

Chosen 131

131 Chapter One Hundred Thirty One

Crysta, back in her winning mood, was back with her goals in sight. Katie ran with Cole, a sight she found revolting. For as long as she could remember, she'd been smitten with the Royal since she'd set her eyes on him. She could almost feel the presence of a mate bond between the two of them even though it was not there.

When she'd found out about the death of the princess of Sirius when she was only an infant, she'd (regretfully) felt overjoyed by the news. Fantasies of helping the royal forget his shattered destiny dominated her mind and she'd groomed herself for this exact purpose.

She'd rejected every boy that had ever tried to lay her hands on her through the years and now that she was supposed to be with him, he stood with someone claiming to be Princess Katie. It was unacceptable and the sight of the girl disgusted her to the core. The Sirius pack had spent a long time getting over the loss of the princess and had finally moved on, 'We don't need the ghosts of the past or at least ghostly apparitions coming back to haunt us... I'll show everyone that you aren't who you say you are. Hang in there, Cole, my dear. I'll break whatever spell she has on you soon enough,' she thought.

Crysta had fled the party the night before with her plans thwarted and having received the visual of the couple dancing within each other's arms. It only helped fuel her anger towards the couple. She wanted Katie gone and that was exactly what she was going to do.

"Oh, is the cripple trying to join us in training as well... That's going to be interesting," she started, reaching the group that jogged around Katie. Prince Drake had also fallen for the girl's trickery. He grew quiet when the girl announced her presence. Bree and Ginger ran beside her, keeping the pace quite easily as they caught up with this group.

"I didn't know you were the one to reject one of your own, Crysta," Drake commented, drawing the girl's attention away from Katie.

"What makes you think 'this one' is one of us?" the girl spoke with disgust in her tone.

"Where is the doubt?"

"Werewolves are strong, Drake. She's... well, she's a cripple who's only learned how to walk. I would be surprised if she's got some fight in her at all," the girl argued, "Just look at the pace you're using. I could sleep for a day and still catch up to you."

.....

Drake, who had seen the girl in action only a week ago, cringed at the inaccuracy contained in her information, "Take those words back..." Cole was the one to react this time.

"Oh, Cole darling, you noticed I was here... And you haven't even greeted me yet," the girl's voice went soft at the mention of Cole. She flashed her pearly whites at the Royal who returned a nervous one.

"Cole, how far to wherever it is that we are going?"

"I will not be telling you that..." this was all Cole had to say to get the girl running faster.

“Try to keep up, Cole,” she called back.

“Wait, you shouldn’t push yourself so much. What if...”

“I have to know just how much I have achieved in recovery. I can’t do that at this pace, Cole, please,” she called backpedalling so that they faced each other when they spoke. Crysta hid the frustration of seeing the girl take the pace so easily as well as the nerve to ignore her while she spoke.

Cole sighed, seeing the logic behind the girl’s logic, “Very well, but the moment you feel as much as an itch, you stop for a rest... You’ve got to promise me on that...”

“Promise... Thanks,” she replied, placing a quick peck on the alpha’s cheek, “Come on, Sandra. No slacking.”

“Why is it called slacking when I do it and not when you do it?” Sandra complained, speeding up to catch up with Katie as she quickly put a distance between herself and the group they’d been running with.

After a few moments, the two had vanished as the forest obscured them from vision. Cole could still tell how close they were even though they started to get out of earshot. ‘The perks of being a werewolf and having a mate whose scent is the easiest thing to discern,’ the man thought proudly to himself before getting serious about the Beta’s daughter that had somehow made her way beside him.

“You don’t really believe that she’s...”

“Yes, Crysta. I do... I know what I feel, okay. Just drop this act before you get embarrassed,” Cole snapped at the girl. Jason and Caden looked at the two in shock...

“Do you guys know each other?” Jason asked.

“Last night, while I slept, I remembered someone who always offered me water and encouragement when I was going for the games,” Cole confessed with a sigh.

“Now that wasn’t so hard, was it? Drop the act, Cole. You...”

“Remember a girl that was kind and fun to talk to. What happened to you, Crysta? Make one more mistake, Crysta. I won’t be so lenient,” he cut her off, taking on an angrier tone, “Katie’s been through enough already. You shouldn’t be part of the rest of her burden.”

“I don’t know what she has done to your head, but I won’t stop until I prove she isn’t who she says she is,” Crysta returned mirroring the royal’s anger before running off in pursuit of Katie with Bree and Ginger in tow.

“Caden, Jason, keep an eye on Crysta for me, just for now. In case she does something stupid,” he said to his two best friends.

“Yes, Alpha Cole,” they both replied in unison, their eyes flashing brighter as they took in the command. This, however, went unnoticed and the two royals watched as the males sped ahead at inhuman speeds.

Cole sighed... he was finally alone with Drake, something that he was aiming for. He hadn’t spoken to his royal counterpart in a long time. The two of them were destined to take over the Royal Werewolf

families in a few years' time. A friendship between the two of them was all but inevitable, considering, no one else in the world understood what they went through.

"Long time since we had a heart to heart," Drake started.

"And now is the time that you want to start?" Cole asked.

"That depends... Do you want to talk about it? Your father..." Drake asked him. Cole's eyes widened when he heard the words leave the prince's mouth. No one had reason to come to a question such as that one and yet here he was being questioned about him.

"No, I don't want to talk about it... and I'd be happy if you didn't either," Cole warned Drake. Drake raised his hands up in mock surrender.

"Don't look at me like that. My lips are sealed. Can we get back to jogging now, please?" Just then, the loud laboured breathing of someone who was exhausted reached their ears. There weren't supposed to be humans this deep into the forest in case there were wild animals in the area. Upon straining their ears, they found that the panting was coming from someone ahead of them.

Rounding a tree, they found a girl dressed in a sports bra panting heavily whilst leaning against the tree. Her breath was laboured and she barely had the energy to open her eyes. When she did, the Royals breathed out in relief upon noticing her yellow eyes, "Someone's heavily winded. Long time no see, Honour."

"Long time... no... see, Your highness. How is Lina so freakin... fast?" the girl replied between breaths.

"I would advise against trying to keep up with Lina. She's a Royal and none of us know why or how she keeps getting faster. How did you end up..."

The girl understood the context of the question, "I was running and Lina found me. She wanted me to 'push past my limits,'" Honour replied, making air quotes with her fingers, allowing herself to fall to the ground on her knees. She was heavily winded, "That girl probably has an engine for a heart. She was barely winded by the time I ran out of energy."

"You're not particularly strong yourself," Drake replied, offering her his hand to take, "Come on... You could try running at our pace. You'll get there earlier and won't have to take one of Jackson's punishment drills."

Groaning loudly, the girl took the man's hand and got up to her feet. She staggered, prompting Drake into holding her steady with one arm on her back, "Are you okay?"

"I woke up early and started this run so that I'd survive Jackson's drills just this once. I don't know if I'll be able to make it," she confessed with a sigh, her breath getting slightly more even.

"Ahem... and this is..." Cole interrupted.

"Meet Honour... Lina's best friend, if I have my notes right. The two of them always wander off and spend a lot of time in her mother's flower shop when Lina is not training or finding some other way to get into trouble," Drake explained.

“Lina is getting smitten with that actor, Jack Boggle. Ever since she got his contact, they’ve been communicating a lot and she gets to watch enough of the series before it’s even released. So I wouldn’t say she’s going to get into any more trouble just yet,” Honour chuckled.

“We better get going if you’re to make it,” Drake warned, noticing light starting to seep through the canopies. They were expected to reach the training grounds before the first streaks of sunlight. Far before sunrise... they were running out of time.

They started the jog to the training grounds then and when Drake grew worried for the girl, he offered her a ride. As a Royal, his clothes remained intact when he shifted back and forth unlike normal werewolves and Betas. This ability was only reserved for alphas and Royals and that’s what allowed them to get away with this one white lie...

132 Chapter One Hundred Thirty Two

Katie ran with Sandra, trying her best to avoid pricking her non-existent imaginary injuries. She found that once in a while, pain shot through her with no source at either one of the four scars on her body. When she persevered through the pain, it vanished just like it came and the sensation annoyed her. Although all that didn’t annoy her the way Crysta did.

With Ashley’s enhanced senses, she could tell that the Beta’s daughter had sped up to catch up to them. Katie didn’t go too fast for fear of wearing Sandra out. She knew what Sandra’s limit was since the last time they’d trained together. Remembering this allowed her to clear her mind. She had a duty to her friend and mentor and one that she had to fulfil. “Is this pace too fast for you?”

“No, it’s not. Umm, Katie, how do you know where we are going?” Sandra asked her.

“I can hear those ahead of us and those behind us. That’s what’s guiding me... along with Lina’s scent... That girl is really fast,” Katie replied.

“It’s rare for you to comment about someone’s speed. Don’t you think you could beat her if you were given the chance to race her?” Sandra asked, sounding normal, a detail that was important to Katie. Sandra was not straining one bit to keep up with her. Katie was sure this was the speed at which the girl was supposed to get winded.

“Maybe... Umm, is it okay if... No, forget it. Let’s pick up the pace. I can tell that we are about to make it,” she shook her head. ‘Of course, she was training while I was stuck in a wheelchair,’ Katie remembered the week she’d spent in her wheelchair.

“Understood,” the girl replied without resistance and even allowed Katie to gauge just how fast they were supposed to run. They were practically running at a pace that a human would have trouble with... That’s when Katie heard it... the deep breathing technique that hunters were trained to use when they needed to draw on energy stored deep within their reserves.

