

Broken Warrior 161

Chapter 161

“Sebastian, what have you brought me?”

“Sire” He kneels, dragging me to the floor with him. He looks up at the prince. “I have found one.”

The prince’s eyes dart back to me, going wild with lust. “Are you sure?” he asks,

his voice covetous.

Sebastian grabs my arm, holding it out to the prince. “Taste her for yourself. I only had enough to ensure I was right about her.

She took out four of our coven before I was able to stop her. That’s how I knew.”

Without taking his eyes off me, the prince stalks over, grabbing my arm and running his nose across my wrist. His eyes close but

not before I see the hunger in them. His fangs come out and almost gently, he slides them into my wrist.

The moment he tastes my blood, his eyes go red and his grip on my arm tightens painfully. He begins to groan lewdly while

sucking my blood. He finally tears himself away.

“She is untouched, pure.” His vulgar purr has bile rising in my throat. He raises his voice over the cacophony in the room. “No

one touches her but me.”

He looks back at Sebastian. “We have a new batch coming in tomorrow. You may have first choice of the feeders. For now,” He

runs a finger down my cheek. I attempt to pull away but Sebastian holds my head in place. “I will take you to your room. I want to

keep you close.”

He grabs my arm and pulls me to my feet. He looks at Sebastian. “You did well, go find something to eat and take your pleasure.

Find me when you are done.”

Sebastian nods and as I’m pulled away, I see him to go to a cage I hadn’t noticed before. There are humans cowering and

whimpering inside. He opens the door and finds a boy, he can’t be older than 5, pulling him out. The boy screams as Sebastian

sinks his fangs into his neck, practically ripping his head off before throwing him aside and grabbing an adult woman this time.

The prince takes me to a room that is beautifully decorated. It's so different than the rest of the dark and gloomy castle. This

room is white and airy. "This will be your room from now on. Do not try to leave. The walls are lined with silver." He walks up to

me, sliding his hand down my hair, pulling the duct tape off my mouth. "You will be treated well here. I will not allow others to feed

on you, I will not allow anyone to defile you. I want your delicious blood to remain untainted as

it is today, just for me."

He gestures around the room. "While you are in this room, you may do as you like. If you want books, you need only to ask. You

will be provided three meals a day, heavy on the iron as I will require your blood daily. You will have everything you want or need

within reason."

"And if I refuse?" I ask him. Does he think that this is some great honor for me?

He turns to look at me. "I am putting you here in recognition of your status as a Guardian. The elite of the werewolf and in some

ways, even more elite than other supernaturals. But do not think that I will not take all of this away and keep you.

the cells with the other blood bags if you offend me. Your life can be much worse than it will be. Cross me and maybe I grow tired

of you and give you to my coven to allow them to feed on you. I promise, they will not be as gentlemanly as I am."

With that, he tosses me a key to my restraints and walks out the door, locking me in my well decorated prison.

The trauma of the day and the mental echos of the screams from the feeding room have exhausted me and I fall onto the bed.

The horrible sounds and things I have witnessed today will haunt me for the rest of my life.

One month ago

Five months. Five months I'd been searching for Eli Gunnar and I finally have him cornered. He's wily, I'll give him that, but he

won't get away from me this

time.

I'm sitting outside a seedy hotel off of Interstate-10 in fucking No Where's Ville Texas. I'm ready to snag this asshole and finally

get him back home. We have the place surrounded. We've laid eyes on him and we've made up a story to the 15 year old human

idiot running the front desk about us being US Marshalls and this guy being on the run. Whatever. That's just so the cops aren't

called giving him a chance to sneak away like he did the last time.

As I watch, he comes out his door, looking around before closing it behind him. He has his bag over his shoulder. Looks like he's

about to move again. We caught up to him just in time.

