

Chosen 201

201 Chapter Two Hundred One

The drive through the reserve was nothing short of breathtaking and the students took the time to enjoy the sights as they took them in. They were able to get their eyes on a multitude of creatures in the reserve. The guides were specifically charismatic and made sure to entertain the students with all the interesting facts about the creatures that they lay their eyes on, "The wild, huh... who would have known it's so beautiful?" Honour's voice cut through to Lina's ears.

The girl turned her head from a running deer to look at her friend, "Huh, I would have thought you would be the first to have such a thought, Honour. Oh, queen of nature and all creatures under the moon," Lina replied with a hint of drama at the end of the statement.

"Yeah, that's true and I would have taken this trip another way if your sister hadn't butted in and ruined the mood," the girl responded through gritted teeth.

"Hey... Calm down. I know what she did was annoying, but it was for the safety of all of us. You know it's her job to keep us all safe. She's doing..."

"A very lousy job, Lina," Honour leaned into her chair and looked away from the beautiful scenery that surrounded her.

"Is something bothering you, Honour?" Lina asked her friend.

The girl sighed and pinched the bridge of her nose, "No, nothing is wrong."

Lina frowned, before humming, "You're missing a lot, you know. You can make the most out of this trip while you still have the chance. Like taking pictures of the flora in the reserve. I'm sure I caught sight of one of the flowers I saw you drawing once... what was its name again? Lotus lunaris- or was it lora-lunaria..."

The girl perked up at her friend, "Where... where did you see them?" her eyes scanned in all directions looking for the plant that had just been mentioned, "And the name is Lotus Lunaria..." she paused and went sighed, sinking back into her seat, "And it only blooms at night."

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"Well, then why don't we look for some when the time comes?" Lina asked her.

"Didn't you just hear your sister warning us to..."

"She said we weren't to let the humans wander about on their own. She didn't say we couldn't wander about on our own," Lina rephrased her sister's words.

"She said there were rogues in the woods. I don't think going into the woods at night would be a good idea. And to look for flowers no less..." she replied, "You're also forgetting that you have to deal with your duel this night."

“Cheer up, Honour. We will be able to do all that. The moon will be up at nine in the night and we will be out by then, in search of the lotus luna-whatever... The duel won't be until twilight and we will be there by then,” Lina replied to her.

Honour narrowed her eyes at the girl before her, “You're different somehow,” she observed, “I like it. What about your sister? Won't she get mad if we sneak out on our own to find the flowers?”

“I don't think so. I know Katie, well, I know a part of her for the short time that I've been with her. If she wanted us to stay put as though we were in a prison, she would have said so, but she only asked us to keep the humans in sight. That can only mean she wants this trip to continue as it should be. She doesn't plan to keep us from having fun in the woods if we can,” Lina replied.

“You're not making sense, Lina. First, listen to yourself. Just imagine all the students were to spread out into the woods in all directions...”

“She'd be able to protect them all as long as the wolves kept their eyes on the humans,” a voice interrupted their conversation. They turned around to see a large alpha seated behind them. To Caden's right was another alpha that looked into the woods. His interest wasn't on anything in particular and he kept his eyes darting about the scenery that passed by them. To Caden's right was Crysta who wouldn't make eye contact.

“What are you talking about? No one can...”

“You have never seen Katie fighting, have you?” Caden cut Lina short, “I guess that's why you're sceptical of her methods. You're right, Lina. If Katie didn't want you all to move about and be as free as you would wish, she would have said so. She hadn't meant to tell you about the rogues, but you just wouldn't stop asking questions, now would you?” he relaxed back into his seat.

Honour's mind was running in circles trying to comprehend what she was hearing. She had interpreted everything wrongly and hadn't even thought to ask the royal what she had meant to pull something as cruel, “You would calmly suggest someone's ability to protect people who aren't even in one place.”

“Katie is no god. That's for sure, but she did tell you to keep the mind link active so that she might reach you. If you're about to walk into rogues, you'll know. The perks of being raised by the Chase family,” he said out loud, getting awkward stares from everyone that was listening.

“You mean that's not some rumour milling about the packs,” the male to his right spoke up for what was the first time in a very long time.

“So you can still talk, Derrick,” Lina returned before Caden could answer him.

“Yes, I can still talk. I've been busy, so buzz off,” he replied.

“Oh, busy with what. I don't see how someone like you would be busy when you barely have anything to do. Would you mind elaborating?” she asked him.

“It's personal. I won't talk about it and that's that. How are you focused on me when someone just said the Chase hunters raised your sister?” his voice went up a few octaves.

“Because I already knew that. You forget that I was among the group that went to pick her up from Brigadia where she was raised,” Katie replied.

“Brigadia... the remote village up north. What would she be doing that far from civilisation?” Crysta asked her.

“Take a wild guess, Crysta. The rogue king is after you. A. You flee to the capital that he tried to kill you from or B. You flee to a remote town that he would never think to look,” Lina asked.

“Well, then how did she end up in a wheelchair?” Crysta asked her.

“What wheelchair?” Derrick asked. Lina only realised Katie had gotten better before the largest part of the pack had seen her in her crippled shape. Well, Lina hadn’t seen her recover either and the explanation the girl had also decided to keep the whole situation a secret.

“Yeah... that. Brigadia was attacked on the night of her birthday. It’s a long story, but the good thing is that she’s okay now,” she responded.

“Yeah, well, about these flowers. Can a lone alpha tag along?” Derrick mentioned out of the blue. Lina regarded him for a moment, trying to decipher his thoughts, however, he wouldn’t meet her eye. Of the three alphas that attended the school, he was the only one that didn’t seem interested in the hierarchy, but he did nothing about the bad things that happened either. In Lina’s eyes, he wasn’t any better than Liam or Wyatt.

“What would a lone alpha, as you say, be doing looking for flowers?” Lina asked him.

The boy’s lips drew to a flat line, “I... umm, want to see them. That’s all. Can we leave it at that? They are rare and sometimes regarded as a myth. If we can find them... I would want to see them,” he responded.

Narrowing her eyes at the boy shortly, Lina gave up and returned to her seat, “This is an impossible trip. Now we have followers to the lootus lanarius,” she complained.

“You’re doing that on purpose, aren’t you?” Honour groaned.

“Whatever do you mean, my queen!!! Or was it the Lotus emporium?” they joked.

“That’s even worse. Now I know you’re doing this on purpose. If you’re going to read my diary, try to read it right,” Honour replied.

“Wait, diary?” Crysta’s voice reached their ears.

“Oh, I forgot we have a set of eavesdroppers,” Lina sighed.

“Well, it does come with the territory. We are werewolves. Where there is gossip that’s within earshot, we will know it,” Caden shrugged.

“Yeah, well, I use plants to label months of the year in my diary. Lotus Lunaria happens to be April,” Honour mumbled the last part, setting her eyes on the flora that passed by them, ”

“Thank you, Lina. I almost ruined a perfectly fun trip,” Honour confessed.

“Don’t thank me yet. I would be more interested in hearing your thanks when we find the...”

“Moon lotus... Let’s keep it that way,” Honour cut her off before she could come up with another ridiculous name for the plant. Lina had read her diary before... Well, there wasn’t much to hide behind the girl’s exterior. She was who she was and there was nothing she dared to hide. She promised not to do it again, but she had found out one thing about her friend. The moon lotus was her very favourite flower and it only bloomed in the wild and at night which made it one of the most impossible flowers to ever find.

“Alright then... Moon lotus it is,” Lina replied with a smile. With her friend’s foul mood lessened, she could enjoy the trip through the large reserve a little bit more. There hadn’t been another communication from her sister. Lina had no idea if that was a good thing or a bad one.

202 Chapter Two Hundred Two

A black stretched limo, a small crew of pack warriors, mostly betas and deltas and a four-hour drive found the crown prince of Sirius in a pack of wolves that still resided within the Sirius empire. Well, there was a lot that was in that domain and he usually preferred to travel by air, but that didn’t seem to be a luxury this time. Besides, he wanted the time.

The drive was long and he allowed it to go on in silence until the very end. All the while, his mind wandered about a myriad of thoughts, but most of all, the real reason he’d decided to visit this pack. There was something he was looking for and this was the only place that would provide him with this answer.

The car finally came to a stop. His sensitive ears could pick up on the sounds going on outside the car. He sat in wait as the wolves got ready to receive him. The door finally opened, and he walked out, ensuring a firm posture and a regal posture that insinuated power and only power. It was a requirement that he found physically exhausting.

A man approached, however, much younger than he’d expected. His resemblance with the person that he had expected to see was uncanny, “Welcome to the Golden Moon pack, Prince Drake. Would I take your father’s absence as a sign that he is not interested in a pack located this far from the capital?” the man before him spoke up while he received him.

“Ah, Alpha Lionel, it’s been a while and no, you misinterpret my father. He has far more to deal with back at the palace,” Drake replied, “Is this what a warm welcome looks like this far south.

“Well, when we of the Golden moon like to stick to the point. Will I be getting more information on the king’s pressing matters? The golden moon pack would like to help in whatever way we can,” the man replied.

“I appreciate the offer, Alpha Lionel, however, I do not know of my father’s intentions and wouldn’t want to make a decision that is against him. That’s beside the reason for my visit though,” Drake replied, growing impatient.

“Ah, the search continues. It seems you are growing restless. Your mate will come to you when the time is right, your highness. You merely need to be patient and calm about it all. You might not even know that she’s in the capital,” Lionel commented, signalling for him to walk with him. The driver gave the keys to the car to someone who would park it and fell in line with the deltas that followed the two leaders.

“Well, I know what you mean to tell me, but as you already know, we are granted our mates when we turn eighteen. Royals are sometimes known to find their mates before they even turn eighteen. I am turning twenty-three soon, Alpha Lionel. I cannot afford to stay quiet as the years go by,” he replied.

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The man sighed, “You remind me of a time I used to chase a girl I was sure would be my mate when she came of age. I was stubborn at the time and ill-advised in the field of patience. If you don’t learn to be so, you will find yourself driving you and your wolf to insanity,” the man replied. Drake took time to regard the alpha that he was speaking to. He’d met Lionel before... This wasn’t him.

“Your advice has been heard and noted,” Drake replied, “You sound different, Lionel. Has something happened? Did you find your mate?”

