

Mated to the Alpha Twins by Jane Doe Chapter 21

I somehow managed to get through an entire shift without once running into the twins.

I finally emerged from the bathroom after pulling myself together and was pleased to find the twins had already left. My pitiful joy was short lived when Cameron handed me a note.

“They wanted me to give this to you.” Cameron frowned, “They didn’t hurt you did they?”

“No.” I shook my head. That was all the answers I was willing to give.

“Good.” Cameron nodded, “Just making sure. Men who hit women are scum.”

“Agreed.” I nodded.

“Here.” Cameron grunted, “Take my phone number in case you need anything.”

After getting over the initial shock of Cameron being nice to me, I looked down at the note in my hands. I waited until Cameron walked away to read the messy scrawl on the paper.

‘Quit avoiding us, Aurora. We need to talk. Alec & Kade’

Of course the simple note had my heart thundering in my chest. Not a chance in h**l would I risk talking to them. I took Grace’s threat seriously, and come this Friday I would be out of town for good. No more confusing twins, no more threatening and

psychotic girls. While my life had not been pleasant, I've never been assaulted at that magnitude before. Sure, Frank couldn't keep his hands to himself but with a well placed kick to the b****s he'd leave me alone. I never had someone viciously a****k me the way Grace did, and it definitely left a lasting impression. Everytime I caught a glance at my swollen face, I remembered her words. Her demand was simple, stay away from the twins. As much as my heart pleaded for me to go to them, I wasn't that stupid. After the damage Grace did on my face, I couldn't imagine what else she'd do. I fully believed she'd have no problem ending my life. She probably wouldn't even get caught for my m****r. I'd just rot in the ground, and soon enough the twins would forget about me.

That's what I repeated in my head, the one thought that kept me from seeking the twins out. I was just the new girl, something fun and shiny to play with. They wanted me because they already had every other girl in town. I was a challenge, plain and simple. Their infatuation would wear off, and I'd finally be free.

Tori drove me home that afternoon. The car ride was awkwardly silent, but I didn't mind. As always, the silence couldn't last forever.

"The twins were asking for you today." Tori mumbled, noticing my discomfort.

I shook my head, "I don't want to talk to them anymore."

"I can tell." Tori grimaced, "Did something happen with them?"

“No.” I shook my head, “I’m just not interested in them anymore.”

“Doesn’t seem that way.” Tori pointed out, and I debated on ignoring her comment.

“Doesn’t matter.” I shrugged, “I’m just something shiny and new to them. The sooner they leave me alone, the better.”

The minute I walked through the door, Melissa approached me.

“Are we really doing this again?” I huffed. I was not in the mood for another attempt at a heart to heart.

“I think we need to.” Melissa frowned, her eyes lingering distastefully on my face.

“Oh, you think we need to?” I scoffed, “You had three years to try and do this. You’re too late.”

“Aurora, don’t be like this.” Melissa snapped, letting out a tired sigh. “I know I’ve fucked up, okay?”

“Really?” I pursed my lips, “That’s good you came to that conclusion all on your own, congrats.”

I retreated up the stairs and into my bedroom before she could say another word. It pissed me off to no end that she magically decided to give a s**t about me. Three whole years she had practically ignored me, and now she wanted to play the concerned mother card. I was determined to get back into my normal routine. It’ll be easier to leave in the middle of the night if she continued to pretend I didn’t exist.

I hopped in the shower, letting the warm water run down my swollen face. The water stung my busted lip and made my bruised eye throb, but it released a lot of the tension I had been feeling. Sleep had quickly become my bestfriend, protecting me from my intrusive thoughts. It was easier to forget the world around you existed when you simply went to sleep. A peaceful break from the turmoil and drama that life brought.

I woke sometime in the middle of the day, the sunlight streaming through my c*****s cast hues of gold around the room. There was something peaceful about staying home from school. Everyone was either working or in class, making me feel blissfully alone.

Deciding to do something new today, I pulled myself from bed and got dressed. I had yet to simply explore, and taking a walk through the woods seemed like a good idea.

