

## Chosen 21

### Chapter 21:

Cole stayed still in a defensive stance from the hunter. If Katie chose to fight him at this moment, she would win without a second thought, there was no doubting the power she wielded. This hunter was the real deal, even scarier than most of the hunters that he had met up until this point. He continued to rack his brain for ways to get out of this trouble or at least some form of explanation in case things took a turn for the worst. How had Katie managed to find him? Had she been chasing him the entire time? No, that was not it, this did not feel like it... He had been afraid of the possibility of finding a number of rogues camping out in the woods outside the town, but now that Katie stood before him, that wasn't something to worry about.

"What's with you? You're shaking a..." Katie took a step forward, tripping on a stone so small it could have been dust before she descended heading for the ground with no sign of catching her balance. Cole rushed forward, putting his head beneath her such that she fell on him. Sparks went through his body on every spot on the wolf's body that she touched with her bare skin. The faint smell of wolfsbane hit his nostrils from her hands although it was not enough to make him cringe. He made a few adjustments, pushing the body of the half-asleep hunter upwards such that he could place her on his back. "Would you really... after..."

"Forget about it. Let's get you home, Katie, or at least what I call home. It's really late..." he said before starting the run back to the place they now called home. He felt like slapping himself for having feared her when there was nothing to be afraid of. Sandra was right. Katie was still Katie no matter what she looked like or how powerful she was. And that was what mattered, she was the one person that he felt something for. It was a faint feeling of affection for her that brought him to keep trying to find out more about her. He had never thought he would find out that she was stronger than him, however.

He jogged on till he was back at the hotel that the Royal family had booked for Jason, Caden and him while they studied here. They had booked a whole floor just for the three of them. 'Honestly, alphas had packs to run and they would rather send those two along with me to act as bodyguards,' he thought to himself, placing an unconscious Katie by a tree before he shifted back into his human form. The cellphone in his pocket flashed a notification that said he had twenty missed calls from both Caden and Jason. Dailing Caden's number, Cole called him to come to help him take Katie up to their suite.

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"So where did you say you found her?" Jason asked, whilst he looked at Katie's face on the couch.

"I found her something like five miles from the town. She was severely weakened by then and collapsed the moment she saw me," Cole explained from the kitchen while he poured herself a drink. Caden sat on the sofa opposite the one they had placed Katie in along with Ash who couldn't take his eyes off Katie.

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"What do you think she could have been doing that far out? Do you think she was attacked?" Ash asked.

"I doubt it. If she had been attacked there would be scratches or marks on her that showed that she was attacked, even if she was the one who ended up the victor, she would still have some kind of sign. She

was knocked out purely due to muscle stress and exhaustion. She has probably been pushing herself too hard for the past few days and now it has taken its toll on her,” Caden said voicing his opinion. Jason, on the other hand, had now switched to drawing funny pictures on her face along with writing words like, ‘I’m the strongest wimp!’ and phrases like that made Katie look like she was from a bullying situation.

“I wonder what she will do to you when she finds out you did that to her face,” Caden pointed out.

“I’ll just say Ash forced me into it,” he said.

“But I didn’t even...” Ash began.

“Oh, come on Jason, leave the boy alone. You have been making his life difficult since we came back,” Caden groaned.

“I was only messing around. How was I to know that he was taking everything I said seriously,” he denied.

“Okay, Ash, from now on. Do not listen to anything that comes out of that guy’s mouth. He is not the kind to get serious at any one point in his life. Sometimes, I wonder how he’s even an alpha,” Caden spoke, turning his attention to the new arrival. It was already coming to midnight and they were yet to catch some sleep. Cole had called on this meeting to discuss what had transpired that day.

Cole took a seat on the sofa that faced the television such that the four of them were on both sides of him and took a sip of his coffee before he began talking, “As we all know, we have been through quite a bit under only a few hours. The rogues attacked when we least expected it and something tells me the story runs deeper than random rogue attack. This was said to be the safest town, but I guess that reputation alone might be open to discussion. I found Katie far from here as you all know and I say she spends the night here since I am in no condition to take her to her house whose location I have no idea of.”

“Can we know what you were doing that far from the city boundaries yourself?” Jason asked him.

“Oh, yeah, that. Remember the scent I told you about on the day when I first...”

“Cole, I thought we talked about you...”

“I know, I know, Caden. I have been heard that my entire life. I just want to hope that she is still out there. It is not unheard of a second chance mate to appear once in a while,” Cole spoke indifferently. The scent that had been plaguing him was similar to something that had been described to him before, but he also had reason to believe it didn’t mean the same thing to him.

“That is true, but they don’t happen when you are still this young,” he replied.

“I don’t know guys. My wolf was excited... I couldn’t let the owner of that scent slip away from me and so I gave chase. They must have been moving too because no matter how much I closed the gap between us, they continued to evade me. Until the scent just went dark like there was nothing anymore. “Do you think that scent belongs to a rogue and Katie was in pursuit when you found her?” Caden asked.

“Yeah, but that doesn’t explain the rapid vanishing of the scent.”

“It is possible if the rogue had those pills on hand,” a small voice said in the room.

Cole turned to Ash, “What pills?”

“The ones we used to use to suppress our presence,” he explained.

“I had forgotten about that. Locking up your wolves, that must be hard on the wolves within you,” she said.

“Yes, that is true. Many of them died because their wolves simply wouldn’t let themselves be silenced. One is required to communicate with their wolf side before suppressing it otherwise, they will be plagued with a minimum of a huge headache and dizziness,” he explained, pulling his knees close to his chest and wrapping his hands around them, memories plaguing him while he remembered his form life.

“Hey, Ash, try not to think about it too much. You are safe now. No one is going to force you to do spy work anymore.” With that, he led the boy away from the living room and to his room to sleep. Something that the lot of them ought to have been getting.

“What happens to Katie?” Caden asked pointing at the unconscious hunter on the sofa.

“We’ll put him in my room,” she said.

“No argument there. Don’t get naughty though,” Caden said, lifting the hunter off the sofa and walking off with him in the direction of Cole’s room. Cole stayed in the same spot sipping her coffee, her mind moving back to a memory that had been trying its best to surface, but she had blocked it. Now she let the memory take over her.

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Cole was twelve years old when he was finally tired of hearing words of pity whispered behind his back about how he was mateless. It didn’t make sense to him that people would know such information about him when he was only twelve years old and it angered him every time he heard someone speak of it.

The morning of that day, he snapped during his morning training and a fight between him and one of the pack warriors broke loose. ‘None of them have a right to make a decision only the moon goddess can. It had taken three of his comrades to keep him from disfiguring the wolf’s face any more than he already had.

‘Why don’t you ask your father about this rumour? That should clear up your suspicions,’ Caden had told him. Apparently, this rumour was well known to be a fact all over the palace. Hearing this from Caden made his blood boil with anger. Nonetheless, he heeded his advice and began the walk to his father’s office on the fourth floor of the colossal Lycaon palace.

He didn’t bother knocking at the door and just burst in, his anger becoming somewhat hard to contain. “Father, I need to talk to you.”

His father looked up from the paperwork before him, taking in his son’s state and closing everything accordingly. “What seems to be the problem, Cole?”

“There is a rumour going around... something about me being... mateless,” the word was repulsive even as it rolled off Cole’s tongue.

“Well...” his father sighed, finally noticing the blood on Cole’s knuckles, “Now might be a good time as any... you might want to take a seat.”

“Just tell me if it’s true or not,” Cole yelled, a yes-no answer seemingly the only thing that could make sense to him.

“You aren’t mateless because that would mean the moon goddess did not choose a mate for you or that she decided you were not to have a mate,” he said.

“What are you not telling me, father?”

“Much as you aren’t mateless... your mate is... dead,” he reluctantly confessed, “I wanted to hold out from telling you for...”

“You can’t know that... I’m not eighteen yet. The moon goddess has not yet...”

“Calm yourself, Cole. The moon goddess revealed your mate well before you were born. The two of you, chosen by the moon goddess herself to bring forth the end of this war, but not everyone was too happy about that. A few nights after she was born, you as well, the two palaces were attacked by rogues. We were able to fend off the attack, but the girl was... killed,” he said.

“You mean, Katie Sirius, the daughter of the other Royal family that was killed when she was still an infant,” Cole asked, remembering a story one of the werewolves he heard was gossiping about.

“Yeah, Katie Sirius was meant to be your mate... I’m sorry, Cole.”

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## Chapter 22:

Cole remembered losing the energy to speak for days after that not being able to comprehend why something so cruel could happen to him. He trained from that day, growing and improving in all matters concerning war and running a pack. He put all his work into activities that could help distract him from what his father had told him that day.

The whole story was explained to him in detail along with proof and evidence of their claims presented. There was no falsified information and it was only a matter of time before he gave up hope on having a mate. As far as anyone was concerned, he was the one Royal who had no mate, a large misfortune for that matter. It meant that he would not be able to inherit the throne from his father and claim his birthright.

