

Chosen 181

181 Chapter One Hundred Eighty One

The king sat in his office going through the last of his day's paperwork. Exhaustion purged his mind and threatened to seize his tireless work, but he persisted. Queen Martha sat in a chair near his with her head rested in her arms on the desk. She'd fallen asleep trying to help her husband. Every once in a while, he'd pass a hand through her hair, sending sparks through him. The effects of the mate bond never got old. One never got used to them and never wanted to.

There was a knock on the door that startled the woman awake. She placed her head back on the desk, a slight headache threatening to plague her mind, "He's finally here, huh."

"Yes, he is... Katie's information points to him alone. We have to hear him out before we make our decision on what we are to do with him," the king replied. Katie had told them everything, without the man's presence. While she wasn't sure if he was on their side or not, she knew he had something shady about him. This had also led her to reveal the presence of a beta alpha sired by her in the ranks of the rogues.

"Well, Katie's method of information of gathering is crazy, to begin with," Martha replied.

"Yes, that is true, however, it wasn't like she had a choice when she bit the boy that day. I just wish she'd told us that earlier. Well, better late than never," the king placed his hand on a button at his desk, "It's open," he spoke up.

The door pushed open, letting the man in, "I'm not one to like being summoned," the man began.

"I know, Uncle. You like appearing at times convenient for you. You must know then that I have called you here on a matter that is urgent and needs to be addressed urgently," the king said to him.

"Was it so urgent that I was not to go on a trip that I had arranged on my own? Where is that soft wolf of a boy you chose to be your heir?" the man asked, finding that the prince was not around.

"He asked that he leave to visit another pack. He's getting quite anxious to find his mate. He's already checked through most of the packs in the Sirius empire and he can't seem to find her.

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"Oh, that's sad to hear. I guess the goddess also sees things my way. He's not fit to lead this pack," the man responded.

"I am well aware of your insecurities about my son, Uncle. But like I've already said countless times, that was not a decision for you to make and it is only my consent that the boy needs to be named Crown Prince," King Davin responded with a smile on his face.

"Ugh, whatever, what is so urgent that you had to call me here?" the man asked.

"We've received information that you are working with the rogues. I'll just get straight to the point. Is it true or is it not? Keep your mind link open so we might be able to confirm the truth. You don't have anything to worry about. I didn't think it would be..." the king stopped rambling when the man before him didn't reply to the accusations that were being thrown his way.

Sean remained quiet and tried his best to conceal any expression from his face that would make him any more guilty than he already was. His cover had been blown without him doing anything. He searched his mind for the mistake he could have made. He couldn't tell at what point he'd made a mistake. He couldn't tell when it had been that he'd let this happen.

"What led you to such a preposterous conclusion?" he kept his voice levelled to avoid conveying any emotion, however, that was beside his common behaviour and definite giveaway.

"I would tell you, but you would probably find some way to give that information to the rogues. We heard that there was a mole within the royals. I never could have thought it was you of all people," the king's sighed. His voice was filled with sadness. Through the mind link, he called on the pack warriors that weren't far from his office to take the royal and lock him in the dungeon.

Sean didn't resist his arrest and stood up, allowing them to bind his hands with ease, "You could be making a large mistake you know," Sean spoke up.

"Alpha Phillip, make sure he gets the most comfortable cell. He's still my uncle," the king told the beta alpha that bound the royal.

"Very well, your majesty," Alpha Phillip replied.

Sean found that reasoning with the king at this point was a lost cause. The man didn't seem to be capable of listening to anything else he had to say. In his mind, this all depended on other pawns of the goddess that had driven him into this situation in the first place. Alpha Phillip sent pack warriors ahead of him to prepare the dungeon the royal was going to be placed in. He had not yet had a hearing and considering his status among the wolves, treating him with animosity was not yet an option.

"Don't you think I might escape if you make me too comfortable?" the man took a stab at idle chit chat.

"Even if you manage to escape, the hunters will have you before you can get too far. I won't be too inclined to go easy on you either if that were to happen," the alpha replied. Sean cringed at the thought of having to go against one of Davin's beta alphas. He shuddered at the thought and decided to stuff any other hopes of escape he had lurking in his mind.

"Well, then would I at least get a playmate in my dungeon once in a while?" the man asked him.

"You are really trying to push your luck now, aren't you?" the alpha replied with a smirk, "I'll ask the king and see if something can be arranged."

Sean sighed at the man's response. Even when he'd been accused of working with the rogues, the Sirius royal family continued to treat him with respect. They were simply too soft-hearted. That was the same reason he didn't find Drake to be fit for the role of king. But then again, he was just like his father. The man's eyes had seen years beyond what a normal werewolf was capable of and he was yet to see the downfall of the Sirius empire, for the exact same reason he had for their weakness.

"I guess a playmate would not be too bad, regardless of the conditions that king gives me," he replied, finally reaching the lowest chamber of the dungeons. This part of the dungeons was cleaned regularly of moss and kept in sparkling condition for reasons the royal had never been able to find. When the king found out about a betrayal within the palace, he had done what he could to keep this specific cell clean. He didn't know he would be the one ending up on the other side of the door to this cell.

The alpha led him in and took off his bindings. The room had a bed within it and everything he'd need to stay comfortable. Unfortunately for him, the shower was merely a partition to one corner of the room with a metal bar that held a drawing curtain. "The shower only has cold water. The king saw no use in adding such expenses for a traitor," Alpha Phillip explained, "But the toilet's got flashing water, so you don't have to worry about that. You will be given three meals a day with no regard for your choice in the matter.

Whatever the king decides you have for a meal will be left to him. I would stay on my best behaviour to make sure he keeps the meals reasonable. There is no reception this deep into the dungeons, although that won't matter since you can always communicate through the mind link. The king will have you blocked from private mind link conversations that have nothing to do with you, so to communicate, you will have to speak directly to him."

"Quite the set of rules he's got there," Sean sighed, falling into the comfy bed that had been made for him.

"You'd have to expect a lot of restrictions considering your current situation. He's pretty convinced you're the one that had the rogues get the confidence to invade the palace eighteen years ago," Alpha Phillip coaxed.

The royal noticed the attempt to draw out information and only shrugged, "They barely needed a nudge. They already seemed convinced that those two children would be the end of them and they made the choice to attack all on their own," Sean sealed his lips, having said that much. It was enough for him to remain locked up for sure, but not enough to get the king into a rage over his actions. 'Damn that goddess... I hope you know what you're doing...'

"Very well. If that's all you'll say, I will take my leave now. I would mind the right side of the headboard. There tends to be a bit of an ant problem. Try to stay in this room, will you?" the beta alpha said while walking out of the room.

Sean watched the door and listened to the numerous clicking sounds of the locking mechanism. By the time they were done securing him, he was sure there was no way he could escape. He almost called them back that he would die of starvation when a machine above his head jumped to life, blowing a cold breeze into the dungeon. 'Just great... Of course, they accounted for the air conditioning, but not the hot bath water,' he mentally groaned. Taking a look at the toilet that was said to have flashing water, he grinned at the simple set-up of the toilet. It was right next to the bath area with two rolls of toilet paper at the top of the water cistern.

"I know this is the best dungeon, but it's still a freaking dungeon with below royal living standards," he mumbled through gritted teeth. 'This must be the lowest level I've ever been forced to... and all for what... How did they even find out that I was a spy in the first place?' thoughts ran through his mind, although he was unable to solve a single one of them on his own. It was all just questions and no answer. 'I'm sorry, Amanda. I got caught...'

182 Chapter One Hundred Eighty Two

Katie entered the gate and found a lonesome bored-looking Trevor. The students were either milling about the hotel or stuck in their rooms on their cell phones. The real fun part of the trip was to start the

next day. Before then, the students were enjoying their first school freedom where they didn't have to worry about their studies. Katie knew she was late... In fact, the butterflies in her stomach filled her with guilt for having veered off general procedure.

The girl shook all signs of her guilt from her countenance and approached Trevor, filling her voice and composure with all the confidence and superiority she could muster. She wouldn't need to do all this if she hadn't gotten distracted. Her only hope now was that the boy didn't see through her facade.

"Trevor..."

"Sirius... You took an awfully long time making a sweep of the area. One might say you were trying to dodge the assembly," the boy replied.

"I happened to run into one of the hunters that guard the tourists. In that case, they will also be helping in protecting the students. That conversation might have taken me longer than I thought it would," Katie explained, "Run me through what the assembly was all about."

Trevor narrowed his eyes at the girl who gave him a genuine innocent smile, "The teachers gave everyone a room key. Well, in pairs. Obviously, everyone is to be paired with someone of the same gender, but for some reason, you and Runt Cole get to have the same room all to yourselves," the boy responded in a bored tone.

"You sound jealous, Trevor," Katie smirked at the boy.

Trevor scoffed at her insinuation, "Oh please. Just try to keep it down in there. The rooms are not soundproofed. Your room number is fifty-eight." With that, he walked away, having ticked the girl off his list. Katie was tongue-tied for what felt like minutes even though it was only seconded... Trying her best to ignore what the boy had said, she walked up to the first entrance into the nearest flat she could find and started reading through the room numbers.