Our town in California didn't really have a forest. The town was close to the desert, making it dry and overflowing with dirt. There wasn't much green in our old town. Everything was so..open, in California. All of the tree's made Georgia feel much more crowded. While it felt crowded, it also made me feel as though I could hide easier. This thought was comforting, as I really didn't want to be seen anymore. Not by the twins, and not by Grace. I simply wanted to remain invisible to everyone, possibly even Tori. Having no friends would make it easier to leave, to know no one was angry at me for my decision.

I walked from my bedroom and out the back door, not once stopping to look for Frank. It was almost funny how having your life threatened seemed to take away other fears. I was no longer

afraid of Frank, just afraid of getting stuck in this town. I was afraid of having my plans foiled. Frank couldn't hurt me more than Grace had, as I could easily defend myself against him.

I walked down the steps and directly into the woods that surrounded most of the houses in the neighborhood. I was far from that little town in the middle of the woods, making me feel calm and secure. The last thing I wanted was to stumble into the little town Tori, and the twins lived in.

My fingers grazed the back pocket of my jeans, itching to touch the note the twin's had left me at the restaurant. I stuck it in my back pocket, my intention was to throw it away as soon as I committed the hastily scrawled words to memory.

I walked in a straight line through the woods, committing each tree and bush to memory. I contemplated where I would go this Friday. Should I go to a city? Somewhere with lots of trees? Or maybe in the mountains.

It would be much harder to find me if I ran to a city, but I didn't enjoy living in cities. I had never lived in the mountains before, the thought sounded tempting. Unfortunately, my sense of survival won out. I decided my best bet would be a crowded city, but now I would have to figure out which city. New York was too expensive and overrated. Plus, New York was simply too close to Georgia. Denver, CO popped into my head. Mountains and a city.

I sat against a huge oak tree in this small clearing, a bottle of water lying on my lap. A withered book sat in my hands. I wasn't sure what the title was, nor did I really care. I read the words greedily, a desperate attempt to escape the world I lived in.

The sound of snapping branches ripped me from my thoughts.

Mated to the Alpha Twins by Jane Doe Chapter 22

Snapping branches tore me from my thoughts and my heart nearly stopped as two wolves walked into the clearing. I had never seen wolves in person before, only in pictures and movies. I was sure wolves weren't naturally this big. The two were nearly identical, both the color of midnight. Their fur was shiny and glistening. I had expected wolves to look much dirtier, living in the woods and all. While I wasn't sure the geographical placement of wolves, I was also fairly sure wolves did not live in Georgia. What troubled me even more was that I wasn't afraid. It was though my mind and body had simply accepted my d***h as inevitable.

My mind played through the scenario. Aurora eaten by wolves. Grace would probably dance with joy while Tori and the twins wondered what happened to me. Would Melissa even notice when I failed to come home? Did wolves leave any scraps?

I was so lost in my thoughts I hadn't noticed the two wolves were sitting only twenty feet away, simply staring at me as though I were the anomaly. The two wolves locked eyes for just a moment, and resumed staring at me.

“Are you guys going to eat me or not?” I huffed.

Sure, I felt stupid. I was talking to two giant and supposedly violent animals, but they simply just stared at me. In the back of my mind, I had decided that being eaten by wolves wouldn't be a bad way to go. Painful for sure, but I'd d*e feeding two beautiful wolves. That had to count for something, right? My fearlessness

freaked me out, and some small part of me wondered if I had truly lost my mind.

The way the two wolves stared at me was starting to get on my nerves. Their eyes were much too intelligent for two animals, staring at me with shock and almost concern. Wolves couldn't feel those emotions. I was supposed to be prey to them, and yet they looked at me like a lost cub.

“What are you two looking at?” I grumbled, dropping my book on the earthen floor. “Go on, get out of here!”

I shouted at the two wolves, and they continued staring.

One of the wolves opened their mouth, letting their tongue roll out the side. If a wolf could grin, I'd imagine that's what it would look like. The other wolf looked at its companion and huffed, rolling its eyes. Could wolves even roll their eyes?

“Fine.” I snapped, “Sit there and stare at me.”

I picked my book up with a grumble and continued reading, determined to ignore the freakish wolves. My mind couldn't focus on the book in my hands, it was busy coming up with insane scenarios. What would make two wolves act this way? Maybe they were experimented on at a lab and had human-like intelligence? Maybe evolution had simply taken its toll and produced much smarter creatures. All kinds of theories were running through my head, all of which were bouts of fiction and partial insanity. It was clear I was off my rocker.

