

The Challenge Two Alphas, One Girl Chapter 56

Chapter 56: Ladies' Luncheon

Elizabeth's POV

That w***e was here. Felicity sat directly across from me at the table next to my Mazey with Friday on Mazey's other side so that Mazey was between an old w***e and a new one. Malachi sat on Felicity's other side so that my arch nemesis and husband's long-time mistress got to sit between said ex-husband and my only son as though she were replacing me. I felt a strong, warm hand enclose my left hand which had been resting on the table. Mazey was stretching across the table to hold it reminding me of when he was little. He was too precious. I calmed a little. My other hand was in Cody's rough palms. Cody was directly across from Malachi. The silence was deafening.

"How is everyone?" Boomed Thaddeus from Friday's other side. Why was she always forcing those two to hang out together? I really liked Thaddeus but where was the competitive aspect of this challenge if all three were always together? Thaddeus' parents were next to me with True sitting on my left. Fang and Astrid were also on that side of the table and Theo was on Thaddeus' right with Ida. The two pairs of twins were next to them: Timothy, Titus, Fallon and Fargo. It was a reunion of sorts.

"I'm well, thank you Thaddeus," I said. Cody nodded. "Yes, I'm fine," said Felicity brightly. "Never been better," said Malachi, grinning. Ugh.

I noticed his neck was marked and stiffened. Felicity also bore his mark, the silvery quality of it shimmered catching the sunlight and to think, I'd hesitated to let Cody mark me.

"How're you doing, Elizabeth?" Asked Malachi hesitantly.

"Great," I said stiffly, feeling annoyed. I knew he was wondering why I had not come to see him at all since the first day at the hospital. I wasn't about to show my face there again when he'd used his Alpha voice to command me to stop fighting Felicity, thus advertising that I wasn't his

true Luna. I felt a small pang of guilt though. He had been shot and we had been married for twenty-five years and we did have Mazey together but he was alive, wasn't he? No harm done.

"And who is this?" Asked Felicity, always trying to be friendly. She was looking at Cody, smiling.

"Cody," said Cody, shaking her hand. "Lizzie's old friend." I had not told him what to say yet. I had just said I wanted to take things slowly.

Malachi did not extend his hand to shake Cody's. "Malachi, this is Cody," I said pointedly so he would acknowledge him.

"Cody and I know each other," he said as though that were obvious. I bristled. I was shocked he remembered Cody. Well Cody did tell Malachi's Dad to 'f**k off' so he must have made an impression.

"This is so great, wow," said Friday, in a tone that suggested anything but that. I almost snorted with laughter but I stifled it. I wasn't about to laugh at Friday's comments. I knew I was being a tad unfair. She was a different person than her mother but she had the same floozy nature I was sure. I had seen a picture

of Friday at the cat cafe in the Marigold newspapers where she was clad in Maze's blazers. I recognised all of Maze's blazers anywhere as they were usually monogrammed. Whatever she had on underneath his blazer was so short it barely registered as a built and she went out like that and took a photo for the papers. We were all fortunate she actually wore a dress below the knee today.

Friday's POV Iant, i aran t necessary congone my mothers and maze s latner saltair either. It literally took wny lainers sanity although he was always near the edge anyway, being such a raging alcoholic. I was happy for them though, all of them. Malachi and my Mom and Elizabeth and Cody. Elizabeth had not officially introduced him as her mate but I could sense it. It was clearly demonstrated in the way they acted together. There was an easiness, a fluidity. Finding your true mate was a beautiful thing. I would never begrudge anyone that. glanced at my handsome Maze. I still felt a pang when I thought of how I'd almost lost him, how he'd rejected me at first, I squeezed his thigh under the table and he smirked a little bit. I squeezed Thaddeus' thigh, dragging my nails up his inner through the fabric of his trousers. Thaddeus quickly retaliated, slipping his hand under my dress, making me stifle a squeal as he pinched my upper inner thigh. I glared at him playfully and he winked,

"Malachi," said Cody, making everyone freeze at the casual, offhanded way he addressed him when they clearly were not friends in the slightest. Cody was a brave one, I liked him. "How're you feeling?"

"I feel good as new," said Malachi, nodding. My mom patted his arm. Cody's POV

I plastered a grin on my face. There were times when I wished I had shot that guy myself but ultimately I was happy for him and Felicity, Felicity was rejected for basically the same core reason that I had dealt with. Malachi and Elizabeth and their family being snobby, looking down on Felicity for being a rogue and looking down on me as one of the servants, the groundkeeper's son. Sheer aristocracy had kept four true mates apart and sent a once decent man spiralling down into alcoholism and even attempted murder.

I did not condone what Farris did not one bit but my heart went out to him. I could understand the complexity of his grief feeling that the woman he loved had run off to live happily ever after with another, more powerful man and the same man too. Malachi. That was how I felt when I saw her in her wedding dress and Farris possibly felt the same panic. The panic that had led me to flee Marigold and head to the neighbouring Berryndale. Farris had fled Marigold for Berryndale also, but he had shot the former Marigold

alpha for sleeping with his wife first. I sighed. Farris was up a s**t creek with no paddle as my father would say and so was I for housing him. I did not have any serious grievance left towards Malachi. I had even had to talk Farris out of showing up here today with a gun. I really hoped that had been the rum talking. He just drank nonstop, going through my bar at an alarming rate. I had no idea that he even knew I existed until he showed up.

I awoke with a start. There were sirens and flashing lights. Commotion in the street outside my ranch house. They were searching for a prisoner. A prisoner! In this quiet ranch! I ran downstairs and peaked outside. There were police vehicles and a helicopter overhead. I heard a rustling coming from the kitchen. I stealthily tiptoed towards the sound.

"Look, please don't make any loud noises," said a voice in the darkness.

Being a werewolf, I could make out his features easily. Dark hair and dark eyes. Olive skin. Tall. Lean but muscled. About my age. I had seen his photo before! The former Beta, Farris Fenestra, wanted for shooting his former Alpha Malachi Mason. Malachi Mason, the man who had married Elizabeth, my mate, the woman I was in love with despite hardly knowing her.

"I know who you are," / said with my palms up.

