

Chosen 91

Chapter Ninety One

Cole hadn't wasted any time in rushing to his mate. He knew who she was now and had no intention of letting her go. He had harboured his own innate hopes that the bond he felt with her was real and he'd been right. A predicament that made him feel like the happiest man on earth. He had many questions. They swarmed his head, buzzing uncontrollably, but he couldn't allow them to cloud his mind and deter his mission just yet.

Sandra had broken protocol to stop him from asking questions. Everything around the secrecy of Katie being a werewolf was still a mystery to him, but it was what it was. Clearing his mind, he reached the tree line into the forest and shifted, following the alluring scent to its source. From what he could tell, now that he knew she was moving, she was not heading for the festival at all, but her path seemed to pass remarkably close.

It would make sense for the others to be worried about her making a commotion. 'What am I thinking? She shifted because of the moon yet...' the question that she'd asked him during the very first lesson they'd had together came back to him. 'So that's why you asked me that?' Back then, she'd wanted to know if werewolves had trouble controlling themselves under the full moon.

Today was the night before her birthday and the moon was full which was a rare occurrence. Once a wolf turned that age, their wolves became a more prominent part of them and in case she was taking those suppressing drugs that Ash had talked about, she was bound to shift this night.

Trying to shake off the bothering thoughts, he felt stupid for having not seen the signs. Katie's appetite, her wild emotions, the sparks he felt every time he touched her. She knew everything as well, which meant she wasn't feigning ignorance when she got close to him. She knew they were mates and made sure to keep him close, or at least that's what the male would like to think.

He continued running, his wolf alerting him of their close proximity. He notified the others of what he knew of the route she was taking. Getting in her path, he waited, the scent growing stronger and stronger. What did her wolf look like? Was she going to be out of control? Would she be happy to see him? What was she running after? He knew she wasn't going for him.

The rapid sound of paws striking the ground caught his attention. She was coming straight for him and wasn't making a turn. It was the first time that this scent was finding him instead of running from him. His werewolf vision seemed to clear up even more as he looked into the darkness of the forest from which she was to emerge.

Right when the footsteps had reached their loudest, something emerged from the cover of the trees, the moonlight bouncing off the silky white fur of a majestic White Wolf. The wolf was unbelievably white without a stain on its pelt. Its eyes shone a bright blue that stunned the male. When the wolf took notice of him, its eyes widened in surprise.

Cole, who'd been expecting a wolf that was on a rampage was rather confused. The wolf before him did nothing to slow down and instead leapt into the air, the sounds of snapping bones filling the air as she rapidly reverted to her human form. "Cole," her voice rang out her arms spread out wide. The black wolf's reflexes kicked in and allowed in to catch her just in time.

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'Katie, what's going on... What...' the man asked, opening a mind link with the girl to receive answers.

"I'll tell you everything later. Follow me," she got up and dashed off in the same direction. Everything happened so fast that he barely had enough time to gather his thoughts. He shook off his confusion and caught up with her allowing his questions to come out in order this time instead of stuttering.

"Katie, where are you going?" he asked her.

"When I shifted, my nose picked a scent. I know who it belongs to and I won't let him get away," she said, determination shining through her eyes.

"Who is it?" he asked.

"Well, it's the only person that has managed to piss me off this much since I was born, Kyle Dwyer..." Cole relayed the information immediately to Jason along with the details of the direction they were headed. If it was true that the coward was still close by, then he was bound to be prepared.

After running for a bit, something struck him as odd. The girl was not shifting back into her werewolf form. "Why aren't you shifting? It would be easier to run that way."

"I don't know about which form is easier to run in, but the truth is that I don't know how to shift. I only shifted back because you showed up. My wolf was calmed immediately and allowed me full control again," she explained.

"What were you planning on doing once you had Kyle?" he asked her.

"Well, I can tell that he is not alone, so I was planning on killing all his allies and enjoying my time torturing... Oh, sorry, I went a bit too dark there. I was going to turn him into the Hunter's Agency," the answer came vaguely.

"That must be the weirdest answer I've had all day. What was all that about torture?" he asked.

"Hey, I was going to hand him over to the Hunter's Agency first, then take my time asking for permission to torture him. What am I saying? That's exactly what's going to happen," she confirmed.

Messages from Jason came through asking him to slow down... "Hey, Katie..."

"We aren't slowing down. This is the only time we can get him. I don't what he is still doing here, but he knows that he's not supposed to be close to this town or else I'll get him. I have a feeling they gave the wolf that I found yesterday some time to return. I can trace his scent here. How do you do it? Everything smells like a werewolf," she said.

"You get used to it. Although I must say that yours is a bit too strong," I chuckled.

"Maybe it's just because I don't know how to block it yet. Other than you and the forest, I haven't smelt anything that pleasing. It was giving me a headache," she groaned.

"And yet you still ran in one direction..."

“Kyle has to pay... for Ash’s death,” she said with conviction. Since Ash died, the feeling of helplessness had not left the young hunter and now that there was something that she could do to avenge the girl, she wasn’t going to fail.

“Your parents are worried. They’ve said you should be careful,” I said to her.

“Hush, we are getting close. From what I can tell, they are about five of them, Kyle included.

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Kyle lay in a makeshift hammock that he’d got one of the rogues to tie between two trees. This was his idea of good night sleep in the forest surrounded by ‘sub-ordinates.’ The boy knew just how much he was entitled to as the Rogue King’s golden goose. The wolves around, the alpha included, were below him in rank just because of the information in his skull, “I told you. He won’t be back. Katie has probably already killed him,” he groaned, boredom racking his bones.

Two rogues sat on tree stumps playing a game of cards beneath his hammock, “He’s the most skilled stealth specialist that’s been sent this way since we found out about the Rogue killer. If anyone can survive this, he can. Although your confidence in the Rogue killer’s destructive power is quite questionable,” one of them said.

“You sure all those drugs that you take didn’t get to your head and mess up with some of your bolts or something?” the other asked.

“Are you implying that I might just be crazy?” she asked the man.

“Oh no, I would never say that about the person that is supposed to give a report to the Rogue King,” he defended himself, “I just fear that we are going to risk too many of our men for something that might not be the big deal.”

“What makes it so hard to understand? We are already in hiding from four of the most powerful human beings in the world, the Four Mighty Hunters. Have you heard of them? Their power is comical. What makes you think the stories that I narrate are unbelievable?”

“The four Mighty Warriors are old men that have been training for far too many years. We understand their power and believe because the experience shows,” one of them argued.

“What of the one from the Chase family? He’s the youngest of them. And worst of all, he possesses both Prometheus gifts,” Kyle said.

“So, what has that got to do with anything?”

“The rogue killer... possesses both gifts...” Kyle was satisfied by the expressions on the faces of the rogues when he revealed this information. It was enough to shut them up for a while. He’d spent a great portion of his life trying to come to peace with this fact as well, “Demetri is not coming back... We have to go. If by some miracle he survives, he’ll just lead the Rogue killer to us. We won’t have anywhere to run if that happens.” As Kyle said it, he realised the grave error he had made in sending Demetri to Brigadia. He’d been mad about the man’s arrogance and made a grave error in judgement. Just as he was about to give the order for them to depart, the alpha burst from the door of the cabin.

“Someone’s coming,” he said... sending Kyle’s heartbeat into overdrive.

92 Chapter Ninety Two

The rogues all got to their feet and huddled up, covering each other's backs in an attempt to protect each other. The sound of paws striking the ground kept getting louder and louder. "Who could it be?" Kyle asked as he hid behind the others. In a battle, the boy was practically useless. He bore no qualities of a werewolf. Werewolves were usually built, but with the years he'd spent suppressing his werewolf, he was skinny and was rather useless in a fight. All his worth lay in the information in his mind. Katie's weaknesses, likes, dislikes, hobbies and everything that made her who she was. After all, that was the mission that he was sent to take care of.

The footsteps got even louder, "You were right about one thing, Kyle. Demitri wasn't making it back alive."

"What... I tried to say that a hundred times. What do you hear? Can we make it if we go right now?" Kyle asked, starting to panic. Every part of him resonated with the single scariest statement in his life, 'Katie is coming...'

"Oh relax, weakling. This is all on you. We would have gotten out of this if you hadn't sent that idiot into that territory. Now look what we've gotten ourselves into," the alpha said. Plans were crumbling and despair was seeping in.

"We could try using the woman..." one of the rogues spoke.

"Well, that seems to be the only thing that we have to do left," the man said, rushing into the cabin and coming out dragging a woman ravaged by the suffering of going several days with next to no food. She was skinny and her lips were dry as she'd been dehydrated. Her dress lay torn at several places and her face was scratched all over.

"Get her up. We'll use her as a bargaining chip, and a human shield," Chad barked. The other rogues help her up. Chad stood behind her with a knife pointing to her back. With the stage set, the footsteps finally came to a halt. A large black wolf stood before them, perhaps the largest that Kyle had ever seen. The scary part of it, however, was its eyes. They shone a bright blue that only spelt doom for anyone that was on its bad side.

The wolf had a companion who'd only arrived behind it, a human companion, or so Kyle thought. The rogues watched as footsteps came from behind the Black wolf. Someone was coming, someone dangerous. Their lives lay with the hostage that they had in their hands.

Dressed in simple denim jeans and a black T-shirt, Katie walked into view. The single most threatening feature of her appearance striking fear into the rogues, her eyes shone a bright blue as well. The only difference was that she carried herself like a hunter and not a werewolf. The presence of a powerful hunter was easy to notice if they wanted and this one was one of those that you didn't want to cross.

