



A Mother before a Mate

45 Episodes

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Chapter 6



Chapter 7



Chapter 8



Chapter 9



Chapter 10



Chapter 11



Chapter 12



Chapter 13



Chapter 14



Chapter 15



Chapter 1

Bang Bang*

I hear someone knocking at the door, and I know it's Grace. She's been my best friend since we were 10 years old, and she comes to get me out of bed every morning for the last six weeks. Six weeks ago my whole life was turned upside down. My parents, my brother Lev, and I were all sitting around the table eating pancakes with fruit and whipped cream for breakfast; my Mom's Saturday specialty.

We were talking and enjoying each other's company like any other Saturday morning when everything changed. My Dad said that Alpha wanted him to evaluate a breach at the eastern border. My Mom, being a doctor, wanted to go with my Dad to make sure all of the pack members were okay.

My Dad was a Gamma, 3rd in command at Cold Moon. Cold Moon is one of the strongest packs around. My Dad was so strong, I still can't believe he is gone. I can't believe they're both gone. Alpha had gotten word that rogues were penetrating the eastern border of our pack lands.

First, he had sent a dozen warriors, and when Alpha thought the very minor threat was taken care of, he sent his Gamma to get the details about what had happened and report back. My father thought everything was over, and he was just questioning our warriors and any prisoners, so when my mother asked to go with him, he agreed.

My father never would have let her go had he known. When my parents got to the border, everything was calm

When my parents got to the border, everything was calm. While my Dad was questioning everyone the border was breached again; this time with 60 rogues. The 15 warriors with my parents were soon overcome. That day we lost 25 pack members, and many families feel the loss from that day.

My brother Lev is 20 and he was thrust into the Gamma position to replace my father. He didn't have the option to stay in bed and mourn and feel everything like I did. He has people counting on him, people that depend on him. He was going to get the Gamma position in a few years when my Dad retired. This was always his destiny, it just happened sooner than we all thought it would. His Gamma training is very time-consuming, and it makes this house seem empty and lonely.

Finally, I hear my bedroom door open. Grace walks in, drops her bag, kicks off her sandals, and flops herself on top of my bed, wrapping her arms around me. She knows if I don't answer the door, it's because I'm crying.

"Did Lev let you in?" I whisper because I'm afraid my voice will crack.

"Uh-huh," she mumbles.

After a minute of silence, I'm able to compose myself a little, "I'm sorry, for being a mess, and not answering the door, and that you're always here picking up the pieces of my life," I admit.

"Lexi, this is where I want to be. I love you. You're my best friend, and I hate that you're hurting. I want to be here for you, to help pick up the pieces. Stop feeling bad about me being here for you," Grace demands.

I look at her, and the look in her eyes and the authority in her voice tells me she means what she says.

I'm so lucky to have her as my best friend. I don't

know where I would be through all of this if I didn't have her.

“Let's go. Get up. We're going to shift and go for a run today. Burning some energy will do you good, and you need to get out of this house,” Grace orders me.

I wipe the tears away and force myself up. As I'm brushing my teeth, I take in the sight before me. My long black loose curls are dull, frizzy and tangled, my skin is paler than it usually is. My blue eyes don't stand out like they used, and I have dark circles under my eyes, and they're all puffy from all the crying. I've also lost some weight too, and it doesn't look nice.

When I walk back into my bedroom, I see Grace is sitting on my bed, on her phone. She is so beautiful, not just on the inside, but on the outside. She's a few inches taller than me, at 5'8", and she has long dark brown straight hair.

She has soft features, with big honey-coloured eyes. She turned 18, seven months ago, and she found out that her long-time crush was actually her mate. She always had a crush on Jett, the Alpha's son. Jett will be the next Alpha of our pack too, making Grace our future Luna. She is meant for the job too. She's strong and kind and she loves our pack. I turned 18 five months ago, and I have yet to find my mate.

We walk towards the forest, within our borders. We undress, and fold our clothes, and then shift. When Grace shifts, she shifts into a large multi-coloured grey and black wolf with black eyes. My wolf is pure black, and I have even brighter blue eyes than my human form. Grace and I run through the forest, the earth crushing beneath our paws, with the warm sunshine shining on us, and it actually feels nice. I'm really glad she made me do this. After running for about half hour, Grace mind links me.

-Lexi, Jett just mind-linked me, he has something really important he needs to talk to me about. I have to go. Let's go, I'll run with you back home. -

-I think I'm going to stay out and run a little longer. It feels good to be out. You go ahead, I'll catch up with you later." - I assure her.

Grace starts to run back, and I continue. After a little while, I realize I have reached the ends of the pack border. Just as I am about to turn around, I hear the faint sound of a baby crying. The guard at the border can't hear it, but he's keeping guard in his human form.

Our hearing is much stronger in wolf form. After standing at the border for 10 minutes listening to this baby cry, and cry as if there is no one there to comfort them, I can't take it. I need to go and see if this child is okay.

The guard tells me that he isn't allowed to leave his post, and he can't come with me. "I'm going to go alone. I'll be quick," I tell him.

I know after everything that happened a few weeks ago, it seems crazy that I would want to venture into the forest outside of our borders alone, but the thought of an innocent child out there alone, or hurt overrides all of my logical thinking.

"You shouldn't go alone," the guard warns.

"I could mind-like the Alpha, and ask for him to send some warriors to accompany you," he offers.

"No. Our pack just lost 25 people. Families are still mourning, the last thing I want to do is risk more pack members, this could be a trap. I want to do this alone. I can't live with the guilt if someone gets hurt because of me," I explain. This is the strongest I have felt since my parents have died.

I cross our border and run towards the crying baby. Running as fast as I can in my wolf form, it takes me about 2 or 3 minutes. When I get there, part of me is surprised that it's an actual baby. It wasn't all in my head, and it wasn't a trap. There a crying baby lays in a cardboard box, under a shaded tree. The baby looks like a newborn, no more than a week old.

I shift into my human form, and I pick up the baby. The baby instantly soothes a little. The poor little thing is covered in sweat. Even though the baby was placed under a shaded tree, it's still a warm summer day, and this baby was frantically crying for Moon goddess only knows how long. The baby is in a white onesie, and I have no idea if this baby is a girl or a boy. There is no sign of anyone else around, and I see that the baby's lips look dry. I'm guessing it must be getting dehydrated, and hungry.

I stay in my human form and speed walk back towards the pack border. When I finally reach the border, the guard quickly removed his t-shirt for me to cover my naked body. I handed him the baby, and slip on his shirt, and quickly took the baby back.

I mind link my brother and tell him what happened and to get baby formula and diapers from another pack member and meet me at the packhouse. When I reach the packhouse, Lev had the baby supplies I requested. Even though baby's diaper is full and smells, I know that our first priority is getting food into that tiny belly. It could be life or death at this point. The baby is sucking on this bottle so vigorously, it's breaking my heart. I don't even want to think about what would have happened if Grace didn't take me for a run this morning.

I am so glad that I went, and didn't just chalk it up to my imagination. When baby is done eating, I change the diaper. It is then that I realize this tiny baby is a girl. My

brother and I, along with Alpha Maximus Clarke, and Luna Camilla Clarke, head down to the infirmary to get her checked out. Doctor runs some tests, and the baby girl seems to be doing well, aside from being dehydrated so she must be given an oral rehydration supplement in between feedings.

“So what do we do with her?” Lev asks.

“Maybe we should bring her to the fire station in town? Let the humans take her? She looks weak, she’s probably a human baby,” Alpha suggests.

“What if she is a werewolf pup? We will be able to tell by the time she’s a year old. And who knows where she’d end up?” I question. I’m feeling very protective of this baby girl, even more so after hearing Alpha talk about dumping her off to human strangers.

“Even if she is a wolf, she’s no more than an omega. Werewolves are far too possessive and protective to abandon their baby. If she’s not a human, she’s an omega. Omega’s are so weak, she’d be able to live a normal life as a human, completely unaware she has any wolf in her,” Alpha says.

He is right. Omega’s are the weakest of the werewolf race, and they often struggle to shift. It’s something that takes a lot of work, and patience for them to do.

She could have a normal life as an omega in a human family. But who will she go to, I keep asking myself?

“I think you’re right, honey. That’s the best thing for her,” Luna agrees.

“Wait. I’ve heard horror stories about human foster care, and that’s where she’ll end up,” I plead.

“If she’s a human, she can’t be here. It’s against werewolf law, Lexi!” Alpha reminds me. He’s right. s**t.

“Ok, why don’t we have my Beta drop her off at the

Chapter 1

fire station in the morning. It'll give us the rest of the day, and night to get her dehydration under control and then he'll drop her off bright and early," Alpha decides and then comes to grab the baby from my arms.

"Where are you taking her?"

"I'll bring her to one of the older women to take care of her until then."

"Wait... I can take care of her until then," I answer, and instinctively turn my body away from him, so he can't take her.

"Are you sure, I figured you wouldn't be up for it, with everything that's happened lately," Alpha questions.

"No, I want to!" I say, as I look down at the sleeping angel in my arms.

Chapter 2

It's 2 am and I'm awake feeding baby girl. I have an alarm set for every 90 minutes. She is on a strict rehydration schedule, and I can see she is definitely getting better. She looks up at me with her big blue eyes, while I'm feeding her, and I feel like we are so connected. I feel like she sees me, and needs me, and that she trusts me already. She's content with me.

Grace came over earlier, and she seemed to fuss a lot in her arms, but then calmed in mine. I think she feels connected to me too. I keep thinking about her being dropped off with human strangers that might not take good care of her, or that she might not be comfortable with. Maybe it's because I have recently become orphaned, but I want so badly for this baby to have a home. Safety. Love. Happiness. I find myself crying over the thought of this precious girl not having those things.

The more I think about it, the more clear it all becomes. I can't let this happen to her. I can't let her go. I think I love her already. I feel an intense urge to protect her. I can't turn my back on her. I can't. I'll have to talk with Alpha in the morning. I'll raise her as my own. I can do this. This is my purpose. It has to be, because I feel it deep in my soul. I stare at her sweet face, as I rock her back to sleep. She's perfect. I'll have to name her. Hmm. I grab my phone and start googling names. I narrow it down to Lucy and Molly. I'll sleep on it.

It's 7:30 am, and Beta Dylan just arrived. "I need to speak with Alpha, I want to keep her," I tell Dylan.

"That's not the plan, just let me do my job," Dylan

mutters.

“This is a child. A person. Call the Alpha,” I demand, trying not to raise my voice too much. I don't want to scare baby girl.

[Pause]

“I mind linked Alpha, and he said for us to meet him in his office so we can discuss this,” Dylan says annoyed.

“Thank you, Dylan!”

Knock Knock

“Come in!” Alpha grumbles.

He's not in a good mood; I think I've pissed him off. Alpha is glaring at me and he's an intimidating sight at over 6' tall, very broad and muscular. He has short salt and pepper hair. Even for a man in his 40's, he's very handsome. Alpha's deep brown eyes are glaring at me; if looks could kill, I'd be 6 feet under.

“We discussed this, Lexi! She could be a human,” Alpha growls.

“Alpha, please. I can't give her up. Give me a year, if in a year she turns out to be a human, then I'll take her and leave the pack. I'll raise her among the humans,” I beg.

