

The Challenge Two Alphas, One Girl Chapter 26

Chapter 26: Cupcake Conversation

Fang's POV

Friday's broken foot meant that the Alphas would be physically carrying her around time. I roared in anger, slamming my fist into the bathroom mirror. Astrid flinched.

"What's wrong, Fang?" She cooed. "Talk to me."

I looked at my bloody wrist. The flesh began to heal instantly pushing the glass splinters out and then the skin came together until every trace of the injury vanished. I had to admit. It must suck to be Friday, knowing that this was in her genetics but it skipped her somehow. Healing at a human rate seemed like a nightmare but it would also bring out the most protective sides possible in both of her alpha mates. They weren't even fighting with each other anymore because they were so concerned. This was horrible timing.

"I'm upset because..." I paused, thinking of a plausible lie. "I wish Friday and I could be closer." That came out fake and Astrid raised her eyebrows incredulously.

"I mean...she's going to be Luna. There's no higher rank than that and she dislikes us you know. It might jeopardise our position here," I said.

Astrid looked pensive. She clearly had not considered this before. "We just have to be nicer to her," she suggested, shrugging.

"Maybe...you should spend some time with Friday," I added.

Astrid looked like I had asked her to eat a tablespoon of ground glass.

"Remember when you dressed her up for the opening ceremony of the challenge. Everyone was amazed at how different she looked and she made the front page of the Marigold Morning newspapers," I said, throwing the larger shards of glass away.

Astrid smiled. "I did do a good job."

"You should offer to fix her up for her wedding, her engagement party, her bridal shower...that kind of thing," I continued.

Astrid was nodding fervently. I knew Astrid adored the limelight.

"Those are great ideas, Hun," she said, clapping her hands together. Thaddeus' POV "I love you," I whispered, gazing into her eyes. It was true.

Her eyes widened. They were glistening with tears. A stray tear escaped down her cheek and I quickly wiped it away. I had loved her since the moment I laid eyes on her but now it had become more apparent. Her pain was my pain. Her joy was my joy. Her suffering was my suffering. Her triumph was my triumph. She was my heart, existing outside of my body.

“I love you, Thaddeus,” she said.

I nuzzled her and held her closer. We stayed like that until it was five minutes to midnight. I tucked her in and kissed her goodnight. I was really apprehensive about leaving an injured Friday on her own but I was right next-door and Maze was opposite. He was far from my favourite person but we did see eye to eye on one thing and that was Friday. She was the top priority.

Maze's POV so something relaxing, something that was manageable even for someone nigh on pain-Killers. I was lucky I was the Alpha. I called in a last minute favour. I went to fetch Friday first thing in the morning and found Thaddeus already in her room. I was livid. He put his palms up. His tone was apologetic.

“I know it's your day but I wanted to make sure she had help for anything she needed and I woke up before you. I couldn't just not check on her,” he said.

I narrowed my eyes at him. Friday was dressed in a blue sundress that Thaddeus had probably helped her pick out on my day. He had no right to infringe upon it, especially with that half-baked excuse, as if I couldn't help Friday get ready.

“Thanks Thaddeus,” said Friday sweetly. She was sitting in her wheelchair. She had crutches but we had also gotten her a wheelchair which allowed her to put her feet up. I wheeled her to the dining room. It did not make sense snatching her away early today. I had to give my special guest time to prepare for my date with Friday. Thaddeus followed us into the dining room.

Friday refused everything she was offered for breakfast, complaining that the pain-killers were making her nauseated. The thought of little Friday not eating properly for the next six weeks was making me nauseated. Thaddeus and I both pleaded with her to have something so she would not have to take her medication on an empty stomach. She obliged, sighing. I carried her bridal style down the stairs and to my surprise, Thaddeus followed us holding the folded-up wheelchair and crutches. He put those things in the trunk and opened the door so I could gently place Friday in the car. I looked at him awkwardly.

“Um, thank you,” I said nodding.

“You're welcome,” he said, shrugging his shoulders at me and waving and blowing a kiss to Friday who had begun to sing again. She did have a sweet soft singing voice but the lyrics which I was sure she made up herself needed work. The chauffeur took me

and Friday to the Marigold Hotel. I carried her into the huge empty kitchen there. There were several kitchens at the hotel but I had shut down this one in particular for Friday and me.

“What’s going on, Maze?” Asked Friday excitedly, her breath ticking my ear.

I kissed her gently. Right on cue, Gregory Georgetown walked into the kitchen. Friday squealed in delight. I could not help the smug smirk that slid onto my face. Gregory was one of the most famous werewolf chefs in the world in addition to being a Marigold native and family friend. He was well-known for his desserts so I had hoped my mate and her sweet tooth knew of him. She clearly did by her reaction.

“I’m Gregory Georgetown. Call me Greg. I’m the head chef here at the Marigold Hotel Restaurant which boasts five Michelin stars,” said Greg, winking. He was a tall guy, lean with wavy blond hair and brown eyes. He had on his white chef’s uniform and hat. “I also have my own cooking show, Wolf it or Waste it, where amateur chefs win cash or their food ends up in the trash!”

I struggled not to roll my eyes. Greg was all about self-promotion. Friday clapped after his introduction and I grinned at her. She was so adorable.

“Greg is going to do a private cooking class with us,” I explained as I put Friday down on a chair near the kitchen counter. “This is my mate, Friday.”

“Nice to meet you Friday!” Said Greg cheerfully. “Now as I always say, if you want to learn how to bake, you gotta start with the cupcake!”

Ugh! But Friday was into it. Greg walked us through the batter recipe. He had everything already measured out in bowls so we basically just poured things and mixed them. We made chocolate, vanilla and red velvet. Friday kept stealing batter to eat. I took the bowls away from her. Just because I was not going to criticise did not mean I would not confiscate either. She pouted and sulked.

My family never let me watch too much television but even I knew who Gregory Georgetown was. His desserts were legendary and all of his restaurants were top rated. All of his cooking shows were hits. He showed us how to make three basic cupcake batters. The chocolate was so rich, the vanilla was light and fluffy and the red velvet had an exotic flair to it. Maze took the batters away from me after a while to my chagrin.

Next we made chocolate buttercream frosting for the chocolate cupcakes, vanilla buttercream frosting for the vanilla cupcakes and cream cheese buttercream frosting for the red velvet cupcakes. The cream cheese buttercream was my favourite of the frostings. Maze eventually took that away too. We assembled the cupcakes and had fun decorating them. There were so many cute decorations in the kitchen, star sprinkles, heart sprinkles, all colours of edible glitter, and dark, white and milk chocolate chips. I

could tell Maze was wary of me being around the chocolate chips. He said I had a chocolate chip problem.

