

## The Millennium Wolves Series Book Two Chapter: 16

### SIENNA

Aiden carried me bridal-style in his arms as he walked down the cobblestone path leading to our house. My heart hadn't stopped racing since we'd left the reception, and I didn't know if it ever would.

My insecurities were like swelling waves, lapping against the edges of my mind.

*What if I'm not good in bed?*

*What if I don't live up to his fantasies?*

*What if I can't satisfy an alpha?*

Aiden stopped at the front door, as if he sensed my fears. And maybe he did. Mates were connected in a way that was so intense it was almost indescribable.

"What's wrong?" he asked in a gentle tone that was unusual for him.

"I... I just don't want to let you down." I murmured. In that moment, I'd never felt like less of a dominant in my life.

To my surprise, Aiden laughed. "Oh, Sienna...you have no idea...."

"No idea about what?" I asked, a bit annoyed by his laughter.

**\*\*No idea how much power you have over me.\*\***

My face burned hot and a gasp escaped my lips.

He continued, holding my gaze. "Yes, I marked you. And yes, I made you mine, but...."

Aiden took a deep breath as he pressed his forehead to mine.

"You made me yours too. Make no mistake I'm not just your alpha, I'm your mate. And there's nothing that will ever change that. Your love has made me stronger than any alpha a blood ever could."

The heat in my cheeks spread through the rest of my body like a wildfire, and just like that, my dominance returned.

I loved Aiden more than words could express. So I wouldn't use my words.

I grabbed the hair at the back of his head and feverishly pressed my lips to his.

I wanted my fire to spread. I wanted it to consume everything until the whole world turned to ash and

we were the only ones left standing

Aiden's tuxedo jacket was bursting at the seams as his muscles swelled underneath. He was practically shifting when he took a step toward the door and lifted his leg.

*CRACK*

Aiden kicked the door clean off its hinges, sending wood splintering across the marble floor.

He stepped over the debris, bringing me inside.

*Well, that's certainly one way to carry your mate over the threshold...*

When he entered our bedroom, Aiden set me down, then pushed my back up against the wall. Our feverish kissing resumed as I started ripping off his tux, piece by piece.

Once his torso was bare. I ran my fingers down the deep ridges of his abs, to his belt buckle.

Aiden's own fingers were busy racing to unlace my corset. He was getting frustrated, and I couldn't help but enjoy it.

Finally, it was unlaced, and my gown fell to the ground. I whipped his belt out through the loops in one swift motion, and seconds later his pants fell and landed on the floor. Aiden's pants were no different than a nod throat than

followed as Aiden tore them off and threw them across the room.

We spent a moment taking each other in, officially mates. But a moment was all we were willing to

spare. We'd both waited long enough.

Aiden picked me up like I was lighter than a feather, and I wrapped my legs around his waist.

We crashed onto the bed in a free-for-all. There were hands and mouths everywhere, both of us

trying to grab and bite whatever we could

Aiden's claws were lightly digging into my bare flesh, and I wanted them to dig even deeper. I held his neck tightly, kissing it, before my kisses moved to his chest

I let my teeth scrape down his stomach, and when I got to his rigid cock, I took it right into my mouth without hesitation.

I started moving slow, driving him crazy, and then upped my rhythm until he was crying out. It was so big that I could barely contain it, but I forced it deeper into my throat.

When I came up for air, my saliva hung from his thick appendage like a silvery, translucent spider web. Aiden wiped my mouth off with his thumb, then gripped my neck, pushing me back down.

I could tell from his satisfied grunts that he was

I could tell from his satisfied grunts that he was feeling pure bliss. But that wasn't enough. I wanted to take him to fucking Nirvana,

I savored his salty and sweet taste as my tongue worked the tip. Then I took the whole thing in my mouth again until I reached the base.

My lips tightened around his cock as I slid them slowly up his length.

But when I came up for air the second time, Aiden flipped me over so that I was on my back. He pried my legs apart so fast that it caused me to inhale sharply.

Aiden used his fingers to spread open my sex, then he inserted his tongue, skillfully flicking it around and licking my most sensitive areas.

