

Grace of a Wolf Chapter 12 - Caine: She's Not Mine

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CAINE

My wolf's glower burns into my back as I finish tying his little human obsession's hands together.

"Will you stop that? I'm not going to hurt her." Not yet, anyway. Or maybe ever.

She was running away.

"Yes, and isn't that interesting?" Grunting, I push myself off the ground, stretching my back. My entire body's sore from sparring, and I just had to chase my wolf's little rabbit through the woods for no reason at all.

4

I wasn't even trying to scare her. She just ran for no reason.

7

Fenris scoffs. *You know what effect you have on others. You should have treated her more gently. She's going to hurt when she wakes up.*

One little tackle to the ground and she even lost consciousness. She's pathetically weak, and the faint prick of guilt against my conscience is unwelcome. "Not my problem, Fenris. We agreed you would stay away from her until I finished my investigation."

6

To his credit, Fenris doesn't argue, instead padding over to rub his head all over the human girl.

Her obnoxious blueberry muffin scent wafts through the air, and I grimace. It's mixed with the scent of other wolves; one stands out stronger than the rest. My skin crawls and tightens, and I tell myself it's because human scents should never mix with wolves. "We'll have to find a place to put her until tomorrow."

A distinct sense of disapproval emanates from my bond with Fenris, but I ignore it.

Just keep her with us. Is that so hard?

"Stop it. You know the restrictions. I'm only here to investigate why they hid her existence and brought a human into a Mate Hunt. This is Brax's second time flaunting law."

2

Fenris scoffs. *You would be hard-pressed to find a pack who hasn't broken this one. Humans are historically desirable.*

"Humans are weak, and bringing them into any pack is considered kidnapping under international laws—"

Only if they don't like it.

My eyes narrow as I stare down my wolf. "This investigation will proceed *lawfully*. Get your obsession under control, Fenris. Humans only bring trouble to a pack. And stop marking her." My voice comes out rougher than intended as Fenris continues rubbing his massive head over the girl's unconscious form. "You're acting like a pup with a new toy."

5

Her scent is tainted with other wolves.

"And that's none of our concern." The words are like rotten blood in my mouth as I get another whiff of the foreign wolf scents clinging to her skin. The one is particularly strong, and I want to scrub her skin raw until it's gone. My jaw clenches. "Back off."

2

Make me.

The girl's sweet scent floods my nostrils—warm blueberries and fresh-baked muffins. Nauseatingly sweet. Artificial. Wrong. My body responds anyway, and I blame Fenris's obsession seeping through our bond.

I nudge her hip with my boot. No response; she's still out cold.

Gentle, Fenris growls.

2

"Shut up." My fingers curl into fists as another wave of that possessive wolf scent hits me. Someone's been all over her, marking her like she's his territory. It's fresh.

7

Now who's obsessing?

"It's your fault. You won't shut up about her." I grab her arm, hauling her over my shoulder. Her body molds against mine, soft and warm. I have to ignore how perfect her body feels, but blood rushes against my will. "We'll just keep her somewhere secure until tomorrow."

You feel it too. There's only one explanation for this pull.

"Enough." My tattoos burn with warning. "She's nothing but a legal headache. Focus on the investigation."

Fenris disappears, and my tattoos grow warm. There's always something missing inside of me when he manifests into his separate form; when he returns, the connection between us is stronger. Sharper.

Each step jostles her body against mine. Her curves press into my shoulder, soft and warm. Blood rushes south with a vengeance, and I bite back a curse.

7

"Fuck."

Having trouble? Fenris's smug satisfaction bleeds through our bond.

3

"Shut up."

Her scent wraps around me with each movement. My fingers dig into her thigh to keep her steady. Another step, another shift of her body. My jaw clenches, and I use my other hand to stabilize her at the waist. And if a few of my fingers dig a little lower, into the soft flesh of her ass—it's an unavoidable accident, that's all.

8

You could always carry her properly.

"Not happening."

Your loss. Though I must say, your struggle is entertaining.

6

"We know nothing about this girl or why she's out here. For all we know, she could be a spy."

A spy? Fenris's mental laugh echoes through my skull. She's been outcasted. Can't you see she's the victim here?

Her body slides against mine again. I adjust my grip, sliding my hand a little higher up her thigh. It's just to keep her steady, to limit her bouncing around up there. Nothing more. "An outcast wouldn't reek of another wolf's claim."

1

Fenris goes quiet. The silence stretches, heavy with something dark and possessive.

It doesn't matter who thinks they have a claim on her. His voice turns eerily mild. *She's ours now.*

2

A dark chuckle escapes my throat; his true self is finally bleeding out. "What do you think she'll do when she realizes you aren't a sweet little puppy?"

It doesn't matter. She's ours.

The calm certainty in Fenris's voice is far too comforting, making me almost feel like he's right. Like he's brainwashing me with his determination. "This obsession of yours is going too far."

Is it?

"Yes."

Then will you return her to the wolf who's laid his claim all over her?

9

My fingers dig deeper into her thigh. It's impossible to ignore the alien scent coating her body. She's saturated in it. There's a level of intimacy there... Red bleeds into my vision. "Fuck."

6

My tattoos burn as Fenris's emotions crash against mine, amplifying the possessive fury until my hands shake.

"This isn't—" My jaw clenches as another wave of the other wolf's scent hits me. "We're only here to investigate."

Keep telling yourself that. Your grip says otherwise.

I force my fingers to loosen, but they tighten again of their own accord when she shifts against me. The soft curves of her body press closer, and my blood burns hotter. "It's your fault. You're pushing these feelings through our bond."

Am I? Then why does your skin crawl every time you catch his scent on her?

"Shut up."

Why does your hand keep sliding higher up her thigh?

"I said, shut up." But he's right. My palm has crept up, fingers spread possessively across her flesh, my fingers just inches from a warm and welcoming heat. I jerk my hand back down, cursing when she almost slides off my shoulder.

Face it. You feel it too.

"What I feel is irritation at being stuck with your new toy."

She's not a toy.

I scoff. "Then what is she?"

You know what she is. You've known since you first caught her scent.

Denial courses through me, and I growl, "Don't even think it."

Why not? Because she's human? Or because you're afraid?

My fingers flex against her thigh again. "She's human. It's impossible."

Then explain why every inch of you rebels against another wolf's claim on her.

I can't. I can't explain why my skin feels too tight, why my blood burns, why I want to hunt down whoever touched her and tear out his throat. I can't explain why her scent calls to me even as it repulses me, why my hands keep wandering, why everything in me screams *mine*.

She's just a human.

