

Chosen 211

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Lina got off the car with Honour once everyone was in the car, putting the teacher's instructions to the back of her mind. "Well, when are we meeting to go and search for the moon lotus flowers," a voice they'd completely forgotten about spoke up from behind them.

"I forgot you were serious about following us tonight. Well, we shall go an hour after the sun has set... That puts the time for the bonfire one hour away, so that's all the time we shall have to find the flowers. I just hope they are not too far from the hotel," Lina said to herself.

"Why don't you ask one of the guides whether she could help you find them?" Katie's voice broke through to all their mind links, including that of the beta alpha that had been keeping his presence hidden from all of them. He merely wanted to hear their discussions. The moon lotus wasn't exactly something he found that interesting and so watching them was his next best option.

"Thank you for that enlightening information, sister. We would really like..." just then, Lina went quiet as she looked up to the sky. The hotel had balconies for random rooms and a few of them had gotten lucky enough to be placed in such rooms. Among those that had earned that privilege were Katie Sirius and her mate.

Looking up, completely by instinct, Lina had spotted her sister seated on the railings that prevented one from falling, a complete violation of safety precautions. Her companions looked in the direction she was facing and froze just as well... Right beside the princess, perching on the railings beside her was the largest eagle that any of them had ever been placed to set their eyes on. The eagle looked on into the sky and perched comfortably beside the princess as though the two were best friends and were having a conversation.

Lina was sure they were having a conversation, however, the rest of her friends didn't. Using a private mind link, "I thought you weren't going to reveal that ability to anyone. You asked me to shut up about it..."

"And you will shut up about it... This friendly King of the skies only decided to pay me a visit to discuss the matters going on in the preserve. Turns out, I have enough mail from the animals in here. I don't want more than the people I trust to know any of this. Just take it that this eagle happened to land near me and is confident enough to perch near a werewolf," the girl replied.

"Very well, sister... Will you be watching over us when we go for the Moon lotuses?" Lina asked her sister.

"I'm always watching over you, Lina. For as long as I'm able to reach you, I will always be watching over you," Katie replied, a smile gracing her face. She looked down at her sister and winked... Lina lost her fear of the rogues at that moment...

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Katie was in her room before anyone could even think to follow her. Well, anyone but her mate that had already noticed the haste with which she left the cars behind. He was curious, but let the feeling slide. He could always ask her later anyway... Once in the room, she rushed straight to the balcony without thinking much of what state she was in... Her shoes left mud stains all over the tiled floor, but she barely noticed. Her mind was entirely drawn to the bird in the sky that had summoned her.

The large eagle was perched on the balcony, having made the quietest descent and landed perfectly on the railing, making barely a sound to attract the attention of the students down below, "You honour me with the haste with which you heard my summons, dear girl," the eagle's deep voice sounded in her mind, translating from whatever sound Katie was no longer able to hear coming from the bird.

"Sometimes I feel like I'm going crazy when I hear one of you speaking to me," she mumbled more to herself.

"Well, you're definitely not running crazy. It has been a long time since one of your kind was able to speak to us and now, after very many years, when the world has needed the help of the rest of its inhabitants, another has come to us," the bird replied.

"What do you mean by that?" Katie asked.

"It is of no consequence whether you know this information or not. Get used to speaking to us first before you end up insulting the entirety of the animal kingdom," the Eagle spoke up, "Your tone is rather rude..."

Katie was silenced once more... It was the same as the day before. Everything she said came out harsh according to the feedback she got from the animals she spoke to. If it hadn't been for Ashley, she probably wouldn't have been able to rescue her sister the day before... "I get that a lot... Could you, perhaps tell me what I'm doing wrong. I don't think I understand how speaking to animals quite works..."

The eagle turned to her and regarded her for a moment before returning its gaze to the sky, "When you speak as one with the wild, you speak with the pride of the race with which you stand for. A wolf is proud and mighty... Like most hunters out there... When you speak, you must embody that pride and address every creature you meet with only the best you can muster at that moment. That is what we creatures of the wild call respect... Anything less is considered harsh..." the bird explained.

The hunter was stunned by the bird's words... The hunter was stunned by the eagle's words... When she heard the eagle speak, she heard nothing but the pride of a hunter... It was somewhat comforting to hear the eagle speak that way. It was exactly what she expected from the 'King of the Skies...'

Mustering up the courage to speak, the girl decided to take the Eagle's word for it and try his way of speaking. She could remember the same way she spoke to Trevor and the other junior hunters that were beneath her. However, there was a difference when she spoke to those she respected and those she didn't. The creatures of the wild were among those she would have considered worthy of her respect. After all, they had helped her in finding her sister.

Keeping that in mind, Katie continued to speak, "What could be the reason the King of the Skies would be visiting someone like me?" she tried.

Katie could have sworn she heard the Eagle chuckle, "I wouldn't go as far as to call myself the 'King of the Skies.' Perhaps it's something you humans came up with to describe my kind. Out of all the birds that roam the skies, I am honoured to be considered the king of the skies," the Eagle replied.

Katie smiled and walked up to the railing, taking a seat beside the eagle. The creature barely budged despite the proximity, "You're not afraid of me?"

"None of us have a reason to fear you. Even if you were to slaughter each of us, we would still remain loyal to you," the eagle spoke up. Katie lost the smile that had only started to form on her face. Chills ran down her spine as she heard the confession coming from the eagle.

"Why would you say such a thing?"

Without noticing her change in demeanour, or simply choosing to ignore it completely, the Eagle continued his explanation, "Now that you know that you can understand all of us, you might want to know the few ground rules that come with the power that you have... Humans are superior to other creatures and to keep the peace between them, the creatures of the wild keep away from them. Humans are tyrants... Cruel and not deserving of the throne they've been given. As such, we cannot coexist with them without a bridge to allow us to do so..."

"What are you trying to say?" Katie asked the Eagle remembering to keep the authority in her voice once again. The eagle was surprised at the girl's sudden change in composure. He'd frozen for a moment, but managed to find his voice again...

"What you do with the power you've been given is completely up to you. Your power will let you call on the creatures of the wild whenever you need us to help you. However, there is a difference between a queen and a tyrant and so is the power they yield," the Eagle warned or advised. Katie couldn't find the difference between the two lines... The eagle didn't make it clear which of the two he was trying to accomplish...

She remained silent for a while before speaking up, "There is something else that brought you here."

"Nothing escapes you, it seems... I came because I was the only one that could get you and I brought a message from Paula. She thanks you for protecting her baby when one of the humans tried to shoot her. The little cub is still growing and has a weak hide, so thank you," the eagle said to her.

"I'm glad she's okay. I was honestly protecting the humans from Paula in the first place. So, there is no need to thank me so... Tell the squirrels that I'm sorry I wasn't able to protect them, even after they helped me find my sister," she replied... Guilt etched its way into her...

"Do you think the humans cared for the action you managed to stop?" the Eagle asked her.

"Yes, they did. What that boy was doing was barbaric and they all knew it," she replied.

"Then why didn't they do anything to stop him. Why did you have to be the first one to react?" the Eagle asked her, "What you did today has never been done before. It's happened before... Poor Bola getting hit by another... It's happened before and even then, the humans did nothing to stop it. They merely scolded the one responsibly and let the next one do the same thing. You, however, stopped it while it was happening... There is a very big difference..."

The eagle's words gave the girl something to think about. However, before she could think of it, her sister's voice came into her mind. The voice calmed her down... Lina spoke kindly to her when she spoke, almost as if she was sorry for what had happened the day before. To Katie, she saw progress and only hoped she could guide the girl to a more desirable form of self-esteem that could help her realise her full potential...

"Have you seen moon lotus flowers?" Katie asked the Eagle...

"I know where they are... but they haven't bloomed in many years..." the Eagle's voice reverberated through the air, holding an ominous feel to it. Katie was finally curious.

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"Is there something else you wish to tell me, Eagle?" Katie asked the bird.

"Well, I do have one last thing I have to ask you. For the past day, there have been wolves milling through the woods and grasslands of the wild. They bear ill intentions and are scaring the creatures of the wild. Do you have any knowledge of these creatures?" the eagle asked her.

"Oh, those ones... I'm afraid it's my fault they are here. They seek my destruction," she answered with a heavy sigh.

"That is unlikely. The power of your aura doesn't make that seem possible," the eagle replied with what the girl could have sworn was a chuckle.

"Yeah... While that may be the case, I can't keep myself from worrying. They could have a plan this time," she mumbled more to herself, "Makes me wonder if power is all one needs to win a war."

"Would you like me to pass the message along? The wolves that roam the wild will be observed by every animal in the woods and there won't be a time when any of them will be able to hide from you," the eagle offered.

"That's a generous offer. Won't it be much trouble for all of you?"

"How many times will I tell you that we will serve you until the very end, well, your very end?" the eagle said with a hint of finality. Bidding the girl farewell and took to the sky. The students that noticed this remained stunned for a moment. One of the guides searched their mind for a possible explanation for what they had just witnessed. The two of them had simply sat next to each other for a long time. Katie had looked to be speaking to no one in particular until the bird flew away.

"Can anyone explain what we were looking at a moment ago?" one of the students asked.

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The eagle soared higher and higher into the air, heading back to the nest Katie had spotted. The girl's ears got every bit of the commotion that was taking place beneath her but chose to ignore it all. "Hey, are you okay?" a voice reached her, along with a scent she was still failing to get used to (even though she had no intentions of getting used to it). Cole wrapped his arms around her and pulled her from her seat on the railings taking her indoors.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Just worried about what's going to happen tonight or what might happen," she replied.