I looked up from my book and noticed the wolves were much closer now, sitting only ten feet away.

“Quit inching up on me.” I snapped, glaring at the two wolves.

I looked on incredulously as one of the wolves stood and slowly took a step forward. It was almost humorous how slow the wolf moved, as though it were tip-toeing over to me.

“I said stop.” I glared, and the wolf took another step.

The second wolf simply looked at its tip-toeing friend and shook its head.

“Get your friend.” I snapped at the other wolf, and it gave me a pointed look.

How could wolves convey this much emotion in a single look? The d**n wolf looked exasperated with its companion, tired of its antics. Did wolves even have antics?

The first wolf continued tip-toeing over to me, and I tensed when it was only three feet away. The wolf didn't look angry. Surely it would growl or snarl if it wanted to k**l me, right? I never had a dog before, but I'm pretty sure they growl and snap when angry.

“Bad dog.” I snapped, pointing my finger at the towering wolf.

I wasn't sure what made me say that particular phrase, but it seemed to work. The wolf stopped in its tracks and looked at me with an almost.. offended look. Its large ears flattened back and a low whine left its mouth. I could feel the small hairs on my arms stand, and yet I wasn't afraid. Could I truly be that numb from what happened with Grace to not even fear two giant wolves?

“So, I guess this means you’re going to eat me now.” I nodded with far too much acceptance.

The wolf that had been inching closer to me, sat on the ground with a loud thud. It shook its head at me, its tongue rolling out the side of its mouth. I assumed the head shake meant ‘no, I am not going to eat you’.

“Thanks.” I pursed my lips, “I think.”

The wolf sitting in front of me whined, bringing its face closer to my legs. It rubbed the top of its head against my leg, a low rumble coming from its mouth. While I never had a dog before, I met other people’s dogs. One dog I had met rubbed its head against my hand in an effort to get me to pet it.

Hoping the wolf wouldn’t freak out and rip my hand off, I ran my fingers through its soft fur. Its fur was the color of obsidian, but it was much softer than it looked. Like long strands of silk, it slid through my fingers effortlessly.

“Does your friend not like me?” I glanced at the other wolf, the one sitting farther away.

The wolf I had been petting raised its head and glanced at its friend. A mix between a whine and a growl left its lips, as though they were talking to each other. The conversation must’ve been interesting, as the other wolf began to approach me. Its eyes were guarded and its steps were slow and calculated. If I didn’t know any better, I’d think the wolf was trying not to scare me. My comfort with the strange situation was laughable and made

absolutely no sense. I was sitting in the middle of the woods petting two giant wolves like Snow White or something.

‘Aurora the Animal Whisperer’ popped into my head.

“Uh, hello.” I spoke to the other wolf as it flopped down next to its friend.

The wolf that had just flopped down rubbed its head against my leg so I began petting it. The other wolf seemed jealous, shooting a low growl at its companion.

And here I was. In the middle of the woods, each hand on a very large wolf’s head. The two wolves were letting out a low rumbling sound, almost like purring as I petted them.

For just a moment, I lost myself in the silent ‘whoosh’ sound my hand made against their fur. The storm blazing in my mind was forgotten for those small moments. I felt safe and at home, but I knew that wouldn’t last.

“As fun as this is, I need to get home.” I frowned, looking at the two wolves.

They seemed reluctant, giving each other wary glances as they stood. I picked myself up from the ground and retrieved my forgotten book and water bottle.

I wasn’t quite sure what to say. See you next time? Ask for their phone numbers?

“See ya.” I nodded awkwardly at the giant wolves, walking back to the house.

I walked back into the house, and grabbed one of my boxes of leftovers. As I plopped down on my bed to eat, I thought about the two wolves I had met. It wouldn't be so bad to be a wolf. Living in the forest, hunting for your own food. No worrying about who would hurt you or how to escape your fractured family or small town. You could simply live on your own, fending for yourself.

I fell asleep quickly that night, dreaming about the midnight wolves with their intelligent eyes.

I knew it was well into the morning when I woke up. Shooting from my bed at the sound of a frantic knock on my door. In my years of living with Melissa, not once had she ever knocked or asked for me. I pulled myself from bed and unlocked my door, cracking it open to look into her faded blue eyes.

