



# Fated To The Wolf

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**Category:** Erotic, Romance, M-m Romance

**Description:** Aidan's world shifted the moment he stumbled into the hidden life of the Bay Harbor Wolves.

Angry and held captive, Aidan is plunged into a reality he never knew existed—a world where shifters walk among humans, and his own brother, Jake, is deeply entrenched, even mated to a powerful wolf named Hayes. Fear turns to disbelief when Aidan discovers he's not just a prisoner, but destined to be a mate himself, bound to the enigmatic and compelling Isaiah.

As Aidan struggles to reconcile his past with a future he never imagined, he finds himself drawn into the heart of the Bay Harbor community, a place brimming with ancient magic, unwavering loyalty, and dangerous secrets. But just as he begins to embrace his fated bond, their world is rocked by a brutal attack, forcing Aidan and Isaiah to fight side-by-side.

Can Aidan accept his destiny and the wild, untamed love of a wolf, or will the looming threat tear apart the fragile new life he's just begun to build?

Uncover a passionate and action-packed tale of fated love, hidden powers, and the fight for belonging in a world where true mates are worth battling for.

**Total Pages (Source):** 10

## CHAPTER ONE

Aman came into the room and stared at him in an oddly penetrating fashion and then had two men hold him while he placed his hand on Aidan's forehead. He then left, and another man looking similar tall, dark, and mysterious came into his room and did the same. They acted insane and refused to answer any questions or react to any of Aidan's curses. It was robotic, methodical, and made no sense and gave Aidan the fucking creeps.

The Bay Harbor community was a cult, a violent, kidnapping, off-the-rails cult, and they had Jake. Jake wasn't one to buy into crazy talk, so it must have been Hayes Castian who lured him in with his muscles and model good looks. He wondered how long it would be before Hayes moved on to the next recruit and left Jake in his dust. Bastards like him never looked back, only forward while satisfying their own needs.

Aidan had been locked up and alone for several hours, but no one had explained why they were keeping him or why they separated him from Barlow. Aidan started pacing the room. It had a bed or rather what looked like a gurney and a metal chair by the wall. There was also an attached bathroom, just the bare minimum, with a toilet and sink. Looking around, he found nothing that he could use to try and extricate himself from this room.

They had emptied his pockets and taken his watch, his belt, and his shoes. The door was metal and locked from the outside. He tested it several times and checked for any weaknesses, but it was solid. He was trapped there until such time that they decided to let him out. Anger started welling up in him again, and he desperately wanted to hit something. Aidan continued to pace the room and then suddenly punched the wall a

couple of times, leaving him in considerable pain.

“He’s like a caged animal,” Zayn commented as he and Alpha Henrik observed Aidan on a monitor in the surveillance room. The infirmary had cameras, which Aidan had already spotted.

“What are we doing to find his mate? The sooner we locate his match; the sooner we can give him relief.” Henrik asked while staring at the agitated man on the monitor.

“Not sure how to go about it without having a line of eligible members file past him, essentially checking him out.” Zayn was not confident in his suggestion, especially when Henrik gave him a swift and sardonic side-eye.

"Find a way to bring him out into the population," Henrik stated.

“He’ll try to run.”

"He won't leave his brother. As long as Jake is here, Aidan will not leave."

"I feel like I betrayed him, and it's eating me up." Jake shared his anxiety with his mate Hayes as they had breakfast in the kitchen of the Pack House. They still occupied the bedroom on the second floor because Jake did not want to be too far from his brother, who was still being held in the infirmary. It had been a rough night for Jake, not being allowed to go to him and desperately wanting to explain himself and beg him to understand.

Hayes told him that Aidan was enraged, and it was necessary that he calm and gather himself before anyone would be allowed in to see him. Jake made it clear that he would be the first to see him, and Hayes agreed. Alpha Henrik then joined them in the kitchen.

The Alpha poured a cup of coffee before taking a seat opposite them at the table. "Did Hayes tell you that your brother is mate to someone in the pack?" Alpha Henrik began.

"Yes, sir," Jake responded. "He told me that Aidan's mind could not be cleared because of his connection to the pack."

"We need to get Aidan out into the population so we can find his connection, his mate. We would like to do that with as little suspicion as possible and just let nature take its course. Do you understand?"

Jake nodded. "If you or I tell him he is mate to a wolf, he will think we're crazy. He needs to meet them and feel the pull for it to be real to him. I know my brother, and I'm sure he is going to fight this, but the pull is something that cannot be denied. Aidan will come around." Jake assured them, and the Alpha smiled as if relieved.

"Good." He stated and stood and headed out, taking his coffee with him. He turned back to the archway and spoke to Jake. "He's being served his breakfast, and in an hour, you may go speak with him. Be careful what you say, and try not to overwhelm him."

"Thank you," Jake said, and Henrik nodded and left the room. The Alpha seemed stressed, but Jake wasn't sure if it was regarding Aidan or the land deal that he was trying to put together. Hayes had told him about the two hundred acres that the pack was seeking to obtain. Jake knew that Aidan worked for the company handling the sale, but he wasn't sure if the Alpha had made that connection yet.

Aidan was new on the job with Sensor Properties. He has a business degree emphasizing real estate, finance, and marketing and had worked for a local company in Detroit before getting the offer from Sensor Properties. Jake wasn't sure if Aidan was involved with the property that Henrik was interested in. He hadn't mentioned it,

and Aidan usually mentioned larger projects he was involved in.

Jake was torn as to whether he should mention any of this to the Alpha. He didn't want to go against his brother or make anything more difficult for him. He thought about talking it over with Hayes, but he feared Hayes would be honor-bound to mention it to the Alpha. They would discover this information eventually anyway, so Jake decided to keep it to himself.

"Did you want me to go with you?" Hayes asked.

"No, I should talk to him alone first and try to convince him that I'm here because I want to be, not because I've been brainwashed." He smiled ruefully, and Hayes reached out and took his shoulder, pulling him a little closer.

"You'll do fine." He reassured him. "You're brothers, and he knows you and will recognize the truth. He trusts you, sweetheart."

Jake leaned into the hug, loving the contact. Nothing felt as good as Hayes' arms. "I hope they find his mate soon, so he'll start to understand and feel the reality of what's around him."

"They're working on it. Everyone in the house has been checked, and so it's up to you to get him out into the membership at large." Hayes laughed at Jake's wide-eyed expression.

"That sounds easy, but Aidan is not a pushover and stubborn as hell. He's going to want me to run with him, and it's going to break my heart to say no." Hayes' demeanor changed immediately, and he drew his mate into his arms, holding him tightly.

"It's only until he finds his mate. Once he makes that connection, he will understand.

Please don't be sad."

"I know." Jake pulled himself together. "It'll be okay."

"Be strong, my love."

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 9, 2025, 2:14 am*

“I will for you and for Aidan.”

Isaiah LaBlanc, security specialist, had just returned to Bay Harbor two days ago after receiving extensive training in border security from Master Emmanuel Cabot at the Coven on Old Mission Peninsula. The Coven was on the cutting edge of current equipment and techniques. They also leaned into magics where traditional methods didn't meet their need, which was not something Henrik wanted to use.

The Alpha had never trusted magic, but still, Isaiah learned what he could about the protections the Mage had set up for the Coven. One of the Pack Enforcers, Javiar, was mated to Sasha, a mage who was well able to set similar protections. Isaiah would present it along with other improvements and enhancements to the Alpha.

The Bay was the Alpha's greatest weakness in terms of border protection, and a little magic would make it secure without running afoul of the humans and their laws. But that was up to the Alpha, and magic had its own downside, which needed to be factored in whenever including it in any process or endeavor.

