

Chosen 511

Chapter 511 Shift

Basketball is a well-known sport in the two empires of the kingdom... and many times comes naturally to the supernaturally stronger werewolves. To make it fair, werewolves are not allowed to use half-shifts during games. Keeping them from drawing on the supernatural strength their wolf sides allowed them was impossible.

So even then, the energy boost from their nature is tremendous, making it nearly impossible for humans to compete.

For that reason, there were sometimes games in which werewolves would only play against werewolves and humans against humans... or games where the number of werewolves and humans on both teams was supposed to be balanced to keep the game fair in terms of strength.

Rarely, however, there were games when humans went against werewolves in a friendly clash of skills.

That said, there is a large difference between flawless skill equipped with fluid technique and the use of brute force to get the game moving in the desired direction.

Because of Brigadia's remote location, it was hard for anyone to attend the Royal Games unless they were heavily funded.

And frankly, these kinds of people weren't many in Brigadia and when there was one, the need to go was diminished by the fact that their friends wouldn't be able to go with them.

As a result, Dexter found himself dribbling a basketball and facing off against a human athlete in a finals match held by Brigadia high school instead of watching the Royal games.

The human he was facing off against was a student at the school he'd attended not so long ago... and he had to admit the skill this 'human' exhibited.

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Dexter had wanted to watch the Royal games in person. To watch the princess go against all odds and duke it out against the King of Lycaon but that seemed impossible now.

Oh no, it wasn't. Now he had to stay behind and face off against a gathering of the best humans in Brigadia versing the best werewolves in a match that would eventually end in his victory, if not barely...

In truth, things weren't looking good for the delta.

"Go, go, Dexter. You can do it, Dexter," the cheering noise coming from the cheerleaders invaded his ears, invading his senses and filling him with more determination than he thought himself capable.

Sweat dripped down his brow, his shirt drenched with sweat. It was the first time he was this winded during a basketball match against humans.

'There aren't even any hunters among these punks,' he cursed mentally.

“Don’t let them through. Let’s keep a tighter defence. Don’t let any plays through,” the human, Titus, facing off against Dexter called out, exuding an aura of authority that was expected of a captain. The people playing with him, were his age, if only slightly older.

His team contained a mix of students on the basketball team and promising junior hunters. Dexter was not even sure which of these two categories frightened him more. Each member of the team had incredible physical prowess and skill, even for humans.

Titus, however, seemed to be on another level. It was also why he’d positioned himself to face Dexter.

His words were considered law to the humans and they ordered everything he said, making the game significantly harder. Each of his calls seemed engineered at making the game inexplicably harder.

The whole situation was starting to get on the delta’s nerves. These were humans. They were lesser creatures that didn’t have the strength to go against the werewolves.

He passed, dribbled and made severe feints but nothing seemed to faze Titus. When there seemed to be an opening he could exploit from his teammates, the captain of the human team immediately switched with them and covered the hole in the defence too fast for the delta to utilise it.

‘Hahaha, the joke’s on you, Titus. I’m only afraid of one human... Well, when she was still human,’ he grunted, passing the ball once more in an effort to break through the defence. His team was not bad either... however, they seemed to be having as much trouble as he was.

No single player was allowed to hold the ball for too long before giving it to their teammate, lest they risk having it stolen from them.

Incidentally, his team was also the one losing this game. Still, in the third quarter, they were trailing behind with a ten-point gap. The situation was not looking good at all.

“You’re not doing bad at all,” Dexter snickered, locking eyes with Titus’ hazel brown gaze.

“Neither are you. I was sure people like you who didn’t like things like training or honing their skills would be down in the dust by now... but look at you, still standing. Well, barely...” the human smirked, reaching forward for the ball that had just flown into Dexter’s hands.

Dexter saw through the attempt almost instantly and spun to get around Titus. The delta, for the first time, felt an opening and went for it.

There was simply no way Titus would be able to recover from something like that. Because of how much pressure and the numerous decisions he had to make, Dexter didn’t notice that Titus’ movements had been a mere taunt. Titus never actually intended to swipe the ball away from him at that moment, knowing the delta was very aware of his every movement.

Dexter dashed forward, easily reaching the hoop before leaping high into the air and jamming the ball into the hoop. The delta came down from the hoop, pumping his fist into the air in celebration.

Much to his dismay, he was met with gasps and silence. Dexter’s confusion was short-lived. Lying on the ground at the edge of the zone of defence was Titus. The human was coughing a lot and a few of his teammates had crowded him to make sure that he was okay.

'Did I?' he wondered, trying to remember if he'd crashed into Titus. Caught in the moment, he hadn't noticed any resistance.

Dexter walked up to them, trying to discern what was going on. This human had put up an admirable fight against the werewolves and Dexter had no desire to look down on him. In fact, he had grown to respect the cocky point guard.

"What were you thinking? What kind of play is that?" a woman, who Dexter guessed was Titus' mother, yelled from the bleachers, fighting against her husband's hold.

Dexter forged his way to Titus, ignoring the lady's pleas and approached her son on the ground, "Hey, man. Are you okay?"

Titus's face was contorted in pain as he tried to brave the waves of pain that washed through his body. When he heard the delta's voice, however, he mustered enough strength to at least stare at him.

The eyes that stared at the Delta weren't those of assurance that he would be fine. Instead, they were filled with rage. Titus gritted his teeth and a look of anger flashed across his face.

"YOU!!! WHAT WERE YOU... ARGHHH," the pain seemed to triple as Titus lost concentration and tipped his head back.

Dexter was about to step back but something tugged at his mind. 'Why does this look familiar?'

"Where is he injured?" Dexter asked in a panicked voice.

"Earlier, he mentioned something about his ribs and not being able to breathe well... but the pain got so bad that he couldn't tell us more," one of his fellow players explained, looking over his shoulder for the medical officer.

The woman in question was still rushing over with a kit in her hand. Dexter knelt down, allowing his claws to grow out of his hands before he slashed the boy's shirt open.

On Titus's chest, a small red bruise was visibly shrinking before their eyes.

The nurse reached them seconds after the injury had vanished, "Give us some space, students. Step back and give him some air..."

The nurse stopped and took a few steps back when Titus let out a blood-curdling scream.

The scream, which started like a cry for help... like the scream of a dying banshee, slowly became deeper and guttural at the end, sounding more like that of a wounded carnivore instead.

Titus suddenly curled into a ball, convulsions shaking his body as something odd started happening, "It hurts... Everything hurts." Titus cried, opening his eyes.

Tears streamed through his grief-stricken eyes but this wasn't as significant as the other thing he exhibited.

Along with the tears and expression of pain that painted his face, his hazel brown eyes now shone a brilliant amber.

Everyone took a step back this time... Everyone except for the nurse, "What's hurting exactly, Titus?"

"Everything... My insides, my gums, my eyes, my ears... everything," the student yelled out right before the sound of crunching bone tore through the atmosphere.

This was followed by several more sounds of crunching bone and screams of pain. Titus's mother gasped when she saw her son's state, unsure of what to do about it.

Dexter, on the other hand, rushed forward, pushing past the nurse and making it to the boy's side, "Hey, Titus. Listen to me. I want you to stop fighting the pain."

"WHAT?! WHAT'S THA—" his words were cut off by a scream of his own. Unfortunately this time, there was another scream that overlapped his, echoing louder than Titus could ever dream of achieving.

Delta looked for the sign of the scream and noticed the cheerleaders standing around a girl who gripped her stomach in pain. She looked like she would be sick. But what brought him a deeper feeling of dread was the elongated canines in her mouth.

Her dark green eyes were lost in a sea of pain as her canines seemed to drop lower than they should have, blood lightly staining her gums as a similar transformation took a hold of her body.

A third scream followed hers and before they knew it, six people from random parts of the court were undergoing a similar painful transformation. Two were players on the team of humans while three came from the audience.

"Nurse Tilda... How can they be going through First Shifts? And at the same time?" Dexter turned to the werewolf nurse.

"I... I don't know. Guide him through it. I'll attend to the cheerleader," the nurse ordered before turning away from Titus and Dexter. She asked for help from some other wolves as well, leaving each of them to their charges. The first shift was one of the most painful moments in a werewolf's life... and before it happened, werewolves were never allowed to freely interact with humans.

That said, it was easier on children since their bodies grew in preparation for that moment. Humans like Titus, however, were subjected to a whole other world of pain that Dexter could not imagine.