As a result, Cole found himself being pursued by daughters of alphas and betas. All trying to get ties into the Royal family. Some of them would even turn out to be rogues in disguise and would be executed immediately. Power, money, prestige... every single one of them had the same look in their eyes when they came up to him.

They all made him sick to the stomach each time they made themselves too familiar with him.

Cole got up from the sofa having finished his coffee and walked back to his room, his mind unwillingly going through the experiences that started to become more frequent after he turned sixteen. At some point, he would laugh at all the silly attempts that were made in an effort to gain his favour. The concept that was being exploited was that no one knew what the moon goddess based on in choosing a second chance mate or even when she did it. It became torture running away from his steadily growing fan club.

Caden and Jason would help when he wanted to be alone and distract them from him. This was partially why Jason ended up becoming as loose-tongued as he was today. The three had become best friends in almost no time growing up in the same schools. Their parents happened to be among the alphas that chose to stay closer to the Royals than most. They did not expand their packs to conquer large territories and rather just turned enough wolves to serve the Royal family. This was how the great dilemma the royals faced came to be solved since they didn't have the capability to create normal wolves.

Caden's loyal personality to serve the crown made him reliable and most of the time was taken to be somebody who wasn't capable of joking around regardless of what anyone who knew him said to prove otherwise. Jason, on the other hand, was much less uptight than Caden and would make the most of a situation if it meant getting a good laugh out of it. Surprisingly, with how loose-tongued he was, he denied all the girls that came to him when they noticed how close he was to Cole, and he turned down each and every single one of them. Despite his nature, Jason valued two things that he didn't let many find out about, that was the crown and whichever girl out there was blessed to be his mate. He might not have looked it, but he was willing to treasure his mate the moment he found her without any hesitation.

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Cole opened the door to his room, his mind snapping back to reality when the scent of someone else hit his nose. He spotted the overpowered hunter lying on his bed, sleeping like a rock. He walked up to her and adjusted her position such that she slept to one side in the most comfortable position he could think of for a hunter, a few crazy ideas running through his mind of funny ways hunters probably slept. 'What if she prefers to sleep upside down like bats?' He gave her sleeping form one more look before turning away. It wasn't unheard of for a hunter to wake up just because of the feeling that they were being watched in their sleep.

He slipped into the shower taking his time to savour the feeling of the warm water running through his hair and down his back before washing himself down. Silence filled the intricately designed hotel room; the lights were dim to allow someone to get sleepy naturally and for comfort to the sensitive eyes of a werewolf. Fatigue racked his body, his muscles screaming from the running he had endured in the short time that everything had transpired that day. "Where... am I?" Katie's voice came out low and weak capturing Cole's attention from the dressing mirror. She turned to the hunter that was stirring and walked up to him in the hopes that she was only talking in her sleep. Much to his dismay, Katie was awake although she clutched her forehead as though her life depended on it.

"Should I get you some painkillers?" he asked rushing over to the water dispenser in the room and getting her a glass of water along with painkillers from the medicine cabinet. Katie grabbed the contents from his hands and gulped them down without any resistance before lying back down on the bed.

"I don't think pain killers will cure this headache though."

"You could just say 'thank you.'"

"My bad... Hard to think of that when your head is trying to kill you. You could have waited till I recovered to suck the gratitude out of me," she said, chuckling at the end, "Where am I?"

"Isn't it obvious? You're at a hotel. In my room..."

"I'm in your room...? In a hotel? You know what... never mind my location. I need to sleep before I can be able to make any life-threatening decisions," she said, Cole, nodding his head humming enthusiastically to confirm every time she paused questioningly.

"Aren't you even a little bit worried about your safety or something? Your parents..."

"I trust you, Cole..." the phrase came out abruptly, shutting the Royal werewolf up and setting him on cloud nine, "I don't know why, but I do trust you. The Chase hunters follow their guts and mine allows me to even take my guard down around you. So I'm not worried about my safety. As for my guardians, I'll talk to them," she explained to him leaving him stunned by the reply. Katie was a mystery the more he got to know her and yet at the same time, she seemed simpleminded. She didn't let her emotions rule her or cloud her judgement and yet again, she treasured her emotions and took them into account when she was doing something. It was a combination that didn't seem to make sense which Cole found all the more intriguing.

"Wait, did you say guardians?" he tried asking, but she was already fast asleep, breathing in calmly and peacefully. She walked up to the bed and slipped into the covers beside her, his eyes scanning her face for much longer than he cared to admit. Her long silky black hair still smelled of forest which only proved how much she had been running through it. The temptation of forcing her eyelids open such that he could see her dark blue eyes grew ever stronger the more he stared at her. He turned away from her if only to reach out and turn off the lights, plunging the room into darkness. An image of his black wolf appeared in his mind, unyielding while it asserted its presence for a reason it did not provide.

His thoughts, a swirling mess of what a crazy day it had been. So much so that it felt so good to finally be going to rest after the day that he had just had. Right when he was about to fall into a deep sleep, he reached out and pulled Katie into his arms, making sure she faced away from him. Sparks went through his body distracting him. His wolf did not waste time taking control of him and holding Katie. Before he had the chance to panic, she leaned back into him... the last reaction he would have expected to come from her. 'There is something I'm missing here.'

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A third party watched them from a pond in her palace, her husband and mate having his arms wrapped around her, "Those two can feel the bond even when it is being suppressed that much," the man asked his wife.

"Seems that way... besides, it was a bond that was not made by me alone, but Prometheus as well... A bond that is meant to bring an end to all the senseless killing and suffering of our people," the moon goddess explained, leaning into her husband who then placed a kiss into the crook of her neck.

"That girl, however... Did she really need to be given so much power?" he asked her.

The moon goddess laughed at the question, "I've always been wary of humans for as long as they were in positions of power and over the centuries, we have seen humans fall because of things as useless as power, greed, lust and the likes of their despicable sins," she paused, "However, I have watched her from when she was a child. This girl is different... that much I know."

"I'm not so sure about that. She is still susceptible to emotions such as anger. You saw her earlier," her husband said.

"That is what I thought as well, but I want you to look at this one more time," she told him, waving her hand over the pool of water before them. The images changed to a point in the day when Katie had her hand around Ash's neck with her pinned against a tree.

"Yeah, that's what I was talking about," her husband.

"Take a closer look darling," she said to him. The man squinted at the looped images for a bit longer before his eyes widened in realization. He put his hand over the video, willing it to slow down and starting it just as Katie smashed Ash into the tree. Within the split second that the wolf's head was supposed to hit the tree, the hunter had put her hand between the back of the boy's head and the tree to avoid incurring any damage.

"But, how..." the scene before him was quite inconceivable, his mind was blank and continued to be so the more he tried to find answers to why someone would do such a thing even amidst all that rage. A further look at Katie's hand after the collision showed her knuckles dripping blood from the impact. "This human... is different."

"I'm glad you can see it now."

Chapter 23: x

Cole woke up in the same position as he had slept through the night holding Katie firmly in his arms like they were a couple. Sparks flew through his body once again making the decision of letting go and waking the hunter up even harder than he thought. "Katie," he whispered.

"Your breath is ticklish. I guess alphas are deep sleepers as well," she spoke up, her voice sounding like music to his ears. Cole did not understand what gave this hunter the charm or sway that she had on him and didn't know whether to take it as a good thing or a bad thing.

"What time is it?" he asked on realizing that Katie had been awake longer than he had been. Her voice bore no signs of someone who had recently woken up.

"Thirty minutes to the first lesson," she said.

"I guess I should let go of you now. Hope it wasn't an inconvenience in any way," he said, loosening his grip on her. In a swift rushed movement, Katie held his hands to stop their retreat and pulled them back.

"Just a bit longer... I like it..." she said, silence taking over the two, "Does it bother you?"

"No... It doesn't. Though it does confuse me that you're okay with this," he said before he could stop himself.

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“Same here...” she replied.

“Your scent is nice and by that, I don’t mean the perfume...”

This was regarded as a compliment in the werewolf community much as it was said that the scent that they found most appealing was the one that belonged to their mates. There was silence before she spoke up, “We should get going...” was all she said to break up the touching moment. Katie removed his hands from around her and walked into the bathroom. No matter how much Cole tried, he couldn’t get the feeling that he had done something bad off his chest. He knew she was a hunter and from what he had been told on how one’s mate was supposed to be identified, she didn’t fit the criteria. Why did he feel this way now?

“Two days to the Founders’ festival. You must be excited,” Katie said from the bathroom.

“I have no idea what that is about so I am just waiting to see for myself,” he replied.

“Well, it’s almost like a ball that Sandra forces me to attend every year,” she replied to him, raising her voice so that he could hear her well.

“Oh really, and do you enjoy it every time she drags you there?”

“Sometimes, but I get out when things start to get out of hand.” ‘What does she mean by out of hand?’ Cole thought. Thinking back to what Sandra had told her earlier, she could remember that she was not a fan once the dance started getting wild.

“So you don’t like having too much fun?” he asked.

“Sounds like someone already knows about my agenda,” a hint of suspicion lay in her otherwise calm voice.

“That obvious huh,” she had seen through his words almost immediately, probably it was because he hesitated before asking or simply because someone who knew nothing about it would have asked what she had meant by going crazy.