Maze made his half-dozen cupcakes say Friday. I smiled. I wrote 1<3 Maze on my six cupcakes. Maze grinned. We fed each other cupcakes. They were delicious. Greg was looking at me curiously.

“Why are you in that cast?” He asked. “I broke my foot yesterday,” I explained. “It should be healed by now,” he said matter-of-factly. I felt a small prickle of shame. “I heal at a human speed because I’m wolf-less,” I mumbled.

“That’s tough!” Exclaimed Gregory. “You gotta watch her like a hawk to make sure she doesn’t get injured again,” said Greg to Maze who nodded in agreement.

“I remember I would never let my wife out of my sight back when she was wolf-less,” said Greg thoughtfully.

Huh. “Your wife was wolf-less, meaning she’s no longer wolf-less?” I asked eagerly.

“Yeah, she was wolf-less when I met her around age twenty-one. After I marked her, she shifted,” said Gregory plainly, his mouth full of cupcake.

I wondered if that could happen to me. Could I shift once I had been marked? Perhaps, I needed another wolf to bring out the wolf in me. I did not want to get my hopes up. I looked carefully at Maze’s expression. His expression was unfathomable, I did not want him getting his hopes up either. I had a moment of dread where I wondered if Maze was only trying to win me, thinking I would eventually develop some lupine powers. I remembered his Gamma, Slogan, thinking I must have power hidden somewhere as I was fated to two alphas. My heart hurt. What if Maze did not care about me? I had been so quick to forgive him, to believe him, to move on from the rejection. What if I had let him in too hastily?

Maze’s POV

My little Princess Friday had a troubled expression on her face. I wondered if her foot was in a lot of pain. I massaged her shoulders and kissed her cheeks. She relaxed a little. I wished there was something! could do to get Friday to heal faster. I hated the idea of her being in pain everyday for six weeks. I wished I could lend her some of my alpha powers somehow. I ran my fingers absentmindedly through her tousled waves. Greg claimed that marking his wolf-less mate had brought out her wolf. I wondered if I could do

that for Friday. In a weird way, I did not actually want Friday to have a wolf anymore. The lupine life was too rough for her. She was so dedicate. I did not want her near a battlefield ever no matter what the circumstances were.

Friday seemed content to just eat cupcakes for lunch but I encouraged her to have some savoury food at the hotel restaurant. After that, we returned to the pack house. Astrid, Beta Fang's mate, stopped us on the Beta floor. Her wardrobe consisted entirely of outfits that resembled the one I had confiscated from her in her skimpy outfit that day. Astrid made my eyes burn. She had no business dressing like this. I sighed when she came over, preparing myself for some bullshit that Fang had probably put her up to.

"Friday!!! Fancy seeing you here at the pack house?" She said incredulously. I narrowed my eyes at her.

"She lives here now. We're in the middle of the challenge, remember? You dressed Friday up for the opening ceremony yourself," I reminded her.

Fang had found someone just as cringe-worthy and fake as him to be with.

"Oh, yeah, I totally forgot about that," said Astrid absentmindedly. "Anyhoo I was wondering if Friday and I could have a little chat. A little girl time."

Astrid winked at me. I stared blankly at her. "No," I said. "Maze!" Protested Friday. She was in my arms. I had refused to let her use crutches on the stairs. "I said no," I reiterated and carried Friday to the Alpha floor.

I put her down on her bed. She folded her arms, clearly cross with me. I ignored her angry expression, focusing my attention on her feet. I put the left foot which was in the cast on a pillow to keep it elevated. I took the other foot in both of my hands and began massaging it. Friday relaxed at my touch. I kissed the sole of her foot.

Friday motioned for me to come closer. I did and we were soon breathless from kissing. I planted kisses down her neck and she kissed across my jawline all the way to my ear. She rubbed the bulge in my pants and I growled instinctively, my eyes darkening. For a split second, I thought I had seen Friday's eyes darken too. I looked at them closely. They were large and a warm brown just like always. This was why! Stayed away from sugar. It made people unstable.

"Are you ok?" Asked Friday, looking at me with concern.

"Am Tok?" I asked incredulously looking at her cast.

She giggled and squeezed the large bulge in my pants again making me groan. She nuzzled me and kissed the tip of my nose.

Fang's POV I was livid. Maze had said no to Astrid spending time with Friday out right. "Why not?" I snarled. Astrid shrugged her shoulders. "Well, what reason did he give?" I asked. "None, Fang. He just said no," Astrid said, biting her lip. "So you didn't ask him?" I growled. "No," she said softly. "He's the Alpha." "Well, I'm your mate and the Beta. Go ask him why not!" I ordered. Astrid sighed. "Right now," I added.

She flinched and walked out of our bedroom. I felt a little guilty for being harsh with Astrid but she barely even tried to do what I had asked of her.

Maze's POV

Friday was kneeling on the bed and straddling my face. Her scent overwhelmed me. I kissed her folds. She was so wet already. I licked her eagerly and she squealed. I chuckled at that and the vibration of my laughter made her squirm. She was stretching over me and unbuckling my pants. I hissed when she took ass ana she squealed again. Berore Friday couia take me into ner mouth, there was a KNOCK on the door.

If that was Fang, I was going to kill him.

Friday was still in her dress. I helped her put on her underwear and then I buckled my pants. I opened the door to reveal a frightened looking Astrid. Ugh.

"Yes?" I said dryly. Friday's POV

Astrid was at the door. I was annoyed about being interrupted but Maze's tone reminded me of something. I used to be so nervous to talk to him. He had that way about him. I felt a little sorry for Astrid even though she had never exactly felt sorry for me. Why was I like this? I sighed.

"Astrid," I said softly. "Are you ok?"

"Yes," she said quickly. "I just really wanted some girl time and I know Alpha Maze is not ok with it and that's totally fine but I was wondering if he might..."

She was rambling. Maze cut her off. "I already said no," he practically snarled. "Maze, stop it!" I said sharply, surprising myself and Astrid alike. Maze flinched.

I bit my lip, expecting him to be furious with me. Astrid was looking at me like I was crazy for ordering around the Alpha. She had a point. Alphas could not be ordered not even by other Alphas. They could only do what they chose.

"If you want to spend time with Astrid, it'll be under my supervision," Maze said exasperatedly.

Whoa. Maze had just changed his mind because of me. I smiled. Maze returned the smile. He came over and kissed me gently. My heart felt very full.

"Well, close the door, please, Astrid," said Maze.

Astrid quickly obeyed and came over. She sat in one of the chairs near the bed. What were Astrid and I even going to talk about?

