey again. I saw 'em by the lake. I think he was going to take her temperature,” Five year old Hayley shouts back.

Harmony curses herself for ever coming up with such a dumb excuse for kissing. Then Hayley’s words register. “What do you mean he was going to take her temperature?”

Just then, a black haired, green eyed fireball bursts through the kitchen door followed by an upset Cody. “Yeah mama, I saw them. They were sitting on the dock with their feet in the water, and Cody got closer to Casey. He was looking at her all funny. Then he moved close like daddy does with you. He was gonna take her temperature, mommy. I just know it.”

“I was not. She thought she had an eyelash in her eye. I was going to help her get it out.”

“Nu-uh.”

“Uh-huh.”

“Nu-uh.”

“Uh—”

“Okay enough,” Harmony says, exasperated.

Hearing her use her mommy voice, they both stay quiet. Just then, a laughing Hunter runs into the room with Trevor close behind. They both stop when they notice the look on Harmony’s face.

“Uh-oh, somebody’s in trouble,” Hunter sings, his green eyes the same shade as his sister and mother, flashing with excitement.

“Looks that way doesn’t it? What happened?” Trevor asks, coming to stand beside Harmony and putting an arm around her waist.

“Well, it seems Hayley was up to her spying again and caught Cody about to do something he knows he shouldn’t with Casey,” Harmony informs him.

“Really?”

“I wasn’t. I was looking for an eyelash.”

“I’ve used that excuse once or twice, and I was way older than you,” Trevor states.

“Oh really?” Harmony asks with a raised brow.

Trevor, knowing to tread carefully, with Harmony's pregnancy hormones just below the surface, says, "That was way before you, honey. When I was just a young boy, a little older than Cody. I would gladly help check you for any stray eyelashes if you want."

She smiles at his obvious attempt to smooth things over before furrowing her brows and asking, "So it started that young for you? The interest in girls?"

"Afraid so. It's the wolf in us. Brings the curiosity along much younger."

"Girls are yucky," Hunter offers.

"We are not. Boys are. They're stink, and they eat their own boogers," Hayley argues.

"We do not."

"Do too."

"Do not."

"Do too."

"Enough," Harmony once again says, gaining control in the room. She mumbles for only Trevor to hear, "Remember when Cody used to feel that way? We better enjoy it while it lasts because with how much Hunter is the exact replica of you, we've probably only got a couple years left before girls aren't so yucky anymore." Then she turns to the kids. "Hayley, how many times have I told you not to spy on your brother?"

"But mom," she starts.

"Don't but mom me. You stay out of your brother's business. Stop bothering him while he's with his . . . friends. Now you two run off and find your cousin Austin Jr."

They hurry off. It will probably be only a short time before they get into trouble again. Megan and Austin have become proud parents of little Austin shortly after they were married. One of the females in their pack had died during child birth, and the father was unknown. With no living relatives to care for the baby, Megan and Austin gladly welcomed the little bundle into their lives. They've been a family ever since. Austin Jr. may not be biologically related to Austin, but he's a four-year-old version of his father with the sweet compassion of his mother. It's amazing how fate works.

Harmony turns to Cody. "You, mister. What have I told you since the day you decided girls were no longer yucky?"

"Not until I was fourteen."

Actually, it was more like forty. "So that means no more looking for Casey's eye lashes. She can find them just fine herself. Is that clear?"

"Yes, mom."

"Alright, you can go too."

He trudges off mumbling, "I was right. Little sisters are the worst."

"I heard that!"

"I still love her though, mom!" he shouts from the family room.

"That's the main thing!" Harmony shouts back.

Trevor watches the whole thing with a gleam in his eyes. He loves when his mate gets all motherly on his pups. Their past five years together have been great. She's an excellent alpha female, and an even better mother. They both graduated from college with degrees in business to help better run the pack and start new ventures that will sustain their pack for years to come.

"I love it when you go all stern mother mode on them," Trevor states grabbing her by the waist.