“Sandra won’t stop talking about that thing every year it comes about. That’s why I had the assumption that she had already told you about it,” she said.

“Yeah, that’s true. She did tell me, but then, why are you telling me?”

She coughed as though preparing a speech and began speaking like an obnoxious school prefect, “Well, I am the head hunter, aren’t I? It’s my duty to...”

“Cut the crap,” he cut her off, chuckling at her childish tone as she voiced her excuse.

“Never mind... I just remembered something that cancels the reason I had for starting this topic of conversation,” she said, stepping out of the bathroom while tying her hair into a high ponytail.

“Did you want to ask me to the dance?” he asked to which she nodded ‘yes,’ “Then what’s wrong with that?”

“I would have liked to take you to the dance honestly... that was my intention when I was starting this conversation, but I’m afraid... that day is the same as my birthday. I will be turning eighteen on that day



and my parents made it clear that I am to celebrate it home... something about a hunter initiation with the Chase family... Family traditions can suck.” Katie lied between her teeth throwing him off track. Her mind was a mess mulling over why she had gotten her hopes up in the first place. After that day, she probably wouldn’t be able to show her face ever again since her eyes would always be glowing blue.

“Oh, that sucks... I did want to ask you about the dance. I guess you could say you beat me to the punch,” he said, his voice dropping.

“So how about a counter proposal...”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Yesterday, we were supposed to hang out together after classes, but after everything that happened. There was no way that was going to work out, so I propose this. I am inviting you to a walk in the woods with me today evening,” she said, leaning on the threshold of the bathroom door, her hair nicely done and looking ready to leave. She had done the best she could do to tidy up before she could leave.

“What are you trying to do, Katie?” there was silence for a while. The expressionless face he kept pinned to the ground was proof that he was warding off her attempts, somewhat of a one-eighty kind of reaction. Katie had followed her instincts her whole life and never once had they betrayed her, so there was something else that was interfering with this and his sudden change in mood proved it.

“Just think about it for a bit,” she said, walking towards the door of his room, “thanks for everything. I owe you one.”

“What were you doing so far out of town, Katie?” he called back, freezing her just as she had opened the door to get out of the room.

“I was angry, so I ran and ran and ran and just kept on running...”

“That was reckless... you could have died. You could barely stand when I found you,” his voice was getting higher and higher.

“Oh, were you that concerned about me?” she turned back to look him in the eye, her mind going into a trance that very moment as she stared at him. Cole found that he couldn’t utter a word for a moment, his anger dissipating as well as he stared back into her deep blue eyes.

“Y-yes, I was... concerned. I was concerned,” he stuttered.

“Well, I’m fine now, thanks to you. Take care, Cole and think about my offer,” she said before vanishing from sight. Cole stayed still for a while before starting his own share of her morning ablutions. All the time he took as he prepared himself, he couldn’t get his mind off the thought of going out with the hunter. It was unlike him to behave like this. It was clear to him that his wolf was attracted to her, but the reason for that eluded him. She was a hunter for crying out loud.

Eventually, he managed to push all his thoughts to the back of his head and continue with what he had to do to get to school. He found Jason, Caden and Ash waiting for him in the living room, already dressed. “Someone slept well,” Jason said, smirking at him.

“You need a hobby, Jason.” They stood up with Jason laughing his heart out and walked out of the hotel and to the cars. “Did any of you guys see Katie leaving the building?”

“Yeah, apparently she knew her way around. For some reason, licensed hunters are allowed to stay in any hotel since that only means that the hotel will be a lot more secure that way, so she doesn’t get to pay for a damn thing. Everything is free for them,” Caden said, getting slightly irritated by that fact.

“Does it feel unfair to you?” Cole asked him.

“To some extent, it does, but when I think about it, it doesn’t. Humans are powerless in the faces of werewolves and the fear they have for them is only natural. It would not be surprising that hunters would then be valued that much.”

Cole was glad he understood that much although she could tell he was not done, “But that also means humans will never fully trust werewolves. It’s impossible to them and that doesn’t sit right with me. In some places, werewolves are even treated unequally. Not allowing them to participate in sports or even putting up werewolf fight clubs where werewolves are captured and made to earn their keep. It makes me sick thinking about it,” he continued.

“That is what the royals have been trying to put an end to in the past two centuries, but something new is always coming up. A way to show the people that werewolves and humans can be truly equal. My union with my dead mate was a plan that would have helped with that,” Cole replied to him, “but I guess the Rogue king wouldn’t let that just happen, now would he?”

The school finally came into view, Jason driving the car into the parking lot that had been reserved for it... something that, once again that his mother had insisted on when they were coming. The four of them got out of the car only to freeze at the sight of the school. The school had been lightly decorated with banners and balloons in a few places, just enough to announce a coming festival and still say that this was a learning institution. A huge banner at the top of the main front door of the main school building had the words ‘Founders’ Festival’ written in huge bold block letters. “Festival is in two days, but it already looks like they are setting up for it. I guess it is a big event after all.”

“The festival is on Sunday and since there is no school over the weekends, the school is designed on Friday to remind everyone to be in attendance on Sunday. That is why the decorations are made so early,” Ash explained.

“This isn’t your first festival, is it?”

“It is... I just read the brochure carefully, gathering all the information I could about the school before I got in. I had to be ready,” he said, reminding us of the days when he was a rouge on a suicidal mission to infiltrate the most secure school in the world. Now that he had actually infiltrated it, Katie was probably angered by the fact that she had not been able to detect them while they walked about in the same school that was at the top just because of her presence.

Chapter 24:

“Caden, take Ash to the principal and ask for his information to be altered such that it’s right and if there is any opposition, feel free to use my name. He is under my protection. Is that clear?” Cole said.

“Yes, crystal clear, since he hasn’t killed anyone yet, he is still innocent,” Caden pointed out before leading Ash away from them.

“So who are you going to take to the dance at the end of the festival?” Jason asked me.

"I haven't decided yet... and what do you mean by 'end of the festival,'?"

"Oh, you didn't know. The festival lasts a whole day. Students from different classes present projects and really important people attend the festival. If something is flashy enough, someone can get themselves a scholarship. It's one of the biggest events in the school, no, the city. Security is also tough on that day as hunters from the hunters' agency are hired to patrol the school and keep civilians out of trouble," he explained. 'Why would Katie miss an event such as that one?' the thought echoed through Cole's mind as they walked into the school. The bell rang for the start of the first lesson as they got in.

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Katie got home to get what it was that she would need at school. That included a bag of her books. Katie's parents did not ask many questions about where she had been considering there had been an attack the day before and instead gave her a new full bottle of pills. "Keep these on your person at all times," Uncle Tom said to her.

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"I can't do that. They are known now, the rogue that was put into a Prometheus evaluation. He passed it," her aunt gasped, covering her mouth. It was almost unheard of for a rogue to pass that test and this was big news.

"That must be a special wolf indeed. Or maybe... No, it's normal for a rogue to pass that test as long as they are determined to escape that life. Something must have inspired him to turn away from that life of darkness. He's lucky," Aunt Marie said.

Katie went to the kitchen and prepared a quick breakfast, her guardians following her expectantly, "So are you going to tell us what happened?"

"There was a lot of death in the air and the fact that the rogues that attacked us were all kids below eighteen years old. They were using the same pills that I have to conceal their presence in the school and pass for humans. They were spies for the rogue king. I wasn't able to find out exactly who they were as we just killed most of them," Katie began, telling them the entire story of how the wolves ambushed them and how he captured them. He told them about Shaemus' weird behaviour but left out his suspicions. Their reactions to that information were something she wasn't looking forward to and decided to withhold it while he carried out his own investigation.

She sipped her tea keeping her eyes away from their expectant faces intentionally leaving out the events of the rest of the night, "I can't say much more after that. I gave Shaemus a punishment of joining the night patrol of hunters for a week."

"So you are going to leave out everything else that happened, huh. It's fine... we just want to make something clear. We made some research, your wolf will come out gradually on Sunday and the pain of the transformation trying to force itself will continue to ravage you tirelessly. You have to keep your emotions in check through that time. A minor slip up could result in you biting someone's head off. By seven in the evening, you should be at the cabin deep in the woods where we have gotten the underground bunker ready to contain you during the transformation and through the whole night. There is no telling if you will go on a rampage when you shift, so that is a precaution that we are going to

have to take. I am hoping we can make it through the night and everything will be better in the morning," Uncle Tom said.

"Okay then, I will enjoy the festival until 6:30 that night and head straight here," she said to them and continued her breakfast. "Don't you guys have to go to work or something like that?"

"Yes, we do..." Aunt Marie said nervously, "but come on, you have to tell us something about what happened last night. Fine, at least just me, Tom can go away and leave to talk girl to girl."

"Since when is gossip a thing in this family?" Katie asked, her voice going up several octaves. This was new in this family... a thorough examination of the behaviour made sense. The Chase family was good when it came to following their intuition and this told her that they could feel something happened.

