

Chapter 29

ELLE

Dulaney believed that he would come out the victor today, but I knew the truth. He would either submit or would get knocked unconscious. I would not kill him if I had the choice because there were others who should get to weigh in on things.

Gabriel trained me to become the best fighter that I could be. He took me to my limits and threw me past them in order to ensure that I could protect myself if the need arose. We trained on every scenario that we could envision potentially happening. One-on-one, two-on-one, blindfolded, and so on.

I would not say that I was the best fighter out there, because I certainly was not, but I knew the type of fighter Dulaney was. He was cocky, arrogant, and easily manipulated. Anger stunted him, and he lost control each and every time.

I would not make the first move, so I waited for him to. I did not have to wait long because he was an impatient person. He rushed up the middle and threw a punch directly at my face. It was the same move that he always made, so I had plenty of time to spin around him and kick the back of his knee hard enough to drop him to the ground.

"Fucking bitch," he spat, jumping back up to face me again.

"Not my fault you're predictable. You sure you don't want to rethink the killing allowance? I got you on your knees without even trying," I taunted him.

Cue the anger. He growled at me before throwing three successive punches which all missed because I was much faster than he was. I was lithe and used that to my advantage. All of the warriors here were that in name alone. They sucked at their jobs.

I feigned left, he took the bait, and I released the perfect roundhouse kick to his jaw which caused him to stagger backwards. He corrected himself before he fell but just barely. His jaw would be bruised soon if the redness was any indication.

He tapped into his wolf's speed to catch me, but he was not paying attention at all and tripped. At least that was what I thought until he threw a handful of dirt to blind me. Such a dirty trick but nobody ever anticipated that he would play fair. The next thing I knew, he tackled me with my back against the ground.

"Stand down. Luna's got this," I heard Kade's voice ringing out proudly. That pride ran through me, invigorating me once again.

I took a moment to think about how my best friend would advise me right now. Focus on what you can feel and hear. I felt his legs pinning my shins down while his hands held my arms down. I heard his breathing in my ear, meaning that his neck was turned and left vulnerable. Such a mistake that would cost him dearly.

"How this reminds me of the first time all over again. You were just as helpless a pup as I ripped you apart just like you are now. Maybe I'll show your mate what you really like done to you," he purred to me. Not going to happen dumbass.

I gasped as if I could not believe that he said that. The moment he started laughing was when I took my shot and bit into his neck hard

enough to draw blood. A lot of it if the warm gushing liquid was any indication. He screamed in pain and removed his arms from mine to staunch the blood flow.

My elbow hit his jugular hard enough to get him completely off me. I wasted no time in pinning him to the ground with my knee in his groin hard enough that his screams turned into high pitched wailing.

"My mate knows how to treat a woman, and I have no secrets from him. I was originally going to just let our people exact their own punishments on you before you were executed, but I might incentivize some of your fellow warriors to show you how you really like it. How many do you think would take the idea of possible freedom to heart? Perhaps one for every count of rape you're being formally accused of," I purred the last bit to him.

His body stiffened completely with my words. He did not know if it was a threat or promise. No, I would not actually do it because I would never stoop to the level that he did. I would never promote rape even against a rapist. However, he did not need to know that.

"Do you submit?" I asked.

"Yes," he croaked.

Kade held his hand out to me, and I took it without hesitation. There was nothing but pride on his face and in his emotions. There was also underlying lust thrown in there too. Hmm. He seemed to like me in charge. Was it maybe the fighting? I would ask him later when we had some privacy.

Loud applause sounded from all around us, startling me. I looked around and blushed at everyone staring at me so intently. Everyone

seemed very pleased with the outcome.

The Council, Apollo, and Gabriel all approached us. There was a similar look of pride on their faces. I knew that Gabriel had seen me fight since he taught me how, but it was awkward that everyone watched and was making me feel self-conscious.

"That was fucking intense," Apollo rushed out with the biggest smirk possible.

"If you say so ..." I replied awkwardly, not entirely certain what to say to that.

"Shut up and take a damn compliment. It was a great match, and Vince and I couldn't be any prouder of you. You've come a long way, young grasshopper," Gabriel said.

I just shook my head, laughing because I had no response to that. Gabriel was a dork, but he was a lovable dork at that. My lovable dork. I could not wait to see him mated because his mate would receive a great man. 1

"If those are the moves that you taught her then I underestimated your level of skill. I've been trying to figure out the best role for you in the pack, but I'm fairly certain I just found it," Kade told Gabriel.

That piqued all of our curiosity quite a bit. I knew that he would find his own path there, but I had not put much thought into what it might be since I spent days unconscious or being held prisoner.

There was still so much that I did not know about our pack, but I would learn every single thing that I could because I was bound and determined to be the best Luna that I could be for Kade and for them.

I was a stubborn and determined soul who never balked at a challenge. I just rolled up my sleeves and dove headfirst into it.

