

## Broken Warrior 111

### Chapter 112

What in the world has my girl this embarrassed? I reach out to take her hand. I don't want her to be embarrassed or

uncomfortable telling me anything. Ever. I want her to feel comfortable sharing every part of her life with me. I certainly had no

idea such a simple question would elicit this response from her and now I'm desperate to know what it is. In the past desperate

to know what it is. In the past when I've used this as an ice breaker on dates, the answer I get is something like, 'I got my first

kiss at seven.' Or 'I

walked in on my parents having sex in the kitchen.' Silly things. Whatever this is, it's important to Cara. And now I really, really

want to know.

She continues to look down at her napkin. "Promise that you won't make fun of me?"

I know I sound intense when I reply. "I would never!"

A soft smile breaks out across her face before she lifts her eyes to mine. "This is the first date I've ever been on."

I'm stunned. I blink. Once. Twice.

How is this possible. She's nearly 18. She's a Guardian. She is known to have spent time with Liam, but she's never been on a

date? I thank the Goddess that I chose this restaurant as our first date. Her very first date ever.

I can see my lack of response has made her uncomfortable and she's looking down again. I reach my hand under her chin and

lift it up so she's looking in my eyes. I lean in so our lips are barely touching. "I'm honored to be the first man to take you on a

date. I don't know how or why I got this lucky, but I don't care. And I hope that this is one of many firsts that we get to share

together."

I can see her eyes go shiny with unshed tears. Did she really think I would be mad or rude about it. I'm thrilled! It means I'm not

measuring up to anyone. I get to be all of her firsts.

This time it's Cara that bridges the distance between our lips, kissing me with a passion that I will one day stoke to a roaring fire.

But for now, I enjoy her passion, listening to her quiet moans and enjoying the taste of her sweetness.

A cough interrupts us again. Jessica is getting on my nerves.

"Here are your appetizers. Can I get you anything else right now?"

It's Cara that replies. She hasn't removed her hand from my face and she doesn't take her eyes off me.

"No, we're good for now."

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+15 BONDS

I see Jessica leave out of the corner of my eye. I smile at Cara and take her hand, sliding it to my mouth so I can kiss her palm.

Watching her, I take my tongue and make slow circles on the inside of her hand. Her eyes darken and her mouth falls open as I

hear her sharp intake of breath. Keeping her hand in mine, kissing her palm again, I look at our food. I take a piece of cheese

and bring it to her mouth. I watch as she bites into the cheese, her eyes closing and a groan leaving her lips. "Take a sip of

wine." I tell her softly. "It will be even better with the taste of the cheese."

She does as I request, watching me over the rim of her glass as she sips her wine. "You're right. It's delicious."

She sets her wine down and looks at the plate. She takes the hand that I'm not holding and puts a piece of prosciutto on a slice

of bread before bringing it to my lips. I keep hold of her hand but move it in between us and open my mouth, letting her feed me.

We go back and forth like this until our appetizers are gone. There is something so intimate and sexual about feeding each other.

I have a moment of absolute clarity when I realize, not only do I want this the rest of my life with this woman. That no matter what

happens, I will make sure that we have it. Together.

Chapter 113

My jealousy toward Jessica is gone pretty quickly. Hard to be jealous of someone that is clearly getting shafted because of you.

When Rik asked about something no one else knows about me, the only thing that came to mind was this date. I'm sure there

are other things, but my brain and my senses are being overwhelmed by Rik and I can't think of anything beyond this moment.

So, at the risk of him finding me foolish, I tell him.

Rather than him laughing at me or making some brusque comment about it, he almost seems happy. When he says he hopes

that this is one of many firsts we'll share together, I know exactly what he means. Artemis begins purring in my head again.

Apparently, she's on board. I'm not sure I'm there yet. His previous reputation still sits heavily in my mind and while this whole

evening seems very out of character for him, it doesn't mean that he's changed.

My concentration is completely distracted again when he runs his tongue over my palm. I'd be lying if I said that eating

appetizers has ever been this intense or so much fun.

This time when Jessica comes back, I look at Rik. "What do you suggest for dinner?"

