

Never again by Malgorzata Uchto

Chapter 3

3. Funny little Blake

Mandy's POV

"Are you kidding me? He's not even to the middle of the closet?" I complained and took a look at the mess Peter created.

Clothes were everywhere, drawers opened, and the suitcases filled to the brim. I looked at Ben, who was sitting on the floor, defeated. "Why didn't you call sooner?" I asked Ben while Peter was running through his closet, yelling nervously.

"Please help me deal with him, and I'll do anything you want." Ben pleaded, looking exhausted. I might take him up on his offer sometime later.

I entered the closet and was met with an even worse view, as Peter threw clothes nervously, shouting, "Have you seen my gray hoodie?"

"Ok, stop! Stop it right there Mr. Collins!" I said in my bossy voice. Putting my hands on my hips, I tilted my head to the right and dictated. "Cold beer, at least seven; and undisturbed time to deal with this hell." I gestured to the mess around him. "And we will have time to say our goodbyes."

He just looked at me like I said something stupid but went out of the closet.

An hour and a half later, five suitcases filled with Peter's necessities and Ben's howling in appreciation, we sat at the couch and drank another bottle of cold beer. God, it tasted good.

Peter stood up to make a toast, "For a new beginning." Joining him, I clicked my bottle with theirs and gulped all the contents. They didn't hesitate to follow my lead.

"Mandy?" Peter started uncertainly and put his empty bottle at the table. He looked at Ben, asking for support.

What's going on? Is there more he's not telling me? Dear God, please give me strength. I was nervous all of a sudden. I looked at Peter expecting another news. He smiled and took Ben's hand and turned to me.

"We were talking about you after we came back from the mall. Ben's feeling guilty for taking me from your life so suddenly, and we came to a solution." he paused, and my curiosity kicked in. What solution is he talking about? I also put my bottle on the table and gave him my full attention.

"I want you to come with us." Ben announced. I was shocked, and they probably saw it too. I widened my eyes at both of them and opened my mouth to object, but he cut me off.

"Before you say anything, listen to me first." He came closer, took my hands in his, and continued, sounding serious. "I feel guilty for cutting short our stay here so suddenly, but you know Alpha's orders," he explained. "I can't say no to that, but I can try to make it up to you." He smiled and added. "Why don't you come with us for some time, I already asked my Alpha, and he agreed but there are some ground rules for you. You can stay however long you want to have more time with Peter and relax. He told me you are overworking yourself, it's not good!" He lectured me, and I still stood shocked.

"Baby girl, do it for me. It's hard for me to part with you so suddenly, and it hurts even more knowing you'll be here alone while I will have Ben. So please agree." Peter joined Ben and put his hand at my arm. "It's not that we never had spontaneous trips before, remember Mexico?" Peter chuckled, and I giggled, remembering that trip. We were watching the sequel to 'Sex and the City' when we thought about going to Mexico. Five minutes later we were in the car driving to the airport, just like that.

"Ok." I nodded.

"Really?" They both asked in unison, surprised at my answer.

I smiled at them, picked my bag up from the couch, and headed to the door. They were shocked for a moment, but when they composed themselves, they reached me in no time and grabbed my arm, turning me around.

"What are you doing?" Peter asked first.

"I'm sorry if I offended you, Mandy." Ben's concerned face was funny.

"Well, if you want me to be ready in the morning, I better go and start packing," I answered, smiling at them.

Their dumbfounded faces were priceless. In no time, they had me sandwiched between them and shouted, 'hell yeah!' in unison.

After Ben told me more about the rules I would need to follow during my stay with his pack, we bid our goodbyes, and I went home to pack.

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"How long to the border?" I asked Ben after I picked up the keys for my rented car and loaded the trunk with my things.

"Two hours. Just follow me, they know about our arrival," Ben answered as I adjusted my driver's seat. Nodding, I started the engine and waited for him to lead the way.

I was a little tired after the flight, packing, and arranging everything with Ryan and my brother. Ryan wasn't so fond of my sudden decision, but I assured him that I would work from there, and if needed, I can always fly back for emergencies. My assistant is perfectly capable of handling daily tasks.

So eight weeks without me wouldn't be that hard. I decided to spend two months with Peter and Ben, and they didn't object. My brother was a different story though. He was concerned about my decision because, in the end, it might cause more problems for me, and a bigger heartbreak.