Cole searched her eyes for something else, "Hey, talk to me..."

"I can talk to animals, okay. Damn it," the girl covered her face. Cole, on the other hand, was frozen for a bit, looking between his mate and the balcony that had hosted an eagle when he'd walked into the room. 'Talking to...'

"You mean you were able to talk to that eagle... A real conversation?" the royal asked and she nodded in response, however, she wouldn't meet his eyes. His silence didn't help her at all either, "That's so cool." He finally replied...

"Huh..." Katie peeped through a slit in her fingers.

"I've heard about it before, but those are just stories. Who could ever think something like that was real. I know the chosen are to have a total of three abilities, but I didn't realise how random those powers could be," Cole groaned, "Can we trade? I can do away with the healing power of mine."

"Is trading gifts granted by celestials even possible?" Katie asked her mate whilst trying to digest the reaction she'd just gotten from him, "Besides, what use is an ability that only works in a place where there are animals. When we return to the capital, there will be less of the wild there. I won't have much use for the power."

"Huh, for a hunter, you're not being as open-minded as I thought you'd be. Animals will always be able to find you if you call for them. At least that's what I've heard from the legends that move through the werewolves. The capital is not without the wild either. Birds can work as spies for you and report anything you want to know..." Cole stopped talking when his mate raised her hand up in gesture.

"I think I get your point. I need to lie down... Probably get some rest before the sun sets... Lina and her friends are going hunting for moon lotus flowers... and I want to follow them when they do so," Katie replied, going limp once she was above their bed.

"Oh, moon lotus flowers... Do they really believe such a thing exists?" Cole asked. Katie looked up at her mate...

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Well... The moon lotus is a flower that has been written about in many books, however, it doesn't make sense for a flower of that nature to exist. Even though there is proof that it has been seen before from peering into the memories of the people that said they saw them and drawings of what they looked like. What I'm trying to say is that no one has seen a moon lotus in ages... Scientists have begun to make up theories about them not being real... After all, what kind of flower blooms only under the light of the moon," he explained.

"Oh, I think I understand what you mean... However, the Eagle did tell me of their existence in the forest, however, they haven't bloomed in a long time," Katie said, drifting into a light sleep.

Cole let the girl rest and spoke after she couldn't hear him, "I'm afraid you might have to be their guide to the flowers then. It's almost impossible to find them when they haven't bloomed under the moon's light. They could just as well be random flowers in the vast forest..."

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The former spy of the rogues walked through the empty base looking for something to entertain himself with. There was nothing he could do in this place. After loitering in what he found to be an underground base for hours, he chose to get out for a breath of fresh air. There was barely anyone left in the base... A few rogues cleaned about and made sure everything was in order. However, besides that, he found nothing interesting.

Sniffing the air told him of their absence... The rogues had completely left the base without his knowledge... 'Did they go without telling me? The nerve on those guys... I could have been a major asset to them...'

"Hey, new guy... I've seen you walking about aimlessly. Get over here..." the boy froze at the voice that spoke to him. He'd only found the exit to the outside world... It was different from the one that the rogue king used when he was going out... He looked about and finally spotted someone at a rack polishing workout equipment. From the man's somewhat toned body, he could tell that he was trained... Well, everyone was trained as long as they weren't spies.

The spies were sent out before they had any real muscle on their bodies. When or if they returned, they were completely out of their element. Well, except for those that forced training on themselves while on their missions. Kyle had chosen to take on the character of a nerd and had to play the part. Pretending to be a nerd and working out just didn't mix, "Oh, you meant me..." the boy exclaimed when the werewolf glared daggers at him.

"Do you see anyone else here?" the man scoffed, "Now hurry up and help me with this."

Kyle ran up to him and got to work polishing the different pieces of equipment. Some of them were weapons while others were dumbbells and everything else that could help the rogues build their bodies into the perfect killing machines, "Speaking of everyone, where is everyone?" he asked the man whilst polishing a... hammer (His mind had failed to formulate what it could possibly be used for...)

"Didn't you hear? They went out on a hunt. Something about bringing down the Chosen ones before they marked each other. It's a mission that's very important to the rogue king. I'm guessing you weren't told because you would have become dead weight if you had chosen to go... After all, that's all you were during your rescue mission... dead weight," the man spat.

"I might have been dead weight, but I served my purpose. I told them all they need to know about the rogue killer. This mission wouldn't be possible without that information," Kyle tried...

"And the price of that information was nearly five hundred rogues... What's that supposed to be, some kind of win. And here I thought they would bring in someone who could increase the strength of the rogues a hundred-fold... Instead, they come back with a kid that can barely defend himself from a puppy," the man spat once again.

"Hey, I did my part. I sent warnings, time from time... I told the rogue king to leave that place alone. The hunters there... It's like they weren't even guarding a remote town," Kyle argued.

"And so, what... Do you forget the mission of the rogues? Did you find any of the beta alphas to be hurt? They were both perfectly fine... There was nothing wrong with either of them... And why is that you ask? It is simple... The hunters there were weak... I heard alpha Aidan the other day saying the girl was slower than he'd expected. The information you gave was inaccurate," the man yelled back at him.

"I gave accurate information. Do you think Alpha Chad would have been taken out that quickly yet he had a hostage?" the boy asked him.

"Excuses... I smell excuses coming from you... Finish up all this and make sure you run fifty rounds about this clearing. Make yourself more useful... Your days as a spy are over... Now it's time to pay for the lives you cost us that day," the man threw down the dumbbell he was holding and stormed out of the clearing.

Kyle looked about the clearing and noticed how closely packed the trees were... It was completely fenced by the thick trees that were pressed so tightly together that it looked as though they were one tree stretching out in a circle... He continued to polish the equipment... A few minutes into the silence, he began to feel the presence of his alpha in his mind... 'This is an odd time to be receiving a transmission from her... And this feeling... It's so familiar... Almost like the tension, I felt before that night...'

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Lina stood at the threshold of her door fiddling with the applications on her phone. It was something she did every time she was waiting for someone in particular. Another crashing sound came from the inside of the room along with grumbles from the same person she was waiting for... 'How hard could it be to pick out clothes to wear...' the girl thought, frustration making its way into her mind.

"What's going on in there?" Lina jumped back, letting go of her phone in the process at the voice that had popped up behind her. Before taking notice of the person that had successfully sneaked up on her, she had to save her phone, a mission that took much longer than she would have liked. The dynamics involved in catching a flying phone only amused her audience. When she finally had it, she sighed in relief... "Soooo..." and the process started once more... This time the girl didn't forget she was in the presence of a stranger.

"Derrick, don't sneak up on me like that," she slapped the alpha who wouldn't stop laughing at her...

"What's so funny?" another voice came. Lina turned to face Crysta.

"Oh, nothing... what are you doing here?" Lina asked.

"She came with me," said another person behind her, "or more like begged me to let her help in protecting you." Caden walked up to them and peeped into the room... "Is she always like this?"

Another crashing sound came from the room, forcing all of them to cringe... "Yes, she's always like this when she's going to do something she loves. She wants to dress for the occasion and when she's looking for the clothes to wear, she messes up everything," Lina groaned.

"Well, she better get herself together. We don't have all the time in the world. Once it's time for the bonfire, we will be coming straight back here..." Caden mentioned, getting his head out of the room and leaning against the wall.

Lina counted the number of people that were going with them. Two alphas and one delta... "I seriously don't need this much protection."

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“Oh, you do. Katie would go on a rampage if something were to happen to you,” Caden replied.

“You don’t think Katie is that petty, do you?” Lina asked the alpha. Curiosity tore through her consciousness. It had been that way since her sister had saved her from the bear’s cave the day before. She hadn’t scolded her as much as she thought she deserved... Everything had been blamed on the two alphas that had taken her out that night as though it was obvious.

“Well, I’m not so sure. We all have something that will make us break. Katie is strong... Strong people usually have one weakness... The ones they care about most,” Caden replied.

“What are we talking about?” a new voice interrupted them from the inside of the room. Honour was finally done dressing up. She had a navy blue scarf around her neck and was dressed in a grey turtle neck and grey sweatpants...

“Are you feeling cold?” Caden asked her.

“Well, I’m not as good at staying warm like everyone else. I still need the insulation,” the girl replied.

“That scarf... Is it?”

“Yeah...” the girl cut her friend off, “It’s my grandmother’s. She would have liked to see the moon lotuses herself, so I’m taking a part of her with me.”

“That’s what you were looking for this entire time. I thought you weren’t going to ever wear it again,” Lina asked her.

“I can’t seem to get rid of it. I don’t want to anymore,” she replied with a hint of sadness in her voice. The girl pulled the scarf back up to her nose and gave it a deep sniff, “Besides, she used it so much that there was no amount of detergent that I could use to take out her scent.”

“Well, the moon lotuses won’t find themselves,” Caden announced, signalling their time to leave. Lina locked the door behind them and the group was soon out of the hotel and into the woods. A lone royal stared at the crew from the top of a balcony.

“You’re running late you know...” Cole said to his mate.

“I know that, Cole. You shouldn’t worry too much about how I’m going to get to them anyway. You know that I can track them quite easily,” the girl inside the room said while she fumbled to get the proper clothes to wear while she was out in the woods.

“Don’t forget to take your bow with you,” Cole reminded her.

“Aren’t you coming along?” Katie asked him.

“No, I will cover for you while you’re gone. In other words, I am taking your post while you’re gone. Now that I think of it, there is something Trevor wanted me to give you,” he said, holding out the walkie he’d been given.

