

Chapter 9: Angel

I'm back in hell. The screams, the fear, the blood, it surrounds me. How did I end up back here? I thought I had escaped. I thought I was free. I try to remember what happened, but I can't. My senses are overwhelmed by the sounds and smell of the feeding room.

The panic I feel only intensifies as I look around and I don't see my friend. Sarah. How do I know her name? I can't remember, but she's not here. It's only me and all of the dying humans. Maybe I'm dead. This isn't where I expected to end up. I thought I'd be with my parents, someplace safe.

Almost as if the Moon Goddess heard me, I catch the scent of the forest. The scent that I loved so long ago when mother and I would walk around, gathering plants and herbs. The scent gets stronger when suddenly, it surrounds me and I am no longer in the vampire's den, but I'm back in the woods.

I'm still alone, but it feels safe here. It reminds me a better time, when things were good in my life. I begin walking around, not really knowing where I am or where I'm going. I find a sunny spot and lay down in the sun. I'm so tired, and the sun feels so good on my skin that I fall asleep.

I wake up again in the forest. I look around me. I'm still alone but the feeling of safety is still here. I take a deep breath. I forgot how much I love the smell of the forest. The fresh air, the slight scent of pine, the clean scent of the earth after a rain. I can smell it all and it makes my heart soar.

If I'm dead, shouldn't my parents be here? I stand and begin calling for them. I walk around continuing my search. But they are not here. There are only the sounds forest, birds chirping, a stream nearby bubbling as

the water passes over rocks, crickets and frogs singing their songs in the grass.

Peace. It's a feeling I've forgotten. But now that I am feeling it again, I don't ever want to lose it.

I don't know how long I'm here, sleeping when I'm tired, enjoying the forest around me when I'm awake. Nothing changes, it's just me and nature.

Then one day, I hear something. A voice, from far off. I quietly follow the sound trying to find the source. It's a masculine voice and it's the most attractive voice I've ever heard. There is something about it that draws me in.

I hear a soft purring sound in my head. "Alessia?" There is no response, but the purr increases a bit. "Oh Alessia. If you can hear me, I've missed you so much. I love you. I'm trying to figure out where we are and maybe you can get stronger."

As I've spoken to Alessia, the masculine voice has stopped and Alessia's purring stops as well, leaving me alone again.

This continues off and on, until one day, I hear a feminine voice talking to the masculine voice. Alessia growls in my head. 'What is it girl? Is it danger?' I ask my wolf.

It doesn't feel like danger, it feels like....jealousy. That's odd. Why would Alessia or I feel jealous over two people talking. The masculine voice stops and the smell of the forest around me dims. The feminine voice continues, and I feel a strange tugging on my arms. When the tugging has stopped and the sounds of the woman are gone, Alessia quietly says 'Wake up.'

'Alessia? Alessia are you back?'

'Not yet, my sweet Angel, but I'm getting there. You need to wake up so I can get even stronger.'

'I'll do anything for you, just tell me what I need to do.'

'Open your eyes.'

I didn't realize that my eyes were closed, but as soon as she says it, I open them. I'm no longer in the forest. I'm in a room, lying on a bed. As I look around, I see that I am attached to some sort of line that is dripping something into my body. I immediately reach up and rip it out. I pull it to my nose. It smells like saline. I don't smell any poison or wolfsbane in it.

I feel weak, but I need to figure out where I am. This room isn't the one I've been living in at the vampire coven. This one feels softer, nicer... safer. What a weird word for a bedroom. Clean, tidy, comfortable, those are words to describe a room. Safe is not one of them and I am not safe. I don't know where I am, but I know that I have to get out of here before someone finds me awake.

I start to get up when I realize that I am naked. Yep, definitely not safe. Looking down at my body, I can still see the remnants of that last night in the feeding room. The wounds are healing and don't look like they will scar as badly as some of the others. Maybe Alessia is getting stronger and is helping me to heal.

Before I have a chance to figure out what I want to do, I hear footsteps in the hallway. I immediately lay back down, pulling the blankets back up and over me to cover myself as much as I can. I have no intention of meeting a stranger naked.