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"What's with that one? She's brimming with the power of a Hunter and yet her eyes..." Chad couldn't finish his statement.

"That's her. Today is her birthday. She's awakened," his shoulders slumped when he noticed. 'So that's how you tracked me down,' he thought. "I'm afraid we won't be able to escape her," he said to them.

“What do you mean? We have a hostage,” Chad said keeping his voice low before turning to them. “One more step and I kill her. You know who this is.” The Black wolf bared his teeth at the rogues when they uttered the threat. “What are two Royals doing here? You told me the Rogue Killer was the only one after you,” Chad was getting anxious in front of the enemy.

Kyle, who knew what was in front of him to be true, was at a loss of words. There was no way a group of four rogues was going to save him from two Royals, not to mention one that had been blessed with Prometheus gifts. For the moment, he felt like they would stand a better chance against one of the Four Mighty Hunters, but this was their predicament and they were going to have to deal with it.

“It took you long to catch up to me, Katie,” Kyle spoke up.

“That is none of your concern, Kyle. Now that you are in my sights, you aren’t getting away from me,” she said, placing her hand on the side of the werewolf that stood with her. ‘Cole, that’s the Director’s wife. Shaemus’ mother. We’ve been looking for her ever since he admitted to causing the riot out of blackmail,’ she said through their mind link.

‘I’ll send the message through so that they can get here faster,’ he said to her.

Katie kept her eyes trained on their enemies. The four rogues before them, Kyle excluded were dead to her. (Shaemus’ mother) seemed to be conscious for the moment, but she needed medical assistance as soon as possible. She started calculating the distance between her and the alpha that held the knife to her back. ‘Can I get to them before he has the time to react?’ she thought, tapping into her Prometheus gifts.

‘Katie, wait a little longer... They are almost here,’ Cole’s voice came through the mind link.

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Jason was finally caught up on the situation at hand. Sandra explained how the two had found out about Katie’s special situation. There was a lot that fell into place. The arrival of the Sirius family, the dark blue eyes, the name that resembled that of the dead princess of the Sirius family. The fact that Cole had been catching a scent that was appealing to him. “So she’s the missing Royal, huh. Isn’t she a hunter though?”

“Yes, she is. Prometheus granted her Prometheus gifts when she saved me from a werewolf back when we were twelve,” Sandra explained.

“I don’t understand. She’s a werewolf. Didn’t the god know that?” he asked.

“I don’t know. Katie didn’t know either. All we knew was that we were training to become hunters and Katie was getting good at it. She wouldn’t stop training. If I was the god Prometheus, I would have given her a gift as well. I just don’t know why he had to go and give her both of them,” she explained.

Samantha and Kenneth ran beside them. The girl was on the back of the coffee brown wolf following Royal’s scents.

“Katie’s scent is intimidating. I can pick it along with Cole’s scent,” he said.

“Is that how it always is? Scents of powerful werewolves can be intimidating,” she asked him.

“Not exactly. Scents sometimes carry the moods of the person that they belong to at the time. Katie caught the scent of someone that she wants to kill. That’s enough to add weight to her scent. We learn

all that when we are learning to track. You can tell that an animal is afraid as you track it down. You can tell that it's just toying with you as it still feels energetic or when it realises you are a lousy hunter," he said.

"It's odd to hear a werewolf referring to hunting..." Sandra chuckled.

"Oh, you guys aren't true hunters. You don't know the thrill of hunting prey and the pleasure of enjoying the reward. Most especially if your prey gave you the hardest time to hunt them. Now that's a hunt," Jason swooned. The two still didn't know how they were capable of communication. This was what the Director had tried to prevent. Thankfully for them, they'd found a way around it and could relay all the information that was required of them and keep the flow of information efficient.

However, the next message that came through made them feel like incompetent hunters, "Cole says they have a hostage."

"Who is it?" Sandra asked, her heart beating faster. A hostage situation wasn't part of the plan. If Kyle was to escape because a hostage, their efforts would have all been for nothing. Sandra turned on her phone and dialled the number of the Director.

"This better be more than the general directions that you've been giving me. I told you that we are tracking your cellphone, so we know exactly where you are and are following behind," the Director yelled into the microphone.

"This something else, Director. It's a message from Katie. The rogues have been found," she said.

"That's good news. Why doesn't she make quick work of them and return with the traitor then?" he asked.

"They have a hostage, sir..." the Director went silent. His voice came through lower than it normally was, "Is it..."

"Yes, sir. It's her..." Sandra replied, not allowing him to finish the statement. Seconds later, multiple pings came from her phone as yet another conference call had been initiated. 'What is it this time? These things are becoming time consu....'

"Shut your traps, hunters," the Director's voice came through, "We have a change of plans. Katie was never headed to the festival. The situation has changed. These rogues that are smuggling the traitor seem to have been the same ones behind the disappearance of my wife and the blackmail of my son that nearly cost the lives of our citizens a few days ago. She's being used as a bargaining chip. Ten hunters are to remain around the festival and the rest, surround the targets. Those rogues do not leave with their lives. The location is to be sent to all of your cell phones."

"Might we help out?" a new voice came through the phone. Sandra knew exactly who it was although she never noticed when it was that he got included in the communication.

"We appreciate the help, Alpha Haelstrom," Anthony spoke, the phone went off immediately. Everyone in the conference call went silent, allowing the director to say something else. "Everyone that is being mobilised, make it there quickly. May Prometheus be with you..." with that, the call went silent.

“This just became a whole lot interesting,” Samantha chuckled, speeding up and getting ahead of the werewolf. Humans, keeping up with werewolves, the thought was troubling to the wolf. ‘Samantha is not human, but Sandra is,’ he thought to himself. The difference was clear as she couldn’t even keep up with any of them. He’d offered her a ride on his back for that fact, marvelling at how light she was on his back.

Shaking the irrelevant thoughts from his head, he pushed his legs to carry him faster and match the speed of the hunters. They had to catch up to the Royal before anything stupid happened. The scent got stronger as a breeze pushed against his face. Something was terribly wrong with Katie’s scent though. It was getting more aggressive. “Katie is about to act. We have to hurry...” Jason said, sending the message outwards. This time, the others running next to him heard.

“Didn’t you tell her to stay put?” Kenneth asked.

“I did... We must hurry. They are not too far,” the four reached just in time to see the Rogue killer’s eyes flashing with pure rage. She’d crouched down, ready to attack.

“Katie...” Sandra yelled out, but it was already too late. The girl set off, vanishing right before their eyes leaving behind a violent twister that pushed them back. ‘When an agility gift has been activated completely...’ the sound of a thunderclap rang clear through the air... ‘So that’s where the name comes from...’

93 Chapter Ninety Three

Kyle was the first to notice the glint in the Rogue killer’s eyes. Even over the alpha’s threats, she didn’t seem to be backing down. If anything, she was getting ready to attack. The royal beside her remained perfectly still, unable to move from the threat. “You aren’t going to get away from here,” the words cut through his resolve like a hot knife through butter.

Chad, whose hands brandished a blade against Claire’s back, growled at the girl who only seemed to be coming up with a way to attack, “Isn’t she supposed to be important to them? You said...”

“I know what I said,” Kyle replied, right before he noticed the look in the weak woman’s eyes. Her eyes were barely open, but they were clearly trained on the girl before them and they were sending a clear message. Kyle didn’t get the time to react as the woman nodded. What followed was the distinct sound of a thunderclap, the Rogue killer vanishing at that same time, if only even before the sound was heard.

A violent wind passed the group of rogues, their numbers diminishing by one instantly. Kyle was alone behind the rogues that held the woman up. Looking back, the alpha was disarmed and restrained on the ground. Katie wasn’t paying attention to him though as she clearly overpowered him with her Prometheus gift. ‘So that’s the sound that you hear when the Thunderclap goes into motion,’ he thought recalling the myths that went around the Mighty hunter.

Katie vanished once more, their numbers diminishing once more... although, this time it wasn’t one of them. It was the hostage that they had staked their escape plan upon. The situation was looking bleak for the rogues and Kyle seemed to be losing all hope of escape. ‘Damn it, I’d escaped. We just had to make the mistake of waiting for Demitri to come back here,’ he thought, his mind soaring.

Cole took a moment to process what had just happened. Seeing now that stopping the girl would have been useless with the plan she had in mind. He had barely been able to follow her movements. Given the speed he'd seen her use before, this was beyond what he thought she was capable of. Moments after Claire vanished from the hands of the rogues, she appeared right next to him panting and drenched in sweat.

"I've never seen you move that fast," the familiar feminine voice of a new arrival reached Royal's ears. A wolf and two other hunters flanked the pair. Sandra had arrived with a very familiar Jason. The wolves leapt into action along with Kenneth, apprehending the rogues that were guarding Kyle. Kyle, on the other hand, was already behind Kyle, a massive black wolf that barred their path. The boy was now on the run.

Katie's panting only got louder. "I couldn't let them put another scratch on her. I don't know how much energy I burnt through pulling that off," she said, right before she went dead silent, a look of shock on her face.

"You... did well, Katie," the Director's wife laboured to speak.

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"Don't speak, Claire. We need to get you to the infirmary and make sure that you recover," Samantha said to her, before picking her up, "I'll call Anthony and inform him of the rescue. What's wrong, Katie?"

"They are... too many..." she said.

"What do you mean? Who are they..." Samantha asked. Cole and Jason made quick work of the alpha, clearing the path to the boy that was supposedly running from an entire group of hunters and werewolves.

