

Chosen 371

Chapter 371 [Bonus chapter] Sleeping Warrior

Fresh white bandages wrapped the woman at three parts of her body, both shoulders and stomach. These were the three places where the arrows had broken her skin... arrows that had been laced with wolfsbane had gone through her. She was breathing steadily with the help of the machine that monitored her vitals.

The constant beeping of the machine was more proof of her being alive than the subtle rise and fall of her chest. She was barely breathing. Regardless of the fact that she'd almost died, though, something told him she was going to be alright.

There was more fight left in this specific female. Even in this weakened state, when killing her would be the simplest thing to do, she radiated the aura of a warrior. Her body's state reminded him very much of Katie's. The only difference was that female felt much wilder than Davin's daughter.

Davin now had to confirm the question burning in his mind. Frank stepped to the side, letting the royals through the drawn curtains. The closer Davin got to the woman in the bed, however, the more his wolf whispered the frightening reality that stared him in the face.

He could feel it. The abnormally high level of divine energy in the being sleeping on the bed. It was the same as that of a royal... In fact, it was quite similar to the that of the Chosen. It was similar to that of someone that had been graced with some ability from the moon goddess herself.

What was worse was the scent of his uncle that lingered all over the woman's unconscious body, mixing with her own in a perfect blend, "I had the same reaction when I saw the way the prince looked at her and ordered to have her hospitalised immediately. We might not see eye-to-eye, but the hunters don't want to destroy the peace that exists between the royals and the humans," Frank explained, "Take a look at her shoulder. I think you'll be even more confused by what you find there."

The king snapped from his daze and moved over to the woman, pulling the light blue garment that concealed her left shoulder. The skin was bare and he sighed in relief for a moment, but there was still one more side to check. He wasn't in the clear yet.

As soon as he'd forced the garment free of the skin there, his blood went cold. The mark there was just as real as she was. Set in her shoulder were two deep rows of teeth from a wolf bite with the dark image of a howling wolf at the very centre of the mark.

Passing his hand over the grooves the teeth marks left, he counted the number of particularly deep marks that the canines left. As he'd feared, they were twelve in total with six for each jawline, "The mark of a royal."

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"Can you be sure that the person that marked her was indeed your uncle?" Frank asked him.

"Yeah, it was him," the man sighed, pulling a chair from behind him and settling in it with his head in his hands. The king rubbed his temples, "This is getting more and more complicated."

"Does it have to be?" Queen Martha spoke up.

"It doesn't have to be, but there are so many questions that keep arising. A rogue holding the mark of a royal and helping a beta alpha escape. It's not looking too good at the moment. Sean doesn't seem to be in the mood to talk either as long as he is here and his conditions aren't met," the king replied.

"He's the one in custody and you're considering his conditions? What kind of king are you?" Silver asked him.

"The same one that wants to ask you to release him into my custody. And before anything, hear me out. You can send hunters to make sure he doesn't escape or go anywhere. I can lock him up with hunters to guard him, but while we are here, I don't think he's going to say anything," the king reasoned.

"I can't make a decision like that. You know that your majesty," Frank replied with a sigh, "I'll need far more than that."

The king was quiet for a moment, "Hmm, very well. Give me two days with him then. If I have nothing useful from him in that time, then he can come back here... indefinitely. You get to decide how much security is around him during those two days."

It was now Frank's turn to think this through. After a moment, the man resigned, "Very well, you can have him. He will have two hunters aware of his whereabouts at all times. Their methods of guarding him will be completely up to them. You have far too much hope in that man, your majesty," the man replied.

The king sighed in acceptance and eyed the woman in the bed, "there are some lines which can only be crossed once and once it is done, there is no going back. Until I know what's with her, she is to be kept in pristine condition. Ensure that she's healing well."

"Hold on. I'll get a notepad for the orders you're giving here. Don't forget how little power your title holds when you're here. The master of this fine establishment is the only one above me, I'll have you know. So make reasonable requests," Silver said, making no attempt to write down the king's orders. Davin didn't indulge him though. He simply remained silent and unmoving.

Silver realised soon that the man was serious. They were to treat someone that had just broken one of the most dangerous wolves in the world like royalty. Didn't the man take a moment to assess what that meant? As these thoughts ran through the Mighty Warrior's mind, he realised there was nothing he could say to change this decision. Thrusting his hands into the air in defeat, "Fine, she'll be treated like glass."

"Thank you, Frank. For all you know, this woman could be of the same value to the empire as Queen Martha or princess Lina," the king said to the man, finally standing up from the chair.

"Maybe Queen Martha should free the Rogue King's beta alpha first before we start making such assessments," Cupid Shooter mumbled to himself.

"What was that, Frank?" Martha asked, feigning ignorance.

"I said this woman couldn't possibly rank as high as your gracious self," the man quickly changed his words, "That kind of respect and elegance takes a certain amount of work to gain."

"Oh... Your words are too kind, Frank," Queen Martha giggled.

The hunter sighed... 'I know she heard me... Why does she have to torture me so?'

Chapter 372 Waiting on a Lone Wolf

"From a rogue that broke out the Rogue King's beta alpha to one of the royals. That kind of autonomy does not exist. You must know that at least," Frank raised his voice to the retreating king. He wanted to sound threatening, but from what he'd already witnessed, that was not going to get him anywhere. Either the king was really tired or he was just used to hearing people make demands of him... or was it something else?

"I know, but we can't be too sure of the story until we hear from Sean and hopefully get the truth out of him," the king waved with his back turned to the Mighty Warrior, walking away with his queen by his side. When they were gone, Frank slammed his fist into the wall in frustration, paying no mind to the cracks that now riddled it, spreading out in a grotesque web of destruction.

'With that mentality, the man will have you eating out of the palm of his hand. I won't be fooled that easily,' his thoughts raged on. Marco entered the room only moments after the king had left, "What would you have us do?"

Silver was pacing for a while, trying to comprehend his next step. The wound to his pride was still fresh and continued to claw at his mind. This made rational decision-making a longer process. Nonetheless, Frank was well-trained and allowed himself time to think through his decisions. One irrational step and he could give an order based solely on the anger he had for losing the beta alpha.

There hadn't even been a fight. He had one simple job... and that was to keep him in custody and work on getting some answers out of him. It shouldn't have been that hard for someone in his physical state. The scene of the large wolf vaulting over the perimeter wall with so much ease flashed through his mind.

None of the search parties had been able to find him, regardless of how long they searched. This search probably would have been more fruitful if they'd had a Chase hunter on their side. The female lying in the bed wouldn't have gotten to rescue him in the first place if there had been a Chase hunter on the premises.

But those were all thoughts of the past. Regrets he couldn't take back. The process of healing from this failure... this mishap, for a Mighty Warrior. Someone who was meant to be a pillar among the hunters. Someone that was supposed to be unbeatable and someone that ensures safety. This was going to take time for him to get over...

And the hunters were definitely going to take a long time to forget about it. There was a possibility that he would even have his title taken away from him. "Silver... Sir. Earth to Cupid Shooter..." A distant voice snapped the man out of his thoughts.

"Oh sorry... I zoned out for a second there. Follow the king's instructions for now and have Prince Sean and Bree released. Prince Sean is to remain under tight surveillance while the girl is to have one escort. If you can spare it, have the hunters tailing them remain a safe distance away so that they can achieve the optimum level of comfort they require. It's imperative that the king have no excuses when the time comes that we ask for them to return," Silver told him.