He smiles. "You've already had my favorite. Filet and lobster tail." I return his smile. So my gift was his favorite dish.

I look at Jessica. "Do you have any specials this evening?"

She looks a bit like she's feeling ill when she responds. "There's a Wagyu Beef Chateaubriand for two."

"Perfect. We'll take that." Rik jumps in. He looks at me. "Anything in particular you want for side dishes? They come a la carte."

"I trust your judgement, Alpha." I get his mega watt smile as he orders our sides.

When Jessica leaves, I redirect our conversation. I want to know something about him that he's never told anyone.

"What is something about you that no one else knows, Rik?"

He slides his fingers across my cheek, tucking a stray strand of hair behind my ear. When he looks back into my eyes, he smiles.

"Well, I'm not sure that no one knows this, but I've never brought a date to this restaurant before. I've only ever been with my

family.”

Okay, that’s a shock. This whole romantic feel makes this place seem like a perfect place to have a date night.

“Why?” I whisper.

He cocks his head to the side, a frown starting in between his eyes. “Why what?” “Why me?” I can’t help but ask. Why am I

getting special treatment? If this is just about me being a Guardian, he doesn’t need to make it this romantic. And Artemis and I

are both starting to fall hard and fast for this man and his wolf. If this is only about a lifetime of being in close proximity, I need to

know sooner rather than later so I can tame my expectations. My feelings for this man that seem to be on a roller coaster ride

that has almost reached the pinnacle and is at the moment just before the ride falls over the peak to the gut clenching drop.

Once you crest the top, there’s no going back.

“Haven’t you figured it out yet Cara? You’re very special to me. I have every intention of making sure that you know just how

special you are to me, every day.”

And just like that, I’ve crested the top and the roller coaster is in free fall, while I’m just hoping to make it to the end without losing

myself.

I’m saved from responding when our food arrives. We move to easier topics for the rest of dinner. The food is amazing and

Tamara’s mate, Jared, comes out to see how we like it.

“Did you make our dinner tonight?” I ask, remembering that he made my lunch. He smiles at us. “I did. Did you like it?”

We both tell him how amazing our dinner was and what a great chef he is. Tamara joins us and smiles proudly at her husband.

“This whole venture was because of my very talented mate. It was all his idea.” She says proudly. His look, when he looks at her,

is full of love. “It may have been my idea, but it’s this beautiful woman at my side that made it into a reality.”

## Chapter 114

Rik answers for both of us. "You've both done an amazing job here. The atmosphere, the food, the ambiance, it's all perfect. I thank you both for making my date with this remarkable woman

memorable." I nod my agreement and they ask if we'd like dessert. Rik tells them we have other plans, and we'll take our check

when it's ready.

"We have other plans?" I ask when they walk away.

"We do, our date isn't over and I hope you enjoy our dessert place just as much as you've enjoyed our dinner spot."

"Well, I've been pleasantly surprised at your ingenuity and unde sure of

what I like. If it's anything like what you've done for me so far, I'm sure I'll love it. And of course, the company is beyond

compare."

"I couldn't agree more about the company." He says, bringing my hand to his lips and kissing my knuckles.

When we leave, he heads in a different direction, farther away from the pack house. He takes us to a spot that I've never been

before. He opens the door for me and as I look around, he goes to the trunk and pulls out a picnic basket.

"We're having a dessert picnic?" I ask.

"Something like that." He says as he takes my hand and we begin walking down a dirt walkway. We don't have to walk long

before we come to a place where the ground gives way. The cliff overlooks the nearest human city. The city lights twinkling in the

night, but far enough away that you can see every star in the sky. It's beautiful.

Rik finds a spot near a tree and lays out a blanket before pulling a bottle of wine out of the picnic basket.

"Compliments of my mother." He says raising the bottle of wine.

"How is Luna Calista?" I ask. It's been too long since I've spent any time with her.

“She’s good. She’d love it if you’d come by the packhouse. And, if I’m being honest, I’d love it too. You’re a part of this pack

Cara, but you never do anything with the pack.”

I shrug at that. “I’ve never really had time. I mean, I train with the warriors in the morning, and have been for years. But between

training, school, homework, I’ve just never had time for things like pack runs or dating.” I look at him and give.

