

## **Broken 591**

### Chapter 591

My girls are the highlight of my life. There is nothing better than having the two of them in my arms together. Some nights, like tonight, I come into our room and my mate and my daughter are on the floor playing together.

They are playing with blocks and building what looks like a packhouse and pack lands. "There's my girls." I say as I walk in.

"Daddy!" My baby girl gets up and runs over. I scoop her up and throw her in the air, listening to her squeal. I catch her and pull her against me, kissing her face and neck while Donovan purrs against her.

"Daddy, stop!" She says in a fit of giggles.

Lily comes over and wraps her arms around me, hugging me. "Welcome home, love."

I hold Cara in one arm while Donovan continues to purr at her and take my mate in the other, kissing her until I hear her moaning softly. "I missed you." I tell her, finally letting her come up for air.

She looks up at me, her eyes filled with love. "I missed you, too."

I lean in, nuzzling her ear. "Maybe you can show me how much you missed me after we put a certain someone to bed."

She reaches up, nipping at my ear. "Deal!"

With that promise. I turn back to my daughter. "So, what are you building over here."

daughter shows me her packhouse, having miniatures of Andra and Donovan. I notice there is now a baby wolf too. "Who is this?"

"That's my wolf, daddy."

"It is? What's her name? Did you introduce her to Andra and Donovan?"

She nods her head, and we spend the rest of the night playing wolfpack. These quiet moments of playfulness together with my girls are the best. It helps me overcome the frustration of the attacks that seem to be coming more and more frequently.

For Cara's fourth birthday, I want to take them back to the island that I took Lily for our 4th anniversary. When I go to see Anders, he is looking over the patrol reports, frowning.

"That bad, huh?"

"It's never ending. I swear, if I'd known it was going to be like this, I'd have either

had Rik sooner or waited even longer. Having a mate and a pup who is an heir makes all of this more worrisome." He says as he tosses his reports across his desk.

“So, I guess this is a bad time to ask for a long weekend away?”

He looks up at me. “What did you have in mind?”

I tell him and he looks at me for a moment. “How long?”

“Five days.”

He blows out a breath. “Yeah. Sure, go and enjoy your weekend with your family.”

I frown. Anders has never acted like he's concerned about me being away before.

“What's up?”

“There are several packs making a move against us and Shadow Falls. I know you work hard for me, but —never mind. Of course, take your family and have a good time.”

“No. I would never leave you during a time of battle or war, Anders. Even if I could, which I can't being your Guardian, I wouldn't.” I tell him. “I'll wait and see how things stand for our anniversary, that's a

couple months away still.”

Both mine and Lily's birthdays pass, and our anniversary and the attacks keep coming. Lily and I are an

amazing fighting machine. Together, no one can defeat us. We can take on 12 wolves between the two of

us when we are together. We know we can count on the other to protect our back and so we can focus

on the fight in front of us. Anders and Charles are both powerful as are our warriors, but it's me and Lily

that are the tipping point in many of our battles.

There is loss. While we decimate the packs that attack us, in every battle we lose some warriors. Then,

sometimes, we lose their mates as well. I've never quite figured out why sometimes the mates can

survive and sometimes they can't.

Cara's fifth birthday comes along. This time, I already know we can't go away from a long period of time.

but I need to take my girls away from all the fighting, at least for a couple of days.

I get Anders to agree to a weekend, and we go into the mountains a couple of hours away, Andra and Donovan run with Cara on their backs, playing tag and catch. Cara laughs and whoever she's riding on

always miraculously wins.

It's a wonderful weekend. We laugh and play with Cara. I find a mountain peak that is high enough to still have snow and Andra and Donovan run up the

mountain so we can have a snowball fight. Cara wins, of

course. And while we have a perfect time while we are there, it's over too soon.

When we return, we're almost immediately back into fighting. Anders begins sending me to Shadow Falls

and leaving Lily behind to ensure that Calista and Rik are safe. I don't like being away from Lily. Sometimes it's necessary, but we don't fight as well apart and I'm always a bit distracted, trying to keep

my mind link open to her to make sure that she is okay.

One night after Donovan takes Cara out for a run, we come back to our room and Lily seems a bit off.

"Lily bud, are you okay?"

She turns and smiles at me. "I want to go away for a day, just you and me."

I walk over to her, pulling her against me. "I like the sound of that. When?"

"Tomorrow."

"Tomorrow? Baby, I don't know if we can get away that quickly."

"Please, Clint. I really want us to go away. Just us. Just for one night. Please."

"Okay baby, let me talk to Anders."