The girl stared at it for a moment, “Communications are down... Do you think the rogues did it?”

“If you’re suggesting I grab a team of wolves to check out the mast, I humbly decline. As for the rogues, yes... I think they took out communications to keep us from calling for backup,” he replied. The girl took

the device from him and pocketed it. She'd dressed in a hood and sweatpants... Retrieving her quiver and bow, she bid her mate farewell and was off to find the group of wolves that was out on a hunt...

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Lina and her team had been running through the woods for a decent period of time before Derrick asked for a rest. They had no idea where they were supposed to find moon lotus flowers or where they were supposed to grow, but Honour wasn't going to rest until she found them. The girl rode upon her friend's majestic white wolf... a suggestion that Lina had made and wasn't accepting any objections. Honour had a weak wolf that wouldn't get them far.

"You have to rest, Lina. I know the flowers are important, but we won't be able to find them if you don't have the energy to keep running," Honour patted the white wolf beneath her, trying to reason with her.

Derrick shifted back into his human form and leaned against a tree, panting heavily, "Someone is out of shape..." Crysta spoke from the top of a coffee brown wolf. Since she was a delta that wouldn't shift without ripping her clothes to shreds, Caden had offered to carry her.

"I don't think you're any better..." Derrick spat back.

"Well, I might be just a little bit better, but you're right, I'm incapable of covering this much distance without showing a hint of tiredness. These two are in their own league," Crysta admitted.

"I don't get it... He's just an alpha. How does he have this much endurance?" Derrick said in between gasps.

"I'm a beta alpha. Try to keep that in mind next time," Caden shrugged.

"Since when did you become a beta alpha. That's a title that goes to the king's..."

"Spare me the lecture... I know what a beta alpha is and the rules for making one, but as it stands, the current king is losing his grip on the mortal realm. I don't know how long he has left, but as he slips away from us, his power starts to move on to his son and that's how this happens," the coffee brown wolf explained through the mind link.

"Well, that makes a bit of sense..." Derrick replied, before shifting back into his werewolf form and letting Lina lead the way, "Hey Lina, what's the deal with your sister? There are way too many rumours going about..."

"What rumour are you trying to clear up?" Lina asked.

"Well, let's see... Forgive how I phrase the rumours or how they might sound. I only heard them from the very people that spread them," he apologized before mentioning one, "There is this one that says she's a village girl that was found to have blue eyes and the ability to make them glow..."

"That is a very odd way to phrase a rumour," Lina exclaimed.

"Yeah, it is... The werewolves are having mixed feelings about her and I'm not sure which side is making more progress. We don't know much about her and yet she walks around the palace like she owns the place. To many, it's irritating while to some, it's the way it should be. She adapted to her new home very

fast and doesn't take smack talk from anyone. It's the way a royal should be, but I guess none of them expected it."

"I think I understand what you're trying to say. Well, if I was to think about that rumour, I would say it's almost completely wrong. The only part that's right is that she's from a remote town and the town is called Brigadia. She grew up there her whole life and knew nothing of her werewolf origin," Lina explained.

"Well, what makes her worthy of being a royal then?"

"Her blood, Derrick. Let's not forget what makes one a royal, okay?" Lina replied.

The alpha went silent for a short while before speaking up, "You've grown more confident."

"I didn't..."

"It's okay. It actually makes me happier to hear you talk back. I just hope you remain that way when she has to go," he chuckled.

"It doesn't matter if she remains that way or not. By the time Katie leaves, everything will be different," Crysta interrupted the conversation.

"You sound confident. Why do you think everything will be different when she leaves?" the alpha asked.

"Haven't you felt it yet? Everything is changing... It was the first time that a royal used their commanding tone on anyone. And there were no consequences... That's only the beginning of it all," Crysta spoke up.

"Crysta, is there something you know that I don't?" Lina asked the girl...

"She doesn't know anything, Lina. She just has one incredible sense of hope," someone's voice interrupted them... they all looked to their right and noticed a human figure running with them. It was Katie... and she was keeping up with them.

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"Umm, Katie, how long have you been following us?" Lina asked her, "And how the hell are you keeping up in your human form. Is that a quiver?"

"One question at a time, little sister. Do you remember that thing that we talked about the other night? The one that you weren't supposed to tell anyone," Katie spoke, running closer to her sister.

"Yeah, I remember that... What about it? I noticed you were using it earlier at the..."

"Yeah, that's the one. I'm glad you remember. Well, I asked around about the set of flowers that you're looking for and found out something a little disturbing," Katie said to her.

"What did you find out?" Honour asked before the princess could say a word.

"Well, the moon lotus flowers haven't bloomed in a very long time which makes them almost impossible to find," Katie replied.

"That doesn't make them impossible to find," the girl replied.

“Well, where do you plan on finding them?” Katie asked her, curiosity etched in her voice.

“Well, plants that follow the sun and not the moon grow in a pattern that’s the opposite of that of the moon lotuses. We would be running deeper into the woods... specifically looking for what I might call, the heart of the woods.”

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“Honour, nature girl, you’re not making much sense right now,” Katie tried. Everything the girl had just said had gone in one ear and out the other, making absolutely no sense in her mind.

“Oh, it’s no use... Lina, turn here and pay attention to what I keep asking you to pay attention to,” the girl said, leaning into her friend’s ear. Katie backed away from the pair and watched in amazement as they weaved through the trees. The further they ran, the more the trees pressed closer to each other. They kept getting closer until the wolves all came to a stop...

“We can’t proceed beyond here while shifted. Let’s proceed from here on foot,” Caden’s voice rang through the mind link. The girl on his back slid down and they began the walk through the closely packed trees. It was as though someone had planted the seedlings with the worst kind of spacing in mind.

“What would force a forest to grow so oddly?” Katie mumbled. The trees had very thick stems and yet, they still grew next to each other so closely. Their large buttress roots got entangled with each other, restricting access to the ground as the group went through the small gaps which only got smaller. The gaps became smaller and more winding as they proceeded.

“Honour, are you sure this is where we should be going?” Derrick’s voice bounced through the tight spaces they were moving through.

“We’re almost there,” she said to him.

“Well, how do you know where we are going?” the boy asked her, “No one has seen the moon lotus flowers in a very long time.”

“I know, I know, you’ve said that a dozen times already,” the girl replied, once again stunning the boy. This was the second time either of the two girls was talking back at him. He froze for a moment, losing sight of where they were all going. They had gotten separated while trying to find different routes to the same destination. The mind link allowed them all to keep track of their own movements... “You stopped. Why did you stop? Did you find something?”

“No...” he paused, “I haven’t found anything. Let’s keep on going. That’s if you’re sure we are moving in the right direction.”

Katie was still quiet and moving through the forest. Her curiosity was now beyond what she could contain. She was eager to find out what was on the other side of the mass of compact trees they were trying to find their way through. Leaves and branches had become scarce at the bottom and looking up didn’t help either. The branches at the top merged and sealed away the top of the trees. No light came through... It was dark, however, she didn’t find any other way for light to come through even if it was daytime.

“Anyone having trouble seeing what’s before us?” Caden asked them.

Being werewolves, this hadn’t seemed to be a problem and for once since Katie had become one, she couldn’t see nothingness on the other side of the trees. On the upside, the odd formation of the trees was coming to an end. However, they were all blind for once, “Hold on, I have my phone...”

Katie’s senses flared up at the mention of a phone. She’d been focused on where the girl was taking them that she hadn’t taken into account the darkness of the forest at this time of the night. The moon was out, but the canopies were so thick that barely a trickle of moonlight came through, “No, wait...” the flashlight flickered for a moment.

Everyone went silent, waiting for the royal to explain her sudden outburst. The girl’s senses brought everything crashing into her mind all at once. The light had been noticed by three hostile wolves and she was sure of all their locations, “We proceed through the trees to the clearing at the centre without light,” Katie’s voice sounded through the mind link.

“Are there rogues outside the clearing?” Lina asked her through the mind link.

“Just move it, little sister. The faster you get there, the easier it will be for me to explain everything,” she responded. Tension filled the wolves as they went through the thinning spaces they had to go through until they plunged into the darkness. Once they were in the clearing, their vision was lost for as long as they tried to make out anything that was in the clearing. The small openings in the tight defence of the trees were all their eyes could see at the moment.

“What now, Katie? You have us all on edge,” Derrick’s voice tore through the darkness, followed by the sound of a growl.

“I guess that answers your question,” Katie replied, “Lina, turn on your flashlight... No, in fact, all of you, flashlights on... I want this place glowing...”

They all did as they were told, lighting up the clearing they had trapped themselves in. All hope seemed lost until a metallic sound of an unfurling bow reached their ears. Lina looked at her sister and saw the girl draw an arrow from her quiver and nock it... She aimed it straight at one of the gaps in the compact trees and drew the string back before letting it fly. Katie’s hand swiftly reached for another arrow without paying attention to the other’s destination.

Her movement was fluid as she immediately retrieved another arrow and nocked it, changing her target to another spot and letting the arrow fly just as quickly. This one was followed by a loud whimper. She’d hit something... The sound barely fazed her as she drew another arrow and let it fly, her speed increasing as she continued to let arrows loose on the wolves that had surrounded them. Lina watched her sister in awe as she let the arrows loose as though everything was moving slowly. Well, for a werewolf as fast as she was, everything could have been moving slowly for her.