The Challenge Two Alphas, One Girl Chapter 27

Chapter 27: Lady-in-waiting

Friday's POV

Astrid was fidgeting nervously. She crossed her legs and then uncrossed them. Maze sat next to me on the bed with his arms folded. He kissed my would-be marking spot suddenly. It was nice of him to allow Astrid to take up some of his day. Thaddeus had already helped me get dressed this morning instead of Maze and he had kept his cool for the most part. Had Maze always been decent or was he becoming that way? I had never really believed that people could change. I always thought they just revealed who they already were, good and bad, as time went along.

"How are you feeling?" Asked Astrid, shakily pointing towards my cast as though she could catch "broken foot" from me. She was one of those werewolves who were really uncomfortable with me being wolf-less. I guessed it must have seemed unnatural to them.

"I feel ok. It hurts but the painkillers work really well," I said, giggling. Maze laughed, catching my eye. I knew we were both thinking of my recent singing career. Maze told me he made up a new song every time the pain killer hit.

Astrid laughed awkwardly.

"Honestly, to be frank," she began, recovering some of her usual spun kiness, "I wanted to offer my services."

"Ok..." I said, prompting her to continue. "Yeah, I dressed you up for the opening ceremony, remember?" She said. I nodded. "You were the one who didn't remember," Maze said indignantly. I elbowed him.

"So, I can do that for the closing ceremony and your crowning as Luna, your wedding, anything important to you. Even just a regular date. You're in that cast so getting dressed must be difficult. It's not appropriate to let Alpha Maze or Alpha Thaddeus dress you while they're both still competing for you. Why not have a lady in waiting?" She said.

I smiled slightly. Maze and Thaddeus did not seem to care much for what was appropriate or not. I knew they did not want to see me in any pain but were still excited at the prospect of having to "dress"

I could see Maze frowning.

"It would be nice to have a lady in waiting," I said. "It would be," Maze said slowly. "But as I said before, all visits will be supervised by me." "What about on Thaddeus' days?" I asked innocently.

"Thaddeus will supervise lady-in-waiting visits on his day," Maze said, flashing me a warning look not to disagree with him anymore.

I was feeling pretty bold or the pain killers were just that intense.

"I bet Thaddeus will agree with me and let me have unsupervised visits on his days," I said smugly, instantly regretting it when Maze flinched.

Tremembered how difficult it must be for them. One of them would lose their mate. I had almost lost Maze. The only thing that remedied it was meeting another mate, Thaddeus, and Maze coming back.

Maze smiled suddenly.

"Actually, let's ask Thaddeus right now," said Maze smugly.

There was a knock on the door. "It's open," said Maze.

Thaddeus entered. Tinhaled sharply. Thaddeus winked at me. He came to sit on the other side of the bed. I was between the two alphas. Their body heat and scents were so overpowering. I fought all of my dirty thoughts.

"Thaddeus?" I said sweetly.

"Yes, Luna," Thaddeus said, squeezing my hand.

"Can Astrid be my lady in waiting and help me get dressed as my foot is broken?" I asked, my eyes wide.

"Absolutely, as long as someone else is there with you too," Thaddeus said.

"So you're gonna supervise me on all your days?" I asked indignantly. Maze was grinning. "No," said Thaddeus. Maze's face fell.

"Sometimes, I might let Theo supervise instead if something comes up when we get to Berryndale. I have more responsibilities back there," Thaddeus said.

Maze's grin returned. "Actually, in Berryndale, Theo's mate can be your lady in waiting," Thaddeus offered. "But Fang and I will be there too?" Astrid added.

"Yeah, my Beta is expected to come and he can bring you," said Maze. "So Friday will have two ladies in waiting plus supervision as deemed appropriate by both Alphas."

I glared at Maze and Thaddeus. "That's great. Tomorrow morning at six?" Asked Astrid. "Seven," I said, smiling.

"Knock on my door before you go to Friday so we can go together," added Thaddeus. He made all his orders sound like suggestions but something about his alpha aura was so powerful you knew that they were not suggestions and you would not dare to disobey.

Astrid nodded fervently. "Yes, Alpha Thaddeus. Thank you, Alpha Maze." She left, shutting the door on me and my two traitorous Alphas.

"So are you bros now?" I asked. The two Alphas chuckled. "Why don't you marry each other, huh?" I asked They laughed even harder.

"Remember when she was as quiet as a little mouse?" Said Thaddeus. "How fierce you've grown my little lioness. I'm proud of you."

Maze nodded. "Every werewolf in the world fears Thaddeus and me except for Friday even in a cast and a night gown."

I snorted. I liked them being civil with each other. "I'm sleepy now," I announced.

"Time for bed, beautiful," said Maze. "Although, it's not like you need beauty sleep," Thaddeus added, winking. I giggled. "Let's go!" I demanded playfully, snapping my fingers. "You're the boss," said Thaddeus opening the door for Maze to wheel me back to my room. "Yes, Alpha Friday," said Maze chucking. It was already minutes to midnight.

The Challenge Two Alphas, One Girl Chapter 28

Chapter 28: Alphas of Art

Fang's POV

Finally, Astrid had some good news. She was going to be Fridays's lady-in-waiting to help her get dressed while in her cast. The only problem was it had to be supervised. I sighed. It was a start. I gave Astrid a nod of approval. She tried to kiss me but I dodged it. I saw a flash of hurt in her eyes. Astrid went to bed. I knew she was sad because we had grown distant over these past few weeks.

I was consumed with this plan to safeguard my family's future. If Maze was really devastated over Friday after my plan, maybe he would even step down and I could be Alpha!

Thaddeus' POV Astrid knocked on my door at seven o'clock as previously discussed. "Good morning, Astrid," I said brightly.

We went to Friday's room and I unlocked the door. Maze had given me the key. He was actually being helpful. I found Friday already sitting up in bed, waiting patiently. She was so cute! Astrid helped her shower then she picked out her outfit and did her hair and makeup. Friday looked even more beautiful than usual in a short floral navy blue dress, eyeliner and lipstick. Astrid was so good at doing everyone else's makeup and picking out their clothes. She should do this for a living and hire someone else to choose her

clothes and makeup. Friday drank her morning coffee and ate a cream cheese bagel while getting ready. I decided to take my coffee as sweet and milky as my Luna's for a change. I ate sausages and eegs with a plain bagel.

When Astrid was done, Friday thanked Astrid and I wheeled Friday away. "Where are we going?" Asked Friday, turning around to look at me.

"We're going to an art studio and gallery," I said. "Ohhh, fancy!" Exclaimed Friday. I chuckled as I lifted her into the passenger seat of the car. I got in the driver's side.

