

MORGAN ROBINSON

HIS
HUMAN

cherish

His Human To Cherish

Morgan Robinson

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Author's Note

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Content & Trigger Warnings

This is a pretty light, fluffy read, but I want to list anything that could be triggering, just in case. If you have no triggers, feel free to skip.

- FMC is forced to live in an unknown world to breed with the males there.
- FMC is physically assaulted. Not by MMC, and there is no sexual assault.
- Mention of FMC's deceased spouse.
- Pocket and textured monster genitals.
- The males on the planet have pheromones that draw in their mates.

A12-02

Any minute now, one of the creepy faux people that calls themselves a Hand of the Creator is going to come looking for me. That's why I've made it all the way to the opposite side of the stadium from where unit A12 is. I would have left the stadium completely if it wasn't a suicide mission. No, I'm trapped in the stadium since the world has completely gone to hell.

My only hope is that I can hide somewhere in the stadium until the Hands get too annoyed with looking for my sister and me that they take A12-04 instead of us. It's a flawless plan. Well, as flawless as a plan from two idiots can be when made in desperation. A plan so selfish we're throwing A12-04 under the bus, but it'll keep my sister and me safe. It sucks, too, because A12-04 and I were finally starting to get along.

I keep my head down as I push past a group of mothers with their toddlers. They were pregnant when the Hands first brought us here. Lucky ducks, since it's one reason they weren't kept in A-12. Bad news for me because a few of them

remember me from sharing rooms when we first arrived. They won't talk to me. They'll note that I'm too close to their unit, and if they're feeling extra petty, they're going to tell a Hand that one of their cattle got away.

I turn my back to them a bit more, but it's already too late. A blonde woman huffs as she readjusts her daughter on her hip and gives me a nasty look. One month was all it took for them to turn us into public enemy number one. It isn't any of unit A12's fault that the Hands have decided we need to ration more strictly. Also not our fault that we still get all the good food. We're being sent one by one to a new world to be broodmares. Excuse me if I don't care about their petty issues about me eating pasta and tacos and cereal while they're on their fifth day of mush.

"Aren't you supposed to be getting fucked by an alien right about now?" The blonde woman with the baby says as I pass them. I don't even know if her kid is old enough to stand, so surely she's not about to start something with her in her arms.

I press my lips together because I want to say something that will start a fight. I can fight, at least, I could a few years ago. Not very good, but Blake taught me how to throw a punch. A fight will have the Hands finding out where I am and have the woman getting kicked out of the stadium. She should fear what the Hands will do to her and her daughter, but of course, she wants to be nasty instead. Being nasty is all that some of these women have anymore.

“You know they only treat your unit best because they’re sending you away, right?” She says it like it’s some big revelation.

I keep walking, even though I can hear her stomping behind me. Are the other women following? Is this going to turn into some weird mob beatdown? The Hands won’t let anything happen to me because I’m still worth something to them. I really don’t want to be found by the Hands, though. I just want to hide until they stop looking for me for the day, and then I’ll figure out what to do next month when they try to get me again.

“Hey!” The blonde grabs my arm and jerks me back.

I swat at her hands, which immediately has her yelling that I’m assaulting her like she wasn’t the one who just put her hands on me. She releases me, and then I’m back to trying to get away from her. She’s drawn a crowd, though, and there’s no way the Hands aren’t already aware of what’s going on. They’ll be here any minute, and then it’s off to a new world where I get to be some man’s broodmare because it’s ‘the will of the Creator.’ I can’t roll my eyes hard enough at the bullshit hand I’ve been dealt.

“It’s not worth it.” Another woman is trying to calm down the one who’s very much intent on chasing me down through the crowd we’ve drawn.

“No, it’s not fair what they’re doing!” Blondie is now screaming about how her life isn’t fair. Ma’am, I’m about to be sent somewhere to carry children for creatures I know

nothing about. I don't have time to continue my tirade in my mind before I feel her fingers wrap in my hair, and then she pulls me back toward her with a violent jerk. Does she still have her kid in her hands? Surely not, right? There's a wail from nearby. Hopefully, that's her daughter.

“Get off of me!” My yell is more of a pathetic whine because I don't have it in me to be dramatic and loud right now. I want to find a dark corner of the stadium to hide in so I'm not shipped off planet Earth. Not to mention that blondie now has a posse of other women who seem just as angry as her. Does it matter that their daughters are not even a couple of feet away bawling hysterically because their mothers are being mean girls? Nope.

Blondie's open palm on my face has me falling to the ground as she screams at me. Apparently, it's my fault her life is miserable in the stadium. I feel the tears in my eyes, but they're not tears of sadness because I told myself I wouldn't be sad anymore. None of these women deserve my sadness or pity or anything, really. I turn my eyes to her, and I appreciate that she at least flinches when she sees how absolutely furious I am. Also, no kid in her hands. Good. At least she's not a total moron.

“Who the fuck do you think you are?” I ask as I push myself off the ground.

She steps away, but I see two of her friends stepping up next to her like they're all willing to be kicked out into whichever hurricane is raging outside the stadium. I should turn back and

try to get away from them because the Hands will be here soon. She's flipped me into being a petty bitch, though, so she's about to get an earful.

“Are you really going to be mad at the woman being treated like livestock? Yeah, you are, because at least I have some value to these alien fucks. You have no worth, no value. I'm sorry you think it's my fault that all of this nasty shit is happening to you, but it's not. It's your fault for letting someone knock you up when this world was going to shit. Be mad at yourself because you would still be one of us if you had kept your legs closed.”

Oof, probably too far, but I'm fired up. Not to say I wasn't trying to get knocked up before all the men died, because I was. I had a husband, a job, and an apartment that we may have still shared with my sister. A kid felt like the next step. Never happened before the world was ruined, though. If we'd been successful, I'd be part of the group surrounding me, and I'd be separated from my sister forever.

“You bitch!” Blondie screams as she launches her body at me.

Another palm to my face, but it's not as hard as the first since she's too flustered to really hit me with it. I throw a punch that lands on her temple. She stumbles away from me, but then her friends are stepping up. Blake taught me how to punch and fight for fun, never to fight anyone in actual defense. If he saw me now, he would throw a fit because he

was always the big protector man. Damn, I wish he was here. I'd hide behind him so fast.

Three versus one isn't fair in any sense, and I learn just how bad it is when one throws a fist at my face, and the other kicks me when I fall down. I curl in on myself because even though the world is darkening and my mind is begging for me to fight, I know how to protect my vital organs. It's all I can do now since they seem to have endless energy to kick me.

I feel someone stomp on my head, which has everything dimming even more. I think there are only three, but I start to wonder how that's possible with how many limbs I feel hitting me. My body numbs, and their strikes stop hurting. I keep myself curled up because I don't want any of them to actually kill me, even though one of them kicks my head again.

“The Hands are coming!” A woman, not in the fight, yells.

That's what finally gets the others to stop kicking me. They know what's going to happen to them if they're caught, so they scurry off like the pathetic bullies they are. A laugh tries to escape my lips as I think about them still having to eat their mush later. It's the last thing I think about as all the women around me disappear and leave me on my own. My consciousness fades, and I let my body succumb to the darkness threatening to take me under.

The sound of beeping and the smell of disinfectant greets me as my senses come back to me. I try to open my eyes, but the

world is too bright, and my head hurts way too much. Not to mention I think one of my eyes is swollen shut from the punch I took before I fell to the ground, or maybe from one of the kicks. I try to reach up and grab my head, but even my arms hurt.

“Fuck,” The word is groggy, but I get it out of my mouth.

“A12-02, we’re glad you’re awake.” The Hand that works as the doctor sounds just as cheery as he usually is. “You gave us all quite a scare. Especially so close to your exit.”

I groan an acknowledgment of what he’s saying because I really want to tell him to go to hell, but that’s probably where the Hands came from. Their weird smooth skin, smiles that are pure horror, and shadows that don’t completely line up with their feet. They’re wrong. Everything about them is wrong, and yet they’re the ones to save me from the mob of moms that wanted to kill me for... checks notes... eating food they don’t get.

“You had us all very worried.” The doctor says. I want so badly to roll my eyes, but it’s impossible. Or at least my brain is screaming at me to stop trying because moving my eyes hurts my head so much.

“We would have offered you a meal before you left, but it’s already past the time when you were supposed to enter the world.” The doctor has the audacity to sound upset with me. Like it’s my fault for getting a beatdown by three women. My bad for trying to avoid being sent off to another world.

“I was told that as soon as you regained consciousness, I was to send you down to the portal.” The doctor walks over to stand next to me. I still haven’t opened my eyes or moved my body at all. My only signs of life are grunts and a single fuck that I somehow squeeze out. “You have two bruised ribs on your left side, major bruising on your arms and torso, and, as I am sure you are aware, a very black eye.”

How long were they kicking me for? The fight felt like it only lasted thirty seconds, but maybe that was just my mind not remembering everything clearly. It sounds like I’m in bad shape, but the doctor says they’re still expecting me at the portal. I try to ask him if I’m still going to be sent, even though I feel and probably look awful. I don’t get an answer because I can feel one of the Hands and their way too smooth skin touching me, pulling me off the hospital bed.

I try to tell them to get off of me, but it comes out in a weird groan that doesn’t remotely sound like ‘get off of me’ in the slightest. A second Hand grabs me underneath my armpit on one side, and the first does the same. I’m half walking, half being dragged out of the room. My head is swimming. The only thing I can see is light that’s managing to snake its way past my eyelids, and my body is screaming at me to just go to sleep. It won’t hurt if I’m asleep.

The Hands don’t let me sleep. No, that would be too easy. They could just leave me in the doctor’s room, go grab A12-04, if my sister is still hiding, and send her instead of me. That could’ve saved them all the time I apparently wasted, and it would’ve spared me from being sent away for another month.

Apparently, I'm not lucky enough for that. I get to be jumped and sent off to another world. Woo.

“A12-02, do you need assistance getting through the portal?”

I don't know which Hand is asking, but I want to laugh in their face. I'm not even standing completely on my own. How do they expect me to go through the portal? I should just go limp and make them throw me through it, but a part of me wants to at least enter the world with some dignity. I huff, hurting my chest and causing me to wince, and then I'm just completely lost in the pain for a second. The quickness of it has me finally opening my eyes, or well, the one I can actually open.

A glowing portal opens inches from my face. I whimper softly but move my feet so they're flattened on the ground. The two Hands holding me slowly give me back the full weight of my body. I try to turn my head to look at where I am or maybe get one last look at Earth before I'm sent away. My body hurts too much for that, though. Instead, I stumble into the portal when I lose my balance. A soft whimper escapes my lips as I beg not to go. I'm not even sure the words leave my mouth, but I think them all the same.

A12-02

My vision is dark like it was when I passed out, and I wonder if I'm passing out again. Nope, I feel a stone floor under my feet, and then I'm reaching around in the darkness for anything to give me stability. Something grabs me and steadies me. I'm faintly aware of it speaking, but I can't really hear it. Everything is still so muffled, like I'm just coming out of a dream.

"A12-02, you're safe now." I definitely hear a woman speaking to me. Wait, a woman. A12-01. That's good. At least I won't be killed immediately. "Let me know when you can see me. It's just you and me right now."

I make a sound somewhere between a groan and a whine. My body hurts, I'm completely naked, and I can't even see anything to get my bearings around me. As if the universe is done being cruel to me, or at least as cruel, my vision clears in my one good eye.

The small blonde woman in front of me is smiling, but I can see the look of worry on her face. The smile is barely holding

on, and I know she's only got it plastered on, so I don't freak out more. Or maybe so the world's inhabitants don't freak out. They probably won't like that their new toy is incredibly broken right now.

"I see you," I try to say, but it's slurred. Maybe those kicks to the head gave me a concussion, too. It would make sense why my head feels like my brain is trying to bust out of it. "I see you."

A12-01 has her arms underneath me. I don't realize how much I'm leaning on her for support until I start slipping from her grasp. I slowly fall to the ground, and she helps me lean against a large stone pillar. There's a pile of clothing next to her, and I reach for a piece, not caring if it's for me or not. I want something to cover me. A12-01 helps me get the tunic over my head and then helps me get my arms into the holes. She fixes it around my body and then gives me another smile that doesn't reach her eyes.

"Is everything okay, my Olivia?" A male voice calls, and that's when the illusion of being alone is broken. A12-01, Olivia must be her name, lifts her eyes to the other side of me. A wood partition is set up that blocks off the rest of the room from where I'm sitting. I can't see who's on the other side or how many, but it's nice to know they can't see me either.

"Just a moment, my Ralleth." Olivia stands up for a moment, holds up her hand, and then looks back down at me. The look of worry on her face is clear, but it isn't because she's worried about whoever is on the other side. No, she's

worried about me because I look like I was put through the wringer before being sent. She kneels back beside me, replacing the frown she wore for a moment with another sad smile. “Can you talk?”

I open my mouth to tell her yes, but the word is scratchy and hurts too much. She pats my hand that’s sitting on my lap. “That’s okay. Don’t worry about that right now. You’re safe now. I promise there’s nowhere safer.”

I use my one good eye to look at the partition or at least move in its general direction. I’m hoping Olivia catches on that I want to know about who’s on the other side. The Hands didn’t tell me anything about where I was being sent or what the men looked like. I’m assuming the worst, but I’m hoping that means I’ll be pleasantly surprised. Olivia doesn’t look like she’s unhappy, but then again, maybe she’s just used to them by now. She could be suffering from Stockholm syndrome. Does that kick in after only a month?

“I want to get you to your room,” Olivia says, not realizing that I want to know about the world we’re in. I can’t blame her. She’s not a mind reader. “Can my mate carry you?”

Mate? I raise my brows and let out a huff of air. Damn, she really went and did what the Hands wanted us to do. I mean, I don’t blame her if she’s happy, but I didn’t think I’d be showing up to her offering to have her mate carry me to my room. Thankfully, she doesn’t realize I’m surprised about her being mated to one of them. No, she thinks I’m giving her permission to have him come pick me up. I’m not anti him

carrying me, but I'd like to know what he looks like before he does.

Olivia stands up and then looks around the room. "Brothers, something has happened. Ralleth's creature needs all of you to stay where you are. Do you understand?"

Everything about that sentence needs to be unpacked. I must be concussed. None of this is real. I'm still in the hospital bed in the stadium. My sister and I were able to avoid being sent, and A12-04 was sent to the world instead of me. I'm just having a weird fever, er, concussed dream.

"Ralleth," Olivia calls out the name of her mate. "I need you to help me with my sister."

Definitely a dream. A12-01 is not my sister. Kendra is A12-03. I don't know why A12-01 is saying I'm her sister. It must be my brain's way of rationalizing not being with Kendra. Maybe she's in the room with me, and that's why I'm imagining A12-01 calling me her sister.

I hear someone stepping around the partition before I see him. Really, I don't even see most of him before he picks me up and cradles me like a baby. Big. He's really fucking big. Really big, really red, and what the fuck? I blink my good eye and squint at his face. There's a lot going on, but the most distinguishing one is the horns protruding from his head and spiraling into twists before thinning into points. I'm dreaming I'm in Hell. Cute.

I don't really know how long we've been walking before I'm taken to a pretty barren room and laid on a bed. Olivia is

right behind her demon and shoos him away from me as soon as he sets me down. He places a hand possessively on her, but his dark red eyes are focused fully on me.

“Who did this to you?” The demon man asks. The S in ‘this’ turns into a hiss as he speaks.

“She can’t speak right now, my Ralleth.” Olivia pats his hand on her shoulder, and he finally looks down at her. He’s at least a few feet taller than her, so the men here must be giant. He stares at her a moment longer until the scales of his face soften, and his eyes flicker to a lifeless black that’s more startling than the red. “Will you go tell the brothers they won’t see my sister tonight?”

Ralleth looks at me, and his eyes shift to red again when they land on my face. Is he mad? Did A12-01 get herself a demon that cares about humans? Can I get one? I’d prefer that over whatever the hell I thought I was going to get here.

Ralleth moves next to my head on the bed and then kneels down on the ground so he’s close to me. “Ralleth’s brothers will keep our sister safe. You are safe here.”

Super weird dream. I’m actually going to be upset when I get sent to the world because my dream aliens are treating me nicer than the actual aliens will. I want to thank him, but I can only manage a twitch of my lip that’s meant to be a smile. He seems happy enough with it and stands.

“I will tell my brothers no female tonight. They will be excited to meet you whenever you are feeling well.” Ralleth

looks at Olivia again and then tentatively asks his next question. “Should Ralleth tell his brothers why?”

Olivia turns to me. “They’re all good men, but they’ll be worried about you. Ralleth won’t lie to them, but he won’t tell them anything if that’s what you want.” She pauses, chews on her lips, and then grabs my hand. “Squeeze once if he can tell them you’re hurt. Twice if you want to keep it between us.”

I give her hand a long, singular squeeze. I’d prefer the big guy just go tell them because his big black eyes are looking more like puppy dog eyes the longer he stares at me. Olivia gives him a nod, and then he’s scampering out of the room as much as a man that big can scamper.

“They’re good men.” Olivia gives my hand a small squeeze, and then I can see her debating something in her mind. I want to tell her to spit it out, but my words aren’t working right. Shit, I probably need someone to watch me during the night to make sure I don’t die of my concussion. That’s a thing, right? Olivia speaks again and draws me away from thinking about how I might die from a concussion. “It would make us all more comfortable if someone watched you tonight.”

I let out a sound of approval, or I hope it sounds like approval.

“I can have a brother sit with you or Ralleth and I can stay in here. He won’t let me stay in here without him, or I would offer that.” She at least looks apologetic about her demon being territorial.

“I’m okay,” I manage to grunt, and the words actually sound like what I mean to say.

“A brother?” Olivia tries to clarify. I didn’t really give an answer at all, but considering she suggests that first means she wants to be alone with her demon. Maybe she’s a bit territorial too. She seemed kind of twitchy when he set me down in the bed.

I nod my head softly and give her hand another long squeeze to signal yes. With the way her demon was looking at her, I don’t think I’m going to be in much danger from the men. Not that they couldn’t do some damage, considering how big they are. Olivia’s been here for a month, though, and she looks healthy and happy. And hairy, but I suspect that’s something I’m going to have to learn to deal with too.

“I’m going to tell Ralleth.” Olivia stands from my side and rushes to the door. She gives me a smile right before she runs out, and then I’m left with my own thoughts until someone comes to join me. I hope he’s as nice to me as Ralleth was. I could use a little bit of kindness after the shit day I’m having. Olivia comes back into the room, out of breath and blushing. “I forgot to ask your name. The brothers will want to know.”

“Diane,” I try to say, but it comes out muffled and slurred. I take a deep breath and try again, slower. “Die-Anne.” It’s ugly, but I think Olivia understands.

“Diane?” She asks. I grunt in approval, and then she runs back out of the room.

Almaac

Something is wrong, and Ralleth's creature is trying to keep us all from seeing the female. Surely if something happened to her, they would tell us. Ralleth has no reason not to tell us. Unless he thinks we are not honorable males, but he would never think this. We will do right by the female. We only need to be given the opportunity.

When Olivia had Ralleth carry the new female to her room, we all knew something was very, very wrong. A female does not have her male touch another unless it is absolutely necessary. Maybe things are different for humans, but Olivia did not look like she was happy about the small human in Ralleth's arms. Her face turned pink, but not in the way it does when we are making jokes. No, she looked angry, but it was her idea for Ralleth to carry the new female.

The brothers and I are becoming restless in the dining hall, waiting to see if Ralleth or his Olivia will tell us what has happened with the new female. Thankfully, it is not long

before Ralleth comes back into the dining hall with eyes red and fists clenched at his side.

“What is wrong, brother?” I ask. Ralleth is my best friend, and I want to make sure that he is okay, too. Whatever has happened with the female has also upset him.

Ralleth paces the dining hall, and I can tell that he is just trying to get his thoughts in order before telling us, but we are all so curious. “The female is hurt, badly hurt.”

None of us expect that, and I know mine are not the only eyes to flash red when Ralleth tells us. Olivia had been brought to us naked, but she had not been hurt.

“I know you all want to see her, and I know you were all excited to have another female in our tribe.” Ralleth’s voice catches in his throat. We do not like when females are hurt. Especially not the humans who are small and frail. They need protection. To know someone used their weakness to hurt them hurts the beating in all our chests. “Olivia thinks it is best if she is alone right now.”

Silence stretches in the dining hall. We all understand why Olivia wants her sister to be alone. She wants to keep her safe while she is healing, but none of us would hurt the female. Olivia must know this deep down.

“Whatever Ralleth’s creature thinks is best for the human, we all agree it is best,” I say as I place my hands on my knees before standing. The other brothers will expect me to agree with Ralleth, even if I think he and Olivia are being too

protective of the new female. There is nothing else for us tonight if the human is not able to meet or visit with us.

I am curious about whose tunic she chose out of the pile. Ralleth told us that humans mate in their noses, so we all wanted to see if she would pick her mate by smelling him on his tunic. Even Olivia was fine with us playing a game to see who would get the most points before the female chose a mate. The game probably will no longer happen since Olivia is too worried about her sister. It would have been fun, though, especially since I know I would have earned at least a few points.

I am just about to leave the dining hall with some of my other brothers when Olivia comes running back to us. I pause my movement as I watch her speak with Ralleth quickly and in hushed tones. Whatever she is saying is not meant for everyone to hear, and that makes me even more curious. Ralleth will tell me what she says when we next speak. He tells me everything because we have been friends since we were young. He tells me things I am not even allowed to tell Olivia that he has told me. Mostly it is about how to pleasure a human female because I want to make sure I know what I am doing when the time comes for me to woo my mate.

Ralleth's eyes scan the dining hall, only pausing when they land on me. He tilts his chin upward, a signal telling me he wants to speak with me. As calmly as I can, I walk over to him. He probably wants to talk to me about the female, and I do not need the other brothers seeing. I do not want them to

think I am getting preferential treatment for being Ralleth's friend. I am, but the brothers do not need to know that.

"Is the female okay?" I ask Olivia when I am standing close to them.

Olivia gives me a sad smile. "Not really. That's why we need your help."

I raise my brows in surprise. Ralleth had said his creature wanted the female left alone, but now I hope they want her left alone with me. Ralleth confirms my hope with a smile that he quickly hides when he sees our brothers looking at us.

"I think whoever hurt her hit her head pretty bad," Olivia says. "She needs to be watched to make sure she is okay through the night."

"Almaac can do that," I say with a nod of my head. I can stay up all night with the female and make sure her beating is strong and her breath is hot. "I am more than happy to do that."

"Uh-huh, I'm sure you are." Ralleth's creature teases me because she knows I am also secretly hoping the female will feel the mating in her nose for me. "Don't be trying to make sure she's female, Almaac."

My eyes go wide at Olivia's teasing. Ralleth was unsure his creature was a female when she first came to our home, so I helped him figure it out. I may have also released in my pants when I saw between her legs, but that is only natural. I think about defending myself, but I can see that Olivia has done it to

rile Ralleth up. He has told me she enjoys teasing him and that he enjoys it when she does. I do not understand, but she makes my friend happy. I am just glad she does not tease me. I would not like it at all.

“We’ll show you to the female’s room.” Ralleth narrows his eyes at his female, and I wonder if he is not trying to get rid of me so he can take her to his room for teasing him.

It matters little to me why Ralleth is ready to have me visit the female so long as I can be the one to watch over her. I will not try to see if she is my mate until she is healed from whatever has been done to her, though. I am an honorable male, and I will not pressure the hurt female to offer me more than just being able to see her and speak with her. She will be treated like a hurt brother. That way, she will not think I am trying to use her hurt as a way to pursue her.

Ralleth picks up Olivia in his arms and carries her through the hallway while I follow them. A few brothers turn to see where I am going since my room is most definitely not down the same hallway as Ralleth’s. I think they will all allow us to leave without bothering us, but that is not to be.

“Where is Almaac going?” Erkoz asks when he and Xoth are close enough that they do not have to yell the question across the whole dining hall, which would alert even more brothers. Not that they aren’t all very much aware that I am obviously going to the female’s room.

“Put me down,” Olivia wiggles in Ralleth’s arms until he sets her on the ground. She lifts one of her small hands up and

points one of her frail claws at Erkoz with a frown on her face. We all want to keep Olivia happy because she was the first female to visit us, and she blessed our leader with her companionship. That is why I am glad she is on my side because I can watch with wide eyes as she gets upset at Erkoz and Xoth. I may even stick my tongue out at them like Olivia enjoys doing to us when she does not like our play. That will surely upset them and will make me laugh.

“You two can go to bed. He is coming to watch over my sister. He won’t mate her or do anything to her because she’s broken right now.” Olivia pauses for a moment and waits for my brothers’ eyes to flicker back to black. None of us like that someone has hurt the female, and we most definitely don’t think one of us will try to mate her while she is hurt. Olivia lowers her little claw and then frowns.

“I was going to ask you.” She nods in Erkoz’s direction, which has me no longer wanting to stick my tongue out at him. I was not the first choice of male that Olivia would choose to watch her sister. “She chose your tunic, though, and I didn’t want to make her uncomfortable if she likes your smell like I like my Ralleth’s.”

Now I am upset that Olivia wanted Erkoz to be the one to go sit with the female. She should obviously pick whichever brother she thinks is best, but still, I thought I was the first choice. And the female didn’t even choose my tunic. Which doesn’t seem like such a big deal since she is hurt, but I wanted her to take my tunic because that might mean that her nose has chosen me as her mate. Maybe she is to be Erkoz’s

mate, and I will only get my hopes up. I sigh but allow myself to adjust to what I have learned. Erkoz is a good male. He will make a female happy even if I kind of want the female for myself.

“Stop pouting,” Olivia says when she turns back to me. I do not miss that she is smiling at me when she scolds me. She is not being serious, but she still knows I am unhappy that I was not her first choice. “He’s been a good friend to Olivia. That’s why he was first. You have been a good friend to Ralleth. That’s why you are second.”

“It is more important to be friends with Olivia, then.” Erkoz’s eyes are bright with excitement after hearing the female chose his tunic. “I knew Erkoz was a smart male.”

“The smartest,” Olivia laughs and then grabs Ralleth’s hand. “Come on.” She motions for me to follow her and waves off Erkoz and Xoth, who are happy once they hear Erkoz was the first choice. I do not know why Xoth is so happy. He wasn’t even close to being chosen, but maybe he thinks since he is close with Erkoz, they can share a female. I wonder if the female would like that? That’s a question I should ask Olivia because it would be helpful if the females like more than one male. There are more of us than there are humans that are coming.

“She can’t talk very well right now, and she can’t move,” Olivia says when we get to the closed door belonging to the new female’s room. “She’ll need help to eat, drink, and move?”

“I can do this,” I say. These are easy enough tasks. I had to help raise two of my sisters, and they needed the same type of treatment when they were small. Taking care of a hurt human can’t be much different from taking care of a small sister.

“Okay.” Olivia pushes the door open, and I let my eyes adjust to the bare room. The rooms I share with the brothers have four beds in them, so they look much more crowded. The female’s room only has one bed, and if I squint hard enough, I can see a small lump in the bed that I am guessing is Olivia’s sister. I start to walk over to her, but Ralleth grabs my shoulder. When I look over, I see it is because his creature is reaching out to grab my arm. “Her name’s Diane.”

My brows pull together, and my lips press tightly against one another. “I will not say it until she is healed, I promise.” I say this because I think it is what Olivia wants to hear. It is also the truth since I have no desire to bed a female that is hurt.

“We leave the door open,” Ralleth says as he starts to leave the room. “The door to our room as well, so we can hear if Almaac or the female need anything.”

“Thank you, brother,” I say with a nod as I walk over to the bed where the small female lies.

“My Olivia needs to be quiet tonight,” Ralleth’s voice holds a hint of a laugh as they walk to their room next door. I know they are words meant only for his mate, so I pretend I do not hear them. Ralleth’s creature is loud, though, and I wonder if

she will be able to be quiet if she and Ralleth are to make love tonight.

I take slow steps toward the bed because I do not want to scare the hurt female by just running up to her. Olivia says she cannot speak or move, so I am sure scaring her is a terrible idea. I see her face for just a moment before I must cast my eyes upward because I can feel the rage burning inside of me. Olivia said the female was broken, and I thought she was being dramatic, like she likes to do sometimes. No, this female has been beaten so badly that her face is swollen and bruised. She is wearing Erkoz's tunic, so I can't see if the bruises continue down her body, but I have a feeling they do.

The female makes a small sound in the back of her throat, and I snap my eyes down to her to make sure she is not in pain that I can fix.

"Are you hurt?" I ask, and then immediately want to hit myself. I would have to lose sight to think she was not hurt. She can't even answer me because it hurts for her to speak. Oh, I am the worst male for this. Maybe Olivia should have had Erkoz come and watch the female.

"Hot," The female, Diane, croaks. Her words sound like they pain her to say, and they are slurred softly in a way that makes my stomach twist.

"You are hot?" I ask, trying to see if I can help her. Olivia always says that our world is much warmer than Earth, especially since we keep the fires going most of the time. There is no fire in Diane's room, but she is still moist on her

forehead. When Olivia gets that way, she fans herself with her hands and rests her face against Ralleth's scales.

Diane makes a sound that sounds like a yes, but I am not entirely sure. I move my lips along the ridges of my teeth as I try to think of how to make her cool. Olivia will fan herself or go bathe, but those are things I cannot do for Diane. We are low on parchment, and I do not think she would appreciate me stripping her to go sit in the water. I kneel next to the bed as I think about how Ralleth has told me that his Olivia likes to lie on him sometimes because his body is so much colder than hers. He says he soaks up her heat, and she can cool enough to sleep.

"Can I touch you?" I ask softly as I raise my hand to Diane's face. She watches my hand with her one eye and then returns her gaze to me with a soft nod. I rest my hand against her forehead, which is moist and burning. She lets out a soft sound of contentment at my touch. Her body relaxes against the bed, and she closes her eyes again. I hold my hand to her head as long as she needs because this is what I have agreed to. I am to watch her and make sure she does not perish while she sleeps.