I turn to go find Anders, but she pulls me back. "I love you so much, do you know that? Do you know how

much I love you?"

"Baby, what's going on?" I cup her cheek. Something is definitely wrong.

"I just need some time with you. Things have been crazy and and I want time with my mate. I need this. I really need this. I need you."

"Okay baby. I'll let Anders know. Do you think Calista will watch Cara for us?"

"I'll go talk to her while you talk to Anders."

"Okay Lily bud."

When I go to Anders, he originally denies me. But I told him something was up with Lily and he gave in. The next day, we went away, just my Lily bud and me.

Chapter 592

One night, not long after Cara's 5th birthday, I'm in our room, cleaning up while Donovan takes Cara for a run. Suddenly, I feel a presence and I whip around, ready to fight, my claws coming out. As soon as I see the woman, I gasp and my claws recede.

She's beautiful, almost glowing. She's wearing a floor-length white dress. She's barefoot and her hair falls long and straight down her back and over her arms.

"Mother." Andra says, bowing our head in submission.

"Hello, my child. I see you recognize me."

"Are...are you the Moon Goddess?" I ask, not sure that I'm seeing what I think I'm seeing.

She smiles at me kindly. "Yes, but you may call me Selene." That seems wildly inappropriate.

"What are you doing here?" I ask her.

"I've come to speak to you. Come, sit with me." She says as she walks to our couch and sits down,

patting the seat beside her.

I go to her and sit. When I do, she reaches out and caresses my hair, similar to how I do with Cara. "

You've been such a good Guardian for me. You have served me well. You have protected your pack, your

Luna and your future Alpha. You have even been a loving influence on one of my children that lost both

their parents, although only one has joined me."

"You mean Liam?"

She smiles again. "Of course."

I shrug. "Anyone would have done the same."

She is shaking her head before I finish my sentence. "No."

She is quiet for a moment. "Why are you here?" I ask. Her presence feels ominous.

"I wanted to warn you. You have been such a great child of mine, I felt that I should tell you what is

coming."

My hand flies to my mouth. "Cara?"

"Cara will live a long and beautiful life. She will mate with an Alpha and become Luna of her pack."

"Which Alpha?" I ask, momentarily distracted by the knowledge that my daughter will one day be a Luna.

"Can't you guess? You more or less prophesied it before they were born."

"Rik." I say and the moment I say it, I know it's true.

"He will be a good mate to her, although, he will have to win her over. They will have a long, happy life

together,"



I smile, thinking of my daughter's future and how excited I am to see her one day become Luna of our

pack. But then my smile fades.

“You haven't answered my question. What have you come to tell me?”

“I know how much you love your mate. And I gave you as many years as I could, but it's time for another Guardian to take over, time for another to rise. I'm afraid Clint's time is over.”

I feel like someone just punched me in the gut. No, it feels like someone just

stabbed me in the gut and began ripping my insides out. The thought of a life without my mate is incomprehensible to me. I know I can't live without him. I'm not strong enough.

But he is. He is strong enough to live without me. He is strong enough to survive for our daughter. I've seen Alpha Christopher do it. It was hard at first, but over time it's gotten easier for him. I know Clint could do it. And he deserves it. He deserves to live.

“No. Take me instead. I can't survive without my mate. He is my everything.

Please. If I've been a good daughter to you, do this for me. Let him live. Take me in his place. Clint is the strongest person I know. He can survive my death, but I will never survive his.”

Selene looks at me a moment. “The wolf that was to take Donovan's place is set to be a Guardian. If they don't get the Guardian spirit now, the child will have to wait to get her wolf.” I barely register that she says her, instead of him. That's not

important, although it's odd.

“But she will get her wolf, right, just later?”

She looks thoughtful for a moment. “Yes, she will.”

“Then that's fine. She won't have to live without a wolf forever.” Lots of people get their wolves late, it's not a big deal.

“And the wolf that was meant to get your spirit later in life, will get theirs early.”

She says.

“That's okay. I'm sure her family will help her, right?”

“Yes, they will help her.”

“Please, say you will spare him. He deserves to live. He is the most amazing mate, the most amazing father anyone could ever want. He's been exactly the person he promised me he would be and so much more. He's been a perfect Guardian, watching over Anders since he was 10 years old. I've only been a Guardian for 11 years. He's been doing it for almost 20 years. Please Selene. I would do anything to save my mate. Please. He deserves to live.”

Chapter 593

“He will be injured.”

I cut her off. "He can survive anything. He's so strong. So much stronger than I am. He will be okay."

