

Chosen 101

Chapter One Hundred One

Lina was the first to start the transmission of information between those that had come to rescue her sister. The detail of their entire battle was projected by King Sirius into the minds of everyone that was involved, including the hunters. Cole and Jason soon learnt that this was an ability that was granted to only the highest-ranking werewolves. It allowed them to communicate with humans as well. Jason still had no idea what that had to do with the power to communicate with humans, for he was an ordinary alpha.

He didn't pose the question as there was a lot that was being communicated through the mind link. The hunters that got emotional about the result of the entire fight went on a rampage and killed the rogues that had been captured. Surrender didn't necessarily mean the rogue would be spared. As much as they were rogues, they also deserved a second chance. Jackeline was the first to lose it. Frost found her armed with everything that her vest had to offer.

Frost had to step in to slow down the woman on her rampage. Anthony approached the restrained female after all was done. No one had ever seen her losing her cool before, "You know that's not how we do things, Jackeline."

"Nothing you can say will calm my rage, Anthony," she spat at him, "Not when Katie was downed by a hunter..."

"We all share in your rage, but that doesn't allow you to kill rogues that have surrendered. What tells you there wasn't one amongst them that was in Ash's position," he argued.

"Are you already forgetting everything that the rogues stand for? Destruction of the entire human race, werewolves and humans alike. If I hadn't gotten there in time, Katie would be dead. Only Prometheus knows if she'll even make it. What do you want me to do, Anthony? The murderers are right in front of me," at this point, Frost held the woman around her neck, restricting the flow of air into her lungs until she went unconscious.

"I'm sorry that you had to see that..."

"No, it's not your fault. I'm afraid there aren't enough words that can describe how angry I am at this result. I would have the rogues killed without batting an eyelash," he said, "But alas, rogues that have surrendered when there is at least one Royal present are subject to Prometheus' judgement."

They looked on to the line of rogues that sat in a line, awaiting the seal of the Sirius family. Drake Sirius moved from one to another, dressed in basketball shorts, placing his palm on their foreheads to place the seal on them. "Where is your father?" Frost asked.

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"He ran off to the Hunter's Agency to make sure little sister makes it. I wish I could go with them, but Cole is her mate and Lina already ran off with her father. I'm stuck tending to these ones... I honestly don't even know if I want them to survive the Prometheus ordeal," he said, placing his hand on yet another one of the rogues. The next one shifted in its position in an attempt to make a break for it.

The whistling sound of a steel arrow, followed by whimpers of the wolf confirmed the kill when it was barely two metres from the others that waited in line. "Those of you who don't want to go through the Prometheus evaluation is bound to die either way. Get out of the line and you die. Stay in line and you die. There is no way you will survive this no matter what you try. I would advise you to give in and go for the evaluation. After all, every one of you who opted for it had the hopes that it would be your only way out..." Anthony spoke up, erasing the hopes of the rest that waited in line with their heads on the ground in submission.

Caden walked through the rogues surveying them with a look of nostalgia on his face, "Hey, are you okay?" Drake asked him.

"Yes, I am fine. I've always been," he said, "You should give up on these rogues. They are all going to fail the test."

"What makes you so sure of that?" Drake asked him.

"Well, look at all of them. They are shaking. I can smell the fear on them. Evaluation tests aren't passed by rogues who are hoping for their lives to be spared. They are passed by rogues who'd rather die than remain rogues," he said. One of the rogues on the ground stopped shaking and got up calmly, eyeing him curiously. The hunters that were around tensed, the hands flying to their weapons. Caden eyed the dirty grey wolf, looking for a glint of the emotion he had seen in Ashley's eyes.

"Oi, Caden, are you trying to save these mutts from their deaths or what? We don't want tainted rogues to survive the Prometheus tests," Anthony yelled at the boy.

"I am not tainting them. Most of the rogues that pass the Prometheus tests are never seeking to pass them. That's because they realise the life that they are in is wrong and there is no way they can escape it. A hunter would rather just kill a rogue on sight, so there is not much that they can do about it. The last rogue that passed a Prometheus test that I met was a decent person with a heart unlike any other that I've met. She strove to be better and didn't want to be a burden to anyone..."

"I'm not saying that rogues can be trusted, but I am saying that there are countless rogues out there that were unfortunate to be born into that life. You don't get to choose your parents. That's the cruelty of this world in which rogues are to die the moment they are spotted. So without knowing that, we continue to kill them relentlessly," he said.

"Stop that, Caden. Stop seeking a replacement for Ash. There was nothing you could do to save her. You can't continue to punish yourself for that. The rogues before you are getting their chance to pass the Prometheus test. If Prometheus deems them unworthy of being purified, that's final. Telling them what they must do to pass the test doesn't change a thing. The gods can peer into the soul of anyone that they want to. They'll still fail the test either way..." Anthony said to him.

The wolf before Caden seemed determined to hear more of what Caden had to say, but after what had been said, it seemed as though the alpha wasn't going to add more to the situation. The rogue reverted to its human form, coiling to cover his naked body, "So, she didn't make it?" he asked.

"Who are you talking about?" Caden asked.

“The very same person that seems to have clouded your mind, Ashley,” he said, raising his amber eyes to meet the alpha’s searing red.

“Who was she to you?” he asked.

“Someone delusional... There is no place in this world for rogues. I tried to tell her that. I helped her keep her secret, but she wasn’t taking any of my advice,” he said.

“So you were there with her when she went through hell. Why do you not believe in a way out of the life of a rogue? She was born into that life. A life she never deserved,” he argued.

“So she managed to get her sneaky paws around you. Who would have known she would end up with an alpha of all people? Not to mention an alpha that has influence with the royal family. She has got to have the largest stroke of luck in the universe,” he began laughing humourlessly.

Drake skipped the rogues that were left to reach him and placed his palm on him, silencing him for the moment. The man landed on the ground in an awkward position. The man continued talking even after he was suspended in a trancelike state. The evaluation was usually done in wolf form, but this was the first that it was being done to a human and he could still talk in that mode.

“Did he bother you?” Drake asked Caden, but the man remained silent, his eye trained on the man that had just been suspended in a trance. It was the first time either of them was seeing a rogue taking the evaluation in human form.

“This test is a joke... Asking me if I’m worthy of redemption. I have been alive long enough to know there is no such thing as redemption for someone like me. No matter how many words a filthy god like you feeds me, you’re just the same as all of them. There is nothing that you can...” the man’s words were cut in half as he immediately started to convulse violently until he went completely still. His face was still and his eyes stared off into space, “All humans must die...” were his last words before he allowed the constraints of death to get him.

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News of the events of the night spread through the ranks of the hunters, stunning those that had been sceptical about the prediction that had been made earlier that day. The news never got to the Founder’s festival, however, and everyone there was allowed to enjoy a good time as though nothing had happened. The sound of thunderclaps might have proven to be ominous and misplaced, but in a place where fun was the aim, anyone would think it was another parlour trick.

The Chase hunters had warned of a great danger that had even required the presence of one of the Mighty Hunters, but the man had arrived at the end of the attack, thankfully just in time to get Katie to the infirmary. “Come on, Marie, we have to keep going. We’ll get there soon enough if we don’t keep stopping for breaks,” Tom called out to his wife, urging her to pick herself up and keep moving.

The two had tried to give Chase when Katie had vanished from the cabin but found that they couldn’t access their Prometheus gifts at all. As a result, everything happened without them getting a chance to help. Thinking wisely about the situation, they knew they would only be dead weight if they went to the battle anyway. As a result, they’d then taken the next course of action and that was to go to the Hunter’s Agency.

“Why, Tom? Why didn’t our powers return to us?” the woman asked between breaths. They’d tried to chase after the girl, but hadn’t been able to do anything without their Prometheus gifts, “Katie was in danger and that’s when our powers were set to activate. Why didn’t they?”

“We told the Royals that they would get their daughter back once she was whole. My guess is that our contract with the goddess ended the moment our little girl shifted into her wolf form,” he explained, trying to make sense of everything. They’d been present for all the conference calls that the director had made, but hadn’t been able to do a single thing to help the girl they raised.

“What happened to our daughter, Tom?” she asked.

“I’ve been trying to call, but no one will answer me,” the man answered. They both knew where to go. The power of Chase intuition. They both knew where to go... they knew where to find their daughter and that’s where they were headed, “You might want to hold out on calling her our daughter. We both knew the day would come when she would have to be returned to her biological parents, painful as it may be...”

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Cole was the first to make it to the Hunter’s Agency once the information was out. He hadn’t wasted time when he was told of her situation. “Hey, you need a hunter to...”

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“Out of my way, Marcel. Which way to the infirmary? You must know the reason why I am asking that question. Do not make me repeat myself,” Cole yelled at the hunter that guarded the gate, pouring every ounce of his commanding tone into his voice. At the back of his mind, he even wondered why the man had stayed behind when a battle had raged on in the forest.

Seeing the mixture of rage and despair in the royal’s face, the man gave up, “Follow me...” Debating his options, Cole tried to reason whether to follow his nose or to follow the man. There was the possibility that he would spend more time hunting the infirmary if he followed her scent, but if he followed the man, he was bound to find exactly where it was that they had taken her.

Falling behind the man, he allowed him to lead the way to the infirmary. Walking through the halls of the snow-white building only helped to increase the anxiety that plagued the alpha’s mind. ‘Please be okay,’ he sent his thoughts through the mind link. There was no reply, but he didn’t feel her losing her grip on life either. A feeling he knew too well from the death of Ash.