"I'm not gonna shoot you," spat Farris, putting his gun down on the table. He was sitting calmly at the breakfast table as though we were old friends. We did have a surprising link.

"Just don't sell me out, that's all," he said. "How did you even know I existed," I said.

He smirked. "Malachi made me keep tabs on you near the beginning of his marriage. He was worried you would return and steal his heir-maker Elizabeth," said Farris with a sly smile.

I growled instinctively.

"Easy there," said Farris, putting his palms up. The sirens increased as a few other cars were added to the melee. Farris raised a finger to his lips to make a Shh sign. I nodded, putting my palms down. He dropped his hands too.

“Look, I’m not some deranged killer. I just need to lie low for a bit. I made a big, messed-up, crazy mistake,” said Farris, sighing.

I sighed too. I could be put to death also for this, aiding and abetting an attempted murderer of the former alpha.

“I need a week,” Farris said. “Three days!” I insisted as the sirens faded in the distance. “I’ll take whatever you’re offering,” mused Farris, rubbing his chin. “No more...gun-sliding,” I said, unable to think of the word I wanted to use.

Farris burst into laughter.

End of flashback

It had been longer than three days and Farris was still hiding out at my ranch. I could not bring Elizabeth there. I had almost thrown Farris out when he admitted he had hesitated a bit after shooting Malachi, thinking of shooting Elizabeth too as she were a witness. I would have killed him if he had. Thankfully, Lizzie was alive and well and hanging nervously off my arm. Malachi seemed less prick-like than his Dad and Maze seemed almost cool so the prick genes were fading and perhaps, Maze had lucked out and gotten some of his Mom’s personality. Farris was volatile when drunk though. I was scared of him flying off the handle. I took his loaded gun and locked it up. I had locked up the liquor cabinet but he just broke back in. The gun he did not even attempt to look for, but the liquor, he threw a fit over not having access to it. The man needed alcoholics anonymous like ten years ago but it was never too late. I went through a dark time drinking daily when I had just lost Lizzie and moved away. I got cleaned up less than a year after though.

I kept looking over my shoulder, terrified I’d see Farris blazing in with a firearm, firing warning shots in the air. In all fairness, Felicity was Malachi’s real mate so they did belong together just like Lizzie and me. Farris should scour the werewolf towns for his truly intended. The colder the revenge the more likely it was to leave frost bite even on the avenger. Revenge was a dish best not served at all.

Felicity’s POV

Despite never being devoid of her usual icy demeanour when it came to me, I was honestly happy for Elizabeth. I had yearned for my mate for years though I did have contact with him. I could only imagine how horrible it must have been to be totally cut off from one’s mate. Then again, my past as a rogue meant I had an extremely strong connection to my wolf, which was why I was always shocked when my little Friday could not connect to hers at all at first. My wolf and I were like one. What the she-wolf wanted so did I and what the she-wolf refrained from I had no interest in.

Malachi kept nudging me mentally and mind-linking about how “sketchy” Cody was. They had some old beef. I thought he was being paranoid. I for one was grateful he kept

“Lizzie” from trying to punch me in the face again at my daughter’s luncheon. I peaked at Friday who was already peaking at me. We locked

eyes and both giggled and smiled. Malachi smiled, always noticing how similar we were. I saw Maze smiling too. Thaddeus was frowning at Cody, his nose twitching for some strange reason like he smelled something odd. Fang was frowning at him too.

Elizabeth’s POV

I was about to officially tell everyone that Cody and I were mates when I noticed Thaddeus and Fang staring at Cody. I looked at him, not picking up on anything odd. Before I could say anything, Astrid spoke so loudly that the whole long table fell silent to listen to her grand announcement.

“I want to take this time, to tell Malachi, Felicity, Elizabeth, Timbre and True, that I’m pregnant and well, Uncle Thaddeus and Maze know already. But the great-aunts and great-uncles are just finding out!” She said.

Everyone cheered. I was thrilled to see honest! A baby! I had always wanted more than one but Malachi had refused, probably pining away inside for Felicity despite the fact she had given birth to like four or five. There was a rumour of an unfortunate happening, a stillbirth before Friday but after the twins. Of course, these rumours were never confirmed. I could only imagine how heartbreaking that must have been, I looked at Felicity who was beaming and gave her a small smile. She spotted it and smiled brightly back. Ugh.

The Challenge Two Alphas, One Girl Chapter 57

Chapter 57: Secrets and Spies

Fang’s POV

Astrid was ecstatic with the huge warm reaction she had received regarding her pregnancy announcement. I was happy for her. I was happy for both of us. I was scared shitless about being a Dad. My own Dad ended up being an alcoholic and then a would-be murderer. Speaking of my own Dad, I could not stop feeling drawn to Cody. The hair on the back of my inner wolf’s neck was standing up! Did my senses deceive me or did Cody smell like my...

“Dad,” said Thaddeus suddenly. Timbre looked up. “Is it ok if I show Cody the spot on our estate where we wanted the new building?”

“Son, today is a day of celebration!” Began Timbre, raising his hands in the air, the old viking about to make a speech I’m sure. Good grief.

“It’s ok, Baby Bear, you’re excused!” Said True, beaming at her eldest son.

“Hey!” Whined Timbre like a little school boy rather than a seasoned warrior and former Alpha. He pouted at his wife and mate, True, who gave him an innocent look from under her lashes.

“Papa Bear, it’s my luncheon today remember. Friday and I are the hostesses so we can excuse Thaddeus,” cooed Timbre, glancing at Friday encouragingly.

“Oh,” said Friday blankly. “Um, you’re...excused?” “Thank you, little Luna,” murmured Thaddeus pressing his lips to Friday’s forehead.

” for one, think commissioning Cody’s company to sort out that new building is an utterly brilliant idea,” chimed in True, winking at Elizabeth.

Even the mothers of Thaddeus and Maze were friends now! Ugh. I felt like I was on Barney and Friends. We were supposed to be in the middle of the Challenge. I got up as soon as Thaddeus and Cody did. Everyone looked at me. Astrid looked affronted.

“Please, um, Luna True, may I tag along? I, uh, love architecture,” I lied, hoping it was not obvious.

