

Chapter 13 Tough Persuasion

-Liam-

Her scent was driving me crazy and she just kept on shoving that naughty little ass of hers on my face like she was taunting me. This mate of mine kept teasing me, unknowingly, and my head was starting to hurt.

The mating ceremony was over. I would've wanted to be there with her and show her off to the other males. My mate, my Luna, my fated woman. I would've claimed her proudly as mine so no one else would even dare lay their lustful eyes on her. She was mine for life and I was hers, at least a part of me.

The moonless night wasn't of a hindrance to me. She probably didn't know that I was channeling Luca's energy to help me see in the dark. But doing so also heightened my sense of smell and I couldn't help myself from taking in her scent. Sweet... so fucking sweet, and it wasn't because of me but that kid!

She might be wolf-less but she should

● She might be wolf-less but she should still feel the bond between us. Seeing her beneath him like that, her face flushed and content. Fuck! I shouldn't have left her alone in that room.

They had their clothes on, but it didn't mean nothing came down between them. I could smell him all over her!

And that scream – she should only be screaming my name! Liam – this was the only name permitted to come out of her lips. She'd better behave or else she'd be screaming my name until her throat was sore. ①

She should have no reason to protect and defend him and yet she kept snapping at me. I saved her life for fucks sake!

Technically, it was Lexy but still... if I didn't find her last night, she might've bled to death. The injury on her chest was fatal.

And what do I get? To see her pinned down by another male and this fiery attitude of hers. I didn't expect this from her – she seemed more of the submissive type during our first encounter. Didn't that mean anything to her at all? She
S
ERA wanted me to touch her when we in the

What mean anything to her at all? She wanted me to touch her when we in the midst of it!

Is my beautiful mate actually an idiot?

All I kept getting from her was attitude. I wanted to carry her bridal style instead so I could admire her beauty without her knowing, but she unexpectedly clung to me. It made my heart skip a beat.

It hammered wildly in my chest I felt like it was going to rip itself out. I told her to let go, trying to sound as calm as I could. She did. In my arms, just where she belonged.

Mine, no one else.

Warning her to back away from him, she instead rolled her eyes at me!

The Goddess sure loves to play games with me, giving me a mate that just won't submit.

If that kid wasn't her lover then what were they to each other? It would be in his best interest to not challenge me because she was rightfully mine.

And I don't share.

And I don't share.

"I don't have a mate!" she shouted at me and I froze. She looked away from me, trying to hold back tears and I felt a twinge of guilt and pain. It was like she indirectly rejected me. She didn't know yet, but it still hurt to hear.

I made her upset. Was it because I called her 'mate'?

My beautiful Anna. After being maltreated for so long because she was wolf-less, she must've believed she wouldn't have a mate. Was that it – was she so hungry for a male's attention that she'd even let that fucking kid fuck her?

I wouldn't allow it. I was late to truly save her, but I was here now. No one would ever hurt her again, not even myself. No one would turn her into a punching bag for as long as I live.

Lifting her higher, I placed a soft kiss on her hair.

She looked up at me. "Then why do I want you?" I asked and her eyes widened.

"I know you're wolf-less. I also know you've been abused," I admitted. "I don't know what's between you and that kid.

"You've been abused," I admitted. "I don't know what's between you and that kid, but one thing is for sure: you are my mate. I will take you to my pack, make you my Luna, and we'd spend the rest of our lives together."

There was no point in beating around the bush. I meant what I said – it was my plan.

"You... You can't be my mate," she said. Her brows knitted.

I started walking again. At least she wasn't snapping at me. "Hmm... But I am. If I wasn't, I wouldn't have looked for you when you suddenly disappeared, or almost killed that kid," I said. If I wasn't so rudely interrupted, I would've ripped his throat out. Then again, looks like I did have a soft spot for her.

"You can't be my mate," she repeated, and I frowned.

It really felt like a rejection. I didn't want her to reject me, I needed her.

"Then why did you moan for me, babe? You kissed me, you wanted me," I said bluntly, and she blushed. "The tingles that you feel when you're around me

...nity, and she brushed. The tingles

● At you feel when you're around me when our skin touches. You don't have a wolf to tell you, but I do and he's telling me that you're my mate. Reject me if you want but know this: I will never accept it."

