

4. Sick To My Stomach

After Max had left, I was feeling overwhelmed, to where I felt sick to my stomach. Usually, when something was on my mind, I would just train. But under the circumstances, I was in no position to do that.

So I settled for doing the next best thing: cleaning. I grabbed my little carry-along tray and started in the kitchen. The smell of the spray and wipe made me dry wretch, accompanied by the sensation of nausea and the sudden urge to vomit.

I dropped the spray bottle onto the bench, ran to the wastepaper bin, and emptied the contents of my stomach into it.

Usually after vomiting, I felt better, but not today. Today I felt physically ill. I wasn't one to experience anxiety, but I guess there was a first time for everything. I knew I needed to talk to Jake properly.

First and foremost, I needed more time to process everything. I needed to know what was going on. Were the rumors true? Were they really planning on sending me away? Had they lost their minds? I was a grown adult, for goddess's sake; I made my own choices.

I thought a bit of fresh air might help improve my mood. Indigo had healed me a lot over the past twenty-four hours, but I still had a way to go. I just didn't seem to heal as fast as usual. The Doctor had told me it was a natural response because of the events that had taken place over the past day or so. And I trusted her judgment.

As I slowly exited the pack house and walked onto the eld out front, I saw some of the pack hands setting up a marquee. As one of them walked past me, I attempted to gain their attention, my curiosity taking over me.

"Hey, what are you guys setting up for?" I asked, putting a smile on my face and trying to sound upbeat.

"We're celebrating the union of Beta Jake and Miss Amalie, the Alpha's daughter from Quaking Pines," she said nervously, avoiding eye contact.

"Oh, I see," I replied awkwardly, suddenly feeling like someone had knocked the wind out of me.

"The entire pack is to be in attendance. Alpha Rick sent out a mass mind link earlier today," the girl responded matter-of-factly, nodding her head, but still avoiding eye contact.

"Oh, that's right," I feigned. She didn't need to know that they had deliberately left me out of the mind link. I guess they didn't want me there. But that suited me just ne. It meant that I wouldn't need to make an excuse to get out of it.

"Is that all, miss?" the girl asked politely, looking as though she would prefer to be anywhere but here right now. And I didn't blame her at all, as I felt the same way.

"Yes, thank you," I replied, feeling a little distracted. And she went on her way.

Maybe it was too much too soon, I thought to myself. Maybe I should rest after all. I made my way back to my room, hoping that I wouldn't bump into anyone else or have any more awkward encounters. As I pushed open my door, I made my way to my bed. It had never looked so inviting.

I began removing my clothes piece by piece until I was in my crop top and underwear. And then I sniffed it, Jake's scent. I turned behind me to see him standing behind the door. "Hey babe," He called out casually, his eyes aching at the sight of my half-naked appearance.

I almost jumped. I was so shocked to find someone standing in my room. My defenses were down. I should have picked that up earlier. I was just so distracted right now.

"Please don't call me that," I retorted, reaching downwards to grab my t-shirt to cover myself.

"Don't be like that kitty kat," he said, playing and walking into my personal space.

"Jake, back off," I warned him. What I would usually have found cute, I now found sickening.

"I've seen it all before, no need to be shy!" he smirked, his eyes whirling with what looked to be desire.

I looked at him with irritation laced over my face.

"You need to leave!" I told him a little more forcefully this time.

"I missed you. I thought it might be nice for us to make up for lost time," he said, reaching out and touching my arm.

"Jake, keep your hands to yourself!" I scolded him. Indigo growled through me in agreement.

"It's over. And we both know it. We always knew this day might come. And now it has. I am happy for you. All I ask from you is that you give me a day, twenty-four hours before you reject me," I declared, standing my ground in front of him.

"But I still want you, Kitty Kat, and I have no plans to let you go," Jake insisted, pushing himself further into my proximity, a devious smirk etched across his face.

"Are you mad?" I yelled out, losing my patience and not in the mood for the game he was playing.

"I'm not sticking around to be your bit on the side if that's what you are thinking!" I declared, shaking my head at him while gesturing with my hands for him to leave.

Determined not to let him see emotion overcome me as tears threatened to spill from my eyes, and I pleaded with my body to remain stoic.

I watched as his eyes darkened, his wolf Brute taking over, and he let out an angry growl. I stood back momentarily, as I was not expecting a reaction like that.

As the daughter of a gamma and one of our pack's best fighters, I made it a point not to tolerate threats, and I didn't scare easily. But I had not seen Jake respond like this toward me before, and I was feeling a little caught off-guard.

Shuings at the door gained our attention, closely followed by the sounds of my pin code being entered, and then my door opening.

"Hey Kat, Mom asked me to come check on you," Dom called out jovially, his smile dropping and turning into a furrowed brow and a confused expression on his face.