A soft groan from the female has me watching her intently while I wait to see what she needs. Instead of opening her eye again, she reaches a shaky hand up to my arm and tugs on me slightly. I do not know what she wants, but I know what I am hoping she wants.

“Hot.” The word is the only one I’ve heard from her, and it is becoming my favorite word because it comes from her. She tugs my arm again, and this time I follow her lead. She pulls me until I am hovering over the bed, and there is no mistaking what she wants. I cannot get into bed from this side, though, so I walk away from her so I can move to the other side where there is more room and I won’t have to move her. She must not realize I am doing this because she whines loudly when I am out of her eyesight.

“Shh,” I whisper. “Almaac will get in bed. He is a big male and needs more space. He does not want to move you.”

My words silence her whines, and her body stops its slow movements of searching me out. I throw the blankets to my side since Diane will probably not be needing them, with how hot she is. I remove my tunic before climbing into bed and pressing my body against hers. She must stay on her back because of the bruising. I lie against her and feel her try to scoot her body even closer to mine. I would like it if I couldn’t see the wince on her face as she moved.

“Stop moving,” I say a bit more sternly than I mean to. I dislike how she hurts herself when I am there and can do anything she needs. “Almaac will keep you cool, but you must not hurt yourself.”

The female lets out a huff of irritation, but as I look down at her face, I see she actually looks very content. Maybe she knows how well I can take care of her. I place one of my arms across her abdomen, staying away from her tits because I

know I am not allowed to touch those until she allows me to. Or if I am checking her beating, but I can feel her beating well enough from where I am. It is hard, which means she is strong. She will heal in no time. And once she does, then I can try to see if she wants to be my mate.

“Sleep,” I say when I see her eye still open and staring at me. “You are hurt and need to heal. Rest. Almaac will keep you safe.”

I do not move my eyes from her face. Even when she closes her eye and slows her breathing. I watch her all night because I will not let any more harm fall on this small female. She is mine to protect, at least until she is better. Then she will have to make her own decision about who protects her. I will enjoy my role until it is taken from me, though.

Diane

I slept like actual trash last night. Something kept me pinned onto my back all night, even though I wanted nothing more than to roll onto my side so I could curl into a ball and cry away all the pain in my body. Nope, instead, I was in and out of consciousness, with the only constant being big black eyes on a red face, watching me like I was in Hell. Maybe the women who beat me actually killed me, and I'm being tortured in Hell by not being able to roll onto my side. Maybe this was the nicest circle of Hell, where the torture was only mildly inconvenient.

“Shh,” Someone hisses near my head, and I realize that whatever is pinning me to the bed is definitely not an inanimate object like I thought it was all night. I jerk against its grasp, but that only has it shifting its body. It's lightly pressing down on my abdomen with its forearm, and its other arm is placed on my shoulder, keeping me pinned to the bed. I think I'm struggling against it, but then it relaxes. “Good female. You are safe.”

Good female? What the fuck? Did I somehow get a kinky demon to torture me in Hell? Why do I not hate that idea?

My one good eye cracks open and peers around until my eye lands on the same face I thought was some part of a weird dream last night, thanks to the concussion. I'm pretty sure I'm not still dreaming, but I'm honestly not sure when I see the demon-looking creature staring at me. I try to move against his grasp again, but he narrows his eyes on me and places his arms back into their bracing position.

"You need to stop moving while you are healing." His words have a slight lisp any time there's an S sound, and that makes it all seem even more unreal since his little forked tongue keeps poking out between his lips. His eyes narrow on mine as I push against his hold again with more fight. Oh, I most definitely wasn't dreaming last night when I thought this was all some weird, concussed fever dream. No, this is all very real.

"Stop moving. Let me help you." The demon says as he shifts his body so he's bracing on his hands and knees. "I will sit you up, but you must stop trying to hurt yourself."

As soon as his hands are off of me, I try to sit up on my own. My head spins, and my side is screaming at me, probably from the bruised ribs I'm just supposed to deal with until they heal. A desperate sound of pain forces its way through my lips, and then the demon man holds me softly, trying to brace all my weight.

"Let me take care of you."

“Please,” The word doesn’t hurt as bad as yesterday to get out, and my voice isn’t as slurred. I smile up at him because, for the first time, I think I can actually talk without it being a big deal.

“Good female,” Almaac runs his thumb over my cheek before releasing my face.

I don’t know what prompts me to say the next thing I do. Maybe it’s the fact that the demon is already calling me a good female, and it’s making butterflies erupt in my stomach. Maybe it’s because I haven’t heard the words in so long since my husband died with all the other males on Earth. Either way, I’m saying something stupid to the demon man, and I’m trying really hard not to think of why.

“Good girl.”

“Hm?” The demon cocks his head at me like he’s not too sure what I said. My face is burning at the thought of having to say it again, so I avert my eyes because I’m definitely not repeating myself. I don’t even know why I said it the first time. Either he doesn’t understand or care, or he wants to move the conversation along because he’s changing the topic. “Do you want to finish sitting up?”

“Yes, thank you.” I allow the demon to help me up, so I’m sitting against the headboard. He moves some pillows until they are propping me up and surrounding me. He keeps fluffing them even after it’s clear I’m up and doing much better than I was the day before.

“Almaac will make sure the female is cared for,” He looks at me and offers me a soft smile. “Even when she tries to fight him.”

“I didn’t try to fight you.”

I find myself smiling, or trying to smile, at the demon. Maybe it’s because I saw Olivia’s last night, and he wasn’t too scary that I’m able to stare at the one sitting so close to me, hovering over me, and find him kind of cute. Well, as cute as he can be for being seven feet tall, with horns that wrap down his head like a ram and big black eyes that look like pits of darkness. I definitely never thought I would think an almost pink lizard man with cute little black speckle-like freckles across his scales is attractive. I also never dreamed I’d be sent to another world hours after getting beat up by three mothers over food rations. I need Kendra here. She’ll have a good laugh at my expense.

“All night, you tried to fight me.” Almaac is still kneeling next to me, but his attention has moved to check my injuries. His hands work slowly against mine as he flips my left hand in his and then traces each finger with his own. He looks up at me for a moment as he starts to push the sleeve of the tunic over my arm. He’s asking for my permission, and I give him a soft nod before he turns his eyes back to what he’s doing. “You are very ferocious in your dreams.”

“Oh, am I?” I ask. The word ferocious has never once ever been used to describe me. I’m pretty sure if Kendra was here,

she'd be laughing and asking who the demon laid next to all night because it surely wasn't me.

“Oh yes,” Almaac's eyes flash red and stay that way as his fingers trace the bruises on my arms. I'm seeing them for the first time, too, and they're making my stomach churn at the reminder of what happened. I thought it was barely anything, but I must be blocking some of it out. I have to be because the biggest bruise on my upper arm is almost black, with how dark it is. Almaac hisses when he gets the sleeve pulled all the way up my arm. “Maybe you are ferocious because you are remembering this?”

He slides the sleeve down and then grabs my right arm. He doesn't ask this time before he's rolling the sleeve up my arm. His cool fingertips trace over every bruise so softly that I only know he's there because he's cooling off my warm skin. His teeth are grinding against one another, and he refuses to look into my eyes. I mean, my face definitely looks terrible, too, because I still can't open my right eye. Still, it's nicer when he's looking at me and not my body. At least when he's looking at me, I can pretend he doesn't see the bruises.

“How bad does it look?” I try to keep my tone light, but there's nothing light in Almaac's eyes.

“No one should ever treat a female this way,” Almaac hisses as he speaks. He finishes looking at my right arm, and then he's grabbing the hem of the tunic I'm wearing. “I only want to check your bruises. I will not touch or look at you in any way that is not out of concern.”

“I- I don’t think—” I feel my bottom lip start quivering, and then tears are pouring from my eyes. Almaac’s eyes flash to my face, the red disappearing as the black returns. “I’m sorry.”

Almaac moves away from me, and I try to wipe away the tears spilling down my face. I didn’t expect to cry. I didn’t even feel that upset, but Almaac asking to see my bruises just made it all too real. It’s like my mind didn’t register everything that happened to me in the last twelve hours. Something snapped, though, and everything just starts pouring in.

My husband. Dead. My sister. On another planet. My body. Broken. My only comfort? A demon-looking lizard man that also probably wants to sleep with me until I’m carrying his kid.

“Shh,” Almaac’s voice is right beside me when he gets into the bed next to me. I feel him lifting me slowly, and then I’m gently laid against his chest, between his legs. I want to tell him I need to be alone to cry, but he’s made it very clear I’m not allowed to be sad on my own. “It is okay to cry, but you are hurting yourself with how hard you are shaking.”

He’s not wrong. I’m sobbing so hard that it’s making my ribs scream out, begging me to stop crying or at least stop moving. I can’t, though. Thoughts about being on the stadium floor, curled in on myself as the women are kicking me and stomping on me, fill my brain. Was it more than three? I remember the first three, but the flashes of what happened are making me think it was more before they ran away. My

breathing is ragged, and each breath feels like I'm crushing my lungs because of the bruises on my chest.

"Almaac will hold you, do not be mad at him," Almaac says, and then I feel one of his legs loop over mine, pinning them down and keeping them from moving. One arm wraps across my upper chest, so he has my shoulders pinned against his chest, and the other arm wraps around my stomach.

"Breathe," He commands, and it's the first thing that cuts through the flashback of being on the stadium floor. "Deep." He inhales, and I feel his body fill with air behind me. I try to follow what he's doing because it's the only thing keeping me from falling back into the memories that my mind tried to block out. "Out."

We do this a few more times. Him telling me to breathe deeply and then to release the breath with him. My body stops jerking against his hold on me, and then he's relaxing his grasp too.

"Good girl, listen to Almaac. He will keep you safe." Almaac makes a soft humming sound underneath me while his words turn me to goo. I'm leaning fully on him with my head lolling back against his chest. He heard me earlier, and he understood what I was asking of him.

Is it wrong that I'm imagining the demon as my late husband? A man that told me it was us against the world. A man that promised to always be there for me, always protect me, and always keep me happy. Yes. It's wrong, but it's so easy to imagine he is Blake when he holds me close and calls

me a good girl. I should care that it's fucked up, but I can't when I take a deep breath, and the smell of the demon calms me.

“Thank you, Almaac.” I take another deep breath and let myself fall deeper against him. My eye closes, and I feel my bruised body begging me to go back to sleep. A soft whimper leaves my lips as the world starts to fade. I should've asked Almaac if he wanted to leave the bed. I'm trapping him where he is until I wake again. I'm too comfortable, and I really don't want him to leave me.

I'm pretty sure I'm asleep when he moves his hand to brush some of my hair from my face. Pretty sure I'm dreaming when he leans down and whispers. “Almaac's good girl.” Definitely dreaming when I let out a sound of approval before nuzzling further against his chest.

Almaac

The dreams of having a female to call my own started only a handful of days earlier, but I had them every night. I did not know what my female looked like, and I couldn't even really say what happened in the dreams once they were over. The only thing I really know is that I am supposed to call my mate good, and she will follow my commands because it pleases her. So when Diane does these things, it has me thinking things I should not.

As she sleeps in my arms, I am struggling not to be angry with myself. I said I would not try anything with the female until she is healed, but I have already done more than is acceptable. I should have never called her a good female. At the very least, I should have continued pretending I did not hear her correct the term of endearment to something she preferred. My soul feels that she is mine, and it makes it that much harder to listen to my rational thoughts. Even holding her in my arms eases some of the shame I feel for not being an

honorable male. Calling her my good girl may be wrong, but I find the shame is overshadowed by the warmth of my beating.

My beating was so hard when she corrected me from calling her a good female to a good girl. I heard a few males of my tribe call their females good on many occasions before the sickness took them. When the males did it, the female would hit him playfully or giggle or let him pull her into his arms. That is why I use it on Diane. I want her to know I think she is being so good by listening to me and being strong for me. When she corrected me, my cock stirred and started to harden. It was then that I really understood why the males called their females good.

I cannot think of how I messed up because it just leads me back to remembering how pink Diane gets when I say it and how easily she relaxes against me. She does as her Almaac says because she knows I am only telling her to do what is best for her. No, wait, I am not her Almaac. I need to not even think like that because it will only pressure her before she is fully healed.

I am supposed to go hunting later today, so maybe Olivia will come to watch Diane until I am back. That can give me time to calm my soul from trying to claim the female so quickly.

As if she can read my mind, Olivia appears in the open doorway. Her eyes are accusatory before I can even explain why I am sitting on the bed with Diane in my arms. I still have a leg thrown over her two small ones, and my arms are holding

her possessively, much like Ralleth holds her when they are sitting in the dining room. She can judge me, though, because I am in need of judgment.

“How is she doing?” Olivia asks. I know it is not the question she wants to ask, but she is being kind to me because she still thinks I am an honorable male.

“She is healing. She speaks now,” I say and look down at her with a smile. Diane is a strong female. Maybe not physically because she is small and weak like other human females. Her mind is strong, though, and so is her soul. “She fights in her dreams. I have to keep her still sometimes because she hurts herself with all the bruising.”

Olivia lets out a long breath of air, and then the suspicion in her eyes dies. “Oh, good. I thought you were already trying to claim her.” Her body relaxes, and she sits on the edge of the bed near Diane and lifts her hand to touch her forehead. I should tell Olivia that I am already trying to claim Diane, but I can’t force the words out of my mouth. I fear Olivia will be mad at me and might not let me be the one who watches and protects Diane.

“Will Ralleth’s creature stay with her while Almaac hunts today?”

Olivia thinks I have not claimed Diane, which I haven’t, but I want to. I’m hopeful Olivia will stay with Diane while I am gone. My biggest fear is that she will invite Erkoz into the room. I do not think Diane chose his tunic because her nose

has decided he is her mate, but I cannot be sure that will not happen while I am gone.

“I’ll be here.” Olivia looks up at me and then narrows her eyes on me. I do not look over at her because I cannot face the look of knowing that she has. “I’ll need a brother to help in case she needs to leave the room.”

I nod slowly as though I am unconcerned by another male touching and helping Diane. “Yes, humans are weak. You will need help.”

“Rude,” Olivia smiles at me when I speak. I do not mean to be rude. I only speak the truth. Humans are the weakest creatures, but that is something that makes them so appealing. It lets us be powerful males. Males that can protect and serve them with all of our being. It is fulfilling, and I am glad the humans are weak and rely on us. It gives my soul a purpose.

“Which brother will you ask?” I think about who will be left at the great hall today. Only ten of us are leaving to hunt for olack, so that leaves over twenty brothers for Olivia to choose from. Surely she will not choose Erkoz.

“If she is feeling better, I was going to explain some things about your customs and then let her meet Erkoz,” Olivia says as she stands from the bed. She does not see the look of betrayal I give her because surely she would not ask Erkoz if she knew how I feel about Diane. I cannot let her know, though, because I need to give Diane time to heal and get better. “She chose his tunic, and it would be nice to know if that’s an indicator of finding mates. There’s still so much we

don't understand about how our kinds interact, but I know we like your pheromones.”

Pheromones are what Olivia calls our smell. I do not know why she uses such a big word for it. Especially when she can just say human females like how some brothers smell. Olivia likes how Ralleth smells, and Diane may like how Erkoz smells. I do not think she will, though. I think she will miss my smell once I am out of her bed. At least, I really hope she will.

“Erkoz is a good male,” I say, trying not to let my emotions betray me. This small female is mine, or she will be mine once she is healed and can say so herself. But still, she will be mine. Not Erkoz's, not any of my brothers. She calls to my soul, and I will not let one of them try to take her from me. “He will keep her safe.”

Olivia turns to look at me, but I cannot look at her because she will see that I mean my words, but I dislike having to say them. So, I busy myself staring at Diane and how peaceful she looks as she is sleeping. Her breathing is even, and her beat is strong. I hope she does not fight in her dreams when Erkoz is watching her because then he will have to put his hands on her.

“I am here to relieve Almaac so he can get food,” Ralleth announces when he walks into the room. Whatever Olivia wants to say is silenced when her mate is near her. Maybe she does not want Ralleth to know what she suspects. Ralleth will be happy for me, but that is because he thinks finding a human mate is easy since he grabbed his Olivia and mated her before

a day had even passed. He will tell me to feed Diane my seed and have her call herself mine, so it is done, but she is still bruised and hurt. I cannot do that to her before she is better.

I look down at Diane and then back at Olivia and Ralleth, who are at the foot of the bed. “I cannot get up unless you would like for me to wake the female.”

Ralleth frowns when I don't say Diane's name. Does he think I do not want to bed her? Because I do. What if neither of them thinks I want to bed the female, and they use that as an excuse to push her to another male? Surely, they cannot think I would not be willing to bed her, but she is still so dark from where she was hurt. I could not bed or mate her without hating myself.

“I will wake her,” I blurt out. I cannot handle their eyes on me, and I want them to stop looking at me. It feels like I am wearing how much I want the female on my face. “She needs to eat, too. I can send another male with food for her.” Stupid Almaac. Why would you send another male? “No, I will bring her food,” I say quickly before they can think about what I said before.

I brush my fingers across Diane's cheek and then shift underneath her a bit. I need her to wake up so that she can hold herself long enough for me to get out from underneath her. Her eye, which is not swollen, flutters open after a moment of stroking her cheek, and then she looks up at me and takes a deep breath. She hasn't noticed Olivia or Ralleth, and I worry

she will say something that makes it obvious I have become too comfortable with her.

“Do you need to move, Almaac?” She says my name so sweetly. I do so badly want her to say it, but I know Ralleth and Olivia will think things that have not happened.

“Yes,” I say and lift my eyes to Olivia and Ralleth. My movement catches Diane’s attention, and then she jerks slightly when she sees we are not alone in the room. “Ralleth and his creature will watch you while I go get us some food.”

“Of course, yeah.” Diane’s face burns a soft pink like Olivia’s does when she is embarrassed by something the brothers say. I wonder what Diane could be turning pink for. I have said nothing to tease her, and neither has Ralleth or Olivia. “Sorry, just push me up, and I can hold myself.”

I help her into a sitting position so she is not leaning against me. She sways slightly as she holds herself up, but I only take a moment to push away from her and then clumsily untangle my legs from around her body. When she is no longer in my lap, I sit on my knees and help scoot her back against the headboard. I fuss with the pillows around her until she tells me she is comfortable.

“I will be back,” I say when I stand from the bed. I do not waste time saying goodbye to Ralleth or Olivia because I want to fill a plate and return to Diane as fast as possible. She is probably starving, so I know I will grab her only the best food. Whatever she does not eat, I will have, and then I will join the brothers who have already begun hunting. I am an excellent

hunter. I will kill an olack before the day is over, even if I start late.

I rush from table to table, grabbing the best pieces of food and piling them on a plate. A few brothers watch me with questioning eyes. They know I did not return to my bed last night, and they want to ask me if I have been with the female. Of course, I have, and of course, I want to tell them all that she is mine, but she is not yet. I ignore all of their looks because I do not want to answer their questions until I can tell them all proudly that Diane is mine.

“Brother!” Erkoz is a good, honorable male, and I should not be thinking about fighting him. His hands will be on my Diane soon, and that is all that I can think about. So, I am not surprised when he seems hurt when I turn to face him. My eyes are red, my lips are pulled back in a snarl, and my free hand is balled into a fist.

I rub my face with my hand until I can calm myself so my eyes turn back black. “Sorry, brother. I will explain to you another time. For now, I think it is best if we are not near each other for a few days.”

Erkoz frowns, and then his hand reaches up to rub his horn. “If I have done something, Almaac, I would like to apologize.”

“No, you haven’t,” I tell him honestly. I am the irrational male between us. I am angry at him because Diane chose his tunic, and that makes Olivia think she should have him watch her. “We will laugh about it when I can tell you. This, I promise.”

Erkoz gives me an unsure smile and a nod. I can see that he doesn't fully believe that everything is okay between us. I only need him to know I am not angry at him because that is not fair to him. Especially when he does not know what he has done.

I run back down the hall to Diane's room. I have been gone not too long, and when I return, I see her smiling and laughing with Olivia. It is a beautiful sound that I am grateful to have grace my ears. I almost do not want to make myself fully visible in the doorway because I want to continue to see the smile on her lips. She is such a beautiful human. Her skin is darker than Olivia's, as are her hair and eyes. She is taller than Ralleth's creature, but her tits are smaller, which makes me wonder how the size of them is determined. I would think a female that is bigger would have bigger tits, but Diane's are barely noticeable under the tunic. Thinking of her tits has my cock hardening out of its pocket, and I am frowning and telling it to go back away.

"Almaac?" My eyes snap from my waistband to the female sitting in bed. My name on her lips only has my cock refusing to go back inside, so I am left walking over to them and hoping they do not notice that I am hard and close to release.

"Sorry," I say, though I do not know why I am apologizing. Thankfully, no one asks either. Instead, Olivia watches me warily and stands from where she is sitting on the bed so I can take her place. "Can I help you eat?"

“Oh, no. I can do it. You don’t need to worry about me.” Diane shakes her head, which causes her to wince. I narrow my eyes at her and press my lips together. I do not like that she hurts herself instead of letting me help her. She lifts her arms to take the food, but I can see the strain on her face as she tries to hide how much it hurts her to move.

I keep the plate in my hands and sit down on the bed, facing her. “Almaac was being kind in asking. You will let him help you eat, yes?”

I hear Olivia huff behind me and realize I have said something she does not like. I do not know what it is because Diane is smiling at me with a sweet look that does not make it seem like she is upset with me. When she nods at me to help her eat, I ignore what Olivia does not like because I am sure she will see that I do nothing but help Diane.

I make quick work of grabbing a piece of olack for her, and she does not even hesitate to eat it from my hand when I offer it to her. She does not question the meat, even though it is not from her world. She trusts me enough to know I will care for her.

“Good girl,” I say, barely a whisper from my lips, because I do not need Olivia or Ralleth to know that I have started calling Diane sweet names. Those are for us and will be what she is called later when she finally mates with me. Her face flushes, but the adoration in her eyes makes me beam with pride.

Diane continues to eat from my hand because she has been sent by the goddess for me. I cannot think of a more perfect female. I want to care for and protect, and this human needs to be cared for and protected. How could she not be perfect for me?

Olivia makes a soft coughing sound behind me, which reminds me she and Ralleth are still in the room. I continue feeding Diane and wait to see if Olivia is going to speak what she needs to say. Instead, Diane holds up her hand and shakes her head softly as she swallows her last bite.

“Thank you, Almaac.”

I rub her cheek with my thumb before moving on the bed to sit next to her so I can eat while looking at Olivia and Ralleth. I do not miss the happiness in Ralleth’s eyes and the worry in Olivia’s.

“Have you told her of our customs, brother?” Ralleth asks with a smile. He is asking because Diane has said my name many times in front of them now. I think nothing of it because she has not been told what it implies. It would be cruel of me to think she means to bed me by saying it now. I will use the sound of my name on her lips later when I relieve myself, though.

“I have not, and so I do not hold her to any of them.” I make sure to look at Olivia to see that she knows I speak the truth. “I thought Ralleth’s creature would want to tell her, so she knows the female has been told everything.”

Olivia looks pleased with me when I speak, and I think it makes up for the sounds of unhappiness she had earlier. Surely she is only worried about her sister because there is no reason for her to think I am anything other than an honorable male, and I am. So long as no one knows that I have already decided Diane is mine. If they know, they may not think I am honorable, but none of them know, so I am safe. I know she worries about her sister, so I do not feel bad about her questioning eyes as I sit next to Diane in bed like I was made to be next to her.

“Olivia was telling me you need to leave soon?” Diane says the words as a question. I keep chewing on what remains of the olack and flicker my eyes between Olivia and Diane. Does she want me to leave?

I swallow my food after chewing on it for longer than necessary. “Yes, I told Ralleth I would hunt today. Few males wanted to go so soon after a female arrived.”

“Oh,” Diane looks down at her hands and starts picking at her tiny claws. “I thought you would be here for a little while longer.”

She wants me to stay! This is good to know, but I can’t stay with her today. I have told my tribe leader that I will go hunt, and so I will go hunt. Diane will be here when I return, and then I can see about getting her healed and then mating with her.

“I will be back soon,” I say before touching her face again. I like the feel of her smooth skin, and when I’m touching her, I

can feel the warmth of her. Even though her body looks so bruised, she is still so full of life. “We do not stay out after dark, so you can see me then, yes?”

Diane lifts her eyes to mine, and I see that I have said the right thing, for she is blessing me with as big a smile as she can make with how swollen her face is. “Good. I was worried you’d be gone for a while.”

“Oh no,” Ralleth says, alerting us once again that we are not alone in the room. “Almaac is the best hunter in the tribe. A female would never need to worry about being provided for by him.”

Olivia hits Ralleth in the chest with a flick of her hand, and I know she is doing it because Ralleth is trying too hard to make the female want to mate with me. I appreciate the efforts, but she is most obviously going to be my female.

“Can I speak with the female for a moment, and then I will leave?” I ask Olivia because she is the one I do not want to hear what I am about to say.

“Of course.” Ralleth picks Olivia up and carries her out of the room before shutting it firmly. He is a good male to help me so much. I am sure his mate is not happy with him, but his best friend is.

I turn to Diane because I want to be quick in what I say, but I also do not want to force her into thinking about mating with other males. It is still her decision, no matter how badly I want her to choose me. “I would ask that you not say any of my brothers’ names while I am gone.”

Diane gives me a confused look that has her trying to squish her eyebrows together, and it causes her pain. I reach out and brush her cheek, hoping to soothe some of the pain as best I can with just my touch.

“I would tell you why, but I do not know if Olivia will be happy with me if I do, so for now, will you please just say Almaac’s name if you must say a name?” It is selfish of me to ask, but I cannot bear the thought of her saying another male’s name. Not while I am unable to tell her she is most certainly not going to bed him because she will share a bed with me.

Diane raises her hand to hold my hand on her cheek. “Will you come back safe?”

“Of course,” I laugh as I say it because I am a powerful male. I have never once been hurt while out hunting. “I am an excellent hunter.”

“You come back safe, and I’ll make sure I only say your name.” Diane lets her head relax against my palm, and I realize this must be why Ralleth enjoys Olivia so much. The small creatures allow us to comfort and protect them. There is nothing greater.

“I will be safe then,” I say softly before I am pushing myself away from her and leaving the room. I move quickly because the sooner I am out hunting, the faster I will kill an olack. Then I will be able to care for Diane. Yes, I must get back fast before the other males think she is for them.

Diane

“So I’m sure you have just like all the questions, and we’ll get to all of them eventually since there isn’t much to do here except talk and hang out,” Olivia says.

When Almaac left, she had another demon, Erkoz, come help me out of bed. I don’t like him touching me as much as I like Almaac’s hands on me. I told him I could walk on my own when he tried to help me out of bed. Was it a little dumb? Most definitely, but it made me feel better because I thought Almaac would be proud of me for not letting his brother touch me. Of course, I made it all of two steps before the world started spinning, and then Erkoz wrapped his arm around me to stabilize me. He let me walk, but I could tell he wanted to pick me up and carry me into the dining hall.

“Are they all going to stare?” There are a couple dozen demons of varying shades of red with varying styles of horns, all staring at me and Olivia. It’s not unsettling, but it makes me feel like they’re all watching and listening to everything I say and do. For some of them, I’m the second female they’ve ever

even seen, and for most of them, they are all hoping I will choose them. I'm probably awful because I don't want to give any of the men still sitting in the great hall a chance.

Maybe I'm rude because all the males want my attention, but I only want Almaac to come back so I can keep getting to know him. He reminds me of Blake, and it might be a little fucked up, but I really miss him. Maybe finding a demon who reminds me of him will make all of this easier. Not that Blake or the demon have anything in common other than their soft, demanding demeanor, but that's a comfort I haven't felt in so long.

"They'll be staring for a long time," Olivia laughs as she speaks. Even her mate is sitting in a chair at another table with his eyes transfixed on her. "They think if they watch us enough, they'll be able to make a female want them. And they probably want to know what they can do to make you want to be their mate."

I frown slightly and try to raise my eyebrows, but it's impossible. "Maybe we start there then, so I don't accidentally mate one of them."

Olivia's smile drops, and her eyes go hard. Before she can even speak, the brothers are already defending themselves.

"We would never."

"Ralleth's creature knows the brothers are not like that."

"You can not be upset with us when we have done nothing wrong."

Olivia closes her eyes and licks her lips before nodding. “I’m sorry.” She turns to all the males who are watching us and offers them an apologetic smile. “You know Ralleth’s creature is worried for her sisters.”

Erkoz lets out a huff and then shifts in his seat. “Does Ralleth’s creature really think we would feed the female our seed without asking her?”

“Excuse me?” The words are more of a gasp, and I can feel my face flushing.

“Ralleth’s brothers!” Olivia throws her hands up. “You have to let Olivia tell the sisters because you all say things in a way that shocks us.”

Erkoz is laughing next to me, with his eyes moving quickly between Olivia and me. “The humans react so funny to normal mating customs. How can I not just blurt them out?”

“I’m ignoring you now,” I say to Erkoz before turning away from him and focusing fully on Olivia. He thinks my reaction is even funnier because he’s laughing hard again, along with a couple of other demons. I can’t even see them because they’re sitting on the side with my swollen eye. It makes it easier to pretend he’s not there, trying to make me even more embarrassed. “So, in order to mate, you blow them?”

“Blow us?” I don’t know which demon asks it, but he sounds more confused than anything. “Is this a human custom?”

Olivia's face reddens much like mine, and she's shooing away the question with a wave of her hand. "Yes, now shush, so I can speak to my sister." She shakes her head softly, but she's smiling still, which means everything's okay. For all I know, this is what life has been like for her for the last month while she was here alone.

"In order to be mated to one of them, you eat their seed and call yourself theirs," Olivia says quickly. "And none of them will trick you into it because they are honorable males, yes?" She asks the question loudly with a cock of her brow, and she's immediately met with a chorus of "of course" and "yes."

"They really are good men." She turns her attention back to me. "A little eager and excited, yes. But they'll care for you and love you with everything they have."