"Are you sure Lily? It means you will never be able to hold your daughter again."  
She says to me kindly.

"Maybe it makes me selfish, but without Clint, I wouldn't survive, so I wouldn't be holding her anyway. This way, at least she'll have one parent."

She stands and I stand in front of her. She cups my face in her hand. "Okay Lily. I will take your life in place of his."

My entire body relaxes. "Thank you."

She turns walking to the door. Before she walks out, she turns back to me. "You have two days."

Two days. I only have two days.

As soon as

as Clint comes back, I beg him to go away for one night. He finally agrees and gets Anders to agree. I get Calista to watch Cara. I just need one more day and night with my mate. I need him to remember what it was like for us when everything was good, when it was perfect.

We leave early the next morning, driving until we find a place that looks good

enough to stop. We get a hotel and I convince him to splurge on a suite. The rest of the day and night, I make love to my mate. I show him in every way possible that he is the most precious thing in my life. I love our daughter, but Clint is everything to me.

In between our love making, I reminisce about our happy times, our anniversaries and all the beautiful times we've had with Cara. I need him to remember. I need him to have this memory and all the memories of our good times when I'm gone.

The next day when we get home, I spend the evening with our daughter. I watch her sleep, holding her hand and caressing her hair until Clint comes to get me. It makes it easier knowing that she'll have a good life, even if I'm not in it.

That night, I don't sleep. I stay awake, watching Clint sleep. I breathe in his scent, relish the tingles of his arms wrapped around me until the sun begins to shine in our room and I know our time is up. Today is the day. The day I will die. I wake my precious mate early, wanting to have him inside me one last time. I give him everything, all my love, all my passion, everything that I am.

When we get the call that we are under attack, I already have Cara in my arms. I've hugged and kissed my sweet girl and all I can do now is hope that she will remember me. I take her to the safe room and I realize that Calista is not there.

I hear Anders panicked voice in my head. "Lily! Calista had Rik out for a walk in the forest. She's outside."

"I'll find them." I say. I give my baby girl one final kiss goodbye before I turn,

shifting into Andra.

“Let's do this my friend.” I say to Andra.

“For our mate, for our daughter and for our friends.” She replies.

“Lily, be careful. I'll see you when it's done.” Clint says to me as Donovan runs to get to Anders.

“I love you, Clint.”

“I love you too, Lily bud. See you soon.”

I run to where I smell Calista. She is surrounded by wolves. I can tell she is trying to cover Rik with her body. I immediately jump in and begin tearing into these wolves. I take out every bit of anger at having to leave my mate and daughter, every bit of heartache and sadness on these wolves. In my heart, I blame them for taking me away from what I love most in this world.

But, in the end, there are too many. I take out as many as I can. I can feel them tearing into me as I stand in front of Rik. Calista has shifted and is fighting to protect her son too.

“Lily! Lily, hold on, I'm coming.” Clint yells in our mind link.

“I love you, Clint. Never forget that.” I say as my injuries force Andra to shift back.

I turn, seeing Rik. He's watching me, his blue eyes wide with terror and shock.

He's so young. Only a couple of months older than Cara. But I need him to promise me that he'll take care of her, that he will love her.

“I'm trusting you to watch out for her. Take care of her and keep her safe for me. Promise me Rik. Promise me you'll always look after my little girl.”

I'm laying on my back, looking at him. My legs won't move because of my injuries and as I watch him, I feel the teeth sink into my throat..

As the darkness surrounds me, I hear his whisper on the wind. “I promise.”

Chapter 594

When the call came out, I realized Lily and I would once again be separated

thate when we're

separated. It's easier for me to fight when she's by my side. flut Calista and Pik

were exposed and away from Anders. He couldn't get to them. When Donovan

got to Anders, he was fighting off eight wolves at once. Without my help, he

would most likely be killed. He's a strong Alpha, but eight is too many, even for

1. me.

I jump in, not thinking twice. This is what I do, it's what I've always done. I protect

my Alpha, my friend. Five of the wolves come after me, recognizing me as the

bigger threat by the gold color of Donovan's eyes. I'm fighting them, injuring

them, but not able to take them down, when I feel Lily's pain. It's

everywhere. She's Injured and she's injured badly.

"Hold on Lily, I'm coming!" I say and I rip the throat of the first wolf I can get to.

My mate is in trouble.

She needs me.

Donovan grabs the back of the neck of another wolf and shakes his head

violently, paralyzing him. "I love

you Clint, never forget that." And I feel it. I feel the pain in her throat.

