

Owned by the Alphas 2: Claimed by the Alphas |

The Arrow

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LORELAI

Brax's canines bit down into my neck, and I sighed at the immediate connection that burned through me.

It took me over—the wolves, the alphas, the magic all stormed my body, creating some kind of euphoric storm that kept my eyes closed and my soul open, absorbing everything it could.

Brax's growl radiated through me just before Kai's hands caressed down my body. His skin on mine was electrifying, sending my nerves into some kind of frenzy, making the storm swirl that much faster.

I moaned as he tore my skirts from my legs.

So many beautiful dresses had been destroyed by my alphas, but this one was the one I least cared about losing because I could feel the pack's eyes on me. Watching the alphas claim me in front of them.

Not in a sexual way, which I probably would have taken too, but in a wolf way. They were openly making me a part of them, and the wolves were accepting it. That made the experience that much more intoxicating.

Kai danced his fingers over my leg before gripping my thigh and sinking his canines into the bite he had previously given me.

I cried out, my legs almost giving out at the intensity of the pleasure that filled me.

Derik held me up, his arm encircling my waist as Brax's hand yanked my hair out of the way, sending my head to the side so he had more access to my flesh.

Kai's toxin filled me at the same time, and I gripped his hair in my fist, my mouth falling open.

Derik met the movement, kissing me hard, his teeth grazing my lip as he released the toxin directly onto my tongue.

I expected it to taste gross, to be some kind of poison that I would want to spit back out, but it was the exact opposite.

It was some kind of sweet cedar and seduction combination that made my heart race and body hot.

I sighed against Derik, pulling him as close as I could, heat pooling between my thighs as everything within me grew desperate for more.

The sweet taste on my tongue had me sliding it against Derik's, chasing the high with him as Kai licked over his bite, his rough tongue driving so close to my core that I was sure I was about to get eaten out in front of the entire pack.

I wasn't opposed. Not when my body was wound so tight from toxin and power.

Brax's tongue stroked along my neck, and I tore my lips from Derik's to meet Brax in a kiss that made me shudder against them all.

And then the pack was howling into the night, ripping us from our connection. My alphas growled and stood in front of me.

The cold air of night broke through the desperate heat within me and I shivered, wrapping my arms around myself, my eyes darting around the clearing.

The torch lamps were lit but each one began going out, and my heart raced.

"What's going on?" I whispered.

"Stay there. We're not alone," Brax whispered, his hand reaching behind him to grab mine. I clutched it tightly.

A darkness fell over the clearing, and everything stilled as the pack snarled and howled.

Kai sniffed the air, a savage roar ripping through him as Derik frowned, stepping forward, his eyes searching through the forest.

"Humans," he spat, and I swallowed hard.

Were they here to talk or to fight? I had no idea, and apparently neither did my alphas because they were still, sensing things that I couldn't.

I peered between Kai and Derik at the pack all swarming the alphas, spreading out into the trees, moving in sync.

I wondered if Derik was ordering them into position, if Kai was barking their attack orders at them, or if Brax's shadows were sensing how close they were.

Kai looked over my shoulder with a smirk, and I frowned at him, not sure what he was finding amusing, when suddenly my mind flooded with a strength that took me over.

All the answers I wanted were there, and I sucked in a breath. My eyes widened and I looked up at him.

"The pack link?" I asked, and he nodded.

"You're a luna now, Little Human." Kai grinned, then turned back around.

I smiled. Derik was moving the wolves into position, like I had thought.

Kai had instructed them to hold back on attacking until they played their hand, and Brax's shadows, that I ached to join, were feeling for the humans, like I had thought.

Mine stayed safely within me, but they were sparked with energy from the border power and wolf toxin.

It was so much sensation still humming in my veins, and I wondered whether I would be any help when it came down to it. Would I be able to take out some humans who my father had brainwashed, or would I choke?

Would I even know what to do with so much of it?

My questions went unanswered as the entire pack tensed, the link tightening, solidifying as the collective stayed firm, loyal, in true pack mode. It was intense and beautiful. Kind of like my alphas.

And then everything broke.

The serene, powerful moment we had all just shared went to shit because one minute, we were standing there waiting for the humans to show their faces, and the next, arrows were raining down on us.

I screamed and threw my hands out as I ducked. I had every intention of just protecting my head from the lethal rain of arrows but instead, a flash of purple exploded from my hands.