I nod but don't say anything. I'm not too sure what I want yet, and I definitely don't want to be thinking about mating any of them. I can barely think about any of them except for Almaac anyway, so I don't know what good it is to be talking about mating when he's not even here so I can gauge his reaction to it. Not that I want to mate with him anytime soon, but I want to see if maybe I can feel something for someone again. Especially if he continues to make me feel the same way I used to feel with my husband.

"Tell her about saying our names," Erkoz says, a little too excited. I want to snap my eyes over to him and frown in his general direction because he's being a nuisance more than anything else. It's not his fault because, like all the other

demons, he's just excited. His excitement comes out in jokes and humor, though. Jokes at my expense since I don't know so much. All of them seem to find it entertaining, though, which only fuels my irritation.

Olivia must sense my frustration because she cuts a hard look over at Erkoz. "What did I say about other females not being the same as me?"

The room goes quiet, and the laughter stops. "Erkoz is sorry." His voice is low when he speaks, and I have a feeling that if I were to look over, he wouldn't be making eye contact with either of us. "He enjoys making jokes. He will no longer speak." And now I feel awful. Poor guy just wanted to be humorous and impress the new human with his jokes. Something that Olivia apparently found endearing.

"It's okay," I chew on my lips when I finish speaking because I'm not sure what to say. I turn to face him and offer him an apologetic smile, but he isn't even looking at me anymore. "I'm sure another human will like your jokes."

Erkoz flicks his eyes over to mine as he rubs his horn. "I shouldn't make jokes until I know the female. That is my fault."

"Not just yours," Olivia adds. "All the brothers are trying to make jokes and make my sister turn pink, aren't you?"

Grumbling from all around means they all thought it would be funny to make the human uncomfortable. "She picked my tunic. I thought she would be receptive to me."

“Shit,” Olivia mumbles under her breath and has me raising my brows. I didn’t know that the pile of shirts meant something to the demons. I just grabbed the first one I could and had Olivia help me put it on. “Alright, let me explain some things to you because the brothers are all going to get weird about your nose soul eventually.”

“My what?”

“They have pheromones,” Olivia says and then pauses like she’s making sure I know what those are. I mean, I kind of do. Not scientifically or anything, but it’s just smells that make a person attracted to someone, right? “I’m not entirely sure how it works, but we were all kind of seeing if you would pick your mate’s tunic because it smelled nice to you.”

“Oh?” I finger the tunic I’m wearing and give an awkward glance to Erkoz, who’s watching me closely. He must know he’s most definitely not my mate. No offense to the guy, but he annoys me more than anything else, and I’m not one who needs someone always trying to be the funny guy with her. “This must be a disappointment, then.” He says nothing, but he turns his eyes from me because he knows I’m telling the truth. Neither of us is much the type for the other.

“Erkoz had a feeling when a brother was angry with him,” Erkoz says. “I wanted to make sure, though. My mate will find humor in my jokes.”

I let out a huff that is meant as a laugh because I don’t want the demon to think I am upset with him for blatantly rejecting me in front of everyone. Who would have thought I’d get

rejected by a male that hasn't been with a woman ever? I mean, that has to be an achievement of some sort.

“Which brother was mad at you?” Olivia asks as she looks around the tables. “No one should be getting mad at their brothers over a female.”

“It does not matter,” Erkoz says. “I am not upset. No brothers are upset. Ralleth's creature does not need to be upset.”

Olivia turns to Ralleth, who is staring at her with a mischievous glint in his eyes. Yeah, he knows who's upset, and I can probably take a guess about who it is, too. Should I be mad that a demon has already staked a claim on me? Probably, but I'm not because it's the demon I kind of want to stake a claim on me. If only he was actually here for me to tell him. Olivia makes an unhappy sound but turns to me.

“The pheromones drew me to Ralleth like drew me to him and his bed. Do you understand?” Olivia asks. And yes, I do, in fact, understand that she's saying the demons have a smell that makes us want to fuck their brains out. Got it. Have I felt it since being there? No. I've felt aches, pains, and misery because my body's struggling not to hurt for more than a few seconds at a time. “They can't control it, and as far as I can tell, I'm only drawn to Ralleth's. So, you're kind of the guinea pig to see if the pheromones draw you to one of them.”

“I haven't felt much of anything besides the bruises,” I say honestly.

I've been drawn to Almaac, but that's because he reminds me of Blake. Who's to know if the pheromones of another brother won't be what draws me to a different demon? I hope not because I'm enjoying my time with Almaac. Even looking around the tables at the demons who didn't go hunting, I don't feel drawn to any of them like I do Almaac.

“Besides the mating process, the only other important custom is that you don't say a male's name unless you're willing to take him to bed.” Olivia crosses her arms in front of her chest as she speaks and leans back in her chair. “The brothers are all very understanding because I've messed up a few times. They won't do anything if you say their names, but they'll tease you for it and also probably ask if you're being serious.”

My eyes go wide when she says that because it reminds me of Almaac telling me not to say any other brother's names. He didn't tell me why, but I figured it was important to him. I didn't think it was because it was meant to signal that I'd fuck them.

“If I've already said a male's name?” I ask, trying not to choke on the words.

“Almaac is an honorable male,” Ralleth answers way too loudly for my liking. “He knows you say his name just because he is the one caring for you. He expects nothing from you.”

He definitely seemed like he expected something of me when he asked me not to say any other male's name, but that's

not something I'm going to bring up with Olivia. Especially not with all the other demons around, ready to laugh and make jokes. Not to mention she already seems upset that Almaac has done so much to claim me before I fully understood what was going on. Not that I can blame the guy. I enjoy being around him, probably as much as he enjoys being around me.

“We should get her one of Almaac’s tunics to wear,” Erkoz says the words slowly and to Ralleth instead of Olivia or me. “She does not want me as a mate, and I don’t think it’s right to make her wear my tunic.”

“Oh, it’s fine,” I say, trying not to make it seem like I’m being that petty over what clothing I wear. I shouldn’t care that it’s not Almaac’s tunic that’s covering me, but when Erkoz brings it up, it’s suddenly all I can think about. Is that why Almaac is mad at him? It has to be because, as far as I can tell, Erkoz hasn’t done anything worth getting mad about.

“It is not fine,” Erkoz counters without a lick of humor in his voice. “Does the female not want to be in Almaac’s clothing? Maybe another brother? Not Erkoz’s, though. And I do not say this to make the female feel bad. She is not Erkoz’s mate, and that is okay. She should not have to wear the smell of a male she does not want, though.”

My eye crinkles in the corner, and I feel my lips tug into a smile. “You are a good male,” I tell him when I can see how flustered he is by what he’s saying. Olivia’s looking at him like he’s grown a second head because he definitely doesn’t

sound like the same joking demon from a moment earlier. “I would very much like a different tunic.”

“I will get you one. Almaac shares a room with Xoth and me, so I know where his tunics are.” Erkoz doesn’t wait for Olivia or Ralleth or anyone else to say anything to him. He pushes away from the table like a man on a mission. It’s not until he’s turning down a hallway that another brother speaks.

“Is Almaac in trouble with Ralleth’s creature?”

I frown. Why would Almaac be in trouble? The male has been nothing but kind to me since I came to the new world. If she’s mad at him, then she’s going to be having problems with me as well. She must sense my frustration at her and her judgment when I turn to face her with my one good eye squinted in disapproval.

“I’m not upset with any of Ralleth’s brothers,” Olivia says quickly while looking at me. “I tried to pick one that you wouldn’t be drawn to stay with you the first night. I feel like I’ve failed you.” And the weirdest part is that she seems like she actually means it.

“I’m not jumping anyone’s bones for a while,” I try to laugh as I say it, but it makes my chest hurt. “I don’t even know if any of their pheromones are calling to me because I’m only in pain. I don’t think you need to feel apologetic until I’m feeling better. Then you can try to set me up with my demon charming.”

Erkoz chooses that moment to come back with a new tunic, and it seems he’s back to being in a joking mood because he

lets out a bark of laughter. “The female does not want a charming male. If she did, she would say Erkoz’s name, not Almaac’s.”

I roll my eye, which has the room spinning. Erkoz runs over to me to make sure I’m okay when I wince. “I forgot no jokes, sorry.”

“Not a joke if it’s true,” Another demon says in jest, and I’m left trying to decide which demon to narrow my eyes at for saying my demon isn’t charming. My demon. Hm? Well, maybe those pheromones are doing something after all.

Diane

We sit in the dining hall most of the day, talking about Olivia's life since she's been here and how life on Earth is going. Olivia tells me about what it was like when she first arrived. When Ralleth immediately scooped her up and took her to his room to study her body because he didn't know if she was a female. I had to snort when she told me he called her an it for a while, and the look on his face told me he didn't enjoy the reminder of his ineptitude. As if to make his mate as uncomfortable as he was, he reminded her it was Almaac that helped him check to see if she was a female. My frown was intense learning that, and at least Olivia noticed I was unhappy. Ralleth was too happy to see both of our faces blush.

Most of the males stayed around the table to enjoy the conversation with us. They were all much more respectful when they spoke with me after Olivia made it clear I wasn't as big a fan of their jokes as she was. Maybe I'd feel differently if I was sitting in the lap of a male I knew would keep me safe and make me feel better when my cheeks flushed red, but I

wasn't. And none of the demons were even giving me a second glance. Something happened, and no one was telling me what it was.

I had to use the bathroom a few times, and unfortunately for me, that meant Erkoz helped me walk outside to the small buildings they used as the restrooms. I don't know why I was still thinking there would be actual toilets. Nothing about how we were living should've made me think there would be toilets, but I really hoped there would be. Thankfully, Erkoz made sure I was seated and then would close the door. He waited for me to call him back to help me stand again.

Walking is slow all day, and I'm sure everyone wishes I'd just let Erkoz carry me, but I only want one demon to carry me. Unfortunately, he's off killing animals so we can eat. I shouldn't hold it against him since it seems like the plans were made before I even came into the world, but I wish he would've been the one to stay with me on my first day so that way he could help me around. I would've let him carry me, feed me, do whatever he thought I needed. Because men like Almaac and my Blake are protectors, nurturers, and that's what I need.

"The sun will be low soon," Erkoz says as we near the great hall from our last bathroom visit. "Does the female want to bathe before she goes to sleep? Ralleth's creature usually bathes in the morning, but I do not know if you want to wait that long."

I should say no thank you or have Olivia help me to the water. Those are things I should do, but I'm not thinking clearly when I think about being able to bathe all the sweat and grime off of me. The planet the Hands sent us to is hot and humid, which leaves a fine layer of sweat on my body no matter what. It was bearable when I was pressed against Almaac's cool body because it lowered my body temperature. I've been sweating all day just sitting in the dining hall, though.

Erkoz must notice the conflict going on inside me because he kneels down beside me so I'm looking into his eyes. "Erkoz will do nothing to the female. She does not like his jokes, so he does not like her body."

I narrow my eyes on him. "Rude."

"I think you are rude, too. It is what bonds us, yes?" The demon is joking with me. Of course he is. I don't think the demon knows any other way to be than joking.

"I'll sic my sister after you when she gets here," I say with an eye roll. "She'll be able to put you in your place."

"Which place would that be?" Erkoz asks as he leads me through the small tribe toward a small pond that's fed by a stream that runs through one side of the tribe.

I try to think of something clever to say back to him, but I'm not my sister, and the cleverness was never what I excelled at. Kendra would be able to handle the demon and his playfulness, though. Not that I should get his hopes up for another woman when she could reject him just as easily as I

have. Still, he seems like a good guy, considering he's been helping me all day with no chance of mating with me.

"Her name is Kendra," I say and risk a side glance at the demon. He's looking down at me with a look of surprise. "She'll be the next one sent."

"You would give me her name?" Erkoz asks slowly, like he is trying to make sure I remember what we talked about earlier, about how weird they are with names. "You think I am rude, and you still offer him kindness?"

"You've offered me kindness all day, and you think I'm rude."

"Well, you are a hurt human female," Erkoz says as he helps me to the edge of the pond. The water is warm, which is a little upsetting since I really wanted something cool.

"And you're a hurt male," I say without thinking about it. He is hurt. He was rejected pretty publicly in front of everyone after thinking he might have a mate since I took his tunic. "It's what bonds us." I smile at him and wait for him to smile back before sucking my lower lip between my teeth and chewing on it.

"Erkoz will strip you now, yes?" He asks as he grabs the hem of my tunic. I nod and let him work it slowly over my arms and then over my head. He hisses when he sees my body for the first time. I haven't been able to look down at my body because it makes my stomach churn too much to even think about. I focus on the red of his eyes as he looks away from me because it's what's keeping me from looking down and crying.

I'm about to ask him if I need to wait until later to clean because I don't want to make him uncomfortable, but then his eyes flash back to black, and he is waving. "Erkoz is going to be in trouble." He looks back down at me, but instead of being angry at how I look, he smiles at me and raises his bumpy brows in excitement. "If you say my name when he comes over, I will bother your sister until she wants to kill me."

When who comes over? Oh shit. I turn around slowly because my head is still spinning slightly. I don't need to see him before I know who's going to be mad that I'm completely stripped and in the bathing pool with another male. Almaac's eyes are red, but he's fully focused on Erkoz and not me. Making it perfectly clear which of us he's mad at. He's stomping toward us but stops abruptly and looks down at me. Does he think I want Erkoz and not him? He probably hasn't talked to any other demons, if that's what he's thinking.

"It will be funny," Erkoz, the little devil, hisses with too much humor in his voice.

"I'm going to have Kendra make you fall in love with her and never say your name." I snap at him. "Maybe I'll ask her to bed all the brothers except you."

"Almaac's female is rude," Erkoz says loudly. Too loud because I know Almaac can hear him, and I know he's trying to cause more issues by calling me Almaac's.

Almaac hears Erkoz's words because his eyes snap to being black, and then he's smiling softly. I don't miss his hand adjusting himself in his pants. He still doesn't move, but that's

because he's waiting for me to ask him to join me. I try to lift my hand to him, but it hurts, and a wince forms on my face.

"You'll have to invite him over," Erkoz whispers to me. "He is an honorable male and won't invade your bathing."

That's all the prompting I need to call out for the demon I really want to help me bathe. "Almaac, will you-?" I don't even get the full question out of my mouth before he's pulling his tunic over his head and working the strings of his pants as he walks toward the water.

Erkoz stands from the water, reminding me he's actually a friend because he didn't even think about stripping out of his clothes. They're wet and clinging to his body, and his erection is still very noticeable, even though we have more of a love-hate relationship than anything romantic. He's a dripping mess as he walks past Almaac. He pats Almaac on the arm and then gives him a knowing smile before leaving us alone.

Almaac keeps his pants on as he nears me. I'm at the edge of the pool, and I see it becomes deeper as soon as you enter it. Erkoz kept me on the edge and entered so he could bring the water up to my body and wash me. Not that he ever got to the washing part before we were interrupted. Almaac kneels behind me, his pants slung low on his hips. I lean against him when he's near, and I feel the tension in my body relax a bit.

"I missed you," I say with a sigh when he reaches up to brush my cheek with his thumb. I know he can see all of me, all of my bruises, but he's not saying anything about them. He's just letting me enjoy his touch before he helps me clean

myself. Then it'll be off to bed because I already feel exhausted.

“Almaac will clean you, yes?” He asks as he stands again. I stare up at him and admire just how beautiful his body is when the last bit of light from the sky is fading. He smiles at me, and I remember I need to answer his question.

“Please.” My eye falls down from his face to his chest and then his hips, where his pants are just barely hanging on. I want them to slip down just a bit more so I can see what's hidden underneath. Olivia said they're pretty normal looking, just covered in scales. Oh, and they apparently come out of a pocket which should be more concerning, but so long as I don't need to do anything with the pocket, I'll be fine.

“Almaac will take his pants off so they do not get wet, yes?”

My eyes snap up to his face at what he is asking me. I suck my lip into my mouth and nod so small I don't know if he even sees it. He must because he's moving the pants down his legs and covering himself so I can't see his cock. I want to tell him to move his hands because that's the whole reason I wanted him to take off his pants. He's hopping in the water before I can tell him how much I want to see what he's packing.

“Wait,” I say as his body falls into the water, and it covers him up to his waist. Just enough so I'm only able to see his cock through the water, which isn't the same at all. Not to mention it's pretty obvious that I'm begging the water to still so I can see him.

“Hm?” Almaac asks with the same inflection as when he made the same sound last night when I asked him to call me a good girl. I narrow my eye at him, but he just cocks his head to the side. He’s still taller than me, even when I’m sitting on the edge of the pool. It’s not as drastic a difference as when he’s standing next to me, but it still reminds me just how much smaller I am than the men on the planet.

“You will stand,” Almaac doesn’t add the question at the end of his command. I was wondering how long he’d be able to keep that part of it up when there was no one around giving him sounds of disapproval when he told me to do something. His hands are wrapped around my hips gently, and he helps me scoot closer to the edge of the pool. “When Almaac finishes cleaning your upper half, you will sit on the edge and let him clean your lower half.”

The water envelopes my lower half and the first half of my abdomen. I sway a bit in the water, but Almaac is holding me tightly to keep me upright. He moves me through the water so we’re trading positions with his back pressed against the edge of the pond. His body sinks lower, and then I see he’s squatting with his legs bent and then pulling me onto his thighs so the water is just barely covering my shoulders.

“Sit still,” Almaac’s words are breathy as he speaks, and I wonder just how worked up he is. He sounds like he’s desperate for me, but there isn’t much I can do in the state I’m in. Almaac’s hands glide over my back, slowly and deliberately, as he rubs the sweat and grime off of my body. I

whimper when he runs over some bruises. “Almaac is taking care of you. Nothing bad will happen to you ever again.”

When he’s rubbed everything off the center of my back, he moves his hands to work around my sides. I let my arms float in the water so they are not in his way. His hands move even slower on my sides like he doesn’t want to stop touching me ever. When he brushes the side of my breasts, I let out a whimper that’s definitely from arousal and not pain. His hands still their movements, just barely touching my breasts, and I want for him to move his hands around to cup them completely.

“Stop moving,” Almaac’s voice is strained. I don’t even realize I’m wiggling my body against him until he says something. Then my body goes completely rigid, more so in embarrassment than anything else. His hands move back down to my waist, and then he tugs me back so my back is pressed against him. His cock digs into my lower back, but he doesn’t mention it, and I try not to wiggle against it. He holds me against him for a long moment, like he’s trying to make sure I’m still. Then he lowers his head close to mine, and I feel him nuzzle against the top of my head. “Good girl.”

I whimper again, and his cock twitches. At least he knows I’m whimpering in pleasure and not because of my bruises. One hand remains on my waist, keeping me pinned to him, and the other splays out to cover my entire abdomen before he begins rubbing it softly, making sure not to go too low or too high. Always just barely not touching what I want him to touch.

“Did you have a good day?” Almaac’s voice rustles my hair, telling me he’s still close to me.

“I did.” I let my head fall back against his chest. “I learned lots of things today, Almaac.”

His hand stills for a moment, and his cock twitches against me again. I’m sure he has some idea of what Olivia told me since he talked about their customs before he left. When his hand moves again, I feel him softly graze the underside of my breasts, and I shift underneath him again.

“Still,” Almaac stops his movements and doesn’t start them up again until I stop wriggling. “You’re hurting yourself when you move. Do not do it again.”

My stomach erupts in butterflies at his command, and I want to see if I can get another good girl out of him before we leave the bathing pool. “I’ll try my best.”

“I know you will,” He says as his hand moves over my breast completely and squeezes it softly. So soft I don’t know if he did it on purpose or if it was just a reflex. Either way, it is clear he’s testing me, wanting to make sure I stay still. He rubs against my breast in circular motions to at least keep up an appearance of cleaning me. “See, you can be still.”

“I can,” I barely whisper the words as his hand brushes against my nipple before he’s throwing all pretenses of cleaning to the side and pinching the stiff peak softly. I let out a moan that has my body shivering because of how badly I want to move.

“Still,” Almaac moves his hand from my waist so he’s grabbing both my nipples at the same time. “Almaac will take care of you.”

“You take such good care of me.” The words are out of my mouth before I can think whether I should lead the demon on even more. Not that it’s really leading on if I want him. It might be considered rude if he knows it’s because he reminds me of my late husband, though.

“I have been blessed.” He moves one of his hands up to my collarbone and holds me gently. It’s a possessive hold, but he’s making sure not to put any pressure on me because of how hurt I am. His hands move back to my waist. “Your top half is clean. What will you do so Almaac can take care of you?”

I take a deep breath that reminds me of my ribs and how badly they hurt. I can’t stop how rapidly I’m breathing, though. If his cleaning of my lower half is anywhere as good as his cleaning of my top half, I’m in for more than just having him rub my legs free of their sweat.

“Sit on the edge and be still,” I say with an exhale.

Almaac stands and moves us slowly so that way we’ve traded spots. He lifts me back onto the edge of the pool and looks over my body. I’m sure I’m flushed, and my nipples are hard. He’s been getting me all worked up when he’s supposed to be cleaning me. Not that I’m complaining. He smiles to himself as he looks at my body and then flicks his eyes back up to mine.

“Lie down,” He loops one arm behind me and uses the other to push me gently to my back. “You can barely sit. I will not have you in pain when I clean you.”

My legs are still clamped together as I lie down. They’re bent, so my calves are still in the water, and I can feel Almac pressed against my shins when he finally gets me on my back. He lifts one of my legs out of the water and starts rubbing his fingers over my skin. He’s slow and deliberate with his motions, and it feels like he’s been massaging my calf for too long by the time he places my leg back into the water. Then, much to my disappointment, he grabs the other.

“Did Ralleth’s creature tell you all of our customs?” Almac asks as he sets my leg back in the water. He leans back over me so I can look at his face when I answer. “Answer.”

“Yes,” The word is barely a squeak because if he knows I know all of their customs, then he knows that I’ve been calling his name, knowing exactly what I’m doing. Not that we’ve been exactly not touching one another. His eyes narrow on me, and I realize I haven’t told him exactly what he wants to hear. “Yes, Almac.”

He lets out a soft huff. “Good girl.” He uses the moment of ecstasy the words coat me in to spread my legs and stand between them so I can’t close them. I wiggle against his body, but then his eyes are hard on me, and the smile he was wearing a moment before is gone. “You will be still, or Almac will stop cleaning you.”

My body goes still immediately, and I tell myself to go limp so I don't accidentally move and ruin whatever is about to happen.

"My female wants me to be proud of her." He says as he runs his hands up my thighs. "I can tell how much she wants to be good. She knows I will take care of her. She wants to do what I say because I know what's best. I can keep her safe. Make her feel good."

"Please," The whimper is small, but it's all Almaac needs to move his hands between my legs and spread my lips. "Yes."

"I am just cleaning, my Diane." He tells me. I don't miss that it's the first time he's said my name, and it has butterflies erupting in my stomach. "So long as she doesn't move, he can keep cleaning her because she is not hurting herself."

I whine and feel my pussy clench around nothing. He moves his fingers between my lips and starts to strum my clit like he's familiar with it. I'd worry about it more if he wasn't making me feel so good. "Almaac." His name is a moan on my lips as I beg my body not to move.

"Almaac's Diane is taking her bath so good." He lavishes me in praise as he keeps up the same rhythm against my clit. I would be a wriggling, mewling mess underneath him if I wasn't so bruised. I really wish I'd known it would be like this when I was sent because then I wouldn't have gotten jumped the day I was supposed to come. "I will need to clean you often until you are healed since I cannot mate you. You will only let Almaac bathe you, and you will only have Almaac

take care of you.” He takes a deep breath, and I feel his exhale chill my abdomen. “Say it.”

“Only Almaac.” The words are shaky as I feel myself getting close to coming. “Almaac cleans me, takes care of me,” I’m an idiot. “Only Almaac mates me.”

Almaac’s entire demeanor changes as the last confession leaves my mouth. His fingers keep up their same pace, but then I feel him push a finger inside of me. My breathing is ragged and desperate, and I’m so close to falling into pleasure.

“Say it again,” Almaac commands right as I’m on the edge of pleasure. His movements are deliberate, and his eyes are hard, like he’ll have me come as soon as I tell him I want him to be the one to mate me.

“Only Almaac mates Diane,” The end of the statement turns into a desperate cry as my body tumbles into sweet ecstasy. Almaac keeps his movements the same until my breathing has evened, and then he moves his fingers off my clit and pulls the other out from inside me.

His tongue snakes around his fingers, tasting me. “Diane is Almaac’s good girl.” It isn’t a question. It’s a statement.

“Diane is Almaac’s good girl,” I repeat.

Almaac jumps out of the water and moves a few feet away before he’s pumping his cock and releasing himself into his hand. He grabs his tunic off the ground and cleans himself off before returning to me, still lying on the edge of the pool. At

least he was kind enough not to come in the bathing pool, but I'd have much preferred if he came in or on me.

“It is time to sleep,” Almaac says as he pulls his pants back on. He sits me up and puts my tunic back over me. He looks at it with narrowed eyes and then looks up at me. “This is mine.”

“Is that okay?”

Almaac smiles again, but instead of answering, he finishes helping my arms through and then scoops me into his arms so he can carry me off to bed. I nuzzle my head close against his chest and take a deep inhale of him. Something about him makes me calm and relaxed, and it's like I'm able to just drift off to sleep, not caring that we aren't even close to our room yet. My sleep doesn't bring sweet dreams, though. No, it brings me nightmares in the form of Blake being so disappointed in what I have allowed to happen.

Almaac

Almaac is not an honorable male, and I am done pretending to be one. If the way Diane responds to me is wrong, then I will never be honorable again. Surely the goddess would not have put such a perfect female in my life if she was not intent on letting me have her. And Diane definitely seems like she wants me too. Yes, she was so still, even when her body wanted to jerk and wriggle in pleasure. She remained perfectly still because I asked it. She must be made for me.

Diane is asleep in my arms like we were sitting earlier, but I have decided this is how we will fall asleep. My leg is already thrown over hers, one arm around her waist and the other is ready to hold her shoulders if she jerks in her sleep again. I wait until I am sure she is asleep before I allow myself to drift off to sleep as well. I make sure to cover us in the blankets because it is too cold in the room for me, even with Diane heating me. I also partially hope she will feel gross, like Olivia does in the morning, and will want me to help her bathe again.

“Sweet dreams.” I rub my thumb over her cheek before leaning my head against the headboard. “I will keep my good girl safe from all things,” I mumble as I close my eyes.

Calling Diane mine is not something I should get in the habit of, considering I am not supposed to be pursuing her as a mate until she is healed, but it is hard when I know she is mine. It doesn't help that I can still replay her calling herself mine, telling me she wanted to mate with only me while I was bringing her pleasure. I should not be thinking about those words while I am lying in bed because I am getting hard again. I wiggle a bit and try to will my cock to go back into my pocket because I can do nothing for it right now.

“I'm sorry.” My Diane is whimpering in her dreams. It is something she has done before, but she has never apologized, and I do not know why she would apologize. As far as I can tell, she dreams of what happened to her before she was sent to me. Right now, she is dreaming of something else, though. I have my arms braced to keep her from moving, but she is still.

“Blake,” I furrow my brows as I look down at her. Her face is twisted up, and she looks upset. “Please.” A tear starts to fall down her cheek, and that is when my heart really starts racing. My Diane fights in her dreams. She does not apologize or cry. No, whatever is happening to her while she is sleeping now must be truly awful if she is crying. I hold her tightly because I know it is best to let the dream finish. It is how you let the dreams pass and release into the world.

Diane whimpers again, and then she wails loudly and throws her body around more ferociously than she does when she's fighting in her dreams. I am prepared for her body to move, so I'm already holding her down. What I am not prepared for is the sobbing that is erupting from her lungs. It is so loud that I know it will have others coming in, so I try to get her to calm down before she has everyone wondering what is happening.

It is too late for that, though, because Ralleth is throwing the door open with a look of fury on his face that does not match the funny image of him with a blanket wrapped around his horns. He thinks I have done something to make Diane cry out. Olivia is right behind him, and when she sees Diane wrapped in my arms with her eyes still closed, she runs over to the bed. She does not scold me or even look upset with me. She must know that it is dreams and not me that has made her cry out. At least, I hope Olivia will be on my side. I may not be honorable any longer, but I do care for Diane.

“What happened?” Olivia looks at me as she holds Diane's face in her small hands.

“She is dreaming. She dreams frequently.” I look down at how I am pinning her to my body and hope that my saying she dreams a lot explains why I have her pinned to me. “She did not cry last night, though.”

“She's still asleep,” Olivia says, more in awe than anything else. I wish Diane was awake because it would mean her crying would stop, or we could at least talk about it. I would

take away the pain if I could. I would take all of her pain from her and take it on myself.

“She will sleep until morning if her dreams are like last night,” I offer because it seems like Olivia wants to stay until Diane wakes up. I do not want her and Ralleth in Diane’s room for any longer than necessary because they worry about her, and it is my job to worry about her. They can worry from their own room, but they do not need to do it while she is in my arms. I will care for her and make sure nothing hurts her.

“Come, my Olivia,” Ralleth says from the doorway. He wraps an arm around Olivia when she is near, and her eyes light up when she sees the blanket is still wrapped around his horns. She says nothing, but I know she is finding it as humorous as I am. “Almaac is an honorable male. He will keep her safe.”

My brother is wrong that I am honorable still, but he is correct that I will keep Diane safe. She is my mate, and nothing will ever hurt her again. Not if I can help it.

“If you need anything,” Olivia says. She doesn’t finish what she is saying because I already know what she wants to say. I will let them know if I need help, but I doubt I will need it to help my mate with her dreams. I will hold her until she wakes up, and then I will listen to any fears she has from the dreams.

“Wait,” Diane’s voice surprises all of us. Thankfully, my look of surprise must be clear on my face because Olivia doesn’t even look at me like I had lied to her, which I didn’t. Last night, Diane slept through all of her dreams. I did not

think tonight would be any different. Diane moves in my arms even though I am still clinging to her. Something is wrong because she is stiff under me like she does not want me touching her any longer. “I need a different male.”

No.

