

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 31

### Chapter 31: Speaking from the Heart

\*\*\*Zane\*\*\*

A gust of wind carries a familiar scent as I walk back to the house, the hairs on the back of my neck standing on end.

Grayson growls loudly when I finally recognize the scent and I turn on my heel in time to see the same French Alpha who touched Kota last week now threatening my mate.

“Looks like someone needs to teach this b\*\*\*h some manners,” he snickers, his large build towering over my small mate and our pup.

“I’ll gladly volunteer.”

The scene is enough to send Grayson into a frenzy, my wolf taking over and shoving me back to watch him carry out his punishment. He shifts mid-run, rushing past our mate and pouncing on the stupid Alpha.

The Alpha is taken by surprise as Grayson pins him to the ground but quickly composes himself, wrapping his arms around my neck.

Grayson retaliates by dropping his weight on him and rolling, both of us wrestling each other around while Talia picks up Kota and steps away to safety.

I manage to pin the Alpha to the ground again, Grayson displaying his canines and snapping his jaws at him.

Kota’s whimpers remind me that a child is watching and I reign in Grayson’s anger, not wanting to traumatize our pup any further.

Annoyed, Grayson snarls menacingly at the Alpha and The Alpha scrambles to his feet, a deadly glare in his eyes.

“You again,” He mutters, Grayson snarling in response and taking a protective stance in front of Kota and Talia.

“Step aside. My problem is with the b\*\*\*h behind you, not you.”

A wicked smirk curls on Grayson’s lips as an idea pops into his head.

Grayson...

No....

I warn him but he’s already made up his mind, dropping our walls and building a telepathic connection between us and the Alpha.

“Unless you want me to rip out your tongue, you should watch what you say around my mate and our pup .” Grayson snarls.

He glances over at Talia, his eyes scanning her up and down before he looks over at us again and snickers.

“She’s not much to look at-”

“KNEEL ,”

Grayson commands, a black film glazing over the Alpha’s eyes as he obeys Grayson’s order.

The Alpha wordlessly kneels before me, sticking out his neck in surrender.

Grayson...

Before I can say anything else, Grayson turns to his side and lifts his leg, a stream of urine showering over the Alpha's head.

A shocked gasp escapes from Talia, little Kota giggling behind her.

Oh Dear Moon Goddess ,I groan, Grayson giving his leg a little unbelievable!

“Who's the b\*\*\*h now 2 ?”

Grayson sneers, kicking the Alpha in the chest with his hind paw.

“NOW SIT and WAIT.”

Grayson turns to face our shocked mate, nuzzling his head against her chest.

At first, Talia stares blankly at us but when Kota begins to stroke my fur, she finally snaps out of her trance and buries her head in my neck.

“Thank you,” she murmurs, her fingers gripping my fur.

We hear footsteps approaching, Queen Aurora and her Gamma walking towards us.

Gamma Evan immediately bursts into laughter upon seeing the urine drenched Alpha but Aurora looks anything but amused. She swallows back her words, however, and sighs tiredly as she forms a connection.

“Assume there is a good reason for what you've done to Benoit,” She says, her voice a bit strained as she nods towards the livid Alpha.

“He threatened my mate, “Grayson snaps.”

And since your guards failed to do their job and patrol the area, I had to take matters into my own hands!"

"Not that I owe you any explanations, but I gave Benoit permission to patrol River Moon grounds "

Aurora hisses, her fists clenched tightly at her sides.

She pauses for a moment to take a deep breath and calm herself down but I still see a flicker of anger lingering in her eyes.

"We'll talk about this later, She shakes her head disapprovingly at me. done now!"

Benoit, the young Alpha, snarls.

"When my father finds out about this, he'll-"

"That's enough out of you, Benoit,"

Aurora silences him, turning over to us, a stern look on her face.

"Go home," She says, Benoit growling with anger.

"You're just going to let him go?" He shouts.

"Are you stupid?"

Gamma Evan is in his face within a second, punching Benoit in the jaw and forcing him to the ground.

"You better calm your pissy ass down before I piss on you too," He growls, Benoit shouting back something in French as he spits blood from his mouth.

“Go,” Aurora says quietly, her face eerily calm.

“I’ll take care of this.”

There’s a faint hint of worry in her voice and it scares me, but I don’t question her, nudging Talia and Kota back to the guest house.

As we walk, Kota taps on my snout, giving me a timid smile through his chattering teeth.

“Can I have a ride?” he asks, his large eyes twinkling with hope.

“Not today, Kota,” Talia answers for me.

“First, you need a bath.”

Talia holds Kota a little closer to her chest to keep him warm until we reach the house.

\*\*\*Talia\*\*\*

Zane remains outside for a bit, not wanting to shift in front of me, and takes a shower downstairs while I take Kota up for a bath.

My heart pounds in my chest as I gather Kota’s things, the adrenaline still pumping in my veins from the scary encounter with the visiting Alpha.

Butterflies fill my stomach, however, when I think about how quickly Grayson and Zane responded.

They didn’t hesitate to take charge and put that Alpha in his place for disrespecting me.

It's been a long time since I had anyone but Gwen protect me and it was amazing to know I'm not as alone as I thought I was.

Grayson was so fierce with the Alpha but gentle as soon as he was done, nuzzling and licking me to make sure Kota and I were unharmed I let out a little chuckle as I prepare Kota's bath, still unable to believe he actually had the guts to pee on Benoit.

In all my years as Luna, no wolf had ever peed on another on my behalf! I find it hard to focus on my task, a bit giddy from the warm feeling spreading across my body.

Finally finishing, I dry and dress Kota in a pair of shorts and a t-shirt.

"Mommy, are you a wolf too?" Kota asks as I comb his hair.

"No, I'm not" I whisper, brushing some hair away from his face.

"I'm just ... me," I shrug.

Zane?

"...."

Seeing no reason to keep this from him, I decide to come clean.

"You, mi amor my lovei, are a wolf just like your father. And when you grow up, you will be a big, strong wolf who can protect me."

"Just like Zane protects us!" He smiles cheekily at me.

I continue to comb his hair but his face contorts as another thought enters his mind.

"Mommy, what is my daddy?"

My heart nearly skips a beat as my brain stops functioning properly for a second. I sit down on the bed beside Kota, trying my best to make sense of my jumbled thoughts.

Where do I even begin? Hey, you're dad's a low life piece of s\*\*t who f\*\*d your aunt while I was pregnant with you and he's now probably looking for you to either kill you or make you his heir!

"Kota, I—"

"Mommy, how come I don't have a daddy?" He cries, crawling onto my lap.

"I want a daddy."

"I...Kota, I,"

I struggle to string together any words, feeling as though I have failed my son. I have done everything in my power to provide Kota with everything he would ever need to compensate for what is missing in his life, a father.

A bitter anger fills my heart.

Christian and Vanessa have ruined any chance of us ever being a family again and in the process, have destroyed my confidence in ever building. I could hear the doubts in my head every time Zane smiled at me, picking at the scabs of my still healing heart to remind me how painful falling for lies can be.

Even now, the butterflies that flutter in my stomach scare me...because it means that he's slowly worming his way into my heart and that one day he'll have the power to hurt me too. I tilt Kota's chin up towards me, forcing him to look me in the eyes.

“Dakota...” I sigh, blinking my eyes to keep them from getting misty.

“I onced loved your father.I loved him very much...” I murmur, tucking his hair behind his ears.

“But he met someone he thought was ...better...and he stopped loving me.So we had to go our separate ways and I got to keep you all to myself,” I smile, tickling his tummy.

“And you have been the best gift your father ever gave me.”

He grins up at me, wrapping his arms around my neck.

“I am ? “Well, sometimes you are a little stinky,” I laugh, Kota grinning from ear to ear.

“But I love your stinky butt very much.”

“I love your stinky butt too!” Kota giggles, pressing his lips against my cheek in a sloppy kiss.

His large eyes suddenly grow very serious.

“Mommy, can Zane be my daddy ?” My cheeks flush at the question and I shake my head.

“Kota, “But he kisses you,” Kota argues, his face furrowing in confusion.

“Only Daddies kiss Mommies.”

“Kota,” I sigh, rubbing my temple to soothe the headache I feel coming on.

“It’s a lot more complicated than just kissing.”

“But he really likes you!” He persists, cupping both of my cheeks in his tiny hands.

“And I really like him.” I really like him too...but liking is not enough.

Not for Kota.

Not for me.

I fight back my tears and shake my head at him.

“I’m sorry Kota, but Zane is just a friend.”

I slide him off my lap and wipe my eyes.

“I need to shower. Why don’t you go downstairs and play with Zane for a little bit? I can order a pizza if you’re hungry. I’ll be down in just a second.”

“Okay,”

Kota sighs heavily, hanging his head low as he climbs off the bed. I grab him by the wrist and pull him back to me, tilting his head up.

“One day, Kota,”

I murmur, pushing back his hair from his forehead.

“When I’m stronger and my heart is not so broken, I will find you a daddy.”

“But I like Zane...” he pouts.

Ugh! Does this child have to be as hard headed as me?

“I will think about it,”

I give in, Kota unable to contain his excitement.

Squealing at the top of his lungs, Kota runs down the stairs to intrusive thoughts but they get the best of me and I hurry out, dressing in a t-shirt and pj bottoms.

Bracing myself for Kota’s 20 questions, I tiptoe down the hall, hearing Kota and Zane giggling.

Wanting to sneak up on them, I slow down my steps and get down on all fours, practically crawling down the stairs. As I get about midway down the steps, their voices become very clear.

“What does b\*\*\*h mean?” Kota asks, my hand going to my mouth to stifle my own giggle.

Zane can’t answer you Kota...I want to say, but I hold my tongue when I hear a small groan.

“I-It’s a ba-ba-bad word, K-Kota,” a deep voice stutters, my entire body going stiff.

“I-It’s not ve-very nice and y-you should al-always be nice.”

Is someone else in the house? I wonder, looking down at my very frumpy t-shirt.

I crawl down the steps a little further until I reach the bottom, peaking around the wall into the living room.

There, I find Kota and Zane rearranging the chairs, pillows and sofa cushions to build a fort in front of the TV. I don't see anyone else in sight, leaving me to wonder if I had really heard another person in the room.

"Why did that man call my mommy a bad word?" Kota asks, handing Zane another pillow beating erratically at the sound of his voice.

So he does talk! He just has a stutter...

Despite this, his voice is soft and gentle, like velvet, each syllable very soothing.

A bit of hurt spreads across my heart.

Why had he lied to me about his voice? How come he speaks to Kota but not to me, his mate? Were all of my mates just destined to not tell me the truth?

"I don't like bullies," Kota replies.

"Me-me neither," Zane chuckles.

"Zane, will you be my friend forever and ever and ever?" Kota asks, spreading arms wide to demonstrate the length of time.

"y-yes," Zane whispers.

"And will you always like my mommy?"

Even from my hiding place, I can see the faint tint of red in Zane's ears.

"Y-you and y-your mom-my will al-always be in my heart," Zane murmurs.

“A-and I wi-will always prot-tec-tec protect you.”

My anger quickly dissolves the more I listen to him speak.

“Zane, do you like kissing my mommy?” Kota asks, crawling into the completed fort.

“Y-you ask too ma-many questions,”

Zane shakes his head, his ears bright red with embarrassment.

Kota only grins, bombarding Zane with many more through his words but trying nonetheless.

Dakota lies patiently in the fort, hanging onto every word Zane speaks as if it were the most important and I realize how completely relaxed Zane is in Kota’s company.

He’s always so nervous around me, always knocking things over and avoiding eye contact with me.

I think about the memory he once showed me, remembering how his father had towered over him like a stone wall, no compassion in his voice when he spoke to his trembling little boy.

“..If he cannot say the words, then he doesn’t deserve to call me father...”

That was what his father said.

Did he think I would be the same? That I would be unable to see past his stutter and respect him as a mate? Did he think I would belittle him like his father and laugh in his face for struggling to say my name?

“Zane, why do you like my mommy?”

Kota whispers, making room beside him so that Zane can squeeze into the fort.

Zane goes quiet for a moment, my heart sinking as I realize perhaps his infatuation with me really only relies on our stupid mate bond. He silences my doubts, however, when he finally answers.

“Be-Because s-she is strong...”

Zane murmurs, closing the blanket door to the fort.

“An-and I w-want to be strong e-enough for her too.” belly as I replay his words. I’m not as strong as you think...I wantte tell him. I am still fixing all of my broken pieces...But I think I want to fix them with you...”

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### Chapter 32: Consequences

\*\*\*Vanessa\*\*\*

It’s very dark, always so dark in this place. I don’t know where I am, but it scares me. I want to get out but no matter how much I cry or scream, I am always met with cold, dark silence.

Regardless, I do not stop searching for a way out, running in any direction in hopes of finding the way out of this nightmare.

The pounding of my heart drums against my ears as I sprint into the nothingness, searching desperately for a light, a sound, anything, to let me know that I am not alone, that I’m still alive and that this is not the end for me. I force myself to keep running, putting one foot in front of another.

As I take another step into the darkness, the ground beneath my feet gives way and I find myself collapsing into the emptiness, my heart sinking to the pit of my stomach as I fall into the endless pitch black.

My arms fling about, searching for something to grab onto and save me from this never-ending fall.

The fall is long and torturous, and after a while, I give up and brace myself for my inevitable death.

Death, however, never comes to take me and my body finally stops falling, colliding into a pool of water.

I open my mouth to scream, my lungs filling with water but I stop when I notice the light above my head, illuminating the waves of the water as it sways to and fro.

My heart fills with hope; Moving my arms and legs, I swim to the surface, coughing up the water I drank and gulping the fresh air as the gentle breeze kisses against my skin.

I wipe my eyes and look around, elated to have finally made it out of the darkness and in what appears to be a lake. I see a sandy beach on the horizon and a silent forest sitting just behind it.

The sky has a greenish tint to it, not a cloud in sight.

I swim to the shore and lay for a moment to rest, counting my breaths.

Looking down at my body, I notice I am dressed in a flowy white dress with no sleeves, my feet completely bare.

After calming my heart, I venture in the lush green forest.

It does not take me long to realize that {I am still alone but the quiet does not scare me for some reason, a gentle calm washing over me the deeper I walk into the forest.

The breeze hums quietly in my ears.

“Vanessa...” it whispers.

I follow the delicate voice of the wind into the woods, feeling the damp earth beneath my feet as I rush through the trees.

Beneath the canopy, I hear the light trickling of water in the distance. I search for the source and come upon a stream rushing through a rocky bed.

Completely exhausted, I step into the cool waters to wash my feet and sit on a small boulder.

“Hello child,” a silky voice murmurs from behind me, startling me enough that I nearly slip off the rock and into the water.

I turn around to find a beautiful woman with porcelain skin face down to her waist.

Like me, her feet are bare but she wears white dress with blue trim and embroidery. Her eyes resemble the dark skies of the night, two onyx beads containing a million stars. Her thin lips are as red as a rose, curled like two petals into a smile.

“Come with me,” the woman instructs, holding out a hand towards me.

A calming presence surrounds her and when I place my hand in hers, a cool electric sensation tingles up my arm.

“Do you know who I am, child?” she says as we walk along the stream.

I take a good look at the woman, and while something about her seems familiar, I cannot put a finger on where I could have possibly met her.

“You seem...familiar,” I reply honestly, my voice shaking a little.

A small chuckle escapes her perfect lips.

“I should hope so.You called me here.”

I stop in my tracks and look at her closely, raising an eyebrow.

“I did?”

The woman laughs again, the sound rich and mystifying.

“You asked for a wolf,”

She murmurs, my eyes widening in shock.

“You’re...”

“I go by many names,” She smiles.

“But most call me Moon As the words leave her lips, a beautiful gray-blue wolf appears beside her.

“Devina...”

I whisper, a smile curling on my lips as I remember meeting her the first time.

Devina’s piercing blue eyes flicker towards me when I call out to her, her head tilting to the side in amusement.I drop down on my knees before Moon Goddess, lowering my head and kissing her feet.

“Your Grace,” I cry, ecstatic that my wish is coming true.

“Oh thank you for this gif-”

“You have nothing to thank me for,”

Moon Goddess snaps, stepping back.

“I have given you nothing.”

“But I thought.”

“All good things to those who wait,”

Moon Goddess sighs.

“Devina would have been your wolf had you simply trusted in my plan.”

Plan? My heart sinks to the pit of my stomach. What plan?