Alpha looks stunned. He was not expecting me to say that.

“Your friends and family are here, and you have been talking about training to be a doctor. You show a lot of potential. You'd give all that up for a baby you just met a few hours ago?” He asks.

“Alpha, I feel a connection to her, and I can NOT turn my back on her. I know it sounds stupid. Trust me, I get it, but she needs me, and I need her,” I explain, and a single tear escapes me, but I quickly wipe it away.

“So what if I say no?” Alpha asks.

“Then I’ll pack my stuff today and leave with her,” I admit. He’s shaking his head at me. He pauses to think for a minute.

“What about your Mate, Lexi? Is your future fated mate going to be okay with you having a child? Will he reject you because of her?” I think for a second before answering.

“I believe that this child is my destiny. Moon goddess will bless me with an understanding mate.”

“And if she doesn’t? And he’s not? And you lose him?”

“Well then maybe one day I’ll fall in love with someone that would understand. Not everyone ends up with their mate. I love this child like a mother loves their child. If I lose him, then I lose him. It doesn’t change my decision!” I say firmly.

Alpha shakes his head again.

“I think you are making a mistake, but it sounds like your mind’s made up. If she turns out to be human, you are going to have to leave with her, Lexi. Your parents contributed so much to this pack, and I would hate to make you leave, but if she turns out to be human...”

I cut him off, “Thank you for giving me a year, Alpha. I completely understand. I love this pack, and I would never want to put it in danger by having a human here. If she turns out to be a human, I will leave happily, and grateful for the year. Thank you, Alpha. Thank You!” Alpha gives me tight smile and small nod.

As soon as I leave, I mind-link Grace.

-Grace, are you free? I need to go into town to do some shopping. Did you want to come with me?-

-Of course, I do. You want to go out? I’m so happy. I actually need a new dress. Jett is taking me on a date this weekend, and I want to get something new, and maybe

Chapter 2

something cute to go underneath it. I'll be at your house in 20 minutes, does that work?-

-Sounds great, see you soon-

When Grace gets to my place, she is shocked to see I still have the baby. I explain everything to her, and she isn't very pleased with me at first. She doesn't like the idea of me possibly leaving the pack in a year, and never returning but I remind her I won't be far.

It takes 5 minutes for Grace to accept her as mine, and soon enough she's excited and helping me with baby names as we head to town to buy everything I need for her. I decided on Molly. My Molly.

Within an hour and a half, we had purchased everything I needed for her. It helps that money isn't an issue because my parents had quite a bit of savings and assets when they passed, so my brother and I are pretty well set up.

Chapter 3

I'm rocking Molly in the living room, and Grace just left. We spent the morning shopping, and putting together all of the baby stuff, and getting organized. I'm waiting on my brother to get back from his Gamma training. I am not looking forward to breaking the news to him, but it's very possible that Alpha or someone else already did.

I kind of hope they did so he's had time to process the information. We have always been close, but I know this seems crazy to basically everyone except me. Finally, I hear the door open, and I can feel my heart rate quicken. I hear him start to go upstairs, so I call him to the living room. When he walks into the living room, he gives me a look of confusion, and I know that no one told him.

"I thought she was leaving this morning?" He furrows his brows.

"Well, she was supposed to. Listen, don't freak out but... I'm keeping her!"

"What?" Lev asks. His eyes wide, and his mouth falls open.

"I'm keeping her. I have this connection with her. I can't drop her off with strangers, to a fate that I can't guarantee is good. I know being a single mother isn't ideal, especially at my age but I'm keeping her. I feel like this is my destiny. I feel it in my soul that I am meant to care for her," I confess.

"I named her Molly, and I know this is weird. It's weird for me too. I can't believe that I feel this way and that I'm taking this on, especially at 18, but I believe this is my destiny," I add.

“Wow, this is a lot to take in. We don’t know if she’s human though. What if she’s a human?”

He’s calmer than I thought he was going to be. “Then I will move into town, and raise her among humans. You could still visit anytime you wanted. It’s only a 15-minute drive.”

“You’re willing to give up being a wolf?” He asks, his brow raised and I nod.

“What about if you have a mate? Even if he was okay with you being a mother, most wolves wouldn’t give up their pack and live among humans. You could risk losing your mate.”

“Lev, I know that. I believe she is part of my destiny, and that everything will work out just as it’s supposed to, whether that be with or without my mate.”

“Ok, well it sounds like you’ve thought this through. I love you, and if this is what you want. I’ll support you... It’s nice to see you come alive again,” he smiles sadly at me. I’m so relieved, I wrap an arm around him. He gives me a hug, and then looks down into my other arm, and takes a good look at Molly.

“I guess I’m an uncle,” he says, as his lips start to curl into a smile. It feels so good to have his support in this.

6 months later.

“Lexi, she’ll be fine. You said you needed to get back to warrior training. Molly will be fine here,” Stella, from the pack’s childcare centre, assures me.

“She’s just not used to being away from me,” I remind her.

“She’ll be fine. I think you’re having a harder time than she is. She’ll be fine, Mama. Plus you’re only leaving for 2 hours.”

I take one last look at Molly. My chubby blonde-haired

blue-eyed baby. I hold her close to me and rub the sweet little fuzzy baby hair she has. I feel my eyes start to water, and I have a lump at the back of my throat.

I know it's only 2 hours, but I hardly ever leave her, and if I do it's only with Grace or Lev, and Stella is a stranger to Molly.

"If she's fussing for more than 5 minutes, will you promise to mind-link me?" I beg.

"Okay," she agrees. I give Molly a few more kisses and hand her over. Molly doesn't cry. Thank Moon Goddess, because I don't know if I would have been able to leave if she was crying for me.

Training went well. I was out of shape, and not as quick and strong as I used to be but it feels good to get back to training, though. I know it won't take long to get back to where I used to be, and soon even better. I want to get as strong as I can, in case Molly and I have to leave the pack in 6 months.

I want to be able to protect us among humans and rogues.

I'm starting with 2 hours training every other day, and in 2 weeks moving up to training Monday-Friday 2 hours per day. Stella didn't mind-link me to tell me Molly was fussing, but I'm suddenly starting to worry that maybe she wouldn't mind-link me, even if Molly was fussing. She's used to babies crying, and especially when they're just starting.

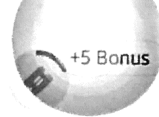
I'm getting nervous at the thought of Molly crying this whole time, so I run to the childcare room in the packhouse. I swing open the door, and to my surprise I see Molly sitting on the floor with a rattle toy and she's wiggling it and laughing. I breathe a sigh of relief. Thank you Moon goddess! I walk up to her, and when she sees

me, she smiles even bigger and reaches out her arms.

My heart melts, and I scoop her up. I hold her close, while Stella fills me in on how Molly did. Apparently, she cried for 2 minutes a few minutes after I left, but Stella was able to distract her with the little ball pit they have. I'm glad she did so good. Molly is my whole world, and I can't stand the thought of her in distress.

She put the pieces of my heart back together after it was completely broken from the loss of my parents.

I miss my parents so much still, but Molly gave me a reason to live, and I'm so grateful to her, and the love we share. She was the best decision I ever made. Being a single Mom has been difficult at times, but it's worth it. Every time I look into those big blue eyes, I know we're both right where we're supposed to be.



Chapter 4

6 months later.

Tomorrow is Molly's first birthday party. I'm not sure of her actual birth date but I decided I'd go with the date that I found her. I'm so excited. I invited some of Molly's little friends, and my friends and family.

I spent months worried that she would be human, but when she was 9 months old, we could sense her wolf. I put a lot of pressure on myself to train and get strong, and it was all for nothing. Although I have realized that not only do I love fighting and training, I am actually really good at it.

Now that Molly is 1, she is a happy toddler. She says about a dozen words, one of which is Mama, and it melts my heart every time I hear her say it.

Tonight, Grace came over and we stayed up late decorating and preparing baked potato casserole, coleslaw, cut up fruit, and I baked the chocolate cupcakes. We call it a night just after midnight, and I'm so pleased with what I see. The balloon archway at the front entrance is amazing. It's pink, purple, white and gold.

There are unicorn balloons and decorations everywhere. I know Molly won't remember her first birthday, but I want to celebrate the sweet little person she is. Now that we're done, Jett stopped by to pick up Grace. Jett looks a lot like his father, Alpha Maximus. He is also over 6' tall, very muscular and he's a good-looking guy. He's a lot like his father too, very intimidating, but is also very kind and loves his mate very much.

And just like all Alpha's, he's very possessive and



protective of his mate. He doesn't want her walking the 3 minutes to the packhouse alone at night, even though the pack lands are guarded. They are both crazy for each other, and they're a great couple.

The packhouse has sleeping quarters for lots of single wolves or young couples. There are a few hundred houses on the pack lands as well. I live in a 3 bedroom home that I grew up in with my parents and brother.

Cold Moon is like a cute little suburb. All cute houses, and then off to the side is the packhouse, which looks almost like a mansion.

It's huge. It's 3 stories high. The main level has a giant cafeteria, a large common room, 6 bathrooms, the child care room, and Alpha's office. The basement is all bedrooms and bathrooms, the 2nd level is bedrooms and bathrooms, and the 3rd Level is the Alpha's floor. A huge living quarters for the Alpha, and his family. Grace and Jett live in the Alpha suite with Jett's family, but Grace assured me that the rooms are very soundproof. She's excited for the day Jett becomes Alpha though, and his family moves out.

"Thanks for all of your help," I say to Grace.

She's a proud auntie. She's not my biological sister obviously, but she's like family so I consider her and Jett are Molly's aunt and uncle. Molly sure has made an impact on everyone that's gotten to know her. She's adorable, and she's such a smiley happy girl, she steals everyone's heart.

"Oh, by the way, my Dad asked me to tell you to see him in his office at 8 am tomorrow morning," Jett tells me.

Why would he want to meet with me? "Really? Should I be scared?" I ask. He sees the concern on my

face and quickly reassures me.

“He just has a favour to ask of you, don’t freak out.”

“Oh, thank Goddess! I was panicking,” I admit.

They both let out a little chuckle at my expense, and I very maturely stick out my tongue at them, which makes them chuckle more. Jett grabs Grace’s hand, “Come on babe, it’s late. Let’s go.”

“Thank you for all the help Grace,” I holler out, as they make their way out.

Beep Beep Beep.

Molly is still sleeping, so I get myself ready. I take a look in the mirror and I’m reminded of this day one year ago. I have come a long way since then. My long black hair is shiny, and the natural loose curls look healthy.

I have a nice summer glow, from spending so much time outside. My eyes are bright blue, and they stand out. My body looks healthy and strong. I’ve got my womanly curves again. I am me again and all because of Molly. She made me find my purpose again. I don’t even want to think about where I would be if I didn’t find her. I didn’t tell people exactly how bad I was back then, but my mind was not in a good place.

I make my way to Miss Molly, and she’s still sleeping. I stroke her hair, and watch her stir, as she slowly starts to wake up.

“Good morning Miss Molly,” I say quietly. Immediately, I’m greeted with a big toothy smile. She starts to sit up, and I scoop her up. I hold her close for a minute and sing, ‘you are my sunshine.’