“I can’t—“ Diane raises her frail hands to my arm around her shoulders and pushes against it. I still haven’t released her. I don’t want to release her until she tells me what is wrong. Before she fell asleep, she was cuddling me and being sweet to me. Now that she has had a bad dream, she is pushing me away like I am her enemy and not the male who will be her mate.

“Not Almaac.” She says, and I feel the world stop moving. It feels like even my beating has stopped for a moment because surely she cannot mean what she is saying. She is my mate. I have never been so sure of something in my life. “I need a different male to watch me.”

My arms release her no matter how much I shake my head no. I will not hold the female against her will, but I do not know why she is pushing me away now. I should ask her what happened, but instead, I’m helping her sit up so I can move out from underneath her. I am a shell of myself as I move because I do not understand what is happening or why. Diane had just told me she wants to mate me when she is healed. Now, she is begging Olivia to have a different male watch her.

“Are you sure?” Olivia’s eyebrows are drawn so close together that I think they may actually turn into one if she is

not careful. I appreciate she is asking the question of Diane since I am unable to say anything because my beating has started hurting like there is a hole in my chest. My throat burns with emotions, and I know that there is nothing I can do right now but do as my female asks.

“Almaac will keep you safe,” Ralleth offers as I walk closer to him and Olivia. He speaks honest and true words, but I cannot stay in the room when Diane has asked for another male. Even the look in her eyes hurts my chest. She is not sad or confused. She is angry. I do not know what I have done to make her angry. Maybe because I have touched her when she is hurt. Yes, that must be it because she must now be realizing I am not an honorable male.

“I want a different male to watch me,” Diane says the words slowly to make sure there is no misconstruing her words. I hear Olivia asking questions of Diane, but I do not stay to hear the answers. I am not wanted in the room, and my being there will only cause Diane to be even more angry. I need to do as she says to see if I can fix whatever I have done to make her upset. Whatever it is, I will fix it because I do not want my Diane in pain, and her anger is hurting her even if she does not show it.

I slam the door to my room open, and Erkoz and Xoth are already awake. Probably from the wailing Diane did when she was still dreaming. They each look at me with wide eyes, like I have hurt the female. I do not tell them I haven't because I am feeling empty and broken. The only thing I can get out of my mouth is. “Go to her.” That I say to Erkoz. If a male is

staying with her, I will make sure it is a male that knows she belongs to me even if we haven't mated yet.

Erkoz opens his mouth to say something. I am sure it will be some kind of joke, but thankfully, he rethinks what he was going to say and just leaves the room. I crawl into my bed, not looking at Xoth at all because I cannot handle the questions he might have. Instead, I curl up in my bed and let my tears fall silently as I think about what I could have done to make Diane mad at me. I thought she liked what we did, but maybe I pushed for too much too fast.

Diane

No, I don't want to talk about it, and no, I will not explain it. That's what I want to tell Olivia as she stands near the door, wringing her hands together. Instead, I stay silent. Almaac made sure that I was leaning against the bed in a comfortable position before leaving because he's a good guy. The type of guy that deserves someone who wants him for him and not because he reminds her of her dead husband except in a weird lizard body. It isn't fair, and I'm not going to force him into that role. He deserves better.

"Did he touch you?" Ralleth asks, and I can see it's something he doesn't appreciate having to ask. As far as I can tell, Almaac is the big guy's best friend, which means my rejecting him is probably making me public enemy number one.

"No, he was an honorable male." I use the same language the other demons use to describe him because I know it'll help put Ralleth at peace with what happened. "I just need to be away from him for a while."

“Oh!” Ralleth widens his eyes like he understands. I want to tell him not to finish whatever thought he is thinking because it is not what’s happening right now. Unfortunately, some of the demons are awful at not saying anything that pops into their heads. “Olivia pushed her Ralleth away for a moment. It is your nose soul.” He nods his head like he is proud of himself for figuring it out.

“No,” I say, and because I’m emotionally raw and a little more than slightly pissed, I say something I’ll regret as soon as it leaves my mouth. “I want to be with him because he treats me like my husband did. My mate on Earth, Almaac, is like him. I want to be with him because I’m trying to replace a person I love, a person who’s gone, and I want to be back.”

Ralleth narrows his eyes at me, and they flash red. Yeah, big guy, now you’re getting it. I’m a piece of shit, and your friend deserves better.

“Ralleth, go back to bed, please.” Olivia presses her hand to Ralleth’s chest and tries to urge him out of the room. I don’t want to speak to her either, so I hope she’ll follow him out of the room, too. When she does, I want to run to the door to lock it, but I can’t even shift my body before I’m groaning in pain. My only saving grace is Erkoz walking into the room, not making eye contact with me, and staying pressed against the far wall.

“Lock the door,” I beg from the bed.

Erkoz frowns but then does as I ask. He stares at me for a long time before he finally works up the nerve to say four

words that hollow out my heart. “You hurt my brother.”

I don't want to cry anymore, but I was never one who could keep my tears hidden. I brush them away quickly and then rub my nose to stop the sniffing. “I know.”

He hates my answer almost as much as I hate myself for hurting Almaac. It isn't right for me to use him as a substitute for Blake, though. It isn't fair to my husband, myself, or Almaac. I know what I'm doing seems selfish, but I'm doing the most selfless thing I can right now. I want to cling to the demon like he's a life raft in my sea of grief, and that just isn't what anyone should be. Even if they're a very willing demon, who wants to fix everything and protect me from anything.

“Why?” Erkoz asks, drawing me away from my thoughts. “Why hurt him? He would make you a happy female.”

“Almaac is a wonderful male,” I say as another tear falls down my cheek. “He deserves a good female.”

Erkoz huffs a laugh at my words and then looks over at me like he expects me to say something else. When I don't, his eyes widen, and he throws his hands up. “Erkoz makes jokes with Almaac's female about her being rude because it is fun, and she laughs, but this time it is no joke. Rude. Rude female.”

I throw my hands down against the mattress because that's about as much of a fit as I can throw. I want to stomp over to Erkoz and point a finger in his face and tell him he doesn't get to be mean to me just because I'm rejecting his friend. “You don't understand.” I shake my head and mumble the words because I can't do anything I actually want to do.

“Our souls can belong to more than one creature.” Erkoz is still angry. He crosses his arms across his chest as he leans against my bedroom door. So he was listening to me when I lost it at Ralleth for a moment. “Almaac’s female doesn’t like that her soul belongs to two males. Her soul doesn’t care what her mind thinks. She should be happy. Many do not even have their soul spoken to once.”

I grind my teeth against one another because I want to scream at him that he doesn’t understand, but he’s acknowledging that he doesn’t understand because he’s one that hasn’t had his soul spoken to at all. I turn my head away from the doorway and stare at one of the bare walls in my room. I can feel the tears burning against my cheeks, and every once in a while, I brush them away because they’re a horrible reminder of the series of poor decisions I’ve made.

“I will watch Almaac’s female,” Erkoz finally breaks the silence, and when I look over, I see he has also had to brush away tears. “Only because I already know the female is going to mate my brother. Other males do not know, and Almaac may not want them to know until his female acknowledges him again.”

It’s my turn to half scoff, half laugh. “How kind of you to make sure I don’t speak to any other males.”

“You can talk to all the males you want,” Erkoz says with a smile that feels hollow. “You will not hurt my brother any more than you already have, though.”

Erkoz doesn't wait for me to answer before he's walking over to the bed. He grabs the lump of blankets from the bottom of the bed and throws them on the floor. He starts to lower himself but then looks at me, still sitting up in bed.

"Do you want to lie on your back?"

"Yes, please," I say through clenched teeth. I want to move on my own, but it's just easier with someone else. I'm hoping that by the time I wake up in the morning, I'll feel even better. I know the bruises and the aches will take a while to heal, but I'm hoping I'm able to move more and more with each night's sleep.

Erkoz helps me onto my back, places a hand on my forehead, frowns, and then looks at the blankets on the ground. Yeah, it's hot as hell in this world, and I'm burning up.

"I do not want to sleep with Almaac's female," Erkoz says without looking at me.

"Then don't."

"She is hot," He says, looking at me with narrowed eyes.

"Yes, and I can survive being hot." I counter. I'm not about to have Erkoz crawl into bed with me when he doesn't want to just so I can use him like an ice pack. I'm not big into forcing anyone to do anything they don't want to do.

"No whining," Erkoz says as he walks over to his pile on the floor.

"Don't tell me what to do." I snarl.

“Oh,” Erkoz looks up at me with a look of feigned concern. “Only one male can do that, then?”

I grab one of the pillows from beside me and toss it at the demon on the floor. “Fuck off.”

“One of those words we only hear when Ralleth’s creature is releasing, so I do not know what you mean by saying that.” Erkoz is acting more himself than he was before. He’s showing me how annoying he can be. How annoying I’m going to find all the other demons because there’s only one that I want. “I can go ask Almaac what he thinks you mean when you tell me to fuck off, but I think he will think the same things I am.”

I don’t respond to Erkoz. He wants me to respond to him because he wants to know that he’s getting under my skin. I refuse to give him what he wants, though. He can keep trying to pick at me, but I can be strong and not cave to—

“He sent me.” Erkoz pokes his head over the side of the bed so only his eyes and horns are visible. “Probably wanted to make sure Ralleth did not ask another brother. Imagine another brother in here. They would be pressing their body against Almaac’s female.”

I groan loudly, which only fuels Erkoz and his fanfiction.

“Does Almaac’s female like the idea of sharing her bed with other brothers? I could go grab a few. None of us care you had a mate before. Some might even like that more because it means that you know how to please a male.”

“Erkoz!” I scream so loud that it has him jumping from the ground with wide eyes. He’s quick about hopping on the bed next to me and putting his hand over my mouth.

“Almaac’s female screaming another male’s name so loud.” He is loving all of this too much. “The brothers will be jealous, and Almaac will be furious.”

As if on cue, there’s a loud pounding on my door that rattles it. Erkoz keeps his hand over my mouth and holds his other hand up with a finger to his lips. “I want to see how angry he will get. Almaac’s female wants to see too, doesn’t she?”

I shake my head, but Erkoz doesn’t care that I’m not into torturing him even more. “No, female, I will not let you eat my seed! I know you are desperate for Erkoz, but I am an honorable male. I cannot let you mate me until you are healthy.”

I’m going to murder him. Find a pair of tweezers and pluck each and every one of his scales off of his body. Sew his stupid pocket shut so he can’t fuck anyone ever. I hope the look in my eyes conveys all the hatred I have right now.

“The female is insatiable!” Erkoz says with too much enthusiasm. “Yes, you can sit on Erkoz’s face if you must. He will lick you until you have found release.”

The pounding on the door has turned into someone slamming their body into it. It only takes a few full-body slams, and then the lock is breaking. Erkoz scrambles away from me as soon as he sees the door splinter. He turns to me with a look of excitement in his eyes.

“You’re getting Erkoz in trouble, but it will be worth it,” Erkoz says right as Almaac hits the door once more and comes tumbling in. His chest is heaving, and his eyes are blood-red. He looks at me in the bed and then sees Erkoz smiling against the wall a few feet away.

Almaac stomps over to where Erkoz is standing and lowers his head so their foreheads are pushing against one another. Their horns are similar, and it is obvious they are using them to make one another back down by pushing against each other.

“She is hurt,” Almaac snarls. “You shouldn’t touch females when they’re hurt.”

I close my eyes because I already know what Erkoz is going to say before he even says it. Not to mention, we have an entire audience in the room witnessing the men having a dick-measuring contest. No one stops them, and Ralleth is actually holding Olivia back from interfering. They must have expected something like this would happen eventually.

“Almaac is the only one that can touch hurt females, yes?” Erkoz asks.

Almaac’s lips pull back into a snarl, but before he can respond, Erkoz is saying more. He’s doing his best to get Almaac as worked up as I was, and it’s working just as easily as it had on me.

“As long as she is still, yes?” Erkoz asks. “She’s a good girl if she’s still.”

Almaac pulls away and swings his fist into Erkoz's face before any of us realizes the dick measuring has turned into an actual fight. Erkoz swings at Almaac and jabs him in the chest twice before their back to being forehead to forehead.

“Do not speak of what she and I do.” Almaac hisses.

“Almaac, the most honorable male,” Erkoz smiles as he says it because he knows his words are about to cut Almaac deep. “So honorable he'll help a wounded female find release when she's in pain.”

“Enough!” I scream from the bed. I've managed to scoot myself back up into a sitting position. Both men snap their heads over to me. Almaac's eyes are still red, and Erkoz smiling like he's the winner in all of this. “Get out of my room, Erkoz.”

Almaac lets out a huff of air in Erkoz's direction. I turn to see how many people were witnesses to the argument that just happened, and it's far more than I'm happy with. There are a few red eyes, and I don't know what they're there for. I don't care, either. I want all of them out of my room. None of them needed to see anything that just happened, but they all felt like it was their business.

“Get out!” I scream at the crowd, and thankfully, they all tuck tail and run out. Erkoz follows right behind them, waving goodbye to me and smiling like he didn't just piss two people off tonight.

Almaac is grabbing the blankets off the floor when I finally get the nerve up to look at him. He hasn't said anything to me,

and his eyes are still red. I can see tears rimming his lower lids, but I don't know if I'm supposed to acknowledge them or not.

“Almaac,” His name is barely a whisper when it leaves my lips, but it catches his attention all the same.

He looks at me for maybe half a second before throwing the blankets at the foot of the bed. “You will lie down.” He commands, and I don't hesitate for even a moment before I'm situating myself to lie down without his help. He doesn't look at me while I do it, and I don't know if it's because his eyes are still red or if he is just that angry with me.

He throws the blankets over me, and I kind of want to scream because of how hot it is with them on. Almaac looks like he is barely holding onto himself, so I let him do what he needs to do.

“Do not speak. Do not argue.” Almaac says, and then I feel the bed dip as he crawls in next to me. “We talk tomorrow.” His arm wraps around me possessively, and he tugs me toward him.

I turn my head so I can look up at him, and I see he is staring at me intently, his red eyes daring me to say even a single word. I don't, though, because he told me not to, and for tonight, after what Erkoz and I just put him through, he needs me just to be his for another night. I let my head fall back down to where it was before and close my eyes before pressing my body against his some more. I want to be so close

to him that I'm flush against his body, but I can't roll onto my side.

Almaac rests his head against mine and lets a soft breath fluff my hair. "You are mine. No matter what is going on in your mind or what you think I cannot handle, you are mine, Diane." I open my mouth to tell him I just need some time to think about things. "Do not speak." I close my mouth and let myself relax against Almaac's hold on me. "Good girl, see you are made for Almaac. Do not fight him anymore."

It's hard to argue with him when complying makes me feel so good. So, I don't fight with him. I don't argue. He told me we'll talk tomorrow, so tonight, I'll let him hold me and tell me I'm his. Maybe if he says it enough through the night, I'll believe it in the morning when I remember how much I'm using him because he reminds me of Blake. Even the conversation we're having tonight feels like *déjà vu*.

If my soul can belong to more than one man, maybe it's for the best that they are so alike. Maybe that's supposed to make me feel less like I'm betraying each of them, even though right now, it feels like I'm betraying the love both of them have given me.

"Sleep, Almaac will keep you safe." His words aren't fully formed by the time I'm breathing his scent in deep and allowing it to lull me off to sleep. Almaac is a safe man. That's what makes me so worried I'm going to break his heart even more.

Diane

When I wake up in the morning, Almaac is already gone. I roll over in bed, thinking maybe he's just further away from me, but after I get over the joy of being able to move with pain that doesn't make me want to die, I notice that he's not here at all. The blankets are neatly folded at the bottom of the bed, and I have enough sweat on me to tell me he's been gone for a while.

I kick my feet over the edge of the bed and stifle my scream when I see a new demon sitting in the room's corner, bundled up under blankets and completely asleep. He doesn't wake when I step out of bed and still doesn't move when I make my way to the busted door. It swings open without making a sound, and then I'm moving as fast down the hallway as I can in search of where Almaac has gone. He told me we'd talk this morning, but now he's gone, and I can't help but feel like something has gone terribly wrong.

As I step into the dining hall, I'm met with dozens of eyes all pinned on me as soon as I'm visible. Most of them I don't

know, but there's one scowling demon who's looking at me with about as much hatred as I have for him.

“Where is he?” I direct the question at Erkoz, even though any of the men can answer me. None of them will because they know I'm pissed to hell, and unlike the first woman who was sent here, I'm not playing nice. Especially when it comes to Erkoz.

“Who?” Erkoz pops another bite of food into his mouth and chews slowly.

“Almaac,” I say, unenthused at whatever game Erkoz is playing. “Where is Almaac?”

Erkoz's eyes light up in the stupid way that tells me he's getting whatever it is he wants from our conversation. I figure it's probably that I'm calling his brother's name, knowing full well it means I want to fuck him. Maybe I do, but I still need to know if I want to fuck him because he reminds me of Blake or because I actually like him for more than that.

“He went hunting,” Erkoz says with a shrug.

“What? Why?” I look around at the other brothers, and they all avert their gaze when I look to them for answers. “He went yesterday. He told me it was someone else's turn.”

“Changed his mind.” Erkoz smiles at me when he speaks. “Any idea why he might do that?”

I narrow my eyes at the demon, who's still pretending that he doesn't know he's stirring shit. “Maybe I'll go out and scream your name some more.”

Erkoz drops his fork to his plate and stands from his seat.
“Do not—“

“Tell me what to do.” I cock a brow at him. “See how well that works out for you today.”

Erkoz stomps over to me, and I start to cower a bit at how much bigger he is than me. It’s one thing to fight with one another when it feels like we’re on an even playing field, but when he gets close, it’s very obvious that we’re not. His footsteps stop when he notices my demeanor changing from strong to scared, though. Then he’s dropping to his knees.

“I will argue with you like this, so I am as tall as you,” Erkoz says slowly, trying to assuage my fright that’s already diminishing because I know he won’t hurt me. Sure, Erkoz and I fight, and I doubt this will be the last time we fight, but he’s never once made me fear him or used his strength against me. “I do not want Almaac’s female to lose her anger because she fears her brothers. We are no threat to her, and her fear makes making her angry no fun.”

I cross my arms in front of my chest. “I wasn’t scared of you.”

“Should I tell Almaac his female is a liar?” Erkoz turns to his brothers, who are all chuckling to themselves until they meet my gaze, and then they are closing their mouths tightly. “He will not think she is so good then, I do not think.”

“I’m going to scream your name outside now,” I say, turning away from Erkoz and walking as quickly as I can to the wooden doors that lead outside.

I can hear Erkoz scrambling behind me, but I don't give him the satisfaction of turning around. I know he's probably still on his knees, and it's probably actually funny, but I won't allow him to see me crack. I want him to fear me getting him in trouble a little bit.

"Maybe I will make sounds of pleasure, too," I say without thinking about it. "Do you think that will make Almaac come back faster?"

"He will be here in an instant to kill me," Erkoz is still laughing behind me, but I can hear a faint worry in his tone. "If he kills me, then who will your sister torture when she comes?"

"There are plenty of other males she can torture. I doubt we need you here."

"You wound Erkoz."

"Good, I'm trying too," I throw behind me just as I'm swinging the door open. Erkoz is pressing his hand against it and closing it before I even attempt to go outside. He's back to standing, but the fun on his face is gone.

"Let Almaac be for now," Erkoz says with a frown. "I know we jest, and I do enjoy it, but he is upset."

"Because of me?" I already know the answer, so I don't know why I'm asking. Of course, it's because of me. I told him last night I wanted a different male to watch over and care for me. Then Erkoz came in and made it seem like we were getting up to some nonsense that we most definitely weren't.

Of course, he's out there hunting stuff because he's upset with me.

"It's my fault too, but he will get over it," Erkoz says with a shrug. "I would advise Almaac's female not to do anything else to make him mad, though."

I chew on my lip because I know he's right, and I don't know what else to say. He tilts his head back to the dining hall, and I follow his lead back over. I can eat and busy myself for the day. He left early, so I doubt he'll be out very long. He said himself he's an excellent hunter, so hopefully, that means he's back soon. I can't imagine him taking all day if he left before I was even awake.

"I do not die today, brothers!" Erkoz announces gleefully as he sits back down in his seat. He motions for me to take the one across from him, and I accept mainly because even though I hate him, he's the closest thing I have to a friend right now.

"We will pray to the goddess Almaac kills you at a later time then," A demon says with a hearty laugh.

"Yes, that will be one less male to compete for the females." Another adds.

"Shush all of you," I wave my hands around, happy that I can do it with only pain instead of major pain. "No one is dying. I just have a very special relationship with..." I point at Erkoz instead of saying his name.

He flashes me a dark smile. "You are not mated. You could still say my name if you wanted."

I groan and put my face in my hands. “I’m done talking to you for a while.”

“Very well. Erkoz will entertain his brothers then.”

Almaac doesn’t return to the tribe until the sun has already set. I sat outside for most of the evening, waiting for him to come back and talk with me. Instead, I had to go inside when it got too dark because the black of the sky made me want to cry. It’s not until I’m situated in bed with all the torches put out that I watch my door swing open slowly. He’s so quiet about it that if I hadn’t been watching the door, I wouldn’t have noticed.

“Almaac?” I ask into the darkness. I laid the blankets out the way he liked before I crawled onto my side of the bed, and I’m grateful I did because he immediately comes over and settles in next to me.

“Do not speak.” He says as he pulls me against his scales. I can hear a roughness in his voice, but I can’t see his face to know what he’s feeling. “Let me hold you.”

I turn onto my side even though it hurts like hell, and then I’m pressing my face against his chest and inhaling deeply. I need him, need to be close to him, feel his comfort and love wash over me. He wraps an arm around me and holds me close to him. His breathing is hard above me, and I think I hear sniffing, but I can’t tell.

“Sleep,” He says with a scratchy voice. “Almaac will keep you safe.”

I don't want to sleep because if I do, there's a chance he's going to be gone in the morning. It doesn't matter how hard I fight it, I'm drifting off in less than a minute.

Almaac doesn't wait that long before he's whispering sweet things to me as he brushes my hair. “Almaac is so proud of you for being on your own today. So proud you could care for yourself. My good girl is strong. The goddess has blessed me with such a wonderful mate.”

When I wake in the morning, Almaac is already gone, and the same demon from yesterday morning is passed out in the corner, wrapped up in blankets. It's exactly the same, and it makes me want to cry. Even when I walk into the dining hall and make eye contact with Erkoz, who's already smiling again like the little demon asshole he is.

“Where is he?” I ask.

Like a nightmare that keeps repeating itself, Erkoz smiles. “Who?”

The next eight days play out exactly the same. Almaac is gone before I wake. Erkoz is ready to banter until I'm bored. Then I sit outside until the sky is too dark for me to bear. When I crawl into bed, I get it set up for Almaac and then wait for him to come hold me. He always tells me not to speak, but he'll lie there, holding me until I fall asleep. He'll say sweet things to me that completely confuse me because when I wake in the morning, he'll be gone again.

Almaac

I am trying to stay away from the female so she can be with other brothers during the day. She asked to have another brother help her and take care of her, so I leave to go hunt during the day and allow the brothers to watch her.

Dath comes to sit in the room every morning with his own blankets. He brought a chair the first morning I grabbed him, and he's sat in it every time he sleepily comes into the room right before the sky begins to lighten. I don't even have time to speak to him before he's wrapped back in his blankets and sleeping soundly in the chair, facing Diane, who is still fast asleep.

I feel bad leaving her, but only because I shouldn't be sharing her bed with her in the first place. I told myself I was going to let her find a new male that could bring her happiness since she wants a different one. On the first day, I did so well by leaving her and the tribe all day. I hunted an olack early in the day and gave it to another brother to take to the tribe while I walked around the trees until the sun was setting. I walked

back into the tribe with every intention of going to the room I share with Xoth and Erkoz, but my feet took me back to Diane's room.

I was going to watch her for a moment and then go back to my room. I told myself I just wanted to make sure she was safe and asleep. Then she said my name so sweetly, like she was scared I was going to leave her all by herself for the night, and I couldn't do that. So now, each night, I hold her in my arms, and when I think she's asleep, I tell her how much I care for her. How proud I am that she has been healing so well. She is a strong female, even if she is human.

I'm folding the blanket at the end of the bed when Dath opens the door with a yawn. His eyes are squinted so much I can barely make out that they're open at all. He gives me a soft nod before wrapping himself in the blanket and snuggling down in his chair. His head falls back against the wall, and then he's asleep again. I rub Diane's cheek softly and make my way out of the great hall to go hunting again. I meet with Toron and Yril in the weapon shack to grab our bows and daggers.

Toron's eyes flash red when he sees me silently walk over to my weapons and grab the same ones I've been using for the past ten days. "You need to stay, brother."

I ignore his words because he does not understand that Diane does not want me. Maybe she feels called to me as I do to her, but she has asked for another male, so I hold her at night with no words and let her be with my brothers during the

day. One day I will be able to not go to her room. Maybe then she'll feel comfortable enough to have a brother share it with her. That would make me happy. Angry, too, but mostly happy because it would mean Diane is finding a male she wants.

“Almaac,” Toron grabs my shoulder and turns me to face him. “You need to stay.”

“I do not.” I pull my arm away from his grasp. “The female wishes for another male. I will allow her the time to find one without me interrupting.”

Yril laughs, and when he realizes I am being serious, he laughs harder, and then Toron is joining him in his laughter. I narrow my eyes at them and feel my lips pulling back to snarl. I do not appreciate their laughing at how hurt I am in trying to do right by the female.

“The female does not want me. She has told me this.” I hate having to repeat the words that Diane has told me. These are the words I ignore every night when I crawl into her bed and hold her tightly to me. I am surprised I have not been reprimanded by Ralleth yet for bothering the female after she has spoken so freely about not wanting me. I should be banished like Xarr was for how I am acting, but everyone looks at me with pity and sometimes with anger.

“That is why you should stay,” Toron says as he wraps his arm over my shoulder and starts dragging me back to the great hall. I still have my daggers on my belt and the bow slung over my shoulder. I tell myself I will see what he wants for just a moment, and then I am leaving. Being in the tribe is too much

of a temptation. If I stay, I will want to wrap Diane in my arms for the whole day, and that is not fair to her.

“Stay quiet,” Toron whispers to me as he cracks the door open and sneaks us inside the great hall. The dining hall is close, but instead of going there, he pushes me into a hallway that is close and holds a finger to his mouth, telling me to be quiet. “She’ll be waking soon, and you can see just how much your female wants to have another male.”

I do not miss how Toron calls her mine, and I do not like that it makes my chest ache because I know it isn’t true. We are partially hidden from the dining hall in the hallway we are hiding, but I can clearly see into it, and when I see Diane, my beating quickens. Her bruising is healing so nicely, and she is looking more and more human. She is so beautiful that it makes me hurt more knowing one of my brothers will get to stare at her beauty always.

“Where is he?” Diane snaps with her hands on her hips. I do not know which brother she is talking so rudely to, but I have a good guess.

“Who?” Erkoz laughs when he asks.

“Almaac,” Diane throws her hands up. “Where is my Almaac?”

My brows pull together, and I feel myself stumbling back until I’m leaning against the cool stone walls. Toron is at my side in an instant to help keep me on my feet. He looks proud of himself when he sees the utter surprise and concern on my

face. Diane is calling me hers, but she told me she wanted a different male. It makes no sense.

“Listen,” Toron whispers to me. “They bicker every morning over you.”

“Hunting,” Erkoz lets out a full belly laugh when he answers. “Every day, Almaac’s female asks these questions. Do you think the answer will change?”

“He can’t be hunting forever!”

“He doesn’t hunt forever,” Erkoz says, and I can feel the energy in the air shift like I already know he is trying to cause trouble. “He goes to his female’s room at night. Is she not good for him? Maybe that is why he leaves her in the morning.”

I want to grab Erkoz by his throat and shake him for how he is speaking to my female, but Toron has a firm hold on me. It helps ease my worry when I see the humor in his eyes. He said they do this every day, so Diane must be able to hold her own against the jokes that Erkoz makes. Even if I hate them, I want to see how my female reacts to them.

“You think you’re so funny, don’t you?” Diane asks, and I can hear her running toward the double doors that lead out of the great hall. “I’m doing it today. I’m going to see if we can get you murdered.”

She runs past the hallway where I am hidden with reckless abandon, and then I hear Erkoz pushing his chair back. He’s

running after Diane, trying to reach her before she makes it outside.

“Almaac’s female is going to get Erkoz killed!” Erkoz yells back at our brothers, who are still sitting in the dining hall. Some of them watch with as much amusement as Toron has, and others eat their food like this is a normal affair.

“I’m not bluffing this time!” Diane yells, and I hear her swing the wooden door open. Erkoz looks over his shoulder once more with a smile on his face, and then his eyes land on mine, and he stops moving completely.

“Your female is dangerous,” Erkoz says with a laugh, and that’s when I hear Diane screaming outside. “She wants to hurt me. Remember that when you hear her.”

“Erkoz!” Diane’s voice is trying to be as loud as it can. She thinks I am out in the trees, hunting for food, and she is trying to get me to come back by calling another male’s name. She does this because it worked so well the first night when Erkoz worked me up enough to fight with him over the female.

My hands are fists by my sides, and my eyes flash red. I step out of the hallway and stomp toward Erkoz. “Did you touch her?”

“I enjoy living. I have not touched Almaac’s female. Ask any brother.” Erkoz says without backing down from me. He is a good male, and I know he speaks the truth to me. “She wants me to be in trouble because she does not like my jokes.”

“I do not like your jokes either,” I press my lips into a tight line and then walk past him out to the female who is still yelling his name.

“That is why you should be mates. You can bond over Erkoz.”

I hiss at him and then fling the door outside open. I see Diane before she sees me. She’s standing by the gate with her hands wrapped around the metal bars as she calls out Erkoz’s name once more. I place my hands on either side of her and trap her against the gate with my body.

“What are you hoping to accomplish right now?” I hiss right as her body begins to tense at her realization that I am here and I am not happy with what she is doing.