Confusion turned to chaos. A few of the werewolves that were able to relax got focused on trying to guide the humans through the first shift.

Crunching bones, bone-chilling screams and pained growls and wails filled the air as the victims of the transformation got through the painful ordeal, losing their minds to the pain that accompanied the first shift.

The junior hunters kept the civilians away from the shifting humans and tried to convince them to remain calm.

"Hey, focus on my voice. Stay awake and focus on my voice," Dexter yelled at Titus. At this point, his body was covered in a sprouting layer of soft grey fur. His jaws had extended forward, his hands and legs bent at odd angles and with his back arched and longer than before.

Standing was no longer possible for him...

“How long till it’s over?” Titus’s mother screamed through the hands covering her mortified expression.

Dexter placed his hand on the shifting boy, “He’s almost there. Just a little longer. Titus, stay awake. Don’t resist the shift... You can get through this. You’ll never have to go through this pain ever again. But first, you must make it through.”

In truth, Titus’s pain was far from over. The process seemed to be slowing down the more he slipped out of consciousness.

A slap rang clear as Dexter’s hand struck firmly across the shifting boy’s cheek. Titus’s amber eyes locked on Dexter’s face, memories of the game returning... as well as his rage towards him.

These emotions were shortlived as a pang of pain eclipsed the rage he was feeling sending him into another fit.

A scream followed... along with an increasingly painful shift.

Chapter 512 Short-lived

Howls of pain and screams of anguish filled the stadium, coming from the humans that had mysteriously started undergoing their first shifts. Amidst the convoluted chaos, two more humans were thrown into the process of the first shift, sowing seeds of doubt into everyone that had no clue what was going on, which was pretty much... everyone in the stadium.

At Dexter’s order, civilians were asked to evacuate the stadium while all the wolves going through the first shift were taken care of with fewer people around.

Werewolves that had some knowledge of the first shift advised the rest of the humans to remain calm as adrenaline was one of the triggers that resulted in the first shift.

With this much chaos and lack of information, it was safe to assume anyone could shift at any moment. The sudden transformations had been completely random and the cause still remained unknown.

Dexter stayed close to Titus making sure to keep the boy awake until the shift was done.

“Stay awake! That’s the only way to ensure you don’t bite anyone’s head off in your wolf form,” the delta spoke, hoping his words reached the point guard.

Titus showed no signs of listening, groaning and growling as the pain continued to assail his body. He seemed to have run out of the energy to struggle but that didn’t mean he was in any less pain.

After what felt like fifteen minutes of painful shifting, a grey wolf lay on the floor of the court, panting with exhaustion.

Dexter ran to a cooler containing water bottles at the edge of the court and returned with the bottle in hand, which he offered the wolf. Titus’s grey wolf sniffed the water and shuffled away from it, giving off a frustrated grunt.

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“Stubborn even after all that,” Dexter sighed, getting up to his feet. The nurse had left Titus to him and gone off to attend to another victim while the rest were also helped by werewolves from Dexter’s pack.

'What's the meaning of all this?' he wanted to ask.

Turning to the werewolf on the ground, he tried to project his thoughts into the boy's mind but there was no reaction. Not even a sign of the boy's subconscious mind gaining access to the collection of the pack link...

It would make sense if he couldn't send any message through. After all, the mind link got harder to use the more unrelated a werewolf was.

Communicating with members of the same pack was as simple as breathing. Communicating with members of another pack was harder and required some bit of concentration for as long as their pack was under the same empire.

If the pack was from a different empire, it was strenuous to use the mind link to communicate but not impossible. The only werewolves that would then pose a problem to communicate with were... 'rogues.'

'A rogue bite?' Dexter thought.

There was that issue of rogues being sighted around Brigadia. Whether these two matters were related, Dexter couldn't tell. It was odd for rogues to leave anyone alive in the first place. If they intended to turn someone into a rogue, they would abduct them.

Leaving them to walk away with their lives, however, was borderline impossible. This was why breeders found to have escaped were always considered among the luckiest of the rogues' victims.

Unlike the rogues that were recruited to fight, the breeders were never tainted with the outlandish beliefs of genocide that the Rogue King implanted into all his subjects.

There were so many questions and no answers. It wasn't like Titus could hide the colour of his eyes intentionally. That was not something werewolves could do at will unless they had a drug to help conceal their wolves.

However, his option couldn't work as well for anyone above the age of eighteen. Above that age, the wolf side of a werewolf was simply too powerful to be suppressed by diluted amounts of wolfsbane.

Dexter looked around at the other shifting wolves, "Congrats, you were the first to go through the..."

A dangerous growl cut him off. Dexter turned back to witness the grey wolf wobbling on its four limbs, trying to get the hang of balancing on his four paws.

Drool dripped down the wolf's maw as it eyed him with savage fury. The look in its eyes betrayed any form of intelligence... Instead of the intelligent eyes Titus had possessed as a human, this wolf bore the eyes of a deranged killer, wanting nothing but blood and carnage.

"Dexter, what's wrong with him? Didn't you keep him awake through his shift?" the nurse yelled at him whilst holding a female wolf's head on her lap.

"Yes, I..." the delta was cut off by a commanding voice echoing through the mind link.

"Werewolves of Brigadia. This is Alpha Graves speaking. The humans that are shifting have been deemed dangerous irrespective of the progress of their first shift. Put them down as soon as possible. It

would be ideal to knock them unconscious so we can figure out what's going on.," the message was brief and emanating an intense sense of urgency that was impossible to ignore.

Dexter turned to Titus, searching once more for signs of consciousness. Despite being on opposite teams during the game, this wolf was still a student.

Dexter might have been older than the boy but he still knew what it was like to be a teenager in his senior year. Back then, he was so stubborn and rebellious that he wound up on the head hunter's bad side too many times to count.

Then again, if he was anything like the kind of teenager Dexter was during his school years, then he was probably as cranky as they came, seeking to assert his dominance and prove that he was on top of everyone in the school.

What better way to do that than to beat up some old alumni who couldn't take the heat during a friendly basketball game? 'Is what I would have been thinking if I were in his shoes.'

The wolf let out a loud snarl, baring his teeth at the delta before circling him in challenge. From the constantly flexing cables of muscle within its limbs, Dexter could quickly read the indecision plaguing the wolf.

"Yes, that's right. I'm a delta with far more experience than you could ever hope to achieve in the next three years. You'd do well to fear me."

"DEXTERRR!!!" the nurse spoke up, getting up to her feet and backing away.

The wolf she'd been tending to snapped its teeth viciously at her, nicking the flesh at her wrists as she quickly leapt out of the way.

It was a close call.

Growing of this odd behaviour, the pack members helping the other wolves quickly backed away, crowding closer to Nurse Tilda. The other wolves unsteadily stood and instinctively joined Titus, snarling viciously at the cornered pack wolves.

Incidentally, most of them were civilians, incapable of fighting as well as the pack warriors. It was only then that Dexter noticed that of all the wolves that stayed behind to help, only two were pack warriors while the rest of the able fighters had left to help with the evacuation.

"Uh, we might need help in the stadium," Dexter echoed over the mind link.

After a short silence, a sliver of a reply returned, "The nearest pack warriors are preoccupied and reinforcements are on the way. The hunters are on their way as well. Try to hold out as long as you can, delta."

Dexter, when given such subpar replies, was used to yelling back at whoever it was that had told him this... but this wasn't just anyone. The person that had chosen to reply to the delta's plea was none other than the alpha of the pack.

'What's happening out there?' he thought to himself. Sensing a wave of tension, fear and urgency all over the mind link, he kept these thoughts to himself. Perhaps they were dealing with a very similar situation, he thought.

But that didn't change his current situation.

Seven wolves against three was not a fight he wanted to get involved in... and yet, he didn't seem to have a choice.

The wolves snarled at them, growling viciously as they gathered between them and the door, "You don't think they'd actually attack us, do you?"

Titus's wolf raked its claws on the ground and bounded for them, covering the distance in a few short leaps. The wolf leapt into the air, opening its maw wide and heading straight for the delta.

Dexter had seen this kind of action coming, considering he was also the one that had triggered Titus's painful first shift. The newly-shifted human was bound to have a grudge against him.

Dexter dashed forward, synchronising his movements with those of the attacking werewolf and not giving him a chance to land a solid attack. He dodged the wolf's maw and put his hand around its large neck.

