



AIDEN

The Alpha of the Millennium sat at the mahogany dining table.

Etienne Tremblay sat at his right side, looking smug and expectant.



We were waiting for my mate to arrive.

I'd been expecting Raphael to give me a dressing down about the now-extinct reality show, but I had never expected this—especially after what I'd recently learned.

My mother had tried to blackmail my mate. To shove her aside.

And to make matters worse, she was embezzling Pack House funds. I'd checked the books myself.

How could Mother be so stupid?

My fault, for not realizing she'd been engaging in shady business deals.

I'd left the door wide open for Monica Birch to try to take advantage of the situation.

Still, my mother should have known to come to me before cooperating with a scheming bitch like



Monica Birch.

And let's face it—she'd love to see Sienna go down.

She sat a few places down from me, her chin held high. But she had yet to meet my eyes.



The news about Sienna's potential infertility interfering with pack law had hit me like a brick. I could still barely wrap my mind around it.

But there was no way in the fiery pits of hell I was going to allow my mate to be set aside.

Whether or not she could provide us with pups didn't mean a goddamn thing. She was my mate, my love, and she would lead at my side.

Despite everything, a flash of warmth washed over me when Sienna entered the dining room.

Hanh Nguyen came in right after her.

She flashed me a tiny smile, then looked at the One True Alpha with her chin held high.

Raphael gave her a small nod. "Right. Let us begin. I flew here today to deal with a small matter, but something far more important has been brought to my attention."





At his side, Tremblay nodded. “Frankly, I’ve been upset and disturbed by the goings on in the East Coast Pack. And after speaking with Ms. Birch, I am even more concerned.”

“And I don’t see how it’s any of your damn business. Especially since you’ve been having temper tantrums all over Yapper like a teenager. Not exactly Alpha-worthy,” I snapped back at him.

I’d spent hours trying to see what Tremblay had to gain from this stunt.

His pack was highly traditionalist; the females were given little personal freedom and were encouraged to find their mates as young as fourteen.

If he saw my progressive ideas for the East Coast as a threat, it made sense that he would try to undermine me.

But I wondered if even Tremblay had known how far he would have to go.

“It is *my* business, Alpha Norwood,” Raphael said. He turned to Sienna. “Let’s begin with the matter of the reality show.”

“Excellent. Please send them in,” Tremblay said to Felix, my assistant. My claws itched hearing him give orders to my wolves, but I chose to say nothing.



The door of the dining room swung open, and Michelle walked in, looking terrified, and glancing around for Josh.

But after he'd gone AWOL for two days, I hadn't allowed him in the meeting either, so she didn't even have her mate to rely on for support.

Michelle was followed closely by Monica Birch and her cameraman. Even now, he was filming everything.

While they took their seats, I shot Sienna an encouraging smile.

She looked strong and confident, even as she faced down her foes.

My heart pounded with love for her, and I vowed one more time that no one would ever remove her from my side.

SIENNA

Raphael's face remained neutral.

Monica gave everyone in the room a sparkling smile as she approached the table.

"I think we can all agree that *Real Mates* was a fun experiment. And if I took it a bit too far, well that's entertainment!"

She held up the same manila file she had shown me earlier. My fingers curled painfully into my palms.

“Here we have excerpts from the journal of a pack healer, which specifically describe Sienna Norwood as being infertile. She attempted to hide this information, but my investigation uncovered the truth.”

She continued on, “By joint territorial law—”



“‘An Alpha’s mate must be able to provide heirs, or she will be cast aside,’ I’m familiar with the rules of law. Get to the point,” the Alpha of the Millennium stated plainly.

I fingered the silver bracelet on my wrist.

Jocelyn’s bracelet. A talisman of my friend’s strength and support.

I am strong enough to beat them at their own game.

My knees were shaking, but I raised my hand. “May I speak, my Alpha?”

Raphael nodded, giving me a level look.

“The only evidence that Monica Birch has against me comes from Jocelyn’s assistant, Hanh Nguyen.”



I glanced at Hanh. “He is a wonderful healer, but he is only an assistant, and his findings were the result of a brief, noninvasive examination.”

Then I looked at Monica, who was sitting smugly in her chair. “But we wouldn’t be discussing any of it if Monica Birch hadn’t stolen his personal medical journal.”

I expected people to gasp in shock, but the room remained utterly silent.

Only for a moment, though.