"I slept in the same bed as Cole Lycaon," this jaw-dropping news had both of her guardians stunned. Katie noisily sipped her cup of coffee for dramatic effect while she savoured the silence in the room. 'It doesn't get better than this...'

"Umm... where do we start? Why? How? When? All these questions are valid. Tell us everything..."

"You what?" someone yelled. This was when it was just registering in Uncle Tom's head that he was supposed to react to this.

"Honey, the moment passed... honey..."

"What do you mean in the same bed? You slept with him! Oh my God, you're only seventeen..." he began ignoring his wife's attempts at stopping him completely.

"And there he goes," Aunt Marie face-palmed while listening to her husband fly off the handle. There was nothing that could be said to snap him out of it now as she had already tried. She could only listen as Katie herself tried to correct him but fall into even more traps that her husband kept on setting, the story becoming more and more ridiculous the longer the ridiculously one-sided conversation dragged on.

"Did he break you? That guy is huge," Aunt Marie burst out laughing at that point. Katie's face was starting to turn red under the pressure of her harassing father figure. This was a trait that both females knew about quite well where he would choose a moment to attack someone using their words against them and spinning everything they said in favour of making the story completely repulsive and embarrassing. It was easy to eventually slip up and say the wrong words when he did this and when that happened it only helped in making the situation all the worse.

"I'm not continuing this," Katie started yelling while running to the sofa to pick up her bag pack, "It's because of you my coffee started tasting funny."

"Sweetheart, don't forget your phone," Aunt Marie reminded Katie amidst her now dying laughs.

"I got it, thanks."

"Get back here, we are still talking..." he yelled back at Katie before the front door slammed shut, "Katie... Katie... This conversation is not over."

“She’s gone honey,” Aunt Marie spoke up, her husband beginning his own series of laughs on the floor. His wife simply rolled her eyes at him, “You can be such a child, you know that.”

“I was only messing with her,” he tried amidst his laughter.

“Even after she tried her best to word her statement carefully,” she replied.

“Oh, come on, she set that trap for herself and you know it. There is almost nothing in the world at that point that could save her. I couldn’t pass up that opportunity....”

“You’re unbelievable,” she facepalmed walking past the counter and into the kitchen to wash up after Katie. It took some time before the laughter seized. Tom, however, did not stand up from his spot on the ground.

He simply lay their spread-eagled and spoke up, his voice low and serious, “You think she found out.”

“She probably feels the bond, but she doesn’t know what it is. The same applies to that Royal, otherwise, he would know what it was and tell her. The pills can’t block it completely, but the more they grow close to one another, the more feelings they’ll start to develop,” she explained.

“He could not have come at a more opportune time. She will need him in the days to come,” Uncle Tom said.

“That much is true. I could not have asked for a better turn of events. Our initial plan would have proved to be too much of a gamble, not to mention, it could have cost many people their lives,” she said.

“That’s true as well,” he confirmed. The two shared an untold secret of how they were meant to initially handle her transformation on her birthday that was more hectic. No one in the entire world had known that the coming of Cole Lycaon had been the biggest stroke of luck that had avoided the death of countless innocents.

## Chapter 25:

Katie got to school earlier than she expected. The perks of having an agility Prometheus gift really came in handy sometimes. She checked her watch before leaving the house and found that she had five minutes to the first bell. That was what made her choose a different path to get to the school and that was a path through the forest to avoid detection. She checked the classroom and found that Sandra and Kyle were not yet there. Cole and his alphas were also nowhere to be seen. There was only one more place she thought to check and that was the hunter’s pub in the cafeteria. This was where they spent their free time even when they came to school earlier than needed.

Sandra, Kyle, Cole and Jason were the people who occupied the pub when she came in. The four of them were engaged in deep conversation before they noticed her. “Good morning,” she greeted them before letting herself fall between Kyle and Sandra, putting her hands around them to brace herself.

“You aren’t light, Chase,” Kyle complained under her arm.

“Boy, you just need to start working out,” Katie said dismissed his complaints, letting him go just as well.

“Someone is looking happy,” Jason said, winking at her.

“You shut your mouth, wolf,” Katie narrowed her eyes at the witty alpha.

“What is he talking about?” Kyle was the first to ask.

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“No, don’t let me interrupt. What were you guys talking about before I got here?” Katie asked trying to get the focus off her.

“Kyle was asking about Ash. He was curious to know how Ash survived the evaluation,” Cole replied.

“That sounds like him anyway. Curious Kyle... You better ace the exams. With all you know, you should be able to get into the best university you can think of,” Sandra spoke up.

“I’ll do my best. You can’t blame me for wanting to know what happened after I was taken away against my will. I really wanted to see the Prometheus eval to completion,” he pouted.

“There was a big chance you were just going to be there to witness a death like all the others you had already witnessed. Speaking of which, were there any cases of trauma during the incident,” Katie asked Sandra.

“From what I could find out from my parents, there were only about seven cases. Some just fainted from being smothered within the crowd, but other than that, everyone was okay. They won’t be getting excited to go for another crazy day out any time soon. Not after what happened back there,” she reported.

Katie stayed silent for a bit before asking, “How long till the traumatized civilians get back to normal?”

“The doctors said it will take a minimum of three weeks and a maximum of three months in rehab given they aren’t exposed to such violence again during that time,” she said.

She took some time to think before sighing deeply, “We should get to class. I surely hope that was the last of the rogues that infiltrated the school. I don’t know what I’d do to the next one that I would find.”

“I don’t think anyone would make that mistake after watching you do something like that to their comrades,” Kyle said, closing his ever running laptop and packing up his bag.

“I don’t think we have the same lessons today, so I’ll just get going,” he said getting up with Jason, “Oh, one more thing Katie... your proposal. I thought it through and I’d like to you up on it.”

Katie’s thoughts froze on hearing him accept to spend the evening strolling through the woods, “Yeah, that would be great. I’ll... I’ll be there,” she stammered. ‘Where did my confidence go?’ she mentally screamed. Her mind soared through the number of possibilities that could happen on an evening stroll. Despite how alien the thoughts she soared through were to her, she wanted to stay within them. Some were as messed up as finding rogues in the forest and romantically taking them apart while others were as innocent as a walk that ended in the night where they simply stared at the night sky in each other’s arms laying cliché love phrases on each other quite thick.

The three friends stood still watching the wolves leave the cafeteria only because Katie was not budging an inch. Sandra waved her hand in front of her friend’s face, “Earth to Katie... what was Cole talking about?”

“Oh,” she snapped out of her trance to see Sandra before her, a look of suspicion on her face, “It’s nothing... just an evening stroll.” With that said, Katie began speed walking out of there... a strategy that Sandra could see through. Sandra quickly tackled her best friend.

“You are not running away from me after saying something that abrupt and juicy,” the two girls struggled on the floor.

“Let me go, Sandra,” Katie whined.

“No. I want gossip and you are going to give it to me,” Kyle could not stop laughing at the two as they struggled childishly on the floor. Katie soon stopped struggling and let Sandra restrain her.

“Fine, fine, I’ll tell you. Cole and I are going on an evening stroll,” she said.

“Oh, that’s it. So can I tag along?”

“Are you being serious? Of course not.”

“But Jason and Cad... wait, there won’t be Jason or Caden during that stroll... just the two of you,” Katie nodded to confirm her statement.

“Wow, that I did not see coming. What brought this on?” she asked.

“No idea... now can you get off me so that we can get to class?” Katie asked the girl who still had her pinned to the floor.

“Oh, sorry,” Sandra hastily got off her and helped her up.

“A royal, huh, that’s like up there,” Kyle began.

“Oh, shut it, Kyle,” Katie said jokingly, “That’s only a title. I’m still stronger than him... I think.”

“Well, when you have your weapons, then you are stronger than him, but I would doubt it if you were barehanded,” he said.

“Whatever you say boy wonder,” Katie replied, raising her hands in mock surrender. The three walked out of the cafeteria only to bump into two other people, one of which Katie didn’t want to see. The halls were empty at this time, classes have already started... and yet here these two were, Caden and Ash.

“This must be Ash,” Kyle said, his voice sounding a bit different from what it usually sounded like. Katie was compelled to look at him. She thought she noticed something of a glint in his eyes if only for a second.

“Yes, that is me. I know you already though I didn’t know who you were,” he said.

“Yeah, but I’m guessing you never know someone until they show their true colours. Katie was sure surprised to find out,” Kyle was spitting venom and doing his best to stay calm at the same time.

“That’s enough Kyle. I can fight my battles for myself,” Katie said, narrowing her eyes at Kyle, “Say something that can save you.”

“Stop bullying him,” Caden said pulling the yellow-eyed child behind him defensively, “I’m guessing you weren’t briefed on what he told us about the rogues he was working with. So I’ll say this before he gets

in more trouble with the teacher. Ash is under the protection of the Lycaon Royal family now and he has been cleared of all suspicion after agreeing to collaborate with the hunters and give them all the information available to him.”

Katie kept her eyes on the boy hiding behind Caden. This boy was too young to be a spy. What kind of person was the rogue king? Her expression finally softened. Ash posed her no threat whatsoever and was not at fault at all, “How old are you, Ash?”

