

Broken 361

Chapter 361

"I'm here to tell you, they're real and they're awful." Angel says, walking in. She leans down, hugging Cara, then me before

taking the seat across from me. Rik sits on Cara's other side and Eli and Liam sit in between me and Angel.

We are able to order our lunch from several different options. I look at Eli. "I definitely want to be able to do this in our

packhouse." I mind link him.

"Agreed." He says, deciding what he wants to eat.

After we've placed our order, Cara looks at me. "I don't want to overwhelm you, but Angel and I already know everything about

each other. You should have those memories now, and know that, while my life has been fairly simple, Angel's was difficult."

I nod, realizing that I do have memories of both their histories.

"We'd like to hear about you and how you came to have Donovan's Guardian spirit."

I look at Eli and then at everyone at the table. I wasn't sure I was ready to discuss what had happened to me, but I feel a strange

familial bond with Angel and Cara and therefore, Liam and Rik as well. The environment here feels safe, caring and supportive.

Eli reaches out to grasp my hand. "You don't need to do anything you're not comfortable with Grace."

Our food arrives and I decide that I might as well tell them. Based on my memories, Angel's life has been worse than mine. "My

story isn't a happy one, so maybe we should wait until after we eat." I suggest.

We all agree, and lunch is a festive event. It's relaxing and it's interesting to see pack members, specifically omegas, interacting

with their Alpha and Luna without fear. In our pack, it's so different, but Eli and I will change that.

I turn and see him watching the same interactions I have been. He looks at me and I know that we're in total agreement. Our

pack will one day look and feel like

this one.

After lunch, we sit back and relax, letting our food digest. Cara looks at me. Whenever you're ready, we want to hear your story."

She tells me, reaching out. and taking my hand.

So, I start from the time I was 10 years old and go through my life, watching my

mother slowly deteriorate and eventually holding her while she died. I talk about my time alone until I met Eli and then our time

on the run. I've been lost in my story, not looking at their reactions, but when I finish, I look up and see that both Angel and Cara

have been pulled into their mates' laps and are crying.

"I'm sorry." I say, worried that I have upset them unnecessarily.

"No, no." Both Angel and Cara say. "Pregnancy hormones." They say in unison, then look at each other and laugh. I can't help

but laugh, too.

"Who's your father?" Liam asks me.

"Edgar Winters." I say, guessing they know him. Alphas have meetings and gatherings throughout the year. I know, I used to

attend them with my father.

I watch as Liam looks at Rik.

"What?"

"When did you say your mother died?" Rik asks me.

"A little over two years ago." I say.

I watch as they look at each other again.

"What is it?" Eli asks this time.

"You were right, Grace. Your father took a new mate just over two years ago and they have a son, nearly two years old."

I knew it. I knew that's what happened to my mother.

But having it confirmed still feels like I just received a swift kick to the stomach

I didn't like Alpha Edgar before, but I definitely dislike him

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I can feel the impact that Liam and Rik's news has on Grace. It's one thing to assume and another to find out you were correct. I

pull her face to me, leaning into her. "Are you okay, baby?"

She just nods, a single tear sliding down her cheek. My sweet mate has had so much thrown at her in such a short period of

time. Sometimes I forget that she's still so young. She's a strong and fierce woman, but there are moments, like right now, that

she's fragile.

I look up at the others at the table. "I'm going to take my mate to rest for a bit. Thank you for lunch. We look forward to spending

more time with you and getting to learn more about Maia's Guardian spirit, but right now, Grace needs some time." I say, before

standing up, picking up my mate, much to her surprise and walking us to our room.

"You didn't have to do that." She says quietly, her head resting against my shoulder.

"Yes, I did. The actual job description for 'mate' is to take care of the one that is given to you by the Moon Goddess. I could feel

how much their confirmation of what your father did hurt you. We can take some time. We're here all weekend. Let me hold you."

I say as we get to our room.

