

Grace of a Wolf

#Chapter 201: Grace: Like You Were Chased - Read Grace of a Wolf Chapter 201: Grace: Like You Were Chased

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"Stop it!" I hiss as sharp claws sink into my forearm. "I'm trying to save your ungrateful asses!"

The cat yowls louder, twisting in my grip while Sadie drags against my hold, nearly pulling my arm from its socket. I stagger backward toward the camper, my arms straining with the effort of controlling two animals determined to run toward danger.

"I swear to all that's holy and not," I growl through clenched teeth, "if I get mauled by Ellie because you two decided to play hero, I'm coming back to haunt you both."

The cat hisses its objection as I practically hurl its pristine white body through the doorway. Sadie is worse, feeling like a ton or two of squirming, barking, foaming-at-the-mouth golden retriever I somehow manage to haul up and manhandle inside like an oversized sack of flour.

My pathetic biceps are ready to wimp out, but I hold on for dear life, knowing I'll never be able to replicate this heroic dog-hauling if she dashes off again.

"Get. In. Here," I grunt, kicking the door closed behind us.

My fingers fumble with the lock, twisting it with the last reserves of my strength. The second it clicks into place, every ounce of adrenaline that's been keeping me upright abandons ship. I slide down the door until my ass hits the floor with an unceremonious thud.

My heart hammers so hard I swear it's about to crack a rib. Each breath comes ragged and shallow, my lungs still burning from the exertion. Sweat trickles down my neck, making my shirt collar stick uncomfortably to my skin.

This is what dying feels like. Has to be.

Sadie hasn't given up her mission, frantically circling the small entryway, claws clicking against the laminate flooring as she continues barking at the door. The white cat, meanwhile, has vanished somewhere into the camper's interior.

Fuck pets.

Whose idea was it to bring them along, anyway?

Oh, right.

Mine.

Seriously, what the fuck was wrong with me?

My legs sprawl out in front of me, utterly useless, while my hip throbs where I collided with Andrew.

Oh, right. Andrew.

I hope he's okay.

I should be more grateful, but exhaustion has crowded out every emotion except a bone-deep weariness.

"What the hell was that all about?"

I crack open one eye to see Jer leaning over the back of the dinette couch, Sara beside him. They're both looking at me like I'm some kind of bizarre life form.

At least Ron looks marginally worried, though even his expression holds more confusion than fear. It's still better than being stared at like I'm a bioluminescent snail or something.

None of them know there might be homicidal werewolves headed our way, and I want to keep it that way for as long as possible.

"Nothing," I wheeze out, trying to sound casual and failing spectacularly. "Just... needed some exercise."

"You smell like you're scared," Sara remarks, her nose wrinkling. "And your heart's going really fast."

I'd forgotten about their heightened senses. Not that my racing heartbeat requires supernatural hearing to detect. It's practically doing the freaking cha-cha in my chest.

"Exercise does that to humans," I lie, knowing she's too sharp to buy it but too tired to come up with anything better.

Jer snorts. "Is that why you're bleeding?"

I glance down at my forearm where four perfect lines of red have bloomed, courtesy of our new feline friend. Blood beads along the scratches, not deep but definitely stinging now that I'm noticing them.

"That's from the cat."

Sadie's barking finally tapers off, though she continues to pace anxiously by the door, occasionally stopping to sniff at the crack beneath it.

I force myself to sit up straighter. "Where's the cat gone?"

"Kitchen sink," Ron supplies, bouncing Bun gently. "It jumped straight in there. Guess it thinks it belongs there now."

Sara keeps staring at me, and says something uncomfortably perceptive. "Were you being chased?"

"No," I lie immediately.

She frowns. "You look like you were chased."

"Yup," Jer agrees, thumping his chest. "Trust us. We know. We're the world's best at being chased."

My heart hurts at how easily and proudly he claims the honor.

I consider lying again, but what's the point? These kids have survived Fiddleback. Sugarcoating danger won't help them. If anything, it might get them killed.

"Yeah," I admit, shifting to a slightly more dignified position. My muscles protest the movement. "The Luna here isn't a fan of mine."

"Did she hurt you?" Ron asks, his voice suddenly deep and manly.

I shake my head. "No. I got away."

Jer nods, with a fierce look of pride. "Of course Grace got away. She's one of us. We're the best at being chased. Zip zoom swoosh, and away we go."

His hand movements are hard to follow, but the gist is clear: he's fast. Maybe with some parkour abilities of his own, though I've seen how he jumps around the couches. They're probably not as good as whatever parkour skills I'd appropriated over the past ten minutes.

Though I still don't know how it happened.

I fish my phone from my pocket, pleasantly surprised to find it still intact after my impromptu parkour session. Just as I'm about to check the App to see if it's done some strange divine interference on my behalf, Sadie's head jerks up again, her ears perking forward. A low growl builds in her throat.

Every muscle in my body tenses.

"What is it, girl?" I whisper, but I have a nasty little feeling in the pit of my stomach.

Ellie's here.

Andrew failed.

Or maybe he didn't even try.

I press my ear to the door, straining to hear whatever has set the animals off.

Nothing.

Then, footsteps. Heavy and deliberate, coming up the metal steps of the camper.

My heart skips a beat as Sadie begins barking frantically.

I scramble away from the door like an awkward crab before shoving myself to a wobbling stand. The children are all frozen, and the door catches as someone tries to open it.

Thank Goddess I locked it.

Without thinking too hard, I grab a skillet from the sink and clutch it in both hands.

A knock sounds. Three sharp raps.

I jump, despite having anticipated it.

"Grace?"