“Come in.” The Alpha called for him to enter, and Isaiah walked in with his formalized report in hand. He'd spent a week with the specialist at the Coven, and he had some interesting points to share. Javier was also present, which made discussing the possibility of magic a little easier. Javier's mate, Sasha, had the ability to give the pack what his grandfather gave the Coven.

He ran through the variety of sensors and systems available and those used by the Coven and in which capacity. He also discussed how they've customized systems for their own needs and enhanced surveillance abilities. "Trigger cameras and lights can

be customized to react to more than just movement; they can respond to smoke, water, extreme temperatures, and also energies.”

“They can identify the presence of the supernatural and distinguish the species?” Javiar questioned skeptically.

“Yes, the coven can identify who is at their borders with a simple alert.”

“I like it.” The Alpha thumbed casually through Isaiah’s report. “You mention magics.” The Alpha narrowed his eyes as he spoke. “I know the coven uses it extensively, and the system that Sasha’s grandfather set up for them was said to be foolproof, but I’ve never been comfortable with it.”

“It would give the added security to the Bay that we currently lack without having to constantly confront the rules regarding waterfront and the public at large.” Isaiah began his pitch. “I know that a form of mage magic was used in the past to try to protect the border, but it was extremely low level and ultimately did not perform as needed.”

“I discontinued the use, believing that patrols were the better option. When magics go awry, the outcome can be devastating.” The Alpha was still not sold.

“I investigated the process thoroughly and included the data in the report,” Isaiah said, giving him the information without appearing to pressure.

“I’ll read it and let you know.” That was as good as he was going to get, so Isaiah left it there. The Alpha then turned to Javiar.

“This is not a slight to your amazing mate. I respect Sasha’s presence in this pack, and I value his skills.” The Alpha spoke to Javiar. “Let’s revisit this tomorrow and bring Sasha with you.”



"Yes, sir," Javiar responded with a warmth that indicated no offense was taken.

## CHAPTER TWO

Aidan sat on the narrow bed and stared at the wall, waiting for whatever was to come next. Lunch had been delivered a while ago, but he did not touch it. It was probably okay because if they wanted to drug him, they could just do it. No subterfuge was necessary. But regardless, he was not interested in eating whatever it was they served. He wanted nothing from them except his brother and to be allowed to leave.

The door moved and then swung open, and Jake walked in. He then closed the door behind him, making it clear he wasn't there to free him. Aidan remained seated and simply observed waiting for Jake to speak. Jake looked at the tray of food and shook his head.

"Aidan, you should eat. It's not tainted." He said and walked over and sat down beside him. "I know you're confused and angry, but please just try and hear me out." Aidan turned and looked at him incredulously, disbelieving that his levelheaded brother would fall so easily for whatever scam this group was running.

"What happened to you, Jake. All it takes is thick thighs and a handsome face, and you believe everything he tells you?" That was insulting, but Aidan was beyond being polite.

"That's not fair, Aidan." Jake shot back.

"You know what's not fair, letting your friends lock me in a room and leave me, and then you have the nerve to try and convince me that they're really just a bunch of cool guys that I'll grow to like." Aidan jumped off the bed and started pacing the room, his anger evident. "It's been less than twenty-four hours, and you're already indoctrinated in this . . . whatever this is." He raised his hands and moved in a circle,

emphasizing his confusion. He made a sudden move toward Jake, and the door flew open.

“Enough!” Hayes burst into the room and charged at Aidan, who did not move. “You will speak to him with respect, or you will not speak to him at all!” Jake immediately jumped in front of his brother as both men tried to move him aside.

“I’m okay, Hayes; you’re not helping,” Jake interjected forcefully. Hayes took a reluctant step back but kept his eyes on Aidan.

“What the hell have you done to my brother, you fucking freak!” Aidan shouted and moved toward him, with Jake pushing him back.

“Stop, both of you.” He demanded. The men continued to glare, but they stopped threatening one another.

“Thank you.” Jake shook his head and glanced over at Hayes first and then back to his brother. “Aidan, this is Hayes, and you’re going to have to learn to get along with him because he is going to be a part of my life from now on. It isn’t a fad or a fling, or however you want to demean it. This is true, and I knew it to be true the second I laid eyes on him. Please try to see what I see. You two are not so different.” Only silence ensued, and once again, Jake shook his head.

“I’m fine, Hayes. Please let me talk with Aidan.” Hayes did not look pleased but nodded curtly and then left the room. Jake turned back to his brother with a ‘what the fuck’ look on his face.

“Sit down,” Jake said and pointed to the bed. Aidan did as he was asked but did not look pleased about it. “Now, I’m going to share something with you that is going to sound outrageous, but it is all true.” Aidan was about to say something, but Jake cut him off. “Let me speak, and then you can comment after.” Aidan raised his hand,

asking to speak, and Jaked nodded.

“I have one question before you begin.”

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 9, 2025, 2:14 am*

“Okay, shoot.”

“Where’s Barlow?”

“Barlow was released. He didn’t see what you saw, and he was deemed not a threat to Pack security.” Jake answered, and it was half true. It was not the time to tell Aidan about the vampire mind wipe. “Now, let me explain.”

Isaiah caught up with Travis after the meeting with the Alpha. Isaiah was scheduled to work the night shift with Travis on the Bayside. His usual partner, Hayes, had a couple of weeks off to complete his bonding and get his mate settled into pack life. Which, considering the events of the last couple of days, was not going to be so easy.

He and Travis headed down to the beach, which was five hundred feet of border that was primarily protected by around-the-clock foot patrols. The cameras and sensors currently in operation were not adequate on their own to prevent trespassers, either those innocently wandering onto pack lands or those with evil intent. It was a weakness that needed to be addressed and dealt with before something gravely serious happened.

"Every major breach has started here," Isaiah commented as they stood on the stone ridge and looked down at the sandy beach below them.

"I agree, we need something better, something more likely to deter, but the Alpha tried magics as a solution a few years ago, and still, we experienced trespassers." Travis intoned dryly.

Isaiah explained the mage magic used by the Coven that was fine-tuned and specific to their needs. "It was designed and installed by Sasha's grandfather and is now under the control of the Master, who adjusts the breadth and intensity as he sees fit."

"I think some of their security measures are worth replicating and will be of definite value on the cliffs and with securing the wild borders, but I really can't see the Alpha using magics. He has a prejudice where magic protections are concerned. He believes it detracts from his own control." Travis continued as the devil's advocate.

"That might be true with street magics and casters who beg and barter for their power, but we're talking about the power of a mage." They continued walking along the ridge and then followed the path to the beach. "We have Sasha, Javiar's mate, who has inherited his grandfather's abilities. He could easily set up protection similar and maybe even sharper than what his grandfather gave to the Coven." Isaiah was confident in the value of at least adding the mage magic to the mix.

"There is still potential for it to go wrong, and we've both seen the outcome of bad magics." Travis had some valid concerns bad magic could run amuck in some of the worst ways.

"Mage magic is different. It's not flagrant or out of control. A mage is born with their power. It's part of their DNA. It's magic that is solid and controlled, and the Alpha would have the ability to tweak it any way he desired. Sasha would give it to him once he set it up, and the power would belong to Alpha Henrik." Isaiah truly believed in it, and he hoped that the meeting tomorrow would go well, but, in the end, it was the Alpha's choice, and they would honor his decision. They let that conversation lay and continued to walk the border at the bay.

The discussion turned to Hayes and his new mate, Jake Kolly, a topic that had swept the entire pack. "I heard about the uproar at the main house yesterday. Were you there?" Isaiah asked with humor, coloring his words and his expression.

“No, but Hayes called me later and filled me in.” He, too, laughed.