The man chuckled, “No, I haven’t found her yet. However, I was made the heir to this pack not so long ago. Since then, I’ve turned a new leaf. Under the advisement of my father, I will make sure I bring my pack more prosperity than ever before,” he announced.

It was only a matter of time before the packhouse came into view. The wolves preferred to live in forested areas as it provided them close access to nature and comfort to their wolf counterparts. The packhouse here had been built into the forest with the least amount of modern technology. There wasn’t a sign of a paved road the closer one got to the packhouse, however, the grass was tended to and the ground levelled the closer one got to the packhouse giving it a natural touch.

Drake finally realised the source of the quietness that filled this place. All the wolves had been paraded at the front of the packhouse in lines, “One would say that you knew I was coming,” Drake observed.

“Yes, we did know when you would be arriving and made the necessary preparations for your arrival,” Lionel replied and walked him through a lane that had been left clear to allow them through. Drake’s wolf didn’t even perk up at the mass gathering like he usually did. He could raise his hopes up before even getting the slightest of signs that his mate was among the members of this pack.

“If you don’t mind me asking, would I know where your father is?” Cole asked the alpha.

“Oh, father decided to take a trip to the capital of Lycaon. He’s among the alphas that have decided to return to the royal to support him in the protection of the capital,” he explained.

“I’m sorry. Did I hear you right?”

“Yes, you did. I’m sure you know of the king’s condition. He’s sick and dying... the information is being held from the masses to prevent mass panic and there are rumours that the prince of Lycaon has vanished. Rogues everywhere... threatening to storm the capital. When this information reached most of the alphas, they chose to leave the packs with a few warriors to reinforce the protection of the king of Lycaon. It’s a noble cause, but if my father dies in a war that might break out, we will be left with a pack with only half a leadership,” he replied.

“Well, I guess you know more about patience than I could have imagined,” Drake replied before finally reaching the front of the group of wolves that had been assembled.

Gesturing with a wave of his hand, "To the right, you have all the mateless females that have come of age. The others are females that have either come one year to acquiring mates or lost their mates. Take your time in your search," Lionel said to him and walked with the alpha while he went from one wolf to the other.

"Such a fragile and yet strong thing, the mate bond," Lionel mused.

"You make it sound like something you haven't made your mind about. Do you find it meaningful to an all-powerful alpha or me, a royal?" Drake asked him.

"Well, I definitely have my thoughts about it, however, whether it should be used as an excuse for someone being capable of leading a pack is just plain hogwash to me," there were gasps through the crowd of females which the alpha ignored and continued milling through the women with the royal.

"Well, 'excuse' is a strong word. Have you ever understood why a wolf chooses to get a companion? Just one companion that they spend the rest of their lives with. A companion that matters so much that they could be called a missing part of them that had been given life. A companion whose death could just as easily lead to the other," Drake asked, looking into the eyes of a beautiful brunette. The mind of his wolf touched the mind of the brunette's before retracting... 'It wasn't her...' Disappointment immediately spread across the girl's face and she let her shoulders droop, however, Drake only moved on like he'd seen nothing. He was used to the reaction at this point.

"You would subject me to the lectures I have received from my parents and grandparents and everyone else that hears my take on werewolves having mates of their own," Lionel groaned.

"Have you ever been alone, Lionel? Have you ever been truly alone?" Drake asked the alpha.

"I don't think I understand that question," Drake replied.

"Well, what's the longest you've even turned off your mind link and kept everyone out of your mind?" the royal asked him, moving on to a blonde and getting the same monotonous reaction.

"If I remember correctly, it was about an hour. I don't remember ever going longer than that," he replied.

"That was quite brave of you. How did you feel at the end of that hour?" Drake asked.

"I speak for myself and not those about me when I say it felt like the life was being drained out of me," he replied, "My thoughts were much louder and slowly throwing me into a depression unlike any that I've felt before. What does this have anything to do with a mate?"

"Well, having a mate is similar to having someone that can never let the world go silent around you. You can block everyone out, but blocking your mate is something much harder. You will never be alone once you're with her and you would never dream of being without her. Your thoughts are clearer and you can make decisions based on a different point of view. Your mate will never be like you. They are always different and complement you perfectly. I guess what I'm trying to say is that once you have your side, you're complete. And a leader that's complete is in all ways more powerful than one that isn't," he replied.

Lionel was quiet for a bit. He'd not heard the story told with this kind of analogy. It only made sense that the prince had ever been cut off for much longer than an hour. His opinion on the matter began to waver, "I'll think on it." His words brought a smile to the prince's face. The girl before him misinterpreted it and brought forth an awkward time of explanation.

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Prince Drake went through the last half of the group without the hope of finding the one person that he was looking for. It was sad to those that realised the pain it was putting him through. The prince was supposed to get a mate soon if he was to let his father step down from the throne soon, but that was starting to prove a strenuous feat. An exhausting one at that... The girls no longer felt bad when their wolves didn't confirm the existence of a mate bond between them.

From the prince's mood and expression, it seemed he was sure there wasn't even one amongst them that was the one he was looking for. A little hope still lit up once in a while, but it was all for nothing. After having heard the words from the prince, Alpha Lionel was more inclined to help him find what he was looking for, however, there seemed to be a predetermined conclusion to the search the prince was making.

As he reached the last female amongst the group of wolves that were below the age of eighteen, he spoke up, "Did you come here to find your mate or to confirm that she might not exist?" Lionel asked him.

"Did I mince words over the phone when I stated the purpose of my visit?" the prince answered him with a question and proceeded to the young girl that stood at the end of the line. This girl had grey eyes unlike the usual yellow and blue. When she noticed it was her turn, her eyes turned a bright amber so fast that the prince thought he might have imagined the colour of her eyes for a moment.

"No, you didn't, but you can't blame someone for not having trust in a phone conversation. There is no access to the mind link that way and lying is pretty easy since someone doesn't have to look you straight in the eye," he responded.

"I don't know what you're insinuating or at least, I would like to pretend I didn't hear what you just said. I came here for two reasons. One was discussed over the phone and once I'm done checking with this last werewolf, that reason will be done with and we'll be left with one other thing that I'd discussed with your father," Drake said to him, walking over to the girl and staring her right in the eye.

"What was the other reason for your visit if you don't mind enlightening me?" Lionel asked him eyeing the girl uncomfortably, "You don't have to check her. She's a runt that lacks the ability to even shift into her wolf. She won't do a king much use in any situation."

"Mates come in all forms. All you have to do is find them. They always have a way they compliment you in the least way you could ever expect," he repeated.

"Oh, so I've heard. It's phrases like that that make it the concept impossible to understand for unmated males like I," the alpha responded.

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The prince went still and quiet as he stared into the female's eyes. His wolf didn't perk up anymore. The situation was the same as all the others. However, something was different about this one. Their wolves touched consciously and when they did, the prince's wolf bowed to that of the girl before him. The same girl that had just been called a runt. Curiosity clawed its way into the prince, "What's your name, girl?" the prince asked her.

"Madeline, your highness," the girl responded quietly. She shook in the presence of the prince, however, he wasn't fooled one bit. There was something about her wolf that was special. He made a quick mental note to ask about her before shaking out of his daze, "Well, Madeline, you're the last one out of your whole pack... And you are not the one either," he said to her.

The girl nodded in response, "Aren't you disappointed?" he asked her.

"No, I'm not. You're not going to find your mate here. I knew that to be the case the moment you arrived," the girl responded.

"Madeline, that's enough," Lionel yelled at the girl, interrupting the prince's response. The girl's face turned into one of fear and she took several steps back.

"I'm sorry, alpha Lionel. I didn't mean to..."

"You're on kitchen duty today. Well, you already were, but now you'll be serving the king himself as well as cooking the best dish you can think of for him. If he's even a little bit displeased, then you will have failed your chance at atonement," he responded.

When the girl was done apologizing profusely and gone, Lionel dismissed the rest of the pack and asked the quiet prince to follow him into the packhouse, "So you would rather feed me on the food of someone who you've just punished as a way to give them a chance at atonement. I don't think I've seen that strategy of disciplining anywhere," Drake finally spoke as they approached the dining hall. It was a large room, though not as large as what the prince was used to back at the palace.

The tables were made of one of the finest kinds of wood and made sturdy, well vanished and arranged into columns that Drake couldn't put into order. Normally, he could tell where the king was meant to seat and where the rest of the pack members would sit, but he was at a loss this time. There was no distinction in this hall whatsoever.

"Well, it is a technique that my father devised to allow the pack to grow. When someone does something wrong, they are challenged to do something from one of their talents that's challenging and if they manage to pull it off, they are dismissed with a mere slap on the wrist, however, if they don't manage to succeed, they are given any manner of punishment that the alpha deems fair," Lionel explained.

Drake thought through the methods of the alpha, "That's some serious out-of-the-box thinking," he groaned, "Going through all that to have his pack produce talented werewolves."

"Well, yeah... the way of life in the Golden Moon pack is a peaceful one that allows us to be closer to nature, however, everyone here has got a dream of their own and if there is anything the alpha can do to help them achieve it, then they will do their best to do so. Anyone without such ambitions is put into

a series of tests that help them find what they are good at naturally. We call it the Selection,” Lionel continued explaining.

“Does someone like you get to take the Selection?” Drake asked him as they took random seats at one of the middle long tables. Some of the pack warriors that followed him about took seats on other tables and left the prince and the alpha to their conversations.

“Well, with a system like that in place, you could never run out of a variety of people. I bet you have amazing healers and craftsmen. However, does that mean you’re low on pack warriors?” Drake asked.

“Not really... for those that are found to have clear fighting prowess or at least reasonable potential for greatness in defence when it comes to fighting aside from the talent that would have been revealed in the Selection, a minimum time of training is required every day to keep them in fighting shape. Only wolves that can’t fight at all like Madeline are exempted from this rule,” he continued.

“I see... When is it that we shall...”

“If it isn’t Prince Drake himself?” a feminine voice called out from the entrance of the dining hall.

One look at the door revealed a beautiful girl in a blue dress that only barely hugged her body, falling elegantly to the ground and giving her an entrance worthy of a queen. Her red eyes accented the power she emanated through her elegant gait towards them at the table.

It’s been a while, alpha Claire,” Drake greeted her.