Ash froze at the question, seized by the sudden change in the mood that was being directed towards him, “I’m... I’m fifteen,” he stammered.

“Well then,” Katie extended her hand out to him, “Welcome to Brigade high. You have nothing to fear here. Even Dexter is not allowed to bother you.”

Ash shook her hand, finally getting over his fear, “That was fast.” Katie chuckled.

“It’s expected... Ash is fond of you,” Caden said matter-of-factly.

“How come?”

“You’re the reason I made it through the evaluation,” he said, snapping the group into silence. Saying something about how the evaluation went was somewhat of a big deal considering the test was never the same and no one knew the conditions to pass it.

“That sounds fascinating. How am I instrumental in your current wellbeing?” he asked.

“You are the reason I was able to believe in a life away from the rogues. Without that, Prometheus deems the evaluation a failure. I was determined to turn over a new leaf because of the safety you have managed to put into this school and for that, I am truly honoured to have met you,” Ash explained. A short and touching speech that came from the heart. Ash couldn’t stop the tears that threatened to break free from his face once again. The smile on his face made it undeniable that he was overjoyed.

“There he goes again,” Caden chuckled, “You really are a crybaby, Ash, but no one holds it against you. I can’t imagine what you went through when you lived with the rogues.”

Chapter 26:

Katie sat in the classroom where she was supposed to attend her first lesson from in her usual seat. In this lesson, she finally got to sit with her best friend, Sandra by her side. Kyle sat ahead so he could focus on what was being taught in the class. He needed that more than these two did. The life of a hunter, if successful was already determined as long as they remained diligent in their efforts to attain the abilities needed to combat the rogues and keep the peace. As such, Kyle was required to remain attentive even though it was tempting to hang out with the hunters. Nonetheless, he was able to make excuses when it mattered.

Katie couldn’t shake the feeling of doom in the pit of her stomach. Something was badly wrong, but she couldn’t put her finger on it. The Chase family trained to never evade one’s intuition and Katie’s intuition right now was screaming trouble. More trouble than it did the day before, but the worst part of this was that she could not figure out what the feeling was trying to tell her.



She tried looking outside for nature to distract her but found nothing. She then turned to the best friend, "Is it just me or does something feel off today?" she tried asking.

"Maybe you are worried about the prisoner we still have," she pointed out.

"Why do we have a prisoner when the boy passed the evaluation?"

"Because the boy doesn't know everything we need to know," she replied, "so they kept the prisoner around for an interrogation so that they can see if they can dig up anything new."

"What do you mean by the boy doesn't know?"

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"The Rogue king sends all of the kids on missions that are different and they are supposed to retrieve different pieces of seemingly unrelated information which he can then use to decide his next move without even the spies knowing what it is that he is planning. As a result, the spies' main objective is to obtain the knowledge that is required of them," she explained.

"So that means..."

"Katie Chase..." the voice of the teacher alerted her, stopping the conversation in half. She looked at the teacher who beckoned for her to look at the door. Principal Brown stood at the entrance of the classroom clad in a black suit looking as regal as he could manage. Katie got up from her seat and walked to the door to speak to him.

"Follow me, Chase," he said. She excused herself from the class urging the teacher to go on as she followed Principal Brown. The principal led her out of the main building, keeping quiet the entire time they walked. Katie could tell where they were going yet until she noticed the infirmary. There didn't seem to be a reason why she would be going there and her mind couldn't figure out why. Remembering the events of the past day only made her feel like she was in more trouble than she out to have been in. They walked past the infirmary and went straight to the teacher's parking lot. A secluded parking lot that was much farther from the school entrance than the main one, which didn't make it ideal, even for the rulebreakers who wanted to use it just for the sake of breaking the teachers only rule.

The Principal walked by to her black Cadillac and opened the passenger seat for her to get in. There was no questioning him with the look he wore on his face. Katie got into the massive car and waited for him as he circled around to get to the driver's seat.

They were soon on the road driving at eighty kilometres per hour in pure silence. "Are you going to tell me where we are going?" she asked him after some time in the silence.

"We are going to the detention centre, the Hunter detention centre," she said. There could only be one reason why I would be summoned there and that was because of Shaemus. Hunters in wrong would be sent there and punished accordingly, sometimes interrogated.

"What did Shaemus do now?"

"Just stay quiet until we get there. You will know soon enough," Principal Brown had never worn this kind of expression. It was like he didn't know what to make of what he had found out and that nothing

made sense. He gripped the stirring wheel so hard that his knuckles were turning white. This was only making Katie more and more nervous by the minute.

They finally reached the Hunter's Agency, a colossal facility that occupied a few acres of land. This was where most of the hunter activities took place and it acted as a base for the pro hunters that protected the town. As Katie entered the gate with Mr Brown, she couldn't help but feel uneasy with the eyes that were staring at her. No one greeted them as they went through and they were even permitted to skip the security check.

Katie tried waving at a few of them, but they would all turn away. Mr Brown finally brought her through to the three-storey building that served as the detention centre. Regardless of how big the building looked, it was partitioned into only twenty identical rooms, eight on each floor. The walls of the building were reinforced with concrete and the doors were made of steel. This was to prevent hunters with Prometheus gifts of strength from escaping. It was rare for a hunter to be guilty of a crime, but once they were suspected, there was a system for clearing their names and this was where they would put them to prevent them from making any further wrong decisions.

Shaemus now qualified to be in one of these cells although he did not possess the Prometheus gift it was meant to withstand. 'This is overkill,' Katie thought as the two walked into the building and went straight for the stairs. The corridor went straight through the middle with four rooms on each side, more like cells. Nonetheless, each cell came with a bed, a reading table and a toilet. The reading table was also meant to hold books and novels of the hunter's choosing to pass the time while their issue was being handled.

She finally got to Shaemus' cell on the first floor. The guard who had come with them immediately started fumbling with the keys to open the cell. "Shaemus said... that you were the one who organized that whole fight and made sure he took the blame for everything," Principal Brown said, the words rolling off his tongue slowly. Before Katie had a chance to react, the guard pushed her through the door and slammed the door shut behind her. She rushed back to the bars that did not allow much visibility of the outside. "Hey, what is this?" she yelled.

"Talk to Shaemus. Maybe you can help us make sense of this. We'll be back in an hour to see how much progress you will have made," with that said, they left. The sound of their receding footsteps proved this was no joke and that they were serious.

"EXPLAIN THIS TO ME RIGHT NOW. WHY AM I BEING DETAINED?" she yelled, rage flowing through every vessel in her body while she did so. 'This is an outrage. They know who I am. I have no time to waste in detention,' her thoughts rumbled in fury. She punched the door, making sure to add some added power of the strength Prometheus gift to it. She continued to punch the door, making it scream on its hinges and sending the vibration through the entire cell. The door was sturdy and would not budge one bit.

"That won't help," a voice startled her out of her rhythm. A voice she knew all too well. She slowly turned to see Shaemus lying in the bed face up with, book in hand. He looked comfortable in the bed and for once, Katie could see the same look in his eye that he used to have before he started causing chaos at the school.

"If it isn't the reason I am here," she said to him.

"I'm sorry about this. I really needed to talk to you," he began.

"Oh, quit it. You knew there was going to be an attack at the clearing, didn't you?" Katie asked, a hint of anger in her voice.

"Could you keep your voice down? The walls have ears," he spoke in a hushed tone. Katie held back on her next outburst so that she could hear the junior hunter out.

She pulled the chair from the reading desk and took a seat leaning forward with her chin on her hands, "What is it that you can tell me?" she asked him.

"You make this easy so quickly, but I'm glad. Thank you," he said.

"Just cut to the chase."

"My mother is missing." He said, keeping quiet to let it register in her mind. Shaemus was a child to a single mother who was a hunter. His father had died in a mission to a location that they believed to be the Rogue King's hideout, but it had turned out to be wrong information and a bomb went off when they arrived. The rogues had then come in and killed all the survivors of the bomb blast. A merciless ambush that only fueled the hunters' hate towards the rogues even more.

"I'm listening," Katie said to him, going silent to allow him to explain the whole story. The reason why he'd been acting so much out of character.

Chapter 27:

"It was about a week ago. My mother went missing, but before I could say anything to the Hunter Agency, they called me. They showed me proof of my mum being alive, a live video of her strapped to a chair and gagged. Her vitals were also being monitored. She was at their mercy and they had her bound in chains strong enough to withstand a Prometheus gift. That only told me that she had been ambushed or tricked since her gift is agility. My hands were tied... they warned me not to get any crazy ideas because they had ears everywhere. I didn't know what they meant at first until they started telling me things that I alone was supposed to know.

My last option was to hope that your intuition was good enough to pick up on everything that was going on. I was told to put on a good show and persuade a large turnout at the Hunters' training ground. I didn't want to, but what choice did I have. Any form of bad acting and my mother would be dead. I had to cause a commotion and lead a large number of civilians..." he couldn't stomach what he was saying at this point.

"Keep going Shaemus. As long as it's your mother involved, I can overlook everything you did, nobody died," Katie said.