Diane takes a deep, shaky breath and then turns around to look up at me. A soft smile is on her lips, and she doesn’t seem scared at all, even though I am towering over her, trapping her with my body. “You’re here?”

“I am here,” I repeat the statement because it seems like it means more to her than I realized. Maybe she wants me to be with her.

“Will you stay?” Something in the way she says it makes me realize I have been the one hurting her this whole time. Her broken voice, when she asks, shatters any anger that is still coursing through my body, and instead, I am left with a hole in my chest that feels like it will consume all of my being.

“Do you want me to stay?” I must ask because I am so undeserving of a female as perfect as Diane to want me. I have been trying to do right by her, but I have ignored the way she seems to need me just as much as I need her. When I left her during the day to deal with the pain of being away from her on my own, she was not moving on with other brothers. No, she was in just as much pain, but it was me who was causing it to both of us.

Diane presses her hand against the side of my face, and I fall to my knees in front of her as I wait for her to answer me. She cups my face with both her hands and then brings her face close to mine so our foreheads are resting against one another. “Please, stay. Stay with me, and don’t ever leave again.”

I pull her small body against my chest and close my eyes as I will the tears inside me not to fall. “Almaac will never leave you again. He did not know.”

“Didn’t know what?” Diane asks softly, and I can feel her tears wetting my scales.

“I did not know you still wanted me.”

“I want no one but my Almaac.” Diane blesses me even more, and it takes everything in me not to pick her up and carry her to her room so I can make her feel good for saying such sweet things to me. “Do you want me?”

How can she even ask when I am all but crushing her in my grasp because I cannot get her close enough to me? I realize she needs my words, though. Words that I have kept from her

for many long days because I thought I was doing her a kindness.

“I do not deserve a female as beautiful, kind, and good as you,” I say with a huff as my tears fall. “I have been an awful male. I have caused you pain, sorrow, and loneliness. I will work every day to make up for how I have treated you. I will be with you every day because you are mine.”

Diane moves against my hold on her, and I release her enough so she can move to look at me. “I need to tell you about another male that I mated.”

Diane

He's here, and he's holding me and speaking with me, and I think he's also crying. He's on his knees, blocking the gate from the brothers who obviously need to go through to hunt, and I see there's a whole crowd of brothers watching what we're doing. Erkoz is the first one I see, and I want to give him the middle finger, but I know he probably has something to do with my Almaac still being here. As much as he annoys me, he has been the one who has tried to get Almaac and me together the hardest.

“We should go somewhere else,” I whisper and press my head back against Almaac's. I like being close to him, and I don't want him to let me go, but we need to move to somewhere more private so I can explain to him why I tried to push him away. I want to explain it all, and then I want him to tell me why he kept leaving me instead of just speaking with me.

“Almaac has hunted enough food for many, many days,” He says and holds me tighter against him. He tried for a while to

hold back the tears, but they're freely falling now, and I feel them wetting the top of my head. "They do not need to leave today, and I am not moving until I am sure I have made my Diane no longer sad."

"I want to comfort you, but I don't want to do it in front of everyone," I trace the scales of his chest and hope he understands I want to be alone with him. We need to talk about some serious stuff, and I also kind of want to mate with him if he wants that after I tell him about my life on Earth.

Almaac wipes his eyes with his hands and then stands. I think we're about to go to my room, but he turns to the small crowd of demons. "Leave, now." There's soft grumbling from many of the brothers. Erkoz gives me a smile that tells me I owe him, or he'll be saying even more dumb jokes. Olivia watches for a moment longer than her demon, like she's checking to make sure I'm actually okay. When I nod, she follows the others as they all go back into the great hall.

Almaac is pulling the bow off his shoulder and setting it off to the side. Next, the daggers that adorn his waist are set near the bow. When he's free of weapons, he reaches out for me. I don't take his hand. I try my hardest to tackle him as I press my body hard against him. He wraps his arms around me and sits on the ground, pulling me into his lap as he does it.

"You have felt this strongly for me this whole time?" Almaac snuffles the words and then wipes his eyes again.

"I was scared," I respond. "So scared by how strongly I feel about you. That's why I said I wanted another male." I hope he

hears the regret in my voice because I know we're in this situation in the first place because I told him I didn't want him anymore.

"I tried to stay away so you could find a new male." He runs his fingers through my long hair, comforting me with his touch. "I could stay away while I was out in the trees. When I returned to the tribe, I couldn't leave you all alone in bed. I thought maybe one day you would find a new brother to share your bed with. It would hurt me, but I knew you wanted a different male."

"I don't want a different male." I cling to his neck tightly, like he might try to push away from me if I don't cling to him like he's my lifeline in this new world. "I messed up because I was scared, and I hurt you, and I'm sorry."

"No, Diane doesn't need to be sorry," Almaac keeps his hands in my hair. Stroking me like he can take away all the pain with just his touch because he can. He's everything to me in this world. My protector, my comfort, and my heart. Yes, it's crazy, but my soul nose, as the other demons call it, has decided I really like how he smells. I like it so much that I want him to be mine and no one else. I want to be his and never have him think I want to share my bed with another male ever again.

"Almaac told you we would talk that first morning," He says the words on shaky breaths. "He was scared, too, and that was why he ran. He didn't want you to tell him to stay away

from you even at night because it hurt too much. Instead, he gave you space you did not want and time you did not need.”

“Then he will never give me space or time again, yes?” I say the words, not thinking about how that may get annoying later on when I need some alone time, but hell, it sounds really nice to say right now, so why not?

“Never again,” Almaac says, cupping my head and holding me tightly against his chest. I take a deep inhale of the calming chemicals he must produce there and let them ease all of my worries and fears. I need as much of that calming effect as I can get before I make the conversation sad again when I tell him about Blake. I’ve decided I want Almaac. If it’s because he reminds me of Blake, well, that’s something I need to figure out on my own because I’m not staying away from a good man because he reminds me of another one.

“I was mated on Earth,” I keep my head buried in his chest when I say the words. I don’t know how he’ll react to it, even though Erkoz has told me on multiple occasions that it’s normal for a soul to have more than one mate. He doesn’t say it in a kind way but more of in a teasing way that reminds me I need to tell Almaac about my late husband if I’m ever actually going to be in an actual relationship with him.

Almaac holds me tight against him. “Did he perish when all your males died?” That’s not the question I was expecting. I expected more of *Why didn’t you tell me? Was he better looking than me?* Those kinds of questions.

“He did.” My throat starts to burn with emotions I try not to think about very often because they only make me sad. “I woke up that morning, and his body was still warm, so I thought it was some kind of joke he was playing on me. I kept shaking him because I wanted him to stop trying to scare me, but he wasn’t playing any tricks.” My tears are slowly falling down my cheeks as I think about that morning and the way I screamed his name when I realized he was gone.

“That is not something anyone should have to go through with their mate,” Almaac’s words puff around my hair. “I am sorry you had to witness such a tragedy.”

I sniffle loudly and brush my tears away. I try to keep my face hidden from Almaac because crying over another man doesn’t seem like something I should do when I’m sitting in the lap of a man I just told I want. Almaac isn’t allowing me to shy away from him. He grabs my chin between his fingers and lifts my eyes up to his. They’re soft and dark, and they look to be swimming with so many emotions.

“I would like to know about the male I share your soul with.” Almaac’s enormous eyes blink slowly as he holds my face close to his. There’s no anger at me loving another man, no sadness that he isn’t the only man I’ve felt called to be with. There’s only interest and a desire for me to share everything about myself with him.

“His name was Blake.” I rub my nose to stop another sniffle.

“I have heard you say his name in your dreams,” Almaac brushes away another tear from my face. “I did not know it was a name, though. Maybe I would have pieced it together eventually, but we have already established that Almaac is not the smartest male.”

A laugh escapes my lips even though the burning in my chest from heartache doesn't feel like it wants any joy at all. “He was a lot like you.” I smile at him when I see his eyes flicker in a sort of pride.

“You honor me.” He says and holds me close against his chest again. “Tell me how your Almaac is like your Blake so I can know how to be the best male for you.”

“Well, you were both tall, strong, muscular.” Almaac huffs a laugh at what I'm saying. “Okay, he wasn't as big or as strong as you, but he was for a human.”

“Humans are small and weak,” Almaac laughs. “I am glad your soul found you one that was not as weak as the others.”

I might think he's jealous if not for the look of pride he gives me when he talks of me finding a non-weak human. He thinks he's actually complimenting Blake, which, if he was here to hear, would not be taking it as a compliment.

“Blake was a fighter,” I say, going back to talking about him. “He did MMA, or well, punching people for money. He wasn't big by any means and still had to work as a server, but he was moving up in the scene.”

“He was good?” Almaac questions. There are probably twelve words he doesn’t understand in what I just said, so he’s grabbing onto what he understands and asking about it. “Your first mate was a good fighter, could keep you safe?”

“Yes,” I say as I think back to how Blake tried teaching me how to throw a punch and spar with him. He wanted me to be able to take care of myself, even if I wasn’t very good at it. “He taught me how to fight. Just for fun.”

Almaac lets out another huff of laughter. “I want to see my female fight. I am sure you are just as ferocious awake as you are asleep.”

“Maybe when I’m healed.” I smile at the idea of showing Almaac the whole two moves I remember being able to do.

Almaac’s body stiffens for a moment at the reminder that just because the worst of the bruises are hidden by the tunic, and my face is looking much better doesn’t mean I’m back to being the healthy version of myself. I feel so much better when I’m with him, though, so I don’t want him getting weird about not being with me until I’m healed. So, instead of letting him have a moment to say something that will only hurt both of us, I continue talking about Blake.

“He used to call me his good girl, too. Just like my Almaac does.”

“That is because you are the very best.” Almaac nuzzles the top of my head with his own. “You do as your mates say, yes? Because they take care of you, keep you safe.”

“Mhm,” It’s more of a hum than anything else when it leaves my mouth because Almaac traces his fingers down my back and around my waist. Like the only thing he needed to get his mind off my injuries was that he also knows how to give me pleasure.

“Your Blake would call you his good girl in the bedroom, yes?”

“Yes,” I sigh when Almaac’s fingers find the hem of the tunic, snaking his hand underneath it so his fingers are stroking my bare back.

“And you were good for him like you are for me?”

“Always,” My breath catches when Almaac’s hand moves up my ribs and softly strokes the side of my breasts.

“You will be good now.” Almaac’s voice is raspy as he places his other hand on my thigh and starts moving his fingers upward until they’re stroking down my slit. “Be still for your mates. Be quiet for us.”

I look up at Almaac as he parts me and starts circling my clit with his big, scaly fingers. I bite down on my lower lip to keep myself from moaning and am met with an approving smile from him. He keeps up the rhythm, and I try my hardest not to move, not to make a sound, but I want so badly to claw at his pants and unsheathe his cock so I can ride him like I really want to instead of continuing this foreplay.

“I will honor your first mate.” He dips his head close to mine, making sure not to hit me with his horns. “Keep Blake’s

Diane safe, protected, and happy.”

“Please,” I whimper against his chest, and that has Almaac stilling his movements against my clit.

“We’ll go back to the room. I want to take my time with my mate.” He picks me up and wraps me in his arms before I can argue with him about how I want him to make me come right out here in the open, where anyone can see us. I wouldn’t argue anyway, not when he’s treating me so well. Not when he’s accepting that he isn’t the first man I loved and not when he’s making it okay for me to have more than one man in my heart. Almaac can have whatever he wants right now because he’s making me feel so accepted and loved that I don’t know what I would’ve done if he didn’t say the most perfect things to me.

My face is nuzzled against his chest as we walk back through the great hall to my room. I can feel eyes on us, but Almaac doesn’t stop moving to speak with any of the other males. He wants me right now. Wants to show me just how badly he messed up for all those days he wasn’t with me. I don’t open my eyes until I feel him setting me down on the bed so gently that I think he’s actually scared he might hurt me if he tries to do anything with me. I pull the tunic off my body so I’m naked and, hopefully, to entice him more into touching me.

“I did not tell my female to strip,” He hisses so softly it sounds like it pains him more than he’s angry. I look down at

his body and see the stiffness in his pants and wonder how long he'll be able to last not being inside me.

"I'm sorry," I say as I grab my breasts and cover them. "I'll keep myself covered if it pleases my mate."

Almaac's eyes snap from my chest to my face, and he narrows them like he wants to tell me that isn't what he meant. "Almaac does not do teasing." He says seriously as he grabs my hands and pulls them from my body before holding them down against my sides. "His female will not tease him, or he will not call her a good girl."

"What will he call me instead if I'm not being a good girl?" I ask as I move so I'm on all fours, facing him. He's sat on the bed, so I crawl over to him and sit in his lap, straddling his cock between my legs.

"My Diane will only be good because she enjoys doing what her mates say too much," Almaac says with a nod. "She can pretend right now, but Almaac knows she will do what he says as soon as he commands it."

"And what does my mate want me to do?" I move my hips against his groin so I'm rubbing against him. Almaac closes his eyes to enjoy the feeling for a moment and then opens them again with more intensity.

"I want you to mate with me," Almaac says as he grabs my chin and pushes my body back so he can look at the bruising. Most of them have lightened to a sickly grey, green, blue color, so they still look awful, but they're feeling better and better each day. "You will be honest. Can you mate now? We

do not need to make love, but I would like for you to eat my seed.”

“I can do that,” I tell him with wide eyes and a suddenly watering mouth.

“So perfect,” Almaac whispers as he pulls me off his body and sets me back on the bed. “Do not move until your mate has prepared everything.” He takes his time positioning me on my knees with my arms hanging loosely. He pushes my back slightly so it’s arched and pushes my breasts out. My demon is having me kneel for him, and I doubt he even knows it’s a thing besides just now deciding he wants to see me do it for him. I’ll show him later how I used to kneel for Blake. I’m sure he’ll like that just as much as setting me exactly how he wants me. He moves my hair so it’s framing my breasts and finally steps away.

“Almaac’s.” His tongue snakes between his lips as he looks down at me, adoring how he has me set. “My beautiful human, so obedient and graceful.”

I smile but keep my head down how he has me posed. Being worshipped is one reason I enjoy doing this sort of play so much. I want to hear how much I’m loved and cherished by the man I’m following the commands of. It makes my heart swell, and the butterflies in my stomach go crazy.

Almaac rubs my cheek once before he moves from the bed and busies himself. I can hear him moving a few of the pillows, and then he’s kneeling by the bed next to me. I can see him flicker his eyes over to me in my peripheral vision,

and every time he sees I'm where he left me, he smiles brightly to himself. When he finishes with whatever he's doing on the ground, he returns to standing in front of me.

"You follow your mate's commands so beautifully," he praises me as he lifts my chin up so I'm looking into his eyes. "Were you this good for your first mate? Is he the male I need to thank for how good you are?"

I suck my bottom lip in and chew on it softly as I nod.

"I am very glad I share your soul with your Blake," He murmurs. "He has helped my Diane to find comfort in this, safety in her male's lead. He was a good and honorable male if his mate responds so beautifully to being submissive to her mate."

My lips start to shake, my throat burns, and then my tears are falling. I don't want to cry when I'm sharing this moment with Almaac, but bringing up Blake has me remembering just how wonderful our life was together and how much I miss him. "I'm sorry." I choke on the words as I go to wipe the tears from my face.

Almaac stops my hands and puts them back by my sides gently. "I told you not to move." He reminds me as he lifts his hands to cup my face. His thumbs brush away the tears as they fall. "Do not apologize for missing one of your mates. Your soul will never be whole, but I will do my best to honor your first mate. He is with us always, yes? In everything we do, in all the moments we share, your first mate is still with us. I will

make sure he is never forgotten and that our Diane is taken care of.”

The sob that leaves my body is harrowing as it erupts from my chest into the room. Almaac keeps my face between his hands until I take a deep, choppy breath that has another sob echoing around us. He wraps one arm around me and pulls me up against his chest. His other arm wraps around my knees until he’s holding me like a baby against him. He sits us at the end of the bed and rocks me as I press my face against his scales and cry against him.

I hear the door swing open at one point, someone checking to make sure I’m okay after the cries. Almaac holds me tightly so my naked body is covered, or at least the parts that I want to be covered are covered.

“She is mourning her first mate,” Almaac says to whoever is in the doorway. He says it like it is a fact and not some secret that he feels he needs to hide. No, Blake is with us now, just like Almaac said. It must be a good enough response for whoever is at the door because they’re retreating and closing the door behind them.

“I will not rush my mate’s mourning,” He tells me as he continues to hold me tightly. My cries have softened, but the tears are still falling. “I will always be here. I am no longer running away like a scared young male.”

I snifle back a laugh because I don’t know if Almaac is saying it as a joke or if he’s being serious. When his eyes light up, I realize he’s trying to make me feel better, so I allow the

laugh to erupt fully from my chest. Maybe I don't really feel like laughing hysterically, but my mind hasn't fully registered that instead of sobbing, we're laughing, and my laugh comes out with the same intensity that my cries did.

"My mate's laugh is beautiful, just like the rest of her," Almaac says with a smile when he finally gets my attention back on him.

"You're too sweet to me," I say as I reach up to touch his face. "Who taught you to treat females so sweetly?"

Almaac beams at the question. "Almaac's mother would be proud he has a mate that recognizes how much work she put into him." His answer has me laughing again, and I feel the sadness in my heart starting to ease. "It is true! I am one of the older males, so I had time to be taught how to treat females by my mother and sisters. I had four, and they all made sure I was the kindest, most respectful male."

"Is that why you crawled into bed with me every night?" I look at him and chew on my lip to see what his reaction will be to my question.

His eyes narrow on me, and he hisses softly. "No, Almaac's sisters would have beat him with rods for treating his mate that way. I do not regret it, though."

"Almaac's female does not regret it either," Calling myself his female is all it takes for him to remember exactly what we were doing before the crying.

Almaac stands from the bed with me in his arms and walks us back over to where he set up the pillows earlier. “Are you feeling better?”

He wants to know if I’m willing to mate with him right now, and I’m more than willing. “Yes, you make me feel safe.”

Almaac’s tongue snakes between his lips, and he flicks it over them softly before kneeling on the ground. He sets me next to a few pillows he has layered on top of one another. “Almaac’s mate will kneel on the pillows. She will sit like she did on the bed.”

I scramble on top of the pillows as fast as I can and sit on them just as Almaac had moved me to sit earlier on the bed when he had me wait for him to set up the pillows. He stands in front of me, staring down at me for long moments as he tries to calm his breathing. I know I’m probably killing him a bit by doing exactly what he wants, but I want to kill him with all the pleasure my submission gives him.

“I am so blessed,” He whispers under his breath as he loosens the ties of his pants. “To mate with me, you need to eat my seed. You have eaten your mate’s seed before, yes?”

“Yes, I have,” I say, while keeping my head tilted slightly down like he had me on the bed.

“I have not done this before, so it will not be long. I will learn to be better, though.” I smile and laugh a bit. The poor guy is letting me know he’s going to come in my mouth in a second. I’m honestly surprised he hasn’t come in his pants, or

maybe he has, and that's why he's stalling for time now by talking about coming in my mouth.

He still hasn't lowered his pants when he grabs my chin and tilts my head upward. "You only need to eat my seed, but I have dreamed of you like this for so many days. You will open your mouth and let your mate use you."

"Please," The word is a soft whimper before I open my mouth and stick my tongue out, waiting for him to unsheathe himself and push into my mouth.

"Good girl," Almaac strokes my cheek as he pushes his pants low enough that his cock springs free. My eyes widen in an instant at the size. It's bigger than any man I've ever been with, and I wonder how much of him I'll actually be able to take. He uses one hand to hold his cock and the other to keep my head in place with his fingers wrapped in my hair. "I will keep you safe, protected, cherished. Diane wants to be my mate, yes?"

I nod my head because I can't speak much with my mouth open and my tongue hanging out. Almaac shivers slightly, and then he's pushing his cock slowly into my mouth. Hardened bumps adorn the top and bottom of his cock, and I feel them drag across my tongue. He only pushes into me a small amount before he pauses because he's about to come. I wait until he moves again before a small moan escapes my lips and vibrates across his cock. That's enough to have him grip my head tightly before his cock twitches in my mouth. His come coats my throat and tongue before I can start swallowing it. I

lick the tip of his cock as he pulls out of my mouth and then swallow everything else left in my mouth.

Almaac drops to his knees, tears in his eyes, and wraps me in his arms tightly. “My mate, my sweet and beautiful human. What have I done to be blessed so wonderfully?”

“You make me feel so loved, Almaac,” I say as I wrap my arms around his neck and try to squeeze him as tightly as he squeezes me. “I am blessed to have such an honorable male.”

Almaac

“**Y**ou sit in Almaac’s lap now,” I tell my mate as we make our way to the dining hall. After she allowed me the honor of being her second mate, I made sure she found her own release. Then I heard her stomach grumble, so I am making sure my mate is fed and happy.

“I want to sit in your lap always,” Diane says the sweetest things to me. They have me wanting to pull her tunic up and play with the small nub between her legs until I am telling her to be quiet in her release. She moans and whines so softly in such desperation when I place my hand on her abdomen, telling her to be still and be quiet. She tries so hard for me, and because she tries so hard, I must reward her for being so obedient.

“I have made promises to keep you happy, have I not?” I ask as I scoop her into my lap and delight in the gleeful squeals she gives me.

“Yes, my Almaac has promised my Blake many things.” Diane blesses me by saying my name in the same breath as her

first mate. I can never meet him, and I can never thank him, but I will honor him in every way I can by being good to his mate.

“Your Almaac?” Of course, Erkoz is in the dining hall instead of off bothering Xoth or Dath or any of the other brothers. He must sit in here waiting for a moment to tease my mate because I know it is something he does frequently.

“Yes, my Almaac,” Diane snaps at him, and I appreciate how she is not submissive or sweet to Erkoz at all. “You already knew that, though. Didn’t you?”

“Erkoz is a smart male,” Erkoz says as he looks at his claws. “Almaac’s mate likes dumb males, though.” He glances up at me to see my reaction, but I cannot be angry because he is right that I was a dumb male.

I left my mate all alone for so many long days because I was too dumb to realize she was scared to tell me she had a mate on Earth. Humans must fear allowing their souls to be owned by more than one creature. That or she thought I would be a jealous male, which I am, but not of someone who she shares her soul with. Her Blake must have been an honorable male to have been blessed with such a wonderful female. Our Diane is the most obedient female I have ever met, and it is only for us, those who share her soul.

“I’m going to make sure none of the other females mate with you,” Diane says, which has my lip twitching upward because she is cute when she is feisty. It is a part of her she does not direct toward me because she much prefers to be my

sweet female. Other males get the ferocious side of her, and I do not wish to be on the receiving end of my mate when she is ferocious.

“Almaac’s mate would not do that to me!” Erkoz throws his hands up like he is angry, but I can see the humor still in his eyes. He actually enjoys bickering with my female, something which is very confusing to me because I wish never to bicker with her. “I have made Almaac and his mate see what they were both too dumb to see.”

“You’re rude,” Diane says flatly. She hides her amusement better than Erkoz, but she is enjoying making the male think she will punish him with no females. “No female will want a rude male, anyway.”

“You are no fun, but you have found a male.” Erkoz counters. I cannot help my reaction because his banter is too funny. I let out a laugh that I try to stifle, but I am a failure at that. Erkoz’s eyes light up at my reaction, and Diane looks up at me like I have betrayed her in the worst possible way.

“Almaac is sorry,” I wrap my arm around my mate’s waist and pull her against my body so she stops trying to stand up from my lap. “I didn’t know he was going to say something like that. It caught me off guard. How could I not laugh when he says something so ridiculous?”

“Oh, so you think I’m fun, then?” She asks me with one eyebrow raised higher than the other.

“Is this a joke?” I ask with a genuine laugh erupting from my chest. “Of course, my mate is fun. She does everything her

Almaac says, and that is the most fun he can have. A female so trusting is an honor to have. Not to mention the wonderful way in which she licks my cock when it is in her mouth.”

Diane turns bright pink like Ralleth’s mate when he embarrasses her, and I enjoy seeing the blush on my mate’s cheek very much. “Shush.” She reaches up and covers my mouth with her hands like it will silence the words I have already spoken.

“So you have done it, then?” Erkoz asks with surprise like he didn’t just tell us he was the one who made sure we mated. “You are mated to one another?”

“We are,” I say and hold my mate close to me even as she keeps her hands over my mouth. She is small and weak. Of course, I can still speak. She must realize her efforts are in vain because she is settling back in my lap with a cheerful hum in her throat because I am telling everyone that I have mated the most beautiful female. “She has blessed me in letting me be her second mate.”

“I told her you would be honored to share her soul,” Erkoz says.

I look down at my female and see she has her head leaned back against my chest. She looks at me with wide eyes that fill me with such joy. She is scared about my reaction to what Erkoz has said since he knew she shared her soul with another male before me.

“My female had to tell you of her Blake because I was being a dumb male.” My words relax her, and her eyes soften.

I lower my voice, so my words are only for her. I love how Diane listens to my commands, but I do not want the other brothers to think they can speak to her in ways only I can. “You will eat now.”

Diane hums a sound of approval and then leans forward in my lap to the plate of food in front of us. I watch her for a moment before I look around at the other brothers who are sitting with us. They all watch me and my female interact, but they do not look upset. Did they truly not try to court my female all those days I was gone?

“Did my female not entertain any of my brothers while I was out hunting?” I ask mostly Diane, but it is loud enough that my brothers can hear.

“And risk having you kill us like she tried getting Erkoz killed?” Xoth laughs loudly, and then the other brothers join in.

“Even Dath stayed far from the female when you had him watch her. He came to me the first day fearful that you might try to have him sealed because your female makes sweet sounds in her sleep.” Erkoz teases. My eyes dart to Dath, whose eyes have gone as wide as our plates, and he is shaking his head vigorously in my direction.

“Almaac is not a monster,” I scoff. I can’t help but laugh at the ridiculous nature of what I am hearing. “My female is the most wonderful, and you are saying none of you would have risked angering me to see if she wanted you?”

Erkoz leans forward in his seat and gives me a curious look. “Almaac wanted to fight me when he found out his female was wearing my tunic. Almaac was not a rational male for long days, so no. None of us wanted to risk our lives for your female because she was very much claimed.”

“Not to mention, I’m not any fun, right?” My Diane says after swallowing a bite of food. “They all think Almaac’s female is boring because she doesn’t like their jokes. I told them I’d like them more if I was sitting in my Almaac’s lap because then he would get to enjoy me turning pink, but it’s no fun if you’re not here.”

“This is also true!” Erkoz says gleefully. “She likes to argue and fight but says she will only like jokes when she is in her Almaac’s arms. Says we make her uncomfortable by talking about mating and licking and pleasuring.”

“You talk about mating and licking and pleasuring with my female?” My eyes flicker red, and I see that I have fallen for another one of Erkoz’s stupid jokes.

“See, they are perfect,” Erkoz laughs loudly as he points to us. “Both are so unhappy to be talking about such natural things.”

The other brothers in the dining hall laugh at my anger and my female’s bright pink cheeks. I will admit she is beautiful when she’s embarrassed and flushed. That is for me, though, and not for my brothers, who think it is funny to embarrass the females with our customs.

“Leave my sister alone,” Olivia says from Ralleth’s lap. She looks amused with the conversation, but Ralleth’s creature is much different from my female. “She does not appreciate your jokes. One day you will find females who will.”

“Yes,” Erkoz says, a little too happy. “Almaac’s female has already told me she is sending her sister after me. I look forward to seeing what she does when she hears my jokes. Surely she will have a better sense of humor than her sister.”

“Wait,” Olivia looks at Diane and gives her a questioning look. “Your sister. The tw—“

“Shh,” Diane sits up completely and waves her hands to get Olivia to be quiet. “Don’t spoil my fun.”

Olivia presses her lips together, and her eyes light up so brightly. She lets out a soft giggle and covers her mouth to stop it. Erkoz notices they are laughing about something that involves him, and I must admit I also want to know what has the humans so giddy about Diane’s sister.

“What fun are you having at my expense?” Erkoz looks between all of us. Even I am pretending to know what the humans are talking about because it makes the worry in Erkoz’s eyes grow. “I am an honorable male. I do not deserve to be treated cruelly.”

“Human females are the cruelest,” Ralleth hisses from behind his Olivia, and she gives him a soft swat on the chest with her small hands. He is talking about how she tortures him in the bedroom, but my female does not do that. No, not all

human females are cruel, or maybe they are, and I got the sweetest one.

“I should have let Almaac’s good girl say my name much more often,” Erkoz grumbles quietly to himself, which has Diane cackling in laughter.

“Oh, stop moping,” My Diane says to him. She pushes the food away from her and snuggles back against my chest. “We’ll all get a good laugh when the next human comes. We can play jokes on my sister, too. She’ll never believe I’ve mated one of you.”

“Because we are much more handsome than your human males,” Erkoz says with a nod. “Stronger, too, I suspect. She will not think her sister could seduce such a strong male.”

Diane opens her mouth to say something fierce back to Erkoz, but I stop her because I want to finish being in the dining hall so I can take my female to the bathing pool. I want to clean her like I did the first day I bathed her. I want to see if I can get her to be more still for me than she was earlier. Making her be good for me is the best part of my day, and the day is still so young.

“My Diane seduced a strong human male for her first mate and the best male here for her second,” I say proudly. “Her sister will be saddened to see who is left to mate.”

Ralleth laughs so loud I am surprised the walls of the great hall do not start crumbling around us. It is so startling that it has me laughing at my joke as well. Even Olivia and Diane are giggling to themselves because they know they have mated

with good males. The other females will as well because only honorable males remain in the tribe. I have made fun of my brothers, but only because of how they have made fun of my Diane when I have not been here to hold her while she turns pink.

“Almaac has changed since he found his female.” Erkoz narrows his eyes on me, but I see his mischief hides in them. “I shouldn’t have tried so hard to get you to mate. Is there a chance to change what I have done?”

“No,” I say as I scoop my female into my arms, which has her giggling loudly. “I need to make up for all the time I have been away from my Diane. Lots of apologizing I need to do.”