When mastered, it could boost the physical limitations of a junior hunter so that they weren’t useless in a battle. The last time Katie had fought with Sandra, she’d almost mastered it. She would have never expected her to master it in the week that she was gone... At this rate, Sandra should have been more than capable of keeping up with Katie when she let go without using her Prometheus gifts albeit for a shorter time than Katie could take using the technique. This was amazing news to her...

“You mastered it... I can’t believe it. Of course, I can, you’re Sandra,” Katie mused. Out of excitement, she’d started running faster... Sandra didn’t reply as all her focus was on keeping her breathing regular lest she risked collapsing out from exhaustion. Katie noticed this and proceeded with what was now clearly a training session... “Let’s put this to the test. The clearing is close... I can smell the large gathering of werewolves... four hundred metres, give or take... Run, Sandra, run... Try to get there before me...”

.....

With an excitement squeal from Katie, the two let go of their shackles and dashed for the clearing. It became apparent to Katie that the people following them had almost caught up when they chose to increase their speed and the boost put a reasonable distance between them. However, she was enjoying the thrill of being able to run with her best friend for the first time to let something like that ruin her mood.

.....

Sandra collapsed next to a tree, missing it while she was aiming to lean against it. Katie laughed at the girl’s state... Her legs would not listen to her and her breathing was a sore sound to the ears. “Kay... Kay... Katie... How in the world aren’t you tired? I know... you... weren’t using your gift,” Sandra panted.

“You’ll get used to running longer distances with time, Sandra. I’m impressed you were able to manage that distance alone. I’m so excited,” Katie squealed in excitement.

“How did the two of you get here?” a feminine voice reached Katie’s ears, draining the happiness from her immediately...

“Can’t we get a moment when we don’t have to deal with this one?” she muttered through gritted teeth, more to herself, “Don’t you have some training to attend to?”

“Yes, that I do... And so do you. Alpha Jackson has asked that we pair up with opponents of our choice. There are two ways to do that. The pair can either agree to be sparring partners or through a challenge,” the girl said.

“I’d prefer the latter. It means I get to fight whoever it is that I want to with no excuses,” she replied... Katie turned to the girl before her who was starting to regain her breath, completely ignoring the well-bred athlete behind her. Sandra was the same, but the difference between a wolf and a human was quite distinct when it came to athletic build. Humans weren’t blessed with the physical advantage that werewolves were blessed with.

“Hey, what did you find out about the sample of alcohol that you got tested?” Katie asked the girl.

Sandra looked between the two females before her, ignoring the ones that followed Crysta around and started debating on whether it was a good idea to disclose this kind of information to Katie at this moment. It was already clear that the girl was trying to get on her nerves, but without the information that Sandra had gathered, Katie still had the ability to hold back from attacking her.

Katie noticed her hesitation and her expression went dark, “What did you find Sandra? What was in that alcohol?” this time her voice was clear to the girls behind her. Fear flashed in the eyes of the girl before

her, sealing the information further into Sandra. Katie looked behind her, but the girl had already masked her expression and folded her hands across her chest, furrowing her brows in frustration.

“Is a teeny tiny aphrodisiac for the man’s worries such a bad thing?” she smirked at the girl. Ashley surged forward and was only hindered by Katie’s restraint forcing the girl into a half shift, her eyes gleaming bright blue with fury. She wasn’t able to hold back the dangerous growl that came from her throat. ‘Give me control, Katie.’ The wolf yelled in her mind.

Katie hadn’t heard anything from Sandra yet... and that was all that kept her rooted to her spot. The wolves in the clearing that were only taking their downtime to stretch and get ready for the morning drills looked in their direction. “A half shift. Impressive... I guess you do need training wheels for that crippled body of yours.”

The scent of Katie’s mate brought her some more control and calmed her nerves. Cole was by her side instantly, two alphas standing between the two girls. “I can’t believe we got here before werewolves. It’s crazy,” Sandra said, breathing out to show how tired she was.

“Katie, what’s wrong?” Cole asked the girl in his embrace that was still stuck in a half shift, glaring daggers at the one and only Crysta.

“Sandra found out what was in the drink you had yesterday, but she won’t tell me what it was and that excuse of a girl is starting to get on my nerves,” she answered, her face returning to normal the longer she was in his arms. She found everything about him calming... albeit annoying since she wanted to rip the girl beyond Caden and Jason to shreds...

With a loud call from Alpha Jackson, the audience disintegrated. Crysta walked away from them with her two followers in tow. Katie didn’t know what to make of the girl’s reaction. “You are going to become a celebrity now... It’s not every day that people find a werewolf capable of a half shift and making it look so easy.”

“It’s like everything I do is special,” the girl groaned.

Cole chuckled, “Well, I wouldn’t expect the moon goddess’ chosen to be anything, but extraordinary.” To the sky, he finished the rest of his statement, ‘I’d almost forgotten that...’ it was almost as though he’d directed the thought to his patron goddess. It didn’t matter anyway since she was always watching him.

....

“It’s about time he realised that... Who in the world reaches the age of eighteen without ever seeing his blood and still think he’s normal,” the moon goddess mused.

“Probably because he watched his mate do all these amazing things that it made him forget about what made him special as well,” Seth tried, jotting down another number in his Sudoku puzzle. He did these when he was feeling like challenging his mind.

The moon goddess looked away from her pool and eyed her husband deep in thought. This was one of those times when he just didn’t mind anything that was happening in the world of mortals. “The person who invented this game was really something...”

“Really... a miniature game like Sudoku has torn your focus from our mission...”

“Nothing is more relaxing like food for the brain my dear. You should try it sometime,” the man replied, his face lighting up as he jotted down another digit that had just become known to him. “Victory... a few more obvious numbers and it’s done... This one was so hard... Mwahahaha.”

The moon goddess chuckled at the childishness, “I don’t need ‘food for the brain’ when I have you to keep me company.”

“Oh darn it... This six has appeared twice,” he screamed, startling the moon goddess. She thought he was done, but he placed the paper notepad down and began toasting it in flames... a deranged look on his face...

“Oh, honey, you were never really cut out for mind games...” the moon goddess burst out laughing at his revenge against the ‘piece of paper...’ “What happened to all that talk of relaxing food for the brain?”

133 Chapter One Hundred Thirty Three

Jackson yelled out orders to the werewolves, telling them to take positions with their partners and go through a variety of drills. Each of them was to make sure that the other was not slacking and doing everything right. After all, they were going to spar at the end of it all. If either of them was not well prepared by the time they finished with the exercise drills, they were done for...

The mode of training was also meant to build trust, something Katie devised after thinking through the cruel things she could do to Crysta before the actual sparring began. She shunned the thoughts, but wouldn’t quite put them past the girl, “Katie, are you okay?” Cole snapped her out of her thoughts as she helped her up. Her anger had dissipated upon the werewolf’s arrival.

“What happened, Jason?”

“When Crysta left Katie momentarily, I might have thought she’d backed off, but I guess I was wrong,” Jason reported, more mechanically than expected.

“The girl asked Alpha Jackson for the opportunity to put the princess through the wringer. Jackson accepted asking her to go easy on Katie since she only recently started walking again,” Caden added, taking the pressure off his friend.

Cole rubbed his temples in frustration, “Just when I thought things couldn’t get any worse.”

“Are you worried?” Katie chuckled.

“Crysta is a tough one. She gives Lina a hard time as well,” a girl, whom Katie hadn’t taken the time to notice intervened. She had yellow eyes and barely had any muscle as the other werewolves did. Katie was amazed she’d even made this distance at all.

The girl stood beside her brother, Drake. The latter barely stayed oddly silent by her side. He wasn’t one to linger where he was not needed, but something kept him here... Katie filed her far-fetched guess to the back of her mind with an image of Ashley nodding approvingly, ‘That makes a lot of sense...’ she replied. Katie only rolled her eyes at the wolf’s enthusiasm towards the subject.

.....

“Honour, I see you made it early today. What a surprise? I’m going to miss watching you try to hard to finish some of my punishment drills today,” the boisterous hulk of a man yelled while he made his way over to us, “Is everything okay over here? I saw a bit of a commotion and decided to start this a bit early.”

“Yes, everything is fine. Can you...”

“That’s great then. Katie, you’ve been paired with Crysta upon her request or more like challenge...” the man said without waiting for Cole to finish his sentence.

“-reconsider your selection for Crysta and... Never mind,” Cole knew the rules and there was no backing out of a challenge when one was made. This was one of the few ways Crysta could exploit. After what she’d done the day before.

“We can postpone the challenge if that’s okay with you,” Jackson offered.

“No, let’s just get this over with. I don’t want to have to go another day thinking of a duel between that girl and I,” she sighed. To Sandra, she continued, “Sandra, you’ve been getting better... much better. Keep it up and you might just make a good hunter yet.”

“Whenever that will be...” Sandra sighed, before getting up from her place on the ground. The god Prometheus didn’t provide any sort of sign of when one would get a gift and many hunted the gifts for the better half of their lives.

“Well, don’t lose hope...” Katie replied before jogging away to join her particularly annoying partner. It was the first time either of them was seeing the girl approach Crysta without hate in her eyes. However, the truth was flipped, Katie was having the hardest time keeping Ashley at bay and the reason she thought she could still act normal was Cole’s presence.

Sandra remained frozen for a bit, her mentor’s words going through her mind on a loop. ‘Hope... The only thing Prometheus offered the humans. He’d created a race that was weak in all aspects. They had the ability to think and work with their hands, but they bore so many physical limitations. Some took it to be a joke when it was taught that the god left them only one thing to account for everything he hadn’t given them... hope. Hope was meant to drive the humans through all their hardships.

