

The Alpha King\'s Huntress: Hunt The Red Lycan

Chapter 13: CHAPTER 11 Orphaned

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Ethan sat by the bank, eyeing the fish that swam lazily in the shallow waters. His senses were heightened, and he knew exactly which one would be the perfect meal for the night. He plunged his hand in and snagged it quickly, feeling the slippery skin against his fingers. He pulled it out of the water, the fish thrashing wildly in his grip. With a swift motion, he slit its throat, letting it bleed out on the river rocks before cleaning it thoroughly. The scent of blood filled the air, mixing with the earthy smell of the forest and the cool water.

Kasia watched from a distance, her heart racing at the sight of the large fish he'd caught. She couldn't help but feel a surge of fear at the thought of what could have happened if it had attacked her while swimming.

"You weren't lying," she murmured, looking at the fish. It was massive, its scales glinting in the moonlight. The forest was eerily quiet; only the sound of the rushing water and their heavy breathing filled the air. She took a deep breath, trying to calm herself down as she approached him.

Kasia glanced at Ethan out of the corner of her eye, noting his intense focus as he prepared it for cooking. It was almost impressive. "This could have easily attacked us."

He chuckled softly, shaking his head as he met her gaze. "They're herbivores. They won't harm us unless provoked." He lifted a hand to brush some water from his face, his movements graceful despite his size and strength. "Now let's get this cooking."

She nodded mutely, following him back to the fire where he'd already started a small flame. The smoke curled up into the air, carrying with it the scent of burning wood and sizzling fish. Kasia wasn't convinced, but she nodded slowly. She slipped into the woods as Ethan was preparing the fire, feeling the urge to run to be free of him. But she stopped herself, surprised he hadn't followed or chained her up. It was a small act of trust that left her conflicted.

She returned with berries cupped in her hands like a peace offering. Ethan took them with a hint of a smile, and they ate in silence as flames licked the dripping fish. The quiet stretched between them, but for the first time, Kasia didn't feel the need to fill it with curses or threats. Only the popping fire and her own breath slowing to match his steadiness.

"I'm surprised you didn't stalk me while I was gone," she commented, her voice barely above a whisper.

Ethan glanced over at her, an amused smile tugging at his lips. "I've got plenty of other things on my mind right now."

He looked at the berries in her hand. "I am surprised that you picked the non-poisonous ones," Ethan said. "Go wash them."

When Kasia was done, Ethan handed her a thick branch, and she used it to poke at the fire, sending sparks flying. She could feel him watching her movements, his gaze making her skin tingle.

"We should eat soon," he said, biting into a thick slice of fish.

Kasia took a bite of the fish, and her eyes widened in surprise. "This is delicious! How did you make it taste so buttery?"

Ethan grinned. "An old secret. I learned to cook over open fires when I was on my own."

"On your own?" Kasia asked.

"Yes," Ethan replied.

"You were orphaned," Kasia said bluntly, the smile fading from her face.

Ethan tensed, his eyes darkening. "Yes. After my parents died."

Kasia shook her head, irritation rising within her. "I don't think sharing some sob stories will make me feel sorry for you. We're not going to bond just because you lost your parents too."

"I know," Ethan said quietly. "I wasn't trying to make you feel sorry for me. Just making conversation."

Kasia pressed her lips together, instantly regretting her harsh words. But she couldn't let her guard down; she couldn't let him past the walls she had built so strong over the years.

They finished their meal in tense silence, the easy companionship of earlier shattered. Kasia shivered as the cold night seeped into her bones. She glanced over at Ethan, taking in his broad shoulders and muscular frame. Heat seemed to radiate from him.

She looked away quickly, angry at herself for even noticing. This was the enemy, she reminded herself fiercely. She could never forget that.

Kasia shivered again, unable to stop her teeth from chattering. The cold was a bit deep, and the fire was doing little to warm her now that the sun had set. She glanced again at Ethan, at the inviting warmth that seemed to roll off him in waves.

"You're cold," Ethan said matter-of-factly. "Come over here by me. I can keep you warm."

Kasia bristled, anger flashing in her eyes. "What kind of woman do you take me for?" she spat. "I'm not some weak damsel looking for a man to keep me warm."

Ethan held up his hands defensively. "I didn't mean it like that. I just thought, "

"I don't care what you thought," Kasia snapped, cutting him off. She scrambled to her feet, putting distance between them. She paced the small clearing, arms wrapped around herself against the cold. Anything to keep from looking at him again.

Suddenly, a deep, rumbling sound reverberated through the trees. Kasia froze, eyes darting around for the source. It came again, louder this time. The sound seemed to vibrate through her very bones, making her knees weak.

Ethan. Was he doing this? Kasia shook her head sharply, trying to clear it. She should feel afraid; she knew that. So why did she suddenly feel such an overwhelming urge to go to him?

Before she even realized she had moved, Kasia found herself standing before Ethan. He looked up at her, surprised.

"What are you doing to me?" Kasia whispered, unable to stop her hand from reaching out to touch his face.

Ethan leaned into her touch, confused but also unable to resist. Her skin against his sent electricity skittered across his skin.

"I'm not doing anything," he murmured. But even as he said it, he knew that wasn't completely true. The Alpha call should not affect humans this way.