NO! Oh, goddess, no! Lily! A moment after I think it, I feel the tether to my mate

bond snap. In the instant. that it takes my brain to register that my mate is gone,

Donovan throws his head back and howls his pain.

Realizing my weakness, a wolf jumps on my back, sinking his teeth into

Donovan's spine. I don't care. My mate is gone. She's gone and all that's left is a

hollow aching emptiness in my heart and soul. She's

gone and I'm ready to go with her.

But before the wolf can kill me, it's ripped off my back. Donovan forces the shift

back, causing what

should be a horrible pain, but nothing can compare to the pain in my heart. She's

gone. She's gone and I'm alone. My light, my Lily bud, is gone.

I don't know how much time goes by, but I wake in the hospital. I hear Anders

speaking to the doctors." He'll never walk again, Alpha. I'm sorry. He's broken.

It's not something we can fix."

I hear Anders snarl and the sound of things smashing and breaking, but

I don't care. I'm empty and I just want to die. I beg the Moon Goddess to take

me before I fall back into my blissful unconsciousness.

I'm in a field with wildflowers blooming all around. I look up and see Lily walking

towards me. "Lily! Oh goddess, Lily! I thought you were dead." I grab her and

hold on to her. I'll never let her go again. I'll never let Anders split us up in a fight

again. We're stronger together, we always have been.



“Oh, my love. I am dead. But you are not. You need to live for our daughter.”

I'm shaking my head before she finishes. “Anders and Calista will raise her, they will take good care of her. I need to be with you.”

“You know I love you, right?”

“Of course, and I love you.”

“Then, I need you to do something for me, Clint.”

“Anything Lily bud. You know I'll do anything for you.”

She cups my face in her hands. “I need you to live, Clint.” I start shaking my head.

“Not without you.”

“You need to live, for Cara. You're strong. Clint. You can do this. I love you and I

will never stop loving you. But I need you to live and be a father to our daughter.

Don't make her grow up without either parent. Do this for me. Please. Promise

me you'll live for our daughter.”

“I don’t want to live without you.”

## Chapter 595

“I know, and I don’t want to be away from you. But I’ll always be here, in your heart.” She puts her hand on my heart. “Whenever you miss me, think of all the wonderful times we had together, think of all the beautiful memories we shared. Tell those stories to Cara. Tell her of the beautiful romance that we had and how we loved each other more than any two people ever have. I will live on in your memories and in your heart.”

“Don’t leave me Lity. I can’t do this without you.”

“You can, and you will. Do it for me and do it for Cara. Do it for your girls.”

She leans in and kisses me. I reach out to pull her into me, to hold on to her, but she’s gone. When I open my eyes, I’m back in the hospital room, alone. I close my eyes, and sob until I’m pulled under by

exhaustion again.

The next time I wake, Calista is sitting by my bed, holding my hand. When I look at her, her eyes are red-rimmed and puffy, and her nose looks raw from wiping it. As soon as she sees my eyes open, her tears

begin again.

“I’m so sorry, Clint. She saved me and Rik. I tried to get to her, but I was too late.

I'm sorry." She begins to sob, but I don't have it in me to try and comfort her. I'm so empty. I had no idea a person could feel this empty and still survive. I understand exactly what Leander has been going through. He's a shell of a person. He's a body with no heart or soul, and now, I am too.

Anders comes in, no doubt feeling his mate's heartache. I would do anything to feel Lily's heartache, to feel her anger at me, to feel anything from her again.

When he walks in, he sees me awake.

"Clint, you're awake."

"Where's Cara?"

"She's safe, Calista and Donna have been taking turns looking after her.

Although she's been crying a lot.

asking for you.

"You should bring her here, let her see me."

I watch as Calista stands to leave. Anders runs his hand down her arm and kisses the top of her head. The pain of seeing their gentle intimacy is almost too much to bear. I had that a couple of days ago, and now, I'll never have it again.

Anders waits until Calista leaves before sitting down in the seat she vacated.

"Clint. I know you're hurting, that you're in a bad place, but I need to tell you something."

I don't look at him. I can't. I don't want to see his pity. I already know what he's going to tell me. I can't feel anything from my waist to my toes. Nothing. I tried

wiggling my toes, moving my legs, anything, but there is nothing.

“I already know I'm paralyzed. You don't have to tell me.”

+15 BCAUS

“We'll figure it out. I've already ordered the best wheelchair for you. Charles and I are researching every surgeon in the world. I won't give up.”

“Thanks.” What else can I say. Lily wanted me to live for Cara, so I will. I will do that for the love of my life, but that doesn't mean I will be here. It doesn't mean that I can stay in this pack. I was the greatest warrior in the pack and now I'm nothing.