“I’ll catch up to you, Katie. Just you wait...” Sandra whispered. Jason, who’d been close heard her words and smiled. Ever since the attack on the rogues, Sandra had a new fire that burned within her... He would know. He’d been training her the entire time Katie was in a wheelchair and her improvements were astonishing, to say the least...

“Would you be my partner?” the alpha asked her.

“You know my father asked that you keep me safe, not beat me to a pulp,” she replied, taking his outstretched hand.

“And there are ways that I can protect you by beating you to a pulp. You’ve been doing well, Sandra. Don’t slow down now,” he said to her. It might have been a feeling or the fact that the girl had spent a

lot of time with the werewolf. She noticed something different about him. Was it the fact that the shirt he wore was a little too tight-fitting on him. She couldn't tell if she'd seen the shirt before either.

"Yeah, I won't slow down," she shook off her nerves and focused on the task at hand... honing her skills and finally catching up to Katie Cha-Sirius.

Katie went through a number of stretches as she got ready to train with her chosen partner, 'How are you so calm when she's right next to you? We have the same mate, how are you blocking me just by his scent... I'm the werewolf, not you... I am. I demand justice,' Ashley was on a rampage in her mind, but the girl was not going to let it show... Well, she was sure she could keep the wolf at bay... That was until Crysta decided to open her mouth.

"Aren't you afraid you might break?" the girl asked, "Phonies don't usually gain physical abilities."

"Have you ever even talked to Cole? You seem very convinced of your relationship with him?" Katie asked the girl while she reached forward to touch her toes, holding the position.

"Of course, I know him. It might have been a while ago, but I know what I felt then. And what he felt as well," she recounted. A tinge of... was that jealousy, etched its way into Katie's emotions before shaking it off and moving on to the next question.

"What makes you think he still remembers or cares? He's never mentioned you... Not even after meeting you yesterday," Katie mentioned, changing her position to an overhead stretch. This was all in an effort to check that her muscles did not suddenly flare up in pain when she was in combat.

Crysta was going through her own preparations as well, taking the opportunity to lower her guard against the girl she continued a nuisance. "He still remembers me... I'm confident about that. And I'll soon show him that I am more worthy of him than you will ever be."

"What makes you so confident?" Katie asked more to herself. The girl's determination to kick her out of the picture was unwavering and very disturbing. That only meant there was a reason she was so sure the Royal would turn to her eventually... 'Don't waver in your determination to crush her, Katie. Stay with me, Katie,' Ashley started arguing in my head.

"Well, if you are so curious, I might just be inclined to tell you," Crysta lowered her voice and approached the girl so that she could whisper into her ear, "I am the reason Cole was able to forget everything about losing his mate in the first place."

Katie froze upon hearing the words that were uttered in her ear. For all Cole knew, she'd been dead eighteen years ago, who was he to resist a girl who happened to want to take his troubles away. These words came with a lot of interpretations, but the worst of them reached Ashley and brewed up a storm of violence. Crysta smirked, seemingly happy with herself.

Jackson was done presiding over one of the pairs just then and walked up to them, "Are the two of you ready? We'll use this sparring session to determine the strength of the princess. Since we already know how strong Crysta is." The man spoke, failing to notice Katie's anger through her quickly applied facade.

"Okay then... Let's get this over with already," Katie replied, getting up on her feet. Katie was up, but unstable, her gifts and wolf in complete disarray. Ashley, having been granted access to these specific items, was ready to use everything at her disposal to make quick work of the tramp before her.

“Our law dictates that the ones going to have a duel bow to each other as a sign of respect. A pack is only as strong as its weakest link and through trust and the bond that joins us, we must make ourselves stronger and the pack as a whole,” the words touched the hunter, but to Ashley, there was nothing heard.

The other wolves in the clearing stopped their training and came to check on these two. It was long since there was something this interesting and none of them was going to miss it. Cole, having taken longer than he would have liked, felt the murderous intent rising within his mate the closer they got to allow them to fight. ‘This is bad,’ his heart sunk when he saw his mate’s eyes flash brighter... Her wolf had taken full control of her and oblivious Crysta had no idea she was staring death right in the eye with a smug look on her face...

134 Chapter One Hundred Thirty Four

Jackson was happy to see that these two had been getting along, well from his point of view. The girls had been talking to each other with no problem and he saw no problem in letting them fight. Maybe Katie could learn a thing or two from the strongest warrior her age. It was only natural that the wolves would fight once in a while anyway... As he began his count, he noticed the bright gleam in the royal’s eyes and her awkward silence.

Katie didn’t take her eyes off her target and watched her every move. Her body was still, tense at only the right spots that he hadn’t noticed at first. He had felt this before, during their hunts. This was the state a predator assumed right before they lunged at their prey and made their presence known with full assurance of their attack.

It was only in rare incidents when prey survived such an attack. However, he noticed this all too late. His hand was already down upon his third count and the match was initiated. Crysta leapt for her target, determination in her eyes... This was the last slow action... If he hadn’t been a Beta alpha, he would have missed most of what happened next.

A massive black wolf sprung onto the scene and nipped Crysta’s shirt at the back, yanking her out of the designated fighting area, right before a blur past the spot she was just standing in. The loud boom of a collision came from the other side of the clearing. The wolves took some time to realise what had just happened.

Jackson looked back to where the princess had been only a moment ago and saw a blank space... The wolf that had pulled Crysta out of the way shifted back into Cole Lycaon and his attention was on something else. Everyone looked from the Royal to the origin of the booming sound... A tree began to fall behind the girl who walked back with a murderous glare on her face.

“Katie,” Cole called out to her, rushing forward so that he was right in front of her. The girl stopped walking to look at him.

“When...” she asked him.

Cole remained quiet for a bit, trying to come up with the right words, “Two years ago...”

“Did you have to act like you didn’t remember her? Why defend her if you had no idea who she was?” Katie asked him, her voice going up. Her eyes shone an intimidating bright blue that didn’t faze the royal one bit but brought chills down the beta alpha’s spine.

.....

“I didn’t remember her. I wouldn’t lie to you. It was only yesterday that...”

“I don’t want to hear the details. Just fix it... All of it. When I return, I don’t want that scamp hanging around you... Is that clear?” she yelled at him.

The royal nodded before the girl vanished right before him, rushing into the woods at a speed that was obviously impossible for werewolves. The only wolf that ran close to that speed was Lina Sirius and she was considered an anomaly, ‘What’s with the females of the Sirius family?’ the Beta alpha wondered.

Cole brushed a hand through his hair in frustration. “Okay everyone, back to your pairs. I’m evaluating the next ones and making sure you give me all your effort. After today, you will all know where you lie and you will all have to work much harder to impress me the next time we do this. Do not make me repeat myself...”

The next matter at hand was the petrified girl who’d kept her eyes on the fallen tree the whole time the two royals were talking. Crysta was shaken with shivers all over, along with anyone else who didn’t fear things they didn’t understand. The king had told Jackson the story, but he hadn’t believed it, well, personally.

It just seemed impossible for a werewolf to be granted Prometheus gifts. Cole walked up to Crysta and squatted down next to her, “What is she?” The girl asked him.

“She’s both a hunter and a werewolf. She had asked that I keep it a secret for the meantime while everyone got used to her. I guess that ship sunk now that you got her wolf to go feral,” Cole replied.

“How is anyone supposed to suspect that kind of thing? There has never been a monster of that kind. You were the only weird werewolf I knew of until now,” she voiced her fears.

“When I told you that she was my mate, you should have guessed that she wasn’t an ordinary werewolf either. Stay away from me until you’ve made amends with her. I don’t want to watch her lose control again. Just a week ago, she was incapable of such a thing,” the man cursed as he walked away from her.

Jackson, who had been listening to the conversation, approached Crysta and took a seat before her. The girl allowed herself to fall onto her back, her eyes glazed as she stared at nothing in particular. Her mind wouldn’t stop replaying the terrifying events that had just happened to her. Katie’s body had grazed her as she sped past and the girl had gotten a good measure of the attack she’d gladly leapt into. The tree that fell only moments later just gave perspective...

“She almost killed you, you know,” Jackson pointed out the obvious.

“I know that... more than anyone,” the girl replied, fear still coursing through her. Up until this point, she’d remained undefeated for a year. A few males claimed their victories after sweating in a duel against her, but the females knew who was on top, including Lina who lacked any upper body strength.

Her speed made up for it in more ways than she could count, however, and that seemed enough for the Royal.

“What would have happened, I wonder. After your death by the hand of a feral Royal,” Jackson mentioned.

Cole, who had kept a listening ear nearly slapped himself for staying behind while Katie ran out. The wolf shifted and was out of the clearing before his friends could ask what he was thinking. After noticing the direction he ran in, they understood his intentions... The only question was if he could catch up to Katie. They’d all failed during the attack a week ago in Brigadia...

“Alpha Jackson...” Crysta called to the man.

“What is it, Crysta?”

“Can you tell me her story? How did she survive, if that’s even her at all?” the girl asked. Perhaps she’d been thinking of herself alone. Letting go was not going to be an easy thing, but... it was better than bringing death upon herself. Katie was unbelievably strong and part of the reason for her question was to learn how the girl had amassed that kind of power by the age of eighteen.

“Well, I only know a part of it, but I can tell you that it was not an easy one. She thought she was human for a big portion of her life and during that time, she was taught to fight,” the man summarised.

“That story is very vague, Alpha Jackson,” Crysta exclaimed, “Don’t you know the rules of gossip? You never summarise a story. You must give details.”

Jackson chuckled, glad to see a part of the girl he’d known back. The fear was still evident in her voice, “I have more people to evaluate. Maybe another time. I just hope you know your place in all this now.”