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Marco spared the cracked wall a glance and decided against asking about it. He'd already witnessed the man's erratic behaviour. From his point of view, he could somehow understand. The Master of the Agency was not around, so Silver was the one in charge. There was no telling what would happen once she returned. Switching his attention to their third captive, "What about her?" Marco asked, pointing to the woman lying asleep in the bed.

"Cuff her hands to the bed to keep her secure. Other than that, make sure she's well taken care of and is healing well," the man replied softly, "If that mark is what I think it is, we could have quite the disaster on our hands."

"You sound like you've not yet made up your mind about the situation we are in," Marco asked him.

"No, I'm taking the realistic side of the story, Marco. We won't let a phoney story come from the king, but we also can't completely disregard the possibility of him having one. And until we know what to believe, we don't disturb the current balance of things. We won't make any irrational decisions. We'll take all precautions necessary to keep the people safe, as we've always done," Silver replied.

"Oh, I see," Marco paused. Frank knew how to act tough, but he had a soft spot for things like mates and virtues he considered beautiful. This was known by all those that got the chance to know him. It was no wonder he was comfortable with the word Cupid in his name. He would kill for an awesome love story... and this situation was reeking of one, "Had I been in your shoes, the only place she would be worthy of would be the dungeons."

Silver chuckled at the man's comment, "I know this is unlikely, but if Prince Sean walks out of this and regains his former status, you would regret ever becoming a hunter." With that said, Cupid Shooter walked out of the room himself with Marco following behind. In a more serious tone, "However, I do not want a war on my hands. The death toll in the Lycaon capital was not pleasant to hear about."

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There was a feast at the palace, where the events that had taken place at the coronation, and in Brigadia were told to all those who were concerned. Mainly, the alphas and betas that lived within the Sirius pack.

While the princess was not dead, none could deny that this felt oddly familiar. She wasn't with them anymore... and they certainly had no way of visiting her either or even communicating with her. Katie Sirius did not exist in the land of mortals... just like it was when someone died.

The feast itself was filling, but quieter than all other feasts that had ever been held in the Sirius palace. The Royal family welcomed this silence as a sign that the rest of the wolves understood the pain of losing another one of them so quickly.

The message from the hunters came in informing them that Prince Sean would be released the next day, into their custody. The king didn't know whether to tell Sean about Katie's disappearance or not. It would be information the Rogue King would love to hear.

The night quickly passed and soon, a small group of three was seated inside the king's office waiting on the prince's arrival.

The Queen had watched her mate get agitated before, but this was nothing like she'd ever seen. His beliefs were battling inside him and there didn't seem to be a way to stop it from happening. Jackson stood in the office with the two of them while they waited for the prince to arrive. The king had been like that for a day, wondering what to do with the prince the entire time.

"Your majesty, I know I've already said this countless times, but you need to calm down," Alpha Jackson tried.

"I want to calm down, but this has been eating at me for a while now," the king replied, finally stopping at one wall and tapping his fist on the wall a couple of times as though trying to make a decision on what to do. When that did not help, he was back to his pacing about the office.

The queen poured him a cup of tea at his desk, "Honey, this might help you calm down." She tried, walking up to him and rubbing the man's shoulders. The woman's charms always worked like magic when she tried but he never took this long to react to them. Eventually, he conceded and followed through with her request, taking a seat at his desk. When he was seated, Queen Martha placed her hands on his shoulders, rubbing her thumb smoothly over the fabric covering the mark she placed on him.

The king visibly shuddered under the gesture, losing what little pacing energy he had left in him. Davin visibly relaxed under the queen's attempt to relax him, "This cannot be healthy," he mumbled.

"And I was so sure you would kill him the next time you saw him," Jackson chuckled, "So I guess you're growing even softer if that was even a possibility."

"I was also certain I would kill him. There wasn't a shred of doubt in my mind. Alas, he is alive and well, walking and breathing the same air we do. I don't feel like killing him anymore," the king responded, "It's odd, but there is nothing I can do about it."

A beeping sound came at the machine on his desk followed by a voice, "I have the prince with me. Might we come in?" Alpha Phillip's voice came through the speaker. The king pushed the button that admitted them in.

The wait was over...

Chapter 373 [Bonus chapter] A peek into Sean's Web of Secrets

Following the clicking sound from the door, Alpha Phillip pushed the large door open to admit the group of three he was escorting. Alpha Phillip, unlike Alpha Jackson, was a quiet man who was rarely seen with the king. He preferred to actively carry out his errands and communicate through the mind link when the king needed something.

That said, he was always present in case the king needed him to physically be. The two were very good friends and the beta alpha preferred to hang out with the king physically when it was less about work and more about having fun. The life of a beta alpha was a busy one and anyone who didn't know better would think the king only had one instead of a pair.

Following the beta alpha into the room was a blue-eyed wolf of considerably leaner build and a few lines forming on his forehead. He was older than he looked but did a great job of playing the role of the king's older brother who rejected the throne to be a Lone Wolf.

To many outsiders of the Royal family and some within, Sean was the black sheep of the family. One that didn't care for the ongoing operations of the empire. He simply did as he pleased... and the king tolerated it for as long as he was present when called upon.

Following the prince were two hunters with weapons lazily at their side. Normally, the hunters preferred to keep these weapons hidden within their garments, but these two men displayed them for all to see. It was possible that they had prepared extra for this specific mission. Sean got seated in front of the king's desk while the other three he'd come with remained standing.

"Aren't you going to say something?" King Davin started once the silence was reaching peak awkwardness.

"I keep thinking you'll ask a question," the man responded.

"You can always start with a greeting," Queen Martha chipped in with a smile, "You look well, Sean."

"Thank you, Martha. I've been well," the prince bowed slightly to the queen. His phrase sparked memories of the last week he'd had. He'd really been stuck in his own little world.

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King Davin sighed, "Might I ask the hunters and beta alphas to leave this room?"

The royals in the room turned to the hunters, completely disregarding the fact that beta alphas had also been mentioned, "No... We must hear the confession from him as well."

The king sighed, "No, no you don't. I promised I would get the truth from him and give Silver the explanation he's been looking for." One of them opened his mouth to fight him on the matter, but nothing came out. He hadn't lied. The deal was simple... Sean was to be allowed all manner of comfort if they were going to ensure some form of results. Right now, the king held more power than they did.

Without saying another word, the man let his hand fall lazily on the hilt of his sword and walked out briskly. The other hunter didn't argue with the king... or even show any sign of doing so. This man simply walked out without any argument. Alpha Jackson and Alpha Phillip followed behind them, closing the door on their way out.

The only people left in the room were the five royals. Drake and Lina had remained quiet this entire time, watching everything as it happened around them. Now that it was just family left, the air felt much lighter. The king got up from his seat and walked to the balcony doors at the far side of the office with his cup of tea in hand and opened the doors, letting in a cool breeze.

Lina spared her uncle a glance but didn't say anything, making it clear that she wouldn't be participating much in this meeting. Her expression remained neutral. Drake, on the other hand, smiled and waved at Sean, "Good afternoon."

"A good afternoon to you too, Drake," Sean smiled. Drake shifted uncomfortably in his seat. Sean was smiling... 'What happened during that week?' the prince couldn't help but wonder.