"Elle's going to need someone that we completely trust to be by her side. With everything that's come to light, I would feel more comfortable having you with her than having anyone else. Along with that, I think that you and Elle could help train some of our people. Those moves were so fluid that I could tell the time and effort you both put into mastering them. You don't have to decide anything just yet. Take all the time you need to think," Kade said to him with genuine smile.

"No need to think. It'd be my honor to do it," Gabriel told him.

I released a breath that I had not realized I was holding onto while Kade explained. I kept getting swept away by my mate. Most mates would have been completely put out by the bond and familiarity that Gabriel and I shared. My mate, however, understood it for what it was. We were best friends and would only ever be such.

I was also glad that we would get to still be close despite whatever the future held within the pack. We were a great team, so I was certain that it would help as we did everything that we could for the pack. There was something that we all understood. If Alpha Andrew knew of me then it would be safe to assume that others would too. I would be damned if anyone ever took me away from my pack. Something we all learned through this ordeal was that it was possible.

"We'll talk more about it later. You'll be brought officially into the inner circle and will have to pledge yourself as such. It's nothing drastic or anything. It's just an oath about protecting the pack. It'll

also make you privy to things that the rest of the pack isn't," Kade explained.

That was certainly understandable. I knew that the pack was a sanctuary for gifted wolves, but I was not dense enough to assume that was the only knowledge which was safeguarded. Everyone that came with Kade have been nothing short of amazing and welcoming. It was easy to see how much they cared about the pack. It angered me that there was an Elder who betrayed everyone.

I never knew that it was an Elder. How could someone who was meant to protect their pack be so vile? He did not use the Nightshade name, but he did talk about his pack and how he held enough cards to destroy it from the inside if he chose to. The things that he did while he was here was positively disgusting. I was not the only one he touched, but I was the one that he did the worst to. I would not lie to my mate, but I did not want him to worry about it all.

I would never forget being brought into the ballroom and strung up in the restraints in front of many warriors and the guests. The way that Dulaney showed the Elder how much pain my body could take. Gabriel helped me wash the blood off and dress the cuts. He held me as I cried and never asked what happened. The pain. The brutalization. The taunts and grunts. Being told that I enjoyed it. Laughing at me as I wrapped something around my body and slowly made my way back home. 2

"Anything I can do," Gabriel assured him, breaking me away from the memories.

"Who do you want to talk to now?" Kade asked me.

My eyes scanned the Alpha family as I considered this. Beta Oscar,

Luna Ashley, and Eric would have the same fate as Dulaney. Alpha Andrew, however, would not. He would still be punished dearly just not executed. That was where we needed to start.

"Alpha Andrew. I'd like it to be a private affair away from the other culprits. Gabe, can you please take him and the Council to his office?" I asked.

He nodded and they removed him from the field. The rest were taken back to the ballroom. I led Kade to the kitchen and grabbed a bottle of alcohol from a bottom cabinet. We would need a bit of calm to get through this fuckery. Neither of us were really fond of the idea, but it was necessary for now.

I slid Kade's shot over to him before we clinked them together and downed them quickly. It slid down smoothly because Alpha loved him the good stuff.

"You were truly incredible out there, darling." Kade wrapped his arms around me. "Gabriel said that he taught you to fight, but I hadn't expected that level of skill. I can't wait to train with you."

I looked up at him with excitement shining brightly in my eyes, down the bond, and through my entire body language. His words made me happy because it was something I really wanted to do as well.

"You'll really do it? I would love that as long as you promise not to go easy on me. I'm durable and need to be pushed through my limits," I said, poking his chest lightly.

"I don't believe in going easy on anyone. Honestly, I'll hold you to a higher standard because I know that you're more than capable of excellence as seen by how you fought out there. Your place will be

beside me in all things which includes pack business and the battlefield if you so choose. I'd never make you fight if you didn't wish to -"

I cut him off by launching myself at him. I caught him off-guard, but only for a fraction of a second before he held me to his body completely. I felt every single one of his muscles, and I could not wait to memorize each one.

"By your side is exactly where I want to be. Thank you, baby," I told him.

"That's exactly where I want you in public. I want you somewhere else in private," he said suggestively. Those words went straight to my core.

I peeked around him to see the time. I let out a frustrated groan since I had to be responsible and shit. My fingers laced with his as I marched towards the office, muttering under my breath about how unfair this bullshit was. 1

Kade yanked on my hand, spinning me into his arms. His lips captured mine, infusing his scent and taste into my mouth. My arms wrapped around his neck, pulling him closer to deepen the kiss.

"The Elders won't be here until 8 P.M. tonight. Once we're done with Alpha Douchewad, we'll head back to our room for a bit. I need to make sure your body is okay after that fight," he said with a straight face even though I felt his mirrored need both through his jeans and the bond.

"That would be wise," I agreed.