It turned out that Ben's Alpha was actually attending the training at Deacon's pack and would be spending the first two weeks there, so I had time to prepare before meeting him. Ethan Jones, according to Deacon, was a good fighter, an excellent Alpha, and a devoted father to his son Blake. A nice name, I hoped I would get the chance to meet the little guy.

Driving for almost two hours, we finally turned onto a road leading to the big forest. I got excited and relaxed, knowing we were almost there. I needed my sleep; I was so exhausted.

Ben drove us directly to my destination, which turned out to be a little cabin about a five minute drive from the packhouse we passed. It was a three-story gray building with a lot of big windows. It looked modern.

When I parked the car in front of the cabin, I immediately fell in love with it. It was beautiful. Getting out of the car, I inhaled the fresh air and sighed in contentment. Vacation.

"The kitchen is fully stocked. I asked a few Omegas to bring all the necessary ingredients. Hope it'll suit your taste." Ben explained while opening my trunk to take out the suitcases.

"You didn't have to, but thanks. Next time though, don't bother, I'll go shopping myself, I don't want to be a burden." I answered, turning my attention to him.

“Nonsense, you’re a guest here and we take care of our guests.” he insisted.

“Thank you, but it is important to me. Next time I’ll do it myself.” I stated firmly.

“Ok.” He gave up, and we walked to the cabin while Peter was sound asleep in the passenger’s seat, looking so cute.

Surprisingly, though it looked like a small cabin from the outside, it was more spacious inside. It consisted of a small white kitchen that opened to the living room on the left of the entrance, with a small dining table and four chairs, a leather couch, a coffee table, and lots of shelves on the opposite wall. On the right was a small built-in closet and two doors. The first door led to the bathroom with a walk-in shower, small sink, and toilet all in gray and white. The second door led to the bedroom with a queen-sized bed, a built-in closet occupying the entire right side of the room, and a vanity desk opposite the bed. It was perfect.

“I hope you like it,” Ben said nervously, scratching the back of his head, standing in the middle of the living room next to my suitcases.

“Are you kidding me, it’s perfect!” I was beaming. “Now go, I need to unpack and hit the bed as soon as possible. I’ll call you tomorrow” I rushed him outside a little impatiently and waved goodbye just as he opened his car door. He smiled and drove away to the packhouse.

After closing the door, I turned to the living room and looked outside over the patio. I smiled, seeing a beautiful lake nearby. Yawning, I started to unpack and put everything in the closet and my essentials into the bathroom. I took a quick shower and put on my pj’s, then climbed into the comfy bed. The moment my head hit the pillow I fell asleep.

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The next three days, I did only three things: eat, sleep and work a little. Although Peter called me a few times to hang out, my body needed the rest, so I simply declined him. It was now the fourth day of my stay, and I was relaxing at the lake. It looked so peaceful and beautiful. I sat on the grass and closed my eyes to enjoy the moment.

The sound of breaking twigs behind me caused me to turn my head, and I was met with the wide eyes of a little boy. He couldn't have been older than 5, maybe 6. He was staring at me shyly, with black hair covering his forehead and mesmerizing green eyes. I smiled at him and gestured for him to join me. He was hesitant for a moment, then decided to slowly approach me. I patted the place beside me, and he sat down, leaving a little distance between us.

"Hi, what's your name?" he asked in his shy voice. He was so adorable.

"Hi, I'm Amanda, but everyone calls me Mandy, and you?" I tried to not scare him away.

"Blake Jones," he answered, looking at his hands.

So, he's the Alpha's son, the poor kid never met his mother. My heart broke for him, he looked like he needed some motherly love. He looked at me with his gorgeous but sad eyes, and the look he gave me made my heart ache. The longing was so evident. I gulped and tried to start a conversation.

"It's a beautiful lake. Do you come here often, Blake?"

"Yes," he said, but I noticed he wanted to say more. I waited, and he finally continued, "I come here every time I'm sad, so a lot."

Dear God, he's just a little kid, I know he doesn't have a mother, but doesn't he have anyone to take care of him, make him happy, except his father?

"This place has something that makes me feel happy." he explained I stayed quiet, and just listened.