Seeing the lustful look in his eye, Harmony quickly puts a hand up to his chest. “Don’t even think about it. I’ve got to make dinner for a full pack tonight and the kid’s little argument already put me behind.”

“I promise to make it quick.”

“Ah. Just what every female wants to hear,” she says sarcastically.

He laughs then starts trailing kisses up her neck to her earlobe. “You know what I mean. No more than an hour.”

She moans but protests. “That’s an hour I don’t have. Besides, the kids are all home. There’s no school today seeing as it’s Saturday.”

“Trevor, Harmony, me and the guys are taking the kids out for a game of tag in the woods. We’ll bring them back before dinner,” Jeremy calls from the family room, followed by four excited cheers. Cody, Hunter, Hayley, and Austin Jr. love playing tag with their uncles. The guys will shift and play tag or hide and go seek. Of course the kids are at a disadvantage. It will never be possible for them to catch their uncles, but somehow, they always do. The kids just like playing in the woods, and it's safer for the guys to be in wolf form in case any threats to their safety occur.

“You see? We’ll be all alone,” Trevor tries to persuade her, inching his kisses closer to her lips.

Harmony is quickly succumbing to his seduction. “What about dinner?”

“I promise I’ll help you.”

“No thanks. You’ll just end up starting this all over again.”

“Not this time. Please, babe? It’s been so long.”

“Trevor, you liar. We just made love this morning.”

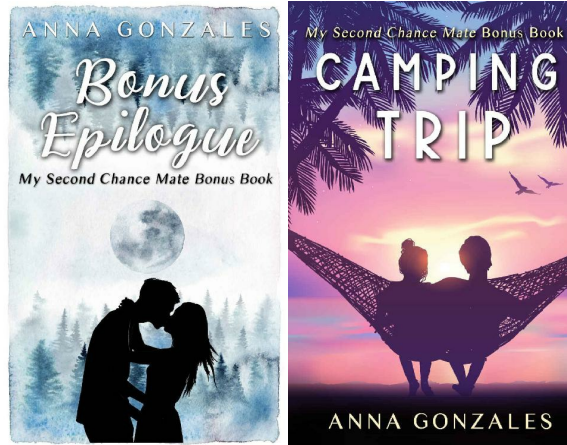
“Exactly. Eight long hours ago.”

Harmony laughs and Trevor swoops in for a heated kiss that has her giving in completely. He picks her up, cradling her in his arms all the while being careful of her belly, then races up the stairs to their room before gently lying her down on the bed.

He looks at her for a long while enjoying the happiness he sees in her eyes, an exact match to his own. He brushes her hair away and says, “Every day I love you a little more than the last.”

“Same here, babe. Same here,” she replies.

Can't get enough of Harmony and Trevor? Make sure you sign up for the author's blog to find out more about them!



Get these two bonus chapters when you sign up at bit.ly/AnnaGonzalesWEB.

Here is a sample from another story you may enjoy:



ALPHA'S
DIRTY LITTLE
SECRET

S Y M O N E R .

CHAPTER 1

AMIRA

Gazing at the several unknown faces, I began to feel as if I was living in the shadows once again. I was left bearing a secret that made me feel like I was living in a lie.

Innocent humans watched as our college professor continued to lecture about Accounting and Finance. I looked to my left; beside me was a girl. Her blonde hair was draped over her brown eyes as she continued to scribble insignificant pictures on her notebook. What amazed me the most was how unaware she was of the nonhuman creature seated only inches away from her.

She sighed. My useful heightened senses allowed me to listen to her heartbeat and breathing that would accelerate every time the professor searched for a student to answer a simple question. Her heart rate would regulate once the professor called someone else. She slouched in her chair, her eyes occasionally wandering off from her work to a boy sitting in the far corner of the room.

“Amira? Are you paying attention?” I looked to my right, finding the eyes of my friend, Eric.

Eric and I have been friends since we were thirteen. Six years later, we were still going strong. We had a lot of classes together over the years, so our friendship continued to grow. However, despite us being friends, I could never find it in myself to tell him who I really was. Or should I say, *what* I was.