With a loud groan, the delta pulled Titus back and threw him back at the group of hostile wolves. The other wolves dodged their flying comrade and growled at the delta in rage.

'Oh, dear!!!'

Two came rushing forward at once. While the other four circled around him. As a strategic tactic, the wolves were trying to deal with the strongest one of the group first as though they were hunting down a herd.

And as such, these newbies didn't notice when another person, out of the trapped civilian wolves, stepped out to help the delta, delivering a dreadful blow into the gut of one of the attacking wolves as Dexter dealt with the other.

The delta dashed forward slamming his knee into the wolf's maw. The wolf, trusting the ferocity of his teeth, had not expected an attack so blunt. As such, it was thrown off guard, allowing Dexter to deliver an upward kick to its neck before hurling it back to the pack of hostiles.

The delta quickly shifted into a black wolf and growled, challenging the rest of the wolves to a fight. His comrade shifted as well, mimicking his act of dominance and instilling a wave of fear into the inexperienced wolves.

Dexter's confidence...

...was short-lived.

Chapter 513 At Death's Door

Dexter, being a delta, was larger than the rest of the wolves around.

However, the differences went far beyond mere size. These hostile newly shifted wolves were bloodthirsty and probably didn't care about what would happen to him if they attacked fangs and claws blazing.

On the other hand, Dexter felt a bit hesitant to attack them. These weren't just werewolves out to kill him, they were people who'd attended the games. One of them was Titus, a very talented human player.

These thoughts were cut off, the enemy breaking the delicate balance of taunt with snarls and growls.

The wolves attacked once more, colliding with Dexter and one of the pack warriors aiding him.

The third-pack warrior stayed behind to protect the civilian wolves. The fight, which was a mess of teeth, claws and growls, did not look so good.

Dexter took out one of the wolves with a swift powerful swipe of his paw at the wolf's feeble neck. After that first attack, which gave him a major confidence boost, the situation turned grim very fast.

One of the wolves attacked from the side, crashing into him from above with its maw clamped down on the back of his neck.

Being the largest, he was also the easiest target for a group attack. At the same time, he was the most powerful around and the one they needed to take down first. Dexter quickly rolled and pinned the wolf that had bitten his neck to the ground and yanked him off viciously.

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The delta heard the sound of bones and felt fangs snapping against his hide as he viciously de-clamped the stubborn wolf, 'Sorry! You'll heal. In just a few... argh.'

Another attack cut off his thoughts. The weight of his body quickly doubled, partly from his straining muscles and the weight of another wolf on his back.

As soon as he'd removed the first one... another had taken its place. The beta alpha grunted in annoyance and bit down on the pinned wolf's leg, shattering the bones before shifting his attention to his the wolf's replacement.

Unfortunately for him, his delayed response time was more than enough for the wolf to gain some leverage.

The delta let out a pained howl as the sharp fangs broke through the hide around his neck... and kept pressing down even harder. His eyes darted about in search of the closest wall.

Before he could take a laboured step toward it, pain shot through his hind leg and another wolf rammed into his side. The tangled mess of fur fell to the ground, separating as they rolled off.

Dexter strained his muscles to stand... blood dripped down his neck and hind foot. He could feel himself get dizzy with the pain. The wolves, on the other hand, were just getting started. His large frame made it hard for the wolves to take him down.

His bones and hide were tougher as well, making their work exponentially harder. That didn't mean it was impossible for them to take him down. Since the start of the battle, he'd been forced to go on the defensive, trying to rip them off him like gnats.

He was partly grateful for the relief of not being bitten on the neck but that was about it. His muscles were already screaming with pain, reminding him of how much energy he'd wasted in dealing with the neck claspers.

Before he could get his bearings, the wolves attacked again. Dexter couched low and launched forward at the right time, colliding with the first wolf in front of him and rolling into the mess of wolves.

When the wolf that he'd collided with was beneath him, he clawed its neck and slammed its throat, turning his attention to the side in time to avoid another wolf. This time, he was prepared for their sucker-punch tactics.

The black wolf easily overpowered the other, clamping down on its neck as well. Had the wolf been a rogue he didn't know, this bite would be lethal and end its life in the next few seconds.

However, this was a citizen of Brigadia. He couldn't afford to kill them. The hostiles noticed his moment of weakness and utilized it. Pain riddled the delta's body as another rain of attacks aimed at weathering him down covered his brilliant black coat.

A loud scream caught the delta's attention, prompting him to fight through the pain even more. 'Screw it,' the delta cursed, biting down on the wolf's neck. The neck howled in pain and collapsed soon after, 'You'll heal... but I can't guarantee how soon. Apologies... Ouch...'

Waves of pain and weakness started rolling through the large black wolf's body. He was strong compared to the others... but there was only so much he could take.

During the assault, he'd ignored the pain inflicted by the other wolves but now it was becoming too much to ignore. His beautiful black coat was now matted with scratches and dripping with blood from numerous bites and scratches.

The wolves instinctively backed off, sensing a change in the delta's standards. After watching their comrade get bitten like it was nothing, they were more cautious to attack. The delta was heavily wounded but it seemed as though he was only getting started.

The wolves surrounding him seemed reluctant to attack, afraid of coming close to his dangerous muzzle and front paws. If it wasn't for Dexter stumbling on his feet, they would have stayed this way...

But his weakness was now all too clear...

A decisive growl from the wolf that was Titus initiated the final attack that would most likely be the end for Dexter if something didn't change. 'Where is the other pack warrior?' his muddled thoughts wandered.

Through his hazy eyesight, he noticed a slender sandy brown wolf collide with the pack of bloodthirsty rogues before it was thrown off and bitten at the neck, quickly going limp at the fangs of the rogues.

A civilian...

Dexter growled and blindly rushed forward, disoriented but mad with rage. Not only that, but his heart suddenly grew heavy with despair. More and more emotions of despair, anguish and pain came pouring in through the mind link.

The wolves easily surrounded him, inviting his disoriented form into a horn formation that would be his end. 'Damn it! I came here to play some ball. Not to die! There is still so much I have to do.'

Dexter thought of his fellow pack mates he'd only started training with recently. As someone who'd recently finished his studies, he was given two options: Further studies into any field of study he desired or returning to the pack to help run it.

There were plenty of things a delta could do as part of the pack. Essentially, they depended on deltas to train the young ones, and protect and keep the peace within the pack. And Dexter loved his pack... just like he'd come to love Brigadia as a whole.

There was so much more he had to live for to die here...

These thoughts, however, were met with menacing growls announcing his execution, 'What really happened here? Why did they suddenly shift? Alphas don't even have that power anymore... No, they attacked even though they made it through the First shift conscious... and I can't communicate with them. How...?'

More questions...

Just as he was about to collapse, he locked eyes with those of a frightened girl holding tight to Nurse Tilda. The nurse herself was putting on a brave face, trying to keep the tears in her eyes from falling out.

The pack warrior wasn't guarding them anymore... and he wasn't anywhere close to them either.

'Did he fight? Was he defeated? Or maybe he ran... No, he wouldn't. He knows the consequences of that are worse than death,' the delta's thoughts rumbled as he strained to keep himself sane.

The wolves closed in for the kill, baring their fangs with no restraint... just pure bloodlust.

Dexter allowed his eyes to close and waited for the attack...

1 second... 2 seconds... 3 seconds...

The attack never came. Instead, the menacing growls turned to groans and shrieks as the sound of rushed footsteps mingled with the sound of paws against wood. Dexter was almost sure he heard the sound of a wolf's body slamming the ground like a sack of potatoes.

Similarly, he heard the singing sound of metal in the air before it was accompanied by a muffled collision, followed by the sound of cracking bones.

'Reinforcements?!'

Dexter opened his eyes to narrow slits and peeked just in time to witness one of the wolves hit the ground with a painful yelp. A large muscular woman with a sledgehammer strapped to her back stood from behind the wolf and dashed towards another one, smashing her fist into its skull with her bare fist... the result of the blow, however, was catastrophic.

With a violent jerk, the wolf was slammed into the ground, unmoving.

On Dexter's other side, a flurry of white hair caught his sight. He watched a beautiful girl with white hair dancing between three of the wolves in a dangerously choreographed series of steps that had them flipped, slammed, punched and unconscious within a matter of seconds.

The swift and vicious effectiveness with which they had been put down felt all too familiar.

'I've seen this girl before...' his thoughts were cut off when she turned to face him.

