

Caged Between The Beta & Alpha By Moonlight Muse Chapter 8

8. A Walk In The Dark

RAVEN

Staying in was suffocating, so I did what I did best: I jumped out of the window and left. I was enjoying the fresh air; it was slightly chilly, but nothing that would affect us werewolves. I wrapped my arms around myself while walking along, glad I wore my suede thigh high boots. I was just walking around the edge of the trees when I heard someone crying hysterically. A child at that.

Concerned, I followed the sound only to find Liam wrestling a very upset Azura. Her face was a dark pink and she looked distraught.

"Need help?" I asked without thinking.

He stiffened before turning to me sharply. Goddess, he was so annoyingly handsome... Even while wrestling an angry, red faced, little cute chibi.

My stomach fluttered nervously, feeling undressed under his intense, sharp gaze that still threw me off.

It was like he was a stranger I didn't recognise. His eyes were burning into me, I saw them darken when they fell on my bare thighs. This stupid oversize top was ridiculously short, but I wasn't expecting to run into him... I resisted the urge to tug it down and instead remained smooth.

"Eyes up here, Westwood." I remarked.

I walked over, reaching up I took Azura from his arms. I hated this... the way my heart pounded when he was near. Oh, how I wished I could turn back time to when I had him as a friend without this bond... My heart clenched painfully and I instead focused on Azura, who began to fight me, screaming.

"I want Mama!"

"Mom and Dad have gone out and won't be back for a while." Liam added, only making her cry louder.

"Awe, Zuzu. Look Mama will come back soon!" I said, wrapping my arms around her tightly, only for her to scream harder.

I ignored the broody big boy behind me, turning and carrying her towards the playground.

"MAMA!" She screamed.

"What did you do?" I asked Liam, not even bothering to turn, knowing his eyes were fixed on me.

"Nothing. She had some fizzy drink and then she wanted to come out, so I brought her... Then she just got upset." He said in a broody tone. "It was probably the caffeine."

"I doubt it." I said sitting down on the swing. I placed her on my lap, wrapping my arms around her, her head on my shoulders as I began rocking her gently. "She was probably

overtired. I'm sure it must have been her bedtime."

"Yeah."

The hinges of the swing next to me creaked when Liam sat down gingerly.

I had never seen him sit on it before... When we were younger, he used to say he was Alpha and was too big for it. As I got older, I realised he used to just do it to let me and Kia take all the turns. Whilst Damon would push us...

Memories that pained me. I stroked Azura's back, rocking her gently, her crying decreasing despite the fact that she was still sniffling

The last time I had come here was that fateful night...

His beating heart, his scent and his long legs were unmissable even when I tried to ignore him.

"Shall I take her?" He spoke after a moment.

"Let her settle down." I said kissing the top of her head.

"She's falling asleep." He murmured.

I looked up at him, our eyes meeting, and that same crushing feeling tightened inside. The distant whimper of my wolf rang in my head.

This bond between us... I knew I needed to end it, but rejection would hurt both parties. If we were to do it, we needed to do it discreetly and then make sure we had time to recover.

There had been one promise I made to myself, that when I came home, I would reject them both. But with the scary murder and all the other stuff that had been going on, the timing just didn't feel right.

I sighed heavily, hearing Azura's heartbeat become steady.

"You actually got her to sleep."

"All she needed was a little comfort." I said standing up, I holding the child close to me.

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"Guess so..." He reached over, trying to untangle her from me, when she sobbed in her sleep and tightened her hold on me.

"I'll put her in her bed."

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He didn't argue, I had a feeling he was glad to have her off his hands:

"With what happened last night, you shouldn't be out alone."

"I'm strong enough to handle myself." I replied.

I did not need any of that. I was not a baby.

"Yeah, but with the killer still out there"

"I'm a big girl, Liam." I cut in.

"Yeah? From what angle?"

My eyes flashed and I turned, glaring up at the giant:

"Just because we are not all overgrown turnips doesn't mean we aren't strong enough to take care of ourselves." I said shaking my head with irritation.