“Yeah,” Crysta sighed, letting go was not going to be easy, “I do...” but her hands were tied. ‘And I called her unworthy of Cole only to watch her down a tree that could have been me. I wonder how she got crippled when she was that much of a badass. I can’t even tell if she’s stronger than Cole.’ Taking another look at the fallen tree, ‘I don’t think Cole can do that though. Damn it, Jackson, you’ve left me with more questions than answers...’ the girl cursed as more questions swarmed her mind...

.....

Cole ran through the forest, following the scent of his mate. It was the one thing his wolf could never lose track of. The wolf was that confident of that. He could tell that she was confused along with a lot of other things, ‘Where are you, Katie? Please hang in there...’

Cole had taken long to piece it together and he was mad at himself for not realising it while it happened before him. Katie had almost killed someone for a petty reason such as jealousy... It wasn’t like her, but she’d done it and that was bound to crush anyone’s spirit. Cole pushed his legs to run faster as he followed her scent. After running for a while, he noticed a log that he’d passed the third time... Backtracking, he began to recognise where he was...

‘What in the world?’ it was only then that he realised her scent had been scattered. Was it some kind of cloaking ability? He was at a loss for words, but he couldn’t find her. Panic was about to set in when he noticed a sound that had been there for a while... The sound of water rushing... ‘The river...’

The black wolf ran to the river and found that the scent was mild there and stretched all over... 'Her scent was scattered by the water... Could she have crossed it or did she take a swim?' The wolf walked along the river bank until he noticed a body lying on the other side of the river lying unconscious. He recognised the clothing instantly and dove into the river, fighting the current until he was on the other side.

"Katie, Katie... are you okay?" Cole called out to the girl, having shifted the moment he was out of the water. He put his ear to her nose, listening for her breath... His heart sunk in fear... she was barely breathing...

135 Chapter One Hundred Thirty Five

"Come on, Katie... Come on," Cole called out to the girl while he applied pressure to the point right below her ribs in short bursts. "Not the way I pictured this day going... Now please come back to me," he yelled to her. He was far from the clearing and the only person he knew that could get to them was Lina...

Even if she got to them, there was not much she could do either... "Why do you get injured when you are very far from a hospital?" Cole argued as he continued the procedure he'd been trained. He placed his lips against her soft ones and tried what he could... Just then, the girl coughed up tumults of water into his face... Unfazed by this, the man placed a peck on the girl's cheek, "Just how many times are you going to scare me?"

Katie reached out and hugged Cole tight, "Cole, you found me..." she spoke into his shoulder, "Ashley went crazy. She wouldn't listen to anything I said."

"Hush... I'm here, okay. Everything is alright," Cole cut her off, lifting her into his arms.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to... Umm, nearly get myself killed," she apologised, looking at the ground. Cole took a seat by the treeline, allowing the girl to rest on his chest.

He was quiet for a bit... "Who's Ashley?"

"Oh, my wolf..." she replied, drawing her lips in a tight line. She hadn't meant to reveal that to anyone, but now it was out there.

"Ashley Ashley... Why is your wolf so conveniently named?" he mused, his mind wandering through the possibilities of this being the same girl that had been killed in Brigadia, "Is she..."

"I don't know, Cole, but she might be the reason I don't feel so bad being a werewolf," Katie replied, letting go of the stress in her muscles. A brief silence went between them before she asked a question, "How's Crysta?"

.....

"That's the last person I'd expect you to ask about," Cole scoffed.

"I didn't mean to..."

"I figured. You're not one to snap like that. Do you have control again?" he asked her.

“Yes, I have control of myself again,” she replied, “What am I supposed to do, Cole? I don’t want to ever be trapped in my body ever again.”

“You can talk to your wolf about that. Listen to me, Katie,” he lifted her chin so that she looked him in the eye, “Wolves never lose control when something is about them...”

“What do you mean?” she asked.

“I mean your wolf only lost control because she couldn’t stand it when someone close to her was threatened. Crysta knew what she was doing when she was pushing your buttons. Don’t get mad at your wolf for that,” he tried.

“I’m still trying to see how my wolf has been a good thing. Ever since she showed up, I’ve been hungry all the time, emotional and now I almost killed someone. How am I supposed to be convinced there is anything good coming from that?” she argued.

Cole sighed, hurt by the words the girl was saying, “Your wolf allows many around you to understand you. You don’t always have to hide your feelings. And eating is the same for everyone. Just a little bit extra for a royal... There is a lot your wolf helps you to experience that you wouldn’t have if you were human,” he tried.

“I haven’t experienced anything good from my wolf since we were reunited... How do you even live with it? Knowing there is something that can take over your body and make you do something you’d regret even if you wouldn’t have done it yo...” the man pressed his lips against hers while she was still talking and cut her off...

‘You think too much, beautiful,’ the man said through the mind link. Katie gave in as sparks washed over her whole body and sapped the strength to argue from her all at once. The two remained in each other’s arms until Cole pulled away. To the girl’s amazement, her mental torment had been brought to a halt.

“Is that better?”

Responding with an obedient nod, Cole lifted the girl up, “When you do let me mark you, you will know much more about what it means to be a werewolf. Werewolves protect their own regardless of the consequences. They do not think through it as humans do. We are bonded to one another and will never leave another behind or unavenged. You don’t have to think about it... that’s a hunter’s job,” Cole said to her.

“So if I had killed Crysta...”

“You would not be responsible for her death. She would have brought that on herself,” Cole finished the explanation. ‘The Royals were exempted from a lot of their powers, through the law and yet... in werewolf society, they still held as much power as they were supposed to... ‘That’s twisted...’ Katie thought to herself.

‘Katie...’ Ashley’s low voice came out. The wolf was weakened and in bad condition after having exerted herself so much with the Prometheus gifts, she couldn’t tell up from down.

‘Rest up, Ashley. I’ll take it from here...’

‘I’m sorry, Katie. Can you forgive me? I had...’

'Don't think about it, Ashley. Of course, I forgive you. Just don't go jumping into a river next time before you've learnt how to swim,' Katie replied, chuckling softly. Cole carried her along the river bank, taking notice of the internal conversation the girl was having.

'It feels like you should be scolding me for much more than jumping into a river,' the wolf replied, 'Still, Katie, I am truly sorry.' With that, the wolf went silent and Katie brought her eyes back to the present.

"Now this reminds me of the way you used to carry me when I couldn't walk," the girl mused.

"Can you walk now?" he asked.

"Yeah, I think I can manage," Cole carefully placed her down as though he was holding glass. The girl couldn't help but be charmed by how careful he was every time he was handling her...

"We'll have to cross the river. You'll ride on my back... You are also in dire need of a change of clothes," the man took in her wet and muddy attire all over...

"Do you mind telling me what happened between you and Crysta? Not in a bad way... She just said something I had never thought of," Katie asked him...

"Well, what exactly did she tell you?" he asked her.

"Well, she told me that she was the reason you forgot about your deceased mate," Katie replied, making sure she got the meaning across in the way she'd understood it.

"Oh, she was really asking for it," Cole shook his head in disappointment, "During the Royal games, I met a girl... At the time, my only friends were Caden and Jason... well, the only ones that I cared about. The others were all just adoring fans that wanted something from me and I did my best to avoid them. I didn't think she had any bad intentions then... I still don't know if she does."

"Are you saying she was something other than a gloating scamp who's full of herself?" Katie asked, washing her face in the shallow water of the river.

"Yes, exactly that..."

"What was she like then?"

"She was... kind, caring and many things that males would like in a mate. We dated for a bit. It was two years ago. I decided to end our relationship," he replied.

"Why did you end it? You had no mate and she seems willi..."

"What was supposed to happen on the day she turned eighteen and found her real mate? Was she supposed to reject the wolf the moon goddess had paired her with just to be with a royal?" he made a decent argument, "There were other reasons why I did it, but that's what I convinced her about. For some reason, she was convinced the moon goddess would grant me a second chance mate and she would be happy to fill that position."

"Is it always that simple?" Katie asked him.

"I don't know how it works, but the moon goddess doesn't just pair people because they like each other. We didn't talk after that and with time, I buried myself into assignments from the King. By the time I

met you in Brigadia, I'd completely forgotten about her... and I was not going to remember after finding out that you were my mate," he confessed. Katie couldn't help but feel holes in the story, but she chose not to press him further and allowed him to shift so that they might get back to the palace.

"Have I ever told you that you have the most beautiful fur coat I have ever seen?" Katie began...

"Don't patronize me, Katie. You haven't seen yourself," the man asked. It was only then that Katie actually took it into consideration.

"Your right, Cole. I haven't seen myself. What do I look like?" she asked him, forgetting they were already halfway through the river... Much to her surprise, the sudden movements from her excitement didn't faze the wolf one bit... 'Cole has abilities of his own that aren't like other normal wolves... Could it be that...?' she couldn't put her finger on it, but she could remember something similar to the man never seeing his blood before... 'What is that supposed to mean?'

136 Chapter One Hundred Thirty Six

The couple had been walking for a while in silence after Katie argued that she didn't want him to carry her all the way. Nonetheless, Cole had made her promise to speak up once she was tired of working. It didn't matter if she was very tired or just a little bit winded, she was going back onto his back the moment he noticed she was tired.

"So, you are resistant to drugs, huh?" Katie tried, seemingly understanding that for the first time. Since she was no longer angry at Crysta, this was the first time she was actually noticing the odd character.

"I have been saying that since you started overreacting..." Cole said, regretting his words instantly, "Not that..."

"Cole, I overreacted... I know that, but you explained why, so I was not in wrong," the girl flipped her hair to one side.

Cole chuckled, "You'll get the hang of it soon enough. As for the immunity, yes, I am immune to basically anything that's meant to alter my body in any way."