I moaned as my body convulsed with rhapsody. It was like he was using his tongue to compose a symphony in my pussy. And my involuntary cries of pleasure were the chorus.

His tongue continued to work as his fingers slid inside of me, testing my flexibility, preparing me for his massive manhood.

As

his fingers explored me, I felt a twinge of pain mix with the pleasure. I could only imagine what was in store for me in just a moment.

A thrill ran up my spine at the thought of Aiden finally penetrating me. I was scared and excited at the same time.

As Aiden's cock rubbed the outside of my sex forcefully, his soft kisses a stunning contrast to the roughness.

"Are you... ready?" Aiden asked, brushing my hair out of my eyes and staring into them deeply.

It was the same question that he'd asked me before. But this time, I knew my answer without a shadow of a doubt.

"Yes," I whispered as my arms cradled his neck.

My breath hitched as Aiden finally slid inside me.

At first, the tension was almost too much to bear. Like I was being pulled apart, but slowly, that pain turned into pleasure. The more I relaxed, the more we became a perfect fit for one another.

"Is it okay?" Aiden asked, not moving a muscle.

I nodded, smiling at how sensitive he was to my needs.

But the longer he stayed inside me, the more I was sure...

My pussy wasn't made of porcelain.

"You said you were going to make me how to the heavens," I growled sensually. "So, come on, Alpha. Show me what you're made of."

Aiden's lips curled into a wicked grin that almost made me regret my words.

*Almost*

He pulled out, then thrust back in. Hard.

I yelped as I felt him even deeper inside me. My increasingly wet sex accepted him with fervor as he started moving faster and faster.

But it still wasn't enough. So I grabbed him by the shoulders and seamlessly rolled on top of him.

Now I was riding him, controlling the pace. I lifted my hair off the back of my neck and gyrated as fast as I could, making sure he could hear how much I was enjoying myself,

It felt like the friction between us was enough to set us ablaze.

Then it wasn't just a building—that fire inside it was coming. Like a raging inferno.

"Fuck, Sienna," Aiden moaned, and I was right there with him

"Oh my... GOD!" I screamed, a sensation enveloping my entire body like an explosion

The lights before my eyes were flashing like fireworks, and I felt as though I might black out.

Aiden grabbed my hips and pulled out, his seed shooting into the air like a geyser.

I collapsed

next to him, panting and trying to process the euphoria that I'd just experienced.

He grabbed my hand in his and brought it to his mouth, kissing it tenderly. "You're unbelievable," he said.

We turned on our sides and stared into each other's eyes. Everything felt exactly right.

"I love you." I said breathlessly

"I love you more than anything," he replied, equally out of breath. "I didn't even have to take you to heaven... You *are* heaven."

As his golden—

green eyes flickered in the dim lamplight, full of adoration, I wondered at how I'd gotten here. Mated to the alpha.

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I just saw myself as a regular girl, but Aiden...

He saw me as a goddess.

And I couldn't wait to start the rest of my life with him.

When I awoke the next morning. I was still feel the high of the previous night with Aiden

My body ached, but in a good way. *Will I ever be able to walk right again?*

I turned over to see how Aiden was faring, and was surprised by the empty indentation next to me,

*Where could he have gone?*

My phone started buzzing on the nightstand and I reached over to grab it. My heart leapt into my throat when I saw a message from Aiden.

**Aiden** I have a surprise for you.

**Aiden** Meet me at 121 Furtaugh Ave.

Sienna A surprise??

**Aiden** How fast can you get here?

Sienna

Omigod!

**AIDEN**

I stood outside, anxiously awaiting Sienna. I couldn't wait to see the look on her face when she saw the surprise. Her car pulled up in front, and I walked around to open the door for her.

"Hi," she said, her eyes bright as she jumped up to kiss me.

"Hi, my love," I said, grabbing her hand and guiding her to the storefront. It was an empty venue. The record shop that used to inhabit it had just closed.

A friend of mine in real estate had told me about it. He knew I'd been looking for a space.