“It must have been wild. I could still feel the tension in the air today during my meeting at the main house.” Isaiah had felt more than just tension, but he didn’t mention it. The feeling had been heavy and seemed to pull at him, but he assumed it was related to the dust-up from the previous day. “I hear the brother has turned into an even larger concern since the vampire was unable to clear his memories.”

"He's a mate, apparently. They had everyone at the main house check him out, but they haven't found his mate yet."

“Did you check him out?”

“First thing this morning.” Travis turned to him with a smile. “Unfortunately, I was not a match. How about you? He is a hell of a handsome man, I’ll tell you that.” Travis licked his lips.

“Not yet.” He laughed ruefully. “I heard he was handsome and quite the handful.”

"I wouldn't mind a handful," Travis commented.

“Neither would I.” Isaiah agreed. “Let’s get some coffee.”

“Sounds good.” They left the beach and headed for the dining hall.

Aidan listened as Jake wove a story of fantasy and magic as if it were reality and truth. Wolves and men and the world of the supernatural fell from his lips, and Aidan sat quietly and listened, desperate to understand what these people had done to his brother.

"They couldn't allow you to just leave because of what you saw," Jake said

emphatically. "They are not bad people, Aidan."

"What did I see? What are you talking about?"

"The guard forgot himself and shifted in front of you. If Derek hadn't jumped and covered you with his own body, the guard would have injured you badly." Jake's frustration was building.

"Shifted?"

"You know what you saw," Jake stated sharply and held him with that accusatory stare he used whenever he felt that Aidan was being obtuse. Aidan remembered what he thought he saw but had written it off as some sort of excited aberration. "A man cannot turn into a wolf. That's impossible."

Jake knocked on the door, and Hayes instantly opened the door and stepped inside. He was obviously waiting just outside in case Jake needed him, and Aidan took immediate offense. "You don't have to hover." He barked. "I've protected Jake his entire life, and you've only known him a day, so back up and stay in your lane." Hayes remained silent, but his glare was brutal. Jake walked over to him and patted his shoulder.

"Aidan is doubting what he saw yesterday." He said, and something passed between them, a look and a nod, and then all hell broke loose again. Right before his eyes, Hayes turned from a tall, muscular man dressed in jeans and a light shirt to a black wolf the size of a small horse. The clothing was shredded and lay about the room, and the wolf stood tall and deadly with his dark eyes trained on Aidan. Aidan moved to try and stand between the wolf and Jake, but Jake stepped to the side.

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 9, 2025, 2:14 am*

Jake walked towards the beast, and Aidan tried to stop him. "Stay back." He said, but Jake smiled and reached out his hand. The wolf nuzzled his hand, and Jake ran his fingers over the animal's head and then dropped a kiss on his nose. "What the fuck am I looking at!" Aidan shouted.

"This is Hayes, the love of my life and my Fated mate," Jake told him about their meeting on the beach and how Hayes had saved him. Aidan listened this time as the true reality of his situation set in. Jake described his own disbelief but also described how the growing bond between them helped him to see and understand. "The supernatural is real, Aidan. They've been here as long as we have, maybe longer. They live among us, working, thriving, and surviving."

Aidan watched as the wolf turned back into a naked Hayes, who continued to give him the stink eye and possessively put his arm around Jake, pulling him towards him as if he thought Aidan would try to take him away.

"It's okay," Jake reassured Hayes. "I want to speak with Aidan alone, and then I thought he and I could go for a walk. I'll show him around the pack lands." Aidan was sure by the look on his face that Hayes was going to balk at Jake's plans, but he nodded, and after a firm squeeze and a hard kiss, he left the room.

"So, now, do you trust what you saw yesterday?" Jake stated, always the smartass.

"Give me a minute, and then I'll answer that." Aidan was at a loss to explain what he just witnessed. Yesterday, he thought it was a delusion. Today, he knew it was not, and that fact was not in the least bit comforting.



"It's all true, Aidan; everything I've told you is true," Jake spoke slowly and purposefully, and Aidan began to believe.

"He's your mate, so does that mean you're going to be living here now?" He thought he'd tackle the practical before getting too deep in the weeds.

Jake's smile was worth whatever he had to accept. It was becoming clear to him that Hayes did not mean him harm, and based on the way he responded to Jake, the connection appeared balanced and respectful. The whole wolf pack shifter thing would take him some time, but he couldn't deny it was true to some extent since he saw it with his own eyes.

"We were staying here at the Pack House because you're here, and I wanted to be close to you, but actually, Hayes has his own place here in Bay Harbor. He said it's a small ranch-style home with two bedrooms, and he hopes that I like it. I'm sure I will as long as he's there with me." That smile returned, and it was there, clear as day, all the love and admiration he felt for that man, Hayes Castain.

"You love him, Jake?"

"I love him, Aidan."

"Okay." Aidan would try to get along with him, and he would try to be accepting of Jake's new life. Jake ran to him and hugged him, and Aidan held him and hoped that everything was as good as Jake thought it was.

"Let's go for a walk, and I'll show you around. It's not at all what we thought; it's just a community that happens to be shifters."

"Just happens to be shifters," Aidan repeated with just a touch of sarcasm as he slipped his shoes on. Jake had returned all of his belongings except for his phone.

"Don't start. You know I'm telling the truth. Come on, and let's go. I'll introduce you to a few people I know so you can see how normal everyone is." Aidan smiled and nodded, and Jake grabbed him by the arm.

### CHAPTER THREE

Isaiah and Travis made their way across the expanse of lawn on the east side of the main house and were headed to the dining hall when suddenly Isaiah stopped and started sniffing the air.

"What's wrong?" Travis stopped beside him and began looking around.

"Don't you smell that?" Isaiah took in a deep breath and then slowly released it.

"What does it smell like?"

"Pungent, masculine, expensive leather." Isaiah rattled off the scents that were bombarding him. He took another deep breath and felt his body shake. Travis stared at him for a second and then looked around once again.

"There's no one here but you and I." He stated and then heard something off to his left. There, coming around the corner of the main house from the front yard, was Jake Kolly and his brother Aidan.

"I have no idea what plant or animal is giving off that scent, but I'd love to bottle it." He took several deep breaths, consuming the wonderful smell. Travis looked at the two coming toward them from the front yard and then glanced over at Isaiah, and the truth hit him.

"Oh my God." He said deep and slow.

“What?” Isaiah shifted his attention immediately.

“That’s Jake Kolly and his brother Aidan.” Travis indicated the two men walking toward them.

“Yeah.” Isaiah waited for more explanation, and then it came at him full-bodied and forceful. The scent was now thick and heavy, rolling over him in waves. His body reacted subtly with sharp attention, a concentrated stare, and a sudden need to jump the man now standing before him. Isaiah felt his wolf surge to the forefront, and he struggled to keep him leashed.

He could feel Travis’ speculative gaze upon him. "It's you, Isaiah. He belongs to you." He said with a grin. “Let me introduce you.”

"Hey, Jake." Travis instantly engaged. “Let me introduce you to my friend Isaiah.”

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 9, 2025, 2:14 am*

"Pleased to meet you, Isaiah." Jake held out his hand, and Isaiah gave it a brief shake and then shifted his attention to the gorgeous man standing next to Jake. He was about five foot eight inches tall and about one hundred and sixty pounds and smelled like absolute heaven.

"This is my brother Aidan." Aidan extended his hand, and Isaiah took it, holding it in a firm grip while studying his eyes. The man was an impeccable specimen of masculine perfection. Muscular and beautiful with a softness that was not weakness. He had eyes that sparkled and lips that begged to be kissed. Isaiah was smitten in an instant, and the importance of this man was crystal clear.