I looked down at her, smirking. "You're stuck with me, babe."

She opened her mouth like she wanted to say something but didn't and closed it again. Then she looked away from me, her cheeks still a deep red, and stayed quiet.

It was a lot to take in, but I needed her to realize that she couldn't stay here anymore. Everyone was counting on me and this was the last chance I got.

And to be honest, my wolf was already head over heels for her. He would never forgive me if I let her go.

She had to come with me, she must.

Question is, will she?

I heard loud voices as we neared the mansion. As we emerged from the woods, we saw that the packs had already gathered in the common grounds, most of them making out. This behavior was

gathered in the common grounds, most of them making out. This behavior was only acceptable when the mating ceremony came around. A werewolf's lust was difficult to control when it came to a first mate, especially when the mark was just completed. It triggered a primal need in us to rut, and let our urges take control.

"Close your eyes," I told her.

She was already covering her face with both hands, her cheeks even redder than before. She looked so cute... so innocent.

I stopped channeling energy from Luca to bring my senses back to normal. The smell of arousal was heavy in the air and if I lost control, I knew Anna would too, but it could also lead her to decide to not come with me. Besides, I'd rather take her on my bed than out in the open – not that I was entirely against the idea.

"Please hurry and take me inside," she said.

Fuck! If only she meant what I wanted it to mean.

Taking long strides, I took her inside – where we should softly hear the wanton moaning and screams that came from

outside. Instead, we were greeted just

paning and screams that came from outside. Instead, we were greeted yet again with the same scene from outside. Unlike the somewhat censored version outside because of the dark, the lights inside revealed everything to the eye.

I had to get her away from here. I had to get myself away from here.

Channeling Luca's energy, I painstakingly ignored the sinful scents assaulting my nostrils and in inhuman speed took her back to my room. My men knew better than to fuck around near my and Lexy's rooms so there was no one on our floor but the two of us. The night was still young – it might be full of them later. Some of us didn't want anyone else seeing what was rightfully ours.

Closing the door, she removed her hands off her face and looked around. "It's alright. It's just us here," I said. She gulped.

"Smooth," Luca interrupted.

"What the fuck, Luca!"

"Uhm... you can put me down now." I gave her my full attention. To hell with this wolf.

this won't.

I helped her stand and she immediately backed away from me, looking away.

"What?" I asked.

"Uhm... nothing," she replied, blushing madly. Those cheeks of her were so honest it was adorable.

"I'll contact my Beta to pick us up by tonight. Do you have anything you need to pack before we leave?"

Looking at me, she said, "Leaving? I didn't say I was leaving."

Picking up the bags on the floor, I threw them all on the couch and opened one. "I wasn't asking. You're coming to my pack," I simply said. "On second thought, all of your needs will be taken care of so unless it's something really important, don't pack anything like clothing. Leave everything here. I don't want you taking anything that he gave you."

"I'm not going to your pack," she said, crossing her arms over her chest. "I will leave when I want to, and there's no way I'm going to a pack like yours."

Pack like yours? I rule the biggest,

Pack like yours? I rule the biggest, proudest, and one of the strongest packs in the world. Disrespecting my pack is the same as disrespecting me.

I pulled an oversized shirt and basketball shorts out of my bag. Holding them in a tight fist, I strode towards her. She stood in place, her breathing rapid and shallow, her eyes never leaving mine.

As I neared her, she backed away from me, until her back hit the wall. Before she could even think of running away, I slammed an arm on one side of the wall, trapping her. "Look at me!" I demanded, but she kept looking to her side.

With my other hand, I gripped her jaw so she would face me. She reeked of fear. I didn't want to scare her again, but I somehow did, only this time she went a bit too far.

"My pack have been waiting for their Luna for a long time, Anna. They've been waiting for you. As their Luna, don't you think you should get to know them first?"

"I am not your Luna!" she spat, and my jaw clenched.

"Take a shower and change into these," I

jaw clenched.

"Take a shower and change into these," I ordered, forcing her hand to take them. She was making my blood boil, but I had to hold myself back or she won't agree to come with me.