“That’s an outrageous and completely unfounded accusation!” Monica said, her outrage a pretty convincing act after she’d practiced on Michelle and me the night before. “I could have you sued for slander!”

“I think you’ll have bigger problems on your hands soon enough,” I said calmly.

“My Alpha, there is no proof of this. I received the journal from an anon—”

“She stole it. And I can prove it,” I said simply, directing my words at Raphael Fernandez.

He slowly looked around to the Canadian Alpha. “Are you telling me I’ve been dragged all the way out here because the Alpha’s mate *might* be infertile?”

Etienne blanched. “I—she—I was assured—”

Charlotte swallowed, going red in the face. “Sienna is not fit to be an Alpha’s mate!” she blurted.

“Look at the fiasco of the Fertility Festival! She invited a *vampyre* into the ECP. And she’s shown the whole world just how immature, how juvenile —”

Raphael only had to raise a finger and my mother-in-law’s jaw snapped shut.



Inwardly, I sighed. Even now, with Charlotte being blackmailed by Monica, there was still a part of her that couldn’t get over how much she despised me.

But she didn’t know that Aiden and I knew her secret. Perhaps her tune would change if I revealed that she had been lining her pockets with ECP money.

Raphael turned to look at me again. “You say you have proof that your personal rights were violated?”

I took out my phone and tapped the screen to load the video that Michelle and I had shot from outside Monica’s office yesterday.

I handed the phone to the Alpha of the



Millennium, and he took it with a frown.

Two blurred figures began to speak.

“I wonder how long it will take for the offers to start rolling in...,” Monica Birch said on the screen.

I looked at her across the table. Her face was deathly white.



“I still don’t like that we stole the journal from that healer,” Curtis’ voice came over the phone.

The cameraman looked at me and gave a small nod. It hadn’t been hard at all to convince him to roll over on Monica and prompt her into giving herself away while we filmed.

I don’t think he was as submissive as she believed.

On the video, Monica’s voice was smug with victory “We took the journal. The proof is right there. The Alpha’s little bitch will go down. It’s all going perfectly.”

“Is there more?” Raphael asked, looking up from the screen.

“That’s the gist of it,” I answered.

He handed the phone back to me, then leveled his

gaze at Monica Birch.

“I... ummm,” her eyes flicked to each of us.

Then, without warning, she bolted from the room.

Her cameraman stayed, the red light blinking.

I’d figured that Monica would run, so I’d asked Curtis to stay.

After all, we wouldn’t want to upset the *live* audience.



“Let her go,” said Aiden. “Security will deal with her. There’s still a larger problem we need to address.”

AIDEN

“It doesn’t matter if the evidence was stolen. Or if my mate’s diagnosis is real or not.”

I looked at Sienna, who had come up with a plan to defeat Monica in barely a day.

My heart burned with love for her—for her strength and courage.

“The problem is the law itself.”



Raphael raised his eyebrows, leaning back as he listened.

“Even centuries ago, it should never have been put into place,” I continued.

“Due to the tragedy of mating bond death, our society has more than its share of orphans,” I said. “Who is to say one of those children, raised by an Alpha, couldn’t be as suitable an heir?”

I met Sienna’s eyes. They were full of emotion as she gazed at me.

“I love my mate,” I said. “I love her more than my own life. And you would have me cast her aside... take some other woman to bed, for *pups*?”

I leaned forward toward Raphael. “You know better than anyone what it is to find your mate after years of searching. To know the divine spark—the unique and precious gift of that commitment.”

“How could anyone expect me to sully that bond for something so political and dirty as ensuring a line of succession? Sienna was *made* for me, and I was made for *her*.”

I stood from my seat and went to my mate. She rose and stepped into my waiting arms.



“No one will separate me from her,” I said. Breaking away from Sienna’s embrace, I faced Raphael Fernandez head on.

“You have the power to strike down this law. I ask you to do so now. Today.”

Raphael regarded us with his usual calculating gaze. “That’s quite an emotional statement, Alpha Norwood.”

I held my breath. Next to me, Sienna’s fingers wound into mine.

“Does anyone present object to removing this particular law from the pack charter?” he asked with a pointed look at Etienne Tremblay.

The Alpha of the Canada Pack said nothing, but I could feel the humiliation and submission coming off of him in waves.

“Well then, Aiden, it seems that the law is no longer,” Raphael said. For the first time, I caught a hint of humor in his eyes.