"How did you find out you were immune to drugs?" Katie asked getting chipper since they were about to get into storytime, or so she thought. Cole's expression got dark and his eyes became glazed, "You don't have to tell me if you don't want to."

"No, it's fine. I just hadn't thought about that in a long time," he paused before continuing, "When I first shifted into my jet black wolf form, my father was fascinated by the power he possessed at such a shortage and got me examined. There were many tests that were carried out. Strength boost that I'd forgotten, "Oh, I must add that I'm almost impervious to sharp objects... Emphasis on the word almost. If it's strong or sharp enough, it might scratch me."

"Did you gain that from the same tests your father was running on you?"

"Yeah, that's basically it. He did apologize when he was done and after I had ignored him for a few weeks. The needles wouldn't work and there was no more need for him to run tests if the scientists couldn't find ways to probe my body," he finished. There was no malice in his voice even though Katie felt he should have been mad at her.

.....

“You’re not angry at him?”

“No, I’m not... I wish I could be though. Can we talk about something else?” it was pretty obvious that he was hiding something from her. The girl decided to look past it. She’d hidden her identity from him for a while in Brigadia. A short game of tit-for-tat shouldn’t hurt.

.....

Breakfast... Lina’s best meal of the day. For several reasons other than being the most delicious meal of the day. The girl was the first back to the palace with her best friend holding tight to her white fur on her back. “Do you have to run so fast?” the girl stumbled, holding onto her friend as she tried to wait out the dizzy spell.

“You need a lot of work, Honour. You’ve got to feel the rush of wind and the feeling of being free. Nothing beats running through the forest at top speed,” Lina mused. If it hadn’t been for the delicious aromas of various foods that wafted through the air, she would have preferred to go for another run. Alas, her belly screamed to be fed.

“Where do you think Katie is?” Honour asked her friend.

“I don’t know, but I know that girl can take care of herself. Did you see that tree she put down? It was insane. I knew she was strong, but that was excessive,” Lina wandered off the topic of her sister’s disappearing act.

Indulging her friend, “You did say she was a hunter with two Prometheus gifts. I don’t see anything surprising except the fact that she nearly killed one of her own.”

“Crysta had what was coming for her,” Lina shrugged it off, “Now hurry up and get your bearings straight. You’re going to make my headstart seem like a waste of energy.” Shifting back into her human form, she helped her friend walk to the palace... The nearest wolves were still far from reaching the palace, a difference that worried most of the wolves in the kingdom.

“I know, but still... It must be hard on Katie. She left looking disoriented,” Honour continued to worry.

“Thoughts like that won’t make her better, Honour. What you can do is make sure her breakfast is ready when she comes back. A little bird told me she has quite the appetite,” Lina yelled, shaking her friend at the shoulders.

“Lina, you’re making the dizziness worse...”

“Don’t worry, you were already dizzy...”

“I was getting better,” Lina only laughed at her. The royal stopped shaking her friend and draped her hand across her shoulders and led the dizzy girl up the stairs. Before they had made it to the front door, the first wolf made it. Another royal, winded and tired from trying to keep up with his little sister. The man shifted and collapsed on the ground.

“You got faster, Drake,” she mocked the tired man.

“Don’t patronize me, little sister. Unless you would like me to be your next sparring partner,” the girl opened the door and vanished from sight, avoiding any further threats from her brother. ‘Honour suits me just fine... thank you very much...’ she answered through the mind link.

A quick bath in the royal chambers allowed exhaustion to seep out of the two girls. They had used this same morning routine for as long as they could both remember even the times Honour got herself into Jackson’s punishment drills. The beta alpha would be mean about them and did not tolerate failure. “It’s been long since I last went through training without getting further assignments at the end of the training,” Honour’s voice came from the bathroom while Lina worked on her black hair in the mirror.

“Yeah, it’s been a while. I heard my brother helped you get to the training grounds in time,” Lina asked, raising her voice so that the girl could hear her.

“Yes, he helped. It was out of character for him, but he carried me part of the way,” the girl mused. Lina rolled her eyes at the swooning tone in her friend’s voice.

“Oh come on... I know werewolves usually find their female mates to be younger than them, well except for Katie and Cole who were born in the same month, but...”

“You’re trying to say that your brother is off-limits?” Lina’s mouth hung open at the accusation. She peeped into the bathroom making eye contact with the werewolf in the bathtub. Her amber-coloured eyes were so similar to her hair, a feature Lina always noticed even when she didn’t want to.

“My brother is six years older than us, Honour. The odds of...”

“I know what you mean. You should know, however, that Jack is also that much older than you,” Honour countered. Lina remained silent and left the bathroom. It was a truth she didn’t want to face, “Lina... We are only looking out for you.”

“I know... I just wish you could do that without having to sound so mean...” Lina sighed, getting back to her dressing mirror and completing her finishing touches to her appearance.

.....

The two reached the large double doors to the dining hall and grunted while they pushed them open. Honour had dressed in another one of her sundresses and done little to tame her hair, letting it fall below her shoulders and only braiding the front to keep it out of her face. To Lina’s surprise, Katie was already seated at the large table on the other side of the room, reserved for royals and the beta alphas. ‘When did she...’

“I’m glad she’s okay,” Honour’s face lit up when she saw the girl seated at the table with Cole seated beside her. The man had her involved in a deep conversation about the foods that were native to Sirius and kept handing her those he thought she’d enjoy the most. This was a treat for the new royal and Lina gritted her teeth in frustration, ‘That was my idea...’

“Well, now we have to think of something else to do with her during the weekend. I wanted to take her out on a run, then I heard that Cole had done just that before the welcome ceremony. Just how many things is that guy going to steal from me? Perhaps I’ll lock him in a...”

“Umm, Lina... Isn't the aim of taking her out as a family to spend more time with her?” Honour cut her off during her rambling.

“Oh, yes, that's part of it...”

“Part of it?”

“We have to show her the best that Sirius has to offer and make her wish she would never go anywhere else. She'd continuously visit Sirius even after getting married to Cole and the two of us, with you obviously would spend our time playing pranks on big brother and have him chase us. With her Agility gift and my ridiculous speed, the slowpoke would...”

“Lina, you're getting louder,” Honour tapped her shoulder and brought her back to reality. ‘Curse werewolf hearing...’ the girl mentally mumbled.

‘You can curse their bond as well. Quit standing there and join us, Lina. You know Honour is welcome to sit at this table as well,’ Queen Martha's voice came through the mind link.

‘Thank you, your majesty. Good morning,’ Honour replied with a slight bow. The two made their way for the table with Lina thanking the goddess for keeping the dining hall somewhat empty while she mumbled her nonsense.

“That was a colourful entrance, little sister,” Drake began.

“Uh, Drake, hi, good morning. Did we meet today? I missed you in the training grounds,” Lina rapped, taking a seat on the other side of Katie, against her wishes. A mental battle on whether she feared her brother more than she wanted to get to know her sister had occurred in her mind and she'd come to the resolution that Katie could protect if something went wrong...

“Why is the dining hall nearly empty though?” Katie asked absentmindedly(or was she...), changing the topic and saving Lina a whole lot of nervous explaining. Drake could be petty when he wanted to be and Lina just wouldn't stop looking for ways to rile him up...

“Oh, it's simply because you're all late,” Davin announced, rubbing his temples. People taking his time was starting to become normal and he was starting to get used to it. As long as Martha calmed him down every time he found himself waiting for someone else instead of them waiting for him, it was fine...

137 Chapter One Hundred Thirty Seven

Katie's mind wandered about the dining hall, trying to get a bearing of how the werewolf society worked. It had finally dawned on her that she was supposed to know how all of this worked since she was the princess of the Sirius family, ‘Still not believing that though,’ she sighed.

‘You better... A wolf of my calibre would not be awarded to any random being of fewer qualifications,’ Ashley intervened, puffing out her thick chest fur. Katie was now sure she'd look like that wolf when she shifted. ‘You find me... adorable. That's not acceptable, Katie. Take it back...’

‘When you live your life learning how to kill werewolves, one that's as white and puffy as you cannot be scary whatsoever,’ Katie shrugged. The wolf slumped over in defeat. The truth was too much for her to take. Katie didn't have anything to fear from wolves.

She took a bite of another dish that Cole had recommended and took the time to enjoy the burst of flavour. Not much made it to Brigadia because of the transport costs. The variety of foods that were available to her in the capital were somewhat overwhelming, "Hey, Cole, don't feed her everything in the menu in one meal. You'll ruin what I had planned for the weekend," Lina intervened, finally having had enough of this. Cole was going to spoil her all at once before either of them got the chance.

"There is so much for her to see and experience in Sirius. I'm sure you'll find something else to show her. Besides, she needs the nutrition," Cole flipped her off and took another bite of his meal.

"Katie, don't listen to that man. He's only going to make you get food poisoning with this bad a mixture of foods," Lina tried after noticing she had no bright future attacking the prince.

"Don't worry, Lina. Sandra hasn't had any of this, so you get another go. Speaking of Sandra, where is she?" Katie asked.

"She'll be here soon. Jason saw her to her room a few moments ago," he reported after a moment of silence using the mind link.

Just then, Katie went silent and eyed the door, narrowing her eyes while she did. It was only for a moment, but she'd felt the presence of something sinister in the castle or was it just her imagination. After Kyle, she couldn't tell anymore. She was wary of everything and it was messing with the teachings that she'd received from her parents growing up.

.....

"Katie, I heard you had a little incident at the training grounds," King Davin finally spoke. The table went silent. They knew his tone of voice well. Katie didn't.

"Oh yeah, I lost control of my wolf. Does that happen often?" she asked, not sensing the trouble the others knew she was in.