"You might be able to overlook it, but I can't do that so casually when even now they still have my mother and might only be waiting to give me more orders that I'll have to carry out. I can't keep going for much longer, Katie," Katie could shake the feeling of relief and pride for her comrade. As much as he was in pain at the moment, she was only happy that he was still himself... as self-righteous as he had always been.

"Continue, Shaemus," she told him.

“When we got to the clearing, I wanted to find a way to tell you. The rogues were going to attack and I knew it, but I couldn’t tell anyone. The only person I could trust in the entire school was you and simply because you are a pro hunter. That speaks for itself though I didn’t know that you were a pro hunter until an hour before our meeting in the clearing. My last resort was to burn down the five minutes you gave me, wasting up all my energy, using it to try and relay the one message that I couldn’t relay to you,” he explained, chuckling at the end, “you have such a great intuition. I could see it in your eyes, the caution. The feeling that something was not right and all I needed to do was to help you confirm it.”

“Do you really think they have spies that are always watching us?” he said.

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“To prove it, they organized a meeting with one of them, a student in our same class passing as a human. There was no way I could tell that he was a rogue. Even as the student stood in front of me claiming to be a rogue, I couldn’t help but laugh at him like it was some sick joke. That was... until he punched my gut,” he closed his eyes cringing at the enemy, “that skinny boy packed a punch. I know superhuman strength when I see it. I just never thought it would one day hit me and not to mention from a fellow student. From that moment, everyone in the school was a suspect. I had no idea how many they were or who they were. There was even a possibility of being friends with them. The perfect infiltration, they called it.”

“I met one of them. He went through a Prometheus evaluation and passed. He was just a child of fifteen years that I had saved the day before from Dexter. They are able to conceal their presence by suppressing their wolves using some pills. The downside is that the pills only work until they turn eighteen. Quite repulsive if you ask me,” Katie said.

“That boy was still young. He is bound to have less information than the others who have been there for months. Rumour has it that some of them have been there for years,” he said.

“The boy said the seven of them were all that were there and we killed them. I’m hoping he was at least right in that aspect. I have one question though. Why did you choose me?”

“I trust you, Katie. I have been put through hell in the past week. Of all the lessons that you taught me back then, one seemed to come back to me and that was trusting my intuition. The only person I could feel safe handling this information with no chance of being a spy was you. I just had to find a way to get the information to you without risk of anyone hearing us. And the only way that I could do that...”

“Was to frame me and have me brought here so that we can talk about this in private,” Katie finished the statement, the entirety of Shaemus’ logic finally settling into her mind. She couldn’t blame him for trying to save his mother, but she also couldn’t deny the fact that he still went through with the plan with no knowledge of how many of the rogues would be attacking.

“Exactly... I’m glad I could at least tell someone about it. It’s been killing me,” he laid back into the bed breathing out a heavy sigh of relief.

“Did they tell you why they wanted you to gather a group as large as that one?” Katie asked.

“No, they didn’t. They would only say that they wanted the school to get a bit more interesting, but that was a lie, obviously. I came to the conclusion that they were planning an attack on the civilians that I would gather on that day. Once again, I’m sorry for the trouble I caused you,” he said.

“It’s okay... my only aim right now is to get all the facts right and make a full assessment of how much infiltration they went through,” Katie said, “I still wonder why you went through with it. What if they were more of them that attacked us?”

“Even if they were more, they weren’t going to attack at once with a Royal, three alphas and a pro hunter on the scene. I don’t know what their goal was, but it was suicide to attack. One other thing I noticed is that they always kept their numbers a mystery like they were many. This could have just been a smokescreen to keep me paranoid about how they were everywhere. The more I thought of it, the more I saw the chances of the civilians surviving,” he said.

“You call it survival when some of them are in rehabilitation because of the trauma they went through. In that commotion, it was very possible for them to die just from being trampled in the fray,” Katie snapped at him. Shaemus closed his eyes, a painful expression gracing his face.

“I am not saying I justify what I did... what would you have done in my shoes?”

“You and I are very different people... especially when it comes to our power difference. That said, I’d probably hunt down the Rogue king. Something tells me he doesn’t stay too far from the spies he wants to actively control like this. At the rate with which they are receiving orders, he can’t be far,” she surmised.

“Couldn’t he be giving the orders through a phone?”

“That would be a convenient way to do it, but phone calls can be tracked and listened to. If anyone caught wind of a phone call that revealed their plans, his plans would be ruined,” she said.

“You make a valid point, but what you are suggesting is...”

“The Rogue King is not far from here. He could be hiding in a hidden compound deep within the forest well out of hunter territory. And if I am merely overthinking it, he could be in town hiding in plain sight, that is if he found some way to mask his scent from every werewolf in the vicinity,” She said.

“That would be a difficult task to achieve. If suppression of a wolf only works for underage werewolves as you said, it would be hard for him to mask his presence, not to mention the fact that he is among the high ranking wolves,” he said. It was good to see that he could still reason even under all that guilt. The look was good on him, even after that, why couldn’t she wipe the feeling of terror from her mind.

“Something is bothering me and won’t let go of me,” she said before she could stop herself.

“You mean like...” Shaemus was stopped when the rushed footsteps of someone running broke through the silence of the Detention Centre. Keys rattled along with the sound of the footsteps. The person was getting closer to their door. Katie checked her watch and it had only been thirty minutes since she was locked in and not an hour. Her feeling of dread got even more pronounced the closer the person came. She got up to her feet, her body shivering with the urge to get moving. After jiggling the keys into the keyhole frantically, the door swung open, a guard tumbling into the cell and dropping to his knees,

completely out of breath that he could not speak even if he wanted to. Someone needed Katie's help and she wasn't going to make it in time...

Chapter 28:

Ash sat in the slowly emptying classroom trying to complete the work that had just been handed to them by the teacher. Catching up when one was actually trying to live a decent life wasn't as easy as it sounded, but it was better than having to be on high alert every time in your life and making sure to take pills that hide who you are

Remaining suspicious of everyone around you for probably knowing your secret and making sure to act natural while you lived with people that you knew were your enemy. Living that life was hard, although getting out of it didn't seem to be something that was easy.

Some of his friends that found out about him immediately unfriended him while the ones that sympathized remained close to him even though those were also cut in half when they were threatened to be alienated just like he was. Nonetheless, he did not mind any of that. He had been initiated into the Lycaon pack and was finally feeling a sense of belonging that beat the fake friendships of high school. He continued writing, slowly losing track of time as the students got out. Soon the class was empty and he was the only one there. His sensitive ears picked up on the silence. He was happy to get to feel his wolf's presence without fear of it being suppressed again.

Footsteps got his attention prompting him to raise his head to look at the door as someone entered the classroom. He sighed in relief when he recognized who it was. Someone he knew and could trust to have his back. "Someone looks jumpy," the newcomer said.

"Yeah, I'm still a bit jumpy. It will pass... that much I know."

"I wouldn't be so sure. How is the work going?" something seemed odd about the person talking to Ash. He wasn't the type to just walk around alone.

"Can I ask what..."

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"You don't get to ask anything..." the tone changed into one that was cold and hostile, "not after betraying us like that." The smell of wolfsbane was the first to hit Ash's nose before his breath was cut off. Ash's assailant stood holding a blade covered laced with wolfsbane, one that dripped blood that was stained purple from the poison having slit Ash's throat in the blink of an eye. Ash's body fell to the ground and started to convulse and release more blood. With his throat cut the way it was, he couldn't make a single cry for help. The killer had made sure to make this quick and quiet. "You know it doesn't even matter if they find you. I'll be out of here real soon and by the time they find out... well, I'll be long gone."

The assailant threw the blade out the window and walked out of the classroom like nothing had happened, counting on the sick odour of the wolfsbane to keep the wolves away before they could smell the blood. He couldn't help the smirk that formed on his face and the feeling of satisfaction on getting rid of a traitor and in turn causing so much trouble for the hunters and the Lycaon pack. 'Oh dear Katie, I

wonder what you will do now. I'm practically dying to know,' he relished his sadistic thoughts, his heart devoid of all feelings of remorse...

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Cole sat partially attentive to the math teacher and partially trying to think of different ways to make the evening one to remember. That was right before the sharp pain in his chest hit like a hurricane. He cringed at the pain and put his head on the desk trying to figure out what it was that was ailing him. Caden noticed his master's condition and asked, "What's wrong?"

"I don't know... pain, unbearable pain in my chest. Like something's been severed," he said. Caden stood up from his seat in such a hurry that it caught the attention of the entire classroom.

"Mr Caden, if you have a question... Mr Caden, Mr Caden, get back here," Caden was out of the classroom before anyone could stop him, his nostrils flaring, looking for the one scent that mattered to him in the school other than Cole's. He ran down a few stairs before the repulsive smell of wolfsbane hit his nose. He almost turned to go back when the scent of blood mixed into the one of wolfsbane. It wasn't just any blood though, it belonged to the person he was looking for.

"Cole, get out of the classroom right now. Something terrible might have happened to the new pup," Caden said through the mind link. His body was frozen in place, a feeling of dread taking over him. Cole emerged from the classroom staggering, the teacher following behind him.