I pecked his lips and continued on towards the office in a better mood. The promise of time with my mate would always make my mood brighten. Plus, I desperately needed to feel him again because that was intense. The amazing things that he could make me feel were mind-blowing. Not to mention that I needed to see what he tasted like when he came.

"Darling, you need to change whatever you are thinking about because I desperately don't want to have to kill all the males in that room for smelling the heavenly scent of your arousal. I'll make it up to you though in any way you see fit," he whispered next to my ear. 1

I just nodded in understanding and thought about things that I wanted to take from here when we left in order to taper down my thoughts. The lot of us did not have much, but what we had was sentimental. It would not be hard to pack up my room. Then I could help Denny so that his parents could focus on themselves.

"Does our pack have frogs?" I asked curiously.

Kade's eyebrows furrowed and nodded slowly. Either he was uncertain about which pack would not have them or if I had some irrational fear of them.

"Denny adopted a frog here but left it so that it could be with its family. He grew very attached to it, so I was hoping that maybe we could help him find something when he got there to help him transition into his new home. He has a thing with amphibians and reptiles mostly. I would wager to say that he'll end up with a gift once he gets his wolf. Paula started showing similar signs before she got hers."

Kade paused us and looked at me curiously. This was kind of his territory after all because of how his gift worked.

"How could they show signs beforehand if the gift comes from the wolves?" he asked, clearly trying to understand my words.

"Does the gift come from the wolves, or does it manifest once the wolf does since that is when a shifter is truly complete?" I questioned back.

This was something that I spent many years thinking about. Faye was great to bounce ideas off because even if she would not tell me outright, she often led me in certain directions by asking specific questions.

I watched as Kade truly thought about it and considered my question. He spent the past six years with the gift of being able to pinpoint gifted wolves. I had no idea how many he had seen in those six years, but I could tell that he never considered this exact question before.

"Theoretically, would there be any way to pick up on indicators that someone might turn out to be gifted then?" he asked me curiously.

I could see the wheels in his brain turning now that he seemed to have come to the same conclusion that I had. It happened then because that was when the final piece of the shifter was fused into being. The term 'gifted wolf' was just as much to blame for this than anything because it led people to assume that the wolf was the gifted one instead of the entirety being gifted.

"I'm not certain other than it's typically due to heredity. Time will tell

though because I have a feeling that it's going to tie into what we've recently discovered. Faye won't tell me if I'm right because she enjoys being difficult. Let's just go with I have an intuitive hunch for now."

Kade nuzzled my neck before placing a kiss over his mark. When he pulled back there was a brightness to his eyes that I had not seen before. They were filled with hope. It suited him just as much as the dimple did when he smiled.

"You're incredible," he told me.

"As are you."

I opened the office door without knocking and strode right in. I barely contained my laughter at Alpha Andrew's face which was white as snow with Gabriel standing behind him with his fingers digging into his shoulders. Gabriel just winked at me.

Kade walked around the desk and sat in the Alpha's chair, pulling me down to sit on his lap. Alpha Andrew's eyes looked everywhere but at me. He was nervous, and with good rights to be at that.

"I want you to look at my mate because she holds your future in her hands. You should be nervous because of the bullshit that you put her through. We know about every single thing. Answer her questions honestly and completely, or she'll take that knife to you. I did warn her that you didn't like your dick being threatened," Kade said, his voice low and deadly.

He swallowed hard, dragging his gaze up to meet mine. I did not speak right away because I wanted him to stew in his thoughts a bit. Once he began to literally squirm, I leaned back against Kade's chest.

"You hired two bounty hunters to track me down and find me. You then murdered them once they delivered me to your border. You originally paid them handsomely before you slit their throats and took it back," I began by laying out the facts.

He opened his mouth to speak, but I just raised my hand for him to stop. This was my show and certainly not his.

"I'm not done. You knew what pack they'd find me in. You ensured that nobody knew that I was brought to yours so that you could hide me away. What pack am I from, and what did you do to my memories?" I asked calmly.

He refused to speak and answer the questions. I knew he would be stubborn, but why this stubborn? Why did he not want me to know?

"You're going to kill me anyways, so it doesn't matter what I say," he spat. Ah. That was the reason for his stubbornness.

"What if I offered you freedom instead?" I asked carefully.

"I'm not that stupid," he said, snorting.

I barely kept my thoughts to myself with his words. He was wrong though because he was that stupid. I doubted that would have been received well, so I could play diplomat for the moment. I needed that information, and I would get it one way or another.

"And I'm not a liar. You'll be stripped of your title and exiled, but you'll do so with your life intact. All you have to do is provide me the information that I desire. You deserve death for the shitshow that you allowed this pack to become. If you'd prefer death then so be it." I shrugged casually.

+5 BONUS

He grew quiet, lost in thought as he considered his options. He only had two, so it should not be that hard. He either provided the information, or he would die. I would prefer to cling to life but to each its own.

"Okay," he said quietly. "Let's start with your pack."

 **Shana Allen**  Author

She's finally about to get some answers.

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COMMENTS


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