"My dad went for training five days ago, and I miss him. Rose is taking care of me, but it's not the same," he said longingly.

"Who is Rose?" I asked curiously.

"She's my nanny, she's nice but old and doesn't want to play with me. She said my ideas are stupid." he hung his head low, fidgeting with his fingers.

Who in their f*****g mind would tell a little kid that something he wants is stupid? She was stupid. I would play with him.

"If you want a friend to play with you, I can do that. Would you like to be my friend?" I asked, smiling at him.

"Would you do that? Even when Rose said it's stupid?" he looked at me and asked hopefully.

I leaned toward his ear like I'm going to share the biggest secret and whispered, "Especially when Rose says it's stupid." I smiled at him.

He studied me, considering whether to trust me or not. f**k. I'm going to make him smile and be happy while I'm here.

"Yes," he squealed and jumped to his feet excitedly.

"That's the spirit," I said, getting up from the grass. "But before we start, I need to ask you something," I said calmly as he put his hand in mine, and we started to walk into the woods. "If I say that I can't go some places, would that be ok with you? Cause you see, I'm just a guest here, and I can't go everywhere freely like you." I explained, making him stop.

"I know, Uncle Ben told everyone that we have a human in the last cabin near the lake." He continued to drag me to God knows where, but I wasn't complaining. I felt honored to be picked by him to play.

"Ok Boss, tell me what's your plan?" I asked with a smile.

"I want to build a fort in the woods." He stopped again and faced me, suddenly unsure. "Is that stupid?" He asked sadly.

I raised one eyebrow and gave him the 'are you kidding me' face and answered, "Are you serious? That is the best idea I have ever heard! Come on, we have a lot of work to do. Lead the way, honey!" I said encouragingly, which made him start running, still holding my hand. I laughed at his eagerness.

We stopped at the place where Blake had chosen to build his fort, and surprisingly there were already building supplies there. I pointed at the pile of desks and equipment, and he understood my unspoken question. "My daddy promised to build it with me but was too busy with his work," Blake's cheeks turned pink with embarrassment.

"That's ok, at least he prepared everything for us so we can start working," I said reassuringly and started the fort construction while Blake bossed me around. He was funny in his little Alpha mode.

A few hours later, the fort was standing proudly between three big trees. We decided to camouflage it with bushes, so we collected all the necessary plants, and a few minutes later, the fort was all done. We high-fived each other.

"Well, I think we made the best fort in the world. What do you think Blake?" I asked him seriously.

"Better than I imagined, thank you!" He hugged me in appreciation. My heart melted, so I hugged him back and kissed his head, inhaling his heavenly scent. A mix of apples, cinnamon, and honey. Sweet, just like Blake.

"I'm glad you like it, honey, I'm honored to be part of it. Anytime you want, we can do something you like." I said, patting his head.

"Blake, where are you?" a concerned voice reached my ears, and I realized that it was quite late, and Blake should head back to the packhouse. Releasing him from my embrace, I kissed his cheek. "It's late, you should go back, but if you want, we can do something together tomorrow, what do you think?" I asked, "You know where I stay, so come and get me and we can maybe decorate our fort, hmm?" I added, and his smile showed it all.

"Ok, I'll come in the morning," he said joyfully, and I smiled at him in response.

"Oh, but I need to warn you, I'm here on vacation, so please don't come before 10am, Ok?" I asked jokingly, but he nodded and ran in the direction of the voice. When he was about ten feet away from me, he stopped and turned around, giving me a satisfied smile.

"She was right, you make me happy," he beamed, making me confused.

"Who?" I asked curiously,

"Moon Goddess," he explained and took off to meet his nanny.

I was left speechless. His words were strange but flattering at the same time. I knew he was something special.

Taking one last look at our fort, I smiled and made my way to the cabin to make dinner and maybe work a little more. All the way, I thought about the handsome little man that captured my heart.

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As promised, Blake came to my cabin the next day at 10am sharp, full of energy to play. I invited him inside and offered him something to eat. I was just making myself breakfast. He took a seat at the dining table and observed me cooking. After about five minutes of silence, he started his interrogation.

"Why did you come here?" he asked, playing with the fake flowers in the middle of the table.