My guys move in and surround him. He throws his bag to the ground and prepares to fight, but they shoot several darts of

wolfsbane and it only takes a minute for him to drop. I get out of the car and walk over to him. He's still conscious when I grab his

hair pulling his face up to mine. "Got you, you sack of shit. Now you will pay for what you have done."

I've had Eli in my dungeons for nearly a month. For the first week, I didn't even ask him anything, just used him as a punching

bag. I have so much pent-up

anger

and frustration and he's the perfect asshole to take it out on. All of my rage of being alone most of my life, my frustration at losing

Cara, my annoyance at having to choose a Luna that I don't feel is worthy of the title because I can't find my fated me, all of that

comes out when I walk into that dungeon room.

It's surprising, really, that I haven't killed him yet. The man can take a beating, that's for sure. I've started to wonder if he has

some alpha blood in him. I'm not sure my own Beta could have lasted this long.

I wipe his blood from my hands and turn to him. "Why did you do it?"

It's the same question I've asked him every day for the past three weeks. Why did he kill my mother?

His answer is always the same. "I didn't kill her."

I look at him, his arms are restrained by silver cuffs over his head to a bolt in the ceiling. He is hanging, his feet dragging on the ground, unable to hold himself up.

"Wrong answer. You were found holding her dead and bloodied body. Why did you do it?"

He lifts his head, one eye completely swollen shut, the other barely a slit. "I didn't do it. I told you, I didn't do it."

"Right, because you're such a stand-up guy. Is that why you tried to force Cara Nelson into a mate bond? Because you're such

a great person?"

"What I did to Cara was wrong and I admit that. She didn't deserve what I did to her and I will pay my penance for that, but I

didn't kill your mother."

I punch him in the gut. "Kind of hard to deny what you did to Cara. You were a little too obvious about that one. But you were

found with my mother's body in your arms. Her dead body." I grab his hair, pulling his head up so he has to look at me. "So just

admit it. After all this time, aren't you tired of denying what you did? Just admit it and I can end this torture. I'll give you a quick

death. Continue to deny it, and this," I gesture around the room, "will continue."

He looks at me, spitting blood at my feet. "I. Did. Not. Do. It." He enunciates each word.

"Fine. Have it your way." I lay into him for another 20 minutes before he's unconscious.

"Unhook him, give him enough food and water to keep him alive." I tell the guards watching him.

"Contact me if anything

changes."

I head upstairs. The dungeons are in the basement under the packhouse. They have reinforced walls and ceilings so that

anything that happens down here cannot be heard outside these walls. Werewolves are violent by nature, but that doesn't mean

that pups and pregnant mothers need to hear me beating the shit

out of someone.

When I get to the top of the stairs, I find Dustin waiting for me. "What's up?" I ask.

He looks me over before turning. "I'll walk with you to your room, looks like you could use a shower." I look down at myself. I'm

covered in blood. I hadn't even realized it. I quickly look up to see that there is no one in the part of the packhouse. I would need to be more careful.

Chapter 163

Dustin gives me an update on warrior training, patrols, and rogue attacks as we walk to my room.

I still feeling like something is crawling under my skin. The feeling has been getting worse lately. I had thought that capturing Eli

would help. When it didn't, I had hoped that beating the shit out of him and getting a confession would help. The confession

hasn't come but the beatings have done nothing to ease this feeling.

I hop in the shower as Dustin continues to update me on the pack status. When I get out, he's looking at me and I don't like the

look in his eyes. "What?" I ask.

"You know what. You're crashing Liam. You're starting down the road to going feral. You need to choose a Luna and take a mate.

You can't continue this pace alone."

"I had a Luna." I snarl at him. "She didn't want me."

"Wrong." He says. He's the only member of my pack that is able to challenge me and get away with it. It's because he'll

challenge me that he's my Beta. "She chose her fated mate. If he hadn't been her mate, you don't know what her choice would

have been. It's been six months Liam. It's time to start thinking about who would make a good mate for you and Luna for this

pack.'