"You can start from the beginning. Whenever it was that you started working for the rogue king. When you decided it was a good idea to spy on royals and report to the rogues," King Davin initiated.

Sean's smile fell. The prince finally assumed a serious expression... an expression that somehow retained a hint of despair. Lina thought she imagined this and shook it off, "It was the other way around. We were the ones on the inside, keeping the rogue king at bay through false details mixed with the truth while at the same time, he demanded... favours of us. We were inclined, on occasion, to give away something that might have been useful to him so we could keep his trust."

"What were these 'favours'?" King Davin was still looking out the window, his eyes lazily surveying the kingdom from this high up.

Sean paused, almost like he was thinking of a better way to come clean. He'd done this before. He'd sat in this same office with his brother decades ago with Amanda and the two of them had explained to him their situation. At that time, they'd asked him to keep it all a secret. Here he was again, about to explain it to Sean. The difference this time, however, was that he didn't know if this could solve anything.

Sighing, he spoke up, "We told him of the tunnels that ran under the castle... a little bit before you were born, the rogues used them to invade the palace. At the time, I had come clean with my brother and we prepared a show for the rogues that attacked. I'm surprised the Rogue King didn't catch on that time. Regrettably, a few lives were lost that day. What I was less proud of, however, was telling him about a prophecy."

"So it was you that told him about the birth of the Moon Goddess's chosen. What were you thinking? What makes you think you have the right to become a spy for the rogue king? You do realise what that entails and what it makes you look like to the rest of us?" Davin asked.

"Yes, I know what it means. I know everything it stands for. I've lived my whole life revisiting that day, hoping there could have been something I could have done differently that day," Sean raised his voice, "But it's not that easy," the man laughed humourlessly, "When is anything ever easy, really? It wasn't even my decision to tell the Rogue King about it," the man responded, "On the day that I met my mate, the moon goddess appeared to the two of us and assigned us this role... the role of double agents so she could tear the rogues up from the inside."

The room went completely silent at the mention of the moon goddess. It had caught them all off guard, "You're joking."

"I have only ever told your father this. Bree, as well, since she seemed to realise the mistakes behind her actions. She might just make a fine young woman," the man responded with a smile although he refused to meet his nephew's eyes.

Sean's smile failed, "I know I messed up. I won't deny that, but... before you make a decision, I'll tell you everything about that day. Celeste didn't leave me any option. It must really irk her that she can't intervene directly, so she tries as best as she can to pull the strings she can. I know you remember what happened at the reserve.

The rogues that attacked the children that had gone out there. Yes... I knew that was going to happen."

"And you told no one at all. You completely stayed quiet while royals were nearly killed," Davin lashed out. The cup in his hand quivered with rage. Martha hurriedly took the cup away from him.

"I know what I did, Davin, but that solved another problem at the same time. Katie and Cole would not be able to rush to Lycaon. No, they wouldn't... and what's more, I was trying to buy time for the prince to mark his mate," Sean argued. With Katie marked, the Rogue King's plans would be thwarted. Everything he'd been working to build would come to a stop.

Amanda worked on the inside, delaying the Rogue King's orders to attack. She bought us every second we needed to keep the power of the Lycaon family from shifting to the Rogue King," Sean made a compelling argument. It showed a glaring depth of how much he'd known about this whole situation.

"So you knew... everything. You knew the Rogue King was planning to kill Trevor. You know the rogues were planning to kill Katie... and you did nothing," Davin wanted him to simply admit to this.

"I didn't just sit back and watch. I advised the girl long before she was marked to get it done. I also had Jeremiah warn her of this as well. Doing it in a way that could be traced back to me would raise too much suspicion. I already had rumours going around of my involvement with the rogues." Sean sighed, then asked a question that wiped the anger from the king's entire being.

"Would you really have wanted Katie to grow up in the same palace as someone like me?"

After revealing just how much he was capable of doing without even trying to exert himself. After revealing how much of a threat he posed to the Royal family... This changed everything they'd known about that night when both palaces had been attacked. The Royal family knew of the moon goddess's involvement in rescuing the princess, but no one could have thought that the entire attack was triggered for the same purpose of rescuing the princess from the spy in the Royal family.

Chapter 374 Sean's Confession

A deep silence settled in the king's office as they took in Sean's revelations. The moon goddess had made the decision to keep Katie out of their lives solely to protect her from someone else she was using in the royal family.

'That's so messed up. What's she thinking?' the king's thoughts raged in a storm of turmoil. He was slowly losing his sense of what was right and wrong in all this. Partly because he was dealing with a family member, so his emotions were heavily biased, though his logic wasn't. Something still didn't add up though.

Since the beginning of this conversation, he'd been hoping for an explanation that could clear his uncle's name. A story that was believable... one that could explain why he did everything he did and still prove him innocent.

Of course, now that he'd heard what the prince had to say, he wasn't so sure innocent is what he could call him. He'd already caused the death of many by following the orders given to him by the goddess. Come to think of it, staying quiet would have been a better option for him, "Why tell us all of this?"

Sean, being ahead of all of them and with a clear mind, knew what this question meant below the surface. He'd prepared to answer it since watching his mate get skewered and dosed with a painful amount of wolfsbane. His words were simple, "I'm done, Davin. I do remember saying it's fine if I returned to the dungeon. Make your final judgement, but I'm done playing both sides."

This did not need to be explained to them. While they didn't know the whole story, it was clear that he'd been through a lot. Davin, personally knew how close the man was to his father. It couldn't have been easy having to keep such secrets from the ones you cared about the most.

"What of Bree? You used her to escape and put her life in even more danger. I can't let something like that go," the king responded, "Many wolves were injured by the smoke she used."

"I take full responsibility for the girl's actions. Manipulating her was wrong and I will accept any form of punishment you have to give," before the king could ask any further questions on the matter, he continued, "As for the woman, the Rogue King ordered her to free the beta alpha."

Bree and I were meant to be a distraction and the girl was to return to her normal life when all this was over while I returned to the dungeon. That was how it was supposed to go, but Amanda just had to ruin it," Sean sighed, "How is she doing?"

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"She's stable for now." Davin paused. This reminded him of something he'd been meaning to ask the man, "Can I see it?"

Lifting his hand to his left shoulder, the prince moved his shirt out of the way to reveal the bite mark with a howling wolf silhouette placed at the centre of the concentric rows of teeth.

The room had already been silent, but there seemed to be a ripple of shock going through it when they saw the mark on his shoulder. King Davin took a seat at his desk and placed his head back in his hands and groaned unceremoniously, "Since when did my life become this complicated? None one should dare answer that... Katie brought a dose of her own chaos already. Who would have thought there was something already brewing within the palace? Long before she was even born."

"You remind me so much of your father, you know. He always wanted to believe there was good in everyone and ended up trusting me more than he should have. I was always looking for a way to leave this palace and have a thrilling adventure... and yet when I returned, he acted like I hadn't gone a single day. I never understood it... and I still don't," he responded kindly, finally looking the man in the eye.

Davin's mind shot back to the girl he was taking a shot for. Bree had broken him out of the dungeon and the man was taking all the blame... 'How are you any different from me?' he mentally screamed but chose to keep this to himself. Instead, he asked, "Do you still think of me as a weak king?"