"Because Beta Ben offered me this trip to spend more time with my best friend Peter, who is his mate," I answered truthfully, stirring the eggs on the pan.

"You are human. How do you know about werewolves?"

"Well, my brother is one, so I've known about you for a very long time," I answered, unsure of where this was heading.

"That's strange, are you freak or special?" he was interested. Kids have no filter. I suppressed an amused smile.

"Honestly, you could say I'm adopted. When I was 16 and needed help, he and his parents welcomed me into their home and took care of me. I loved them

immediately, and now we are very close." I answered, putting the eggs on the plates, and taking them to the table.

Blake took the fork and started to dig in with satisfaction. "So, you have no real mommy?" he asked, filling his mouth with eggs, and I almost choked on my own food. I took a few gulps of water to clear my throat and answered carefully, knowing why he asked this question.

"I don't know my birth mother, but Adeline, my brother's mom, gave me all the love and attention I needed, and treated me like her own daughter, so she is my real mommy. Sometimes strangers give us more than our relatives." I explained the best I could.

He nodded his head, and after finishing his eggs, he jumped off the chair and went to put his plate in the sink. Turning around, he smiled, "We are the same. Alone. She said you are special, and you'll give me your love. Do you want to play hide and seek?" he bounded out of the cabin without waiting for an answer, leaving me confused and speechless. What's going on? What he's talking about?

I finished my meal in one big bite and threw the plate into the sink. I ran after him, "Blake, wait up buddy, what did you mean?" I shouted into the woods, trying to find him.

"Find me, and I'll tell you." I heard his giggling voice somewhere in the distance.

Running through the woods was exciting and refreshing. I was supposed to spend more time with Peter, but instead, I focused on Blake. It was like an instinct to follow him, and I did, forgetting about everything and everyone besides him. My little source of happiness.

I finally found him hiding inside the fort we built and approached him quietly, but he heard me and ran away again, giggling. Damn, he's fast. I spotted him at the same place we met, sitting there waiting for me. I took a few cautious steps and sat down after determining that he wasn't going to run off again.

"So, I've got you. Will you tell me now?" I asked, interested.

"She said that someone special will come soon, but it's not my mommy." he started, "She said the special person will love me and take care of me."

I couldn't speak, I just stared at him in wonder.

He continued, "She said, 'She'll be all you need little boy,'" He frowned, "At first, I was angry, I'm not a little boy, but then I understood that she was talking about you. You'll love me, you'll be like my mommy..."

I didn't know what to say. I didn't want to give him any false hope but damn, seeing his begging eyes, I gave up. "I'd be honored to be that special person, Blake," I said, holding him tightly.

He hugged me back and kissed my cheek, "Thank you, Mandy." He whispered.

I held him in my arms like he was my life, and suddenly he was. Forgetting about Peter, I found a new purpose to exist, and it was him. A little boy longing for love that I could give him with no expectations to have it back. I stood up and took his hand in mine, leading him back to my cabin. "You're staying with me tonight. I'll call your uncle and inform him. Can you mind link yet, honey?" I asked him, and he immediately shook his head.

"No, I can't, I'm too young, but Uncle Ben knows I'm here, he'll tell Rose," Blake answered.

After reaching the cabin, I led Blake to my bedroom and told him to wait for me for a while I took the phone and called Ben. After the third ring, he answered, sounding concerned. "Hi Mandy, it's not a good time to talk, we have a missing child, so I need to focus on my duties. Can it wait?" he asked in his serious voice.

. "Are you looking for Blake?" I asked, laughing out loud.

"Yes. Have you seen him? He's been missing since morning." His begging voice made me stop laughing.

"Actually. I have. And that's why I called. He's with me, so call off the search team and calm down. I'll return him in the morning." I assured him, and he ended the call, satisfied that Blake was safe and sound.

I heard a little snoring when I stepped out of the bathroom and went to the kitchen to check on my laptop. I promised Ryan to look after the new project that was proposed by our new IT manager. Checking it over thoroughly for an hour, I found no mistakes, so I emailed him back giving the green light, and went to bed. Seeing the little body in my bed filled me with contentment, and I instantly cuddled him, closed my eyes, and dozed off into a peaceful sleep.