"Long time no see, Dexter. You look terrible," Katie Sirius grimaced. Dexter's state was truly a sight to behold... It was a miracle he was still standing.

'Yeah! I've definitely seen her before,' the delta collapsed on the ground in exhaustion, 'She's the reason I was always so lazy with training.'

Chapter 514 An Odd Power

Dexter was relieved to see Katie but also surprised as well. Yes, the former head hunter was someone respected and loved by everyone in Brigaida. It's where she'd grown up but her life had long since changed.

If there was ever a time when Dexter considered himself lucky, this was one of those times. Everyone knew the story of the Lost Luna. She

How then was she here, saving him of all people? It's not like he wasn't grateful... but then, he could think of several other places that the royal could be other than here.

Refusing to dwell on the details, the delta chose to feel glad he was alright and that Katie had saved him.

"What brings you here, Katie? Some unrequited love you'd like to confess to?" Dexter rumbled through the mind link, allowing his exhaustion to seep through the mind link unrestrained.

Katie chuckled lightly, "I see nearly dying didn't take away your sense of humour."

The princess was walking from one unconscious wolf to another, placing her hand on their foreheads. Dexter got the feeling she was attempting to take them through Prometheus evaluations, which also brought more questions.

Prometheus evaluations could only be given to people that had submitted and were willing to switch back to the side of the empires.

"This... No, they needed more numbers to take me down. I was just about to give them hell when you arrived. These scratches are nothing," Dexter joked, wincing as he lifted himself up on his feet.

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"You shouldn't try to stand up just yet. You took quite the... umm, biting," Katie fully turned to his struggling form, her eyebrows furrowed in concern. Her new look was so foreign that it took Dexter's jokes out of him.

White hair with bright blue eyes... The clothes she was wearing seemed spun from the petals of moon lotuses interweaved with the finest silk, giving her an ethereal look of majestic grandeur.

Her presence was much more powerful than it had been years ago... and for some reason, it was warmer. Before, she was a powerful hunter that could knock the lights out of him the moment he strayed...

But now, it felt like this new version of her could take a joke or two and still retain the power to put him to the ground should he go astray. Her power had far surpassed his now. After all, she'd just taken down three of the hostile wolves without breaking a sweat... and made them look like pups through it all.

"I... I'm fine. Don't worry about me," Dexter shrugged off her concerns, suddenly feeling his limbs get even heavier. The delta shook off the feeling of uselessness as best as he could and limped over to the Luna.

Katie was now tending to another of the wolves she'd knocked out. She placed her hand on the wolf's forehead and a moment later, a glowing blue symbol of a howling wolf enclosed in a blue circle that reminded Dexter of a lunar eclipse appeared in the wolf's fur.

"Don't they have to submit to you before you do that?" Dexter asked, confused.

"Normally," Katie replied, making her way to the other.

She'd finished doing this to the rest of the unconscious wolves. Standing beside the last one was a bestial woman dressed in brown furs with a sledgehammer attached to a harness that held it firmly along her back.

"My Lady, we do not have time to linger," the woman spoke in a respectful tone that betrayed her brutish body structure.

"I know, I know, Brunhilde. I just need to talk to Dexter really quickly before we get going," Katie waved her hand at the female hunter, "Go on ahead. I'll come after you. You can ask the Hunter's Agency for a vehicle while you're at it. Fill the tank too."

Brunhilde grimaced at the mountain of commands that came her way before giving a slight bow. The warrior was gone without another word, leaving the battered delta in the presence of Katie Sirius.

'Still orders her subordinates around, huh? I guess she was always a royal from the start,' Dexter thought to himself, remembering her disciple, 'Speaking of subordinates, I wonder where Sandra is.'

"Katie, is that really you?" a feminine voice cut through the silence and wiped the question from Dexter's mind.

Katie looked up and furrowed her brows in confusion. Standing before her, not far from them was a woman dressed in white medical garments. Katie's memory strained in search of a name, longer than she would have liked.

"Nurse... Tilda?" she asked.

"Are you okay?"

“Yeah, just having trouble gathering my memories,” Katie shrugged, “You should come here as well. Just in case this big oaf dies before delivering my message.”

“Message? And I’m not dying any time soon.”

“Yes, Dexter. I have a lot I want you to tell my parents and the hunters of Brigadia. I can’t be here for long,” Katie replied, “Now, to my...”

“No, I won’t. You should tell them yourself. They haven’t seen you in years and you come here just to tell me that you’re leaving. Don’t you think they deserve to see you first?” Dexter argued, his anger getting the better of him.

Katie, however, wasn’t shaken by the delta’s sudden outburst. Instead, a tear rolled down her cheek, “Don’t you think I know that? Look around you, Dexter. Don’t you hear it, Dexter?”

Dexter took that chance to scan his surroundings. The civilians they’d been trying to protect were long gone and seven grey wolves were lying on the ground, unconscious with blue ethereal marks on their foreheads.

Three other wolves lay on the ground, however. The two pack warriors along with a sandy brown slender female had tried to protect him. Now that he looked at them, he couldn’t help the feeling of dread that filled his mind.

And what had Katie meant by ‘hear it’? Dexter gritted his teeth and swayed a bit, his feeling of dread doubled as he came to a melancholic realisation.

Chapter 515 Grieve

All throughout his battle with the wolves, he’d felt feelings of despair, anguish, pain, terror flooding his mind through the mind link... but he hadn’t had the time to interpret what these emotions were telling him.

Or even discern the screams for help that came through the mind link.

Why the emotions had called out to him so much. Dexter had simply carried out his duty to protect the civilians trapped in the stadium, hoping reinforcements would come in time...

He’d never paid attention to those that were defeated either.

Now that he had the time to take in his surroundings, the injured delta lumbered over to the slender sandy brown wolf that had tried to help him and nuzzled her neck.

Expecting the warm fur and rhythmic breathing of an unconscious werewolf, nothing had prepared him for what he felt. His muzzle was met by the cold touch of death.

She was dead...

And so were the pack warriors.

‘The screams of terror in the mind link...’ he voiced...

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“Now, do you understand?” Katie asked.

Katie had always been the person who felt she had to protect everyone she cared about. As a Royal, it was no doubt she could feel the same things he felt in his pack link, only that she wasn't simply connected to their small pack here in Brigadia.

She was connected to every werewolf in the world. Imagining what the Luna was going through was beyond his capabilities. He could only try to empathise with her.

She was probably going through a much greater form of torture. The mere fact that she was standing before him was proof enough of her strength.

Now he understood why she couldn't stay.

Even as she stood waiting for him to come to terms with her words, he could feel the restlessness rolling off her body. It was taking everything to keep her from tearing out the stadium and putting an end to the carnage.

“What's the message?” he asked.

With that said, the princess began relaying a great amount of information through the mind link to him. A lot of it was explaining what was going on around the world, along with what was happening in Brigadia alone.

She gave him instructions on what to do with the unconscious wolves that had werewolf symbols on their foreheads. According to the princess, there was no telling when they would wake up and they all had to be placed in hospitals and their lives sustained.

She gave him heartfelt messages that he was meant to deliver to individual hunters and her parents, if they were at all in Brigadia.

Messages to the hunters that raised her.

“Is that all?” Dexter asked, a dull headache starting to form in his mind.

“Yeah, that's all.”

The wolf sighed, “You can't protect everyone, you know.”

“Yes, I do... but I have help,” the girl replied with a slight smile.

“Ah, the gorilla!”

“Call her that to her face next time,” Katie chuckled, “It's been nice seeing you, Dexter... Nurse Tilda.” To the nurse, she bowed in respect. The nurse had got a similar dose of information, which explained why she was rubbing her temples.

“Not even the cramming I had to go through in medical school could come close to this,” she muttered under her breath.

“Thank you, Nurse Tilda,” the girl smiled.

“Be careful, Katie! And, I can’t believe I’m saying this... Don’t overdo it. Knowing you... you can get yourself killed performing a training pushup just to make a million of them,” the delta sighed.

“I’ll be careful,” she replied before vanishing right before his eyes.

Just like she’d come, she was gone...

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Katie rushed out the stadium and walked to the edge of the woods. At the edge of the woods, a pair of pigeons fluttered to her shoulders and started cooing for half a minute as the Luna listened patiently.

“Thank you... Keep me updated,” she said when they were done. Her ears extended to the top of her head a white fluffy tail swished at her back before she blurred out of view.