Why is it so difficult to convince her? She's my mate, it should be easy!

"Don't treat me like a kid! I can look after myself," she said and threw the clothes at me. She walked past me, heading for the door, while my mind tried to comprehend the situation.

I wasn't treating her like a kid! What was up with this woman!

"Thank you for everything Alpha. But I'm no one's Luna," she said, with her back to me. "I can't go with you." 3

Her words were like bullets that went straight to my heart. I was getting rejected. She didn't want anything to do with me. But I couldn't just let her go - I needed her.

I walked towards her and as I was about to speak, someone interrupted.

"But you have to, Bella."

Chapter 14 Blessed Friend

-Anna-

Well-built and lean, he stood by the doorway, his frame blocking the only exit. I recognized the voice, having heard it at times on days I was allowed to take a stroll near the training grounds. Looking up, I saw my best friend, who I had barely seen for years. I still considered him my best friend, though I didn't know if it was the same with him. He called me "Bella", my second name, and he was the only one who called me by that name; everyone else preferred to call me "Anna".

His beach blonde hair was a mess, which meant he had just returned from a run, but there was a weird scent coming from him. His thin lips

were set in a straight line, his blue orbs

● re set in a straight line, his blue orbs set on me, and though he wore a serious expression, it was the first time in a long time that I could get a good look at his face.

A strong angular jawline, a straight nose, and flawless

skin – I found myself getting attracted to him, my heart racing in my chest.

“Ca-Carson,” I said, finding my voice.

Raising a brow, he asked, “The curse’s affecting you now

too?”

I nodded. His bloodline was blessed generations back by a

witch, or perhaps it would be more appropriate to call it a curse. The witch

was in love with a certain ancestor of his, but her love couldn’t be

compensated because he found his mate.

So, she casted a spell on him and made

sure it wouldn’t end with him.

In order for the spell to carry over to the

sure it wouldn't end with him.

In order for the spell to carry over to the next

generation, starting from the first of his blood that got afflicted, no females were born into their lineage. In every generation, the male's mate could only conceive a son, and so the blessing or curse continued.

Blessed or cursed with an extremely attractive physique,

women, especially she-wolves, were easily drawn to him like they were falling in love, and those who didn't know better thought the feelings were real when

in fact, it wasn't. He was the very definition of a "chick magnet"; a walking, breathing "come on" to every woman out there.

If he found his mate, such effect would cease after he

received his mate's mark. Until then, he would have to deal with the numerous

women that he attracted. And that

men that he attracted. And that included me. It was against my will, but it hadn't

even been five minutes yet and I already feel myself falling for him.

"Sorry," he said, in a voice that sent butterflies flying

on my stomach.

"N-No, it's okay," I replied. "I understand it's the curse

or blessing, however you want to call it."

"A curse," he said. "Definitely a curse. Too bad I haven't

found my mate yet."

Knowing he was still available made me feel happy and I knew

I shouldn't be. It must be hard for him to have to wait for so long.

But he's available.

No, Anna! He's your best friend.

I felt an arm snake around my waist. I got pulled to the

pined to the
side, bumping on Alpha Liam.

"If I mark her, she wouldn't be affected anymore. Am I

right?" he asked Carson, ignoring me glaring at him.

Every time I was close to him, it was like a jolt of

electricity ran through me, and in its wake an eruption of tingles. A rather

impactful yet pleasant feeling and only he had such an effect on me.

Seems like he really is my mate – my second mate, a second

chance at completing this missing half of me.

Mated to two Alphas – was the Goddess playing some sort of

a joke on me?

"Yes. That's about the only way," Carson said.

They're actually holding a conversation normally? Maybe

normally? Maybe

Carson doesn't know about Flynn yet?

"Hmm... what do you say, babe? Would you like me to mark

you?" he asked, turning his head to meet my glare with a smirk.

Goddess, my mate's smirking at me and I find it... sexy.

"I take it silence means 'yes'?" He stretched the last

word as he said it, with his deep baritone voice.

Goddess, his voice is sexy too.