"It only happens when a wolf has a reason to attack someone, but it almost never happens for the person the wolf attacks to be a member of their pack," the man replied, trying to sound more serious by the minute.

Katie thought through his words, "Am I a part of the pack?" Davin's expression softened at the question.

"Don't you feel a connection with the pack?" Lina asked her.

"No, not really. If its something like what I feel with Cole, then I don't think I have that," Katie replied, causing a laugh to ripple through the table.

"Umm, Katie, the mate bond is a little bit more intense than that," Cole chuckled, "but you weren't so much off the mark. Close your eyes." Katie did as she'd been instructed, "Clear your thoughts and try to listen..."

It took a while longer than Katie would have liked for her to start hearing the whispers of the wolves around her. Conversations flowed through her mind from one wolf to another. 'Did you see the way she rushed at Crysta? A plus for the scare...' 'Do you think the two of them planned to scare the girl so that she might back off?' 'Maybe they did... What were the odds of Cole pulling Crysta out of the way at the right moment?' 'Hey honey, can you take the kids to school today? We have more customers today than

usual and I have to get to the restaurant to...' 'Say no more. I'll handle it. Just come back in one piece, okay...' 'Yes, I will. Love you...'

The conversations continued to weave through the girl's mind. Teenagers gossiping, men arguing, couples chatting, children bickering, pack warriors discussing shifts, all of it swarmed her mind and the most amazing part of it was that she felt a connection to all of them. She could tell where they were, if they were in physical pain, if they were happy or sad, all of it...

"There you go," Cole's voice brought her out of her thoughts and the voices came to a stop.

"I thought most of those were private conversations. How could I hear all of them?" she asked.

Martha placed down her fork and rubbed her temples, "It didn't even take a few tries for her to get the hang of it."

"I know right. It's insane. I'm jealous," Lina complained, before her face beamed, "What if that's part of why she's one of the moon goddess' chosen pair?"

"What are you getting at, little sister?"

"Well, we all know about Cole's insane healing abilities and immunity to poison. Well, Katie is also a fast healer, but what if her quick adaptability is what makes her so special?" Lina mused.

"We'll put a pin in that," the king spoke up, "On another unrelated note, I finished with the paperwork involving the school you'll all be attending. As per your arrangement in Brigadia, the lot of still have to go to school. Sometimes I forget that Cole is still eighteen and has to attend school as well. Sandra's transfer has also been completed, so everything should be in order."

"I can't believe I still get to go to school," Katie groaned, "and this time as a werewolf hunter that's also a werewolf hunting another starry werewolf that could potentially be a part of my family."

"Did you just say 'starry,?'" the king asked.

"Oh, yes, I did. The Rogue king's..."

"No offence, but I thought you were being delusional when you said you saw the rogue king. He's only been seen a few times and every time he was seen, the same description you've given described him. Unfortunately, we've never believed that either because there isn't single royal that has a wolf of that pelt," he cut her off, voicing his conclusions. Katie shrugged off the insulting comment as she wouldn't have believed the Rogue King's presence either if she hadn't seen him for herself.

"Well, you'll have me, Jason, Caden, Sandra and Lina by your side, so you have nothing to worry about," Cole told her.

"That does make me feel better," she replied, her appetite returning to her. 'You should just kiss him on the lips every time he says something touching...'

Katie rolled her eyes at Ashley's comment, her senses flaring up all of a sudden. She turned her eyes to the large double doors as they heaved open. Sandra rushed in carrying her phone and keeping it far from her ear. Whoever was on the other side of the phone call sent shivers down Katie's spine. 'Why can't I eat in peace?' she groaned.

'Make sure you finish the food before you Katie... I'm still hungry,' Ashley replied, silently cursing that she wasn't the one in charge of moving their body at the moment.

"Katie, it's for you. Why won't you answer your phone?" Sandra asked. Memories of diving into a river of water flashed through the girl's mind.

"It fell into a tank of water," she lied bluntly flashing a nervous smile.

"You got it wet, huh... Well, that will have to wait until you finish talking to Samantha," Sandra announced. Once Katie had the phone, Sandra took the time to greet the royals. Lina called for the girl to take a seat besides Honour.

"Hi, my name is Honour," Honour began, her vibrant smile gracing her face.

"My name is Sandra, hi... Am I allowed to sit here? These seats are..."

"Amazing, expensive, worth more than our 'peasant bottoms'," Honour commented cheerfully. Sandra laughed, nodding in agreement as she sat. This brief moment of happiness, however, was shut down by the sound of a woman yelling out of the phone Sandra had just passed over...

"KATIE..." Samantha's voice came through the phone.

"Yup, that's the woman who sent me running here even though she was miles away from here," Sandra commented while she served herself with something she had no idea of. A move she came to regret... it was packed full of chilli.

"Hi, Samantha, how are you doing today?" Katie replied, in her most cheerful voice. The woman on the other side of the phone was clearly angry, but Katie couldn't help, but smile. It was the first voice she was hearing from home and nothing it could say would wipe the smile off her face.

"Don't use that tone on me. Where is my katana?" the woman asked...

"Where is your... Oops," the smile was gone.

138 Chapter One Hundred Thirty Eight

Katie placed the phone on the table and put her head in her hands while the phone continued to utter the woman's arguments along with a mixture of profanities that should have not reached Lina's ears. Lina shrugged them off when Drake eyed her. "Katie, are you even listening to me?"

"Yes, Samantha although I can't echo some of the words you've used. I'm not even sure I understand all of them," she replied.

"What a delightful lady?" Martha spoke, focusing on her plate as though she had been thinking out loud. The rest of those at the table knew otherwise...

"Katie, was that the queen I just heard? Am I in speaker?" Samantha asked, her voice low this time.

"You asked me to put it in speaker once I reached Katie so that you could give her a 'piece of your mind,'" Sandra chipped in.

“Oh yeah, I said that. You’re majesties, I am sorry for the noise and more than numerous words that might have slipped out on occasion,” she apologised, regaining her formal tone.

“Not a problem, hunter. Is that all you had to ask Katie? We could send you another katana crafted from the best smiths in Sirius to replace the one that you lost,” King Davin spoke up.

“The king is there too. What kind of audience did I have?” Samantha asked, groaning while she asked.

“The entire royal family...” Lina pitched in happily.

.....

“Oh poor Lina. She’s still so young,” Samantha cried. Katie was holding back a fit of laughter though not as much as the two alphas that had reached the door just in time to hear the conversation. Jason and Jackson were laughing while Caden stood beside them with his mouth open, replays of the insults went through his mind... ‘What did Katie do to make sweet Samantha so mad?’

“Katie, I called with more than just the announcement on my katana and yes, a replacement would be nice. Thank you very much, your majesty,” Samantha was humbled and dead serious all of a sudden.

“Not a problem,” King Davin replied, hoping the hunter would continue to explain what was happening, however, Katie picked up the phone and turned off the loud speaker. She was gone before any of them could stop her, vanishing with a tempest of wind in her wake.

“Hunters can be so secretive,” Martha groaned.

“Well, we don’t exactly allow them to freely walk the royal grounds either,” Lina replied.

.....

Katie ran out to the back of the castle, taking the shortest route that her memory could provide and Samantha waited for the girl to get to somewhere more private before they could talk, “I’m clear, Samantha. What seems to be the problem?”

“Frost and Jackeline received new assignments. Since they are ranked highly amongst the hunters, they are called on when something grave is about to happen. They were sent to investigate the movements of the rogues. After what happened with Kyle, the hunters took their chances and decided to track the movements of the rogues that escaped.”

“Can the information they gathered lead us to him?” Katie asked her.

“I can’t be so sure. Her first report made it back to Brigadia. The reports return to the Agency where the hunter comes from for confidentiality. The higher-ups are then the ones that deal with the information based on what’s been gathered. Your parents are still here, so they were able to confirm that we had no traitors in our midst. However, that is not the case with the other agencies.

It’s been established, following Jeremiah’s betrayal, that there might just be hunters out there that are acting as double agents. I don’t know what something like that mean for hunters, but there is chaos in the hunter society. Some of the hunters even think you were lying about the whole thing, after all, you aren’t only a hunter, but a werewolf as well,” she explained.

"I'm sorry for causing all that trouble. What was in the report that returned to Brigadia?" Katie wanted the information that was going to help her to deal with the rogues faster and was curious to know what happened to those that escaped.

"Well, the report stated, that the rogues split on their journey into two groups. After further investigation, she was able to tell that the biggest part of the force of rogues was sent to the Lycaon empire and not the Sirius empire. It was impossible to confirm which of the forces had Kyle with them. We don't know where the Beta alphas went and we also have no idea where Jeremiah is," there were too many missing bits of information. It was good to have a bit of intel coming in from someone she trusted, though and that was something in itself.

"What are the rogues looking for in the Lycaon empire? I thought they were after the chosen," Katie asked.

"I don't know. We found that a bit suspicious, but without knowing everything, we couldn't be sure. It's not easy to carry out an investigation in no man's land. Rogues can come from anywhere. It's their playground. We couldn't even tell where a force of rogues that large came from in such a short time. Many of the hunters are becoming a little... cautious of the missions they take on,"

"You mean they are becoming scared," Katie corrected.

"Prometheus doesn't choose wimps, Katie," the woman retorted, shutting down Katie's rush of anger, "Otherwise, how are you doing? Is Cole treating you right? How long till the marking? I need details, girl."

"Umm, I don't think I'm obligated to discuss such with you, but I can tell you that he's the sweetest hum-I mean werewolf that I've ever met," she replied.