“Oh, Fang! Please, call me True,” chastised True. “Run along and have fun,” she said as though I were her fourth son and had asked to go to sports practice with my friends. She didn’t need to tell me twice. I gave a quick peck on the lips to a suspicious Astrid.

Thaddeus led Cody and I to the back of the main pack house where there was a vast open field. It was windy. The wind made the overgrown grass bow and rise again as one like a wave crashing through a green sea. The Berryndale landscape was really beautiful. I almost forgot my aim when I stopped to admire my surroundings. I recovered.

Are you smelling what I’m smelling? I asked Thaddeus over mind-link privately. Thaddeus’ POV I sure hope not, I answered Fang, sighing.

The truth was I didn’t actually want Farris caught. He was a huge asshole and a sorry excuse for a father to my little mate, Friday, but him being sentenced to death would break her little heart. I knew she still wished she could have a decent relationship with him like the one she had recently developed with Fang. I supposed nothing in this world was impossible when you considered that Maze and I were friends now. Genuine ones. I thought of Maze too. I knew he didn’t want to have to be the one to put Farris to death. Sure, he wanted to avenge his own father, Malachi, but he also didn’t want anymore drama and rang nag come, Perhaps, ne was just curious to know nis vaga’s wneabouts this.

If I were right about

“Look, Cody, I like Maze a lot and therefore I care about Elizabeth and I want her to be safe and happy. My top priority however is Friday so I need to know something, why do you smell like Farris?” I asked. The drunken stench of the former Beta was faint but unmistakable. I had always been nose for my keen sense of smell even before I took up the post of Alpha.

Cody gulped, sighed and then took a slow, deep breath. Fang and I waited patiently.

“Fang, Thaddeus, please know that I mean absolutely no harm to anyone here. I adore Elizabeth but that’s just the thing...” began Cody, pausing.

“What’s the thing?” I asked impatiently. “Enlighten me!” I was trying to not use my Alpha voice. I only used it as a last resort. Fang was shifting nervously from foot to foot.

“Elizabeth was taken from me by Malachi and I went off the deep end. I was devastated, out of my mind with grief so when he showed up...I...my heart went out to him. Felicity was taken from him by the same man,” concluded Cody.

“You housing him right now, yes or no?” I asked pointedly. “Yes,” whispered Cody. I heard a sharp intake of breath from Fang.

“You do know that harbouring an attempted murderer of a former alpha is also punishable by death, depending on how lenient or harsh the pack leaders want to be,” said Thaddeus, folding his arms, his tone impassive.

Cody sighed. “I expect the pack leaders to be lenient though,” said Cody defiantly.

This guy was brave. Thaddeus towered over him, seven feet to Cody’s six-foot-two or three. He was talking Mano y Mano with the famed seven foot alpha.

“Why is that?” Asked Thaddeus, his tone and gaze darkening with suppressed rage.

“Because that is under Maze’s jurisdiction and I doubt he’ll be in a rush to kill his mother’s mate after the years of unhappiness she went through with Malachi. He’d even hesitate to kill Farris. That’s Maze’s mate’s Dad. This is a very complicated family and I think you guys both realise that,” said Cody with a tired smile.

I shrugged but said nothing. I didn’t want Maze to be in that predicament though.

“How do you know my father?” Fang said softly, frowning. Cody and I looked at him in surprise. We had almost forgotten he was there. He had been silent up until now.

Cody’s POV

“Malachi had ordered your father to keep tabs on me in the early days his marriage to Lizzie. He didn’t want me coming back to Marigold to snatch his heir incubator away from him,” I said, my tone becoming bitter near the last few words.

It was such an unfair situation. Felicity and Malachi had pursued a more than two-decade-long affair, the discovery of which pushed Farris into a fit of vengeful rage and sent Lizzie running into my open arms. Now, Farris’ head and possibly even mine were on the chopping block. Lizzie and I deserved our happy ending after all these years just as much as Malachi and Felicity. I looked at Thaddeus. I doubted his parents, True and even Timbre would be ok with snuffing me out not after the lengths they’d gone through to pull Lizzie from a dark place and to locate me for our reunion. Thaddeus and Maze were the current Alphas but perhaps this needed to be handled by the generation that initially produced the mess. Perhaps, Malachi and Felicity, and Lizzie and i all needed to have an open honest discussion with Timbre and True

“I’m prepared to tell Malachi myself,” I said quickly but first I needed to message Farris and tell him to get the hell out of the house in case they sent a squad there. I reached for my cellphone in my pocket.

“Easy there, Partner,” said Fang putting his palms up. I was surprised and frankly suspicious about the suddenly cooperative demeanour of Cody.

“There’s no need for that yet,” I said sternly as I mind-linked Theo for backup in case Fang completely sided with Cody.

Theo was at my side in the black of an eye, a wary expression on his face. “Take me to Farris,” I commanded him. I didn’t use my Alpha voice. I was going to trust him for now.

I looked at Fang. He nodded resolutely. Theo’s expression remained unfathomable.

“Let’s go quickly before the girls realise we left,” I said, heading in the direction of my car. Theo close on my heels. Fang and Cody sauntered behind us.

Friday’s POV

Thaddeus, Fang and Cody were not back yet. I glanced at a worried Elizabeth. Maze was holding her hand again from across the table which was so sweet of him. I kept glancing upwards hoping to see Thaddeus. I grumbled to myself.

“What’s taking them so long?” Asked Fallon and Fargo in unison. Timothy and Titus shrugged.

Astrid was beginning to look worried too. I stood up. “I’m going to go check on them,” I announced.

“No, no, there’s no need!” Piped up True. “They’re probably mapping out how they want the building to look,” said True with a dismissive wave of her hand before she took another spoonful of chocolate brownie and vanilla

The Lunch had been served and it had all been divine, roast chicken with jackets of cheesy mashed potatoes, meat and vegetarian and even vegan lasagna, different kinds of pasta and different kinds of rice. We were now onto the desserts: brownies with ice cream, a plethora of kinds of cheesecake, cupcakes sprinkled with edible glitter, chocolate mousse, Oreo mousse and coconut mousse. The conversation between Elizabeth and my Mom was one of the most, correction, the most awkward thing I have ever feared witness to.

