

## **Chapter 111 Visiting Alchidna**

Serena

The coach brought us inside a cobblestoned courtyard, directly in front of a large iron-wrought portico. Through the window, I saw the facade of my father's pack house and it was impressive. It was obvious that this was a military camp because there were flags of the kingdom above the doorway and along the edge of the rooftops, and on each towering beam hangs a golden shield and two crossed swords.

"Serena, come," Aero told me whilst offering a hand for me to hold.

Refreshments were served right after we disembarked the coach. Feeling thirsty after all the moans I did, I quickly grabbed the perspiring glass and gulped the sweet and tangy content. Aero did the same and the server—an old woman—proudly smiled, standing a few feet away from us with a clean apron wrapped around her waist.

"Your Majesties, it is my pleasure to serve you," she rasped and lowered her head towards us.

"Thank you for this, Madame," I stated after placing the empty glass down. "May I inquire as to

the whereabouts of my father? He seems to be absent here..." My voice thinned to a whisper as I was too engrossed looking everywhere in search of him.

"He is in the middle of a sparring practice, my queen," the server informed. She shifted her attention to the side and signaled to a well-dressed young man standing near the beam.

"Fredric will guide you to the training grounds," she continued as he neared us.

"Thank you, Madame." I dipped my head towards her before Aero and I left the portico.

With Fredric guiding us, we passed through rooms and traversed connecting hallways inside the pack house that were moderately lit with fire torches.

"Did you inform my father we are visiting him?" I asked while we did this.

Beside me, Aero nodded. "Of course, I did. He's just busy Serena. The ascension ritual for their new alpha is tomorrow night after all."

My brow arched.

"So you're saying we are here not only to investigate but to attend this ritual?"

"Yes, two birds in one stone," he proudly commented, his eyes still focused ahead.

I couldn't help but scoff. "Like what you did at our wedding slash your birthday?"

This made him groan softly.

“When I think about it, the kingdom was more enthusiastic about our wedding than my birthday. I think they had even forgotten about it because I received only a few greetings.”

I bit back a laugh. “Are you sulking, my king?” Instead of acting prickly, he interlaced our fingers and kissed my knuckles.

“No. I just found it to be refreshing,” he added. This brought a wide smile to my face.

“It seems my appearance in your kingdom changed a lot of things.”

“And I’m thankful for that, Serena.”

Our gazes met; each depths swirling with warmth and love.

Damn... I could never get tired of this.

“Your Majesties,” Fredric abruptly called our attention and gestured to a closed door, “we have arrived.”

It was made of sturdy wood and carved with different kinds of weapons. Obviously, this told me this was the entrance to the training grounds—at least from inside the pack house.

The moment Fredric opened the door, I gasped.

“Oh!”

Sunlight filled the hallway immediately, hitting us in return and blinding us for a moment.

Aero stepped outside and pulled me with him.

Once my eyes adjusted, I could fully register the spacious area, the objects, and the people in it. The place was just like a mini coliseum made with light yellow to white slabs of stone similar to rough quartz. Surrounding it were thick, gigantic trees of dark green to autumn shade. Men sat on the stone steps where weapons of varying kinds were displayed; some of them sported bare torsos while the others wore armors and helmets. At the center of the arena where their attention was focused sparred two men. Upon closer inspection, I was taken aback to find one of them to be my father wearing a metallic-looking vest, skin-tight sleeves, and dusty pants. With his bare hands, he fought a shirtless man obviously half his age. Their show of strength almost equaled each other and this mesmerized the audience and me.

“This is just a small training ground, Serena,” Aero informed me with a proud emotion flickering in his eyes. “Wait until you see the main one behind those mountains.”

I followed where he pointed and saw mountain ranges on the distant horizon. With our limited time, I didn’t think we could actually visit that place now, but maybe in the near future, we can.

“This is amazing, Aero!” I exclaimed, squeezing his hand. “My father’s pack is amazing!”

“Alchildna supplies the military power of Phanteon. Together with Alpha Kade of Jaxis, they train werewolves and lycans into seasoned soldiers.”

I learned about this in the past when Elijah made me study the tradition and history of Phanteon but to hear it from my husband now gave the facts even more depth.