"This boy is going to be a handful," Cole said casually, sending the message to those he knew could hear him.

"Katie, what do you mean 'they are too many...?' Do you mean the rogues that were protecting Kyle?" Samantha asked. Katie nodded. Her laboured breathing finally came to a stop. She tried to stand and staggered for a bit, Sandra catching her just in time and helping her to find her footing.

"No, not those ones... I mean the ones that have come to retrieve Kyle as reinforcements," she said.

"How do you know?" Kenneth asked, stopping in his tracks. Kenneth, along with the two males were just about to go after the boy when they heard Katie speaking. The information, coming from the one person who had no trouble facing a Royal, was somewhat apocalyptic.

"The same way I always know when a Rogue is three miles from Brigadia. The same way the Chase family is able to tell when there is a traitor within a certain group of werewolves. The same way that the Chase family knows when something bad is about to happen. Samantha, I would like to borrow your katana," Katie asked.

"Those aren't laced with wolfsbane... they'll be..."

"You know that I'm a werewolf now... I can't stand the scent of wolfsbane..."

“Oh, right... Be careful,” she said, “If it wasn’t for the fact that the boy is on the run right now, I would have stopped you from going after him. You don’t know how far they will go to defend that boy...” she said to him, drawing a long blade from within her jacket, ‘Where was she hiding that?’ the wolves stared in wonder.

“And don’t ruin my blade,” she warned before running off with Claire in her hands...

“Hey Kenneth, do you have a flair?” Katie asked. She was acting far too calm for their comfort now.

“Yeah, I always carry one. Although I don’t see any reason to with the way you’ve been handling things in the past few years,” he said handing the girl the gun-shaped gadget procured from his own leather jacket.

Katie emptied the weapon of a green coloured bullet and fished for something in her pockets. “I didn’t know why I needed to carry these today, but now I know why. My parents must have been more perceptive than I was in detecting what was going to happen here,” she said. In her hand, she held two items.

The hunters present were immediately hushed by the significance of the two items. The first one was a hairband, an item that Katie hadn’t used in a very long time. She used it every time she was announcing just how serious she was going to take something. Tying her shoulder-length black hair into a high ponytail. Cole was stunned by the change in her appearance even though the look in her eyes brought chills down his spine.

The second item was a red bullet, shaped the same way as the green one. The red bullet was one that was not held by many hunters since it was rarely used. When Anthony realised she was someone who found herself facing rogues plenty of times, he had granted her the authority to fire one. The green bullet was used to notify hunters that there were rogues in the area and help was needed.

The red bullet, however, was used when someone wanted to notify the hunters of something far worse. So terrible that it was said this bullet was only to be used when the Rogue king was sighted. This wasn’t a guarantee that he was, however, it was a sure chance that he was. “Katie, what are you doing? The gun won’t let you fire that bullet unless the situation requires it,” Kenneth spoke up, trying to stop her.

“This situation requires it...” Katie said, loading the flare gun and firing the shot high up into the air with all the strength she could muster. Kenneth watched the red smoke trail high into the sky, the bullet exploding into a crimson display that could only mean bad news to everyone that saw it. “Let’s go after him before he gets away. Sandra, I want you to stay here. Tell the rest when they get here of everything that’s happened,” the orders were given.

“I’ll stay with her. In case other rogues show up...” Jason offered. The rest of the group respected his request and turned in the direction the male had just gone. The feeling of impending doom seemed to be weighing on them as they started the run further into the forest. This was the furthest either of them had ever gone into neutral territory. Anything could happen...

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Anthony was watching the progress of the female junior hunter and noticed when it came to a stop. She was still a mile out. His calls had been going straight to voicemail and yet something in the pit of his

stomach had him going crazy on what could be happening there. Katie had shifted and he was glad that she was in control of herself, but now he couldn't tell anything that was running through her mind anymore.

Would she be able to hold back if she found the boy? He didn't know if he could hold back himself, but she was another story when it came to that. She could kill him without another thought or if he gave too much of a resistance. That's what he thought of her anyway. It wasn't long before he heard the distinct sound of a thunderclap. "Is the Mighty Thunderclap here yet? I don't see a cloud in the sky," it was dark, but the stars were out as well...

"No, he's still far from here..."

"Then who was that?"

94 Chapter Ninety Four

Anthony had been joined by a number of hunters on his way to Sandra's location. He might not have understood how the Chase family knew about things that were going to happen before they ever did. It might have always been a vague warning, but something always happened and the world had come to know to always heed their warnings. This was one of them...

A thunderclap filled the air reaching his eyes, a sound he'd only heard a few times before he finally settled in Brigadia. He'd seen the Thunderclap or rather he'd heard the Thunderclap in action once before. The man was fast and his movements were as loud as they were threatening. Rogues fled from the sound of him breaking the sound barrier.

Unfortunately, Anthony's information suggested he was still far from Brigadia. There was no way he'd made it to Brigadia in that short time frame. "I don't know where the sound came from but..." the hunter that tried explaining was stopped by the distinct sound of a phone vibrating.

Anthony fished through his pocket for the device, making sure to keep up his speed while he did and answered it. "Director," Sandra's voice came through.

"Give me the news that has nothing to do with updates on your position. Have you at least found Katie? What was the loud sound that I heard just moments ago? Is the Thunderclap with you?" he didn't notice he was rambling. He'd been calling them constantly and the previous call had shaken him. It was confirmed that his wife was in enemy hands and he was out for blood.

"We found Katie. The rogues were using Miss Claire as a hostage," she said.

"Stay right where you are. Don't let them escape. We are on our way. They won't lay a single hand on her, do you hear me?" he yelled into the phone, getting even more fired up to make the rogues regret the day they decided to capture her.

"Well, I would and had planned to follow your orders, but I arrived late. Katie got involved," she said.

The Director went silent for a bit when he heard the information. Katie wasn't an idiot and would have made the same judgement he would have if she was in such a situation. But leaping into action when someone that important was in harm's way would only be possible if she had a way out of it... "Was she the cause of the sound I heard just earlier?" Anthony asked him.

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“Yeah, she was... Samantha is taking your wife to the infirmary at the moment,” she said. The phone went silent in the next moment. Sandra hadn’t answered a number of questions that she had, however, there was nothing that he could do about it. Considering there were rogues that they had only gotten her wife from, she was supposed to be helping them with the rest of the job.

“I don’t think we’ll be needed for much,” one of the hunters chuckled beside him, “That rogue killer has been stealing the spotlight for far too...” the man was silenced by the screeching sound of a flare. Hunters were used to the sound and we all looked up to see where it was coming from. Anthony almost tripped, having expected to see green smoke, the sky was stained red. The red flare was only used when...

“Who had that... Isn’t that only given to a select few?”

“Katie had one. I gave her one when I realised that she was going to land herself in an awkward situation one time. She’s the only one in the party ahead that had a red flare. Hurry up, we must get there...” Anthony said to them.

“Want a ride? We could get you there faster...” an unfamiliar voice came from his left. The seasoned hunter found himself drawing two knives in defence, “Oh, slow down there, Anthony. It’s just me.”

A man came out from the cover of the trees, dressed in a white suit. ‘What is he doing running in a white suit? Does his vanity go that far?’ he thought as he took in the appearance of the Werewolf King, Davin Sirius. His blue eyes shone brightly in the dark of night making it hard to miss him. Soon after, another man came through from the cover of the trees. This one was younger, probably in his twenties, and he didn’t wear as ridiculously as his father.

“Father, I’ll take the other two. You need to get to Little sister as fast as you can,” the boy said.

“Okay then... Where are Lina and your mother?” he asked.

“Mother ran off to help the injured woman that we passed by. Lina ran ahead to help. You know how fast she is,” Drake Sirius spoke.

“Very well, son...” Anthony needn’t have added anything to what had been said. They were all in agreement and he only waited for the two wolves to shift and offer the much-needed rides. The hunters with agility Prometheus gifts tapped deeper into their power and pushed ahead, allowing the three that didn’t have that luxury to board the massive Royals.

The wolves nodded once they were ready and dashed forward, going almost twice the speed that the hunters had been going, ‘At this speed, we’ll reach them in no time...’

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Katie brandished the katana with the mastery of a professional hunter. Having taken lessons from Samantha herself, it wasn’t hard to use the weapon. They had already laid waste to ten rogues and Kyle was nowhere to be found. “How fast can those little legs carry him?” Kenneth panted as he dealt a deciding blow on one of the rogues that were bothering him.

"If my guess is right, then he has got a ride from the wolves that were supposed to rescue him," I guessed.

"Well, in that case, then we have to go faster, but they just keep coming," Kenneth said, in between breaths. Cole dealt one more blow to another one of them.

"On the contrary, they've just stopped," Katie notified them. They had been so involved with slaying that they didn't notice that they were taking a break.

"What that supposed to mean...?" a low growl filled the air, silencing the hunter. Cole moved back and shielded the girl he was sworn to protect (and marry).

"These ones are different," he said to them. They waited, readying their weapons and getting ready. Red eyes were the first things to be seen, however, the more they revealed themselves, the more they seized in their resemblance to alphas. These ones threatened the power of the Royals themselves. "Beta Alphas... Right-hand wolves to a Royal. It's illegal for a Royal that's not the head of the Sirius or Lycaon family to possess them," Cole said.

"I've never heard of Beta Alphas..." I said to him.

"Their power is very close to that of Royals. I've never had the luxury of sparring with my father's beta alphas. Rumour has it that they are even more powerful than Royals..." he said. Katie placed her hand into his fur and felt that the wolf was slightly shivering.