The hunter shot with deadly accuracy. Her sharp ears confirmed that each arrow was making contact with flesh that belonged to one of their enemies. However, the most surprising part was the fact that Katie had her eyes closed the entire time. Her ears had grown longer and white fur covered the back of them. After what seemed like an eternity for the girl, the arrows came to a stop and the hunter furled her bow, “That takes care of six of them,” Katie mumbled, using her abilities to search for more rogues

in the area. Three of them had seen the flash of light and had alerted three others who'd made it to them in time.

"How could you..."

"I'm a hunter. Some questions should just be left unanswered. I don't think we'll be able to hide the bodies of the ones we've killed. Even if we could, the scent of blood will give it away..." Katie said, thinking to herself, "You can turn off the flashlights now... Before they attract any more rogues."

"The rogues... How many of them are there?" Caden asked her.

"About forty of them, give or take a few. I haven't had the chance to count them. That will take much more concentration and they would all have to be within range for me to count them," she replied.

A squeaky sound reached Katie's ears, along with information, 'The other hostile wolves are far from here, but there was another that didn't get within the range of your arrows. Would you like the creatures of the wild to snuff the life out of him before he warns his comrades?'

"Yes, that would be helpful. Thank you," she replied, with as much authority and respect as she could muster for the small woodland creature.

"You're learning to speak like a wolf... fast learner, I see. And you found the moon lotuses without our help. Fascinating,' the squirrel was gone before she could ask him anything else. The girl looked about, but failed to see something in the pitch-black darkness... 'What do you mean we found the lotuses?' she thought to herself.

"Who are you talking to?" Honour asked her... "and why did I understand you yet you sounded like you were speaking a foreign language?"

"That's a story for..."

"Oh come on, Katie. It doesn't hurt to tell the werewolves of your abilities," Lina groaned, interrupting her sister's thought process. Having the power to move so fast and a lot of strength was one thing, but being able to understand animals was another. Katie thought her world would crumble the moment she realised her secret was about to be revealed.

215 Chapter Two Hundred Fifteen

"It's not like they will exploit you..." Lina continued.

"Exploit... Who said anything about that?" Caden asked.

"How about one of you turns on a flashlight? The moon lotuses are here. Honour was leading us in the right direction all along," Katie said with a hint of finality on the matter. Lina sighed, 'Then you take me to be the pathetic one...'

'No... I've never. You're stronger than you know and I'll keep saying it until the day you believe it,' Katie's voice replied to her sister privately.

Three flashlights jumped to life and illuminated the clearing. They all saw nothing for a while as their eyes adjusted before gasping all at once... Right at their feet was a large collection of grey plants... They looked as though they were suspended between life and death. It was a rather horrid sight...

"They haven't seen the light of the moon in so long. It could be centuries for them to be drained of this much light," Honour spoke up.

"If it had been centuries, they would be dead and rotting by now," Derrick interfered.

"You claim to know something about these flowers, then go and say something as uninformed as that," Honour replied, holding back the insulting words she wanted to use.

Derrick froze at the girl's statement, "How long has this streak of talking back been going?"

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Honour's mind had already moved on and his words only passed by her ears without making much sense. She brought her hand to the tapering end of one of the grey flowers... 'How I wish the canopy above us could clear up and let the moonlight through?' the girl's thoughts soared.

Katie's attention was all of a sudden drawn to the nature girl kneeling down in the centre of the clearing lightly touching one of the dead flower's petals. A familiar sensation of power was coming from her. She'd felt the power somewhere once before, but couldn't quite put her finger on it... Where had she felt that power before... Without having much time to think it through, a light wind went through the enclosed clearing...

Along with the wind, small streams of moonlight began to pierce through the canopy. Their eyes snapped upwards into the sky just in time to see the canopy opening up in the rarest of displays. The leaves blew out of the way and the branches began to shrink away from the centre of the canopy. It was a bizarre sight to witness with one's own eyes, but it happened before them and the branches cleared the way and let the full light of the moon reach the forest floor...

With the moon's light, came a wave of blue light coming from the luminous flowers. The grey of the flowers vanished and was gradually replaced with a glowing blue that snuffed out the light of their flashlights and lit up the forest floor in an undeniably marvellous glow that had the group speechless. They moved about the clearing marvelling at the flowers before them, "As I live and breathe, I never thought I'd ever get the chance to see them..."

Katie was about to comment when she noticed something else that had slipped everyone's vision. Honour... The girl was covered in the same glow of the moon lotuses. Katie walked up to her and lifted her chin from the flower she wouldn't take her eyes off. The girl's glowing face held an unnatural beauty that brought a crashing wave of nostalgia to the royal when she saw her. There was a delicate yet powerful and deadly air to the girl at the moment.

"Is something wrong?" Derrick asked Katie. "Why can't she move? Honour aren't you happy that you found them. They are more beautiful than I thought they would be."

Lina fell silent when she saw the girl, "Yes, they are breathtaking..." Honour sighed. 'Katie, Lina, do I look different?' the girl asked through the mind link.

'Yes, you're glowing,' Lina replied, 'What are you?'

'I am the same person you've always known,' the girl replied, pulling her scarf to cover part of her face. The scarf lit up in an intricate pattern when she touched it... 'I don't even want to know what any of this means.'

'But you must...'

'My mother will be able to explain everything when I get home,' she replied, getting up from the ground.

"Aren't you going to take one of them?" Lina asked her.

The girl looked around her... at the field of flowers at her feet, which was glowing the same colour as her skin at the moment... "No, I think I will leave them where nature dictated them to live. The flowers are sacred to the werewolves... And they affect the growth of plants wherever they grow. It would be best if they were left here..."

Lina rushed up to her friend before she reached the edge of the clearing, only to stop when she watched the trees moving out of the way for the girl to walk past them without the hustle they'd gone through when they were getting there. Honour walked off, leaving the royal too stunned for words.

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The group returned to the hotel that night without much spoken amongst them. The only one that seemed to find their silence weird was Derrick and none of them bothered to fill him in on what had happened in the field of flowers. Katie was astonished, but what she had seen and was now trying to figure out was keeping Honour on edge about it all. She'd tried a few attempts at conversation, but the girl had not paid any attention to anything she had to say.

Eventually, the hunter had given up and walked the crew back to the hotel. "Lina..." Caden's voice finally cut through the silence when they started seeing the lights of the hotel.

"Yeah."

"Did you find what you were looking for tonight?" the alpha asked.

Lina thought to herself for a while. She was supposed to be happy about what they had found in the woods, but the person that had needed this the most had only become sad the moment something magical happened to her. The glow that had taken over her body started to fade the further they moved away from the clearing and they had all watched the clearing close up the moment they all left, almost like no one was ever meant to go inside.

Taking on the responsibility for the two of them, "Yes, yes we did," she replied.

"Well... Isn't that cause for celebration? I remember someone saying these flowers haven't been seen in a very long time," Caden tried.

"What we found today, isn't an answer to a question, but a doorway to more questions. Questions to which I don't know the answers or where to begin looking. I can say one thing though... Honour..." the girl with the slight glow about her face turned to look at her best friend. Thin streams of tears were evident on her face. None of them had heard her cry, but the connection through the mind link that

shattered to reveal the girl's true emotions spoke volumes. Lina reached for her friend and wrapped her arms around her, "We'll figure it out together, Honour. You know that, right?"

Honour did not reply to her friend's comforting words... She merely leaned on her shoulder and let the tears flow... The glow about the girl's body and that within her scarf finally died down, but her tears didn't. Katie beckoned for the males to proceed and leave the girls to her. With a short farewell, the two males were gone.

Katie watched the two girls... Their connection reminded her of Sandra. The two grew up together and were soon separated by the amount of skill they'd acquired growing up. If it hadn't been for her becoming a mentor to her best friend, they would have stopped seeing each other as soon as the hunters saw no use for her being the head hunter of Brigadia high school.

"The two of you... Stay with each other tonight... I don't want to have to look for one of you when the other is nowhere to be found. Honour, the power coming off you. It's familiar... It's not hostile. I wouldn't feel down if I had it. Nonetheless, you do have to look for answers. I suggest you start with the scarf that seemed to glow along with everything else in that place," Katie told them, beckoning for them to follow her back to the hotel.

"Katie, could Derrick see Honour glow back there?" Lina asked the hunter.

"Can we not talk about me like I'm some lab experiment?" Honour interferred.

"It's that kind of thinking that I wish you could keep out of your mind, Honour. I wasn't normal either and there were always different hunters wishing to know what made me different from the rest, but I didn't let that catch up to me," Katie tried.

"Well, did they ever see you glow like a freaking light bulb?" Honour nearly snapped at her.

"Well, no... But picture what they will say when they find out that I can speak to animals... I don't even think I will be telling anyone that," she scoffed, looking away from the two girls before her.

"So that's who you were talking to back at the clearing..." the girl replied, "Is that also how you know there are rogues in the forest?"

"That's something else... but the animals can tell me of everything happening in the forest with more detail than I'm capable of gathering on my own," Katie replied.

"You know, Katie... Werewolves value the ability to communicate with the wild. After all, it is a part of this world that they feel they have a right to belong to. It's an ability rarely found amongst us, but not unheard of. And every time there is someone that is granted that ability, they are respected and treated with the utmost respect. I don't know what the moon goddess intends to do by giving one person so much power, but it definitely isn't normal," Honour said out loud, "Maybe you just don't know enough about your kind yet."

216 Chapter Two Hundred Sixteen

"Hmm, you have more knowledge on your... our" she cringed, "kind than most that I have met," Katie said to the girl as they neared the entrance of the hotel. A lone figure stood at the hotel gates and watched them as they walked up to it.