I've heard them in the hallway outside my door. I may be a paraplegic, but my hearing is still that of a

Guardian. I know what they are calling me. I've gone from being the strongest warrior in pack, the Big

Daddy Badass to nothing. No, I'm worse than nothing. I'm the Broken Warrior.

This one was still hard to write. It will start getting easier from here.

Chapter 596

I wake up in a beautiful meadow. It feels like spring. The air is warm, but not hot. There's a stream gurgling nearby and birds are singing all around me. I sit up,

looking around.

“Andra?\*

My head is empty. Andra is gone.

Is this death? I'm in a beautiful place, but I'm alone?

“Andra!” I yell, looking around.

And that's when I see her. Selene. Beside her is a beautiful brown woll. “Andra?”  
She comes bounding over to me, tackling me to the ground. “Andra. Oh Andra!” I  
say, hugging her and running my fingers through her fur.

I look up and stand as Selene walks up. “Lily.” She says to me before looking  
around.

“Is this your realm?” I ask her, following her gaze.

“No, it isn't. It seems you Guardians continue to surprise me. You've put yourself  
in a place where it

appears you can choose.”

“Choose?”

“Choose to come with me to my realm or stay and watch over your family and  
friends.” She gestures in a

direction, and I see what looks like a pack gathering in the distance.

“Why can’t I hear Andra in my head?” I ask, looking back at my wolf.

She turns back, running her fingers through Andra’s fur. “You were a Guardian.

As such, the spirit of the

Guardian must go to another. In order for that to happen, I have to separate you from your wolf. So, this is Andra, and she can understand you, but you will no longer be able to hear her in your head. You are now two beings, rather than one. She is the same, other than no longer being a Guardian.”

I bend down, wrapping my arms around her. “I’m so glad you’re here with me.

For a moment. I thought

you were gone too.”

She chuffs at me. I smile, pulling back to look at her. “We’ll have to figure out a new way to communicate, although, having had you in my head for nearly 20 years, I think I know what you’re

thinking.”

She rubs her face against me before I stand. I look at the pack gathering and then back to Selene.

“I can stay here?”

She smiles at me. “Apparently, you can. No other child of mine has ever ended

up somewhere other than

my realm when they passed, but here you are.”

I turn back to the gathering in the distance, feeling drawn to it. “I'd like to stay here. How long do I have?” I ask her.

She looks around. “Since you created this plane, I'd say you have as long as you choose to stay here.”

I take a step toward the gathering. “How will I let you know when I'm ready to come to your realm?”

“Something tells me I'll know.” She says.

I look at Andra and in unison, we begin jogging to the gathering. As I get closer, I realize it's a funeral. They are laying someone to rest, and I can hear the gentle

sobs of those watching the service. At the front is a pyre. This person is getting a warrior's send off.

As we walk closer, I see Clint in a wheelchair and my heart aches at the sight.

Selene said he'd be

injured. I hadn't considered that it might be permanent. He looks empty, haunted, devoid of all emotion. I suddenly have a flash of seeing him in this life, telling him he has to live for our daughter. I'm thankful he

has done this for me.

Cara is sitting on his lap, his arms are wrapped around her and her head is buried in his neck as she cries. Beside him, Calista stands, looking almost as distraught as Clint. She is holding Rik's hand and tears are falling down his face as well. Beside Rik is Liam. He is standing stoically, but I can see the tension on his face. As I look, I see Alpha Christopher and Anastasia, Alpha Eric, Zoe and their children and many other pack representatives that I've met over the years. Our entire pack is here, making this a

huge event.

I turn back and see Anders standing above the pyre on a stage and suddenly I realize this is my My hand instantly reaches out for Andra and she is there, standing next to me. I look back at the hundreds of people who have gathered to say goodbye to me. All of them are in tears.

funeral.

I'm suddenly reminded of something I heard years ago, called the ripple effect. You don't always realize the impact you have on other people's lives. One drop into a body of water sends ripples out in every direction. As I watch, I open my mind and I hear the voices, thanking me for saving them, saving their children, their mates, for being a friend when they had no one else, for being kind to them when they needed someone. I'm overwhelmed at the outpouring of love.

Chapter 597

As Anders finishes his speech, his voice breaking, he stands to light the pyre holding my physical body. I walk to Clint, putting my hand on his shoulder, Andra walks beside his wheelchair and leans against him. both of us lending him what



strength we can.

