

Never again by Malgorzata Uchto

Chapter 4

4. Coming back home

Ethan's POV

"... ten more laps and we're finished" Alpha Henderson stated, standing in the middle of the training field while we all followed his order, exhausted, sweaty, and happy it was the last day of training. Finishing my last lap, I sat on the grass, breathing heavily. That was intense.

"Here, take it." a bottle of water appeared in my view, and I gladly took it and drank eagerly.

"Slow down, Alpha," the voice said in amusement. I was so focused on my task that I didn't register the person sitting beside me. When I finally emptied the bottle, I sighed and thanked the person. Turning my head to the left, I was surprised to see who it was.

"Sorry, Alpha Henderson, I didn't see you approaching." I explained.

"It's just Deacon, and it's ok, I probably shouldn't have been so tough on you today." he said and looked around apologetically. I followed his gaze to see all the other Alphas in the same condition as me. Yeah, we were worn out.

"That's alright, that's what we signed up for." I stated and looked at him. He was gazing at his warriors training at the other end of the field.

"At 8 pm the bonfire starts I thought I should reward you all for your hard work." he announced, turning to look at me. "You're a very skilled and strong Alpha Ethan, and an excellent fighter, probably the best trainee I have ever had." he

smiled at me. I was stunned for a moment at his praise but quickly composed myself.

“Thank you, Deacon. I appreciate that.” I answered truthfully. I put a lot of effort into this training. Being praised by him is a huge compliment. He’s the best fighter I know. I’m not surprised that the council asked him to train other alphas; he is simply the best choice with his knowledge, unorthodox approach, and amazing fighting techniques. I learnt a lot and was honored to hear his words. “The bonfire sounds good; I think everyone will appreciate it. I need to hit the shower first though.” I smiled and stood up to head to my room. We said our goodbyes and went separate ways.

On my way to our accommodation, I was interrupted by a familiar and breathless voice behind me. Smirking, I turned around to be greeted by my friend Alan. He looked worn out.

“Hey Ethan, happy to go home tomorrow?” he asked, exhausted.

“Yes, I’ll finally see Blake.” I answered, smiling at the thought.

“He’s probably excited to see you again too. You barely ever leave him for this long.” Alan stated the fact.

This was actually the longest time we’ve been separated. I usually take him with me when I have to go for more than one day. This time I couldn’t bring him with me, though. f**k. The past two weeks were tough. “I didn’t tell him yet. He found a new friend and he’s not missing me as much as I thought.” I answered in fake annoyance.

“That’s good man, someone saved him from crying after his daddy.” he joked, patting my back.

We both laughed. Continuing our walk, we talked about the bonfire and our favorite parts of training. When we reached my room, I hurriedly reached for the doorknob in desperate need for a shower but was stopped by his next words.

“Charlie was asking about you,” he said, making me face him. “She asked me to ask you to call her.” he nervously scratched the back of his head, knowing I didn’t like talking about his sister.

“Thanks, I’ll think about it.” I answered, not bothering to hide my irritation and entered my room, closing the door a little more forcefully than necessary. I went straight to the bathroom to shower. The moment the warm water hit my aching muscles, I relaxed. My thoughts went to Alan’s request. It pissed me off.

Charlotte Smith was a spoiled, irritating bitch, a total pain in my ass. At 25 years old, she was still mateless and constantly nagged me to make her my new Luna, saying her mate is probably dead and I need a Luna to help me lead my pack. She was right that my pack needs a Luna, but definitely not that irritating and selfish slut. I bet her mate rejected her, but she hid that. After Emily, I couldn’t think about anyone to fill her place. My sweet Emily was an excellent and loving Luna and the best mate I could ask for. Everybody adored her. My heart ached remembering her lifeless body covered in blood lying on the damn delivery bed. It’s been five years since that day, but it still hurt to think about. Her last words haunted me for a long time after that.

‘I love you Ethan, take care of our son and be happy again.’

And just like that she was gone. My world collapsed, my wolf howled in pain and my heart was ripped apart. That day I let myself cry for the very first time in years. How can I be happy without her? f**k. I punched the shower wall in anger. Shaking my head, I forced my brain to think about something else. I needed to call Blake, hearing his voice would definitely lift my mood.

Shutting the water off, I exited the shower and took the towel to dry my body. I entered the bedroom naked. I’m a werewolf, nudity was normal for me. I quickly put my clothes on and took the phone I left on the nightstand. Finding the number, I called my son.

