

The Broken Warrior's Daughter

Chapter 5: Cara

When I arrive home, my father is ready for me. I think when I'm at school, he sets up the training for the evening. He has a variety of training sprints that he puts me through. He mixes it up every day and I never know what it will be. Sometimes, it's focusing on balance in case I lose the use of a leg or arm in battle and have to fight with a broken or injured limb; sometimes it's sensory deprivation, in case I have to rely on my sight or sound only. He's even taken both of those away and had me fight with only my sense of touch, taste and instincts. That was miserable. I got knocked down more that day than any other. But, it's all good training and makes me the best and strongest fighter that I can be.

"Hey dad." I state as I walk over to the table and drop off my backpack before leaning over and kissing his cheek.

"Hi honey, how was your day?"

"Good. Classes are getting harder as we head into the end of the year, but it's all good."

"Still getting straight A's?" he asks. My studies are just as important as my fighting skills.

'You can't just rely on the muscles in your arms and legs Cara, you have to use the muscle that's in your head as well.' He's made sure that I focus my studies on anatomy, physiology and chemistry. The latter is so, if I'm ever poisoned, I can identify the poison and find what I need to heal myself.

Some of my training over the years has been to have my father give me poison so I can see what happens to my body and how I react. He is always very careful to ensure that he has the correct antidote and the pack doctor on alert and ready on speed dial in case something goes wrong.

While I don't love those training days, and usually feel like crap the rest of the evening, sometimes longer, it is helpful and my father is always very careful. I've also been developing an immunity to wolfsbane for years. My tolerance is pretty high, I'm nearly immune now and dad continues to give me doses every day. My

werewolf healing burns it out of my system more quickly the more I become used to it.

Today's training session is agility. He's got me set up in an indoor course to complete in my human form. There is another one outside to complete in my human or wolf form. I have to find ways around the obstacles and "mines" that he lays for me. It's not just a test of my agility but also of my concentration and use of all of my senses to ensure that I'm quick but also cognizant of my surroundings at all times.

Today's training includes flying logs to knock me off my feet and attempt to incapacitate me, slippery and sharp hand and foot holds that are meant to make me fall so I have to ensure that I can find alternate ways to move forward even if I'm injured. For my wolf form, there are spaces that could trap me, flying knives that I have to dodge or push through the pain if I don't dodge fast enough and traps that drop from no where to try and capture me.

Dad and his wolf, Donovan, give both Artemis and I pointers and tricks as we go through our training. Artemis and I are worn out after training, as usual.

"Head up and shower before Alpha Anders gets here, and I'll get started on dinner." Dad finally releases us from training and I head up to shower. I stand under the hot water letting it work on my sore muscles.

'We're getting stronger every day,' Artemis says to me.

I smile, 'Yeah we are, as evidenced by what happened yesterday.' If a wolf could smile, Artemis would definitely be smiling right now. I know it's our legacy to be a Guardian, and my mom and dad gave me great genetics to get where I am today, but yeah, we totally kicked ass.

I hear the doorbell ring as I finish getting ready, putting on jeans and a comfy sweatshirt, pulling my hair up into a messy ponytail. Alpha Anders is like an uncle to me. Our dinners together became casual a long time ago.

I skip down the stairs of our house and go to open the door. "Hi Anders." He told me years ago that when he is here for dinner, that I don't need to use his title. After several reminders and getting my father's approval, I finally acquiesced.

I step back and let him in. “Dad’s out back getting the grill going. Can I get you a beer?”

“Thanks Little Badass, I’d love one.”

I roll my eyes, “Not you too!” I whine to my Alpha. He just smiles saying, “If the name fits...” Yeah, yeah.

“I’ll go join your dad and see if he needs any help.” He smirks at me when he says this. We both know my dad won’t let him do any of the work, but this is part of their weekly banter.

I grab a beer from the fridge, check to see if my dad needs one too and grab a second one for him. I pop the tops and take them out to our deck. Dad and Alpha Anders are discussing my training over the past week, Dad giving him the updates that he made for my training today. Alpha Anders looks at me and then asks my dad, “Did Cara tell you she has a new nickname?”

My dad looks at me and I roll my eyes so far back in my head that I’m pretty sure I see my brain.

“Well?” my dad looks at me expectantly.

“Apparently, my new nickname is Little Badass.”

My dad’s beer stops on its way to his mouth and he looks at Alpha Anders. “Is that so?” he asks. He turns his gaze back to me. “And what exactly did you do to get that name?”

“Weeeeeeeell,” I drag out the word giving Alpha Anders a side eye glance.

“She pinned me in 15 minutes,” Alpha Anders answers for me. A smile larger than any I’ve ever seen on my father’s face spreads wide and he looks at me with pride in his eyes.

“Apparently, the apple didn’t fall too far from the tree.” Alpha Anders continues.

My dad takes a swig of his beer. “That’s my girl,” he says quietly.

Alpha Anders looks at my father seriously. “Clint, I’ll say it again, we really need you at warrior training. I’m willing to beg if that’s what it takes.”

Dad huffs out a breath, “Anders, you know I can’t.” I smile and head back inside. This is a battle that has been going on for years. Alpha Anders wants dad back on the training field and dad feels he won’t bring enough to the pack.

For dinner, I am in charge of the vegetables. Dad put potatoes in the oven while I was showering, so I check those and start on my roasted brussel sprouts with bacon and a maple glaze. I’m pulling the potatoes out of the oven and putting the vegetables into a serving bowl when Dad and Anders come back in. I finish putting everything on the table, getting another beer for both men and we all sit down to eat.

Conversation is easy between Dad and Alpha Anders. They reminisce about old days, talk about pack issues, current warriors and techniques to teach and train younger members. Dad always asks about Luna Calista and Rik, and Anders always makes a point to ask me about my day, my life and what is going on with me. I don’t mention my recent interactions with his son, better that he doesn’t know that I’m not Rik’s biggest fan.

When dinner is over, I pull out the dessert that Anders brought. “Cali made her famous brownies for us today,” Anders tells us. I set them on the table and moan softly as the taste of chocolate fills my mouth. Luna Calista makes a mean brownie! The table gets quiet as we all enjoy the dessert and Dad asks Anders to thank Luna Calista for us.

When we’re done, I clear the dishes and wash up before excusing myself. Before I can give dad a kiss, Alpha Anders hands me an envelope. “This, I believe, is an invitation from my wife for you to attend Rik’s 18th birthday party next weekend. To say that she will be disappointed if you don’t attend would be an understatement.” Ugh.

I look at the envelope and open it. Yep, it’s an invitation for one week from this Saturday to attend the big event.

I plaster a fake smile on my face and look at my alpha, “I’d love to attend.” He smirks at me while dad laughs outright.

“Don’t look so glum honey, I’m sure you will have a good time.”

Alpha Anders looks at my dad and smiles. “I’m so glad to hear you say that Clint, because I have a special invitation for you to my son’s party. And I will take it personally if you do not attend.”

My father's laughter dies out instantly and he glares at Alpha Anders. I snicker and look at my dad, "Well, I guess you get to be my plus one dad."

I say goodnight to Dad and Alpha Anders and head up to start on my homework. They talk late into the evening, and I'm already in bed when I hear them saying goodbye and Anders telling Dad that he'll see him next week.