"I'm so glad to meet you, Aidan." He saw the awareness in Aidan's gaze. He felt something just as Isaiah had felt the connection, and the bond began to form between them. Aidan looked at their joined hands and then back up at Isaiah, and he smiled.

"You work here?" Aidan asked.

"Yes, I work security with Travis and Hayes."

"Do you live in the main house?"

"The Pack House?" He clarified, and Aidan nodded. "No, I have my own place on the cliffs."

"Are you visiting or moving in?" Isaiah asked him, sensing that Aidan just wanted to keep the conversation going, and he was more than willing to oblige.

“I’m not sure at the moment.” The smile remained on Aidan's face, and Isaiah loved every minute with this man.

"Jake, could you come with me? I wanted to get your opinion on something." Travis inserted himself, and Jake caught on immediately.

“Sure.” He said and then turned to Aidan. “Isaiah will continue your tour, and I’ll catch up with you when I’m done.”

“Okay.” Aidan had no complaints, and Isaiah was appreciative of Travis and Jake’s maneuvering, although he sensed a hesitation in Jake. They watched as Travis and Jake headed back in the direction of the main house.

“So, how much of Bay Harbor has Jake introduced you to?” Isaiah began and placed his hand softly on Aidan's upper back.

“We just started. I met the gardeners and the house manager and toured the gardens in the front yard. I think there is still a lot to see.” He took a step closer to Isaiah and looked up into his eyes.

“Have we met before? You seem familiar.” Aidan commented as they began to walk in the direction of the Bay. The beach was always lovely and quiet. It would give Isaiah the opportunity to have a nice talk with Aidan. The fact that this man was his mate was still a shock. When he heard that Jake’s brother was a mate to someone in the pack, he never assumed that this handsome man would belong to him. It was a delightful shock.

"I don't believe we have met. I'm sure I would remember you, but I do feel like I know you." Isaiah kept stealing touches and glances, which, to his pleasure, Aidan reciprocated readily. "You live in Eastport, I assume." Isaiah wanted to get him to talk about himself.

He wanted to know all there was to know about his precious mate. His wolf was still pushing forward, trying to get a look at their new mate, and he wouldn't doubt that the beast could be seen in his eyes. Therefore, he tried to keep his gaze on the ground or out towards the bay.

"I work for Sensor Properties as a real estate specialist." Aidan moved his hand so that the backs of their hands touched as they walked. After a few hundred feet of awkward touches, Isaiah took the initiative to take hold of Aidan's hand, holding it loosely in his. Aidan accepted the embrace without comment.

"Henrik is dealing with Sensor in the acquisition of the property to the north. He hopes to expand the Bay Harbor footprint, and I believe he's interested in some new builds broadening the residential." Isaiah enjoyed their easy exchange, but there was a fire inside him that was growing larger by the minute. He needed more from Aidan than just idle chit-chat. He needed real recognition.

The chance for a deeper interaction came almost immediately. Aidan stopped all of a sudden and turned on Isaiah. "They're keeping me here because of something I saw."

"What did you see?" Isaiah had a hunch, but he wasn't going to offer it up. Aidan needed to tell him. Isaiah turned toward him then, and their eyes met once again. The wolf was apparent, and Aidan's reaction was predictable. The power of his wolf was showing through. Being so close to his newly discovered mate made it impossible to force him down. The wolf wanted what the wolf wanted, and so did Isaiah.

Aidan pulled his hand free and jumped back from Isaiah, but he did not run away. He stood there, taking it all in from a distance of a few feet. Fate was doing its job. "I saw a man turn into a wolf." Isaiah did not speak but kept pushing the power of his presence toward Aidan, flooding him with calm awareness.

"You're a wolf," Aidan stated after a few seconds of uncomfortable silence. "Hayes

shifted in front of me because I had doubted what I saw. He was a huge wolf, black and fierce."

"Did it scare you?" Isaiah asked softly, and Aidan gave a quick shake of his head.

Aidan felt like his heart and his mind were all over the place, and he was struggling to understand even a portion of what was happening to him and failing. Was he afraid? No, he wasn't afraid; he was confused and agitated, but it was not fear. Isaiah did not scare him, and neither had Hayes.

"You're a wolf," Aidan repeated himself, and Isaiah nodded.

"Yes, most everyone you will meet on pack lands will be wolves. There are mates that are humans, fox shifters, bear shifters, and other species, but this is a wolf pack led by the Alpha Wolf Henrik Vaughn." It confused him further, but he appreciated Isaiah's honesty.

"I don't know how to process this information. I know it's true; I saw what I saw, and I can clearly see it in you. The area is teeming with energy, supernatural energy I can feel. I couldn't feel it before." He was grappling with this sudden flood of evidence that refused to fit into his previous view of life and the world he lived in.

Aidan came closer, one slow step at a time. It felt as if he were being pulled by an unseen force. "I believe you."

"Thank you," Isaiah said and reached out his hand to Aidan. "I promise to never lie to you." Aidan took the hand and held it tightly in his own. The contact was settling and comforted him in a way that was more than just supportive; he felt Isaiah's presence down to his bones.

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 9, 2025, 2:14 am*

“Who are you?” There was so much more to this man than just being a friend of a friend who agreed to show him around.

“Isaiah LeBlanc, a security guard for the Bay Harbor Wolves.” He repeated. “Who are you?”

"Aidan Kolly, real estate analyst with Sensor Properties." Aidan followed suit.

"Let me show you around the property, and then how about I take you to lunch at the dining hall." Aidan was feeling a little overwhelmed, and taking a step back for a minute was exactly what he needed. He held onto Isaiah's hand, not wanting to let go because the contact was something he needed. It wasn't hurting anyone, so he wasn't going to analyze it right now.

"Thank you, I'd love that. I am a little hungry." Aidan suddenly felt more at ease. "Is the food good at the dining hall?"

“I eat there most days.” He admitted. “The Alpha did not skimp when hiring a chef. The food is some of the finest in the area.”

"Being close to you helps me relax, and my mind settles and clears, and you smell amazing. I don't know what you're wearing, but I want some." He watched as a gorgeous smile covered Isaiah's face.

“You smell good to Aidan.” He said with a chuckle.

"This means something, doesn't it?" Aidan asked, and at that moment, Derek



happened by no doubt on his way to see his brother, the Alpha. Derek had been instrumental in Aidan's takedown yesterday, and he wasn't sure how he was feeling about the guy at present.

"Isaiah." Derek acknowledged with a nod, and then he turned to Aidan. "Aidan, good to see you so calm." He smiled, but it was not a pleasant smile. Aidan had a feeling that the guy was incapable of a pleasant smile. Aidan answered him with an icy stare, which just made him laugh and turn his attention back to Isaiah.

"I was going over your report, Henrik sent me a copy, and I like what you proposed about using the Mage to protect the beach. I agree there is merit in the idea." Derek stated, and Isaiah nodded his understanding but did not respond. Derek was not one for discussions, but Isaiah took his support as significant. No one had the Alpha's ear the way Derek did.

"That guy makes me angry just looking at him," Aidan said while they watched him walk away.

"He pisses off most people. It's his superpower."

"Was he talking about magic as a security measure?" Aidan's voice was sharp with skepticism, but he couldn't help it.

"Jake has explained most of what's going on here, and part of me thinks that you're all insane, but another part is believing what I'm seeing. Magic in the mix is really not a big reach at this point." Aidan tried for a lighthearted response. He wanted some answers, and he wanted to understand.

What he was feeling for this literal stranger was unusual but not unwanted. He was feeling pulled in an odd way, and he was feeling a familiarity that brought peace and comfort, which were all things he needed to understand. Everything would come

together like puzzle pieces in the end once he had a clear picture.