Screams filled the air, and I gasped as Kai laughed. The pack went still—in awe, if the link was to be believed.

The humans were forced back, their arrows bouncing off the purple dome I had created around us.

I frowned and looked at my hands, which looked totally innocent and normal. I had no idea how I had done it, but I was grateful.

I broke through my alphas to see if I could find my father in the angry human wall that was bashing on my shield, frowning when Brax stumbled into me.

I turned to him, gasping at his wide eyes and the arrow sticking out of his shoulder.

“Brax!” I cried, and tried to hold him up as he went down, but he almost took me down with him.

Kai and Derik rushed to help, grabbing him before he collapsed. Derik swung me out of the way, but I broke his hold on me, racing to Brax as my heart stampeded in my chest, tears filling my eyes.

I swiped them away and leaned over him. “Brax,” I whispered, and his eyes fluttered open, his hand going to my face.

“I’ll be okay, Spitfire. An arrow hurts like a bitch, but it’s not going to kill me,” he said before coughing, hard.

I held him as he did, and he looked down at his hand with a frown. Speckles of black blood coated it, and the panic set in.

Wolves weren’t human, but I knew they weren’t meant to bleed black.

“Help him,” I whimpered as Kai tried to work the arrow out.

He almost had it, getting the tip, then hissing when he touched it. "Fuck. Derik, it's laced with wolfsbane," he growled, his eyes going to the pack as they watched, their fear and anger visceral in the link.

It was suffocating.

Kai left me and Derik and stood up, his eyes full of anger and hatred.

"Drop the shield, Little Human," he said, his voice low and dangerous.

I shuddered at the malice in it, looking at the humans on the other side. My father was there, watching me hold Brax's paling face in my lap, a stupid smug look on his face.

"Are you going to kill them?" I asked, not sure why when I knew the answer.

"Yes."

I couldn't even find a reason to argue with him. The humans had come here to fight, to kill. I wasn't sure how potent a wolfsbane arrow was, but they might yet succeed.

They didn't care. So why should I?

I lifted my hand. I was not sure how I had made the dome shield around us but I called it back, hoping it was easy as that, my watery eyes meeting my father's as I drew back my magic.

And then Kai was roaring out, a message of attack to the pack, a promise to the humans.

The second the shield was gone, the wolves attacked, and so did the humans.

I turned away from the carnage and bloodshed, holding Brax as Derik used the hem of my torn-off dress to wiggle the arrow out of his shoulder.

Brax hissed when Derik finally got it free, and I breathed a sigh of relief, placing more of my shredded skirts against the wound that was oozing more black blood.

The space was filled with angry clashes of teeth and violent screams, but I didn't want to see the humans get torn apart. I hated them in that moment, but I didn't want to see what was happening to them.

They had wanted a massacre, and I had every faith in my pack providing that. Especially with Kai on the hunt.

"I have to go help. Your father is retreating like a coward, and we can't lose him. He has attacked us," Derik snarled, checking over his shoulder, the clearing dark as the wolves chased the humans farther away.

It was weird: thinking of them told me exactly where they were. Not a picture, but a feeling. Some ached, some were cut, but they were mostly okay, they were alive.

Brax, not so much. He coughed again, and I nodded toward the forest.

"Go, I'll take Brax home," I said, and as I said it, a carriage rolled up.

Derik looked like he wanted to say no, but I knew he was only doing that to stay with me.

"Go, Derik. I have my shield. I can't fight yet, but I can defend, and I won't let them near us. Go help the pack," I said.

He warred with his indecision until he finally nodded. He lifted Brax, who groaned at the movement, black tendrils stretching along the veins surrounding his wound.

My heart was thundering, hurt crushing my chest at the idea that this could be fatal to him. It was a despair that edged on my thoughts as I opened the door to the carriage.

Derik made me go in first, then lifted Brax in, and I held him to me. He groaned, and more tears sprung to my eyes.

"What do I do when I get there?"

"I'll handle that side of things, trouble." Cain smirked, pushing past Derik and climbing into the carriage. He grabbed my hand and held it over Brax's shoulder before turning to Derik.

"Go. The pack needs you. I've got these two, D," Cain said, and Derik took one last look at me and Brax before nodding and slamming the carriage shut.

There was a fierce roar that turned to a growl as I felt Derik's shift just before the carriage started moving. I kept my head in the link, trying to figure out if they had caught my dad yet, but I was shut out.