"I'll need you to help me with this. I can't stay here while Kyle goes further ahead," I told him.

"We must wait for reinforcements first," he argued.

"Guys, I hate to interrupt your conversation, but these monsters are not in a chatty mood," Kenneth said to them.

The Beta alphas brandished their claws, clawing the ground and snarling at them. Their impatience to kill leaked through their eyes. "Fine, go ahead... I'll make an opening. Although I don't know how I'm going to make one..." he said.

Before Cole could attack, one of the Beta alphas lunged forward, stretching its paw out to strike him. Cole tried to go backwards, but Katie was frozen in place. There was no way around it... He was going to be hit unless... Something smashed into the wolf's side, pushing it off its well-timed strike. They had the luxury to watch a smaller sandy brown wolf push the black mass to the ground. "Caden, just in the nick of time..." Cole exclaimed, turning back to Katie only to realise she no longer stood in her previous position.

"Be safe... my love," he sent his thoughts through their private mind link.

"I will," Katie replied while she ran on in the forest, however, she soon started wondering how true that statement would be when she found that rogues swarmed every inch of the forest. Her senses went haywire pinpointing rogues in all directions as she ran on. Straining her mind, tapping into the one ability that even now proved tricky to use, she was able to pick up on the location of the traitor she was in pursuit of.

Kyle had already created a gap of one mile between them. It was very likely that he was riding on the back of a wolf. The rogues had one objective and that was to rescue the one person with every bit of information on Katie. 'I guess the Rogue king still wants me dead after all these years,' she thought as she tried tapping into her gifts to forge her way through the forest. The rogues hadn't yet noticed that someone had slipped through the Beta alphas.

The element of surprise was all she had if she wanted to bridge the gap that had been put between Kyle and her. "You know you can always shift and let me handle it," a feminine voice sounded in her mind.

"What in the... Who is this? I'm only used to Cole yelling in my head..." she replied, struggling to keep her footsteps as silent as she could with the new distraction.

"Hmph... Typical, the first thing you did once you had control of your body again was to lock me out like you've been doing your whole life..." the image of a White wolf shone clear in her mind, however, she had trouble believing that this wolf was disappointed and she could read this expression clearly as though she was watching a human...

95 Chapter Ninety Five

Katie finally realised what the voice in her head was trying to tell her. 'I'm not sure I can control you if I let you out...' she said to the wolf.

'Of course, you can't. I can handle all this on my own. I would just need to borrow your trinkets. What do you call them? Prometheus gifts... Yeah, those...' she said.

"What would you need those for? Don't you already have your physical enhancements?' she asked the wolf, wondering what more she was going to have to give up to her alter ego.

"Well, I haven't eaten much, soooo... I don't have enough energy. Your gifts would provide me with that. On the bright side, you would get to relax," the wolf said.

"What do you mean you have not eaten? Do you have any idea how much I was forced to stuff myself with today because of you?" I asked.

"I have no idea what you are talking of considering you decided to pull a Thunderclap and burnt through all the food I had stored up. Such a waste," she sighed.

"You know that I had to save that..." Katie paused to swiftly slash the neck of a rogue that she noticed her running through them. With one swift near silent motion, the rogue was dead and she was nowhere to be seen by those that noticed it go limp, "Damn it, now you've made me get sloppy."

"That is not my fault at all. You have your own killer thing going on... I don't even know how you do it," she replied, adding an attitude to her tone. 'Where did I get a wolf with this kind of personality?'

"You know I can hear you right?"

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"Of course, you can. You can hear everything in my mind," Katie groaned.

"I think we got off on the wrong foot or something. Considering we are going to be together for a very long time," she said, her voice sounding familiar, but Katie couldn't quite put her finger on it.

"Okay, what do you propose? And make it fast because I don't have much luxury left. I'm almost catching up with Kyle," Katie replied.

"Well, I was thinking I should introduce myself. I don't know how much good that would do, but she told me to..." the wolf said.

"Who told you to?" Katie asked.

"The moon goddess... When wolves reach the right age, they develop in mind as well and gain personalities. Not all can speak, but some of us can... My name is Ashley," the wolf said.

"Ashley... as in Ash..."

"No, Ashley. I don't think Ash is a feminine name so I will not let you call me that," she said. Many questions swarmed the hunter's mind, most the wolf could not decipher for they rushed by too fast for her to notice, however, the image of a boy, who was obviously a girl pretending to be a boy kept flashing through the girl's mind.

"Who is this girl supposed to be?" she asked.

"Never mind that... Ash is there... If I get too tired to keep going, you are going to have to take the wheel," she said to the wolf, "But if I ask you for control, you give it to me."

"Very well... That's fair. I'll just be doing a bit of stretching exercises up in here," the wolf said before beginning the ridiculously nagging stretching exercises within Katie's mind. 'This is not normal...' she mentally facepalmed before locking her eyes on the boy that rode on a dirty grey rogue at top speed. There was a destination in mind with the way the rogue ran in a straight line. If not, they were merely trying to get out of her radius.

Katie was next to the rogue before it could realise what was going on. Kyle's triumphant smirk turned to a look of his despair when he learned of the new developments. One swift motion lopped off the rogue's front paws and had Kyle sailing through the air. Katie grabbed him mid-air and struck the back of his head with the hilt of the katana she held, knocking him unconscious before she'd landed. The rogues, at this point, noticed everything that was going on and stopped in their efforts to back up alpha Chad.

Kyle was more important in the eyes of the rogue king. 'I can't take all these rogues. They must be numbering into hundreds...' she thought as they swarmed her on all sides, snarling and barking at her. She was completely surrounded.

'You've got that right. They might even be able to hit one thousand in number. I admire their determination,' the wolf said.

'That's easy to say when all you have to do is get a front-row seat to the action that's happening before you,' Katie complained, through gritted teeth.

'Focus, Katie,' she closed her eyes and looked for the thinnest part of their defence. To her dismay, that was in the same direction that Kyle had been going. The rogues that stood between her and the other hunters were so numerous she couldn't believe where she was. 'I can't kill those many,' she said.

“Well, then, you go the other way,’ the wolf said.

Katie wouldn’t have done anything else either as the rogues lunged at her only seconds later, leaving one option for her. She would continue running in the direction Kyle was headed. Leaping out of the rogue way, she unleashed the power of the agility Prometheus gift and downed the rogues that blocked her way, totalling four in number.

‘They are chasing us now...’ the wolf in her mind spoke, looking back as though she could see them through some back window, ‘Wow, this ability of yours is quite handy...’

“Of course, you can use that as well,” Katie groaned... ‘Is there anything you can’t do?’ she thought to herself.

“Apparently, I can’t convince you to let me take the reins. What’s your plan now?” she asked.

“Well, to be honest, I was planning to keep these rogues following me and even make them rotate a bit until the other hunters realise that I’m the one being chased. They would all just swoop in and kill the rest of these mutts,” Katie said, smirking at her plan.

“Oh, that sounds swell,” the wolf said, allowing the girl to marvel at her brilliance, “If you had the energy to pull it off. Feel your legs, they are aching from the strain. You are about to collapse, Katie. You can’t keep this up much longer. You’ll get tired and your whole mission will have failed,’ she said to her.

It was true... everything she said was true. Katie was in no shape to keep this up. After spending nearly half her energy in the near-impossible of Claire, she was running low in her reserves. But why then wasn’t she let the wolf take over? Memories of the times that she’d reached her limit and forced herself past it flashed before her eyes. Her whole life, she’d been the only one that she could count on to protect, to get the job done.

Why now would she give this all up and hand it over to... “Katie, listen to me... I am you and you are me. We are different in some ways, but we are the same in others. If you die, I die. If you get happy, so do I. If I’m sad, you’re sad and vice versa. If we kiss Cole, we both enjoy it...”

“Did you have to bring that up?” Katie groaned.

“Oh, come on. You can’t tell me you don’t want to. I know you dream of...”

“Okay, you made your point. How do I give control over to you then?” she asked the wolf.

“Now, we are talking... Okay, follow my lead. You can feel me in your consciousness. Reach out to me and I’ll do the same,” Katie did as she was told, “You’re doing great. Now you are going to feel some parts of your body asking to run on their own. It feels like they are being assisted. One by one, let go of those body parts and I’ll take over from there.”

The explanation was easy enough, but once she was done and no longer in control of her body, she marvelled at the fact that she hadn’t shifted yet, “I thought that was how shifting was supposed to work.”

“Oh, that’s another procedure. If you want to learn it, I’ll teach it to you. Although I don’t see why. I could always give you control once I’ve shifted,” she replied, tossing the boy’s body into the air. Katie watched in awe as her body began to change in mid-air into the majestic form of a mighty White wolf.

Energy filled her limbs... even though she wasn't in control of the wolf, she could feel the strength between each paw strike.

Catching Kyle, however, seemed trivial as the boy continued to sail lifelessly through the air. A rogue took the chance to try and snatch the boy from the air. In one violent manoeuvre, Ashley leapt up and bit into Kyle's hand slinging his lifeless body violently onto her back and dashing forward faster than any of the rogues could have anticipated, leaving them behind and taking a sharp right... the wolf was enjoying her run so much that she let out a loud howl that shook the night air... reaching the ears of all creatures of the night that were out that night... A New Royal had just been announced... and her power threatened that of the Royals that were present that night... Her howl bore no violence, but insurmountable power...