"I spent a week with the Coven observing their security techniques. They use mage magic for a large portion of their border security, and it has worked extremely well. Alpha Henrik has had good and bad experiences with magic and is not necessarily in mind to adopt the measures." Isaiah kept it short but answered his question.

"Sounds like you have Derek on your side," Aidan said and suddenly realized that the conversation was not going where he wanted it to go. Playing around the edges was not going to get to the heart of their matter.

"He rarely involves himself with such things, so he must truly see its worth," Isaiah responded dryly. This subject was definitely dead on arrival, so they might as well get down to basics.

"Okay, sit." Aidan stopped at a bench by the rose garden at the corner of the property and pointed at it. "We need to talk."

"I agree; we need to talk." Isaiah sat, and Aidan sat next to him, close enough that their thighs were touching, and Isaiah placed his arm along the back of the bench behind Aidan. It was a nice touch.

"Why do you make me feel this way?" Aidan burst.

"What way is that?"

"Like I might crawl out of my skin with the need to be near you. The desire to be close to you is coursing through me like a raging fixation." He was laying it out there, and he hoped that Isaiah had something constructive to say.

"We're mates." He said and then left it there. His dark eyes glinted with the presence

of his beast trained on him, and Aidan could feel a surge of desire rush through him. If they were more acquainted and if they had even a modicum of privacy, Aidan would definitely jump his bones right there on the bench in broad daylight. That was how much this man was affecting him.

“I feel the same about you.” Isaiah, with his dark, good looks and toned body, sat there in all his gorgeousness and said he felt the same. Aidan was fixating, but there was nothing he could do about it. The feelings were deep, bone deep. He reached his hand over and took Isaiah’s hand once again.

“I like touching you. Your voice soothes me, and your scent is like a refuge and fills me with a sense of safety and well-being. I’m probably saying too much and saying it all wrong, and who knows, maybe it's all just magic.” Aidan looked away to his right but held onto Isaiah.

“You're saying everything right, my love. What you are feeling is the pull, just as I am feeling. I assume Jake explained the mating process and the power of the Fated bond when telling you about his infatuation with Hayes?” Aidan nodded. Jake spoke of the Fated bond and the connection that exists between a wolf and his predestined mate, but was Isaiah saying what he thought he was saying.

“You and I are like Jake and Hayes?”

“Yes, the reason they released your friend, the deputy, is because they brought in a vampire to wipe his memory of seeing the guard shift into his wolf form. They tried to do the same to you, but the vampire could not touch your mind.” Aidan remembered the man who touched his forehead and then got all huffy about some issue. He wasn’t going to think about the vampire aspect just yet.

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 9, 2025, 2:14 am*

“A human who is destined to be a Fated mate is immune from manipulation such as having their memories touched. It was then that we knew you had a mate somewhere within the pack.” That was clear and yet so confusing at the same time.

Isaiah went on to describe and detail their situation, some of which Aidan was aware of. He told him about his scent and how it had called to him and his wolf, directing him to Aidan, and once they touched, he had no doubts.

“You’re okay with this?” He pointed at himself, and Isaiah smiled. It was a beautiful smile. “You’re okay mating with a human, someone completely outside your life and your culture?”

“Yeah, I’m more than okay.” Isaiah slowly leaned in closer and gently took Aidan’s lips in a sweet, tender embrace. He held him in thrall for several seconds, and Aidan felt and tasted the warmth and strength of the man and the wolf. It was all starting to make sense when it should have made none. “You’re everything I have ever dreamed of in a forever lover. Fate brings two people together that were made for one another, and she is never wrong. Alpha Henrik has a human mate, as does Derek. It’s rather common for humans and wolves to be mated.”

“Derek Vaughn is in love with a human?”

“Leo is the absolute love of his life and the center of his world.”

## CHAPTER FOUR

Isaiah couldn’t resist it any longer and pulled Aidan in for another sensual,

exploratory kiss. His lips were soft yet firm and inviting, moving against his with familiarity and longing. Aidan's hands moved over Isaiah's arms. The touch was exhilarating even as it was tentative and shy.

They'd shared quite a bit, but still, they weren't even halfway to a proper understanding. Isaiah was planning to suggest they go to his place following lunch and continue to get to know one another.

Aidan was open, and their connection was growing. He broke off the kiss, pulling back slightly to look down into Aidan's expressive stare. Isaiah was shocked by how much and how deeply he was affected by this man. His presence left him trembling with want.

All of Isaiah's plans were cut short when Jake came rushing to them from across the vast lawn. He looked panicked and breathless, and Aidan immediately stood ready to give him whatever assistance he required. Isaiah felt forgotten in that moment, and he took a step back. Jake launched himself at Aidan, who caught him and held him.

"What's wrong, what happened?" He searched Jake's face and then looked around, trying to find what it was that upset him.

"Was it that bastard Hayes?" He yelled, and Jake immediately calmed down and vigorously shook his head.

"No, no, Hayes is wonderful. I was just worried about you." Isaiah listened closely, confused by this sudden outburst of fear and distrust from someone who was fully vested in the wolf culture and had completed their own mate bond. Jake's behavior was odd, to say the least.

"Come back to the main house with me. I need to make sure you're okay and that no one is taking advantage of you." With that statement, Jake gave a pointed glance at

Isaiah, who took immediate offense.

“He’s quite safe, I assure you,” Isaiah said, his tone dripping with contempt.

“I want Hayes to explain to you the meaning of mates and how to recognize your Fated mate.” Jake was obviously suspicious of Isaiah’s claim and his motives. Then Aidan, still holding onto Jake, turned to Isaiah, and his comment was quietly devastating.

“I’ll catch you later, Isaiah.” He then walked away with his arm around Jake, comforting and reassuring. Isaiah watched them until they disappeared inside the main house, but neither Aidan nor Jake looked back at him. His mate shut him down and walked away, leaving him with nothing but a glib, catch you later; it was the worst feeling in the world.

He sat back down on the bench and leaned his elbows on his thighs while resting his chin on his hands. Closing his eyes, he tried to understand where and how things had gone so wrong. He had been sitting there for quite some time when he felt someone sit down beside him, and he glanced over to see who it was.

“Derek told us that Aidan was your mate.” Zayn began soft and supportive. “Jake is fearful that his brother is being deceived. It’s crazy, but he’s making himself believe it. This is just the beginning, Isaiah, not the end. He will come back, and your bond will grow stronger. The pull is fierce with humans. He will not be able to stay away from you for long.”

“Why does Jake distrust me. Doesn’t he know how sacred the bond is and that it would never be used as a tool to deceive?” Isaiah was feeling desperation rising within him the longer he was apart from his newly discovered mate.

“Try to take it easy. Hayes will talk with Jake, and I’m sure he will back off.” Zayn

was giving him hope, but he desired so much more. "I know this is painful. Trust me, I've been there. Just give him time."

"I will. It would seem that I have no other choice."

"Jake is scared. It all seems too fast and convenient to him."

"I understand." He really didn't, but it was the expected response, so he gave it.

"Henrik said to take a couple weeks off so you can focus on your mate." Zayn gave him a pained expression, which did not fill him with confidence. Then he patted his knee before standing and, after a deep sigh, headed back to the main house.

Isaiah remained there for a few more minutes before heading home. They hadn't made plans to meet again, and that was riding him hard. 'Catch you later,' God, he hated those words. He shook himself and took a deep breath. He needed to grow up. He was nearly a hundred years old. He wasn't a child, and he could handle this. He kept telling himself that as he walked home.

"How do we know that Isaiah is telling the truth? Maybe he just wants to use Aidan and is pretending to be his mate." Jake opened with that, and Hayes was not impressed. Aidan had calmed Jake and assured him he wouldn't do anything rash or hasty, and then he went to the kitchen with one of the enforcers named Seamus for a bite to eat.

