

13 | Are You Jealous?

I had started to fall asleep in Riot's arms. My eyelids began batting slowly until they closed. Barely awake, I feel him squeeze me closer to his body. The electricity between our skin lulls me into tranquility.

Except this time reality doesn't come back like a slap to the face. He doesn't drop me as soon as we get to the cabin like last time. He carries us through the door, up the stairs, and down the hall further than I've been before. He turns into another bedroom, this one with black walls and white trim, basically the opposite of the one I'd slept in.

He sits me down in the middle of the room, the plush carpet so against my bare feet. He starts rummaging through dressers, plucking out articles of clothing.

Soon he walks over to a door on the far side of the room, opening it. He holds out the handful of clothes to me as I approach.

"Everything should be in there."

With that he all but shoves the clothes against my chest, walking out of the room.

His latest nice streak is now over. But at least it lasted longer than the previous ones.

I step into the bathroom and lock the door behind me. Undressing is simple since the only thing I had to cover me was his shirt.

I lay the clothes he'd given me on the counter and quickly look through them. A black v-neck and grey sweatpants, both which smell like him.

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Riot didn't talk for the rest of the day, which left me on my own. And of course, leaving wasn't an option. While I spent most of my time playing solitaire with a deck of cards I'd found, he was pacing around the house, restless. A lot of the time he was outside, just watching the woods. I suspected Nathan had put him on edge and he probably expected him to send more wolves after us.

I'd made the living room my home for the day. It has a typical hunting lodge feel to it. There's high windows that fill it with natural light and various animal mountings, the main spectacle being an enormous moose head hanging above the grand stone fireplace. The floors are wooden, stained with a dark varnish to perfect the look.

Despite the beautiful room, there was something strange about it. All of the furniture was wrapped in plastic, as if to keep the dust off of it. This made my mind reel. Was the house abandoned and he just found it? Or was it his and he only used it on special occasions, such as a kidnapping? I had uncovered part of the large leather couch, allowing enough room to let me sit comfortably, sinking down into it.

As I reach forward to move another card on the coffee table, the same words go through my head for the millionth time. "Tried to take my pack... It must be lonely in exile."

I haven't been able to get my mind off of it.

Exile. A word I'd heard all too often lately.

As if on cue, the door opens and closes, signaling that Riot is back. He'll stay for roughly an hour, and then he would leave again. That's the pattern he's following all day.

I feel his presence moving across the room behind the couch, ignoring my existence like it's nothing. It bothers me. It makes my chest crawl with a fear I want so badly to forget the feeling of. I haven't said anything to him being brought back here. And I don't want the chance to be voiceless again. Not to him.

"You wanna play?" I ask, anxiety pooling in my belly along with anticipation, "I'm tired of beating myself."

I wait a couple seconds, hopeful, but he keeps walking. The saliva in my mouth goes cold.

No... No, it's fine. He's not ignoring me... he's... he's thinking of an answer. It's fine.

When no reaction comes, I try again, "Afraid of losing? I guess I can understand that." The panic grows by the millisecond. My hands are jittery as I reach out to pick up another card, trying to convince myself to be casual.

He's almost gone now, one foot out of the room.

He doesn't hear me. He's not turning around.

At the last minute, in a flash of desperation, I blurt out his name, almost yelling, "Riot."

He stops, standing in the doorway with his back to me.

"Why am I here?" I ask, the silence of the room amplifying, "If I'm such a damn bother to you then just let me leave." The more I talk the angrier I get. I was brought here against my will only for the one whose suppose to be my mate to act like I'm a nuisance he was stuck with.

He turns around slowly. I flinch when his dark eyes are staring daggers at me.

There's so much venom in his voice that I have to hold back a whimper— another doing of the mate bond.

"Why? So you can go back to him? Good luck picking him off the ground," he ends in a growl, his hands flexing like the first time I saw him.

He wants to hit something, or fight someone. Anything that lets his aggression be released.

My brow furrows tightly, and going against all my instincts, I raise my voice at him, "What the hell are you talking about?"