"You're so cute when you're flustered, mate," he added,

then sensually bit his lower lip, making me gulp. I couldn't look away from

those lips of his, remembering how soft they were on mine when he kissed me,

how good it felt when -

"I hate to interrupt but Flynn would be here any second

now," Carson said, bringing me back to

ow," Carson said, bringing me back to reality.

"We'll be ready to go before he gets here," Alpha Liam

answered. "Have you seen Lexy anywhere? Thought she'd be here by now."

How many times do I have to tell him that I'm not

leaving! I have something to do here first!

"She left after treating Flynn. Haven't seen her since,"

Carson said to which he replied with a hmm.

Is that some sort of expression of him? Oh, no. I am

not observing him or anything. It's just something I kind of noticed. Right.

"Well, we don't have much packing to do, so your

assistance isn't needed," Alpha Liam said, dismissing my best friend like he

was from his pack.

was from his pack.

Carson merely smirked, and oh my Goddess, it made him more attractive. "I'm here for her. Figured she wouldn't agree to leave so easily," he said.

That's right, I wouldn't.

"She is leaving," Alpha Liam said slowly. "Aren't you?", he

asked, pulling me even closer to him.

"No!" I replied, holding on to my rational brain as my

body kept reacting weirdly in his hold.

"Let me talk to her," Carson said, and this arrogant

Alpha's hand squeezed my side.

"Before she leaves," Carson continued, looking me in the

eye. "I need to talk to my best friend."

Chapter 15 Favorable Choices

-Anna-

The big white spot of light coming from the flashlight lit the way. Here we were, walking back out into the woods, into a secluded area that was reserved for the Head Gamma. It was where my father and I resided before he passed away and I was taken to the mansion to live the rest of my days, serving the pack. I was forbidden to return to our house, and I wasn't sure if I wanted to, the place was too special for me.

I hadn't seen it for two years, and with every step we took, we were getting closer to it. I prepared myself for this day but knowing I'd have to face the past as soon as I step foot inside the house made an uneasy feeling rise in my stomach. In a way, I was glad I didn't have to do it alone; my best friend was with me.

Unsure of what we were after that day, I almost cried when he called me his best friend. I held back the tears because he was the crybaby, not me. Though there wasn't a single trace of the crybaby I knew in him. I guess we all changed over

ew in him. I guess we all changed over the years – the three inseparable best friends – Flynn, Carson, and I. Even when Flynn and I were dating, the three of us still hang out, almost every day. Three troublemakers we once were.

Carson walked beside me, with Alpha Liam a good five meters behind us for some privacy. I didn't trust him. He could easily eavesdrop on our conversation. He agreed to let my best friend speak to me on the condition that we were within sight, and to my surprise, Carson didn't protest. He admitted it was Carson who told him about that nasty torture shack, growling as he did.

None of us wanted to have to walk past the mating werewolves so Alpha Liam had this crazy idea on how to sneak out of the mansion. We were on the fourth floor, where the guest rooms for his pack were, and he wanted us to jump out of the window. Again, Carson was on board with the idea. We would immediately be at the back of the mansion where no one would see us, and we didn't have to witness the same scenes.

Never had I thought about jumping out of building before but at that point, I'd

Never had I thought about jumping out of a building before but at that point, I'd rather jump. I thought I'd jump and get caught by one of them, but Alpha Liam was sneaky. Channeling his wolf's energy, he carried me in his arms again, then jumped.

It was scary yet exhilarating, and it was impressive to see him do such a feat. Of course, I wouldn't tell him. I merely rolled my eyes at his handsome smirking face, saying Carson did the same thing effortlessly.

I was yet to accept that a wolf-less 'werewolf' such as me was actually given a mate. I guess the Goddess was listening.

The plan was to escape with my mate, to use him so I could finally leave the pack. If he was loving and caring, I'd stay with him. Once I wasn't with the pack anymore, I'd decided that I'd live my life to the fullest. If my fated mate would accept a failure like me, then I would faithfully stay beside him.

That was the plan! I didn't know what I should do now. The promise was about to be fulfilled and I would finally leave, but if I went with Alpha Liam, would it be the

● went with Alpha Liam, would it be the right choice to make?

"I'm going to miss you around here," Carson said, and it made me want to happily squeal.