He heard Jake and Hayes discussing him, his situation, and Isaiah. The way Jake was speaking of Isaiah disturbed him, and he was glad to get out of the room and away from them before he said something he regretted. He loved his brother dearly, but he did not get a say in his private life, and he certainly did not get a say in his relationship with Isaiah LeBlanc.

Seamus made him a ham sandwich and poured him a cup of coffee before sitting down with him at the large table in the kitchen located near the glass doors, which afforded a lovely view of the bay. They sat in silence for a few minutes, and then Seamus broke that silence.



## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: July 9, 2025, 2:14 am*

"Isaiah is your mate. There is no doubt about it." He offered and then glanced out to the bay. "He's one of our best security people. That's why the Alpha sent him to the Coven to be trained in the new systems. He catches on quick, and he has a mind that is always working. He's also a damn good soldier."

He didn't need Seamus to sell him Isaiah's attributes. He knew for himself that he was a good man. The connection they shared gave him an inside view of just who Isaiah was, and he was attracted to every part of him.

"I know he's my mate. I felt the connection, and Jake had already explained the basics of what to expect." He finished his sandwich and then set the plate aside, taking his coffee and drinking a few sips. "It was more powerful than I would have expected, which just makes it clear to me that he is the one. It's kind of bonkers actually to think that yesterday I wanted to burn this place down, and now here I am having lunch and apparently planning my wedding."

Seamus laughed hard, and Aidan joined. "Feels good, doesn't it."

"Yes, it does. I know I have a lot to learn, and life is going to be awkward for me for a while, but I am excited to get to know Isaiah. I just met him, and within hours, I was ready to move in without hesitation. Will it always feel like this so desperate and overwhelming?" Aidan discovered that the longer he was apart from Isaiah, the more he longed to be with him. "The pull, as Isaiah called it, is fierce."

"I've been mated for a few years, and I've found that it just gets better, broader, and more intense. That's the power of a Fated bond. There is nothing like it in the world, and it is fierce." Seamus stated.

“I look forward to it. Now I just have to get Jake on board.”

“Hayes is taking care of that.”

Isaiah remained at home, wondering what Aidan was thinking and when he would see him again. He knew he was being pathetic, but he believed he had a right to his feelings, considering his mate had walked away from him without a backward glance and had not contacted him since.

Travis had stopped by, but Isaiah was not fit company for anyone. He let him know that Hayes had worked things out with Jake, and Aidan was asking questions. “He’s understanding what's happening, and he knows that you're his mate.”

"Then where is he? Why is he not at my side." Isaiah was losing his cool the longer he had to wait. His wolf was pushing to shift and just bring the man home, but as good as that idea sounded, it wouldn't work out in the end. Aidan had to come to him of his own free will; he could not be forced or coerced.

"Give him time, Isaiah. It's only been a day." Isaiah apologized for his abruptness and thanked Travis for keeping him informed. “Also, the Alpha has given Sasha permission to set up a border on the bay side similar to what his grandfather gave the Coven. He's already on it, so we will find out if mage magic is the answer." As much as that should have been satisfying for Isaiah, all he could do was nod. The absence of his mate was making everything dark and lifeless, and excitement was out of reach.

“I hope it works for us as well as it works for the Coven.” Finally, Travis had his fill and forced Isaiah out of his house and down to the dining hall for dinner. It helped a little, very little, but it did get his mind off things for a bit. He could see the main house from where they were seated, and it gave him comfort to know he was close to his mate.

“He won't stay away for long,” Travis assured. Everyone was telling him the same thing, and yet Aidan had yet to seek him out. It had been several hours, and the waiting was excruciating. It was dusk when they left the dining hall, and Travis left him to get ready for work. Isaiah decided to take a walk on the beach to clear his head before heading home.

“The security glamour that Sasha used has brought to light a magic spell that exists on the bay side from the southern border to the forest line. We didn't put it there.” Javiar reported the illicit intrusion to Henrik immediately. “Sasha removed it, but he said it has been there for quite some time gathering information on the property and the pack.”

“Why didn't we know it was there?” Henrik barked, clearly disappointed in the lack of thoroughness.

“It was cloaked and placed deep within the aura of the lake. Even Sasha didn't know it was there until his magic bumped into it.” This was serious, and the ramifications were endless. Henrik ran his hands through his hair, furious at the breach and desperate to find the source. He called Derek and put him on the case, and asked Sasha to try and find the author of the magic.

“Sasha is doing a complete sweep of our borders and every inch of pack lands to see if there are any other surveillance spells in place.”

“Bring Sasha to me as soon as he is finished.”

“I'm sorry, Aidan, I overreacted.” Jake sat with Aidan on the back deck. “I knew that your mate was here somewhere, but it just seemed so odd that you'd just run into him while on a walk. Everything struck me as contrived the more I thought about it, and then I felt responsible for you, and what if I'd drawn you into something that wasn't real.” Jake continued to drone on and on, trying to find the right words.

"I can't very well chastise you for overreacting, considering how I acted yesterday, but the way you spoke to Isaiah was uncalled for." Aidan sat there with his brother, but every molecule in his body was pushing him to go and find Isaiah. It had been hours since he left him there by the bench, and the void was beginning to become painful.

"He's really your mate?" Jake once again asked for reassurance.

"Based on the way I felt when I saw him and the way I'm feeling right now, I'd say yes. I don't know much about this culture, but I know how I feel when I'm with him, and it is like nothing I've ever felt before. I want to investigate these feelings, and I want to know him, and more importantly, there is an urgency stirring in my heart that is compelling me to go find him." Aidan spoke calmly, but it was calm. He was not feeling. It had been too long he needed to go to him.

Aidan suddenly stood and looked down upon the beach below them and saw a man walking and recognized him immediately. That need brewing in his soul exploded, and he jumped from the deck and began racing down to the beach. Jake did not interfere with him this time. He obviously knew better.

He was at a considerable distance, but he knew his mate. He knew it was Isaiah, and he needed to get to him. He should have gone sooner. Suddenly, he was feeling guilt descending upon him. He shouldn't have waited. He should have sought him out earlier, but so many things had held him back, not least of which was his own lingering doubts that kept getting in his way.

The what-ifs were killing him and had kept him at the pack house waiting instead of going to Isaiah. Isaiah was a stranger, and yet there wasn't anyone on this earth that he knew better. The truth of that was what had kept him frozen and waiting, not trusting himself until he saw him on the beach, and then nothing would stop him. All doubts and hesitations disappeared.

Isaiah stopped when he saw him. He didn't come to him. He simply watched and waited. The insecurity he was feeling filled the air between them, and Aidan felt like an ass for having waited so long and for having left him to begin with. He made some mistakes today, but going forward, he would not, ever again, take this man for granted.

"Isaiah." He called out, but Isaiah remained rooted to the spot. He ran faster, needing to get to him as soon as possible. "I'm sorry." He said quickly and stopped a few feet in front of where Isaiah stood. He looked tired and sad, and it tore at Aidan. "I shouldn't have left you. I shouldn't have stayed away so long." Still, Isaiah did not respond. He stared at Aidan, his expression changing from uncertainty to what looked like hope.

Aidan moved closer until they were mere inches apart. "I'm sorry." He said again, and Isaiah reached out, brushing the hair back from Aidan's face. He let his fingertips linger, brushing them gently across Aidan's cheek.

"I'm not trying to deceive you, Aidan. I am not a liar." The words came out like gravel, low and coarse.

## Page 9

*Source Creation Date: July 9, 2025, 2:14 am*

"I know," Aidan responded softly. "I know, and I should have defended you."