Her ears perked up, taking note of the different things the students were gossiping about. Some of them had come with games to play through their first night at the hotel. Others had come with movies ranging from romantic movies to action series and anything else that could entertain a teenager. Some of them merely wanted to gossip about boys and even had sleepovers in their rooms. The students were full of all sorts of energy to do all sorts of things that night. One room caught Katie's ear though. She looked up at the room number. '36'

The room wasn't empty, but no sound came from it either. She was curious to know what was going on with whoever was in that room. This hunter wasn't one to pry into matters that weren't her own but call it whatever one might want to call it, she wanted to know who was in that room. And just like that, the girl barged into the room without asking for anyone's permission. She was stunned immediately as her eyes met the most floral room she could have ever imagined.

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The room had been organised and plants placed in the right places to give it the feel of nature. Not to mention scented for added effect. The air condition had been set to the perfect setting that it felt like a cold breeze all the time within the room. Katie was impressed by this level of organisation. The person inside the room, however, lay on her bed with a book in her hands and headphones in her ears, locked in a world outside reality.

Honour looked at peace and within her element in that room. The faint scent of Katie's sister still hung about the room, but Katie was sure she was meant to be there. After a moment of silence, Honour lifted her gaze from her book and spotted the royal. Her eyes widened in shock and she removed her headphones as fast as she could, "I'm sorry I couldn't hear you over the sound of the..."

Katie raised her hand to stop her from rambling, "I hadn't said anything yet, so you can put those worries aside."

The girl seemed to relax at that, "You startled me. My mother keeps saying I tend to space out a lot and many times miss what happens around me. I hoped it wasn't the same thing that was happening just now."

"It's not... Is this your room together with Lina's?" Katie asked her.

"Yes, it is. She's busy preparing for her fight with Liam. She can barely notice me when she gets all worked up. She's always been like that though. I don't know if I would call it a good thing, but I do hope she learns soon enough what's worth fighting for in this world," Honour sighed.

"You're wiser than I gave you credit for..." Katie laughed.

"Why does that sound like a major insult?" Honour asked her.

"Oh, it was a compliment. I'm glad Lina has a friend like you. She'll definitely need one when she falls," Katie replied, with a hint of sadness.

"Do you think Liam will defeat her?"

"Whether he defeats her or not is not the issue. Lina has the chance to choose a path she'll regret whether she loses or wins. There is a lot that influence can do to a person... as well as defeat," Katie had thought through this entire situation Sandra had gotten the girl into. While she knew why her friend had done it, she didn't like the possibilities of what might come of it.

Liam was someone who despised having to train typically because he was an alpha and felt that his inborn power was more than enough for him to be considered superior to those that did have blue or red eyes. Lina's lack of physical strength only worked to anger him and treat her like an abomination in contrast to all alphas and royals. Katie hoped her sister could learn what she needed to learn in time.

"You could have told your sister what you're thinking so that she might gain more confidence in this fight and also know the right way to bring Liam down," Honour pointed out.

"I could... But I'm afraid she wouldn't learn anything that way. And so, I chose to put myself out of this one. Maybe when she finds that I'm not actively cheering her on, she'll realise it's not something I approve of and find that it's useless. Those are all just my speculations of the brilliant ways this could all turn out. It's not what I think she might do in the long run. Which is what makes you so important. You stay by her side like I'm sure you always have," Katie explained.

"Yes, I have always stayed by her side. I just never thought you of all people would let her be at a time when she needed you," Honour replied. 'Is that what she picked out of all that?' Katie thought as her chest felt tighter with guilt.

'Well, you did speak in riddles. You were bound to get one of those as her answer,' Ashley pitched in.

Katie was at a loss for words and didn't know what else to tell the girl. Awkward silence took over the room and Honour wanted nothing more than to break free of it, "Don't worry, I'll stand by Lina when she faces Liam. And I will tell her what you think about all this. Maybe then she too will understand what disapproval from an elder sister feels like."

"You'll watch your tongue when you tell her of my reasons for keeping out of the fight between Liam and her. Is that clear?" Katie asked the girl with a smile that forcefully reached her eyes.

The awkward smile told the girl all she needed to know about what the girl was trying to tell her, "Or you could just show up at least. Your sister has been training hard for the chance to prove her worth in the pack. I would think you know a thing or two about fitting in," the hunter was taken aback by the response. Without further discussion on the matter, she turned around and reached for the door handle, the girl called back, "Katie, you do care for your sister, don't you?"

The question got Katie's heart racing faster than she thought it would have. Honour was the one person she knew to be closer to Lina than anyone else. It was why she asked her for help in bringing her to the Den in the first place. She did care for her little sister, but the question she was being asked only meant she hadn't been acting like it and that part she hadn't intended, "Yes, I do care for her."

The girl made her way for the room she'd been directed to, paying no mind to any other room numbers. Without knocking or asking, she barged into the room, a habit she was meant to break but hadn't gotten around to doing so just yet.

Cole was seated at a desk with his hand holding a device to his ear. He turned around, startled by the sudden intrusion only to relax when he found that it was Katie. "I'll call you later," he said before turning off the phone. "Are you okay?"

Katie closed the door behind her and sighed. This room was different and not as brightly coloured as the one she'd just visited. The colour theme in this room was navy blue, a colour that was more of her style as a hunter. "I'm fine. Who were you talking to?"

"One of my father's beta alphas back home. There is a matter he said a royal had to make the final decision to before anything was decided upon, so I was discussing it with him," he explained.

"Oh, anything else you're hearing from home that I might find interesting," Katie asked.

"Other than the increasing number of rogues in the forests bordering the capital, nothing to be reported," he replied.

"You know that we are linked right. I know when you are hiding something. Now hurry up and tell me," the girl answered, dropping onto the bed so that she might hear him out.

Cole looked away from her before saying the one statement he never thought he'd have to say at such an early stage in his life, "My father is dying..."

183 Chapter One Hundred Eighty Three

Katie took a seat beside her mate giving him her undivided attention as he explained his situation. It was a story she was bound to find more than revealing. Cole sighed, finally choosing to start it all from the very beginning. "Healing my father for the first time made us realise that I couldn't heal him completely.

Something that fatal could only kill me if I was to use that power to heal it. The trade-off is usually that painful.

So, I came to the decision that I would help him out every time it got worse. The King didn't like this. After all, he is the king. He's meant to be the strong one in the family and here he was depending on his son. A few days after my birthday, he caught wind of some information that he wouldn't reveal to me. He asked that, 'for my security, that I go study at the safest school in the world.'

I didn't know what he meant at the moment. That was until I found you there and got very interested. Your flashy birthday confirmed his intentions. However, he cannot go long without requiring healing. And soon enough he loses the ability to walk or do pretty much anything."

"Those phone calls you've been having..."

"Some from his attendants as well as my stepmother, while others were from his beta alphas on matters that required my approval," he replied.

"I'm sorry about your father," Katie sympathised.

"It's alright. He's only been like that for a year," Cole replied, with a deep sigh.

"Could that also be the reason why the rogues have been gathering in Lycaon?" Katie wondered, dropping onto the bed with her head in thought.

"You never seemed to be one for detective work," Cole chuckled.

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"I'll have you know that I, more than most, do my share of detective work in this line of work," Katie rose to her defence.

"What do you have for me then, miss detective?" Cole smiled, pulling the girl into an embrace to which she did not object and simply cosied into.

"We haven't heard of someone from the royal family that fits the rogue king's description that got me thinking for quite some time. It's only still a theory. You once said there was a way to transfer the power of a royal in case their lineage was about to meet an end," Katie suggested.

"One of the Kings in the past came up with a way to do that, but I didn't think it was ever done. That's why it was never thought that the rogue King could be a royal, to begin with," Cole replied.

"Yeah, but couldn't any of the royal's relatives do that very same thing and create a new bloodline that carries the power of the royals?" Katie asked.

"How long were you thinking to cook up something as diabolical as that?" Cole was bewildered by the reality of this possibility, "It would be possible, but the goddess' blessing remains in the two original bloodlines. The king who devised that technique made it to save one bloodline in case it was about to meet its..."

"In case one bloodline was about to meet its end," Katie finished his statement for him.

"It's a good thing my bloodline is yet to end then," the prince replied, rubbing his hand tenderly across the girl's neck. "On another note, someone had more than a simple security check."

Katie's eyes widened at the accusation, "I did no such thing. I take the security of my charges very seriously. I would never do anything until the security check was over..."

"Oh, so it was afterwards..."

"One of the hunters felt like going for a run. I think she was just testing me though. She ate my dust, hehe," Katie added mischief into her voice.

"You're enjoying yourself a little too much. Anyway, Sandra, who seems to be your entire life, brought your things in, including that flashy new werewolf murdering device that you got from your parents," Cole mentioned, shuddering at the bow he'd seen.

"Oh yeah, that one. I'll have to keep it real well. If I ever hope to become as good as one of those four. They are scary," Katie replied.

"Oh yeah, how do you even keep firing that thing. Just pulling that string took far too much energy," Cole commented.

"You tried it out?" Katie's mind was running ridiculous images of Cole trying to imitate a might bowman with the red fiery bow. The mischievous Ashley wasted no time in sending the images to Cole and chuckling to the back of Katie's mind. Cole laughed out at the images that bombarded his mind. "You don't have to laugh. If I only I could spank Ashley..."

"Well, if you must know, that's not so far from what I was trying to achieve. The string proved too impossible to deal with though," this got Katie laughing. 'Who knew Cole could goof off?'

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At the time the hunter was talking to Lina's friend, the girl had only been out in search of the lavatories, the most important facility to any human or werewolf. This was a simple enough task. The girl was soon through with what took her there only to find a party of three outside the exit. Wyatt had his attention on his nails, the only other part of this world that seemed to matter to him other than his smoke.