“Yeah...no,” I admitted before we both shared a low snicker.

“Eric, you know I got all of this stuff already,” I reassured him, slouching down in my chair.

I was known to be very intelligent in school. Unlike most, it was very easy for me to remember and comprehend any given task. This skill has been very helpful to me.

“Well, then, if it’s so damn easy for you, you can teach it all to me because I’m lost as hell.” Eric sighed. His eyes narrowed in on the textbook in front of him as I chuckled at him.

“Okay, ladies and gentlemen, class dismissed,” the teacher announced as she wrapped up her lecture. I stood from my desk. Students began gathering their things before everyone scrambled out of the door.

“So, lunch on me today?” Eric offered.

“No, sorry. I have to help my mom prepare for this dinner we are having tomorrow. Just a few out-of-town guests.” I sighed heavily.

“Okay, cool. Well, I’ll text you tonight?”

“Sure.”

The appetizing smell of food danced its way around me, clouding my nasal passages with the mouth-watering aroma of my mother's home-cooked meal.

I walked into the kitchen to see my mother running back and forth. She was cutting vegetables, stirring food in the pots, and measuring the temperature of whatever she was roasting in the oven.

"Mom, is it this serious?" She was acting as if the president was stopping by for dinner.

"Yes, sweetie. This is when you'll see your new alpha for the first time." My mother was more cheerful than the rest of us were.

It was amusing how my mother cared about the alpha's arrival more than the actual werewolves that lived here. I expected her to feel uncaring about his presence as if he was just another regular visitor, her being a human and all.

I guess being married to and being the mother of a werewolf really had her interested in the supernatural world. Unlike her, I couldn't care less about the werewolf society. I found human life to be much better. Accepting. I enjoyed not living under the command and authority of some male who was determined to show his dominance over everyone because of a title.

That was why I loved living in the city. Majority of our pack, including the alpha and beta, lived far out in the country somewhere.

Honestly, that's how I liked it. I loved being away from the group who allowed their title to get to their overgrown skull.

I preferred the distance. However, my father seemed to not feel the same way I do. Recently, he had invited the previous alpha and luna, and their son—the new alpha—over for dinner. Only my father could ruin such a beautiful thing.

"But Mom, they aren't coming until tomorrow," I reminded her again.

"I know, I know, but I prefer to get things done now."

I sighed. Looking over everything, I could see how she had handled things.

"You seem to have everything done." The chicken was roasting in the oven; the vegetables were boiling in the pots; and she seemed to be starting on dessert. "Call me if you need anything then."

I snatched up my bag from the kitchen counter. Reaching into the cupboard, I pulled a granola bar from the box before I left the kitchen.

I silently cursed my mother and father again. I don't even know why I have to be here. If I could, I would disappear before the guests even made it to town. Sadly, my father requested that I should be present for the attendees.

Why did I seem so against the presence of the new alpha? I would say our past was just a tiny piece of the reason that I wanted to disappear. Even though my mother said it's the first time meeting the new alpha, it's actually not. We had already met before he had taken over the title, alpha.

When I was about eight years old, my father and I would visit the main pack house for some business. Since my father was one of the strongest warriors of our pack, the previous alpha would need him by his side during decisionmaking.

That's when I had first met eleven-year-old Xavier, the soon-to-be alpha.

My father said—to keep us busy and out of their hair while he helped the alpha—Xavier and I should go play, and we did. Honestly, I thought Xavier was cute. I was actually very fond of him.

Stupidly, I asked him if he felt the same way. Let's just say it was not the answer I hoped for.

To impress his friends, who were the children of other higher ranked members, he knocked me off the swing. I remembered crying on the ground as he and the other kids laughed before they left me soaking in my own tears.

That fucking bitch.

Yes, I knew that it happened many years ago, but for some reason, I just couldn't forget and forgive. I guess I just didn't take rejection or embarrassment too well. I still don't.

Luckily, after that, I never saw him again, and I was perfectly fine with it.

I quickly shook the thoughts off before I disappeared into the bathroom.