“Your impatience and jealousy got the best of you.”

Moon Goddess shakes her head disapprovingly, looking towards Devina.

“And you took what was not yours.”

A bitter anger fills my heart.

“”But- but he was mine...” I sob at her.

“Christian was mine! I met him first! I loved him first.”

“He was not meant for you!”

Moon Goddess reprimands.

“I deal with you. Someone who would do anything to please you and show you what it’s like to be loved.”

Tears trickle down my cheeks.

“Please, your Grace. Please have mercy on me! I know I made a mistake but-”

“Do you have any idea what it’s like to have your mate taken from you? To have someone else tear you apart from the person you love most?”

Moon Goddess asks, a slight tremor in her voice as she tilts her head up to the sky “Do you have any idea the pain your sister felt when she walked into her bedroom and found you with her mate?”

I swallow back my words, unable to look the goddess in the eye.

“Many nights, she came to you crying about her pains, pains you were causing,” Moon Goddess continues.

“And all you did was laugh in her face. You told her it was all in her head. You made her feel crazy! You have forsaken a sacred bond between two people!”

Moon Goddess shouts, stepping back to reign in her emotions and calm down.

“So now you must pay the price.”

Fear settles into my bones as I look at Moon Goddess’s cool black eyes.

“You took something sacred from your sister and now ...She will take something from you.”

Devina suddenly vanishes from Moon Goddess's side, leaving behind nothing but dust in her wake.

“Noo!”

“I scream, reaching out my hand to hang on to the beautiful wolf only for her to slip through my fingers receive the wolf that was once meant for you,”

Moon Goddess declares.

“And to show you just how merciful I am, I will still grant you your wish. You will receive a wolf, one worthy of your crime, and endure all the consequences of your actions.”

She flicks her wrist, a small brown wolf with reddish brown eyes appearing beside her. She is not nearly as beautiful as Devina.

The little wolf whines, lowering her gaze to Moon Goddess's feet.

“Let this be a lesson to you... Never interfere with my plans again, child,”

Moon Goddess explains as I gaze upon the pathetic wolf.

Moon Goddess looks down at the small wolf, stroking her dull coat.

“She is not much now, but you can make her stronger in time and with patience. Lots of patience.”

I look down at the wolf with disgust.

How the hell am I supposed to be Luna with that mangy mutt? How the hell am I supposed to give Christian his heir?

“Our time is up,”

Moon Goddess whispers, placing a finger on my forehead.

“I will be watching you closely. Until next time.”

Before I can say anything else, a bright white light blinds me, Moon Goddess and the wolf disappearing. I close my eyes to shield them from the burning brightness and when I open them again, I find myself staring at a white ceiling.

I try to breathe but there’s something lodged in my throat.

I can’t breathe! I can’t breathe! I want to scream but all that Panicking, my hands feel around my throat, a heart monitor beeping erratically beside me.

I hear a loud slam followed by footsteps and quickly find myself surrounded by people in scrubs.

Dr. Lila steps forward, instructing someone to raise my bed.

“Calm down, Luna,” she mutters, placing her hands on the tube coming out of my mouth.

“Let’s get this out.”

I gulp large breaths of air once the thick tube is removed, my eyes frantically scanning the room.

It appears I’m in the pack hospital and as expected, my husband is nowhere to be found.

I open my mouth to speak, but Dr. Lila beats me to the punch.

“I’ll mindlink the Alpha,” she murmurs.

“I’ll tell him you are awake.”

\*\*\*Christian\*\*\*

“Do you have what I’ve asked for,” I ask Saul, the private investigator I hired to find Natalia.

“Everything you requested is right in here,” Saul replies, plucking a large manila envelope from his suitcase and sliding it across my desk for the envelope.

Saul and I have been working closely together for the past week trying to locate Natalia.

We tried searching for Natalia’s bank statements but she withdrew all of her Luna money from its original account so I could no longer track her monetary movements.

When that came up empty, we scoured public records in Wyoming, the state Natalia landed in after leaving Silver Crest according to her travel records.

Luckily for me, the state of Wyoming requires petitionees looking to change their name to notify the public of their name change.

According to records, Natalia filed for a motion of confidentiality and despite not having proof of physical abuse or a restraining order against me, she managed to convince the judge that her life was in danger.

The motion was granted, her file sealed from the public.

It was irritating how smart Natalia could be sometimes but money moves mountains these days.

All I had to do was make an offer the clerk could not refuse and before I knew it, Talia Ramos became my new obsession.

We cross-referenced Talia Ramos against other public records like birth certificates, marriage records, real estate ownerships, vehicle licensing, and other court records across the state of Wyoming.

Saul expanded the search nationwide when we found nothing and even searched within his own databases and networks until he found her.

After four years of searching, I finally have her in my Open it! Jack snarls.

I do not waste anymore time and tear the envelope open, finding a real estate record for a home in a town called Poulsbo in the State of Washington.

There's also a copy of a medical assistant badge with a photograph of Natalia, her lips pressed together and her hair tousled off to the side.

I smile at the picture.

Tiny, Jack purrs. She still looks amazing.

"She also works at a bar," Saul says as he lights up a cigarette, Jack growling at the thought of our mate working in such a place.

"I've provided the address to the place."

A bar? Jack growls.

That's beneath her!

"I believe congratulations are in order,"

Saul chuckles, taking a drag from the cigarette.

“I found the birth certificate confirming Natalia gave birth to a son. Your son goes by the name Dakota Ramos.”

My heart feels as though it's soaring.

Talia hadn't failed me after all. She gave me a son! Hart! Jack huffs.

We'll fix our son's name to Dakota Hart.

“My contacts tell me she enrolled your son in a local daycare,” Saul says, blowing out smoke from his nose and lips.

“I've given you the address and phone number to that as well.”

“Dakota,” I repeat, testing out the name on my tongue.

Wanting to get a jump on finding her, I hand Saul a check and “Pleasure doing business with you, Sir,” he mumbles, turning on his heel and leaving.

I call in Jordan and Derek, both of whom look exhausted from a training session.

“I found her,” I sigh in relief, pushing the documents on my desk closer to them.

“I found my mate.”

Derek examines the pages, his eyes carefully studying Natalia's real estate records, while Jordan stares blankly at her medical badge.

“She's made well of herself,” Derek mumbles as he reads.

“Of course she did. She’s my mate,” I reply, my mind already daydreaming of the day we would reunite.

She would be angry at first, but once she realized that I was just frustrated with her lack of pregnancy, she would understand that we were truly meant for each other.

I will give her a Luna Ceremony even greater than her first and we will live happily ever after with our pup.

“Jordan, I want you on the first flight to Seattle,” I instruct him, knowing Natalia would be angry if I went searching for her.

“You two still have a connection. She’ll be a lot more willing to cooperate if the first person she sees is you, her Gamma.”

“She hates me,” Jordan replies without hesitating.

“I betrayed her by keeping quiet. She won’t want to see me.”

I sit up immediately and face him.

“Well, then figure out “

“You were her closest friend. She will forgive you.”

“She’s not the forgiving type. You know that!”

Jordan retorts, Jack snarling at the challenging tone in his voice.

“It’s probably best if we just leave her alone-”

I have him pinned up against the wall before he can finish his sentence, digging my elbow into his throat.

“She belongs to me,” I snarl, baring my teeth at him.

“And you will bring her home.”

He lowers his gaze, giving into my Alpha aura.

“Yes Alpha,” he replies with a strained voice.

I let him go, returning to my desk and jotting down all of the information he will need to bring my Tiny home. I make a copy of the badge and slam it against his chest.

“You will find her and convince her to come back to me,” I snarl, practically shoving him out the door.

“Or I’ll kill you myself.”

“Yes, Alpha,” he nods, walking out of the room.

The thought of Natalia coming home calms me down a little, but Jordan’s attitude worries me.

He’s never been one to question my decisions. I’ll have to keep a close eye on him... I am about to give Derek instructions to start preparing everything for Natalia’s return when I receive a mindlink from Dr. Lila

“Alpha,” she whispers.

“The Luna is awake.”

\*\*\* Jordan\*\*\*

“We need to talk ” I mind-link my father as I pack my things for Washington.

“I’ll be home in 20 minutes.”

Maybe she won’t hate us, Adam, my wolf, tries to soothe me. Maybe she’s had time to forgive.

You and I both know that Natalia does not forgive betrayals, I snap. I betrayed her in the worst possible way.

Adam falls silent, knowing he could not argue with the facts.

I finish packing up my stuff and loading my luggage into the car.

The drive to my parent’s house is a short one, my dad waiting for me in the driveway.

“Where are you off too?” he asks as I pull up.

“There’s been a change in plans...” I mutter.

“He found her,” I add, putting the car in park.

“Christian found Natalia and I’ve been sent to bring her home.”

His face pales.

“But Christian can’t remain as Alpha. There’s no guarantee his wolf will remain sane enough to continue to lead us even if Natalia returns!”

“I know that!” I snap, my father glaring at me for raising my voice.

“I am well aware of Christian’s insanity. He thinks Natalia will forgive him for what he did to her. For what we did to her.”

My father goes quiet for a moment, thinking over a new my chest at the thought of facing Natalia again.

The look of betrayal on Natalia's face that night flashes across my mind.

"I can't bring her back here," I murmur to myself.

"I can't put her through hell again. She deserves to live in peace with her pup."

"So what do you plan on doing?" my father asks, lowering his voice.

"What I should have done over four years ago," I sigh, starting up the car.

"I'm going to protect my Luna."

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Zane\*\*\*

Talia orders a pizza and the three of us sit by the fort and watch Shrek in Spanish. I can't follow most of what is being said but the subtitles help.

Talia seems restless as we watch, glancing at me from the corner of her eye every so often and shifting on her pillow over and over again.

I know there's something on her mind but I cannot bring myself to invade her privacy, so I timidly place my hand over hers, Talia flinching as the sparks ignite between us.

Ashamed, I pull my hand away but she takes it in hers and interlocks our fingers, muttering an apology under her breath.

“Sorry...it’ll just take a little getting used to,” she blushes, her thumb caressing mine.

“Your hands are...warm...” she smiles nervously.

She says nothing more, turning her attention back to the movie.

I want to ask her what is on her mind but before I can figure out a way to communicate, there’s a knock at the door.

A bit of dread settles in the pit of my stomach when I see Evan standing in the doorway.

He tries to hide his worried face with a smile, but his eyes give him away.

“The Queen wishes to speak to both of you about today’s... incident,” he says, carefully picking his words.

“Zane didn’t do anything wrong,”

Talia huffs, taking a Grayson practically swoons over the gesture and like a love sick puppy, demands to come out and mark her on sight.

Is that all you can think about right now? I snap at him, knowing we are very likely going to get kicked off the territory for his behavior.

No, I’m definitely thinking about her t\*\*s too, Grayson replies nonchalantly.

Just look at how she’s puffing out her chest.

They look great in this top...

I despise you, I sigh, knowing there is no way to trade wolves at this point.

Trust me, I'd trade humans in a heartbeat, he retorts.

"I never said Zane did anything wrong,"

Evan explains calmly, though I can see the fear flicker in his eyes as he backs away from my small Latina mate who glares furiously at him.

"Trust me, I would have loved to piss on Benoit Perrault years ago."

"So then why-"

"Things are more complicated than you think and unfortunately, Zane and his wolf only made things worse,"

Evan interrupts.

"Please, just come to the Pack house so Aurora can speak to you both."

Seeing that we would have to face Aurora sooner or later, we grab Kota and head to the pack house where Evan takes Kota out to play with Rio on the lawn while Talia and I head upstairs to Aurora's office. I don't smell the visiting Alphas anywhere, meaning they're nervous.

Talia must be nervous too because she holds my hand as I open the door to the office, giving it a tight squeeze as we enter.

The tension in the room is thick, Aurora resting her head in her hands as she focuses on her breathing while her mate, Oliver, gives me a murderous look.

Carter, their Beta, seems to be the only one not upset at the moment, greeting both Talia and I with a smile.

A spine tingling fear washes over me when Oliver opens his mouth to speak.

“Do you have any idea what you two have done?”

Oliver growls, his blue eyes flickering between sapphire and silver.

“Do you have ANY idea how much you f\*\*\*\*d up-”

“Oliver, stop it...”

Aurora warns, her face stern as she looks at her husband.

“Let them speak for themselves before you place blame on anyone.”

“You know as well as I do that it does not matter what the reason was. Zane had no right to pee on an Alpha visiting my territory!”

“Our territory,”

Aurora corrects him, Oliver’s mouth closing instantly.

“You forget, Zane and Talia are my guests here and Benoit, as a visitor, should have respected me by respecting my guests. You and I both know he has not!”

“So what do you propose we do?”

Oliver shakes his head in disbelief.

“That we should just let Zane get away with throwing away everything we’ve worked hard on building because he can’t “You’re one to talk,”

Aurora retorts, Carter coughing to hold back his laughter.

Oliver gives him a deadly look, Carter holding up his hands in surrender.

“I think I need some air,”

Oliver mutters, storming past me.

“Je t’aime,” Aurora calls after him, Oliver pausing at the door and taking a deep breath.

“I love you too,” he sighs, closing the door after him as he steps out.

Aurora lets out a large breath of air, pinching the bridge of her nose as she once again rests her head in her hands.

“Aurora, I can explain,” Talia says when the suffocating silence becomes too much.

“Zane was just—” Aurora holds up her hand, Talia clamping her mouth shut.

“I already know what happened,” She mumbles, finally looking up at us.

“I saw your memories as soon as you walked in.”

She runs her fingers through her hair and leans back in her chair with her eyes closed.

“Unfortunately, it does not make this situation any better.”

“What exactly is the issue?” Talia asks for both of us.

“Benoit is just another Alpha.”

“What’s the issue?”

Aurora laughs sarcastically, sitting up straighter.

“The issue is that Lune De Minuit is River Moon’s the pack company, but they also have a huge influence over our other shareholders. Alpha Jacques’s eldest daughter, Adeline, used to manage these shares before she went rogue 6 months ago. Benoit is the heir apparent to the Alpha title and has been managing the shares from France. He is set to take the title next month, so we planned to have a formal meeting with him next week to discuss the future of our partnership. His father, however, decided to show up two weeks earlier than expected.”

She stops to rub her temples in exhaustion.

“Oliver has been negotiating with Jacque all week to come up with a finalized plan to end the partnership. They came to an agreement this morning until Grayson so graciously pissed on Benoit Perrault. Now, not only are all the negotiations off the table, but Lune de Minuit has declared River Moon and, by proxy, my kingdom, an enemy.”

The young Queen looks like her head might explode with frustration and for a brief moment, she appears overwhelmed with emotions.

“I can’t believe I’ve only been Queen for less than 3 months and I’m about to enter another war,” she whispers under breath, Carter walking over to her and patting her back.

“Give yourself a little credit,” he chuckles.

“You were Luna for like 5 minutes before we went to war with the Witches and you took them down in less than 3 weeks. You can handle a snobby Alpha and his son with your hands tied behind your back.”

Aurora does not smile but his words seem to have given her the comfort she needed.

An enormous wave of guilt washes over the Queen.

“It’s not your fault,” Aurora says after a deep sigh.

“Benoit would have managed to cause trouble with or without Grayson’s help,” she laughs dryly.

“But did it have to be piss?”

You’re lucky I held back, Grayson snickers. It was either piss or rip out his throat.

You should be thanking me. Would you shut the f\*\*k up? I snap, Aurora bursting into laughter.

“Me cae bien tu lobo, {I like your wolf},”

Aurora giggles, before her face once again grows stern.

“But he needs to learn discipline. I wholeheartedly disagree, Grayson replies before I shove him to the back of my mind.

“I still have something to discuss with both of you,” Aurora says, her eyes switching between Talia and I.

“Are we being kicked out?” Talia asks, her hand squeezing mine.

“That depends entirely on you,” Aurora responds with a shrug as she rests her hands on her desk.

“I made you a promise that I would keep you safe and I have failed you now on two occasions,” she smiles halfheartedly.

“And now it looks like the time of peace in my Kingdom is over.”

Talia shifts nervously on her feet so I wrap my arm around her waist and pull her close to remind her she has me to lean on.

“I know you have your reservations about wolves, so I don’t add.”

“I could always make arrangements to place you somewhere else while Gwen completes her mission...But I would really love it if you stayed.”

Talia goes very quiet for a moment, wrapping her arms around my stomach and burying her nose in my chest.