+15 BONOS

him a sheepish smile.

“Hmmm, we’ll have to change that.” He says and hands me a glass of wine.

He reaches into the basket and pulls out a covered plate. The smell hits me before he pulls the cover off.

“Oh man! Are those the best brownies in the world?” I ask and am rewarded with

Rik’s smile.

“I may have put in a request and when mom realized they were for you, she was more than happy to comply.”

I bite into the gooey goodness and moan softly. Seriously, what does she put in these brownies?? Mine never taste this good.

When I open my eyes, I realize Rik is watching me. Even in the dim light, I can see his eyes have gone dark. He

looks....predatory. A shiver of excitement runs down my spine. What would it be like to have him hunt me and Artemis? Artemis

purrs so loud at the thought that even Rik can hear it.

“Want to share with the group?” He asks with a devious smile. I shake my head no and finish my brownie.

He finishes his brownie and leans back against the tree. “We need to talk Cara.”

## Chapter 115

This evening could not have gone any better. The dinner, the ambiance, the amazing company, it’s been perfect. Now we’re here

at the overlook and the night is gorgeous. It's a little cool, but that just means I'll have an excuse to pull Cara closer to me.

I'm really interested in what has Artemis purring so loudly I can hear her, but when Cara says she doesn't want to tell me, I let it

slide. I have something that I need to discuss with her. I've been thinking about it since last night, and while we're here, together

and alone, I think it's time.

I lean against the tree and pat my leg. "Come sit with me?" I ask. I've been touching her all night and now with her sitting away

from me, the space around me feels unpleasantly empty.

She moves over to me, ready to sit beside me, but I grab her by the waist and turn her, sitting her in my lap, so she's facing me. I

want to see her face and have her see mine for this conversation.

She yelps a bit when she settles in my lap. I'm guessing she's never been in a situation where she's straddled a man that she

wasn't pinning to the ground in training.

"I want to talk about last night, and what that means for our future."

I see her brows furrow when she starts thinking about last night, so rather than let her ask questions, I jump right in.

"When you thought my father was going to come down on me, you stepped in front of me. You acted as my Guardian, even

though I didn't need you to. Even without thinking about it, you were protecting me." She starts to interrupt but I put my finger to

her lips to silence her.

"Let me say this, please." She nods and I remove my finger, sliding my hands down her arms to her hips.

"I've had a lot of time to

think about what happened in the woods with Eli. Time to think about what it would have meant if something had happened to

you after you sacrificed yourself for me. And I'm going to tell you now Cara, I can't live with myself if something were to happen

to you because you were taking a bullet, an arrow, a dart, whatever it is, if you take the hit for me. I honestly don't know how my

parents have been able to live with that guilt. But I can tell you, I won't be able to do it."

I take a deep breath before continuing. This is key. I need her to agree to this.

"I want us to have a partnership, not Guardian and Alpha. I know I'll never be able to keep you out of the fight, but I want you

standing by my side, not in front of me. If we're fighting together and something happens to one of us, then it does, and we live

with that. But please, don't ever put yourself in a position where you give your life for mine."

I take her hand and I put it on my heart, holding it there with both of mine. "I'm strong Cara. I'm a strong Alpha that, in truth,

probably doesn't need a Guardian. But since the Moon Goddess decided to bless me with a fierce and powerful protector, who

am I to complain? But," I pause to make sure she's hears me. Your life means more to me than just a pack member, more than

just a Guardian. So, promise me, please, that when the time comes for us to fight, because we both know it will come, that you

will stand beside me, not in front of me."

—

I watch as a series of emotions play across her face surprise, frustration, anger, gratitude. She takes her other hand and slides it

up my chest. Her face is still thoughtful when she responds. "I can't guarantee that I will be able to stop myself if it comes to

saving your life. Being a Guardian is like being an Alpha. It's in my blood and I can't fight the genetics. But," She pauses before

finishing. "I would love to be your partner in life."

I know my smile is huge and without thinking, I lean up and kiss her. It's fast and

"Thank you." I say with fierce before I pull away, looking into her eyes. everything I'm feeling in my heart.