"Yes... very much," he chuckled, "But there is strength in that weakness. A rare strength that inspires so much more. A strength that I will never have." The king of Sirius was a lenient benevolent ruler who almost never gave severe punishments, but at the same time, he was respected by the whole empire.

No one defied him and there was peace among the werewolves. The empire prospered under his rule, inspired by his positive flashy and kind character. It wasn't so different compared to the rulers of Sirius before him. It was a trait they shared. Many times, Sean felt he wasn't the same as all of them. He understood that this world was cruel and unforgiving. There was no room for leniency.

Why then had he given up the throne and allowed his brother to take it? The answer stared at him every single day he was at the palace. While the world was cruel and unjust, everyone dreamt of a world that was anything but that. A world where kindness, peace and prosperity flourished. In a world like that,

Sean would be out of place as its king. The only people that could sustain such a world... were people like Davin.

"You might have it already, but simply fail to see it. I hope you find, one day, that you were right where you belonged the whole time," the king replied. The man before him leaned back into his seat storing the king's words deep into his mind.

'We'll see about that, your majesty,' Sean thought to himself. "I'm done helping the goddess. I hope she can forgive me for walking out on her."

"Why would you..."

"It's been far too long, dear nephew and I'm honestly tired. Do whatever you have to. I will stand by your decision no matter what it is," Sean responded, while he did, he actually started to look tired, letting go of whatever tension had been keeping him active.

"What if my decision happens to be your execution?"

"That is unlikely, but I hope it doesn't come to that honestly," the man chuckled.

"I thought he was going to say something cool like, 'so be it,'" Lina interrupted. It was the first time anyone other than the two had spoken up.

"Life is of so much value, Lina. I don't think I have to tell you that though. Who would have thought the girl who'd been called so weak would stand out this much in the end?" Sean exclaimed.

"In what end, grandfather? I'm still sixteen and have to go to school. Nothing... well, for me, nothing is changing," the girl suddenly turned sullen.

"Yes, you are only sixteen. So young and so strong. You should challenge your brother for the throne," the prince spoke up.

The room gasped at the utterance, "That's no joke, Sean," the king snapped, standing from his seat.

Barely shaken by the outburst, Sean spoke up, keeping his same tone, "Don't mind me, nephew. My words don't usually have to make sense."

Chapter 375 Awakening

"And yet you sound quite sane," the queen stepped in for her enraged husband.

"Sanity translates to what you make of the world. Whoever said I was insane?" the man sighed, his words only turning more cryptic, 'Knowledge can be heavy,' he thought to himself, "Don't waste another day on me. Make the decision. Either I stay in the dungeon or you hand me back over to the hunters," Sean stood up and turned to leave.

"Do you even care for your life?" the king called for him.

The man didn't bother answering the question. Instead, he opened the door and came face-to-face with Honour. The girl was stunned to see him as was he. The two of them stared at each other for a while before Sean shook off his surprise and walked past her, 'Correction: Knowledge can be painfully heavy.'

Honour watched him walk off for a while before the king called out to her, "Honour, is there something you wanted?"

"Oh, no, I was just looking for Drake... or Lina. Boredom eats at me," the girl replied with a smile.

Lina placed her hand on her brother who'd tried to stand and pushed him back down, "You get to spend way too much time with her. I'm starting to wonder what you're even doing together. Dad, perhaps now could have been the right time to tell him what happened to the girl my dear sister."

"I honestly don't know. One doesn't simply turn their backs on the Rogue King." With that said, the sixteen-year-old was gone from the office and walking off with her friend.

"Phillips, call on the hunters. We'll have them regain custody of my brother for a ten-year sentence," the king replied.

"Are you sure about that, your majesty?" the beta alpha asked him.

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"Yes, I am. Bree will be released and the explanation for her involvement will be that Prince Sean manipulated her into doing everything that she did. I will speak with Frank Silver personally and tell him what truth I can about the situation," with that, the matter was closed.

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Lina walked on with her friend, heading to Crysta's room. The two girls had now gotten used to walking to the part of the palace that housed the deltas. Greeting the few they passed by, the two of them pushed Crysta's door open without knocking, a habit that Lina insisted on keeping regardless of how disturbing it was.

The two of them were stunned when the inside of the room was already graced with a visitor, "Oh Bree, hi. I didn't know you'd be here."

"Yeah, I also had no idea you'd made it a habit to come here," the girl replied with a nervous smile.

The green-eyed delta stared between the new arrivals and Bree looking for something missing. 'What could it be? Oh yeah... Where is that glare? This is weird,' the delta thought to herself.

"Bree, are you okay?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. I have nothing against the princess anymore. She can do as she pleases. It doesn't bother me," Bree raised her hands in surrender, "I promise."

"That's good to hear. Back to who we've been talking about, would you like to go see her?" Crysta asked, "I was actually hoping we would all go together."

"Who are we...?" Lina stopped herself before she'd finished the question.

It was painstakingly obvious who the two of them were talking about. The third member of a trio that she'd gotten used to seeing as she grew up.

As soon as Crysta had dressed up in clothes warm enough for the chilly air outside, the four girls left the palace for the walk. Clouds hung heavy in the sky, showing no sign of a downpour, but also denying the sun any purchase.

It had been like this since that day. The sun never once came through... Lina was somewhat grateful even though it felt selfish to be so... Smiling when she'd lost someone dear to her just didn't feel right.

These clouds were also the sign of a grieving alpha. The four girls walked the way to the cemetery in comfortable silence until they stood before a large grey headstone.

Bree knelt before the headstone, reading the words that had been engraved into it. The circlet of flowers placed on it had begun to wither. Honour reached out to the flowers and placed her hand above them. A hum of divine energy emanated from her hands. Soon enough, the drying brown petals began to quiver in a light breeze as a brilliant metamorphosis took over them, their vibrant colours returning to them gradually till they were fresh and beautiful again.

To top it off, roots from the circlet grew larger and crept into the ground, planting themselves firmly in the soil and blooming a few more flowers that surrounded the beautiful circlet, "So you're the one that saved us back at the reserve?" Bree asked.

"Katie played a large part in it too," Honour replied.

"Katie... She must be having fun in Lycaon, now that..."

"Bree," Crysta stopped the girl from continuing. She looked around and read the faces of her friends. Lina's face spoke the most out of all of them. Bree turned back to the grave before them and closed her eyes in prayer.

The illusion of peace and silence was not without its cruel share of pain. It was a silence that screamed louder than any noise they could make. Even without the certainty of being attacked by rogues, they could feel their problems only beginning. The war was nowhere close to complete.

"Now I understand why she always felt that our teenage squabbles were a meaningless waste of time. There is so much pain in this world already," Bree whispered softly. In the cold quiet cemetery, her whisper to the ears of her werewolf friends was just as loud as that of a normal person talking. The story of the king's uncle was still fresh in her mind. The sacrifices he'd had to make to keep the kingdom safe.

Even as she knelt down in front of her friend's grave, tears streamed down her face, 'Why was I the one to survive? I did the exact same thing you did... why did you have to die for it and I lived? You didn't even hurt as many people as I did. Why should I move on as if nothing happened... Like I did nothing. I know what I did... and yet he wouldn't let them charge me for any of it...'