The streets of the Brigadia were starting to calm down, the image left behind, uglier than anyone ever deserved to see.

Humans, hunters, werewolves lay scattered on the ground, either dead or unconscious. The unconscious werewolves were surrounded by insects, untouched but marked as a sign of life to allow the princess to easily identify them as she rushed through the devastated town.

Each unconscious wolf received a blue incandescent mark on its forehead before she proceeded to check the rest of the bodies.

The torn parts of the asphalt took on the shape of a sledgehammer and at rare occasions, the shape of a fist, ‘Goddess’s lotuses, Brunhilde! What were you trying to do? Turn the world upside down.’

‘Perhaps, she’d lost her hammer and wanted to forge a new one out of tar,’ Ashley chimed in.

Katie smiled at her wolf’s humour. If it wasn’t for the chaos rumbling through her mind, she would have laughed but there was work to be done...

The princess sighed, zipping through buildings in tight formations that had her dashing back and forth across the city.

A blue streak painted a line of divine energy sweeping through the town, placing evaluation symbols on the foreheads of the unconscious werewolves that had forcefully gone through their first shifts.

And for the victims of this carnage that were still alive after the onslaught, she placed them at the doorstep of any family that had survived and rang the bell.

Gradually, the frightened families of people that had survived stepped out of their rooms to witness this strange phenomenon. Some found bodies on their front porches and checked them for signs of life.

It didn’t take much to realise what was going on.

The carnage was over... and something was making rounds through the town, too fast to be seen by normal eyes.

Oddly enough, the wind left behind by the being felt like a breath of fresh air. Devoid of the earlier malice and terror that filled the eyes and growls of the rabid wolves. This one was different...

With it came a sense of safety...

They had seen terror and come close to death. Many who were alive were lucky to be alive. It was going to be a while before the darkness of this day would become a memory and this would come to be known as the darkest day in Brigadia.

The survivors knew not to be afraid... but not to rejoice.

It was time to grieve.

Chapter 516 Never mind... She's here

The hunters of Brigadia were caught off guard by the sudden influx of werewolves. Most of them were at the edges of the town, dealing with the 'rogue' issue that had arisen in the past few weeks.

Because of this, they hadn't prepared for an internal attack. Scratch that, there was simply no way to predict such a thing... and at a scale as large as what they witnessed. Wolves tore through the streets, attacking everything and anything that lived and breathed with no sense of purpose or intelligence.

There was nothing to explain the sudden phenomenon and thus no preparations had been made.

Anthony was caught off guard, quickly using the wolfsbane-laced throwing knives concealed within his jacket to put a stop to the wolves in his sight, naturally assuming rogues had finally chosen to attack.

This assumption was put to a stop soon, however, when he witnessed a frightened woman collapse on the sidewalk. For some reason, the rampaging wolves left her alone after that... and he witnessed her shifting, her grey human eyes quickly gaining the glow of a werewolf.

What was more was... when she completed the painful shift, she turned as murderous and irrational as the others.

The situation quickly escalated as more and more humans shifted before his eyes.

Steeling his nerves, he made sure to take the chaos that followed as his first priority. He had to stop the panic lest the hunters be hindered from carrying out their tasks.

Panic would only cause more trouble. The wolves they were fighting were more than just random rogues that they could put down like cattle. The rabid wolves were citizens of Brigadia.

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He blocked out the dark thoughts that threatened to throw his mind into despair. Wasn't he the one that killed three of the wolves before witnessing a human shifting? He didn't want to admit it...

No, he would stop the slaughter instead.

He had to deal with the chaos before there was nothing left.

But that was a lot harder than it looked.

Not everyone had come to the realisation that he had... and until that could happen, there was going to be more death... and regret.

The First shifts were happening at once and randomly. Even after rescuing a frightened group of humans that weren't going through this process, they would quickly disband when one of them started feeling joint aches and headaches.

...and the chaos would worsen tenfold.

It was hopeless...

As a result, he let loose an order he never thought he'd ever have to.

Anthony ordered the hunters to put down any and all werewolves they came across. They were to refrain from killing them but put them down nonetheless and move on through the town.

Due to the random nature of the transformations, clearing a place of the wolves that had shifted did not mean they were completely gone. Any human could still succumb to the demands of their wolf side and begin the shift as well long after the hunters had left.

This made their situation much... much harder to deal with. The hunters were slowly succumbing to the pressure of trying to protect everyone.

The hunters couldn't be in all places at once and yet that's exactly what they were supposed to do. The director gritted his teeth, trying to contain the feeling of uselessness that threatened to reduce him to nothing.

All he could do was continue fighting... He'd given his orders and the hunters had moved on to carry them out, sweeping through the town as they carried out his orders.

When it became clear the panic wouldn't easily die down, the hunters stopped trying to calm the masses and simply focused on what it was they were running from.

Anyone that showed signs of shifting was to be captured while those that had shifted would get put down with a dose of wolfsbane to keep them subdued for an extended period of time. Just enough wolfsbane to weaken them but not enough to kill them.

The hunters unleashed the full wrath of their gifts on the town, order collapsing and being replaced by a helpless attempt to protect what little humanity was left in the town.

At the rate at which things were going, it seemed as though the humans in the town were actually less than the werewolves. It became harder to predict the end result of the battle and what it meant for the future of Brigadia.

It only took a few hours...

After a few hours, the fighting came to a close with only a handful of humans gathered within the confines of the Hunter's Agency. These were the last people under suspicion... and for good reason too.

A few of them had managed to completely fight the First Shift and buy themselves more time while others were still stuck in the early stages of the process.

"Director Anthony, we've gathered them all here! Now what?" Samantha called out to him.

The female had got to work helping them the moment she arrived. Anthony thought she was more distracted than usual but without any real chance to ask her why he let it slide.

What could he do though? It was a good question. Anthony didn't really know what he was going to do with the shifting wolves. As soon as they completed their first shifts, they would attack.

That much was clear from the ones before them...

However, now that they hadn't shifted yet, he felt there should have been an option other than putting them down.

"Let's contain them for now... until she gets here," a feminine voice commanded.

And then there was... her.

She'd introduced herself during the fray as Brunhilde and made quick work of the werewolves, fighting with a ferocity that reminded the man of the Mighty Warriors. She was strong... really strong.

The large warrior woman dressed in skins was helping them fight against the wolves as well. The woman had come out of nowhere and just started helping them, cursing every now and then for being left to handle everything herself...

'The nerve of this woman!'

Unfortunately, she didn't seem to have the sense to follow the chain of command. She did as she pleased and this was starting to get on Anthony's nerves, 'Who does she think she is?'

"And how do you suggest we do that?" Director Anthony asked through gritted teeth.

Brunhilde rubbed the back of her head with a baffled expression, "Barricades?! Don't you have those? I'm assuming you use some for the highway."

"Those are too short. They'll leap over them with ease," Anthony countered.

"Well, we could always stack them on top of each other or we could position hunters around the enclosure of barricades and keep throwing the escaping wolves back in. We only need to buy time," Brunhilde explained.

"Buy time for what?"

Brunhilde opened her mouth to speak... but froze and closed it when a sudden breeze rushed through the compound. The shifting humans seemed to feel it as well, going silent along with everything.

"Never mind... She's here."

The warrior hunter slammed her sledgehammer into the ground and leaned against it, assuming the composure of someone bored and free of all burden.

Chapter 517 Silent Prayer

The first lesson hunters knew to always keep in mind was 'Never let your guard down,' and yet this woman was now relaxed, checking her nails even.

Anthony was about to ask her what she was thinking when a breeze blew past him. His eyes only caught a glimpse of white as something devilishly fast darted past him and onto the humans they'd surrounded.

The new arrival skidded to a stop right in front of them, facing a teenage girl clutching her stomach in pain, "Make it stop!!!"

The white-haired woman, gripped by the plea, placed her hand on the girl's forehead. It will be over before you know it," she said before the girl's eyes rolled to the back of her head and her knees went weak.

'I know that voice,' Anthony's eyes widened. He'd heard it before. Today it sounded richer and more composed but it was undoubtedly the same as he'd remembered it. The white-haired woman before the was Katie Sirius.

Katie caught the girl and placed her gently on the ground before turning to another person. "What did you do to her?" a man asked with a trembling hand.

"It's sort of like a Prometheus evaluation. It's harmless and once it ends, you'll be in complete control of your wolf side," the white-haired woman explained.