"Friday, I really am so sorry about your foot," I said earnestly. I did blame myself on some level. Horseback riding had been my date idea.

"Thaddeus!" Said Friday sternly. "This is not your fault. I rushed ahead of you on the horse. You even tried to stop me," she said, sighing.

"How are you feeling?" I asked. "Still in pain." "I feel ok. The painkillers work really well," Friday said brightly pulled into the parking lot of Alphas of Art, a studio and art gallery, I carried Friday inside, cradling her gently to me. Friday snuggled into me, sighing contentedly. Friday's POV

Even though I was in a cast, the female art gallery workers all seemed extremely jealous that I was being carried around by Thaddeus. Their jealousy made me feel both lucky and uncomfortable at the same time. I really was a lucky wolf-less she-wolf to have two Alphas vying for my affection. However, I could tell some she-wolves thought I was unworthy of such fine specimens being interested in me and that hurt.

Thaddeus had rented out a large private room in the studio. The walls were a bright vermilion and the wouia nave propady gave me a neaaaacne. Inaaaeeus naa newspapers spread all over the floor of the room. There were two blank canvases with balloons taped all over them. The balloons seemed to be filled with liquid.

"What's in the balloons? Paint?" I asked.

"Exactly," Thaddeus said, grinning. I would have never imagined Thaddeus being interested in the arts. He was so masculine. Maybe it was ignorant of me but I could not picture him painting and sketching and writing poetry about his feelings.

He handed me a container to put on my lap. It was filled with darts. I grinned.

“We’re splash painting! You just throw the darts at the balloon you want to pop. The colour of the balloon corresponds to the colour of the paint so you pop as many or as little as you want and in the order that you want,” Thaddeus explained.

Thaddeus demonstrated, throwing a dart at a red balloon. The balloon popped allowing red paint to splatter and run down the canvas. He threw the next dart at a white balloon near the popped red one. The white paint mixed partially with the red so there were white, red and pink areas. I threw my first dart at a big

blue balloon. It just bounced off, not popping at all. I groaned.

“You have to use a tad bit more force, Baby,” said Thaddeus, chuckling.

I tried again, throwing the dart as hard as I could. It missed the blue balloon I wanted and popped a red one nearby. I aimed for the blue again. Success! I cheered and Thaddeus high-fived me. I watched as the blue paint splattered over the red to make some purple areas. I began throwing darts at random. Thaddeus did too. The room was filled with the sounds of popping balloons and wet squelching noises from splattering paint. My painting actually looked cool. Thaddeus’ splash painting was cool too. We got to keep them.

The next activity was pot making which I had seen people do in a romantic movie before. Thaddeus had me sit between his legs so he could guide my hands to form the clay pot. Thaddeus had his huge hands over mine as we shaped the spinning clay. He kissed my would-be marking spot and then trailed kisses down my neck and across my shoulder. He nipped playfully at my shoulder. I squealed. I felt sleepy because of my medications. I yawned. I turned around and gently pressed my lips against Thaddeus’ lips. I kissed his cheek, jaw and his neck. I sucked on his marking spot. He groaned and shivered. I giggled. Thaddeus smirked.

“I love you, Thaddeus,” I whispered. “I love you, Friday,” Thaddeus said, nuzzling me.

The pot he helped me to make was tall and narrow in diameter like a vase. I would put flowers in it the next time he bought them for me. We put the pot to bake and harden in the kiln.

Thaddeus’ POV

I wheeled Friday around the gallery part of the building, showing her the recent art exhibition. I had another surprise for her. We met with Frederick Mackie, the most celebrated werewolf Artist in the art world right now. He was a peculiar guy as was to be expected. He had his hair completely shaved off except for a tuft of red hair to the left. He wore tiny round spectacles with translucent blue frames. He had one blue eye and one green eye and a very bushy red beard. His suit was white and khaki pinstripe. Friday was thrilled to meet him. She clapped when she saw him.

"I did a project on him in Visual Arts class in high school," she whispered to me. "I love your watercolour paintings, Mr Mackie," she said. "Thank you, Luna! I hope you'll love this one I'm about to unveil. It's acrylic though," Fred said. The painting was covered with a white sheet. Frea gripped the white fabric and ripped it on or in the canvas to reveal his masterpiece.

Friday's POV

One day I was meeting the most famous chef and the next day I was meeting the most famous artist. Broken foot or not, I was having a great time. I wished I could have champagne though like the other guests at the gallery but I could not have alcohol with the painkillers I was on. Mackie paused for dramatic effect, gripping the white fabric covering his masterpiece teasingly. He had a glint in his eyes. He swished the fabric off of his painting with a flourish of his hand. I gasped.

The painting was of a young woman with golden skin, brown eye and wavy long hair riding on the back of a brown wolf with piercing blue eyes. They were in a lush green forest. It was me and Thaddeus in his wolf form. I smiled. It was beautiful. The crowd cheered. Mr Mackie handed the framed piece to me. I held it carefully.

"Thaddeus had that commissioned for you," Mackie said, winking.

I beamed, my eyes glistening. Thaddeus kissed me. His lips were so soft and warm. I actually requested junk food for lunch from Thaddeus. I had not had it in so long. Thaddeus got everything imaginable from a couple drive-throughs and we took it back to the pack house. There was pizza, breadsticks, buffalo wings, fried chicken, fries, quesadillas, fajitas, wontons, mini spring rolls and egg rolls.

I was stuffed in a matter of minutes.

"Satisfied, Baby?" Said Thaddeus.

"Not quite," I said. Thaddeus frowned. I tugged on his sleeve, pulling him towards me. A wide grin replaced his frown as he leant in. I kissed him eagerly, relishing his taste and smell. We lay on my bed under the covers and softly kissed and caressed each other. There was no sense of urgency this time and I liked that. I removed his shirt to reveal his gorgeous muscles. I kissed his arms and hands. I kissed his chest and planted kisses all over his abs which made him groan. I could see his huge member straining against the denim of his jeans. I unzipped his jeans and he pulled them off. I rubbed the bulge through his boxers while he explored my mouth with his tongue. I broke away from him, glancing at the painting of us he had put on the wall of my room. I smiled at it. I couldn't believe I owned a Mackie original and I was the subject of the piece! I wrapped my arms around Thaddeus. He kissed my forehead.

"Do you think your family will like me?" I wondered out loud.

"Of course," said Thaddeus. "They've been hoping I would meet my mate for a while now. They're were tired of me moping about." Thaddeus chuckled.