Diane looks up at me with such sweetness in her eyes that I am struck by how much I almost lost by giving her space she did not need. I owe a lot to Erkoz, not that I will ever tell him. No, I will just help him with his female when she finally arrives. The poor female does not know she will have to deal with my most annoying brother, but maybe she will find him endearing in the same way Diane finds my commands comforting.

“How is my Almaac going to apologize to me?” Diane wraps her arms around my neck and pulls herself up in my arms. I do not answer her question because I am still trying to decide what I am going to do to her. For now, I want to get her naked and in the water. I will figure out the rest as I go.

Almaac

I spent the next few days treating my Diane like the blessing she is. I learned the ways she liked to have me touch her little nub, to have her bite down so hard on her lip to stay quiet for me. When I was sure I knew how to do that perfectly, I started filling her with my fingers. She could only take one at first, but the more I used her, the more accommodating she was. Her eyes would be dark in lust when I filled her with three of my fingers. She says ‘too much,’ but she takes them because I command it of her. I am sure filling her until she feels too full and adding more still is my favorite thing to do with her, but I need to learn it all.

Ralleth tells me much that he has done with Olivia. What she likes, what she does not, and what makes her squeal the loudest. I have used all of this information so I can make sure I treat my Diane the best, but I do not want her squealing loudly. I want her to hold all of it back because I ask her to. I enjoy seeing how twitchy and panicked she gets when she is so close

to release that she is scared she cannot be good and quiet and still for me. She always is, though, because she is perfect.

“Show me how your Blake had you kneel,” I say when we return to our room in the evening. We spent most of the day speaking with the brothers. At one point, Diane went off with Olivia so they could talk about human female things. That was when I asked Ralleth to explain to me licking a female again. He says that he loves doing it, but I do not know how I will enjoy doing it more than shoving all of my fingers into my small female. Watching her stretch to fit all of me and still being able to take more if I told her to.

Diane kneels on the bed with her head tilted down, her hands resting on her thighs, palms up, and her small breasts pushing out as she straightens her back. Her Blake found a way to make her look so beautiful and submissive. It is even better than when I have her kneel for me.

“This is how you kneel from now on.” I hiss softly as I let my eyes fall all over her body.

“Yes, my Almaac,” Diane’s lips pull up slightly, but I can’t see her full smile since her head is tilted downward. She is so beautiful when she is submissive and obedient. Not that she isn’t always beautiful because she is, but when she is like this, I always fear I will release in my pants.

“If I leave you now, you will stay like this,” I say and watch for her reaction. I am learning much about myself the more I learn about how to pleasure my female. She allows me full control over her, and I do love the power. It also means I am

who she expects to keep her safe when she is trusting me so strongly.

My Diane is stiff, but then she speaks. “It would scare me, but if you think it’s safe, I trust you.”

And this is how I know the goddess has given me the most amazing female. No other would trust me as she does, but I do not use that trust to scare her, and I tell her as much. “I will stay then. You will not move while I admire you.”

Diane sucks her bottom lip between her teeth and bites down on it softly. If I have my way, she will bruise that lip soon. I love it when it is swollen and bright red from where she has bitten it to keep her sounds of pleasure quiet for me. Yes, I am very much looking forward to that.

I grab the chair that Dath left in the room when he was watching my female when I was off being scared in the trees. I pull it in front of the bed so I can watch my female, but not close enough that she can see me watching her. I will not leave her, but I want to see how long she will remain knelt for me. Not to mention I can see the wetness from her core starting to drip onto the bed. Her wiry hair covers her sex from me, but I know what is between her legs, and I can imagine it clenching around nothing as more and more time passes.

My cock is hard in my pants already, and my shirt was discarded when we entered the room. I work the string of my pants so they fall loose enough for me to pull my cock out. The only reason I do not release in my pants or all over my female when we play is because I pleasure myself frequently.

Ralleth tells me it will become easier to last longer the more I am with Diane, but for the time being, I must relieve myself before we play, or I will release against the bed while I feast on her.

A soft whimper escapes her lips after long moments of her not moving. It causes my cock to twitch, and I stroke it harder. Her chest heaves with a deep shuddering breath, and her shoulders soften slightly.

“Are you in pain?” My voice is raspy because I am close to release.

“No, my Almaac.”

I am more than happy she is not in pain because it means I can command her back to how she is supposed to be kneeling. She has become restless, which is making her twitch softly and make soft whimpers. This is not how she is supposed to act, and she needs to be reminded.

“Then sit up straight and stop whining.” My cock twitches as the command leaves my mouth, and Diane immediately responds to me. She is the best female that has ever been created, and I will need to give her so much pleasure for being so sweet and obedient to me. “That is my good girl. So submissive to her mates. Does my Diane enjoy doing as she’s told?”

“Yes, my Almaac.” Her words are barely a whisper, and I wonder if she is feeling a growing need in her sex that I am feeling in my cock.

“Say it.” I hiss and buck my hips into my fist.

“I enjoy doing what I’m told,” Diane says and then continues, almost like she knows I am close to releasing. “I want to be obedient for you, submissive to you, good for you. I want to do anything you tell me because I trust you to make me feel good and keep me safe.”

My hiss is loud as I feel my seed erupting from my cock. I catch it in my hand that isn’t pumping my cock. When I have finished, I grab my tunic from the ground and clean my hand. Diane whimpers from her spot on the bed again, and my eyes snap over to her to see why she would disobey me so blatantly.

“Say what you need to say,” I tell her. A part of me wants to fill her with my fingers for not being silent for me, but she seems to need something. I am a bad male if I do not make sure she gets everything she needs. I will listen to her reason, and if it is not good enough, I will see if I can fit more fingers into her.

Diane’s face turns bright pink, but she remains silent. That will not do. I walk over to her and place my hand between her legs. Her sex is soaking as I thrust a single finger inside of her.

“What did you call this again?” I ask.

Diane whimpers, probably knowing what I really want to do to her. “I called it my pussy.”

I narrow my eyes at her. “No, not yours.”

“Your pussy, Almaac’s pussy,” Diane cries as I push a second finger inside of her. I keep my free hand on the back of

her neck, holding her possessively, so she knows I will protect her and keep her safe. Even as I am the one stretching her until she thinks she can take no more.

“Good girl,” I squeeze the back of her neck softly as I pull my fingers from her completely. “Why did you whimper when I released?” I circle a finger around her opening and wait for her to answer.

Diane’s eyes flicker up to look at me even as she keeps her head tilted down. Her tongue licks at her lips, and she is taking far too long to answer. I thrust my two fingers inside of her, causing her to tense so she doesn’t move her body since she knows I want her still.

“Almaac keeps his release to himself,” Diane gasps as I add a third finger and feel her clenching around me so snug and tight.

I pull my fingers out of her pussy and lick them clean of her juices. When I am happy with how clean they are, I turn my attention back to my female. “You need only ask, and your mate will fill you with his seed.” I tease her. I have let myself release in her mouth only twice because I did not realize how much she might like it. “Your Almaac will be better at keeping you fed, though.” I nuzzle my head against the crown of her head. “Thank you for trusting me.”

“Always,” Diane’s words are breathy. She still hasn’t moved, and she is trying her best to stay quiet even as her breathing is picking up.

I keep my head pressed against hers. “I want so badly to stretch my female and make her take all of my fingers, but I promised myself I was going to use my tongue on you today.”

Diane’s mouth opens, and her breathing catches in her throat. I pull away from her and take her face in my palms so I can bring her eyes up to mine. Her face is bright red, her bottom lip is already bright from her biting, and the colored parts of her eyes are almost black. She wants me so badly right now that she will be the most submissive version of herself. I have seen her like this before, and each time, it is a treasure.

“My Diane is going to be so good for me, isn’t she?” I ask, knowing she will nod her head yes for me. When she does, I continue. “She wants to be stretched and feel my tongue on her.” Her eyes are glazed over in lust, and she nods her head again. I pull her close to me so her nose is placed right in the center of my chest, where the humans say our pheromones are. “Almaac wants you needy. Deep breaths for your mate. Deep breaths.”

She moves slowly because her mind is lost in the lust she is feeling. She will want me even more as she fills her body with my pheromones. The humans tell us it makes them feel certain ways, and I have tested it once on my Diane when she is like this, and it makes her feral in how badly she needs her Almaac. I would never use it on her if she were not my mate and not already wanting to be with me, but since she is my mate and she already so desperately needs me, I have her inhale me.

Diane lets out a low moan as her claws try to pierce the scales of my chest. She wriggles in my arms and wraps her legs around my torso, her slickness grinding against me. I let her for a moment as I chuckle softly against her hair. She is desperate now, and this is exactly how I want her. So desperate for relief, desperate for her mate. I will take care of her, make her find all the pleasure she could ever want.

I peel her hands off my chest and hold them in one of mine. She continues to grind herself against me, and I love feeling how wet she is in anticipation of me being inside her. I hold her hands above her head and then lean down so I am lying her across my bed.

“Unwrap your legs,” I say as I flick my tongue over her dark nipples. She does immediately, even though her hips keep trying to find friction between us. “I may have gotten my mate too worked up.” I chuckle because I do not think it will be possible for my Diane to stay still today.

“I’ll be good.” Diane’s eyes go wide, and she stops the movement of her hip even as her face turns bright pink and the flush travels down her chest, stomach, and between her legs.

“You are always good,” I tell her as I flick my tongue over her nipple again. Her lip is sucked between her teeth, and I flick her nipple again to see her bite down on it more. My cock is back to being hard. How could it not be when my mate is being so receptive to my touches?

I grab her thighs and push them far apart from one another. Her lips and clit are burning red. They will be so hot against

my fingers, but I do not touch her yet. She wants me to touch her so badly, and I will, but first, I need to make sure she knows what I want from her.

“You will be still,” I say as I run a finger over her folds, making sure not to touch the bundle of pleasure. “You will be quiet.” I trace down the other side, noticing that her core is already trying to clench down on my fingers even though they are not yet inside her. “You will take all the pleasure your mate gives you because he will not be happy with you just releasing once.”

My Diane takes a deep breath, and her eyes go wide. I have never made her release more than once, but Ralleth has told me it is possible for human females to release repeatedly. I want to see how many times I can get my mate to release. She will be shaking and twitching outside of her control by the time I finish, and that is what I am looking forward to most. I want to take my mate to the place where her body betrays her and moves on its own, even though she tries so hard to stay still.

“Does my Diane want this?” I ask. I do not need her answer because I can see her wetness building, her thighs already shaking softly in my hands in anticipation of what is to come.

“Yes, please, my Almaac.” Her voice is dark and lusty.

Two of my fingers spear her pussy as soon as she says please, and then I’m working them in and out of her quickly, spreading them to stretch her wide so she can accommodate more of me. When I add a third one, I watch her face. She

always pretends like three is too many, even though I have seen her take four.

“How does that feel?” I ask as I stroke her cheek with my free hand.

“So full,” She says on a shaky exhale. Me asking her questions is the only time she can make sounds, but she does not try to be sneaky and make sounds that have nothing to do with her words. She is so good. She will not moan or cry out because I have asked this of her.

“My Diane can take more,” I say with a smile. “She stretches so nicely for her mate, doesn’t she?”

Diane braces herself because she knows I will add the fourth soon. “Yes.”

“She wants me to add more.” I tease her because her pussy squeezes my fingers so tightly when I make her beg for more. “Ask your mate. He will give you what you need.”

“Please,” Her eyes are wide, her legs trembling beneath me no matter how hard she tries to keep them still.

“Hm?” I ask. I try to seem like I do not know what she is saying please for because she needs to be more specific in her needs so I can help give her what she needs.

“More.” Diane bites her lip as she tries to hide another shiver that moves her whole body. “I need more of my mate, please.”

“You will have more of your mate then,” I hiss and remove all of my fingers from her. I stoke her clit as I coat two of my

fingers from my other hand in her juices. I will be slow with her as I see how far I can push her. She has given me her trust, and with that trust, I will take her to places she is dying to go.

When my fingers are coated in her slick, I push the first two back into her and then work on getting the first two from my other hand inside of her. My Diane's body tenses since this is the first time I have done this to her. She has taken the four fingers of one hand before but never the first two from each hand. I hook them against the soft walls of her pussy and watch in awe as her pussy stretches to accommodate me. Her legs are back to shaking, and soft beads of sweat erupt all over her body.

"You are taking me so well," I praise her. "Your body responds so well to your mate, doesn't it?"

"Yes, my Almaac," The words are so quiet as I curl my fingers in a spot that has her breath catching and shuddering.

I furrow my brows and curl my fingers against the same spot, and she reacts the same way. Her eyes are wide, and I know that I have found what I intend to give her pleasure with. I curl my fingers in the same spot over and over as Diane's body becomes erratic in its shaking. She is trying so hard to keep herself still, and her muscles are rioting against her with each curl of my fingers. I watch her face, the worry on her face as she bites down hard on her lip. I remove my other hand so I can focus fully on stroking the spot inside her that has her desperate for release.

"Ask your Almaac to help you release this way."

“I- I can’t—“ Her words are choppy, and I realize she will not be able to be good for me if I continue how I am.

“Be loud for your Almaac if you need.” I amend her rules because I want to hear her beg me to make her release in this way. “I need to hear my mate beg for release like this. If you need to be loud, you will still be my good girl.”

“Make me come, fuck,” Diane’s words are loud moans as her body shakes around my fingers. “Almaac, please, don’t stop. Make me come, please.”

My eyes brighten, and I continue to curl my fingers against her until her pussy is clenching down on them. She is releasing more wetness forcefully against my chest. I watch in amazement as I continue to curl my fingers in on her and watch as liquid pulses from inside of her.

“I’m sorry,” Diane tries to move away from me when her release finally settles.

“You will be still,” I say more harshly than I mean to, but I am too entranced by the beauty of what I just witnessed. I remove my fingers from her pussy and push her thighs so she is back to being exposed to me. “I did not know females could release like that.”

“It doesn’t happen all the time,” Diane sounds worried, but she has nothing to be worried about. She has blessed me with her release. “Only when you make me come like you just did.”

A smile breaks out across my face. “My Diane should not have told me that,” I say before plunging my fingers back

inside her and curling them against her soft walls. “I will bring her pleasure only in this way so that she continues to bless me in her release.”

“Not every time, Almaac,” Diane moans as my fingers scrape along her sensitive area. “It doesn’t happen every time.”

“I do not need it to happen every time. I just need to know that it can happen,” I say before shoving my other two fingers in right as I curl against her.

“Too much,” Diane is being loud in her protests because I haven’t told her to be quiet again yet.

“Be quiet if you want your Almaac to see how many fingers he can get inside you.” She will say too much, but what she really means is for me to fill her with all of my fingers and still add more. She is an insatiable female.

Diane whimpers softly, and then her lip is sucked back into her mouth. My beating is hard in my chest because she is telling me to add more, so I will do as she asks. I remove my hands from her completely so she can remember just how much she enjoys feeling full. I rub her clit with one hand and return three of my fingers to her pussy. She moans at the intrusion, but it only has me curling my fingers against her soft walls until she’s shuddering underneath me. When I pull out of her, I admire her pussy is more open, stretched, waiting for me to fill it again. It is too inviting. I lose myself to thrusting inside of her until she is trying to clamp her thighs closed around my hands.

“Be still,” I hiss. She slowly moves her legs back to being spread far apart. When they are spread even further than I had them, I smile at her with a full smile. “Good girl. Thank you for blessing Almaac with your obedience.”

My Diane whimpers, but I do not need her to say anything. I am going to make her feel so good for being so good to me. I lower my head between her legs and let my tongue flick over her clit. She sucks down a deep breath and moves underneath me for just a moment before she is forcing herself still again. I move my fingers inside of her, and she cannot help but move her hips up toward me. I smile against her and lick at her more ferociously. Ralleth is right. I do like having my tongue on her, but I would much rather have it inside of her. My eyes widen, and then a devious plan has been concocted in my head. One that I will let play out another day when her liquid release is refilled completely.

Diane’s pussy clenches on my fingers as well as it can while I’m trying to keep her spread. It’s the only indicator I have that she is finding her release again because she is doing so beautifully in keeping all her sounds inside her. I wait until her clenching stops before I remove my tongue from her clit and look at her body. She is bright pinky, out of breath, slightly shiny, and her lip is bruising so beautifully. She will hurt herself too much if she keeps doing it, though.

“You will not bite your lip for the rest of your releases,” I say as I return my tongue to her clit and start moving my fingers inside her.

“I can’t be quiet if I can’t bite my lip, my Almaac.” Diane sounds worried.

“Then you will not be quiet.” Her head falls against the bed, and she lets out a long moan that has me lapping at her like she is the tastiest thing I have ever had on my tongue. She is, but that is beside the point. I will feast on my Diane until I have determined she can release no more.

Diane

“My female is almost healed?” Almaac pulls my tunic back up so he can examine my torso after I just put it on. I swat at his hands, but he ignores me and brings his other one up to cup my breasts. “The bruises are almost gone.”

Almaac is refusing to have sex with me until I’m fully healed, even though I’ve told him I’m pretty much completely healed. It’s been twenty-four days since I was jumped on Earth and five days since I begged Almaac for his cock for the first time. Of course, he stuffed it in my mouth instead of my pussy. Much to my disappointment.

“I am healed!” I say with a little force. “I’ve been healed for days.”

“Shush,” Almaac drops my tunic and readjusts it so it’s covering my body. “Almaac wants to show his female something, and then she can try to persuade him to spread her legs and push his cock inside her.”

“So charming.” I hit his arm lightly before flinging the bedroom door open. He’s right behind me, picking me up and spinning me around in his arms.

“My Diane does not need charming.” He lowers himself to his knees once he has me pinned against the hall wall. His hands make quick work of spreading my thighs and shoving two fingers inside me while he continues to speak. “She needs to be controlled and taken care of. If she wanted charm, she would have asked for Erkoz. Would have him pushing inside of her instead of her Almaac.”

I lean my head against the wall and let out a soft moan because Almaac hasn’t told me to be quiet yet, but I’m sure it’s coming.

“Which male did you mate,” Almaac hisses, and I open my eyes to look into his. “Did you mate one that is charming and cunning, or did you mate one that will give you everything you need so long as you are good for him?”

“Yes,” The word is a whimper on my lips as he keeps thrusting inside me, his fingers curling on the sensitive spot inside me that will have me making a mess all over the floor if he’s not careful. But he’s my Almaac, so of course he’s careful.

“Which male did you mate?” He curls his fingers again, which has me crying out and clawing at his neck.

“Almaac. I mated my Almaac.” My legs are shaking, and he’s taken on holding most of my weight in his free hand. My

breathing is ragged, and the sounds escaping much more loud than he normally lets me get away with.

“Good girl,” Almaac says softly as he presses his head to mine. He curls his fingers one last time, which has me gasping for breath, but then he removes himself. “We will finish this later when you try to convince me to make love to you.”

“Wait,” I hold on to his neck tightly as I let the orgasm I was about to have recede into my body. “That’s not fair.”

“Would you like to release all of your pleasure in front of my brothers?” Almaac asks.

My eyes fly open, and for the first time since we started, I’m looking around the hallway and see that we are most definitely not alone. My cheeks heat bright red, and then I’m staring open-mouthed at Almaac, who’s smiling brightly like he’s proud of himself.

“I do not mind others seeing how good my mate is for me.” Almaac is posturing in front of his brothers and I don’t hate it. He lowers his head and whispers to me. “You told me your Blake showed you off sometimes. I want to show you off, too.”

“I like it,” I nod against his cool forehead, and his smile gets even wider somehow.

“The most perfect female,” Almaac says as he stands back up to his full height and wraps his arm around me. “My brothers are jealous that I have a female that trusts me so much.”

Almaac isn't wrong. I can see the way the brothers watch us, not like they are going to do anything to me, but like they are grateful to get a peek into what being with a human is like. What surprises me about the small group is that Erkoz is there, not smiling like he normally does until he sees me giving him a questioning look.

"I thought you thought I was ugly because I'm rude?" My shoulders rise and fall with the laugh I'm keeping inside.

"You are, but Erkoz needs to know how to treat females." He answers honestly. I decide not to be hurt by the ugly acceptance because I'm the one who brought it up. If he really wants to be with my sister when she arrives, he'll be in for a rude awakening if he thinks I'm ugly. "Erkoz has a question, though."

All the other males have returned to whatever it was they were doing, which is usually just hanging out and eating. Every once in a while, one of the tradesmen, trades-demons, will go work on something, but for the most part, there isn't a lot to do around here. Erkoz is walking with Almaac and me as we make our way through the great hall. I'm glad they're able to get along now that I've mated Almaac. I thought he might still be angry at Erkoz for all the grief he gave both of us for so long, but they seem close enough. They're not nearly as close as Ralleth and Almaac because those two talk about everything. Especially when they think Olivia and I can't hear them. I've learned that demons are terrible at whispering, but maybe that's just because they can't hear as well as us, just like they can't smell as well as us.

“I’m an open book,” I say when I remember Erkoz has a question he wants to ask.

“You are a human,” Almaac says as he narrows his eyes on me. “We no longer have books in the tribe either, so I do not know where you could open one.”

I get over wanting to laugh in Almaac’s face for not understanding a human phrase because he mentions that there’s such a thing as books in this place. Olivia told me our translator chip allows her to read the letters Ralleth sends to other tribes, so that also means we can probably read their books. I make a mental note to ask Almaac to ask Ralleth to get us some books. I might even bring it up with Olivia because I’m sure she’d kill for some kind of entertainment as well.

“We can talk about books later. I have a question for Almaac’s good girl.”

I roll my eyes, and I know Almaac is cutting his friend a look with a snarl. Erkoz is already laughing to himself because he loves the reactions he is able to get from both of us. Almaac does not like anyone but him calling me a good girl even if it’s preceded by Almaac’s name.

“Ask your question before I ask for your banishment for annoying me,” I tease.

“Almaac’s female would never because then her sister would be without a mate.”

I laugh so dramatically and hard that I bend my body in half and grab my knees while I keep laughing. It's so forceful and never-ending that I can feel the tears in my eyes starting to slide down my face. Erkoz is beaming brightly because he thinks he's amusing me when in all actuality, I'm laughing at not with him. Olivia told me the demons don't really understand the difference, which only has me laughing harder at Erkoz now.

"Less ugly like this," Erkoz nods and then looks over to Almaac. "I can see how you are able to mate her when she is like this. Normally, I feel bad for my brother for having such an ugly mate."

"Banish him!" I manage to get out between sucking in breaths of air and laughing more.

"If you banish me now, then you will forever be ugly. Your only hope is that Erkoz is here to make you laugh."

Almaac lets out a huff but doesn't come to my defense at all. I stare up at him when I'm able to stand up straight and cock a brow at him.

"Almaac thinks you are the most beautiful female," He says with a wave of his hand like it's supposed to shoo away any of my questions about him finding humor in Erkoz blatantly calling me ugly. "I would not mate an ugly female."

I know he's telling me the truth because I don't think Almaac knows how to lie. Still, I want to see if I can goad him into something if he thinks I think he thinks I'm ugly. Yes, that's a lot of mind games, but thankfully, the demons aren't as

clever as humans, so maybe I can get away with it before Almaac realizes what I'm doing.

I sigh softly and look up at him with a frown. "Is that why my Almaac does not make love to me? He thinks his female is ugly?"

Almaac stops moving, his body stiffens, and his eyes snap to mine with deadly seriousness in them. A whimper escapes my lips when he looks at me, and I realize that my taunting has, in fact, done the job I wanted it to do.

We're close to the exit of the great hall, but Almaac is determined to make a point now. He pulls me over to one of the pillars and pins my body between the pillar and his. Erkoz follows us with curious eyes, and I realize he's also blocking me off from the rest of the room. His brows raise in surprise, and then he's tilting his chin, telling me to look back at my mate.

Almaac's eyes are deep red, anger mixing in his mind, making him think irrationally. I know he'll never hurt me, so his irrationality is going to be with determining whether my body can take him fucking me right now in the great hall's entrance.

"Almaac does not do teasing," He hisses in my ear as he pulls my tunic over my body and tosses it to the side. "His female teases him for what reason?"

I turn my eyes away from him, but he's grabbing my chin and forcing me to look up at him. "I want you in all ways."

His eyelids close around his eyes until they are just small slits. He's trying to figure out what game I'm playing, but I'm not playing a game, and I'm not teasing. I want him, even if it's right here in the middle of the great hall.

"You left your female needy and desperate after stretching her." I press myself against his cool body and hope he's starting to see that it's just him I want. "She needs more."

Almaac's hand goes between my thighs immediately, and then his eyes flicker back to black. Yeah, he can feel how drenched I am after how he left me earlier. He grabs the back of my head and pins me to his chest. "Breathe me in. Deep breaths."

I inhale his pheromones through my nose and feel them ignite the desire in my core. I'm already soaked, and now I'm gushing. My pussy clenching around nothing, and my clit aching to be touched. Almaac likes having me take in his smell now that he knows it turns me into a feral animal in heat. I hope it means we're also about to have some fun.

"Are you nice and sensitive now?" He asks softly as his finger traces small circles around my clit.

"Yes, my Almaac," My breath catches in my throat as he keeps stroking me perfectly. "Please, make love to your female."

Almaac inhales deeply and keeps circling my clit. He doesn't penetrate me with his fingers or lick at my neck like he enjoys doing when I'm about to come. Instead, he listens to my breaths catching and my heart pounding, and then when I

think he's at least going to let me come, he removes his fingers.

A whine erupts from my lips that has him giving me such a disappointed look I stifle it. He's not happy with the little stunt I pulled to get him to fuck me, and he's even less happy with me whining about not getting my way. I just want his cock, and then maybe I won't be so needy. Instead, as if to torture me more, Almaac holds me against his chest and has me breathe in his scent even more. Like I'm not already high enough on his pheromones. No, he wants me so sensitive and horny that a soft wind rustling my pubic hair will have me falling over in orgasm.

Almaac holds my face in his hands after he has me suck down at least three more lung fulls of his scent. He studies my eyes, which are probably black with my blown-out pupils. He seems happy with himself and reaches out for my tunic, which Erkoz hands him quickly.

“If you start feeling less desire, you will tell Almaac, and he will make sure you stay just like this,” Almaac says as he licks some of the sweat from my neck. “I want my female to feel a fraction of the desperation I constantly feel if she thinks I do not want to make love to her every moment of every day.”

I whimper softly, realizing that I'm about to be a horny mess for the rest of the day or until Almaac decides to give me relief. He allows me to fall to the floor to sit for a moment as I try to calm myself. Of course, as soon as I'm able to and the lust dissipates slowly, he is staring at me with a knowing look.

“I feel less desire.” The words have pricks of tears in my eyes. Not because I’m sad or hurt but because I really need to come, and I’m not trying to torture myself all day.

“Good girl,” Almaac pulls me to his chest again. “I will make sure you are never without desire.”

My body shudders as I breathe him in again, and then I’m shaking as my legs try to give out. My clit aching and so needy that I’m trying to grind myself against Almaac, who’s keeping me from doing what I need to get off.

“So beautiful when you’re desperate for your mate,” Almaac whispers in my ear. “I know your Blake must have done this to you. Tell me how long your other mate could keep his Diane so beautiful and needy.”

“Almaac,” I can’t help the whine that erupts from my lips, and he must realize that the whining comes with desperation because he no longer looks disappointed that I’m begging and calling out for him.

“Almaac is not a time.” He rubs his thumb along my bottom lip and pushes it inside. I eagerly suck on it, lapping at it with my tongue. If I can show him how good I’ll treat his cock, maybe I can get him to relieve some of the need inside of me.

“This desperate, maybe a half day,” I answer as truthfully as I can. Human men don’t have pheromones like my Almaac, but if they did, I have no doubt Blake would have used them to torture me in the same way.

“Our female can do much better than half a day,” Almaac says quickly as he pops his thumb out of my mouth and returns to standing. I crawl over to him, my hands groping at his groin. No care that we’re not alone and that Erkoz is the only one blocking all the other demons from seeing just how desperate I am for my mate. “Ask your question of my mate so I can continue making her desperate for her mate’s cock.”

Erkoz rubs his horn softly as he looks down at me, my blown-out pupils, probably looking more like a feral animal than anything else. “Erkoz was going to ask if all females like being good because he is not sure he wants a good female. He sees now that even human females that are good girls are bad sometimes for attention.”

Almaac lets out a huff of laughter and looks down at me, still stroking him through his pants. “She is the best female for me, brother. You will have a female that is good for you.”

Erkoz nods, and I can see his cock straining against his pants. He won’t do anything about it in front of me. Hell, I’m sure he hates that it’s partially because of me he has a boner. “Thank you, Almaac.” Erkoz nods at us.

“Erkoz,” Almaac motions for him to come closer for a moment. “I use my smell on my female because she allows it. Do not use yours on a female unless you ask. Do you understand?”

Erkoz’s eyes flash red for a moment. “I would never.”

“I know, but I feel I need to say it since you have seen what it can do to a female.” Almaac looks down at me with

adoration. “The human females trust us to protect and care for them. I do not want to spoil that trust by not reminding my brother to be careful with the power we wield over them.”

Erkoz’s eyes settle back to black, and he nods. “Thank you for letting me watch.”

Then he’s walking back to join the others, who are definitely all staring at us. I can’t be bothered to care much about that when I have my mate’s cock so close to my mouth. I only need to free him from his pants, and then I can have my way with him. Of course, Almaac realizes this, grabs my wrists in his hands and helps me up to my feet.

“So desperate,” Almaac chuckles. “Makes me want to keep you like this all the time.”

“Please,” The word is a betrayal to me, and I hate myself for saying it. I do enjoy being Almaac’s horny little mate, though, so if he wants to play like this more often, I have no problems with it.

“Good girl,” Almaac coos as he walks me through the double doors that lead outside the great hall. “Maybe Almaac will allow you to release before bed.” When I lean into him and moan, he adds. “Maybe not.”

Diane

The house is small and a little run down from the outside, but I can tell that Almaac is excited to show it to me. It's only a short walk from the great hall and an even shorter one to the bathing pools. Olivia told me that most of the males stay in the great hall, and only a few elders still stay in the houses outside. I don't think Almaac is showing me one of the elders, though.