“Well, that’s Honour for you. She has read too much on everything useful and useless in this world,” Lina replied, leading her friend into the hotel, past the lone werewolf standing at the entrance. Katie recognised him and felt her blood run cold. Where the fear came from remained a mystery to the girl. One last detail twinkled at the edge of her mind, forcing her to call after the girls that were leaving.

“Honour, I don’t think Derrick noticed anything. You can be sure of that much,” she said to them before they vanished, mouthing silent gratitude. Cole stood at the hotel entrance, remaining quiet even after the other girls had gone past earshot.

“Well, how did it go?”

“We found the flowers... Along with a group of rogues that were dealt with,” Katie responded.

“Tell me about the rogues...”

“I dealt with them rather quickly. There wasn’t much to them after all,” she responded.

“Then what was with the tense mood Caden returned with. I couldn’t get much from him and his memories. He didn’t seem to notice anything besides blooming lotuses and a gloomy amber-eyed werewolf. What the hell happened out there, Katie?” Cole asked.

The girl stepped back and looked her mate in the eye... The genuine worry in his eyes shattered past her walls and sent the fear away... “Let’s trade memories. I also want to know what Caden saw out there.”

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Sandra woke up to the low hum of noise coming from the gardens within the hotel. Her mind was foggy on what had happened before she fell asleep. Looking through the meagre memories that made themselves available to her, she found that there was nothing much she needed from them. She only needed to know the reason she’d chosen to fall asleep. This reason was also good enough to bring her mind back to reality faster than she’d intended to on an average day.

Rising up from the bed as fast as she could, a pair of strong arms wrapped around her, instantly calming her, “Get up very fast and you’ll ruin the effect of the rest you needed,” a voice whispered into her ear. She allowed herself to relax for a moment before speaking to the man that held her.

“What’s the time? Am I...”

“You’re right on time, Sandra. The bonfire has only begun and that puts the duel even further away. Calm down,” Jason’s voice filtered into her mind. Taking in a deep breath, the girl finally let her thoughts flow in a more orderly manner.

“Thanks... I was afraid I’d oversleep,” she replied.

“It’s no problem... Can I ask something?” the alpha asked, taking his arms off the now-relaxed girl, “You seem more aware of things you shouldn’t be aware of. Is there something I’m missing here...”

“Being around Katie and training with her has got its perks. I’m not good at it like she is, but it started happening recently. The bonfire sounds amazing... I’m surprised you’re still here when there is... ‘venison’ out in the gardens,” the girl said, putting air quotes on the word ‘venison’.

“Well, yeah, we are going to have a bite of that amazing tender explosive concoction of flavours, but I was not going to have any until you woke up,” he replied.

Sandra sighed and got up from the bed. She walked up to the dressing mirror and looked at herself in the mirror, judging that she needed a shower before getting out of the room, “Let me just get ready.”

“Take your time... No need to rush,” Jason replied, leaning into the covers and getting comfortable. His wolf was in the exact same mood. For as long as the two were near this female, there wasn’t anywhere else they’d rather be on the planet...

‘Caden, report...’ he said through the mind link he shared with his fellow beta alpha.

‘Well, they are both fine. In fact, they are more than fine... The beta alpha counterpart sent images of the two royals staring at a batch of venison that was being roasted by one of the hunters as though it was one of the treasures that life had to offer, ‘You can continue taking care of your kitten.’

‘My ‘kitten’ is doing fine, thanks for asking. Keep in touch in case anything happens. Sandra feels like there is something bad going to happen tonight. She wants to protect her friend just as much as we want to keep the Luna out of harm’s way...’

‘Sometimes I wonder if she’s in need of any protection, then I remember what happened in Brigadia,’ Caden replied, ‘I’ll tell you first in case anything happens.’

‘Thank you, Caden.’

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The hotel staff knew how to throw a party... Music, which none of the students had seen coming, boomed across the gardens, setting the mood for all those that thought a bonfire was a bad idea. The actual bonfire that had been set roared and reached higher than any of them had thought possible.

The three hunters worked the grills with a lot of meals set to be grilled and served to the hungry students who still wanted more meat. Among these happened to be the royals of the Sirius household. Putting aside their differences, the royals crowded the grills and made orders for meat. Lina took some time to adjust to her sister’s appetite. The girl didn’t mess around when she put her mind to it. Food just seemed to vanish into a bottomless pit.

Cole, on the other hand, was encouraging her to eat more. (Not that he wasn’t eating a lot himself...) Derrick sighed when he realised the royals were lengthening the lines and tried to sneak in a request through Lina’s orders. Crysta stood to the side of everything and sighed... “One deer, that’s all they brought... What were they thinking?”

Jason arrived a moment too late... Everything concerning venison had been consumed. When the hunters switched to ordinary beef, half the royal population and alphas had vanished from the grills to find something else to do. A section of the gardens had been designed for those that wanted to dance... The school goofballs had taken the stage first and set the rhythm that got couples on the floor. Katie

was only wondering how they could have so many couples in two classes and had even taken the time to personally count them herself.

"I can't believe you ate every last piece of venison," Sandra yelled at the couple once she found them eyeing the dancing couples. The numbers vanished from Katie's mind... 'I know that voice...'

"Oh, Sandra, where have you been?" she pulled the girl into a hug, "How could anyone miss this much fun? Have you seen the large contraption that keeps spewing fruit punch?"

"I'm sure you finished every last drop from the fountain, Katie. Did you even hear what I said?" Sandra groaned from under her hyper friend's arm, following her where her aimless feet carried them.

Jason stayed beside Cole, chuckles leaving him as he took in the sights, "The people of the Sirius reserve sure know how to throw a party."

"Well, yeah, but I would rather say the students know how to party..." Cole had just said that when someone crashed into the dancing party and screamed, 'WHO WANTS TO PARTEEEE?' The music switched up to disco and everything was different. A large crowd of unruly students milled into the couple's crowd and it was chaos beyond that...

"I guess that's what happens when you awaken the beast inside of teenagers that know nightlife in the capital," Jason exclaimed, shifting his head to the right as a glass cup flew past him and crashed further back.

"Chaos indeed..." Cole confirmed. The two boys slowly shuffled away from the dancing crowd and back to the grills.

"You've got to be kidding me..." Jason's voice brought Cole's attention from the party people and to the grills. There, exposed for the whole world to see, on a bench with his mate, was Sandra digging into the last skewer of venison. Cole could tell it was venison from the scent, but he'd been sure the whole of it had been finished by the time he was done. His mate was only tapping his friend's back.

"It's good, isn't it?" she said to her.

Jason walked up to them, taking a seat opposite them, "Well, if there was one extra, then there was obviously another, right Luna?"

Katie looked up from her friend and regarded the beta alpha. She then looked between her best friend and the beta alpha, "Umm..."

"Sandra, dear..."

"It's all mine, Jason," she cut him off.

Cole walked up to his friend and helped the disappointed beta alpha out of the vicinity, masking his laughter from them, "Come on, Jason. You know how it is for those that are tasting venison for the first time. You should let them have the last laugh for now. We'll probably get to eat it again once we return to Lycaon..."

"That's a very long time from now, Cole and you know it..."

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217 Chapter Two Hundred Seventeen

The party went on until the full moon was high in the sky. The fire had finally died down... The students ran out of energy. Those that had overdone it crashed on the grass, snoring loudly. No alcohol had been brought to the party, but the teenagers had somehow managed to bring themselves into a state close to that of drunk teenagers.

The junior hunters had then been tasked with getting all of them into their respective rooms. Katie had started helping them out with getting the students to safety when the rest of her friends joined in to get the students to safety. Twilight... the hour they had all been waiting for finally came. It found Katie standing on the balcony with her mate... The time for the duel between her sister and Liam had finally come... The alpha had chosen the location and the werewolves had all gathered outside the hotel, ready to head out.

The beach was the location for the fight. Katie was sure it was far if they took the car, but running through the woods provided them with a straight path to the beach that would take them a minimum of thirty minutes to get there at top speed... Caden and Jason were asked to go with the group and keep them safe from the rogues. Katie, however, seemed sure the rogues wouldn't attack them just yet.

"What happens now?" Cole asked her as they watched the wolves leaving the hotel.

"Doesn't it feel weird for the alpha to ask his Luna what the plan is supposed to be?" Katie asked.

"Not really... Not when I'm in a place that's not my home. I'm the future King of Lycaon, not Sirius..." he answered with a shrug.

"Would be interesting to see you take charge of an army of werewolves..." the girl mused, "We have quite the work to do tonight. I've been trying to keep the thought out of my mind and the minds of every werewolf. Keeping them in the dark was the only way to let them enjoy this. The fun is over now, Cole..." a screech from high in the sky stopped the girl from talking. The two looked up into the sky just in time to see an eagle descend upon the balcony, landing effortlessly on the railing.

"What do you have to for me, King of the Skies?" Katie asked the eagle, remembering her guidelines for speech.

"There is rather interesting chatter going on... the hostiles know of everything you are supposed to be doing here. They know of the duel between the two wolves. And they plan to let it proceed until the time is right," the eagle spoke up.

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"So you understand what the eagle is saying to you right now?" Cole asked the girl.

"The rogues know everything that was meant to happen here today. They are going to attack after the duel. I guess my uncle was really communicating with them after all. Kyle's information must have been right..." she said to him.

Katie turned to the eagle, "Have the creatures of the wild keep away from the fight tonight. It's a fight amongst werewolves. They should stay as far as they can from this fight," she said to her.

“Might I make a request?” the eagle asked.

“What would that be?”