"I can't picture you moping," I said with a giggle. Thaddeus was always so jovial. "Trust me, I moped," he grumbled in his deep voice, pressing his forehead to mine. Maze's POV

Rather than mope around the pack house like I usually did on Thaddeus' days with Friday, I went to visit my family. They lived in an affluent and exclusive gated community in Marigold appropriately named Prestige Gardens. My chauffeur drove me past well-manicured lawns and sprawling mansions. We pulled up in front of my parent's house. I tipped the driver and told him to be back for me in an hour. The house was just as I remembered it, a towering grey brick building with flowering vines growing along its walls.

The butler, Willis, answered the door. He grinned at me and clapped me on the back.

"Are they out back?" I asked, sliding out of my blazer.

"Your mother is our back. Your father is in his office. He's very busy today and can't be disturbed," said Willis. The entrance room was spotless as always, the marble floors gleamed and every surface was immaculate. My mother gave the housekeepers hell. I found her on the patio out back with a few of her other glamorous house-wife friends. They squealed in delight when they saw me.

"Is this Maze? So big and handsome!" Said Mona Merry, my mother's best friend. She was a slender, brown-haired she-wolf who always wore designer shades even at nighttime. I bet she wore them even in her wolf-form. She had a periwinkle scarf tied around her hair that matched her dress. She extended her hand to me and I kissed it.

Martha Vaughn, a voluptuous blonde, with oversized lips that were clearly enhanced, pouted at me. "You never come to see up Mazey-poo. Your mother misses you and so do I," she said in a breathy voice.

Martha was about a decade younger than my mother and her other friends putting her in her early forties. I distinctly remember her hitting on me the moment I turned eighteen. She had a husband twenty years her senior and he was always away on business while she was constantly hiring a new pool boy or gardener. She was holding her white and black French poodles in her hands who were named Salt and Pepper respectively.

"He's busy! He's the new alpha! What do you expect?" Said Orla Faulte who had deep brown skin and high cheekbones with almond shaped eyes. She was tall and thin with her curly black hair in a large bun. I gave her and Martha hugs.

I kissed my mother on each cheek and handed her the bouquet of roses I had gotten her. Her three friends “awww”ed at that.

“You really should visit me more often Mazey Darling,” said my mother, frowning. “I will,” I promised, feeling guilty. “So where is that...er mate of yours?” Asked Mona. “She’s with the other Alpha,” I said, trying not to think about it. “Today is her day.”

“What a lucky, lucky girl she is. The two most handsome Alphas in the region fighting over her,” said Martha, pursing her full red lips.

I grumbled inwardly. I soothed myself thinking about tomorrow instead. I had an interesting idea of what to do with Friday and I was curious to see her reaction. I was always interested in her reactions. She was so unique, neither easily impressed nor difficult to please.

“Where’s Dad?” I asked, ensuring my tone was lighthearted. My mother stiffened. They had been fighting. I could tell just from her reaction to the question. Her friends glanced in random directions, seemingly all thinking about other things.

“He’s in his office,” my mother said, smiling in a way that did not reach her eyes. “He’s so busy these days,” my mother added.

“Doing what?” I could not help but ask. I was the Alpha now. Dad was retired.

My mother shrugged.

“So tell us about Wednesday!” Said Martha in her lilting sophisticated drawl.

“It’s Friday,” I corrected her. “She’s...beautiful, kind, smart, she loves animals, she’s really easy to talk to, she’s playful like a child almost...” I stopped myself. Listing things I liked about Friday was making it difficult to breathe. I fidgeted in my chair.

I wondered if I’d ever forgive myself for rejecting Friday. It was such a dumb move and I might have to pay for it for the rest of my life if she chose Thaddeus.

“You ok, Hun?” Asked Orla. up than with my father.

“I’m gonna say a quick hello to Dad,” I told Mom. She nodded.

I went up the winding staircase and down the hallway. My Dad’s office was all the way to the end. I pulled on the handle and found it locked. Normally, I would just knock but something made me go around. There was a seldom used second door into the room. It was technically a secret door but my father and I knew all the passageways in this manor. I went into the upstairs library and found the panel door that blended right into the wall. I pushed on it and walked into the office. My eyes widened and I inhaled sharply at the sight before me.

The Challenge Two Alphas, One Girl Chapter 29

Chapter 29: Maze's Moods and Musings

Friday's POV

I did not think I would ever get used to this feeling. It was so overwhelming. Thaddeus had his face pressed against the sensitive area between my thighs. He licked my p***y, parting its lips with his large tongue. His huge palms were pressed against my inner thighs. He moved his hands to envelope my waist when I began to squirm too much and he wanted to hold me in place. I squealed in delight as he took my entire vulva into his large hot mouth. He swirled his tongue around and sucked gently on my inner lips. He found my clit and traced patterns delicately on it with his tongue. I groaned loudly. He put his tongue inside me, darting it in and out rhythmically. My fingers tangled in his long silky hair. I was not sure if I was trying to pull him closer or push him away. The pleasure was unbearably intense. I was a little lightheaded. I moved against his face, rocking my hips. He groaned against me. The vibration made me tremble.

"Thaddeus," I whimpered.

"c*m for me, Friday," he commanded, his voice husky. I obeyed. Pleasure flowed through mein waves. All of my muscles stiffened, flexing and then all at once, they relaxed. I was limp and sleepy. I

sighed happily. Thaddeus kissed his way back up and found my mouth. I tasted myself on his lips. His beard was soaked. I blushed.

"You're so beautiful, Baby, just like this, you're perfect," he said, making a frame with his hands like he was a photographer shooting a model for a magazine ibit my lip. Thaddeus wrapped me up in the covers. I felt a strange lurch inside of me. I shot up, sitting upright suddenly, clutching the covers to my front.

"What's wrong, Baby?" Cooed Thaddeus.

Maze. Something is wrong with Maze. Istiffened. The voice in my head sounded like me but a more powerful version somehow.

I could not tell Thaddeus I was worried about Maze. He would be livid. He won't be mad. Maze and Thaddeus respect each other more than you realise.

The voice was creeping me out. I listened closely for a few minutes. It was gone. I sighed in relief but I decided to heed it's advice anyway.

"I think something is really wrong with Maze," I said sheepishly.

"Like what?" Asked Thaddeus.

"I don't know," I mumbled, feeling stupid for bringing it up. "I'll mind-link him since you're worried," Thaddeus said.

Maze had gone to Prestige Gardens today. I overheard Gamma Slogan talking about it. That was on the other side of Ambrosia entirely.

"He's supposedly really far away. The mind-link can reach so far?" I asked. "With Alphas, yeah. We have a really huge range," said Thaddeus.

Alphas have really huge everything, I thought to myself smirking.