I tried to mind-link Thaddeus and that was when my wolf and I realised he was very far away and moving steadily further. Were we being left? My wolf started to panic.

Ishh-ed her. They were probably just walking around the vast grounds and looking at other building spots, I told myself but I had a nagging suspicion that there was something more afoot.

“Excuse me, please, I have to use the bathroom,” I said to the table. No one tried to stop me, not even Maze. It was time for me to investigate.

Ezra’s POV

I had been keeping tabs on Cody for almost two days. Yesterday, at the Howl, was the first time I had ever seen him. Elizabeth’s mate?! How interesting. So both Malachi and Elizabeth had spent twenty-five years in a loveless marriage where both of them knew who their true fated mate was. Why would anyone do such a thing? Subject themselves to a life of misery. I could not easily enter into the gates of the Berryndale Pack House but I could have my vampires follow him everywhere else. So I did just that and low and behold, I made a ground-breaking discovery. Farris, the former Beta of Marigold wanted for the nonfatal shooting of the former Alpha was hiding out at Cody’s house.

I was there in person now, peering through the windows of Cody’s ranch house, watching an. transgressions on the aireaay doomed Farris. Before I couia ponaer tnis Turtner, i neara une sound or car doors opening and closing and then footsteps. Voices. Cody, my new buddy. The Formidable Fang. A deep, booming voice that was unmistakably Thaddeus! I had to move away from here. Otherwise, they would smell me. I stole through the forested area at the back of the house. I leapt effortlessly into a tree, crouching amidst its highest branches and pulling my hood back down. I would watch the show unfold from here.

The Challenge Two Alphas, One Girl Chapter 58

Chapter 58: A Pitiful Prisoner

Thaddeus' POV

Cody opened the door to his ranch house. It was painted white with a wrap around veranda in the front. The rooms were all bright, in whites and creams, with minimal furniture and ornaments. You could tell a guy lived here alone. A bachelor. Well, not anymore now that he'd come back for his "Lizzie." We found Farris, Friday's Dad, slumped over near the liquor cabinet in a pool of his own vomit. Theo and I glanced at each other. We looked at Fang, scrutinising his expression. He kept his facial expressions neutral. I knew he had to be hurting on some level. I clapped him on the back, squeezing his shoulder. He put his hand on the hand I'd laid on his shoulder. He sighed deeply. Theo rubbed his back.

"Hey, Fang, this situation...it's complicated," I said, not knowing what else to say to him.

Fang's eyes were shimmery, glassy. He was trying to blink away the tears. A stray tear escaped down his cheek and he quickly wiped it away. Even Theo was feeling sorry for Fang, continuously rubbing his back comfortingly like they were bros. I had to think of my delicate little Friday. This was her Dad. Asshole or not. Attempted Murderer. Former Beta. He had served Marigold so that should not go unnoticed but he'd also betrayed his former alpha but his former alpha had in a sense betrayed him first with the affair with his Beta's wife. It wouldn't be my decision to make, it would be Maze's but I was worried about that too. Cody had gone and gotten himself into this mess. Maze couldn't let any harm come to Cody devastating his mom. Killing Farris would devastate his mate and not doing anything would alienate his father.

Cody helped Farris to his feet and started getting him cleaned up. Cody mopped up the vomit. I got some water from the fridge and encouraged Farris to sip it. He could not go to trial drunk as a fish. Farris slumped over on the couch in a new set of clean clothes. He moaned. His stomach hurt apparently. Well, obviously

We gave him some greasy fries to eat and he ate about half a portion and drank two cups of water before he started to perk up a little. He had his wits about him now. He glanced at me somewhat distastefully. I knew he had wanted his daughter with the Marigold Alpha Maze but I was not sure if recent discoveries had changed that.

"Farris, I'm gonna give you a chance to please explain what happened the day Malachi was shot," I said.

not get

"As if its' gonna make any difference. I'm a dead man walking," said Farris. Fang's POV

"So you're not even gonna try to plead your case?" I asked, trying as hard as I could to emotional.

"You know what upsets me?" said Farris.

“What?” I snarled, reaching my limit with him.

“You can forgive your w***e of a mother but you can’t even try to see it from my perspective,” said Farris, slurring his words and cackling madly near the end of the sentence.

I was sick and tired of hearing him call Mom a w***e. She had an affair with her mate. She decided to run off with him. What’s done is done. Even Elizabeth who was a wreck-at-first was trying to pull herself

“When am I supposed to see it from your side, huh? When are you ever not drunk so I can talk to you, sympathise, empathise?” I snapped, losing my patience, losing my cool.

“Poor Fang, his father is a drunkard. Where’s hot stuff? King pin? Big cheese?” Laughed Farris. “What?!” I asked, narrowing his eyes. What the f**k was this maniac talking about? “I think he means Friday,” mumbled Cody.

Thaddeus actually laughed. “Boss Lady is fine. She’s hosting a Lady’s Luncheon,” said Thaddeus proudly, puffing out his chest a little.

“She ain’t no lady. She’s a w***e like her mother,” muttered Farris.

In one fluid and swift motion. Thaddeus grabbed my Dad by the scruff of his shirt. His feet dangled off the ground as the seven foot alpha was holding him at eye level and the former beta, at six-foot-two, was ten inches shorter than giant Thaddeus.

“Don’t you ever everinsult my mate, again?” Snarled Thaddeus, canines bared, eyes black.

Thaddeus dropped him. He fell on his knees and slid back down onto the ground slumped over.

“She’s a w***e!” Complained Farris. “Just like her mother and the other one,” mumbled Farris.

“What other one?” Asked Thaddeus quickly, forgetting to threaten my Dad again this time. I was not thrilled about him calling my Mother and Sister whores along with some third person.

My Dad did not answer Thaddeus’ question. He just lay on the floor, fell asleep, and started snoring very loudly.

“Are you turning him in?” I asked, holding back tears. My voice cracked a little. Damn it! A tear rolled down my cheek and I quickly wiped it away.