The words that echoed in her mind were not lost on the girls surrounding her. Crysta knelt down beside the girl and pulled her into a warm hug, "You don't have to forget her, Bree. You don't have to forgive yourself immediately, but you can't stay in the same place either. You can't remain stuck. She wouldn't want that at all. You know how stubborn Ginger could be. We move forward... and rebuild. That's all we can do... so that the ones we've lost didn't die for nothing."

Lina knelt down on the other side of the girl, joining the two of them. Whilst Crysta's words hadn't been directed at her, they allowed her to see past something she'd failed to since watching her sister disappear. What could she do without Katie around?

How was she supposed to go on as if nothing had happened? Perhaps there was something she could do. Something that showed Katie's effort was not for nothing. Lina had defeated Liam because of her sister's encouragement. While Katie hadn't cared for the argument they had, she did help her find her courage.

Katie helped her find her strength... and she wasn't going to let it go to waste. Madeline and Honour remained standing, both for reasons they couldn't discuss. The feeling Madeline had gotten a long while ago, in Lina's presence had returned to her. A feeling she didn't know how to feel about. Wanting to avoid experiencing it again, she kept a short distance away from the princess.

Honour, on the other hand, noticed a profound change in the princess's aura. She'd noticed it since they came back from their trip, but now it was much more pronounced. The divine energy within Lina...

It was different... It flowed differently and raged like a storm while still retaining the tranquil nature of a calm bottomless sea. Whatever power the princess resided within her... It had gone active.

Chapter 376 When the Clock Strikes Midnight

Sandra yawned loudly, throwing her head onto the desk in agonizing boredom, "If I see another request to go collecting firewood from no-man's-land, I'll personally go out to their homes and give them a smacking," the hunter groaned.

The crimson-eyed beta alpha next to her chuckled whilst going through a different pile of documents of his own, "It's important that there be fuel for the people to cook. Those applications allow those that aren't a part of the pack to sign in for the next expedition into the woods. It's safer than trying to do it on your own, plus it's free compared to hiring hunters," Jason replied.

Sandra sighed and lifted her head once more, taking in the appearance of the quiet empty office they were working in, "What happened with your usual help though? It's rare to have you working late like this with no one around to help, not to mention this workload is insane. I'd say you were preparing all this work as an excuse for me to help you with it."

"I wasn't preparing it for you if that's what you're asking. Though now that I think of it, that would have been a good strategy to get me into spending more time with you. Why didn't I think of this sooner?" Jason smirked, "We've been having less and less time to ourselves."

It just seemed like the right opportunity for me. Caden took Kyle out for a run. I had thought the boy had gained some respect by now, but Caden still likes to tease him like the person he was given to torture a month ago."

Finally turning her attention back to the documents in front of her, Sandra flipped over to the next and grimaced at the heading, 'Request to join Hunting Party In One Month's Advance. Target Animal: Stag.'

Sandra sighed, "Has he forgiven him yet?"

Jason was stunned by the question, “No, he hasn’t... He doesn’t feel like torturing him anymore though. He’s passed that. Have you forgiven Kyle?”

Sandra stopped skimming through the document before her and placed it down... ‘Dear Alpha King Emperor Supreme and Mighty, Steel Cole: After teaching my daughter to use a bow, I request that she join the next...’ the document went...

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“Katie asked me to take care of him while she was gone. You know how much I respect the girl. Back then, when I saw her eyes with barely a shred of animosity towards Kyle, I thought, ‘It’s probably better that way.’

Before I knew it, I had found it in my heart to forgive Kyle as well. After all, he has devoted his life to serving Katie now. We can’t hold on to that hatred or else it will eat us from the inside out.”

Jason paused to think over her words, “What do we do for Ashley then?”

“We visit her grave and leave flowers. Speak to her as much as we can with the hopes that the words will reach her from beyond the grave,” the girl replied, turning back to the papers in her hand, “I know I have been doing that. It’s the only way I could get over the guilt of forgiving Kyle.”

“You’ve thought about it a lot, haven’t you?” Jason asked. His attention on his work was long gone and he was now staring at the hunter before him.

Sandra’s dark brown locks were trimmed to shoulder-length, giving her a more dangerous appearance. However, to this beta alpha, she only looked more beautiful. Her neck was also much more exposed now. ‘Restrain yourself,’ he would tell his wolf.

“Yes, I have... Ah, another request to collect wood,” the girl rubbed her temples, having moved on to another document in her pile, “What do they need all that firewood for anyways? It feels excessive.”

Stealing a glance at the clock on the wall that showed that it was nearing midnight, Jason stood up and approached the girl. He offered her his hand, “Would you fancy a walk with me? To clear our minds.”

Sandra eyed the pile of work they still had to go through, then figured she needed the refreshment. The offer was far too enticing for the hunter to pass up.

Smiling, she took his hand and accepted his request, following him out the door. The alpha led the girl through the back exit of the palace and into the gardens where the air was cool and the atmosphere was quiet and calm.

Sandra wondered where everyone was, but another look at the time confirmed they were probably asleep already. She’d spent so much time with Jason that she hadn’t noticed when time drifted by. ‘Time flies when you’re having fun, I guess,’ she thought to herself.

The air in the gardens was cool and refreshing and cleared Sandra’s mind. As the breeze blew through her hair, relaxing her exhausted mind, her thoughts wandered about the different memories of the past month.

Without Katie around, she'd found comfort in spending time with Jason when she got the chance, training every chance she got and monitoring Kyle's progress.

The relentless ticking of time cannot be slowed and after what had felt like an eternity for the silent alpha, the clock finally struck midnight.

Suddenly, a pair of arms wrapped around Sandra from behind. The pair had walked into the gardens, guided by the warm yellow lighting that was neatly placed through the beautiful plant life. They'd come closer to the famous Royal gazebo.

Normally, Sandra would leap out of his grip and smack him for scaring her, but this time was different, sparks went through her body and sent shivers down her spine. Her knees went weak by the mere action... 'I knew it,' Jason thought to himself.

'Oh, so today's that day!!!' Sandra mentally screamed. Not even her hours of research into how the mate pull worked could have prepared her for what was happening right now. Her thoughts were quickly getting muddled and replaced by one thought alone.

"Jason," her voice called him softly, "What's going..."

"You're my mate, Sandra," he replied.

The girl's heartbeat kicked into overdrive, "What...?" Hearing it from him was different from her numerous speculations. Not to mention the tone of his voice. He'd never heard Jason sound so serious before. And Jason also made it a habit never to lie to her, which wiped the rest of her doubts from her mind.

Sandra was speechless, clueless about how she was supposed to feel about this. She'd kept her distance from Jason with a fear that had slowly turned to a certainty that she would never be his. On the other hand, Jason had made sure to keep her closer and to keep her in sight.

"I've always suspected. It had to be you. I couldn't shake the feeling. I just had to wait for you to turn eighteen," the man whispered into her ear.

Sandra brought her hand to the werewolf's arms around her and gasped. Jason was shaking... moments later, emotions flooded her mind. Emotions that didn't belong to her.

A flood of confusion, sorrow, relief, pain, longing, love... so many at once. She could tell they weren't her own and she'd felt the presence of Jason's mind so many times that she could easily tell whose emotions these were.

He was holding onto her like she could vanish at any moment, just like Katie had left Cole a month ago, "Hey, I'm right here."