I turn to him, slamming my fist on the bathroom counter. "You don't think I know that? You don't think I've looked? That I've tried

to find someone who I think is worthy to run this pack with me? I started running this pack long before I became Alpha. I know

the pressure, the responsibility that comes with this job. Do you think there is a she-wolf in this pack that could handle that?

Handle me?"

"What about Alpha Christopher's daughter? She's an alpha by blood. She's been trained to be a Luna all her life." He says

quietly.

I look at him like he has two heads. "That meek, mild little thing? How the hell am I supposed to take someone like that to my

bed? I need a partner, someone that can match me in strength, someone who is fierce, not just a Luna who orders. napkins

when we run out." I push past him, walking into my closet to get dressed.

"I'm going into the city to find someone to stick my dick in. Someone not from our pack. Tomorrow..."

I'm cut off as the patrols mind link both Dustin and me. "Alpha, Beta. We have a breach at the border."

"Rogues?" Dustin asks.

"Well, it's A rogue, but you need to come."

"Xavior, you can't handle a single rogue on your own?"

"It's not that Beta. Please, can one of you just come, or better yet, both of you."

Dustin and I look at each other. "I'll take care of it." He says, but I'm already shaking my head.

"I'll come."

We head out, jogging to the border where the breach has happened. We're almost there when the most delicious scent of

raspberries and cream hits my nose. Cyran, who has been mostly quiet since Cara's birthday, sits up in my head. Cyran?'

He doesn't say anything, but I can feel his interest in this rogue. As we walk to where they have the prisoner, I can see that one

of my men has a woman in his arms. As soon as I see her, a vicious snarl erupts from of my chest. Cyran pushes forward taking

an aggressive stance pack mate. Dustin moves in front of me. "Alpha?" He asks.

Et Our

"Mate." Cyran says before pushing past Dustin and snatching her out of Xavior's arms.

I look down at the small, frail girl in my arms. Her skin is so pale it's almost opaque. Her white hair is in tangles around her face.

Her face is gaunt as if she hasn't eaten in too long. From what I can see around the jacket that is her only clothing, her body is

riddled with puncture wounds.

'Cyran, is she human?'

I pull her closer, inhaling her scent. 'No, she's not human, but her wolf is silent, absent.'

It wouldn't matter if she was human. She's my mate, the one the Moon Goddess made for me. I don't care who or what she is,

she's mine now.

Her scent, her delicious scent, has immediately eased the uncomfortable feeling that has been eating at me for months. It's like

my body just remembered that it belongs inside my skin and has stopped fighting against itself. A peace that I've never felt

before washes over me.

"Mate." I repeat.

Chapter 164

Current Day

I've lost track of how many years I have been in this hell. The feeding room, aptly named on my first night, is where I am taken

every night. Every night the humans are brought in to feed on. Every missing person that is never found, every runaway child,

even many of the individuals that are trafficked are captured and killed by vampires.

The night after I arrived, Sebastian chose his feeder. Surprisingly, he didn't kill her. She has been here as long as I have.

Unfortunately for her, he has no problem raping her while he's feeding. She stopped crying a long time ago. Most of the humans

don't survive the first night. If they do, they never survive the second. I've been forced to watch every day as men, women,

children, elderly, it doesn't matter, they are brought in, used, fed on and in some instances when the vampires become overcome

with bloodlust, ripped apart.

The sounds of screaming, crying, pleading, and dying have become the music that I am forced to listen to day after endless day.

There was only one time when I was given a reprieve from being fed on. When another vampire coven came to visit, Prince

Keenan thought to share me with the royalty of the visiting coven. I nearly died from the loss of blood. Prince Keenan had to kill

the other vampire in order to get him off me, ripping him away from my neck, barely missing my carotid artery.