“Happy Birthday, my little Princess!” I hear Lev say.

I turn, and he’s walking into her room. He grabs her out of my arms without even asking, and lifts her high in the air. Up and down giving her raspberries on her neck and belly each time. Molly is laughing so hard, and it’s the most precious sound ever. Lev and I are laughing too. No matter how often he does this, her laugh doesn’t get old. After a minute or two, he pulls her close and gives her a hug, and kiss. Looking at Lev, I am often reminded of my Dad.

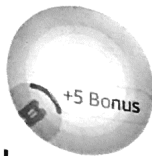
He looks a lot like my Dad and I actually look exactly like my mother. Lev has blonde shaggy hair and blue eyes. They were both tall and muscular. Dad and Lev are both very handsome. At 22, he still hasn’t found his mate, and I know it weighs on him. Watching him with Molly, I know he’ll be a good Dad one day. Lev hands her back, “I better get going. I have to get to work.”

“Love you, Princess,” Lev says to Molly.

I get her ready, and when we head downstairs Molly is enamoured with all the decorations and balloons. That alone made it all worth it. After we’ve eaten, I drop her off and then head to Alpha’s office.

I knock, “Come in,” I hear him call. When I walk in, I’m surprised to see both Luna and his daughter Sophie, are sitting on the couch in his office. Luna is a kind woman, and very beautiful. Luna has blonde shoulder-length straight hair, with a little bit of grey, green eyes, and she has a beautiful face. For someone in her mid 40’s, she’s ageing well. Sophie has light brown wavy hair, that’s long and she has green eyes. She is also beautiful, but she’s not kind and nice like her family.

It’s so crazy to think she is related to Jett and the offspring of her kind parents. I’m guessing they just



spoiled her way too much, and it went to her head.
“Come in, and take a seat,” Alpha directs me to the chair across from him, by his desk. I give the ladies a smile and nod.

“You wanted to see me, Alpha?” I ask.
“I’ve noticed you have improved a lot in your training. I was told you are now the third strongest female fighter,” he smiles.

“Third or fourth,” I correct him, and he nods. Joscelyn is the strongest, and Cora is the second.

“Joscelyn and Cora are both training all the women fighters, and their schedule is quite full already. I know you currently train at least 2 hours a day. I would like to add to that,” Alpha says with a smile.

“Okay?” I question.

“I want you to train my daughter for me.” s**t. Sophie is lazy, weak, and an entitled snob.

“Why now, sir?” I ask.

The men in our pack start training at around 13, younger for Alpha’s, and the girls at around 15. Sophie is 18, and she only did the mandatory 6-week course at 15. “The why is not important. Will you do it?” He asks.

“Of course, Alpha,” I respond, even though I hate the thought of training her.

He gives me an appreciative smile, “It needs to be intensive. We need her to make a lot of progress in a relatively short amount of time,” he answers.

I wince. “Is there a danger I should be aware of Alpha?” I ask. He looks at me, studying me.

After a very long minute he breaks his silence.

“We may be looking to make a match for Sophie. A match that might require her to be a strong fighter.



Nothing is set in stone, but we just want to be prepared if the opportunity presents itself. This doesn't leave this room. Do you understand?" His Alpha tone is full and deep.

"Of course, Alpha. Why don't we get Sophie started in the daily training with all of the women, and then I can train her an hour on top of that?" I question.

"Ugh, I don't want to train with all the women. That's why we called you here," Sophie huffed. Alpha looks at me, waiting to hear what I have to say about Sophie's demands.

"Alpha, Sophie... training with all the women might not be what you had in mind, but believe me when I tell you that it's incredibly valuable. She will learn so much more, and so much faster in the group setting. I can train her privately, but if you want her to make a lot of progress in a short amount of time, the best option is to do both private and group training. I'm not the best, and by missing those group classes, she'd be missing training from both Joscelyn and Cora, not to mention how much we learn from watching other warriors fight. That's my two cents, but it's ultimately your call."

I look between Sophie and Alpha Maximus. "She's right, Sophie. I learned a lot from my group training sessions," Alpha admits. Sophie looks pissed at me. Great.

"Sophie, think about why you're doing this," Luna reminds her.

"There isn't any guarantee though, Dad is just hoping to make this match," Sophie says annoyed.

"You should know how to fight regardless, you're an Alpha's daughter," Alpha grumbles.

I really wish I could leave this conversation. I look at my watch. Group training starts at 8:30 am this morning,

and it's 8:25 am. Alpha looks at me.

"Do you have somewhere to be, Lexi?" He asks, annoyed.

"Sorry, Alpha. One of my training classes starts at 8:30. I can be late though. I apologize." He looks at me for a second.

"I thought group training was at 9:30 this morning?"

"The women warriors train at 9:30, but a few of us women train with the men as well. They're fine with it, and it's ... intense," I confess.

"Sophie, get dressed and get down to the training grounds for 9:30. To start, she'll do 3 women's group classes per week, and 5, 1-hour classes with you per week. Okay?"

"Yes, Alpha!" I say quickly.

"Daddy," Sophie groans.

"I'm not asking you to train with the men, just the woman warriors of MY pack. You better show respect to Lexi and the other warriors. You will not reflect poorly on me, do you understand," Alpha growled. Wow. He's pissed.

"Okay," Sophie agrees with her head down.

"You're excused. Thank you, Lexi!"

"Yes, thank you, Lexi," Luna adds and smiles at me. I smile too and nod.

I rush down to the training grounds, and the warriors have already started. I usually train 1 hour with the guys, 1 hour with the women, then 1-hour advanced ladies class with Joscelyn and a few other women warriors. Now I need to add an hour with Sophie. It makes for an exhausting day. I might have to skip a group training session once in a while, which sucks. I owe a lot to Alpha, for supporting me with Molly, so I'd help him with

anything.

The men's class was intense and invigorating. When the ladies class starts, Sophie is nowhere to be seen. What the hell? I take off and head towards the packhouse. I head to the top floor and knock on the main door. Luna answers and gives me a puzzled look. "Sophie isn't at training," I explain.

"SOPHIE CLARKE," she yells.

Sophie appears, and she looks annoyed. "I don't want to, Mom!" Sophie whines, but I sense fear in there too.

"Why don't we go and have a private lesson or 2 first, and then maybe you'll feel more comfortable coming to a group class?" I ask.

Sophie nods and agrees. I wonder if she was embarrassed? It can be intimidating to fight with experienced fighters. I wait for Sophie to get dressed, and then we leave.

I take Sophie behind the packhouse for privacy, and we spend an hour training. She doesn't seem to remember much from the mandatory 6-week course she took 3 years ago but I am sure to give her the same kindness Alpha showed me, and I don't make her feel small or weak. I try to positively encourage her. After the hour is up, I head to my last advanced class.

Both advanced Men and women use the space since each group is so small. I never skip my advanced training session because it's the training session I enjoy the most, and the one I learn the most from. We train at the same time as the advanced men which also has Lev, Jett, and Eli, and we sometimes train together, and those sessions are my favourite.

I feel myself getting progressively stronger and better. It's 11:30 am, and I know Molly has a nap at the childcare

Chapter 4

centre between 10:30-noon, so I head home to shower and get ready. I put on a white summer dress, and wear my hair down, with a little makeup.

Molly and I spend the afternoon together, and right before her party I dress her up. I put two little pigtails on the side of her head, with a unicorn headband and rainbow tutu. Everyone gushed about how cute she was.

The party went off without a hitch. Lev BBQ's, and I put out the food I had prepared. The little ones play in the ball pit for a little while. When we sang Happy birthday to Molly, her eyes were wide with excitement. I'm not sure if it's because of the fire, or the chocolate but it warmed my heart.



Chapter 5

7 months later.

It's March 27, and I'm celebrating my 20th birthday! Lev is taking care of Molly tonight, and Grace and I are going out with some of the ladies. Mila, the mate of Eli, the soon-to-be Beta, Joscelyn, and Cora are going to join too. We're all meeting at Joscelyn's to get ready together, and then heading out to the club to dance the night away. I haven't gone out partying since before Molly, and even then it wasn't to an actual club, so the girls think it will be good for me.

She's 19 months now, and she is a bright, happy, and adorable toddler. While getting ready, we all help each other with our makeup and hair. I'm wearing high-waisted white jeans, with a pink crop tank top. I'm wearing my hair in a tight high ponytail, with my hair straightened, Ariana Grande style. My makeup is on point, with perfect cat eyes. I don't think I've ever looked as good as I do right now.

All the ladies look awesome. Grace and Mila look hot, but they are more covered up than the rest of us because they have a possessive Alpha and Beta for a mate. Both Jos and Cora are letting the goods show, clearly not mated.

We make sure to get pictures because we need proof we looked this good and then start to do some shots. It takes a lot of alcohol for werewolves to get drunk or even a buzz, but we did about a dozen shots each, and we're ready to head to the club.

Jett drives us down, and I can tell he really does not

want to let his sexy mate out of his sight, especially while she's got a little buzz. "Just come in with us, Jett!" I offer, with a playful roll of my eyes.

"No this is supposed to be a girl's night," Mila argues.

"Look at his face! He's miserable. He can be our bodyguard for the night, right?" I ask him.

His lips start to curl up, and his face brightens. "If I tell Eli I'm the bodyguard, he'll probably feel much better about this whole thing," Jett offers to Mila and she rolls her eyes, "Fine!"

Jett is all smiles as he walks into the club with us. Grace is too. I love how much they love each other. I hope one day I can find someone to have that with or even just a fraction of that. We head straight for the bar when we get in because our buzz is starting to fade.

We order some shots, and then head to the dance floor. We're dancing and swaying to the music. I'm having so much fun. Soon enough, I notice Eli is here too. "What are you doing here?" I ask with a smile. I'm not mad, just curious what excuse he'll give for not being able to stay away from his mate for the night.

"Jett was allowed to come, so I figured it was fine. Is it okay? I don't want to crash your party?" He asks looking a little guilty.

"The more the merrier," I holler with a smile, and get back to dancing. After a little, Grace and Mila are dancing only with their men, and I totally get it.

"I want that," Cora says with a frown, as she points to the happy couples. I nod. "Me too," Joscelyn and I say in unison.

"We're the strongest women in our pack, do you think we scare guys away or something?" Joscelyn asks. We all pause to think before we embrace each other and



start to laugh.

After a while, we head back to the bar, just us three though. I'm not sure what happened to the couples. While waiting to be served, 3 guys come up to us and ask to buy us a drink. They're cute, and we're lonely, so we accept. After we have a few shots, we head back to the dance floor and the guys follow us. One of the guys, Mark, starts dancing with me, and the other two guys are dancing with Cora and Joscelyn.

Mark is hot, and before I know it we're dancing really close, and his hands are on my ass, and we're making out on the dance floor. It was getting pretty hot and steamy, and then I felt a tap on my back, followed by another one. I pull away and look behind me to see Jett, Gracie, Eli and Mila staring.

The guys don't look impressed with us, but the girls are smiling ear to ear. "Let's go girls. The bar is closing in 10 minutes," Jett says firmly.