Chapter 377 Morning Jog

Jason's hold on her relaxed slightly. Sandra's senses felt magnified with him this close... The difference between her attraction to him moments ago was colossal. While she could still control herself enough to keep from saying something silly, this change did not go unnoticed.

"I'm glad you're still here. It doesn't feel real. I'm bound to aid Cole as his beta alpha, which means I can't just do as I please, but you... You don't have that kind of restriction. You can go anywhere you want. Your family is not even in Lycaon. You could have stayed in Brigadia after Katie was gone and I'd have no right to reject that decision. You could have been stationed somewhere after becoming a hunter. You could have chosen to complete your last school year after Katie left and..."

"Jason..." Sandra called, silencing the beta alpha at once, "I know you've always had an eye out for me, but I never thought you were this serious about it," leaning back into his embrace. She might have as well just accept the reality, like her best friend before her.

Jason chuckled, "To be honest, I've had my eye on you since the moment we met. You know how seriously I take the bond between mates."

"I might have heard a thing or two about that... but why me of all people? I'm... human," Sandra sighed.

"That doesn't matter to me," the man chuckled, "A mate is one's other half. Their perfect significant other. Finding out that person is human makes no difference to me. You're perfect just the way you are."

The hunter blushed heavily. She knew Jason was the occasional smooth talker but he'd never been this aggressive with his words before. It was like he was trying to melt her on the spot. When the alpha noticed the silence that had overtaken the two of them, he asked, "Would you go on a date with me tomorrow?"

Frozen Sandra almost forgot the muscles required to keep talking. She was still trying to process what was going on and she took a minute too long to respond, "Y-Yeah... How long have you been planning this?"

Jason finally released her from his hold and allowed her to face him. Rubbing the back of his head nervously, "I don't think you want the answer to that."

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"Jason's a creep, huh," she confirmed.

"Hey, don't say it like that. It makes me feel like a pervert when I was clearly just hoping and praying to the moon goddess every day that my wolf and I were not wrong," the man -panicked.

"Can the goddess be that cruel though? To lead you on and..."

"No, it's not like that. It's just that some people can be easy to talk to and a desperate unmated male could mistake that to be a sign. Although, I know what that feels like. We were different and I couldn't ignore it. The doubts are hard to keep away though," he explained.

"I understand... and I'm glad," Sandra pulled him into a hug. There they were again, the sparks that went through her body every time the two of them touched each other. Everything had changed so fast. While Jason had been clearly obsessing over the day when this would happen, Sandra had her own version of longing that kept her close to him.

"Your kindness has been driving me crazy." Her inaudible words were not lost on the beta alpha's keep hearing and a smile spread across his face as he hugged her back.

“Happy birthday, Sandra.”

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Sandra woke up the next day for her morning jog rejuvenated and ready to conquer the day. She sat up abruptly, only to fall back in the bed as memories of the night before stormed her brain. A chilling rush went through her as she remembered the plans she had for the day.

It was going to be her first date with Jason. The first date with her ‘mate.’ The word sounded foreign as she tried to roll it off her tongue. She’d read about the concept many times and every time she remembered what she’d read, she’d get goosebumps. The girl forced herself out of bed minutes later and joined the pack for the early morning drill.

Lycaon training wasn’t the same as Sirius training. It was much more gruesome even though it passed like a breeze for someone that had been mentored and trained by the Rogue Killer. Sandra still remembered how much her friend trusted her to put down a normal rogue as though it was as simple as breathing. It hadn’t been simple for her, but she bore through it, chasing after the elusive Katie while still watching her go further from her.

“Your head seems to be somewhere else today,” Kyle’s voice broke through her thoughts as they jogged through the forest with the rest of the pack.

“Yeah, well. Today is not a normal day either,” the girl smiled at the thoughts in her mind, then smirked darkly, “A day you might never see in your life.”

“Oh yeah. It must be an amazing day for you. I don’t even know my actual date of birth,” he replied bluntly.

‘Yeah, that’s not what I meant, even though I’m glad you remembered my birthday,’ Sandra suddenly got the urge to facepalm. Her mischievous statement had been rendered useless as well. Kyle didn’t have a birthday.

“The fact that you remember my birthday only makes me wonder what kind of stalker you are,” she stated bluntly.

“Huh, of course, I would remember. You forget it was my job to keep track of Katie’s actions. I knew everything about her and her friends. One could say I was...”

“More than a stalker then. You were probably a peeping Tom as well,” Sandra cut him off.

“I wasn’t the latter, but I see your point now,” he sighed, “Walked right into that one, didn’t I?” he grumbled causing Sandra to laugh at him, however, the next thing he said knocked the smile right off her face, “You and Jason, huh. Congrats.”

“How did...”

“I’ve never seen the alpha happier which is saying something considering he’s always jolly,” the boy replied, “Try to keep up, will you?” Sandra hadn’t noticed her pace slow down and sped up to keep up with the rest of the pack. ‘I guess it couldn’t have been a dream now, could it?’ she thought to herself.

Chapter 378 Dilemma

Sandra stood inside her room, petrified by the choices she had laid out before her. One was a pale yellow dress that was rather simple. One of those dresses that were comfortable, not too much and yet, not too little either, allowed perfect mobility at the same time. This was her best option for a casual outing. Her eyes glazed over this option and landed on her other options.

Her desire to look her best on this date drew her eyes to the other two dresses in the room. One was red and identical in design to the blue dress that Katie had worn on the day of Cole's coronation. Sandra had bought this dress from a boutique recently strictly for the nostalgic feeling it gave her. She hadn't exactly planned to wear the luxurious dress, but her impulses wouldn't let her leave it behind and she'd ended up bringing it home with her.

The third was a deep green, littered with gems at the lower hem. It was made of silk and very comfortable. However, one look at the dress was all it took for someone to realise how expensive it was. This one had been passed down to her by her mother and was very precious. While it was a special dress that she would like to wear in Jason's presence, and easily dwarfed the red one in beauty, its sentimental value only demanded the best of occasions for her to wear it.

The three dresses posed a heavy battle in her mind as she tried to pick one out. While she was pacing about in thought, the door to her room swung open only, forcefully admitting someone Sandra hadn't been aware of. With her back turned from the door, Sandra scowled. There weren't many that could simply barge into her room, "Kyle, how many times will I..." the rest of her words choked their way back to whatever vile nest she'd hatched them.

Instead of locking eyes with the obnoxious beta alpha, she had come face-to-face with Queen Margaret, "Oh, your majesty," Sandra wiped off her shocked expression and bowed in respect to the elegant woman, "Can I help you with something?"

"Yes, you can tell me why Cole's beta alpha is going to have to wait half the day for you to get ready," the woman asked her before setting her eyes on the dresses on the bed, "Oh my, these are beautiful." Her quarrelsome demeanour vanished in a flash and was replaced with the attitude of a lady much younger than she usually acted, "Which one are you going to wear?"

"I don't know. I'm stuck on choosing one from these three and I can't decide which one would be best for this," the girl groaned before getting into the explanation of what each of the dresses meant to her. The queen listened to her patiently, nodding at the end of each statement she made. They were valid reasons for her dilemma, but the queen was already years ahead of this youngling and could make the decision with less confusion.

"I think you should choose the yellow dress. It suits you very much. Makes you look like an angel while the others make you look more like... well, a ruler. The green one though, you can't wear that to something as trivial as a date. You'll know when to wear that one," the woman voiced her opinion.