I frowned, and Cain jolted me to get my attention.

"I need you to concentrate. You have magic in you, and he needs that right now.

"It's not like healing, but if you can put that shield you made around his heart, it'll make my job a lot easier and his odds a lot higher," Cain ordered, and I swallowed back my tears at the idea of Brax not beating those odds.

My hand glowed, and I felt the magic in me. It was fluid, like it had been at the border, and I pushed it out, willing it into Brax.

He sucked in a breath, his back arching as his eyes flung open and my magic latched around the pumping of his heart.

It raced along the veins that were filled with black gunk and forced it out of the way, fighting it every time it sloshed closer to his heart.

It was a constant battle against it, and I blew out a breath. I had to concentrate harder than last time, and it was terrifying. One slip and he could die, one slip and it could be my fault.

Tears streamed down my cheeks as I kept him alive the entire way back to the city, all my focus and energy on him.

I kissed the top of his head, and he murmured something incoherent, his hand tightening in mine.

My lip trembled and my chest hurt as his hand lowered to my stomach, the swell there hard and fluttering inside. He rubbed it lightly before sighing, and then he was unconscious.

I whimpered. "Brax," I cried, the hurt lacing through my chest, my heart, tearing it to ribbons as the black veins stretched up the side of his face and down his arms.

"Why aren't his shadows fighting it?" I demanded, and Cain shook his head.

"This wolfsbane is toxic to our kind. His shadows can't fight it, they are part of his human side," he murmured, checking Brax's pulse and hovering his hand over the wound.

It glowed brightly but didn't seem to be doing anything.

"Why isn't it working?" I snapped, wondering if Cain could really fix my alpha.

I couldn't lose him. He was my connection, to the shadows, to the most intimate parts of my soul. He understood me and my pain, just as I felt his. I couldn't handle losing him.

Tears came freely, and a pain in my stomach pierced me. I sucked in a breath and almost lost my concentration. Cain hissed at me and forced me to look at him, his glowing hand going to my stomach.

"Calm down. I know it's scary and hard, but you have to calm down. Focus on protecting his heart and keep your heart rate steadier.

"Your baby is picking up on your panic. He's going to shift inside you if you don't figure out how to handle this. Brax is not dead yet," Cain ordered, his eyes full of fierce determination.

I swallowed back the hysteria bubbling around me before I took deep breaths, looking down at Brax's face. It was pale, his blond hair sticking to his forehead.

His shoulder was leaking black, his veins turning dark, but Cain was right. I couldn't give up yet. Brax had to survive, and I had to do everything I could until that moment.

I forced my shield out wider, pushing back the poison inside him, focusing on my task again as we rode up outside the mansion.

The door swung open and three pack members met us. All three were shirtless, two males, one female, all wearing the water tattoo for Brax's pack.

They lifted Brax out of the carriage and Cain followed, his hand glowing over the wound.

I climbed out of the carriage behind them. My eyes narrowed as I focused, refusing to let the panic back in. I swiped a stray tear away and followed them through the halls of the mansion to an infirmary.

Cain climbed onto Brax's waist and placed both hands on his wounded shoulder, whispering words in the air.

Brax's eyes flung open. He started thrashing, screaming out, and I only just held the shield in place at the disruption. I ran over, my heart clenching at the terrified look in Brax's eyes.

"Get the fuck off me! No! Don't kill him!" Brax screamed, and I sucked in a breath, my eyes briefly meeting Cain's.

We were the only ones in the room who knew where Brax's mind had gone. To that night he had been made to turn.

I swallowed and grabbed his hand. "Brax. You're safe, you're okay," I breathed, and his wild eyes turned to mine.

I leaned in and kissed him, the poison slowly retreating as I fought it back with my shield and Cain used his own magic on it.

The pack members held Brax down but loosened their hold a little so he could touch me. His fingers stroked down my cheek, down to my stomach, and he held his palm there, keeping it there as his head fell back.

"Spitfire," he breathed, and I nodded, eyeing Cain's movements. He was wobbling a little on top of Brax, the glow in his hands dulling before his eyes fluttered dangerously.

"Cain?" I asked, and he turned to me, his eyes drooping, his nose starting to bleed.

"I can't heal all of him today. Your potion takes a lot of my magic quota for the day, but I'll do more tomorrow once I've had some rest," he breathed, getting off Brax with shaky legs, gripping the bed as he almost collapsed.