I was given three days to rest. The only three days of rest I've had since I arrived here so many years ago. Sometimes when I'm

being fed on, I wonder what it is that I've done to deserve this. My life has been anything but easy. Alessia is rarely in my head

anymore. In the beginning, she was strong and able to heal me quickly. Over time, my bite marks have started to scar, and she is

only able to heal the worst of my puncture wounds. The marks are everywhere on my body, wherever Prince Keenan chooses to

feed on me. They are on my arms, my legs, my breasts, my inner thighs, my backside. Anywhere and everywhere he has

wanted to feed on me he has.

I learned early on not to fight it. If I fight him, he kills someone. He won't hurt me, he won't kill me. In some ways he's become

addicted to my blood. So, he won't do anything to me. But he makes sure I know that whatever he does to someone else is

because I defied him. So, I learned not to defy him.

It doesn't mean he doesn't kill. He does, almost every night. I just know that there is nothing that I can do to prevent it.

The massive orgies that take place nightly are disgusting to watch. Vampires really do love to have sex with whoever they are

feeding on. They don't care how much they hurt them. Most seem to prefer it if their food is in pain. The crying and screaming

seems to only incite them in their blood lust.

Sebastian's girl is the only one that is different. She and I have created a bond. After the second night, I realized that Sebastian

wasn't going to kill her. He didn't mind hurting her, he raped her nightly as he fed on her, but he never injured her so badly that it

killed her. She eventually ended up in a room similar to mine. I've seen her as we are being escorted to the feeding room at

night.

She had been there several months before we made eye contact. Maybe it was because I needed a distraction, maybe because

she was the only one to have survived so long. Maybe we were both curious about the only other person in the room that was

left alive night after night. She had given up crying and pleading. She, like me, learned to take it and get through it.

On this night, Prince Keenan was between my legs, feeding on my inner thigh, his disgusting tongue licking me. He had

someone bent over and was raping them as he fed on me, one hand holding them down, the other holding my thigh to his

mouth. I could hear the sounds of their pain and suffering as he continued his relentless pounding, grunting his pleasure as he

fed on me.

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I was searching for an escape from the madness, when my eyes locked with hers. Sebastian had her up against the wall,

feeding on her while he pounded into her. We stared at each other, holding onto the others' gaze like a lifeline. As she looked at

me, she silently said, "I'm here." My heart fluttered and I returned her words with my own silent words, "You're not alone."

It became our nightly routine. We'd lock eyes and when our vampires were busy, we'd mouth those words to each other. I think

that may have been the only thing that kept me alive, kept me going. Especially once I could no longer hear Alessia. I felt so

alone until that moment.

"Guardian." Prince Keenan purrs in his vulgar way. "I require more blood

tonight, take off your top." While the prince did not ever rape me, and he did not let any of the other vampires touch me, he did

find repulsive ways to make his feeding sexual. Tonight would be no different. He had an insatiable appetite, some nights taking

three or more humans, usually killing all of them as he fed.

I do as he asks, removing the ridiculous excuse of a top. It barely covers me and is see through. When I take it off, he grabs me,

pulling me to him, sinking his fangs into my breast so that his foul tongue can lick my nipple while he feeds. He grabs another

female and forces himself inside her mouth. I know how this will go. I saw it the first night I was here. And it's something he

seems to get off on.. Strangling a woman by suffocating her during his orgasm. When his eyes close in his lust, I look for my

friend, my only lifeline in this hellhol

I find her, her eyes had already found me. We mouth our words back and forth to each other. Our eyes locked on each other, our

only sanity.

Just as the prince is about to finish, there is a loud bang at the front of the castle. The doors fly open and gas canisters are

thrown into the room.

The vampires are immediately up and running to counteract the intrusion. Wooden darts and bullets go flying across the room.

Vampires start dropping, aging and turning to dust in front of my face. I'm too shocked to move. I stay where I am waiting for

death to come. I'm surprised when someone throws a jacket over my shoulders. "You're okay now. We're here to rescue you.

You can come with me. You're safe."