“Dakota really likes it here,” Talia whispers to herself, though we all hear her.

“He’s never been around other pups...I had forgotten how much pups need to be around other wolves.He’ll have questions that I don’t know the answer to...And there are some good wolves here that he can look up to,” she admits.

“It could be good for Kota.”She looks like she has more to say before now, that is all she has to offer.

“So is that a yes?” Aurora asks with a hopeful smile.

“Well, what do you think, Zane?” Talia murmurs, slowly tilting her head to look up at me.

“Should we stay?”

Heat rushes to my cheeks and I blink at her.She’s asking me? No, Zane.She’s asking your shadow, Grayson grumbles, the desire to punch my own wolf growing by the second.

“Will you protect Kota and I?”

Talia whispers, her thick lashes fluttering at me.

With my life, I want to say but I only manage to nod my head at her, a small but beautiful smile curling on her lips.

“Then we’ll stay...” Talia replies, turning to look at Aurora.

“might like it.”

“I’ll see to it that he’s enrolled. I’m glad to see River Moon is slowly changing your perception of us wolves,”

Aurora chuckles, Talia’s cheeks turning red.

The young Queen rummages through her drawers and plucks out an envelope, holding it out for me to take.

“Which reminds me, in less than a month, there will be a Night of Melodies ritual. Four of our pups will receive their wolves over the next few weeks and will be initiated into River Moon as official pack members. We would be most honored if you would join us in this celebration. It will take place on the Buck Moon, perfect for the pups to test out their new wolves. There will be lots of food and music and plenty of pups for Kota to play with. It should be fun if you choose to come.”

“Thank you, your Majesty,” Talia replies quietly, taking the envelope from my hand.

“Are we free to leave now?”

“Yes, I just have one more question for Zane,”

Aurora says as she rises to her feet and switches to telepathy.

“Zane, you asked if you could work here in River Moon and I think I have something you could do. Would you be at all interested in guard training? Now that we have a new enemy on the horizon, it would be nice to have another silver wolf helping to protect the pack. You don’t have to do it if you don’t want to and you don’t have to give me an answer right now but-”

“Yes!” I reply almost too quickly, Grayson rolling his eyes at me for my eagerness to be useful. “I mean, yes, your Majesty. I would like that very much.”

“Great!” she says aloud.

You can start first thing Monday morning, 6 am sharp. Evan can pick you up and he’ll take it from there.

Her eyes suddenly fog over and she heaves a heavy sigh, Carter laughing at her.

“Well if that’s everything, I’m apparently late for a meeting with the other Alpha’s. You are dismissed.”

Talia and I collect Kota from the lawn and head back to the house.

\*\*\*Natalia\*\*\*

The idea of an impending war is unsettling.

Silver Crest experienced a time of peace during my reign as Luna and I’d only ever seen one rogue attack. It was small and luckily no one got hurt but it pales in comparison to an all out war against sophisticated werewolves.

Having Zane and Grayson with me, however, puts my mind at ease.

They would protect Kota without hesitation.

“What did the Queen ask you?” I finally ask when we arrive at the guest house.

For a second, it appears Zane might actually answer, his mouth opening a little but ultimately, he bites his tongue and finds his phone to type out his reply.

I do my best to remind myself that he is probably just afraid to speak to me, but it hurts nonetheless that he will not use his voice around me because Zane suddenly looks very nervous, as if waiting for me to scream at him.

To be fair, though, I know I have not been the kindest person to him so I understand that it will take some time for him to open up to me.

Patience, I tell myself, forcing a smile on my face.

Just be patient. I stand on the tips of my toes and press my lips against his, Zane’s eyes widening with shock at the sudden kiss.

It takes a moment for him to finally react but when he does, my entire body fills with sparks as his arms wrap around my waist.

“Eww mommy, eww!”

Kota squeals, a huge grin on his face as he holds his hands over his eyes.

“No more kisses for Zane, mommy!” I pull away from Zane and bend over to pick up Kota.

“Should I kiss you instead?” I ask, showering his chubby cheeks with kisses.

“No!” Kota screams, bursting into laughter as I tickle his belly.

Zane remains frozen in his place like a statue, his cheeks and ears bright red.

I lean forward to peck him on the lips, Zane only blinking at me.

Perhaps I am being too forward? I wonder, feeling a little dejected by his lack of enthusiasm.

I want to turn away and hide under a rock for letting my feelings get the best of me, when Zane suddenly cups my cheeks my stomach, their wings fluttering with glee with every movement of Zane’s delicious lips.

“Ewww, cooties,” Kota cries, once again covering his eyes as I reluctantly pull away from Zane.

“Okay, you little gremlin,” I laugh, making farting noises on his cheeks.

“How about you and I go look for a room for you tonight?” I ask, tickling him.

Zane tilts his head in confusion.

“A room all for me?” Kota asks, grinning from ear to ear.

“A room just for you,” I say, tapping his nose.

“You will be sleeping by yourself like a big boy tonight. What do you think?”

“Yeah!”

Kota nods his head, his big eyes twinkling with delight.

I carry Kota upstairs, but not without noticing Zane blushing furiously at the prospect of being alone with me tonight.

Kota picks the room at the end of the hall with a large window facing the River Moon Packhouse after inspecting all the rooms thoroughly and testing the mattresses for maximum bounciness.

I bring him all of his clothes and the few toys that he brought to make the room feel like his.

As a finishing touch, Kota places his stuffed wolf on the bed to sleep with him.

Around bedtime, I settle Kota into bed, cuddling with him for a moment.

“Kota?” I ask as I comb his hair with my fingers playing with his ears.

“Does...Does Zane ever talk to you?” I ask, biting my lower lip as I wait for his response.

Kota scrunches up his nose and laughs at me.

“Uh huh,” he nods his head.

“All the time.”

“And what do you guys talk about?” He shrugs, petting his wolf’s fur.

“Stuff.”

“What kind of stuff?” I pry, wanting to know just how long Kota and Zane have talked without me knowing.

“Poop!” Kota squeals.

“Kota, I’m being serious,”

I sigh, frowning at the little boy. I don’t get much information from him, however, Kota being too excited to sleep in his own room so I give up trying entirely.

It takes me an hour to finally put Kota to bed, my own energy drained from all of today’s activities.

I drag myself back to my room where I find Zane setting up a pillow and blanket for himself on the floor, reminding me that I had told him he could share the bed with me to keep Kota from curling up on the floor with him.

“You can sleep with me if you want,” I blurt out, covering my mouth in embarrassment almost immediately after the words leave my mouth.

“I-I mean you can sleep on the bed..with me,” I correct myself, Zane’s ears turning pink.

He nervously gathers his things and stares at me for a hold back my laughter when he trips over his own blanket and lands on his back on the bed, a part of his shirt riding up to his belly button.

I see a glimpse of an S-shaped scar on his hip but he quickly fixes his shirt to hide it. I do my best to pretend not to notice the shame in his eyes as he scrambles to hide under the covers and I climb into bed with him, pulling the covers down to reveal his red face.

“Why do you hide from me?” I ask, his dark brown eyes unable to meet mine.

I tilt his chin up, forcing him to look at me.

“Why did you hide your stutter from me?”

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 34

### Chapter 34: Hidden I

\*\*\*Zane\*\*\*

“Why did you hide your stutter from me?” She asks, her hand reaching out to touch my cheek.

I flinch away, my entire world collapsing in on me.

Quick! Play dead, Grayson snickers, his stupid comment making me even more nervous.

Unable to face my mate, I turn around on my side to hide my shame from her, pulling the covers over my head.

For a long time, the only sound I hear is the pounding of my heart against my ears, drumming louder with every passing second.

“Zane?” Talia whispers, tentatively placing her hand on the covers.

“Zane, please look at me. You don’t have to hide from me.”

The fear gripping my heart, however, makes it hard for me to face her. I know better than to speak.

My father spent years reminding me just how worthless my words were and he trained me to be quiet to avoid embarrassing him.

I know all too well that the second she hears my voice, she’ll laugh, or worse...she’ll hate me like my father. You’re being irrational, Grayson mutters.

If she really hated you, why on earth would she still be here with you? The Queen gave her a chance to leave and yet she chose to stay here with us! She asked us to protect her and her pup.

Our pup! She kissed us here alone with us! Does that sound like someone who hates you for your flaws? Do her actions remotely resemble Father's? Each individual word he says makes sense, but I cannot understand their meaning together.

How could anyone love me the way I am? My own father could not even stomach the sight of me.

Gamma Wyatt never mistreated me, but he went along with my father's idea to pass me off as Agne's son and pretended I did not exist.

He turned a blind eye to the torture and abuse I faced in the Hive.

Agnes cannot hear me so she cannot grow impatient with me when I have to repeat myself over and over again.

My mother was a kind woman, but I knew all too well that I was a burden to her and that I ruined a lot for her.

She and my father would have had a better marriage had I not stood in the way with my ineptitude.

I was only a month old the day my brother, Jonathan, died but there is no doubt in my mind that she wished my brother had lived instead of me.

He would have been a better son and my father would have been proud to name him as the next heir of Scarlett Haven.

Kota is the only person who does not seem to notice my imperfection, but he is only a child and he does not understand that the man he wants to call Dad cannot even say his name without getting stuck.

One day, he will grow up and find it embarrassing for me to speak around him and his friends.

Perhaps he will even pretend to not know who I am.

I cannot entertain the idea that anyone will ever accept me as anyone or cause trouble if I stand back and never say a word. I can be the Silent Alpha, the one my father is too afraid to ever let the world know about.

The one who lurks in the shadows, watching over the people he loves from the comfort of the darkness.

Bullshit! Grayson snarls.

This is bullshit and you know it! Our mate is giving us an opportunity to show her who we are, he adds, his anger evident in every word he spews.

Have you forgotten how huge that is? After what her former mate did to her, she is sitting here, asking us to let her in.

Have a little faith in our mate and give her a chance. She deserves it. She deserves someone better...

Will you have a little faith in Moon Goddess for once? Grayson sighs in frustration .

She chose Talia for us for a reason and I, for one, would like to know what that reason is.

Don't you? Yes, but...But nothing! Grayson roars. No more hiding.

No more silence! You have to remember that you are not the same little boy who used to stand in front of the mirror reciting poetry while his father stood behind him with a cane.

You have a mate who holds your hand when she's scared and kisses you when she doesn't know what else to do

.You have a pup who wants you to be his father.

You have a mother who has watched over you for the last twenty years without complaint.

You have a friend who wants to teach you to be a better version of yourself...and you have me, your other half.

We will share this burden together and we will prove to Talia that we deserve every kiss, every hug, and every ounce of her around and watching everyone else find their place in this world except us.

I want to build a home with my mate.I want to lead a pack like Moon Goddess intended, and most of all, I want you to be happy.

Before I can finish processing Grayson's argument, Talia pulls back the covers and rests her head on my shoulder, her body pressing up against my back as she wraps her arms around me.

"I am trying to understand you," she whispers, her breath tickling the back of my neck.

"So I am not angry or upset with you for keeping your voice to yourself, but I need to know the truth about you.I need to know who you are if you're going to be my mate."

The entire world disappears as I concentrate on her words.

Her mate...

She wraps her fingers around my bicep and gives it a good squeeze.

“Please don’t hide anything from me anymore,” she murmurs, her fingers moving up to graze my beard.

“I want to see you.I want to know all of your flaws and imperfections...all of your pain and worries.You are wrong to assume everyone else is perfect but you.I have my own flaws, things I hate about myself too.”

Shocked, I turn my head and look at her.What could she

“Don’t look so surprised,”she chuckles softly to herself before her face dims.

“I hate a lot of things about myself...”

How dare she hate herself? I roll over on top of her, grabbing her wrists and pinning them on either side of her head.I lay between her legs, her knees propped up at my sides and an amused look on her face.

“What?” She whispers, her lips almost grazing my own.

“You don’t think I hate being me sometimes?”

There is pain in her eyes as she glares at me.

“You think I’m strong?” She scoffs.

“Well I’m not.”

Tears spring to her eyes but she refuses to let them fall, batting her eyes to make them all go away before she looks at me defiantly.It is only now that I realize what she means.

She hides...just like me.

It is time for both of us to come out of hiding. I can feel her heart fluttering in her chest, one beat after the next as neither one of us speaks.

Heat burns in my cheeks as she leans forward, her lips pressing up against mine in a gentle kiss.

A kaleidoscope of butterflies rushes through my body but I pull away before my mind turns to mush.

A puzzled look flickers in her eyes as I push myself up onto my knees, pulling her up into a sitting position.

My face turns bright red as I push her legs closed and spin her around so that her back is pressed against my chest.

“What are you—” in hales slowly, understanding that I prefer to see her past and show her mine than to speak.

“Okay,” she sighs, resting her head on my shoulder.

“Show me.”

I lower my walls, allowing the river of her thoughts to flow into me and connecting our minds together.

Here goes nothing....

\*\*\*Natalia\*\*\*

The darkness is oddly very soothing but it's not long before I see a flash of white light and the sound of a small boy mumbling to himself.

Bracing myself to face Zane's past, I slowly wander towards the light until I find myself in Zane's old bedroom again.

Little Zane stands in front of a mirror, holding a small book in his hands.

He appears to be older here than in the last memory he showed me, perhaps 7 years old, but his bruises are still there.

“St-st-strength is to l-lead.St-st-strength is to...”

Zane pauses for a moment, wiping a few tears on his cheek.He takes a deep breath and looks hard at himself in the mirror.

“St-strength i-is to f-fight.”

His small hands tremble, his fingers gripping the book tightly as his frustration builds up.

“St-st-st...s-strength is to make what’s-”

The sound of the locks jingling at the door stops Little Zane in his tracks and he hurriedly closes the book and puts it back in its place on the bookshelf.

He runs his fingers through his hair and smooths out his shirt, making sure there’s not a hair out of place or wrinkle on his clothes.

Despite his split lip and bruised face, Zane forces a tiny smile to greet his father.

Sebastian’s cold gaze, however, makes Zane’s legs shake with fear and he swallows hard.

The same man as last time, Wyatt, I believe, stands behind Zane’s father, a solemn look in his eyes, although he forces a smile for Zane’s sake.

In his hands, Sebastian holds the pack tablet and with a cold voice, greets his son.

“With your mother dead and my allies and enemies thinking you are too, I no longer have any use for you. My wife, Sarah, has given me a new heir this morning,” he declares, a frown carved into his cheeks.

“And as my only son, on the day of his 21st birthday, Caine will take over as Alpha of the Scarlet Haven pack.”

My heart shatters when I see the tears forming in Zane’s eyes, but he does his best to contain them, biting his lower lip and accepting his father’s declaration.

How can he be so calm when his own father has just disowned him? Gamma Wyatt looks distressed for the little boy, but he does Sebastian holds out the pack tablet and instructs Zane to put his hand on the stone.

His small fingers timidly graze the carvings on the tablet but he flinches when his father grabs him by the wrist.

“I, Sebastian White, Alpha of the Scarlet Haven pack, demote you, Zane White, from Alpha to Omega.

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 35

### Chapter 35: Hidden II

\*\*\*Natalia\*\*\*

Zane suddenly doubles over in pain, his hands gripping his head as a small whimper escapes his throat. His breathing becomes ragged, and I fear he might pass out with every heavy breath.

Wyatt steps forward to soothe the young pup, but Sebastian’s booming voice makes him cower back in his place.

“Do not coddle him!” Sebastian warns, his voice echoing off the walls.

“He must be a man and face his fate on his own.”

Zane’s legs finally give in, and he falls to his knees until finally, his pain stops.

Panting, he slowly raises his head to face his father, wiping his tear-streaked cheeks with his sleeves.

“You will remain here until I find a way to make you go away,” Sebastian snarls, before turning on his heel to leave.

Wyatt does not move, his eyes glued to the trembling little boy still sitting on his knees.

“I’m sorry,” he mumbles to Zane, a single tear sliding down his cheek.

“WYATT!”

Sebastian calls over his shoulder, Wyatt wiping his face and following his Alpha out the door.

The door slams shut, the bolts jingling as they lock Zane in his prison.

towards the little boy, he fades away like sand between my fingers, the memory melting back into the darkness.

The pitch black only lasts a moment before I once again find myself in the same room, Zane looking up at his father, a small shaking woman behind him.

As I look closer, I realize it’s Agnes, much younger but just as beautiful as she is now.

“You will be moving to the Omega house with her,” Sebastian snaps.