"I think considering how addled his mind must be, years of alcohol, emotional trauma," mused Thaddeus. "Maybe we could do twenty-five to life and not murder."

"Would Malachi and Maze agree to that?" I scoffed. "Felicity and Friday could convince them," suggested Thaddeus.

He was right. My Mom wouldn't want my Dad dead either. She would blame herself. She would be consumed with guilt and that would eat away at Malachi too through the mate-bond. It was Malachi's decision to reject her ultimately. His choice had made things complicated, rejecting her and then still pursuing her relentlessly, dissatisfied on a personal level with his publicly acceptable Luna, Elizabeth. Friday and Dad had a horrible relationship but I knew she yearned for a better one. She wanted his love, craved his acceptance, similar to what she had wanted from me.

"You won't let him escape from here, will you?" I asked, looking up at Thaddeus. "He couldn't escape from anywhere or to anywhere in this state," stated Thaddeus throwing his hands up.

My Dad continued to snore. Friday's POV

They were all gone. Fang, Cody and my Thaddeus. Ugh! Where were they? I could not wait to get out of this stupid dress and end the day with Maze and Thaddeus. They had promised me a massage. My wolf purred thinking about it. There was an open field at the back of the pack house. The grass was so overgrown it was knee-high in some places and waist-high in others. I sighed. I was not too great at tailing people following their scents yet. All I could tell is they'd been here recently and then they'd gone. The sun beat down overhead but the cool wind eased the effect by tossing my wavy hair back and forth. The wind grew stronger and blew my hat off. I gave a small shriek of surprise and turned to chase after it. I saw a hand flick out and effortlessly catch it. Maze. neck, wrapping the illac ribbons around a gentiy so that it lookea like i was wearing a choker. I lookea up at Maze, drinking in his handsome features. He grabbed me by my waist and pulled me flush against him. I tickled him which made him release me. I ran away treading lightly, picking my way through the tall grass, I heard a low growl behind me. I giggled just as Maze pounced in me, tackling me to the floor. He cradled my head throughout our fall.

I lay, shrouded by the tall grass with Maze leaning over me, putting his weight on his palms and knees. One of his knees was between my thighs. He was panting and so was I when our lips found each other. He kissed me so sweetly and so urgently at the same time. I moaned into his mouth as his warm rough palms caressed my bare thighs under my dress. "You're gorgeous," he whispered against my lips.

"You too," I said, blushing and running my fingers through his silky dark hair. Both Thaddeus and Maze had not had a haircut in ages it seemed. Their hair was just passed their shoulders. It suited them though. Maze laughed. I tangled my hands in his hair and pulled him to me. He kissed me, moving his lips skilfully against mine, coaxing

my mouth open, nibbling my lower lip and sliding his tongue along the nibbled area. He did the same to the top lip while his pelvis pressed against my core. I could feel his huge meter straining against his pants. He sat up suddenly pulling me with him so that I was straddling his lap, my legs at either side of his waist and my arms around his neck, my fingers kneading the nape of his neck,

his hands massaging my lower back. I felt a little giddy. He slipped one of the dress straps down so my shoulder was bare. He planted open-mouthed kisses down the side of my neck and along my bare shoulder making me shiver.

“Maze,” I whimpered.

“What, Friday? Talk to me, Baby,” he replied grabbing one of my hands and kissing each fingertip. He repeated this on the other hand. He nuzzled me. I sighed contentedly but then I remembered what I wanted

to tell him, “Thaddeus is gone!”

“What?” Said Maze. “Fang, Cody and Thaddeus are gone,” I told him. “Yeah,” said a voice.

I jumped, startled. Elizabeth had come round to the back and was staring at us. Malachi and my Mom were walking towards us too.

– “Where are they?” Called Malachi.

“They’re right here, in the grass,” said Elizabeth loudly to her ex-husband and his new bride. At least they were on speaking terms.

Malachi, my Mom and Elizabeth just stood there, staring at me, my dress all rumpled and my hair tousled as I straddled Maze in the grass. I blushed the deepest shade of scarlet and tried to scramble to my feet, causing me to fall over and get my dress tangled in Maze’s cufflinks.

“Do you guys mind?” Snarled Maze.

“You didn’t!” Said Malachi pointedly. Felicity smiled but covered her eyes. Malachi seemed to be referencing when Maze had walked in on Malachi and my Mom that day I had asked Thaddeus to mind-link him. Maze growled lowly but I could tell he wasn’t serious.

“Maze, un hand her,” said Elizabeth indignantly like Maze was some robber who had me slung over his shoulder like a sack of loot.

I stifled my laughter and slowly got to my feet. Timbre and True came over followed by the four twins. "We should go look for them! Thaddeus, Fang..." I began but Timbre stopped me gently.

"And they have your father with them, Friday," said Timbre gently.

My heart plummeted. My mother's face paled. Elizabeth's eyes widened in fear. Malachi stiffened and pulled my mother even closer to him. I could feel a vibration near to me. I looked up. It was Maze growling lowly and he was far from joking around this time, his eyes black and his canines bared.

The Challenge Two Alphas, One Girl Chapter 59

Chapter 59: Difficult Deliberation

Thaddeus' POV

I was in the basement of the Berryndale Pack House where the dungeons were kept. We usually didn't keep prisoners in the pack house itself. These cells were reserved for only the most important of prisoners thus they were all empty save for one. Farris was still asleep. He lay on the cot of his cell. The bars were all solid sterling silver. I had not had the heart to put the silver chain around his neck. He was in essence still the man I hoped to be my father in law. I wanted to at least allow him his dignity. The silver bars of the cell should suffice. I sat at the guard's desk watching Farris sleep. Fang was pacing back and forth. Cody was nervously twiddling his thumbs. They were both acting like they were on trial too.

I was not looking forward to seeing my little Friday's face when she found her father down here in the dungeons. The door opened and a group of people descended the stone steps. I could hear their echoey footsteps. Malachi and Felicity were the first to approach the cell. Upon seeing his mother, Fang's eyes welled up with tears. Oh God, did I make a big mistake even asking Cody why he smelled of Farris? Felicity doubled over, sobbing openly. Malachi, startled, scooped her up and held her bridal style, cradling her head to his chest, trying to shush her.