“The infirmary is right around the corner,” Marcel said once they were on the third floor, noticing the alpha’s anticipation.

“Thank you,” Cole said, barely sparing him a glance and dashing down the hall in pursuit of his mate’s scent. He held back his urge to cringe as wolfsbane tainted the air. His heart went into overdrive as he realised he had reached the door to the room that she was in. Cole burst through the door, his wolf snapping forward and taking control of his actions.

A thunderclap found him pinned to the wall by a bulky man whose aura only made the wolf retreat to the back of his mind, “Who might you be? Oh, you’re a Royal...”

“Yes, I am. Unhand me this instant,” the Royal yelled at the man, clearly skipping the fact that he was completely outmatched.

“First calm yourself. I could hear your ragged breathing before you even stepped into the building. I don’t know anything that’s going on. I was called here by the Chase family and arrived when this girl had been shot by four arrows and barely hanging on to her life. I have sworn to protect this girl from harm and do not know what form it might take. Identify yourself before I take it upon myself to silence you,” he spoke, his voice clear as a bell to avoid mincing words.

“My name is Cole Lycaon and that is my mate,” Cole spoke, “Is that good enough for you?”

“As I said, I don’t know much. I do recognise you now, but I am wondering what you are doing so far from the Lycaon capital,” he commented, letting the wolf down. The man ran a hand through his hair in frustration, “I should have come sooner.”

“So you’re the Mighty Thunderclap?”

“In the flesh... This is the first time that I am making it too late to a fight. I can tell this girl was of so much importance. Which is why she was targeted, but...”

“I haven’t seen her yet,” Cole rushed from the hunter. The Thunderclap kept his eyes off the curtain that obscured the girl from view. Cole was in such a hurry that he saw no use in trying to stop him from going to her. It would have only made everything harder.

Cole ripped the piece of fabric out of his way, falling into a deep silence upon seeing Katie. Needles stuck out from her hand, delivering blood into her body and taking out blood from the other. This was what was done when there was the need to reduce wolfsbane from a werewolf’s system. A werewolf could heal from certain doses of wolfsbane, but when it was in excess, a procedure like this was necessary.

Her breath came out in short spurts even after being aided by the system she was hooked up to. The once energetic Rogue Killer looked reduced and on the brink of death in the bed before him. The memories of their parting moment were still fresh in his mind. She hadn’t left him with any doubts and yet here she lay, “What happened?”

“She wouldn’t stop convulsing. The doctors figured it was supposed to be because of the wolfsbane, so they did this to try and reduce the wolfsbane from her system and have her heal on her own once that’s done,” the man explained.

“How long until she gets back to her former shape,” Cole asked clenching his fists in frustration. There was nothing that he could have done to stop this... He knew that much and it hurt him to his very core...

“They said it depends on how well she can heal. After the wounds close up, she’ll be able to walk like normal, but she won’t be able to strain herself for a while,” he said to him.

“How long...”

“I’m afraid I don’t have that information. I would advise you don’t push her to do anything tasking for a couple of months,” the man said to him.

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The sound of sirens filled the air as the two parents reached the Hunter's Agency, the first thought coming to their mind being their daughter. "Hey, what happened here?" Marie asked a nearby hunter.

"When the rogues that had surrendered were being readied for Prometheus evaluations, something happened that caused them to pull out of submission. It wasn't pretty. They acted like rabid dogs. The hunters killed them, but a number of them were severely injured. Those that had lowered their guards found themselves with fatal injuries. The ambulances at the agency weren't enough and we don't even know if they'll make it," the man said, rushing off to help the injured.

The two ran pushed through the people to make it to the inside of the infirmary in search of one person... Katie. They found Cole waiting outside the door to the infirmary holding his head in his hands. "Where is she?" a booming voice echoed through the halls. The voice was distinct to the head of the Sirius family.

"You don't have to yell, sir," one of the nurses tried to caution the man. The infirmary was busy with everyone milling about to tend to the injured.

"Don't tell me what to do... My daughter is in here somewhere and I need to see her immediately," the man screamed while following the scent he'd managed to track. One thing he knew to guide him was the scent of blood and wolfsbane.

Marie waved the man over calming his rampage immediately. He was immediately followed by Martha and Lina who was dressed in a hunter's leather jacket. To be more specific, she was dressed in the leather jackets that were granted to the Mighty Hunters. 'What in the... I won't ask...' the woman shook the thoughts and led the Royals into the room Cole sat outside of.

The family went silent when they got inside the room. The doctors and nurses stood aside and let them be, partly because of the fear of who they were and the sympathy for the state they were in. King Davin stepped forward with every intention of making it to his daughter, his fist clenched in anger. "This is not how we were supposed to be reunited," the man spoke through gritted teeth.

Martha wanted to calm her husband's rage, but she struggled to keep her composure as well. Watching her child lying in the bed with bandages binding her shoulders and thighs. Fragments of the arrows that had been lodged into her flesh lay bloodied in a crucible, the blood was stained purple with wolfsbane.

Just then, the girl began convulsing, the machine increasing the number of beeps. Doctors came into the room in a hurry, "I'd like to ask you all to step out please. She's going into shock... Come on, Katie. I know you are stronger than this..." from the tone the doctor used, they could tell he knew her. The three could only watch and listen to what was going on in the emergency room, tension filling them while they prayed for the girl to get better. However, things weren't looking so good and Davin knew it...

Using his sensitive ears to check the hearts of the doctors, he could tell that they were terrified and running out of options. Katie was teetering into the afterlife without ever getting a chance to know her family...

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The doctors came out of the room an hour later, avoiding eye contact with everyone that tried to seek it. They didn't look like they were harbouring any good news, but they had to deliver it nonetheless.

After a moment of painstaking silence, a voice spoke from the group of people that waited on the information, "How long will you keep us in the dark? Tell us already." Most didn't dare look at the Werewolf King as he spoke to the man.

He wasn't one for patience when it came to his daughter and he was most certainly not going to show any today. Cole sat with his two friends along with Sandra in the same seat he'd occupied for nearly two hours. Exhaustion along with the heavy sense of failure racked his body, doing nothing for his mental fortitude. He'd been silent the entire time and never answered a question that he was asked. This told the rest to give him the space he needed and avoid trying to make any small talk with him.

Drake had arrived with Caden after helping out with what had seemed to be a last-minute retaliation from the rogues. Drake reported everything to the Werewolf King who answered him with silence. Up until then, he hadn't cared for anything else that had happened that day and thought it was only his daughter that was injured in the fight.

"We managed to keep her stable, but she won't start healing. Even for a human, she's going really slow in the healing process. Her heart beats weaker and her body is not responding to any of the medication. We were able to remove a massive amount of the wolfsbane from her system that it shouldn't be affecting her improvement, but nothing's working. I've not seen this in all my years and I'm ashamed to say I don't know what else to do for her," the man said.

"Have you tried Cadiversion?" King Davin asked.

"I have... Trying it again, however, might just stop her heart and that's not what I want to do..." he said, "I'll allow her immediate family to go in along with her mate, but the rest must remain outside as there is not much room and she needs all the space she can get."

Davin, Drake, Lina, Martha, Cole and the two Chase hunters that raised the girl all looked at each other confirming that's what was meant by immediate family. A large crowd for the room they were going into although none of them would rather be anywhere else.

Katie lay on the hospital bed, the constant beeping of the machine reminding everyone of the fact that she was still alive. The wounds on her shoulders had been patched up and the blood drips removed. Her breath was slow and deep like she was in a deep slumber and her fists were clenched so tight that her knuckles turned white, a gesture that none of them missed.

"What's your final verdict, doctor?" Davin asked.

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"I believe... It's all in her mind," the doctor said to him, "Whatever put her in that state was traumatising enough to stop her from allowing the healing process to take effect. If she doesn't pull out of it, she won't see the light of day."

The room fell silent for a moment after hearing the doctor's information, "That's not fair." Lina's voice was the first to cut through the silence. Martha pulled her daughter into a motherly hug to soothe the tears that came soon after. They'd only just met her and here she was... on the brink of death.

"Tell me something, Hunters. Is this what you meant when you said the secret had to be kept until she turned eighteen... when she was whole and perfectly capable of protecting herself," Davin asked.

“No, it’s not what we meant...” Tom replied, trying to keep his voice emotionless. Well, if there was ever a time that the hunter needed his training in suppressing emotions, this was that moment.

“Then try your best to explain how this happened. You predicted she would get into trouble. What then did you do about it?” the Royal argued. This time, Martha put her hand on his shoulder to stop his much-delayed advance to the Chase hunters.

“They called me to their aid. I’m sure they would have handled this perfectly on their own if they could,” someone interrupted. The Thunderclap said getting into the room. Lina started taking off the course only to be stopped by the man raising his hand.

“Oh, come on. This is my family. I was going to ask for one of those lab coats they keep around with no one to wear,” Lina grumbled, wrapping the coat around her as though she sought more warmth from it. ‘Isn’t that thing full of wolfsbane-laced weapons?’ Tom’s thoughts sailed off-topic for a moment before he remembered the reason for the interruption.

“When Katie ran off after catching Kyle’s scent, we tried to give chase, but...” the words got caught in his throat. For as long as the two of them had been tasked with raising the girl, they had always been able to access their powers as long as it was to protect the girl, but for the first time, nothing happened. Would it have changed anything?