“She’ll help you pack your things.” He growls when both Agnes and Zane remain frozen in place.

“Do I have to repeat myself? Get moving!” he commands, pushing Agnes into the room.

He leaves without another word, Zane rushing over to help Agnes to her feet.

At first Agnes shields herself from Zane’s touch but when she recognizes that he only means to help, she allows him to hold her hands.

She signs the word “thank you” to him but Zane does not seem to understand.

Agnes then pulls out a pen and paper from her pocket and the two of them exchange greetings in silence.

Almost instantly, Zane takes a liking to Agnes, smiling very brightly at her with every note she writes.

How long had it been since he had someone to talk to? I wonder, my heart growing heavy as I watch him fall in love with Agnes.

They exchange several notes before she helps him pack his things in a small suitcase. He doesn’t pack much, just some room holding a small suitcase and handing it to Agnes.

“These are some clothes for you,” Wyatt explains slowly to Agnes, who only stares blankly at him.

“f\*\*k,” Wyatt groans when he realizes she does not understand him.

Zane, however, grabs a piece of paper and writes out what Wyatt said for Agnes. She smiles and nods, Wyatt sighing with relief.

“Zane, you’ll need to explain everything to her,” Wyatt says, Zane nodding back at him.

“From now on, you two are Agnes and Zane Thorne, mother and son. You are two rogues who lost their pack, the Snow Belle pack, thanks to Ravenstone and its allies. Do you understand?”

Zane processes this information and again nods. So that’s how she became his mother, I say to myself, putting all the pieces together.

“Tell her that in a couple of weeks, we’ll have the paperwork for her to take full legal custody of you,” Wyatt adds.

“She’ll be your mother in the eyes of the State and this pack.”

After Zane explains the situation to Agnes, the three of them walk out the room, Zane looking back at his prison one last time before closing the door.

Once again, the memory fades, the pitch black shifting into a very tiny room with two small cots.

There are two dressers beside the beds and a door on the left wall that leads to the bathroom and shower away.

Zane looks about 10 or 11 years old now, but to my dismay, there are still bruises on his face.

An alarm goes off when the clock strikes 5:30 am, Zane waking with a start.

As he sits up, I see a large blood stain on his t-shirt and on his bed.

He rushes off to the shower to wash up for the day and when he steps out of the shower, he is dressed only in his jeans, revealing a long cut between his shoulder blades that resembles the tip of a whip.

There are other wounds and scars on his back and torso, and I'm left to wonder how any wolf could hurt a pup with no wolf.

Zane quietly collects Agnes' clothes from a dresser, folding it all neatly and placing it at the foot of her bed.

I watch as he gently taps on her shoulder, helping her into a sitting position when she wakes.

She signs something to him, and he audibly groans before getting up to get the first aid kit.

With special care, she cleans his wound and redresses it, cupping Zane's cheeks and kissing his forehead when she's finished.

Once they finish cleaning up and tidying up their room, the two of them head out to the mess hall, several other omegas trickling in for breakfast.

They all line up to receive their food, Zane and Agnes being pushed to the back of the line.

When it's their turn to receive a plate, all that is left is a single pancake.

Tears fill my eyes as I watch Zane not hesitate to hand the plate to Agnes while he grabs two glasses of orange juice.

Agnes frowns at him as they sit down at a table near the corner, pushing her plate towards Zane.

He only shakes his head and sips his orange juice quietly.

She signs to him, but he again pancake in half, taking one half and pushing the other towards Zane.

Seeing that Agnes is not going to give in, he begrudgingly takes his half and eats it.

I find it hard to not admire their love for each other.

Zane was not her son and Agnes was not his mother, and yet they took care of each other like a small family.

They were not bitter or angry about their situation, but just happy to have each other's company and share what little they had.

The head of the Omegas, a small stout woman with a head full of gray hairs, stands at the front of the mess hall with a clipboard in her hands.

She calls our names one by one, giving out assignments for the day. She calls Agnes' name and looks at Zane to explain.

“Agnes, you are on Laundry duty with Maureen and Lily. All the linens, bedding and towels need to be washed, pressed and put away,” the Head Omega instructs.

“Zane, you are to report to the construction site with Amadeas. He will give you your assignments.”

Zane translates to Agnes and her face pales.

They argue for a moment before she storms away to do her work, leaving young Zane to himself.

He sulks for a moment but then puts on a brave face and walks out of the mess hall.

I follow him outside, my eyes wandering to take in his pack.

It is not nearly as big as River Moon, but it is bigger than Silver as a second glance, as if he did not exist to them.

He arrives at what appears to be a construction site of a playground, several men carrying bars, slides and other pieces to be installed.

Zane is the youngest person on the crew, the other men towering over him.

A man with a thick blonde beard calls Zane forward, and instructs him to fill the sandbox, pointing towards the wheelbarrows and sandbags.

Zane says nothing and grabs a pair of gloves before attempting to pick up a sandbag.

I watch in horror as he struggles to lift the bag over his head, huffing and puffing as finally tosses it into the wheelbarrow.

His face turns red as he pushes the barrow towards the sandbox, the task requiring all of his strength and concentration.

The man shouts at Zane to hurry up, beads of sweat gathering on his forehead.

“Stop!”

I scream at the man when he shoves Zane out of his way, Zane struggling to not lose his footing. I look around in desperation at the other men, begging them to help Zane, but they do nothing as they continue their own work.

As Zane pours the sand into the sandbox, a group of women stroll by, one of them holding the hand of a small three-year old child.

“Look Caine,” the woman says as she points at the construction zone.

“Look what Daddy is building for you.”

This must be Zane’s little brother, the next Alpha in line, I note, studying the woman and child.

And she must be the new Caine grins cheekily at the playground while the Luna boasts to the others about her husband and all the wonderful things he’s building for their son.

As she speaks, she lets go of Caine’s hand, the little boy wandering towards the construction site on his own.

With everyone busily completing their tasks, no one seems to notice the little boy walking towards the sandbox.

Zane empties out his wheelbarrow, wiping his dirty face with the back of his hand when he notices the little boy walking towards him.

As he looks around to see where Caine came from, a small boom lift with two people holding the hood of the slide tower drives into the construction area directly along the path Caine is walking on.

The driver is completely focused on ensuring that the hood does not hit any of the poles already installed and cannot see little Caine standing in his path.

Zane sprints towards the little boy, just barely reaching Caine in time to carry him to safety.

The little boy screams as Zane carries him out of harm's way, drawing the attention of the women chattering away on the edge of the construction site.

The Luna rushes toward her son.

“Get away from him, you filthy animal!” she snaps, pulling Caine out of Zane's arms and slapping him across the cheek.

“You are never to touch your future Alpha again. Do you understand?” she snarls, her face twisting in disgust as she storms off.

“f\*\*\*\*\*g mutt.” there are tears streaming down my cheeks.

I can't even begin to imagine the years of pain and torture Zane endured all those years or how much it hurt to be rejected over and over again by everyone who was meant to love him.

Shame fills my heart as I realize that I too rejected him, and it makes me wonder...will he ever be able to forgive me?

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 36

Zanet\*\*\*\*\*

“Zane, I-”

Talia pauses for a moment to wipe her tears and several thoughts fill my head.

Is my past too much of a burden to share with her? Am I too broken to love?

“Thank you so much for sharing with me,” she murmurs, my entire body tensing as I brace myself for her to turn me down for my baggage.

My mate, however, interlocks our fingers together, bringing my hand up to her lips and kissing it.

“You are so strong, Zane,” she whispers through her tears.

“So strong and so brave,” she adds, giving my hand a squeeze.

“My problems feel so small compared to yours now,” she chuckles sheepishly.

“I had a much easier life than you did. Good parents and for a brief time, a good husband.”

She fidgets with her hair at the mention of her ex husband and I frown at her. I did not show her my past to compare pain.

Pain is pain, no matter how small or big. I hold her close, hoping I can somehow shield her away from any more pain and suffering.

“I guess it’s my turn, isn’t it?” she says quietly, resting her head on my chest.

I nod my head and place my hands over her eyes.

My walls come down and I focus on her thoughts until the pitch black fades away.

It doesn’t take long for me to figure out that I am in a hospital room of sorts, a machine steadily beeping in the corner as I look around.

The room is quite spacious with a large window overlooking the city.

A woman lays asleep on the hospital bed, a series of tubes coming out of her.

Her face is bruised and swollen, her entire body covered in bandages.

Talia sits by her side, her thumb caressing the back of the woman's hand.

"I'm sorry, Mami," she murmurs as she strokes the woman's cheek.

"I-I'm so sorry for pushing you away this past year. I should have... I should have tried to understand you more because I know that you only ever had the best intentions for me."

She stops to catch her breath and wipe her tears.

"I know you don't like him much, but Christian is a good man..." she says with a forced smile.

"And he'll take good care of me. I know he will... So you don't have to worry about me anymore. You can rest now with Dad. Yo voy a estar bien {I'm gonna be okay},"

She leans over her mother and kisses her on the forehead.

"Te quiero mucho, mami. {I love you}. Siempre te voy a querer {I will always love you}. For a moment, she stays there with her cheek pressed against her mother's before her phone dings and she looks down to read the message. is almost here, okay? Just a little more and then I-I'll... I'll let you go, okay?" she smiles through her tears.

Her lips tremble as she brushes away the woman's hair.

"Un poquito mas {Just a little more}."

The heart monitor responds with its beeping but the woman never stirs.

Suddenly, the door bursts open, the same woman from Talia's last memory and her ex-husband bursting in.

That must be Vanessa, I note, watching her ignore Talia as she rushes to the woman's side and kisses her forehead.

Christian, however, comes up behind Talia and holds her to his chest.

I know it shouldn't, but it angers me to see my mate in his arms.

“Ay, Mami,”

Vanessa whispers as brushes away her mother's hair, her voice morphing into a sob.

“;Qué te pasó ? ;Qué te hicieron ? {What happened to you ? What did they do to you ?}”

She turns to Talia, her face stained with tears.

“Are you sure she's...”

Her voice trails off at the end but Talia understands and nods as she wipes the tears on her face.

“And Dad ?” Talia shakes her head, a fresh stream of tears rolling down her cheeks.

Christain squeezes her tightly, Talia burying her face in his chest as he responds on her behalf.

“They couldn't do anything for him.He died on impact...” he A small whimper escapes Talia's throat while Vanessa caresses her mother's cheeks.

The medical team arrives, Talia sobbing even louder now that the end is near.

“Is she in pain?” Vanessa asks.

“Does she hurt?”

One of the nurses steps forward.

“No, sweetie. She’s not in any pain.”

“Good,” Vanessa nods to herself.

“And...H-how many...How many lives is she saving?”

“Four,” the nurse responds.

“She’s saving four.”

“O-Okay,”

Vanessa says to herself, kissing her mother’s cheek.

“H-How long will it take before...she umm...before she...”

“Not long,” the nurse.

“Only a few minutes and we’ll make sure she’s comfortable.”

“O-okay,”

Vanessa replies, looking over at Talia.

“Okay.”

Talia steps out of Christian’s arms to stand by her sister, grabbing hold of her mother’s hand.

“Adios, Mami,”

Talia whimpers, giving her mother’s hand a squeeze as the nurse begins to turn off the machines.

Vanessa watches closely as the nurse reaches over to remove the ventilator from her mother’s mouth when she suddenly bursts into tears.

“I can’t,” she whispers breathlessly.

“I can’t do this.I can’t watch.”

Talia tries to calm her down by hugging her.

“Vanessa-”

“No!”

Vanessa snaps, storming out of the room and into the The nurse pauses and looks at Talia who only squeezes her mother’s hand.

“Keep going,” she murmurs, the nurse nodding and proceeding with the removal of the tube.

“It’s okay, Mami,”

Talia whimpers, wiping away the last of her tears.

“She’s just scared but I’ll take good care of her for you.You just go home to Dad.We’ll be okay.”

As the nurse promised, it only takes a few minutes before Talia’s mother finally goes home, the medical team wheeling her into surgery.

Christian holds Talia for a few more moments while she sobs silently before she rushes off to find her sister.

It does not take her long to find her, Vanessa curled up on the floor, hugging her knees to her chest.

Talia does not appear angry or upset, quietly sitting beside her sister.

“I’m sorry,” Vanessa whimpers, her body shaking with grief.

“I just couldn’t do it. I couldn’t watch them ...k-kill her,” she hiccups, Talia throwing her arm around her sister’s shoulder.

“I couldn’t...I couldn’t...”

She bursts into another sob, Talia giving her a tight squeeze and letting her rest her head on her shoulder.

“I know...”

The hallway of the hospital disappears into the abyss, morphing into an office.

The room is painted white with minimal decor, just a few plants here and there.

A large desk sits in the middle of the room, right wall, there is a reading nook with a large comfy chair and a matching coffee table.

The entire left wall is a book shelf full of thick books and a wedding portrait of Talia and Christian.

Talia sits at the desk, punching away at a calculator and jotting something down on a sheet of paper.

Her brows are furrowed in concentration when a gentle knock on the door draws her attention.

“Come in,” she calls out, a beautiful woman and a brooding man walking into the room.

The woman holds a small bouquet of flowers and a little red box in her hands, a beaming smile on her lips.

“Mrs.Hart!” Talia smiles happily, rushing to greet the woman with a hug.

“Nat, we’ve talked about this,” the woman corrects her, her smile never faltering.

“You can call me Kay. You know Mrs.Hart makes me feel old.”

Talia chuckles as she puts the flowers on her desk and nods nervously at the man beside Kay.

“Mr.Hart,” she says, forcing a smile for the silent man who only gives her a quick glance and nods in acknowledgment.

Kay nudges her husband in the stomach to behave but Mr.Hart only growls in annoyance.

Thoroughly embarrassed, Kay clears her throat and cheerfully hands the small red box to Talia.

“Happy Anniversary, my dear,” she chirps, smiling like a two years and Goddess you have done an incredible job.

“Right, honey ?” She asks her husband.

The man only looks at Talia, his intense stare sending chills down my spine.

Talia does not seem bothered by his cold demeanor, keeping her attention on Kay.

“Anyways, we have a gift for you,” Kay continues, attempting to diffuse the developing tension.

“I hope you like it.”

Talia opens the box and extracts a beautiful bracelet with stone beads  
“It’s a fertility bracelet,”

Kay explains, a bit of hurt flickering in Talia’s eyes.

“It’s meant to bring you good luck with your fertility. Figured it would be worth a shot.”

“Oh I see,”

Talia smiles politely, although I see the anger twitching in her cheek.

“Thank you. How thoughtful of you.”

“Ah, yes. Because a few stones are going to fix the problem here,”

Mr Hart mutters, Talia doing her best to stay calm.

“Face it, Kay. She’s a human pretending to be a she-wolf. A pathetic one at that. A real she-wolf would have already delivered a whole litter of pups by now.”

“Christopher!”

Kay snaps at her husband.

“You take that back this instant!”

“She might be a Luna, but she’s a disgrace to this pack!” Mr.Hart snarls.

Natalia stands tall as Mr.Hart berates her for her failure to produce an heir but I still see the slight tremor in her left hand as

“Christian is turning 26 next month,” Mr.Hart adds, his voice low and threatening.

“He’s not getting any younger.You have one more year, Natalia, one more year to give him an heir or I will see to it that you are removed from your position.”

“Christopher!”

Kay shouts, her husband only glaring at her in response.

“I should have never approved of this marriage,” he mutters to himself before storming out of the room.

Kay looks at Talia with shame.

“I’m so sorry,” she whispers.

“I didn’t...I didn’t think he would-”

“It’s alright,” Talia shrugs, walking back to her desk.

“I’m getting used to it.”

Kay’s face softens and she excuses herself to go find her husband.I watch Talia sit at her desk for a moment, her eyes studying the fertility bracelet.

She rolls the beads between her fingers, as if willing them to work.She ties the bracelet on left wrist, her lower lip quivering when she finally looks back up.

Tears roll down her cheeks as she closes her eyes to take a deep breath. I walk over to her, wishing I could somehow soothe her pain.

Talia, however, does not need me, wiping her own tears and sitting up straighter.

I'm left in awe of her as she dives into her work, somehow finding the strength to focus on the spreadsheet in front of her.

Just as suddenly as she begins her work, Talia doubles over, intensifies, pushing herself away from the desk.

Her mouth hangs open in a silent scream and she collapses on her knees onto the floor, her arms wrapping around her stomach.