I stood in front of the mirror in my room after I finished taking a shower. I ran my hands down my hips as I stared at my reflection. I adored my frame. I didn't consider myself fit or slim like the other female werewolves I had encountered. Other she-wolves had a fit and athletic physique, the type of body that would look exceptional in anything. I, on the other hand, did not have that. I was a curvaceous woman—full breasts, thick hips and thighs without such a slim waist. I would always assure myself that I would soon diet. At least, after I finish off the pizza I was enjoying.

I began to smile. My full pink lips looked well with my silky smooth skin and brown eyes.

I pulled out my blow dryer and started drying my shoulder-length black hair. When my hair was already dry, I pinned it up and leaped into my bed. Turning my television on, I searched through various channels until I finally landed on a show I could finish my night with.

* * *

Wrapped up in my comforter, I felt at ease. No classes. No early morning wake-up calls. Just the perfect time to oversleep.

"Amira, wake up. Let's go the mall." I heard my mother's all too familiar voice as she pushed through my bedroom door.

"No, thank you," I rolled away from her. "It's too early."

"Too early? It's 12:30 in the afternoon. Now, get your butt up."

I turned to my mother and an annoyed snarl escaped me. She narrowed her eyes and shot me a warning glare before walking away. It was a warning, convincing me that her wrath was more powerful than my teeth.

"Make it an hour, or I'm coming back."

"Fine." I sighed.

I stayed in bed for another fifteen minutes; I just did not want to get up. Mustering up some energy, I swung my legs and sat up from the bed. Tired and drained, I dragged myself to my bathroom. After finishing my routine, I picked up my bag and made my way downstairs.

"Hey, Dad," I greeted my father as I walked into the kitchen. He glanced up from his paper to meet my gaze.

"Hey, where are you two headed?"

"She's dragging me to the mall." I slipped into a chair beside him. I reached for his paper and pulled the comic section from the crumbled pile.

"Oh, good luck." I could sense the humor in his comment.

My father knew how things went when it involved accompanying my mother to the mall. He

had found a way to get out of it. During their mall trips, he would make her shopping experience hell. He complained, dragged his feet, and gave opinions my mother found useless. Occasionally, he would become 'ill' during their mall runs.

I could only admire his tactics for escaping.

"Okay, sweetie, I'm ready."

"Okay." I sighed and stood up from my chair.

I followed my mother out to the car and got in. I slumped down in my seat as I listened to the vehicle's engine roar to life from under the hood. I slipped my earbuds on and drifted into my own thoughts the entire ride.

* * *

We roamed the mall for hours, not looking for a specific item. My mother just wanted to buy random things. With the help of my complaints, my mother wrapped up her shopping journey, and we finally left the mall.

"Sweetie, can you tell your father to come help with the bags?" I scowled at her. *What am I? A personal beeper?*

Reaching into our mind link, I urged for his assistance. A few seconds later, my father emerged from the front entrance. He grabbed my mother's bag, refusing to have her carry her own.

He should have joined us in our mall run then. With his petty whining, I would have been home already.

By the time we arrived home, I made my way to the kitchen and walked over to the refrigerator, pulling a bottle of water from the shelf. As I turned to leave, I witnessed my parents sharing an intimate kiss in the living room. "We all have rooms for that, people."

"Sorry, honey." My mother's cheeks flushed red as she pulled away from my father.

"You will understand once you find your mate," my father explained.

A mate. To us werewolves, our mate would be someone the moon goddess has blessed us with. A mate would be someone we plan to spend the rest of eternity with.

Love. A destined bond that was almost unavoidable and hard to break. My mother and father were mates. He shared his secret with her, and she accepted his life and him as well.

However, some weren't that blessed. Some were cursed. Some were given a mate who could be careless, cold-blooded, and downright disgraceful.

There could be some who don't want a mate. Some who would rather remain unrestricted than fall into the spell of the mate bond.