“What happened?” the King asked, getting angered by the wait.

“Our powers wouldn’t activate no matter what we tried. Katie was gone so fast that we didn’t even see what direction she went,” Marie spoke.

“What do you mean your powers wouldn’t activate?” Davin asked, surprised taking the rest of his anger away.

“Taking in Katie came with a couple of conditions,” Tom began, “Agelessness and sterility were just a few of them. Everything changed just to raise the child.”

The room fell silent as the information came out, “I was wondering why you looked the same since the last time I saw you, but I didn’t think you hadn’t aged one bit. What makes you think... I’m so confused,” the queen spoke.

“The moon goddess gave us a number of conditions in order to raise the child,” Tom explained, telling them the entire story of the conditions that were given to them by the moon goddess. Having received permission from Prometheus, she was able to alter the purpose for their gifts and direct them to the protection of the child. This meant they couldn’t perform their duties as hunters, but they could teach the child to be the best hunter she could be. After all, they were Chase hunters.

This all passed Cole’s ears without spurring a single reaction from him. Even when the conversation picked up and attracted the attention of everyone else, his eyes remained trained on the girl in the bed. He could hear her heartbeat get weaker and each time it scared him more. She left him in the forest to retrieve Kyle when she was fine... She was so fast he hadn’t even seen her leave. When had she gotten herself closer to the brink of death?

Without noticing, he took a step towards her. Partly because he wanted to hear her heartbeat clearer. He wanted some miracle to happen and revive her. The doctors didn’t know what to do for her and they

were only hoping she would pull through at the last minute. Although this all sounded like they didn't have a way to make her better. He'd never felt so helpless... All he could do was get closer to her and reach out to her.

Her hand lay by her side, clenched into a fist. The only point on her entire body that still showed energy. The closer he came though, the more the hand relaxed. He probably imagined it... the girl calling out to him. It was one of the things he felt he wanted to do anyway. Her hand felt small in his palm, 'How is this the same person that made all rogues flee Brigadia?' she looked small and fragile in the hospital bed. As he held her hand, their connection strengthened and threw the royal into the mind of the unconscious girl. Cole went blind...

Before Cole could panic, the scent of his mate wrapped around him calming him immediately. He took in her scent even though he couldn't tell where it was coming from. On to the next... Cole was frozen by the image of a white wolf standing before him in all this darkness that surrounded them. Looking down, he couldn't even tell what he was standing on, "Where am I?"

"You're in our mind, I guess. I'm glad you were able to get here. I can't seem to reach her," the wolf spoke to Cole. The Royal was entranced taking in the details of the wolf that was mated to him before he realised it was his wolf that was keeping him pinned to the majestic beast.

"Oh, yeah, Katie, where is she?" the man asked.

"Over there..." almost like magic, Katie wasn't far from them, floating through the vast void of nothingness with a dazed expression. She was still dressed in the same casual clothes from the festival, although they remained tattered and the four wounds from the arrows remained fresh bleeding profusely with no sign of stopping. She looked terrible and yet the words that came from her were not related to the pain.

Cole walked to her slowly, listening silently to the thoughts that plagued her mind. The thoughts that refused to let her heal the entire time she was here. He couldn't tell if he could help her out of it, but this was a better chance than what the doctors were offering and it lit a fire within him. He wasn't helpless after all...

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Floating right before him, the girl that stirred up foreign emotions in the heart of the Royal, bloodied and completely unaware of her surroundings. She mumbled incoherently... words like 'I almost had him... He was right there... I lost... I could have ended all this... He shouldn't have been there... Why did it have to end like that? I'll kill him...'

She repeated some and growled out others, rage coming off her in waves. Her wolf didn't dare to come closer for the girl's mental state completely clashed with that of the wolf. "It's hard being in the same mind when she keeps going on and on about how she should have done that or could have done this or shouldn't have been this blind..." the wolf explained from her position away from the floating hunter.

"Hey, Katie," Cole called out. The mumbling instantly seized, pleasing him. She didn't open her eyes, something that he needed to get her to do. He held her hand and she held onto him just like she had back in the hospital. Her emotions shifted from rage to regret and shame, "Katie, come back to us..."

There was silence for a while, her body going still, "What..." her voice boomed, coming from all directions.

"Come back to us..."

"But... But I haven't finished my mission yet," she spoke back, starting to sound confused.

"What might that mission be?" Cole asked her.

"Killing the Rogue King," under normal circumstances, the Royal would have asked himself why she had that as one of his thoughts. But with the condition she was currently in, nothing else mattered to him.

"You can kill him another day. I'll help you do that, but we need you home... Who am I kidding? I need you home. I don't think I'd live without you," he said.

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"Why do you sound like you're crying, Cole? I like listening to your laugh," she said to him..

"Well, it's because you are dying," he revealed, "You got shot with four arrows..."

"Oh, that happened... I remember..." he stopped him, switching back to her emotions of rage.

"Well, for once Katie, abandon your mission and come back to me," he called out to her, knowing full well he was asking her to do the hardest thing in the book.

"Cole... I..."

"Katie," he stopped her once more, "Listen to me. You can't always charge in straight into danger. That's not how you'll succeed in ending this war. Most of the people that rushed to your rescue are confident that you will be the one to end him, but you can't do that if you're dead. Do you have any idea what it felt like to be unable to do anything about it?"

Slowly, the girl's eyes began to open. He could feel her returning to him and soon enough he was also expelled from her mind. Light came crashing back to his eyes once he was out. His attention was completely taken by the girl, the audience that watched seemingly invisible. Katie's fading heartbeat rose and the girl took in a deep breath before finally settling into a normal sleep.

"What in the world?" the doctor couldn't stop himself from talking when he saw what should have been invisible. This was the same reaction that the rest of the occupants in the room had even though they did not speak.

'Thank you,' the voice of the wolf came to him through the mind link. He stood to leave only to be held by the hand tightening its grip around his. Katie twisted uncomfortably in her sleep prompting the Royal to sit back down and tuck the stray hairs on her head behind her ear. The girl relaxed at his touch, leaning into his palm and finally settling again.

"You might want to stay by her side until she wakes up," Martha spoke to him, chuckling at the two mates, "Thank you, Cole Lycaon. You saved my daughter."

"I don't think I would have gone on without her around. I had to do something," Cole replied sheepishly.

"I don't think I've ever seen you care so much in your life, Cole," Drake chuckled, seeking the much desired effect of turning his fellow Royal's face red.

"Oh, come on, Drake. Can you be any more childish? That was the sweetest act of passion I've been graced to see in my lifetime," Martha defended Cole.

"Yeah, I must say. Quality maturity right there. You might just make the right man for my little daughter just yet," Davin spoke, laughing boisterously while he said so.

"The apple doesn't fall so far from the tree," Jason groaned. Cole was surprised to see that he was in the room as well... "We were let in when we said we were part of the family from the side of the groom," he added with a goofy smile noticing Cole's confusion. The jokestar added a thumbs up even after he'd just followed Drake's lead in embarrassing Cole.

"You're all evil," Cole narrowed his eyes at the three adding to their chorus of laughter. The females in the room (Sandra, Martha, Lina and Marie) shook their heads in disappointment.

"Boys will be boys," Marie sighed, "How is she? Did you get to talk to her?"

"Yes, I did. She was still stuck in a trance from the fight in the forest. I couldn't make out her words on them though. I guess we'll have to ask her when she wakes up," Cole replied.

"Yeah, I guess so... I don't like that wait, but I guess we'll have to wait nonetheless," she sighed. Everyone silently agreed with her. The doctor suddenly started moving, checking all sorts of vitals and monitors. He checked her pulse then went on to check her temperature all in rush.

"What's the problem, doctor?" Cole asked.

"Those heartbeats... they are spiking a little higher than normal. At first, I was sure it was because she'd only just stabilised, but now I'm sure there is another reason for that," he said to them.

Cole tried to get up and let them work only to get held back by Katie. The girl shifted uncomfortably again. "No, Cole, stay where you are. Whatever you did helped her. You seem to be acting as an anchor of hope for her, something that she needs if she's to make a full recovery," he said.

Two nurses came to aid the doctor, switching the now empty drip with another one and preparing everything he might have needed. "Her temperature is rising. Could she be going into shock?" he tried, but the monitor didn't suggest anything erratic. While he was just about to take his hand off her forehead, he noticed something beneath the bandages that covered her shoulders and thighs.

"Nurse, help me take off the bandages," he asked his helpers referring to them in general. They got to work removing the bandages, tension building in the room while they did. Upon removing the bandages, the girl breathed in deeply as though she was only being released from suffocating restraints. Cole, along with the others watched as the wounds closed up and the black veins of wolfsbane disappear almost instantly. Soon enough all that was left was the star-shaped scars from the wounds.

The colour returned to her face and her body began to return to its former radiance. Silence took over the whole room as they all tried to interpret what they had all just witnessed, "Is it supposed to be that fast?" Marie asked the wolves in the room.

“No, it’s not...” the doctor replied, reaching for the canular in her arm and drawing a sample of blood. He held the syringe to a sample of blood that he’d collected earlier. The difference between the two was a slight tinge of purple, “How is this even possible? It takes time for this much wolfsbane to be expelled from the body.