The man says this even though there is still screaming all around the room. I see others gathering up the humans and helping to

get them out, the vampires running, trying to escape the bullets that are still whizzing around the room.

I'm taken outside and it's the first time I've been outside in all the years I've been here. I was able to open the window in my

room, but it had silver bars and I wasn't able to escape. Tears well up in my eyes, as I realize that I've been released from my

hellish prison. The man that has escorted me out of the building helps me into a truck. I'm given some oxygen and laid on a

stretcher." The medics will be here to check on you in a minute. Just stay here, you are safe now."

"Wait." I say, wanting to know who these people are that have saved me. "Who are you?"

He smiles kindly at me. "We're from a guild of hunters. We hunt the supernatural and kill them. You don't have to worry, we're

very good at what we do." He pats my hand before stepping out of the truck.

Hunters? I've gone from one hell to another. If they find out what I am, they will kill me, or worse, imprison me and keep me as

their lab rat. I need to get out of here.

I go to stand and see another person on a stretcher next to me. She reaches out her hand and clasps mine. She pulls her

oxygen mask away from her face. It's my friend. "Go, I don't know what you are, but I know you're not human. I'll cover for you.

Go."

Chapter 166

"What's your name?" I ask her.

"Sarah. Now go, your secret is safe with me, Guardian." She stresses the word. Guardian is the only thing that anyone called me

here, so that is what she knows

me as.

I thank her before checking to see if anyone is around. It's chaos and everyone is running, either hunting vampires or bringing

people out to the trucks. I hop out. of the truck and skirt around several others, keeping to the shadows until I get to a forest line.

Once I hit the forest, I run.

I've been running for days. I've found water easily, rinsing off the smell of the vampires and the left over blood from my last night

with the vampires. Food, however, has been impossible for me to find. Without Alessia to hunt for me, and in my weakened

state, I haven't been able to catch anything. I've found some berries and some other plants that I can eat to keep me alive, but

nothing substantial enough to keep up the pace that I need in order to get far away from

my past.

At night, I find caves or trees to climb trying to keep myself safe from large predators or vampires that may be out running from

the hunters as well.

Based on the direction of the sun rising and setting, I'm heading south. I remember all those years ago, that my family had been

heading north and that is what brought us into vampire territory. I don't know where the coven was in relation to where we were

found, but south seemed as good an option as any, and I've kept to that direction. Eventually, I'll get to the ocean, if I survive that

long.

I've been walking today. It's been a day since I had water and too many days to count since I've had a real meal. I'm ready to sit

down and rest when I hear the sound that I haven't heard in years. The howl of a wolf. It's not just any howl, it's the sound of a

wolf on the hunt.

I don't know if it is hunting me, or if I'm just in the vicinity of where it is hunting, but when I hear others taking up the hunt, I begin

to run. I know I can't outrun them, but maybe, maybe if I can find a lake or river, I can swim to safety.

How do I keep getting into these situations? First vampires, then hunters, now werewolves. I'm so tired, maybe it's not worth the

fight anymore. I could be with my parents again. There would be no more pain, no more suffering.

1/2

I hear the pounding of paws closing in on me. I'm running as fast as I can, darting around trees and bushes until I run right into a

clearing. I only get a couple of steps when three wolves come out of the woods from the other side. I stop dead in my tracks. I'm

about to turn and run in a different direction when I hear another two come up behind me.

"Please." I beg. I don't even know what I'm begging for, I just know that I don't want to be caught and imprisoned again. "Please,

no." I say before exhaustion takes over and the darkness sinks in.

Chapter 167

I carry my mate to the alpha floor. I've been the only person living on this floor since my mother died when I was 6 years old. My

father wouldn't set foot up here again after her death and moved into a dwelling away from the packhouse. He gave me the

choice and I stayed here, preferring to live in familiar surroundings to living with my grieving father.

I've mind linked the pack doctor to meet me here and I make my way to the room across the hall from mine. I don't know if she

will recognize me as her mate, so I want her to have her own space until she is healed and we can talk.