I give one last look to Mark and tell him I have to go. He pulls me close and kisses me one last time, and not just a sweet peck. The man kissed me good. "Can I have your number?" Mark asks. If he wasn't a human, I totally would.

"I'm from out of town, we leave tomorrow. It would be pointless. Thanks for the dance and drink though!"

As soon as we all get into the SUV, "Looks like you ladies were having fun," Grace says, with a grin.

"I wasn't expecting to see all of you making out with guys," this time bursting out laughing. "Laugh all you want, but I needed this. I feel so hopeful now, it was a great birthday" I say proudly, obviously still intoxicated at this point.

"Yeah, we don't all have mates that we can make out



with, don't judge us, we're lonely," Cora slurs.

"No judgement here. You ladies will find your mates. Hopeful about what? The rando?" Mila asks, confused.

"No, not him exactly. I have thought about it over the last year or so, and my mate might reject me one day, because of me and Molly, and I wondered if I could feel chemistry with a man that wasn't my mate. It seems like when you're 15, you can be attracted to everyone, but as you get older, it's harder to make a connection. The point I'm getting at is I liked kissing him tonight, and he made me feel desired. I thought I might never in my life feel that. So today is a birthday win! Even if my mate rejected me, maybe I'll find love without him. I've been telling myself that all this time, but this is the first time I actually maybe believe it," I admit.

"Don't give up on your mate. Molly is a doll, and if Grace had been in your position, it wouldn't have kept me from her," Jett admits.

"Me either," Eli agrees.

"Really?" I ask, feeling more hopeful than ever.

"But you guys have known Mila and Grace since you were kids. Maybe if he's just meeting me, it's harder to accept," I counter.

"Your mate might be in our pack, but just younger than you, and not 18 yet," Mila points out.

"That's true."

The next day, I felt a little hangover but I took some Advil and Lev made me a double bacon grilled cheese and I was all fixed up. Thank Moon Goddess too, because I have been told I need to meet with Alpha at noon. I'm not sure what he would want to talk to me about.

The last time he pulled me into his office, it was to

ask me to help train his daughter, Sophie. If he's asking me for another favour, I hope this time it's a less mentally exhausting task. Sophie always complains, she doesn't put in a full honest effort, she has all sorts of demands, and then she blames me personally that she isn't a great fighter.

She has Alpha blood in her veins, and her father is one of the strongest Alpha's, if she would have dropped the ego, and tried over the last 7 months she would have made so much progress.

When I get to Alpha's office, his door is open, and he motions me to come in. Molly and I make our way in. Alpha smiles at me and then directs his attention to Molly.

"Hi, Molly!" He says while lowering his big husky voice. "Did you want a lollipop?" He asks, as he opens a jar on his desk, and lifts a lollipop out. Molly's eyes are big with delight as she smiles and nods.

"Peas," Molly makes her best attempt at please.

Big bad Alpha is smiling ear to ear, and soft as a teddy bear at the moment, as he chuckles and hands it to her.

"What do we say to Alpha?" I ask Molly.

"Tank you!" Her little voice says.

"You're welcome, sweetheart!" I open her lollipop, and turn my attention to Alpha, with a smile and he returns it.

"So number 2, now?" He asks, referring to my rank. I'm the second strongest female warrior now. I nod.

"That's impressive," he acknowledges.

"Thank you!"

"In just over a year you have made an immense amount of progress. I was hoping for something similar with Sophie, especially given the fact that she's my

daughter.” I can hear the disappointment in his voice. I nod.

“Alpha, I have been training her the best that I can,” I explain.

He puts his hand up to stop me, “I know you have. I’ve kept an eye on training, and I see that you are very patient with her, and you’re doing a great job. You’re not the problem. I know that.” I take a sigh of relief.

“Now the problem is that time is nearly up,” he adds.

“She’s not a bad fighter. She’s still made a lot of progress,” I add, trying to soften the blow.

“She’s not a great fighter or even a good fighter,” he concedes while shaking his head.

“Do you remember when I mentioned that we were hoping to get a possible match for Sophie?” And I nod.

“Well in 2 weeks, when we have the Alpha ceremony, the Alpha we hoped to make a match with Sophie will be coming. No official negotiations have been made. I’ve spoken to the previous Alpha and Luna of Black Moon pack, and they would like to make the match for their son, the Alpha. They want their son to have a Luna, he hasn’t had any luck finding his mate. We would like to make a strong alliance, not to mention Cold moon and Black Moon are the top 2 strongest packs. An offspring from both bloodlines would be a force to be reckoned with. We’re hoping that Sophie can make an impression on him, and with the gentle nudge from his parents, maybe we can make this happen. But if Sophie isn’t fierce, why would he agree to give up on finding his mate? He’s not going to think much about our bloodline,” He explains.

I nod. “I know we only have 2 weeks left, but I would like for you to add Sophie to the advanced class, I want all



hands on deck. Maybe we can make miracles happen. I know the women won't be happy, but this is important."

I nod, but I'm confused. My face must give it away because Alpha looks at me, and questions, "What is it?" "It's not my place," I add. He furrows his brows at me. "Spit it out," he orders.

"I guess I can understand why someone would agree to an arranged match after searching for years for their mate. I don't understand why Sophie would agree to this, though. She's 18 and probably mated to an Alpha anyways. Does she really want this? Is it possible that she doesn't? That would explain the lack of effort in her training," I question.

"Oh, she wants this. She wants this more than anything. The only pack stronger than ours is theirs. I love my daughter but she is spoiled and she's more concerned with status, money and power than she is with something like love," he admits.

"Ok, well I'll get her into the advanced classes for the next few weeks. Hopefully, with the pressure on, we can make a last-ditch effort to make some real progress," I say optimistically.

"Thank you. I also expect that none of this leaves this room," Alpha states.

"Of course, Alpha." I nod in agreement.

"I have one more request," Alpha says, as I was about to get up. I tilt my head, "Okay?"

"The day after Jett Alpha ceremony is followed by the game day," Alpha starts. During Jett's Alpha ceremony, he will be named Alpha, and Grace Luna, followed by a ball, and Alphas from all over will bring their top officials and warriors.

The next day is followed by a buffet breakfast, a BBQ

for dinner, and all-day there are different activities for everyone. Everything from potato sack races for kids, warrior battles, Beta and Gamma battles, races, log throws, it's all an excuse for Alpha's to boast about their pack any way they can. "On the game day, if things progress in a way that Sophie is expected to fight with the warriors, I would like you to fight against her."

I furrow my brows. "Why? Wouldn't she be better suited to someone... weaker?" I ask.

"Normally yes, but I was hoping that you could..." I don't let him finish.

"Throw the fight?" I question. This pisses me off. I was training hard for this.

"No, just go easy on her. Beat her, but don't let her be a bloodied mess when she's done."

"Am I supposed to be a bloodied mess when we're done?" I ask.

"No. I'm not telling you to let her beat you. Maybe just block, and then pin her down so she taps out. Something that won't humiliate her so much. If she loses gracefully to one of my top fighters, it doesn't look as bad as getting her ass whooped by a mediocre fighter," he states very gently.

"Sure, I can do that," I agree.

"I'm going to try and avoid having her fight, but if they request she does, I can't deny them. Thank you, Lexi!" He does sound grateful too.

"Your welcome! Anything else?"

"That's everything, I'll let Sophie know," he tells me. I nod and smile.

Chapter 6

Today is the first day that we are adding Sophie to the Advanced warriors training, which basically means the 6 other women in the advanced warrior's group are all going to be spending that hour focusing on Sophie. I don't think they will be as understanding and accepting as I am.

First up, is the men's group class, which Joscelyn, Cora and I also attend. Cora's working hard to try and get her 2nd place title back, but I think the gap is getting bigger between us. I am getting stronger and faster all the time. Then we do the women's group class, I am also leading this class with Cora and Jos now. Sophie is nearly 10 minutes late showing up and continues to have a cocky, crappy attitude.

When the advanced class starts, the ladies are surprised to hear of Alpha's orders. They are not happy, but we all give up our training time to help Sophie. The least she could do is have a good attitude, and try. Maybe be a little grateful, but none of that is happening.

Then Sophie and I move on to our 1 on 1 training. Sophie is putting in 3 hours a day, 5 days a week. Those are intensive training hours. It's too bad she isn't open to learning from people. I'm not sure if she thinks it's a weakness to be open to learning from us, or if she's afraid that if she really tries and fails she'll be embarrassed. Regardless it's all to do with her ego.

The next 2 weeks seem to fly by, between taking care of Molly and training 4 or more hours per day. Joscelyn and I have been getting together sometimes in the evening to train too. She's still better than me, but the gap is

closing. I also added extra running workout sessions to my days, making the past 2 weeks a blur of exhaustion.

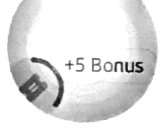
I already am a great runner, but I plan on competing in the races on the games day, after the Alpha ceremony. It sounds pointless to many because it's not like you win anything. If you're a warrior though, there is great honour and a sense of pride in being able to make our pack stand out above the rest in any way we can. Even just being a strong competitor, regardless of winning. I'm looking forward to the games day, far more than I am looking forward to the ball.

Although I am excited for my friends to become Alpha and Luna, and for Eli to become Beta. It's a big day, and as one of the top warriors, I'm supposed to be there. Grace is going to pick up her gown, from getting altered and we go together, with her Mom. I take the opportunity to look for a dress as well. I've kept procrastinating. Grace's dress is gorgeous. It's a strapless red silk A line dress. The top is tight, and kinda shows off her boobs a little, but it poofs out at the bottom. She beautiful and like royalty. I love her dress!

I tried on a few dresses before I finally found one. I decided on a dark blue off-the-shoulder dress, that is form fitting until below my hips, then it flares a little. It's floor-length and has a high slit on one side. It's classy, while a little sexy. "Damn girl, you look hot, and your ass is amazing," Grace says with wide eyes and a cheeky smile.

"If you happen to meet your mate, he's not going to be disappointed," Grace beams.

My eyes widen. "What if he's there? I didn't even think of that. I've been so preoccupied with training for the games, and training Sophie, and taking care of Mol, I didn't even think that my mate could be there." I say in shock.



“How could you not think of that?” Grace chuckles.

“I don’t think about my mate that often. Since I got Molly I have tried to put it out of my mind for the most part, because I didn’t want to focus on it and get my hopes up. I’ve honestly been obsessed with the games too, so I’ve been thinking about that the whole time,” I admit.

“I wonder if you have a badass warrior mate?” Grace muses and I shrug. Could be.

When we’re all done with our dresses, we head home. Joscelyn and I get together at the park to train. I set Molly up in the sandbox, she loves playing in the sand and would do it for hours if given the opportunity. Jos and I don’t do any sparring because I wouldn’t want to scare Molly, but we work out together. We like to work out with each other because we are so competitive that we force each other to push ourselves harder.

We even do some sprinting races. Jos whoops my butt with pull-ups though. She has a larger, more muscular upper body than I do. I’m still strong and have plenty of muscle. Size doesn’t mean everything, especially when it comes to fighting. I’m fast and scrappy, and I’m much stronger than I look.

After an hour of working out, Molly is still playing in the sandbox having fun. Jos and I are done, and we sit with Molly and make some castles with her and just chat about tomorrow. Jos is 25, and she’s basically given up all hope of finding her mate.