“This was Almaac's family home.” He says as he pushes me through the wooden door that is hanging slightly off its hinges. “He hasn't lived here in many years, but he was hoping...”

His voice trails when he notices I'm gripping his cock through his pants as he leads me inside. He hasn't given me any peace from keeping me drugged up on his pheromones. So if I'm a little out of it and caring more about where his cock is than where we are, it's his own fault and not mine. When he doesn't stop me from turning around and falling to my knees, I take it as his acceptance that I'm going to have his cock inside of me.

“Hm,” Almaac runs his fingers through my hair and holds me still. “I am not a smart male, am I?”

“You’re the smartest,” I say without really thinking about what he’s trying to say. My mouth is working the outline of his cock, even though it’s covered by the fabric of his pants. He cradles my head against him and lets my mouth continue trying to take him, even though it’s impossible until I get him to take his pants off.

“Your mate wants to show you your new home, but you would rather have me release my seed down your throat?”

“My mate has made sure I want nothing but his seed,” I answer truthfully as my fingers claw at the string of his waistband. “Please, let me pleasure you, and I’ll be good.”

“You are always good,” Almaac says softly as he moves his hand from my hair to cup my face. “Let me take care of you. I should not have gotten you so desperate when I wanted to share important things with you.”

“I like being desperate for you,” I pant as my fingers finally loosen the string enough that his pants are sagging around his hips. He grabs my hands before I can pull them down any further. My eyes watch where his cock is holding them up, and I’m begging with all of my being that they’ll slide down just a bit more.

“Then let me care for you.” He pushes me further into the house until we’re in one of the small bedrooms. Everything looks old except for the bed, which looks like one from his room in the great hall. I cock a brow at him because he most

definitely thought something was going to happen when he showed me the house.

My tunic is discarded in one swift motion, and then I'm being laid on the bed on my back. Almaac climbs on top of me and presses his chest against my nose. I know what he wants, and I oblige so quickly. I top off the pheromones still swimming in my system and let myself be lost in the lust. Almaac will keep me safe. He only ever brings me the most amazing pleasure when he gets me like this, so I know today will be no different.

"You've been craving your mate's cock for long days now," Almaac says as he removes himself from me when he thinks I've inhaled enough of his scent. He kneels beside the bed and pulls my body until my pussy is just barely not touching his face.

"I need you," I beg.

"You need my seed in your womb?" He teases as his tongue flicks out of his mouth and teases my clit. I buck against his face so ferociously I'm surprised he doesn't place a hand on my abdomen and tell me to be still. He must notice my uncertainty because he stops his licking long enough to tell me. "This is our home. You can be as loud as you want here. Though, the brothers will still probably come out of the great hall to listen."

"Please, I need to be filled," I cry much louder than I have before. "I need my Almaac in me, need to be filled with his seed, feel his young grow inside me."

Almaac's nostrils flare at my mention of young. Olivia told me if I ever need to get fucked, I just need to mention having his young, and he'd be putty in my hands. I've been holding on to it as my last ditch effort to get Almaac inside me, and it seems Olivia was right because the man looks more conflicted than I've ever seen. His hands keep my thighs spread wide for him, but his tongue no longer flicks at my clit.

"I want to try something, and then I will help my mate grow with my young."

I want to ask what the something he wants to try is, but he's already thrusting two fingers inside of me and curling them against my g spot. My hips buck off the bed, and I cry out his name so loudly I'm surprised the house doesn't fall down around us. Almaac shoots his eyes up at me and gives me a curious look.

"My mate is so loud when she is not told to be quiet." He muses. "Is that why you bite so hard on your lip? You must hurt yourself to keep from screaming out your mate's name?"

"Yes, fuck, Almaac, yes." He curls his fingers inside me again, and then I feel him stretching me with the first two from his other hand. He'll spread my pussy wide for him like he likes to see how stretched he can get me. I moan at the feeling of being too full but know that my Almaac will not be satisfied until he's stretched me to his heart's content. Another thing he seems to have in common with my previous mate but Blake would have me beg him to fist me instead of stretching me with just his fingers.

“You will scream your mate’s name when you bless him with your release,” Almaac says as he dips his head between my legs again.

Instead of feeling his tongue on my clit, though, I feel it pushing inside of me where his fingers have opened me. My breathing’s rapid and erratic as he presses his tongue as far into me as he can. Then he moves it so it’s applying pressure to the same spot he found that brings me so much pleasure with his fingers. The feeling is so intense I wrap my thighs around his head and let out a guttural moan that has my whole body shivering.

Almaac laughs softly, which has his tongue vibrating inside of me, right against my g-spot. I tense even more around his head. He pushes my thighs far apart, keeping me spread while he works his tongue inside me. He wants to make sure nothing is blocking him from what he truly wants. All of my release when I finally come. He flicks his tongue inside of me a few more times as I writhe underneath him and call out his name. One last roll of his tongue, and I’m desperately trying to close my thighs as my body is wracked with pleasure.

I have my fingers holding onto his horn and the back of his head like I can keep him pinned to me as I ride out the waves of pleasure coursing through my body. He keeps rolling his tongue in the same spot even as I release on his face and in his mouth. When I’m able to open my eyes from the pleasure fading, I stare in awe at the demon who has brought me so much happiness. He’s licking at the juices that have spilled

down my legs as he watches me with so much excitement in his eyes.

“My Diane enjoyed that?” He asks like he isn’t currently covered in my release. “She is so wet, so, so wet.”

“I loved that.” I shiver as I think about just how good he made me feel not a moment before. “Please fuck me.” It’s more of a whine than a plea, but my Almaac knows I’m desperate, especially after what he just did to me.

“Almaac does not know how to fuck, but he will make love to his mate now.” He says seriously. Olivia told me the demons are confused by fucking, but maybe that’s something I can teach my Almaac later. Right now, if he needs to make love to me, I’ll allow it so long as I feel him fill me with his come.

“Please,” I beg when I feel him push my thighs apart obscenely wide. He sits down on the bed, kneeling as he studies my body. I let my body relax against his touch, and he spreads me further. His tongue snakes out of his mouth, and his eyes become hooded as he tries to memorize how I look, exposed and at his mercy.

“We will go slow.” Almaac’s voice is thick as he speaks. He pulls my body so I am lying against his thighs, my pussy weeping right underneath his gaze. Is it the most comfortable for me? Probably not. Can I see anything without straining my neck? Nope. I can see the absolute devotion and hunger in my mate’s eyes, though, and that makes it worth whatever is about to happen.

Almaac moves one of his arms so he's pushing down on my legs right below my knees. It keeps my body bent in half, and my pussy open for him. His other hand is used to guide his cock against my entrance. I'm a mewling mess underneath him as soon as I feel the cool tip of it press against my burning heat.

"Please, Almaac, I don't need slow. I need you inside me."

"You may not need slow, but I do." He pushes his length through my folds and grinds against my clit. His cock wetting itself with all of my juices. When he's content with how wet he is, he returns the head of his cock to my entrance and slowly, much too slowly, starts pressing inside of me.

"My mate is a hungry female," He smiles as he watches himself impale me in agonizing slowness. "Her pussy is trying to milk me even before I have fully penetrated her."

My cheeks burn bright red, but he's looking at me with so much adoration I don't worry about any embarrassment I have about my pussy clenching down on his length.

"You need your mate's seed?" Almaac asks me as he uses his hand that was guiding his cock to play with my clit. "You will release on your mate's cock."

"Yes, my Almaac," I shudder as I say the words because I can feel the bumps on his cock dragging against the sensitive spot inside me. He keeps my legs pinned against me as he continues his slow exploration of my pussy. I feel him butt up against the end of me, and he pauses for a moment.

“Ralleth’s creature can take all of him,” Almaac pushes against me some more, and I’m gasping at the intrusion.

“Too much!” I say, panicked. “Really too much, my Almaac. This is not like with your fingers.”

Almaac withdraws himself completely and pauses for a moment. His hand has left my clit, and I know he’s trying to figure something out. My demon is hung. I’m a blessed female, but that doesn’t mean he gets to shove the whole thing inside me.

He pushes into me forcefully, and I tense, thinking he’s trying to force himself fully into me when it’s impossible. Instead, I feel his hand wrapped around the rest of him so he doesn’t go in too far.

“Is that too much?” He asks through clenched teeth. “Almaac can make sure he uses less, but he did not feel your ending.”

“That’s perfect.” I lift my hands and stroke the forearm, holding my legs down. “My Almaac takes care of me.”

His body shakes at the praise, and then he’s pulling out, only to sink himself inside me again. He keeps his hand wrapped around the base of his cock, so he doesn’t use more than I can handle until he gets used to how deep he can thrust. He manages a handful more thrusts, and then he’s releasing his seed inside of me. He leaves his cock buried in me and then strokes my clit, trying to get me to orgasm since I couldn’t find one while he was pumping into me. He doesn’t stop until

I'm gasping out his name, and my walls are clenching down on him, causing him to come again.

He releases my legs, and they fall down ungracefully. He holds my hips so I stay impaled on him, and then he's placing a hand on my abdomen like he's somehow already managed to fill me with his young.

"Almaac has been blessed by the goddess," He says as tears begin to rim his eyes.

"I am blessed to have such a wonderful male." I sit up in his lap with a bit of his help. "You're the most amazing male." He sniffles softly and allows me to wipe his tears from his face. When he's finished crying, I grab his face and remind him of why we're there. "Will you show me our new house?"

Almaac

“E rkoz feels like he is doing most of the work,” Erkoz says, which has me huffing in his direction. I carry the materials, I hold all the heavy things, that is what I can do to help. I am not a woodworker like him. So yes, he does most of the work, but I am attempting to help. When I look over at him, I see he wants something. He is not actually complaining. He thinks he can use his helping me repair my family home to get something.

“What do you want?” I ask. I am hoping it is just that I will hunt for him the next time it is his turn. I have no problems taking other brothers’ hunting duties, especially if it gets me out of having to listen to Erkoz whine. I think I just dislike whining in general. Even when Diane does it, I only tell her to hush. Maybe this is a problem with Almaac, but as long as I can fix it so no one whines, then I have fixed the problem.

“I do not want Almaac’s female to be cruel to me with the other females,” He looks around the room like my mate might

show up at any moment to poke fun at him, which he deserves considering how much fun he has had at her expense.

Still, I do not like my brother worrying over my mate, not letting him find happiness. My Diane tells him cruel things, but I also know she has no intention of telling the females to ignore Erkoz. She tells me as much when we lie in bed together and speak about everything. She actually likes Erkoz a lot, which I try not to be jealous about. He is her friend, and she is allowed friends in our world, even if her friend is my most annoying brother.

“Diane will do nothing to warn the females away from you,” I say. “But do not tell her I have told you because she will be angry that I have ruined her fun.”

“Almaac is worried his female will no longer be good for him,” Erkoz chuckles, and his eyes squint like they do when he is amusing himself.

I sigh loudly because, of course, as soon as I tell Erkoz he is safe, he is back to his annoying ways. At least he is done whining, and I don't have to do even more hunting. I return to moving all the furniture inside the small stone house I once shared with my parents and sisters. We removed everything so we could repair my home quickly. That is why Toron helped me with resealing the stones that were coming loose in the walls. Erkoz has been helping me with the doors, wooden furniture, and the roof. Dath has offered to make some dyes for my mate because she wants to make art for the walls. It has to wait until we get more supplies, but Dath is already

stocking up on different flowers and having us pick some when we go out hunting.

Tomorrow Diane's sister, actual sister, not just another human female, she made sure to tell me that over and over, is coming to our world. I want to have her stay in our home if she would like. I know it must be scary for the human females to come here, even if Ralleth's mate and mine found us quickly. The room Diane stayed in still has a broken door, thanks to me. I do not think it will be very comforting for the next human female to see it.

"Almaac is not trying to take two females for himself, right?" Toron asks as I walk outside to grab some chairs for the kitchen.

I frown at the accusation. I have never wanted two females. I can barely handle the one female I do have. She is insatiable and wants her mate often. I cannot imagine how one male could handle two females, especially not me.

"No, I have no plans to take a second female." I pick up the chairs and then stop. "Why do you ask this of me?"

"You are planning on moving the next female into your home. I think it is only fair we question it."

"My sister," I amend his comment. "I am moving my sister into my home. She is blood to my mate."

Toron's eyes go wide, and he dips back down to seal more of the stones. He is embarrassed by his question now, which means he did not know that the next female is related to my

mate. This has me worried because it means that other brothers do not know and will think I am trying to take another female when that is not my intention at all.

“Who all thinks this?” I ask with worry, tainting my voice.

Toron rubs one of his horns and looks up at me before diverting his eyes again. “I think everyone. Probably not Erkoz because he is friends with your female, and probably not Ralleth, or he would have already spoken to you.”

“His creature would have my head on a spike,” I shake my head. “No, she knows my mate has a sister coming. That is why I have not felt her wrath. I need to clear this up with the other brothers, though. I do not want them thinking I would do this to them.”

“Toron will explain.” He stands and wipes his hands on his pants to get rid of as much muck as he can. “He has finished now. Let him go tell the brothers.”

“If they do not believe you, please tell me.” I grab his shoulder and keep his eyes on me. “I do not want my brothers to think I am not an honorable male.”

Toron laughs loudly, and it catches me by surprise. “That is what has them worried. They see how your mate clings to you for protection and care. They think other females will want to feel just as safe.”

“You are all capable males,” I shake my head. “I am not the only male who can protect a female.”

“You protected Ralleth’s female when she was attacked by Xarr, and you protected your female against Erkoz’s cruel jokes.”

“Yes,” I say because I did those things, but any other brother would have done the same for Ralleth’s creature. I was just the closest. As far as protecting my female from Erkoz’s jokes, no one can actually do that. I only tried to fight him once, and that only amused him.

“How will any of the females know we can protect them if Almaac is always the protector?”

I laugh. I must laugh because what he is saying is ridiculous. His eyes widen in surprise, which only has me laughing more. My laughter, of course, has Erkoz coming out of the house because no one is allowed to have fun without him making the jokes. He looks at my hand on Toron’s shoulder, my head which has fallen back in laughter, and the confused look on Toron’s face, and he does not know what to make of the scene. I do not know what to make of it either.

“The brothers think all the females will want me because I am the only male here who protects them.” I get the words out between laughs, and Erkoz’s laugh soon follows mine. At least he can see how ridiculous the other brothers are being.

“Almaac, who runs from his mate and cries in her bed at night, is who the brothers are scared will take all our females?” Erkoz laughs even louder when he describes how I handled my mating. He is not wrong, and it makes me fold in half in laughter. I am not proud of how I acted, but it is so true

that I cannot be mad at him. Especially when the other brothers think I am going to take the females from them. I could barely mate my female when she was pushing all the other males away.

“You are scared he will take the females, but have you not seen how angry Ralleth’s creature gets when Almaac makes his mate eat from his hand or be quiet while he is talking?” Erkoz continues saying things that I have not noticed, and it silences my laugh. “Has Almaac not noticed?”

“No?” I question. “Why is Ralleth’s creature mad at me?”

Erkoz shrugs his shoulders. “You are too occupied with keeping your female a good girl. Erkoz is too entertained waiting to see if she will be bad. Every once in a while, I see Ralleth hold his creature back because she is angry at Almaac.”

“Diane is never bad,” I frown at him, wanting to see her be bad because it simply will not happen. I turn to Toron to send him away because I want to speak with Erkoz more. “Toron, go tell the other brothers they do not need to fear me stealing all the female’s nose souls. I do not want any other females.”

“Making sure one female is good is hard work, then?” Erkoz tries to make fun of my mate and me, but he does not fully understand the beautiful gift Diane gives me.

“My Diane is always good,” I say with a nod. “I never have to work hard, and I hope I never do.”

“Erkoz hopes his female is bad,” Erkoz hisses it like it’s a secret even though we all very much know he wants a female opposite of my Diane. “Although, if Ralleth’s female does not like what Almaac does with his mate, she will surely not like what Erkoz wants to do to his.”

I narrow my eyes at Erkoz because I do not know if I like what he is saying. “What does Erkoz wish to do to his female?” I have never wanted Diane to be bad because I would have no idea what to do with her. I know I dislike being teased like Ralleth, and I surely do not want my Diane to be bad, like Erkoz is saying.

“I am not sure,” Erkoz rubs his horn and has the sense to look embarrassed that he has told me so much. “I never felt this way until Almaac’s female was here. I have dreams of being with females and what I want to do with them. The other brothers have been having dreams too, but I do not share my dreams with them. I don’t think they will understand like Almaac will.”

I feel my brows pulling together. “I only know what my mate wants. She might understand you better since she had a mate before me, but I am not the one to ask about those kinds of questions.”

“Almaac would not mind if I spoke with his mate?” Erkoz’s eyes widen.

“Almaac will be there, of course,” I say before he can get too happy about speaking about things mates do with my mate. “When we finish the house, come have dinner with us.”

“Erkoz will finish the house now, so fast.”

Erkoz sprints back into the house before I can tell him I will need to make sure it is okay with Diane. I am sure she will be fine with it. Erkoz is an honorable male. I also do not think we will finish the house until the next female is here, so I hope whatever he wants to speak about is not too important. I know it has to do with how he wants to be with a female, but surely it is nothing bad. Then again, apparently, Ralleth’s creature does not like how I am with my mate, so maybe we need to talk about these things.

I carry the chair into the house and then decided I need to speak with Ralleth and his creature. Preferably just Ralleth because he will be honest with me about why his creature is mad at me. Ralleth’s creature tries to be understanding that we have different customs than humans, and she is very helpful in getting us used to humans. I do not think she will be honest with me. She may think it is a difference between us and humans, but I do not think that is what it is.

Thankfully, when I enter the great hall, I see Olivia and Diane speaking and laughing at one of the tables. I smile when I see them because hearing a human female laugh is one of the most beautiful sounds. Ralleth is near them, but when he sees me, he stands. This, of course, gets the attention of the females. I stroke Diane’s cheek when I am near, and she melts against my touch. How can Ralleth’s creature be mad at me when she sees how much my Diane trusts me?

“Can I speak with Ralleth?” I ask his creature because I am taking him from her.

“Of course.” Her cheeks turn pink, but I don’t know why. Maybe she is embarrassed that I am asking for her permission to take her male.

Ralleth leans his face close to hers, and she touches her lips to his. I do not understand why she does it and even less why Ralleth endures it. It is not something my female has ever shown an interest in, but maybe I should ask her. The frown on her face, when she watches them makes me think she does not want to do it any more than I want her to do it to me.

“Let’s walk, brother,” Ralleth claps me on the shoulder as he comes to stand by me. “We do not speak without the females often, so this must be interesting.”

I try to laugh softly to show he has not caught on to me, but it comes out forced, and his eyes widen at me. Yes, he can already tell that I have something important to speak about. He pushes me out of the great hall until we are walking the paths of the tribe. Most of the time, when we speak alone, it is about the different ways we pleasure our females. Not that we do that very often anymore since it was mainly me asking Ralleth questions before I did everything with my female.

“Your creature is upset with me,” I say. I do not know how else to start the awkward conversation because it is going to be awkward no matter how it starts.

“Well,” Ralleth rubs his horn. He does not lie. That is one of his biggest faults. Even when he lies, he is bad at it. So, he

tells the truth all the time. “Only sometimes.”

“Why?”

Ralleth slides his lips against his teeth. “She does not like how you treat your female sometimes. She is worried that you make her do things she does not want to do.”

The hiss that escapes my lips is deadly, and my eyes flash red at the thought of anyone thinking I force my Diane to do anything she does not want. Ralleth stands in front of me and puts his hands on my shoulders. His forehead presses against mine. I must be more angry than I realize because he is holding me tightly, and he’s trying to get me to back down.

“Calm down,” Ralleth hisses. His eyes are still black, but he’s pushing down on me like I am not calm. Am I not calm?

“Brother, it is okay,” Erkoz now has his arms wrapped around mine, pinning them to my body. When did he get here? “We are not your enemy.”

“Calm down!” Ralleth’s voice is loud and rings in my ears.

The anger under my skin begins to dissipate, and I realize why I am being treated the way I am. My lips are pulled back, so I am baring my teeth, my muscles tense like I’m ready to fight someone, and my chest is heaving like air is the only thing keeping me from completely enraging. I loosen my hands so they are no longer balled into fists, and I stop struggling against Erkoz’s hold on me. I didn’t even realize we were so close to my home, but we are standing right outside of it when I see what has happened.

“I am sorry, Ralleth.” I look around us with wide eyes. A few brothers are watching us, wondering if they need to step in. My shirt has been discarded, and Ralleth’s is disheveled. “I did not mean...”

“He is calm,” Ralleth looks behind me to Erkoz, who is now releasing my arms. I fall to my knees when I am released and hang my head in shame. “Go!” Ralleth tells the brothers around us. “Almaac and I have fought plenty of times. I do not know why you stand and watch now.”

“Because it is about females now,” Erkoz laughs. “Almaac is volatile when his female is mentioned. The other brothers like seeing what he will do.”

“That is cruel,” Ralleth says through gritted teeth.

“He is not wrong, though,” I mumble. I look up at Ralleth, worried. “Please, the females did not see, yes?”

“No, the females are still in the great hall,” Ralleth looks in the direction we came from. “The brothers who watched were already outside. I do not think the females could hear us.”

“I am truly sorry,” I say as I get back on my feet. “I should not have fought you.”

Ralleth huffs a laugh. “You did not fight me. You tried to push back, but I am obviously the stronger male.”

“And I grabbed you before you did something to get banished,” Erkoz adds with glee.

Ralleth narrows his eyes. “But mostly because Ralleth is stronger.”

“Yes,” I say as I pull my brother in for a hug. “Ralleth is the strongest male.”

He laughs as he returns my hug, and then we are separating. “I will tell my Olivia to stop worrying about your female. It is obvious you care a great deal for her.”

“I do,” I say as I rub my chest where my beating has started picking up. “I dislike that your creature thinks I would do anything my Diane does not like.”

“I will talk to her.” Ralleth grasps my shoulder and gives it a squeeze. “You did not care about her being upset with you before. What changed?”

“I did not know she was upset,” I answer with a chuckle. “I am so enamored with my female. I never thought to look at yours.”

Ralleth nods. “Good. You should not need to look to mine for approval.”

“Do not be mad at her,” I add on because I don’t want my friend to be angry at his mate, even though I do not think it is possible to be mad at our mates since they are so wonderful and perfect for us. “She is just looking out for her sisters.”

Ralleth listens to my words but says nothing. I doubt he is mad at his female, but more so thinking about what he can get out of the situation. I chuckle to myself, thinking about my friend scheming ways to get things from his mate when I simply take. Maybe that is what Olivia does not like, but I do not want to scheme and play with my mate. I just want to have

her. I don't think of it anymore when we are back in the great hall with both females glaring at us.

“Did you get into a fight?” They ask at the same time, causing Ralleth and me to smile at one another before laughing. We did get in a fight, but that is okay. We are brothers. We are meant to fight sometimes.

Diane

My sister is coming in less than half a day, and I am losing my mind. I want to make sure that she feels safe and happy here, but I also know at some point, she's going to have to be around the males, which means she's going to find one that she likes the smell of. I just have to hope that all of Almaac's brothers are as good as he says they are. If I find out that one of them is using his weird smells to make her do things, I might actually snap.

"Kneel," Almaac's voice cuts through the haze of my thoughts and worries. He brought me back to the room after we had lunch because he says I'm worrying too much. His shirt is already discarded, and his pants are loose and hanging low on his hips.

I scurry onto the bed and kneel in the way Almaac likes. He hisses softly, and I know he's proud of just how well I listen to him. I feel the bed dip but don't look to see where he is. I can feel his movements behind me and know he'll be taking my

tunic off. I relax against his touch when he presses his palms against my arms.

“Arms up.” He nuzzles his head against mine and puffs my hair with his exhale.

I do what he says and feel the tunic being pulled over my body. He moves from the bed, and I keep my arms up because he hasn't told me to put them down. He takes his time with whatever he's doing, but I know he's watching me. Making sure I stay still. The thought has fresh wetness pooling in my core. My chest heaves slightly with each breath as the blush creeps up my body. The bed dips again, and I feel myself swaying slightly like I'm lightheaded since the desire in me is starting to take control.

“Such a good girl for her mates,” Almaac runs his fingers along my arms but doesn't tell me to drop them. “Are they tired yet?”

“Yes, my Almaac,” I whisper. My arms are feeling sore from holding them up for so long. He took his time with my tunic and with just watching me. Even now, as he skates his fingertips across my arms, he offers them no relief.

“You will keep them up for your mates,” Almaac commands, and I can't stop the small whimper that escapes my lips. “No whining.”

His hands fall lower down my arms until he's letting them fall down my back. I keep my bottom lip pinched between my teeth, so I don't make another whimper when he finally moves

his hands to my torso. He's careful not to touch anywhere that I actually want him to touch, and my arms are burning.

"Please," The word escapes my lips before I can stifle it. I don't even know what I'm begging for. To be able to put my arms down, to have him touch me more intimately. All I really know is that the desire in me is growing, and the next thing he's going to have me do is suck in his smell. Then there's no reason to think anymore because Almaac will take care of me. He'll take care of all my feral needs.

"Soon." His hands grab my wrists, and he pulls them up higher. The feeling elicits a moan from me. I know he's staring down at me, smiling. "Did Ralleth's creature talk to you yesterday?" He lets go of my wrists, but I know he wants me to hold the pose as best I can.

"Yes, my Almaac."

"And what did my female tell her?" His voice sounds almost worried like he thinks he's doing something wrong.

"I told her that my Almaac keeps me safe and cared for," I answer honestly. "I also told her I did this for my Blake before he passed. That helped to make her feel better."

Almaac grabs my hands again and rests his forehead against my knuckles. "She was worried about my mate."

"Yes, my Almaac," I don't lie to him because there's no point. I didn't even realize Olivia had an issue with our relationship until she got me by myself. She started asking small questions at first like she was being sneaky about it.

They were the same questions I heard when I was in a relationship with Blake. I enjoy being cared for in all ways, and some people struggle with that. Thankfully, when I finally just came out and told her it was a kink, she seemed more receptive to it.

“How tired are they?” Almaac tugs on my hands softly.

“So tired, please, my Almaac,” I beg, but I know what he’s going to tell me.

“No whining.” He leaves my hands where they are and brushes my hair behind my head. When he’s perfectly content with how he’s placed my hair, he finally grabs my arms and helps me put them back where they go when I’m kneeling. “You are so good for me.” He coos as he rubs at the soreness in my muscles. “You could have gone longer, yes?”

“Yes, my Almaac.” My eyes are wide, but I keep my head tilted down. If he makes me put them back up, I might actually start whining a lot more, and that’s not what he’s going to want to hear.

“You would not be quiet, though.” He already knows I was about to start whining. Of course he does. “I will make sure you can be my good girl. I will not force you to fail.”

I want to turn around and wrap him in my arms and tell him how much I love him. How much I appreciate how well he takes care of me. That’s not the language Almaac wants his love in, though. The way I can show him my love for him is by following his orders and obeying his commands.

Almaac shifts behind me, and then I feel his body retreating off the bed. He stands in front of me and tilts my chin up so I'm looking into his dark eyes. I smile at him because I don't know what else to do to show him how much I need him. He doesn't need my words, but my actions have him in a chokehold.

"I have been blessed," He whispers as his thumb strokes my cheek. I relax into his hold on my face but keep my eyes on his. "You will listen to what your mate says." He removes his hand from my face and pushes me onto my back. One hand lifts me so I can pull my legs out from underneath me. He makes sure I'm spread underneath him before he lays his abdomen over my core and leans his forehead against mine.

"I want you to grow with my young." My hips buck at the words because my body seems to think that is a great idea. Almaac chuckles but then guts me when he says. "Be still while your mate talks." I chew on my lip to stop the whimper from escaping my lips, and his eyes light up. He loves watching me obey him, especially when I try so hard to be good for him.

"I will need to fill you frequently," He continues talking about breeding me. "Morning, afternoon, and night. Until you are filled with my seed, and my young is swelling inside you."

I nod my head and tense my whole lower half so I don't grind against him. He has to feel how wet I'm getting from him, just talking about coming inside of me over and over. He shifts on his arms, which has his abdominal muscles moving

over my clit and soaked pussy. My nostrils flare in desire, but he's not done yet, because he wants me even higher before he has me smell his pheromones to intoxicate me even more.

“You were sent here to carry my young.” Almaac shifts against me again, and my lip trembles. “You were sent to be filled with my seed.” More movements like he knows he is grinding the hard ridges of his muscles perfectly against me. “You were sent to be mine.”

“Yes, my Almaac,” I can't stop the words from tumbling out of my mouth. “Please, I'm all yours. I want to have your young. I want to carry them for you over and over until I have given you the family you want. Please, let me do that for you.”

Almaac's eyes widen in wonder at my words. His tongue snakes out of his mouth to lick at his lips, and then he is shifting his body against me as he crawls until my nose is right in the center of his chest. I press myself against him and suck in deep breaths, knowing that I'm about to get everything I could ever want as soon as he thinks I'm desperate enough. He cradles my head with one of his hands so I don't leave before he's ready for me to.

“My mate will show me how desperate she is to bear my young,” Almaac rolls us over so I am straddling his groin with my head still cradled against his chest. He releases my head, and I sit up slowly, trying to get my bearing around me. Almaac moves his hands behind his head and props himself up to watch me with excitement in his eye. “Show me how badly you want my seed to fill you.”

I take only a moment to register what Almaac wants, and once I do, I'm scrambling back on his body until I can feel his cock underneath me. I don't play. I don't tease. I prop his cock up, and I take as much of it as I can in one move. Almaac's hiss is deadly when I push him as far as I can get him inside me. He keeps his hands behind his head, though, and watches me.

"Yes, my mate wants to grow round with my young," Almaac hisses as I pull him almost completely out and slam back into him. I move my hips erratically over his length because I want so badly to be filled with his seed, to feel it dripping from me. Hoping that I will be with child soon.