I lay her down on the bed as Dr. Phillips knocks. "Alpha?"

"Dr. Phillips, come in." She comes over to the bed and takes in the state of my mate. She immediately begins setting up her

medical supplies. "Alpha, can you take off her jacket and any other clothes she's wearing while I get set up?"

I see Dustin hovering in the doorway and I growl at him. "No males on this floor until I say so."

He backs away and Dr. Phillips looks at me curiously.

I take off the jacket and see that she's not wearing anything else underneath. A vicious snarl rips from my mouth when I see the

state of her body. She is covered in bite marks. I hear the doctor gasp behind me and turn to her. "Are those...?" I ask.

She nods. "Vampire bites." She walks slowly to the bed, taking in the multiple scars and punctures in various stages of healing.

They are everywhere. "Oh this poor woman. Where did you find her?"

"She stumbled across our border and passed out."

She looks at me. "Do we know of any active vampire covens in the area?" I shake my head. As she begins her initial exam, I

mind link Dustin. "Find out everything you know about vampires in a hundred mile radius."

"Yes Alpha." I cut the mind link as the doctor looks at me. "Help me roll her over."

I snarl again when I see that her back is no better than her front. Cyran is thrashing in my head that someone would do this to

our mate.

Dr. Phillips puts an IV into her arm and begins giving her fluids. She takes blood and looks at me. "I need to test her blood and

see if it can tell us anything. On

examination, I can tell you she's dehydrated, malnourished and I would guess anemic and low on blood platelets."

She looks at my mate and then at me. "Does

know if she has a wolf?"

"Cyran said her wolf is dormant." I answer her without taking my eyes off this frail girl. How can this small woman be my fated

mate. She looks like she will break if I touch her.

"Is she...?" Dr. Phillips asks, wanting to know if she's my mate. I nod my head before looking at her. "Yes, but only a few people

know that, and I want to keep it that way.

“Yes, Alpha.” She says before packing up her things. “I’ll take her blood, test it and be back when I have results and will check

her again then. Contact me if anything changes in the meantime.”

I nod and pull up a chair. I’ll be staying here tonight, keeping watch over my girl. As she leaves, Dr. Phillips turns to look at me.

“Congratulations Alpha.”

“Let’s wait to congratulate me until we save her.” I tell the doctor. Looking at her, I’m not sure this woman will survive the night.

As I settle in to keep vigil over my fragile mate, Dustin mind links me. “Alpha.”

“What did you find out?” I ask, wanting to know how close the risk is to our pack. If she escaped a coven, they may be looking for

her and I want to be ready. Vampires and werewolves don’t cross paths very often, but when we do, it usually ends in a bloody

mess.

“There are some covens in a one–hundred–mile radius. I didn’t hear anything in particular about them searching for a missing

girl.” I sigh, I was hoping for more. “However, I expanded the search and nearly 170 miles north of us, there was a coven that

was raided by hunters about nine days ago. From what I hear, they were killing a lot of humans which put them on the hunter’s

radar. From the little I have gotten so far, it sounds like the coven prince had a favorite blood bag.” He stops, I wait him out. “It

sounds like this girl.”

Chapter 168

“Do we know the status of the coven and if this prince escaped the hunters?” I ask.

“Not

yet, I just wanted to let you know what I found. Are you still going into the city tonight?” He asks me. I look at my mate. I won’t be

going into the city looking for someone to warm my bed ever again. I finally found her and no matter what I have to do, I’m going

to make sure that she never leaves..

“No, I’ll be staying here. If you find out anything else, link me.

After a couple of hours, the doctor returns. Her initial assessment was correct. "Alpha. We can give her blood but we've never

had to do that with a werewolf before. I don't know if she will accept it."

I shake my head. "Let's see what her body will do to heal her before we take those drastic measures."