Thaddeus' eyes went dark. I stared at him. I stroked his strong jawline and rubbed his lower lip with my thumb. All of his features were so handsome and manly. His eyes turned blue again as he came back to me.

"Is he ok?" I asked.

"No...he...well I think he wants to tell you himself," said Thaddeus.

Maze's POV

My eyes widened and I inhaled sharply at the sight before me. My father was sitting in his office chair with a woman straddling his lap, rocking against him in a tight embrace. They were both naked and locked

in a passionate kiss. I could not help it. A growl ripped through me at the indignity of it. My mother was home and right downstairs. Her friends were with her. Did any of them have any idea?

My growl caused them to break their kiss but the woman remained on his lap. He clutched her even more closely to him as though she were more precious than life itself. He grabbed a nearby shawl to cover her with. The woman looked mortified and my father simply looked annoyed. I stared at the woman. Why was she so incredibly familiar?

The obvious came back to me. This was Friday's Mom and I spent everyday with Friday staring at her and everyday without Friday thinking about her. Friday really resembled her mother. I wished I had not growled now. It was still unthinkable, their selfishness, but I had frightened Mrs Fenestra and she had that same wide-eyed look Friday got whenever she was upset. It was making me feel guilty. My wolf was confused, unsure if to hate this woman who dishonoured his mother or love her for her great resemblance to his mate.

"Maze, do you mind?" Asked my father dryly. I spluttered. "Do /mind? Me? Me!" I yelled.

Friday's mother bit her lip. "Alpha Maze, please, a little quieter," she pleaded in a stage whisper. "I know how upsetting this must be for you but we don't want anyone to come up here and make it even worse."

I calmed down a little. I shut the door.

"Um, try closing the door with you on the other side of it, son!" Said my father.

I ignored him and sat in a chair covering my face in my hands, totally exasperated. I heard a lot of shuffling as they got dressed. I felt a hand on my shoulder. It was soft and small. I looked up at her, willing myself to detest her. She smiled and she looked exactly like Friday only older. I groaned and sighed.

"Mrs Fenestra, how can you behave like this, think of my mother, think of Friday's father," I implored her.

She laughed sadly. "Trust me, Friday's father doesn't care. He only married me because he wanted sons to pass his Beta lineage onto."

"Is Friday his?" I asked suddenly, an unspeakable fear gripping me as I glanced at my father. My father rolled his eyes. "Of course she is, Alpha Maze," chuckled Mrs Fenestra. "You can't be fated to a relative, half or otherwise. Fate isn't crazy," my father said.

Relief washed over me. Friday and I looked nothing alike but I just wanted clarification for my peace of mind.

"And all of Friday's brothers?" I asked. "Mine and Friday's Dad," said Mrs Fenestra.

"You're an only child, don't worry," said my father. "Does Mom know you guys are up here?" I asked incredulously. "No," said my father. "Your mother and I hardly speak and we haven't shared a room since you were ten,"

"Why don't you just divorce then and marry Friday's mom?" I asked dryly.

"That would be a huge scandal," said my father. Of course, he was thinking of keeping up appearances.

"And then Friday would be your little step-sister," said Mrs Fenestra, raising her eyebrows. I felt nauseated. "Stupid idea, sorry," I said quickly. "Maybe we will one day," my father said offhandedly. "But you already knew all of this Maze."

He had suggested the truth at the awkward dinner with Friday and her family but seeing really was believing.

"He's just shocked, Dear, it's an upsetting thing," said Friday's mom, running her fingers through my father's hair..

"He's a grown man now, not a little boy. I refuse to coddle him," griped my father.

"Malachi! Stop it!" Said Friday's mom playfully smacking his arm. I had never seen my father allow anyone to talk to him like that. "You behave, ok?" she said grabbing his chin. He folded his arms and scowled like a petulant child.

"Friday isn't here, is she?" Whispered Mrs Fenestra. I shook my head. She gave a sigh of relief. Maze? A deep voice I did not recognise at first called. I tried to place the voice amidst all my confusion.

Thaddeus? I said. Alarm bells went off in my head. Thaddeus had literally never mind-linked me before. I had mind-linked him once about Friday. What's wrong? Where's Friday? Is she all right? What happened?

My heart raced and my breath hitched in my throat. She had just broken her foot. Had she fallen and gotten injured worse?

Relax! She's fine! She's the one who asked me to check on you. She said she felt something was wrong with you, Thaddeus explained.

My little wolf-less Friday had sensed my emotions correctly from miles away. That did not add up. Even an Alpha would struggle with that unless directly using a mind-link.

I...she's right...I was upset...but I'll be fine, Trambled. Something occurred to me. But why do you care, Thaddeus? It's your day.

Because Friday cares and I care about Friday, said the Alpha.

I thought about that and realised he was right. Something bad happening to Thaddeus would not make me happy either because it would devastate Friday and her happiness was my happiness. This put

us both in a weird predicament. I pushed those thoughts away.

I did not want Friday to worry too much. She needed her strength to heal. It occurred to me that I had neglected to tell Friday's family anything. Friday always seemed to think none of them cared for her but

they should probably know.

"I have to get back to Friday. She's recovering from a horseback riding accident," I told them. Friday's mother gasped. My father paled. I had forgotten how much he liked little Friday.

"Is she all right?" Asked Friday's Mom. "Why didn't you tell us anything?" My father asked, disgruntled. because sne s wol-less. Sne proke ner root. Sne's in a cast. inen

sne'll need physiotherapy for a few weeks or months the orthopaedic doctor said," I explained.

My father nodded gravely. "She's a brave girl. Wolf-less and horseback riding. She doesn't let her delicate nature hold her back," my father said, sounding and looking impressed which was a sight to behold because nothing ever impressed him.

Mrs Fenestra was clutching her handkerchief.

"Mrs Fenestra?" I asked. This was going to be a difficult question but Friday deserved the truth. "It seems that Mr Fenestra and Friday's brothers especially Fang were really unkind to her growing up. How could you allow that?" I asked, narrowing my eyes a little.

I tried not to sound harsh. I knew how protective Alphas got with their mates and my father was already trying to pull Mrs Fenestra closer to him. She sighed.

"Her father always wanted boys. When I heard that Malachi was courting your mother, I was heartbroken. I wanted to be with someone who would marry me so I wouldn't waste my life pining away for my mate who rejected me," explained Friday's mother.

My father winced. "And I wanted to hurt him, my mate," she admitted. "So I married his Beta, but I ended up hurting myself and Friday in the process."

"How come you and Friday aren't close?" I asked outright.

"I think she assumes I share her father's sentiments but that's not the case," said Friday's mother.