It takes her a moment to reach for her phone on the desk, her fingers shaking as she dials a number.

"Jor-dan," she gaps into the phone, her voice hoarse.

"He-help me."

She lays on the floor for several minutes before a man bursts through the door, kneeling down beside her.

"Nat, what happened?" the man asks, pulling Talia in his arms.

She holds back her scream to answer.

"I-I don't know," She gasps.

"It just hurts."

"What hurts?"

“Everything!”

She cries, her hands clawing at her chest.

“I can’t breathe! Jordan, I can’t breathe.I can’t breathe!”

“Okay,” the man named Jordan replies, blinking hard as he tries to think of what to do.

“O-okay, I’ll take you to the pack clinic so Dr.Lila can take a look at you,” he says, carrying her out of the room.

The room morphs into a clinic, Talia sitting anxiously on an exam table in a patient gown and Jordan sitting beside her as he holds her hand.

The pain seems to have subsided temporarily, Talia no longer screaming or writhing but still equally fearful.

“It’s going to be fine, Luna,”

Jordan tries to soothe her.

“I’m Talia nods, trying to convince herself that his words are true but her furrowed brows never relax.SSomeone knocks on the door and a tall woman walks into the room wearing scrubs and carrying a clipboard in her hand.She sits down across from Talia and forces a smile on her face as she removes her glasses.Something’s wrong here...”

“Okay, Luna.I have some good news and some bad news,” she sighs, her eyes flicking to Jordan.

He gives her a warning look, before he forces a smile and squeezes Talia’s hand.

“The good news,” The doctor says, clearing her throat.

“Is that all the tests came back negative. Your uterus is fine, your heart looks good, your lungs sound excellent, your kidneys are both functioning, no gallstones or kidney stones from the looks of it. Just perfect. Your health is perfect.”

“See, Luna?”

Jordan chuckles, the laugh not reaching his eyes.

“I told ya you were fine.” A small smile of relief forms on Talia’s lips.

“So then...?”

“The bad news,” the doctor sighs, lowering her clipboard.

“Is that this pain you’re feeling is likely just stress.”

“Stress?” Talia repeats as if the word is foreign to her.

“It’s just...stress?”

The doctor nods.

“All in your head, Luna. You said the pain started after your altercation with Alph- I mean Mr. Hart. Well, it reacting.”

“This doesn’t feel like stress,” Talia retorts.

“I’ve worked as an EMT before. I know stress. This is definitely not it-”

The doctor raises her hand to speak.

“Work-related stress and emotional stress can manifest very differently,” she explains.

“Emotional stress can feel like everything is collapsing on you, and you suddenly feel like you can’t breathe. Does that sound familiar to you?”

“Yes...” Talia nods.

“And did your heart start to beat uncontrollably, like it was going to burst out of your chest any second?”

“Yes...”

Talia whispers, her hands gripping the edge of the table.

“Were you afraid?” The doctor asks.

“Yes...” Talia whimpers, a small sob escaping her throat.

“Y-yes, yes. I thought I was dying,” she hiccups.

“And, for a brief moment, did you feel like giving up?”

Talia only nods, unable to find the words to explain her pain.

The doctor rolls her chair closer to Talia, resting her hand over hers.

“Luna,” the doctor murmurs.

“You have put a lot of pressure on yourself to conceive and your body knows it. You need to relax. Do something fun for yourself and let your body do what it needs to do. Your time as a mother will come when it’s meant to be. Not any sooner or later.” diagnosis.

“I will prescribe you something for the pain,” the doctor says, jotting something down on her clipboard.

“But please, just take it easy from now on. Spend some time with your husband and have some fun. A pack hurts when its Luna is not feeling well.”

The doctor once again exchanges looks with Jordan, and I realize then that the doctor is lying about something, holding the truth hostage in her mind.

The memory slowly distorts to a bedroom, Talia standing in front of a mirror as she applies lipstick. She looks incredible in a black floor length dress with an asymmetrical neckline and a thigh slit.

“Babe, are you ready?” Talia calls out, Christian walking into the room in a smart tuxedo.

“I’ve been ready,” he chuckles, hugging her from behind.

“Even Vanessa is all dressed up. We’re all just waiting on you.” He peppers kisses on her bare neck and shoulders.

“Ya know, I could eat you right here...”

He purrs, Talia smiling with delight as she enjoys his kisses.

“You’re almost perfect.” Talia raises an eyebrow as she scrutinizes her reflection in the mirror.

“Almost?”

“Mmhmm,”

Christian murmurs, sliding his hand down to her perfectly flat abdomen.

“Almost...If only there were a pup or two inside your belly,” he sighs heavily.

“Then I think you would truly deserve the Luna of the Year Award.” turning to face her ex-mate and kissing his bearded cheek.

“The award is given to the best Luna in the region for outstanding leadership and performance, not for how many pups she has,” Talia reminds him.

“You’re just mad you didn’t get the Alpha Award,” she teases him.

“Awards are stupid,” Christian snorts, Talia’s smile growing smaller by the second.

“And you shouldn’t let awards get to your head.Don’t forget, you have yet to fulfill your most important duty to your pack.”

He pulls away from her arms, muttering his displeasure under his breath.

“Now hurry up! We don’t have all day.You wouldn’t want to be late for your ‘oh so special award’.”

Christian slams the door to the bedroom, Talia blinking fast and fanning her eyes to stop the tears.

She grabs a pill bottle from the medicine cabinet and dry swallows two little white pills while she glares at her reflection.

“You’re a good Luna,” she whispers to herself, practicing a smile on her face that doesn’t reach her eyes.

“You’re a good Luna, ” she repeats over and over again as she heads out the door.

The memory fades once more to an award ceremony, hundreds of Alphas, Lunas, Betas, Gammas, and other high ranking wolves, sitting around at some tables in front of a stage. I can see Talia poking her head from behind the stage, scanning the room for her pack.

Jordan and another man wave at her, both of them grinning from ear to ear.

Kay and Mr. Hart are also present, beside Jordan and I realize Christian and Vanessa are nowhere to be found.

Talia’s excitement declines as she too struggles to find her mate.

She then doubles over in pain, biting her lip as she tries to gain control of her agony.

“Not only did she serve as a third party mediator to help settle pack relations between two rival packs, but she also helped negotiate funding for the AEP complex building that will house the business of her pack and those of her allies, thus creating over 700 new jobs for the packs in her region,” an announcer says over the loudspeaker.

“She is truly a force to be reckoned with and an inspiration to Lunas and she-wolves everywhere. Please help me congratulate this year’s Luna of the Year, Mrs. Natalia Hart of the Silver Crest pack!” Talia takes several slow and deep breaths, repeating her earlier mantra to herself...

She forces on her practiced smile and stands upright, her hand on her abdomen. Taking one step after the next, she walks on stage and accepts her award.

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 37

### Chapter 37: Touch

\*\*\*Zanet\*\*

“I thought I was going crazy,”

Talia whimpers as her memories fade away, both of us opening our eyes.

“I even went to the pack psychiatrist to get help,” she begins to sob.

“I was suffocating inside but I couldn’t let myself crumble under the pressure. I tried so hard to be the perfect Luna because everyone was counting on me,” She sighs, shaking her head in disbelief.

“But it was all for nothing. In the end, I didn’t matter to anyone, not to my pack, not to my mate, not to my gamma, and most definitely not to my own sister!”

She pauses for a moment to collect her thoughts, holding her head in her hands.

When I attempt to comfort her by wrapping my arms around her, she flinches, raising her head back up to wipe her tears.

“I didn’t matter to the people I most cared about,” she mumbles.

“And I was an idiot to believe I ever would.”

You matter to me\_, I want to say, resting my chin on her shoulder and holding her tightly.

“It’s okay,” she sighs.

“I’m definitely done trying to live up to other people’s expectations,” she adds.

“So before we go any further, we need to discuss some things first.” She says, turning her head to face me.

“I know heirs are important to wolves, especially to Alphas and I’ve proven to not be the most fertile away now. I struggled so much for Kota and I definitely don’t need to be treated like a disappointment for being unable to get pregnant right away. I’m not a breeding w\*\*\*e, understand?”

I don’t even flinch, nodding my head adamantly at her.

Pups have never even crossed my mind, my only concern thus far being that I be good enough for her.

“Good,” She sighs in relief.

“I am also not interested in being y= anyone’s Luna or having any more gammas for that matter, so if I you have a pack you plan to take over, find another Luna to take my place. I’m not slaving away for people who will only turn their backs on me when I need them most.”

I chuckle softly to myself and squeeze her tightly, wondering what pack on earth would possibly want me as it’s Alpha? Nodding that I understand her concern, she proceeds with her next condition.

“One more thing, Zane, and this is non-negotiable,” She adds quietly, biting her lower lip nervously.

My heart beats loudly in my chest as I lean forward to listen to N closely. She takes a deep breath and looks at her hands resting on her lap.

“No marking.” My heart sinks to the pit of my stomach, Grayson going into a fit of rage.

No marking? He scoffs.

How the hell is the world supposed to know that we belong to each other if she does not bear our mark? Perhaps she is ashamed of having me for a mate? I wonder, dread washing over me.

Seeing the look of worry on my face, she hurries to explain.

“I’m not ashamed to bear your mark. I-I just don’t see the point. I wore a mark proudly for years like an i\*\*\*t, meanwhile my mate dishonored our bond with my sister to the knowledge of everyone in my pack,” she adds quickly.

“It means nothing to be marked if your mate can still degrade the bond with ease. Humans don’t mark each other and it’s never hindered our relationships. We are free to love and date whoever we please without having to tie our souls together and I’d prefer to keep it that way.”

I’m sorry, what part of my tail and snout remotely resemble a human to you, lady? Grayson sneers. I do not date, I mate...

**FOR LIFE!!!!**

“Besides,” she smiles timidly.

“What’s to stop you from finding someone else who makes you happier than I ever could? Or better yet, someone who can give you a pu-”

I don’t give her a chance to speak anymore nonsense, cupping her cheeks and pressing my lips against hers.

At first, she doesn't move, her eyes wide open as she stares back at mein shock.

Gathering up the last of my courage, I move my lips a little until she slowly melts against me and deepens the kiss, parting her lips so that our tongues meet for a tender dance.

The moment they touch, the world fades away completely until we are all that I lower her body against the bed and lay between her legs, our lips never parting as we mold ourselves to each other.

My lungs begin to burn, however, and I reluctantly pull away, my eyes studying the beautiful woman staring up at me with tears in her eyes.

For the first time in my life, I feel the need to speak, the words tearing at my throat to break free from their prison.

Taking a deep breath, I slowly open my mouth, a small groan escaping my lips.

"y-y...Y-y-" I gasp, Talia looking up at me with patient eyes.

"Take your time," she murmurs, one of her hands gently grazing my cheek.

"There's no rush." I blink a few times, forcing my mouth open again and concentrating on every syllable.

"Y-you...ar-are so...st-str-strong," I pant, my cheeks beginning to flush.

A small smile curls on her lips, a single tear rolling down her cheek as she pulls me close enough so that our breaths become one.

“So are you.”

Her lips once again meet mine, parting and closing against my mouth as passion burns within us.

She slowly slides her hand from my nape to the crown of my head, her fingers gently gripping my hair and tugging it slightly.

Her deep kisses light a fire in me, every part of me burning for her.

She wraps her legs around my waist, clinging to me like I bury my face in her neck, my tongue caressing the place where my mark should go.

A soft moan bubbles in her chest, my c\*\*k twitching at the sound.

Heat ripples across my body when her hips grind against mine, a hard lump growing in my boxers. I can feel her n\*\*\*\*\*s hardening beneath her shirt, her peaks poking against the fabric.

Embarrassed, I begin to climb off only to be flipped on my back by my mate, her hands pushing against my chest as she pins me to the bed beneath her.

She rocks her body back and forth against my hard on, a smirk curling on her lips as she teases me for blushing.

A curious look flickers across her face as she gazes down at me.

“Is this okay?” she asks, my breath ragged and labored the more she grinds on me.

Unable to put into words how good she feels, I barely manage to nod, Talia biting her lips in satisfaction.

She follows my gaze to her chest and giggles.

“Have you ever done this before?” she asks, her hands gripping the edge of her shirt and playfully tugging it up a bit to expose her bare stomach.

I see her lips moving but I am too busy concentrating on not nutting too early to hear what she’s actually saying.

“Wha-what?” I ask, beads of sweat gathering at my forehead as I feel a need build up where she is swaying her hips.

We’re going to die virgins, aren’t we? Grayson groans, practically face palming himself. I ignore him, Talia giggling as she slowly pulls her shirt over her head, her naked breasts staring back at me.

A lump forms in my throat, my eyes unable to tear away from the pert brown peaks staring back at me.

There’s a sexy wolf tattoo between her breasts, flowers and tear drops extending past her underboobs.

My tongue aches to taste her tattoo but I don’t have a clue how to express that, a pathetic groan escaping my lips.

“Am I overwhelming you? Do you want me to stop?” Talia asks, her arms timidly wrapping around her chest.

I shake my head at her, Talia’s eyes looking intently at me.

“I need words, Zane. It’s important to me that you tell me if I’m pushing you too hard,”

She explains, leaning forward so that her lips brush up against mine as she speaks.

“You can speak slowly if it’s easier for you.I’m not in any rush,” she murmurs, sliding her hands down my abdomen so that her fingers grip the hem of my shirt.

Our lips meet for a gentle kiss, her hips gyrating in a slow motion, my c\*\*k on the verge of erupting.

“W-wait,” I blurt out as I grab her wrist from moving up any further.

She freezes, her cheeks turning a light pink shade.I do my best to concentrate on my words, but my speech still comes out slurred.

“l-l...”

I groan in frustration, angry with myself that my words She once again leans forward, her face close enough that her minty breath tickles my chin.

“Just breathe,” she murmurs.

“Count to three and try again.”

I open my mouth again but my nerves have my tongue in a twist.I want to scream at Moon Goddess for making me this way but I fall silent when Talia speaks.

“I heard you talking to Dakota,” she whispers, a little wave of shock rippling through me.

I thought I hid that well.

“And I know there’s nothing I can say to make you believe me, ” she chuckles.

“But I loved hearing your voice,” she confesses, my heart nearly skipping a beat.

She loved it?

“It was beautiful to see you so comfortable with him,” she smiles at the memory.

“But it also hurt that you didn’t want to share your voice with me,” she adds.

“Because I would never think less of you for the way you speak...Trust me, I’d love for you to stutter my name while I ride you.”

Grayson howls with laughter and I don’t even want to think about how red my face is, both of my hands attempting to cover the burning heat of my cheeks.

She chuckles at my timidity, pulling my hands away from my face.

“I’m not ashamed of you, Zane. I just want you to know that to me.” I digest every word, my eyes looking down at my shirt still shielding my scars.

“Are you afraid to show them to me?” she asks, her face softening as she looks at me.

She pecks my lips when I nod, one of her hands guiding mine to her lower stomach. I feel dips and grooves at my fingertips and she smiles at me.

“You didn’t notice my stretch marks when you first looked at me, did you?”

She teases, moving my hand across all the little stretch marks on her tummy.

“Do they bother you?”

When I shake my head, her smile widens.

“So then why would your scars bother me?” She shrugs.

“I am not ashamed of my stretch marks because they are proof that I’m a mother and that I had the strength and courage to carry my pup on my own. Your scars are no different. They tell me your story, what you’ve had to survive and overcome.”

She grips a handful of my shirt, her eyes settling on mine.

“Will you show me your story? I study her eyes for a moment, finding kindness and patience swirling in the mix of brown hues. A smile stretches across her lips when I push myself into a sitting position and pull my shirt over my head. Her eyes travel along my now bare torso as she drags her timid fingers against my skin. She traces the S-shaped scar on my hip, her touch making my torso, curiosity flickering in her eyes.

“Can I see the ones on your back?” she murmurs, climbing off of me so that I can turn around and sit on my knees.

Talia’s fingers trace the lines of raised flesh on my back created from every silver tipped flogging I took.

Suddenly, I feel her warm tongue taste my skin starting from the small of my back, her lips kissing away the pain of every wound I ever had.

She makes her way up until she reaches my shoulder, her fingers gently pressing on my skin.

“Turn around,” Talia murmurs, and when we come face to face again once more, I notice tears in her eyes.

She straddles my lap, draping one of arms around my shoulders while the other pushes back my hair from my forehead.

“You...are so beautiful,” she whispers, pressing her lips against my temple.