She smiles at me then leans in and rubs her nose against mine, her eyes closing in contentment. "Can I tell you something?"

She whispers.

"I want you to tell me everything Cara Nelson. Anything, everything. So yes, tell me something." I chuckle.



Chapter 116

She slides her nose across my cheek to my ear. I feel her breath a moment before she speaks, and I can feel myself going hard

underneath her. "I think you smell better than your mother's brownies." Yep, rock hard.

I run my nose under her ear before responding. "Can I tell you something?" I whisper. I feel her body shiver and know she's

feeling this just as much as I am. She nods against my cheek. "You smell of the most delicious vanilla and honey. Every time I'm

near you, it's hard for me not taste you. And when I do?" I moan softly in her ear, and I'm rewarded with the scent of her arousal

drifting up from between us. I nip her earlobe before finishing. "You taste even better than you smell."

Her neck lifts slightly, just enough for me to know that she's submitting to me. I don't waste any time kissing her neck, licking and

nipping my way down to her mate mark. I want her to feel the pleasure that will one day soon be permanently etched on her

neck.

I continue my gentle assault on her neck, working my way down. The minute my tongue slides across the space where her mate

mark will be, her body goes rigid. I stop and I can hear her heart rate has increased, her breaths have become gasps, and not

the good kind.

I pull back and look at her and the look in her eyes terrifies me. I put my hands on either side of her face. "Cara." She doesn't

respond. "Cara!" I say it louder and see her eyes refocus on me. "That's right. Look at me. I'm right here."

'I...I...' She stammers. It takes me only a moment to understand my mistake. While I had left love bites on her neck last night,

between her sweater and my desire to watch her, I'd never gotten down to the area where her mate mark would be. The area

where Eli had plunged his canines over and over. I had just inadvertently thrown my girl back into her worst nightmare.

"Cara. Look at me." When she does, I hold her gaze. "I will never mark you against your will. Do you hear me? You are safe. I

won't hurt you." She nods stiffly and I pull her against me, wrapping my arms around her, rocking her gently.

15 Of The Most Inappropriate Dresses

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I continue to hold her until I feel her body relax and her arms go around me. "I'm sorry." She whispers./

I put my hands on her shoulders and push her back so I can look at her. "You have nothing to be sorry for love. It's my fault. I got

carried away and I didn't

think. I should be the one apologizing to you."

Her face is still pale. "I didn't mean to ruin..."

I interrupt her. "You didn't. Here." I pick her up by her waist, turning her around and readjusting us so that she's sitting in between

my legs, leaning her back against my chest. I wrap my arms around her and lay my chin on her shoulder. "Did you know that I

know every constellation in the sky?" I ask.

She shakes her head before giving me a weak "No, I didn't know that."

"Well," I point to a spot in the sky. "You see those three stars that look like they make a triangle?" She nods. "That's Dory. And

that," I start to point to another

set of stars.

“Dory? As in the little blue fish from the Disney movie?” She asks.

“Yes, the very same one.” I reply in my most serious voice.

She turns her head and looks at me arching an eyebrow. “There is no Dory constellation.”

“Sure there is.” I tell her, pointing to the triangular stars again. “You see the front star is her nose, the back star is her tail, and the

top star is her dorsal fin. Dory.”

I feel her body start to shake with her chuckle. That’s better. I continue making up stupid constellation names until she joins in

and we end up laughing and joking before finally settling in to relax and just enjoy the night.

“I need to get you home. You’re still recovering and I want to see you again tomorrow. I don’t want your dad banning me again.”

“He can’t ban you while I’m conscious, so I think you’re safe. And can we go see my mother tomorrow?”

“I would love that. But can I ask a favor of you in return?”

“Sure.” She says.

“Come have dinner with me at the packhouse afterwards?” When she agrees, I know tomorrow is going to be a great day!

## Chapter 117

I can’t believe I freaked out. Everything was fine and then it was like it all came flooding back. The fear, the pain, and I got lost in

the memory. Rik was great, helping me get centered. But it makes me worry. What will happen when the time comes and I do

find my mate? He will want to mark me. What if I freak out? What if can’t go through with it?