"Oh, she came out. I thought for sure we'd have to call the fire department," Liam remarked, getting Wyatt's attention. Their third company was Crysta.

"Liam, you know tomorrow is the day when you get to have your fight with Lina. When you said you had a business that needed attending to, this was not what you meant," Crysta barked at the alpha.

"You will learn to respect one of these days, dear pack warrior. I know what happens tomorrow. I only came here with a proposal. I want to see what my opponent is made of and when I say that I don't mean I want to fight with her," Liam replied.

"I'm just wondering when the runt got the respect to be called by her name. It makes me want to gag," Wyatt replied, "However, I will abide by Liam's request and play nice for the evening."

“What are you two talking about?” Crysta asked them. Lina wanted to sneak past the three, but she knew their attention was completely trained on her. She knew not of their intentions, but she wanted nothing to do with it.

“Oh, it’s not something that serious. We still have a few hours before sundown. The day is still young and yet the teachers feel this trip should begin tomorrow. I was thinking of a front-row seat to the wild. We’ve always been allowed to run free in the woods back at the palace, but those are nothing like what’s out there. The four of us, I was thinking... A run through the woods. For old times’ sake...”

Lina’s senses flared up. The temptation of rushing through the wild was tempting more than anything. She’d run before but only imagined running in the wild. The animals that ran through the woods, the sound of nature and the different smells she wanted to experience. Her wolf side felt it too, the need to taste that kind of freedom. “There... The princess gets it.” Lina hadn’t said anything, but her face had said everything that they needed to know. She wanted to deny it. Crysta’s face told her to deny it, but her mind got muddled by her desires.

“If it’s not for a long time...”

“Nothing more needs to be said. It’s settled,” Liam cut her off boisterously, “Come on, Crysta. You can’t tell me you don’t feel it. The primal need to run through the woods. To be one with nature...”

Crysta wasn’t one to fall prey to his charms, however, there was something else at stake now. Liam had played his cards right and gone for the princess first. Crysta wasn’t done making amends with her just yet and knew her words meant nothing if she tried to spur her away from a chance at ‘freedom.’ The only other option was, “We better be back before sundown. Any later and I’ll have your head.”

“Oh, big words for the delta,” Wyatt said in a singalong voice, “If you would only follow us, ladies.”

“How are we even going to get out of the hotel?” Crysta asked.

“Well, that’s easy enough. Straight through the main entrance,” Liam walked on with all the confidence in the world.

“And who exactly would be letting you out at that time?” a new voice intervened. Trevor stood leaning against the gates of the hotel, holding his notepad.

“We’ll be letting ourselves out. It’s not against the rules now, is it? It’s still daytime,” Wyatt began. The air filled with a dangerous silence as they watched the two stare themselves down. It had been a while since wolves went against hunters. The title of a head hunter was not awarded by mistake and the wolves all knew that. ‘What are the odds we’d run into him right before getting out?’ suddenly freedom felt like the furthest thing from reach for Lina which only made it more enticing to reach.

184 Chapter One Hundred Eighty Four

“Wyatt Black...” Trevor spoke in a deadly tone.

“Trevor Waters, it’s been a long time since you’ve thought to cross paths with me again,” Wyatt replied. Liam, for once, stepped back for the two to chat.

“Yes, it has been a long time. We struck a deal not to interfere with each other then. As long as you stayed on the good side of the rules as all wolves are meant to,” Trevor replied.

“Well, my mind’s foggy on the terms that came out of our little scuffle, but I do remember you cutting me a little bit of slack on all the stuck up rules you’ve got stringing up the wolves at the school. We were clear on one thing though. I was not to hurt any humans,” Wyatt said the last part in a dangerous tone.

Trevor’s face contorted into one of anger. He wanted to lash out at the wolf but had no real reason to. He knew they shouldn’t be crossing the gate at this time, but they showed no sign of backing down. Memories of a time he’d crossed paths with this particular alpha still stained his mind like it was only yesterday, “You heard the teachers. You can think of exploring tomorrow... with the rest of the class.”

“Look around, Trevor. We are werewolves, creatures of the wild. That is where we ought to have fun from. We aren’t going to be out till late and that’s fine in my book. And you know I won’t be backing down on this. I say it’s fine that my friends and I go out for an evening stroll, no humans are allowed. Those things are just too fragile,” the conversationalists spoke as though they each wanted to solve this in the least violent way possible.

“Werewolves or not, the rule on relaxing was issued to all students...”

“Trevor, Trevor, don’t push your luck. There are only so many of your rules that I can take before I feel like causing an uprising. We don’t want to cause another incident... We are in a wildlife reserve after all,” Wyatt’s voice had suddenly gotten very low and warning.

The hunter stared at him sharply for a moment. He barely flinched before him. Lina was amazed he was that confident before an alpha when she’d watched Sandra do the complete opposite. Sandra was afraid of alphas and yet she was very skilled as a hunter. Lina knew Trevor wasn’t one to be messed with either, but he was still a junior hunter. However, without knowing what he could actually do, she couldn’t tell how strong he actually was.

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“You know you don’t faze me one bit, Black. I have no problem putting down a mutt that steps out of line. You’ll find that the boy you tasselled with a while back is not the same boy that stands before you now...” Trevor spoke. Wyatt remained quiet, his hand balling into a fist as though getting ready to get violent, “Be back before sundown or I’ll be forced to give you the pain to remember.”

With that said, Trevor stepped aside and let the party of four through to the outside of the hotel.

“You’ve made a great choice, Trevor.” Wyatt was bright and cheery once more and sauntering out the gates. While he passed the hunter, he whispered, “Don’t forget that you don’t give me orders.”

The wolves jogged off a distance from the hotel, aiming to plunge into the forest once they’d found the right spot to shift. This was an issue for the delta of the group. Crysta found a suitable place to set her clothes and shifted into a sleek grey wolf. “Must be a hassle having to care about shredding clothes every time you have to shift,” Liam commented, letting his wolf forward.

“Only comes to show that alphas are far more superior to the wolves below us,” Wyatt responded, shifting as well. Lina didn’t have anything to say about the grey wolf and only shifted into her white slender wolf. She would have been the biggest wolf given her status, but without the usual bulk of the royals, she was merely the tallest of them.

The four wolves were soon rushing through the woods together. Lina, not wanting to leave the rest behind, kept pace with the rest of them as they raced through the woods. The alphas let loose and rushed forward leaving the two females behind. Crysta wasn't particularly interested in partaking in their madness. She'd only tagged along to watch the princess and make sure the alphas didn't try anything before the decided date of their duel.

"Crysta, shouldn't we catch up?" Lina spoke through the mind link when her ears picked up on the distance the alphas were leaving between them.

"What are you even doing here, Lina? Why couldn't you just refuse their offer and stay in the hotel?" Crysta snapped at the girl.

"Oh, did you want to come here just the three of you or something? I don't see any harm in a little run through the woods," Lina replied, going on the defensive.

"No, what do you take me for? These are not the woods back home, Lina. Back home, your parents let you run around well beyond the night, but this is different. There are creatures in these woods. Wild animals that only think of survival. What would happen if a snake were to bite you or a lion to think you threatened its cubs?" the girl scolded her.

"I didn't realise I came here with a chaperone. What's happening to you? I would think you'd like this sort of thing," Lina replied before dashing faster, trying to put distance between herself and the girl.

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Back in the hotel, a hunter lay by her mate with her eyes closed while he continued to work through the different notes, he'd made on whatever information he'd received over the phone. Oblivious to him was the fact that Katie was wide awake and vividly noting the progress of the four troublemakers. They were getting dangerously close to her three-mile radius limit of detection and she didn't like it. The rogues hadn't caught up to them yet, at least they weren't within three miles from them.

Katie could tell that much, however, there was a lot more that could hurt the wolves if they got too reckless. "Just because you have fangs and claws doesn't give you the permission to put yourself in danger's way," the girl thought out loud.

"That's a lesson I've been hoping you'd learn for a while now," her mate voiced back, keeping his eyes on the papers before him. Katie got up to look at him, partially insulted. She didn't complain though. There was truth to the words he was using.

"I'll try to stay out of trouble, Cole, but I wasn't talking about myself," she replied.

"Oh, you mean the four wolves that decided it is nice to take a run through the woods?" he asked her.

"Yes, those are the ones I mean. So, you've been noticing them too," Katie observed.

"Well, you might have your mojo, but in this case. If the wolves are part of the pack, I can keep track of them. Your mojo would help better for humans in this case," the alpha replied.

"I guess that would make sense. Using the mind link to tell the location of lost wolves still gives me a headache. I was holding out on learning that skill in a while," Katie said, getting up from her place on the bed and dressing up in a better shirt suitable for running.

"I'll come and help," Cole said, placing down his papers, "This work was getting boring anyway."

"Thanks, Cole," the girl reached for the fiery bow at the dressing table but thought better of it. She didn't think she would be needing the weapon for what they were going to do.

The couple walked out of the hotel only to find Trevor at the gates wearing a sour look, "What are you guys doing out at this hour? Are you also going out on an evening stroll?" the boy asked.

"When did someone decide to make you a gatekeeper?" Katie asked the junior hunter.

"I decided to fill in for all the junior hunters that came with us today. However, tomorrow, there is an allocation of roles that I made sure to mail to all hunter and junior hunters that are present for this trip," he spoke formally.