My stomach does flips as I look back at her, a warmth spreading across my cheeks.

“So perfect,” she murmurs as her lips graze my cheeks.

“And all mine.”

Our lips meet for a tender kiss, Talia taking the lead as she pushes me onto my back and pins me once more beneath her body.

“Mine,” she whispers against my lips, my arms tightening around her waist.

“All mine, Zane. You’re mine.” scent of her arousal as she gyrates her pelvis against my groin.

Her tongue slides into my mouth, seeking dominance over me.

Lick her tits...

Grayson purrs, his tail wagging from side to side.

W-what..? I ask, Talia’s lips bewitching me into a trance.

Did I stutter? He jeers.

LICK HER t\*\*s! Startled, I pull away, Talia raising an eyebrow at me.

“Too much?” she asks, looking at me with concern.

Not enough, if you ask me , Grayson grumbles.

I don't answer, mustering up what little confidence I have to lean forward and wrap my lips around one of her n\*\*\*\*\*s.

Her peak hardens like a small pebble in my mouth when I flick my tongue over it a few times, Talia moaning in response.

The sound alone is enough to make a little precum ooze from my d\*\*k, her swaying hips only increasing the heat washing over me.

Talia places her hand on the back of my head, pushing me into her chest while she grinds on my erection. I move my tongue between her breasts and across her tattoo, taking special care to kiss the pretty wolf before latching on to the other n\*\*\*\*\*e.

Her mouth hangs wide open, another moan escaping her lips.

After a few licks, Talia pushes my head back onto the pillows, her dark eyes swirling with lust as she slides off my groin to sit back on her heels, her thighs still straddling mine. I down to my hips, her eyes still locked with mine.

She does not look away as she leans down to flick her tongue over my burn scar.

My heart beats erratically in my chest when she places her hand on the hard lump in my shorts, her palm rubbing my shaft up and down.

“Breathe,” she chuckles, Grayson howling with laughter as I realize I have been holding my breath.

“Does this feel good?” She asks, mischief flickering in her eyes.

I open my mouth to speak but all that comes out is a moan, Talia’s lips curling with satisfaction.

“My tongue would feel better, don’t you think?” she asks with a smirk, Grayson growling with lust.

“..Wonder what you taste like..”

Like cherries, baby.

Like cherries, Grayson purrs, pacing back and forth in a frenzy.

You can tie our sister in a knot if you like.

Talia pulls back my shorts and boxers, my c\*\*k springing to attention with a few beads of precum oozing from my slit.

She licks her lips as she wraps her fingers round my girth, her eyes looking at me with intense desire.

“Do you want me to taste you?” She asks, her hand moving up and down my shaft.

I barely manage to nod as she rubs my tip, the swollen head now dark red. It feels as though I’m about to explode when she suddenly stops pumping base of my c\*\*k.

You can do this, Grayson encourages me. It’s only three syllables.

My mouth hangs open, Talia waiting patiently for me.

“T-T..Ttta..”

“Slow down,”

Talia whispers, scooching closer to me while still holding my c\*\*k in her hand. She leans forward so that her lips brush up against mine when she speaks.

“Say it with me. TAH”

“T-TAH...”

“LEE,”

She giggles as she stares at my lips.

“LLE..LEE.....”

“AH,”

She smiles, pecking my lips.

“A-AH,..”

I pant, exhausted from the effort.

She only smiles before settling back on her knees in front of my c\*\*k and sweeping her hair off to one side. I flinch when I feel her warm tongue sweep across the slit of my head, Talia giggling at my reaction.

My hands grip the sheets of the bed, my mouth hanging open as she wraps her lips around my tip. I watch her take me in all the way, my body filling with ecstasy with every flick of her tongue.

“Fff-fu...” I stutter, the waves of pleasure tying my tongue in a twist when my tip hits the back of her throat.

Talia sucks in her cheeks, only intensifying the pleasure and after a couple of pumps, I feel myself explode.

Talia drinks the flow every last drop but the white liquid still spills down her chin, overflowing onto my c\*\*k.

She handles the spillage well, spreading the c\*m over my shaft and licking the tip.

“f\*\*k, I want you inside me,” She moans, scrambling to remove her panties.

Instinct takes over and I kick off my shorts and boxers, my d\*\*k hardening again at the sight of her naked body.

She hurriedly straddles me, lining herself up with my c\*\*k when the door bursts open, little Kota wiping his sleepy eyes and yawning.

“Mommy, what are you doing?”

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 38

Chapter 38: Horsey

\*\*\*Talia\*\*

My heart drops to the pit of my stomach the moment I hear Kota’s voice.

“Mommy, what are you doing?” he yawns tiredly as he wipes at his eyes.

In a panic, Zane grabs the corner of the cover and swings his arm around to shield our naked bodies, but in doing so, accidentally hits me in the arm and knocks me off the bed.

“Oof,” I groan as my body hits the floor with a loud thud.

Mortified, Zane scrambles to his feet but I push him back to sit down on the edge of the bed with his back to Kota.

“Stop moving,”

I hiss, Zane blushing furiously as he nods his head. I grab his shirt lying on the floor and throw it over my head.

“Kota, wait in the hall,” I call out from behind Zane, adjusting the shirt and searching for my shorts.

“But mommy. I wanna stay with you.”

It takes everything in me not to groan out loud, Zane draping the covers over his erection.

I manage to find my own shirt and wipe the c\*m dripping down my inner thighs before locating my shorts and slipping them on while still crouching behind Zane out my mouth.

“Vamonos, Kota {Let’s go}, ” I sigh, walking out of the bathroom.

“I’ll handle this,” I call over my shoulder as I usher Kota out of the room.

Once he’s in the hall, I poke my head back into the room.

“You wait here” I tell Zane, my eyes glancing at the tent holding firm beneath the covers.

“Just play with yourself if you need relief,” I whisper with a smirk, Zane turning a deep shade of red.

“I’ll be back to finish what we started.” I close the door completely, leaving behind my blushing mate.

“Mommy, what were you doing with Zane?” he asks, hugging his wolf to his chest.

“And why were you naked?” I lift him into my arms and carry him back to his room, racking my brain for ideas.

“We were...We were playing horsey, Kota,” I laugh nervously, swallowing the lump forming in my throat.

“I was the cowgirl and he was the horsey but since we were out in the desert, it got really hot so we took off all our clothes.”

Kota tilts his head to the side as I set him on his bed.

“Can I play horsey with you guys?” he yawns tiredly.

My eyes nearly bulge out of my head at the suggestion.

“Ummm.....may-maybe next time,” I stammer, quickly tucking him back into bed.

“Right now, you need to go to sleep.”

“But I’m not tired, mommy,” he whines, fighting against his droopy eyes.

“I wanna play horsey with you and Zane.” through his bag to find his favorite story book.

Kota scoots over to the side of the bed to make room for me and I climb in, settling in comfortably with the book in my lap.

“Which book would you like me to read to you?” I ask, opening up the book to the table of contents.

“Wumplestinky! {Rumpelstiltskin}” Kota cries, cuddling with his wolf and curling up beside me.

“Okay, okay, Wumplestinky it is, then,” I laugh, flipping the pages to the beginning of the story.

“Once upon a time, there lived a miller...”

Not long into the story, Kota falls fast asleep, curling up into a little ball on his side. I tuck him in, wishing him a good night and kissing his forehead before tiptoeing back to my room.

Zane lays with his back propped up against the headboard, his hand timidly rubbing his now limp d\*\*k.

His cheeks heat up immediately when he sees me, his thick member growing stiff in his hand. I make sure to lock the door this time, not wanting any more interruptions for what we are about to do.

Removing my shorts, I crawl onto the bed, Zane eyes glued to me as I straddle his lower abdomen.

“You okay?” I ask, draping my arms around his shoulders.

He nods and I frown at him time you need. There’s no rush, I whisper, caressing his cheek.

“If things get too overwhelming, you can tell me to stop. I won’t get mad or upset. I’ll be more upset with you if I do things that make you uncomfortable.” He nods, his ears red.

I feel his hard member pressing up against my ass and I tilt my head to the side, grinning at him.

“Were you able to relieve yourself?” I ask, Zane becoming the reddest he’s ever been.

“Do you know how to play with yourself?????”

He opens his mouth to speak but struggles to string together a sentence, his tongue twisting with embarrassment.

“Relax,” I soothe, gently pecking his lips.

“It’s okay if you don’t know. I can teach you if you like?”

“O—kkkay,” he stammers as I climb off of his lap and sit beside him.

“You don’t have to be embarrassed,” I whisper, placing my hand on his tip.

“But it is very important that you explore your own body to know what you like and don’t like. Since you’re inexperienced, we can learn how to please each other together,” I smile at him, hopeful that I’m not crossing any boundaries.

I wrap my fingers around his c\*\*k and pump along his shaft, Zane watching my hand move in a simple up and down motion.

His breath quickens when I begin to move my hand in a corkscrew motion as I pump.

I massage his balls with my other hand before my hands away and look at him, Zane’s face flushed with lust.

“You try,” I instruct, grabbing his hand and wrapping his fingers around his cock.

He looks embarrassed to pleasure himself in front of me so I offer an alternative, pushing the shirt I’m wearing up to my navel and laying flat against pillows.

I slide my hand down to my slit, my fingers teasing the folds.

Zane watches quietly, biting his lip as his eyes flicker between my p\*\*\*y and my face.

“Do you want to touch me instead?” I ask, massaging my vulva as I sway my hips.

Zane turns on his side to face me and I take his hand, kissing each finger before popping his middle finger in my mouth and sucking on it lightly.

His breath hitches as I flick my tongue over his fingertips, his eyes completely mesmerized as I suck his finger like the most delicious lollipop.

I then drag his hand down my body and in between the canyon of my breasts to my hips, my body tingling with sparks beneath his touch.

He flinches when I guide his hand to my slit and look up at him to make sure he’s okay.

Verifying that he’s just nervous, I press his fingers between my folds, guiding his hand up and down the slit.

He furrows his brows in concentration and I let out a little giggle at his adorableness.

I guide his fingers up to my clit, his middle finger drawing a moan from my chest as he presses it against my now throbbing “That’s my clit, baby,”

I hiss, swaying my hips against his fingers.

“Rub it and see what happens,” I tease, Zane moving his fingers in a circular motion over my bundle of nerves.

I draw in a quick breath, my toes curling at the incredible sensation building up in my core.

Zane picks up his speed, my back arching as I moan.

“F-fuck, slow down.I’m going to c\*m,”

I stammer, blinking away the stars blurring my vision.

Zane blushes furiously and slows down his fingers, my hips still swaying against his hand.

I guide his hand lower and push his middle finger into my pussyhole.

“This is where you will go in later,”

I murmur, holding my back a chuckle when he pulls his finger out in embarrassment.I wave two fingers in his face and plunge them into my p\*\*\*y, thrusting them in and out slowly.I build up a tempo and rock my hips to the rhythm of my pumps.

My breath quickens as my thrusts go deeper and faster and my toes once again curlin ecstasy.

“Do you want to try making me c\*m?” I ask, slowing down my pumps.

Zane blinks at me for a moment before timidly nodding his head and placing his hand over my vulva.

“Don’t forget my clit,”

I tease him, Zane blushing as he inserts his fingers into my p\*\*\*y hole.

“Just start slow and work your wayHis hand trembles nervously so I decide it is best I give him as much encouragement as possible.

“Ahhhh....”

I moan when he slowly starts to pump in and out of my hole.

“Yes, baby...Just like that...”

I throw my head against the pillow, closing my eyes to concentrate on the intense pleasure Zane is giving me.

My walls contract around his fingers, forcing Zane to thrust harder.

“M-y...clit,”

I pant, digging my heels into the bed as I feel myself getting closer.

Zane begins to rub my clit in quick circles, my incoherent sounds becoming louder.

I writhe against his hand, feeling the pleasure growing stronger until finally I reach my climax, my body convulsing with pleasure.

c\*m spills onto the sheets, coating my inner thighs and Zane’s fingers as I pant for breath.

He looks a little frightened at my intense orgasm but the satisfied smile on my face seems to calm him down enough to relax.

“That...was...good,” I pant, my body craving more.

I prop myself up on my elbows and remove my shirt, Zane’s eyes flicking to my tattoo. I can sense a question in the air and glance down at the wolf between my breasts.

“It’s my wolf,” I murmur, tracing the design with my fingers.

“My ex wanted to turn me but I refused. I liked to think that my human form was more than enough and that I didn’t need to change to be a good Luna,”

I smile despite remembering the pain my old pack let me endure on my own.

“I was very wrong of turning. A little she-wolf for a human Luna to make me feel like part of the pack,” I shrug sheepishly.

“I know it’s such a stupid tattoo, but for a while ...i-it made me feel good—”

My words get caught in my throat when Zane presses his lips against mine, one of his hands cupping my cheek as he parts my lips with his tongue and explores my mouth.

He pushes me onto my back, rolling on top of me and wedging himself between my legs. I prop up my knees and dig them into his sides, molding my body with his.

My skin tingles with desire as we rock and grind against each other until my lungs burn for air and he pulls away.

Zane moves his lips down my jaw, burying his face in my neck and inhaling my scent. I slide my fingers into his hair and grip him tightly, throwing my head back to give him all the access he needs.

He presses his body into mine, as if wanting to somehow tattoo himself onto my skin. His warm lips pepper kisses on my chest, nipping and licking at my wolf tattoo.

I moan when I feel his tongue flick over my n\*\*\*\*s, his plump lips wrapping around the little buds as he sucks on them.

Heat spreads down to my core the more he suckles on me, c\*m dripping between my thighs.

Unable to hold my desires in any longer, I press my hands against his chest and push him onto his back, climbing onto his lap and straddling him.

My lips move with his until my lungs burn and I bend over to lick his n\*\*\*\*s, wanting to ensure he feels as good as I do looking Zane in the eyes.

“Do you want me?” I murmur, reaching in between my thighs to stroke his cock.

He slowly nods his head, closing his eyes to feel me.

“Words,” I whisper, leaning forward to peck his lips.

“I need words.”

“Y-yes,” he stammers, his cheeks flushing.

“I w-want you,” he says, swallowing the lump in his throat.

A smile curls on my lips, little butterflies fluttering in my belly at the thought of him trusting me enough to be his first.

My fingers wrap around his c\*\*k, Zane groaning as I stroke his shaft a few times to make him harder.

Satisfied, I line him up with my entrance, my eyes focused on his perfect lips.

“Are you ready?” I ask, Zane mumbling a yes.

insert his tip inside me and grind my hips forward, taking him inch by inch.

He groans as I tighten my walls around him, squeezing his shaft in pulsating waves.

Placing his hands on my ass so he can help me rock, I grind my hips back and forth, keeping my core tight so I can feel every perfect inch of him.

I drape my arms around his neck to steady myself as I rock, moaning with every delicious wave of bliss.

He bends his neck to kiss my breasts, flicking his tongue over the sensitive buds so that I arch my back and push more of me into his mouth.

“F-fu-fu,” he moans, his breaths quickening with every thrust of my hips approaching.

I pull his head up by his hair, pressing my lips against his and forcing my tongue in his mouth.

He grips my ass cheeks, digging his fingernails into my flesh as he thrusts me forward with greater force until I feel him explode, pumping his warm seed inside me.

I don't stop grinding forward, rocking faster and faster on his oversensitive rod until I feel myself fall into ecstasy, every cell in my body vibrating with pleasure.

My arms wrap tighter around his neck as I kiss him, wanting to become one with his body.

"You okay, baby?" I ask when I finally catch my breath, my fingers caressing his beard as I kiss his neck.

"Y-yeah," he pants, letting himself rest against the headboard.

I pepper his face with kisses until the high finally fades away and I can gather my thoughts.

His hands slide up my sides, his fingers barely grazing my skin as he explores my body.

"Can I try with Grayson?" I ask, tucking a strand of my hair behind my ear.

His face flushes and I try to explain myself.

"He's my mate too," I murmur.

"And I'd like to get to know your wolf as much as you." He stares at me for a moment before reluctantly closing his brown eyes and sighing.

When he opens his eyes again, pools of liquid gold look back at me as he stares at me.

“Hi Gray-”

He plunges his tongue in my mouth before I can finish my sentence, as if attempting to devour my lips.

It's a toe curling kiss and-for a moment, I allow myself to drift off into oblivion and melt into him.

When I finally pull away, my cheeks are flushed and my breath is a little labored, my lips swollen from the kiss.