“Aurora, I need you downstairs.” Melissa pursed her lips, she looked almost petrified.

“For what?” I huffed. The idea of slamming the door in her face popped into mind, but her next words made my blood run cold.

“Your father is here.” Melissa rushed the words from her mouth, her voice sounding as frightened as I felt.

Mated to the Alpha Twins by Jane Doe Chapter 23

“Your father is here.” Melissa rushed the words from her mouth and my heart nearly stopped.

What she was saying made no sense in my mind. My father- I didn't have a father. I had Frank and a sperm donor. A Father was

a foreign concept only lucky kids were able to fully experience. I was not one of those lucky kids.

“Father?” I found myself repeating the word, confusion soaking each letter.

“Your father.” Melissa spat, anger forming in her crystal eyes.

“The social worker managed to track him down.”

“The social worker.” I nodded, not fully processing the conversation.

I still couldn't get passed the word 'father'. It simply wasn't possible, wasn't fathomable.

“Get down here.” Melissa snapped, “He wants to speak with you.”

Was that jealousy in her tone? Why would Melissa be jealous?

I trudged downstairs, completely ignoring the fact that I was still in my pajama's. My busted and swollen face hadn't even registered in my mind. I had spent so many years as a child imagining my father sweeping into my life and stealing me away. We would live in a big house together and I'd finally be happy. I imagined him in so many different ways. Strong and handsome, working as a secret agent or international spy. His job was the reason he had left my mom, had left me and never returned. My child-like mind had come up with all sorts of excuses for his behavior. It took me such a long time to realize people simply didn't care. They didn't care about their spouses, family or

children. In the end you needed to look out for yourself, relying on anyone else was a broken heart waiting to happen.

I had spent too many days crying for my Father, begging the invisible man in the sky to bring him home.

My eyes locked instantly on the foreign man standing in the living room. My Father- my sperm-donor.

His eyes were just like my own. One so blue it looked almost white, one chocolate brown. His dark hair was the same color as my own, cropped close to his head. I could easily see the similarities between us. I used to love the fact that I looked like my father, and now I hated it. I resisted the urge to cringe as his piercing gaze met my own. Did I look at people like that? With the same wide and startling gaze? The contrast of the deep brown and light blue was violent, making his eyes become the center of attention.

My Father- sperm-donor was build extremely tall and wide. He looked muscular for his age, and might even be called handsome. He wore a finely tailored suit, slate grey with blue accents. Full eyebrows and a wide nose, full lips and long eyelashes. I could see myself within him, and my own self-hate began to bubble and boil towards the surface.

“Aurora.” My name left his lips, surprise widening his eyes as he took in my mangled face.

Some child-like part of me wanted to run into his arms, cry in joy that my father had finally come home.

Well, it was too f*****g late.

Too many nights spent crying in the dark, begging for him. Too many nights suffering at the hands of Frank and the cruel words of Melissa. He was too late for me, for my love, my admiration, my loyalty.

“Who are you?” I paused, for a moment I hadn’t even recognized my own voice. It sounded distant and foreign. Hidden pain and torment filled my words.

“I’m your Father.” The stranger cleared his throat, running a hand over the dark stubble on his chin. “The name’s Garrett Maddox.”

“Garrett.” I nodded. Garrett I could deal with, a man claiming to be my Father was out of the question.

Garrett paused, some conflicting emotions forming on his face. None of which I cared to recognize.

“Aurora, what happened to your face?” Garrett was very good at controlling his emotions. Nothing leaked out through his words, his eyes were another story entirely. They were lit with unspoken rage, enough to nearly cause a shiver down my spine.

“I told you, I tried to ask her.” Melissa frowned, her voice sounded pleading and almost whiny. “She won’t tell me.”

My eyes darted to Melissa, hardening at the sight of her. She was practically cooing for his attention, even with Frank feet away in the recliner.

“Aurora, tell me.” Garrett insisted.

The anger that rushed through me was enough to snap me from my stupor. Not a chance in h**l would I give this stranger whatever he wanted, no matter who he claimed to be. He was ruining my plans, plans I was determined to follow through on no matter what.