These thoughts kept me awake most of the night. When it’s time for training,

Dad goes light on me again, but it still pushes me. When we’re finally done, I’m sore and decide to take a long, hot bath to

soothe my aching muscles and hopefully clear my head. I still have some of the muscle soak from Rik’s gift and I pour that into

the tub. When I slide in, I lean my head back against the edge of the tub and just soak until the water goes cold.

I should pick up some flowers to take to my mother's memorial. I have no idea what Luna Calista and Rik bring as far as flowers

but we're heading into spring, and some color would be nice, I think.

Rik said he would pick me up at 3pm. That gives me plenty of time to go get some flowers and get caught up on my missed work

from school. Graduation is in 3 months and I need to make sure there is nothing that keeps me from getting out of high school.

I have lunch with dad and let him know my plans for the afternoon and evening." Good, I'm glad you're going to see your

mother," is all he said.

Around two, I head over to the florist. When I walk in, I don't really know what to look for. There is an older woman behind the

counter. "Can I help you?" She asks

1. me.

"Yes ma'am. I want to take some flowers to my mother's memorial, but I don't really know what to get."

"Do you know what kind of flowers your mother liked?" I shake my head no. She died when I was young."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that." She looks around at the flowers. "Well, there are different ways to choose flowers, but no wrong

way. You can choose by the color that speaks to you, the shape of the flower itself, the meaning of the flower or by the

month."

That reminded me. "Do you happen to know what tulips mean?" I ask her. I had forgotten to look up the meaning of my tulips

this morning.

15 BOHOL

"Oh tulips. They are my favorite! They mean 'perfect love'. Isn't that beautiful?"

She asks.

"Yes, it's really beautiful!" Perfect love. And Rik knew exactly what they meant. It makes me smile. I can't wait to see him

today.

“What is the flower for May? That is when my mother was born.”

“Over here.” She takes me over to some white flowers. “These are Lily of the Valley. They are the flower for May.”

I slide my hand down the stem of one. “Lily of the Valley. I wonder if that’s where her name came from?” I say more to

myself than the florist, but she heard me

anyway.

“Oh, was your mother’s name Lily?” She asks looking at me more closely.

“Yes. Lily Nelson was my mother.”

Her hand goes to her mouth. “You’re Cara Nelson?” She asks.

I have no idea why she would know who I am, but I respond tentatively. “Yes, that’s me.”

“Oh my goddess. I’m so happy to meet you. My name is Dorothy.” And she puts her hand out. I shake it.

“Did you know my mother?”

“Only on the periphery. I’ve known our Luna since she took her position, and your mother and Luna Calista were great

friends, so I knew her that way.” She looks around again. “If you don’t mind, might I make a suggestion?”

“Of course!” I reply, happy for the help.

“If you like these, I think they will be great, but Luna Calista has been getting mostly red and white flowers through the

winter. Since it’s March, we have the March flowers in as well, daffodils. Those are yellow and you could pair those with lily

of the valley and have a nice bouquet for your mother.”

I agree and she takes what she needs to make up the bouquet for me. While I’m waiting, I hear the bell above the door ring

with another visitor and a moment later, my nose is filled with the scent of brownies.

## Chapter 118

I turn and see Rik. He hasn't seen me, but I see his nose go in the air and he starts sniffing. I duck behind a large plant, waiting

to see if he'll sniff me out. 'Yes, let him hunt us.' Artemis snickers in my head.

I'm peeking around the planter trying to find him, when he grabs me from behind. "Gotcha." He says, nuzzling my ear.

I giggle turning in his arms and wrapping mine around his neck. "Artemis thought it would be fun to hide from you.

"Oh believe me, Kai was all kinds of ready to hunt you." He smiles before kissing me. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm getting flowers for my mother. What are you doing here?"

He smiles and takes my hand, heading over to where Dorothy is finishing with my bouquet. "I'm picking up the flowers I ordered

yesterday for your mother."

I look at him out of the corner of my eye. "You mean when you were here getting my tulips?"

He turns and smiles at me. "Exactly."

"Do these flowers have any special meaning I should know about?" I ask.

