

Chapter 104

As the rogue wolf howled in pain and fury, leaping around and shaking his head, trying to get the arrow out but couldn't, another one lunged at Sush while her hands groped around for another branch and this one went through the rogue lycan's throat. She rolled away and saw that the tip protruding from the fallen creature's nape also had a pointed tip of an arrow.

It was Greg's snarl - when he pushed his opponent down with every bit of strength he could muster - that pulled Sush's attention away from the rogues she killed without fully comprehending how. Greg was too caught up in snapping the neck of the one below him to notice another rogue lycan lunging at him from behind, claws out and ready.

Sush picked out another random branch without so much as a look, and used her full body weight to knock the rogue away from Greg, which wasn't very far to begin with, given the brawniness of their species. She slit the branch-turn-arrow through the creature's neck.

Unrelenting, the rogue's claws managed to cut across her thigh before she made her escape with a groan, trying to muffle out the pain as Greg came over to tear off the rogue's hand - its claws still protruded - and jammed it into the chest, just right above his heart, offering him a slow death.

As Greg pulled himself over to examine Sush's injury, a mix of anger and confusion set in him - fury for failing to keep her safe; confusion at her wound exuding a blue liquid instead of the usual red when it came to blood. The next thing his vision caught was something glimmering in faint gold at her side, under her hand. He neither moved nor spoke while witnessing a normal branch extending into something long and sharp. A javelin?

When his animal looked to her face for answers, he found her golden

rimmed eyes glaring at something behind him and before he knew what was happening, the javelin she created flew and struck the proditor that was coming at him and ultimately fell on the lower part of his body as he released a grunt at the weight.

"Oh, God. I am so sorry, Greg," said Sush frantically, leaning over to push her latest victim off him.

With his state weakened from oleander and the force exerted to end his opponent, his animal retreated and his human came into view, huffing with a smile and even his dirt-filled face and tired eyes didn't take away the pride he had for his octopus's unique ability. "My dear," he grunted as the numbness from the oleander began destabilizing him with each passing second, as much as he tried to hide it from her. Her eyes were trailing to the gray lines on his arm before he brought her gaze back to his, saying, "If you have to apologize for saving my life, I'm not treating you very well. Where and when did you learn to turn branches into weapons, by the way?"

Blinking like she didn't understand him, her sights then pivoted to the branch below her hand and saw it turn into an arrow, witnessing the transformation herself for the first time. "I... don't know how I'm doing this."

Chuckling lightly at her discombobulation, Greg was as happy for her as Sush was confused. But a sudden firing from his right had him hauling her under him to fully shield her with his body, and the bullet Hazel fired ricocheted off the tree trunk before a second bullet came their way when Sush - out of pure instinct - stretched out an arm from under Greg's cage and brushed the leaves on the ground into the air, making a circular shield appear right before their eyes and that was the exact thing the second bullet ricocheted off.

Across the space, Kenji exclaimed with an excitement that resembled a person who'd just witnessed magic, "How did you do that?"

The next bullet from Hazel was aimed at the eastern octopus's arm but his sudden-improved reflexes enabled him to dodge the bullet before

one of his team members hauled him back behind a tree. While Millicent was reprimanding him for his recklessness, Kenji couldn't shake off the feeling that it wasn't his brain that made him lean away. It was as if his arm knew it was in danger and pulled itself away. When they said that one's hands, arms, or legs developed minds of their own, he didn't think they meant it literally.

Before he could contemplate further, his dominant, right hand - which clearly developed a mind of its own since Kenji had planned to stay low as Millicent ordered - tightened its grip around the trigger and pulled him to lean over the trunk to fire a bullet, which missed Hazel while the thugs on her side began firing at him and the ones he was with.

As he hid behind the tree once more, he came to terms that whatever the new reflex was, it arrived after he saw Sush's trick with the shield, and the reflex was apparently shared with Hazel since she dodged his bullet the same way he dodged hers.

As more shots were fired his way, Millicent yelled, "Well done, Einstein!" "It wasn't me!" Kenji argued, his left hand pointed at the guilty hand to a narrow-eyed Millicent before the continuous firing blocked out their conversation.

Millicent and her archers aimed at the thugs, rogues, and proditors surrounding and protecting Hazel, taking them out one at the time, and realizing that - unlike before - they couldn't seem to miss their targets now. Every bullet struck, even when they thought their targets would move and they'd miss, they didn't miss even if their targets moved by those few inches.

Unbeknownst to them, when Sush's survival instincts peaked and her eyes turned gold, she awakened an ancient power of the hunter breed - one that no hunter knew about since the first and only generation of power-imbued hunters were decimated in the first interspecies war millennia ago. While the octopuses now had better reflexes and their limbs - like the limbs of the underwater creature itself - had minds of their own, an archer's weapon never missed its target, which posed a

problem to those on Sush's side as well seeing that some of the thugs were archers.

Millicent, noticing this change that she hadn't yet understood - now gave new orders - half of the archers to deal with Hazel's seemingly-endless flow of protectors while the remaining half, including herself, fired at their opponents bullets - as unrealistic as it sounded. But when it was actually done, it awed every archer and continuously shocked some others that none of them seemed to be missing a single shot. Bullets clashed and were thrown off-course, angering their opponents who were also running out of ammunition and would have to rely on brute force soon.

As for the chameleons, when someone asked Patterson how he managed to paint himself in the midst of battle to match the tree he was hiding behind, he gaped at his camouflaged body before looking around and found fellow chameleons blending into their surroundings as well - some aware of it and some not. One idiot was even standing out in the open, near a puddle, frozen and awestruck by what she was seeing.

Chapter Comments



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