“I don’t have to tell you anything.” I snarled, “Not a single one of you.”

“Aurora-” Garrett opened his mouth to speak, but I silenced him with a wave of my hand.

“You do not get to speak to me, Garrett.” I snarled his name, glee running through me as his eyes widened.

Pure, unfiltered rage ran through me. Rage spanning well over ten years. Every single time I cried for him ran through my head, every single time I bragged about him to other kids. Each moment was on debut in my mind, each filling me with more and more anger. The world around me vibrated, and it took me a moment to realize I was quite literally shaking with rage. Fear rolled through me and I attempted to control the torrent of anger. My vision tinged red, and I tasted something burnt in my mouth.

Garrett hesitated, some sort of unmet expectation forming in his eyes. He seemed much too gleeful, much too accepting of the anger I felt. It only pissed me off further.

The brick wall exploded in my mind, demolished. The bricks crumbled into nothing, the cement disintegrated. Rebuilding the

wall was hopeless, futile. Something stirred in the back of my mind, waking at the onslaught of rage I felt.

‘Finally’ The voice in my head shouted, sounding much too gleeful.

I stepped towards Garrett, the anger was becoming too much. It started as a fire, comforting and warm. It quickly grew out of control, consuming me and dousing me with gasoline. I wanted to end the source of my anger, Garrett.

His eyes widened as I hobbled forward.

Two sets of knocks pounded on the thin screen door. A familiar voice pulled me from my rage, somehow dousing the flames as if they had never existed.

“Aurora.” Kade’s deep voice called out. Alec stood next to him. Both sets of their dark and alluring eyes were locked on me. The flames were gone, vanishing. They no longer licked against my skin, egging me on.

The brick wall in my head was still in shambles, unable to be repaired. The voice in my mind that had once been quiet was now much louder, unable to be held back.

Garrett’s expectant look in his eyes faded, but kept their interest as they looked me over.

I hadn’t realized it yet, but I was looking at the twins with both eyes. I somehow managed to open my swollen eye. It no longer throbbed with pain, nor did my busted lip. My face felt fine,

painless even. Something had happened indeed, whether I chose to accept it or not.

Mated to the Alpha Twins by Jane Doe Chapter 24

I was torn between my miraculously appearing sperm-donor and the twins stationed at the front door. Each looked at me expectantly, waiting for me to make the first move.

“This is too much.” I snapped under my breath, feeling much too exhausted for just waking up.

There was no way I planned on letting the twins inside, or entertaining my sperm donor for any longer. I’d simply retreat back into my bedroom and pretend this entire day never happened. Garrett and the twins would hopefully be long gone.

‘Let them in.’ The voice in my head rang out clear as day. The voice was so close, I looked around the room wondering if someone else had come into the house.

‘I know you can here me.’ The voice called out again, sounding exasperated.

“I’m going crazy.” I mumbled under my breath, turning my back on Garrett and the twins as I bounded up the stairs.

It was all too easy to listen in on their conversation. The house was old and the walls thin. All I had to do was peak my head from my bedroom to hear whispers of what they were saying.

“You left—Can’t take her now.” Melissa’s voice sounded angry, that same whining tone present in her words.

“My firstborn—just like me.” Garrett replied in his annoyingly calm voice.

I flopped down on my bed, pulling the covers tight around me. I squeezed my eyes close and prayed for sleep, prayed for all of this to be a horrible dream. My world had been flipped upside down in a matter of one day.

‘Aurora.’ The voice in my head was soft and teasing, ‘You can talk to me, y’know.’

‘No, I can’t.’ I shook my head, ‘Because that would mean I’m actually crazy.’

‘You’re not crazy.’ The voice in my head chuckled, ‘I could explain but I don’t know if it’s my place to do that or not.’

‘The explanation is that I’m clearly becoming mentally unhinged.’ I snapped back, ‘Only crazy people hear voices in their head.’

‘Well, crazy people and werewolves.’ The voice responded in a calm tone, as if this were simple fact.

‘Yep. I’m going crazy.’ I nodded, ‘Goodbye now.’

Sleep had finally managed to take me. I knew it was well into the evening when I finally woke up. The bright sunlight was much more dim, the sky darkening in deep hues of blue and orange. A light knock sounded on my door, and a strange smell flooded into my nose.