96 Chapter Ninety Six

Cole found the Beta alphas to be a problem. At first glance, he'd thought they simply had puffy fur that made them look intimidating, but that hadn't been the case once the fighting broke out. They were that muscled, a feat only Royals were supposed to be able to achieve. He knew the four beta alphas that were supposed to be in existence and these two were not among them. Beta alphas were incredibly powerful, but the downside to all that power was total submission to the Royal that they were bound to through the bite...

After the fast-paced scuffle that Cole had gotten himself into with the werewolf before him, barely getting out of it unscathed, he was reluctant to get close to the beast again. Caden, along with the help of Kenneth managed to hold off the other. The forest wasn't quiet anymore. The sound of numerous paws could be heard beyond these two giant werewolves.

Katie was on the other side of the Beta alphas in pursuit of Kyle before they lost their chance, but with this much of a wall behind the two of them, there was no way the hunters could get to them. Without Sandra to inform them of the hunters' progress, there was no knowing when they'd get there. Cole noticed that the Beta alphas hadn't paid Katie any attention even though there was a large chance they didn't notice the hunter dash past them. Nevertheless, she was out there with no backup.

Knowing this, Cole felt his confidence seep back into him. He was the closest to her and the others were still minutes away. That was enough time for the girl to get herself into an inescapable situation. He would have been fine with her going out, but after the way she'd strained to save the Director's wife, he knew she was already reaching her limit. A loud howl filled the air, steeling the Beta alphas in their positions.

The alphas turned in the general direction of the howl and growled in annoyance. Right before the Royal could react, something whizzed past him. 'An arrow...' he thought remembering the distinct sound that he'd heard in the archery range.

The arrow was aimed at one of the beta alphas who snapped it in half within his jaws, showing next to no effort in accomplishing this feat. Cole, with the training he'd gone through in his years in Lycaon, had never seen something of the sort, 'These Beta alphas are not normal...'

The alphas seemed to notice his restraint and smirked. Sharing a glance, the wolves dashed from sight. "What are you doing standing there?" a feminine voice snapped him out of his thoughts... A woman dressed entirely in leather with her red hair tied into a ponytail approached him.

"Don't blame him Jackeline. Those weren't normal alphas..." Kenneth rushed to his defence. Sweat covered his brow and the sandy brown wolf that came following behind him was not in any better shape.

"I saw that they were beta alphas, but that shouldn't be much for a Royal," she quarrelled.

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"No, Beta alphas are only granted to the head of a Royal family. They aren't normal and you know it. I misjudged the situation. If they were serious, we could have gotten killed," he said, confirming the level of trouble they were in.

"If that was the case, then why did they run? And what was with the howl I heard just now? Where is Katie? Were those beta alphas the reason she fired the most sacred of all alarm flares? For crying out loud, the yellow would have done exactly what she wanted," the woman continued to ramble on.

"Calm down, Jackeline. Katie went ahead to retrieve Kyle..." Kenneth tried. Just then a werewolf dashed past them in a blur of white vanishing beyond the trees that were beyond.

"Now that's the kind of backup that I need," Jackeline smirked, nocking another arrow into her bow, a string attached to the back of it, "Tell Frost when he comes everything that has been discovered. Cole, don't fall far behind. Katie might need you. For all of those that aren't fast enough to follow the Rogue Killer, kill every rogue you get your hands on..." she yelled, letting her arrow fly. Moments later, the string went taut and she was gone, using her Prometheus gift to give her an inhuman boost of speed.

It was then that Cole realised the calvary arrived. The woman was just the first to reach them. Looking back, a force of numerous professional hunters flooded the forest, some leaping through the trees at inhuman speeds and others running as fast as they could on the ground. 'I'm glad they came, but will it be enough to save Katie. Howls filled the air replying to the one that had sounded much earlier. The howls were similar, but they didn't come from Katie.

Cole snapped out of his thoughts, "Caden, let's go..."

"Are we killing rogues or going after Katie?" he asked.

"A bit of both... I can tell from this force of hunters that there will be those gifted with speed who will get to her before us," Cole said. Two wolves flanked the two of them. Everything seemed to slow down as he recognised the two forms beside them. A massive black wolf with a white star-shaped tuft of fur on its forehead stood to Caden's left. Atop his back, sat the bulky Director of the hunters, Anthony dressed in the hunter leather that everyone had on.

"Someone's gotten slow," the wolf beside him spoke into his mind, "How did you manage to lose my little sister?"

There was only one person on the planet that would have spoken down to Cole as though they in a mocking tone in an attempt to get the point of them not being equals and yet still not manage to rile

him up while he did, "Well, she pushed ahead to capture the traitor when we were cornered by beta alphas..." Cole said, without realising the head of the Sirius family was hearing.

"Are you sure of what you are saying?" Davin Sirius asked Cole.

"Yes, I am sure... I know the strength of an alpha. These ones were stronger than I am," he admitted.

"Ouch, you just admitted that without hesitation. Were you that scared of them?" Drake goaded.

"That's troubling and it also doesn't make sense," Davin said, "We don't have time to pour over all those details. Pick up the pace, Cole and make sure you protect my baby girl. Drake, do the same... I'll assist the hunters in reducing the numbers of the rogues..."

"Hey Cole," Katie's voice cut through the conversation.

"What is it, Katie? Have you found Kyle?" he asked her.

"Oh, yeah, I got him, but I'm now being chased down by so many rogues. They might just be able to hit a thousand. I don't know how long I can keep this up. Are the hunters there yet? How did you fare against the beta alphas?" she asked.

"The beta alphas were experienced... far too experienced than I'd like to admit. It's frustrating, but they ran off when you howled. My biggest guess is that they are coming towards you. Be careful. The hunters are here and they are doing their best to wither down the numbers of the rogues. Your sister and a female hunter called Jackeline are making their way to you regardless of the rogues in their way. Back up will be there soon..." he said.

"How about the Thunderclap?"

"What do you mean... the real Thunderclap?"

"Yes, the real one... One of the four Mighty Hunters," she said.

"Oh, I had no idea he was supposed to be here. No, I haven't heard any Thunderclaps besides the one that you produced earlier," he said.

"What thunderclap did I..."

"Oh, you mustn't have noticed since you were in motion. So weird. You produced a thunderclap when you saved Claire," Cole explained.

"Oh, that explains my weakness. I won't give up..."

"Don't talk like that. It's scary. Try and send me your current location... Using that weird voodoo of yours. How far from my former position do you presume you are?" he asked.

"I'm about five miles out. I don't know how long I'll last. It's easier to run while I'm shifted, but that can only get me much. The rogues are too many. Focusing on any one of them immediately gives the others a chance to attack and take Kyle from me. I'm running out of ideas. My only hope is the rest of the hunters," she said to him.

"Why do you sound so relaxed?" he asked her.

“Huh... Oh, I have no intention of failing. I’ll get Kyle back into a dungeon one way or another. It doesn’t matter if I have to kill all the rogues behind me, the traitor will make it to the dungeon,” her determination shone through the mind link, calming the wolf.

“Cole... Cole... Have you understood the plan? You seem to have zoned out,” a voice broke through.

“Oh, I just received a message from Katie. She’s about five miles out. I heard the plan and I intend to follow it. I can tell she’s about to reach her limit. And I’ll be there to protect her when it happens,” Cole said, his conviction getting to the rest of them.

“That’s what I’d like to hear. Now go Son of Lycaon and pay no heed to the rogues that you encounter. Unless it’s necessary, kill them...” Davin said.

“What about the beta alphas?” Cole asked him, hoping he wouldn’t have to find them again.

“If you find them again, kill them. They probably weren’t instructed to kill you, which is why they didn’t. They won’t be hard to kill without an order to kill you. Unless their alpha tells them to kill you, they can only defend themselves. Use that to your advantage when you meet them and... on second thought, knock them out...”

“That’s harder,” Cole groaned, pushing forward and weaving through the swarm of rogues that they finally collided with. Most of them were trying to run back, but they were too slow and were getting massacred by the hunters. Those that realised they were only targets if they continued turned back to face their invaders and got the same result.

“Well, if you kill them, their power will just go to whoever is next in line for that power...” he explained. No one spoke more about the matter and they all parted without saying more. There was no need to blame the families considering none of them recognised the beta alphas. However, it also meant that there was a Royal that was breaking rules and had made Beta alphas of their own. ‘I’m afraid something dark and sinister might be going on without the Royals’ knowledge... and I don’t like it...’ Cole thought, finally finding his resolve. Katie was all he had to worry about right now...

97 Chapter Ninety Seven

The moon goddess was not one to care about lost souls and the likes of those that were dead. That was not part of her powers as a deity anyway. And indeed there was no reason for her to be meddling with the work of the god of the Underworld. She was supposed to merely watch over those of her subjects that were still within her domain and yet here she was treading through one of the filthiest parts of the Underworld.

Bugs buzzed about in the muddy marsh, irritating the goddess and her mate. The duo had dared to walk the domain of the one god that didn’t take intruders lightly, “Was this really the only way that we could get his attention?” Seth asked her, groaning as he swatted at yet another fly or bug among the wide assortment of creatures that decided the Underworld was a good place to live in.

“Yes, honey. There is no way to get this god’s attention. Unfortunately, he also hates surprise visits,” she said.

“If that’s the case, then what are we doing here? You know that gods are more powerful within their domain. We should disrespect him like this,” he said. For years, all matters concerning the werewolves

had been left to the two gods that were involved in their creation, Prometheus and Celeste. As a result, the chaos that ensued on earth was spared and the two were tasked with fixing their mistake.