I raced around to him, holding him up as he let me lead him to the seats along the wall.

"Thank you, Cain," I whispered as Brax lay there, silent but calm, his pack members standing there, watching, waiting for instructions.

Cain nodded shakily and leaned against the wall.

"He'll be weak for the next few days, until I can fully draw the poison out," he murmured sleepily, and I nodded, just thankful he'd survive.

"Why are there no other healers or doctors coming to help?" I wondered, looking around the empty infirmary.

Cain let out a deep breath, dabbing his bleeding nose before answering. "They are just wolves with doctorates really. We don't get hurt much, and most of the time, we heal on our own.

"So, we have most of our doctors over in the birthing building with the young. They can't help with something like this.

"His fate is entirely tied to the witches. It took a lot of begging to get them to let me heal him."

"I thought you weren't connected to them?" I asked, frowning as I played with the torn edges of my dress that rested on my thigh.

"That's why I had to beg." He smirked, then stood unsteadily. I stood next to him, ready to catch him, but he shook me off.

"Your wolves didn't find your dad, but they're on their way back. I've told them Brax is okay," he said, then began moving toward the door.

"Are you sure you're okay?" I asked, worried at how pale he still looked behind his tattoos and piercings.

He looked back with a smirk and nodded. "Yeah, trouble, I'm fine. I'm going to go visit my mate and then I'll be perfect." He grinned, his eyes lighting up.

I grinned back and nodded. "Any chance you'll tell me who the lucky girl is? If she's got you smiling, I'm sure we'd get along," I said.

He looked like he wanted to before he shook his head. "She's not ready. Our mating is...unconventional, but when she gives the okay, I'm sure you'll be very close."

He smiled, and I nodded in understanding. My curiosity was piqued though. I was fucking three werewolf alphas, so how much more unconventional could he get?

He gave me a chuckle over his shoulder, and I shook my head, turning back to Brax. He was still asleep, and I went over to him.

I sat on the bed next to him, not sure how to help or what to do but I hated just sitting there, waiting for him to get better. He grabbed my hand in his and gave it a gentle squeeze.

“Just stay with me, Spitfire,” he breathed, and I nodded, my throat closing as I lay down next to him.

The three pack members still stood on the edges of the room, and he dragged his sleepy eyes over to them.

“Thanks, guys, I’m good now,” he breathed, and they shared a look, hesitating.

“We’d rather stay, Alpha. Just in case,” one of them said. Their loyalty was tangible, their worry thick in the air.

“I’m about to ask my girl to get me naked and shower with me.”

“Brax, we can’t, you need to rest,” I insisted, but he kissed my hand.

“The poison that was dripping down my skin is burning, Spitfire, I just want to wash it off,” he reassured me, and I chewed my lip.

“I’ll go find a cloth and water. Stay here,” I said, and he nodded, giving me a small obedient salute.

I grinned, glad he was feeling playful but still hating that he was hurt.

I turned to the wolves that guarded him. “A little help getting the things? I have no idea where anything is,” I said, and one of the men offered to come with me.

“I’ll go ask the cooks in the dining hall for another serving of food for him,” the other guy said, and I nodded.

I went to leave when my heart panged, something making me look back. I wasn't sure what, but I did.

My eyes fell on the female there. She wasn't doing anything, just standing against the wall. Her long hair covered her naked breasts, the strands going down to her belly button.

Her flowing skirt was made up of swirls and patterns that made my head spin but was a beautiful water blue.

I admired it, then looked back up at her. She hadn't moved and yet I was finding it hard to leave her there with him.

"Luna?" the guy asked, sensing my hesitation as he held the door open for me.

I ignored the prickling in me, assuming I was just nervous about leaving Brax, then followed the guy toward wherever he was leading me.

"I'm Corben," he said, and I nodded.

"Hi, Corben," I said, and he showed me to a little bathroom, opening the cupboard and handing me a cloth and a bowl. I filled it with water, then followed him back to Brax.

"Sorry I missed your epic border magic thing. We were watching through the link and felt it all, but damn, I wish I'd been there." He grinned, his tall, lean body walking casually next to me.

I smiled and shrugged. "I think I have to keep feeding it, so maybe you can come next time," I offered, and he grinned.

"Maybe. Some of us are more connected to the water, it's hard to be away from it. But seeing that all happen for real might be worth it," he said, and I smiled as he opened the door for me.