“I would like to relay your orders to the creatures of the wild that don’t have the will to fight in this war that you’re about to get into,” the eagle spoke, “Some of us long for a time that we might be useful to one as great as the woman that stands before me.”

“I’m flattered...” thinking through the Eagle’s words, “Very well... I will accept help from only those that can help.”

With a bow, the eagle set to the sky. Katie couldn’t help but feel the rush of blood in her system. She was excited and scared at the same time. They had the rogues all figured out... Why then was she afraid of...

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Lina reached the beach first having carried Honour on her back the whole way. Her wolf was pumped for this fight. Fear, excitement, anticipation and emotions that clouded her thinking flooded her mind. She needed the time to think to herself, “Calm down, Lina. Your mind’s a mess,” her friend told her.

“Well, I have never won a fight in my life, Honour. Not after my wolf failed to show up on time. Then shows up later with only half a complete version of a wolf to offer,” the girl snapped at her friend.

“It’s a gift stronger than you think. Katie and Sandra have shown you that from time to time. It’s now or never, Lina. Don’t let fear stop you,” Honour replied.

“You know, Honour. I don’t even know if what I’m doing is right. If this was all right, wouldn’t Katie be here to watch me fight him today?” the white wolf was yelling at the top of her voice.

Just then, another wolf burst forward from the treeline. Lina was surprised by the speed with which this one had caught up to her and was even more surprised when she realised this wolf was none other than a delta. Crysta had pushed herself to the limit to keep up with her. The wolf reached her and collapsed at her feet panting wildly.

“What possessed you to run that fast?” Lina asked the wolf before her.

Crysta stayed silent for a bit before answering, “The desire to tell you that you have all it takes to put Liam to the ground.”

Lina took a step back from the wolf. It was like the wolf before her was an entirely different person. All those years the girl had spent treating her flashed before her eyes along with the years before that... the years when they were still best friends, “You have come so far, Lina. I’m not the only one that wishes to apologize to you. And more are to come... when they all realise it, they will come back to you. No matter how much you deny it, the colour of your eyes will never change.

Many hate you for it while others love you for it. Only a royal is capable of achieving the impossible amongst the werewolves... and your speed is truly impossible. Why else would you be so fast if not for the colour of your eyes? You’re not weak. Katie sees that and so do I. Who am I kidding? Everyone sees it... they are just too afraid to admit that someone with your kind of speed and strength can be stronger

than them in the long run," she explained, standing up. Her panting was getting less and she could finally stand upright.

"Well then, tell me this. Why isn't my sister here?" she asked.

"Well, if you would ask me, I would say your sister stays away to keep herself from ripping the people that give you a hard time to shreds. You know how impulsive she can be," Crysta said with a hint of pride in her voice. The words, albeit unproven, calmed the girl's nerves.

"Crysta..." Lina called out although the rest of the words she wanted to stay remained unknown to her. Instead, memories of the past came flowing between the minds of the two werewolves and the two of them remembered them quite clearly. Memories of a time before the wolves had turned against Lina. A time when the two of them had been the best of friends...

"Always by your side, Lina. That was what I promised then... Allow me to make that promise once more. This time though, you know my intentions," the delta announced. The rest of the werewolves found the three wolves. Lina had shifted back into her human form and was flanked on both sides by a black green-eyed wolf and a girl dressed in a turtleneck and black sweat pants. The scarf around her neck blew in the night's wind. The moon's light was bright on the beach. The light of the full moon gave them the perfect lighting they needed for the duel.

Wyatt and Liam shifted into their human forms and ordered two wolves to draw a circle in the sand... the circle that the two of them were meant to fight within. It was going to be an official fight and going by the standards set by the royals in case of resolving an issue through the use of violence. Wyatt walked to the side of the fight so that he was looking at the two fighters at an equal distance and out of the circle.

"This has not happened in a long time and on this day, we shall decide if Lina deserves the respect that comes with the title that her eyes claim for her. The title of a royal alpha. This title has been held by many before us, but never before has it been held by someone unable to fight or defend the pack... and for that reason, we come here today to witness the first display of power by Lina Sirius. Tired of being looked down on, the royal has decided to prove her might to all the wolves of Sirius. Her challenger, Liam White."

218 Chapter Two Hundred Eighteen

The two challengers stepped into the fight. The wind grew completely still. "Without wasting any more time, under the moonlight, witnessed by the moon goddess herself and the Sirius pack, the duel between alpha Liam and royal alpha Lina shall now begin."

Lina's heart went into overdrive once more, tension leaking into her every pore and fibre of her being. She searched her mind for the first sign of a strategy and came up blank. The alpha before her smirked, noticing how scared she was. "Just like it's always been. You don't deserve to bear the respect of your family," Liam spoke up, as he began to walk straight for her.

Lina's wolf surged forward in anger, clearing the foggy in the girl's mind. Just as the man reached her, the girl breathed out the last of her fear toward the man before her. She felt something unravel inside her right before Liam's fist made a connection with her jaw as though she'd only been waiting for

a moment like this. 'Huh, this is quite familiar...' she thought to herself as she remembered the many times the same person had used a move very similar against her.

Gasps filled the crowd as they watched an alpha take an offensive move against a royal in an official duel. They had made fun of her and made her life hell for as long as they could remember, but never enough to raise the attention of the royals themselves. Now that it was under the moonlight, the werewolves weren't sure if they'd just skipped a rank and shamed the royal before the very goddess that blessed their family. It seemed as though the priorities had been flipped.

Silence took over the audience... a look of annoyance spread across Liam's face when he saw the girl before him still standing right where she had been. Lina wiped a drop of blood from her bottom lip, "I didn't know your punches were the same even when you were asked to punch someone. I'd say you hit like a girl..."

The next attack came without warning or preparation. 'Predictable,' the girl thought to herself as everything seemed to slow down, 'All these years and this is the bully I couldn't stand up to.' Lina had regained her composure and saw Liam's fist moving as slow as everything else that didn't possess the Prometheus gift of agility. Instincts kicked in from the numerous training sessions Lina had been through with the junior hunter, Sandra.

She took the misguided fist and pulled his arm in the direction it was originally going, performing the now-natural motions as fast as she could and as fluidly as she could manage, flipping the alpha almost effortlessly over her shoulder, adding a little more energy to the movements and slamming his back into the ground. 'Your speed is your weapon, Lina. Would you want to know something about hunters, Katie?' a memory rang through the girl's mind while the fight proceeded.

Sandra had been taking her through different ways of using someone's force against them along with ways of turning speed into strength. 'No, and I think you have enough stories about the hunters to put me to sleep every night for three months...' Lina had replied right before failing to restrain the beta alpha, Jason yet again, 'Come on. Could you turn off your powers just once so I can fight someone normal?'

'Well, hunters like to play a lot of arm wrestling when they have nothing to do,' the girl proceeded, 'Be freer when using your arms and let the movements come naturally and quickly as well... Your initial momentum tells your brain the speed at which your reflexes should kick in and when.'

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'And they call us the brutes,' Lina replied, taking another try at the alpha following Sandra's instructions to the best of her abilities.

'Well, did you know that any hunter that has a Prometheus gift takes part in this arm-wrestling?' Sandra said to her.

'No kidding... Wait, what would someone without any real strength be doing in an arm-wrestling match with someone armed with a Strength Prometheus gift,' Lina asked the girl, losing focus in the middle of an aerial manoeuvre. Jason used the chance to grab the girl by her torso and bring her crashing to the ground with a grunt of pain. It hadn't been the first time but given her fast healing, Jason had stopped worrying about her hard he hit her.

'You're getting better...' Sandra's voice rang in her mind.

'I definitely am...' she replied to the memory right before slamming the alpha into the ground as hard as the force she'd gathered could allow. Gasps rang through the night when this happened. Lina's eyes shone a bright blue as her wolf forged forward in an awakening. "I'm not the same person you used to make fun of Liam..." she told the coughing alpha.

Liam got up and dusted himself off, "You get one lucky hit in and you get ahead of yourself."

Lina smirked, "It seems you are in need of more education." Liam lunged for her and into a flurry of attacks that the girl dodged with so much ease it made him look like he was aimlessly flailing about. Lina could tell from the amount of calculation he put into his attacks that he wasn't just flailing about. Each attack made it seem as though he was trying to discern a pattern to her movements, a strategy that would have worked if he wasn't moving this slow to Lina.

When the girl finally grew tired of dodging his attacks, she allowed her palm to meet with the side of his fist and followed through with another technique similar to what she had done to him the previous time. However, this time, she kept his arm in her grip and made sure he landed with his face on the ground. She then twisted his arm so that his palm nearly touched his shoulder blade. It was a painful position that had the alpha frozen for fear of dislocating his arm.

"Surrender now... as you should have noticed, if I wanted, I could dislocate your bones in a number of ways and in any that I want. You're completely outmatched and ridiculously slow. You can't land a single hit on me and I can do what I want to you," she said to him.

The alpha laughed darkly, "You don't really think I believe that for a second."

"Alpha Liam..." the girl spoke up filling her voice with all the authority she could. Within her mind, she screamed at herself, wondering where her dominant attitude had come from, "You have constantly disrespected someone who ranks above you and you have been tolerated for a while. Even after being denied the right to take your father's place as alpha, you remain ignorant of the crimes you commit time and time again. I will give you five seconds to forfeit or else..."

"Or else what..." the alpha asked before a pop was heard echoing across their beach. Liam gritted his teeth to keep a scream from escaping him. Lina had dislocated his shoulder and kept the arm in that position. She released him and allowed the man to observe the consequences of his compliance.