I take off her shoes and tuck her into bed, before taking off my shoes and curling up around her. I wrap my arms around her and

let my scent help her relax, allowing her tears to fall. She turns, curling into me, letting me hold her while she cries. I don't say

anything, I just rub her back, and kiss the top of her head, letting her cry it out.

"I hate him. I know I shouldn't, but I hate him for what he did to my mother."

"You and I both know that there are people in positions of power that don't deserve it, people that abuse the power that they

have been given. I'm thankful that I have you for a mate, someone that will never take that power for granted and will never

abuse it." I tell her, looking at her.

"And as much as I hate the life that I had before I met you, I'd do it all over again if it brought me to you. Every step we've taken,

every heartache we've suffered, has brought us here. And I know, for me, I wouldn't change it. I wouldn't change anything that

might mean I didn't end up here with you."

She reaches up and kisses me. It's a slow, tender kiss, full of love and a promise of a future together.

"Thank you." She says, rubbing her nose against mine.

"I didn't do anything." I tell her.

"You don't realize how much you do for me. You have quickly become my rock, my solid ground. You are the place that I know

I'm always safe. You are the

foundation that allows me to be a stronger person. So, yes, my mate, you do and are my everything."

I take my time, stripping us out of our clothes before slowly making love to my mate, showing her how much she means to me,

how desperate I am for her. This woman who is my everything. This woman who makes me feel like the most powerful, amazing

man in the world. And I learn that hearing her whimper and cry my name softly as she finds her release, her nails biting into my

back as her body contracts around me is just as unbelievable as hearing her scream my name.

Afterward, we curl up together,

wrapped around each other, and we fall asleep.

It's mid-afternoon before we emerge from our room again. We go in search of our hosts and find Angel and Cara having tea on

the back porch, looking out over the pack lawn and forest beyond.

When they see us, Angel immediately jumps up, coming to Grace. "Are you alright? I'm sorry Liam and Rik upset you. We didn't

want your first day with us to be so tense." She says, pulling Grace over to where she and Cara are sitting.

"It's okay. It was just a lot to have my suspicions about my father confirmed." She says, sitting down while Cara pours her some

tea.

“Where are the guys?” I ask, wondering why they left their mates alone.

“They’re in Rik’s office. They said you should join them if you came down. Let me get someone to take you.” Cara says, before

her eyes go unfocused.

A moment later, one of the packhouse omegas comes out and offers to take me to Rik’s office. I look at Grace and she nods,

letting me know she’s okay. I walk over and kiss her before turning and following Rik’s pack member to his office.

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When I get there, I see that it is Rik, Liam and another Alpha I don’t know. Rik immediately stands up, gesturing for me to come

in and sit down. “How is Grace? We didn’t mean to upset her.”

“She’s better. She’s stronger than she knows, but that was a tough blow. What she didn’t tell you was that her father marked his

new mate on her 16th birthday.”

“I never liked that guy.” The older gentleman says.

“Eli, have you met my father, Alpha Anders?” Rik asks.

I stand again. “I don’t believe we’ve ever met sir. Eli Gunnar.”

“I know who you are, son. It’s nice to finally put a face to a name.” He says, shaking my hand.

“Bourbon?” Rik asks, holding up a bottle.

“Sure.”

Liam turns to me. “So, you said you had some things you wanted to talk to us about. You have our undivided attention.” He says,

sipping his own glass of bourbon.

“Well, the first thing was about the mate gatherings, and I think we’ve all agreed that’s a good idea.” I say as Rik hands me the

glass of amber liquid. The color immediately reminds me of Grace’s eyes when Maia is shining in them.

“I’ll talk to Angel. With Cara being mostly on bedrest and your pack needing some clean up, we can host the first couple of get-

togethers.”

“Thank you. And that brings me to my second issue. As I’m sure you both saw, my pack is in quite a state of disrepair. Everyone

is pitching in, but it will take time and money. I need to get a job to start bringing in money for the pack. I was hoping that you

might have some ideas for me.” I tell them, swallowing my pride.

I watch Rik and Liam look at each other again. It’s almost as if they are having a private conversation between them.