The smell was of stale perfume and something dull and spicy. I couldn't place my finger on it, and I couldn't remember ever smelling something like it before.

"Come in." I grunted, sitting up from the bed with sleep crusted eyes.

Melissa came into my room timidly, and I realized this was the first time she had come into my room in three years. She had never bothered coming to get me for anything. Today was a day of firsts, and hopefully lasts.

"Your Father left awhile ago." Melissa murmured, "He's going to be coming back soon."

"Garrett." I grimaced, "His name is Garrett. Why is he coming back?"

Melissa sat on the end of my bed and sighed, looking truly defeated. Yet another first today, Melissa was sitting on the end of my bed. She glanced at my face warily, and I noticed I was looking at her through two clear eyes. Slowly, my hand reached up to my face. I let my fingers graze over my swollen eye, surprised to find no pain. I couldn't feel the puffy skin that was once there. Everything felt smooth and flat. I reminded myself to look in the mirror as soon as I could.

"It's not my place to say, Aurora." Melissa frowned, "There's just some stuff he needs to talk to you about."

"I have no interest in talking to him." I snapped, "Or you."

Melissa flinched at my words, but I felt no guilt. Guilt couldn't touch me when I planned to run away in just a few short days. I planned on working a double shift tomorrow, giving me the entire day away from Melissa, Frank, and now Garrett. This would be the last bit of money I needed for me to comfortably leave this town behind. Friday was so close, and I was counting down the seconds.

"I know." Melissa nodded, not meeting my eyes. "You'll find it hard to say no to him. He can be very persuasive."

"Maybe for you." I scoffed, "I on the other hand have no problem saying no."

"You've always had his strength." Melissa nodded to herself, "Certainly not mine."

"I have my own strength." I growled, the sound was odd in my ears. Apparently Melissa thought the same. "I got my own strength from dealing with you and Frank for years. Not from Garrett."

Melissa sighed, "You're right. Either way, he's going to want to speak with you. You don't have to give him a chance or let him into your heart, but try and listen to what he has to say."

"I'm not making any promises." I shrugged, looking away.

Melissa left silently and I trudged to the bathroom a few minutes later. My jaw dropped as I looked into the bathroom mirror.

My swollen eye was completely healed, my busted lip absent from my face. It was as though the event with Grace had never

happened. All physical wounds were gone from my body, only the mental ones remained.

‘You’re welcome.’ The voice in my head chimed out smugly.

‘Quiet.’ I growled, ‘You’re just a voice in my head. You didn’t do this.’

‘Then what did, Aurora?’ The voice teased, ‘Enlighten me.’

I paused for a moment, thinking over the possibilities. Realistically, there were none. Things like this didn’t happen to normal people, then again normal people didn’t hear voices in their head either.

‘Shut up.’ I mumbled, trudging back into my room.

I sat in the silence and nibbled on a granola bar, thankful the voice in my head remained quiet.

It was strange. The voice didn’t sound like my own, a little deeper and rougher around the edges. Yet I felt like I knew the person who was speaking in my head, as if they were a close friend. That didn’t change my feelings on the situation. Only crazy people heard voices. Once I left this town and finally got established in another, I’d have to look into a psychologist.

Around two hours later, I had absolutely no insight on my situation. I would simply continue what I had been doing. Ignoring the twins, making money, and pretending Garrett never existed.

A rougher knock sounded on my bedroom door, and Garrett peaked his head inside.

He was wearing a different suit, this one a dark Ash grey. What kind of man changed his suits more than once in a day? His bright blue eye and rich brown eye stared at me past long lashes.

“Aurora, could I talk to you for a minute?” Garrett asked, his face an emotionless mask. It seemed Garrett was good at that particular expression.

“Okay.” Was all I responded with.

I watched as Garrett entered my room, his eyes flickering around at my minimal belongings. His eyes flickered over the cracked and peeling paint, and the metal bed frame my d***y mattress sat on.

“Where are your belongings?” Garrett questioned.

His words had me clenching my teeth. There was interest and concern in his words, two emotions I couldn’t stand to hear coming from him.

“These are my belongings.” I snapped, “Mind your own business.”

Garrett paused and raised an eyebrow at me, “Your mother’s temper, I see.”