The man narrowed his eyes at her for a bit before his eyes widened in recognition. Tears welled up in his eyes, "You're... You're Katie Chase."

With the odd outfit, white hair and glowing blue eyes, it wasn't easy to recognise her... but without a doubt, he could tell who she was.

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"Yes, I am. I'm glad you remember me," the princess smiled brightly.

The man's shivers came to an end and he stepped forward, closing his eyes. Katie silently placed her hand on his forehead. The symbol of a wolf appeared on the man's forehead before he lost consciousness as well. The girl proceeded to do the same with everyone else regardless of their situation.

Those who were starting to feel the pain of the first shift collapsed with the beginning stages reversed while those that halfway through collapsed with the first shift proceeding uncontrollably, only coming to a stop when the grey forms of their wolves were left on the ground, a glowing symbol on their foreheads.

A few minutes later, the crowd of humans was all passed out in the compound of Brigadia's Hunter Agency. Katie sighed when she was done with the last one before turning around to face the exhausted hunters.

The Luna gave a bow, "Hi! It's been a while."

Kenneth was the first to break out of his trance, lumbering over to her with a limp in his step and engulfing the girl in a heartfelt hug, "Thank Prometheus, you're alright!" the man whispered.

"I'm in much better shape than you, Kenneth," Katie giggled, returning the hug.

After that, the hunters crowded the girl, each of them getting a chance to hug her and thank the gods for returning her safely.

Anthony was the last to approach her after Samantha.

After staring at her for a bit, he pulled her into a tight hug, “Anth—Anthony, need air,” the girl tapped the man’s back, straining to get free.

“A little suffocation’s never killed you before,” the hunter replied in a sombre tone.

“We don’t have to test that now!!!” she argued before managing to peel him away from her.

Anthony didn’t want to mention an observation he’d made to the girl. But he could feel it. Even as he hugged her now, it felt like she was going to vanish in the next moment.

All while the hunters had crowded her, the girl had stayed fixed to the same spot, refusing to move or approach them. They were the ones to approach her and even then, she made no sign of moving from that position.

“You’re not here to stay, are you?” Anthony asked quietly.

The girl gave him a weak smile, “I like you better when you’re yelling.”

The Director scoffed, “Did you see what happened out there? It’s...”

“I know, Director Anthony, I saw it... I saw it all,” Katie choked, “And you’re right. I can’t stay.”

“Director Anthony, could I borrow a car? With a full tank if that won’t be a problem,” a female voice suddenly interrupted.

‘There she goes again... Ordering everyone... Wait, she requested?’ Anthony turned to the female brute, ‘Can’t you see that I’m having a moment with my long-lost self-appointed niece? The nerve of this woman.’

“What for?” he asked grumpily.

“I’m escorting Her majesty on her mission. We are in need of transportation means,” the woman said with a slight bow.

“Manners look odd on you, Brunhilde,” Katie giggled.

“You’re not helping, my Lady,” Brunhilde sighed.

Katie covered her mouth and looked away, “Sorry!”

“You know each other?” Anthony asked, raising a brow at the princess. This pairing was not even in the least bit compatible.

“Yeah, I know her. She might look like a hulking brute who likes to smash everything in her path but she’s a softie at heart,” Katie giggled.

“Luna Kat—”

“If you’re helping her, then I’ll come too,” Anthony announced, cutting Brunhilde off.

Katie stopped laughing at this, "I'm not against you coming, Director but you can't. Look around you, Anthony. The people here need you. Besides, you'll slow us down. Brunhilde will barely be able to keep up on her own as it is."

Anthony narrowed his eyes at the Luna. Katie wasn't known for being disrespectful or boastful. The hunters of Brigadia had raised her and knew all her mannerisms, including her tendency to always be transparent.

Katie meant no disrespect with what she said... Then again, that had other implications.

"Are you saying she's stronger than me?"

"Yes," the girl nodded.

Blunt and simple. Katie didn't beat around the bush when the truth was clear. It was one of her qualities. One of the new traits she'd gained, however, was... her empathy. It made sense for someone that had gained their wolf side but Katie seemed to always be thinking of others now.

Anthony wasn't complaining but the girl had just appeared... only to ask for a vehicle to leave. There was a lot he wanted to tell her... his eyes darted to one of the wolves laying on the ground and spotted the blue ethereal symbol.

"What about the rest of the wolves in the town? You haven't taken them through Prometheus evaluations like these ones."

Katie sighed, "Anthony, I do remember saying that I'd seen it all. That's how I know they will need you."

Anthony was going to insist on Katie joining them for a meal at least. However, he'd noticed her restlessness long since the hunters started welcoming her back.

"Hey, I'll be back when all this is over. We'll catch up on everything," Katie said, finally turning her feet to face him completely for the first time.

"It's that bad, huh?"

Katie nodded silently.

If something like this had happened in a remote town, the situation was bound to be exponentially higher in other towns and cities all over the world.

Knowing the girl, Anthony could tell just how much she wanted to go.

"Very well! Let's get the vehicle ready. Kenneth and Samantha, fill the car with supplies for her journey. And Katie... You better come back here when all this is done," Anthony said firmly, balling his fists.

A few minutes later, a fully-fuelled armoured truck roared to life and left the compound, leaving the hunters of Brigadia. Most of them were wounded, weak and tired. The number of people that had died was too high to count and the result of the chaos was a nightmare to put into words.

Nonetheless, there was work to be done. Everyone had to be accounted for... and Brigadia had to find a way forward.

Anthony watched the car leave and murmured a silent prayer. Her life was going to be significantly harder than theirs. Anthony was responsible for Brigadia. Katie was responsible for two empires... She was, in every way, worse trouble than he could comprehend.

'May the gods be with you, Katie.'

Chapter 518 Barely anyone left...

Brunhilde twisted the steering wheel of the powerful armoured vehicle as she floored the brakes, forcing the vehicle into a vicious drift before switching gears and flooring the accelerator.

The engine roared loudly and the tires screeched over the asphalt, groaning under the stress they were being put through.

The hunters were issued very sturdy vehicles. So much so that Brunhilde was more than happy to receive one in Brigadia to aid her in this mission. Unfortunately, she'd not foreseen this situation at all.

The car she was in was fast and durable, capable of taking care of any needs a hunter would ever require... but it had never been designed to keep up with the freaking Luna of Lycaon.

'Damn that princess... just what does she think she is... a goddess!!!' the hunter cursed, pushing the vehicle even harder, straining her eyes and ears to keep up with the lightning-fast wolf she was following.

Even with the help of a car as strong and fast as this one, Brunhilde felt like she was back in the fight with the princess, doing everything in her power to keep her sight of her.

It took all her driving experience, concentration and a tonne of reflexes to keep up with the darting princess... and even then, she felt like she would lose her anytime soon.

On the bright side, the two of them were streaking across the land at blinding speed and covering great distances in a short amount of time. A great eagle soared high in the sky, screeching every now and then, allowing the princess to alter the path she was following.

Katie kept close to the road so that her guardian could keep up with her but that was just about the only luxury she gave her. The closest pack to Brigadia was still a few miles away and Katie wanted to get there as soon as possible.

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Brunhilde was more than strong enough of surviving alone in the woods... but the civilians in that pack she was rushing toward were not as powerful as she was.

So when it came down to it, she really cared more about the people she was trying to save than her 'slow' bodyguard. It went without saying, however, that having Brunhilde by her side was bound to increase her chances of saving more people than she could on her own.

She still needed Brunhilde... So, the middle-ground of all this indecision was to have the Bane hunter drive like a crazy lunatic toward their next destination.

In a few more minutes, the road led out of the woods and ahead of them, a town a little more developed than Brigadia expanded to both sides, inviting them inside with an ominous silence that was interrupted by the sound of Brunhilde's roaring engine.

The first scent to hit the royal's nostrils was that of blood, sending several warning signals of danger through her system.

This was the last Brunhilde saw of the lightning-fast wolf.

The warrior gave up trying to keep up and drove the car through the open gates of the town at her own more humane pace.

She'd only been driving. There shouldn't really have been much to it. All she had to do was twist this round wheel and step on a couple of levers that would get her where she wanted to go...

But she was panting heavily in her seat.

The hunter drove through the town, taking in the sights.

Just like Brigadia had been after the attack, blood covered several places, showing signs of a chaotic massacre. Werewolf claw marks against the wood of buildings... mangled bodies of those that weren't able to get away one at a time.