"You put her out of the house for being wolf-less," I said, my anger rising. "You rejected her and banned her from the pack house for the same reason," said her mother.

I flinched. I remembered how little Friday's face fell when I rejected her on that porch. I had hurt her. I had broken her heart. Was she going to break mine at the end of this challenge and ride off into the sunset with Thaddeus? That was a strong possibility. We were growing closer and closer but I knew her and Thaddeus must have a strong bond also.

"I didn't want to put my only daughter out but Fang and Farris were terrible to her. She was better off without them. She had the cottage from my mother to live in. I asked Fang to always get food from the pack house for her," she said.

I snorted. He definitely did not do that. Friday's mother paused. "Sorry," I said. "But Fang did not help feed Friday." Friday's mother squirmed uncomfortably. My father was listening, stroking his chin. "Poor girl," he commented. "Why didn't you ask me to organise the food for her?"

Friday's mother sighed. She actually had tears in her eyes. "But Fang told me he dropped stuff off every Friday...cause her name was Friday. He would even make that stupid joke about it."

I rolled my eyes. "Fang lied, Mrs Fenestra. I know he's your son. Sorry," I added. "Is he a good Beta to you?" My father asked. "Yeah," I admitted. "We're not close but he knows how to keep the pack house under control."

"It's Friday's Dad who engineered all this...negativity towards Friday from her brothers. He always called her the extra child. He never wanted a daughter," Friday's mother admitted

My father rubbed her shoulders. "And...I should've been stronger to protect Friday from all of that," she said, her eyes brimming with tears.

"Did you genuinely mind that Friday was wolf-less?" I asked. "No," said Friday's mom solemnly, a tear slipping down her cheek. "I should have been tougher. I

Friday's mother sobbed and my father put his arms around her.

"Don't cry, Mrs Fenestra," I beseeched her. She quieted a little, leaning on my father. He stroked her hair.

"It's a long way back to the heart of town and I have to get Felicity home before Farris is done with his poker game," said my father dryly.

"I have one more question...ok two more?" I admitted, "All right, Maze," said my father. Friday's mom nodded encouragingly. "Did the mate-bond ever fade at all after the rejection and getting new partners?"

"In my case, no," said my father, confirming what I was afraid of. I would never get over Friday if I did not end up with her. "Actually, the bond grew stronger the more time we spent apart. My wolf was going crazy. He wouldn't let me eat or sleep properly until he had his mate somehow."

That was what had begun to happen to me when I initially rejected Friday. I took a deep breath.

"Same with me," said Friday's mother. "Except my wolf wasn't angry at me as I didn't do the rejection. She was just mournful." My father flinched again and pulled Friday's mother even closer to him.

"Last one... how could you...stand to be with anyone else other than your mate when you already knew what...completion felt like?" I asked

My father sighed. "It's not as though the entire marriage with your mother was unenjoyable..." my father paused. He was trying to not offend me or insult my mother and to not hurt his mate all at the same time. "It was just more...carnal. When your mother and I were younger, that was easier to maintain than it is now. Young people are naturally more hedonistic."

"So you were attracted to mom but you didn't love her. With Mrs Fenestra there was love and attraction," I said more to myself than them but they nodded.

"I wanted to be around Malachi, somehow and I wanted to be a mom. Malachi did offer me children but they would be illegitimate and I didn't want that," Friday's mother said.

My jaw dropped. My father had wanted to have kids with his mistress of a mate. He was always so straight-laced. It just did not seem like him.

"Last one I swear..." I added. My father groaned. "How long did you manage to stay away from Friday's mom before you started...visiting her?" I asked.

I wanted an idea of how long would have resisted Friday's mate-pull had Thaddeus not come along and made the situation urgent.

"Four days," my father said simply. Four days? I would not have even lasted the week without Friday if I were anything like my father and though I hated to admit it, I was a lot like him.

"It was four days before I let her see me and we spent time together, but it was three days only till i had to see her again. I hid from her. I watched her from afar," he said

Friday's mother chuckled. "This has been enlightening," I announced.

I nodded at both of them and before I had even turned my back on them, they began kissing passionately again.

The Challenge Two Alphas, One Girl Chapter 30

Chapter 30: Fang and Friends

Thaddeus' POV

I was relieved to see Maze walk into the pack house that evening. Even Cat-ur-day was happy to see him. Friday would be calmer now that he was at home so he could have his mood swings and tantrums in the safety of the pack house. Maze looked sullen and withdrawn (well, more than usual) as he walked into the common living room. I was with my six comrades and Theo. Fang was missing again. Something weird was up with him. I would figure that out after I reassured Friday.

“Come on,” I said to Maze. He followed me up the stairs to the Alpha Floor.

Friday was in her room. I had already helped her bathe and change into her nightgown. When Friday officially became my Luna, there would be no nightgowns. The most comfortable way to sleep was commando. Friday smiled at Maze and me. I winked at her. We sat on either side of her.

“Thank you, Thaddeus, for checking on Maze,” she said sweetly. Maze was quiet. “What happened, Maze?” Asked Friday Maze was silent. “Please, tell me, Maze!” Friday pleaded. “She was really worried,” I said, disgruntled. “She deserves to know.” “I...” Maze paused, taking a deep breath. “I walked in on my father and your mother, Friday.”

Friday looked confused at first but then it dawned on her. She flushed.

“They were in a compromising position. All three of us had a serious conversation about it. My mother and her friends were right downstairs,” Maze explained.

Maze sighed. “I’m so sorry, Maze,” said Friday.

“Look on the bright side,” I said. “You’ll still get to be close to Friday. I’ll be her husband and you’ll be her step-brother.”

Maze glared at me. Friday playfully swatted my arm. I flashed her a hurt look. She kissed my cheek. Maze noticed out of the corner of his eye. She kissed his cheek too.

Friday’s POV

Thad started to notice a strange pattern. Every time I was around both Thaddeus and Maze, especially if I was in close proximity to both of them simultaneously, I felt a strange power within me. It was faint but it was there and the combined alpha auras seemed to trigger it. I had not told anyone about this yet, not even Maze or Thaddeus. I sighed happily, breathing in both of my mates scents.

I was so relieved Maze was ok. He was emotionally shaken up but nothing terrible had befallen him. I wished I could snuggle up, sandwiched between the two alphas and fall asleep. I yawned.

“You’re sleepy. Time for bed,” Maze said sternly. His no-nonsense tone reminded me of his spankings. I smiled slyly.

“Good night, little Luna,” said Thaddeus.

I wanted to kiss them both on the mouth but they might hate that. So, I leant forwards a little and pointed to my cheeks. They realised what I wanted and broke into smiles. They both leant down and kissed me on my cheeks.