"It's my fault. It really is," I heard her whimper. "I drove you both to this point. Put me on trial."

"Don't be ridiculous!" I heard Malachi whisper fiercely. He was rocking her a little. He sat in the chair furthest from me still cradling her.

Elizabeth came into view. "Cody?" She said. Cody's smile was tired. He embraced her. "What do you have to do with any of this?" Elizabeth asked.

“He has helped to bring Farris to justice,” I said vaguely to Elizabeth. Cody was salvageable. I was not so sure about Farris but this situation had been thrust upon Cody. He certainly had not gone looking for Farris.

Fang raised his eyebrows at my careful wording and seemed a bit calmer. I was a peaceful Alpha. Don't let my seven foot frame fool you. I preferred the least amount of bloodshed possible. That being said, I could still rip a head off if I needed to. My father and mother came down, arm in arm. My father nodded at me in approval and my mother smiled sadly. I knew who would descend the staircase next. I stood up for her. An Alpha should always stand when his Luna enters a room. Friday walked arm in arm with Maze. I could not make head nor tails of Maze's emotions but Friday's were crystal clear. She was devastated. Maze released her arm. She walked up to me and put her arms around my waist, burying her face in my chest. I felt the wetness of her tears as I wrapped my arms around her and kissed the top of her head.

“Berryndale as your Aly had captured your most wanted, but it's your call Alpha Maze by right,” I said.

“Alpha Maze?” Said Maze. “Mazey-Wazey,” I corrected myself. Malachi raised his eyebrows at our little banter but did not say anything. I don't know what to do, Maze whispered in my mind, his voice sounding small and very young though

What would you do if you made the decision to please only yourself? Remember when you rejected Friday? I asked him.

I try to forget, he said, chuckling sadly. Did you make that decision to please yourself? I asked.

No, of course not. If I'd made that decision with only myself in mind back then, I would've given up being Alpha and moved to the woods to sleep on that tiny cot with Friday every night and be immensely happy, said Maze.

I smiled. I need to talk to my father, Maze said. Maze's POV

I met with my father, my mother and Felicity upstairs in the Berryndale Alpha Dining Room. Thaddeus came with me for emotional support. Cody kept edging nearer and nearer to the doorway though he'd been

asked to wait in the hallway. Fang, Fallon and Fargo were there. They deserved to speak on this. It was their father. My Baby was a wreck, her eyes swollen and puffy. She was clutching one of my monogrammed handkerchiefs in her hands and wringing it. It was soaked with tears. She was wearing Thaddeus' blazer. I couldn't wait for today to be over. I needed to hold her. I couldn't stand the thought of her resenting me.

“I called this impromptu meeting to get an idea of what everyone thinks about the situation. Laws do not always uphold justice. Some circumstances are more complex. A

crime was committed and a punishment should be exacted but I wish to hear everyone's thoughts first because we are... a family. A really weird family," I said. Thaddeus snorted but smiled warmly at me.

It was true. The twins and Fang were about to be my stepbrothers and my father's stepsons. I wished to marry Friday which would then make the boys my brothers-in-law. Felicity was my step-mother or perhaps, mother-in-law. Either way, none of us were escaping each other anytime soon. Friday shocked me by speaking first. The little girl in the woods who had fell on her knees when I rejected her would have never done that. She was different now, a true Luna.

"I can't ask you to ever trust my father again, especially not anywhere near your father, Maze. He can't go free. That would be unthinkable but I would appreciate him being spared the death penalty," Friday said, whispering the last few words.

I nodded. I felt Thaddeus' hands on my shoulders. "I share the same sentiment," said Fang, "As my sister and Luna." Friday's eyes widened at being called Luna by Fang. She smiled sadly at him. Fallon and Fargo were quiet, looking at each other. I could tell they were mind-linking.

My mother sighed. Cody had edged all the way into the room and was standing behind my mother stroking her hair.

"On the day that Farris shot Malachi, he turned and aimed the gun at me," she said.

The twins gasped, Cody hissed and Felicity sobbed quietly while my father cradled her head in his chest.

"It was Malachi who stopped Farris from shooting me too by injuring Farris and causing him to drop the gun. He would've orphaned you, Maze, if he could've. I wouldn't be surprised if he intended to shoot Felicity too for his revenge," said my mother.

I was gripping the table with such force wooden dust fell to the floor. I had not realised Farris meant to kill my mother too simply for being a witness. He was truly a fiend. What had my mother done? Besides being setting

"Maze," said Felicity softly, her voice hoarse from crying, "all I ask of you is that you take your time to decide, Whatever decision you make, please think on it for a reasonable amount of time. Don't decide right away."

"I want him dead," said my father plainly. "But I know my little mate wants otherwise," said Dad, looking down at the top of Felicity's head. She was still being held by him.

Mom winced at the word mate but then relaxed when Cody wrapped his arms tightly around her. I could not help but notice how dependent werewolves were on their mates for healing. My mother was miles better overnight emotionally because of Cody. And my

Father survived a silver bullet laced with wolfsbane when nursed by Felicity whom he had been craving for twenty five years. I looked at Friday, She was already looking at me,

No matter what you do, I love you, Maze, she said simply. I did not deserve her. I love you too, Baby, I said. Fallon and Fargo were the last to speak which was usually never the case. "Maze," said Fallon gently. "Like our Mom said," added Fargo. "Please take your time," Fallon requested. "There's no rush," Fargo said. "Thank you, all of you, for you invaluable input," I said. "Wait!" Said Felicity. She even whined the same as Friday. "What's wrong?" I asked. "Thaddeus didn't say what he wanted," Felicity said.

"Baby, he's just here cause Maze asked him to be," murmured my Dad in Felicity's ear as he ran his fingers through her long wavy hair.

My Mom winced again, this time in response to the word "Baby." My father shocked even me at times with how tender he could be towards Felicity. I had thought it was simply not in his nature but then I remembered how offended I would get when people would be shocked to find me pampering Friday like a little princess. I supposed the apply really didn't fall too far from the tree.