"I was sure the two of you were on bad terms. What happened?" Cole asked, looking between the two of them. He'd held out long enough and required an explanation.

"I'm not sure we have time for all that explanation. We have runaways to catch up to," Katie urged her mate, trying to dodge the question. 'To think Frank's advice worked and got me to be buddies with Trevor of all people...'

"Oh, those troublemakers. How did you know they got out? Were you watching them when they tried to rough me up to get past? Why didn't you help me?" the boy asked.

"Oh, I wasn't using my eyes to watch you at the moment. When I noticed that scuffle, I thought you had it all figured out," Katie replied, feigning ignorance. She'd been aware of the tension. After all, that was what she was trained to detect, "Nothing bad happened, so no harm done."

"I keep losing more and more trust in you, Katie," he replied, "Be careful out there. You better take care of her, runt."

The two walked past her leisurely, the forest as their destination, "Are you going to let him talk to me like that? I have tried so many ways to get him to stop that does not involve dislocating one of his body parts, but he makes it so hard."

"Both of you better play nice or I will have a variety of disciplining methods to come up with for the both of you," she replied, "See you later, Trevor. Cover for us if we take too long."

"Do you think you will take too long?" the boy called back.

"Well, I did mention we were after runaways. They might have wandered a little too far from the hotel than I had allowed them to," the girl spoke.

Trevor refused to add anything to that as his mind began to ponder the meaning behind her words. Now that he thought of it, she sounded like she was saying she hadn't seen any of them even leave the hotel. 'How does she know if they've gone too far from the hotel or not?' he wondered to himself, 'The only family that is known for an ability similar to that is... It can't be... Can it?'

The four 'runaways' rushed through the forest without a care in the world. The leader was Liam as he seemed to be the only one who knew where they were going. He led them through the forest, through clearings and creaks. Lina allowed herself to feel the freedom of running through the forest as part of a pack. Fitting in had been hard for her since she shifted. She'd been shamed by so many that every time she thought of this same thing, she got angry when the memory of one person came to mind. Honour... the princess of nature had been trying to get the girl to realise just how beautiful her wolf was.

Without realising it, she'd begun accelerating into the lead, drawing closer to Wyatt. The alpha noticed the wolf's glazed expression and smiled inwardly. The only thing this runt was good for, running faster than the wind. "You've always been faster than the rest of us," he spoke through the mind link kicking her out of her thoughts.

The girl looked about and realised who had just spoken to her. Slowing down, she allowed him to take the lead once more. The alpha took the lead and made an effort to keep the pace so that the girl wouldn't get too bored. 'You might be a weakling, but your speed has always been something the rest of us envy about you,' he thought to himself. His thoughts were shielded from everyone and he meant it to stay that way.

They were running for a while, barely taking the time to rest. Okay, they didn't rest a single bit until they reached Liam's desired destination. The sea...

Lina skidded to a halt as they broke through the treeline to meet the edge of a cliff metres away. The scene before them had the girl completely frozen. For a moment, she seemed to fade from existence. The slender white wolf walked as though in a daze closer to the cliff to get a better look. In the evening sun, the sea was a dazzling sight to behold.

The setting sun cast kaleidoscopic rays onto the water and lit the sky in a flurry of colours. The sea roared with an energy that was contagious to the girl. It was like it was calling out to her. The salty sea breeze blew into her fur blending her more into the nature around her. For the other three wolves that were watching, the girl had never looked more like one of her kind. Lina's eyes closed as the wind blew into her.

She wished she could be here forever. A screech in the sky caught her attention, snapping her blue eyes open. The enhanced vision of the wolf caught sight of a Great Eagle in the sky taking an evening flight. The two hunters were of one mind. She spotted the subject of the eagle's attention, a fish swimming unsuspectingly within the waves.

It was as though the wolf's eyes zoomed in and watched as each of the eagle's feather's pressed against its body as it folded its wings and angled into a nosedive. The King of the skies skilfully plucked the unsuspecting fish from the water and spread his wings, taking to the sky, back into his domain with his meal in talons. "I could be here forever and never want to leave..." the girl didn't notice she was speaking out loud.

Liam and Wyatt shrugged off the obvious marvel before them and walked off to the edge of the cliff, "It's a steep drop," Liam mentioned. Lina looked down from the sky to take note of their subject of interest.

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The white wolf inched forward and took a look at the bay down below. The harsh waves crashed onto the side of the cliff making the loudest of noise while they did. Sharp rocks jutted out of the water looking up at them. The waves constantly crushed onto the rocks, chipping away whatever small part of the weathered rocks they did, sharpening them even more.

“A deadly one too... Talk of skewering,” Wyatt replied. It was a drop so steep it was dizzying to look down.

“It’s deadly enough without the sharp rocks,” Lina answered unconsciously. It was the first time she was speaking to them directly since they came.

The white wolf sat to brace herself while she stared down at the roaring waves. Crysta finally snapped out of the trance she’d been set in watching the white wolf. She didn’t like what was happening at the moment. These two alphas were never without an ulterior motive, “Best to leave the edge then,” she told the princess, urging her away from the cliff. When she finally had the entranced wolf away from the edge of the cliff, she turned her attention to the alphas.

“Why did you bring us here, Liam?” she asked the alpha.

“Can’t a man just come to see the beautiful scenery and enjoy nature with a few friends?” he asked, faking an innocent pout.

“No, not in your case,” she responded, shielding the princess from the two males. Lina was not stupid to think the two of them were just being nice. She had hoped Crysta would be a little less direct though. Going against them without any hint of caution wasn’t something she was used to. The hunters could stop fights between werewolves and humans, but that was all they could do. A fight between werewolves was out of their jurisdiction.

This is what had gotten these alphas their reputation. Werewolves wouldn’t cross them and that was common sense. Crysta herself wasn’t fond of crossing them. In fact, until only a few days ago, she was one of the people that cared nothing for what they did even if it involved Lina. Liam’s cheery mood dropped all of a sudden, “Why do you have to go and ruin all the fun? We could have had a fun evening without any trouble. Now you’ve gone and ticked me off,” he began.

Lina had heard the same tone with Wyatt when he was speaking with Trevor. The two were ticking time bombs only waiting to blow off. “Ticked off or not, I still asked you a question.”

“I came here to make a proposal. The runt is to step down from the fight or something very bad will happen to more than just her when she loses. You know how we treat weaklings in our pack. Especially those that act like like they are entitled to anything when all they truly are is a waste of space,” Liam spat.

“I only see one waste of space here and he’s standing right before me,” Crysta spat at him.

“Watch your tongue, Delta. You will know your place. I have no challenge in place for you. I might just lose my temper and choose to teach you your lesson right now,” the boy black and white wolf that was Liam snarled.

“What makes you think you scare me, Liam? I did just call you a waste of space. I don’t call just about anyone that unless I’m sure they are indeed wastes of space...”

“Woah woah woah, let’s calm down here. We didn’t come to create more unnecessary violence,” Wyatt got in the middle of them, “We’re not barbarians. We only came here to make sure the princess knew what she was getting herself into. Speaking of the princess, she hasn’t said anything about the fight since we got here. She’s the one we wanted to ask these questions.”

The two males turned their eyes at the white wolf behind Crysta. Lina hadn’t thought she’d be pulled into this argument so soon. Her heart had been pounding from fear of the violence that was about to happen before her. She tried so much to get her mind into the whole violent thing, but every time she tried, her mind wouldn’t let her go through with it. She understood what it meant to fight one another. There was the possibility of injury and that’s what she’d been up against in Brigadia. A real fight against rogues was nothing like what these boys were trying to put her through.

The more she thought about the fight, the more she realised something about it. It wasn’t a way for her to teach Liam a lesson... He seemed far beyond redemption. She saw that fight as a way for her to prove herself worthy of being called a protector of her pack. After all, that’s what it meant to be in a pack. They look out for each other, not push each other down.

“Lina, do you have anything to say?” Crysta called her out of her thoughts.

“Oh, yeah, I will be there in the fight tomorrow. Wasn’t that supposed to be obvious though?” she said without thinking through her words. Her words angered Liam even more than he thought they would. They were barely filled with fear. Instead, the girl sounded confident that she could beat him.

“You really think you stand a chance against me when you barely lack any strength in that body,” the wolf argued.

Lina noticed the anger in his voice. She felt it come off him in waves. He didn’t like the way she looked down on him. However, Lina was tired of all this. The colour of his eyes suggested she was meant to be stronger than him and yet, he looked at her as though she was a new werewolf that was even beneath those that possessed amber eyes. It frustrated her. ‘I guess Katie is rubbing off on me...’

“Yes, I think I can...” she replied, with the same tone of confidence.

186 Chapter One Hundred Eighty Six

Liam was astounded by the confidence with which the white wolf before him spoke back. He’d always seen her be beneath him. This made him livid. “So, your sister shows up and you start feeling like you’ve grown a pair of wings,” the wolf spoke into the girl’s mind.

“Back off, Liam. You know Katie is not allowed into the fight between you and Lina. The rules of a duel are clear,” Crysta spat at him, trying to get his waves of malice to point in some other direction.

“What are you trying to protect, Crysta? Don’t tell me you actually feel sorry for her after all these years,” the alpha continued.

“Don’t shift your venom to me. You’ve been stuck in a loop of imaginary power for far too long, Liam. You know none of us would ever let you lead the Den. The only rightful leader for that position is Lina. That has always gone unsaid within the Den,” Crysta defended the girl. Lina was taken aback. For someone who’d been bitter toward her for so long, she was witnessing one turnabout.