He stood and looked at Etienne. “Tremblay, I believe you and I need to have a conversation about what constitutes ‘a moral emergency’.”

“Yes, my Alpha,” Etienne said, visibly shaking.





They left the room. So did Hanh, and a moment later Michelle, who hadn't spoken a single word, but who I'd felt cheering Sienna on the entire time.

I turned to my mate and kissed her with all the fervor that roared through my veins.

MONICA

"*You live streamed the whole thing?*" I screamed at Curtis. I was still being held by Pack House security, and he had just emerged from the dining room.

I needed to get the hell out of here, and fast. Aiden Norwood would be looking for me.

"What were you thinking!" I said to Curtis.

"Maybe that he had a responsibility to your viewers, Monica," a commanding voice called to me from behind.

My heart stopped.

It was Alpha Norwood.

I turned and faced him, clenching my jaw.





“To show them the truth of who you really are,”
Aiden continued.

Sienna stood next to him; I wanted to fly at her
with my claws, to tear out her goddamn eyes.

I held myself still, though.

My survival instinct was stronger than my rage.

He prowled closer with each word. “You. Will.
Leave. My. Territory.”

He leaned in. “You. Will. *NEVER*. Come back.”

I tried to respond but choked on my words.
Nothing came out.

“You will never contact me, my mother, or anyone
in my family again.”

He knew about Charlotte...

My mind was blank with fear—an emotion I
hadn't felt in years.

Aiden leaned in, his voice a bare whisper. “And
if you do, I will kill you. Or better yet—I'll let
Sienna do it.”



SIENNA

My phone buzzed as texts from my friends started pouring in, congratulating me—they'd seen the whole thing play out live.

Aiden and I held hands as he turned to go back into the meeting, but then Charlotte came around the corner.

Michelle was following her close behind.

My back stiffened.

Aiden frowned, looking from me to his mother.

“Seems like you've been hiding a few unsavory secrets of your own, mother.”

Charlotte paled. “How did you know?”

“Sienna overheard Monica. We have the tape if you'd like to see. But luckily for you, Sienna decided to edit that part out, so Raphael didn't find out what you've been up to.”

Her mouth opened and closed speechlessly.

“I told you to stay away,” Aiden said.



Charlotte shook her head, her hands raised. “Please son, I was only trying to do what is best for you. That girl... she’s simply inappropriate!”

Aiden gave her a menacing smile. “In a way, I’m glad that you decided to start skimming off the top. It means you never get to tell me what’s ‘appropriate’ again.”

Charlotte looked torn between shame and rage. Finally, she dropped her eyes, and I stepped between them.

“You’ve done enough,” I said to Charlotte. “And you’ve said enough. Time to get your husband and pack yourselves off on another trip to Tahiti or wherever it is you like to go.”

“How *dare* you try to banish me,” Charlotte fumed.

“I’m not,” I said. “You aren’t banished. After all, I’m the one who invited you back into my life.”

“But that was a *mistake*,” I said. “One I won’t be making again. And if you want to have any chance of a relationship with your son, I’m telling you now: make yourself scarce for a *while*.”

I continued, “And in the future, you don’t get to treat me as though I’m beneath you. Unless you want the *unedited version* of Monica’s tape to be leaked all over the internet.”





She stared at me one moment longer, then she turned on her heel and stalked off.

In the corridor, nervously shifting from foot to foot, was Michelle.

“I didn’t really help at all,” she said.

“It doesn’t matter,” I told her. “It’s just good to know you’re on my side again.”

“Of course,” she said with a smile. “Best friends forever, right?”

I hugged her tightly, noticing that Michelle was still far too thin, and that her returning hug was reluctant.

“I think I want to go find Josh,” she said uncertainly.

Those two would have some work to do to repair their relationship, but I knew their love was still strong.

Just like Aiden’s and mine.

They would be okay, eventually.

“Okay. I’ll call you soon,” I said.



Just like Aiden's and mine.

They would be okay, eventually.

“Okay. I'll call you soon,” I said.

Michelle walked away. I wasn't sure if our friendship would ever be the same, but I meant what I'd said.

I turned to Aiden. “You probably have to get back in there, don't you?”

He took my hand. “I'm gonna get Josh to handle it. It's time for my Beta to begin taking on some more responsibilities in the Pack House.”

Then he looked at me, and his eyes were smoldering. “I think we need to get out of here.”

I smirked as my own lust began to rise. “I couldn't agree more.”

Next Chapter