I pulled the door open for her and watched as her eyes went wide, looking at the wood floors and the blank walls. "What is it?"

"It used to be a record store." I said, "The owner retired and put the space up for sale."

"So, what? We're gonna have a picnic here?"

I wrapped my arms around her and pulled her close to me, bending over to kiss her cheek. "We can have a picnic here if you want."

She turned around so we were face to face.

"Aiden Norwood, what are we doing here?"

I looked deep into her eyes, trying to hide the smile tugging at my lips. “Sienna Mercer–Norwood, I thought you’d wanna see your new gallery.

Her mouth formed an “o,” but no words came out. Then her head snapped around, taking in the space like she was seeing it for the first time. She turned back to me, her eyes stilled wide.

“Happy one week anniversary. Sienna.”

She squealed—I didn’t even know her voice could reach that octave—and then she ran around the entire circumference of the shop, looking at each wall for a moment before moving to the next.

Something inside me welled up, something made of joy and love, of passion and of familiarity, like first time.

Then she came back to me. I can’t believe you did this... for me,” she said.

“I’d do anything for you.”

She looked at the ground then back at me “There’s something I want to tell you. I found out something. About my... my birth parents.”

I’d known Sienna had been adopted by her parents, but we’d never talked much about it before. I could see how important this was to her, how much it made her whole body tense up, like she was trying to keep the information inside.

“They were alphas.”

My mind went blank. I blinked. “Where? Where? When?”

“They’re gone now but... in the Texas Pack. They were alphas, Aiden.”

“They were alphas,” I whispered back, and everything started to make sense. Her power, the way we could communicate, the way she felt like the most perfect fit. I grabbed her and kissed her because this day... it couldn’t get any better.

## **SIENNA**

I’d gotten so excited by the new gallery, Aiden had insisted on giving me some time to get acquainted with it by myself.

*He probably just wants to get away from all my squealing.*

I'd already made a stop at my parents place to pick up some of my sketchbooks and paintings from the garage. It had served as my makeshift studio for a while, but now..

"I have my own fucking *gallery*." I said aloud to no one. I still couldn't believe it was real.

I picked up one of my old sketchbooks and started flipping through the pages to see if there was anything that had potential,

I smiled when I saw an unfinished sketch of a handsome and muscular man, looking like he had the weight of the world on his broad shoulders.

It was from the first time I'd met Aiden.

I thought back to that day at the river. The day that had changed everything. Now everything was so different, but it all felt like it had happened the way it was supposed to.

As I flipped to the next page, my heart stopped.

It was the *other* sketch that I'd drawn that day. The haunting, sexual vision that had hung over me like a dark cloud.

But when I looked at it now, it didn't fill me with dread. Instead, I felt a sense of peace.

I thought of Emily and felt tears brimming in my eyes. I had finally found a way to move on from the past. I knew Emily would've been proud me.

I hoped that, just maybe, she was up there watching over me. Maybe my peace could be hers as well.

I wiped away the tears and picked up a pencil, then flipped to a blank page.

*A new beginning*

As I sat in my gallery, watching my pencil scribble over the page in abstract movements, I had a different kind of determination. One that wasn't fueled by any traumatic past memories or regrets or anyone else's judgments.

No, now my determination was for my future.

I had a gallery to fill my own gallery, with walls so blank they screamed possibility. So I'd promised myself that I'd be here drawing every morning until there was no space left in the gallery

for new work.

I suddenly felt a gust of wind hit me, but the chill that came with it lingered long after it had gone. *Did I leave the door open?* That's when I turned to my left. And saw her.

The purple-eyed lady.

She was back.

"Hello, Sienna." She walked toward me, every one of her movements more graceful than the last.

"You never told me your name," I responded, keeping my guard up. Something about being mated to an alpha was making me more confident in myself.

"It is Eve," she said, her purple eyes glowing at me. You looked beautiful at your mating ceremony."

You were there?"

She just smiled. Of course she was there. She was everywhere. But I'd asked the wrong question...

—"Why are you *here*?"