"Daddy!" Blake exclaimed with joy, answering after the third ring. The sound of his voice made me smile instantly.

"Hey buddy, how are you doing?" I asked, delighted to hear his excitement.

"I'm good Daddy, I'm going to see Mandy and she'll teach me how to bake and then we'll go to play at the lake and then we'll paint our fort and..."

"Slow down, buddy." I cut him off, he was talking so fast in his obvious excitement.

"Soooo, I'm going to see Mandy...and we'll bake muffins... and play at the lake..." he said slowly but I zoned out, thinking about 'that' Mandy. She apparently took all his attention; all I hear is 'Mandy this and Mandy that'. It was starting to piss me off how much she seemed to have bewitched him.

Why the f**k did I agree to Ben's request and approve her stay at my pack? Probably to make him happy. She was his mate's best friend and was apparently devastated after hearing that he was leaving her. How pathetic. Humans, they couldn't deal with change. I bet she did it on purpose – to look miserable and depressed in order to gain some time so she could figure out how to make money from it. That's what she was: another gold digger. She definitely sensed money in Ben and was trying her luck using a 'best friend' card. My wolf growled in anger at my thoughts, but I blocked him out immediately. I was so engrossed with my thoughts that I didn't hear Blake's question.

"Sorry buddy, what did you say?" I asked apologetically.

"Are you ok, Daddy?" he sounded concerned, my baby boy.

"I'm fine buddy, I was just thinking about something." Or someone, I thought irritated.

"I said I miss you, when will you be back?" he asked, pleading which made me feel satisfied. 'Mandy' wasn't all he thought about. Again, my wolf growled. What the f**k was his problem? Focusing on my son, I simply answered "Tomorrow." and was instantly met with a shout of excitement.

"Yesss! I need to tell Mandy about it!" His response made me pissed again. What the f**k? I need to end this as soon as possible. I won't let some bitch to manipulate my son. Again, my wolf growled at me. What's wrong with him, is he sick or something? Still blocking him out, I said goodbye to Blake, hiding my annoyance and threw the phone on the floor. Seething in anger, I sat down on my bed and pinched the bridge of my nose. I needed a f*****g drink. I stood up and went out, heading to the party.

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Emptying my tenth beer, I felt a little dizzy. Slowly, I looked up and focused on the fire. The other alphas were enjoying themselves. Some were engrossed in conversations, some sucking faces with slutty omegas and some just like me drinking to simply forget. I was so focused watching the fire, I didn't hear someone approach and sit next to me until I felt an arm bumping with mine.

"What's up bro? You look like shit. Are you ok?" I over to see Alan's concerned and definitely drunk face. He offered another bottle of beer, which I gratefully took and took a few gulps.

"Yeah, I'm f*****g peachy." I scoffed, taking another sip of beer.

"Please tell me it's not Charlie?" he asked, broken. He knew exactly how I felt about her.

"No, it's not her." I answered truthfully.

"That's great man, at least I don't need to play the mediator between you two." he sounded satisfied, definitely too drunk to notice my indifference.

"So, what makes you," he pointed his forefinger at me, "this grumpy?" he asked before he took another sip of his own beer. He winked at the red headed omega approaching us with lust evident in her eyes. Goddess, is this a heat season or something? I was just about to respond but the redhead sat at Alan's lap and started to kiss him deeply, rubbing on his lap. She was definitely looking for a good f**k.

Uninterested in seeing live porn, I stood up and went for a walk. Reaching a huge meadow near the waterfall, I sat down and enjoyed the view. Moments later, I heard heavy steps and looked up to see Deacon coming my way.

"Can I join you?" he asked, sounding desperate so I gestured for him to join me. He sat down and looked at the waterfall. "You know, this is my sister's favorite spot. Every time she's here and has a problem, she comes here to think. I inherited that from her I guess," Deacon said, chuckling. I was intrigued, he was an only child as far as I knew.

"A sister? But you're an only child, right?" I asked him in all seriousness.

He sighed, "Yes, I'm an only child, but you never know when you will meet a stranger who will change your life, and you'll connect immediately. That's where cupcake comes in," he said smiling. "She is the best thing that ever happened to me, except my mate of course," He laughed, then his face turned serious. "I'm very protective of her." Why was he telling me that? "Anyway, I noticed your sour mood, is everything alright?" he asked, really interested.