After running a couple of tests on the sample of blood, the doctor began taking the needles that were in the girl, smirking as he watched the pricks close up immediately the needles out. “Cole, your father spoke of this once before,” Davin said.

“Huh, what did my father say?” Cole asked, breaking his focus on his mate for what must have been the first time in a few hours.

“He said you would heal at a rate faster than anything he’d ever seen,” the man said, trying to recall the words of his comrade.

“I don’t recall anything of the sort,” Cole answered.

“Have you ever observed your healing speed?” Lina asked him, trying to get to a faster answer.

“Oh, I don’t recall being injured...” Cole chuckled sheepishly.

“Oh, that’s not right. Not even once... Come on, what about the time you had your ass handed to you by my broth...”

“Language, Lina,” Martha interrupted.

“Sorry mother,” she groaned.

“I didn’t get injured during that time either. Are you forgetting that I won that time?” Cole said, trying to think back to the Royal games.

“Hmm, now that I remember it. I don’t remember seeing you covered in any bruises after that fight. Though I do remember giving you some while we were fighting... It’s terrifying to think...” the man paused when he heard the soft groan of his little sister. Katie was stirring.

“At this rate, she’ll make an extraordinarily fast recovery. From what I’ve just seen, she would have healed on the battlefield had she not fallen into that state of unconsciousness and blocked her healing properties,” the doctor explained. Katie’s eyes fluttered open slowly, allowing everyone in the room to see the bright blue gleam of a royal’s iris... Her consciousness came along with a burst of an aura strong enough to silence everyone in the room.

The delicate qualities were fast fading the more she became aware of her surroundings and took control of her body. ‘I guess the Rogue killer is awake...’ the thought rumbled through the hospital building... and everyone knew it...

105 Chapter One Hundred Five

Katie looked around at the eyes that were staring at her sleeping. Many of them bore blue eyes and did not look at all like people she knew. She could tell they were important although they meant nothing to her. Her eyes lingered longer on the man that had awoken her before searching the room for people

that she knew. She found that Sandra, Cole's alphas and her adoptive parents were among those that waited for her.

"Hey... Welcome back to the land of the living," Cole started. She knew of her situation that had nearly gotten her to see the afterlife and at the moment, she was staring at the dashing knight that had pulled her out of it.

'Come on, Katie. Why are you wasting time?' Ashley began, the impatient wolf ruining the entire moment. Katie smiled at Cole while internally scolding the wolf.

'You just had to voice my thoughts out to me. Besides, we have one hell of an audience,' she replied. "Thank you for pulling me out of it," she expressed her gratitude engulfing the man in a tight hug.

The rest of the room seemed to wake up upon hearing her voice, the lot of them stunned from the moment of her waking, "Katie, are you feeling okay?" Marie's voice was the first to cut through to her.

"Yeah, I'm fine. What happened after I passed out?" she asked, skipping over the fact that she'd just woken from the brink of death.

"I should have known you'd ask for a report right after waking up from your own deathbed," Tom groaned, unimpressed by the girl's behaviour.

Katie couldn't help but chuckle at him. She didn't let Cole take his hand from her when he did and gave the male a pleading look. "Won't I be in the way of..."

"No, I want you here. That's that," she simplified the situation giving him no room for escape. Part of him was happy that she wanted him by her side while the other didn't want to be a hindrance to anything the rest wished to discuss with her.

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"Well, how's this going to go?" King Davin asked the one question that no one had bothered to ask, "I for one would like to know just how well she's doing. Doctor, can you tell if she's completely back to normal?"

"She should be good to go for the moment. Unfortunately, the arrows were targeting the parts of her muscles that are crucial for movement. The ones on her thighs stuck too close to the tendons while the ones in her shoulders damaged her sockets. I advise that she take it easy for at least a month before she can do anything physically tasking," the doctor explained, "Other than that, I'll get the paperwork for a discharge ready. I believe she's fine enough to leave the infirmary."

"I'm fine... I don't feel any..." Katie stopped as she tested out her arm rotating it in a vertical circle. A sharp pain shot from her shoulder numbing her hand while she winced in pain... "I stand corrected."

"As I said, Katie, you might look okay on the outside, but the tissues that were damaged inside are much harder for you to fix. Don't do anything tasking for the meantime," the doctor repeated.

Katie, acting deaf, swung her legs out so that she could try to walk, "Hey, calm down. You can't skip over everything that the doctor says..." Cole stopped halfway when he had to catch the falling girl. She tried three more times to get up. Each time, her thighs burned with pain from the internal injuries and gave way. Cole held her steady and helped her take a seat on the bed.

“She’s a stubborn one, isn’t she?” a deep voice rumbled through the room. Katie looked up to see a man in his forties dressed in only a shirt and custom issue leather jeans, similar to the ones that the director wore, but these were different. They were made for someone of a higher rank than the director. The aura that came from him was much more refined than what Katie usually got from the hunters that she normally talked to.

“Did you see him?” she asked the man.

“Who might you be referring to?” the man asked.

“Who else would I be referring to when I ask a Mighty warrior?” her voice was steeled as he addressed the man.

“I’m afraid I might have been a tad bit late. Who do you refer to? If it’s the Rogue King, then I’d like to tell you that he was not there,” the man said.

Katie sighed, “I guess you did come later than you should have.” The room fell into yet another deep silence. They wrestled to make sense of what the girl was saying.

“He wasn’t there, was he?” Lina was the one to ask this time.

“Oh, he was there, but I wasn’t strong enough to pose him a threat,” she said, holding on to Cole’s hand tighter. She didn’t say, but the man was her only anchor from the enraged state she’d been in earlier. Memories of that night filled her mind once again. She could remember the feeling of being heavily exhausted. Her wolf merging with her consciousness to face their greatest foe, only to get shot down by arrows... arrows...

“I think you...”

“Where are the arrows that I was shot with?” she asked them, looking around frantically in the hopes that they’d been removed from the infirmary and still around.

“We left them behind when we’d removed them from your body,” Lina said, recalling the events from when she’d met her.

“I don’t remember you. That’s too far into the forest for me to retrieve them,” she groaned, “Would someone tell me what happened already.”

“Not after you answer the question. Was he there?” the Mighty Warrior asked her.

“Oh, he was there. I saw him with my two eyes. Powerful royal with two... umm, beta alphas...” the word was far in her memory as it was never part of the things she was meant to deal with.

“That’s impossible. There are only two Royals in the world allowed to have beta alphas,” King Davin snapped.

“I don’t see how it counts if a Royal simply never reveals that he has beta alphas in secret. It’s just a matter of deceit,” she flipped the man over.

“Katie, I believe you haven’t met these people just yet. Let’s make an introduction,” Marie said.

“Well, that saves me quite the trouble,” she perked up staring at the new faces. Her wolf huffed upon noticing the girl’s techniques of delaying interrogation. ‘You know it would be much easier if they knew quickly enough...’

‘There will be a time for that, Ashley,’ she said to the wolf, smiling when she calmed down.

“Katie, meet your biological family. It’s definitely not the introduction that we hoped for. The hotel suite was even ready for your arrival, but I guess there was a change of plans,” Martha spoke for the family.

Recognition sparked in her eyes when she recognised the two from the newspaper from eighteen years ago, “I remember you two from an old newspaper. Wow, you are not the same...”

“Hey, what’s that supposed to mean? I am known for staying young and ageless if you must know,” the large man spoke, rubbing his hand through his hair to prove his point and smirking at the end. Cole found himself growling at the gesture even though there was no foul play in what he did. It was Katie’s turn to laugh this time...

“So you’re King Davin Sirius,” she confirmed. The Royals were among the people she’d come to know to be very warm to be around. They had no desire to cause trouble and were as peaceful as they could get...

“Yes, that is I. Right here is my lovely mate and wife, Martha Sirius,” he said, proudly puffing out his chest.

“How do you both have blue eyes? I know the Royals don’t intermarry,” Katie said, making an observation that no one had bothered to voice the entire time the wolves had been in Brigadia.

“You’re either sharp or have no fear for the Royal’s whatsoever,” Davin chuckled, “It’s quite simple. The colour of the royal’s mate changes when she’s claimed. Specifically after marking each other... It’s the final signal that a new Luna has been chosen... Well, in the case of the crown princes, that is...” he said.

“My name is Lina. I would be your kid sister,” the youngest of the said, smiling from within the large leather jacket that now looked like it was never meant for her. Katie looked between the girl and the Mighty Hunter...

“Is that yours?”

“I had to use my own shirt to stop the bleeding before you were brought here,” she defended herself, having been questioned numerous times on the choice of wear. Lina was not amused by the looks she was getting, “This coat hasn’t done a difference from the clothes I normally wear,” the girl groaned.

A man who looked to be Cole’s agemate slapped the girl on the back, “Oh, don’t worry little sister. This will all blow by once you learn a thing or two from your older sister. The name’s Drake, crown prince to the Sirius crown.”

“You don’t have to announce it like that, boy. I am still the king for many years,” King Davin argued with the boy.

“Father, your time will soon come to an end. Just keep the throne warm for me. Besides, I do not want to rule just yet. That paperwork is a beast,” Drake chuckled, spreading his contagious smile through the room.

"I'd like to clear the room so that Katie has less to attend to. Anyone who isn't a part of the Sirius family can now get out. That doesn't apply to you, Cole," Marie said out loud, the last part directed to Cole. She had noticed the facade Katie had put on while the people swarmed her. she didn't want to ignore her friends, but there didn't seem to be an option when she was faced with the family that very much wanted to talk to her. The girl mouthed a quick 'thank you...' to her adoptive mother and sighed in relief as the numbers in the room reduced.