He cocked his brow but said nothing as we reached the large house in the woods. The lights were glowing welcomingly as we approached. He unlocked the door and I stepped inside, not even realising how cold it had been out there.

I led the way up the stairs, I had no idea which one her room

was...

Seeming to understand my hesitation, Liam brushed past me, making my stomach flutter and opening the door opposite Aunty Red's room. I entered and I had to admit her room was so cute, decorated in a unicorn theme with pinks, rose gold and white. The wallpaper had clouds on it, set against a glittering pink background. The bedding and curtains were covered in unicorns, and the pink fairy lights that made the room glow made me want to just jump onto the bed and sleep in this cutesy room.

I carried her to the low bed; it was small, yet big enough for my five-foot frame if I had wanted to fit. See, I could totally sleep here.

Liam moved the covers back and I slowly lowered her to the bed. She began crying and I winced.

Oh crap.

"Shh, I got you." I whispered, slowly lowering myself onto the bed and patting her back.

"Damn..." Liam muttered, "Kids are so hard."

He reached over, taking Azura's shoes off. Her leg was draped over my waist. His arm brushed my thigh, sending a shock of sparks through me, and I couldn't stop the gasp that escaped me. His eyes snapped to mine, changing to a dark magnetic blue. My heart was thundering but I looked away quickly, trying to de-tangle Azura from my neck.

"I'll get her.! Liam said, slowly taking her hands from around my neck.

Only for her eyes to flutter open and the start of a new wave of tears threatened to spill.

"It's ok I'll hold her." I said, not looking at him. "It's near ten anyway; Aunty should be back soon."

"You sure?"

"Yeah." I said, not missing how his gaze fell on my bare legs.

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Goddess, please tell me my ass is not peeking out cheekily. He looked away smoothly, and I was glad because otherwise I was going to give him an earful.

I reached down and unzipped my boot, pulling it off before reaching for the other. I was about to remove it, trying not to disturb Azura when Liam reached over, unzipping it and

tugging it off for me, making my heart thump louder. •

His piercing eyes met mine as he dropped the boot on the floor and leaned closer.

I clung to Azura tightly, despite trying my best to remain indifferent. However, I was not able to stop the fear from consuming me when I realised that I was still vulnerable to the bond. His closeness, his scent and those dangerously sexy eyes were a thirst trap I couldn't deny. I turned my head away, / closing my eyes.

I can't see you. Go away.

I thought I heard a small chuckle but I wasn't sure when I felt the blanket cover us both, and then I felt him move away. I was not able to breathe until he left.

"I'll be downstairs." He said quietly before he shut the door after him.

My eyes flew open and I let out the breath I didn't know I was holding. I had always wished Liam was my mate, but the older I got, I had that connection with both Liam and Damon. Like there was just that chemistry there. I know someone would say choose one and reject the other, but it hurts to think of doing that to either of them. Just the thought made my wolf whimper and my chest tighten.

It wasn't even my own fear; it was the fact that I would have to hurt one of them, and because of me, I might destroy their friendship completely. I didn't want to be that woman, not

now, not ever.

That was why I never approached them, not wanting to be the reason for their bond to break. Deep down, in the beginning, I hoped they'd accept it and we could be happy no matter how unique our situation was. Yet as time passed, I stopped thinking about that and made it clear to my wolf and to myself that I didn't need a mate.

I eased out of Azura's hold, quickly replacing a large plushie in my spot. She hugged it loosely, but she was in a deep sleep and I was sure she would stay that way now.

Yay!

I picked up my boots slowly and padded to the door, exiting silently. I shut the door as quietly as possible behind me, stepping back when I suddenly knocked into someone, I gasped as a hand clamped over my mouth. Before I could even register the shock of sparks that coursed through me, I had flipped him over my shoulder, slamming him to the ground, one hand going to his neck as I pinned him down with a knee to his chest.

For the first time since my return, a small smirk of amusement crossed his lips.

“Nice move, bitesize.” Liam said, making my heart race at that old nickname, his eyes roaming down my body until they lingered on my bare legs.

But it was his next words that made my eyes fly open.

“And an even nicer view.” He whispered seductively, the back of his fingers ghosting down my left thigh... *