

# The Alpha and the Mistake

## Mistake - 5

Ryder

My mate's mother laughed with a shake of her head. "Typical. Always on the go, this one," she said, nodding at Brook with her chin. "Mike tells me all the time how she never seems to stay still."

I stared at her for a moment. Did she just say what I thought she said?

"Dean, is it?" her mom asked, but didn't wait for me to answer. "You are the alpha's guest, right? How are you settling in? How did you meet Brook? Did Mike introduce you? He's such a sweet boy, taking time out of his day to make sure Brook feels at home."

My jaw dropped, not even sure where to begin answering her questions. And again with Mike? What the hell was going on? Brook groaned, clearly embarrassed. Since there was obviously something going on here, I decided to go along with whatever it was. "Uh, yeah, and we have Science together." Harry and my mate gave each other a look. It had an uncomfortable and nervous air to it, and confirmed one thing. Brook's mom had no idea who Mike really was and how he treated her daughter. The question, though, was why? I looked at Harry. No doubt he was the answer.

Anger set my blood on fire. I clenched my fists to prevent myself from doing something I might regret later. Harry turned to his mate. "Nancy, why don't we let them talk about whatever it is they have to talk, and we go watch that show you've been telling me about all week."

"Yeah, we've got a project already in Science. Can you believe it? This early? It's why he's here," Brook jumped in.

"You get everything ready," Harry insisted to his mate. "I'll get us some popcorn and take care of these two."

He placed one hand on Brook's shoulder and another one on mine. His grip tightened on me. I had to bite the inside of my cheek to keep from pushing it off. As an alpha, his act of dominance rubbed me in all the wrong ways. Plus, I wanted to punch him right in the face for allowing Brook to be hurt.

Once in the kitchen, the Brook I was familiar with emerged. Her eyes narrowed at me. "This is against the rules. Tell him, Harry. He's not supposed to be here."

Rules? What is she talking about?

Harry glared at me. “Son...” He put a bag of popcorn in the microwave. “Mike and Brook agreed on this. He should’ve told you the rules when you joined in. No bruises on her face or where her mother can see them. No broken bones or anything that would get her hospitalized. Also, none of you should bother her in our home.”

Holy crap! This was insane. “Are you for real?”

Brook’s glare got even colder. “Of course, I’m for real. Even if I’m a mistake, I’m still a person.”

“That’s not what I meant,” I told her. How could she think that... well, I knew how. Hopefully, I would make her see how wrong she was as soon as I had the chance. I turned to her stepdad. “You let him beat on her as long as he follows the rules. For what? So her mom doesn’t find out?”

He hesitated, glancing over at Brook. I took a step closer to him, my anger getting the better of me. Brook was suddenly in between us and her scent washed over me. The anger disappeared, and all I wanted to do was hold her, especially since I saw tears in her eyes, just waiting to fall. The only thing that stopped me was her furious expression. “Enough,” she demanded. “Just stop it, please! If you have a single decent bone in your body, just stop. I don’t know what you’re playing at, and I don’t care. Go away, leave me and my family alone!”

Exactly like at school, Brook left before I could utter a word. It seemed I’d have to tie her to a chair for us to have an actual conversation.

“Why won’t you leave her alone?” Her stepdad said, his eyes turning a yellow-brown.

He’s angry? Funny. I growled at him, letting my wolf shine through my eyes. “Why aren’t you protecting her? She’s your mate’s daughter!”

“I have no choice. Alpha Ryan ordered me to not take any actions against his son. Besides, what do you care? You’re just here to hurt her like the rest, so do — “

I had him against the wall, my face inches from his before I’d realized I moved. “I would never hurt her! Don’t you ever say that I would!”

His eyes widened with surprise. “I thought...” He glanced at where Brook had gone, then back to me. “Is she...?” Understanding shone in his eyes.

“Yes, she’s mine,” I replied. It felt good to finally say the words. I backed off him.

“Then do something,” he shot back at me. “You could take her out of here tonight. End this damn nightmare for her once and for all.”

My stomach twisted. I wanted to. God, did I want to, but I couldn’t. Not while I pretended to be my younger brother, Dean. The other packs needed more than Mike bullying a human girl as

proof the Black Mountain pack needed a new alpha. If I wanted to stop my uncle's reign of terror, I needed everything I could find. With shame, I glanced at the floor. "I can't. At least, not yet. My pack needs me here and playing nice with my uncle."

The hope that was in Harry's eyes died and he shook his head. "Right. Of course, then do her a favor — leave her alone."

"You can't keep me from my mate," I growled at him. The alpha in me couldn't ignore the challenge in his tone.

"I'm not," he said more meekly. "But if you can't claim her, then leave her be. She's dealing with enough without adding a power-play between packs. Plus, I don't think she likes you very much."

I flinched. That, while potentially true, was below the belt. "Because she doesn't know me. Between Mike and School, I haven't had the chance to talk to her. All I want is to talk."

Harry sighed, taking the popcorn out of the microwave. "Okay, if all you want to do is talk, you can go up. But word of advice, reel it in a bit, kid. She doesn't trust our kind much, for obvious reasons. If you go all possessive of her, it won't end well for you. She's upstairs, third door to the right."

"Thanks," I said, appreciative he was not only giving me a chance to talk to her, but for the advice too. With a deep breath, I went upstairs.

I knocked on the door and a moment later, she opened it. Brook's eyes widened with shock. "What are you still doing here?"

"We haven't yet had a chance to have that talk," I told her, leaning on the door frame.

"But Harry—" She looked confused, even glancing down the hall for something.

"He and I came to an understanding." I offered her a smile. She looked at me as if I'd grown a second head.

"Understanding? What kind of understanding? Did you threaten him?"

The smile fell from my face. She might as well have slapped me again. "Of course not! Look, Brook. Please, I just want to talk."

She bit her lip as she looked up at me with indecision. Thank God she didn't refuse outright. After what felt like the world's longest minute, Brook took a step back to let me in. She sat on her bed, crossing her legs. "Why?"

"Why what?" I asked, walking into her room. It wasn't a large room, but it was nice... for a girl's room, that is. She had stuffed animals everywhere, but also a lot of pictures too.

“Why go through all this trouble to talk to me, Missy Mistake? You werewolves don’t make any sense, I hope you know that.”

I grinned. I guess she had a point there. “There is a method to our chaos, I promise.”