When he walks in, he is a giant of a man. His size and build immediately remind me of my father. His hair is a sandy blond color. It probably gets lighter when he's in the sun. His eyes are a beautiful shade of green. It reminds me of when my mother and I would find wild sage in the woods. And his scent. Oh goddess, his scent is of the forest. It's the same scent that pulled me out of my hellish nightmare and placed me into the forest. It's wild and clean and familiar. I take a deep breath, wanting to smell more and that's when I get the scent. The scent of an alpha.

I catch the whiff of his alpha aura just before his eyes latch onto mine. I immediately grab hold of the fear that is threatening to drown me and pull it back. I know how to manage fear. I've become adept at managing my terror. I shut it down. I pull all emotions back and wait for what is to come. I know I can handle it, no matter what it is.

He has stopped walking and is just looking at me. "You're awake."

It's not a question, so I don't answer him. I continue to wait, to see what fate has in store for me now.

He watches me as he slowly moves toward me, as if he's afraid to spook me. "My name is Liam. You stumbled into my pack over a week ago. You were near death and my doctor has been taking care of you." His eyes track to my arm that is bleeding from where I ripped the catheter out. I swear I can hear him sigh.

"We were giving you IV fluids and some liquid nutrition as you were dehydrated and malnourished when you arrived. You were also low on blood and your blood platelets were low, which is probably why your blood isn't clotting. Here." He goes to take my arm and I instinctively jerk it back, holding it against my body.

He growls softly at me. "I'm not a leech. Your blood is of no interest to

me, except I don't want you bleeding out after I've expended so much energy to keep you alive." He puts his hand out. "Give me your arm." It's not a request and I don't really have any other options.

I put my hand in his, palm up. Tingles immediately flow up my arm, causing me to jerk and look up at him. The smirk on his face does nothing to ease my discomfort.

Gently, he pulls my arm up to his mouth, keeping his eyes on mine. When he looks down at my arm, I see his aggravation at the state it's in. "Did you have to rip it out so violently?" It seems like a rhetorical question, so again, I don't answer.

He leans down and licks the wound, sealing it closed. I'm only just able to stop the moan that tries to leave my mouth. What the heck? His tongue on my skin feels nothing like the vampire prince's tongue. His felt dirty and disgusting. This man's, Liam's, feels pleasurable. It's completely unexpected and very much unwanted.

He sits down in a chair that is next to the bed. He looks at me a moment before asking, "Can you talk?"

"Yes." I try to say, but my mouth is so dry and it comes out in a choking cough. Liam is immediately back on his feet, grabbing me a glass of water. He gently puts it to my mouth so I can drink it. The cool water soothes my raw throat and I close my eyes a moment as I enjoy the feeling.

I open my eyes and pull back. Liam's eyes are on me, watching me. "Drink the rest of it." He says as he puts it back to my lips. I watch him as I drink the rest of it down.

"Better?" He asks me. I nod and he raises an eyebrow at me. "Yes." I

reply and this time I don't choke on the word.

"Good." He puts the glass down and returns to his chair. "What is your name?"

"Angel."

He smiles. "That's fitting, you look like an angel."

"Where are you from?" He asks his next question. I shrug, I don't really know how to answer that one.

"Were you always a rogue?"

"No."

"What pack were you from?" His rapid fire questions are getting answers out of me before I'm ready, but this one stops me short.

"Are you going to send me back there?"

"No. You won't be going back there."

"Then what difference does it make?" I ask him.

"Why were you running from your pack?"

"Why do you think I was running from them?" I answer back.

"No wolf goes rogue without a good reason. Did you kill someone in your pack and run?"

I scoff at him. I know rogues aren't well liked by packs, and many are violent offenders kicked out of their pack if they aren't killed, but not all rogues are bad. Sometimes they leave their pack to escape their alphas,

like my family did.


"No, I didn't."

"Didn't kill someone or didn't run?"

"Why do you care?" I'm getting aggravated. His questions are making my head spin.

"As Alpha, it is my duty to ensure the safety of the pack. I need to know if you are a danger."

"I'm no danger to your pack. I'll be happy to leave just as soon as I get something to wear." I retort.

"You're not going anywhere." He states and I know my face goes pale. He doesn't even know I'm a Guardian yet and he's already unwilling to let me go. I need to find a way to escape before Alessia gets back up to full strength and it becomes obvious what she is. 



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