"Is that all you got for me? No offence," Sandra pinched the bridge of her nose. A decision that had been this hard to make could not be solved in the blink of an eye. It couldn't be so easy. That's just not how Sandra had thought this would go. Perhaps, she'd expected the queen to fuss over the fine details of each of the dresses and completely dissect the reasons why one of them was a better decision than the other.

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She'd expected the queen to compliment her on what each of them did for her appearance and which one would be more attractive to the beta alpha. Then they would drift off into talks of what the date would probably be like and waste even more time before randomly picking one dress with both her eyes closed.

But this didn't happen. Queen Margaret had skipped it all and given precise reasons why thought so. 'It can't be that simple.'

The queen sighed and grabbed the yellow dress from the bed, pushing the girl to the dresser and setting it before her, "Look at the person in the mirror. She's practically glowing and she's happy. The aim of this date is to have fun with the person you'll spend the rest of your life with..."

"You say that far too lightly..." Sandra interrupted.

"It's the truth. Back to the dress. In my opinion, the other dresses... have much heavier attachments to you than this one. If he doesn't give them perfect compliments, you won't like it. They are also literally heavier than this one.

If I might add, in this dress, you're you, Sandra Alastair. The person Jason wants to spend the day with. The person Jason has been waiting for a long time... I would know. In the other dresses, you also have someone else in mind and that's not what that alpha needs now. Do you want any more reasons? Because I can keep going."

The girl sighed and took the dress from the queen's hands, holding it against her chest and staring at her reflection in the mirror, "I understand what you mean."

"Good. Now sit and let me get you ready. It's been a long time since I last helped someone get ready for one of these. I'm excited," Sandra was surprised by this request, but couldn't deny her the chance. In all honesty, she was relieved the queen was going to help her. Sandra sat down and let the queen work her magic. The woman hummed to a tune while working on her with her eyes closed.

"I haven't heard from Cole. Do you know where he is?" Sandra asked.

"The king has errands that require his attention once in a while. So he's not always going to be around," the woman replied briefly. Sandra scrunched her brow in confusion. Something about the way the queen said this was all wrong. The hunter allowed it to slip her mind a moment later, but the queen's words had sounded slightly rehearsed.

"I see," Sandra shrugged. The people that had been present for training were less than usual that she'd even resorted to sparring with Bella. The female delta had taken a liking to Sandra (mainly because of how skilled she was) and the two of them were always sparring partners when that part of morning training came around and Jason didn't require Sandra to help anyone else out.

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Chapter 379 Bright Lights

Jason had been waiting by the car for a while, getting more and more anxious as time went on. Queen Margaret had left him to make sure Sandra was alright and reported through the mind link that she would help her get ready.

Dressed in a well-fitted tuxedo, Jason was a sight to behold. He didn't know if he had overdone it or if this was just right, "Aren't you guys taking this a little too far?" the male voice of a familiar beta alpha interrupted his train of thought.

Kyle emerged from behind the massive black car, taking in Jason's unusual appearance. He'd even cared to work on his hair, giving the dark wavy locks an attractive shine.

"Huh, no, we aren't. And you better behave yourself while I'm gone," Jason snapped at the rookie beta alpha.

"Hey, relax," Kyle raised his hands up, laughing lightly, "I've never seen you tense before... Scratch that. I've never seen you tense... ever. I didn't even know you had nerves. Werewolves are weird when they meet with their mates, aren't they?"

"Is someone jealous?" Jason asked with a smug smile. 'Yes, little beta, I am an entire level above you. I have a mate and you don't. And she's beautiful... Mwahaha,' Jason felt like saying.

Knowing Jason, Kyle could glean all this from his smug tone. The beta alpha rolled his eyes, barely shaken by the accusation.

"No. Not in the least," Kyle turned his back to Jason waved his goodbye then and was gone. Watching him leave, Jason couldn't help but ball his fists. It had been almost two months since he'd joined them and yet he was still the same.

He carried Katie's will with him, but beyond that, he was a walking husk that wanted nothing more to do with his life. For a beta alpha, that was all they needed to live, but they were werewolves as well.

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Like all werewolves, they reserved the capability of making their own decisions. They had dreams as well and when the royals realised this aspect about their beta alphas, they normally kept their orders to a minimum to allow them to live their lives.

'What did she see in you?' the man thought to himself. These thoughts were wiped from his mind in the next second, as though Kyle had never spoken to him in the first place.

A sweet alluring scent wafted through the air, arresting more of his focus than he had the power to resist. It was a sensation he was not yet used to. A scent that entranced him the moment he caught a whiff of it.

'The scent of his mate.' At the top of the palace stairs, the girl was dressed in a yellow flowing dress that dropped down to right below her knees. Seated atop her head was a round sun hat that matched the dress perfectly.

Sandra had not gone overboard with jewellery or make-up. In fact, she looked more like herself than he'd ever seen her. She didn't bear the barbaric tendencies of her mentor and this outfit depicted that and more of her womanly charms.

While Katie had been obsessed with getting stronger and even failed to learn a lot more than fighting rogues, Sandra had the chance to get to experience other things. Which explained why the girl liked paintball far more than archery.

The bag she carried was small as well, barely able to contain more than a phone. From the look of the material, however, Jason could tell it was nothing too pricey.

Sandra walked down the stairs with a slight spring in her step and twirled around before him, "How do I look?" Now that she was closer to him, Jason noticed more about his mate than he'd initially tried to.

While her hair colour was similar to Katie's dark locks, there was a tinge in hers. Her hair sat neatly on her shoulders in wavy locks. 'Huh, not a single scar on her face. That had to be hard.'

"Jason."

The alpha shook off his daze, "Oh yeah, sorry, I was too stunned for words," he replied sheepishly rubbing a hand through his silky hair, "You look stunning, Sandra." That said, the beta alpha produced a small black box from his pocket.

The girl eyed the box in Jason's hand and walked closer to him. The man opened the box and watched in satisfaction as the girl gasped. In the box was an intricately designed necklace with three amber opals set in delicate silver metal that curled around them in elegant curls, holding them in place delicately as though they'd shatter the moment they fell out of the silver grasp. The amber within the opals seemed to swirl if stared at for too long, "Turn around for me, dear."

Sandra, flushed, turned around and took the hat off before holding her dark brown locks out of the way. Jason's wolf surged forward once her neck was exposed. He'd never felt his wolf surge forward as much as it did now. 'I'll have to make a point of telling Caden this little detail if he ever does find his mate,' he thought to himself.

Caden's wolf was fundamentally more aggressive than his. This was partly the reason why Caden was generally quieter than him. The influence of his wolf would have made him appear short-tempered otherwise.

Closing his eyes, Jason took a deep breath and gently placed the necklace where it was meant to be. He placed a kiss on her neck when he was done, "That should do it."

"You're so close," the girl shakily whispered.

"Does it bother you?" he snickered.

"No, it doesn't. Where are we going?" The hunter pulled away from him with a smirk and placed her hat back on her head.

"That hat will be in the way. Lose it..."

"Oh, I thought you said I looked stunning wearing it," Sandra teased.

Jason approached the black SUV and opened the door to the passenger seat for the girl, "Using your hat for creating distance from your mate. There has got to be a crime for that in our constitution. I would have it confiscated in the name of the king."