“Oh, yes, it has been a while. I was only tending to the gardens when I heard we were in the presence of royalty. My brother was never one for communication when it came to these kinds of things,” she explained herself.

“No need to explain. I would have only thought you were out on important matters that needed your attention, so there is no harm in being late,” Drake waved her off.

She took a seat beside her brother, “You are too kind, your highness. Unfortunately, all I know of your visit are rumours about you coming here to seek your mate? Would it really be the cause for your arrival...” she asked.

Lionel hid the annoyance in his heart, for he had sent out a strict order that everyone be present when the prince arrived. However, his sister had ignored his orders... as she always did and was now making the smooth lies she made when their father was around. Thankfully, she was never doing anything too dangerous to cost her brother anything. The potential to slip away scared her brother more than anything else though.

“Yes, I did come for that exact reason, but that’s not the only reason I came. It’s already clear to me that the search for my mate is not going to be an easy one and I wouldn’t have come at all if there wasn’t a bigger chance of me finding her or something else that could help me find her,” the mention of this got the two alphas to gasp.

“That method is a secret that...”

“Oh, relax, I’ve already spoken to your father on the matter. He reacted just like you did the first time I mentioned it to him. However, my information sources are not wrong and I know what I’m saying is

true. Your faces show it all. Anyway, he accepted... to help the kingdom of Sirius keep flourishing," he replied.

"Where did you get that information? You're not supposed to know anything about her," Claire was furious.

The prince sighed, "I know of the reasons you keep the Seeker a secret and I will do nothing to expose her existence. If I'm to make a guess... It was the last girl I checked, wasn't it? What was her name, now... Madeline, was it?" alpha Claire lost her composed face for a moment to the restraints of fear while Lionel got even angrier.

"What if she is?" he asked him, dangerously.

"Then I would like to ask her about my mate. As I said, I only came because there was a way this pack could help me find her. I have checked more than half the packs on this world and none of them had the person I was looking for. Your father already said yes to the idea. You two are all I have left to convince. I want the Seeker to tell me what I wish to know... For the future of the Sirius kingdom."

The two of them calmed down for the moment, "What about the other thing..." Lionel asked him.

"Huh, what other thing?" Drake was now confused. Picking up the pieces, he realised there must have been another reason for someone to come looking for the Seeker, "Wait, is there a reason other than searching for mates that the Seeker could bring a wolf to this pack?"

"There is one other thing... I'm guessing you've never heard of it, so I will leave you clueless about that point," Lionel responded.

"Oh come on, Lionel. He will only go and look for the information. The rich kings have all the money and resources to get such answers in the blink of an eye," Claire shrugged.

"Yeah, I tend to forget that. Very well then...since he didn't come with that many guards and has no time to change his plans, I'll let him in on a secret only if he promises to keep it to himself and never come here for that same reason," Lionel formulated the contract.

"Now you have me highly curious. You have my word," Drake responded.

"Well, the Seeker... as the title goes, has the power to locate the Origin..."

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Drake was silent for a moment trying to take in the information he'd just been given. Pieces of his memory strained to grasp the full meaning of what he'd just been told, but none of them seemed to fit. There was too much that was rumoured about this particular chapter and he hadn't particularly thought he would ever need to know what it was, "Can you elaborate more on the Origin? It seems to have slipped my mind."

The two alphas looked at him in disbelief. Noticing how he didn't care what they thought of him, they let his ignorance on the matter slide and proceeded to explain, "The origin is where the two friends, Sirius and Lycaon..."

“Were granted the power of the werewolves and given the orders to tear down the human race,” Drake finished the sentence almost mechanically. It had all come rushing back to him the moment the two of them had started explaining. His mind gave him far more information than he wanted to know. The Seeker was capable of finding that same place and now that he thought more and more about how something like that could be dangerous, he began to understand why the presence of the Seeker was kept a secret from all werewolves, “Oh my... You have quite the mission on your hands, now don’t you?”

“Does that mean you understand how important it is that this remains hidden from the rest of the world?” Claire asked him.

“Yes, that is what it means. Now does this chef that you hired take all the time in the world to prepare food or am I the one who’s simply too hungry from my four-hour trip?” Drake asked, clutching his aching belly.

Lionel looked about and summoned one of the guards seated around them, “Would you go to the kitchens and find out what’s keeping that girl too long?”

The delta nodded quickly and rushed out of the dining hall to find the girl that was supposed to be delivering the food they wanted to have... Once again, the prince’s mind wandered, “So, you’re telling me that Madeline has the power to find the Origin?”

“She doesn’t have the right training to achieve such a feat. Her mother, however, has the power to do such a thing. She’s far more talented than that runt and the girl shows no interest in learning how to use the power that has been passed down through generations in her family. Honestly, I don’t know why father tolerates how lightly she takes her gift,” the man sighed.

Just then, the double doors opened allowing a crew of women dressed in aprons and a general white outfit through to the dining halls. Madeline led them with a trolley in hand. She walked up to the prince’s table and began to set it up for them to start the meal. This all took a while before they were set to eat.

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The girl was asked to stay behind such that the prince might judge her cooking before she proceeded to the next thing on the menu. Waiting for this proved to be more trying than hearing the results of all her hard work combined, for the prince seemed to be enjoying himself, tasting every bit of the spread in front of him like he had all the time in the world.

“Oh, if it isn’t the Giant Crab that the Golden moon pack is famous for,” he would say and spend his time savouring the food in front of him. Lionel found this entertaining and couldn’t help snicker at the girl’s nervousness. The prince was halfway through his food before Lionel realised he was going to finish it before passing his judgement.

“Well, what do you have to say about the girl’s cooking?” Lionel said, his voice going up even though he was speaking to someone that was clearly more important than him and in every way more powerful.

“Well, it’s better than most I have tasted here in the golden moon pack. She has real talent. I was enjoying my meal so much that I forgot she was still standing there. There is still room for improvement

though which is not a problem considering she is so talented at such a young age. How old might you be, girl?" the prince asked.

"I... I'm only sixteen, your highness..." the prince blanched at the answer.

"Lionel... you set me up with sixteen-year-olds..." he said, turning back to the alpha on the other side of the table.

"Oh, I wouldn't want you to find your mate later on and blame me for not showing you girls that young, in case she came from this pack. It's not unheard of for a girl to feel the mate pull by the age of sixteen," Lionel replied.

"If she's a Seeker though, doesn't she know who her mate is? Why would you still show her to me?" the prince asked as though it was very obvious.

The room fell dead silent, "It's complicated for the sake of the Seeker. They won't receive a mate that easily. They can't tell who their mate is, but they can tell who everyone else's mate is. The painful part is that their mate can tell that they are the one, but the Seeker can't tell. The mate pull can only be realised after the male that claims to be destined for her has proved to be worthy of her. In a way, they are gems that must be fought over."

"Oh, I didn't know..." Drake said thoughtfully, "Wait, fought over? Do they ever have more than one mate?"

"Well, I'm not sure. None of us can tell, but it's normal for three males to claim they are mates to the Seeker. Whether they all feel the pull and fight for her or whether one of them feels it and the others merely pretend so that they might win themselves a Seeker is not known," Lionel sighed, "You can proceed with overseeing this meal, Madeline. You're forgiven for your previous mistake."

"Thank you, Alpha Lionel..."

The girl turned to walk back and bumped into a chair, steadied it and continued on her way, making sure to be careful to watch her step on her way back. Drake sighed before continuing his meal, "I heard Katie Chase is in the capital of Sirius."

"She doesn't go by that name anymore. You would know that if your information was complete," the prince scoffed at him.

"Well, it's what's written on her hunter's license and what I prefer to call her," Lionel replied.

Drake's mind began to buzz about the real reason he had come to this pack, "Well, just make sure the other royals don't hear you calling her that. I would personally make sure you didn't call her that, but I'm currently thinking about different matters... Wait, is that safe?"

Walking through the main entrance was a girl holding a tray of cups filled to the brim with juice. Drake had seen this before... the last time that he'd attended this very pack. The person serving the table was meant to bring refreshments on a tray and this was used to demonstrate their incredible stability. However, this was the first time he found it to be challenging.

The person carrying the tray this time was none other than Madeline. She was ridiculously clumsy and shook with the vigour of a jackhammer. Sweat trickled down her forehead as she walked toward their

table. "Oh, that's part of the meal. A little bit of entertainment if you will as well as the only part of the craft that the girl is ridiculously lacking in.

Drake swallowed hard when he heard this... The girl continued to walk toward them and began to serve them one by one. She successfully served the prince and moved on to her alpha and his sister. It was a task that everyone in the dining hall watched with the utmost scrutiny. The girl was serving them all until... it happened.

Drake turned just in time to see the girl trip. In the corner of his eye, he saw a retreating leg as though she'd been tripped. He didn't have the time to dwell on it much longer as the girl fell, much less reach out to save her from the terrible fall. The sound of shattering glass filled the hall rousing a round of gasps from everyone but chuckles from one particular table.

Ignoring the obvious sabotage, the prince stood up to approach the girl, "Just how clumsy can..." Drake raised a hand to silence Lionel as he began scolding her.

"Are you okay?" the prince asked the girl, lending her his hand to help her up.

The girl stared at the hand outstretched for her to take. With tears welling up in her eyes, she slapped away his hand and ran out of the dining hall. Drake stared until she'd left the room before speaking up, "Five minutes... That's all the time I'm giving for the person that tripped her to step up and that's me being very... very lenient."

Lionel looked back at the deltas and betas with a look of disappointment, "Your highness, would you let me handle the punishment for the delta."

"First thing's first... I want the wolf that did it to step forward," Drake said. When no one stepped forward, the royal spoke up once again, but quieter, rubbing his temples, "Alpha Lionel, royals aren't known for getting angry. Would you tell me the two things that can calm down a royal that has gone feral?"

"A beta alpha and their mate," Lionel sighed before looking through the betas at the table. He walked up to the table, staring at one of them in particular, "Well, what are you waiting for, Victor?"

"What... What makes you think???"

"Would you want to face the anger of the entire pack or just mine... I don't know how many people would call your stunt funny when you find out just how stupid that was. Are you forgetting the person that cooked the food that you have chosen to call the best in the pack?" the alpha cut him off, trying his best to keep his temper in check.