"Is everything alright here, guys?" my brother Dom asked with a look of trepidation on his face.

"Jake here was just leaving," I said with a lie, my arms folded and a deep scowl on my face.

"We're not done here!" He called out, inching closer to me, invading my personal space. I could smell a feminine scent emanating from him. It just added to the nausea that I was already experiencing.

"Yeah, we are. It's best if you don't come over again, Jake. I wish you all the best with your new mate," I called out in a snarky tone. I shouldn't have let my emotions get the better of me, but I was beyond pissed off right now.

"We are not done here! I meant what I said!" He threatened me. As I took in, his brows lowered and pulled close together, his jaw clenched tightly, his lips tightened and his nostrils flared in anger.

My brother watched the exchange moving closer toward the both of us, taking a protective stance toward me.

"Jake, you need to leave NOW!" Dom yelled out in a commanding tone. I could imagine that would not have been easy for him, considering Jake outranked him. I watched as Jake's features darkened even more.

"Remember that I outrank you, pup!" Jake said in a menacing voice, turning his attention to Dom and stepping into his personal space. And I was both shocked and proud when Dom didn't inch in the slightest. But I didn't want this to escalate any further.

"Just leave!" I said, pushing myself in between Jake and Dom. I was growing more and more impatient with Jake's presence. Jake glared at me, then stormed off, hung angrily along the way. He reached for the door and aggressively slammed it shut, almost pulling it off its hinges.

"What was that?" My brother asked worriedly, turning his attention back to me.

"I've never seen you two like that before. Hell, I've never seen Jake that mad before," he responded.

I sank against the wall, feeling a little dejected.

"Hey, are you okay?" Dom said, looking at me, and no doubt realizing that I was struggling to hold myself together. I had remained staunch while Jake was here, but now that he had left and I was in the company of my sibling, it all felt a bit much.

"I will be. Thank you for coming to my defense. I know that must have been hard for you, and I don't want to make life difficult for you," I apologized to my brother.

"Never apologize, Kat, he was being a real d**k," my brother replied.

"Come here sis," He said, putting his arms out and bringing me in for a hug.

"It must be rough seeing him with someone else, especially since he marked you. I can't imagine what you must be going through," He replied, looking at my neck in sympathy, then hugging me, and rubbing my back in a soothing motion.

"It feels so surreal. I always knew this day might come, but I guess I was in denial. And since it has happened, it's bawing. It's like I might see this whole new side of Jake that I didn't know existed," I recounted, pulling away from the hug.

"Do you want me to call Max over?" He asked.

"No," I replied immediately, shaking my head adamantly. Jake looked at me with a look of astonishment on his face.

"But she's your best friend, plus she will be better with this sort of thing than I am," he confessed.

"That's the thing, though. Since this whole thing has happened, I've seen a different side of Max, too. It's like everything has changed," I confessed to him, tears welling from my eyes and cascading down my cheeks.

"I'm sorry, Kat. What can I do to make this better for you?" He asked me with a pained expression clear on his face.

"You've already done more than you know, just being here and being yourself," I replied, putting a small smile on my face for his benefit.

"I've always got your back, sis, always," Dom declared, and I believed him wholeheartedly. If there was one person I could count on in this world, it was him.

"Besides, he will be gone in a day or two. You won't have to worry about him again," he declared.

"Oh, you haven't heard then?" I blurted out.

It did not surprise me they had kept Dom in the dark about this bombshell, as they hadn't even discussed it with me.

"Jake has insisted that I accompany him to Quaking Aspines. He has made a deal with Rick. It's all organized," I said, tears slowly owing once more from my eyes.

I watched as anger engulfed my brother's face. "No, no way. You must have it wrong! Rick's your friend. And Jake, he was being a d**k before, but he would never do something like that, surely," he growled, trying to rationalize what I had just told him.

"Max said she overheard her parents talking about it!" I added.

"I'll go speak with Rick. I'm sure it's just a misunderstanding," Dom tried to reassure me.

"It's ok, I'll handle it. I'm not going anywhere. This is my home. Don't worry about it, little brother, I've got this!" I replied with a sense of assuredness visible on my face. My brother looked unconvinced.

"Promise me you won't say anything. Let me handle this my way?" I pleaded with him, placing my hands on his chest.

"Only if you tell me if you need backup. I'm loyal to our alpha, but I'm more loyal to you, Kat. Family trumps everything. I'm here for you, sis!" he declared, pulling me in for another hug protectively. I was so glad to have such a loving sibling. It was exactly what I needed right now.

Now that the adrenaline had rushed through me after my heated encounter with Jake, I was feeling dizzy and lightheaded. And then, suddenly, everything went dark.