I jump back at the sudden shattering of glass, the arm of the couch jutting into my back. I quickly spot the fragmented vase pieces strewn across the floor.

Or throw something. That works, too.

"Tell me you're not his Luna." He's shaking as he comes closer, but his voice is as steady as a kill shot, deadly and certain.

The length of the couch is the only thing separating us now, and even that's not enough. I can feel the presence of his wolf surfacing, the same lethal aura that rolled off of him before Nathan got in his way.

The fear starts to disintegrate. That's what was bothering him? That's what made him hate me for the entire day?

My stomach flutters with excitement at the thought of him being possessive. One word could send him to the edge at this point. It'd be like throwing a bone to the cliff and watching his wolf drag him off the cliff. So I say four.

"Why? Are you jealous?" An amused smirk curls my lips.

"Fucking right I am," he responds immediately, with dead certainty.

I blink, the smirk falling from my face, "Wait... what...?"

Him admitting to caring about me was the last thing I expected.

He steps closer, the couch proving to be a sad excuse of a barrier. My back arches, the arm rest preventing me from scooting away any further.

Soon he's right in front of me, barely giving me room to breathe. His arms cage me, one on the arm rest and one on the back of the couch. The close proximity hits me like a punch in the gut, forcing all the air out of my lungs. When I inhale again, my nose fills with his addictive scent.

I swallow, trying not to let the regret show on my face.

"Answer me." His face is unreadable, but his voice is a death warning.

I give what sounds like more of a question than an answer. "Um... Technically...?"

A growl rips from his throat, deafening and murderous. The leather squeals as it tears at the mercy of his claws. I press myself even further into the cushions, wishing it would just have mercy and finish swallowing me whole.

"You know this couch looks really expensive and I'm not gonna be the one to pay for it to get reupholstered so."

"Did he touch you?" He asks through clenched canines, cutting off my nervous rambling. His mouth opens and closes again, like he wants to say something else but stops himself.

My unfocused gaze falls to his chest. "No."

He leans in closer, the tip of his nose caressing my jaw as he inhales the scent on my skin. His voice is so low and so close that it sends ice through my veins, making me shiver.

"Now he never will."

My fingertips ache with the need to touch him. To feel his body flush against mine in a solid embrace. I itch to watch his muscles flex beneath his tanned skin and to study his scar further. The collar of his shirt only teases me, gravity pulling it down as he's bent over me, giving me just a small glimpse.

His eyes, which have turned an impossible shade darker, roam over every inch of my face. My forehead, my cheekbones, and my nose, until eventually landing on my lips.

His mouth is slightly parted, his tongue unconsciously flicking out to wet his own lips.

Cautiously, I reach my hand up to curl my fingers gently around his wrist. When he doesn't pull away, I begin running my hand slowly up his arm, feeling the exquisite ridges and dips of his muscles.

A rumbling, yet so soft sound is coming from him, like a canine purr. By the time my palm reaches his shoulder, he seems to lean in closer.

My fantasy cuts off before it can even start when he suddenly moves away, standing up straight. The sight of his receding form is like a bucket of cold water over my head.

He's heading for the door, but I don't want him to leave. Not now.

"He wants me to marry him," I say to the top of my head. He stops in his tracks, every muscle in his body visibly contracting. A human might not be able to notice the small things, but a werewolf definitely can. And the sound of his knuckles cracking makes me tense.

"His father arranged it. I wouldn't have had a choice. The party that you... crashed... that was the bonding ceremony." When I stop talking I feel like I could drown in the silence that's so thick in the air.

There's no growl. No snarl. No nothing.

"Riot?"

He flinches slightly at the sound of his name. Then he shakes his head and continues walking out of the room.

Just like that, I'm unheard again. It feels like my heart shrivels in my chest. I've always envisioned it wilting like a flower. But this time it feels worse. So much worse.

With one last glance towards the cards laid out on the table, I lay down, burying my face against the cool leather.

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Things are getting more intense. But is it for the best or the worst? Share your thoughts :)

Thanks for reading!

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