Rejection. Some would rather reject their mate; it's their way of freeing themselves from the world they consider a prison. However, it's not always accepted by the other. The rejected mate may not fully accept it, leaving them with a broken heart and the feeling of desertion. Some would begin to feel as though it's their own actions that caused the rejection, and feel self-loathe and hatred for their wolves. Finally, another dangerous aspect was pain, hatred, and even suicidal ideation.

Honestly, I didn't care about finding my mate. I didn't want to find some wolf who probably believed that I my only purpose was to bear his children and sleep with him. A man who would probably only use me as his chew toy. I couldn't allow someone to have so much control over me, so much power. And then give me so much heartache.

“No, thank you on the mate thing, Dad.” A waved my hands frantically. I didn’t want that curse.

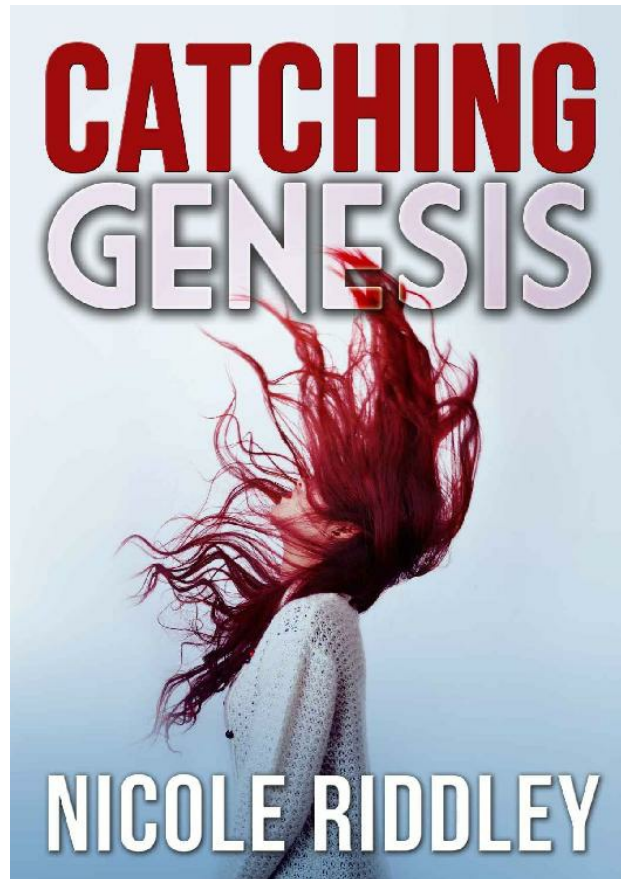
“Honey, go, get dressed. Our guests should be arriving in about an hour.” My mom pressed. Shifting my eyes toward my father, I shot him a venomous glare once again.

“Oh, honey, you will love them. They are nice people, so relax.”

Disagreeing with him, I picked up the small bags I had gotten from the mall and ran up to my room to prepare for an unwanted arrival.

If you enjoyed this sample, look for
[Alpha’s Dirty Little Secret](#)
on Amazon.

BOOK YOU MIGHT ENJOY



CATCHING GENESIS

Nicole Riddley

“I, Logan Carrington, future Alpha of Shadon Geirolf Pack, reject you, Genesis Fairchild, as my mate and future luna of my pack.”

Rejected and broken-hearted, Genesis Fairchild turns to her best friends and come up with a plan to give Logan, the school’s major player, and future alpha, a taste of his own medicine.

One Operation Payback later, a silver-gray eyed lycan joins in the picture and like a moth to a flame, Genesis feels the instant connection between her and the Lycan Constantine.