As the fire burns, everyone begins to move toward the packhouse. They will have a celebration of my life. That is what we do in our pack, we celebrate the life of the ones we've lost. As I look down, I can see that Clint will not be celebrating today. He stays, watching my body burn, long after everyone else has gone.

Calista comes to take Cara and tries to get Clint to come too, but he just shakes his head. I stay with Clint. "You can do this, my love. You're so strong, I know you can do this." I say to him, knowing he can't

hear me.

As we stand here, Alpha Christopher comes to stand beside Clint. "I know what you're feeling. And I know you want nothing more than to lay down and hope the Moon Goddess takes you to join your mate. But you have to live for your daughter. She needs you."

"How?" Clint whispers, his voice sounding rough and raw.

"Everyday when you wake up, you get out of bed. Then you shower. Then you get your daughter up, make sure she's fed and get her off to school. Then you do it again in reverse in the evening when she comes home. Eventually, you don't have to fight to do each step, you just start going through the motions. And then you start filling in the time when she's gone. At least, that's what I did. You'll

never get over it, never  
get over her, but it does get easier with time."

As the two of them stand together, watching the pyre burn. I turn to find my

daughter. When I do, I see her sitting in a chair. Someone, probably Calista has brought her some food, but she's not eating. When no one is looking, she ducks away and climbs the stairs to our room. The room has been re-arranged. The bed is gone and so are most of our belongings. I'm guessing they had to move Clint to the first floor

since he couldn't get upstairs any longer.

I watch as she pulls a blanket from the closet and wraps it around herself. It's the blanket that I had her wrapped in when I took her to the safe room. She takes a deep breath, sniffing my scent on the blanket

as tears slide down her cheeks.

Behind me. I hear a noise and turn to see Liam. He doesn't say anything, he just goes and sits beside Lily, wrapping his arm around her and holding her while she cries.

When she finally pulls away, she looks up at him. "I'm sorry, Alpha. I shouldn't be crying on you like this."

"How about, we make this our little secret? I won't tell, if you won't tell. Okay?"

My heart clenches as I hear my words to Liam all those years ago repeated to my daughter.

She nods, leaning against him as the tears start again. "My mommy is dead."

"I know. She was my friend. I'm going to miss her." He rocks her back and forth as she cries.

“You know, I lost my mom when I was about your age.” He tells her.

She looks up at him, her emerald eyes shining through her tears. “You did?”

“I did. And you know what helped me?”

She shakes her head at him.

“Your mom. She gave me her number and told me to call her anytime I needed to talk. And you know

what? She always answered when I called.”

“I don't have anyone to call.” My sweet girl says tearfully.

“Sure you do. You have me. I'll be your friend and any time you need to talk, no matter what time it is, you call me, and I'll answer. Even if you just need to cry or tell me about your day. Whatever it is, I'll always

be here for you Cara.”

I watch as he gets up and finds a pen and paper, writing his number down for Cara. “You have a phone.

right?”

“Yes, there is one in our room.”

“Okay, then anytime, Cara. I mean it. And, if you need to get out, Cyran can take you for a run. He'd be happy to carry you or run with you, if you ever want to go.”

“Thank you, Alpha.”

“Call me Liam.”

“Thank you, Liam.”

And this is how the friendship between Cara and Liam started. And how Clint learned how to live without tllly.

Chapter 598

When I returned to the packhouse after being in the hospital, Anders had moved most of my things to a room on the first floor. It was just another reminder of how far I had fallen. The name stuck and I could

hear people whispering about the broken warrior.

I waited until after Lily's funeral before approaching Anders.

“I'm leaving Anders.”

“Where are you headed, Clint.” He asks me as we navigate through the packhouse. It was never meant to house a wheelchair. Anders has made accommodations for me, but it's not how the packhouse was built.

“I'm taking Cara and we're leaving. I can't stay here.”

He stops, turning to look at me. "No."

"You don't have a say in it. I'm no good to you anymore. I'm not even capable of being your Guardian."

"You're still a warrior in this pack."

"But a broken warrior, right? Isn't that what everyone is calling me, the broken warrior? I can't live like

this. I won't live like this."

Anders snarls and he immediately sends out an Alpha command telling everyone that if they are heard

calling me the broken warrior again, they will answer to him. His aura is so strong, I hear several omegas

in the packhouse yelp.

He turns back to me. "You're not leaving. That's an order." I see Zakai has come forward and I feel his

Alpha aura pushing over me.

I scoff at him. "I may be broken, but I'm still a Guardian. Your Alpha aura has no effect on me." Even

though Donovan is still suffering from the loss of our mate and can't come forward, I'm still not affected by the Alpha aura. Donovan wants to leave the pack too, and he's only harging on because of our pup.