"I'm on my way out of town. But I wanted to warn you of the dangerous path ahead, seeing as how I'm the one who set you on it," she responded cryptically.

Warn me? What path?"

"The path to finding the truth about your birth parents."

I was stunned into silence, but Eve continued speaking. "Just be careful of who you trust. There are those who don't have your best interests at heart."

"Like who?" I asked, but Eve was already gliding back toward the door. "How do I find the truth?"

"Only you can answer that, Sienna. You may even find that the answer is already within you."

With those final words, Eve disappeared, leaving me more confused than ever.

When my eyes returned to my sketchbook, that confusion turned into a feeling of foreboding. The abstract sketch I'd been working on when Eve walked in suddenly held a very clear form.

A shadowy figure with elongated fangs. parents."

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A vampyre.

## **The Millennium Wolves Series Book Three Chapter: 01**

### **SIENNA**

*The water beat against our naked bodies as we stood facing each other in the warm summer rain,*

*Our glistening figures were bathed in an amber light that turned the whole meadow bronze.*

*His eyes wandered over my curves in shameless*

*desire.*

*I blushed, not used to the attention.*

*The run had lasted hours and brought us to the top of a hill overlooking the entire island. Far in the distance, the glowing towers of the resort barely registered on the horizon.*

*We stopped only when we knew we were completely alone.*

*“Come here,” he beckoned, holding out his hand.*

*My heart raced as I stepped toward him, steam rising from his bulging shoulders.*

*I felt his rough hand against my cheek as he pulled me in for a kiss.*

*Soon he was on top of me, our bodies sliding against each other on the soft grass like we were trying to start a fire.*

*His tip brushed against the outside of my sex in a tantalizing rhythm, spreading my lips but refusing to enter*

*It was a torture that I couldn't take.*

*I pulled him into me, gasping in pleasure and a little bit of pain. He was deeper than I had ever felt before.*

*I moaned in delight, calling his name, begging him not to stop as the rain showered down on us.*

*I turned the handle to off, letting the last trails of water escape down my chest.*

*It was winter now, and our honeymoon had long been over, but hot showers still reminded me of that day on the island with Aiden.*

*The steam hugged my skin like a warm blanket as I stepped out of the shower.*

*It was funny to think that, one year ago. I had stood in the same bathroom, furious that I had been tricked into staying with Aiden, but now here I was mated to the alpha of the East Coast Pack*

*I was, mated to the alpha of the East Coast Pack and wanting to be nowhere else but here in this house with the man I loved.*

*“Do you need help in there?” he asked through the door in his growly baritone voice.*

*“No. I'm perfectly capable of drying off on my own, thank you very much.” I replied, smiling myself.*

*Over the past twelve months, he had become more playful, letting down his guard and showing me a side that was different from the dominant alpha he had to display to the rest of the pack.*

“I’m happy to help,” he continued, with a charming persistence that made me giggle. It’s truly no problem at all.”

“Down, boy.” I said, wrapping myself in a towel and laughing.

“But I’ve been so good,” he protested,

“Good things come to those who wait.” I answered, wiping the steam off the mirror and tousling my damp locks.

I opened the door and took a step forward, pressing my wet body against his broad chest, wrapping my arms around him, and gripping his muscular back

He tilted his head as if to kiss me, and I pulled away. “I said good things come to those who wait...and you didn’t wait.”

I pushed him away and sauntered into my closet, making sure he had a good view of my ass. Once around the corner I tossed out my towel so he knew I was naked and pulled the sliding door closed.

I had barely put on my underwear when the door flew open and I found myself wrapped up in Aiden’s arms, his lips on mine in heated passion.

I felt myself dip back, and we crashed into the pillowy mattress. Aiden’s weight pressed against me with powerful longing. I could feel how hard he was, and I felt myself getting wet in anticipation

He tore off his shirt, revealing his chiseled torso and bulging arms. His chest heaved with desire, and his golden–green eyes flickered with lust.

I leaned down and kissed my alpha. His lips were soft and warm, and every time we touched it felt like I was melting into them.

