

## Alpha Niall And His Lost Mate Chapter 25

Niall's Pov

She just sat there.

She just sat there and she won't talk. She won't talk to me, she won't talk to Valero, she blocked me from her mind and completely put her barrier up—blocking me from whatever she might've been feeling.

It killed me that I was the cause of her pain and the reason why she wouldn't even look me in the eyes. She held onto me while we made it to the small river about three miles away from where the fight just occurred, but after she was clean and wearing my shirt, she just sat in front of the water with her knees against her chest and her chin on them, staring at the water.

The only time she spoke was to protest when Valero began to dig a hole to put Clarissa to rest, and so we brought her to where the river's current was stronger, where she cleaned her off, placed leaves all around her and sent her down the rushing water.

She said Clarissa wouldn't want to be subjected to lying in the ground. Even after death she would want to be free. I never understood the relationship she had with the rogue, but I have come to learn that they had a link. Shocker.

I was gone for one day and my mate formed what should've been an impossible link with a wolf. I knew, however, that there was more behind their connection that I didn't know. Also, from what I could detect from Zoey's demeanour, she learnt something and was thinking hard about it. But all I knew was that whatever bond they had, it really did a number on her.

And she seemed to be blaming it on me.

Sighing, I sat a few feet away from her, knowing well enough that she wouldn't want to talk to me yet. I couldn't feel her emotions, but I was hurting because she was hurting.

My wolf whimpered loudly in my head, trying to get me to go comfort her. It was only instinct for him to want and need to comfort her, but he didn't understand that when she doesn't want to see me, I can't change her mind. So, I simply watched as she stared in the dark abyss of the river.

The moon shone down in all its glory, maybe even brighter than usual, as if celebrating the homecoming of one of its own.

There were always strange stories being passed down from generation to generation, that when the moon's purest children die, it shines brighter than usual.

Surely we never believed it, but could it be true with this Clarissa rogue? Did I misjudge her for the person I never thought she could be? Was the only reason why she was so persistent in pursuing my mate was for her own good? Did she know something about Zoey's true bloodline? Maybe that was the reason why they had a link. Could they have been related?

Valero mentioned something about them having a mindlink, and as far as my knowledge of mindlinks go, those can only occur between pack members who could only become 'one' from the blood of an Alpha. The only possible bond that could initiate a mindlink is a mate bond. Otherwise, they shouldn't have been able to form any kind of link—even if they are related.

This only led me to believe that there was a lot more to my mate that I needed to learn.

The worst part was, that's all I had been trying to do. It was never my intention to leave this long and have her worried.

My initial plan entailed me returning home the very day I left, but my cover got blown and I had to do my best to resolve the matter civilly. But instead of making it better, I led my mate, my cousin and a rogue that obviously meant something to her, into what could've been a death trap.

I sighed deeply, hanging my head in shame as I thought about how much worse this could've gone. The only thing that gave me joy was the fact that she was okay. Physically at that.

"Hey bro," I heard my cousin's voice soft and steady as he sat beside me. He only wore his pants like I did, since his shirt got lost somewhere in the crossfire, and I gave mine to Zoey after she shifted and shredded her clothes.

"Hey" I mumbled before burying my head between my chest and knees again. I didn't feel like talking.

"How are you holding up?" I knew what he really wanted to know was how Zoey was doing, but he didn't want to ask directly.

"She shut me out. I can't link her or feel her and she won't talk to me. I just think we should all get some sleep. It's well past two in the morning now" I knew I was tired as hell, but I couldn't dare bring myself to close my eyes knowing my sweet beautiful mate was hurting.

The silence sat between us for a while, and I thought he decided to just get some rest. Instead, he spoke again after a while.

“Remember when we were ten? You, Daniel and I were playing on the stairs that day?” I whipped my head towards him in shock that he dared mentioning Daniel. He never mentioned Daniel. Ever.

Nonetheless, I nodded as he continued. “We were all on that staircase, and we knew we shouldn’t have been playing there... Yet, we did and-” I rubbed his shoulder in comfort, knowing that even after nine years it must’ve been hard for him.

Daniel was Valero’s twin brother. He died when we were ten. We were playing on the staircase, and Valero slipped on one of his toys. But just as he tipped over and was about to fall, Daniel caught him and switched their bodies so that he was the one who took the blow. He died in Valero’s embrace, and I was watching in shock.

Uncle Aiden never really got over the loss, hence why when Valero was old enough to take over the pack at eighteen, he didn’t hesitate to step down.

I didn’t understand, however, why he was bringing the topic up. We hadn’t talked about him in so long, even after we accepted his death.

“I blamed myself for years for his death you know?” He turned to look at me through the darkness of the night. “When I shifted for the first time, it didn’t feel right because he wasn’t shifting with me. If it hadn’t been for you, I don’t think I could’ve become the man I am today”

“What’s your point Val?” I asked, not wanting to sound annoyed or snappy, just unsure why he’d bring up Daniel after so many years randomly on a night when my mate was blocking me out.

He chuckled lightly as he fiddled with a stone between his fingers. “My point is, you were there all those years reminding me that I couldn’t have seen it coming, and what Daniel did for me was far more than my ten year old mind could understand and comprehend. He didn’t die in vain because I swore to be the man that I knew he would’ve been—the Alpha that he would’ve been...I think it’s my turn to remind you that”

“But Clarissa didn’t die for me. And no matter what I tell myself, it will always be my fault why she died” I reasoned, feeling guilt rise in me once again.

“Did you really just say she didn’t die for you?” He asked flabbergasted, taking me by surprise. “Are you telling me that she didn’t jump in front of your mate to take a silver bullet? Clarissa didn’t die for the one woman that will determine your joy and peace forever?”

I hung my head again, looking at it from that point of view. If she didn’t take that bullet, my Zoey would’ve been...

I had been so caught up on how Zoey wasn't talking to me, that I didn't really stop to consider that if Clarissa was just a second too late...

My heart clenched just thinking about it, and all I could do was pray a silent prayer to the moon for her soul, silently asking it to relay a thank you to her from me.

"I-I didn't.." I couldn't find the words to say to him. But if his aim was to make me feel better, it didn't help. The only relief I felt towards the whole situation was that she took it on herself to sacrifice herself for my mate. And I know that sounded wrong in every aspect, but it was how I felt.

"I know. I know. But, instead of moping around down here, go stay with your mate. She might not show it, but she needs you. She is feeling that gratitude more than you are right now, and she feels terrible at the fact that she is grateful that another wolf died for her. She feels guilty for being happy about what Clarissa did for her. But you have to let her know that it's okay to be grateful for a sacrifice that big. And before you ask me how I know what she's feeling, just consider that I have been there."

I pondered on his words for a while, realizing just how true they were.

"When did you get so wise?" I ultimately asked.

I saw now that I wouldn't get through to Zoey if I just sat around and waited for her to let me in. She has lost her dad and her mom, almost lost her sister, and she thought she was going to lose me too. I was a terrible mate for even considering leaving her be for the night. She needed me, whether I admitted it or not.