"If you needed to go to the infirmary, you could have just said so," the teacher yelled in exasperation.

"This has nothing to do with my medical condition. Get back to the lesson," Cole said to the teacher in an authoritative tone, "and excuse my other comrade to come with me." The teacher rolled her eyes in disbelief and simply walked back into the classroom. Seconds later, Jason came out and helped Cole walk, catching up to a frozen Caden at the staircase.

"Hey Caden, what's with the..." his question stopped halfway when the scents got to him as well. An alpha would be heavily weakened if it didn't know the cause of the feeling of loss and this was what was happening to Cole right now. Caden knew what the pain he described meant which allowed him to make the suspicion that Ash was in danger, but now he stood frozen unable to continue for fear of the reality that his mind kept trying to prepare him for.

"Caden," Cole's voice had a hint of anger to it, "stop wasting time."

The message was clear in his words and was enough to get Caden moving again. He ran ahead allowing Jason to lead Cole there at his own pace. The scent was impossible to miss and soon enough classes were werewolf students were starting to run out of the classes away from the source of the smell. Panic was taking a bit longer to set in which worked well for Caden since he was able to go through the hallway before it filled up with panicking students. Unfortunately, this also meant that the culprit had all the time in the world to make a swift getaway.

He finally found the classroom that was supposed to be the smell was thickest and got in, his hand on his nose. He turned to face the back of the classroom and froze at the sight before him, his body began to shiver in rage, fear and loss. Emotions that, up until now, had never been invoked at the same time at such a magnitude. Ash lay in a pool of blood, his eyes lifelessly staring up like he was looking at the

someone towering over him. the smell of wolfsbane originated from a slit in his neck that ran across his throat. He wouldn't have been able to scream for help with that kind of wound. He also didn't know how to mind link since he was only recently a pack wolf. 'Who would do such a thing?'

"Did you find the source of the blood?" Cole's voice came in strained through the mind link.

"Yes, alpha, I found the source of the blood," he said.

"You rarely refer to me as your alpha... What happened?"

"Just get here... and see for yourself," Caden's voice was completely empty of all emotion. All he knew was anger and a strong sense of revenge. It took everything he had to keep himself rooted to the spot on the ground. He wanted to hunt down the person that had committed this heinous atrocity and end their lives in the most creative and painful way he could think of.

A little over a minute after talking to Cole, he turned up with Jason, "Damn that scent is thick in here," Jason said, his voice sounding, "Hey, Caden, is this..."

"Is this supposed to be some kind of joke? If it is, then it's not a funny one..." Cole spoke, his voice spelling danger.

"That pain in your chest is what an alpha feels when they lose a pack member..." Caden spoke, "Ash... is dead," the three of them shared the same thoughts of murderous intent as they stared at the dead body of the fifteen-year old that they had only recently taken into their custody. Memories of Ash's innocent smile and crybaby nature only helped to fuel their anger.

"He was innocent. He was only a child," Jason was about to start rambling.

"Stop speaking in the past tense. It doesn't help quell this rage," he said.

The first people to arrive were Sandra along with some of the teachers. Katie was nowhere to be seen in the group of people that came. Sandra steeled her face and made a call to the Hunter Agency to tell them of what had just transpired within the school. There was an uncomfortable silence for some time before the sound of sirens could be heard in the distance, however, they were not the first to arrive.

No one noticed how or where she passed when getting in. Katie just appeared frozen at the front of the classroom, her body shivering with fear. Sweat beaded her forehead and stray strands of her hair stuck to her face. To the werewolves, she still had an overwhelming scent of the forest with her which showed she'd been running. 'Where is she from?' thoughts originated from the three werewolves as well as Sandra. Sandra had noticed her leave with the principal, but she did not know where exactly she had gone.

One more thing that caught their attention was Ash's hand. In his own blood, using the last of his strength, he had endeavoured to write something on the ground but wasn't able to finish. His energy had only allowed him to write one letter. The letter, 'K'...

Chapter 29:

Caden turned to the new arrival in the room, pure rage driving him through his next actions. This one gesture raised a lot of questions... The one person that Ash was infatuated with was Katie and it seemed less than likely for a dying person to try and write the name of their loved ones rather than their killers.



The first person that came to mind when he saw the name was that of the person that stood before him right now. Each passing thought seemed to convince him more and more that he was staring at Ash's murderer. His need for justice was beginning to cloud his judgement even though no one could blame him for his suspicions.

Ash had been killed with a poisoned knife and his throat had been skillfully cut to make it so that he bled to death without uttering a single word of help. Not to mention the only person Kyle would have trusted to get that close to him with a weapon in hand would have been Katie as well. Everything seemed to point directly to her. The weapon that had been used as well as one that only Katie was authorized to use in the school.

Katie soon noticed the malice that was directed towards her and spotted the letter that was written on the floor. From the look in Caden's eyes, there didn't look to be a way for her to calm him down and allow normal conversation. "Does this look like something that could happen in the safest school to you?" Caden asked her, his voice shaking with anger.

All of Katie's work to promote peace in this school and bring about a sense of safety was shattering right before her eyes. The mass panic that she found in the corridors proved that. Considering the reports on werewolf casualties in the school being more than humans, there was going to be an uproar of chaos when it was revealed that a werewolf was killed within the walls of Brigade high school. Katie's mind worked on summing up how much she was supposed to deal with that she didn't manage to notice the fist that connected with her jaw a second later.

Katie hit her back hard on the whiteboard at the front of the room, falling down into a crowd. Her jaw pulsed with pain from the impact of the blow Caden had delivered, snapping her out of her thoughts. "Are you messing with me right now?" Caden asked, his voice low and dangerous.

"I won't let it slide the next time you try to hit me," Katie said. She walked right past him and up to Ash's body, using two fingers to close the boy's eyes. "Damn it, Ash. What were you trying to say?" Cole was astounded by her level of confidence that it only seemed logical that she wasn't the killer. Come to think of it, there was nothing she would gain from killing the boy. As far as Cole had noticed in the past days, Katie did not prefer violence and kept it to a minimum. Her fight with Shaemus spoke for itself.

"Where were you, Katie?" he asked, his voice coming out hoarse and almost inaudible.

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"I was... at the Hunter's Agency..." she said, "I'm afraid we might not be in the clear yet about there being rogues in the school that are suppressing their abilities."

"You expect me to believe a rogue killed him when wolfsbane is thick in the air and the precision of the cut is no doubt something of a master's job. Not to mention the letter he's written on the floor..." he said inquisitively. The pain in his chest was beginning to subside although it still felt like he had lost something within him and hurt like hell to even think about it.

"Your suspicions are your own right. I can't blame you for lashing at any conclusions in your mind so that you can seek justice for the crime that has been committed today. While you have lost your pack member, I have lost everything that I've been building since the day I set foot in this school. I'm only remaining calm so that I can keep a level head while carrying out an investigation on this. And when the

time comes that I find Ash's killer... I'll put him through more hell than he can imagine," Katie's voice was getting shaky towards the end, allowing the listeners in the room to get a sneak peek into the rage that boiled deep within her.

"Katie..." Caden called, his hands still balled into fists. This was hard on all of them and he had been the first to act out of pure emotion rather than reason, "I'm sorry I hit you."

"It's okay... I'm just surprised you have already ruled me out of this considering he wrote the first letter of my name with his dying breath."

"I can't deny that it points to you more than anyone else that I know, but..." he paused, taking in a deep breath, "it also doesn't make sense for you to kill someone as innocent as Ash. And for that, I will hold off on any suspicions that I have against you until we have more information."

The paramedics finally made it to the room and got to work on bagging the body accompanied with everything entailed in their job descriptions. The five students stood aside and watched in silence as the body Ash's body was put on a stretcher and carted away.

When the stretcher was just about to pass by them, Cole placed his hand on it stopping its further progress. "When the autopsy is finished, the body is mine," Cole spoke, his voice low while he said it.

"Do you happen to be part of his..." the paramedic stopped when Cole stared him straight in the face, "Never mind Mr Lycaon, we will give you a call when the autopsy is done," With that, he let them leave with Ash's body.

A sudden silence from the commotion snapped everyone out of their thoughts. A sole set of footsteps stood out in the silence. A few moments later several people could be heard moving through the hallways. The first person to come through the door was a tank of a man. The man dressed in sleeveless black leather clothes, an unbuttoned jacket similar in design to the one that Katie owned except that it could easily be twice the size. On the inside of the jacket, he donned on a thin black shirt that did not hide a thing about his physique. The leather trousers that he wore just seemed like overkill with the bad boy outfit.

Katie greeted the man with a slight bow of the head. This was a gesture that registered deep into the minds of the werewolves. The man spelt trouble in each step he took. The others that escorted close behind him almost meant nothing in the suffocating presence and authority that came off him. It was clear that he wasn't a werewolf and yet...

"Meet Sir Anthony Richards... the head of the Hunter Agency," Katie made the introduction as was required of her in a situation where the three wolves could easily get her into trouble.