"I'm going to miss you, too!" I chirped. A little too loud, and Alpha Liam growled.

"I'm sorry it had to be this way," he said. "But I think you leaving would be best for everyone here."

Ouch. The pack really wanted me gone.

"They'd get what they always wanted, and you could finally be happy," he continued. "And safe."

"I'm leaving after this. The pack won't even notice I was gone," I replied nonchalantly. They treated me as an outsider anyway so there was no point in staying, but it still hurt to think that at one point in my life, I would've done anything for them. "I'll be happy... and safe. I'm thinking of living with the humans. They don't seem to be so bad."

I could tell my best friend anything. Carson won't tell a single soul. He was the best at keeping secrets, and he most

● best at keeping secrets, and he most likely knew at least one secret from every pack member by now because everyone confided in him. As Beta, he was more like a brother to the pack rather than an authority figure. Having been around the Omegas and Gammas, I'd heard their numerous conversations, including rumors and fantasy. So, even if I was cooped up in the kitchen or the laundry room on most days, I was still updated on matters regarding the pack.

"What about your mate? I doubt he'd let you do that."

"I don't know. I guess I need more time to think about it," I said, wanting to cut the conversation short but he wouldn't let it.

"He was worried you won't go with him. You should've seen his face when he realized you were gone." He flashed me a knowing grin, and it made my heart skip a beat, from the curse or the bond, I couldn't tell.

"I guess he would be," I simply said.

"Please go with him," he said, stopping in his tracks and facing me. "I can't... I

Please go with him," he said, stopping
his tracks and facing me. "I can't... I
can't bear the thought of you leaving. I
want you to, but it doesn't mean I want
you gone. At least when you're with him,
I know that you're safe."

Unbelievable. He's asking me to accept
Alpha Liam? Why must I live my life
bound to an Alpha when I could be free!
I'm wolf-less! I didn't have to abide by
werewolves' customs.

"Carson, we grew up together with our
lives set out for us. I was supposed to be
Head Gamma and I wanted it. You know I
did. But now, I have a chance to choose
another path for me," I said. "Leave all
this behind and try to forget the past. My
father would've wanted me to be happy."

I raised my hand to the base of my neck, t
o clutch at the vial, but my hand wrapped
around nothing. An old habit, whenever I
talked about him. I could never rid of it
and now it meant more to me than it did
before. I had to get it back.

I resumed to walk, and he followed suit.

"Please think about it, Bella," he pleaded.

"Why are you taking his side?"

Why are you taking his side?

As my best friend, he should be siding with me. But he kept sticking out for Alpha Liam instead. Why wouldn't he listen to me?

"Because I'm a selfish prick," he said. "I won't be able to forgive myself if I let you go without knowing if you're safe. If you're with him, at least I know my Bella's well-taken care of. I can't lose another family."

I held his hand and closed the space between our sides, ignoring the intense aura from behind that seemed to be directed at me. Holding his hand and getting close to Carson made me feel weak in my knees but I wanted to do this.

He was like a brother to me. It was difficult for him to admit what he just did, I knew, and this was our way of comforting each other – I hadn't forgotten.

"You won't lose me," I said.

Giving my hand a light squeeze, he said, "If he ever makes you cry, I'd be there for you."

He suddenly pulled me in front of him

● suddenly pulled me in front of him and hugged me tightly. I hugged him back. I missed my best friend so much. Then I felt something slip inside a pocket of the jacket Alpha Liam lent to me. "I'd immediately be beside you."

"Enough!" Alpha Liam roared, as he ripped me from Carson and pulled me beside him. He held out an arm and pointed to where I was standing just a few seconds before. "Stay back!"

Carson smirked, then walked to where he pointed.

"Don't talk to him like that!" I snapped.

If he keeps acting like this, I seriously won't consider Carson's words.

Ignoring me, he continued to walk, dragging me with him. "I really have to get you out of here," he muttered.

He probably didn't intend for me to hear it, but I did. "I can get myself out," I replied. "I don't need your help with it."

"Stop that." His shoulders dropped and his voice was pained. Unlike before, it sounded more like a plea than an order. Is he actually sulking?