“Oh, is that what you believe...”

“Enough, Liam. You’ll get the chance to prove the runt’s inferiority when the time comes... Tomorrow,” Wyatt said, walking up to the other alpha, “Save your strength and anger for that time. She will know not to cross us ever again.”

These words seemed to calm the alpha down. Everything that came from Crysta and Lina was only fuel to a fire that had already been lit. Lina let go of a breath she was not sure she’d been holding. Everything was finally calming down again. She could go back to enjoying nature. The sun was vanishing beyond the horizon and darkness was starting to set in. “Just so you know, Lina. We’ll never accept you as a part of the pack,” Liam said as he turned away from the girl.

The confidence that had been welling up inside the white wolf began to fade rapidly as the darkness that had plagued her for the largest part of her life set back in. The fear that she could never fit into the pack that she’d been born into. Crysta noticed the change in the white wolf’s composure, “Lina...” she was gone before another word could be said. Reaching her through the mind link was already rendered impossible as she instinctively blocked her mind from the pack.

“Oh, that was just great Liam,” Crysta barked at him.

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“I didn’t say anything she didn’t already know. I was only being blunt about the plain truth. We’ll never...”

“Maybe you’ll never accept her into the pack. The rest of us know what it means to bear the eyes blessed by the two royal families a long time ago. She will be accepted by the rest of us and if you have something wrong with that, you know she possesses the power to strip you of your power as an alpha. One measly alpha doesn’t mean a thing to a royal. Keep this up and the royals might just get tired of your stupidity,” Crysta didn’t realise she’d been yelling at the alpha.

Liam, in his anger, struck the wolf before him with his paw, sending the smaller wolf rolling away from him. Crysta steadied herself with her claws before she bit a tree at the treeline. Liam’s wolf glared a bright red as rage seethed through him, “Just what do you think you’re doing, Crysta? You were one of the ones that let this happen. What makes you think you can walk away from all of it? The social ladder was established a long time ago. You cannot just decide it’s going to be flipped over on a whim. The runt is below us... That’s how it has been and how it will always be...” the black wolf was walking closer to the smaller delta, his power rolling off in waves that forced his will on the other wolf.

“You don’t realise what you’re trying to go up against, do you Liam? Have you cared to ask about the story behind the girl you are trying to dismiss,” Crysta asked?

“What are you babbling about now?” Liam asked her. Wyatt remained calm and shifted his attention to the delta that had sparked his interest as well.

“I speak of her sister. You try to undermine her coming as something insignificant, but you know nothing about her. I have taken the liberty to ask around. She was raised by Chase hunters. She’s a hunter of a class of her own and a werewolf that we know nothing about. Lina gets the confidence to stand up to you after all these years. That’s not something just about anyone can do. I’ll give you a hint. The

thunderclap the other day. It was bright outside and yet... we all heard, clear as day," the girl spoke in riddles for she didn't believe everything she said herself.

"Are you so scared that you will say everything you can to save your skin?" Liam was amused.

"Guys, we better get back to the hotel. It's getting pretty late," Wyatt spoke with a tone of finality. Unlike Liam who was a spitfire, Wyatt was much more vicious and wasn't questioned when he chose to make a decision, something that he rarely did. The two formed a duet that was feared by all werewolves within the school. The three of them were soon running through the forest...

"Do you think Lina is..." Crysta was stopped when her paw suddenly got caught in the ground. Without warning, the other two wolves also tripped and found that they could not proceed with their run. The ground around them was constantly shifting.

"What is this?" Liam was the first one to ask in a rush.

"Stop struggling, dummy. It's quicksand... and we are in one hell of a large pit of it. We should be able to get out just fine if you could stop freaking struggling," the alpha warned his friend, along with the girl before him.

"We didn't come across this when we came through here," Liam complained, slamming his hands into the mud in frustration. Crysta had finally stopped struggling as well. However, it wasn't fun to stay still when one was constantly sinking into the ground. However, working together in this kind of situation was the only thing that she reasoned could get them out of this situation.

"What now, boys?" she asked them.

"Well, we should be able to slowly swim out of this quicksand. I advise you don't panic though. Stay in your wolf form and pad your way out. That should help you... Oh great, my leg's stuck," Wyatt sighed, "This day keeps getting better and better."

"Now this is an interesting turn of events," a new voice reached their minds. They all turned to see a massive black wolf seated calmly a few metres away from them watching them sink slowly. The wolf had blue eyes, confirming the only royal they'd come with besides the two females that they both knew possessed white wolves. Cole Lycaon was somehow right there watching them sink, "What brought you guys out here in the first place? I'm just heavily curious."

The wolf before them was calm as though they weren't going to sink in a few minutes, "Could you get us out first before you ask questions. If you haven't noticed, not all of us enjoy watching our lives flashing before our eyes," Liam retorted, adding a hint of sarcasm into his voice.

The black wolf walked around the pit to the back where they'd entered it from. Cole then stretched out to the nearest wolf before him and pulled him out slowly by a scruff of fur at his neck, "This is so embarrassing," Wyatt sighed.

"Reminds me of a mother wolf transporting her young," Crysta mentioned.

"You did not have to point it out," Wyatt added with a groan.

Once the three of them were out of the quicksand, Cole asked them a question they didn't know he would be asking any time soon, "Where is Lina?"

Liam, on the other hand, was looking about for company, "There is no way the mighty Cole Lycaon came out here all on his own. Where are his alphas? Or at least that mate of his that seems to be causing an uproar through the whole of Sirius."

"Well, you guessed right. I did not come on my own and I don't know where my partner is. We split up as she went on to look for Lina. Now tell me where Lina is," Cole repeated his order, this time with more urgency.

"She went on ahead of us. You should have met her before you met us. You know how fast that girl is. I have no doubt she ran right on top of this quicksand before there was a chance that she could sink into it," Wyatt was quick to answer. The other two knew he wasn't speaking the truth.

"Have you tried contacting her through the mind link? Ask your significant other. She might have already found her?" Crysta intervened before the alpha would realise they were trying to fool him into believing a phoney story.

Wyatt gave her an odd look, but she ignored him and continued to divert the royal's mind away from their folly, "I have tried contacting Lina for a while now, but my messages won't go through. Let me try with Katie. She probably already found her."

The massive wolf went into a daze as he started communicating with his mate. Wyatt used that moment to send Crysta a private message, "Why won't you lie to him? Are you trying to suck up to those in power now as well? I know of your..."

"Oh, shut up, you idiot. Haven't you noticed he was able to track us down without any help? That's only something that can be done by a pack member. If he could do that, then it's true that he would have been able to see through your deception through the mind link. Do you still think through your words before you speak?" Crysta barked back at him.

"Thank the goddess. She found her," Cole replied. Crysta sighed in relief. The girl was safe now that she was with her sister. That was more than she could have asked for. After all, the only reason she'd tagged along was to make sure the girl was safe from these two. "The three of you have a lot of explaining to do... And I'd suggest you did that before my mate gets her chance to interrogate you. She tends to lose her temper..."

187 Chapter One Hundred Eighty Seven

Katie and Cole ran through the forest for a while before the hunter picked up on the exact locations of three of the wolves they were looking for. "You know you could have easily done it using the pack link," Ashley groaned in the girl's mind.

'Maybe next time you can share this information before having me focus on a ridiculously hard technique from a family I only recently found that I am not a part of by blood,' Katie replied, rambling as she did.

'No need to yell. I'll tell you next time. You have bigger things to worry about. I have been trying to reach Lina's wolf the moment I noticed she wasn't among the wolves you found. She's closed herself off from the pack. Something must have happened between the wolves for her to go dark like that.'

“Cole, would you deal with those ones while I look for my sister?” Katie asked the black wolf that ran beside her.

“Yeah, I can do that. Be careful. Jeremiah might have followed us here,” the alpha replied.

“Aww, it’s nice when you worry about me,” the girl cooed before veering off their general direction and focusing on an entirely different target. Katie partially wondered what the three wolves were doing in one place and not trying to get back to the hotel, but left those thoughts to the back of her mind. Her sister was still missing and she needed to find her quickly, “You better be careful too, Cole.” She called back.

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Lina Sirius ran with no particular direction in mind. Well, that had been after she realised she was lost. Her obvious destination had been the hotel, but after running about the forest for much longer than she would have expected in a direction she was sure was the hotel, she came to the conclusion that she was completely and utterly lost. Her ears and nose continued to pick up on different smells. Many of them were new, but that wasn’t the part that frightened her.

It was the fact that she could tell the intention behind each scent. The animals of the forest weren’t so kind to intruders and she found that every direction she turned, there was a scent she felt she should stay wary of. The problem of running at such a high speed was that it made tracking difficult. She couldn’t run at top speed and track at the same time.

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After going around in circles, dodging a myriad of different animals that gave her a murderous stare the moment they saw her, she confirmed there was nothing she could do to find her way back to the hotel. Her mind plagued her with constant worries of never being able to fit into the society she was born into. What Liam had said made sense to her... It always did and it always had. After all, that had been her life for as long as she could remember.

Filled with the sense of loneliness she thought she’d gotten rid of, Lina kept herself closed off from the rest of the pack and walked into a cave to find some warmth. Little did the girl know that the cave belonged to a mother bear that had left her cub to rest within the warm confines of the cave. The wolf had left tracks at the very entrance of the cave and all evidence of her invasion. How could she know! This was her first time in the wild and she knew nothing about it.