"Thank you for the introduction, Chase. Report..." his commanding voice came out booming. Katie flinched a little. She would have expected to be used to his tone by now, but it was like he yelled louder the next time he did it.

"I only just arrived sir, but I will relay what I know of the situation. The werewolf that passed the evaluation yesterday was murdered by what seems to have been a blade laced with wolfsbane. I have not yet found the weapon that was used..." she froze up, unable to continue with the rest that was not confirmed.

“Well, considering you were the first to leave the Hunter’s Agency when you got the news, you should have seen more than that,” he said.

Katie clenched her fists in anger... “I was only gone an hour... How was I to know that the enemy would use a window that small to commit a murder?” she said, her voice low.

“Do you think you would have stopped this enemy if you had been around?” the man asked.

This was a question Katie could not answer... Her mind was a mess, anger trying to cloud her thoughts. The white wolf that faintly strained to act on her anger did not help soothe her anger at all. She had to figure out a way to figure this out.

When Anthony noticed he was not getting an answer to his question, he called one of the hunters that were behind him. “Tell Principal to check the cameras at the entrances and exits in a two-hour span of this incident. Make sure to make a detailed recording of the names of every student with a roughly suspicious movement during that time so that we can narrow down the suspects,” he said.

“Do you really think a student is the one that did something like this?”

“After what we witnessed yesterday with Shaemus creating a diversion that risked the lives of nearly five hundred civilians, I can even suspect a helpless baby,” he told the hunter. With that said, the hunter left, walking quickly to relay the order. “Chase... I want you to keep it together.”

Chapter 30:

The order was as impossible as it could get. Cole wanted to punch the man in the face for asking someone that was supposed to be grieving to keep it together. It sounded preposterous when he said it. “I’m trying sir...” Katie said. This was a reaction the werewolves did not expect. It came as illogical to them for someone to ask something so heartless when they were faced with such hardship and Katie’s reply was all the more peculiar.

“That won’t cut it, Chase,” he yelled louder at her. Cole started to get angry at the sight of him. This, however, changed when he saw what Katie did next.

Katie closed her eyes and took in three deep breaths allowing her mind to settle, bottling up all thoughts of the death and emotions like a trained hunter was supposed to be capable of. The effects of the anger started to leave her body. The white wolf retreated into the back of her mind clearing the fog that had plagued her since she got the news of the death.

When Katie opened her eyes, they were as clear as they had been that morning before the tragedy. “Yes, sir...” she said once again. Her voice was confident this time and she looked the man in the eye with a newfound determination. The formerly shaky voice and trembling that plagued her body were gone in an instant.

“It’s that easy?” Cole asked her. What they were doing was simply trash to him and he did not approve of it.

Katie glanced his way, a small smile showing up on her face, “Yes, Cole, it’s that easy,” she said before walking out of the room carrying herself as calmly as someone who didn’t care one bit about the person that had just been murdered in front of her.

Some of the hunters got to investigating the crime scene while others handled crowd control in the school, trying to heal the commotion that was constantly rising in the vicinity. Sandra got to the ground, slamming her fist onto the ground in an effort to seize her nerves. The director of the Hunters' Agency stayed seated on a desk watching the hunters at work. He noticed Sandra's gesture and smiled a bit, "Keep at it, Cadet. You'll get there."

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"Do you lose your humanity when you become a pro hunter?" Cole asked.

The man huffed at the question, "Is that what it looks like to you? Well, the short answer would be yes, but the long one wouldn't be as simple."

"That doesn't make sense," he said. He could only keep his palms balled into fists to help him contain the storm within him and yet Katie was already calm like nothing had happened.

"Well, to put in the easiest and shortest explanation, not everyone has the luxury of giving in to their emotions. The person that I would say is most affected by this tragedy is Katie, but that's just my opinion. After this, the title of safest school will surely move on to the next school in line. If things get even more out of hand when this information spreads, the school will then be shut down for further investigation. Death is death... a murder is a murder... there is no way to justify that. The common report was that werewolf casualties in this school were more than the human casualties. It is also known that this also happened when Katie showed up.

Something that only meant that the hunters here were good at restraining the werewolves was giving the school prestige, but that can easily be flipped into a story much darker... and Katie is at the centre of it. The only way Katie can get out of this is if she finds the truth behind this death, otherwise, she is looking at spending time in the most secure hunter detainment facilities. Her reputation in the hunter society as the one hunter that was granted both gifts stands untarnished, but you can't tell that to the general public now, can you? She will do everything she can to get to the bottom of this... and emotions are merely standing in the way of that," he finished his explanation.

Cole had not thought that far ahead about her situation and neither had Caden and Jason. Sandra, on the other hand, was angry about something completely unrelated. "How can I be so far behind?"

"Calm down, Cadet. That's no way to catch up to your master," Anthony said, lowering his voice for the first time.

"Don't you think I know that? I've been telling myself that for the past thirty minutes, but nothing I'm trying is working. How does someone avoid..."

"By going through the procedures that one is taught without fail. Discipline, Sandra and persistence... Do not falter in your determination..." Sandra struck the ground one more time with her fist, this time drawing blood, an internal battle that was clear to everyone in the room raged on in the junior hunter.

"I will catch up to you, Katie. No matter how far you go," she said before standing up, her anger dissipating all at once.

"That's more like it... You really want to catch up to her that bad, huh?" the director asked.

“We grew up together, training hard. She progressed extraordinarily fast. While I asked her to try and relax, she was driven and determined to get stronger. I couldn’t tell where she got her determination from, but it was clear that she was leaving me behind. By the time I even tried to keep up, she was advancing at such a high speed, it was unbelievable. She graduated not long after, we were only fourteen when she graduated with both Prometheus gifts in her possession, something that was almost unheard of.”

“Almost?” Cole asked.

“Yes, almost... It’s been done before... the head of the Chase family, for example, has both Prometheus gifts. The founder of the Hunter Agency also had both gifts. Hunters with such power strike fear into werewolves just by standing in their presence. The culprit of this crime could not have dared to do this if Katie was nearby. As you must have noticed, she got here before the ambulances even did. She, no doubt ran all the way at astounding speed,” Sandra said.

“Your assumption is correct. When she was told of the incident, the steel door of the detainment centre was ripped off its hinges from the sheer force of her pushing it to go through. She was a blur after that... leapt over the gate to avoid the hustle of opening it. All that is possible with the Prometheus gifts though,” the director explained, confirming Sandra’s story before the hunters came back to him.

He turned his attention to them, “Report.”

“There was a lot of wolfsbane mixed in with the blood of the werewolf that was killed and based on what we could trace, you won’t believe what it is we found...” he said.

“You know that I don’t like being kept in the dark,” Anthony said.

“The wolfsbane that we tested from the blood came from a batch that was issued to the last hunter that you would expect,” he said.

“Let me take a wild guess...” Anthony facepalmed, “Katie Chase.”

“Y-yes, sir,” this struck fear into all those that heard the information. The hunters could account for Katie’s whereabouts at the time of the murder, but there was no saying what had happened for sure.

“Chase, what did you get yourself into this time?” the man said partially to himself and for the first time since the man had arrived, the students saw his face turn to that of worry.

“So it was one of her blades that were used to kill Ash...” Cole spoke up.

“Seems so... situation is not looking good for her,” Anthony said, “someone who would have access to her weapons, I would presume if she was more careful with who she gave her jacket.”

“I agree it isn’t hard for someone to get their hands on the bag that contains her jacket, but again, there isn’t that big a list of people that would dare to touch it,” Sandra said.

“Yes, but still, be it as it may, someone can still choose to send someone else or could simply pay someone to take it from her. There is also the issue of the time they had to take it from her. In the end, there are just too many suspects and there would be panic if we chose to point fingers,” the issues that kept this case difficult to investigate seemed to be many. “However, if there are rules that must be set aside in order to solve this mystery, we shall do it.”

This breathed some new hope into the quiet werewolves. For the three of them, there was nothing that they could really do when their comrade had only been killed. For werewolves, the time of death was not the same as the time to pick yourself up. The alpha was nearly incapacitated by the feeling of loss and the rest of those in the pack had to stay with him during the time of grief. This, however, didn't mean that they were unable to take revenge on the culprit. In fact, aside from the grieving, the only other thing they could do in this state was to kill the murderer of their comrade.

"Where has she gone now?" Cole asked.

"I have no idea where she..."

"Director Anthony, I found something..." he was cut off by the same person that they had just asked for.

"Speak of the devil."

"You guys were talking about me?" she asked on hearing that.

"The Royal was just trying to know what it is that you were doing at the time at least," he said, "What is it that you said you found?"

Katie put her hand into her pockets and from it she procured a sharp tool, a dagger. The werewolves covered their noses in an effort to block the stench of wolfsbane that ravaged their nostrils... the acrid sickening smell from the dagger was thicker than the one that came from the cut on Ash's neck was.

"Nice job... where did you find it?"

"A few feet from the classroom window out there," she said pointing out the windows of the classroom that looked to the forest and away from the school. "The murderer did not want to be detected by the werewolves so they ditched the dagger."