Victor stood up and walked up to the royal, bowing down low in respect, "Your alpha will decide your punishment. I'm afraid a punishment from me would probably kill you. If I don't find the punishment you're given satisfying, I will punish you myself and trust me when I say you won't like it that... you won't like it... Don't let me down, Lionel. Claire, lead me to the Seeker's house. I have questions to ask of her," he ordered, turning around to walk out.

"She's only a runt who can't even shift... Why must I face any punishment for putting her where she should have been in the first place?" Victor grumbled, however... it was loud enough for the prince to hear every single word... and he was inexcusably livid...

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The dining hall had gone silent once again. Drake could not believe what he'd just heard... Well, on second thought, he could believe it. He'd seen it before... A wolf getting bullied and treated differently from the others just because they were weaker. He'd seen it and for fear of the rules, he'd kept it out of it. However, someone had opened his eyes to a number of things in the short time that she'd been at the palace. The one person that did what she felt like and as long as it kept the justice intact.

Drake was tired of all of it. For years he'd heard of reports of what was happening to his sister and then one day, he'd seen it happen. It wasn't long before they had gone looking for Katie in Brigadia. The girl had been bullied by the rest of them simply because she couldn't do anything about it. She was different, but that didn't have to make her a target.

It was cruel and he hated himself for doing nothing. Before he'd thought of doing something about it, someone had come through with a simple solution that didn't make the rules into account. Katie wouldn't take this discrimination sitting down and it had lit a fire within the royals in the capital of Sirius including Drake.

"Is that so...?" he asked, his voice low and dangerous.

The room had gone completely silent. Alpha Lionel stepped forward and got a deadly stare from the prince, sealing off any more hopes he had to stop the royal from carrying out his own form of justice. "Yes, it is. Werewolves are powerful and strong. We are the apex predators that prey on the weak. A runt like that one has no right getting respect from the rest of us."

"I see and is that because she was born that way or because she was too lazy to work for the power that you seem to have been born with or should I speak slower so that you might get my point clearly?" the royal was now walking back to the man who faced him defiantly.

"Oh, I get it... You're angry because that one reminds you of her. So that's why you're taking a liking to her. How the royals have fallen?" Victor replied with a smirk on his face. Lionel rubbed his temples... He didn't want to watch anymore what was going to happen before him.

"You're born with all this power and all of a sudden you feel like you're above everyone else in the world that's weaker than you, is that it?" the prince asked him.

"That's the law of nature... Always has been..." he replied.

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"On this day, you will know why the royals were made without the urge to kill every living thing that walked the earth that was weaker than them," Drake replied, placing his hand on the man's chest. The man backed away from the royal, sensing the malice in his voice, however, he was already too late.

Drake had got a hold of his shirt and in one forced pull, lifted the man into the air. He made look effortless as he slammed his back into the nearest table and held him there struggling... "You were given the power of a mere delta and that was enough to make you forget how weak you once were. Maybe you'd like to take a mile in that girl's shoes. This is the punishment I was meant to give you the moment you're alpha failed to please me with his... However, you've earned it all on your own. You will never be able to shift again in your life until you've been forgiven by the Seeker's daughter and yours truly..."

Additionally, you will regress to the power of an average werewolf..." the royal let go of the man and watched him shiver on the table vigorously.

"Is it wise to do something of the sort?" Alpha Lionel asked the prince.

"He should be grateful... I didn't cut off his access to the mind link. This was me being lenient..."

"Hold on, prince Drake. This goes against the rules against using your powers to compel the wolves..." Lionel argued.

"It goes against the law to compel werewolves against the humans. This matter isn't between the hunters and the werewolves. We turned away from oppressing the humans. I will not stand by and watch my own kind oppress themselves. We are not savages," Drake argued, "Now are you coming or what... Throw that disgrace into the dungeons for a week so that he learns his lesson."

The orders were relayed to the frightened deltas and betas that stood frozen before their shivering comrade. When Victor had the power to open his eyes, he looked cold and hugged himself. The colour of his eyes was bright amber and it shook every delta to the core... "Are we really that insignificant to the royals?"

"Is that what you got out of all this?" Claire wondered, touching the fallen delta's forehead when the alpha and royal were out of the room, "He undermined someone weaker than him. My father has spent his life trying to show all of you that we can all be strong in a different way that's not just your physical strength. My brother finally learnt that and that's when he was granted the right to take his father's place.

That girl has the potential to find the Origin. Now many of you don't know what that means and it is useless information to you, but to someone that can use that information, it is dangerous. That's why we protect the Seeker. Oh, Victor, your world hasn't yet ended... There is a way to get back to the way you were before, but it won't be easy."

"I don't...care about that... I will make that royal rue the day he crossed me," the werewolf cursed, turning to look at the door that the royal had gone through.

"You don't want to take that route. I can guess the reason the Royals have become more active. If what I'm guessing is true, they are more dangerous now than they have ever been before. You don't want to against them lest you risk your death," Claire tried.

"I don't care if they think they are gods... I will bring him down from his high horse..." the man replied. The woman sighed heavily, "Take him to the dungeon."

The betas lifted him from the ground and began the journey to the dungeons... Rage boiled within the man's mind and filled him with hate. 'I'll make you pay and one day I'll put you down... Mark my words, prince of Sirius...'

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Drake calmed down during their walk to the house they were looking for... It was the Seeker's abode. His mind was easily cleared when he realised who it was that he was going to be meeting. Memories of the sadness his sister held haunted him in his dreams. Ever since Katie had begun breaking rules in the

palace, he got the urge to do a variety of things that he believed would be better for the pack. It wasn't just him. His parents were feeling it as well. A lot had to change if the wolves were to live in harmony after... after the rogue king was defeated.

"Is it her...? Katie, I mean... Is she the one that brought this streak of rebelliousness out of you?" Lionel asked the royal, slowing down so that they walked at a slower pace and take a longer time to reach the house.

Drake sighed at the question, "You could say that... Katie had a lot to do with it."

"You do realise there are consequences to being reckless. The rest of the alphas won't take it lightly if they hear that the royals are just misusing the power they promised to keep away," Lionel spoke up, "And neither will the hunters."

"I know what you're saying, Lionel," Drake sighed, "There will be consequences and I will face them when it comes to it."

"Huh, you sound like her. You do what's right first and face the consequences later," Lionel replied with a smile on his face, "Here we are."

The cottage they stopped right in front of was small and beautiful, made from strong hardwood. Drake walked up the stairs, allowing the alpha to lead the way to the cottage. The scent of cinnamon wafted out an open window before they had got to the door, bringing the feeling of home to the royal and alpha. "You're lucky she's friendly. Seekers aren't known to be friendly. I say that from experience with the Seeker before her and the one before that. Well, it was my father that had experience with that one and his father told him of the one that was even before that and the.."

"I get the point, Lionel, the prince stopped him from saying more..."

"Oh, right. Well, it's rude to idly stand by someone's door as though we're planning a robbery or kidnapping of sorts," the alpha mentioned before reaching forward.

The door swung open before the alpha could do anything to reach it, "That was an interesting conversation about my predecessors, alpha Lionel. I would have liked to think that I've atoned for their misunderstandings."

"I'm sorry, Selene, but the past remains the past. Despite how it may sound, I'll still stand by my description of the Seekers before you. You are far more approachable and warm in comparison to all of them," the alpha defended.

"Now I'm trying to figure out whether I should be proud or try to emulate them. Perhaps I've strayed off the path that the Seekers are supposed to take," the woman replied.

"No, you're perfect just the way you are," Lionel panicked. The woman before him was shorter than him and her face was only starting to age. The remnants of her youthful beauty were only starting to fade and her face took on one of wisdom that far exceeded her years. She had a warm smile and an attitude to match. Her voice was equally warm, banishing all nerves that plagued the prince's mind. He felt hope that she would be able to help him.

“What brings you here, alpha Lionel? And who is the guest that you bring with you? I don’t think I’ve seen him around these parts,” the woman shrugged, taking in the prince’s appearance, “Is he some sort of noble?”

Drake’s lower jaw dropped in shock at the woman’s oblivious act. He wondered whether something was covering his eyes since he was sure she would at least be able to tell from his eyes that he was a royal, “Sometimes I forget how much time you spend inside this cottage of yours...” Lionel sighed.

“Well, are you wearing contacts? I’m sure those eyes aren’t supposed to be that colour. You would get arrested for impersonation if anyone from the royal family got to know what you’re doing walking around with blue contacts,” the woman advised. This got the royal to laugh instead.

“I’ll be on the lookout for anyone that uses contacts to impersonate me then,” he replied with a chuckle. Silence took over the three as the woman took her time to decipher what the man had just said. Her eyes darted from her alpha to the bring until they widened in the realisation of the person she was in the presence of...

“And I was talking in the presence of an actual royal...”

“I sometimes wonder how such details slip your mind. I was sure to inform the entire pack that the man was coming today,” Lionel replied.

“Oh yeah... You did, didn’t you?” the woman chuckled... “It’s like half the pack listens to those announcements. You’ve got to make them a lot shorter. One speech during the pack meeting is long enough, you don’t have to make others in the pack link as well,” the woman huffed and left the door open a little wider, letting them in. Inside the cottage, a teenage girl walked by with a plate of breakfast foods in her hand... she froze at the visitors that had stepped into her house.

“Hey, Madeline...” the Seeker yelled at her.

The girl was quick to respond, but the prince had already seen what he needed to see. Her eyes had been grey and without a hint of the amber that appeared in every average wolf.

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“I’m sorry, mother,” the girl apologized to the Seeker. The Seeker only sighed at her carelessness and waved her off. The girl was gone in the blink of an eye to what Drake guessed was her room.

“Might I get you anything to drink?” the woman asked them, gesturing to the sofas in the living room. The cottage was cosy and despite how satisfied the prince was, the smell of cinnamon just had an alluring pull to it.

“A cup of tea if it won’t be much trouble,” he replied, taking a seat opposite alpha Lionel.

The alpha looked about the cottage, his thoughts soaring through the possibilities of their visit. It made sense to him now that the prince would go through the females first. Knowing about a Seeker wouldn’t have required him to go through the needless work, but he’d gone through it anyway, “So did you plan every part of this visit with my father?” Lionel asked.