“Actually, Rik and I were talking about that after we left your pack the other day. Did you know that I own a business? Holstin

Enterprises, Inc?” Liam asks me.

“Uh, no. I didn’t know you owned your own company. What do you do?”

“Funny you should ask. My company has two arms. One is in security and the other is in construction.”

“Construction?” Liam could be my supplier, or at least would have knowledge that I don’t have about where to get construction

materials.

“And we have a proposition for you.” Rik says.

I take a sip of the bourbon, which is delicious. “What kind of proposition?”

“Liam and I would like to loan your pack the money to rebuild.”

“And, if you and your pack are willing, I can hire you through my company and pay you and whoever chooses to work for me. We

can come up with plan, but I can take a percentage of the salaries to pay back the loan, while still ensuring that you and your

pack members have an income while you rebuild your pack.”

I don’t know what to say. This is so exceptionally generous and it’s a perfect. solution to how we can get the packhouse and

homes rebuilt quickly and efficiently.

“Why would you do this for me?” I ask. It seems too good to be true.

Liam snorts, but it’s Rik that answers. “We’re family now. Family helps family.”

I look at Liam and he just shrugs. "I told you, Rik has very specific ideas about family. And I did warn you that it would be weird."

"Yes! Yes, thank you! I don't know how many of my pack members will participate..." I begin.

"Doesn't matter, however many there are, we'll figure it out."

"Now that that's settled, was there anything else?" Rik asks.

"Yes, one more thing. I need to know how to make my pack official."

"I believe I can help you with that." Alpha Anders says. "It's simply a matter of completing the application, getting the backing of

three Alphas, and submitting it to the werewolf elders for approval. I'm guessing the three Alphas in this room will back you and

since I'm on the council, I can help push it through quickly. But you will need a name for your pack. Have you given it any

consideration?"

"I have, but I'd like to run it by Grace first." I say.

"We can get started on the rest of the application and put in the name when you decide." Anders says, moving to Rik's desk and

motioning me over to begin completing the application that will make our pack official.

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I decide very quickly that, not only are we sisters through our Guardian bond, but Cara, Angel and I would have been friends

regardless of the bond. We are all very different, but very much alike in the ways that matter.

I tell them about our pack and how all of the pack members have come from packs where they were mistreated. They are

shocked at our numbers and the separate number of packs where our members come from.

"How can an Alpha and Luna allow their pack members to be treated so poorly? It's their job to care for their pack." Cara says.

Angel is nodding. "I agree. I almost lost it when I thought Liam was allowing our omegas to be abused. He had to rein me in

because my aura had pushed the pack to their knees and was causing them pain. It's a partnership. As Alpha and Luna, we

have to work together. There will be times when we lose our temper or become frustrated. That's when the mate bond is so

important, not just for each other, but for the health and safety of the pack. I'll never understand those that don't value the mate

bond."

"Honestly, I never understood it. Watching my mother suffer for so long, I hated the idea of the mate bond. It felt like chains

forcing my mother to feel things that she no longer wanted to feel for a man that didn't love her and willingly mistreated her. I

never wanted it. But then I met Eli and I realized it's not the bond that is the problem, it's the person. If you both accept the bond

and treat each other with love and respect, then it grows

and develops into something beautiful." I say, thinking about how much my belief in the mate bond has changed since meeting Eli.

Cara leans her head back, rubbing her hand over her baby bump in gentle circles. "I can't imagine anything more wonderful than

the mate bond. My father told me about it all my life." She lifts her head up and looks at me. "Do you know, he never took another

mate. Never even considered it." She looks thoughtful. "Now, knowing what I have with Rik, I understand. You could never have

this feeling with anyone else. There could never be anyone for me, but him."

"I'm really glad to hear you say that, love." Rik says, walking out and chuckling at his mate before picking her up and putting her

in his lap. "How are my mate and my little Peanut doing?" He asks, kissing her nose..

"We're just fine, daddy." She says as Rik rubs his hand over her protruding stomach.