I went inside, stilling as I saw the girl with the long hair leaning over Brax. She hadn't seen me yet, but I heard everything she was saying, surprised that she was crying.

“Brax, this is not fair.” She sniffled. “You promised. We were to marry, and I’ve kept it quiet like you asked, but how am I meant to keep doing this? It’s killing me,” she cried, and my own heart tightened.

Corben went to step forward, but I stopped him, wanting to hear what Brax had to say.

I wasn’t sure if he knew I was there, but our link was weakened, thanks to his poison, so I’d bet no if he hadn’t called me over yet.

“I’m sorry, Danika. I didn’t mean to hurt you, or for it to work out like this. But I told you before, we can’t marry. Not anymore,” he whispered, and my heart clenched tighter.

He had been engaged? He hadn’t told me that. He had made me think wolves didn’t do things like that.

“So five years together and then she comes in and I’m nothing to you?” she cried.

I felt for her, I did. I didn’t know I had stepped on anyone’s toes. But I also couldn’t let my alphas go now that I had them.

“It doesn’t mean ‘nothing.’ I still care about you. I just... I’m not in love with you the way I am with her.

“You know we were being pressured into marriage. None of us were mating, none of us were providing heirs. But that’s all changed now,” he said.

I only just kept the tears from rolling down my own cheeks. He was still in love with someone else?

I had naively forgotten they had entire lives before I came along. I had thought meaningless sex made up most of that, but apparently not.

“I can still give you heirs, Brax. Please, don’t throw me away like this. What we had—”

“—is over,” he finished for her. “I told you, we can’t be anything now.”

The pain in his voice hit me hard. I didn’t want it to hurt for him to be with me. I wanted him to want it, to choose it. But not if it wasn’t what he wanted with his entire heart.

I stepped forward then, going toward Brax and putting the bowl down. I didn't say anything; there was nothing I could say yet without crying.

I concentrated on cleaning his wound. I dabbed the wet cloth around the open area, cleaning it of black blood as everyone tensed.

Danika took a step back, clearing her throat as she wiped tears away from her face so fast I almost didn't see it.

Brax looked over my face. I could feel the gaze on me, but I refused to meet it. If I did, I'd see the pity and crumble in front of his ex.

No. If I was going to have my human moment then it was going to be a private one.

"Luna." Danika bowed, then left the room quickly.

"Corben, leave," Brax bit, and Corben let out a low whistle before heading for the door.

It slammed behind him, and I kept cleaning Brax's wound. He stopped me, grabbing my hand in his.

"Stop, Spitfire," he murmured, and I shook my head, a stupid tear escaping. He chased it away with the pad of his thumb, and I finally looked at him.

"You love her?" I asked, and he shook his head.

"I thought I did. We were paired together, expected to mate for a long time. She felt it in her but never got the brand, and what I felt was...not as deep.

"We eventually came to the conclusion that because of what I am, it's probable I cannot mate, Spitfire. She deserves that connection, one I can't give her, and I can't even tell her why," he breathed.

I nodded, trying to come to terms with the fact that he'd had a female for five years, gotten engaged even.

"I thought wolves didn't marry or get engaged?" I asked, and he shrugged, wincing as it caught his wound. I held him still and kept cleaning.

"We don't. It's not a traditional marriage. Especially when it comes to the alphas. We just find the female that will carry our heirs. They don't become luna though, not like you," he tried.

I knew I had no right to be upset, that was before me, but I couldn't shake the feeling there was something still there.

How had he gone from a girl of five years to switching it off for me? What if he did that to me? It was lead in my brain, sinking in my heart as the self-doubt thoughts took over.

"You broke her," I said, hating that I had come in the middle of something. Not enough to give up my alpha, but it still hurt seeing the way Danika's face had crumpled in pain.

I understood that to an extent, and I didn't want to be the reason.

Brax grabbed my hand and kissed the back of it.

"I hate that I hurt her, Spitfire, but I can't pretend to love her the same way she does me, and I can't ignore that my entire heart belongs to someone else," he said, pulling me in until my lips met his.

I wanted to pull back, to keep processing what I had heard, but the kiss melted away everything but him in that moment. I kissed him back fiercely, possessively.

He was mine and I was his. That might make me selfish or greedy since I had Derik and Kai too, but I didn't care.

They were all a part of me now, and I wasn't going to let that go, no matter what.