“Well, yeah... He just never mentioned his sudden absence,” Drake responded, “Congratulations on earning his approval. I didn’t think he would give you this much responsibility so soon.”

"If it wasn't for the new leaf I only turned a while ago, I would have taken that to be an insult, your highness. Seeker, the prince does not like to be kept waiting," the alpha yelled.

"I know that's you putting words into his mouth. That man is a thousand times more patient than you'll ever be," the Seeker's voice came back from the kitchen with a hint of a giggle.

"Well, now that you know who doesn't like to be kept waiting, would you hurry this along? I seem to have forgotten my room wide open and have a thing for privacy," Lionel tried again.

"You will say just about anything to get things to move faster. I'm just surprised you haven't started telling me we are under a rogue attack," the Seeker's voice sounded again, this time, coming closer to them though. She finally came into view holding a tray in her hands. On the tray were two cups of what Drake's senses told him were well-brewed cups of cinnamon tea.

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"I didn't ask for your tea," the alpha huffed.

"And yet it is what you'll have. This world doesn't always offer what we want to have now, does it, Lionel?" she asked him with a smile on her face.

"No, it doesn't..."

"Great... I'm glad we see eye to eye. To what do I owe the pleasure of this visit? I never thought the prince of Sirius would be coming to my doorstep to see me in particular," she said to him.

"Well, I came to ask for your help. They say you have a gift that can help you find mates," Drake announced without wasting time in any more idle chatter.

"You get straight to the point, huh? I just don't understand why you would be coming to me for something like that though," the woman shrugged, taking a seat beside her alpha.

"Why is that? I've been searching for her for almost a year now," Drake responded.

"Huh, a year... That's odd. Aren't you sixteen?" the woman asked as though it was obvious. The two males stared at her with looks of concern and shock. The Seeker was bothered for a moment by the looks they were giving her, "What... Did I say something wrong?"

"Umm... Well, you have his age wrong by a lot of years... He's turning twenty-three soon," alpha Lionel said to her.

"Huh..." speechless, she looked between the two werewolves, "Oh, the two of you are serious about that. I can see where the problem is now."

"What is it then?" Drake asked her, getting slightly hopeful with the news he was hearing. The woman might have been a bit odd, but the way her eyes turned grey whenever she was trying to figure out what they asked of her told him there was more to her than her odd eye colours.

"Well, your mate is a little too young. You're actually searching for her two years too early. You won't be able to find her for another two years. She's sixteen at the moment. I don't know who she is if you want to ask. The rules don't let me know your mate's name if she hasn't come of age yet. However, there is

something odd about her,” the Seeker said. Drake was disappointed, however, the last thing the woman said caught his attention.

“What do you mean by that? Is she alright? Injured? Sick? Tell me already,” he asked.

“She’s neither of all the things that you’ve said, but I would say your mate is special. So special that the entire fate of a race could rest upon her one day,” the woman said, “How she comes to be so important is beyond my scope of abilities. I’m sorry about that.”

“It’s okay. Can you at least tell me her location so that I know where to start when the time comes?” Drake asked her.

“I can’t do that, but you won’t have trouble finding her. Something tells me you’ve been staring at her for a while now. Patience should help you get through the next two years without much trouble. However, I would ask that you train yourself to be able to protect her when the time comes. She’s going to need the protection,” the Seeker said before a tear rolled down her cheek. Her grey eyes flickered back to amber and didn’t go back. “That’s never happened before... I can’t see much more... My power... It won’t work.”

“What is that supposed to mean?” Lionel asked her, panic starting to fill his voice.

“My best guess is that I was not meant to pry anymore than I should have. I do know what I had found out before the connection was severed though,” the woman said with a thoughtful expression, “Your mate... She has a very strong connection to the moon goddess.”

“What... The only people who have connections to the moon goddess at the moment are the moon goddess’ chosen. The royals have weak connections in comparison...”

“I do remember saying she was sixteen. That only means she isn’t one of the Chosen. Perhaps the goddess did something and stopped the oracles from releasing a prophecy about it for her protection,” the Seeker surmised, however, it was all just a theory and they had no way to prove it. It was the best they had, but all they had as well.

“What about Lionel over here?” Drake piped up, trying to diffuse the tension in the room.

“Huh, me... No, I don’t need to know where she is or if she exists just yet,” the alpha spoke up, backing away from the Seeker.

“Oh, don’t worry, you coward. I don’t have access to my powers at the moment. I don’t know if it is permanent, but I do want to know why you don’t want to find your mate,” the woman rested her chin on the armrest and stared up at the alpha with pleading eyes.

Lionel went quiet for a moment, “Not yet... I can’t find her just yet. Not when I still have passing thoughts of someone else that I’m sure doesn’t belong to me...”

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Katie looked stared at the white rhino, holding her breath as though it was the only thing keeping her from being attacked. The rest of the students didn’t seem to notice. The rhino had noticed the girl’s ability to understand them and was curious. Katie hoped rhinos could read facial expressions. This could go in a totally wrong direction.

“Moving on... We have far more to see in this large reserve, so get comfortable and expect to be amazed. Hopefully, we shall get to see the family of rhinos that resides in this park. They are the sweetest with little Bola,” the guide continued.

“Bola?” one of the students asked.

“Yes, that was what we all decided to name her. It wasn’t my first choice, but it’s what we settled on at the end of it all,” she announced. Katie continued staring at the rhino and made sure to keep eye contact with him while they passed it.

“Aren’t I lucky?” was all the rhino said before going back to grazing.

“Naughty kids...” Wyatt spat. Katie turned to him and looked for the ones he spoke of. Taking notice of the group of kids that were giggling in the middle section of the car. At first glance, there was nothing wrong with the group, but after taking a longer look, Katie noticed one of them holding a black and red slingshot.

“Hmm, I would think of you in that group of kids as well. What makes you different?” Katie asked him.

“Well, I don’t go around oppressing creatures that have done nothing to me and are of no consequence to me whatsoever. I wouldn’t even call it fun since the creatures can’t fight back. If I was to get crazy with a slingshot, I’d probably be shooting someone that could fight back and not a squirrel,” he responded.

“Did you say squirrel?” Katie asked, her eyes darting about until they landed on a pair of squirrels a distance away. They were almost out of sight by the time Katie noticed them... and one of them was injured. She didn’t know if they were the same ones that had helped her the day before, but the sight brought something boiling within her. The giggles coming from the naughty students didn’t help calm her down one bit.

“Yeah...” Wyatt spoke up, “Squirrel is what I said.”

Katie nearly turned on the students, but something kept her from doing anything. The student holding the slingshot was a human. Her blood went cold... The rules weren’t the same when it came to dealing with this group. She sighed and turned a blind eye... ‘Strike one, kids...’

The students were in constant awe each time they saw a creature they had never seen or only heard of through the television and read about in books. Animals of all shapes and sizes filled the reserve and each had a story to it. At some point, Katie felt like asking the guide if some of the stories were made up. Almost all the young ones had been named as well as their mothers. A few carnivorous animals were seen, scaring the human students in the group.

Katie facepalmed at the sight of a girl holding onto a boy that was equally scared by a lion that had only yawned as they passed its mostly sleeping pride. The students with the slingshot had been using it as much as they wanted focusing on nothing of consequence and Katie had noted each and every time they had used the slingshot to irritate an animal. They had eventually gotten bored and stopped using it or so the girl thought...

The car came to a stop, ordered by the guide who had spotted something interesting, “If you could all look to our right. One of the many things we hold most dear in the Sirius game reserve is this wonderful

pair. The third part of this small family is the same one we saw earlier. So here we have young beautiful Bola and her mother, Paula.”

“Of course, they rhyme,” Wyatt grumbled.

Katie chuckled only to feel her senses flare up in her mind. She turned about looking for the source of trouble. She detected no odd rogue movement about them and yet she still knew there was danger around them. If only she had been a second faster, she would have noticed the boy that had the slingshot stretched to its limit and aimed at the young calf that fed next to her mother, oblivious about the projectile aimed at her forehead.

Just then, the slingshot let loose of the stone, aimed straight at the cub. From all the practice Katie had gone through in archery, Katie could tell this shot had been made perfectly and would spell doom for the rest of them... ‘I should have gotten that slingshot the moment they hit strike three...’ she thought to herself while she tapped into her Prometheus gift.

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Katie leapt out of the car with the intention of catching the stone before it struck its mark. She was faster than she had been in Brigadia and was sure of her capabilities to stop the disaster that was to happen. With a light thundering sound, she dashed forward and snatched the stone from the air before it hit the young rhino.

Little Bola, frightened out of her wits, darted away from the girl in fear. Her mother shielded her and stared got into a defensive stance, grunting at the girl with a murderous look in her eye. Katie went totally still and turned her hand to show the rhino the stone that had been focused on her child. Ashley reached forward and forced a slow half shift onto the girl. The animal-like appearance calmed the rhino a bit...

“Forgive the human for his stupidity. I will be sure to reprimand him,” Katie whispered.

The rhino stared at her for a moment, the students along with the guide went silent, watching the scene before them. With her back turned to the car, the students hadn’t noticed the transformation that had taken hold of the girl while she stood still in her staring contest with the rhino.

The rhino, as though understanding the intentions of the werewolf before her, turned away and walked off with her young one. Katie sighed in relief... she was sure the rhino would have done its best to flip the car on its side if she hadn’t stepped in. Ashley retreated, “Paula says you better keep the humans away from her daughter...”

“That would be for the best,” Katie replied, walking back to the car and getting in through the entrance. The students remained quiet as she made her way to the obvious cause of this awkward environment. When she reached the boy, the slingshot was out of sight... One look from the hunter and the boy produced it from his backpack. Katie held the slingshot in one hand and shattered it before handing it back to the boy.

The boy gasped in horror and stared between the broken slingshot and the person that had just shattered it, “Do you have any idea how much this cost?”

“Far more than your life and the lives of everyone here...” Katie replied and waited patiently for the boy to take it from her. ‘Umm, Katie...’

‘Don’t remind me, Ashley...’ Katie sighed, letting her scowl fall into a look of kindness.

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“Having fun has never been a bad thing, but be mindful of how you do it,” Katie told the boy before walking away from him. She took her seat at the back once more... “Is the tour going to continue or not?”