Pulling Cole closer, she settled against the Royal like he was a pillow. The man responded by wrapping his arms around her and getting comfortable. He might have been liking his role as emotional anchor a little too much... (or maybe a lot...)

106 Chapter One Hundred Six

Katie was comfortable with this arrangement. Attending to people in the arms of her mate. Was it embarrassing? She had no idea. Was she enjoying it? Yes, she was. Did anyone object? Nope... And so the day continued with her in her mate's arms speaking to whoever came to visit her without a care in the world about how she must have looked.

Cole, on the other hand, noticed the looks he was getting. However, that did not bother him as much as the urge to mark his mate there and then. Her scent filled his nostrils every time he breathed it in and it wasn't doing him any justice. She completely had her guard down in his arms and continued to act so innocently... He almost suspected she was doing this on purpose, but one peek into the mind link erased all his suspicions. Katie was simply happy to be in his arms like this and there was nothing more to it. In fact, she visibly showed how comfortable she currently was. This arrangement, albeit somewhat difficult, gave him the satisfaction of showing off who she belonged to.

"I'm glad to see you very comfortable," Drake was the first one to speak, eyeing the couple with a hint of envy.

"Oh, don't worry, big brother. I'm sure you're mate is out there somewhere waiting for her knight in shining armour," Katie spoke up in an attempt to lighten the mood.

Without waiting for the rest to catch up on the humour, the king intervened, "How has your life here been?" he asked, wiping off his ever-present smile and replacing it with a look of concern. The Sirius family realised now that they were in front of a long-lost family member. Joking around wasn't going to get them any closer in the way they would have liked her to. In fact, they had come to collect her...

"Brigadia is not so bad. It's actually pretty fun. Everyone's friendly and they care about the town. It's been nice watching them get lazy over the years that I spent keeping rogues away. I can't even imagine what will happen if word of the attack in the forest gets out. I know there was no civilian in that attack. There just might be a chance to keep the entire thing forgotten," Katie was starting to drown in her own words. Her concern for the town seemed too powerful for her to resist.

She'd spent a long time caring for the town that it had become a part of her, "You love it that much, huh..." an air of awkwardness took over the entire room. Cole's hands got tighter around her, pulling her more into his warmth.

"She's coming to Lycaon," he spoke before any of them had gathered the energy to speak.

“Out of the question, Cole... She comes to Sirius,” Martha was the one to rise before the others this time. The two glared at each other intensifying the tension in the room. Lina moved a bit farther from her family in an attempt to be invisible and avoid partaking in the argument.

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“What’s this argument about?” Katie asked, innocently.

The two parties were astounded by the question though they had to keep their calm while speaking to someone who only just barely survived death. “We are talking about where you will be living... As of this day, your birthday, you are no longer in the custody of the Chase family.”

The information hit Katie like a brick wall, colliding with her entire agenda. This whole time, she’d been anxious to get out of the hospital and go back home so she could lie in her bed once more. She’d never missed it this much until now, yet here was an argument amongst the most powerful of werewolves in the world on where she would be spending her night. The bed in the home of the Chase hunters was completely out of question.

“Do I get a say in this?” Katie asked them, drawing their attention once more.

“Considering you had no idea what the argument was about, I’m afraid to give you one. When did you learn about your biological family?” Davin asked.

“That was...” she took a moment to think, “A few weeks ago... When I deliberately stopped taking my pills, my wolf... umm, woke up.” She said, the male beneath her stiffening at the revelation.

“Wait, you mean all those times that I caught the scent of my mate? It was just you getting lazy about your meds,” Cole asked the girl.

“Yeah, I’m afraid that’s true. There is that day when you chased me into the forest. I was so exhausted that day. Thankfully, I had a few pills on me and took them before you found me,” she said.

“That explains the smell of wolfsbane on you that day. I’m glad that the poison is out of your system. It could have killed you,” he said, his voice so concerned that it hypnotised Katie into looking up at the alpha’s eyes.

“Ahem, back to your living conditions. Cole, I ask that we come to a peaceful agreement,” Davin said, this time sounding humbled as he spoke. The Royals knew to take the man’s request every time he offered to stop riding his high horse and act reasonably other than using the insane power he had as a Royal.

“I’m listening,” Cole spoke up.

“Katie was taken from Sirius when she was only an infant. Giving her away when she’d never lived with us would be like she never existed. I ask that you allow hold onto her for a while and get to know our daughter before letting her open a chapter of giving birth to overpowered pups,” the man said, ending the sentence with a smirk.

“Humph, at least I won’t give birth to hunter werewolves as you did,” Katie huffed in reply.

Drake covered his mouth and looked away from his father. A similar gesture rippled through the family as they tried to spare their father the embarrassment, "Don't look away from me. I had no idea she would have a comeback that witty..." he tried, but only made it worse as they burst out laughing.

"Maybe you'd like to reconsider before you speak next time, honey," Martha said to the king. 'Royals... what an odd group of people... To the rest of the world, they are tyrants that can kill anyone they please... Well, that's how it is known in places where they've never met them and the rumours still mill through the crowds. However, up close, they are the total opposite...' Katie couldn't find it within her to laugh along with them for a while.

"Are you okay?" Cole asked her.

"Yeah, I'm just flushed. What's this supposed to mean for me? Am I leaving Brigadia?" she asked the male.

"Maybe not right now, but yes, you are leaving Brigadia," he replied calmly.

"What, but there is..."

"Nothing here that belongs to you," the alpha intervened.

"What do you mean nothing that belongs to me? I live in Brigadia. I've defended this place from a lot..." she said. She would have continued if it wasn't for the palm that covered her mouth and stopped her from speaking.

"Think about it like this. You are mated to the next King of Lycaon and a princess of the Sirius Royal family. With our union, the war comes closer to an end. The rogue king will want to do a lot to get to you now that you have announced your presence. I don't have to say much more... You know what's best for this town," he said.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Well, that Rogue king is after you. He's been after you since the day information reached the rogues about your whereabouts. They almost succeeded tonight. The more you stay here..."

"I know what you're saying," Katie said, sighing in defeat, "Since when do you use the information to manipulate your mate...?"

Cole only chuckled, "I'll protect you wherever you go, honey. Even if you feel like returning to Brigadia, I won't stop you, but I will be with you."

"I wouldn't ask you to leave the capital to come and live here... Huh, I really don't belong in Brigadia, do I?" Katie said, realisation finally reaching her. She remembered the look on her Aunt Marie's face when she had revealed her school worries to her. Now that she was surrounded by her real family and had finally understood their purpose of coming, she realised just what she had meant...

"No, you don't..."

'So you knew I wasn't going to spend another night in that house,' Katie thought. She'd run off that morning very energetically. Returning to that house was the most obvious thing to her, but now it felt

like the farthest place on the planet. "I'd like time to organise my thoughts," she spoke up, undeniably dismissing the congregation before her.

Davin nodded in respect and turned to walk out. Drake did the same, but the two people didn't seem inclined to move. Martha walked up to her daughter until they were right next to each other. Her black hair fell onto her shoulders, the blue eyes accented her beauty nicely... It was like staring at her reflection... The woman hugged the younger girl without warning. Stunned at first, Katie slowly wrapped her arms around the older woman.

'So, this is my mother... And I'm allowed to call her 'mum', she thought to herself. An overwhelming sense of longing came crashing down on the girl as she realised the whole reason her foster parents had trained her to avoid associating them with the person that brought her into this world. It was as though the two could communicate in the silence that engulfed them...

"I thought I'd never see you again after that day," the woman whispered into her ear, images of the night she was given to the Chase hunters flowed into the hunter's mind. Her mother had risked her life, travelling with an infant, and a fatal wound in her gut as she took her to the place the moon goddess directed her to.

Suddenly the solemn expression she'd seen in the newspapers looked far more accurate than she'd originally thought it was. The queen loved her children... and Katie was one of them...

107 Chapter One Hundred Seven

The Royal family walked out moments later leaving the two to a short moment of silence. "Are you okay?" Cole asked Katie, enjoying his role of 'cushion.'

"Yes, I'm fine. Emotions as a werewolf are just a bit harder to control," she replied, trying the breathing technique to wipe her emotions away from her. Unfortunately, this didn't seem to help at all. She could still feel the surging mess of emotions welling up within her. At the back of her mind, a wolf chose to make herself even less noticeable to the hunter. Maybe that way, the hunter would be able to confine her emotions like she was used to...

'Don't... You're a part of me as much as I am a part of you,' Katie said to the wolf within her. Ashley had taken a deep dive into the memories of her counterpart and found out everything about her. She didn't know why, but something about the memories appealed to her. She even found the reason Katie had been stunned by her name. The dead child that was still being mourned bore a similar name with the wolf.

"Well, for someone who's only just found out that she is going to be taken from her home, you are taking this quite well," he said.

"It's like you want me to snap at you," she sighed, "Cole, I'm hungry."

"Huh, that was sudden," the Royal was surprised.

"Feed your mate, Cole. I'm starving..." she continued, her wolf pushing forward with excitement. Cole noticed the change in her demeanour. Her voice was playful and she didn't give him the option of getting up, "Before I'm forced to eat you instead..."