"When are you due?" I ask as Liam comes out and also picks Angel up, sitting her in his lap. I watch as she gives him an

exasperated look but doesn't complain. He just smirks at her before burying his nose in her hair. She has a lot of hair.

"I'm due in about 6 weeks." She tells me and I turn to Angel. "I'm due about a month later, so I'm about halfway through my

pregnancy.” Angel says,
answering my unspoken question.

“And do you both know what you’re having?” I ask, already knowing the answer. Maia can smell the babies.

Cara rolls her eyes at Rik before answering. “We’re having a girl. Rik is so proud of himself for realizing it first. He could smell

her, or so he says.” She swats his arm, playfully.

“We’re having a boy.” Liam says. “And Rik is right, I could smell him before the doctor confirmed it.”

I’m wondering where Eli is and why he didn’t follow Rik and Liam outside. “He’s putting in an application to make your pack

official. My father is helping him. He’ll fill everything out except the name. He wants your input on that.” Rik tells

1. me.

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Another woman comes outside. She’s pregnant as well, but not as far along as Cara and Angel and not yet showing. “Oh, Lunas,

Alphas. I didn’t mean to interrupt.” She says, before turning to go.

“It’s no problem at all, Willow.” Cara tells her.

“So, you’re having twins. Is there something in the water here I should know about?” I ask jokingly.

The woman, Willow, turns to me as the other four all direct their attention to me as well. “What did you say, Luna?” Willow asks

me.

“You’re having twins.” I say, but as I look around my confidence wanes. “You did know you were pregnant, right? I’m sorry if you

didn’t.”

Willow looks at Rik and Cara before turning back to me. Rik eyes are laser focused on me. “I just found out that I was pregnant

this morning. I haven’t told anyone. other than my mate.”

“Oh, I apologize. I didn’t realize you hadn’t told anyone. Please forgive me.”

“You said twins?” She says, her voice going up an octave.

I look back at the other four who are all watching me intently. I lift my nose in the air and sniff. Definitely twins.

“Yes, two boys.” I tell her. I watch as her eyes glisten with unshed tears and her hands go to her mouth. “I need to go tell my

mate.” She says before running off.

“When is Ailduin scheduled to return?” Angel asks.

“A couple of weeks.” Cara says,

“You’ll have to come back when he’s here. He will want to chronicle this gift. I think it’s new.” Rik says.

“You said you knew how

many hunters there were and now this. He’ll definitely want to know about this.”

“I’ll have him bring the chronicles of Maia’s Guardian line as well. I know my father appreciated reading them.”

As soon as Cara says it, the memories flood into my head and I begin nodding. “I remember. Just now when you mentioned it, I

remember the chronicles.”

At that moment, Eli comes out with another Alpha behind him. I stand to introduce myself, but before I can, Rik jumps in. “Grace,

let me introduce my father, Alpha Anders. Dad this is Grace Gunnar, Eli’s mate.”

“It’s nice to meet you.” I say, before turning to sit down. Before I can, Eli has pulled me into his lap.

“Eli!” I say, embarrassed as this public display.

He just shrugs. “It’s apparently the thing to do, pulling your mate into your lap.” He says, smiling and kissing the corner of my

mouth.

“If he’s anything like these two, you’ll be lucky if your butt ever touches a seat. Angel laughs.

“Before we go to dinner, I have a question for you both.” Liam says. “Since your pack will be official, have you considered joining

in the Tournament of the Moon Goddess this year?”

The Tournament of the Moon Goddess. I had forgotten all about it. It is the werewolf equivalent of the human Olympics. It occurs

every four years and it’s where the strength of the packs are ranked and the populations of the packs are tracked. Each

continent has their own since there are so many packs worldwide Even here, there are hundreds of packs that participate. I

attended the year 1 turned 10 with my father, cheering on our pack. Obviously, I didn't attend the one that occurred when I was

14 and now here it is again.

I look at Eli to judge his desire and willingness to participate. He looks at me. "We will consider it. When will it take place?"

"It will be in three months' time. I can give you the information on it, but it would be beneficial to have your pack attend. It would

validate your pack's existence to the other packs." Rik says.