“Oh yeah as I was saying, you got lucky to witness one of the last remaining families of the Great White rhino in existence. It is said that they were hunted for sport a long time ago and their numbers dwindled. They live a long time and take even longer to procreate which made it easy for their numbers to rapidly fall during the time that they were hunted.

How could we know for sure though... This is information from a time that we know nothing about in this day and age... We might just be guessing about just like the dinosaurs we’ve seen in books,” the woman joked, lifting the mood.

The car started back up and started moving. Katie’s mind wouldn’t let go of her experiences in the wild. She was connected to it in more ways than she wanted to admit and it raised so many questions within her. It offered her new ways to keep everyone safe, but she also had no idea how anything worked and that paused a large problem for her.

“So... you care about humans?” a voice snapped her out of her thoughts. She turned to notice a smirking Wyatt on her right.

“I was a hunter before getting into this Moon Goddess’ Chosen business. Of course, I care about humans,” she replied.

“Don’t you think you’ll have to make a choice when the time comes?” he asked her.

“Nope, I don’t think so. I would like the same for the rest of the werewolves. Humans are meant to be a part of our lives just as much as we are a part of theirs. It’s the only way to unite the two races and keep conflict from ever starting up in between them,” Katie explained.

“You speak like someone who spends most of her time dreaming of the impossible and cooking up worlds filled with rainbows and butterflies,” Wyatt replied.

“Now wouldn’t that be something?” Katie mused.

“Huh...” he snapped his head in her direction, a look of shock on his face, “I was kidding...”

“So was I,” she replied with a smirk on her face. Wyatt sighed, “What’s her deal?”

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Cole groaned once again... boredom tearing at his every body cell... He was stuck in the one car that didn’t have his mate in it and he was absolutely bored... He yawned and looked about the car. Jason was trying his best to ignore his alpha’s bored mood. It mirrored his own, but he tried his best to keep that to

himself. Trevor was in their carriage along with Liam, one of the troublemakers that had been assigned to help the hunters in protecting them.

Cole hadn't heard from Katie in a while and it was worrying him. His wolf was eventually able to calm him down. The wolves, being able to feel the bond much stronger than their human parts, could convey a few messages sometimes without their human parts knowing a thing about it. Katie was doing just fine, as his wolf had convinced him. He finally came to the conclusion that he would talk to her the next time they met. He could tell there was something going on with her that she wasn't mentioning.

"Hey, we need to do something before the boredom decides we don't deserve to live," Jason tried.

"What do you have in mind?" the royal asked him.

"Well, we could talk about something I've wanted to ask you. I thought the beta alpha transformation would only happen after you had become king of Lycaon," Jason asked him in a hushed tone.

"Yeah, that is what I said. What does that have to do with anything?" Cole asked him as though nothing he was saying was a need to panic.

"Well, what's happening now? You know your father is the king. Why would we be transforming into beta alphas this early," the wolf asked him.

"Well, I thought you knew about my father's situation. I normally have to heal him once a month..." Cole paused.

"Yeah, I still can't believe you go through that, but you don't lie and that's what you chose to tell us that day we asked you. What's that got to do with anything?"

"As time went on, my father was starting to get weaker much faster. At first, the injury was in his pancreas alone and caused him a lot of pain, but that was all it was and I could heal it to the point where it was painless... However, the more I healed him, the faster the infection spread. The body didn't continue to fight the infection that had taken his pancreas and it began to spread. Once a month turned into twice a month and soon thrice... it wouldn't end. So when we left, he made me promise to only go back once I'd found her and made sure she was fine with coming back with us... It's taking longer than I would have thought."

"You make it sound like you don't want to go and save him," Jason grumbled.

"I have been talking to him on the phone. Beta Alpha Raymond Benjamin helps me out every time I want to talk to him. The man is as stubborn as he's always been. The doctor doesn't give me any good news when I ask him for the bright side of this whole ordeal," Cole continued.

"What about the rogues that are gathering in Lycaon? Benjamin told me about those ones as well. They seem to be aiming for the palace, but they aren't making a move," Jason asked.

"I have heard of those ones as well and hunters have been deployed to keep the palace safe," Cole replied.

"I would be a little bit comfortable if I knew the Perfect hunter was there as well," Jason sighed.

"Well, last I checked, he was also called to help and he accepted the call," Cole replied.

“Huh, who could have thought the Lycaon palace would be the first to see the famous, Thorrin Chase?” Jason smirked.

“Yeah... I only wish I could see the monster in action. Someone who’s so powerful they say he doesn’t compare to any of the other Mighty Warriors,” Cole mused. His boredom was starting to dissipate as he relived the days of his childhood.

His best friends were present on the day they were told about the Four Mighty warriors. They were all impressive, however, talk of the fourth and most powerful of all of them had them dropping their jaws and fighting to imagine what he was capable of. It was impossible to believe anything they were told and disregarded most of it... for a time.

“If you could only look to your right, you will see one of the few remaining Great White Rhinos. It was said that they were hunted for the sport back in the past, however, since they live long, take a long time to mature and also have one offspring at a time, their numbers quickly dwindled quickly and now only barely scrape by,” the guide’s voice broke through to the two boys.

“Huh, I don’t think we have one of those in the reserve back home,” Jason said thoughtfully.

“No, we don’t have one of those monsters,” Cole responded, taking in the gigantic creature that was easily the same height as their bus back at the hotel, “I wonder what it would be like if the goddess had given us the power to shift into a creature other than a werewolf. Could have been a tiger, lion or even that rhino...”

Jason turned to look at his friend who wouldn’t take his eyes off the creature. “You have the weirdest thoughts, my friend...”

“We’ll be meeting the rest of the cars at the beach for lunch and take the scenic route back to the hotel. There will be a bonfire... as promised, in the night to mark the end of the day,” the mentioned meeting of the other cars was the only thing that made it to Cole’s mind. That and the look the rhino had given him as they drove past it... almost as though it saw something in him or maybe because it could tell he was a werewolf.

‘I must really be having a lucky day...’ the rhino mumbled before going back to grazing, even though it was understood by a single soul in the car.

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Word of the incident with the rhino spread through the students like a wildfire. The open mind link was buzzing with gossip of Katie’s confrontation with the rhinos in the reserve. The more this information spread, the more the boy that had caused it all felt like going invisible, which was obviously impossible. Katie’s group was the first to reach the beach. She hadn’t thought much of it until the salty scent of the sea reached her nose.

Ashley was getting excited the closer they got to the water. Awe was the first reaction from everyone that saw it... the large ocean that spread out as far as the eye could see. A large water mass, almost unthinkable to someone that had never seen it before.

“Wow,” one of the students said out loud. The guide had gone quiet upon reaching the ocean and plastered a smile on her face.

"I couldn't have said it better myself," she said, "On days when there is no one here and I need a place to think, I like to go up to the cliff or come down here to clear my mind. The view never ceases to amaze me."

Katie looked to her left and noticed a high cliff not so far from where they were. The waves made a lot of noise as they crashed onto the jagged rocks in the bay. Taking note of the safety hazard, the girl continued to take in the sights. Her neck felt stiff from another force that wanted her to take in everything faster.

She looked up and took notice of an eagle soaring high in the sky. Respect for the hunter burned deep within the girl as she stared at his serious eyes scanning the waters for his next unsuspecting prey.

"When you think you've seen it all," the girl mumbled to herself. The car came to a stop and let them all out. It was only a short while later after the other two cars reached the beach and parked next to theirs. Katie snuck away from the beach and leapt into a tree, taking a position that allowed her to watch all the students at once.

Her senses hadn't let go of the rogues one bit and she was curious about one danger in particular. Wyatt and the other junior hunters had noticed her queer mood and let her to herself. Katie made sure to remain as quiet as she could on her perch up in the tree.

"How long?" a voice came to her ear.

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"It made sense soon enough... Are you alone?" Katie asked the voice.

"Won't you at least look me in the eye?" the voice came again.

"No, I won't. I might just get the urge to behead you the moment I see you," she responded with a smirk on her face, "I noticed you wanted to talk to me..."

"Well, I did want to talk to you, but I didn't think you would be this willing to talk. Not after..." an arrow tip at the back of the girl touched a spot on her shoulder the girl knew all too well. One of the four scars that she wore was proof of the battle that had nearly cost her life.

"That is why I won't look you in the face. I can't do much attacking anyway. If I can keep these students happy and blissfully unaware of the danger around them just a little longer, then that is what I will do. However, if this isn't a friendly meeting, then I don't mind exposing the danger you pose to them," she responded.

"Oh please, I would never hurt humans. Werewolves, however, I can attack if it comes to it," Jeremiah answered with a sigh.

"Aren't hunters..."

"I only got the guts to shoot you when you performed a half shift. It wasn't human... and that, I can shoot," he cut her off before she could argue with him.

"So that day in the Founder's festival..."

"I was trying to make sure the rogue king had lied to me about you being a werewolf. I milled about looking for signs of the rogue killer and any signs of her being a werewolf as the rogue king had suggested, however, there was no such luck," he replied.

"Why can't you kill the rogue king the next time you see him? It makes all our work easier," Katie said to him.

"I wish it were that easy, but the man is more powerful than any werewolf I've ever seen it. I could even say that he has gifts himself. You once said it was your mission in life to put an end to this war. I have seen what you're capable of and yet you haven't even reached your prime. Keep at it, Katie. Many of us feel as though we are reaching our limits but you, you only keep pushing higher. I know I'm the last person that should be telling you this, but I would say you're the one person that has the potential to beat the rogue king, however, not as you are now. You need to get stronger if you are to bring him down," the man spoke to her. She heard him put his drawn arrow back into its quiver... He was leaving.

"Wait, so you're not on his side. How many of you are working for him undercover?" she asked him.

"There are many hunters that are bound to the man in ways that they can't begin to count. He captures people they care about the most or puts threats on their lives and uses the hunters. Some are simply undercover and sneaking information back to the Hunters," he explained.

"Which one would you be?" Katie asked him.

"I am among the ones being threatened, however, I would like to make contact with the hunters. To be more precise, the only hunter that I know I can trust is you. Would you work as my contact to the rest of them?" he asked her.

"How is that supposed to work? You make it sound so easy, but the moment he finds out you're playing the part of a two-faced traitor, he's going to kill you," she told him with a hint of annoyance.