“You don’t have to get cannibalistic. I’ll ask Caden to bring you something. Just hang in there,” he said, holding up the girl who was now fake fainting. She was only getting heavier in his arms, not that he couldn’t hold her. She giggled at the man’s efforts only to cringe in pain, “Are you okay?”

The concern in his voice made the girl feel like melting. She almost forgot the pain that had only just shot from her abdomen, “Oh, I’m fine. It was just my stomach. I strained myself during the fight. How long was I out?”

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“Not long actually... Your healing speed is top tier even for a Royal. The fighting only ended hours ago. It’s currently the middle of the night. Happy birthday, princess,” he summarised placing a kiss on her forehead... The girl huffed in disappointment... “What...”

“Nothing... Were there any injuries?” she asked from her position across his laps, doing nothing to change it.

“You just have to draw the report out somehow,” he groaned, “When I heard that you were injured, I didn’t pay attention to anything else that was happening. You weren’t stabilising and I was growing worried sick and when the doctors did manage to stabilise you, you kept growing weaker,” he explained before sending a message to his alpha to bring her food.

“Oh, sorry to worry you... And thanks for bringing me back. I don’t think I would have gotten out of that,” she said, her eyes glazing over.

“Did you really see him?” he asked her.

“Huh, who, the Rogue King... Oh yeah, I saw him. He was big and powerful... And a Royal,” she said.

“Oh, then what happened? I don’t think you’d let him get away from you if that happened,” he said to her.

“Of course I wouldn’t have let him go. I was weak, but I would have at least stalled long enough for the Mighty warrior made it,” she said, “They are only called upon when there is a high likelihood of the Rogue King appearing. My parent... sorry, guardians were spot on in their prediction,” she said to him.

“Yeah, they were... Can you promise me something, Katie?” Cole said, suddenly getting serious.

“If it’s reasonable, then yes,” she replied, noting the demanding tone in his voice.

Cole sighed at the reply. He had known she wouldn’t be easy to convince, but he still wasn’t going to take no for an answer. Part of him hoped she would realise this and give up, “You are not allowed to go into battle on your own regardless of what’s at risk,” he said to her, keeping his voice as cold as he could. It was a small price for what he’d experienced when he thought she was going to die.

Katie kept silent taking in the words she was sure were directed as a command and not an option. She didn’t want to make such a promise, but she knew he wasn’t going to drop it either. ‘You know we did almost die...’ Ashley spoke into the girl’s mind.

'I know... I guess I just hadn't let it sink in until now,' she mentally replied. Sighing, she gave in to her mate's demands. Her shoulders relaxed more than she thought was possible, relieving her of unknown stress, "Fine then... You have my word on this, but..."

"I might not be able to accept that..."

"Just hear me out, okay? I don't want us to have any regrets if the time ever comes. I won't risk my life again if that's what you're afraid of, but the next time I do something solo, I'll ask you first. Only when you let me will I go," she was practically begging him to accept the condition.

Cole knew what she was trying to get at. If there was ever a time that she would get a golden opportunity to end the war, this would allow her to break her promise without going against the promise she was making to him. It was unlikely and he didn't even see a point in raising such a point. Nonetheless, knowing she had the liberty to act in such a situation would give her the peace of mind she was seeking. "I will be the one to decide that then," he accepted.

The door creaked open just enough to allow a blonde head to peek through. Sandra surveyed the room and backed out to see if the coast was clear before sneaking into the room, "Hey, I thought you heard..." a voice shouted from outside before Sandra shut the door...

"I just had to see her. Since when were you appointed her bodyguard," she shouted at the man outside, his voice coming very close to Jason's.

"I wasn't appointed her bodyguard, but she hasn't called for anyone else yet and..."

"You guys can come in now," Katie cut the male's speech in half and watched the door burst open. Sandra leapt back just in time, barely missing being hit by the door.

"That's great, Katie. How are you feeling? Is it true you saw him? What happened? Does it still hurt? How did Cole wake you...?"

"Can you slow down or at least shut up, Jason? She has only woken up," Sandra shook the red-eyed male, "Where is that passive composure you had just a moment ago? You wouldn't even let me get close to this room."

"What makes you think I wasn't curious? Cole has been so worried I thought he'd throw all our wolves into mourning," he mumbled. Katie turned her head up to look Cole in the eye again.

"You were that worried. Aww, that's cute," she teased the now reddening tomato she was using as a cushion.

"I see someone got a new pillow," Sandra smirked at the girl.

"Yes, and it's all mine. No borrowing it... comes with heating capabilities as well. I don't even need a blanket in the winter," Katie replied, cosying into the Royal once more. It wasn't like he was complaining.

"You are getting way too comfortable, Katie," Cole chuckled, wrapping his arms lovingly around her.

“Oh, come on... You two should get a room,” a new voice poured into the room. They all turned to see Caden by the entrance holding a couple of large takeout bags. Katie couldn’t help but lick her lips at the smell of the food.

‘He looks familiar,’ Ashley spoke up abruptly, catching Katie off-guard.

‘Huh, what do you mean?’ the wolf pushed forward in her mind to take a closer look at the male.

‘I don’t know, but I feel like I know him. It’s probably a figment of a past life. It’s nothing to worry about. Let me out...’ the wolf protested, turning her attention back to the Royal we’d captured for a headrest.

‘Huh, no way... I do not have any idea what you have in mind. Besides, I have to talk to my friends first... Speaking of which, you are distracting me,’ she countered before bringing her mind back to the present. Unfortunately for her, the room had gone deadly silent and everyone was giving her a weird look, mainly Sandra. The werewolves were either smirking or trying to contain their laughter (Jason).

“So your wolf talks, I see,” Cole pointed out.

“Huh,” Katie turned to the Royal, my mind going completely blunt... ‘That’s a thing...’

108 Chapter One Hundred Eight

The Royals got out of the room only to find the man that was responsible for saving their daughter’s life standing at the entrance. The entire corridor had been cleared out and there was no one who could be seen except for a few nurses that were still bustling around and helping the doctors tend to the last remaining patients. It had been a busy night and everyone was only thinking of sleep at the moment.

“Sir Jim Gordon, it’s been a long time. I’d like to extend my gratitude for rescuing my daughter,” the King began, giving the man a slight bow of the head. The rest of the family followed in an equally respectable gesture, Drake with a bow and the females with brief curtsies. It wasn’t proper for Royals to go all out with the greetings, but necessary in the event that they were addressing someone who’d rescued one of their own.

“I was only doing my duty to this world. Besides, without that girl there would be no hope for the rest of us,” he said. His voice carried volumes of wisdom and unspoken messages.

“So you know the tales,” the phrase came out sounding more like a question.

“No, but as I carried her here, I could tell she was something special. I wouldn’t be surprised if she makes it to the rank of Mighty Hunter herself regardless of her werewolf hindrances,” he said.

“What do you mean by hindrances?” the King asked, feeling slightly offended by the remark.

“I’m merely stating the facts, King Davin. No need to get bent out of shape over it. The werewolves possess a strong sense and need to protect their own, to groom them and make sure that the whole pack functions as a whole. No one gets left behind,” the man started, “As a result, werewolves are the one type of creatures that can bear overwhelming emotions without being consumed by them...

However, that is not the same for a hunter. Hunters do not have that luxury and it is through this that I call being a werewolf a hindrance. Perhaps she might surprise all of us and turn this around to draw power from her werewolf side, but that would be me being highly optimistic,” he summarised.

Davin Sirius was intrigued by the detail with which the man had thought through his argument and couldn't quite counter him. Nevertheless, the spirit of the girl he'd just seen in that room was not one to be taken lightly, "Well, this is my daughter you are talking about. It wouldn't hurt to be a little optimistic," he said.

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They bid the man farewell and began the walk away from there only to hear him call back, "Your majesty..."

Davin froze and turned back to see the man, noticing the fast-paced thoughts that ran behind his eyes, "Is there something else you wanted to share?" he asked.

"I would like to request the princess to come with me to the forest. I want to see the place Katie was brought down," the man said, keeping his head down while he made the request. It was a peculiar one and Davin was reluctant after having seen his daughter moving about with the man's coat hiding her nakedness.

"Only if Drake escorts you..." he said.

"That would be fantastic," the man said.

If it wasn't for the reputation of the Four Mighty hunters, Davin would have ordered a battalion of hunters to escort them into the woods and keep them miles apart with only cellphones to communicate and yet still feel like it wasn't enough protection. Lina was remarkably beautiful and a bit too much of a free spirit for his liking... and it made him anxious every time he watched her unknowingly cross a line. 'Hunters aren't that kind of people... they aren't like the unmated males from the Capital,' he tried to convince himself.

'Oh, honey, enough worrying. There is nothing that's going to happen,' Martha's voice came into the man's head.

'That's what I hope. I'll have his head if something happens to my daughter. We don't even know if the rogues are still out there or not,' he replied, watching the trio leave.

"You worry too much, dear husband. I have a mind to flip the back of your head, but what good will that do?" the woman sighed.

"Well, there is you taking care of me when we get back to the suite," Davin said thoughtfully while they turned to proceed with their preconceived journey.

"Dear Moon Goddess, I'm going to end up doing that whether you're injured or not," Martha giggled. It had been long since the two of them weren't in the company of their children since they left the capital. The suite was starting to feel small and cramped with all of them having to live on the same floor and with nothing much separating the rooms.