“Don’t chicken out on me right now. We’ve come so far to turn back now,” she tried pleading with her significant other.

“I am not chickening out. My job is to make sure that you are safe... and offer you all the pleasures and desires that you might crave. Following you to the pits of Tartarus does not fall into that category,” the man complained, making sure to keep his voice down while he spoke. He made sure to keep his voice down as well while he argued with his wife.

“I know... and that’s all sweet when you put it like that, but I need to do this. It just might depend on everything...”

“Is this about that girl again? The one who has escaped death countless times now...” he pointed out, “How much will you interfere in this mortal’s life? If the Big man notices what you are doing, he will call this whole operation off,” he tried to warn her.

“I know what you are saying, but among all the gods that I know, this particular one doesn’t have any interest in the laws that were set aside by Big Z. However, what I’m doing is not exactly interfering with the girl’s life. Can you just follow me to the palace?” she said, dragging the complaining wolf along. Seth’s red eyes flickered with even more annoyance. Knowing his wife, however, there was nothing he could do to change her mind.

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He later gave up and followed her like the loyal husband he was. The dark palace loomed over them in the distance, dark energy creeping from it. The intimidating presence of a god that was in their element almost petrifying them to the spot, “I haven’t felt this weak in a long time,” the moon goddess spoke through her chattering teeth.

The lord of the Underworld was among the most powerful gods in existence and an audience with him was something she didn’t wish to do. She’d only come here to do something she viewed as important. Soon enough, the palace gates came into view. They reached the black iron gates. The material was completely black and not because it had been painted, but because it was its natural colour.

“What might you be doing here?” a voice came to them. It came from a severed head that was hung at the top of the gate.

“What in the world...” Seth leapt back, “That’s creepy...”

“Mean... You’re not the first to react that way, however. You must be Celeste... I wonder what a goddess of your calibre would be doing risking a stroll through the Dark Lord’s domain with your significant other.

“Can we get in, Baskania?” she asked the severed head kindly, “Please...” she added, flashing her pearly whites.

“Well, you asked so nicely, so I don’t see any reason to refuse. I don’t even know why I’m kept here, to begin with. I’m bound to let in everyone who comes to see the big man. A piece of advice, Celeste... The

master left his pet dog out to play with his visitors. I hope you brought one of his favourite treats. You know that mutt loves the goddess of the moon,” he said to me.

“Yeah, I came with his treats...” the gate slid open revealing the dark marble courtyard. Seth nearly jumped out of his skin when the door shut with a loud groan behind them.

“Sheesh, could this place get any creepier? This guy knows how to design,” he said, staring at the statues of the souls in suffering while they spent their time in the Fields of Punishment.

“Don’t stare at the artwork. He doesn’t like it. Now that we are on the palace grounds, you might want to watch your step. Any invocation of his attention can alert him of our presence. Depending on his mood, he’ll do any manner of things,” Celeste warned the red-eyed man.

“That’s comforting. If you get scared, you can always jump into my arms,” the man said, trying to calm his nerves.

“Aww, that’s sweet, though considering I’m a goddess, carrying you wouldn’t be a problem either. If you get scared, don’t hesitate to hold onto me,” she returned the gesture chuckling lightly.

“Werewolves is one thing. The lord of the Underworld... That might just scare me,” he said. Low growls suddenly filled the courtyard. For the first time since Seth had been betrothed to the goddess, he was scared to hear a growl. He was the one male that was above all werewolves, well, he was on par with the Royals, but there was no growl he knew of that could make him go on high alert.

“What about that?” his wife asked, looking past him with the calmest expression on her face. The man turned ever so slightly to see the colossal three-headed dog that stood behind him. Its three heads snarled at him, sending the message of scrutiny.

“Honey, do something. This is the one that you were talking about with the severed head, is he?” Seth asked through the gritted teeth, keeping completely still. The three heads sniffed him and searched him from top to bottom. The dog breath was exceptionally putrid, but the sneezing and scrunching one’s nose seemed to be out of the question.

“You’re doing great honey. Let me just check my handbag,” Celeste said, checking through the enchanted pouch she carried with her, a smirk on her face. She was quite sure the dog would not do anything to someone that she’d come with and was only taking in his appearance. His methods, however, were the part that was hard to endure.

“You’re enjoying this, aren’t you? What’s taking you so long?” Seth asked.

“Well, I am enjoying this indeed. I want to see if he’ll like you. Try petting him,” she said, finally finding what she was looking for only to take the time to watch her husband accomplish what might have been the hardest thing in his life, both mortal and immortal...

With an excessive amount of awkwardness, the man patted one of the dog’s heads lightly. This was followed by a tackle that had the three heads all fighting to get a chance to nuzzle the man, “Oh, come on. You can all get a chance. For a second there I thought you were going to eat me... Ahaha,” Seth laughed nervously while enjoying the company of the creature.

“Well, you’re not entirely wrong. If you’d either been an intruder or a soul that had escaped the queue to the Furies, you would have been devoured by him indeed,” she said to him, wagging a piece of jerky in the air. The dog jumped off her husband and game to receive its treat. Celeste threw it into the air and it began to expand, making it to the size of a cow by the time the dog grabbed it, its three heads fighting for the meat all at the same time.

“Someone is having a good time with Cerby,” an ominous voice cut through the air, bringing the darkness of the Underworld back to them. They both froze at the voice of their new arrival. Well, they were the arrivals, but at this point, they hadn’t expected to be found instead of finding him, “Would that happen to be all you came to do?”

Celeste took a moment to regain her voice, “No, that’s not all I came to ask. I have a favour to ask of you,” she said, making a small curtsy in respect to the divine being before her.

“A favour, you say... You must be brave to ask the lord of the Underworld for any of those... Oh, it has something to do with someone that met their death, doesn’t it?” the man asked.

“Yes, it does...”

“Then there is nothing more that needs to be said. You know the rules very well...”

“Please, let me finish. I am not asking that you bring someone back to life. I know the rules,” she said.

The god allowed his mind to interpret her words before answering her question. There had never seemed to be a way around his orders and yet here she was telling him that he wouldn’t have to go against his rules in order to help out. She’d captured his curiosity completely...

98 Chapter Ninety Eight

‘Maybe this was a bad idea,’ the moon goddess thought under the scrutiny of the mighty Hades.

‘You cannot back out of this now. Not when he’s right in front of you. Gods this powerful don’t take lightly to things that take their time for no good reason. We don’t need another tragedy on our hands,’ Seth spoke through the mind link that the two shared.

‘You’re not helping, Seth,’ she complained, trying to regain her composure in front of the god.

“Well, you know the essence of the spirits of wolves,” she began.

“Oh, I remember that well. A sneaky way of you getting people to be reborn. That quite an interesting concept you came up with,” the god mused, his dark eyes gleaming with amusement.

“I don’t quite follow,” Seth spoke up. The god turned his head to the side and watched the man as though he was only seeing him for the first time.

“You dared to bring a hero to my realm?”

“He’s not dangerous. Besides, he’s my divine significant other. His rank is just as high as mine in the eyes of the gods,” she defended the man. Seth was starting to feel like he had made a mistake to speak up when the goddess ran up to him and hugged him in front of the god, a sign of affection that calmed

Hades. Mortals weren't trusted for their ever-shifting emotions and it was frowned upon when a goddess took on one of them for a spouse.

"Does his loyalty still remain?" the god asked, darkness creeping in from all sides of the already dark and gloomy palace.

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"Yes, he does. How else would he have followed me to the Underworld?" she swooned looking into the man's eyes. Seth calmed down holding the goddess lovingly in his arms and kissing her out of spite. The goddess didn't fight him in his course of action, caught off guard by the man's actions.

Hades watched them patiently as they had their moment. His scepticism towards the mortal receded the more he watched them. Seeing through deception was one of his specialities and this man was smitten with the goddess as she was with him. They made a rare couple among the gods that even the goddess of love envied.

"Ahem, if you'd only pause the love charade and tell me what you came here for so I might let you continue. Preferably in a place that's not here. Maybe back in your moon palace," Hades caught their attention. The god's words cut through the fog that came along with the moment that the lovers had themselves in. They quickly cut their love scene short, remembering the person that was in front of them.

Celeste was surprised the god of the Underworld had not vapourised them or at least done something overboard with their reckless display. 'The kiss was your fault,' she said through the mind link.

'I take full responsibility, my love. I couldn't help it,' he replied before they turned to the god. Cerberus continued to bite into his treat as though nothing was going on. The meat had been enchanted to keep growing back until the three-headed hound was full and tired of eating it. This was why it was his best treat. Once he was done, the meat would shred completely and leave a clean white bone that he would then spend months munching on in his downtime, that was when he didn't have to guard the souls that stood in the judging lines awaiting their judgement.

"To answer the question that your spouse asked earlier, the concept that the moon goddess came up with concerning werewolves. You must know that at a certain age, typically eighteen, they tend to say that the werewolf matures," the god started.

"I have heard the story before..."

"Don't interrupt me," Hades said calmly, the warning getting across with the slight but scary sway of the shadows, "Now, as I was saying... and I'll be clearer this time. This time that they say that the wolf has matured. The kind of evolution that forces a werewolf that has not learnt to control the shift to shift uncontrollably and irreversibly unless their mate is present. Celeste asked me to help her out with that part a long time ago... it was about the time she was trying to make amends with Prometheus.