"Ugh, you're boring me. I asked for details," the woman groaned, "Your parents got their gifts back and they are still as fit as they were eighteen years ago. Chase hunters are not human..."

"I'll call them later on... Somewhere after school. Oh, I'd almost forgotten to tell you. I can walk again," Katie yelled out the last part, forgetting the entire purpose of finding a place to speak clandestinely. She looked around the backyard and shrugged off the odd looks the wolves were giving her.

"That's great to hear, Katie. Can you umm... do that thing again?" Samantha asked her.

"What thing?" Katie was now curious.

"You know... the one the thunderclap does. I was just in time to see you do it. I still can't believe what I saw that day," Samantha explained, sighing while she did.

"I'm not sure. I was in the heat of the moment that day. I had to save Claire's life. Anthony had been miserable for the longest time that I'd ever seen him and the woman looked to be in bad shape. How is she?" she asked.

"She's getting better. She spars with a few of us when she gets the chance. She's not yet back to her former state, but she's making good progress. I shall send her your regards, along with everyone else," Samantha told her.

“Thanks, Samantha,” the girl couldn’t wipe the smile off her face as she talked to one of the people that had raised her.

“Hey, kiddo,” Samantha said, getting serious once again, “Take care of yourself this time. Don’t rush into a fight you can’t win. There are so many people that you can save when you’re alive compared to when you’re dead.”

Samantha was not the first one to make that very same speech. Cole had given her something similar a while back and she’d promised him to stay out of trouble unless he allowed her to. ‘Right before I ran into a river and nearly drowned to death...’ ‘I said I was sorry. How many times will I apologise for that?’ ‘You need swimming lessons, wolfie.’

“I’ll be careful, Samantha. Take care of yourself as well,” she replied. The phone went silent a moment later leaving the girl standing still. Memories of her growing up swarmed her mind, threatening to overwhelm her. ‘Hey, you know Cole will know if you get overwhelmed again...’

‘Did he know when I was about to drown in a river?’

‘No, I had blocked him out?’ Ashley replied.

‘Then that was the last time that you do something like that,’ she scolded the wolf. Ashley sighed as they turned to return to the table that the dining hall. It was a short walk when someone was completely overwhelmed by thoughts. The mind link of the entire pack swarmed her mind. It was now filled with gossip of their newfound princess being a hunter. There wasn’t much doubt about it left. ‘I guess I’ll have to embrace this truth as well...’

As she rounded a corner, she ran into none other than Crysta The two girls stared at each other unmoving. Katie wasn’t going to say anything to her as she had nothing to say to her. She didn’t feel sorry for trying to snip her head off her shoulders moments ago.

Crysta took a few steps back and took a short curtsy, stunning the princess, “Will you accept my apology?”

Cole had spoken of the girl’s character from before Katie was in the picture and Katie had wondered what would change a person like that. ‘Don’t cave so quickly, Katie...’

Sighing, the girl replied, “I’ll have to think of it when I do receive it.”

“For what it’s worth, I am sorry,” the girl replied before walking away from Katie without another word, “I won’t pretend to like you though.” Oddly enough, the tone in her last statement brought a smile to her face... ‘Glad you aren’t a suck-up to those in power...’

139 Chapter One Hundred Thirty Nine

Lina made sure they’d all packed the right things needed for the first day of school as she’d been assigned the tour guide for her new big sister. They were to go their separate ways once they got to the school, but before that, she was in charge. Taking her phone out of her pocket for the umpteenth time, she checked the time once more, “So this is what father felt like,” she mumbled, more to herself.

“Should I go and make sure she’s alright?” Honour asked her, fixing a flower in the girl’s hair without asking her for her permission.

“You just want me to look like a tree, don’t you?” Lina sighed.

“It’s only one flower, and it’s beautiful. The blue flower accented the royal’s eyes nicely even though it wasn’t the way she would have wanted to dress.

“If I needed a hair ornament, Honour, I’d buy one,” she reached for the flower but thought better of it when she saw her friend pouting, “Okay, fine, just this once. Would you stop looking at me like that?”

“You take your natural beauty for granted so many times. It pains me sometimes,” Honour replied, retracting her defensive pout. It worked on Lina every time even though she never asked for anything big from the girl.

“Oh, did someone decide to grow a garden in their hair?” a voice came from the other side of the palace gates. Crysta walked out with Bree and Ginger by her side. The two blondes snickered at the comment, hanging on their leader’s every word.

Lina merely looked away from the girl as though she was a passing gnat that would soon find its way to somewhere else, “I don’t understand the relationship between you two,” Honour began, but stopped the moment she noticed the tears that stained her friend’s eyes.

Crysta flipped her off and waltzed into the forest, taking the shortcut that wolves took to get to the school, when they didn’t want to use a car, “I’m sorry...” The royal raised up her hand to silence her friend. This was not a discussion they were going to have and Honour knew that well.

.....

“We finally made it,” Katie’s chipper voice pitched in, breaking their silence, “Where is the car? Or are we going to walk there?”

“I would have preferred we ran, but father had to assume his fatherly stature and act like your legs were not doing okay... Ugh, we’ll be walking,” Lina mimicked a disgusted teenager, one that she was, having wiped all signs of her previous mood in an instant.

“Wow, that’s one crew you’ve got, Katie. You guys went to pick one person and you returned with five,” Honour mentioned.

“I don’t think I got your name,” Katie spoke up, taking her time to take in the girl’s appearance. She stood out like a sore thumb but projected the warmest aura she’d met amongst the wolves.

“My name is Honour... Honour Leilani,” she replied, flashing Katie a smile that only reminded her of Martha Sirius.

“Okay, now that nature girl has made her introductions, can we get to school before lunch?” Lina said through gritted teeth.

“There it is...” Katie pointed at her friend, “Your resemblance with the King. Both of you really hate being late. I’m not usually late myself, but come on... It’s my first day. Take it easy, Lina.”

“Someone is used to walking outside of the rules...”

“Took the words right out of my mouth,” Katie smiled at her, “Lead the way, Princess.”

.....

The Sirius School of Academic Excellence and Integrity... Katie spent more time staring at the lengthy name of the school. Sandra stared at it with the exact same expression. From Brigadia High School to the Sirius School of Academic Excellence and Integrity... "Sandra..."

"I see it, Katie. When you think you've seen it all," Sandra voiced their thoughts.

Cole backtracked to find what they were looking at and found that it was the name. Looking between the two girls and the lengthy name that he obviously already knew about, he started to chuckle. "Why the long name?" Katie asked.

"It's like I came here to sightsee," Lina groaned.

"If it bothers you so much Lina, you can proceed to class," Katie told her.

"You have been out of school for almost two weeks and you don't find that mildly disturbing. Assignments and all the work that you have not yet..."

"Who could have thought the biggest fan of Jack Boggle was a bookworm?" Katie cooed, "Get to class, Lina. We'll be fine. And take mother nature with you as well."

Honour stared at the girl in shock. "Oh, I like that one. You should replace Drake in the field of nicknaming," Lina replied, dragging the speechless Honour away from Katie and her gang.

"Well, it's been the five of us since the beginning of this mess, hasn't it?" Katie pointed out.

"Now there is something I can agree on," Caden spoke for the first time in hours. He'd grown quieter over the days, but only to the point that everyone could tell he was fine.

The school was so massive that it got Katie's blood racing just looking at it. Brigade High School could not compare to this school and the name just made her cringe at the thought of whoever thought it would make a good name. "Well, at least they already know we are supposed to be here. Let's just get to our classes."

"Which classes?" Sandra asked.

"That's part of the adventure, Sandra. Onward," Katie strode forward with an excited expression. She was in a good mood that day and there was nothing that was going to ruin it. 'Why does something bad happen every time you get too happy?' Ashley asked when she found the trend bothersome.

'Well, the world is not ready for this kind of happiness, Ashley,' Katie replied. Right after she said that someone else made themselves made their presence known to them.

"So that's why you weren't in class yet," Crysta spoke up from the top of the stairs at the entrance to the school building.

Cole put his hand around Katie, the preconceived notion that Katie would be losing her temper any time soon coming into play, "You don't even know if we decided to take the scenic route," Katie huffed.

"Of course, follow me and I'll show you to your classrooms," Crysta replied, turning around without another word. She hadn't greeted them or acknowledged Cole's presence. Cole loosened his grip on his

mate and the group followed her. "I asked the principal to allow me the honour of giving you a tour of the premises. This place is just huge, but I'm sure you'll get to know everything within a day or two. It's a pretty simple layout for a city-building."

"So everything in the city is built to intimidate those from the countryside, got it," Katie noted.

"Basically," Crysta chuckled, "To your right, you will see the path that takes you to the infirmary."

"Which of the two races find themselves in there more, humans or werewolves?" Katie asked.

"That number is always changing. When the hunters are in a bad mood, the werewolves will get pretty roughed up, but when they slack off, the humans find themselves with more victims. I wouldn't worry about it though. There is less violence in Sirius than in other places across the world," she explained, moving on.

"That way, you will find the cafeteria..." the tour continued until they'd gone through the entire school except for the top floor of the main building, a detail that Katie had noted during their tour. The trip ended on the third floor of the main building which housed the classes they were supposed to be attending. "Any questions," Crysta asked, turning to look at them.

Katie was swarming with a lot of them. Jason beat her to it, though, "Umm, why did you take us around the whole school if the classes were just here?"

"You said you wanted to take the scenic route to the classrooms. Did I do a bad job?" she asked.

"No, no, you didn't. You actually aced the role of tour guide," Jason replied.

"I have a question," Katie spoke up and proceeded when Crysta gave her attention, "What's the top floor?"