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Jim Gordon, the Thunderclap, one of the Four Mighty Warriors. He'd risen to the rank in his late forties and on that path, he'd had the pleasure of working alongside multitudes of hunters. He'd seen his share

of violence and it wasn't a pretty battle that was being fought. He could tell how relentless the young hunter that he'd carried to the hospital was.

She was so determined to accomplish her mission that she'd not realised when she'd fainted and her mind had remained in the state of alertness during battle. Unfortunately, that had impeded her healing. If it hadn't been for the doctors who helped to clean her fast-moving blood that could have spread wolfsbane to all parts of her body... or the numerous drips that were used to rejuvenate her constantly waning strength, she would not have made it.

He was partly proud and frightened by the girl. She was much stronger than any hunter her age but much weaker than the Rogue King. Up until this point, there was little information on the man and those who had been graced with the opportunity to fight him had only recounted insane power unlike that of a regular wolf.

Accompanied by Lina and Drake Sirius, the three made it through the forest in search of the clearing that Katie had been when she was downed by four arrows, "What are we looking for when we get there?" Lina asked him while they ran. Royals were impressive for the power they possessed to talk to humans even when in their wolf forms.

"We are looking for the arrows that were used against Katie," the man replied.

"What do you mean? What about those arrows? They should be the last thing she sees at the moment," Lina said.

"In my years, I've learnt a few tricks from the Chase hunters. It's that my gut instinct is never wrong. When Katie asked for the arrows, she wanted them desperately, but she didn't show how much she did," he said.

"What's that supposed to do with anything? They are laced with wolfsbane and she can't use them like that," she said.

"She can if she wears a gas mask. Besides, I have the feeling she didn't simply want them to add more to her quiver. I think she knows something that could be uncovered once she sees the arrows up close," he said to her.

"And you got all that from a gut instinct," this time it was the Prince to his left who spoke. Unlike his sister, he was taking the information in a calmer way. There wasn't much to go on except for the hunch he had... but that was enough for him. After all, saving Katie in the first place in the exact position he found her... had also been a hunch.

They found the clearing after running for what felt like an hour... which was actually thirty minutes. The three were remarkable in speed and were only wondering why it took so long to get to the desired location. Lina shifted back and wrapped herself up with the jacket that reappeared upon her shoulders, "It was in that tree that the arrows pinned her," the girl said, pointing at a tree with four holes that leaked blood, stained with purple in the four different spots.

"I saw it before I could get here and there was a female hunter who made it before me. She was fast and she shot arrows at a speed I've only seen coming close to Cupid Shooter," she said.

“That’s impossible. Where could you have even seen Cupid Shooter in the first place?” the man snapped at her. Four Mighty warriors... Seeing one was a blessing to the few who got the chance and yet here was a girl claiming to have seen another beside the Thunderclap that stood before her.

“I’ve seen three of the Mighty Warriors now. You are the third that I’ve seen. I know what I’m saying... Look there,” she said, pointing to an assortment of arrows that lined the ground in a formation that made a defensive wall from the tree, “She shot them while in the air. The scene brought me a sense of nostalgia, but that’s not the point.

I got to Katie when the hunter had taken her down. We took out the arrows there and threw them in random directions... so if we look around...”

“You mean like this one...” Drake interrupted her, holding up a steel arrow that still dripped with a purple liquid.

“Yes, exactly,” Lina said, looking away from the grotesque-looking item. After a few minutes of looking around, the other three arrows were found and wrapped in a cloth that was then stored by Jim.

“Was that all we came for?” Lina asked.

“Yes, that was all. Hopefully, this will get us some more information. Centuries and we’ve never come close to finding the Rogue King,” the man sighed. The trio then chose to depart without another word. The werewolves wanted to leave the place anyway... It deeply stunk of rogues that had been killed that very night and the forest was still littered with their bodies.

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Caden thankfully realised the two lovebirds were not going to eat alone and brought more food for the four of them. Sandra set up the room so that they all had where to sit and talk (a task that wasn’t that necessary, but hey...) Katie, on the other hand, sighed when she realised they were supposed to share the food and no one had accounted for her now-boundless appetite.

Silence filled the room while they all settled down to eat. There had been some developments since the four friends had last spoken and this preferably the right time to address them. “So, she’s a werewolf?” Jason began, seeing as no one else seemed ready to.

“Yup, she is...” Cole replied.

“The same one we were convinced was dead eighteen years ago,” he continued.

“The very one...”

The room once again filled with silence and the sound of forks striking food and mastication taking place. “Katie, did you really see him?”

“Sandra,” Jason tried to snapped at the girl...

“What... I’m curious. I know you are as well,” she countered. It was clear there were numerous unanswered questions among the three of them. Caden mostly remained quite and watched them bicker.

“Well, I’ll answer some of your questions... the ones that I can. I am a werewolf. I’m sure the werewolves didn’t know that...” she said to them.

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Caden and Jason glanced at Sandra briefly before turning their attention back to the couple before them. Cole hadn’t touched his food since they began eating. He discretely watched his mate while she ate. At the back of his mind, he knew the food she’d been given wasn’t going to satisfy her waking wolf.

“Katie, what about him... Did you see him?”

“Yes, I saw him... The guy was there and I tried to attack him before,” Cole wouldn’t have known unless she’d been leaning into him like she was. Her body began to shiver at the thought of what had happened in the forest. She couldn’t seem to finish the story... That, however, didn’t matter to him. He wrapped his arm around her hoping it would calm her, which it did.

“I’m sorry we asked, Katie... We won’t bring it up again,” Caden apologized narrowing his eyes at his two friends. As it turned out, Katie was not ready to discuss what had happened that night. Not even Cole knew what happened to her every time she was asked to narrate the story. As for Katie, her mind remained unable to retrieve all the information.

Each time she tried, nothing came through. The last vivid memory was of the Rogue King, but after that everything was blocked. It’s not that she didn’t remember, but more of she didn’t want to. She wanted that part of the night completely out of her mind. For some reason, meeting the Rogue King had been less traumatizing than what happened next.

“Want more food?” the sound of the Royal to her left called.

I was then that she realised she’d finished eating and barely felt a thing in her belly. His food lay in front of him, untouched and calling out to her, “Why hesitate, Katie? I’m hungry,” Ashley screamed in her mind.

‘So you’re the reason I eat like a wolf,’ she groaned mentally.

‘You are a wolf, darling and right now, I say grab that plate of delicious looking...’

‘What about Cole?’

“What about him?” the question was blank and Katie could tell from the wolf’s emotions that she saw nothing wrong with depriving the Royal his meal, ‘He did just give it to us. He’s such a gentleman to know that I need nurturing.’

“Do newly awoken wolves eat this much?” Katie asked him, coming out of her conversation with her wolf just in time to hear Caden ask Cole something else... “What was that?” she asked Caden.

“Oh, it was nothing...” he began only to realise Katie was not going to drop it until he said something, “Fine, I asked him why he thought it was necessary to stuff you up. You don’t look like someone who would umm... fancy seconds...”

Sandra put her hand to her mouth to stop the laughter that threatened to burst free from her, "I'll just take this off your hands, Cole. Thank you very much," Katie said, ignoring the alpha's uninformed question.

"Caden, how about you order more food? I'll need to eat something as well," Cole spoke up, in an attempt to ease the tension in the room, "And yes, Katie, it is totally normal for werewolves that have just awoken to eat a lot. It helps with their development. Your wolf might have awoken, but she doesn't have full strength yet and that can only be achieved if you eat enough."

"Oh, okay then. On another note, someone please tell me what happened after I passed out," Katie groaned. From the moment she woke up, everyone about her had been dodging the question. She was starting to get frustrated by this and the more they ignored her, the more she got worried that something bad had happened.

Sandra could barely look her in the face. Something had happened indeed, but everyone seemed reluctant to tell her. Cole, who also hadn't heard a thing was wondering also started to get worried, "Did something bad happen? I thought the battle ended."

"That's... what we thought as well..." Sandra spoke up. Caden used the opportunity to sneak out of the room... and the others let him for a part of the story involved him.

"What happened then?" Cole was the one to ask this time. Caden was already far from earshot, praying his friend would not see an error in the actions.

"Well, there was Jackeline..." Sandra began.

"What about Jackeline?" Katie's heartbeat asked, her heart beating faster. 'Was she injured? What had happened?' Katie's mind rushed through all the possibilities...

"Katie, she's fine now. Although she's was given a sedative to keep her calm..." the girl tried to calm her.

"What happened to her?"

"She went berserk after the Thunderclap rushed you away. She killed every rogue she could find... even the ones that had given up. Frost was able to subdue her, but she was raging. She hasn't woken up ever since," she said.

"I hope she's fine," Katie was only beginning to relax, "Is there anything else?"

"Yes, after she'd been subdued Prince Drake started working on Prometheus evaluations for the rogues that had surrendered. Everything was going smoothly until..." the words got stuck in her mouth. Jason put his hand on hers, nodding for her to stop talking. She'd gone through for as long as she could have and he only felt that it was right for him to tell the rest.

"Caden interrupted the procedure," he began, drawing a reaction from Cole.

"That's impossible. Caden..."

"Caden's been mourning Cole. He's been mourning for the lost wolf. I didn't know how bad it had gotten until he began speaking to one of the rogues. Among the ones that had surrendered was a rogue that had been keeping an eye on someone we soon came to know as Ashley," he said.

