

Scars by Jessica Bailey Chapter 2

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We were both artists. I focused my talents on jewelry design. I opened a small shop. The front was my showroom; in the back, I had my workshop. I did my metalsmithing. I also had a small loft upstairs that I used to rest from all the custom festival orders a few times a year. I would create custom pieces and designs as werewolves cannot wear silver, but we still like shiny things as women. I made a good living with my shop. My mate was not as successful in his endeavors.

He was a photographer, and he was amazingly talented. His pictures took my breath away and made me log to travel the world so that he could take pictures. He opened a small gallery, but he quickly closed it. His ego could not take the criticism that came with selling one's art. Every person that walked past without saying a word or coming into look was a chip and his frail machismo. Soon my success was my curse.

His father died, and his mother came to live with us, and my house was taken over. It was my home, but I had no say. If I attempted to speak up, I was disrespecting his mother and disrespecting him. I found myself spending more and more time at my shop, making more and more excuses as to why I would not be home. It became my refuge. I was at this point supporting three people. I had to focus on my work to keep food on the table. Soon enough, even my haven was taken from me.

My mother-in-law did not like that I was the breadwinner as she was from an older, more traditional generation. She convinced her son that he should be the one controlling the finances, and my mate quickly took control of my business and all our finance. All I did was work under his watchful eye day in and day out. I lost contact with all my friends and hung on with dear life to keep my connections with my family. I became a shell of myself.

He never hit me or physically abused me in any way. His abuse was control! I made all our money, but I was only allowed \$20 a week. I didn't need more because my mate would get me what I needed. I didn't control what I ate as he was a picky eater and didn't like strange food. He controlled what I wore as he did not want any other male to look at me, but I had to dress in a way that would not bring him shame. He controlled me socially as I didn't need friends because he was the only friend I needed. The one connection he could not control was my Alpha father, John. My mate tried everything in his power to sever this connection.

We fought often, and I tried to regain some semblance of who I was. If we fought about finances, I was reminded I was a bastard who should not have been born. I was the reason that my mate's art had failed because I was a curse. It was only right of me to make it up to him by giving him control of my business. My full linages was a secret to the pack as I didn't want it to hurt my business, and some with traditional views would

not allow their families to buy from me as I was not a child of destiny. He would threaten to reveal my secret to the pack and ruin me if I did not comply.

If we fought over household issues or his mother, I was just a spoiled brat of an Alpha. He would remind me I had no power away from my father's pack, and he was in charge. I couldn't win no matter what I said. I gave up; I lost who I was. No, I didn't lose who I was; I was stripped of who I was. I was a walking puppet. I didn't even fight him when he wanted sex as I had no passion, no desire for him anymore. I just longed for him to finish and get off me. To the outside, I put on a mask of the perfect mate to the ideal man. I was too scared of what else he would take from me if I disobeyed.

The only thing I had that no one could take was my creativity. What I made was mine, I may not have control of my business or home, but no one could take away my creativity. I made a safe space in my mind that I would go to in the worst and loneliest of times. In it were all my future creations, and it is where my inspirations lived. I would look at a rough stone and metal and find its true calling. I would whisper, "what were you meant to be." As I would say that, and my eyes would become teary. I knew part of me was saying this to myself; the stones only answered as I cut and polished them, they still answered. I never did; the pain of that answer cut into my heart too deep to bear.

Being the eldest of the most powerful Alpha meant even as an adult, I still had responsibilities. My father and grandfather never hide my existence but embraces me fully. My brother was turning 17 soon and hence would have his heir ceremony. This was done when the next Alpha turned 17 giving them time to find their mate and learning how to run a pack. At 25, they were expected to take over the role, and the previous Alpha would become the leader of the pack elders. Once the next Alpha takes over, he will receive the Alpha mark on his left shoulder blade, a full moon, representing his right to rule his pack. The Alpha's mate would become the Luna after her Luna ceremony and receive the Luna Mark on her shoulder blade a crescent moon, showing she was one with the Alpha a phase of his full moon. I felt a bit sorry for my brother and his future mate. They had big shoes to fill. The pressure of taking over the Ashwood Pack was intimidating.

My stepmother Luna Celest called me regarding any possible travel needs for both my mate and me. I was so excited I missed them so much.

My brother's heir ceremony was the beginning of the end; I didn't know it yet. I rushed off the phone with Luna Celest, so excited to relay my news. My mate was not as enthusiastic. He was downright pissed.

"Why would I want to go to that bratty little shits Heir ceremony." He snarled as he sat at the kitchen table with his mother. She just glared at me saliently.

"He's going to be the next Alpha of the most powerful Pack in the US show some respect," I said, trying to show as much pride in my family as possible.

His mother, Karen, did not like when I talked back to her son. She snapped, “do as you are told like a proper, she-wolf, or didn’t that bastard maker teach you properly.”

It took everything in me to hold my wolf back from tearing her throat out. They had control over everything in my life. They hated my father and the fact he held more power than them.

My mate growled, “we are not going! And it’s final.”

I scrambled to think of a way to go that he could not say no to. “you don’t have to go, but I will have to. Our Alpha Mason is going, I will need to go, or it will look bad on my father and our Alpha.” I did it. They could not control me if two Alphas expected my attendance.

“Fine!” he growled, knowing he could not win.

I prepared for my trip in silent excitement. Longing for my family and a few days of love and peace, or so I thought. On the day I was departing, I had only just left 15 minutes earlier when my phone rang. It was my mate.

“That’s right. When I call you to answer, otherwise know that there will be consequences.” He snarled over the phone.

“I’m only going to be gone few days, and I’m going to see my family. There’s nothing to worry about.” I said as calmly and reassuringly as possible. I just wanted to hang up and enjoy my alone time for once.

“Fine, but when I call, you answer!” and he hung up. No goodbye, no love, you have a safe trip, just dead silence. It was always odd to me that we could not mind link, long distances as other mated couples. We only could a few hundred feet. My father and Celest could mind link for hundred of miles. I assumed it was my fault as I did most things. I guess I would have to watch my phone. I wasn’t sure what else he could take away at this point, but I didn’t want to find out.

I continue my three-hour road trip leasing to music, and my mind is clear. I have no idea what will be waiting for me when I return home, but at that moment, I didn’t want to think about it.