Calista comes running up. "What's going on?"

"Clint thinks he's leaving our pack. He's not." He snarls at me.

Calista crouches in front of me. "Clint. Please. We've already lost Lily. We can't lose you and Cara too."

Calista has always been a gentle soul. Between that and her long-term friendship with Lily, I can't bring

myself to be unkind to her, so my voice is gentler when I speak.

"I can't stay here, Calista. I don't belong here anymore."

She puts her hand on mine. "You do belong here. You are a Guardian of this pack, and you are my best friend's mate. But I understand if being in the packhouse isn't comfortable for you any longer. Will you

give me a couple of months. Let me make other arrangements for you and Cara? Will you do that for me. please?"

I nod, knowing I can't deny her. True to her word, two months later, Calista and Anders take me and Cara to a house that they built on the edge of the pack

territory. "I've told the patrols to give this place a wide berth. You'll have privacy and no one will bother you here. If you see anyone breaching the borders, send up the alarm. Otherwise, you won't see anyone you don't want to see."

They walk us inside. The house has been built for someone in a wheelchair. The counters are lower, the downstairs bedroom has wide doorways and rails in the shower so I can get myself in and out on my own. The bathroom sink is low enough for me to use without having to pull myself up and has an opening so I can slide my wheelchair underneath as I get ready in the morning.

I can hear Cara upstairs. Calista took her up to show her her new bedroom. Anders showed me pictures and told me if I wanted to go see it, he'd carry me up when Cara wasn't home. Calista decorated it for her but told her if she wanted to make any changes, she could. The only thing Cara asked for was a phone. I've noticed that she calls Alpha Liam when she's feeling down. At first, I thought he would tell her to stop calling, but he never does, and he answers every time she calls. I've even heard her call in the middle of the night when she couldn't sleep. The house is more comfortable for me, and even though Cara is still young, Calista makes a point to check on her and come tuck her into bed every night. I begin to feel like I can breathe again. I understand what Alpha Christopher meant about fighting through and taking the necessary steps until you don't have to fight them anymore. Once we moved into the house, it was just me and Cara. She and I didn't have anyone else to help her get up and get ready, so I had to do it. Eventually, I get into a morning and evening routine and the days goes by.

## Chapter 599

About a month after we moved into the house, Calista had a ceremony in our memorial garden. We don't bury our dead, like some humans do, we burn them,

sending them to the Moon Goddess. But that doesn't mean that we don't want a place where we can go to spend time with the memory of our loved ones.

Anders comes to get me and Cara and drives us to the memorial. I think it was planned to be small, but the entire pack has shown up to honor my mate's memory. When the statute goes in, I know that Calista designed it herself. It's an angel looking down on her wolfpack. It's exactly what Lily did her entire life. She fought for the pack and died for the pack. I have Cara take the flowers that I bought for today and Calista helps her set them beside the statute. I'll have to find a way to come here and visit her. It's a bit of a ways from our house, but what else do I have to do every day while Cara is at school?

As more time goes by, I begin to fill in the time while Cara is at school. In the mornings, I wheel myself to Lily's memorial, stopping to get flowers and leaving them for her. I talk to her, and it helps me. Sometimes, it even feels like she is there with me, and it brings me peace. I tell her about everything that is going on with Cara and how beautiful our daughter is. In the evenings, after Cara is asleep. I go to my room and lay on my bed, looking at my guitar in the corner of the room or at the pictures of Lily and I in Maine and of the three of us in the

same spot years later. I'll close my eyes as I fall asleep and dream of the good times with my mate. It makes it hard to wake up in the morning when I'm alone, but it helps me to get some sleep at night.

Anders insists on coming for dinner every Thursday night. Calista comes by several times a week, bringing food and making sure that Cara is doing okay. But I think she is checking up on me, too. I notice that Calista never comes on Thursdays and eventually, I ask Anders about it. He says he misses his



friend and so this is “our’ time.

About a year after losing Lily, Calista and Anders show up at my house with a van. “This is for you, Clint.”

Anders says to me, gesturing at the van.

I look at him a moment. I can’t believe he would do something this callous. He knows I can’t drive. I’m

about to turn around and go back inside when Calista puts her hand on my arm. “Clint, we would never be so cruel as to offer you a gift you couldn't use. Before you turn away, let us show you what we've

done.”

I find I still can’t say no to Calista. So, I watch as Anders pushes a button on the side of the van. The door slides open, and a ramp unfolds. He gestures for me to go in. “Take a look.” He says, smiling.