“Who’s Ashley?” Cole asked. Katie couldn’t help, but suspect who they were talking about.

“Ashley was Ash’s real name. I guess she didn’t really do much to change it when she decided to pretend to be a boy. The rogue... he spoke ill of her and was starting to get to Caden,” he continued. Sandra gave the young man’s hand a squeeze when she realised it was getting harder to tell the story. “Before Caden could react, Drake through the man into his Prometheus evaluation.

That wasn’t enough to shut him up though. The man continued to talk through his trance and while he spoke to the god Prometheus, he... incited the rest of those that had surrendered. The hunters had their guards down and didn’t see it coming. Most of those that had surrendered lost faith in salvation by the Prometheus evaluation and resolved to go down with at least one of their enemies.”

Katie took in a sharp breath when she heard that, “How many... How many casualties?”

“The hunters that were injured were... fifty in number. Thirty of them had fatal injuries. We didn’t see the attack coming. Caden and Drake tried their best, but there is only so much you can do to stop mindless creatures. They had no sense of purpose left, but to kill anyone that wasn’t one of them. Some of them tried to even get to the Founder’s festival, but were cut down before they made it there,” Sandra finished the story.

Katie took the time to think about what she was hearing. She’d spent such a long time making sure Brigadia was safe. “Would one say that the hunters weren’t able to defend themselves because they were... out of shape?”

Sandra realised what Katie was implying immediately and was quick to act, “Katie, this had nothing to do with you. The hunters knew what had happened to you. They knew they were supposed to stay on their toes.

Caden came back into the room only moments later with the food he’d ordered. He’d moved fast, partly because he wanted to make it right after the story was done and partly because... he was tired of the burden he’d been carrying since the death of Ash Myster... Ashley...

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The room fell into a deep silence when the door swung open. Caden’s eyes were a bit teary and the occupants of the room could tell he had a lot to say. “I got the food,” he began, closing the door of the hospital room.

“Thanks, Caden. I’m starving,” Katie groaned, clutching her stomach.

“Well, I made sure to get more food this time. I underestimated the energy needed by a werewolf Rogue Killer,” he said, handing the takeout bags to the girl’s outstretched hands.

“I believe you owe us an explanation now. You’ve been mourning... and we’ve only been able to watch. Leaving you to your time alone, but you know a wolf cannot move past grief on their own. We do that as a pack,” Cole began.

“I didn’t want to distract you from what was already happening in your lives,” he said.

“What’s that supposed to mean? You know the pack comes first,” the dialogue continued. Katie placed her hand on the Royal’s to calm him when he started to get agitated.

“Cole, you know Caden wouldn’t have done anything irrational... What did happen Caden?” the room fell into silence as the stage was now Caden’s.

“I... I talked to Ashley the night before she was murdered. Jason had already fallen asleep and she couldn’t find any. At the time, we thought she was a boy, of course...” Caden recounted the events of that night to his friends, doing his best to keep his composure while he did. He had quite a lot to tell them and he told with extreme patience. The wolf within Katie pushed further to the back of her mind, trying to block out the information that was being delivered which proved impossible since she was one with Katie.

“Earlier when I interrupted the Prometheus evaluations, I was hoping there was still a soul among the cowards that lay before us that was like Ashley... Still seeking happiness and not war and death, but... I was wrong. Rogues are just like we are taught they are. They seek the destruction of all bipeds. I know it was a naive thought and I can’t help, but take all the blame... I don’t know how to fix it,” Jason stood up and approached his friend.

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“You don’t have to hold that much in, man. It’s not healthy for you,” Jason said, moving his seat so that he was next to the man, “And no one blames you for seeking another pure soul trapped in the darkness that the Rogue king has cooked up.”

“We’ll have a memorial in Lycaon... And her story will be known to all,” Cole spoke up.

“What good will that do?” Caden asked.

“Well, it will clear Katie of the incompetence accusations that she is being subjected to, but what’s more... It will get to all the other spies out there. The story will carry a message of help to all those that seek to get out of their life amongst the rogues. We might not get many considering what happened to Ashley in the end, but it is one step in the right direction,” he said.

“And what direction might that be?”

“The same one we’ve always been walking to. A life without rogues and a life without werewolf or human oppression,” Cole’s words reached him and the rest that was in that room, “We have a lot of work to do, but at the moment, I guess we should first hold off anything until after bidding our fallen the farewell that she deserves.”

Amidst the deep conversation that had now taken a turn for deep silence, the sound of someone chewing salads broke through the silence of the room. It drew everyone’s attention to the person that had now served herself a second plate of the food that Caden had brought with him. Seated comfortably with Cole acting as the perfect pillow, Katie continued to dig into the food.

“How can you even...”

“Just because I’m eating doesn’t mean I’m not paying attention. Besides, I’m not the only one that can tell that it’s time for all of us to get some sleep,” Jason took out his phone, the device came out cracked and barely able to function, a state he was used to at this point. When your job was to be the right-hand bodyguard to the Crown Prince of the Lycaon empire, owning a phone that was constantly being destroyed was normal.

“That device was cursed the day it was sold to you,” Sandra pointed out.

“And so were its predecessors and those that are going to come after it,” the man replied, finally getting the phone to work, “It’s quite late. Five hours to sunrise. We’ll leave you two to yourselves. I still don’t fully understand how the Princess survived eighteen years ago... or why Prometheus would give a werewolf his gifts, but I know I’ll find out soon enough. Have a good night, you two,” he said, smirking and pulling Caden to his feet.

Caden, whose first reflex was to reach out to the food they were denying him, started complaining, “Why do I have to leave at the same time as you?”

“Because then you’d be the fourth wheel,” he said.

“Isn’t that phrase supposed to be... Hey, what about Sandra?”

“See you later, Sandra. You should also get yourself some sleep. Wouldn’t expect you to spend so much time here either?” Jason said, shoving his fellow alpha out the door.

“Who would have thought Jason was the responsible one?” Katie mused at the spectacle that had just occurred right before her eyes. It was normally Caden that was pushing Jason around.

“Well, to be honest, they are both responsible. Jason just has a... ‘colourful’ character. Makes it hard to know that he can be responsible if he wants to be,” Cole explained. Katie had finally slowed down on the food, but whether it was her finally getting satisfied was beyond his comprehension.

“You have such loyal friends. I envy you...” she said, absentminded.

“That hurts, Katie,” Sandra mock-cried.

“Well, you didn’t exactly react well when you found out I was a werewolf. Take this as revenge, sister,” Katie smirked, making her way to the evil laugh that was stopped by a heart-warming hug from her best friend.

“I thought you wouldn’t make it. Why would you scare me like that?” the girl said, finally taking off the fa?ade she’d been wearing the whole time.

“You have such little faith in your mentor,” Katie chuckled, returning the hug kindly. Another set of hands wrapped around the two of them.

“Don’t scare us like that again,” Cole said to her. ‘Are these the two people that are closest to you?’ Ashley asked the girl. It was only now that she was realising who was closest to her... Sandra, her best friend and Cole, her mate...

“I can make that a promise,” she said to the two of them... ‘Yes, Ashley, these are the two closest people to me. Well, outside my family,’ she replied. The wolf reached out to the surface, taking in their scents as a way of imprinting.

Had Sandra not read about what was going on, she would have run away from the girl. Snow white fur had grown from the back of her friend’s face. Unlike the stubby facial hair of a grown man, this fur was soft like cotton and for some reason made the girl feel even more huggable. “And you better stick to it. Both of you...”

“Someone is good at merging with their wolf,” Cole began, watching his mate in astonishment. Her fangs were elongated and her face had become more wolf than human, but she didn’t seem to be straining at all.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Katie asked, finally getting out of the double bear hug.

“Well, it’s not every day that a wolf and their human parts use the same body simultaneously. When that happens, it’s called a half shift and honestly, it’s not common. Most werewolves want to be independent and find it repulsive to sync with their human counterparts even though they know of the strength that form provides,” he said. ‘You’re far too talented,’ he thought to himself.

“Oh, well, I guess the moon goddess gave me the perfect match then. A wolf that gets me completely,” she boasted, “Now, Cole, hurry up and eat something. I’ll smack you on the head if you don’t.”

Sandra, having seen Katie before the Founder’s festival, finally understood why the girl hadn’t gobbled up the entire meal. Despite her somewhat relentless eating, she had been thinking of Cole and was pretending to be satisfied just so that he could eat something. “You two are made for each other,” Sandra said, getting off the bed, “Have a good night.”

Silence filled the room... Sandra was gone and the two of them were left to themselves once again. Katie reached forward for one of the takeout bags and found that there was one meal left within it. “I guess Sandra knows me too well...”

“What was that?”

“Nothing... I was just pointing out that Sandra left her food behind,” she said.

“Oh my... we should...”

“Back off Lycaon, this is mine...” Katie’s face was starting to return to normal bringing her face back to normal so smoothly that Cole almost missed the change.

“Alright fine, bottomless pit... Just don’t get an upset tummy during the night,” Cole chuckled.

“What is it like... life in the palace?” Katie asked the thoughts of leaving her home creeping into her mind. Cole could tell she was anxious. It was the only way this could all go and she knew it. It didn’t help make it easier though...

“How about we make that a story for another day. I should probably get going as well... Is there anything else you need?” he asked her, wrapping up his food so that he could get going.

“Yes, I need you to stay the night...”