The hunter could spend forever taking in the carnage that was left behind by the wolves but time was not on her side. 'Just how many will die in all this?' she gripped the steering wheel before changing gears and driving through the quiet town, stopping outside an abandoned store.

Brunhilde parked the car and entered the store, picking a large assortment of food and drinks from the shelves and piling them into a shopping cart. The large warrior wasn't one to go around shopping.

Her physical build and intimidating aura were always bound to draw too much attention to herself, so she kept to herself a lot. This time, however, she could shop for whatever she wanted... well, she could take whatever she wanted.

She picked a bag of chips from one of the shelves and looked around before wearing her best official face, "I, hereby, take this bag of chips in the name of the Queen. For the Empire!!!"

After striking a ridiculous pause she chuckled silently to herself before proceeding to fill the cart with various other snacks. When she was done, she looked at her watch and widened her eyes in shock.

She hadn't noticed the time go by.

The warrior rushed out of the supermarket in a hurry, freezing at the exit of the supermarket. Seated in the passenger seat was a white-haired princess, her pristine features marred with sadness.

Silently, the hunter rolled the cart to the back door and emptied its contents into the back seats before tossing the cart away and getting into the car as well.

The silence inside the car was tense. Too tense, even for Katie. Brunhilde stole a glance at the princess and noticed she hadn't taken her eyes off the same spot on the gravel outside her window.

“Done already?” she tried. Katie had clearly seen something out there. So far, Brunhilde hadn’t seen a sign of life... but then again, there were packs that were equipped with Bunkers to protect everyone in times of crisis. Perhaps that was where everyone left alive in this pack had escaped.

Katie sighed and pulled her knees up closer to her body. It was now that Brunhilde noticed something odd. Katie was barefoot... Her velvet attire wrapped tightly around her ankles.

From her back, a fluffy white tail appeared and wrapped around her as she transitioned into a half-shift.

‘Tail!!! That’s new,’ the hunter thought to herself but decided against asking.

“There was barely anyone left to save!” she replied.

Brunhilde froze at the Luna’s words. The hunter turned on the engine and got the car back on the road. Something was still bothering her, however.

“Hunters?”

“Dead.”

“What about the Bane hunter?”

“Died saving a little girl. I was just barely in time to save the last of them. The wolves held out better. No surprise there,” Katie turned her head to look out the window.

“What will happen to them now?” Brunhilde asked.

After a short silence, “I don’t know.”

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Lina Sirius dropped to her knees, exhaustion racking her body. Her muscles screamed in relief like never before. ‘Who knew a short game could be so exhausting?’ she thought to herself, trying to discern when it was she’d gotten this exhausted.

They’d won 11-10.

The game was, in no way easy. After Kyle got in, everything turned from hard to impossible. The beta alpha’s large size made him the perfect person to defend against anyone making baskets past him.

Cole could more than handle himself against Lina, proving that her speed was an advantage he could easily work around. The alpha didn’t focus too much on stopping her rather than picking the ball from her hands on pure instinct.

His timing was frighteningly accurate and he didn’t even need to look at the ball to predict Lina’s dribbling habits and make use of them.

Jason wasn’t a simple opponent either. It was clear that the beta alpha was holding himself back after his recurring experiences with Bree but that did not make him helpless. Keeping him in the game provided a sliver of an opening that Kyle and Cole seemed to close up very well.

In the end, Jason’s weaknesses were used as a trap and trying to ignore them only made the beta alpha tough when he applied his strengths.

What were Jason's strengths, you might ask? Shooting...

And Lina had discovered this the hard way when the beta alpha's formless shot brought the game to a frightening 10-9 with Lycaon in the lead.

A soft fluffy piece of fabric fell on the princess's face. Lina looked up to notice Cole holding out a bottle of water for her to take.

Taking the bottle from him, she sat up and wiped her face, "You're good. Did you ever play against Katie or Sandra?"

"You were with her more than I was. Never got the chance," the girl said, taking a long sip of the water.

"Well then, it would be nice for us to play a game or two... or however many, when she returns," the prince replied.

"How does it feel to be beaten by a wolf, delta and only one royal, Cole?" Crysta interrupted.

"Oh, I went easy on you. Two losses in a row would not be good for your morale," Cole returned.

"Well, you can mark this as your first in a long line of losses for your team," Crysta countered.

Kyle was soon with them as well, his eyes darting about the place as though in search of something. "Are you even tired, Kyle?" Jason came up to the man, panting heavily while he did.

The blonde looked to be in terrible shape, his face making the worst contortions in expressions of pain and misery.

"Yeah, I'm fine. You just need to work on your endurance a bit more, Jace," Kyle replied, now scanning through the bleachers.

A dainty hand tapped the large man's hand, catching his attention. To his right, Honour stood locking eyes with him like he was an old friend.

"She's gone to the hospital floor. I'm sure you'll find her somewhere near Room 19 in the East Ward," the goddess told him.

Without questioning how she knew this, Kyle thanked her and took off.

"Where is he going off to?" Cole wondered.

"To find Mady."

"Honour, how could you? I thought we said..."

"I know what we said, Crysta and I didn't like it," Honour cut the girl off.

Crysta's face turned red, her mouth closing and opening. A myriad of words stuck at the tip of her tongue, arrested by that one look of determination in Honour's amber orbs. 'How could one goddess be so insufferable!' she mentally screamed, turning away from Honour to cool off.

Just then, the lights in the sports centre went off, plunging them into a veil of darkness.

Chapter 519 An Old Enemy

Micah Chase, a renowned hunter of the Chase family, though not as well known as his brother, Thorrin Chase, had tasked himself with figuring out the mysteries that plagued the somewhat perfect uninterrupted Royal Games.

His brother was talented at a great many things... but if there was ever something that he was better at than Thorrin ever hoped to be, it was his sharp gut instincts. Despite his weakness, Micah had much sharper instincts than those of his brother.

Since arriving at the Great Arena, he'd felt something off about the place but not been able to quite put his finger on what made the place feel so eerie. Everything seemed fine and no one seemed to notice anything out of the ordinary.

Apart from the concerning way with which the two Sirius Royals reached Great Arena, everything seemed to be going smoothly.

...and yet, his gut said otherwise.

His suspicions intensified even more after he met the princess coming from a suspiciously dark parking lot. Checking through it gave him no results even though his senses had driven him there in the first place.

The parking lot was a dead end... but the princess had given him more than enough information to keep following through with his hunch.

The sighting of the famous survival series actor 'Jack Boggle' in the dark place was very suspicious considering the actor had been reported missing for a long time now.

He tried to make a few calls and that's when the second weird thing happened... His signal went off, making the use of phones in the whole Great Arena virtually impossible.

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Panic had risen first through the human population and after a short while, the hunters were able to calm the masses and assure them that communications would be back in order.

In the meantime, a small sub-terminal had been set up within the Great Arena to allow devices to communicate. This only helped the people inside the Great Arena to communicate with each other, however, the rest of the world was still inaccessible.

Micah sighed, walking towards a large tall structure that rose up into the sky, towering above everyone and everything like a pillar of metal beams set on touching the clouds. The hunter looked up momentarily, taking in the sight with a bit of interest.

He placed his hand into his coat and felt for the weapons it concealed, shifting one of the knives to a sheath at the side of his belt for quicker access should things turn bad really quickly.

Because most of the land around the Great Arena was flat or flattened, finding a hill to raise the mast was next to impossible. As a result, a large telephone tower like this one had to be built to project signals across the vast flat land of the Great Arena.

What was more was that it had to be taller than the Great Arena itself to be effective and gave it a much more impressive look compared to the rest of the masts Micah had ever seen.

Surrounding the base of the colossal mast was a black shelter with a single metal door. Micah curiously approached the door, stopping the door hesitant to open it.

...and for good reason.

Despite the door's weathered state, covered with moss and rust, the last person to access it had definitely used force. Four parallel cuts ran deep and diagonally across a hole that used to hold the doorknob.

'One strike. A powerful one. A general? Or perhaps one of the beta alphas?' the hunter thought, spreading his field of awareness in search of anything.

Once again, there was nothing. Not a single sign of an enemy. Secretly, he was hoping there was nothing. If he had to go against the rogue generals or one of the beta alphas, there was no telling how he'd fare against them.

