

## FERAL – Chapter 3

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Lucas panted as his feet pounded the treadmill below him, as he pushed himself, ignoring his aching muscles wanting it to hurt. He wanted to feel even a fraction of the pain his mate must be going through now. Not only that, he wanted to destroy everything and anything he could lay his hands on, so large was his anger. However, his office was already suffering from the aftermaths of his rage and since he could barely set a fire to the pack house in his blind rage, he decided to work it out by exercising brutally.

He'd been on this treadmill for four hours and counting, with the machine at its highest speed. If it was a mere human, they would've collapsed from the strain on their bodies, but he wasn't any mere human. He was a wolf, an alpha for that matter. The Alpha, as far as the werewolf world was concerned. He could run until he broke the damn machine.

Sweat was pouring steadily out of every one of his pores, even the ones in his feet. He'd been like this since the episode in the pack hospital. Seeing one's mate as damaged ashes were, was enough to send any wolf on a rampage to kill whosoever was responsible for their pain, let alone an Alpha as powerful as he was.

Lance, his gamma had come to check up on him but after a curt bark from his alpha, he retreated. Lucas would much rather be alone because there was no telling what he could do to anyone with his wolf so close to the surface.

"She's awake, Alpha", D.r Abbie's voice said in his head through the pack mind link.

If he wasn't so used to having people's voices in his head, he probably would've flown off the machine in startlement. He stumbled a bit but didn't reply to D.r Abbie's report. After slowing down the machine and finally getting off, he grabbed a small towel laying on a bench and wiped the sweat from his heaving body. Without stopping to grab a shirt or take a shower, he almost sprinted to the pack hospital, earning him surprised glances from his pack members who didn't know that he'd found his mate. And he intended to keep it that way. At least until his mate was well enough.

He burst into the hospital at a very high speed, startling nurses and visitors alike, not stopping to answer the greetings of his pack members. He'd made it known to the hospital staff that he wouldn't appreciate any word getting out about his mate. Not that he was ashamed of her. Far from it. He just wasn't ready to share her with anyone or scare her in her fragile state. Although she might be the one doing the scaring. He remembered the earlier episode in her ward when she'd managed to get out of steel constraints just by ripping her hand through.

That wasn't normal for someone in her supposed condition. Yes, a healthy werewolf would comfortably do that, but according to Dr. Abbie, either her wolf was dormant or she had no wolf but it was most likely the former. She was healing at an almost human rate, meaning she had no help from her wolf. On the other hand, she suffered severe silver burns, and there were traces of wolfbane in her system. Silver and wolfbane don't affect any other supernatural creature apart from werewolves.

Lucas growled as he considered the implication for the umpteenth time. The obvious explanation was that his mate had been tortured with enough silver and wolfbane to force her wolf to go dormant. And it took the worst form of torture for a wolf to go dormant.

Different scenarios rushed through his mind as he imagined meeting his mate's torturer. A sick grin found its way onto his face at the thought of all the fun events he already had planned out. Such a person would wish he had never been born. He didn't care if his mate was the worst sort of criminal to have warranted such torture. She was his mate. The soon-to-be werewolf Queen. No matter what she did, nobody had the right to torture her, even if the law happened to be in support.

The werewolf world may have false visions of a democratic rule, but the truth was that it was a monarchy. If he so chose, he was the law. He could bend it to suit his needs, no matter what the council or anyone thought. This was torture against the person who would soon be the second most powerful and respected creature in the werewolf world. He would make an example of the very unfortunate fool.

Yes, silver was a common instrument of torture that most alphas employed to deal with the worst of rogues and criminals, Lucas included. But to use it intravenously and coupled with wolfbane? That was the cruelest of cruel. If an alpha did such, he would be stripped of his title or even killed, depending on who he happened to offend with his actions. This time, it was Lucas who happened to be offended and any alpha with a bit of sense would disappear from the face of the Earth. Which was another reason why Lucas decided to keep his mate's arrival a secret. Let it be known to his pack and to the other packs the circumstances of her arrival and the mastermind would know the game was up. He would either kill himself or run. Lucas wanted the pleasure of taking that life all for himself.

Again, he rewound the events of that fateful day in his head. Lance had returned from the meeting in the Blue Moon Pack, immediately messaging him that he needed to see something at the hospital. He'd arrived from the pack house to see Lance carrying an unconscious, naked, and badly bruised woman in his arms and inside the hospital.

His wolf had immediately gone on high alert, sniffing the air and growling "mine". He'd immediately snatched the unconscious body from Lance's arms and rushed her in himself, yelling for Dr. Abbie. Lance told him he saw her a small distance away from Blue Moon's pack lands and that he was pretty sure she was a member of Blue Moon since she had that underlying pack scent. That made matters easier. He knew which

pack to begin his search from once his mate was well enough to give him enough information about her torturer. But for now, he would focus on the present and on helping his mate get better.

Then, he would make who dared cross him rue the day they were born.

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