“Thank you,” I murmur, pecking his lips gently and pulling away before he can lure me into another mind-blowing kiss.

“So you are not as shy as your human?” I tease, Grayson grinning from ear to ear as he shakes his head at me.

“Do you speak or are you determined to keep me on my toes? ”

He shrugs cheekily, his eyes dancing mischievously as they flick down to my lips.

“Do you want me?” I ask, Grayson wrapping an arm around my waist.

Before I have a chance to say anything else, Grayson flips me on my back, spreading my knees apart so that he fits between my legs.

I moan when he fills me up completely, my back arching at the unbelievable sensation.

He pulls his c\*\*k out so that only the tip is inside before pushing himself all the way in again.

One of his hands wraps around my throat, his lips latching onto one of my n\*\*\*\*s, He pumps slowly, but forcefully, his fingers squeezing the magic spot, my body writhing beneath him.

He pounds me into the mattress with every vengeful thrust, his eyes nearly black with lust as our bodies collide with each other.

The wet sounds of my p\*\*\*y, the slapping of our skin, and our grunts and moans create an erotic melody that rings in my ears with every pump, arousing me even further.

His thrusts only increase as we both near the edge when suddenly, a loud toot erupts from my p\*\*\*y, my cheeks burning red with embarrassment. I did not just queef, I groan internally.

Grayson only chuckles to himself before continuing his mission until we both reach our blissful end, sighing contently as we ride our highs.

Zane and Grayson take turns having me for the remainder of the night, each of them exploring my body differently.

It doesn't take long for me to realize they are polar opposites, Grayson being very dominant, while Zane is very shy and timid.

They share the same goal, however, both of them wanting to know how to please me.

By the end of the night, I find myself curled up in their arms, completely satisfied yet eager for more.

**The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 39**

\*\*\*Wyatt (Scarlett Haven Gamma)\*\*\*

“He is not to say a word to anyone. You understand me? Not a word,”

Alpha Sebastian snarls in my ear as he hands me the tablet with the California Pack Map.

“Keep him silent until he’s brought before me.”

I know better than to question him, so I just nod my head and take the tablet.

In the hall, Caine and my son, Korbin, await my instructions.

“So where exactly does this Alpha live?” Korbin asks as I lead them down to the car.

“My sources tell me the Bay Area,” I reply curtly, not looking forward to this wild goose chase.

Caine is silent as I pull out of the drive and head towards the airport, a feeling of dread settling in my stomach. I don’t know why Sara requested Caine to join me on my mission but I know it can’t be good. I’ll just have to keep a close eye on him and make sure he doesn’t get himself killed.

“So what’s this Alpha like?”

Korbin asks, leaning back against his seat with his arms behind his head.

“Have you met him?”

“I have,” I sigh tiredly, knowing Korbin will be asking a million questions throughout this drive.

“And?”

Korbin pries, suddenly sitting up straighter towards me, as if paying attention to what I have to say about his older brother if only you knew you've already met him...

"He's a man of little words," I reply carefully.

Neither of them need to know who Zane really is.

At least not yet, anyways.

"What's the Alpha's name-"

"Would you quit calling him Alpha?"

Caine snaps, finally fed up with Korbin's incessant questions.

"I'm the Alpha!"

"Not yet you're not,"

I retort, glaring at him through the rearview mirror.

"So I suggest you change that tone of yours if you want to remain on this mission."

"If he is such an Alpha, then why did Dad send him away? If he were a real Alpha, he would have never accepted to part with his pack. He wouldn't hide away, he would face Ravenstone like a Man!"

"Well, unlike you, Alpha Toran actually does have an interest in your brother," I reply smugly, the look of indignation on Caine's face pleasing me.

"He's valuable to him."

“What is that supposed to mean?” Caine sneers.

“Nothing,” I shrug nonchalantly.

“Just that your brother is a Purebred Silver wolf... unlike you... and Alpha Toran is no i\*\*\*t.He knows that a silver wolf like your brother is rare.Purebreds are hard to find, the last known ones being the Altamirano clan of México, a family line which disappeared years ago.Why waste his heir instead?”

“Who do you think you are to speak to me that way?” Caine snarls.

“Your superior,” I reply calmly, his face contorting in anger.

“Listen very carefully Caine, because I’m only going to say this once.You might be the Alpha’s son and a silver wolf, but this is my mission.You were invited to join by your mother.As such, I am in charge and you will not question me on any decisions I make.You will not speak, you will not move, you will not do anything unless I tell you to.Do I make myself clear?”

He only grunts in response, looking out the window to avoid me.I sigh in frustration.

Caine is young and stupid.

The only place he will lead our pack to is to its doom.

Schilling silence fills the car but before long, we find ourselves in the airport searching for our terminal.I hate flying but there’s no way in hell I’m staying in a car with Korbin and Caine for 15 hours.I’d rather die.

“So what’s his gift?”

Korbin hisses as we find our seats by the wings of the plane, Caine upgrading only himself to first class like the prick he is. I only shrug in response. I did not witness Zane's first shift, so I do not actually know what his gift is.

Traditionally, the first shift is a very important event for a werewolf.

Not only do you meet your other half, but you also get to communicate with your other pack members at the next full moon.

We call it a Night of Melodies ritual.

As an outcast, however, Zane's first shift was anything but special.

"Sir are you sure-"

"Are you questioning my decisions again, Wyatt?" Sebastian snarls.

His voice deepens when I shake my head.

"Then take him to the cabin by the waterfall and leave him there for his shift. Bring him back next week."

"You intend to make him deal with his first shift alone, Alpha?"

Lask, bewildered by such a thought.

"But he is your-"

"Enough!" Sebastian roars.

"I will not explain my decisions to you, Wyatt."

"Yes sir," I reply, biting back my words as I turn to leave.

As I reach for the door, Sebastian's voice stops me in my tracks.

"Take Agnes with you."

Shocked, I turn to face the Alpha only to find him with his back to me, his eyes looking down at a small photograph of Elenore, baby Zane and little Jonathan.

"She can ...ahem ...she can watch over him while he shifts," he says quietly.

"Yes sir,"

I reply, many thoughts churning in my head as I go in search of Zane and Agnes at the Hive do not think he understands himself either.

All I can do is hope that he will not regret his decisions later on.

Zane only forces a smile when I explain to him that his father does not wish to attend his first shift and that he is being sent away to do it alone.

He does not even question me for the decision nor does he display any anger towards me or his father for not being given a Night of Melodies ritual like any other pack member.

He only silently accepts his fate with a small nod and begins to pack up a few clothes for the trip to the waterfall.

He works quickly to fold and put away his things but I still notice the slight tremor in his hands and the quiver in his lower lip.

I know he must be breaking inside.

"I'm sorry, kid," I sigh, hating the situation on his behalf.

Zane does not respond, stoically zipping up the luggage and signing something to me.

Over the years, I have managed to pick up a bit of sign and I am able to decipher his question.

“Will you be going with me?” he asks.

“I am only dropping you and Agnes off,” I reply with regret.

His calm face falters slightly but he quickly recovers and asks another question.

“Will it hurt?” he signs.

Unable to lie to him, I place my hand on his shoulder and pull him closer to me.

“It will not be a pleasant experience but the pain only lasts for a moment ...and then...It’s the most amazing He smiles at this, but the joy does not reach his eyes. I can tell he is scared but as always, he accepts his fate, his pain or fear being locked away in his heart for no one else to feel but him.

The drive to the waterfall cabin is not long, but far enough away that no Scarlett Haven wolf will disturb him.

Alpha Cyrus bought it years ago as a small safe haven for himself.

It later became the place where he would meet Princess Bre in secret.

He passed the cabin down to Sebastian but the Alpha does not like to visit it.

He hates being reminded of his brother.

Zane helps Agnes out of the car and I unload his luggage before taking off.

I watch Zane comfort Agnes from my rear view mirror as I drive, my chest swelling with pride.

Even in his own pain, Zane looks after the people he loves like a true Alpha.

If only Sebastian could see just how strong his son truly is, maybe then he would accept his son the way he is.

Not a day goes by that I don't regret not being there for Zane's first shift.

If Elenore knew I left her son alone on the most important day of his life, she would never forgive me.

As we fly over the Coast, I pull out the California map, studying the packs of the Bay Area.

When traveling between packs, it is important to always carry a Pack map.

Wolves are territorial in nature and we do not like newcomers trespassing without permission.

San Francisco itself does not contain any of our wolf form but werewolf businesses are abundant in the region and our arrival will not go unnoticed.

Luckily for us, King Arthur has a few connections in the Bay Area who are willing to house us safely for the duration of our search.

I have no doubt finding Zane will be easy.

Silver wolves are rare and a rogue one is not likely to fly under the radar for long.

It's very likely Zane and Agnes have already found a pack to stay at.

The only concern I have is that Ravenstone likely already knows where he is too and it won't be long before they try to kill him.

I look at the sea of red dots on the map, knowing Zane and Agnes could not have gone far from San Francisco.

"Ya know there's a rumor going around that the Ivory Twins live in California," Korbin whispers.

"Do you think that's true?"

"The Ivory Twins are a myth, Kor," I sigh in annoyance, studying the pattern of packs carefully to figure who might be allied with who.

"Well, I think they are real,"

Korbin mutters, lazily stretching out his legs.

"Sit up straight," I snap, Korbin sitting up and peeking at the tablet.

I point to a red dot in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

"Our scouts are waiting for us at the airport. See that little Red Dot?" I ask, Korbin nodding his head.

"That's where we are headed. The Redwood pack is an old ally of King Arthur from his youth. They should have some information about the man we are looking"

"And if they don't?"

I stare at the sea of red dots on the map.

“Then Moon Goddess help us.”

\*\*\* Jordan\*\*\*

It is a particularly hot day in Seattle as I leave the airport, a breeze of hot air welcoming me when I step out of the plane.

I go through baggage claim fairly quickly and take an uber to the nearest ferry terminal.

After several transfers and a near two hour journey, I arrived in the small town of Poulsbo.

The Downtown area is full of colors with a beautiful view of the water.

Despite it being late in the evening, it is rather quiet, only a few people walking up and down the street.

Nat must love it here, I tell myself as images of her walking a little boy to school flood my mind. I curse Christian and Jack for asking me to come disrupt her life.

She needs to know that Christian is coming, Adam, my wolf reminds me. She needs to know it's not safe for her or her pup here anymore.

There's a motel in the town square and after settling in, I begin examining the documents Christian gave me with Natalia's info.

My nerves make my hands shake as I read her files, nervous years. She has built herself a new life here.

How will she react when she sees me? I wonder, knowing Natalia is very likely still angry with me for betraying her.

The darkness outside lets me know it is too late to check the daycare or the clinic for Natalia, so my best bet is to locate her job at her other job at The Masque.

I had studied the club on the journey in and came prepared with a masquerade mask for entry.

I still can't quite wrap my head around her working at a club but knowing Natalia, she must have felt the job was necessary to raise her child the way she wanted.

"Dakota..."

I mumble to myself as I read about the little boy she is raising.

According to his file, he is almost 4 years old.

Unfortunately there is no picture attached but I imagine he looks just like her. I carefully examine her work badge.

Her hair is still long and curled and her eyebrows are still dark and pronounced.

Her smile, however, has changed.

It does not reach her eyes like it used to, hardly any emotion peeking through her soft brown eyes.

When I first met Natalia, her cheeky grin was the first thing I noticed about her.

Her smile was one that could make a person feel seen.

While training, Luna Kay taught her how to refine her smile to one that displayed not only kindness but strength. I used to catch her practicing in the mirror, curling and uncurling her lips her happiness long before Christian rejected her.

She just learned to hide her pain behind her smile...because a good Luna should always put her pack first before herself.

How different she must be now...I wonder, tucking away her picture.

Grabbing the mask from my bag, I get ready for the club, hoping and praying that Natalia lets me speak to her.

My legs tremble as I walk through the quiet town and I mumble a small speech to myself.

The bouncer at the door lets me in, music blaring through the speakers as I walk in.

Exotic dancers work the poles while beautiful girls dress in tiny schoolgirl outfits and fishnets carry trays of drinks to men lounging in private booths.

I force my way through the swaying bodies of drunk dancers on the floor and find the bar, two bartenders hard at work mixing drinks.

Almost immediately, I catch the scent of a wolf coming from the male bartender with tattoos on his arms and neck.

I studied the Washington pack maps prior to arrival and know there are no packs in Poulsbo.

From which pack did this man come from? He seems to sense my wolf as well, making his way across the bar to take my order.

“You’re not from around here, are you?” He asks, pouring out a whiskey neat for me.

I don’t reply, unsure what to make of this lone wolf and dissatisfaction but continues questioning me.

“We don’t get a lot of...visitors...around here,” he adds, carefully choosing his words.

“So you must be looking for something or someone,” he pries.

I eye him carefully.

Even with a mask on, I can tell he is just curious to know why another wolf is here, his calm demeanor and friendly aura presenting no threat to me.

After a long pause, I finally respond.

“I’m looking for someone,” I reply, raising my voice as the music intensifies.

“She’s a waitress here.Talia Ramos.She agreed to meet me but I don’t see her anywhere...”

I scream over the music, my voice trailing off at the end as I pretend to look around.

“Have you seen her?”

I cannot tell what he’s thinking behind his mask, but the flicker of terror in his eyes tells me he knows exactly who I’m talking about.

“Talia?” He asks, tapping his chin with his finger.

“Noooo, I don’t think we have a girl named Talia who works here...You sure you have the right place?”

He’s hiding her...Adam observes.I point to my mask and grin.

“She told me to bring a mask.Unless there’s another club in this town with a mask requirement, I think I’m in the right place.”

He shifts uneasily on his feet and shakes his head.

“Well, her name doesn’t ring a bell.Sorry buddy, but I think your girlfriend “She’s not my girlfriend,” I sigh, trying to come up with a good lie.

“She’s my...”

“Hey, Micah, have you heard anything from Talia? It’s been over a week with no response from her.Hope she’s okay,”

Another waitress asks, setting a tray with empty glasses on the counter.I sense the wolf within her, and when she looks over at me, stops in her tracks.

Micah looks like he’s about to lose his s\*\*t, his lips curling into a tight smile of anger.

“What the f\*\*k, Nikki?” he hisses.

“Sorry,”

She mutters, biting her lip anxiously.

“Where’s Talia?” I ask, stepping closer to the girl.

She looks nervously at Micah who shakes his head at her to keep quiet. I let out a sigh and sit back down in my chair.

“I don’t want to hurt her or Dakota. I just need to warn her about something. Please, help me find her before he does.”

“Who?” they ask in unison, glaring at each other in disgust.

“Her Ex-Mate.”

\*\*\* Toran (Alpha of the Ravenstone Clan)\*\*\*

“I’m going off to bed, hun,”

Rionna smiles, kissing me on the cheek.

“Should I wait up for you?” she giggles, snuggling up next “No, baby,”

I sigh, reluctantly knowing I had a lot of work ahead of me.

“I have something to take care of tonight.”

She curls her lips in a tiny smile.

“You need to slow down, hun. This has been going on for too long...”

I stare at her big brown eyes and cup her cheeks.

“It will all be over soon,” I reply.

“Just a little longer.”

Rionna purses her lips but she does not argue with me.

“Promise me you’ll at least get some rest tonight,” she says, pecking my cheek.

“Promise?”

She trots away to our bedroom, knowing I can’t deny her single request.

Despite not being my mate, she is the love of my life, unknowingly changing every cruel aspect of me into something better.

Something good.

I stare at the sea of files on my desk, unsure where to start.

For the past twenty years, I’ve been fighting this war...and am getting tired.

There’s a knock at my door, my son Tylen walking in with a file in his hands.

I take a good look at him, proud of the man he has turned out to be.

He is a good warrior and an excellent diplomat, though he hates representing the pack in ally meetings.

It saddens me that he does not want my title, but I will not impose my will over him. I will simply have to crown a new heir when this is all over.

“What is it?” I ask, holding out my hand for the files.

“Scarlett Haven wolves are already moving in as you paths with the Ivory Twins,” he says, handing over the documents.

I smile at this.

Sebastian and the Scarlett Haven wolves always thought the stories of the Ivory Twins were just myths but I knew better than to question Moon Goddess. I had seen first hand what she could do.

“So what’s our next move?” Tylen asks, pulling up a seat and speaking as I flip through the files.

“We wait...” I reply, leaning back in my chair.

