

## Chapter 27

Hades came to check up on me every couple of hours. He usually brought food and would ask me how my leg felt. He never once asked me how I felt and I knew it was because he was trying to let me process my emotions on my own. I always tried to shoot him weak smiles to show him how grateful I was, but there was no getting around the fact that all of this was awkward for both of us.

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But when I tried to find him the next morning I came across quite the surprise.

"Queen Keiko," I yelled, staring at my monarch in shock. Then, not knowing what else to do, I curtsied. As my eyes swooped down I noticed that she was wearing leggings and a hoodie that was more likely Ajax's than hers. And were those slipper on her feet?

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"Good morning, Charlotte," she said with a bright smile. She pulled the stool beside her out and patted it in invitation. "Come sit, Ethel was just telling me about how she makes these cheese buns and they are to die for."

I glanced at Ethel, looking for assurance. In the short time I had known her I transitioned from hating her to seeing her as a stable friend. There was no way someone with such curly hair and sass could be evil. She nodded her head in encouragement, looking oddly at ease with a woman who could make her own mate, the powerful king, feel small.

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"Where is Hades?" I asked.

"He and Ajax had some business to attend to," Keiko mused, picking at her nails. "And I take any opportunity to spend an extra minute with Ethel. She is a baking queen and her greenhouse, God, you would think she was the goddess for spring."

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"Oh, you're so sweet," Ethel said. "Hades will be back in a couple of hours I'm sure. You can spend time with us until they get back, if you'd like."

"How is your leg?" Keiko wondered when I finally seated myself beside her.

Apparently news traveled faster here than it had at my old pack which was impressive. "Fine, thank you. I still won't run on it or anything, but I think it has gotten much better. Hades has done a wonderful job of keeping me on my feet and taking care of me."

"Always the giver that one. I imagine that he's also quite apologetic about how things came out," Keiko continued, cocking her head.

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"He seemed to be," I agreed warily.

"This all must've been quite the shock for you," Keiko pressed. "First you find out you are mated to the most feared werewolf in history, then you find out why he murdered your friend."

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"It has been hard." We weren't exactly on the best of terms and I wasn't in a position to let her in on all my feelings and secrets.

"I hope that you understand why it needed to be done." Her tone was still so , but I could hear the concern in her voice, like she read my robotic responses as something more.

"Understanding that my mate was a killer was one thing. Then I had to understand that the person I thought I would spend the rest of my life with was a child molester." Tears flooded my eyes, but I blinked rapidly to keep them at bay. Caleb had taken too many of my tears already. He didn't deserve anything from me anymore.

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I jumped when I felt something press against my back, then stared at the queen in shock when she began rubbing soothing circles between my shoulder blades. When was the last time someone had genuinely tried to comfort me? It had been Ethel, not my mother like I needed. And with that thought I let my head fall into my hands, pushing the heels against my eyes to stop myself from crying.

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"Oh you poor thing," Keiko murmured, now pulling me in for a side hug.

All the things that I wanted to keep trapped in my own head started to unravel on my tongue. "I hated him so much. I was so angry I thought I could kill him. I tried to kill him ." Saying the words out loud now made me sick.

"You tried to kill him?" Keiko gasped, which only made me feel worse. I must've been the only girl in the world who wanted to kill their mate as soon as I met him. Then, when she spoke again her voice was filled with admiration. "That's so hardcore."

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"But now he was only trying to do what was best and the person that I was so adamant on defending is..."

"Oh, sweetie, that is awful."

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"It has been very difficult for you," Ethel chimed in. "You deserve to grieve over so many things."

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"And I just keep thinking that I'm way to plain for this to happen," I admitted, no longer able to control the words coming out of my mouth.

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"You think you're plain?" Keiko repeated.

"Look at me, I look like every other girl walking down the street, brown hair brown eyes," I stated. "Things like this don't happen to quiet girls who just bake and paint."

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"Charlotte, I'm Asian. White people literally tell us we all look the same all the time. How do you think I felt when I got caught up in this whole mess with Ajax? For years it was just me and my mom then I was the queen of a whole werewolf community that I didn't even know existed."

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I straightened up and peered at her through my watering eyes. "But you were so bad ass. You were a stripper who was getting her education and you were all hot headed and passionate."

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"I wasn't always like that," she corrected. "The situation demanded it and it seems that yours did too. You fought with someone named a er the god of death," she reminded.

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"I just feel like such a piece of shit," I moaned.

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"Then, we need to spend the day doing what makes you happy," Keiko insisted.

"I need to apologize," I corrected.

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"I'm sure we could find a way to do both," she laughed. "Whenever I need to apologize to Ajax I go out and buy myself some new clothes. I get whatever I want and usually find something sexy for him. It's a win-win."

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"I don't really think that something like that would suit me," I whispered.

"How about you cook him supper? You could spend the day out of the house grocery shopping and get to make something, plus he'll really enjoy it," Ethel suggested.

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"That sounds perfect."

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~~~Distraction Section~~~

So, it's not Tuesday, but I'm still updating. And my question in the last chapter was not just so I could remind you guys that you are in lock down. I've been quite oblivious to the whole situation because my work never stopped, I continued to commute, continued to go buy groceries, ect. And with my province opening up I felt like much of the world was following suit. Not the case. So, in the past 24 hours, the comments that mentioned the highest amount of time in quarantine was 3 months. I've decided to do continuous updates for every week in those three months. So, y'all better buckle up for 12 updates day a er day, starting right now.

Question of the Day: Describe your favorite outfit!

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