No, nothing is alright, I have to deal with two bitches, one wants my Luna's position and the second one stole my son. I could feel myself getting angry again, but I quickly composed myself. "It's nothing, I just have a lot on my plate right now and I miss my son." I explained truthfully.

"Like we all do, man." he patted my back, chuckling. I laughed with him and relaxed. "Ok, I better go now, I need to fetch a beer before they drink it all," he

stood up. "See you tomorrow, Ethan." I just nodded in agreement, and he left me alone.

After staying for a little longer to enjoy the view, I decided to go to my room. Maybe tomorrow would be better. As I turned right into the corridor, I saw Alan leaving his room, his smug face and disheveled hair made me smirk. Stopping at my door, I heard him clear his throat, "Ethan, I'm sorry about Charlie." he apologized.

I raised my hand to cut him off, "Don't." I ordered, "Just tell her to leave me the f**k alone." I said, seething in anger again. I went inside my room, shutting the door firmly. To calm myself down, I took a long relaxing shower and headed straight to bed. I fell asleep almost immediately.

The next day, I was woken up by my phone ringing, with half opened eyes I reached for the nightstand and without looking at the caller ID I answered with a snap, "What?!"

"Did I wake you up?" the voice on the other side sounded familiar and apologetic. I checked the phone screen and seeing the ID, my eyes widened in shock. I composed myself immediately and explained myself.

"I'm sorry Alpha Henderson, I didn't expect you to call, I'm sorry for my outburst" I apologized quickly. It was 7.30 in the morning, after all.

"That's ok, and I told you it's Deacon. Anyway, I'm calling to invite you for breakfast at my house. I want you to meet my family." he offered sincerely "If that's ok with you of course?" he added.

To say I was shocked was an understatement. I was speechless for a few seconds but quickly accepted the offer. "I'd love to. What time?" I asked.

"Hmm in 30 minutes, is that ok?" Deacon asked unsure and I answered with a simple yes and we ended the call.

I got up from bed and started my morning routine. I don't know why he did it, but I'm honored and a little surprised. Is there something he wants from me? Shrugging, I chose my outfit, combed my hair and left the room.

Just when I was about to ring the bell, the door opened, and I was met with a beautiful little redhead. She was probably 5'7", with green eyes and a slender figure. I sensed the motherly love radiating from her; she was definitely the Luna.

"Hi, come on in, we've been expecting you." she said in her sweet and joyful voice, opening the door wider to let me in.

The house was decorated very modern with industrial design and was very beautiful. She led me to the dining room where Deacon was trying to reason with a little girl that looked like an exact copy of her mother. He was lecturing her about not going into the woods alone. I also noticed a boy with an annoyed expression on his face seeing the girl's behavior, he looked so similar to Deacon.

"I'm Linda, Deacon's mate." the redhead introduced herself, extending her hand for me to shake and I took it, bringing her hand to my lips with a small kiss before I introduced myself.

"Ethan Jones, it's a pleasure to meet you, Luna." I smiled friendly at her, making her giggle.

"Just Linda, don't need to be so formal." she answered and led me to the table. I took an empty seat opposite Deacon, and we said our hellos. Linda had prepared a lot of heavenly smelling food and I had just started to put it on my plate when the little girl started whining.

"Why can't I go alone? Aiden is allowed, why can't I?" she asked Deacon, pouting and crossing her arms over her chest. Deacon sighed in exasperation.

"Sweetie, the forest is dangerous and not safe for you to go there alone, even Aiden is forbidden to do that." he tried to reason with her but damn, the girl was stubborn.

"Then why did I see him going in there alone yesterday?" she shouted and pointed an accusing finger at him. Family drama.

"I wasn't alone, I was following Uncle Nick, he's teaching me tracking, stupid." the boy answered, rolling his eyes. I suppressed my laugh.

Deacon scolded both of them and after a few awkward moments, we continued to eat. I learned the names of the kids, the boy was ten-year-old Aiden, currently training with the pack's Beta, who was teaching him tracking. The girl was five-year-old Isabella, who was a little princess apparently. Linda assured me that despite the differences, they love each other. She even asked about Blake, which was very sweet of her, and I praised my son saying he's the best kid in the world. The conversation went smoothly but after an hour I decided to take my leave. I needed to go home and still needed to pack my bags. Standing outside on the porch, I smiled at the sweet couple and said my goodbye.