“The Ivory Queen is young. She likely does not yet know how to separate her feelings from politics and has developed an emotional bond with Zane. If Scarlett Haven tries to take him by force, she will respond.

“I see...” Tylen replies.

“And that’s when you’ll come in.”

“Precisely,” I smirk, putting down the files.

“Agnes and Zane only know what they were told all these years....but I will show them all who the real monster is...and when that happens, Sebastian White will crash and burn.”

## The Silent Alpha by StephanieLight Chapter 40

Chapter 40: A wolf’s perspective

\*\*\*Grayson\*\*\*

I have been pacing back and forth for the past hour, all of my instincts urging me to just take command and do as I please.

I don't know where Zane gets his self control from but I am dying over here! There's a s\*x goddess lying beside us, completely naked with her n\*\*\*\*s staring right at me, daring me to lick them while my human is comatose with an erection.

This i\*\*\*t has another thing coming if he expects me to just sit back and look! Pssst....Hey! Hiss loudly, hoping to wake Zane up.

He only mumbles incoherently and I hiss even louder.

HEEYYY! Still, Zane remains fast asleep, my patience reaching its limit.

WAKE THE f\*\*k UP! I shout, Zane's eyes bursting open in fright as he nearly falls off the bed.

Verysmooth, I mutter as he barely manages to grab onto the headboard in time, Talia stirring a little in her sleep at his sudden movement.

What the f\*\*k, Gray? Zane snaps, now completely awake.

Pleased to have his full attention, I sit down on my hind legs, my tail wagging back and forth.

I'm Aorny, I reply.

Rolling his eyes at me, Zane curls back up on his side, but I am not about to pass up this opportunity.

Not after last night I take control of his body, Zane protesting almost immediately as I sit on my knees and tentatively cup one of Talia's breasts.

What are you doing? Zane hisses nervously, shoving me back and taking control again. I want to taste her gumdrop buttons! I snap, fighting to take control.

Stop it, Zane argues when I gain semi-control of his hand and squeeze Talia's breast.

You're going to wake her up! That's the point! I reply sarcastically.

A little moan escapes Talia's lips, Zane groaning in horror but our c\*\*k twitching at the sound.

"Mmmmm,."

Talia sighs, her eyes fluttering open and looking up at us.

Zane gulps nervously, unable to move his hand from her breast.

Talia lowers her gaze along his arm until she sees his hand still cupping her boob, her n\*\*\*\*s hardening while goosebumps rise across her skin.

A little smirk forms on her lips but she does not say a word, patiently waiting for Zane to make the next move.

Squeeze it.

Squeeze it.

Squeeze it! I chant, hoping Zane might actually grow some balls and take charge.

He remains frozen like a deer in headlights, however, his mind filling with useless thoughts of self-loathing.

As I'm about to give him the pep talk of the century, Talia places her hand over his Zane's hand trembling slightly.

"You know..." Talia smiles up at us.

"You're allowed to take charge too. Sometimes it's nice to feel wanted..."

I can tell Zane is blushing by the way his heart is racing and I sigh knowing last night was probably going to be the first and only time we would ever have s\*x.

I just wanted a titty, I sigh, resigning myself to no s\*x today.

"B-but,"

Zane stammers, slowly moving his hand up to her throat, his thumb grazing the place where we are supposed to mark her.

"H-how do I...H-ow do I-I know you w-want me-me wo"

I have to say I am impressed that he's brought up the subject without me having to and that he's not letting her get away before she can give us an answer.

My gaze falls upon the markless spot on her neck and I fight the urge to impose my will on her and mark her already.

"I do want you," she argues, wrapping her fingers around his wrist.

"I just don't want to be marked. I don't have to be marked for me to be yours. Humans don't mark each other and it's fine-"

"B-but I am n-not a hu-human," he argues, Talia glaring up at him.

"But I am," she replies.

“And we don’t mark each other for love.” prepare his argument.

Humans do mark each other for love.

They marry, they take each other’s names, they wear rings, they give each other jewelry, they get tattoos.

Hell, they even give each other hickies! Marks take many forms, ours just happens to bind our souls together, but everyone leaves a mark on the person they love, be it physical or emotional.

“Look, I know that the mark is part of your culture and I respect that,” she insists.

“But why can’t we just...be together? Why can’t we just be happy to have found each other without you having to mark your territory?”

Because you are not territory I snap, unable to see how that was a hard concept to understand.

A mark is more than just a physical claim of each other.

It’s emotional...spiritual!

“I-I am a wo-wolf, Ta-Tal-ia,” Zane argues.

“N-not a h-human.M-my m-mark means so-something to me.”

“So what does it mean to you?” Talia asks, her head shaking in disbelief.

She takes a deep breath and exhales slowly, gently pushing Zane’s hand away from her neck.

“My first mate marked me...and when I disappointed him, he took it all back.He stripped me of my title and rejected me because I couldn't give him what he wanted...Did you know it only takes three days for a mark to fade?”

She props herself up by the elbows and wraps the sheets around her chest.

There's a sadness in her voice as she speaks.

“It only took three days to break my soul so it could unbind itself from him...But it took me years to fit all the broken pieces back together again...only to realize some pieces are lost care about the meaning of your mark?” She asks quietly, forcing a cold smile on her face and shrugging at me.

“What difference does it make if you mark me when in the end you can just throw me away? I am a very disappointing mate and will inevitably fail to give you what you want-”

“I-I just w-want you!”

Zane snaps, his voice ragged with frustration.

“I-l just want y-you.”

Talia stares at him in shock, her mouth slightly agape as if he had just said something revolutionary.

Zane's mind quickly becomes muddled with thoughts and I try my best to calm him down.

Deep breath, hooman.

You have to tell her what a mark means to us or she will likely never back down, I explain to him, Zane's thoughts only worsening for fear of messing up.

Why don't you tell her instead? Zane asks nervously.

You are better with words. I'm not the one who brought it up, I mutter.

Besides, you need to learn to speak up for yourself. I can't be the only one here with balls.

I don't- Look at her! I snap, Zane gazing down at our mate.

She's being so patient with you.

Trust that she will listen to you and if you have to repeat yourself, then do it.

Talk slowly if you have to, but don't pass up this opportunity to tell her how important she really is to us. Talia understands that he has more to say and does not rush him.

"I- I...ahem," he clears his throat, his hands shaking from the build up of the pressure to say something.

"I-I...I."

"Breathe,"

Talia whispers, inhaling slowly with him.

"Now let it out," she exhales.

They do this a few times until Zane's thoughts finally slow down enough for him to process them.

His ears are bright red from embarrassment but I very quickly knock some sense into him. She had s\*x with a 26 year-old virgin who can't even masterbate properly.

We're way past embarrassment rightnow ,I snicker.

Besides, she queefed last night.

She can handle a little stutter if we can handle a p\*\*\*y fart.

My pep talk doesn't seem to help but he gathers his thoughts and opens his mouth nonetheless.

"I-I ..ahem...I a-accepted a long time a-ago t-that I-I will never be g-good e-enough for my fa-father, t-that my p-pa-pack will ne-never know who-who its true Alpha is-is, t-that I will ne-never spe-speak right. My en-en-entire exist-tence has been full of 'n-nevers' ...but I re-refuse to let you be an-an-another ne-ver in my li-fe. For as l-long as I can re-remember, I have been f-fo-forced to hide eve-ry p-part of who I am. My n-name, my ti-title, my w-wolf, my po-powers, my every-thing! But I wi-will not hide y-you only pa-part of m-me that I w-want to show the w-world. Mar-Marking you is n-not about own-owning you or us-using you until you are no l-longer useful to me. It-It's about sh-showing the rest of the w-world that I ha-have someone to li-live for, someone to lo-love for the rest of my li-life, someone to ch-cherish and pr-pro-protect from all the e-evils in the w-world, someone to sp-spend my eter-nity with."

He takes a moment to catch his breath, Talia slowly absorbing this information.

You're doing great, I encourage him.

Keep going...

“I-I don’t w-want to hide another p-part of myself because y-you, K-kota and my mom are the only beau-beautiful things in my life.I am n-not asking to ma-mark you now.I am si-simply asking for a ch-chance, a small ray of ho-hope that some-day in the fu-future, you will b-bear my ma-mark.I-Ij-just want a ch-chance.J-just one to sh-show you t-that I am n-not HIM.”

He looks at her sternly and repeats himself.

“Be-because I am n-not HIM.”

Talia turns her head to the side, avoiding his gaze to think over his words when a knock at the door startles us.

“Good morning Mommy,”

Kota chirps on the other side of the door.

“Uh-oh Mommy.The door is locked!” he gasps as he tries to turn the knob.

“Are you still playing horsey? Can I play with you too?”

Horsey? I cackle.

Is that what we were doing last night? Cuz Talia immediately sits up, swinging her legs over on the side of the bed.

“We’ll talk about this later,” she hisses at us, tugging her shirt over her head and pulling on her shorts.

“Put some clothes on and change the sheets,” she instructs.

Zane scrambles to put on his shorts and t-shirt and begins to strip the bed, his cheeks flushing when he sees some little white stains on the fabric.

Tsk, tsk, I jeer, Zane telling me to shut the f\*\*k up.

Talia lets Kota in, picking him up and kissing him good morning.

The little boy peers over her shoulder and looks up at Zane and I.

“What are you doing, Zane?” he asks as Zane puts on fresh sheets on the bed.

“Oh, umm,”

Talia hesitates for a moment before coming up with the dumbest excuse I’ve ever heard.

“Sweetie, Zane had a little accident last night,”

Talia chuckles, Zane’s eyes widening in shock.

“So we have to change the sheets.” I beg your pardon? Igrowl, struggling to contain my petty demon inside.

“Uh-oh!” Kota gasps, cupping his cheeks.

“Zane went pee pee on the bed!”

Alright, that’s it! Ihuff.

Tell him I rearranged his mommy’s guts and she puked! I shout. Everywhere and many times!

“M-Mommy farted on the b-bed,” Zane blurts out.

“And-and s-she le-left it all stin-stinky.”

“I did not!”

She snaps with indignation.I shove Zane aside and momentarily take control.

This is personal.I make a loud farting noise in her face, Kota squealing hysterically.

“Eww!!!” Kota giggles, pinching his nose.

“Mommy and Daddy are stinky!”

My wolf ears do not miss the title he has given me and, for a brief moment, I forget all about my annoying mate and her farting yttttg, Our entire lives together play out like a movie in my head, each moment more beautiful than the last.I grow excited at the thought of witnessing Kota’s first shift and helping him meet his wolf for the first time.

Unlike our own shift, Kota will not be alone to figure it all out for himself.I will be there with him to help him through the pain.

When he meets his mate, I will be the one to help him plan out his first date with her, and before long, I’ll be fixing his tie at his wedding.

I’ll be the first one at the hospital to greet his pup and it will be the most spoiled little bean in the world.

I see it all so clearly in my head and now that I have, I will do everything in my power to make it our reality.

Zane did not have a father but Kota will have a Dad.

“Kota,” Talia sighs.

“He’s-”

“Mine,”

Zane and I both say together, Zane regaining control “H-He’s mine,”

Zane reiterates, pushing back Kota’s hair and kissing his forehead.

Talia seems at a loss for words as she watches Kota cup his cheeks and make his own fart noises at us.

She has to know now that there’s not a chance in hell that we will ever walk away from him...or her for that matter.

We take care of Kota’s morning routine, giving Talia plenty of space to think about what we said while she dresses.

Zane instructs Kota to wash his little face and brush his teeth by showing him how he does it, Kota mimicking his movements.

I watch in amusement as Kota attempts to comb his own hair like Zane, carefully observing Zane as he grooms himself.

Once dressed and ready to go, Zane takes Kota downstairs for breakfast, both of them opting for a quick bowl of cereal.

It’s a beautiful day outside, so we decide to set up our bowls of cereal outside on the patio.

A butterfly flutters past us and settles on some flowers nearby.

“Woah!” Kota cries, running off to see the butterfly.

“Look Zane, look! A butterfly!”

He tries to get close to it, but it quickly takes flight, fluttering to another bush to rest.

Zane grabs Kota, putting his finger to his lips.

“W-we have to be qu-quiet s-so we don’t s-scare it,”

Zane whispers, Kota gasping and covering his mouth with his hands. A small creature from a distance, Kota asking a million questions which Zane answers patiently.

I watch silently, feeling my spirit fill with nostalgia.

Our humans are not aware of just how much we know about them.

They do not feel us until they are thirteen, but in truth, we have been with them since birth, silently observing them, watching them grow. I remember Zane’s first butterfly.

It was Elenore’s birthday, and up until that point, Zane had never set foot outside of his prison.

His mother spent all day with him, wanting to share her special day with her son.

That day, she brought him a small chocolate cupcake for him to eat all by himself, but he insisted on sharing it with her, the two of them giggling and smearing frosting on each other’s noses.

Zane was sad to watch her go at the end of the visit, feeling lonely in such a large, empty room.

In the early hours of the morning as he was sleeping, he heard the jingling of the locks on the door.

Afraid that he perhaps had done something to upset his father, Zane jumped up from his bed and stood beside it, his eyes glued to the door in the darkness.

Elenore and Wyatt suddenly came in, an air of excitement “Zane, baby, get your shoes on,”

Elenore instructed, plucking a small coat from her bag and a hat.

Now fully awake, Zane grabbed his shoes and put on the little coat.

“Mommy, w-where are w-we going?” he asked, wiping his tired face.

“We, my beautiful little boy, are going outside,”

She smiled down at him, cupping his cheeks in her hands and kissing him on the forehead.

His eyes widened in shock and excitement, his energy filling the room.

“We should go now before the rest of the pack wakes up,”

Wyatt hurried them, Elenore lifting Zane in her arms and draping a blanket over him.

Together, they rushed out of the house as quietly as possible and headed to the waterfall cabin hidden in the northern part of the pack lands.

Zane sat glued to the window, staring at the incredibly large world illuminated by the first light of the day.

Upon arriving, Wyatt did a small patrol of the area, Zane's excitement growing as they waited for his signal.

"You ready, my beautiful boy? Are you ready to see the world?" Elenore asked him upon receiving the green light that all was clear.

She helped Zane out of the car, his lungs filling with fresh forest air for the first time.

His little eyes darted from place to place as flowers opened up upon feeling the sun on their petals.

Wyatt shifted and stood close beside them as Elenore took him into the woods for a short walk.

Zane stuck out his hands to feel the fresh green leaves on all the plants along the trail, amazed by their velvety smoothness or jagged edges.

The sound of birds chirping in the distance startled Zane at first, but his mother took him to a clearing where they could hear and see several birds singing in the trees.

"Look, a b-bird!" Zane cried when he saw a mother bird settling on her nest.

"A b-bird! A b-bird!"

"Just like the ones in your books," his mother whispered, instructing Wyatt to set up a small picnic blanket for them to rest.

She removed his shoes so that he could feel the damp earth beneath his feet, Zane wiggling his toes on a pile of leaves and laughing at the strange feeling.

Elenore sat quietly on the blanket, watching her son as he leaped into the grass like a frog and picked different flowers for her when suddenly a small butterfly fluttered past him.

“M-mommy! M-mommy!” Zane squealed, his eyes wide as saucers as he ran after it deeper into the forest.

Elenore and Wyatt followed him and found him sitting by a bush, watching the butterfly open and close its wings as it stood on a flower.

“W-what is it?” Zane asked, mesmerized by the many spots on the creature’s wings.

“It’s resting after a long journey.”

“Ma-maybe it needs wa-water, M-mommy,” Zane said, looking around for a leaf with which to give it water.

He never did find a leaf because just at the moment, a large silver wolf appeared from the southern part of the forest, Zane scrambling to hide behind his mother.

“Sebastian,” Elenore gasped, her hand instinctively reaching behind her to soothe her son.

And just like that, the beautiful first morning of freedom became a nightmare...

For many years, I watched in horror as Sebastian degraded his son and I knew that on the day I came forward, I would have to be strong for both of us.

I may annoy Zane most of the time, but my only goal is to make sure that he never feels like that frightened little boy again.

We are free now and I intend to keep it that way.

The scent of our mate approaching draws me out of Zane's memories, her footsteps soft and quiet as she tiptoes towards us.

Zane becomes nervous in her presence but calms down when she wraps her arms around his waist and hugs him from behind.

She rests her head on his shoulder, breathing in calmly and saying nothing for a moment.

Zane's heart beating with hope.

“But perhaps...one day I will be.”