"Grace and I have a lot to talk about. We'll add that to the list."

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At dinner, we sat with Rik, Cara, Liam, Angel, Rik's Beta Chase and his mate, Lacey, bis Gamma Jason, and his mate, Willow,

the one pregnant with twins. I realized Rik's entire team of ranked members is pregnant at the same time. In addition to them,

Rik's parents, Alpha Anders and Luna Calista joined us.

Rik introduced us to his pack and let everyone know that we were forming our own official pack. He explained how our pack

came into being and I could tell by the looks some of them were passing back and forth, that they knew of others that may need

to escape to our pack.

During dinner, we talked about getting together tomorrow and seeing what strengths the girls could use together. I can see Rik is

hesitant to let Cara do much, but she likes the idea. "It's not the Guardian gifts that tire me out, Rik. I'll be fine." And that was the

end of that discussion. I couldn't help but smile. At least I'm not the only one willing to do just about anything for my mate.

After dinner, we sat outside for a while, enjoying the evening air before retiring

to our room.

"Rik said you had an idea for the pack's name. What were you thinking?" Grace asks me as we settle into bed. I pull her against

me, so her back is flush against my front, curling my arm around her waist before answering.

"I wanted to see what you thought. Most packs are named for the area they are in, or some significant landmark on their pack

lands. But....."

"But?" She says, turning and looking at me over her shoulder.

"I was thinking we could call it Safe Haven. I know it's not typical..." I rush to continue, but she stops me.

"I love it. It's perfect and it's exactly what we are. I think the pack will like it too." She says.

"Yeah?"

"Yeah." I feel better knowing she agrees with the name and feels that the pack will too. I didn't think coming up with a name for a

pack would cause this much trepidation, but once it's named, it's permanent. It's kind of like naming your child, you don't want to

get it wrong and have them deal with a crappy name. their entire life.

"I'll finalize it with Anders tomorrow and get the application process started. Now, tell me why the idea of the Tournament of the

Moon Goddess had your

anxiety spiking earlier."

She shifts uncomfortably in my arms. I kiss her shoulder, rubbing my nose against her neck, waiting her out.

"My father will be there." She whispers.

It hadn't occurred to me that she might have to face her father. After all these years, I understood her reluctance. "You don't have

to go. I think we should, as a pack, formalize our ranking among the other packs, but we can do that without you, baby."

"Excuse me." She says offended, turning in my arms. "I'm a Guardian, our pack will not battle for a ranking of strength without

me. I'm the strongest member of our pack, with the possible exception of you."

"Geez, you spend one day with Cara and Angel and now it's all 'I'm a Guardian'." I say, changing my voice to a high-pitched

nasal voice.

She smacks my chest. "I don't sound like that."

"How do you know? I think that's exactly what you sound like." I tease. "I'm a Guardian, and an Alpha female, hear me roar." I

say in the same high-pitched voice again.

She rolls over on top of me, straddling me, her hands pinning my arms to the bed. "Did you want to see just how loudly I can

roar, Alpha."

I'm thankful we sleep naked, as I grab her hips, and slowly slide my dick between her folds, loving how wet she already is for me.

"Every minute of every day, baby." I tell her before shifting and thrusting inside her.

She sits up, her head falling back as she takes me deep inside her. Looking back down at me, she rubs her hands over her

breasts, her eyes never leaving mine as she plucks her nipples, bringing them to hard peaks. My dick twitches inside her and I

growl my pleasure as my hands guide the movement of her hips until she gets her rhythm. Once she does, I replace her hands

with mine, pinching and tugging her nipples while she rides me like the Alpha female she is, hard, fast and dominant. I reach up

taking one of her breasts into my mouth, sucking and teasing as my hand finds her clit rubbing circles in time with her pace. Her

hands grab onto my shoulders as I feel her walls start to tighten on me and she increases her speed, slamming herself up and

down on my dick until we both are roaring our pleasure together.