"Oh, you make it sound like you care about me," Jeremiah replied in a cocky tone.

"My hatred for you vanished the moment I realised I could kill you without sparing much of my energy," she smirked.

"Oh, I'm quaking in my boots..." Jeremiah chuckled, "I'll be careful. You know the rules of undercover work. Take me to be the one undercover... Take care..."

With that, he was gone... Katie's focus came back to her surroundings and noticed someone at the base of the tree leaning against it, oblivious to the hunter above... Or so she thought... His alluring scent soon told her exactly who he was, erasing all thoughts of him being unaware. With his experience in tracking, (an assumption she'd made...) there was no way she could have been hidden from him.

The hunter leapt out of the tree and landed beside Cole Lycaon. The man had his hands folded across his chest, "Anything you would like to share? You seem to be far busier than I realised."

"Well, I am in charge of keeping everyone here safe and we have a large group of rogues running about the reserve. Of course, I'm busy," she responded.

Cole sighed, looking up into the tree, "Who were you talking to?"

“You heard all that, didn’t you?” the girl groaned. There was just no hiding anything from her mate. “I should start rethinking how strong this mate bond is... everything I knew about it seems to be heavily insufficient in explaining it.”

“Oh, what didn’t you know about the mate bond?” Cole asked the girl pulling her into a side embrace and leading her back to the crowd of students. A group of two hunters and a head junior hunter, sighed when they realised they wouldn’t be getting to talk to the girl once she had been captured by her mate. Cole led her back to their group of werewolves.

“Well, it makes everything easy. I can tell you everything and be sure that you’ll take it well... and...” the words got caught up in her mouth. The rest that she intended to say just couldn’t come out verbally.

“It lets us say everything we wish to say without having to use our words,” Cole said when he realised her tongue had gone heavy, “Would you like to tell me through a private mind link?”

Katie thought it through before answering, “Maybe when this is all over.”

Cole had heard this phrase before, “When all of what is over...”

“Don’t tell me you haven’t noticed yet... The rogues in the reserve... I plan to bring them all to the ground,” she said to him coldly. Cole knew it was inevitable, but the way she said it reminded him so much that he was mated to a hunter and that her cold killer side was just as much a part of her as the caring one that didn’t want to see a single scratch on her sister.

“Hey lovebirds... We just talked to one of the guides. The bonfire will have venison,” Jason yelled at them as they reached the small gathering.

“And for some reason, it has got these two hoodlums very excited,” Sandra said bluntly pointing at the two beta alphas.

“I’m only wondering if they think they will be allowed to eat it raw... Or do they think they get to hunt the deer as well?” Katie picked up on her friend’s lines.

“Ha ha ha, make fun of us all you want. It will be us laughing when you finally get to taste it yourself,” Caden puffed out his chest.

“We’ll see about that...” Katie froze when a group approached her from the back. With her powers at their maximum, she knew where everything was and was unconsciously keeping track of everything. Anything that made her heart rate spike was cause for concern and the group behind her brought a feeling of happiness, but one of concern as well.

She turned around before anyone could tell her of their arrival and met face to face with Lina, her beloved little sister. The girl looked nervous and wouldn’t meet her sister’s eye, “How are you doing, Lina?”

“I would like to apologize for...” her lips drew into a thin line. Katie thought hard to remember what it was she was apologizing for but came up blank.

“Well, I can’t remember what you might be apologizing for, so I guess it’s forgiven and forgotten,” Katie replied.

Lina's eyes darted to her sister's thoughtful face. 'Sometimes I forget how warm you can be one day, then scary on another...' "Very well then... Can I ask something of you?"

"What is it, Lina?"

"We are going out tonight... Early before the duel with Liam... We want to look for moon lotus flowers..." the girl began to explain. She stopped waiting for her sister to lecture her on how careless she was being to go out at night when she'd only been warned about it the day before...

"Hmm, is that all?" the hunter asked her.

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"Did you hear me?" Lina raised her voice at her sister. 'Aren't you going to tell me it's a bad idea? Do you even know what a moon lotus is or are you just letting me off easy because I'm your sister?'

"Yes, I heard you. Do you want me to escort you or are you going with Honour and Derrick alone?" Katie asked her, "You could go with Caden to be safer..."

"But you said there are rogues in the woods..." Lina replied, "Why then would you let us go out very easily?"

"Listen to me, Lina. Tonight... It won't be very different from that night. So be careful and don't do anything stupid," Katie replied in a serious tone, "The only difference is that these ones aren't quite as many. Those were a storm of rogues that we had to deal with that day."

Despite the grave nature of the information that the girl was telling her sister, she kept her voice cheerful as though there was nothing that the wolf had to worry about, "For someone that's trying to warn me about rogues, you're oddly relaxed."

"Well, I would be scared if I was the rogues actually. I plan to bring them all down," Katie replied cheerfully, "I am curious though... Like there is something I'm missing here." In the back of her mind, she thought there was something wrong with what the rogues were doing. They didn't attack at all and for as long as Katie had been keeping her guard up, they'd stayed fairly far from the students as though they were aware of her watchful eye. It was only one enemy that had approached and even then, she had known his intentions and they had nothing to do with attacking the students, "If there is nothing left, I do hope you find those... what did you call them?"

"Moon lotus flowers... they only bloom in the night," Lina replied with a nervous chuckle.

"Oh yeah... aren't those called Lotus Lunaria?" Sandra asked.

"Oh, so that's what they are. I was completely clueless. I've never heard an alternative for their name," Katie wondered.

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"Oh, they have many names. Their relation to the moon makes Moon lotus the perfect nickname to give them," Cole pitched in, "Keep them safe, Caden."

“I’ll do everything I can, alpha Cole...” Katie smirked at the grimace on her mate’s face when he was addressed with his title. Beta alphas that we’re also your best friends made a title unbearable.

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The two hunters along with Trevor sat in a triangle, discussing matters concerning security. There was a lot they had to discuss concerning the safety of the students. They discussed everything they could think of, from the security at the bonfire and an interruption that brought all their plans crashing down when they’d only just begun.

“I have a proposal,” Trevor began. An idea boiled at the back of his mind and he wanted it off his chest. If he was to pull it off, he was going to need to convince a lot of people, but that didn’t seem to worry him one bit.

“Well, let’s hear it,” Alice answered.

“Why don’t we have the bonfire here?” he said, staring back at the beach. Students kept themselves away from the water even though they looked as though it was the one thing they all wished to do, “The students want to get into the water. This place could be turned into a camping ground. The students could have all the fun they wish to... Just think about it...”

“That would be a good idea, but we don’t have all the security we need to pull off a large scale camping trip,” Morgan objected.

“Well, the Hunter’s Agency seemed to find it reasonable to send this same group of students off with only one hunter. And the hunter they sent was meant to come, had they known of her presence or not. You told me to stop underestimating her, so I don’t see much reason to worry,” Trevor continued.

“Have you thought of what she might think about this before you make her work a lot harder,?” Alice asked the junior hunter.

“Well, she seems pretty fine guarding this large group. Each time I see her, she’s relaxed and doesn’t seem too bothered by the potential dangers in this place,” Trevor said.

“Have you heard the rumours before you begin to run your mouth?” Morgan asked him.

“Who hasn’t heard them? ‘Student stands up to rhino after another student attempts to attack her already injured cub’,” Trevor groaned out the headline, “Can we move on to the camping I was suggesting? It will really help lift everyone’s spirits. Especially the werewolves...”

“What about the werewolves?” Morgan asked him.

“One of them had me know that they were warned on rogues taking shelter in the reserve. Most of them are on edge because of this exact reason. And you wouldn’t guess what simple-minded overrated self-respecting...”

“It was Katie, wasn’t it?” Alice stopped him halfway.

“Yes, it was. Please let us hold the bonfire here. It would do those scared werewolves some good. I also heard that there is going to be an official duel between a couple of them at twilight. With an event like that one, we can keep an eye on them,” Trevor said to them.

"I am starting to see your point. We'll have to talk to the guides and send the cars back to the hotel for equipment. Call on the third hunter at the hotel for extra protection. Finally, the last point is that we have to find a way to talk to Katie. She is too taken by her werewolf minions that she doesn't have time left for the hunters. I wonder a lot if she's a hunter and not a werewolf, but I guess blood is thicker than water," Alice began, letting her eyes hover above the group of werewolves that had the girl immersed in a conversation.

Sensing their conversations, Katie excused herself from her group of werewolves and walked up to the hunters, "Don't let them keep you too long, alright?" Cole had called out to her.

"I can't make any promises," she replied before sauntering over to the hunters she was meant to protect the two classes with.

"What are we talking about?" she asked them, taking a seat beside Alice.

"Well, you, of course... You're having so much fun we are wondering if you're doing your job," Morgan began, "Well, those were Trevor's thoughts..."

"I know what it looks like. You're all free to feel that way. Anyway, I would warn you all to stay vigilant. There are rogues in the reserve. I forgot to mention that earlier."

The hunters looked at her like she'd lost an eye and was talking like nothing happened, "And you know this because..." Alice trailed on, waiting for her to pick up.

"I just know that... If you want me to find you one at the moment, you'd have to keep up with me until we got to one. Unfortunately, that would alert them that I know of their presence and I am not aiming for that. The rogues that have decided to follow me to the reserve shall meet their ends soon. Although I still need them for one last task," she said half to herself.

Alice looked at her with a suspicious look, "Would you elaborate on how you would be able to find the rogue so fast? I was under the impression you were going to track it down, but at the speed that you're talking about, it's like you know the exact location of the rogue in question."

"Yes, that is exactly what I mean. Anyway, I found you talking about something, but I still don't know what it was about," Katie tried edging them away from the questions she was sure they were trying to ask her.

"If I'm to guess, I would say you came here only because you felt it was the exact thing you needed to do at the moment," Alice groaned. It was Morgan's turn to look at his comrade.

"Am I missing something here?"

"I knew something wasn't right about one of the students the moment they arrived yesterday," the woman replied.

"That's why you excused yourself to go check them out yesterday," Morgan continued, piecing it together.

"Yes, I did. And was I given the shock of a lifetime when I find the girl that was handed over to the Chase family for protection against the Rogue King," she said.

"I wasn't sure there would be anyone out there who knew anything about that," Katie laughed nervously.