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Over the next week, we became so close to each other, almost inseparable. We shared our little secrets and made the 'blood oath' to never forget each other. The oath consisted of us cutting our pointing fingers, and after joining them together, we pledged our loyalty and undivided love inside the fort we built together. It was perfect.

I didn't see Peter the entire time, and I was ok with that. I think Blake took all of my time, and I forgot about the main issue of being alone. Or was it an issue? Being alone sometimes makes you think about important things from another perspective... but Blake made me feel alive. He was like fresh air, my joy and excitement, my entertainment and pride, and mostly my new life. I couldn't deny it anymore, he did it. He totally and undeniably took my heart. It had only been two weeks, but I already felt willing to do anything for him. I was baking another set of muffins, waiting for Blake to come and help me decorate them when my phone rang. I went to the living room and picked up the phone from the coffee table. It was Peter. Hesitantly I clicked the answer button. "Hello, Peter." I started.

"Wow, no 'hi handsome'? You forgot about me." he complained.

"I'm sorry honey, I was a little occupied, and truthfully I did. But I'll make it up to you, I swear." I said, feeling guilty.

"That's ok baby girl, I was occupied myself," he answered, chuckling, and I knew what or rather who occupied him. Smiling at his response, I felt less guilty. "By the way, I'm calling to ask, are you ok? Heard you found a new little friend..." he sounded intrigued.

"Yes, I'm ok, actually more than ok, and yes I met a new friend, guess you already know," I answered happily, checking the oven to make sure the muffins were not in danger of burning.

"Well, the whole pack knows, he's been running satisfied through the whole pack saying that the Moon Goddess gave him a new mommy," he said, worried. "Mandy, what's going on?"

I knew that it might cause trouble but hearing him say that Blake was happy made me feel content.

"I know this might sound strange, but I fell in love with him. He's so adorable, smart, funny, and knowing he's got no motherly love, I decided to give him some. I don't know how to describe it, Peter. I don't know why but he became very important to me, to my heart. We have a connection. I think it's the same situation we had, remember – that pull to get close to each other?" I explained.

"Yes, I do," he answered, concerned.

"Is this a bad thing? He's just a child, a sad child, he needs his childhood to be happy, what's wrong with me trying to give him that?" I almost cried at the end. He sighed in response.

“There’s nothing wrong in trying to make someone happy, but I’m worried Mandy, please don’t make promises you can’t keep. You are here temporarily, please make sure he understands that. If you break his heart, I think even your brother won’t be able to protect you from Alpha Jones’ wrath. Blake is his weakness, and you know what that means.” he said, a little sad.

I know what that means, but I can’t force my heart to stop loving him, he’s my funny little Blake, and even when I’m gone, I’ll keep in touch. Nobody will take that from me.

“Don’t worry, Peter, he knows I’m leaving, and we already made plans for him to visit me in California.” I answered truthfully. “If you guys are free tonight, will you come for dinner? We could talk about everything, hmm?” I suggested hoping he would agree. It made me feel guilty that I forgot about him so easily.

“Will you make steaks?” he asked, already knowing my answer.

“Of course, everything for you honey, I even made muffins.” I teased him.

“Strawberry muffins?”

“Aha,” I said, taking the last set of muffins from the oven, the smell was mouthwatering.

“What time?” he asked excitedly.

“Be here at six,” I answered just as Blake entered my cabin, smiling in excitement.

“Deal, see you then.”

“Ok, bye,” I said and ended the call. Putting my phone down, I turned to Blake, who was sitting at the dining table, already munching one of the muffins.

“Hey, buddy, what makes you so happy today?” I asked, kissing his head and taking the chair next to him.

“My daddy’s coming home tomorrow!” he exclaimed, jumping in his seat.

I was happy and terrified at the same time to finally meet the Alpha. Hopefully, he would let me continue spending time with Blake. If he refused, it would break my heart.

“Can we make muffins for him?” Blake’s question got me out of my anxious thoughts.

“Sure thing, honey,” I answered, smiling and went back into the kitchen, still thinking about tomorrow. Why am I nervous? It’s not the first time I’ll meet an Alpha, maybe him being Blake’s father makes me feel this way. Oh God, please help me. Taking a few deep breaths, I forced myself to relax and start collecting ingredients for the next set of muffins.

Ethan Jones, tomorrow we’ll meet...