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We collapse, her laying on top of me, catching our breath. I wrap my arms around her as our breathing comes back to normal. "I

really don't think I can choose a favorite position. That one was fun too." Says my sexy mate. She kisses my chest, looking up at

me. "I like being in control."

I burst out laughing before rolling us onto our side and curling her up against me. "Of course you do, little Alpha." I say, kissing

the top of her head, before we drift off to sleep.

The next day, Rik and Liam want to assess Grace's fighting skills. "So, here's the thing." I say, knowing Grace has no fighting

skills and feeling the need to defend her. "She was raised as a human. She hasn't been—trained."

"That may be true, but Maia has the knowledge of not just her, but also Clint. Clint was a great warrior. You should be able to tap

into that knowledge, Grace."

"Knowledge is one thing, Rik. But you're talking about someone that doesn't have the muscle memory, or the physical strength

yet. She will, but she's not there yet."

"I think you are underestimating her genetics. She's an Alpha and on top of that, she's a Guardian. Let's just give it a try and see

if she can tap into her power."

I look at Grace, who shrugs. "Worst case scenario, I suck and I'm not worse off than I think I am." She says, laughing.

"Liam, you're great at pissing off Guardians and helping them tap into their strength. Why don't you take this one." Rik says, with

a smirk on his face. I hear Angel scoff behind me.

Liam just shrugs. "He's not wrong." He says before taking a defensive stance. against Grace.

"Okay, show me what you've got Grace." He says, waiting for her to strike out.

She looks at me and then back at him. "You want me to hit you?"

He nods. "Let's see how strong you are."

She looks at me again before looking back at Liam. "But I don't want to hit you."

Out of the corner of my eye, I see Rik put his hands on his hips and narrow his eyes, like he's waiting for something to happen. I

feel like I should know what's about to happen and I'm about to go up to Rik and ask when Liam speaks.

"Are you sure you don't want to hit me?" He asks, tauntingly.

"Yeah." She says, staring at him.

"What if I told you that I beat the shit out of your mate every day for over six months?"

I see Grace tense up. I don't think this is a good idea.

"Did he tell you that I'd beat him so badly that he couldn't even stand when I was done?"

Grace is growling now.

"Liam." I say, trying to impart his need to be cautious. They did just state that she's an Alpha and a Guardian. She's going to be

stronger than Liam if he pushes her too hard.

He starts bouncing around on his feet, dancing toward her. "And I enjoyed every minute of it."

He hasn't taken his eyes off of her, but it's not going to matter. I can see the air around her starting to shiver. Whatever power

they wanted her to tap into, she's tapping into it, and it's not going to be good for Liam.

I feel rather than see Angel standing up, moving closer as Liam continues. " Maybe I'll take him back down there and...."

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Whatever else he planned to say, was cut off as Grace went flying at him. She's fast and her punches and kicks are coming at a

speed I didn't know was possible. Her fist connects with Liam's stomach, and I hear him grunt as he shifts and dodges out of her

way. I can see that he's using every bit of his strength and training to keep from being injured by her onslaught of anger.

"You stay the fuck away from my mate. I will end you." Grace screams and in an instant, Angel is in front of Liam, her arms flying

out on either side of her. I have a moment to feel the power surge that pushes me backward, nearly off my feet before watching

as the wave of energy hits the forest line and the trees shake and creak from the pressure.

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move to Grace, wrapping my arms around her. "Stop baby. Stop. He was pushing your buttons. He's not going to hurt me." Her

breath is heaving in her chest.

"Dammit Angel. I told you to never step in front of me again." Liam grabs her, his hands going protectively around her stomach to

protect the baby.

“Her power can’t hurt me Liam, but it can hurt you.” She says, then looks at Grace.

“Like Cara’s power didn’t hurt you?” Liam snarls at Angel.

“I didn’t know what to expect then. I do now.” She tells him before turning back to Grace.

“Eli is right, Grace. Liam didn’t mean it. He did the same thing to me, made me angry so I could tap into my Guardian strength.” I

can tell Liam wants her to

but she’s holding steady.

move,

Grace looks at Liam. “We’re family, Grace. I would never hurt my family. I know what I did to Eli was awful, but you and he are

my family now. I won’t hurt him, and I didn’t enjoy hurting him before.”