“I’m hoping to find a mate-less warrior,” Jos admits. and I nod.

“I think I was mated to a warrior, and he must have been killed. I don’t think he’s out there. I went to an Alpha ceremony 3 years ago, at Harvest moon’s Pack, and I was thinking I would find my mate since so many warriors

would be there, but nothing. I've accepted that my mate is most likely dead, I'm ready to move on. I want to have children, and I'm tired of being lonely," Jos vents.

"I understand. It's hard to wait around for years with no guarantees. I wonder if I should look for a good man, that will be a good father to Molly, and a good partner to me? Do I wait around for this fated mate of mine, if he's even out there, and he might not want me anyways, or do I move on?" I also question.

Jos gives me a side hug, and I return it. I can't even imagine how lonely she's been, at least I had Molly.

"I wish there were no fated mates, we could just find someone and no one had a claim to anyone. You decide who you give yourself to. It just hurts too much for those who don't get their mate," Jos says.

"I agree. Or there should always be a second chance mate and even third chance mate." A second chance mate happens sometimes if someone's mate dies or if they are rejected. It's rare though.

"Totally," Jos agrees.

Chapter 7

Jack Lavard Point of View

We've been driving for the last 2 hours, and we'll be at Cold Moon's packhouse in 2 more hours. I'm in the passenger seat of an SUV while my Beta Zac drives, and my parents are in the back seat. We have 3 SUVs full of top officials and warriors with in our little convoy as well. I had Zac drive, so I could get some work done by I didn't take into account my mother wouldn't stop talking.

"Are you even listening to me, Jack?" I hear my Mom ask me. No, I wasn't.

"Of course!" I respond, but my cover is soon blown when she asks me to repeat what she said.

"Sorry I was thinking about something," I admit.

"I was saying, you're 23, and you still haven't found your mate. Maybe you should think about giving up on her, and start looking for a strong match. Someone to give you strong pups?" I've only heard this talk for the last 6 months or so.

"I know, Mom. You want me to mate with Alpha Maximus' daughter. I've heard this before. I'm not going to agree to an arrangement without meeting her. I'm not going to make a match with someone I can't stand, just for her bloodline. If I'm going to give up on my mate, she needs to be a strong fighter, and I need to like her. That's not negotiable." I tell my Mom for the hundredth time, and it's starting to get on my nerves.

"And you know what? You and Dad were mates. I don't appreciate you guys trying to force a fate on me, you wouldn't accept for yourself. If bloodlines were so



important, why didn't Dad find the strongest she-wolf he could, and make pups with her?" I ask.

My Mom is weak, and can't fight at all. Their faces have shock and guilt written all over them. Good. I'm so tired of the pressure they have been trying to put on me.

"We don't want you to forget about your mate for power. We're just concerned that you haven't found her yet. We just don't want you bearing the burden of a pack, without a mate. I don't want you to pick a she-wolf you can't stand just for power either. I just heard that Alpha's daughter Sophie is very beautiful, she has a strong bloodline, and she would be open to looking for a match," my Mom explains.

"I've been doing just fine with the Alpha duties on my own anyway, I don't need a Luna to be an Alpha to our pack. I don't want to talk about it anymore. I'll meet her soon enough and I'll form an opinion. I won't be forced into anything." I say firmly. My parents are the only people that can annoy me this much and get away with it.

Lexi's Point of View

Today is the big day. Everyone has been so busy, and as Gamma, Lev has been extra busy the last few days. If my Dad wouldn't have died, today would be the day that Lev would be becoming Gamma. It's hard to imagine how our lives would look today, had my parents survived.

I met up with Cora and Jos to go for a good run. We all want to be as strong as we can for games tomorrow. After our run, I spent the afternoon with Molly. The Alpha ceremony starts at 6 pm, which will take about 15 minutes, and then dinner is served at 6:30. By 7:30 the ball starts, and dancing and music will be in full effect.

The girls show up at my place at 3:45 pm to get ready together. I get Cora to add a little more curl to my hair

and side part it, with some pins holding back one side. I do a side part on Jos, and I do several small braids on one side. The rest of her dark brown hair has big loose curls. It looks badass, but also sexy. Cora normally has really tight natural curls, and she wants sleek and straight tonight. I straightened her dirty blonde hair poker straight for her.

We help each other with our makeup. I do a cat eye, with a little glitter on top, with some blush, and mascara, and a classic red lipstick. I put my navy blue dress on, and I wear some sparkly silver shoes. Cora does a smokey eye, and pink lipstick, to match her knee-length glittery pink dress. Jos goes for a pretty glittery gold on her eyes, with a red lip, with her floor-length gold sequin dress. We're all ready at 5:30, and that's when Stella, her daycare worker shows up to watch Molly.

"I've ordered a Pizza, it's on the kitchen counter," I tell Stella.

"Sounds good, now get out of here and have a good time," she orders.

I give Molly a kiss goodnight and we walk up to the banquet hall near the packhouse. We get there a little early, and head to the bar, to get a few shots. Alpha has a special reserve of moonshine, so it works a little faster than anything else, but we steer clear of it tonight because we can't be hungover tomorrow. We take a few shots of Vodka, while there's barely anyone in here, just to ease some of the jitters.

Jack Lavard Point of View

"Let's go, we're going to be late Jack," my father growls at me.

It's finally the night for me to meet this wonderful Sophie I've heard so much about. I'm kind of dreading it.

Chapter 7

Even if she's cute and strong, and I like her, I'd still be giving up on my mate. I'm not looking forward to that, and I'm not sure I'm ready to commit to closing that door yet. Plus, if I'm not interested in Sophie, I'm going to be listening to my parents b***h about it for Moon Goddess only knows how long.

I grab my navy suit jacket and head out of the cottage we're staying in, on Cold Moon packlands. The banquet hall is just a 2-minute walk. When we get there, someone at the door is there to instruct us where our table is. It's packed in here. We're told we are sitting with Alpha Maximus and his wife, and their daughter Sophie. Yay! Ugh.

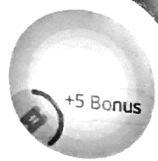
"I'm going to go to the bar first," I tell my parents.

"Well, why don't you come with us, and then take Sophie to the bar with you. We can't show up at the table without you," my mom tries to tell me.

"Come with me then, and we can still make it to the table together," I offer as I head to the bar. My parents follow me with a huff of frustration, I get a double whiskey neat. I drink it quickly and order one more. I smell a faint delicious floral vanilla scent. Someone is wearing a nice perfume, it's too sweet to be a wolf's natural scent.

My parents are glaring at me, so we make our way to the Alpha's table. As we get closer, I see Sophie. Her parents are sitting at the table talking, and she's standing talking to a guy I recognize. Jett. She's pretty. She has light brown hair, and it's up in a high ponytail. She's wearing a purple silky dress, and it's quite revealing. Her body seems very slim. Kinda scrawny. Not much of an ass on her, which is disappointing. I'm an ass man.

We make it to the table, and my parents introduce



me to Alpha Maximus and Luna Camilla, and their daughter Sophie. I shake everyone's hand, including Jett, and congratulate him. We both were at a few Alpha training seminars over the years. I always liked Jett, he was a cool guy, and very strong, maybe Sophie's a nice girl. We stand and talk for a minute just catching up.

"You have to meet my wife Grace," Jeff says, and then Hollers for her.

She sees us and then makes her way over. She looks beautiful, and her dress is fit for a Luna. She smells like that floral vanilla scent. It must be her perfume I smelt earlier.

"I lost you for a minute," Jett smiles to Grace.

"I had to tell Lexi, she can't find out with everyone else," she smiles ear to ear at her mate.

"Of course you did," he says with a chuckle.

"Grace, this is Jack Lavard, Alpha of the Black Moon," Jett introduces us.

"Black Moon? Wow. It's nice to meet you, thank you for making the trip to be here tonight," Grace says warmly. I look at Jett and he's just beaming with pride looking at his mate. He's a lucky man.

"Find what out, with everyone else?" Sophie asks.

"You'll find out soon," Jett tells her and Sophie rolls her eyes.

Alpha Maximus stands on what will be the dance floor later. Everyone sits, and everything is quiet.

"Thank you all for being here tonight. As a father, this is such a proud moment for me. I know that Jett is going to be a great Alpha. I know all of you will be in great hands. Before I get started, I'd just like to say Thank you. Thank you to my wonderful mate, and your Luna. Without her, I wouldn't have been able to serve you all

for all of these years. She carried my burdens with me and helped all of us throughout the years. Camilla, baby. Thank you.” The crowd breaks into cheers, and claps. Alpha follows and claps for her.

After a moment, the clapping dies down.

“Thank you to all of the members of my pack who have served me, sacrificed for me, and stood with me. For my warriors, you’ve sacrificed more and served harder and gave more than you should have sometimes. I can’t thank you enough, for your loyalty, the blood, sweat and tears,” he’s cut off by loud cheers and clapping, and chants of “ALPHA, ALPHA, ALPHA.

More than half the room is standing. It must be all of his pack.

Alpha Maximus is smiling from ear to ear, he’s loved and respected. I’m surprised to see that Sophie isn’t standing. Luna, Jett, and Grace are. I wonder if Sophie has an issue with her Dad. It seems pretty disrespectful. After a little while Alpha put’s a hand up to quiet everyone. Everyone quiets down, and he takes a second to start again. When he starts, his voice is shaky. That display of affection must have got him choked up.

“It’s been an honour to be your Alpha. Thank you all so much. I hope that you all give the same respect and loyalty to my son and his mate. They are both well suited to the role of Alpha and Luna. Jett, please join me up here.” Jett stands up and stands beside his father.

“Jett, do you accept the position of Alpha of Cold Moon pack?” Jett looks at his father and smiles.

“I do.”

“Will you promise to always try to act in the best interest of Cold Moon?” Alpha asks.

“I promise, always.”

"I, Alpha Maximus Clarke, transfer my title of Alpha, to you Jett Clarke. May Moon Goddess watch over and guide you," Maximus says, and bows his head to Jett.

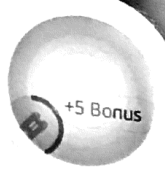
"For the first time, Alpha Jett Clarke!" Maximus says, and the crowd erupts into applause. He must be very loved. I notice everyone in here is clapping except Sophie. Does she have a problem with everyone?

"Thank you so much, Dad. It's such an honour to be following in your footsteps. I have always looked up to you and admired you. Everyone does. That won't change. You have led us with strength, humility, kindness and wisdom. I will strive to be like you, and lead like you have. It's evident when you listen to the cheers of the people that you have led, that you are loved. I feel honoured and grateful that you are my father. To my mother, and our Luna. You have shown so much kindness and strength to those around you over the years. I know that you were a strength for not only all of us but my father. I know you bore the weight of many of his decisions, and you were a constant support system for him, and everyone around you that needed you. Thank you for being the strength behind the scenes. You weren't seeking credit for the ways you impacted the pack, in ways people couldn't see. Thank you for your quiet strength and humility. I'm so proud to call you my mother." The crowd erupts into applause again.