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Katie ran through the forest in search of her sister. It was starting to feel like she was never going to find her. The voices in the woods were far too many for her to filter and no matter what she tried, her power as well as the voices of the creatures of the woods reached her mind the same way and filtering them out was almost impossible for her.

However, giving up was not an option and she continued to trudge forward. The search was futile and she dashed through the woods like a gust of wind, keeping at the right amount of speed to be barely a disturbance to the wildlife as well as keep an eye out for her sister. Her eyes and ears were peeled for

any sign which never came and right when she was about to give up, she heard something... A whisper, no, a growl, or was it a squeak...

It didn't make sense that the sound wasn't human, but what was even more bizarre was the fact that she understood what it had said or squeaked, 'The forest is full of white wolves today. They are just whizzing past like it's mating season...'

Katie might have been offended by the meaning behind the sounds, but she was now even more curious to know where it was they had seen a white wolf. Skidding to a stop, she searched the woods for the sound of the voice and soon enough came face to face with a pair of squirrels. The two creatures stared at her curiously before squeaking once more... 'What is she looking at...'

'I think she's looking at you...'

'I have seen many things in my lifetime, but this might just be the weirdest of all of them. Maybe I'm just imagining things,' Katie thought to herself.

"Maybe she finally ran crazy," the other squirrel squeaked before bursting into a fit of squeaky laughter.

The girl was even more amused by this. The more she watched the two of them, the more she heard their speech clearly. 'What would even be the use of being able to understand these woodland creatures?' the girl thought to herself, 'However, if they could help me find my sister...'

She cringed at the thought of having to ask squirrels for help. There was simply so much wrong about the situation and yet, there was everything natural about it as well, 'I might be becoming more animal than I ever thought I'd get,' the girl thought to herself once more. "Did the other white wolf come through here?" she tried, however, her voice came out as more of a bark. This was, by far, the most ridiculous thing she'd ever tried and felt like the stupidest wolf in the world for even trying it.

"This one is quite rude despite her charming appearances," one of the squirrels told his friend.

"Yes, yes, very rude indeed. How dare she speak to us in that tone? Although I am curious to know why the wolf wants to know where the other wolf is. Maybe the two of them are fighting for a mate," the friend responded with a laugh.

'Let me take the wheel, Katie,' Ashley whispered into the girl's mind.

'Did you know werewolves could understand other creatures?' Katie asked her.

'Oh, no. Werewolves can't understand other creatures. It just so happens to be one of the abilities that have been granted to you as the moon goddess' chosen. It is an honour to have such an amazing gift. Just think about it. We could find out where Lina is pretty easily with this power. Just let me do the talking,' the wolf replied.

The hunter complied and let the wolf take control of the body, "This wolf is bipolar..." one of the squirrels observed.

"Oh yeah, I have heard of those. I haven't gotten the chance to see one though. So you mean she could either be very mean or very nice right now?" the friend asked. It was amusing to both the wolf and the girl to watch these two speak as though they were normal humans.

“May I have your assistance in finding the other white wolf? She’s my sister and I’m afraid I’ve lost her,” Ashley took a stab at communication. She sounded much less fierce compared to her counterpart who internally rolled her eyes at the wolf, ‘Show off...’

“Oh, I like this one. She’s super nice... Tell you what lady. Your white sister might have been a little bit... okay, very lost and she might have sort of walked into a mother bear’s den. I don’t think she’ll make it and even if you go to help her, I don’t think you’ll make it either,” the squirrels announced.

“Can you take me to the den? Maybe I can reason with the mother bear and get her to let my sister go,” Ashley replied.

“No, that won’t work. The mother bear listens to no one. If you go there, she will definitely kill you as well. I say you forget about your...”

“I’m a wolf and wolves don’t leave any of their own behind. Please... I’m begging you. Help me find my sister. You don’t have to get involved with the mother bear. I will handle that on my own,” Ashley replied, cutting the squirrel off on his depressing preconceived conclusion on her situation.

“Well, you ask so nicely it makes it so hard to resist what you are asking me to do for you,” the squirrel replied calmly, “Follow us. We’ll show you to the den and once we’re there, we’ll be on our way. You’ll never hear of us ever again.”

The squirrels, dashing through the trees, began to lead the girl to her destination. It wasn’t long before Katie began to spot a small set of wolf tracks, separated by a large width. Her sister had an impressive stride when she was running. Katie admired the girl’s athletic trail until she found another set of footprints, larger footprints.

The sound of a large growl tore through the forest’s calm atmosphere... “Katie, have you found her?” Cole’s voice came through the mind link.

“Yeah, I found her,” Katie replied. What she didn’t tell him was just how much trouble the girl had gotten herself into.

188 Chapter One Hundred Eighty Eight

Katie ran faster when she noticed the two sets of footprints. The scent of the bear was fresher than that of the white wolf she’d been searching for. It was only now that she was finally able to pick up on the path the girl had taken. It seemed she had also been running about in circles before she settled into the cave. “Lina...” Katie tried calling through the mind link, but there was no response. The girl had blocked them out. All that was left was a race against time. Bracing herself lower to the ground, the white wolf launched into a sprint faster than she normally ran.

Lina, on the other hand, stood in the centre of a cave, sandwiched by two bears. One was a sleeping cub and the other was the cub’s mother who had only just returned from her hunt. Two fish lay on the ground at the entrance of the cave. They smelt fresh and made Lina’s stomach growl, ‘Not at a time like this...’

The bear growled at her anger written all over its body. The bear took up too much space, blocking all forms of exit that the wolf had hoped for. Fear gripped the girl as she stared at the large angry bear. The

bear took another step into the cave, forcing the girl to take a step back. A growl warned her of her actions and she looked behind only to notice the sleeping cub was the next thing she would be stepping.

Lina stepped aside and pushed back so that she avoided the cub. The bear was still for a moment... Katie knew there was no excuse for her intrusion and there wasn't a thought in the bear's mind that suggested letting go of the home invader. 'If only I could speak to animals, this could be a decent negotiation,' the girl thought to herself.

Her wolf tried getting her to contact the other werewolves to come and help her, but she perished the thought at the influence of Liam's words, 'No one will help us when they know we might just die from this. If anything, it will be an opportunity for them to receive information about the death of the runt. The perfect tragic story for the unfortunate abomination of a royal,' the girl responded to the wolf's pleas. When it was clear that the girl was not going to let the mind link open, the wolf went dead silent.

The light rumble of thunder reached the insides of the cave, sparking recognition in the girl's eyes. She knew there wasn't a chance of a cloud in the sky and there was only one person close enough that could run fast enough to produce such effects. 'She learnt to control how much energy she uses when running...' the girl noticed.

The bear sniffed the air and took notice of the change in the wolf's demeanour. Something was completely wrong and the bear could tell. A loud growl got the young cub to wake up. There was a period of confusion before the little cub ran to his mother, hiding beneath her legs for protection. It was only a moment before a new scent filled the air. The sound of rushing footsteps soon came to a stop. Lina never thought she'd ever be happy to see her beloved sister step in to rescue her.

A large majestic white wolf with bright blue eyes walked into the cave filling the space to the same size as that of the bear, 'I never noticed how big Katie was...' Lina thought to herself as she admired her saviour.

Katie was relieved to find her sister unharmed. 'Those damned squirrels barely put me at the entrance of the cave,' she grumbled mentally, 'At least they pointed me in the right direction. Besides, I doubt I could have made it in time if I followed at their pace.'

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"So there are more of them. Stay hidden, son, I will make sure these mutts never see the light of day," the translation of a growl relayed itself into Katie's mind. She wanted to spend some time screaming at the fact that she'd just discovered an ability she still found no use for... Well, she was just about to try and negotiate for her sister's life, but she saw no other time she would ever need this power. The more she thought of it, the more she realised the ability was probably going to come in handy much more than she'd initially thought it to be.

Shaking the thoughts out of her head, she spoke up, letting Ashley relay her messages, "We mean you no harm. My sister wandered off and got lost. I have come looking for her," Katie replied to the bear.

The bear was frozen for a moment and so was Lina. For a moment, the girl wondered whether she'd heard her sister right. The wolf had just spoken through sounds she wasn't sure where possible and the message had actually been translated in her mind. It was almost as though the wolf was making actual human words and yet she wasn't actually doing so... 'What in the world...'

"I was sure mutts of your kind could not speak the language of the wild. What are you?" the bear asked the hunter. This part of the conversation was completely lost to Lina. The bear sounded like it was growling and Katie barely flinched at what looked like a threat.

"I am one of the moon goddess' chosen. I have only noticed that I have the ability to speak to animals. I'm actually still getting to understand how it works. Thankfully, I can explain what happened with my sister to you and spare any bloodshed," Katie tried.

"Oh, you misunderstand. Your sister is not going anywhere. Anyone who enters my cave is bound to be killed by me and that's how it's always been," the bear replied with a low growl of annoyance.

"I ask that you make an exception. That girl is the daughter of the Werewolf King. If you killed her and I told him that she was killed even after trying to negotiate with you, the Werewolf King will not hesitate to send a pack of wolves to hunt you down," Katie responded.

"So now you threaten me? You've got some nerve, chosen one..." the bear spat at her, "The rules of the wild are not the same as those in the big palace you probably live in."