Then again, this silence felt even worse. He could feel it in his gut that something wasn't right... and yet he the trouble eluded him at every time. It was like his enemies intentionally stayed out of sight and only appeared at his periphery for a few short moments before they vanished again.

Pushing the door open, the hunter stepped into the shelter, taking in the state of the inside. Micah was never one for electronics and didn't really understand anything beyond staying away from exposed wires and wet electric grounds.

Thick beams planted thrust and bolted to the concrete floor held the mast firmly planted in place, then ran up and through the roof to the upper part of the structure.

The lights inside flickered with an ominous irregularity. After searching for a short while, he came across a mess of wires at the bottom of one of the mast's legs.

The wires had been viciously cut. When he leaned closer for a look, the hunter covered his nose as the putrid smell of charred blood and flesh invaded his nostrils.

Crouching down, he saw the source of the awful smell... 'Electrocuted!'

The hunter sighed, looking around. The shelter was empty except for a few chairs, a table and a ladder that ran down the middle of the mast, leading up and out through the roof.

Without an experienced engineer, he couldn't fix whatever damage that had been done here. In contrast to a report his sister-in-law had submitted a few years ago, this wasn't the simple flip of a switch that had trapped students in a reserve.

These rogues wanted the mast to be irreparable for a very long time.

Micah walked up to the ladders and climbed up to the top, emerging through the roof of the shelter and standing on its rusty roof. The rundown shack was just strong enough to hold his weight... not like he was worried about that.

The hunter was confident he could easily escape the roof with a quick step if it started to give. Standing at the top of the black shelter, he took in the sights around the mast. Because of the dangerous waves that surrounded the mast, there were few buildings allowed closer to it and none of them was residential.

The hunter turned in all directions, a nagging feeling boring into his consciousness. 'Someone's watching me,' he thought to himself. The gaze that tore at his senses was next to impossible to discern.

'A civilian. Perhaps they saw what happened here,' he thought.

"So, they actually sent you. Who could have thought?" a deep voice suddenly interrupted him.

Micah turned his head skyward towards the voice that had just spoken, then his blood ran cold all at once. His senses didn't say anything about him... but his muscles tensed up and his breath hitched as a memory clawed its way back into his mind.

Seated on one of the beams high up on the mast was a man. His arm looked messed up but without a doubt healing as it should have been.

"Who are you?" Micah asked calmly, easily concealing his tension.

The man's shifted his gaze from the horizon to the hunter, revealing a pair of searing red eyes. Micah tensed at the sight of the man's eyes. He was, without a doubt, a rogue general. This realisation came along with a crystal clear memory.

He knew these eyes.

How could Micah forget him?!

This was the same person responsible for the bite-shaped scar on his right forearm. This was Samson, one of the Rogue King's generals. His strength two years ago had been significantly stronger than Micah's downing the hunter without breaking a sweat along with the devilish childlike alpha, Benji.

"YOU!!!"

"Ah! You remember. I'm honoured," Samson chuckled, bowing slightly, "You were weak back then but I've heard word of your improvement. Still, that's irrelevant. What makes you think you'll be any different this time?"

"Two years is a long time. I'll put you down here and now," Micah declared, retrieving a pair of wolfsbane-laced hunting knives from his jacket.

Samson raised his brows at him in amusement, "Do Chase hunters really attack people that bear no murderous intent?"

Micah froze at the question.

Why did it feel like he was the one trying to coax the werewolf into fighting him? Samson was dangerous. He was a rogue general capable of bringing down an army of trained hunters and pack warriors. But why did he feel no more dangerous than a civilian right now?

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"I knew you'd learnt to hide your murderous intent but this is something else," Micah replied through gritted teeth. How was it possible that the rogues were this capable of concealing their murderous intent?

It wasn't something they could just learn on a whim. It was hard to do, especially for creatures as impulsive as werewolves. It didn't make sense.

Even Katie Chase Sirius hadn't been able to completely conceal her emotions once her werewolf side manifested. 'What's going on here?'

"OR... Stay with me here..." the alpha raised his index finger to emphasize his point, "...I have no intentions of killing anyone. It can be that simple, really."

"That's not possible. Rogues are not the kind to give up blood lust and carnage. You only strive to bring the world down and nothing else," Micah retorted.

Something wasn't right.

It was true that there was no malicious intent coming from Samson but that was all the more reason to believe that he was up to something even more sinister. Perhaps he was feeling regret for something much darker than he ever thought himself capable.

"Why cut off communications? What's your end game here?" Micah mumbled.

The werewolf's sensitive ears picked up on every syllable and a smirk graced his face, "Someone's finally using their head. You know... Normally, I wouldn't tell my enemy a thing. But I'll make an exception simply because you're special to me. I once had high hopes of you becoming my most powerful beta. But I guess life doesn't always go according to plan.

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...also because there is nothing you can do about it even if I told you."

'Yay! How generous of you!' Micah's eyes stayed trained on the alpha, showing no signs of losing their hostility.

Samson chuckled darkly but kept his gaze as well. For the first time since their meeting, the alpha seemed slightly irritated by Micah's presence. His cool and lax attitude reminded the hunter of just how powerful the rogue general was.

The fact that he was so relaxed in his presence translated to how powerful he truly believed himself to be.

"Let's see. Where should I start? Ah yes... the Rogue King's grand plan. He's never been one to overthink his actions but with the last failure, he's changed his perspective so much.

His brilliance is, in all ways, divine and grand. I feel lucky to witness his genius in action. You should just surrender, Micah. His plan is already in motion... and no human will be spared."

"You're not making sense."

"Say hello, Jack," the alpha yelled out loud, a hint of madness glinting in his eyes.

A sign of movement caught the hunter's attention as someone else made himself known. Emerging from behind one of the massive vertical pillars of the mast, famous actor, Jack Boggle stepped out, keeping his gaze to the side.

Micah stared at the man in disbelief. He was known to be missing... but here he was, "Lina really did see you."

"Yes, she did. And you're on the wrong side, Micah," Jack spoke in a sombre tone, turning to look him in the eye.

However, when the actor turned to look at Micah, the hunter took an unsteady step back in shock. Jack Boggle wasn't just being held captive by the rogues but his eyes shone a brilliant amber now.

"You were once a junior hunter. A promising one! If you could only let go of your pride, you could—"

"This is not about that," Jack snapped at the hunter, cutting him off harshly.

In the next second, however, all that hostility vanished and his face softened into one filled with worry, "I tried to get her to cancel the games. But now it's too late. It's probably happening already now."

"What's probably happening?" Micah suddenly asked.

Samson's voice rumbled as he chuckled to himself, "Should you really be here, Micah? I've heard that you grew powerful enough to become a Mighty Warrior candidate. Of course, you still have a long way to go before reaching the Perfect Warrior's level but that's still impressive in its own right.

All that power sent here to check on a mere cell tower... when you could be saving so many that are about to die," Samson mentioned.

"You're here too... If there was anything that threatened the Great Arena, it would be you," Micah countered. Rogues attacking the Great Arena. That was crazy. There were so many hunters there for them to take such a risk.

"Who said anything about rogues attacking? Come on, Micah. I know you're a bright one. You've already seen Jack over here. How long do you think he's been a wolf?"

Micah turned to the former actor and stared at him expectantly.

Jack slumped his shoulders and slowly mumbled, "One day."

It was all the hunter needed to hear before he blurred out of sight, turning his full strength and speed back to the Great Coliseum. If what he'd heard was right, then there was so much that he'd not accounted for.

Only chaos lay ahead... So many lives were on the line...

There was one more thing that was feared all across the world. A werewolf losing control of its violent urges. It was the reason every school was advised to start only after they'd established connections with the Hunter's Agency of their region and allowed either Junior hunter to attend or hired a few professional hunters to protect the school.

One feral wolf was enough to bring an immeasurable level of death and destruction. And for this reason, the empires were advised against releasing young werewolves into society before they'd learned control.

It was also the reason hunters were often placed in situations where they had to kill humans that had been turned into werewolves by rogue alphas. Without any knowledge or experience in exercising control, they were considered just as dangerous as the rogues.

If what Micah assumed to be the case, the Great Arena was in more danger than he could have imagined.

'...also because there is nothing you can do about it even if I told you,' Samson's words echoed.

Gritting his teeth as he dashed, swung and shot through the air towards the Great Arena, Micah suppressed his conflicting emotions. He didn't want to admit the truth behind the general's words.