"I think Thaddeus should give his opinion," said my Mom. It seemed as though she just wanted to disagree with my Dad but I valued Thaddeus' opinion was well.

"Thaddeus?" I said, looking back at him. He stared at me and then at Friday who smiled though there were tears in her eyes.

"Honestly," said Thaddeus in his deep rumbly voice, "I don't trust Farris, And I never will but life has indeed dealt him a tough hand with which to play."

Felicity drew a sharp intake of breath. Friday bit her lip. Fang looked like he didn't blame him. Fallon and Fargo were impassive. My Dad was pensive and My Mom looked at Thaddeus curiously,

"And for that reason," said Thaddeus. "I would spare his life but I would wipe his memory, rendering him no longer an enemy and then I would banish him."

The room was silent save for my mother who gasped. Cody nodded in agreement. I had forgotten that in Berryndale, they used magic at times in their punishments. By magically wiping his memory, he could no longer plot revenge but he would forget everything, his children's names and their faces. He would forget the fact that he ever had children, that he had ever married. In Farris' case, this would truly free him. Did he deserve be left off the hook like that. I adjourned the meeting without an official ruling. I needed intensely stupid choices when we made quick rash decisions. I had almost IOSC Friday being nasty in my choices and my Dad had been without his mate in the full capacity for twenty-five years though they had lurked in the shadows together.

“Thank you, Thaddeus. You’ve given me a lot to consider. You all have,” I said, standing to leave.

My parents came over and hugged me. It was possibly the first time in my life they had ever hugged me together. They usually have such an aversion to each other. I sighed, re

uch an aversion to each other. I sighed, relaxing in the embrace. I felt like ten years old again, confused. I wished Dad could just make the decision for me. He would undoubtedly kill Farris and go onto marry Felicity like it was no big deal but I wasn’t like that. I didn’t think I could sleep peacefully next to Friday knowing I’d sentenced her father to death. I’d rather sentence him to life in prison. Thaddeus wanted to send the man on a lifelong vacation, wiping his memory of all grudges, passed grievances, misdeeds and responsibilities. It was certainly very merciful. I knew how Thaddeus thought. He had longed for a mate for so many years. He felt a mate was the greatest comfort. He was probably right about that. Thaddeus saw everyone else getting their hoarily ever after except Farris and it did not sit right with him even though Farris was an asshole and an alcoholic, creating his own problems.

“Tomorrow is Day nineteen of the challenge. Can you believe it?” Said Thaddeus, grinning.

It was my day tomorrow and I had no idea what I wanted to do. I had just gotten the news that my paternal grandparents would be arriving on Day Twenty of the Challenge (the day after tomorrow). These were the same grandparents who had conspired to keep my Dad and Felicity, and my Mom and Cody apart. Meanwhile, they forced my Mom and Dad together for money and prestige. They had spoiled me growing up but our relationship had been a bit hollow and had mostly centred around lavish gift-giving.

“Maze?” Asked Thaddeus.

“Sorry, Bro, just thinking,” I said.

“She’s not gonna hate you, Bro,” said Thaddeus.

Just then, Friday exited the bathroom in a tiny pair of pink polkadot shorts and a matching short sleeved top. She honestly looked so adorable. She straddled me and cupped my face in her hands.

“Stop worrying, Maze. It’s driving me and my wolf crazy,” whined Friday. Thaddeus grinned. “Her wolf,” I repeated to him.

“Little Red Riding Hood is a wolf now,” I said smirking. “She’s not so innocent anymore,” I murmured lifting her blouse to kiss her torso, making her moan.

“She’s still outnumbered though,” said Thaddeus as he pushed her onto her back and I turned off the lights.

“This story has two big bad wolves,” whispered Friday in the darkness as two pairs of hands began eagerly roaming her body. I could smell her getting wetter and wetter and regrettably we tore the tiny polkadot shorts to shreds. No big deal. Thaddeus or I would buy her another pair.

The Challenge Two Alphas, One Girl Chapter 60

Chapter 60: Daddy Dearest

Friday’s POV

As always, at a few minutes to midnight, Thaddeus and Maze parted ways from me, leaving me alone in a cold empty bed. The day’s events made the bed colder and emptier somehow. I felt so alone. It was not as though my father had ever given me the slightest inclination that he loved me. He had never paid attention to me, complimented me, comforted me or shown that he was proud of me. Not a single memory of him was pleasant. I remembered his smile though directed at someone else and his laughter though! had not been privy to the joke. I had loved him from a distance as I still did now. I sighed. Sleep would not come easily tonight.

I looked at the clock. It was five minutes past midnight. Officially Day 19 of the Challenge. 11 more days. Did I still have to pick? I didn’t, did I? Even though I had never dared to dream much I had in fact always assumed my father would walk me down the aisle. If anyone had decided they wanted me that was. Dad was always quick to remind me no one would want a wolf-less she wolf in their bloodline so I shouldn’t expect many offers. He had also said being wolf-less might mean I didn’t have a mate or wouldn’t recognise the mate bond at first even if I had one. He’d been partially right about that. I certainly had mates but both Maze and Thaddeus had had to tell me they were my mates at first. I smiled. I wished they could sneak back into bed with me.

I crept downstairs to the Beta floor. I was sure Fang was sleeping soundly. He had enough on his plate without me disrupting his sleep. I went all the way down to the common area of the ground floor. There were several male voices. They were talking about mates. Timothy, Titus, Fallon and Fargo were among them. I could not tell Timothy from Titus and vice versa.

“I hope I meet my mate soon,” said either Timothy or Titus. “Yeah me too,” said Fallon. “Me three, actually,” said Fargo.

“Not me. I’m not ready to be tied down yet,” said either Titus or Timothy, whoever hadn’t spoken first.

“Your sister is hot though,” said Timothy/Titus. “Bro!! Seriously!!! Could you not?!” Exclaimed Fallon while Fargo made retching sounds.

I descended the stone steps to the dungeons. I wondered if I had an aversion to silver now. I didn’t have an issue with it before I discovered my wolf. I eyed the sterling silver bars as they glowed in the moonlight that filtered through the small windows in the ceiling.

Touch them. You can. You’re special. You’re not like the others.