I think about the way he describes his parents. They seem amazing, and the relationship they have seems solid, and it makes me realize more than ever, I want a Luna I can love. Not just one to make strong pups with.

"Now, I would like to appoint my lovely wife as our Luna. Grace..." He motions her up, and she stands by his side.

"Grace Clarke, do you accept the position of Luna to



Cold Moon ?” he asks. “I do!”

“Will you promise to always try to act in the best interest of our pack?” Jett asks, smiling at Grace with adoration.

“I promise.” She responds, looking up to him with just as much.

“I am honoured to introduce my lovely mate, my wife, and your new Luna, Luna Grace Clarke.” The crowd erupts into cheers, and I notice one woman on the other side of the room is standing and cheering louder than the rest.

I can see her side profile and from what I can see, she looks good. Really f*****g good. She has a nice round ass, and I can see her toned leg poking out the slit on the side of her dark blue dress.

“They’re like best friends,” I hear and it pulls me out of my thoughts. I look over and I see Sophie was talking to me. I nod and give a little smile. I smell Grace’s perfume again. It smells so good.

“Thank you all so much for the warm welcome, I feel so honoured to be the Luna to such an amazing pack. I promise I’ll always do the best I can, for all of you. The first order of business. Jett?” Grace says. She’s excited too.

“Yes. We have an announcement to make. Grace?” Jett says, and he’s beaming. I don’t know what the heck is going on.

“We want to tell you all that... I’M PREGNANT!” Gracie bursts with excitement.

The whole hall is screaming. Instinctively, I look over at the blue-dressed girl, and she’s standing with the rest of the woman at her table clapping and cheering.

“Do you know her?”



Chapter 7

“Hmm?” I furrow my brows confused.

“Lexi?” Sophie asks as she points to the blue-dressed girl. I shake my head no. Lexi, hmm. I like that. The crowd is still clapping and I notice again Sophie isn't. She looks bored too. This whole time she looks bored.

Chapter 8

Jack's Point of View

Soon everyone's sitting down, and dinner is being served. First a strawberry spinach salad, and then roast beef with roasted potatoes, and glazed carrots. Dessert is served, and it's some Mocha cake. Everything is delicious, but Sophie complained about everything and was so self-absorbed asking her father why they didn't have black forest cake, her favourite. Like this whole ceremony revolves around her.

Her voice is irritating me already. When dinner was finished, the plates were swiftly taken, and the music started playing.

"Let's get a drink," Sophie demands while grabbing my arm. I nod hesitantly, but I could use one, so I stand up. She wraps her arm around mine and holds on to it. Once we get our drinks we head back to the table that our parents are no longer at. We sit, and she's staring at me and smiling. Very flirtatiously.

"Can I ask you a question?" I ask. She smiles even wider and nods.

"Do you not get along with your parents? And your brother and his mate?" This isn't the question she was expecting obviously because she looks surprised.

"Why do you ask that?"

"I just noticed there was a lot of love shown for your family here tonight, and you didn't seem to participate in it."

"Well, I don't know. I'm not really close with my brother and his mate, and my parents and I are fine, I

guess. People are always praising them, and I guess it just gets annoying,” she confesses.

So she’s a spoiled brat and is jealous the attention isn’t on her. She is completely unaware of how easy her life actually is. “Maybe one day, I’ll be a Luna, and these ceremonies won’t be so boring,” she says while stroking my arm. Not my Luna, is all I can think to myself.

Her friend shows up at the table, also looking scrawny and weak, just like Sophie. “Danielle, this is my Jack,” She introduces me. I almost choke on the air. What the hell? I mind link my Beta who is also my best friend Zac, and also my Gamma Kyle to come and save me. My two guys show up quickly and join us. I noticed that ‘blue dress Lexi’ is dancing with Grace and a few other ladies. I finally see the front of her, and see her face. f**k me, she’s gorgeous.

She’s the most beautiful woman I’ve ever laid eyes on. They seem very carefree and happy. I can’t help it, I want to look at her. I’m so attracted to her. I don’t remember ever feeling so drawn to a woman before. She’s leaving the dance floor and I think she’s headed to the bar. I zone back into the conversation around me. The girls are trying to get us to dance.

“Zac and Kyle, why don’t you take these beautiful ladies for a dance. I have to check on something,” I say, as I stand up. I notice Sophie is disappointed. I don’t care.

I get up and make my way towards the blue-dressed beauty. I’m smelling Grace’s delicious perfume even stronger. As I get closer, the scent is almost intoxicating. I see her stop in front of Maximus, and she’s talking to him. I concentrate and use my heightened werewolf hearing to hear what they’re saying. It’s hard because of the music and the distance between us. I move a little closer and I can start to make some of it out.

“You didn’t have to show Molly and me the kindness that you did, and I will forever be grateful to you. If you need anything ever, don’t hesitate to ask, Alpha,” she tells him. He smiles at her. Her voice is so smooth and soft. “It’s just Maximus now,” He corrects her.

“Not to me. I happen to know for a fact, that Alpha Jett would be 100% okay with me continuing to call you Alpha.” She adds.

“You and your family have given more to this pack than most have. I appreciate the loyalty, dedication and sacrifice you’ve all made. You owe me nothing, Alexandria. If anything it’s the opposite. The way your father served, and your mother healed, and your brother and then you. Not to mention what I put you through the last 7 months, I’d say I’m thoroughly indebted to you,” he adds with a smile. She chuckles.

What are they talking about? “The last 7 months hasn’t been the easiest, but I’ll continue if you ask me to,” she smiles and f**k, I feel the air being sucked out of my lungs. I love her smile.

“You’re off the hook Kido! It’s sink or swim time,” he winces.

“Everything will work out just as it’s supposed to,” Lexi tells him. He smiles and nods. They say goodbye, and she makes her way to the bar, and I do the same.

As I get closer to her, Grace’s perfume is getting stronger. It’s even stronger than it was when grace was right in front of me. Maybe it wasn’t Grace’s perfume. I hear in my head ‘Mate.’ What??? All of a sudden she turns around and looks at me. Our eyes are locked and she doesn’t move. I take a step closer and she doesn’t move. After a few more steps, she finally starts moving closer to me.

Lexi's Point of View

When I'm done speaking with Alpha, I head to the bar. I keep smelling a delicious cologne all night. And as I'm walking to the bar, the cologne scent is getting stronger. The intoxicating aroma is making my heart rate quicken. What the hell? Then all of a sudden I hear it. I hear 'Mate,' in my head.

I turn around, and only 15 feet away is the most beautiful man I have ever seen. I take in his sight. He's over 6' tall. Probably 6' 4'. He has these sexy broad shoulders and he's so muscular. He has dark hair and has sharp features and a strong jawline. He's the definition of sexy and masculine. As an opponent, he'd be intimidating, but as a mate... so damn sexy. He's in a navy suit, and he looks good. Really good. And that smell. My gosh, how intoxicating. He takes a step closer and then pauses. Before I have time to spiral and think he doesn't want me, he's moving closer. My brain clears a little, and finally my legs start working and I meet him half way.

When we get to each other, I don't even know what to say. I just look at him. Now that I'm closer I can see his green eyes. They are so bright and beautiful.

"I'm Jack," he says. His deep voice is so soothing and sexy.

"Lexi," I say without breaking eye contact. Oh my gosh, he smells even better up close. I want to touch him, is that weird? He moves closer so there is less than a foot between us and his hand comes up, and his fingertips slowly graze my cheek.

I feel the sparks from his touch that I've heard so much about. It feels so good. I feel myself leaning into his touch, and I close the last bit of space between us. I want him. I feel him moving closer too. It feels like we're

magnets and it's out of my control. Jack uses his fingers to guide my chin to him. Before I know it, we're kissing in the middle of the room, for everyone to see. Dammit. He's kissing me like I belong to him. Full of possessiveness, and passion. I feel his deep desire for me and It's turning me on. I want him.

He pulls away, and I can't help but frown. He wraps his arm around my waist and walks me to a dark corner so we have a little privacy. As soon as he stops, I fist his shirt, unable to control myself and I pull him into me. I can't get enough of him. He's kissing me rougher, and I'm returning it. He grabs my ass, and I moan into his mouth.

He stops and looks at me with hooded eyes that are nearly black now.

"You're f*****g perfect," he rasps with brows drawn together. I bite my lip, trying to keep my mouth shut. I don't trust myself to say anything right now. I'm too filled with lust and need to put together a coherent sentence.

His thumb moves to my lower lip, and he gently grazes it and pulls it from my teeth. He lets out a small groan, and his lips crash back into mine. He's a primal beast of a man, and I'm overcome with a need of my own. He kisses me until I'm breathless and then starts kissing down my jaw, moving closer to my ear, and then to my neck. I'm panting, and it feels so good and I'm seeing stars and a moan escapes me.

"F**k baby, you're turning me on," he pulls me close and whispers, and I feel his erection pushing into me.

I nod, "You're really turning me on," I admit, trying to catch my breath. His lips are back on mine, and all I want is to get out of here with him. I'm a virgin. I can't believe the effect he has on me. I feel someone trying to mind link me, but I cut off all mind-link.

His hands are moving to my ass, and he squeezes before he lifts me up. I wrap my arms and legs around him. I'm firmly in his grasp and it's like he can't get me close enough. We fit together perfectly. One hand makes its way to his hair, and when I lightly tug, he lets out a groan. That sound sends me over the edge. Hearing the effect I have on him makes me want to rip his clothes off right here in front of everyone. I'm aching for him, and I start to grind against his erection. I feel his fingers tighten on my ass, and then I hear something.

“LEXI!”

I pull back from my mate, and he lets out a growl. I look, and it's Cora.

“What?” I ask, also frustrated to be interrupted.

“You closed off all mind links,” she says, looking upset.

“So?”

“Stella was trying to get a hold of you. It's Molly. She's in the infirmary,” she explains. What? No! I feel my heart drop. I need to get to her. I unwrap my legs and he lets me down.

“I'm sorry, I have to go,” I say in a panic to Jack and I rush out to get to the pack hospital. As I'm running out of the hall, Lev sees me.

“What's wrong?” He asks. I don't have time to stop and talk so I mind-link him.

-Molly is in the infirmary-

I hear he's running now too. Thank moon goddess the hospital is only a minute away.

Chapter 9

Jack's Point of View

My mate is standing in front of me, her scent is so intoxicating, and I can't think clearly. I want to touch her, I want her. I say the first thing that comes to mind, "I'm Jack."

She's staring into my eyes, "Lexi."

The way she smells, the way she looks, the way she sounds, I can't even help it, I move closer to her. My body takes over, and my fingertips graze her cheek. I feel sparks erupting on my fingertips. This feels much more intense than I thought it would. She starts moving closer to me. Is she going to kiss me? I move into her, and my fingertips gently pull under her chin, and I can't help that I'm moving into kiss those delicious lips.

f**k! I've been with other women and nothing has even remotely compared to even just this kiss. She's mine! I want more of her. I pull away, and I see the disappointment in her face. I pull her into my side, holding her close and I guide us to a dark private corner of the room. I move her against the wall, and she leans against it and lifts her beautiful face to me. I know she wants more. So do I. She grabs my shirt roughly and pulls me into her, and kisses me. I love that she can't keep her hands off of me either, which only fuels my desire.