“I want to start a family with you, Sienna,” he said suddenly

“I know,” I replied. “We will.”

“I mean right now. I want to start trying.”

Aiden’s words caught me off guard. I knew we would have to talk about it eventually, but I had put it out of mind over the past six months.

There was so much to get used to being mated to the alpha of the second most powerful pack in the United States. I could no longer dress the way I used to. I couldn’t go out in public with bodyguards, and I was constantly under the microscope.

No more spontaneous meetups with the girls at Winston's.

No more peaceful afternoons in the park, where I could be alone with my sketchbook and my thoughts.

I had

duties now, like the one I had to perform this afternoon. It was the first day of the Fertility Festival, and pack tradition required me to shift with Aiden in front of the entire pack and let him mount me.

I thought Aiden had been joking when he first told me about it, but I guess when you're brought up as an alpha, you don't question the status quo and outdated ceremonies.

But I didn't come from pack royalty. Before I was his mate. I was an adopted nineteen-year-old with one human parent and a severe aversion to the

spotlight

The idea of being so vulnerable in such a public setting was absurd, not to mention humiliating.

I had tried confronting Aiden about it, but every time I brought it up, he would go off on some tangent about how it wasn't a big deal and how important it was for the pack.

We weren't actually having sex or anything, but I still considered him getting on top of me as a fairly intimate, and private, affair.

"Sienna?" Aiden asked, grabbing my thigh,

"Yes, sorry. I was someplace else."

"Do you want to keep going?"

"Aiden, I don't know if I'm ready yet."

"What do you mean? It's been a year. Alphas and their mates are supposed to start trying for pups at the beginning of the first Haze after they've been mated. It's tradition."

There was that word again. "*Tradition.*" God, how I was starting to hate the sound of it. And the Haze, that lustful craze that possessed every werewolf during the Mating Season, was about to make matters ten times worse.

"Can we talk about this later?" I asked, trying to salvage the romantic moment, which was quickly slipping away.

"Of course, we can talk after the ceremony." Aiden replied, gazing at me with his soft, unsuspecting eyes. The longer I looked into them, however, the more confident I became that I couldn't go through with the ritual this afternoon.

It killed me to do this to him, and I knew it was my fault for letting it go this long, but something deep inside me didn't feel right.

"That's something else I wanted to talk to you about," I said, breaking his gaze.

"What do you mean? Are you nervous?" he asked, rubbing my arm.

*Damn it, why does he have to be so sweet right now?*

But I couldn't back out again. There wasn't any more time to put it off. I had to tell him how I felt.

"Aiden. I don't want to do it."

A confused look came over his face, and I hoped we could sort through this without it blowing up into a fight.

"Why? It's only a short display for the pack so they can give us their blessings as we try to conceive."

"If it's just for the pack's blessing, then why do we need to shift and do all the other stuff?"

"It's symbolic."

I was hoping Aiden would take a moment to listen to himself and realize how weak an argument he was making, but his genuine expression meant I would have to spell out my objection.

"May be for you, but I think it's degrading."

"My mother did it, and so did my father's mother. You're my mate, Sienna. No one will think less of you."

"It's not what about other people think, Aiden. It's what I'm comfortable with."

"Listen," he said, getting out from under me and sitting up on the bed. "This only happens once or twice in a lifetime. We'll be shifted for less than a minute. Tradition is what keeps a pack together. Without it, we lose our identity."

*There was that stupid word again.* “I feel like I’m losing my identity having to follow all these stupid rules,” I shot back

I put a stern look on my face, letting him know he wasn’t going to sway me.

“Look, Sienna, forget the pack. Can you do this for me? And I swear that I’ll never ask you to do something like this again.”

Aiden was my world, and I would do anything to make him happy, but right now I hated that he wasn’t listening to me. As an alpha, he wasn’t used to compromise, but if our relationship was going to continue growing, he’d need to figure out how.

“Do you seriously not understand where I’m coming from?”

“It’s just this once, Sienna,” he replied, “After this, you get to call the shots, my love.”