The werewolves were violent creatures that didn't care about anything that lived. As long as it had life, once a wolf had shifted, they'd kill it. It was a dark sight. So she came to me for help in giving wolves something that I would call emotions. The concept was simple enough. The wolf, at the age of maturing,

would have a soul occupy it. One that had been dipped through the River of memories and they would be reborn as the wolf part of a werewolf,” he explained.

Seth was appalled by the information. After realising that Hades had finally finished the explanation, he turned to his wife, deciding it was better to ask her and not the short-tempered god before them, “Are you telling me that every single wolf out there is a soul that has been reborn into the body of a werewolf?” he asked.

“Yes, that is true. That is what I mean when I say the werewolves are my creation and have nothing to do with Prometheus,” she said.

“Okay then... What are we doing here then?”

“Oh, the man doesn’t know either. This must be good. You’re lucky you made an appointment before coming here. That saved you a lot of difficulties. What is it that you want from me, goddess of the moon?” Hades asked her.

“I want you to perform an intentional rebirth for me,” she said.

“Are you suggesting what I think you are suggesting?” Hades asked...

“Yes, I am. There is a dead werewolf that I want you to send through the process and send their soul to be reborn into someone that I have picked. They will mature when the full moon rises tomorrow. I want that to coincide with the rebirth of this particular soul and for the two to be combined,” she said.

“Well, I wonder why you would do such a thing considering there is nothing the soul will remember. This is a useless endeavour you are going through,” the god of darkness said.

“Well, that is what I have decided. I’m confident this will help me bring the war closer to its end or at least, it will help save the life of the one supposed to bring this war to an end,” she said.

“That’s two favours already, Celeste. Are you sure you want to be that indebted to me?” Hades asked.

The goddess found herself smiling at the thought, confusing her spouse, “I wouldn’t want to be indebted to any other god among all the Olympians,” she said to him.

“It’s been long since I last heard someone praise me. If this is some way of getting onto my good side, it’s working quite well. Consider your favour done. What is the lost soul’s name?” he asked.

“Ashley,” the goddess replied. Seth was astonished by the display going on in front of him. His wife had now completely lowered her guard and was speaking to the god of the Underworld like she would a normal person. There wasn’t a hint of hostility left in the god’s presence and the darkness seemed to recede to its former state. ‘Is she really friends with the most dangerous god out there? If not, the most feared...’ the question buzzed in his mind as he watched them discuss.

“Doesn’t this Ashley have a second name?” he asked, slightly narked by the bluntness of the reply he’d gotten.

“No, unfortunately, she does not. She’d not yet received one by the time of her death,” the goddess replied.

“That sounds sad,” he said, taking out a notebook, (‘Wait, why does a god have a notebook,’ Seth mused.) “Might I know the cause of death then?”

“Assassination by a poisoned blade,” the goddess replied.

“Oh my... that’s rough. Humans do have their ways around getting rid of each other,” he chuckled in amusement. Seth found that he had to grit his teeth and clench his teeth at how lightly the god was taking the death of Ashley.

“Well, is there anything else that I need to know about this Ashley?” Hades asked.

The moon goddess thought for a bit before answering, “I think there is only one... You’ll find that despite her whole life, she was worthy of a trip to Elysium had she not met her untimely death at the hands of a spy,” she said. This got the god’s hands still while he was writing down the information. The goddess held the soul in high regards compared to any he’d ever heard her praise. Well, besides his husband and Sirius of the two werewolf brothers.

“Well, that is quite a description. You’ll see the soul in your scrying pool once I’ve allowed them to be reborn. Any communications that you have for them at that time will be possible before the moon rises. Now if that is all you’d come for, I’ll poof you away from here,” Hades said, adding a hint of playfulness to his voice.

“That is all, Lord Hades. You have my thanks. Call on me if you ever need me to repay the favours I owe you,” the goddess said.

“Sometimes your actions alone make the favours worthy of my time. I don’t think I’ll be asking for the payment soon, so rest easy,” with that said, a dark cloud covered the two lovers. “Oh, and would you please reduce the number of treats you give that mutt? He gets distracted when he has a bone to chew on every time he gets bored.” Celeste couldn’t help but chuckle at the thoughts that expression on the god’s face.

Hades returned the gesture with a few of the rarest things the universe had to offer, his smile... Seth was at a loss for words on seeing the god smile. ‘How is it possible?’

“He’s probably the most misunderstood god in the universe...” she explained to ease the mental turmoil that her spouse was going through.

99 Chapter Ninety Nine

Katie’s wolf, Ashley had been running for what seemed like hours. Well, they both knew it was much less... it was about thirty minutes since she’d shifted. A nagging taste filled her mouth while she ran and she endeavoured to spit it out every time she felt the irritation on her tongue. Thinking back to what might have happened, she remembered biting the unconscious boy in an effort to keep him away from the rogues. His blood was laced with wolfsbane to keep his wolf at bay.

“I wonder why you used to take this stuff intentionally for all that time,” Ashley spoke in their mind. Her legs were beginning to tire, but the wolf showed no sign of slowing down. They had been blocked from turning and leading the rogues back to Brigadia and were now very sure of being led further away from Brigadia. The rogues were getting tired of following growing sluggish as well. Using the honed sharpened

senses that Katie had developed as a hunter, Ashley was able to know when it was possible to attack and struck down any rogue that found themselves exhausted and yet still giving chase.

"It's not like I knew that I was a werewolf. The whole time I thought they were pills that I had been prescribed by a doctor. It was supposedly helping with my health... well, that was partly true considering the headaches I would get if it stopped taking them," Katie explained.

"Well, I'm glad we shifted without those drugs in your system. It would have been the most excruciating experience," Ashley sighed.

"Well, it was still excruciating to have to go through that shift without the drugs," she said.

"Oh, yeah, the first shift is supposed to be like that, but the wolfsbane would have made it worse. And besides, you forgot about all the pain when you smelt Kyle. You even broke out of the underground bunker with sheer strength. No wonder we are exhausted," the wolf retorted.

"Something's wrong, Ashley. I have rested enough. Let me take control," Katie asked the wolf.

"What do you..." only then did the wolf notice what was going on. They'd been running in the same direction the rogues came from for quite some time. In fact, it was the same direction that Kyle was being taken when they got him. In about fifty metres, there was a large clearing that neither of them wanted to reach. Looking back, scores of rogues chased after them. The hunters were finally in their field of detection, but still a couple of miles away from them.

At the pace they'd been running, there was no guarantee the hunters would keep it up either. The closer they got to the clearing, the more fear set into their system. 'Cole won't make it in time and I don't think anyone else can...' she thought to the wolf.

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"What do we do then? The rogues won't let us turn to take a detour. Well, if I was to fight them, I don't think I'd last long. Our mission would fail... Katie, what do we do?" the wolf's legs screamed with exhaustion as motivation seeped out of them. Nothing was going the right way. The clearing was now just a measly ten metres away and fear set into Katie's limbs as she'd never felt before.

"Damn it... He's here," she screamed, getting motivated to move forward and run away at the same time. The moment they crossed the treeline, Katie switched with the exhausted wolf and shifted back into her human form, holding Kyle on her back like the sack of flour he was turning out to be(just seemed like it...)

The rogues that chased halted in their advance at the edge of the clearing, spreading out and continuing beyond the clearing. It was a long way out, but now it was clear what their objective had been. To lead the rogue killer into a trap. She could have run back, but her legs wouldn't let her. She was still tired. She'd used up all her energy. 'I'm still weak...'

"No, Katie, that's not it. You're stronger than any human can hope for. Don't blame this on yourself," Ashley tried comforting the girl.

"That's not it, Ashley. I've been training for years for the moment when I'd be given the opportunity to end this war. I had no idea about the goddess' plans to stop the war by uniting the two Royal families.

That came afterwards. I don't want to see homes with anti werewolf precautions to line their fences with wolfsbane before bed. Children aren't allowed to run free in the forests and hunters spend sleepless nights protecting their homes from attacks.

I have protected Brigadia for four years with the intention of making it the one place where it is okay to run out into the woods and have fun with friends. I want the bridge between humans and werewolves to disappear. Wolves are oppressed by the rules because of their nature and they can only behave and take it in. The Royals have tried their best to remain happy and avoid all the words of hate they receive when they are reminded of the atrocities that were committed centuries ago.

All hunters know this and we respect the Royals for their patience. However, while rogues still exist in this world, we will always be reminded of the nature of werewolves in the world. Hunters are stronger than werewolves... Where do we get off being the good guys when our strength can be used against humans just as well as werewolves..." tears were streaming down Katie's face while she explained to Ashley. The essence of her mission in this long fight against the rogues.

Ashley didn't know most of it and was silenced by the conviction in the girl's voice. They'd both been pushed to the brink and barely had the energy to stand... and yet they both knew that they were far from done with fighting. In fact, this was the one moment when they needed to fight the most.

"The world is being poisoned by a single soul. One person that doesn't want peace between the humans and the werewolves... and that is the poison that we are to remove from this world," Katie said to the wolf once more. It was only now that Ashley was realising why Katie said all this. Her eyes were pinned to the darkness that shadowed the other side of the clearing. The moonlight was brighter in the clearing, allowing them to see clearly what would step out of the darkness.

Katie's eyes were as sharp as they could be for a human and her other senses were even sharper for her to fight well in darkness, but she needed to see her opponent. From the cover of the trees, two figures emerged, cloaked in black fur. They walked side by side, leaving a gap between them that was big enough for two Royals to fit. The wolves that came from the forest were very familiar. 'How did they get back here so fast?' Katie thought to herself.