"Nope. There is only one person that I get flowers for based solely off their meaning." He reaches down and kisses my nose.

"Perfect love?" I ask.

"Yes, you are." He says smiling before turning to Dorothy.

"Good afternoon, Dorothy."

"Oh, good afternoon Alpha. Give me one minute to finish with our future Lu..... erm, our future Guardian's flowers and I'll get

yours."

"No problem Dorothy. I was headed over to pick up this beautiful woman before going to Lily Nelson's memorial, so now I'm

saved a trip."

"I have my car outside Rík, I'll have to drive it home."

He takes my hand. "I'll have someone come by and get it for you. Unless you need to get home for another reason?"

I look down at myself. I had planned to do another once over on my appearance, but that seems silly since Rik is standing here

now and has already seen me. “No,

## Chapter 119

I didn't want to be late to pick up Cara. I really wanted to be early, like hours early, but I restrained myself. She has things to do

today and I don't want to overwhelm her.

When I can't wait any longer, I head over to the florist to get the flowers I ordered. yesterday. Dorothy had suggested that I start

adding some color to Lily's memorial, so it's violets today. I'm surprised when I walk in and immediately catch my favorite scent,

vanilla and honey. I look around and don't see her. 'Let's hunt her down.' Kai says to me, and I can feel his excitement. He's

been wanting to chase our mate for real. Unfortunately, Artemis isn't yet ready to shift so Kai has had to be patient.

I stalk around some plants, following my nose. When I see her peeking around a planter, I know that she hid from us so we

would have to find her. Oh my little guardian, you can never hide from me.

Wrapping my arms around her and hearing her yelp of surprise has made my day. I take a deep breath of her amazing scent and

feel everything that was out of sorts in mind and body today settle immediately. She has become the balm to my stress and

worries, and she doesn't have to do anything but be in my presence.

I suddenly have a flash of Liam, having gone so many years without his mate. For someone that is as alone as he is, he really is

a great Alpha. He doesn't let his own emotions impact how he runs his pack. At least not yet. Alphas have been known to go

feral if they don't find their mates. I really hope he finds his, but I'll be damned if he thinks he can have mine.

After convincing Cara to leave her car, we head to the memorial. I can tell when we arrive that she's nervous. Never having had

to live without my parents, I can't imagine what it is like for her. But I plan to be by her side and support her in any way she

needs.

When we walk up to the memorial, Cara stops and looks around. "You and your mother placed all these flowers?" She asks me.

I point over to a section just off to the side of the memorial. "I believe that group in front is from your father. And those around the

back are probably from other pack members giving their respects. These on the sides are from my mother and I."

I begin to walk toward the memorial, taking her hand and pulling her along with me as she takes it in. There are many people in

the pack that loved Lily Nelson.

From what my mother said, she was a wonderful person with a beautiful soul. She touched so many lives in our pack.

I let go of Cara's hand and walk up to the memorial. Following in my mother's footsteps, I place my hand on the angel's folded

hands. "Thank you, Mrs. Nelson, for your sacrifice. Mom told you we'd never forget, and we never will." I add my own part to the

end. "I am keeping my promise to you. I will make sure that she is always safe."

Cara walks up to me. "What was that? What promise?"

Before answering, I take my flowers and make room at the foot of the stone statue for both of our vases. I place the flowers and

stand, looking back up at Lily's angel.

My mind takes me back to that moment as I tell Cara. "The day your mother died, we were under attack and my mother tried to

get us to the bunker, but we didn't make it. We were cut off and were about to be attacked. Your mother came out of nowhere,

taking out the other pack's warriors. I can remember it so clearly. She was incredible. I'd never seen anyone as fierce as her." I

stop and look at Cara. Until you." I swallow hard as I go back to the memory.

"She took down so many wolves, but they just kept coming and at one point, she was so severely injured, that she shifted back. I



think she knew that she wasn't going to make it. My mother had shifted and was fighting as well. However, you know my mother,

she's not a warrior. But she was holding her own to protect me. Your mother looked me right in the eye."

My mind takes me back in time and I'm there, in the battle, seeing Lily dying in front of me, hearing my mother's wolf snarling

from somewhere behind me. 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."