I could tell he wasn’t going to budge.

“I need to finish getting ready.” I said, hopping off the bed and heading back to the closet.

“Do you need any help?” he called out with a playful tone.

“No, I can manage on my own,” I answered unenthusiastically.

“Don’t take too long now.” said Aiden picking up

“Don’t take too long now,” said Aiden, picking up his shirt and blowing me a kiss before sauntering out of the bedroom.

I put on the festival dress and looked at myself in the mirror, thinking about all the alpha mates who’d endured this before me and wondering whether or not they felt as disgusted as I did.

*Its less than a minute, Sienna. It’s less than a*

The stage was built in a clearing in the forest. Giant trees had been hewn and their bodies bound together to create the gigantic platform that Aiden and I now stood on. Behind us was the rest of the council and a surprise VIP. Raphael Fernández, the Alpha of the Millennium.

*No wonder Aiden didn’t want to call off the festival*

All around on the ground, looking up at us with excitement, was what seemed like the entire East Coast Pack

For a moment I thought I saw a pair of purple eyes, but it must've just been my imagination.

I hadn't seen Eve since she'd stopped by my gallery over six months ago. Nor had I gotten

any clarity on that vague warning about my birth parents that she'd left me with

If my parents really had been alphas. I wondered if they'd had to participate in this horrendous ritual too.

As the opening declarations were made, my heart started pounding. I couldn't believe I was going to do this. I'd run through it dozens of times in my head as we drove to the festival.

I felt Aiden's hand grab mine and squeeze it in reassurance. He then shed his robe, revealing his dark, statuesque figure, and began to shift.

*This is it. There is no turning back.*

I stood in place, not moving. A gasp rippled through the crowd like a tidal wave.

Aiden's massive wolf now stood beside me, gazing expectantly at my human form.

I walked up to the microphone and scanned the dumbfounded faces in the crowd. My hand shook as I pulled down the microphone so it was pointed at my lips.

*It's not too late. You can still shift.*

*No, you're doing this, Sienna.*

I tried to force the words out, but they refused to budge. My adrenaline was spiking, constricting my throat and every muscle in my body.

*You're an alpha too, Sienna. Start acting like it.*

I closed my eyes, blocking out the sea of people and marshalling my nerves. My throat relaxed, and the words came pouring out before I had a chance to think

"I will stand with my mate but only as his equal, not as his prize. I still ask for your blessing, but I will not shift."

There was a moment of silence as my words sank in, but angry howls soon pierced the growing tumult. I stepped back from the podium, unsure of what to do now that I had made my protest.

The shouting intensified, and the spectators' faces teemed with malice. I started to feel frightened, threatened

Had I just made a huge mistake?

## **The Millennium Wolves Series Book Three Chapter: 02**

### **Sienna**

I felt a nudge in my back and turned to see Aiden still in wolf form.

"I'm sorry, I can't," I said, placing my hand on his muzzle. This is one tradition I refuse to uphold."

Even my mate's wolf eyes held disappointment and betrayal. It stabbed me in the heart like a sharp knife. It was all too much for me to take. I had to get away before I completely broke down.

I turned and walked off the stage as quickly as I could without running

When I made it to the ground, Jocelyn was there waiting to intercept me.

"Sienna, wait!

\*\*Jocelyn, I can't. I need to get out of here."

"Okay," she said, taking one look at me and realizing I was in no state to listen to anything she had to say. "Come with me."

She took my hand and pulled me past the news vans. Already, reporters and camera operators had started to swarm around me, lunging with lenses and microphones.

By the time my security caught up with us, we had already made it to the Pack cars. One of the security team opened the door to a limousine and ushered Jocelyn and me inside.

The door slammed closed, and the sounds outside were instantly muted. As we sped away, I looked out of the tinted windows at the mob of angry wolves shouting at our car. I don't think I'd ever felt so hated in my life.

Thankfully, I still had Jocelyn.

As the Pack Healer, she not only mended physical wounds but emotional ones as well.

We had become like sisters over the past year, and her previous relationship with Aiden meant that she knew him as well as I did, if not better.