A week goes by, and my little mate hasn't opened her eyes. Dr. Phillips says that she is healing slowly. Having me by her side,

even if she doesn't feel the mate bond, is helping her.

I've barely left her side. I've had Dustin bring me anything that needs my attention. I only allow him and Dr. Phillips on this floor. I

still haven't decided what to tell the pack, but until she wakes up, I don't want anyone disturbing her.

When Dr. Phillips arrives for her morning check, I leave to shower and change clothes. I mind link Dustin asking if there is

anything that needs my attention.

"What do you want us to do with Eli Gunnar?"

I haven't been back down to the dungeons since my mate arrived. I don't want to leave her right now. Her medical condition has

been tenuous, and I wouldn't forgive myself if something happened while I was away from her.

"Let him sit for now. I need to focus on her. Make sure he's got enough food and water to stay alive, otherwise he can wait."

"Yes Alpha." He doesn't close the mind link, so I know there's something else.

"What is it, Dustin?"

"I got more information on the vampire coven up north. The vampire prince and some of his top men escaped the hunters. From

what I've heard, he and his nest

mates took over a weaker coven and that he is gaining in power."

He hesitates again and I growl at him through the link. "Get to the point."

"The word is that they are looking for two women. One is described as pale with white hair. The bounty on her safe return to the

vampire prince is 5 million dollars.”

I stop mid-step. Five million dollars? For a werewolf? Vampires don't even like our taste. They don't feed on us at all. I've heard

they describe our taste as muddy garbage. So then, why is a vampire prince after my mate?

“Double the patrols. I want to know the instant anyone picks up a strange scent.” I think about it. “Have you ever smelled a

vampire before?” I ask my Beta.

“Just once, and it's not a smell you forget. It's a disgusting sickly sweet smell.”

“Did you happen to smell it on my mate when we found her?”

“No offense Alpha, you didn't really let any of us get close enough to her, but I'll ask Xavier if he noticed anything off about her

scent before we got there.”

“Alert the patrol to be on the hunt for that scent. If they come across it anywhere near our territory or the human city, they are to

inform you and I immediately.”

“Yes Alpha.”

The mind link closes, and I finish getting dressed, trying to figure out why a vampire would be so interested in my mate. What is it

about her? Cyran can feel that she has a wolf, so her taste should be repugnant to the vampires.

My mind is filled with these thoughts as I return to her room, my nameless mate. Because I'm so deep in my thoughts, it takes

me a moment to realize that her eyes are open and she's staring at me wide-eyed. As I watch, the fear I see is replaced with a

look of dread and resolve.

Chapter 169

I'm back in hell. The screams, the fear, the blood, it surrounds me. How did I end up back here? I thought I had escaped. I

thought I was free. I try to remember what happened, but I can't. My senses are overwhelmed by the sounds and smell of the

feeding room.

The panic I feel only intensifies as I look around and I don't see my friend. Sarah. How do I know her name? I can't remember,

but she's not here. It's only me and all of the dying humans. Maybe I'm dead. This isn't where I expected to end up. I thought I'd

be with my parents, someplace safe.

Almost as if the Moon Goddess heard me, I catch the scent of the forest. The scent. that I loved so long ago when mother and I

would walk around, gathering plants and herbs. The scent gets stronger when suddenly, it surrounds me and I am no longer in

the vampire's den, but I'm back in the woods.

I'm still alone, but it feels safe here. It reminds me a better time, when things were good in my life. I begin walking around, not

really knowing where I am or where I'm going. I find a sunny spot and lay down in the sun. I'm so tired, and the sun feels so good

on my skin that I fall asleep.

I wake up again in the forest. I look around me. I'm still alone but the feeling safety is still here. I take a deep breath. I forgot how

much I love the smell of the forest. The fresh air, the slight scent of pine, the clean scent of the earth after a rain. I can smell it all

and it makes my heart soar.