"I know that, but I know there is a rule of the wild that works in the human world as well. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Kill that girl and the pack will seek revenge for their fallen one," Katie tried. She had tried asking nicely and was running out of patience with the bear. It was already very late and her sister needed her to sleep if there was ever going to be a chance she could beat Liam.

The bear stared at the white wolf for a moment, taking in the colossal size of the abnormal wolf that continued to negotiate for the release of her sister. "I can tell that you're powerful. Why don't you just take your sister for yourself without bothering with me?" the bear asked her.

Katie was shocked by the question for a moment. The girl sighed and let her eyes drop to the small cub that was between the bear's paws, tucked away in the safety of its mother's body. 'Aww, Katie's a softie...' 'Only when it comes to kids...' Katie defended herself before Ashley could make a big deal out of the situation.

"You're protecting one of your own, aren't you? That cannot be a question coming from you," Katie replied. The bear looked back at the white wolf trapped within the inside of the cave and back at the one that had come to her rescue. The resemblance was impossible to miss. They were related and the one that had wandered off was definitely younger than the other.

"You can leave with your sister," the bear conceded, stepping out of the cave to let the werewolf out. Katie bid the bear farewell and was soon dashing with her sister, the hotel set as their destination. "Since when can you speak to animals?" Lina yelled through the mind link.

The hunter cringed at the girl's surprise, "Well, I only found out today when I was looking for you. I need an explanation for that though."

"Oh, it is said that the chosen ones were given random powers by the goddess. I guess speaking to animals was one of yours. Are you telling me you don't know your powers yet?" Lina exclaimed.

"I didn't think I was getting powers from the goddess and I honestly don't think I want powers from her. I keep remembering what Cole's ability did to him just for using it. It's not something I would like to go through," Katie said to her.

"It isn't always something that can backfire like that. Look at how resilient he is. You can barely scratch him. That might even be the reason Drake lost in that fight as well as the same reason Frank lost against him," Lina spiralled off into more thoughts. Katie, however, was worried for her.

"What happened, Lina? What are you doing out here?" Katie asked her, finally letting go of her issues with speaking to animals. It was an issue she'd wish to address another time. Lina's mode dropped.

Instead of talking to her, the girl ran off faster than they had been running. Katie got even more worried by this reaction and tapped into her Prometheus gift to keep up with her sister. "Lina, please tell me. You'll get us lost again if you keep this up."

"You don't have to protect me whenever something goes wrong, Katie. So just let it go and leave me alone. I can find my way back to the hotel," the girl yelled back through the mind link. The mind link allowed the flow of emotions if someone focused and Katie had been trying to read her sister since they'd gotten out of the cave. "

I can't leave you like this... You're bordering self-destruction... No one can go through what you're going through on their own. I hope it doesn't anger you, but I'm not going anywhere, Lina," she reached out running beside the slender white wolf. Katie could feel her own bulky wolf getting tired and yet she could tell that Lina was only getting started. 'If only you knew how impressive you are...' the girl thought to herself.

189 Chapter One Hundred Eighty Nine

Lina ran faster, trying to get away from her prying sister, however, the hunter was far from done. She sped up and blocked the girl's path, growling at her, "How long will you be running?" the hunter barked at her, "That will never solve any of your problems. You forget the colour of your eyes, Lina. The world will always revolve around you."

"You know nothing about me, Katie. Just leave me alone. You only walked into my life recently. I wouldn't expect you to understand when you haven't been part of our kind for that long," the younger wolf retaliated.

Katie was taken aback by her response, but it was not enough to make her back off, "This has nothing to do with me spending the largest part of my life as a human. I wasn't any human. I was a part of the Chase family. Everyone was always looking at me for results and I had to make it happen..."

"That's different. Hunters aren't driven by their emotions. They are just walking robots that have the same beliefs and a system that's fair. Werewolves rely on strength and emotions. They listen to their hearts. If I am not fit to be a royal in their eyes, there is nothing that can change that," Lina argued.

"You're not weak, Lina. You've never been. You are what you believe you are..."

"It's so easy for you to say. I doubt you've ever failed in your life even once. You're so perfect. The one junior hunter that was able to receive her Prometheus gifts before she was even eighteen. A complete prodigy. How would you ever know how I feel?" the girl yelled at her.

Since the start of this argument, Katie had chosen to keep her head strong no matter what the girl threw at her. After hearing this coming from her, she felt as though she couldn't go on. Lina noticed her odd

silence, "Let's get back to the hotel..." Katie said after a moment. Turning around, the girl started off in a jog, "Are you coming?"

'What... just happened?' Lina thought to herself. She'd only been yelling at her perfect sister, she hadn't known there was something that could hurt her. She never showed weakness no matter what was thrown at her. Lina knew this from what she'd seen and all the stories that she'd heard about her. This was different... "Katie, wait..."

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Cole and the others finally reached the hotel, shifting back into their human forms. The delta had to go back to the place she had kept her clothes to dress up. The royal began pacing about in frustration at what the wolves had done. Wyatt chose this moment to walk away, "Where do you think you're going?" Cole growled at the boy.

"Umm, my room. That is where we're supposed to be, isn't it?" Wyatt feigned innocence.

"Not until I'm done with you," Cole growled at him.

"Alpha Cole, we got stuck in quicksand. Did you honestly think we could make it back in time in such a condition?" Wyatt continued. The royal walked up to him fuming and stopped too close to the alpha for comfort, staring him in the eye. The alpha stared back at him with a clear amount of defiance.

Before Wyatt could utter another word, he crumpled to the ground, clutching his stomach from a sudden punch from the royal, "You're walking a thin..."

"Oh, shut up. You're in need of an education. You got my mate's sister lost in a game reserve. Do you have any idea what you have done?" Cole yelled at him.

"I allowed her to let loose in the wild. She'll make it back. You said the princess was found and safe. Isn't that what we should be focused on now?" Wyatt replied between laboured breaths.

Cole chuckled darkly, "It seems you have never seen a hunter spill blood."

Wyatt's blood went cold at the royal's words, "What are you trying to say, Alpha Cole?" he asked, getting up. He'd recovered from the assault, but felt the effect would take a while to heal.

"Katie Sirius has no control of her temper yet. Make a mistake and she just might kill you. It wasn't long ago that I saved Crysta from losing her life. How dense can one werewolf really be?" Cole was writhing.

"Cole, you can calm her down, can't you? I tried to keep the princess out of trouble. That's got to count for something," Crysta asked Cole.

"I'll do what I can, but you all know the nature of a werewolf. You will be on her hitlist until you find a way to account for what you have done. Unless her wolf can forgive you for the stunt you have pulled, you better watch your back," Cole replied, rubbing his temples. Taking his anger out on the wolves before him just didn't feel worth it at the moment. He was more worried about his mate. He could feel a multitude of emotions coming from her.

“Why are you all on edge? It’s not like there are rogues in the game reserve,” Liam shrugged.

“Oh, is that what you think?” Cole asked, trying to recall when the alphas had become so oblivious to the situation they were in. “Why would rogues be so far from the two moon goddess’ chosen?”

“What...” the three of them exclaimed in unison. Cole looked from one to the other and sighed, “The rogues are always looking for an opening to kill one of us. Just a few days ago, they almost captured Lina. I can’t believe you didn’t even know that. Does the alpha even communicate with the pack?”

“We thought those were all rumours. Alpha Davin never confirmed what happened,” Crysta responded.

“I see... Well, now you know...” just then a voice interrupted the four of them.

“Wyatt Black, we had an agreement,” turning around, Cole took in the image of the junior hunter before him. Trevor, for the first time, bore a dangerous look on his face. He barely showed his expression, but his tone translated his message. He was angry. An agreement had been broken and he wasn’t in the mood to let it go.

“Did we now?” Wyatt replied, his eyes flashing red at the junior hunter before him. Cole got the impression something more was going on before him and he chose to give the two of them some space so he could watch what would unfold.

“Yes, we did... And you broke it. Now surprise there, however, you won’t be getting off with a slap on the wrist,” Trevor said coolly. The alpha growled at him and this was followed by the metallic sound of a chain. Thick chains dropped from the junior hunter’s sleeves before he brandished them. “Junior hunters are not allowed to have weapons without authorization, but no one said we couldn’t improvise. Think long and hard, dear alpha. Attacking me might just be the reason you get to enjoy this tour with a limp in your step.”

The threat was clear as day. Cole smirked, ‘This must be interesting.’ The alpha looked at him, possibly for help, but he only shrugged and made it clear he wasn’t planning to interfere, “You’re a traitor, Cole Lycaon,” Wyatt whispered into his mind.

“Call it what you may. You brought this on yourself. I would believe your father would have wanted you to show how mature you are before getting the chance to be crown heir to his pack,” Cole replied with a shrug through the mind link, “I would think hard and well before rushing to any decisions.” This advice stung considering Cole had only recently given a Mighty Warrior a massive pummelling. ‘I feel like the biggest hypocrite right now...’ he mentally chuckled. His wolf agreed.

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Lina followed her sister in silence. She finally opened up to the mind link again so that she could reach out to her sister, however, the girl had blocked plenty of the open communication through the mind link, ‘Huh, she got good in controlling what flowed out of her mind this quickly... She really is a fast learner. Which proves my point?’

“It’s a cold night,” the girl tried to break the silence.

“A werewolf shouldn’t complain,” Katie replied with no hint of interest in her voice.

“Well, we can also tell. It’s only right that we can complain as well,” Lina continued. To this, her sister did not respond. The girl sighed, “Was it something I said?”

