

The Rise And Fall Of Alpha Tyler

Sage

In a world of unpaved roads and endless forests, there's no shortage of monsters lurking behind every turn; I am not immune from such terrors. I'm only nineteen, still looking for my freedom, but being the Alpha's quarry has kept me alive for this long. Alpha Tyler is a bored man, a ruthless beast, and he spends most of his days toying with his prey.

Today, as per usual, I am that prey.

I bolt through the woods, dodging trees and jumping over blank ravines. It's impossible to know where to go for sure but as I've seen in the past, this field has to end somewhere. When it does, I'll be set loose onto the world. I may fall prey to another monster, to another prideful Alpha, but I have to take that chance.

Wrong way, wrong way. Wrong way.

Biting on the doubts that flood my mind all at once. I can't be sure, the moon in a thin, slender phase tonight and hardly lighting my path. I hear steps, harsh pounds of paws that smack against the ground like a large hammer coming down over a feeble, malleable nail.

That's when I spot the fence. It's not far from me now, a towering boundary to Alpha Tyler's pack lands, to his personal playgrounds, and I aim to escape tonight. I launch up the vertical, silver bars, too tightly built for me to squeeze through, opting to jump.

I fail, my paws sliding down the fencing without any hope of making it over.

A large wolf swipes me sideways, throwing me clear across the pathway, my wolf too afraid to take the brunt of this failure tonight. I give in, shifting to my mortal phase, back to embodying a naïve, pathetic nineteen-year-old girl who can't run for a damn.

Alpha Tyler hovers over me, his paws trapping me in his clasp, his nails digging into my shoulders to draw blood. He tips his head back, taking the scent like nectar in the wind. His wolf is huge, typical of an Alpha, but like me he sports one mark that forces the both of us to stand out in a crowd.

His scar runs parallel to his eyes and lip, running straight down in a vertical, unmistakable trail. It starts at the edge of his brow, dragging all the way down in a soft, pinkish hue until it ends at the bottom of his ear. It's unmistakable to sight, even on his wolf, whose teeth are bearing down in my face so close I can smell the fresh kill on his darkened gums.

"Pl—Please, Alpha," I beg, my hands carefully reaching for his jaw, as though to stroke it and calm the furious monster he is tonight. "Alpha Tyler, please..."

He snarls, his black eyes focused on one thing, and one thing only.

My scar is a dainty little thing, something I've lived with since I was a child, a rogue, set loose by a careless Alpha once my parents were killed. I was attacked my first week in that dangerous world alone and I bare the mark to prove it, a mark Alpha Tyler finds so fascinating.

He shifts to his towering, pale presence and still kneels over me, his eyes tamed on my mark. He traces it across my jawline, watching it sprout over my cheek and disappear into my hairline. He took me in specifically for this mark, I believe, or to toy with me in these hunting games of his, and I can't ever shake his eyes off the horrible memory bore into my face forever.

"My sweet Sage," he sings, his voice carelessly kind in this moment. I wait for it to change; it *always* changes. "You have to focus, Sage. If you weren't so hellbent on trying to navigate my fencing, you might have made it through this round unharmed."

I swallow hard, feeling needles puncture all the way down my throat.

"Unharmed?"

He blindsides me, his fist collapsing down across my face, directly over the scar I bare like it's a target for his affection and affliction. I turn under his body, feeling trapped as usual, but he never let's my cowering last. He brushes a hand down my neck, *cooing* me softly with his lips that graze down my throat, then center on the nape of my neck.

His free hand fondles my breast, the moon my only witness to such crude behavior.

"Alpha—Alpha, please," I beg, trying to appear small and unthreatening. "Luna Maria said I have to be back by midnight, sir. She wants me to start cooking for tomorrow's assembly. Please, Alpha."

He snickers a noise and continues his tongue along my shoulder blade. "Are you saying the Luna has more power over me; over what I want? Sage, when will you learn? You do as I say, and only as I say. Understand me?"

"Of course, Al—"

I gasp, his hand brushing my inner thigh and threatening to snap my femur in half. Last time he did that, I was doomed to limping for at least a month, my blood so weak and frail, I sometimes wonder if I am a wolf at all. Perhaps a pathetic excuse for a wolf, a tamed creature meant to hunt, meant to break, and destined for death.

I see spots, ready to release this consciousness for another, but he pulls away thankfully.

"I suppose you deserve a break. I have several of my Alpha friends coming over tomorrow for the new moon. It's my favorite phase," he breathes, his words and his breath tickling my throat. "Do you know why it is my favorite phase, Sage?"