"It's okay; you were placed in a difficult position between your brother and a man you'd only known for a few hours. I understand your struggle." The sadness was still dripping from his words, and Aidan didn't know what to do or say to take it away.

"I want this, Isaiah." He said and gestured between them. "I want to see where this takes us." Isaiah cupped the back of Aidan's neck in his hand and gently urged him closer while bending to take his lips in a careful but explosive kiss.

The second their lips touched, Aidan felt a fire that had been simmering suddenly burst and began to rage. The feeling of being home and being exactly where he was meant to be consumed him, and he eagerly reciprocated the kiss and its urgency.

The kiss came slowly to an end, but they continued to hold one another as the commitment and desires they felt began to consume them. "I was waiting till morning, and then I was coming to you. I had so many fears I didn't know what to do or how to make this right. To be honest, I was afraid that I might have ruined everything and that you wouldn't trust me or believe me when I told you how I felt."

"How do you feel?" Isaiah's voice was a whisper, and it danced along Aidan's flesh, reigniting the flames and sending a tremor through his body. There was no doubt whatsoever that this man was his everything.

Aidan didn't use words. He instead locked his eyes onto Isaiah's dark stare and pulled him down to him, taking his lips in another mind-bending embrace, channeling everything he was feeling, everything he wanted, and everything he believed into that

kiss, branding his lover with his desire.

Isaiah took everything Aidan was offering. They devoured one another as their need to be close and to experience everything overtook them. The kiss went on for ages, each of them desperately searching and finding the meaning and finding their answers. Isaiah felt his wolf surging to the surface, eager to mark and to claim.

"The Alpha gave me a room on the second floor," Aidan said with his breath catching and his heart beating out of his chest. He leaned his forehead against Isaiah's chest and steadied himself. "Come home with me, please. I need you so badly." Isaiah could hear the pleading in his tone, and it touched him, touched his heart, and melted all his fears. This was his mate, his Fated mate, and that was all that mattered. Everything else was just details.

"I want you too, sweetheart, so badly. These hours we've spent apart have been a torment, and the fear I felt that you might never come back had me in shreds. I couldn't think straight, and I felt like my life would be forever hollow and empty. It was terrible." They continued to hold one another, desperate to get their feelings across and their desires clear.

"Come with me, please." Aidan pulled on him, urging him to follow.

"If I go to your room with you, my wolf and I will claim you, and then there will be no going back, no walking away. Our lives will be made one." Isaiah wanted him to be clear on where this path was taking him.

"I know what to expect, and I'm ready." He said without pause and continued to pull Isaiah along. That was music to Isaiah's ears, and he hurried to Aidan's side and slipped his arm around him. The night that had started with sadness and regret had turned into one of joy and expectation, and he couldn't ask for better than that.

The sudden exuberance that passed between them was electric, and Isaiah picked up speed, pulling Aidan along, and contemplated picking him up and racing back to the Pack House. Waiting and being patient were so overrated, as were bedrooms since the beach was beginning to look like an adequate place to complete their bond.

All those fevered thoughts were abruptly halted when there came a flash and a movement before them. It wasn't natural, and it wasn't initiated by the pack. Isaiah recognized it for what it was: a raid. He scooped Aidan up and deposited him in the thick brush. "Stay there until I come for you. Do not move." He then turned, and as he rushed toward the interlopers, he shifted and attacked.

They were coming up from the bay dressed in black and cloaked by night. He leaped upon one and realized the person was human, and he was prepared to kill. Isaiah tore at the suit he was wearing, but it resisted the force of his claws. The suit was tactical and specialized. The suit was protective, but the man had nothing covering his face, so Isaiah went for the kill in a brutal and bloody fashion and then tossed him aside.

The men from the Pack House charged from the house led by Alpha Henrik and swarmed the beach, taking the intruders on in hand-to-hand combat. The attackers had weapons, guns, and knives, and several wolves were injured, but the battle was going in their favor. It had been many years since they'd engaged in such warfare, still their skills were as sharp as ever, and their leader was a champion.

Isaiah looked back to where he'd stashed Aidan and noticed the enemy getting close. He finished the shifter he was fighting with a swift slice to his throat and then turned back to his mate, rushing toward him just as the enemy discovered his presence. It was a human and a cougar shifter, and Aidan was not going easily.

Aidan struck out at the human with a jackknife a little more than three inches long, but he was able to inflict maximum damage, going for every exposed inch of flesh and laying it open. The cougar grabbed for him just as Isaiah arrived and easily



cracked his neck and tore out his exposed throat.

The human started to run, abandoning him and jumped back into the water. Isaiah did not pursue. Instead, he shifted back to his human form and cuddled Aidan in his arms.

“Are you okay?” He asked, panicked and out of breath as he frantically searched Aidan’s body for injury.

“I’m not hurt. Go, do what you have to. I’m fine. I’ll wait here.” Aidan read the situation and did not push. Isaiah kissed him hard, bruising his tender lips, and then shifted as he turned and rushed back to battle those who dared to attack them and invade their sacred lands.

Derek was cutting through them swiftly and methodically, leaving bodies piling up on the beach, and Isaiah couldn’t be happier about the fact that Derek was there. The man had abilities beyond imagination when it came to delivering death. The battle raged on for nearly twenty minutes before those who were able ran back to the bay and disappeared beneath the calm waves.

Strewn across the beach were humans and shifters who had fought together against the wolves, and it made no sense at all. They stood there analyzing the scene, taking in all that had happened. Alpha Henrik sent guards to search the pack lands for any further breach or enemy presence.

He was about to order a clean-up when suddenly the bodies before them began to tremble and smoke as if on fire, and then they disintegrated into the sand, leaving nothing but smears and pools of black which were washed away by the bay.

“It’s a spell the attackers were covered by a termination spell which would activate upon death,” Sasha stated as he made his way over to where Javier was standing and wrapped the man in his arms. Isaiah looked over his shoulder and saw Aidan making

his way toward him. He was a little shell-shocked but was doing well, considering. Isaiah met him, and they just stood there holding each other for a few minutes.

"That was outrageous," Aidan commented. "I'm so glad you're not hurt. I watched you, and man, your wolf is extreme and savage and the most beautiful beast I've ever encountered." He ended with a smile. "So does this happen often?"

"No, this is, as you say, outrageous. Battles happen, but we were blindsided, which never happens. Luckily, we were more than they bargained for."

"I think it was a test, and these men were forfeit to see our strengths and test our resolve," Sasha stated, and everyone fell silent as that information was processed. "The mixture of human and shifter and their gear, they were expendable throwaways, I believe, although I don't think they knew that."

"Somebody was watching and gauging our reactions," Henrik stated, and Sasha confirmed. "Is it over, for now?"

*Source Creation Date: July 9, 2025, 2:14 am*

"Yes, they've retreated, and I placed a barrier that extends out into the bay. It may interfere with the locals, but not so much that they will notice or complain.

"Do whatever you have to, Sasha, solidify our borders to the best of your ability." The Alpha's aversion to magic was fading under this new threat. The Alpha stepped away to take a call, and when he returned, it was to alert them that the Coven had sustained an attack at the same moment. "Whatever is going on, they are targeting the supernatural."

With humans involved, that made the threat a hundred times more deadly. No one wanted to think about the fact that their secret may have been discovered and what that would mean to the paranormal world. The Alpha was barking orders, and people were rushing around. The time to worry was later. Right now, they had to fortify and prepare for whatever was coming.

"Come home with me, Isaiah, before the next battle takes place. I want our bond to be solid, and I want to wear your mark." Aidan stated as they made their way up to the pack house.

"I'm right beside you, sweetheart. Just lead the way." Isaiah held him close to his side as they walked. Derek came up beside Aidan and fell into step with them.