I want to touch that ass, that I've been admiring all night. My hands make their way down, and when I firmly grasp her ass, she moans into my mouth. f**k! I feel an overwhelming feeling of love and desire for her. I stop kissing her, and I look into her eyes. I know I can't tell her I love her, I just met her 5 minutes ago, so I just tell her how perfect she is. She bites her lip, and f**k! I want to take her right here.

I contain my need, and slowly pull her lip from her teeth with my thumb. They're so f*****g soft, and I need to kiss them. I pull her closer and kiss her again. I move from kissing her lips that taste so damn good, down to her neck. As I kiss her neck I can feel her body is panting, I can smell her arousal and a soft moan slips from her lips. I feel a jolt of electricity surge through me.

"f**k baby, you're turning me on," I whisper in her ear. I see her once blue eyes are now nearly black with desire.

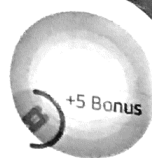
"You're really turning me on," she admits in a breathy voice. I grab her and kiss her again with more urgency, lifting her off the ground, she wraps her legs around me. f**k. I feel her heat on me. I love the way every inch of her feels. I want her. I want all of her. She has a hand in my hair, and when she gives it a light pull, it drives me wild. I groan in pleasure. She deepens the kiss, and she starts grinding against my erection. f**k, we need to get out of here.

I can hear someone calling her name from behind me, and I'm pissed. Get the hint. After the 4th time, Lexi pulls away from me.

I couldn't even help it, I let out a growl. Why is someone interrupting us?

"What?" She says, and I can tell by her tone she's pissed too. My mate is so f*****g sexy.

"You closed off all mind link," the girl complains.



"So?" She questions, still annoyed.

"Stella was trying to get a hold of you. It's Molly. She's in the infirmary," She says. Lexi's whole body language completely changed. I can see the panic on her face, and she lets go of me, and unwraps her legs from me.

"I'm sorry, I have to go," she says while running off.

Stunned, I stand there for a second and put myself back together, so I can chase after her. I see some guy following her out the door. Who the hell is he, he's a big guy. Definitely a higher-ranking wolf. Who's Molly, and who's Stella? I wonder. I make my way towards the door, and I'm stopped by Sophie, and she's pissed. I'm guessing she's seen some or all of what happened between Lexi and me tonight. I don't even care.

"Who's Molly? And Stella?" I ask her.

"Molly is Lexi's kid, and I don't know who Stella is," she responds, with a proud look on her face. Her kid? What? Even though Lexi is long gone, I follow the scent. Soon I find myself at a green building close by. I open the door and bypass the nurse, and follow her scent.

I can hear a screaming child, and I wonder if it's true. Does my mate actually have a child? I turn the corner and my heart drops. I see my mate holding a little girl in her arms. Worry all over her face. My first instinct is to go to her and comfort her. I hate to see her upset. Lexi is holding her little girl and swaying with her in her arms.

"Shhh... It's okay, baby," she says calmly to the child.

"What happened?" I hear her voice is calm but raised a little.

"She was in her crib sleeping. She must have woken up and tried to climb out of the crib. I didn't hear her crying or anything, but then all of a sudden I heard a bang, and I went up there and I think she hit her head on the



corner of her toy bin on the way down,” the woman explains, and she is really upset.

“Okay, it’s okay Stella. It’s fine. It’s not your fault. I’m sorry I raised my voice,” Lexi tells her.

Lexi moves to the side, and I now can see the little girl’s face, and there is a lot of blood. No wonder everyone is panicking.

“It’s okay baby, Mama’s here,” she comforts the crying baby.

“Where the hell is the doctor?” The blonde guy asks, and he’s pissed off. He has blond hair, and so does her child. Is that? Are they together? I watch closely to the body language between them.

“He’ll be in soon. He was at the ball,” A nurse admits.

“Lev holds her, let me get a good look at it,” Lexi says.

He grabs the little girl, “Come here my little princess,” he coos and Lexi is examining her cut.

“The cut isn’t even that deep. The crown of the head just has a lot of blood vessels, which is why she is bleeding so much. She’s fine, it’s not deep. If she were older and had her wolf healing abilities, this wouldn’t have been an issue, because it would have healed so fast,” she determines.

She looks at the nurse, “I need a light to check her pupils!”

The nurse hands her one, and she checks her daughter’s eyes with it. She seems to know what she’s doing and talking about.

“She not concussed. Pupils are fine.”

She puts her light down. “Come see mommy,” she coos to her little girl. Her daughter isn’t crying much anymore. They seem to have calmed her down a lot. She’s really sweet with her child. I feel a pain in my chest thinking about the fact that my mate has a child with

someone else. This should be my daughter, and we should be doing this together.

I see her look at the baby's father, and she smiles at him, "I think you were more afraid than Molly was," she teases.

I can feel the rage bubbling up.

"Hey you might have stayed calm on the outside, but I can tell you were freaking out on the inside too," he rebuts.

"You're the Gamma, shouldn't you be better at staying calm in high-stress situations?" She jokes.

He's the Gamma. Hmm. I knew just by his size, and the way he carried himself that he was more powerful than most.

"Pack stuff is easy compared to hearing my princess crying and face all bloodied." He puts one of his arms on Lexi's back, and the other on Molly's and leans down to kiss Molly's head. Lexi didn't pull away from his touch.

"I know," Lexi agrees.

Even when he comes up from kissing Molly, he leans his head against hers and keeps his hand on Lexi's back, rubbing it. What the f**k? I turn around and walk out, slamming the door on the way out. I'm not in much of a partying mood anymore. I pull my clothes off and shift. I shift into my huge pure black wolf. I need to run and deal with the urge to rip that Gamma's head off. I'm pissed. I waited all these years to find my mate, and we have this intense moment, and I believe she's mine, but she must have gotten caught up in the moment, because she chose a mate, and they have a child together. It feels like my heart is being ripped out.

Lexi's Point of View.

Lev and I are comforting Molly, and I hear a growl and

a door slam. Now that I'm calmer, I smell my mate. Did he come here? "Excuse me, who just slammed the door like that?" I ask a nurse.

"I'm not sure who he was."

"Did you get a look at him?"

She nods, "Tall, very large, dark hair, very handsome, blue suit,-"

"s**t!" I say, while instantly feeling the tears sting my eyes.

"What's the matter?" Lev asks in a panic.

"I found my mate tonight. I didn't have time to tell him about Molly. He obviously saw though, and that was him slamming the door. He left. He doesn't want me," I say and a sob escapes me.

"I'm sorry Lex," Lev pulls me into a hug.

I nod, "It was easier to think about losing him, when I didn't know him, and smell him, and touch h-"

"Okay, too much, Lex," Lev stops me.

"If he leaves you because of Molly, he isn't worth it. Even now that you know how he reacted? Would you drop her off at the fire station if you could go back?" He asks.

"What? NO!" I spit out.

"Exactly! Forget about him. It's his loss. Look for a good man whose mate died, or rejected him or something. As you've said, Molly is your destiny, if that's a problem for him, he's not meant to be part of yours. Right?" He says firmly. He's right. I nod.

"You're right. Thank you!" And wipe away my tears. We cleaned Molly up and put a band-aid on her, all before the doctor even showed up.

"I'm going to get this little dolly to bed. You go back

to the ball. Have fun.”

“I don't want to leave you both!”

“Lev, I'm going to go home, and go to bed. Go have fun!” I demand and use my hands to do a shoo motion.



BOY NEXT DOOR

Syokau Mutulu

Dare To Be A Teen- Elite Academy Writing Contest. Bella's life changes overnight. One day she's...



Chapter 10

I wake up with little hands on my face, and to Molly's smiling face. I love her so much, and I stand by my decision. She is meant to be mine. I look at the clock, and it says 7:11. The games start at 10, but signing up for the event starts at 9:30. They are having a breakfast buffet at 9 am at the packhouse, but I'm not going anymore.

I want to avoid seeing my mate as much as possible. He doesn't want me and I need to move on, and I don't need to make it harder on myself. I'm still going to the games today because I've worked too hard to hide away and not participate. As the second strongest female warrior in this pack, my scores will increase Cold Moon's overall score.

I'm going to go, and fight, and run. I'm going to use the pain I feel and turn it into anger to be even better. It's early, so first things first, I take Molly to go change her diaper and get her dressed. I grab the tool bag and take 20 minutes to convert Molly's crib into the toddler bed. I don't want a repeat of last night. Molly and I head down for breakfast and I make us some scrambled eggs, toast and cut up some bananas.

"How's my princess this morning?" Lev asks, when he walks into the kitchen.

"She's good. Completely unaware of the panic she put us all through last night." I admit, and Lev chuckles and gives Molly a kiss on her forehead.

"You're not going to the buffet breakfast?" he frowns.

"I figured I wouldn't make things harder than they need to be," I say while pushing my eggs around on my

plate.

“You're still going to the games, right?” he presses.

“Definitely. I've worked way too hard to not compete. Plus my score will help the overall pack score. I love this pack and I'm not going to let them down.” I say firmly.

“Good! I'm glad. You work too hard to throw it away for someone who doesn't appreciate the both of you. So who was your mate? Was he a warrior?” Lev asks.

“I have no idea. I know his name is Jack, and he was big. He's strong, whoever he is,” I respond.

“Last name?” he presses and I shrug.

“Did you learn anything aside from his first name?” he asks, eyebrows furrowed. I can feel my cheeks are turning pink.

“Oh gross, Lex!” he groans.

“The mate bond is intense, okay!” I add with my head down.

“Well I'm going to go to breakfast, and if I happen to come across a Jack, I'll give him a piece of my mind. Hopefully I get the right Jack,” he says with a smirk.

“HA HA, funny!” I roll my eyes.

At 9 am, I get some high-waisted black leggings, a black sports bra, and an oversized black hoodie on. I'm not wearing any colour, because I don't want to stand out at all. I do my hair in two french braids, to keep my hair out of my face, and I pack a diaper bag for Molly.

All the activities are held outside today, and the child care ladies have a nice sized area fenced off, and they have a dozen people watching the kids, so we can grab our kids if we want in between our events. I pack some water and protein bars in a sling bag for myself. It's 9:30,

so I get my trainers on, and Molly and I head out. I drop her off and then flip my hood of my hoodie up, and head to the registration line. The available events are:

Women's Fighting Human Form

Men's Fighting Human Form

Women's Wolf Form 300 meter run

Women's Human Form 100 meter run

Men's Human Form 100 meter run

Men's Wolf Form 300 meter run

Men's Log throw

Women's Log Throw

Beta and Gamma fighting.

I sign up for everything for women, except the log throw. Because of my higher rank as a warrior in our pack, I will skip the first few rounds of fighting. For the runs, we can go in between other events, and they time our score and put it on the leaderboard. At the end, the top 5 compete in one final race.

The top 5 in each event are awarded points towards their pack. First place is 30 points, second gets 20, third gets 10, and 4th gets 5 points, and 5th gets 2 points towards their pack. At the end, the pack's are ranked and the top 3 packs are posted. It's nothing official or anything. It's just for fun and bragging rights.