When she relaxes against me, her breathing coming back to normal, Angel finally drops her arms and let’s Liam pull her aside.

“We will have words later Angel. He tells her before turning to Grace.

“Did you feel your strength, your power? Can you tap into it now?” He asks her. She steps out of my arms and cracks her neck.

“I feel it.” She turns to me. “It’s a LOT of power.”

Angel is nodding. “Yes, it is. But we’re all here to help you learn how to harness it and how to boost it using our strengths as

well.” Angel says, motioning to Cara and herself.

“What was that you did just now Angel?” I ask her, wondering how she and Liam were able to remain standing when both Rik

and I were pushed backward. Thankfully, Cara was seated already.

“Cara can punch out her power, similar to what Grace just did. I can direct it, guide it. When we are working together, I can help

Cara direct her power too. So, if I wanted to hit you with my power, but leave Grace untouched, even if she’s standing right next

to you, I could.”

“Really? Let’s see.” I said, interested in how this works since I’ve never seen anything like that before.

Liam raises an eyebrow at me. “Are you sure about that?” He asks. “My little angel is pretty tough.”

“Well, don’t kill me, just show me. And you’re sure you can keep it from hurting Grace?” I say, stepping up to stand beside Grace.

“Yes. Ready?” Angel asks.

“As I’ll ever be.” I say and in an instant, I’m on my ass on the ground. It felt like I was punched in the stomach.

“Damn. That’s impressive.” I say, when I notice that Grace is untouched.

She turns and helps me up before turning back to Angel with a smile on her face. “Okay, let’s get started.” Grace says.

Does not use ability to send a

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For several hours, I train with Angel and Cara, tapping into and manipulating each other’s power. Then Rik wants me to train

physically. As we walk to Clint’s and Cara’s old house, he explains.

“You’ve found your Guardian strength and power, but you need the physical. strength in your human form. It will also help Maia

for you to train both in human and wolf form. You probably remember that Clint had an entire training center set up for Cara.”

When we get there, I recognize the house. It has feelings of both happiness and sadness, loneliness and family. It’s a strange

combination.

‘Clint lived here after losing Lily. While he had Cara and loved her, and Anders visited every week, he still felt the constant

emptiness of losing his mate.’ Maia explains to me.

“What is this?” Eli asks as we walk up and see an incredible training center.

“This is only the outdoor training equipment. There’s an entire indoor training center as well.” Cara says.

“Clint built it over the years to train Cara.” I say, getting the memories from Maia. I walk up, running my hands along the training

equipment. "He worked on it every day while she was at school. It was how he was able to survive Lily's death. It gave him a

purpose."

I turn and see a tear fall down Cara's cheek. "I'm sorry, the memories..." I say.

"No, it's okay. Like you said yesterday, it's one thing to know something and another to have it confirmed. Dad was amazing at

training me, and later the pack warriors as well."

"I just wish he would have started training them earlier." Anders says, walking outside from the house.

"Hey dad. We wanted to have Grace and Maia train today, if that's alright."

"Of course, as long as I can watch."

"You live here now?" I asked him.

"We do, Cali and I." He turns and looks at Cara. "She happens to have a batch of your favorite brownies coming out of the oven

in a few minutes."

A huge smile spreads across Cara's face. "I do have an insatiable appetite for

brownies." I notice Rik's eyes darkening.

"Okay, let's get started before this gets awkward." Liam says. I notice that when Rik sets Cara down in a chair beside his father,

his kiss seems exceptionally passionate. I don't want to know what it is with them and brownies.

Liam explains the obstacle course, Cara jumping in to remind me of the different ways the course is set up to knock you off your

feet, forcing you to concentrate and maintain your balance.

"I find it's more fun to train competitively, Grace. Do you have a preference who you train against?" Liam asks.

"I'm training with my mate." Eli says before I can answer.