"Oh, that's where the hunters hang. Werewolves don't go there," Crysta answered. Cole had his hand around Katie's waist once more when she turned to the stairs.

"Why can't I go there, Cole?"

"Because you have a class that you need to attend right now," Cole replied.

"It's almost over and..."

"You'll go there when you have some free time. For now, you need to get to class," he cut her off before she could pour out her numerous reasons. 'There is no convincing him, Katie. You might want to give this one up...'

The girl looked at the stairs with longing eyes, "I will check out that floor before the end of this day. I just have to see what it looks like."

"Is it true that you are a hunter?" Crysta asked her, "I don't want to listen to rumours."

"There is no use hiding that anymore. Yes, I am a hunter," Katie replied.

"So weird..." Crysta mumbled to herself, shaking the thought of the abomination before and walking into the class... Caden walked ahead after Crysta, Jason following with a goofy expression...

"I'd like to introduce our new student... I mean two students... Oh my God, how many are you? It's like I'm being attacked," the teacher's voice came from the inside of the class. Sandra was the next to enter and Katie heard a sigh coming from the teacher, "Where is Katie Sirius?" she asked calmly.

"Oh, right here," the girl announced her presence, popping in through the door. Laughter went through the class upon her entrance... "Are there more of you?"

"No, just me... The other four can speak for themselves," the girl replied, "We are sorry for the tardiness. The tour was long..."

"Not too long, I hope," the teacher replied, "Can I have the others introduce themselves so that we can proceed with the class?"

With that said, the wolves introduced themselves along with Sandra. The class seemed to find her just as interesting as the rest of them, for she was a human walking amongst powerful werewolves... 'What would make her special?' Katie could see how that would be confusing...

140 Chapter One Hundred Forty

Katie scanned the room for a seat while she waited for the others to get done with their introductions. As it so happened, the royal did not need to introduce herself. She'd been expected by the school, but for some reason, the others weren't. This confirmed the lack of flow of information between the two royal families that she'd been trying to figure out.

"Trevor, would you do the honours?" the teacher spoke up, breaking Katie out of her survey. She'd found a perfect seat at the back left of the room. The girl didn't like attracting attention in the class and the vantage point allowed her to look at everyone in the room as what was outside. Unfortunately for her, the windows that looked out to the vibrant green of nature was already occupied by a group that gave her chills.

'Why does this feel familiar?' the girl couldn't help, but wonder. The boy at the very back right corner stood at the teacher's summons. He was built better than most a human and looked like he could handle himself in a fight. This was no ordinary human and all five of the new arrivals could tell.

"As the teacher just mentioned, my name is Trevor. That is all that you will need to know other than the fact that I am the head hunter in this school, the student division. Everything concerning werewolf-human violence is to be reported directly to me. I do not expect any of you to be causing any trouble in this school. I have the power to issue a suspension and... Prometheus-forbid, an expulsion," the class descended into silence at the violence in the boy's words.

Katie was smiling her ears off at the sight before her. She'd been the head hunter at her former school and had to make the same... 'Wait, why is he in this class? I was just exceptional...' the thought hit like a meteor. The girl raised her hand. Trevor sighed before allowing her to speak.

"Why is the head hunter in this class?" she asked. Sandra caught up with the reason for the question.

"That's because I'm the best. That much should be obvious," he flipped her off. Ashley stirred within Katie's mind, 'He would be nice to toss around...'

'Did you miss the part where he said no causing trouble?' Katie asked the wolf, pushing her to the back of her mind.

'The details are usually boring until you decide to get involved,' Ashley replied, yawning and retreating to the back of her consciousness.

.....

"Yeah, I guess that's about right," Katie replied, turning to the teacher, "Is there anything else we must know?"

"I just have a question. How are the five of you all supposed to be in the same class? Is this supposed to be some kind of security detail?" the teacher asked, running her eyes through them suspiciously.

"That is not part of what you're obligated to know. They are in the system, their papers check out and the royals can vouch for their presence here," Katie replied with a hint of hostility in her voice. The teacher backed off.

"You can take your seats then," the teacher said, with her hands raised in surrender. Katie took her seat at the desk that mirrored Trevor's purely out of habit. Unbeknownst to her, the hunter had taken notice of the way she was conducting herself.

"Do they intrigue you, Trevor?" one of his friends asked him.

After a moment of thought, "It's hard to deny that. Two royals, two trained alphas and a human girl who might just be a hunter. This school year might just be interesting after all."

.....

Lessons proceeded normally and Katie was disappointed to find that they were teaching something she had read about in Brigadia. 'Reading ahead makes education boring... Or is it my hunter parents that made the mistake of teaching me?' Sandra, however, was struggling to keep up and found that she had to borrow a textbook and make a few summaries of the work that she'd missed during their trip.

The bell that signalled lunch break sounded and Katie internally rejoiced for the freedom. In her current seat, she didn't have the option of looking out the window. They were raised and tinted to keep students from being interrupted by whatever happened in the hallway. "Someone hates school," Jason mumbled as he finished the work he had. Caden peeped into his friend's book and facepalmed.

"None of that is right at all. Sandra, can I see your work? It might make the slightest bit of sense," Caden complained. Sandra passed over her book. Caden's face lit up as though he'd found gold and he began to copy everything he saw like it was the gospel.

"I believe they would call that plagiarism," Katie sighed.

"And you haven't written a thing in your notebook," Cole noted beside her.

"Katie knows everything that has been taught. She gets ridiculously lazy when she is taught something a second time," Sandra beat her to the explanation.

“Aren’t you guys going to have lunch?” a feminine voice interrupted them. Crysta stood before them with her hands folded across her chest. If it wasn’t for the red lights she raised in Katie’s mind, she would have openly called her beautiful, but that was far from a possibility now.

They looked around and noticed the class was nearly empty. On the other side of the class, Trevor and one of his friends sat in a heated discussion, or at least that’s what they looked like they were doing, “Oh, I hadn’t noticed the class was empty already,” Katie replied.

“Follow me and I’ll show you where the Sirius wolves hang,” Crysta offered, smirking with her hand outstretched for Caden to take. Caden took the girl’s hand and stood up, a gesture they all recognised as an acceptance of the girl’s offer. They packed what they had and followed the girl out.

“So the rumours say she’s a hunter, huh,” Katie’s ears perked up at the conversation taking place at the other corner of the room. Werewolf hearing came in handy that way, but for a hunter, he was being sloppy at keeping his conversation clandestine. Katie’s hunter mind was already looking for reasons clandestine. As the head hunter, Trevor was not supposed to be prone to such a mistake. ‘That’s just cruel...’ Ashley groaned finally catching up with Katie’s thoughts.

Crysta led them through the halls straight to the cafeteria. “So, since you guys are royalty, you just have to make the order and the food will be brought to you,” she explained. Upon noticing their arrival, a human behind the counter rushed out from the other side of the kitchen. She fumbled, wiping her hands against the fabric of her apron. She brandished a notepad and spewed the contents of the menu in a hurry that Katie almost missed some of the things that she said.

“Oh come on, Kendra. You don’t have to be that scared of them. They don’t bite you know,” Honour’s angelic voice interrupted. The girl walked up to them dressed in an apron similar to that of the shaking nervous girl before them. She picked the pen and notepad from the girl, “I’ll take it from here, Kendra.”

“Look who’s doing community work once again,” Crysta rolled her eyes.

“There is nothing wrong with lending a helping hand every now and then, Crysta. You should try it out sometime. It might show a side to you that you don’t even know exists,” Honour countered, “Now if you don’t mind, I’ll take your orders and have them brought over to you in the Den.”

Katie’s eyes widened at the mention of the ‘Den.’ That hadn’t been part of the tour, “Very well, runt. The Den, bring only the best on the menu today extra meat. You know how it goes.”

‘Does she have to be so mean when she’s speaking to her?’ Katie wondered internally.

‘Well, that’s what happens when a powerful werewolf is speaking to one that’s weaker than it. It’s just how it works,’ Ashley explained.

‘That’s sick and twisted,’ Katie retorted.

‘Well, it could be worse. I didn’t expect that behaviour in the Sirius pack, but I guess it can’t be helped. Honour should only be grateful she doesn’t get picked on every time those above her get to see her,’ Ashley shrugged.

“If you would only follow me, I’ll show you where the Den is,” Crysta called to them. Katie was about to turn to leave when she noticed a part of the cafeteria that didn’t seem to fit. Nostalgia came rushing

back like a storm. Cole had his hands around the girl before she could rush over to that part of the cafeteria.

“Maybe another time, dear. Let’s get the tour part of being here done, then you... I mean, we can do all the exploring that we want to,” she whispered into her ear.

“How can I deny it when you say it like that?” Katie said, giving up her struggle.

“Do you think she knew we were here? I know our scents are well hidden by the wolfsbane-lined walls?” the voice of one of the hunters reached her again.

“I doubt it. That was just the look of someone curious at everything they see,” this voice she knew to be Trevor. The bitterness in his tone was impossible to miss.

“Umm, Cole, did you happen to hear what the hunters were discussing when we were in the classroom?” Katie asked Cole, who now had his hand around her waist. Similarly, hers was draped across his shoulder.

“Not really... They talk in tones hushed enough to keep werewolf hearing out of their conversations. Are you worried about something?” he asked.

“No, it’s nothing important...”

.....

The Den turned out to be a separate building from the main school building and it was filled completely with werewolves. A few humans were littered here and there in large groups of werewolves even though it was clear who was supposed to be there. A ring was set up in one corner of the large building and tables were arranged all over the place for them to have where to eat and talk. Groups of all sorts littered the room, couples, goths, glorious pack warriors. The only reason anyone needed to be here was to be a werewolf.

Katie was impressed...