"Show your mate," Almaac commands. "How badly does my Diane need to feel my cock release inside her?"

A guttural moan escapes my lips as I keep pumping him in and out of me. I want him to come. Why isn't he coming yet? "Please, Almaac, please, my mate." My fingers press hard into his abdomen as I beg him to give me what I want.

"No whining," Almaac hisses and pulls my hands away from his abdomen. He holds them over me and uses them to slide me up and down his cock like I weigh nothing because, to him, I don't. He pulls me up and drops me over and over, and I don't care that he's too big because he's stopping my descent before he's banging against me. I just need him to come inside me.

"Almaac," My voice is small and desperate. "I'm going to whine. I can't help it. Please, I need your seed. Please, please,

please.”

Almaac’s lips pull back into a snarl. But I can feel him twitching inside of me, his cock releasing exactly what I need to sate the horny beast inside of me. His name is the first thing on my lips, but the gratitude tumbles out even as my orgasm fades.

He waits until I am calm in his arms before pulling himself out and holding me tightly against him. “You can whine when you are begging for my seed.” He says it seriously, and I laugh softly against him.

“I thought you hate whining,” I poke at him.

“I do, but hearing my mate so desperate to carry my young. I like those sounds more than I dislike the whining tone she uses.”

I bite my lip as I smile up at him. “How do I beg without whining?”

Almaac looks down at me with wide eyes. “If you learn, you will show your mate. Those are sounds he wants to hear.”

I roll my eyes at him, but he’s too busy setting me on the bed and spreading my legs to notice. His thumb on my clit is the first thing that takes over my mind and body. A growl erupts in my chest because I want him to keep doing whatever it is he’s doing.

Almaac’s eyes widen at the sound, and he moves his thumb the same way, but now he’s only getting content sounds. He narrows his eyes at me slightly before deciding he has other

things to worry about. The first of which is making sure his come stays in me. Two fingers push inside me as he continues to rub my clit and massage his release against my walls. I move my hips with his fingers because he hasn't told me to be still yet.

“Every morning.” He finishes saying something, and I realize I haven't been paying any attention.

“What?” My voice is small because normally I hang on every word he says, but I was so lost in my lust I was ignoring him a bit.

Almaac's fingers are still inside me, and he looks up at my face. “Maybe every night as well.”

“No, wait, what is my Almaac saying?” I beg. He continues thrusting his fingers inside me now, and I feel myself starting to succumb to the feelings of pleasure building up inside of me.

“I am talking about how often I will need to make love to my mate, so she becomes round as soon as possible.” Almaac gives me a devilish smile as he curls his fingers, making me cry out as my orgasm crashes into me suddenly. He keeps thrusting in and out of me like he can't endure not feeling me clamp down around his fingers. I'm sure he thought for a moment of shoving more inside me just to see my reaction, but somehow he refrains.

“Morning and night,” I say when I come down from my high. “My Almaac will need to do this morning and night, and I will gift him as many young as he can put inside me.”

Almaac hisses at my words, spreads my legs, and pushes himself inside me again. “Tell me again.”

“I want all your young,” I gasp as he pushes into me with desperation. “I’ll grow round as many times as the goddess blesses us. Let your mate gift you with babes, please.”

Almaac has to strain his neck to watch me as he plows into me, but I have my neck craned back so I can stare up into his eyes. His tears are barely tracks on his face as empties himself inside me again. I want to reach up and brush them away, but my muscles are still goo after being thoroughly fucked.

“These are tears of joy,” Almaac says when he sees what I want to do. “Joy that I have been blessed with a mate that cares for me so dearly.”

I smile at him and relax back against the bed. I’m exhausted from the fucking and know I need a nap before my sister gets here. I also need a bath, but I don’t know if we have enough time for that or if Almaac will even want me to since he’s come inside me. Maybe he’ll think I’ll wash away his seed that might make me pregnant. I chuckle to myself, and I feel Almaac pull away from me. His head dips low to mine, and I realize I’ve already closed my eyes.

“Sleep,” Almaac’s voice is soft. “Almaac will protect you.”

Diane

“**T**he house looks good enough!” I say with way too much sass to Almaac.

I can already see his nostrils flaring, and I hold back a nervous giggle. Should I go ahead and fall to my knees? Something tells me we’re going to get to dinner even later than planned because of my little outburst. Almaac crosses his arms over his chest, and yep, I should get on my knees. I fall immediately and let myself kneel in the way he loves so much. I don’t look up to see his eyes widening in appreciation or to see his nostrils flare again.

He takes a few steps until he’s right in front of me, and then he squats down, taking my chin in his hand. “You stay like this until I finish. No moving, no sounds.” He drops his fingers below the tunic and starts strumming my clit hard enough to make me gasp. He’s quick about working me up to the edge, and then he’s pulling his hand away, pulling my nose to his chest, and ordering me to inhale him. When I’m twitchy with lust, he pulls away from me completely, releases my head so it

can fall back to where it goes, and then disappears into another room.

“I am not leaving you,” He calls out because he knows being left alone scares me. “We are just finishing the house, and then we can go wait with the others for your sister.”

I furrow my brows when he says we, but then I hear the front door open. My body tenses, and whoever just entered hasn't moved from where he's standing either. I can't see them, but it has to be a brother. Some of them will watch Almaac and me play. None of them really know what Almaac does for me or makes me do, but they're understanding that it's a mate thing. Not understanding enough not to be worried when they enter my home and see me kneeling on the ground, twitchy with desire, with my mate nowhere to be found.

“Almaac?” Erkoz's voice sounds worried. I roll my eyes and relax a bit because, of course, it's Erkoz in my home witnessing me obeying my mate. “Almaac!” He says, a bit more panicked.

“What?” Almaac steps out of the bedroom he was in. “You can step around her. She will not move.”

“Do I just ignore her?” Erkoz asks in disbelief. “Has she been bad? I thought Almaac did not like his mate being bad.”

“She is being good right now,” Almaac sounds irritated by Erkoz's questions. “Can you not see how beautifully she obeys me? She has not even looked at you, has she?”

“No,” Erkoz finally moves from where he’s standing by the door. He walks until he’s standing closer to me, but he’s given me a wide berth as he passes me to stand by Almaac. “Is this what you have her do to be good for you?”

“Sometimes,” Almaac huffs a sound of approval like he’s proud someone is noticing how good I am for him. “Most of the time, I have her be quiet and still while I try very hard to make her not quiet and not still.”

I bite down on my bottom lip and want to rub my thighs together. He’s showing me off, showing off how good I can be, and it makes me only want to be better for him. I hear footsteps near me, and then Almaac is crouching down beside me. He moves my hair from around my face to behind my back.

“How hard do you try?” Erkoz’s voice is shaky, and I wonder if he’s not asking for a show right now. I don’t mind. Blake showed me off to our friends who were in the scene too, so I’m used to being shown off. What I’m more surprised by is that Erkoz seems to want Almaac to show me off to him.

“Arms up,” Almaac says softly and grabs the hem of my tunic. I lift my hands up and am immediately met with the tunic being pulled from my body. “Arms down.”

“What do you do if she doesn’t do what you say?” Erkoz’s words are dry in his throat.

Almaac pets the top of my head. “She always does what I say. That is why she is the perfect mate for me.”

Erkoz takes a deep breath, and I wonder if he wants to say or ask something else, but Almaac is in my ear. “Erkoz dreams of females being bad for him. He does not want a good female like my mate.”

I bite down harder on my lip and force myself not to look at either man. Poor little Erkoz probably thinks there’s something wrong with him, and that’s why he’s so fixated on what’s happening with Almaac and me right now. I want to tell him I can explain what he wants to him, but I’m to be quiet right now. My mate is in my head, though.

Almaac presses his thumb against my lips, and I open to suck on it. “My mate will help Erkoz figure out what it is and why he has the dreams.” I don’t answer. He’s commanding me, not asking me. He pushes his thumb as far into my mouth as he can and then withdraws it. “Are you feeling less desire?”

“Yes, my Almaac,” I reply. A part of me wants him to get me all worked up again, but the other part of me knows we have so little time until my sister is coming through the portal. Almaac must realize this, too, because he doesn’t make me inhale any more of him, and he doesn’t play with my clit again.

“You will stay quiet and still until we finish.” Almaac stands from me and then turns to his brother. “We need to finish soon. Her sister will be here, and I want her room to be complete.”

Erkoz says nothing, but I hear them both retreat into the other room where Almaac was busy finishing putting together

the bedframe. We brought the mattress with us when we came, so the only parts left are securing her door, which is still a little off its hinges, and making sure the bedframe is secure.

“How can you not want her to mess up?” Erkoz’s voice is soft, and I know he thinks he’s whispering. I know all the demons think they’re whispering when they’re that quiet, but it’s only whispering because they have awful hearing.

“Why would I want her to mess up?” Almaac’s not being quiet. He’s enjoying that Erkoz is uncomfortable. The tables have turned, and he’s loving it. “If she is good, I reward her with my cock. I want her to be good always because I enjoy doing things to her with my cock.”

I can almost hear Erkoz’s brain trying to piece together why he likes what he likes, but he has no frame of reference for it. “My dreams.”

“I had the dreams too,” Almaac says, and this time he is quiet as well. It’s the first time I’m hearing about any of the men having dreams about, well, anything, but they seem to worry Erkoz. “I started having them when Ralleth’s creature was the only female here.”

“That is when we all started having them,” Erkoz says. “At least the ones who are open about having the dreams. I do not tell the others because I am ashamed.”

“And you think I was not?” Almaac asks. “I dreamed I would have a female kneeling in front of me so many nights. I demanded she do as I said, commanded her to take everything I give her. I—“ Almaac takes a moment, and I hear something

scraping along the floor. “I dreamed of everything I do to my mate, and my mate enjoys everything I do to her.”

“Who did you dream of?” Erkoz asks after long moments of silence. “Did your female have a face in your dreams?”

“I do not know,” Almaac answers, and my heart sinks a little. I was hoping he would say that he saw me. “Now that I have my mate, I do not have the dreams any longer.” Okay, I can settle for that explanation. “Do you see a female?”

Erkoz is silent for a long time. Way too long. So long that it doesn't take much to figure out what he's not saying, but thankfully, my Almaac is not the smartest male in the tribe. He probably thinks Erkoz is just thinking, but the tension in the house could be cut with a knife. I don't mind because either it's because I'm the only female he's seen even remotely interested in what he dreams about, or the demons all have weird sex dreams about their mates. I'm really hoping it's the latter because it's going to make Erkoz lose his mind when he finds out.

“Did you ever want to do any of these things before the human females came?” Erkoz changes the topic. It's actually interesting to listen to them when they think they're being quiet. They talk so freely about most things, and sex doesn't seem to bother them at all. Well, except for Erkoz having wet dreams about me. That part he'll probably never admit.

“No,” Almaac says with no inflection. “I never thought of calling a female good, of having her obey, of stretching her just to see how much of me she could take.”

“Stretching her?” Erkoz sounds confused, and I pray to their goddess that my Almaac does not go into detail about that part of our relationship. Of course, their goddess only answers their prayers of having females brought to them because for the next ten minutes, I get to listen in detail about what Almaac thinks of trying to shove all of his fingers inside of me, how he wants to do the same to my ass but hasn’t brought it up yet, and how he wants to see if he can fit his whole hand in me but he’s pretty sure it won’t fit. It most definitely will not, and I will shut that down so fast. He doesn’t stop explaining until they are walking back out of the bedroom.

My face is bright red, Erkoz’s eyes are probably saucers of wonder, and Almaac is no doubt grinning like he’s proud of himself. “My female wants these things, or I would not have dreamed them,” Almaac says, definitely like I didn’t just hear him talking about wanting to fist me. My whimper is small, and I don’t know if it’s fear or desire that lets it out. Almaac knows, though, because, of course, he does. “Could my female hear us talking?”

“Yes, my Almaac,” I answer truthfully. There’s no point in lying when telling the truth gives me the sweetest pleasure.

“You can fit...?” Erkoz’s question dies off, but it has Almaac wanting to mess with him.

“Stand,” He tells me as he offers me his hand to help me up. I stand, and Almaac kneels beside me at my side. I touch his horn and stroke it softly as he holds his large hand up against

my abdomen. “It is amazing how much they can fit inside of them. Look at how big my hand is compared to her.”

Erkoz’s eyes are laser-focused on Almac’s hand that is spread to cover my whole abdomen. He lets out a shaky breath. “I’ve dreamt it.” Which means he’s dreamt of doing it to me. Or to someone who looks like me, but he doesn’t know that’s possible yet.

Almaac seems almost upset that Erkoz said that. “Well, if you have dreamt it, then I no longer need to show you.”

My tunic is grabbed from the ground, and then Almaac is covering my body again. Erkoz looks more conflicted than I’ve ever seen him, and it kind of breaks my heart. There’s no way he’s been dreaming about me for very long. It must have been recently that the woman in the dream was given a face, and that’s why he’s acting strange around me now.

Almaac wraps his arm around my shoulder and squeezes me. “You were so good for your mate. I would reward you now, but Erkoz has already seen what I want to do to you. I will just have to do it tonight.”

Erkoz lets out a small hiss that has me laughing. Poor guy is jealous even though he hates me all because his brain is using my face in his dreams.

“Almaac’s brother will feel better when my sister gets here,” I tease Erkoz, who looks at me with concern. “He will see who was actually in his dreams.”

“You know the female in his dreams?” Almaac asks excitedly because he still hasn’t pieced together why Erkoz has not told him. “Is she ugly? Is that why Erkoz does not tell me what she looks like?”

Another loud laugh from me and narrowed eyes from Erkoz. “He thinks she is hideous. He’s told me this plenty of times.”

“Almaac’s good girl is not very good right now,” Erkoz huffs. I lean more on Almaac and let him lead us back toward the dining hall. My sister will be here at any moment, and then all will be right in the world. Hell, I might even be getting an annoying demon-in-law if his dreams are any indication of mating.

“Oh!” I run back to the house and grab one of Almaac’s tunics from the wardrobe. The demons are both waiting right where I left them, staring and wondering if they should’ve followed me. I hold up the tunic triumphantly. “I need to make sure Olivia doesn’t get weird with the tunics again. Kendra can wear my mate’s tunic until we find her mate.”

“My mate is smart,” Almaac pulls me back against him, and we keep going. I’m so lost in staring up at him in awe that I almost miss the statement from Erkoz behind me.

“Mates. Two mates.”

Yeah, I’m just going to pretend I didn’t hear that. I have almost everything I could ever want in this new world. Worrying about my sister’s mate or mates is not something I

want to do until I'm sure she's healthy and safe. I wrap myself in Almaac's embrace and smile up at him.

"Thank you," I say, just as we're walking back into the great hall.

"You are welcome, but what are you thanking your mate for?"

"I'm happy, and it's because of you."

"You have brought me nothing but happiness." Almaac drops to his knees behind me and pulls me into his embrace. "My life was nothing before I had you. I never intend to take you for granted again."

"Good." I give him a soft pat on the chest. "Now, let's make sure my sister is just as happy as me."

"Anything for my good girl." Almaac cups the back of my neck and gives it a squeeze before sweeping me off my feet and carrying me the rest of the way to the dining hall. He looks down at me once and smiles. "Anything."

Diane

Eight Months Later

Almaac's been watching me differently recently, and I'm pretty sure he already knows what I plan on telling him. He's asked me multiple times now if I am keeping secrets from him, if there's anything I want or need to tell him, or if I am trying to be sneaky. This, of course, means I have to feign ignorance about his accusations. I have a good reason for doing what I'm doing, though. I don't want to get his hopes up too early and then the pregnancy not stick. I'm telling him tonight. Well, if he lets me get that far.

I don't realize I've zoned out watching Ralleth holding Olivia until she lets out a loud giggle that startles me from my thoughts. Ralleth's hand is always protectively covering her abdomen, and it's right there right now as Olivia eats and laughs with some of the other human women. I normally sit with them, but I know I'll crack and tell them I'm pregnant as soon as they even imply that it might have happened. The only one who knows is Kendra, and she's been sworn to secrecy.

“Diane,” Olivia waves her hand like she’s beckoning me over to them. I turn my eyes away from them, but Almaac is already standing and forcing me to my feet too. He’s noticed that we don’t sit with his best friend and his pregnant mate, and I’m sure it only fuels his suspicion. My cheeks grow hot as Almaac pushes me around the other tables until we’re sitting with his friend.

“We’re trying to figure out who’s going to give birth to my baby’s mate,” Olivia says right as I take a drink of water. I can’t stop the spit take that happens. It’s like she purposefully waited until my mouth was full before hitting me with the little game they were playing. “We don’t know what we’re having, obviously, but there are two other babes that’ll be born right after mine.”

“Oh?” My brows rise almost to my hairline. I didn’t realize that another female was already pregnant. “Who else is pregnant?” I try not to sound too surprised because I most definitely haven’t told anyone that I’m carrying, so they’ll be surprised when they find out there are three young that could be competing to woo the future tribe leader.

“Me!” Deja giggles excitedly and then cuts her eyes across the room to her mate, or her not mate, since they’re weirdos. I’m surprised he doesn’t have his arm wrapped around her like Ralleth does to Olivia. He’s just as, if not more, territorial than Ralleth and Almaac combined. “I’ll probably be giving birth right after Olivia, so don’t make it look as awful as it’s probably going to be.”

“Yeah, I’ll try my best.” Olivia laughs, causing Ralleth to hold her closer to him.

“So, who’s the second?” I ask as nonchalantly as I can. They all look around at one another and then over to Ralleth and Almaac. I turn to face my mate to try and figure out why the women are looking at him and Ralleth. Of course, Almaac is narrowing his eyes on Olivia, and Ralleth is rubbing his horn while trying not to look at any of us. “Wait...”

Almaac looks down at me, a hand cupping my cheek. “I told Ralleth, and it is now clear to me that he spoke about it to many people.”

“What did you tell Ralleth?” My throat burns as tears threaten to spill from my eyes. I’m not sad as much as I’m pretty embarrassed. Everyone apparently knew the secret I was trying to hide.

A single tear falls down my cheek, and Almaac’s eyes flash red before he’s turning to his best friend. He moves me from his lap to the table, and Olivia follows the cues that she needs to get out of Ralleth’s lap. Almaac doesn’t move from his chair until Olivia is out of the way, and then he’s lunging at Ralleth. They’re both out of their seats, in each other’s faces in an instant. Almaac is slightly larger than Ralleth, but Ralleth is the tribe leader, which means he demands a certain respect. I’m sure if any other male treated him the way Almaac did, there would be bigger consequences, but the two are like brothers.

“Should we do something?” Deja asks as she watches with wide eyes. It’s probably the first time she’s seen them fight, but it’s the fourth or fifth time for Olivia and me.

“Nah,” Olivia turns back to the food on the table and pops a piece into her mouth. She turns to me and wiggles her brows. “So, here’s what I’m thinking. I’ll have a little boy, and then you have a little girl, and then we can make them related for real.” She points to the two demons still hissing and pushing each other around. “Imagine how much they’ll fight if your mate thinks he needs to protect his little girl.”

“Oh god,” I groan at the thought. “He might actually try to kill your mate or your young.”

A fist goes flying, and then the two men are on the ground throwing punches at one another as they grapple. Olivia rolls her eyes and then turns back to the other females. “Can someone go find Kendra’s mate? He’ll annoy them until their only enemy is him.”

“I think Dath already thought of that,” Deja says as she looks to the other end of the great hall, where Dath is pulling an annoyed Erkoz behind him. As soon as Erkoz’s eyes land on the fighting demons, his sour mood turns into one of glee.

“What did Almaac’s mate do?” He cuts his eyes over to me like somehow it’s my fault they’re fighting. Most of the time, it’s because Almaac thinks the only way to protect me and my hurt feelings is to punch someone. It doesn’t help that the someone is almost always Erkoz. Every once in a while, it’s Ralleth.

“Almaac told Olivia’s mate that I was pregnant, and then he told everyone,” I respond as I take another sip of water.

Erkoz snaps his head over to me, his smile falling for a moment. “You are with young?”

I give him a small smile and nod.

“Did my mate know?”

My face heats, and I don’t know if I’m about to get her in trouble or not. “Yeah, I told her a while ago.”

“Of course,” Erkoz sounds irritated, but then he returns his mischievous look and walks over to the fighting men. “Stop fighting, or I’m getting my mate pregnant with the sole intention of having all of our young seduce Ralleth’s for the rest of our lives. I won’t even allow Xoth to plant his seed in her womb. It will be a small tribe of little Erkozs running around.”

Ralleth’s eyes turn red, but Almaac stops swinging at his friend. He falls back onto his butt, a loud laugh filling the great hall. Ralleth is still hissing, his anger now focused on Erkoz.

“You would have young just to spite Ralleth?” Almaac laughs harder as he asks.

“It would be funny, so yes.” Erkoz nods. He takes a seat in Almaac’s chair and faces me, his hand rising up to me. He holds it in the air until I give him a soft nod, allowing him to place his palm against my abdomen. A smile fills his face, and he turns to face Almaac and Ralleth for a second. “Are you

two done being angry males? Your females have gifted you with young, and you only think of fighting with one another. Dumb males.”

“Get your hands off my female,” Almmac pushes Erkoz out of the way and kneels in front of me.

“You should be kind to Erkoz,” Erkoz says as he leans back in the chair. “He will have to save Almaac many times before we die. Yes, Almaac should name the young after me. It’s the only way to show how grateful he is for me.”

I narrow my eyes at Erkoz as Almaac hisses, but then a wonderful idea pops up in my head. “Since my mate told everyone about the babe, I think I should get to choose the name.”

Almaac nods vigorously. “Of course, you do all of the work in growing my young. You can name him whatever you want.”

I give Erkoz a wink and watch as his eyes sparkle with delight at the cruelty we’re about to pull on Almaac. I rub my abdomen softly before whispering just loud enough for Almaac to hear. “Little baby Erkoz.”

Almaac’s hiss is drowned out by Erkoz laughing loudly in the hall. “Almaac’s mate blesses me.” He says loud enough for all of the brothers to hear. “She has decided to name her young after Erkoz.”

“Human females are cruel, brother.” Ralleth pats Almaac on the shoulder, but Almaac is just staring at me like I have betrayed him in the worst possible way. I’ll let him sweat it out

for a bit. It'll be fun to see how he reacts when everyone thinks his kid is going to be named after the most annoying of his brothers.

“If my mate is happy naming our young after him, then I will find a way to be happy with it,” Almaac says, trying to make himself okay with the name. His hand holds my abdomen, and then he's pulling me into his lap. “I only ask for a healthy young. He can have the worst name, and I will still be grateful.”

“I will go tell everyone the good news,” Erkoz says as he leaps from the chair. He knows he isn't actually going to be the namesake of my kid, but he'll rub it in up until I tell Almaac that we'll name our young something more fitting. I have no doubt that everyone in the tribe will be calling my young Little Erkoz before night comes, though. Almaac can sweat it out until I feel like he's repented enough for telling everyone I'm pregnant.

I turn in Almaac's arms. “How did you know?”

“You haven't bled in more than sixty days,” Almaac answers way too comfortably for my liking. “No bleeding means there's a young growing, so I made sure to keep track of your bleeding.”

I close my eyes and rub my eyes at his admission that he thinks is perfectly normal. “Almaac,” My voice is chiding, but his cock only hears his name on my lips, and it's hard against me.

“Say my name again,” Almaac whispers to me. Of course, it’s loud enough that the other women hear it. They cover their laughs with coughs before turning to speak to one another.

I turn around in his arms so I’m facing him completely.
“Take me to bed, Almaac.”

Almaac

Six Years Later

A loud wailing wakes me from my sleep. It's been only a handful of days since we decided Blake needs to sleep in his own room, and he is very unhappy that he cannot take all of his mother's warmth during the night. The night always starts out so good, with him eager to sleep through the night all on his own because he is a growing male and wants to be a strong male like his father. He wants to sleep all through the night, and that is why I am not upset when he wakes up crying when he finds himself alone.

Diane shifts under the blankets, her abdomen swollen and round with our third young. "I can get him." She tries to get out of bed, but I gently push her back down. She needs to sleep while she can. Our third will be born soon, and then neither of us will sleep through the night for many long days.

"Let your mate handle the young," I keep my hand on her, and she smiles up at me. She will allow me to tend to Blake and his fitfulness just as she allows me to tend to everything

she needs. “Go back to sleep.” I brush her face with my thumb until she closes her eyes. “Good girl.”

I grab Therrek from the crib next to our bed. He is already moving around in his sleep, probably from hearing his brother crying. I do not want to take the chance he wakes his mother, so I grab him, and we both go to Blake’s room. He stirs slightly in my arms but stays asleep even as we grow closer to his brother’s crying. The cries have softened, but he’s definitely still crying.

“Strong males can cry,” Erkoz says on the other side of the door. I roll my eye, knowing he most definitely crawled through the window to get into Blake’s room without alerting us. I stand at the door, listening to see what all Erkoz is going to say to him. Blake says something I can’t hear, and then Erkoz is laughing softly. “Yes, even your father. He has cried many times.” Another pause. “No, of course not Erkoz. I am better than all males, so I do not cry.”

I press my lips together tightly and walk through the door. Erkoz’s eyes are alight in mischief, but he has Blake and his own son, James, tucked on either side of him as he speaks. I roll my shoulders to try to get rid of some of the sleep I’m still feeling as I walk to the side of the bed where Blake is. I put his brother next to him and then climb in with all of them. Erkoz moves James between us so all the small males are near one another.

“Yours was awake too?” I ask as I lean my head against the wall. Erkoz and his family moved into the house next to mine

when they decided they were going to have young. James and Blake are separated by a small patch of land between their windows, and that is all. When they are older, I have no doubt they will visit with each other often, but now, it only serves to alert Erkoz and Xoth when my young cries and me when theirs does.

“Always awake.” Erkoz laughs. “They do not know how peaceful sleep is supposed to be yet. I keep hoping he will sleep through the night when the next is born, but I do not think even that is possible, considering yours is still crying in the night.”

Blake huffs between the two of us, unhappy that we are talking about him crying. “I am not a babe.”

“No, of course not,” I laugh and tousle his hair. His horns are finally starting to grow, but the hair atop his head is still strange to me. It is dark like his mother’s, but that is the only thing he shares with her. His scales are a soft red, like mine. His horns are dark black, the same as his eyes and teeth. He knows the hair is different since all the other males don’t have any, but thankfully, James is even more unusual looking than he is.

“Story,” James tugs on Erkoz’s arm just as the other male is starting to fall asleep.

Erkoz narrows his eyes at the small male before sighing softly. “You’ve already heard two stories tonight. We are with family now. Go to sleep.”

“Story,” James says again, climbing into his father’s lap and tugging on one of his horns.

“Ask Almaac,” Erkoz keeps his eyes closed, but his arm wraps around the young, pulling him back to his side and cradling him close to his side. James nuzzles against his father’s side and forgets about asking me for anything. Instead, Erkoz and his young take deep breaths as sleep cradles them both.

“I’m sorry for crying,” Blake sniffles as I continued to brush his hair with my hand.

“There’s nothing wrong with crying,” I move Therrek in between Blake and James. He runs warm, so he will keep the younger males warm since Erkoz and I will be soaking up their warmth as we lie with them. “All males cry.”

“Not Erkoz,” Blake rubs his nose. His eyes are growing heavy, and he’s having trouble keeping them open for very long. “He says he is the best male because he doesn’t cry.”

I roll my eyes, but not where Blake can see it. “Erkoz is a liar. He says anything if he thinks he can make himself look good. You should ask his mate sometime. She will tell you what a liar he is and how often he cries for her.”

“Your father lies,” Erkoz says without opening his eyes. This causes Blake and me to laugh and Erkoz to smile in victory.

“See,” I point to my son. “He will do anything for a laugh. He is an honorable male, so long as you don’t listen to

anything he says.”

Erkoz huffs, but he doesn't dispute what I'm saying. Blake seems to accept my words as he wipes his eyes one last time. He grabs the edge of the blanket and tries to cover me as best as he can. I need to remember to bring extra blankets in here because right now, Erkoz and I only have half of our bodies covered, which means we will be cold all night. It is worth it so long as our young feel safe.

“Sleep, Blake.” I give him one more pat on the head before crossing my arms in front of me and letting my eyes fall. “Your father will keep you safe.”

Author's Note

Thank you so much to everyone who has been enjoying this little series of mine. I have been absolutely falling in love with my little alien demons as I write about them, and I am so excited to see where things go. I have a very vague outline for how I want the series to go, so we're learning all of it together. Any time I feel a little burnt out on writing, I come back to this world and the creatures that live in it. Recently this has been my favorite project to work on. So, I will have more stories coming out for the next two women entering the world soon. I hope you all continue to enjoy them as much as I enjoy writing them.

About the Author

Morgan Robinson writes paranormal and science fiction romances about sweet monsters, usually of the demon variety. She's always had an interest in demons and the bad rep they get, so her stories turn the tables and give demons the love stories they've always deserved. Her novels contain plenty of steam, fluffy romance, and sometimes more than one MMC.

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Also By Morgan Robinson

The Crossroads Series by Morgan Robinson

Paranormal Romance



Two demons, one woman. Want to make a deal with the devil?

Alex never knew she was a magical creature. In fact, she had no idea magic even existed until two crossroad demons came to take her abusive boyfriend's soul from him. When the two demons laid eyes on her, though, they decided there was a better deal to be made. Alex's boyfriend could keep his soul if he handed over Alex's.

Tom was an original crossroad demon who still had the hunger

of long ago. The hunger forced him to feed on human souls or risk insanity. William was a crossroad demon that had gone through the changing in the 1950s. Sure, he was a little incompetent at household duties, but he made up for it with wit and charm.

A deal was made, and a deal was honored. Alex would go to live with the two crossroad demons that wanted her for more than just her soul.

Note: This story is for those of you who are never happy with just one MMC. If you want your men obsessed, protective, and downright monstrous when it comes to protecting their love, you've come to the right place. This story contains violence, monsters, and some steam. CWs are at the front of the book.