"I want to train you." He said. "I saw you take on that human and that cougar shifter with nothing but a pocketknife. You have potential, and I want to train you." He turned to look at Isaiah, gauging his acceptance.

"Aidan makes his own decisions, but I agree he is exceptional," Isaiah said, and

Derek then turned to Aidan.

“Yes, I would appreciate the help.” With a nod, Derek disappeared, and Aidan and Isaiah headed up to Aidan’s bedroom.

The misunderstandings, the upset, the battle, and the aftermath were forgotten as Isaiah watched his beautiful mate slowly undress. He'd caught hints of the tanned, muscled body beneath the clothing, but seeing it in all its glory was breathtaking.

“Don’t just stand there, strip.” Aidan gave him orders, and Isaiah pulled himself out of his stupor and began pulling off his shirt and jeans. Seeing his mate’s body was sending all kinds of sensations through his body. His cock was rock hard at present and throbbing. Aidan had gotten him going out there on the bench earlier, but this vision was intensifying that reaction to the maximum.

When he slid the tight boxers down his legs and dropped them to the floor, Isaiah froze for a moment, taking in the smooth, flawless perfection of Aidan Kolly. He saw many days and nights filled with the joy and fulfillment of having him in his life.

Isaiah finished stripping and appreciated Aidan’s rapt attention to his finer attributes. Isaiah was a large wolf in many respects, and Aidan was clearly enjoying what he was seeing.

"Come closer, Isaiah." His voice had dropped a few octaves, and it sizzled along Isaiah’s flesh.

In his estimation, if sex were personified, it would look like this gorgeous man standing before him. Isaiah moved closer and slowly took Aidan into his arms, pulling him flush against his hot, feverish body. The touch was electric, sending bolts of sensational awareness through his system, forming the foundation of their bond. The kiss was natural and came as soon as they touched.

Aidan's lips were soft and yet firm and enticing, pushing him to go deeper and harder. Aidan's scent was tantalizing him, filling his heart and mind with thoughts of love and forever and visions of a most beautiful man. "I love you, Aidan. I knew it within minutes of meeting you. You're the answer to my prayers and a symbol of everything I desire in this world."

It was a bold declaration, but it needed to be said. Isaiah needed to get it out and share with his mate the depth of his feelings. Love had come almost immediately upon meeting the man. His presence, his calm demeanor, his kindness, his loyalty, and the ease of their time together brought Isaiah to the realization that he could not and would not live without him.

"I love you too, Isaiah. I tried hard not to, but there is no denying that we are meant to be. I don't know where it will all lead and what it will mean for my life going forward, but I know in my heart that I need you by my side, and I will not know true happiness without you. You are my rock and my destiny and everything I desire in this world." He repeated Isaiah's words, making his feelings clear.

Isaiah moved toward the bed, and Aidan followed. He ran his hand down Aidan's back as he got onto the large bed and settled himself, stretching out on his back. He turned his head toward Isaiah and smiled that sexy, playful smile that broke down all his walls.

This was his mate, and still, he had difficulty believing it was real. Fate had been exceedingly generous with him, and he would be forever grateful. "You're amazing, my love, and I am so lucky to have you."

Aidan reached out to him, pulling him in for a sweet but tentative kiss, and then their eyes locked. "I'm the lucky one, Isaiah. Trust is hard for me, and my tendency was to lean toward anger and isolation, which left me with character traits that were often cold and distant. All of that was shot to hell the minute I laid eyes on you. Actually, it was the minute I sensed you were close. I hadn't met you yet, and still, I felt my life

changing.” He touched Isaiah’s face and seemed to marvel at the sensations it evoked. “I love you too.” He finished.

All talk ceased for a while, and communication became physical. The touch and the emotions they shared filled the room. The air was heavy with anticipation and want, and it was beautiful. Isaiah moved to lay atop his mate, carefully spreading Aidan’s legs with his own and seating himself between pressing his aching cock to Aidan’s. He was hard as stone, and Isaiah could see the expectancy mirrored in his expression.

“I’m going to mark and claim you.” He raised one hand and placed his fingertips against a spot on Aidan’s shoulder. “I will bite you here, sealing our bond and coming together as one.” He received a shaky but eager nod from Aidan. “You want this?” He had to clarify because there was no going back in the event Aidan discovered he wasn’t ready.

The response was immediate. “I know what the stakes are, and I know what this means. I want this; I want you, and I am ready.” He held Isaiah’s gaze.

Isaiah took Aidan’s lips in a deep, forceful kiss, communicating all his wants and desires in that embrace. Aidan clutched his arms, then his waist, and then the sides of his head, the frantic moves signifying the level of his excitement. Isaiah pushed Aidan’s legs further apart and pressed down, grinding his cock against Aidan’s tender, inflamed flesh.

Isaiah reached over to the bedside table and opened the drawer, all while not breaking the kiss, and thankfully found what he was looking for. He pulled back, breaking the kiss just long enough to cover his finger with the slippery substance, and then tossed the tube aside and took Aidan’s lips once again. It was like breath for a dying man. That kiss was so invigorating.

He quickly began loosening and penetrating, stretching and preparing with an urgency that steadily became more and more powerful. The need to claim was raging

within and pushing his wolf to the surface in wild torrents. His control was held on a razor's edge. "More, Isaiah, more. I need more." Aidan burst with the anxious demand, and Isaiah immediately sped up, forcing his fingers deeper, thrusting and stretching.

"I'm ready, I'm ready." Isaiah knew he couldn't wait any longer, and ready or not, Aidan needed this now. He moved his fingers, and Aidan jerked, seeking more pressure and needing the stretch. Without pause Isaiah thrust inside his cock long and thick, forcing the channel open, and filling him fully. The stretch sent a shiver through Aidan and was followed by a smile that was part relief and part shock.

Isaiah pushed up onto his palms and started a punishing rhythm of thrusts and grinds that had Aidan vibrating beneath him. He gripped the sheets with both and held on as Isaiah brought them both to the peak of ecstasy. The sounds and scents permeating the room were earthy, heady, and amazing. Isaiah pounded inside and then slammed so deep his vision faded for a second, and then he came.

They tilted slightly, and the light dimmed as his body erupted, and the bond so bright enveloped and flashed between them. Isaiah wrapped Aidan in his arms and sunk his teeth into the square inch of flesh he'd pointed to earlier. He drank and held on until he felt Aidan's warm release filling the space between them.

Aidan trembled and struggled to catch his breath. Isaiah slowly pulled back, licking the wound closed, and they simply held each other for several minutes as they let the energy and emotions settle around them.

"You are mine. You are the wolf's mate. No going back now, baby." Isaiah had to force the wolf back several times, so he was certain Aidan had experienced the power that lurked beneath the skin.

"Your wolf is beautiful, Isaiah." Aidan had sensed the direction of his thoughts, which was all part of their growing bond. "I saw him on the beach, and he was

magnificent, and I saw him here with me, and he was intense and yet sensitive. I'm very happy, and I see a long and enjoyable future for us, baby." He laughed, and Isaiah gently pulled out and lay beside him with his arm draped over Aidan's middle. He grabbed his t-shirt off the end of the bed and gave them both a tentative clean-up. Neither was ready to get up or end what they'd started just yet.

"This is just the beginning," Isaiah stated with a touch of pride and placed a proprietary kiss on the side of Aidan's head. "You're a pack member now with an entirely new set of responsibilities."

"I think I can handle it." Aidan chuckled.

"I know you can, baby." Isaiah kissed him again, and then the kiss grew deeper and more urgent. Aidan rolled to lay on top of Isaiah, straddling his waist and raining kisses down his neck and chest. "With you at my side, I can do anything."

THE END