That said, I had kept her in the dark about my apprehensions. She'd been brought up in the same Pack-centered world as Aiden, and if she sided with him, well, I decided I'd rather go it alone than risk tainting our friendship.

"Si, why didn't you come to me?"

"I didn't think you would understand. I thought you would tell me the same thing Aiden did."

"Which was?"

"That it wasn't a big deal. That it's important for the Pack. That I'm overreacting. But now I see how stupid it was to keep it all bottled up. And now you both hate me."

"I don't hate you, Sienna, and neither does Aiden."

"You didn't look into his eyes like I did," I replied, fighting back tears.

"I'm sure he felt embarrassed," replied Jocelyn. "And it certainly didn't help that the Alpha of the Millennium was there."

"Thanks for reminding me." I cried, burying my face in my hands.

Jocelyn put her arm around me and stroked my hair, trying to calm me. I could only imagine what Aiden was dealing with right now. I had abandoned him there, with the crowd, with Raphael

I was such a horrible mate.

"I can tell that this is about more than just the ritual," said Jocelyn in her soothing Healer voice.

Sometimes I hated how good she was at her job, but I had just witnessed what happened when I kept things to myself.

Besides, I had no reason to be afraid of Jocelyn's judgment. She was my best friend. I felt embarrassed that the thought had even entered my mind.

"Aiden wants to start trying for a family, like now, and I'm not ready at all."

"What makes you feel not ready?"

"I don't know. It's this feeling that's hanging over me. I can't explain it."

"Does it have to do with Aiden?"

"That's definitely part of it. It's like he only wants pups because tradition says we start now. That's crazy, right? You should want to have kids because you want to have kids, not because some outdated rules say you should.

Have you told him that?"

"I don't want him to think that I'm ungrateful or that I don't want to have his pups. What I want to say is that I think a big part of the world he was raised in is folksy bullshit."

"Maybe don't use those words," Jocelyn replied, laughing, but every healthy relationship is based on open communication."

*Yeah, but that only works when your mate is willing to listen*

I picked at the seat in frustration, thinking about my exchange with Aiden before we'd left for the festival, cursing myself for not being more assertive.

"And the other part?" asked Jocelyn.

"What?" I replied, returning from my thoughts.

"What is the other part of the feeling that's hanging over you?"

I wasn't sure I even knew, just that it was there, looming ominously above me whenever the conversation of having children came up.

"It's like this fear lurking in the back of my mind."

"Fear of what?"

"I don't know. The unknown. I guess."

"It's normal to be apprehensive about the future. Si. Especially when it comes to starting a family."

"No, it's not about the future as much as it is the past, like where I come from."

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-You mean your family?"

"Yes, but not my adoptive family, my biological one. I don't know anything about them."

"What about that frightens you?"

"I mean I was found in a carriage. They could be anyone. Before you pass along your genes, don't you think you should know what they're carrying?"

"Family is more than genetics, Sienna. Look at your adoptive parents. Do you think they cared who your parents were when they brought you home?"

"That's different," I protested.

"Is it, though?" answered Jocelyn,

"Of course it is. I was literally pushed into UNLIMITED their lives. Were they supposed to wait for a background check on my parents before bringing me home?"

"Si. I think you're obsessing over this too much. Any children you have with Aiden will be fine. You're a perfectly healthy, loving she-wolf, and he's an alpha. They get half his genes too. you know."

"That's easy for you to say. You're not even mated."

I instantly regretted letting the words out of my mouth. Being mateless was something that weighed heavy on Jocelyn, and although I hadn't said it to be mean, I knew I had come off as the biggest bitch

\*\*Jocelyn, I didn't mean to say that. I was trying

"It's fine. Sienna. I know your head is in a million places." Her reassuring smile let me know she hadn't taken it to heart. I breathed a sigh of relief

"You need to talk to Aiden, though...about both items."

As usual, Jocelyn was right, but how was I supposed to approach him after what I had just done?