Liam looks at Rik. "Then I guess it'll be you against me." He says, rubbing his hands together, a gleam in his eye.

Rik laughs. "How about we all take turns against each other. Grace needs to train for longer than just the one time. That way we

can all run it three times.”

“Grace, do you remember the course, or do you want Rik and Liam to run it first?” Cara asks me.

“I remember it, but Eli won’t know anything about it.”

“I’m good. Remember, I lived in the wild for nearly two decades. I’m used to managing unexpected things coming at me.” He

says.

I shrug. “Okay. And if I remember, the goal is to not only get through the obstacles but to be the first to hit the stop button at the

end?”

“Yep.” Everyone watching says in unison.

Eli and I line up. I turn to look at him, smirking. “You think you can take me, Alpha.”

His low growl answers me just before Anders shoots the start gun. In my memories, Clint was never able to run the course. He

built it and worked out in

the sections meant for upper body workouts, but he never ran the obstacle course. It felt good to be able to run his course for

him.

Chapter 370

I almost immediately fall behind Eli who is extremely muscular and uses his upper body strength to pull ahead. I’m strong, but I

don’t have the training that he’s had. However, he’s not nearly as good at balance as I am, and add to that, the flying logs

intended to knock you off the small beam, I am able to gain some ground on him.

I have to admit, my competitive nature is spurred by having to run this course against Eli. I can see he’s having the same

response. We’re pushing ourselves harder and harder as we get closer to the end.

into a

We’re almost to the end when a huge log comes swinging down, I duck just in time, but Eli is too big and gets smacked off the

stump he’s jumping on, pool of water below. I’m laughing as I jump to the end and hit the stop button. I look down, watching him

come up and shake the water out of his hair. He grins up at me before pulling himself out of the water.

“That was fun! I’m glad I get to run it again.” He says.

Rik and Liam line up at the beginning of the course and when the starter gun goes off, it’s mayhem. They are ultra-competitive

with each other, both pushing to get ahead. Liam is more muscular than Rik but Rik has the edge with agility. They are fairly

equally matched and end up hitting the stop button at the same time.

For the rest of the afternoon, we run the obstacles, sometimes in wolf form and sometimes in human form. I only beat the guys in

human form if they fell off the obstacle, and even then, Liam still tied with me.

However, in wolf form, Maia kicked all their butts. I’d like to say that she is a gracious winner, but not at all. She pranced around

smacking their wolves with her tail, howling her dominance and flaunting her superiority. Angel and Cara loved every minute of it,

giving Maia lots of hugs and ‘atta girl’s. By the time we were done, I was exhausted.

Thankfully, Luna Calista ended up making dinner for us, so we were able to sit outside and eat. I’m blaming the extremely long

work out session for the embarrassing way I fell asleep in Eli’s arms. After dinner, he pulled me into his lap again. I can tell this is

his new favorite thing, but I wasn’t complaining. I leaned against him, tucking my nose under his neck and the next thing I know,

he’s putting me into bed. He must have carried me all the way back to the packhouse, which is miles away from the Clint’s and

Cara’s home. Or, I guess it’s Anders and Calista’s now.

1/2

The next morning, I woke up sore, but we had already discussed having me workout again before we head back to our pack. Eli

planned to leave after lunch, so this time, we worked out in the inside gym. This obstacle course was built differently, but it was

no less gruesome, especially considering my sore muscles. After lunch, Cara gave me some muscle soak, after ensuring that we

have a functional bathtub. She told me to make the water as hot as I could stand before pouring the salts into the tub. I can't wait

to use them.

Rik, Liam and Angel ran with us to the canyon, where Liam and Angel broke off to head to their pack and Rik said goodbye as

we left for ours. All in all, it was a good weekend. I've agreed to continue my training, coming to see them again in two weeks

when Ailduin returns. After that, we'll see how often I can come to train with Cara and Angel. I think the more we train together,

the stronger we will all become. But some of that will also depend on their pregnancy and delivery of their babies. Either way, I

know the bonds that we have started to forge this weekend will only continue to grow and strengthen.