I look at my watch and it says 9:47, so I head towards the 100m human form races. I get in line, and because I am early, there are only 10 people in front of me. I find out they are letting 6 people at a time race, so they can get each person's time. Men and women can run at the same time.

They have two leaderboards, one for women and one for men. I sit in my spot and stretch. I'm number 11

so I get my trainers on, and Molly and I head out. I drop her off and then flip my hood of my hoodie up, and head to the registration line. The available events are:

Women's Fighting Human Form

Men's Fighting Human Form

Women's Wolf Form 300 meter run

Women's Human Form 100 meter run

Men's Human Form 100 meter run

Men's Wolf Form 300 meter run

Men's Log throw

Women's Log Throw

Beta and Gamma fighting.

I sign up for everything for women, except the log throw. Because of my higher rank as a warrior in our pack, I will skip the first few rounds of fighting. For the runs, we can go in between other events, and they time our score and put it on the leaderboard. At the end, the top 5 compete in one final race.

The top 5 in each event are awarded points towards their pack. First place is 30 points, second gets 20, third gets 10, and 4th gets 5 points, and 5th gets 2 points towards their pack. At the end, the pack's are ranked and the top 3 packs are posted. It's nothing official or anything. It's just for fun and bragging rights.

I look at my watch and it says 9:47, so I head towards the 100m human form races. I get in line, and because I am early, there are only 10 people in front of me. I find out they are letting 6 people at a time race, so they can get each person's time. Men and women can run at the same time.

They have two leaderboards, one for women and one for men. I sit in my spot and stretch. I'm number 11

in line so I'll go in the second heat. It's finally 10, and the first heat starts. They get ready, and when the whistle blows. Four men and two women take off running. When they are done, we wait for the timekeepers to relay the times, and put them on the board.

I pull off my sweater and toss it on top of my bag. In our heat, we have three women and three men. When the whistle blows I run. I feel strong and fast, I beat everyone in my heat, even the guys. I'm happy with that. I see my time is 11.03 seconds. My name goes to the number one spot in Women's. Not that impressive though, because only 5 women have raced so far.

Seven men have raced so far, and the number one time for men's is 12.68 seconds. Out of these 12, I'm the fastest. It's a good start to the day. I head over to the wolf form races and see Cora on the way. "Hey, you!" She smirks at me.

"Hey!" I roll my eyes. I know she's acting like this because of the compromising position she found me in last night. I feel a sting inside, when I remember how good it felt to be with my mate last night.

"I'm going to wolf form race, coming?" I ask her. She nods, and we make our way there. When we get there, the lineup is huge. There are probably 80 people in front of us. She mind-links me,

-So was he anyone special?-

-Nope. Just my mate.- I frown at her. Her eyes are wide and her jaw drops.

"Are you serious?" she asks out loud. I nod, and mind-link her,

-Yeah he followed me to the hospital and I didn't see him, but I heard him when he growled and slammed the door when he left. He's obviously not okay with me

having Mol, so no one special to me.- I shrug and swallow the lump in my throat and she hugs me.

"I'm so sorry, Lex!" She says out loud and I nod.

"At least now I know not to wait for him," I try and say optimistically, but she knows I'm hurting.

After nearly an hour we make it to the front of the line. They wave us to the women's tents, and we walk into the large tent, undress and shift. For the wolf 300 M run, they have 8 people keeping time. Cora and I are in the same heat, and we get into position with 2 other women and 4 other men. When the whistle blows, I run. I can feel the dirt crushing beneath my paws, and I'm in front of everyone. I see from the corner of my eye a wolf gaining on me, and I push even harder and give it everything I've got. I cross the finish line, and another male wolf is right behind me.

Cora came in 3rd place.

When we get out of the tent again from changing, we check the leaderboards. I'm first in the women's with a time of 14.4 seconds. Cora is the 4th overall woman with a score of 15.7 seconds. I look to my side and see a very large man looking at the scoreboard.

"You're really fast," he smiles.

"Thank you, you too," I smile back.

"Not fast enough though," he says and my smile widens.

"It's almost 11, let's check out the fights," Cora says, and I nod.

Jack's Point of View

I wake up, and the clock says 8:45 am. I didn't get to sleep until really late. I was running for a few hours, and I hunted a bear. I needed to release some aggression. I still feel like my heart is being ripped out, and I have so much

rage, but I have decided I need to accept this. She has a family with this guy. I need to keep my distance from her. Why did she kiss me though, if she was with someone else? It felt like we were magnets, it was probably just really hard to resist.

I'll need to find a Luna for my pack that isn't my fated mate. She'll need to be a fierce fighter, and I need to like her. I know I can't be stuck with someone like Sophie for the rest of my life. f**k! This would be so much easier if she would have told me, and never let me touch her, and kiss her. I keep thinking of the way she smelt, the way she felt and tasted. Part of me wants to find him, this Gamma, and kill him. If he's what my mate wants though, I can't be selfish. She just got carried away with me. I wonder if she told him about us.

Breakfast is in 15 minutes and I'm famished. I have a quick shower and get ready. Alpha's aren't permitted to participate in any of the games, which sucks, so I don't need any athletic gear on. I throw on some jeans and a black t-shirt. When I came out of my room, my parents were clearly waiting for me.

"What happened to you last night?" Dad asks. I question whether I should tell them.

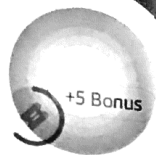
"Sophie was really upset that you left," my Mom adds.

"Sophie and I... not going to happen," I say flatly.

"Why?" my mother asks, already upset.

"Oh, where to start... Her voice is like nails on a chalkboard, and her laugh. Ugh. She's selfish and spoiled, and weak, and not even that attractive. Do you want me bound to someone that I literally can't stand?" I ask.

"Of course not son. We want you to be happy. You're more alone with a Luna you can't stand than you



are single," my Dad answers.

"You should find someone though," dad adds.

"I will. I'm ready," I nod, and it f*****g hurts. I don't want a match. Not one f*****g bit. I want her.

"What changed?" Mom presses.

"I met my mate last night."

Both my parents are looking at me with wide eyes.

"What happened?" Dad asks.

"Well, we had a very amazing 5 minutes together, but then I found out she has a kid and family with someone else. She didn't wait for me. It's time for me to move on," I huff and drag my hands through my hair.

"Oh Jack, I'm so sorry. I can't even imagine the pain you're feeling," my Mom says while hugging me.

"I'll be fine. It'll just take some time," I tell them. I'm not sure if I believe that, but if I say it enough, maybe soon enough it'll be true.

"Let's get some breakfast!" I say while walking out the door. I head to the packhouse, and I can't help that I'm looking for her.

I crave seeing her and smelling her, but she's not here. I see him, though. Her Gamma. He's sitting at Alpha Jett's table. She's not with him, and neither is their daughter. I wonder why he would leave his girls home. Maybe he knows about me and he's trying to keep Lexi away from me?

He looks pretty carefree and happy. That's weird. If she were mine, I wouldn't go to breakfast without her. I'd want her by my side all the time.

I eat a full breakfast, and then I need to go for a run again. I'm having chest pains, and I need to do something or I feel like I'll explode, and rip that Gamma's head off.

When I make it back around noon, I take another quick shower and force myself to head to the games day to support my warriors. I train these warriors and I want to be able to cheer them on. If I'm lucky, I won't see my mate.

I see a fenced area with kids everywhere and I can smell my mate. Her daughter must be in there. I can't help but make my way to them. Leaning against the chain link fence, I watch the kid's play, and I see a little blonde-haired blue-eyed cutie. She's playing in the sandbox with a little girl a few years older. She looks so happy.

I can't help but think how she would look if she came from me and Lexi, instead of him and Lexi. I force myself to leave. It hurts too much to think about. I make my way to a crowd of people. I can tell they are doing races in human form. I walk over and take a look at the leaderboards. Men's 1st place and men's third are both my guys. I smile with pride.

Women's First place.... Lexi Smith. I feel my heart starting to race. I wasn't expecting her to be a competitor. Her time is 11.03 seconds. That's f*****g fast. I stare at first place for a minute before I remember I was supposed to be checking how my pack did. I scan down the list and 3rd and 5th are from my pack.

I head to the next station - the wolf form races. I check the women's this time first, wondering if I'll see Lexi's name on the board again. Sure enough, 1st place: Lexi Smith. It feels like a knife to the chest. I hope she's not a warrior. I don't think I could bear it if she was everything that I ever wanted. I've always thought my mate would be weak, just like my mother. I thought if I couldn't have my fated mate, at least my Luna would be a strong fighter. I make my way to the log throws, and I

don't see her name on the board.

I'm relieved. I head to the fighting area, where 4 matches are going on at the same time. 2 men's and 2 women's. I can smell her. I see the board and I don't see her name anywhere, and relief floods my body. She's probably just a strong runner. She's not that big either, so my heart is probably safe from being completely ripped to shreds. I see Zac and Kyle on the bleachers, watching the fights so I join them.

"How are you doing? Your Mom told us about your mate," Zac confesses.

"Of course she did." I roll my eyes.

"I'm fine," I lie to them.

"Let's find you a badass warrior Luna, yeah?" Kyle adds. I chuckle and nod.

After watching for 45 minutes, the crowd is notified, "The men and women that have made it this far, are moving forward and will now be competing against the top-ranked fighters of each pack."

"This is where things get interesting," I admit.

And then I smell her again. She's closer than she was before. I see a woman make her way to the ring. She has her hair in a bun, and she looks like she's strong and athletic.

She's in blue leggings and a blue sports bra. Then I see a woman in an oversized black hoodie with her hood on and carrying a small backpack. She walks confidently towards the other woman. She tosses her bag and slips off her shoes. She pulls off her hoodie, and I see she has 2 french braids, and she's wearing black leggings and a black sports bra. I see her perfect body. Her toned abs, and round ass. It's her. f**k. She's one of their top fighters? What the f**k?

“Damn she’s hot,” Zac says.

I growl at him and give him a death glare. The fight starts and Lexi looks confident and the fight is very quick. She tried to punch Lexi, and Lexi was super quick dodging and blocking. Before I know it the other girl is thrown onto her back and she has the wind knocked out of her. Lexi doesn't get on top. She just stands there and waits. Sure enough, 10 seconds go by and the girl's still laying there seeing stars, and trying to catch her breath. As soon as the fight is called, Lexi helps her opponent up. I can see on the board they are not from the same pack. She's just being nice. f**k! Why does she have to be so perfect?

“That was badass. Dude, seriously ... If you don't go after that one, I will,” Kyle tells me while staring at her and smiling. Lexi slips on her shoes, and hoodie and grabs her bag. She starts to walk away, and then she sees me. Our eyes lock for a moment, and I tell myself to look away. It took me an extra second or 2 longer than I wish it would have, but I mustered the strength to look away from her.

Kyle looks at me, “If you don't want her, I'm going,” he says while jumping off the bleachers. I grab his arm and yank. Hard.

“What the hell, man?”

“Don't you dare talk to her... That's her,” I rasp and his eyes widen.

“I... I didn't know. s**t. Sorry, Jack.” I nod. She walks 2 bleachers over and sits down to watch the next fight.

Summer Richards

Summer Richards

Writer

“Leave a comment and let me know what you think