"Thank you for breakfast, it was delicious." I addressed Linda and she just smiled at me, next I turned to Deacon. "Your training approach is amazing, I'm glad I enrolled. I learnt a lot from you, I'll definitely come again." I assured him. I did learn a lot, and I hoped my warriors would appreciate it also.

"Have a safe trip home, Ethan. Something tells me we'll meet again soon." he said with a mischievous smirk, which made me confused. What did he mean, did I enroll in another training already? Saying goodbye, I left Deacon's house, another hour later I left his pack territory and boarded the plane. Finally going back home.

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"I just landed buddy; I'll be home in two hours." I assured Blake, smiling happily at the thought of seeing him soon.

It's good to be back.

On my way back to my pack's territory, I called Ben for updates and fortunately there were no rogues spotted during my training, so everyone was safe, and no more problems appeared. Next, I decided to call Blake to let him know I was on my way home. He was excited and told me about the surprise he made for me. That made me feel happy.

"Just hurry, I missed you Daddy!" He exclaimed happily. I chuckled,

"Ok buddy, see you in a while." I said, smiling and ended the call.

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Parking my car in front of the pack house, I felt relieved to finally be back home. I cut off the engine and attempted to take my things from the trunk but was interrupted by a shouting Blake who ran out of the house and jumped into my arms. I caught him immediately, held him tightly in my arms and inhaled his heavenly scent. Hmmmm. Apples, cinnamon, honey...and strawberries? That's different but so alluring I couldn't stop inhaling. My wolf purred in delight, but I focused on my son.

"You're here, you're back!" Blake cried in my neck, and I tightened my hold on him and kissed his head repeatedly.

"I'm here buddy," I said between kisses, "I missed you too." I inhaled his scent again, but the strawberries were still evident. "You smell different buddy, were you eating strawberries?" I asked, confused.

"I was with Mandy all day, maybe that's her scent." he answered and looked up at me with a smile "She smells like strawberries." he explained.

My wolf purred again at hearing Blake's words. I could feel myself getting angry and jealous. That human is crossing the line. She might smell nice, but she needs to know her place. After a moment, I put Blake down and took my suitcases inside. It was after dinner already, so we went straight to our floor, and I unpacked while telling Blake about my trip and he told me about Mandy and what they did.

He brought muffins they baked to surprise me, and we ate them vigorously. I had to admit they were delicious. When he went to bed an hour later, I decided to walk to the cabin where Mandy was staying to check out the cause of Blake's happiness.

The evening was quite cold but thanks to being a werewolf, it didn't bother me. Nearing my destination that strawberry scent was growing more intense and my wolf started to pace around in agitation. 'What's going on?' I asked him but he was silent. When I was about a dozen feet away, I saw the patio door open, and the alluring scent hit me twice as strongly. It wasn't just strawberries but was mixed with cranberry and honey. So mouthwatering, I took a big sniff of the scent. I closed my eyes to enjoy it, but my wolf nagged me to open my eyes. Once I obeyed, I saw her and froze. The world stopped, my heartbeat increased, and all the air left my lungs. A stunning little creature stood there wearing only a t-shirt at least two sizes too big. Brown hair pulled up into a messy bun, gray eyes looking at something in the distance, she had a wine glass in left hand and the right hand holding a phone to her ear, looking irritated at whoever was on the other end of the line. My wolf shouted excitedly, repeating one word in my head.

Mate.

I didn't hear what she was saying. I was too confused and stunned to register anything around me. She walked out of the cabin and sat down on the chair at the patio putting her sexy legs on the opposite chair fidgeting with her toes. It was so simple yet so f*****g sexy that my d**k immediately got painfully hard. I didn't move and just watched her taking a sip of the wine. When the glass met her kissable lips, I uncontrollably licked and bit mine thinking how good hers would taste. My wolf told me to claim her right here, right now and I almost agreed but stopped myself.

"...ok I'll do it, but you owe me big!" she said in her sweet and angelic voice, ending the call. She sighed and looked my way.

Although I was between the trees, well hidden in the dark, I felt like she noticed me. Her eyes were focused on the darkness, and I gulped in nervousness. What should I do? Her gaze held me in place, and I didn't want to look away. Willing myself to do it, I took slow steps back and then turned to leave.

Was I ready for another mate? My wolf was excited, but I on the other hand was terrified. Could I let her in? The answer was simple f**k NO! and with that, I shifted into my wolf and ran.