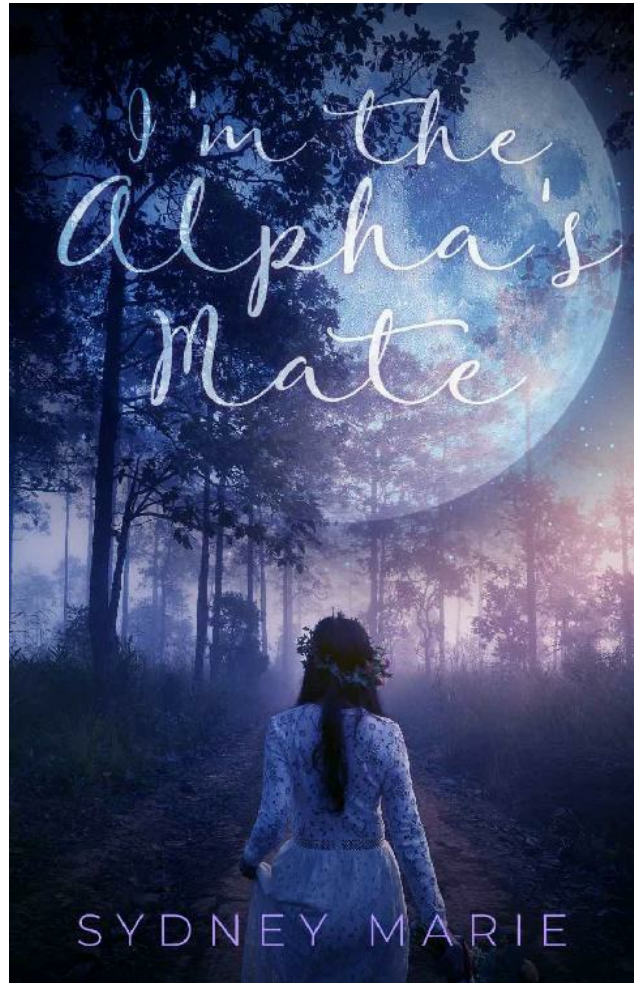
When she is introduced into the pack of lycan royalty, she not only deals with her changing identity, but also the arrogant future Alpha’s retracted rejection and determination to finally claim her, leaving her life a bit more interesting and a whole lot more complicated.

Will Genesis allow her one true mate to complete the mating bond?

Or will she follow her heart and become the erasthai that she has been long destined to be?

If you want something fun and light to devour in one sitting, then get lost in Genesis’ world of arrogant werewolves, royal brats, and an irresistible lycan god. Grab a copy now!

BOOK YOU MIGHT ENJOY



[I'M THE ALPHA'S MATE](#)

Sydney Marie

“My parents couldn’t accept me. What makes you believe this man you have set me with will?”

Young werewolf, Evangeline Farra, possesses a secret ability that has forced her to a life as a rogue in the middle of nowhere. But nowhere is not exactly what it seems to be cause nowhere is where she meets the Alpha who is bound to change her life.

A ruthless Alpha, Sebastian Tate, hates rouges with a burning passion. Driven by his virtue and strength of character as the Alpha of Tate Pack, his pack’s safety is his life’s prime purpose.

But what if the very person he is made for is the very person who will threaten their existence?

As cruel as fate is, Evangeline has death trailing her. Will Sebastian accept her and stand by her as death slowly closes in on them?

This book is for all those werewolf and non-werewolf fans out there. Join Sebastian and Evangeline as they struggle to find peace in a world full of monsters that even they themselves fear.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My husband, children, and siblings who have put up with my spaced or stressed out moments and have inspired many of the situations I write about.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Thank you so much for reading *My Second Chance Mate*! I can't express how grateful I am for reading something that was once just a thought inside my head.

Please feel free to send me an email. Just know that my publisher filters these emails. Good news is always welcome.

anna_gonzales@awesomeauthors.org

One last thing: I'd love to hear your thoughts on the book. Please leave a review on Amazon because I just love reading your comments and getting to know you!

Can't wait to hear from you!

Anna Gonzales

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Anna has loved reading from the first day she learned that combining different letters together made these fabulous things called words. Romance is by far her favorite but she will bury herself in a good Paranormal or Sci-Fi if she stumbles upon one. When she's not engrossed in a book or creating new characters and storylines on her laptop, she's kept busy being a wife and mom to her five children in their home state of Hawaii. She comes from a very big family with eight brothers and five sisters, many of whom have been the inspiration behind her characters. Anna is a hopeless romantic who loves happily ever afters, as long as the hero and heroine gave to work to get there. After all, struggle makes the success that much sweeter!