“Say what you want.” I growled lowly, “But I am nothing like Melissa.”

My chest continued to rumble, and I stopped the motion with a wary look. I was making all kinds of strange sounds today. I passed it off on my failing mental health and the outburst of anger I had earlier.

“Melissa?” Garrett nodded to himself, “Noted.”

“What do you want, Garrett?” I huffed, crossing my arms over my chest.

“You don’t have to call me Garrett, Aurora.” Garrett gave a small and gentle smile. “Call me whatever you wish.”

I bit back the urge to call him my sperm-donor, feeling like that might be a little childish.

“Garrett is fine.” I snapped, “Quit changing the subject.”

Garrett looked truly uncomfortable in that moment, and I resisted the urge to laugh out loud. If only he knew he wasn’t the only one extremely uncomfortable with this entire situation. He should’ve just stayed where he was and minded his own business. He went seventeen years without thinking of me, what’s a few more?

“There is no way for me to break this easily.” Garrett sighed, running a hand through his chocolate colored hair. “I want you to come live with me, Aurora.”

Again, my jaw dropped. Dropped in surprise, dropped in offense, dropped in disbelief. My—Garrett wanted me to come live with him? He missed seventeen years of my life and now he wanted me?

“No.” I replied deadpan, no lingering emotion on my face.

Garrett opened his mouth to continue.

“No.” I cut him off.

“Aurora, let me speak.” Garrett frowned, a stern look coming over his face.

I paused, giving him this one moment.

“My—wife and I have just bought a house in town. You wouldn’t have to leave your friends, your school. All I ask is for you to come live with us. There is much you do not understand about our family, and I would like to explain it all.” Garrett sounded sincere, but that same strange aura of power surrounded him. It made him seem bigger, more scary. I could feel it swirling around me, but for some reason it couldn’t touch me. Garrett wasn’t big nor scary, simply a man who gave himself too much importance.

“Let me make this crystal clear.” A snarl ripped through me, remnants of today’s intense anger flooded through my veins.

“I am not your family.” I snapped, “I want nothing to do with you. All I want is for you to turn around and leave my life the way you came. I would never live with you.”

Garrett seemed absolutely unfazed by the anger that wracked through me. The voice in the back of my head was urging me to calm down.

‘Now’s not the time.’ The voice murmured, ‘We need Alec and Kade for your first time.’

“Aurora, I was not asking.” Garrett’s voice turned stern, making me wonder if he had any other children. “You are coming to live with me.”

“Why.” I grimaced, my anger seeping from my pores. “Why now.”

“Because you are almost eighteen.” Garrett turned, remorse burning in his eyes. “And I have spent far too long absent from your life.”

I couldn’t find the words, couldn’t force my lips to form them. His eyes were burning with sincerity, his voice held hidden longing and sorrow. I didn’t forgive him, not one bit. And yet I couldn’t figure out what to say, nothing felt right. I wanted nothing to do with this man, and yet he regretted abandoning me. Did his regret warrant my forgiveness? Absolutely not.

“I saw your—condition when you came downstairs.” Garrett grimaced, “The state of your room, and your lack of belongings only solidifies my decision.”

I clamped my lips shut. Garrett had that tone most adults had. The tone that made it clear there was no room for argument. I would simply be wasting my breath. What infuriated me even more was how Garrett made me out to be a child who couldn’t take care of herself. I had been caring for myself for three years. Who cares if I didn’t have belongings? That didn’t matter to me.

“I would like to take you to dinner this afternoon.” Garrett paused, “Then I will leave you to pack your things. I’ll return in the morning to pick you up.”

I pursed my lips, Garrett sure seemed to like things in order.

“Fine, Garrett.” My voice was void of any emotion.

The anger had fully left my system, leaving me with a blissful numb sensation.

“One last thing.” I called out, making Garrett turn in the doorway.

“I will play it your way.” I nodded, my eyes locked on his own. Our eyes equally identical in every way. “But do not forget that I’ve been taking care of myself all this time. I do not need you, and I do not want you. Never forget that.”

“I won’t.” Garrett nodded, “Be ready in an hour.”

The door closed behind him, and for some reason I felt as though a lot of doors had been slammed shut by his decision.