The same beta alphas that she'd left fighting Cole stood before her. She could now understand that they weren't normal either. They were powerful enough to overpower even him. At her current state, she wouldn't be able to fight them... and yet, her body refused to back down. She gritted her teeth, her eyes locked onto the darkness beyond the beta alphas who had now stopped their advance.

From the cover of the trees, something approached them ever so slowly. A black wolf with starry specks of white littered all over its body emerged easily dwarfing the beta alphas. His eyes shone a brilliant blue, identical to the colour of Katie's eyes. This was the famous Rogue King, in the flesh... He'd shown himself at last... and every nerve in Katie's body pushed her to do the one thing she'd wanted to do since she got the resolve to end this war... To end him where he stood. Since the start of her training, Katie had never understood the meaning of the statue that resided in the centre of the Hunter's Agency with the depth of understanding that she did right now.

The three wolves that stood before her were each capable of defeating her on their own and yet, she didn't have the nerve to back down. It just wasn't an option. He was right in front of her... and she was

going to kill him no matter what happened. The entire war that raged on in the world was because of this one entity...

Ashley shared in her rage and pushed forward, not asking Katie to pull out. The strength that was left in the wolf fuelled that strength the hunter had left. Her ears seemed to grow longer and her canines as well. She was going through a half-shift, the only way she could stand up to these beasts in the state she was in.

Once the union of wolf and hunter was done, she let out a growl threatening any of the three to take a step forward. 'I must kill him here and now... This is what I have been training for...' she thought to herself. A whistling sound distinct to an arrow rang through the air reached her ears, but she paid it no head. That was... until she tried to push her right leg forward to attack the rogue king.

A dull pain flared through her thigh while she strained. Another whistling sound followed and this time the dull pain came from her left leg. She looked down and noticed the problem, steel arrows stuck out of both her thighs, black veins pulsing around them. They'd been laced with wolfsbane and from the looks of the arrows, they were made for hunters. She was still standing barely, the weight of the unconscious traitor weighing her down. She made a move to remove him from her back only to hear two more whistling sounds that sent her flying back into the bark of a tree and pinning her there.

These ones had struck her shoulders and were the first ones to send agonizing pain through her system. Kyle's body was a few metres ahead of her, displayed to the Rogue King and ready for the taking. The adrenaline in her body was starting to leave her. She'd delivered the traitor to the Rogue king himself. 'Did I just fail?' she asked herself, 'No, I have to finish it...' these were the last thoughts before she noticed a barrage of arrows through the slits of her closing eyes.

"Katie, stay with me..." she heard the distant voice of a woman. 'Who's that? I can't...' with that, she fell unconscious, having pushed herself to the very limit and finding that she wasn't as strong as she hoped she was to defeat the Rogue king...

100 Chapter One Hundred

Jackeline, the fastest of the hunters with the agility Prometheus gift among those in Brigadia. At least, that is what she knew to be true. There were those who were faster such as the thunderclap, but that didn't stop her from soaring through the trees at breakneck speed to get to the girl she'd spent a large part of her life raising.

'Katie, I know you are strong, but this is not among the things you can handle,' she thought to herself, 'It's all not worth it if you end up dead yourself. You are one of the most important creatures in the world. You're no longer the famous rogue killer that handles everything on her own. You're Katie Sirius, one of the moon goddess' chosen and one of the greatest tools we have in ending this war. We cannot do this with you dead.' The hunter's thoughts spurred her to go faster. Using her slingshot arrows to propel her faster through the trees.

Earning the title of the deadliest shooter was not an easy feat and she stood at the top in this field in Brigadia. Many hunters wondered why she and Frost stayed in this remote town, but part of it was because they wanted to protect the girl who was the biggest hope in ending the war. Not all hunters wanted to fight rogues for the rest of their lives and send the task on to hunters in the future.

Not far behind her, a lean white wolf blessed with blue eyes dashed managing to keep up with her even at this speed. She weaved through the scores of rogues with ease paying no heed to them. One mission in mind, just as her own. The moon was high in the sky and illuminated the path they were to follow. Jackeline didn't know what to call the phenomenon. Tongues of flame, the same colour as the moonlight, marked the path to the Rogue killer. She knew this phenomenon to be true for it had been spoken of before. It was how the moon goddess guided people to places she wanted them to reach.

A loud growl filled the air, getting the hunter's attention. She changed the trajectory of her next arrow and propelled herself far into the air of the night sky, high above the trees, just in time to see the girl get shot by arrows. The beta alphas were already here... 'Cole was right about those ones. They aren't normal,' she thought while she nocked an arrow into her bow. She released a barrage of arrows to stop one that tried to strike Katie while she was down, 'If I'd gotten here a second later, she would be dead...' she silently thanked the moon goddess. She was losing altitude, however, and soon wouldn't be able to fire her arrows again.

Thankfully, the arrows she'd fired were enough to alert the wolves of an archer that was watching. The beta alpha grabbed the boy that lay on the ground and dashed off with his lifeless body. That was irrelevant to the woman as she immediately dashed forward to Katie's side. "Katie, stay with me. Don't fall asleep," she tried, but it was no use. The girl fell unconscious. The wolf that had been following appeared before her almost immediately she had managed to get Katie down from the tree. Slowly and carefully, the woman pulled the arrows out of the girl's body.

"Who could have fired these arrows and with such precision?" she thought to herself. It was unimaginable for a hunter to be the one that did it and yet here they were. Arrows were issued to only hunters that were good with a bow.

"We need to get her to the infirmary at the Hunter's Agency. Those are the only facilities that can help treat this kind of thing. But we are over ten miles from there. How are we supposed to get her there still alive?" the woman thought, despair was starting to set in. The wolf before her shifted back into her human form... a sixteen-year-old girl.

"I'll carry her back. I'm the fastest wolf that I know of. That's our best chance right now," the girl said, ripping her light shirt into shreds and tying the above the wounds. She was incredibly calm about the situation they were in and immediately turned the shirt into strips to make tourniquets for the unconscious girl.

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"You must be Lina. Where did you learn to do that?" she asked.

"I'm not so good in a fight, but I make up for it in support and this is part of what one must know on the battlefield," she explained while she skilfully tied above the wounds to slow the progress of the wolfsbane through the girl's body.

"That's nice to hear. Do you think you can get her to the infirmary in time?" Jackeline asked. To be honest, she hadn't volunteered only because she knew she wouldn't be able to make that distance either before collapsing. Rogues were still running away. It seemed they were retreating and the beta

alphas had long fled from the scene with Kyle in hand or on back... All in all, the rogues had accomplished their mission without fail...

The girl took time to answer her, "I have to... Who else can get my sister to the facilities she needs..." just as she said it, thunder rumbled loud and clear. In the next few seconds, a bulky man stood before them, dressed entirely in black. A scar ran across his forehead but did nothing to hide the warmth of his now ageing face. It was clear that he was beyond his forties, but the power he exuded was insurmountable.

"Let me take the girl to the infirmary," he said to them, his eyes making quick work of the situation. From the experience he'd had in the field, it was easy for him to make out what was going on. He knelt down and grabbed the girl in both his arms... "So this is the one that's bound to lead us out of this war?" he asked. 'He got that just by touching her?' Lina asked herself.

The man quickly took off his coat and threw it at the sixteen-year-old. "You might want to cover up before the rogues decide you'll make a good breeder," he joked.

"That is not funny at all," the girl groaned, putting on the coat quickly, "Get my sister there safely."

"I will do my best to get her there safely," he said, walking away from them, "Would someone point me in the absolute direction of the Hunter's Agency then. I assume there is an equipped infirmary there."

"Yes, there is," Jackeline said, pointing the man in the right direction. Making sure he had the girl nicely tucked against his chest, the Mighty warrior was gone, a loud boom sounding with his departure. Three more booms sounded shortly after he had left, the sound intertwining to sound like a thunderstorm.

"That's insane..." Lina exclaimed, looking at the spot the man was standing in only moments before.

"Yes, it is... What's left now is to take out the trash?" Jackeline said.

"What about Kyle? That is the name of the boy that Katie was trying to capture, isn't it?" she asked.

"Those beta alphas won't be easy to catch. There is no way we would catch up to them. We are only left with killing the rogues that are trying to escape," she said. The rest of the hunters are on their way as well to finish this," Jackeline said to the girl. In truth, she was looking for ways to blow off steam.

"Can't we cast Prometheus evaluations on them?" the girl asked.

"That is a luxury that's granted to rogues that willingly surrender to us. These ones are trying all sorts of things other than that. This is a battlefield, young girl. It's the reality of the world we live in. Rogues are not meant to live," she said, releasing arrows into the trees. Using her werewolf vision, the girl was surprised to see that the arrows were all hitting targets and downing them.

"Why aren't they coming into this clearing?" she asked.

"My guess is that they knew about the clearing and they also know that getting into it would make them more of targets than the cover of trees that they are depending on. I don't have so many arrows left. I might have to get into the woods myself and do this the old way," she said, finally running out of arrows, "You don't have to fight..."

“Okay then. I don’t want to, but if you need my help, don’t hesitate to call me,” the girl said, stunning the woman. Looking at the werewolf, she saw a look she wouldn’t have recognised on the wolf unless they were in this situation. Lina Sirius was afraid to draw blood... ‘Royals continue to amuse me,’ Jackeline thought before rushing off into the battle that ensued. The rogues were starting to seem hopeless, having lost their purpose to fight. There was no reason for them to continue. Jackeline, on the other hand, wasn’t feeling entirely merciful at the moment and went on a rageful rampage, cutting down any mutt that she found on the way.