Cara's gasp pulls me out of the memory. "It was the last thing she ever said. I'm not even sure my mother knows she said it to

me. I never told anyone. It scared me. But before her eyes dimmed, I promised her. I promised your mother that I would always

keep you safe." I chuckle humorlessly. "I'm guessing she didn't realize her daughter would be a Guardian too."

I turn to Cara and take her hands in mine. "So you see, I have a promise to keep. I must ensure your safety. It's not just the

Alpha in me, or the love that I feel blossoming in my heart for you, but I must keep my promise to your mother."

I cup her face in my hand, loving that she leans into my touch. I lean forward and gently kiss her lips. I can feel the tears hanging

in the corners of her eyes. I take my thumbs and wipe them away before they can fall. I pull back to rub my nose.

+15 BONOS

against hers. "Don't cry love."

She sniffs and pulls herself together. She sets her flowers down beside mine. "Do you mind if I take a moment with my mother

alone before we leave?"

"Of course not. I'll wait for you at the car."

When I get to the car, I lean against it waiting for Cara. I think back to that day. There was something in Lily's eyes, in the way

she told me to take care of Cara. It was like she knew. Like she knew that Cara and I would be mates. There's no way she could

have known, but somehow, I think she did.

## Chapter 120

When Rik heads back to the car, I take a moment to look at my mother's memorial. "I miss you mom. I really wish you were here

so I could talk to you about everything that is going on. I don't know what to do. I don't know what the right choices are. Dad is

great, but he's not you.

I close my eyes and imagine that she's standing here next to me. What would she say?

'Follow your heart. It won't steer you wrong.'

I swear it's almost like she's standing beside me. Like I can feel her presence. I'm sure it's because I want to feel it so badly, but

it's comforting. I open my eyes. Thanks mom. I love you."

I head back to the car. Rik kisses my head as he opens my door. I slide in and we head to the pack house. Now I'm nervous for a

different reason. I've never eaten at the packhouse. From what I understand, it's always full of pack members getting together.

Even those that don't live in the packhouse are welcome to join in at any meal. The result is a very loud, very busy cafeteria type

atmosphere, similar to what we have at school.

When we get out, Rik takes my hand. I know I haven't accepted being his girlfriend officially, but no matter what happens on

Monday, I'm going to say yes. I'm going to listen to my mother's advice and follow my heart. But since I really want to spar with

him, I'm not going to tell him that until after our match up on Monday.

When we walk into the dining hall, the room goes quiet. I immediately regret agreeing to come here. Why is everyone staring at

me?

"Cara!" I look up to see Luna Calista beaming at me. She has started walking toward us.

“Luna Calista, how lovely to see you.” I force a smile on my face, but I know it must look fake. I’m just hoping I don’t look like I

feel, like I want to throw up.

I feel Rik’s thumb making circles on the back of my hand and I look up at him. He’s smiling down at me. I instantly feel better. I’m

not on my own trying to navigate this new experience. He’s here and I know he’ll stay by my side until I feel comfortable.

Luna Calista comes up and hugs me. “It’s so good to see you. Rik said you’d be coming by tonight, but I wasn’t willing to believe

it until I saw it with my own

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eyes. Will you join us at our table?”

She points to a table where Anders, Chase, Charles and some other ranked wolves are sitting. “Of course.”

Luna Calista pulls me away from Rik, who rolls his eyes. She steers me to the table and sits me next to her. “Mother, you can’t

hog her for the whole meal.”

“Nonsense. If you want to sit closer, have Chase move.” Chase stops mid-bite, looking up at Rik like he’d be nuts to make him

move. Rik jerks his thumb and Chase huffs before moving down a seat. Now I’m seated between Rik and Luna Calista.

An omega comes over and asks what I’d like for dinner. “Ummm, what are my options?” I ask.

“Anything you want dear, our kitchen staff are adept at making everything.”

I look at Rik, but he’s just smiling at me. I turn back to Luna Calista. “What would you recommend Luna?”

“Please, call me Calista or Cali like your mother did. And I’m a sucker for Italian.” I see the omega smiling behind her back.

Apparently, it’s well known that our Luna has a weakness for Italian food.