I shake my head, holding in every emotion I could spill out at once. Fear, dread, and especially regret. I should have never stepped foot on Alpha Tyler's pack land's so many years ago. It will definitely be the death of me.

He chuckles lightly, the noise making me wince. “Silly Sage, it’s the best phase for hunting mutts. It’s when you’re the weakest, and when I’m the strongest. The moon is just a sliver, so small and so pathetic—much like yourself—that any power delegated to our kind is rationed out to the Alpha’s. The superior wolves.”

I can only nod, his hand daring to trail further and further down my hip.

“Have you heard of the Alpha’s assembly before, little Sage?”

“N—No, Alpha.”

“It’s where me and the strongest Alpha’s participate in a game of sorts, a game of the hosting Alpha’s choosing. This year, it’s my turn. My favorite game will be played under the best moon phase available and the winner gets a swell prize.”

I swallow hard, nodding along but hardly hearing his words.

“We will play my hunting sport, just as we have tonight. But you won’t be subject to just my tracking skills. You’ll be hunted by four of the strongest, most intelligent Alpha’s in the world. And do you know what the winner gets, sweet Sage?”

Again, I shake my head, trepidation rushing through my cold veins.

“You.”

Luna Maria is more ruthless than her husband, the Alpha. She hates me, hates that her Alpha is so mesmerized with my scar, and she dares to create another one like it, I’m sure of that much. She puts me to work all night, forcing me and the other useless gammas to slave over preparations for the event taking place tomorrow.

I’m going to die, I know that is my fate, and I don’t care.

I can’t fight anymore.

The sun rises and the other pack’s Alpha’s begin piling into the palace, throwing their weight around as they bark orders at me, at the other servants, and soon I feel trapped between the biggest and most dangerous Alpha’s in the world.

Offering Alpha Tyler a drink, his typical scotch he enjoys before every good hunt, he grabs at my hips, bruising my surface just beneath my white, lace dress and yanks me to sit on his lap, snatching his scotch up in a single swoop.

“This here is the prize tonight, gentleman. She’s a worthy prize at that, hardly squeals when caught. Plus, her body is perfectly unmarked. Other than my favorite little blemish here,” he hums, his free hand brushing my cheek. I flinch and he grabs at me tighter, sipping his

liquor. “Alpha Mattis, I’m sure you need another little gamma running around your room, hmm?”

I swallow hard, the bulky Alpha sitting nearby grins with a crooked, snake-like smile. “I suppose. I just lost my last toy to a whipping last week. I’ve missed hearing her little screams. What do you say, Alpha Tyler? Does this one squeal pretty good?”

“Find out for yourself,” my Alpha hums.

He pushes me forward, the Alpha nearby pouncing on me, his legs digging into my sides as he pins me underneath his weight. He snatches my wrists, pinning them up over my head with one palm, the other swiping quickly across my temple in a hardened fist.

“Agh,” I breath, seeing spots.

“She is certainly quiet,” Alpha Mattis hums. “I’ll break her of that in no time.”

“Only if you win, dear friend,” Alpha Tyler chuckles.

The door to the study is burst open, a new entity standing perfectly still, eyes baring deep into each Alpha before landing on me. My eye is swollen and my senses are deadened with this moon phase, but I make out the glassy gray irises from down here on the floor.

“Alpha Willulf. I didn’t think you would make it.”

I swallow hard at the sight of the four Alpha’s Tyler had said would be here, and yet the extra one in the doorway is the only one I can pay attention to. He is massive, flawless, and smells of a sweet custard pastry I have never let touch my tongue before.

It’s clear to my wolf, to my roaming thoughts, who this large, tattooed wolf really is.

Mate.

Alpha Mattis climbs off of me, the other Alpha’s all welcoming the new guest into the room while I feel too frazzled to gather my tray and get the fuck out of this room. I’m stopped by a meaty hand, black ink embedded into the skin of the arm that stops me cold in my tracks.

“Say hello to the prize for tonight’s hunt, Alpha Willulf,” Tyler breathes.

The new Alpha only stares at me, through me, and I consider bowing and begging to be spared from his wrath. He will kill me, reject me, or do as my Alpha and use me. I can’t bare the thought of that pain continuing, especially if it’s at the hands of my fated mate.

“This little gamma is the prize?” the voice booms, Alpha Willulf finally releasing my arm with a gentle shove. I scurry out of the way, petrified. “I suppose I will partake in your games after all, Alpha Tyler.”

“Glad to hear it. We set loose the bait at midnight.”

“Perfect. Can’t wait.”