I touched the silver bars. They still did not burn even though I had a wolf now. They felt cold and smooth. I ran my fingers along them as I walked towards the last cell. I saw a tall man, face down on the floor, thinner than I remembered. A mass of dark tangled hair obscured his face. He lay motionless on the floor. The cot behind him was empty. Had he fallen out of it?

“Dad?” I whispered.

He slowly raised his head. He stared at me. I had my hands on two bars peering in. He gingerly placed a finger to a bar and I heard the hiss as the silver burnt his fingertip. He groaned snatching his finger away.

I shrugged. My cheeks were tear-streaked. “Did you mean to kill Malachi?” I asked. He sighed. “Of course I did, at the time,” he said. “And Elizabeth?” I whispered., He chuckled sadly.

“She’d seen me. If I’d shot her, and had the balls to finish Malachi off, I wouldn’t be in this mess,” muttered my father.

My cheeks were pressed against two bars. My nose and mouth were in the space between them, my hands gripping the bars as I kneeled on the floor like a child peering through the bars of her playpen.

“But Mom would be devastated. Malachi is her...”

The words died in my throat as my father’s hand shot out and grasped me by the throat. I heard hissing as he singed his arm against the silver in the process. I gripped his hand with both of mine and forced his fingers open. He was forced to relinquish me. I scrambled backwards, my neck searing with pain.

“A w***e’s concerns! You’re a w***e just like your mother!” Yelled my father, his eyes bloodshot.

I pressed myself against the far wall, spluttering and gasping for air. I coughed and massaged my throat. I panted until breathing became easier. I didn't even have time to process what had just happened. My father had just tried to strangle me. My eyes welled up with tears.

"I should have sold you like I did with the other one," he muttered, his eyes faraway.

Truth be told, I had come to try to release him if I worked up the nerve to do so. The punishment for something like that was also death but I would rather put my own life in Maze's and Malachi's hands than my father's. I knew Maze could never sentence me to death.

He'd die first, said my she-wolf without a second thought. Malachi wouldn't hurt us either. He wished he had fathered us. "What?!" I said. "Sold me? What other one?" He was muttering things to himself.

"What other one?!" I screeched, more tears streaming down my cheeks. He cackled softly.

"Your mother wanted a girl. We had three boys already. I didn't want any girls. I knew they'd be whores like their mother. She was so happy when she found out it was a girl. She wanted to name her Flora or Florence. She kept asking me to pick between the two. We were penny pinching. Another mouth to feed would have ruined us," he snarled.

"Bullshit!" I growled, my eyes black. He actually flinched. "You had enough! You just wanted to spend it all on getting wasted!" I whispered fiercely.

"I knew your mother had a mate. I'm not stupid. I didn't know who he was! Just that he existed. How could I be sure it was mine? I remember when it was born," my father said, as if narrating a twisted fairytale.

"She!" I screamed. "She was born!" –

"IT!" He bellowed and I was surprised no one had come down to the dungeons yet with all our yelling

"Your mother was totally out of it. I was drunk admittedly. I considered killing it. But I was merciful. What if it was mine? I sold it," he said. "Made a fortune! Drank most of it away but still. Told your stupid months. She only let up moping when we conceived you.

I was silent.

"Who did you sell her to?" I whispered through tears, too stunned to scream and rage anymore.

Farris laughed. I would not be calling him father anymore. Biologically we were related but that no longer meant anything to me.

“Who?” I breathed. “To the highest bidder!” Farris said, laughing. “Tell me, father,” I spat the last word. “You’re on your death bed. Time to confess everything!” He seemed amused at my venomous words. He continued with his tale.

“There’s a convent up on a hill just outside of Berryndale in vampire territory. The nuns there were trained in combat as vampire and werewolf slayers. The convent was attacked by vampires who overpowered and bit the nuns. Some nuns killed themselves rather than become what they were trained to hate and kill. But others welcomed the change and became formidable vampire warriors. Ezekiel Victor Van Der Windt, the Vampire King, had led the attack on the convent. He was obsessed with making super vampires and super werewolves. He’d been exposing vampire children to increasing intensities of light. He even experimented on his own children. Ezra, the Vampire Prince, can easily walk in the daylight. Most born vampires are strong enough to do this for a few minutes but not comfortably and for hours like Ezra. Victor wanted to do the same type of experiments with werewolf children but they much harder for a vampire like him to get his claws on,” said Farris.

“And you sold her to him. Raelynn. You sold her to Victor,” I breathed. It was not a question.

“Oh I don’t know what she’s called now. But yes, I sold her. Volunteered her for the experiment. I sold you too, you know,” said Farris.

“What?” I spluttered. “He needed two children, one to inject with wolfsbane and the other with silver,” said Farris softly.

I gasped, recoiling further from the bars that didn’t burn me. I shut my eyes tightly so I couldn’t see him.

“I injected you periodically with the silver myself when you were little. I thought I’d made you wolf-less. That the experiment was a failure. I’d been told the girl being injected with wolfsbane was also wolf-less, another failure. I thought they’d kill her. But the Vamp Prince took a liking to her it seems. You and your sister have always been so lucky that you’re pretty little whores like your mother. It makes up for you being useless!” Sneered Farris.

My eyes turned black. My wolf took over, speaking with my voice and hers, two voices melting together, “We came here to free you but now we’d rather watch you die!”

My wolf relinquished her hold on me.

“Suit yourself,” said Farris, grinning spitefully.

I scrambled to my feet and scurried out of the dungeons, hastily ascending the stone steps back to the ground floor. My heart was racing. My breathing came in shallow gasps. I tried to steady myself. Raelynn was my sister. My father had sold her to be used in an experiment by vampires. Had injecting her with wolfsbane made her wolfless or just temporarily suppressed her powers and gave her an immunity like me? Our father had used us like guinea pigs, all because he wasn't sure if we'd been his or not. I shuddered at the realisation of how callous my father really was. Sure, Malachi was a snob but he did not enjoy cruelty and he truly loved Maze. He had respect for Elizabeth and love and respect for my Mom. I felt nauseated as I dragged myself up the stairs. I crawled back into bed. I wasn't sure when sleep arrived to.