Now that's more like it, said the strong voice, the inner me, the powerful me. "Good night Alphas," I said.

"She doesn't listen, this one," scolded Thaddeus.

I giggled. The Alphas caught me way off guard. Thaddeus grabbed me and pushed me gently down on the bed and started tickling me. I squealed. Maze came over and I thought he would make Thaddeus stop because it was childish but he started tickling me too. I shrieked and they laughed, tickling my sides and under my arms and my foot that was not in the cast. It was playful and more friendly than erotic but they were both my mates so my body started to react. I started to get wet down there and tingles spread all the way through me.

"I surrender!" I declared. I did not have a white flag so I raised my white cast into the air.

The Alphas chuckled. Suddenly they stopped laughing. I felt a little strange. Today has been a rollercoaster ride of emotions tapping into Maze's energy. I had also had an intense sensory experience with Thaddeus. I groaned. Maze stiffened. His breathing became shallow. Thaddeus' eyes darkened. There was a heat in my lower belly. I hugged myself tightly, curling up, bringing my knees closer to my chest. I was tremulous. What was happening to me?

Fang's POV

The manor was ostentatiously decorated. Statues, oil paintings and ornaments lined the walls. The lighting was so dim. The place had a vacant feel to it despite being filled with artefacts and ornate furniture. Ugh, vampires. They made every house look like a cross between an art museum and an abandoned church. There was never anything normal like a television or a toaster or something. I followed what's-her-face up a winding staircase. I was thankful the place seemed empty. I could not have even a whisper of this getting back to the Marigold pack house. Maze had his face so far up Friday's ass these days, he did not even notice his Beta was barely around. I noticed that he was even trying to get along with Thaddeus. Was my sister a witch or something? Maybe she was a changeling baby and that's why she never shifted? Whatever she was, she had those two alphas going crazy over her.

Katrina Van der Windt! That was her name. She paused just outside a set of black double doors with door knockers in the mouth of onyx gargoyles. She turned to look at me. She was in a leather jumpsuit with a plunging neckline that ended just below her navel. What else would a vampire wear?

"This is your last chance to turn back," she whispered, her usually cold eyes softening. I took a deep breath. It was too late now. "Let's go," I said. She nodded.

We entered a high-ceilinged study with a huge fireplace. A man in a high-backed chair faced away from us. All I could see of him was a taloned pale hand clutching a cane

with a bat carved on the handle. I knew from his smell that he was a high-ranking vampire, old and powerful. The smell burned my nose. I held my breath every now and then.

“Father,” Katrina said.

The man turned around. His face was sharp and angular. He was deathly pale with light grey eyes. He had platinum blond hair. He grinned with his fangs on display.

“Beta Fang,” he said softly. “Of Marigold, welcome.” He had a deep voice and he spoke very slowly in an accent I could not quite place.

“Thank you, Lord Ezekiel,” I said.

“Oh please, please, no, there’s no need for formalities,” drawled Ezekiel dramatically. “We are dear friends now, brothers even, family.” He hissed that last word, drawing it out.

I heard a snort of laughter. I looked across the room. A young man had just entered. I had not heard him come in. He was incredibly stealthy to be able to sneak up on a Beta in his prime. The young man was from Nim, a wisluiness. I knew that vampires were much more prone to melancholy than werewolves but he reminded me of those mournful ones who had lost their mates, hollow and tired. His hair was a darker shade of blond than the other two vampires, almost a warm golden colour. He locked eyes with me. I could not read his expression.

“Is there a problem, Ezra?” Asked Ezekiel. Lord Ezekiel Victor Van Der Windt was sometimes referred to as the Vampire King. The Vampires had no official leader but he was the eldest and most powerful vampire in one of the largest remaining covens. Many vampires had left coven life to live as individuals among humans, witches and wizards and even werewolves. This was because vampire coven life was notoriously restrictive. The Vampire Council was tyrannical, deciding everything from dress codes to curfews to arranged marriages. Young vampires found it oppressive and repressive. They fled in droves over the years but Ezekiel Victor Van Der Windt had kept his coven in tact. Katrina was his daughter by marriage and Ezra was his biological son and the technical heir to the family fortune and legacy. Naturally, people often called him the Vampire Prince.

“Yes, brother, dear, is there a problem?” Katrina repeated.

Katrina apparently resembled her mother, Ezekiel’s late second wife Sonia, greatly. Sonia had mysteriously disappeared when Katrina was but three. She was presumed dead. Ezekiel’s first late wife Eleanor had also mysteriously disappeared in the past when her son Ezra was a little boy. Ezekiel did not take a third wife.

“Yes.” Hissed Ezra to my surprise. “Speak it,” said Ezekiel.

“How can we trust someone who would sell out his own family?” spat Ezra. “Who hands over their little sister to an arch nemesis over a stupid job?”

A growl ripped through me before I could stifle it. Being Beta was my birthright. It was not some stupid job. Vampires had no understanding of werewolf life and pack issues. I was not about to let this spoilt punk push me around. He looked like he could be snapped in half by a half-trained warrior.

“Peace, Ezra,” said Ezekiel, holding a palm up. “Fang has his reasons and his reasons do not matter to me. It is a mutually beneficial relationship. Ahhh! Mutualism, the greatest form of symbiosis.”

The Vampire King went on a tangent that literally no one myself and Ezra included cared about.

“Symbiosis refers to a relationship where two different creatures interact closely. There are three kinds of symbiosis,” said Ezekiel, holding up three fingers with talons that were long and sharpened to a thin point.

“Parasitism, where one creature, the parasite, benefits and the other creature, the host, is harmed,” said the Vampire King.

Ezra rolled his eyes and slumped into an empty chair near the fireplace putting his head in his hands and groaning. I politely pretended to be interested. I did not come here for a biology class but if Ezekiel was going to fix my problems after Science 101 than so be it.

“Commensalism, where one creature benefits and the other does not benefit but is not harmed!” Said Ezekiel with a flourish of his hand.

Ezra mimicked the flourish. “Mutualism, where both creatures benefit,” said Ezekiel, licking his thin lips. “That’s you and me.” Ok, sure, whatever. “Yes, we’ll both benefit. Very interesting, Ezekiel.” I said, nodding. “Yes, father,” agreed Katrina softly, nodding encouragingly. Ezra regarded the three of us with a disgusted look. He got up and exited the room through a side door. My step-brother was arrogant.

“Are you ready to mutually benefit, Fang, because I sure am?” Said Ezekiel, extending a spidery hand.

Katrina smiled pointedly at me. I stepped forward and shook the vampire’s ice-cold hand.