"You have thirty seconds to forfeit... Something else will be breaking once your time is up," Lina declared.

Liam sat up and painfully pushed his shoulder bone back into its socket. He turned to the girl that had just disrespected him... "You're going to regret that..."

Lina raised her eyebrows at him in surprise, "You know... Crysta was right about something. There is a lot that's going to change here. Look at my eyes Liam. What colour stares right back at you," the royal ordered him and walked up to him so that he could take a better look. The eyes pulsed a bright blue... "Don't forget your place, alpha Liam."

The next attack was much slower and more predictable than the rest. The girl sighed in disappointment. She moved about him, keeping her speed faster than he could visually follow and twisted his dormant

arm behind his back, tripping him at the same time. Knocked off balance and completely unaware of what was going on... the alpha was surprised to find himself in the same position he'd only been in a moment ago and a popping sound followed soon after.

This time he didn't have the time to prepare himself for the attack and he yelled in pain, "Fine, I forfeit..." he said to her.

"Never compare yourself to a royal, Liam. You aren't even close to the power of a beta alpha. I would know... That idiot gave me one hell of a hard time," Lina said to him letting go of him and turning her back to her friend. The circle that had been drawn in the ground vanished immediately, a light wind blowing the sand, signalling the confirmation from the moon goddess. The duel was already over...

A growl filled the air... Everyone went quiet... Lina turned just in time to see a black red-eyed wolf rushing towards her with its fangs bared. The wolf was slow, however, she hadn't expected the alpha to resort to something that was clearly illegal. Before the royal could react, a grey wolf rammed into the alpha that attacked her, sending the two of them rolling to the side. The two wolves fought for the upper hand, their senses disoriented, before backing away from each other.

The grey wolf shielded Lina and snarled at the alpha menacingly, its teeth bared and claws extended in a stance that only displayed hostility to its enemy, "That will be enough, Liam. You lost," the voice struck a chord in Lina. 'Just how far are you willing to go to redeem yourself, Crysta.'

Liam snarled at the defiant wolf before him, anger filling him even more. The hypocrisy of it all was unforgivable, "Hey, Liam, now might not be the time to let your anger get the best of you," Wyatt tried, levelling his head.

"You lost the right to advise me a while ago, Wyatt. Just get out of my way," the boy barked at the alpha. Looking at the royal surrounded by the very wolves he'd been surrounded by only a few weeks ago, he couldn't help but feel detest for the girl. Going against her when she'd only watched the duel would only cause him more trouble than he would have liked. And so, he dashed off into the woods, trying his best to put as much distance between the pack and himself. At the same time, he shut himself off from the pack's mental link.

Lina sighed in relief when it was all done, "I thought for a moment there that I was a goner."

"Really, how would you think that when he barely had the chance to touch you?" Honour exclaimed, looking her friend up and down, "Are you the same person I've always known?"

"Well, yeah, I am. Sandra made it look so easy to turn my speed into a weapon and it..."

"That was a brilliant display," an eerie voice interrupted the girl. Along with it came a cold breeze that brought everyone to a halt. Their senses didn't lie to them either... the scents that were carried in the breeze belonged to none other than their natural enemies, rogues. Lina turned to look at the source of the voice. Leaning against a tree, a relaxed look on his face was a huge man of similar muscular build to Alpha Jackson.

"Who are you?" Lina asked him, keeping her voice defiant. A couple of growls came from the woods behind the man revealing two more wolves. The three all bore red eyes...

"Oh, you shouldn't be asking me such a question when you're so close to your end," the man replied.

“There are only three of you. What makes you think you can take on a whole pack?” Lina asked him.

“I honestly don’t think we need more than the three of us to lay waste to this sorry excuse for a pack, but since you insisted I’ll just show you that we came in more than just strength, but numbers as well,” the man smirked. Emerging from beyond the treeline, rogues began to walk into the moonlight cutting off every possible escape route in an instant. They were cornered between the rogues and the ocean. “I love the looks on all your faces... That fear... It’s what we live for when carrying out the goddess’ wishes...”

219 Chapter Two Hundred Nineteen

Jackeline had been assigned to help in following the rogues that retreated after the fight in Brigadia. After a failed attempt at trying to prove whether the Rogue King was among the group that had left the remote town, their results had come up inconclusive. All they had to go on was the words of Katie Sirius. Staring into the fire they had lit that night in the woods, her mind soared through whatever topic she could find to alleviate the boredom that surrounded her.

The whistling sound of an arrow got snapped her out of her reverie to welcome the female hunter that came in swinging. The only people that had been assigned this job were a small group of five women all blessed with the gift of agility. It was the perfect team that could keep their distance from the rogues if anything wrong happened.

“Well, the rogues are increasing in number, that’s for sure,” the woman shrugged, slumping down next to Jackeline, “Jackeline, be my pillow. I’m tired...”

“Hey, find your own pillow,” Jackeline piped up when she realised what was about to happen. The woman let herself fall onto the previously relaxed woman, “Ugh, you’re filthy. Get off me... This isn’t funny...”

“What do you have to report, Elena?” another woman asked, ignoring the obvious goofing around that was happening before her. Jackeline’s assailant, Elena, spoke up without bothering to release her friend.

“Well, the rogues are definitely picking up more numbers on their way to the capital. I don’t know if it’s too early for us to confirm their target, but I would say they are going straight for the capital. It doesn’t matter how many detours they take, they seem to have that destination at the focal point of their movements. They have currently made camp five miles from here. The group is so large that it’s too easy to locate them now. Attacking them, however, would be suicide,” Elena reported to the other woman.

“Get off me already... I’m not your personal cushion, you know...” Jackeline finally forced the woman off her, getting up to her feet. The irritated woman shuddered and walked away from Elena with every intention of putting as much distance between the two of them as she could.

“Take a seat, Jackeline. We should all be present to hear the rest of Elena’s report,” the other spoke to her.

“I’ll listen from way over here, thank you very much. Shouldn’t we wait for the others though?” Jackeline asked, right before the sound of a twig snapping reached their ears. Jackeline’s hand

instinctively flew to the quiver while the other readied her bow before she realised they weren't in any danger. From the cover of the trees emerged two more women, each carrying a pair of rabbits.

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"Today's hunting session was a major success," the one ahead of them announced, caring nothing for the volume of her voice.

"Four rabbits, I wonder who's going to gulp down all of that," their leader replied, "I declare a meeting to discuss our next course of action."

"What more are we supposed to do except report the rogue's course of movement, Sera?" Elena asked the woman, curiosity leaking into her tone. As far as they had been concerned, they had done everything that had been asked of them and they would continue to do so.

"Well, that will all depend on the answer to the next question I have for you, Elena?" Sera spoke up. The two women that had arrived got comfortable and began preparing their catches for supper. Skinning them as quietly as they could.

"What would that be?"

"If you were to estimate the numbers you saw today, how many rogues would you estimate to be in that large force of werewolves?" Sera asked her. Everything went dead silent as they waited for Elena to tell her the answer.

Failing to realise what the answer to that question would determine, the woman shrugged and answered based on her opinion of what she had seen, "I would place those mutts within the ranges of thousands and they only seem to be getting more with time."

Sera remained quiet for a while to think over what the woman had said. Jackeline thought she saw the woman's hands shaking while she held them closer, "Well, it's worse than I thought it would be. It would be safe to assume that the rogues are only going to keep getting more and more in number until they reach the capital. If a force as large as that gets to the capital, I don't think the hunters will be able to contain their rampage," Sera confirmed.

Jackeline's heart went into a panic at the mention of the capital defenceless, "Did you tell me there were Mighty Warriors stationed at the palace? The rogues won't be able to get past them."

"I'm afraid you overestimate the abilities of the world's strongest hunters. The king has something planned... Deploying a force that large could only mean he's fighting for something he's sure will tip this war in his favour..." the woman sighed, rubbing her hands together. Jackeline got the feeling she was trying to keep warm, "We've been given a new mission... And simply thinking of it gives me chills."

Waiting for the woman to continue proved to be the wrong move as she remained quiet after telling them, "Well, don't just stop there. Tell us what the mission is going to be," one of the cooking hunters spoke up.

"Well, we've been asked to get even closer to the rogues and find out what it is that they are trying to achieve here. We are to blend into the shadows and confirm the reason for the rogues coming together on such a large scale," the woman spoke up.

The others were quiet for a while, waiting for the woman to cheer up and tell them that she was joking. After a short wait, they realised she wasn't lying one bit. The rogues were gathering in a large number and the woman had just told them to march straight into their midst and carry out espionage amongst them, "You're kidding, right?" Jackeline was the first to speak up.

"I don't think she is," another spoke.

"No, Brenda, you have no idea what's going on inside her head. I want here it from her," Jackeline snapped at one of the hunters cooking.

"You heard exactly what I said Jackeline. We'll be infiltrating the force of wolves and finding out a way to bring them down. A week point... We need to find out what the rogue king is planning if the hunters are to stand a chance against the rogues in this coming battle," Sera confirmed before an argument could break loose.

"I know what you are saying, Sera, but I also know just how impossible it is for us to pull off something like that. We'll be dead before you could know it," Jackeline argued.

"That all depends on if you let yourself get caught. Our orders are clear... We shall find out the rogues' plans and report to headquarters, lest we risk the lives of countless many in the capital of Sirius," Sera spoke up.

Every hunter knew the price of becoming one. They would lay down their lives if it meant they were going to protect humanity. It's how it had always been and there wasn't a sign of it changing. However, after the fight in Brigadia, Jackeline didn't believe she could fulfil her mission at all by putting herself in obvious harm's way. She couldn't betray the people she'd sworn her loyalty to and watching herself bring herself into a suicide mission was not an option for her either.