"Well, I was stationed somewhere else at the time. And Marie Chase... was my best friend. She told me everything," Alice continued.

"Well, in that case, you know what brought me here then," Katie responded.

"Trevor was suggesting that we have the bonfire here and we set up tents in the sand. Camp out for the night and enjoy the stars," the woman reported.

Katie's mind flared up with excitement. It was an excellent idea, but one that came with several other dangers. If the rogues were to attack, they would be cornered and have nowhere to run. "That is a very good idea, but I think it's beyond my abilities. I won't put humans at risk," the girl responded.

"Oh come on... That's not something I expected to hear from the same person that has been training with Frank Silver," Trevor groaned.

"How do you manage to doubt her skill and accept it all in the same day?" Alice asked the boy, amusement laced in her voice.

"What can I say? It's a talent of mine. I know she's powerful. I haven't gotten to see her in action just yet, but from the way the rest of the werewolves fear her, I can tell she's not your ordinary werewolf. It's hard to believe it though when I see her mulling around with her mate like there is no danger left in the world," he sighed.

"Well, that's a Chase hunter for you. They don't need their eyes or ears to see everything," Alice smirked, "Isn't that right, Katie Chase?"

Impressed by the woman's deductions, Katie smiled in response, "This would place us all on the same page now. I've been watching... everything."

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After that last detail concerning the girl's attention in the matter of security, talks amongst the hunters proceeded smoothly and it was at last decided that the students could not be allowed to have a camping trip with rogues in the reserve. It was a decision Trevor came to hate very much, albeit necessary that they take Katie's advice into consideration. The two experienced hunters knew more than to go against the warnings of a Chase hunter and Katie was now considered part of that family... as it said on the license Trevor was sure he'd read clearly the first time.

Seeing the license for the second time and taking note that the last name that was used wasn't Sirius simply blew his mind. The first time he'd seen it, he'd not paid any attention as he already suspected she had a fake one for emergencies. Once the students were well rested and had enjoyed a meal that one of the cars had gone back to bring for them, prepared by the hotel kitchen staff, it was time to set off. The destination was the hotel they were all eager to return to.

On their way back, the students were in a much more cheerful mood. With their bellies full, some fell asleep in the cars and missed the sights they passed by, "It must be nice to be comfortable and always

sure of being safe. Not having to worry about rogues or anything that could snuff out your life the moment you made a mistake,” Katie mumbled to herself.

Wyatt looked to his side... the girl was letting her eyes skim through the variety of plant life and the occasional rare animal that zipped past them. The guide was quiet and the ride was silent as they made their way back to the hotel. It was in no way close to the beach and they took a route that Katie soon found to be quite long. From what her mental map said, the roads were made to meander through the reserve and allow the best viewing of what the reserve had to offer.

“It never crossed the mind of whoever built these roads that someone would want to take the short route back to the hotel. I could walk straight through the woods and make it back to the hotel on time,” Katie sighed.

“It’s not all woods you know. Besides, I wouldn’t want the car to get stuck in quicksand,” someone mumbled beside her, having had enough of what she kept saying to herself.

“Oh, was I bothering someone... What do you know about quicksand? And... Oh, that explains the muddy scent from yesterday. Three get caught in quicksand while one gets caught in a mother bear’s den. What were you even planning to do out there?” she wondered. Taking her attention off the alpha and back to the passing trees.

It was as he had said, though... The reserve wasn’t completely covered in forest. As the guide had said to them before, the lions didn’t like living in the woods and spent most of their time in the parts of the woods that were rather filled with scattered trees and plenty of tall grass. Katie noticed the drastic change in vegetation but didn’t pay it much attention. It was all the same to her, anyway... a way for the rogues to hide from them.

“What could they be waiting for?” she wondered to herself. The entire day had offered the rogues a chance to attack the students and cause major damage, but they hadn’t done anything to give away their presence. This form of coordination scared the girl a lot. She thought of asking the boy what he could know about all this, but there was nothing she could think of... Just then, a thought crossed her mind...

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“Hey, have you heard from the palace at all?” she asked the wolf beside her.

“Why would I bother calling back there when I’m literally on a vacation. It’s a relief I get to spend some time away from there after all,” Wyatt spat.

“Someone’s in a bad mood. I was only asking to check if you’ve heard anything from them,” she replied before using the mind link to talk to her mate.

“Hey, do you know what they did with my uncle or at least what they are planning to do with him,” she asked Cole.

Cole’s voice came back groggy, “I’m not sure about it all, but I heard something about confirming your suspicions before locking him up.”

“So if he’s currently locked up, then it would mean...”

"I don't know if he's locked up just yet..." as though her memory was moving in slow motion, the girl remembered she had a phone whose service had been paid for. She retrieved the device from her pocket and began to fiddle with it until she reached the contacts and dialled her mother. Before she could do anything else, her eyes spotted the most irritating piece of news any teenager would ever want to hear.

"It's been like that since we got here. There isn't a bit of signal in this place. If you wanted to call for help, forget about it," Wyatt said.

"Why wouldn't a preserve have any kind of signal? What if someone got bitten by a snake. It just doesn't make sense for a place like this to have this bad signal. Communication is very useful in a place as big as the one they were in at the moment..." the girl said, adding a string of light curses to match her mood.

"Well, if you don't mind, some of us are trying to sleep here. It's not like the imaginary rogues you saw will be attacking us at all. Just because one person said there are rogues in the woods doesn't mean there actually are there," he said to her, coiling up with his back turned to her. She thought of telling him to wake up and fulfil his assigned duty, but let go of the matter... "Cole, something is terribly wrong..." she said through the mind link.

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The hotel soon came into sight as the evening sun was beginning to set. The students got out of the cars and began to stretch as they left the car, "Don't forget to summarise everything that you've learnt from this trip. I will be asking you all to present your reports on Monday in the morning lesson," the teacher yelled at the students as they retreated to the gates with loud groans and complaints.

The woman giggled at their childishness and watched them all as they left in clusters. This trip had put a smile on all their faces... "Are you having fun as well?" Katie asked the teacher.

"Oh, this is a fun trip for everyone. Coming to the reserve has always been a dream of mine, but I have never been able to accomplish it until the duke approached me on the matter," the teacher replied.

"He approached you first before announcing it to all the students?" Katie asked.

"He approached the whole administration at the school and was told to pick out the first classes that he would want to send out on this trip. He came to me and the teacher of the other class. We wondered why he was being very specific but figured he was trying to get his family members to go for the trip first before any other class. None of us opposed him... Besides, we both wanted to see the reserve as well," she replied cheerfully.

Katie smiled back and climbed off the car. It was only a few moments before the other cars caught up to them. The teacher continued to let the students off with a message concerning a report due Monday. Katie soon began to giggle at the faces the students gave her each time she bombarded them with the information. Before she could approach the other cars, her senses flared up at the same time a loud screech reached her ears, translating to words she could understand almost immediately and seamlessly.

Katie looked up and spotted a large eagle soaring high in the clouds. She'd gotten his call loud and clear. She turned to the hotel and rushed in... paying no mind to the different people that had wanted to talk

to her at that moment. Cole looked up and noticed the bird as well... 'I wonder what the eagle's doing so far from the ocean,' he was sure he'd seen the eagle's nest not so far from the shore as it continued to hunt.

"Hey, what's up with your mate? She just ran off yet we have to deal with this issue of communication. Without cell phones working, we can't communicate," annoying Trevor's voice reached his ears. He turned to see the boy holding up a walkie for him to receive, "Just get this to her. I know she has a lot of things she deals with. That much is clear to me now."

Cole's frustration cooled down. For a moment, he could have sworn he saw a sincere look in Trevor's eye, "Are you going to just stand there looking at this thing like it's a bone or are you going to take it to your mate like a good puppy playing fetch?" And it was gone...

"Sometimes I just wonder if you have some kind of death wish," Cole chuckled and took it from him.

"No witty remark... I guess I'd already given away too much," Trevor replied.

"Yeah..." Cole said, turning to leave. The look of disgust towards werewolves was gone from Trevor's face. 'This place is just full of surprises... One after the other...' Cole thought as he started to make his way for the hotel.

Jason had already found his way back to the junior hunter that was being let off her job as part of the guard for the vehicles. Sandra allowed herself, for once, to leap into the werewolf's arms and make peace within his embrace. "It's been such a long day... How can these werewolves think of brawling at midnight when we've already had such a long and tiring day?"

"You should get some rest before dinner. This night is not going to offer you much sleep," he responded in a calm tone, taking in the scent of Sandra Alastair.

"Did you hear something I don't know of yet?" she asked him.

"Yes, I did... There are rogues in the reserve. I don't know what they are doing, but they have been in the reserve the whole day... according to Katie..."

"Katie's instincts on this kind of thing are sharp. She's right if she tells you there are hostiles in the reserve. How many of them?" Sandra asked.

"We didn't think to ask her that. How the hell is she supposed to know how many they are?" his voice went up at the bizarre question.

"Katie can know how many they are... I should have known this earlier and asked her at the beach," she responded, "I thought she was merely warning her sister to be careful, but now I realise what she meant by saying this night was going to be like the other one... She meant the one in Brigadia. When nearly a thousand rogues descended on the town of Brigadia and nearly cost her life."

"Hey, hey, calm down. You can think about all that later... After you've rested for a while. You're not as strong as she is and you know that, but you must be at your strongest if it comes to its worst. That's the only way you can be of help to her. You know how much she counts on you," Jason tried, "Besides, you know I won't budge on this... fighting me on it is just useless."

“You should have led with the last part. Just take me to my room already,” the girl sighed, pulling out of their embrace. Without noticing it, Jason brought his thumb to her face and wiped a tear off her cheek.

“You will catch up to her one day, but there has never been a shortcut to that kind of power and while that is true, you should constantly be aware of your limits,” he continued.

“You’re coaching me like you were hired as a replacement for my mentor,” Sandra chuckled.

“Well, until you decide to go back to being trained by your mentor, I will be standing in for her,” he puffed out his chest. Sandra could only laugh at his confidence... ‘If only you knew how weak you are in comparison to her...’

‘A few months ago, I would have agreed to that, but now... I’m not so sure...’ Jason’s voice rang through her mind. The girl had forgotten that they were still able to communicate through their minds and still had no idea what the answer to them having that ability was...’