“Try again, sister,” Katie replied after a moment of silence.

Sighing, Lina replied, “I’m sorry, Katie. I wasn’t thinking when I we were arguing.”

Katie was silent a while. Lina had the time to question everything that could have been running through her sister’s mind. Her curiosity was eating at her. This whole time, the girl was the perfect wonder that never did anything wrong, with the exception of showing up late to school. No one ever said anything wrong about the girl and even when they spoke of how she didn’t know how to hold back during training, Lina saw it as a good quality. There was simply no getting past her perfect image.

“Gaining Prometheus gifts at an early age isn’t normal, Lina. Something has to have happened in someone’s life for something like that to happen,” Katie replied finally, “And I’m not perfect either. I stumble all the time. I even fall... If it wasn’t for Cole, I’d be dead...”

190 Chapter One Hundred Ninety

Lina was speechless at the revelation. Her sister’s voice was filled with both sadness and fear. Emotions that didn’t fit the picture Lina had of her. She remembered the girl that had downed a tree from missing a hit that was meant for Crysta. She remembered the girl that had been the source of a thunderclap that rumbled through the capital of Sirius. She was achieving feats that were only known to come from people twice her age and yet, here she was... showing a side Lina never thought she had.

“Why would you say something like that? You’re great at everything you set your mind to...”

Katie chuckled at the girl, “We all have our faults, Lina. They might not always be clear, but they are there and they are dangerous to every one of us.”

“What fault do you have? Surprise me...” Lina asked.

“Well, you were there in Brigadia. Why don’t you tell me?” Katie answered her with a question. Lina didn’t want to think back to that moment. She had been among the only people to reach her sister when she’d been shot by four arrows. She had offered to carry her away.

Seeing that her sister had understood what she was trying to mean, “No one starts out strong in this world, Lina. We do what we can to get stronger. True strength, however, doesn’t come from how many wolves you can defeat. You watched me get downed by an archer. Was that a show of strength or recklessness?”

“You do realise you are insulting yourself right now?” Lina asked her sister.

“I know what I did wrong, Lina. I’m not perfect. I just can’t stand back when I know I can do something. The two of us... We’re faster than most in the pack and with that speed. There are times when every second counts, Lina. You’re not weak,” Katie told her.

“That’s very easy for you to say...” Lina grumbled, “You know nothing of...” She stopped herself, noticing the repeat of the same words she’d only apologised for.

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Katie noticed this and chose to shed more light on what she wasn't understanding, "You said something about me knowing nothing of failure," Lina remained quiet at the girl's words... "Well, that's not exactly true... I have lost so many times. Would you consider the battle in Brigadia a win for me?"

"You keep going back to that stupid battle. You could have never known that a hunter was helping the rogue king," Lina grumbled.

"Oh, is that what you think?" Katie chuckled, "Did you know that I can catch arrows fired at me?"

Lina perked up in surprise, "That's even more impressive... wait, why didn't you catch those ones then?"

"I was at my limit. Holding Kyle, facing the rogue king and both his beta alphas, no energy left in my body and with hundreds of rogues behind me. I was trapped and I'd gotten myself in that situation," Katie responded.

"You didn't have a choice, Katie. They were going to take him and you had to do something or else they would have taken Kyle. You couldn't stand back and let them take him," Lina argued.

"And what would that have gotten me... Jeremiah spared me. He's a much better shot than that and yet he intentionally shot my joints," Katie replied.

Lina remained quiet for a bit. She couldn't argue with the girl's logic, however, she had no idea it haunted her as much as she showed her, "Does it still haunt you? Do you think you made the wrong choice?"

"I try not to think about it. There was too much I didn't know about what I was getting myself into. It was the perfect trap. If Jackeline hadn't showed up in time, the rogue king would have killed me," Katie sighed.

"That woman was scary..." Lina shuddered, "Katie, what are the conditions for someone to get Prometheus gifts?"

"Hmm, I'm not sure what's true. It's not like Prometheus if fond of communicating with humans, but if I was to say, it would be someone's character," Katie answered her thoughtfully, "Now race me, Lina Sirius..."

Lina's wolf perked up at the challenge, "I'm not actually sure where the hotel..." Just then, the girl picked up on the scents of the other wolves that had already made it through to the hotel, "Never mind, you're on, Katie 'Chase'"

Katie chuckled at the girl's enthusiasm before skidding to halt, forced to stop by a tempest of wind that formed when the white wolf beside her suddenly dashed forward, vanishing from view before Katie could tell what had just happened, "Katie let me take over, please..." Ashley begged once more..."

"Why do I get the feeling you have something up your sleeve, you sneaky wolf?" Katie groaned as she allowed the wolf to take control of her body. Immediately Ashley had taken control of the girl's body, she shifted back into her human form and back into her wolf form. The difference almost went unnoticed to Katie, but she didn't feel the same... So much so that she simply got too curious and had to know what had changed.

Instead of the bulky strong massive white wolf she usually transformed into, she was large and slender. Built for speed and not strength... "Oh, Lina is going to be so jealous... When were you going to tell me this was possible?" Katie asked her.

"Three powers, Katie... That's what the moon goddess granted her chosen, however, they were all meant to reveal themselves at a time when they needed them. That is why I cannot tell you each of your abilities until the time is right. Consider it a wild card though. Although, with the power you already have, there is the option of you never learning about your third power," the wolf replied before feeling the ground in her paws.

The feel of the new body was different. She felt as though moving was as simple as breathing. After getting a feel of the transformation, she dashed forward, leaving a dust cloud in her wake as well as the light sound of thunder. The usual exhaustion the girl got each time she used this much speed didn't catch up to her this time. The wind was much easier for her to cut through while she ran and she found that she could run much faster when she wanted to.

The two entities barely noticed when it was that they'd taken control of the body and in total sync, rushed forward after their sister. The hotel was in view when they finally caught a glimpse of the white wolf rushing before them. Katie's senses flared up. She could tell something was wrong. Digging deeper, she rushed forward and caught up to her sister, her protective instincts kicking in. She had no idea what was happening, but she didn't like it. Whatever it was, she was going to put an end to it... or so she thought...

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"You like messing about whenever you get the chance to, don't you, Waters? I have warned you so many times to keep to yourself if you don't want to have trouble with the werewolves. I'm sure you haven't forgotten what happened a few years ago. You fancied yourself a hero at the time. Or have you forgotten what the job of a hunter is?" Wyatt asked him.

"You know, Wyatt... I am the head of security. It doesn't matter whether the student is a werewolf or a student. Just this once, your actions don't matter whether they involve humans or not. Get in line and listen to what I tell before we have a problem on our hands," Trevor replied. Words he knew would get on the werewolf's nerves. It made no difference to him, these were words he'd wanted to tell the boy for a while.

"You get on my nerves, you know that," Wyatt growled at Trevor.

"I know that, Wyatt. That wouldn't be the case though... If you only listened to what I asked of you. I wonder how you will get the position of future alpha if you keep up this rebellious streak," Trevor shrugged, raising his hands to accentuate his meaning, "Honestly, what will they do with you?"

The alpha launched into an attack, shifting into his black wolf in the blink of an eye. That had been the last straw for him and he was determined to teach the junior hunter a lesson on respecting the race that bore red eyes. Trevor smirked and sidestepped just in time to dodge the attack. In the same moment, he began to wrap his chains around the wolf and restrain him.

The chains went around the wolf's neck. Trevor got onto his back as though he'd mounted a horse only to force the wolf to the ground with his legs wrapped around Wyatt's torso. The wolf was choking from

the swift hold that now had the chain blocking his windpipe. Cole was impressed by the refined swift moves the hunter had utilised to restrain the wolf, something he hadn't been expecting. Just then, the low rumble of thunder reached their ears.

Cole's wolf got excited, alarming him of the new arrival, "She's here," Cole spoke up just as two slender white wolves with striking blue eyes emerged from the forest. They looked identical although one rushed faster than the other, her focus diverted to the commotion that was taking place before them. From the bond he shared with the white wolf, Cole was able to tell who it was. She looked very different from the last time he'd seen her shifted, but her scent was exactly the same... intoxicating.

The white wolf began to circle the two struggling creatures. "Welcome back, darling," Cole pitched in.

"Thank you. Who knew Trevor could restrain an alpha. I'm impressed. The chains are quite impressive as well as an idea," Katie observed.

"Aren't you going to stop them?" Cole asked the white wolf that constantly circled the two fighters.

"I would, but after what Wyatt has done, I would much rather prefer watching him choke," Katie replied with venom in her voice. For some reason, Cole was convinced she would kill the wolf otherwise. He stole a glance at Liam who was doing his best to remain invisible. It was obvious he was a part of the planning committee for this little charade and yet the blame was all falling to Wyatt... 'Such a coward...'

Lina walked up to them after shifting into her human form and found the Trevor and Wyatt struggling on the ground. She wasn't one to let a fight keep going, but there seemed to be tension between the two of them and she wanted nothing to deal with any of it.

"Well, Wyatt, what do you say? Will you listen to what I have to say?" Trevor asked the wolf he had restrained. Wyatt had tried everything, but every move he made only made the chain around his neck even more unbearable. He then chose to shift back into his human form which was much smaller. Maybe then he could... before the thought was done, he felt the chain tighten around his neck the smaller he got. Trevor had been prepared to keep the chain around his neck even if he shifted.

After realising just how stuck he was, he grumbled "What do you suggest?"