"I don't agree with that strategy. We should find a way to get that information that will not lead to our deaths," Jackeline said to them. Looking from one face to another, she realised none of the others would look her straight in the eye. All was lost before she could say anything about it... "Don't tell me you would all walk straight into thousands of wolves looking for information that could get you killed before you came out."

It was like her words reached deaf ears. They barely reacted to what she said... and it irritated her. They all reminded her of someone else... Someone so reckless that she'd done... that exact same thing. "If there is a chance..." Elena had begun...

"I've heard enough. I'll take a walk..." the woman turned around and walked from them, "You're all crazy... Every single one of you."

"This meeting..."

"Is over as far as I'm concerned," Jackeline completed before vanishing into the cover of darkness. The hunters about the fire were left in silence, wondering which was crazier, the fact that they had just signed on a mission that had almost no chances of survival or the fact that one of them had outright told them it was a stupid thing to do. Up until this point, it had been unthinkable for a hunter to think of their own safety before that of the humans they were meant to protect.

"So she really did go berserk in Brigadia..."

“Hey, you’re not allowed to bring that up,” Elena scolded her comrade.

220 Chapter Two Hundred Twenty

Jackeline ran through the woods until she was tired of running, her thoughts wouldn’t let her rest. She couldn’t find it in her to accept the fate they’d only spelled out for her moments ago. ‘How could they all just sit there and accept the orders they were being given? Sera literally just told them they were going to walk into the biggest army of rogues they’d ever seen and they barely put up any resistance...’

Fishing an arrow out of her quiver, the woman began to dig into the bark of a large tree that stood somewhat secluded from the others. She had run about the area and found nothing to be lurking about. She needed to clear her mind somehow. If it hadn’t been for the bright moon that night, she wouldn’t have been able to make sense of her surroundings as accurately as she did now.

Once she was happy with the digging she was doing, having created five depressions into the bark of the tree, she gave herself a large distance from the tree, climbing up into a tree and making the target almost impossible to see. From her position, she nocked an arrow, her thoughts rushing out along with the one activity that allowed her to think.

She let the arrow fly, along with everything that contributed to the tangled mess in her mind. Memories of the one hunter that had been by her side for the longest time her mind allowed her to remember, Frost...

This was the first assignment she’d received in a while that prohibited her from going with him. It was important and requested by one of the highest-ranking hunters in the world. None of the women that had been summoned for the task were in the position to refuse it and no other was in a position to oppose this decision either. They had then tracked the rogues and come up with a conclusion on where they were headed.

“You will be just fine, Jackeline,” Frost had told her the evening before she left.

“No, Frost, you know I won’t. You, of all people, were there when I lost my nerve. You know what Prometheus uses to determine who becomes a hunter. Hunters don’t lose control of their emotions,” she said to the man.

“No, that’s not true. Prometheus grants hunters their gifts based on the work they put into protecting humans from werewolves. That’s all there is to it. Once a hunter proves they can control their emotions, they are considered worthy of attaining the gifts, but it has never meant the others that desire the safety of all humans are less worthy of his gifts,” he replied, pulling her into a hug, stopping her pacing tendency.

Jackeline remained quiet within his embrace, her eyes landing on the reminder of her defective nature. She ran her fingers along with the bandages that bound the cuts along his arms, “The irony of your words is painful, Frost. Not when I see you covered in bandages because of me. Maybe I am what they call me... A defective hunter, after all...”

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The man sighed heavily, “Do you really think hunters should be able to suppress every single emotion?”

Something about the way he'd asked the question then had made her look away from his bandages and seek his eyes. They held tears of sadness, but never let go of them, "We are good at suppressing them. All in the name of thinking rationally. However, when do we reach our limits? Aren't we allowed to find a way to relieve ourselves of those emotions when they become too much for us to carry? After all, at the end of it all, we are humans, just like everyone else. Humans, hunters, and werewolves... we are all the same inside," the man said to her.

Jackeline was speechless while he spoke to her. His face caused her even more confusion... Frost had never shed a tear since she had come to know him. He was the strongest man she knew, both physically and emotionally... and yet, at that moment, he'd allowed her to see a weak side of him. "You're not weak for letting your emotions get the better of you. It only proves that you're human. We might be better at controlling our emotions than the average human, but it doesn't mean we don't have them. Otherwise, the Man god wouldn't give us these gifts. He only grants them to humans... which is what we are."

Another arrow sang through the air, striking the target once again... 'We are all human, huh... Then why are they giving their lives for a mission that they all know they won't be able to succeed in?'

Her fifth arrow sang through the air and struck right into the bark of the tree, at the centre of the fifth hole that the woman had curved out. With this arrow, the chaos in her mind died down... She'd made up her mind on what she was going to do.

Dropping from the tree she'd been hanging on, she walked up to her target tree and found the arrows had gone far too deep for her to pull out. Sighing, she left them there and tucked her bow away, heading for the camp. She found Brenda and rose to finish up preparing supper, "You're right on time, Jackeline. Careful, one might think you smelt the meat from miles away," Elena joked.

"Well, I did know how long it would take them to make it, so that's also reason to suspect me to be a wolf. It smells good, Rose," she replied.

"Aww, don't I get a compliment? I cooked mine as well, you know," Brenda whined.

"Well, you can share it with Elena. I call dibs on Rose's cooking. It's divine..." Jackeline replied, getting comfortable beside Elena, "I'll take the first watch. Just rest when you feel like it."

"Oh, how did you know we had voted you to take first watch?" Elena asked, humbly receiving her share from Brenda, "You know Brenda, I think your cooking is fantastic. You don't have to listen to that mean..."

"Rose, where is my share of the meal?" Sera spoke up getting out of her tent to have supper with the rest of them.

"Why won't you..."

"Her cooking is better. We all know that. No offense, Brendah..." Jackeline was laughing to herself as she watched the whole scene unfold. 'Sera's brutal...' "Come to my tent, Jackeline. I need to talk to you." The laughter was gone in an instant as though she'd just been called to the principal's office.

Jackeline got up and followed the woman to her tent, taking her food with her. Looking about, she realized just how much of their luggage they would have to abandon if they were going to get close to

the rogues. Running with it would be impossible for all of them. Within the tent, a lantern lay beside a sleeping bag, along with a couple of notebooks and a satellite phone for communication. "What is it you wanted to talk about?" Jackeline asked, getting nervous.

"Have you made up your mind on whether you will be joining us?" Sera asked her, her voice serious... as it usually was. Her silence spoke more than she hoped it would, "I guess that settles it then..."

"Settles what?" Jackeline questioned, her voice raising up a few octaves.

"You won't be joining us for this mission. I will be sending you back home," Sera responded.

"Huh, and the rest of you?" she asked her.

"The rest of us will be continuing with the plan. Sending someone for a tough mission that they haven't agreed upon is just the same as sending them to their deaths. We'll manage with just the four of us, is that understood?" Sera spoke up.

Jackeline's eyes wouldn't leave the ground. Everything the woman had just said was meant to be good news to her ears, however, the thought of leaving them to such a suicide mission was even more cowardly of her, "Can I ask you a question?"

"What would that be, Jackeline?"

"If the information you seek was somehow found out before you went for this mission of yours, would you keep it up?" Jackeline asked.

"That is highly unlikely, so I won't think of it," the woman replied.

Jackeline stood for a bit before turning around to exit the room. 'This changes nothing,' she thought to herself as she left the tent. "Hey, Jackeline, get this. Brenda's food is much better than Rose's. You just have to try it..."

"I won't be falling for that," Jackeline replied, walking right past them.

"Aren't you going to finish up your food?" Rose's kind voice rang out.

"I'm not hungry anymore," Jackeline replied, leaping up a tree and making her way to the high branches in the shortest time possible.

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It was well into the night when Jackeline came down from her perch in the tree. The fire had gone out and resigned to a light red glow. The others lay sound asleep in their tents. Just when the girl thought she would enjoy the silent cover of night, Elena's growl reached her ears... 'Honestly, Elena doesn't act the least bit like a woman,' Jackeline thought to herself, frustration itching at her to find a way to shut the hunter up lest she awoke the entire forest.

Jackeline picked up a few extra arrows from her backpack and replaced the ones she'd lost to a tree earlier before setting out to fulfill her mission. The one plan she'd hoped to achieve before any of these loyal hunters would surrender their lives. Dashing forward, she let her thoughts come and go as they

could. She stuck downwind and kept her steps as quiet as she could making her way to the front of the rogues in the largest beeline she could estimate.

'If everything goes according to plan, I should be able to find all the answers without having any trouble... Of course, when does any plan ever go according to plan?' she chuckled to herself before finally seeing the first sign of a werewolf. There were some that were awake, just as she thought they would be... Taking to treetops gave her the cover she wanted... After getting well within the group of wolves at the front, she retrieved a pair of binoculars from her pocket and began to search through the crowd. At the very front of the pack of wolves was a colossal wolf she could only confirm was a beta alpha... 'If only I was powerful enough to subdue one of those... This would be much easier. The woman continued to look through and found that some were in their human forms watching and guarding. 'Sleeping in wolf form definitely allows them to keep their senses sharp, however, I get the feeling this is normal for them. Their senses must have dulled already after getting used to ignoring some sounds during sleep as wolves. Taking the time to think through her plan and keeping her heartbeat steady, she spotted her target, basing her criteria on choosing him solely on the fact that he looked easy to subdue.