Sandra laughed, getting into the car. The man pushed the door closed and rushed over to the driver's seat. Starting the car, the couple was off, "I heard you love paintball," the man smirked.

Sandra beamed at the mention of her favourite game. She could still remember the last time she had a match. At the Founder's festival, where Jason had tried his best with Jeremiah and Shaemus.

Thinking back on it now, it felt like it was a distant memory and yet not even half a year had gone by, "Feels like forever since the last time we played."

Sandra hadn't known what to expect from Jason on their first date. Would he be taking her for a meal or was there some other plan he had in mind? There was the issue of him working. Would he have to stop the day in half and return to work?

If that were the case, Sandra had no doubt she would follow and help him with the work he had to do. Thanks to Thorrin, her first assignment from the Hunter's Agency had been indefinitely postponed so she could watch over Kyle and Cole at the palace.

Now that Jason had suggested paintball, she couldn't help but feel it was the best option to help her take her mind off everything they'd been through. A game of paintball... Sounds like a lot of fun. 'My dress... I'll figure something out.'

Her thoughts were interrupted by Jason's attention-grabbing voice.

"The only difference this time is that we won't be versing a very fast hunter and grouped with a potential spy for the rogues," Jason laughed, reminiscing the past events, "It's been a quiet month."

"Well then, let's try to make this a day we won't forget. It's not healthy for us to keep dwelling on the past, you know," Sandra responded. Jason smiled, turning to see her beautiful smile briefly before returning his eyes to the road.

'The remote town of Brigadia raised two bright lights...'

Chapter 380 Perfect Mate

The day proceeded with paintball, lunch... and, after Jason's relentless requests, a few video games that Sandra was not familiar with. The hunter was reluctant at first and when she accepted, she took the time to adjust. Before Jason knew it, she was putting up a fight.

Her instincts as a hunter didn't let her down when it came to combat it seemed. Even when that combat took place in a virtual world. Sandra found the feeling of victory much more rewarding than she'd initially anticipated. After all, it was the first time the girl was actually getting to defeat her mate in something combat related.

Sandra later urged him to take the day slower... His tension had not gone unnoticed. Jason obliged, cancelled the storm of other activities he had planned and took her to the park where they found a table set with tea and refreshments, steam rolling off the rims of the cups that had been set for them.

Sandra looked about them in search of Jason's little helpers but was at a loss. They were just that good at hiding. Before taking a seat, the man peeked under her sunhat, "I know the weather is fine today, after a long period of time without the sun, but do you have to hide your face from me?"

Sandra smiled, finally taking the hat off and placing it on the table, "Since you wouldn't stop whining, I guess I'll have it off for the rest of the day."

Jason was quick to give her a kiss on the cheek before flashing her a dazzling smile, 'He just wants to kill me with charm today,' she mentally groaned, "Thank you," he replied, pulling her seat out for her. 'Definitely wants to destroy me...' the hunter silently lamented.

"Don't think I haven't noticed your helpers preparing something everywhere we went. I know you were ready-" she shuddered, "-far too ready for the paintball, but this was sudden. You couldn't have heard it all done that fast," she gestured at the table.

"You're right about all of it. I had helpers. It would be next to impossible for us to go wherever we wanted without me giving some sort of order," Jason laughed nervously, "I just wanted our date to be perfect."

"You don't have to go through all that trouble to impress a girl that already finds you impressive when you don't try," Sandra smiled.

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"Perhaps I'm only trying to match the perfection I've been graced with," the man replied with a mischievous grin.

The girl chuckled. Having heard his compliments longer than anyone, she was learning to expect them when they came. He didn't seem capable of missing the chance, "Perhaps you should have worried more about who would be eating all this. I don't share my best friend's appetite," she chuckled, picking up a cup of tea.

The all-too-familiar scent of cinnamon overwhelmed her senses. There was no doubt the tea had been prepared to perfection, just the way she liked it. Jason was not taking any chances.

Not even when she'd brought up the complaint about her dress getting messed up in their game of paintball. It felt too convenient for there to be a beauty salon not too far from the field for her to wash off and resume her dating outfit as if nothing had happened.

It soon dawned on Jason that she was going to take tea and nothing more. "This reminds me of the time Cole was invited to a tea party with one of his suitors," the man chuckled.

"Oh, and what did he end up doing?"

"Hmm, he had me deliver a letter of him declining her invitation. She was so mad at him. She all went, 'Who's going to eat all this?' like she'd meant to feed him until he was fat and couldn't walk," Jason narrated.

Sandra couldn't hold her laughter, "I would see how this would remind you of that time. I'm guessing you ate everything in his stead though."

"No werewolf could have been prepared for what she had made for Cole. It was more of a feast for a nation than a tea party. She took the phrase, 'The door to a man's heart is his belly,' quite far too seriously," he replied chuckling.

“It should be. It would be a shame for you to reject my cooking,” Sandra sighed, the satisfied glint in her eye did not vanish while she faked taking a sip of her tea.

“You can cook? Why haven’t I had any of that before?” Jason asked, his face beaming at the idea of his mate making a meal. ‘Would it take good, divine... or would it be a demon spawn presented on a platter. Whatever I’d eat it all without complaint. If it’s not good, she can get better, but that smirk tells me she knows how to cook.’ The anticipation was slowly taking root in the beta alpha’s mind.

The two of them continued talking for the better part of the evening. Jason stopped trying to impress her exceedingly and returned to his usual normal self, cracking jokes and doing all he could to keep a smile on her face.

The conversation between the two of them flowed so naturally that it sometimes surprised Sandra. She thought of herself as a quiet person, but with Jason, she wasn’t the same either. Her mind was more active and everything on her mind just came tumbling out with no end to it. She didn’t have to think of what to say and felt comfortable speaking her mind in his presence. ‘If only we could get stuck in moments like these,’ she thought to herself.

Eventually, the sun made its steep descent over the horizon, bathing the sky with smooth crimson rays. The cool wind and the warmth of the evening sun commanded a slower conversation between the two of them.

Upon Jason’s request, they had taken a stroll through the park and found a place where they could watch the sunset, “Watching the sunset on a date. I’ve read that a couple of times,” Sandra mentioned. Yet another one of the things she did that Katie never had the time for... Reading novels.

“It might be, but I’ve had a phrase before that went... ‘Something as simple only gets more beautiful when you watch it with someone you love,” Jason’s words shocked the girl. Once more, he was going a little too deep with his compliments.

“Your compliments are coming off a bit strong today, don’t you think?” Sandra hid her reddening face, wishing for her hat to return to her. It was much easier to hide her face under it. Unfortunately, they’d left it at the table where they’d been seated, no doubt intentionally.

“Either that or you’re finally starting to take them seriously. I’ve always meant everything I’ve said about you,” the man responded. Sandra couldn’t help the rush that came over her. It was different when she wasn’t trying to stop his advances. His words held more meaning now... They weren’t the same occasional flirtatious lines he’d used on her since they’d met.

Jason cupped her cheek and looked into her eyes, “I like around, calling myself ‘perfect,’ but I couldn’t have been granted a more perfect mate. I must be the luckiest beta alpha in the world.”

‘...Someone wake me up right now...’ Sandra swallowed. Jason’s soft crimson gaze was so close to hers right now. ‘...This can’t be real...’