If I'm dead, shouldn't my parents be here? I stand and begin calling for them. I walk around continuing my search. But they are

not here. There are only the sounds forest, birds chirping, a stream nearby bubbling as the water passes over rocks, crickets and

frogs singing their songs in the grass.

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

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

just me and nature.

Then one day, I hear something. A voice, from far off. I quietly follow the sound trying to find the source. It's a masculine voice

and it's the most attractive voice I've ever heard. There is something about it that draws me in.

I hear a soft purring sound in my head. "Alessia?" There is no response, but the purr increases a bit. "Oh Alessia. If you can hear

me, I've missed you so much. I love you. I'm trying to figure out where we are and maybe you can get stronger.

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

This continues off and on, until one day, I hear a feminine voice talking to the masculine voice. Alessia growls in my head. 'What

is it girl? Is it danger?' I ask my wolf.

It doesn't feel like danger, it feels like....jealousy. That's odd. Why would Alessia or I feel jealous over two people talking. The

masculine voice stops and the smell of the forest around me dims. The feminine voice continues, and I feel a strange tugging on

my arms. When the tugging has stopped and the sounds of the woman are gone, Alessia quietly says 'Wake up.'

'Alessia? Alessia are you back?'"

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

Chapter 170

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

'Open your eyes.'

I didn't realize that my eyes were closed, but as soon as she says it, I open them. I'm no longer in the forest. I'm in a room, lying

on a bed. As I look around, I see that I am attached to some sort of line that is dripping something into my body. I immediately

reach up and rip it out. I pull it to my nose. It smells like saline. I don't smell any poison or wolfsbane in it.

I feel weak, but I need to figure out where I am. This room isn't the one I've been living in at the vampire coven. This one feels

softer, nicer...safer. What a weird word for a bedroom. Clean, tidy, comfortable, those are words to describe a room. Safe is not

one of them and I am not safe. I don't know where I am, but I know that I have to get out of here before someone finds me

awake.

I start to get up when I realize that I am naked. Yep, definitely not safe. Looking down at my body, I can still see the remnants of

that last night in the feeding room. The wounds are healing and don't look like they will scar as badly as some of the others.

Maybe Alessia is getting stronger and is helping me to heal.

Before I have a chance to figure out what I want to do, I hear footsteps in the hallway. I immediately lay back down, pulling the

blankets back up and over me to cover myself as much as I can. I have no intention of meeting a stranger naked.

When he walks in, he is a giant of a man. His size and build immediately remind me of my father. His hair is a sandy blond color.

It probably gets lighter when he's in the sun. His eyes are a beautiful shade of green. It reminds me of when my mother and I

would find wild sage in the woods. And his scent. Oh goddess, his scent is of the forest. It's the same scent that pulled me out of

my hellish nightmare and placed me into the forest. It's wild and clean and familiar. I take a deep breath, wanting to smell more

and that's when I get the scent. The scent of an alpha.

I catch the whiff of his alpha aura just before his eyes latch onto mine. I immediately grab hold of the fear that is threatening to

drown me and pull it back. I know how to manage fear. I've become adept at managing my terror. I shut it down. I pull all

emotions back and wait for what is to come. I know I can handle it, no matter what it is.

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

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

in store for me now.

He watches me as he slowly moves toward me, as if he's afraid to spook me. "My name is Liam. You stumbled into my pack over

a week ago. You were near death and my doctor has been taking care of you." His eyes track to my arm that is bleeding from

where I ripped the catheter out. I swear I can hear him sigh.

"We were giving you IV fluids and some liquid nutrition as you were dehydrated and malnourished when you arrived. You were

also low on blood and your blood platelets were low, which is probably why your blood isn't clotting. Here." He goes to take my

arm and I instinctively jerk it back, holding it against my body..

He growls softly at me. "I'm not a leech. Your blood is of no interest to me, except I don't want you bleeding out after I've

expended so much energy to keep you alive." He puts his hand out. "Give me your arm." It's not a request and I don't really have

any other options.