-Well, that's your advice on how to patch up the relationship with my mate. What would you prescribe for repairing my image with the rest of the Pack?":

"I'm a healer, not a miracle worker," answered Jocelyn, raising her hands in protest.

I had silenced my phone when we got in the car, excepting a torrent of notifications, but now I glanced down and saw that I had new messages excepting a torrent of notifications, but now I glanced down and saw that I had new messages from my mom and Selene.

Besides Jocelyn, they were the only other people in my life who I felt comfortable talking to right now. I knew they wouldn't judge me for what I'd done.

"Answer them," said Jocelyn. "I think I've given you all the advice I have, anyway."

Mom

Honey, give me a call.

Mom I'm not angry. I just want to know you're okay.

Mom

Don't listen to what the horrible people in the media are saying.

Mom Si?

Sienna

Hey

Sienna Thanks for checking in, mom

Sienna

I'm fine

Mom What you did was so brave.

Mom Your father and I are here for you if you need us. We love you.

Sienna

Thanks. That means a lot

Mom This whole thing is really teaching me about my friends.

Mom Patty came over right away and started saying some not nice things.

Mom I don't think I'll be speaking to her again.

Jeez, was my mom seriously losing friends over what I had done? That was the last thing that I wanted to happen.

I hadn't meant to divide the Pack. And what was the media saying about me?

Selene Sister, all the gals at work think you're awesome

Selene I'm so proud to be related to you!

Selene Not that I wasn't before lol

Sienna Thanks, sis

Sienna

I appreciate the support

Selene Im starting a new collection

Selene

calling it "fuck the pack-riarchy"

Selene too far?

Sienna Just right, Goldilocks a

So, I was destroying friendships *and* spearheading social movements.

Great.

The car dropped us off at the Pack House. I thought about having it take me home instead, but Aiden's numerous texts and voicemails made it clear he had to deal with damage control and would be there for the rest of the day.

Aiden was on the phone when I arrived at his office. He held up a finger to let me know it would be a moment before he was free.

I took comfort in the fact that he looked at me with the face of a man buried in work, not an angered mate.

Still, his distance upset me.

I started running through what I would say to him when he got off the phone. How would I start? What if he said he was working late and I should go home without him?

"Hey, little girl."

Was he finished already? I still had no idea how I should begin

"Hey, Mr. Wolf," I said, stalling, "I wanted to know if you needed a lift home tonight."

*What? A lift home? No, I want to know if we can talk about how I just turned our life upside down.*

“Depends on who’s driving,” he replied, walking toward me with a swagger that made my mouth water.

*Focus, Sienna.*

Instead of kissing me like I wanted, he stopped a few paces away and crossed his arms, expecting a reply

I couldn’t stand this tension between us. It was like we were each waiting for the other to take the first swing. The playful flirtations of that morning felt like a millennium ago.

“Aiden, I want to talk about this afternoon.”

–What about it?”

– Don’t do that.”

-What?”

“Don’t make me spell it out. You know I’m sorry about all this. It wasn’t my intention

“Look, Sienna, I understand why you didn’t shift.”

“Then why are you acting so cold?”

immediately

“I didn’t say I agreed with it,” he replied, shifting his expression to one of disdain.

I couldn’t figure out what hurt me more, the fact that he understood how much pain it would cause me yet still pushed me to go through with it or that, even after the fact, he was upset with my decision

Any feelings of reconciliation began to evaporate and were immediately replaced by a boiling rage.

“Why is it so hard for you to let go of your stupid traditions!” I yelled. “Can’t you see they are tearing us apart, Aiden? And for what? So the Pack can sleep happy, knowing that their alpha and his mate are at home fucking every night, trying to conceive the next alpha?”

“Why don’t we talk about this tomorrow, I think we’ve both had long days.”

I couldn't believe he wanted to sideline this like it was some trivial item on his agenda. His nonchalance only stoked the fire pouring out of my mouth.

"Either we talk this out now or you find another place to sleep tonight!"

Surely he would know I was serious now.

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"I'll see you in the morning then," he said, straight-faced.

I couldn't believe this was happening

What had I done?