I look from him to Calista who nods at me. I wheel myself inside the van and see that it has been modified to allow for me and my wheelchair. I wheel over to the driver's seat while Anders gets in the passenger seat. “It will take some adjustment on your part, but the foot pedals have been shifted into hand pedals.” He points to two hand holds on the sides of the steering wheel.

I look at him and back to Calista. “You did this for me?”

“Of course. You're my best friend and it must be tiresome trying to go everywhere in your wheelchair. I know you're too stubborn to ever ask for help, so we got you this. At least now, if Cara needs to go somewhere, you don't have to ask anyone, you can take her yourself. But I'd suggest you practice before bringing her along. Shall we give it a go?” He asks me.

“Right now?”

“No time like the present.” He says and shows me where the button is to lift the ramp and close the side door on the van. I shift from my wheelchair to the driver's seat and adjust everything to fit me

comfortably.

“See you later, Cali.” He says before leaning back in his seat. I feel like I'm learning to drive all over again. but a couple hours later, I think I've got the general hang of it.

“Thank you, Anders.” I say to my friend.

“Anything for you, my friend.”

Clint is finding a life without Lily: What do you think of Anders and Calista's gift?

## Chapter 600

Time moves differently in this place. At first, it moved slowly. I spent a lot of time with Cara and Clint as they were hurting so much. Most nights, I would sleep beside Clint. But if I heard Cara crying, I'd go lay down with her. Sometimes I would spend time with Calista who holds a lot of guilt for my death. No matter how many times Anders tells her it wasn't her fault, she still blames herself.

I listen to my daughter when she calls Liam, crying on the phone, or telling him something funny that happened at school. She's afraid to tell her father, although he usually already knows. But she doesn't want to upset him because she is finding small moments of happiness. Liam is always a good friend to her, supporting her and validating her feelings. I'm not sure I realized how important it was for him to have me, until I watch how valuable having him is to Cara.

I watch as Clint slowly begins to live again. I like sitting with him at my memorial. It's like he's really talking to me. Andra really likes the memorial, too. She goes and lays on it when Clint is there, almost like she's watching over the pack with me. And I guess she is. She and I have developed a language of sorts. We shared headspace together long enough that we both usually know what the other is thinking but we have found ways to communicate when we don't.

I watch my beautiful daughter grow. And on her 10th birthday, I'm there to see her get her wolf. The party had been wonderful, Calista had planned the party at Clint and Cara's house. She invited Cara's friends and even Liam was in attendance. Rik was at some event for Alphas that recently got their wolves, so he

wasn't in attendance. What I, nor anyone else was expecting was that Artemis would have the golden eyes of a Guardian.

When Artemis pushed forward, everyone, including me, gasped. I don't know if this is something that has ever happened before. Donovan recovered first, greeting his daughter and telling her how much he loves

her. Liam was second, asking her if she'd like to go for a run after her shift. I'm glad he's willing to do

that for her. Since Andra and I aren't there, and Donovan is unable, having a friend who can also look

after her on her first run is the next best thing.

I watch that night as she shifts for the first time. Donovan shifts for the first time since his injury. I can tell it's extremely painful for both of them, but to their credit, no one says a word. After the shift, Donovan pulls himself over to Cara and lays beside her as she shifts. Andra is laying on her other side, lending her

support as well. Calista, Anders and Liam are there to encourage her and help guide her through her first shift. As soon as she shifts, Andra howls her pleasure

at our beautiful daughter, and I feel tears in my eyes.

Liam shifts into Cyran and takes Artemis on her first run. Anders helps Clint shift back and then helps him into his wheelchair.

“Have you ever heard of this happening before?” Clint asks Anders and Cali when they are back inside

and he has gotten dressed.

“No. Did you ever find that book you were looking for?”

What book?

“No. I searched everywhere I knew to search after we realized that Lily,” his voice breaks for a moment

before he recovers, “when we first realized Lily was immune to wolfsbane. Then, when I became immune after our mating, I searched again, but never found it.”

“I’ll look around again. But Clint, we need to be careful with her. She’s definitely a Guardian and you that means that other Alphas will come looking for her.”

know

“I’d like to see them get through me.” He snarls and I can hear Donovan’s voice overlaying on Clint’s. And this is why I knew he was the better person to survive. He will keep our daughter safe and protected from others. I’m even more thankful now that she has a friendship with Liam. He took over as Alpha a few months ago when his father finally passed into the Moon Goddess realm. He will help keep her safe.