“Let’s go meet your father?” he then gazed at me. I quickly bobbed my head up and down. “Sure!” Together, we ambled down the steps. Numerous soldiers noticed us, stopped their rowdy talks, and bowed their heads.

My father seemed to have noticed the sudden silence of the coliseum and so, looked up.

Once our eyes met, I flashed a big smile.

He signaled his opponent for a break and quickly strode to meet us at the base of the steps.

“Serena! My dear daughter! Welcome to Alchildna!” he cried out as he embraced me.

I returned it with equal tightness and said, “Father, it’s so great to meet you again!”

He withdrew but instead of caressing my cheek like he used to, his attention was instead diverted to my belly.

“I see that my grandsons are growing well,” he commented whilst running a palm all over my belly. “Good. Good!” It was still flat but it did have a noticeable bump if I stare at it even more.

“Did you have a smooth travel going here?” he asked, now caressing my cheek. Huh. Figures. His grandsons first and his daughter second.

“More than smooth father,” I answered with a smile anyway. I couldn’t compete with my sons anymore if they were his priority. I could actually see him turning into a doting grandfather and spoiling them to the bone.

Visible wrinkles appeared on his face as he awarded me an approving smile. “Lovely to know that,” he said, then moved his attention to Aero.

“And Your Majesty, welcome again to Alchidna.”

He dipped his head down and changed his expression into a formal one; the one I usually saw back when I didn’t know he was my father.

“General,” Aero acknowledged with a nod, putting up a kingly face. “The last time I stepped foot in your pack territory was when I was freshly crowned as king. I see that you’ve maintained your place well.”

“Thank you for the praise, Your Majesty,” my father replied. He shifted a bit and raised a hand midair. “My pack and I did our best.”

“And your hardships showed during the great war,” Aero added. “You’ve done well, General.”

“It is my pleasure to serve the throne, Your Majesty.” Aero had been my father’s king long before he became a son-in-law so naturally, there was a gap

between them, but still, I got a feeling he was flowering up his words more than the usual.

“I believe you’re tired from your travel,” my father said, then motioned for someone to approach us. “My beta, Allain, will guide you to your room.”

Aero raised a hand—stopping his beta from his tracks—and directed his attention to the men lifting heavy weights a few meters away from us.

“I take it you were in the middle of a spar, General?” he asked, his eyes set specifically on a certain buffed man.

“Yes, Your Majesty,” my father replied. “I was sparring with the future Alpha of Alchidna, my second-in-command in the army, General Russel.”

“The future alpha eh...” Aero mused.

My father immediately flashed a grin.

“I know that look, Your Majesty,” he said.

“Why spar tomorrow when I can do it now, right General?” Aero started to unbutton his coat.

“My thoughts too, Your Majesty.” To my surprise, my father agreed.

With brows knotted, I stared at Aero who in turn winked at me. The hell? He never winks.

‘You don’t really need to show me how strong you are, Aero. I know for a fact you’re the strongest man in your army,’ I mind-linked.

His smirk widened. ‘I know, but you haven’t seen me in a hand-to-hand combat, my queen. I

promise, you'll enjoy it.'

My eyes turned to slits as he continued to undress. Damn. Of course, he'd be shirtless! I thought out loud when he took off his shirt and stood in front of me like a vision of the god of war.

Literally, I salivated as I examined his godly form under the bright morning sky. I had seen him like this countless times and even with more skin exposed but being in public and being surrounded by other shirtless men, it made me realize just how lucky I was to have the alpha king as my mate.

Ugh. Focus, Serena! I chastised myself and luckily, it worked.

"Right," I rolled my eyes heavenward. "Go easy on the man will you?"

"Werewolves and lycans heal fast, Serena, remember?" he reminded before giving me another wink and facing the sparring area.

I wasn't supposed to get turned on while looking at his glistening, muscled back but damn it, I was. Big time.

'Careful, my queen. You are surrounded by male wolves,' he mind-link me whilst nearing the center of the arena. 'They could smell your lust for me.'

I gnashed my teeth hard. 'Then you shouldn't have taken your shirt off!'

His rich laughter instantly flooded inside my head. I felt embarrassed for a moment and I was sure this showed through a heavy blush on my cheeks. 'I'd be more than happy to douse that desire of yours after the fight,' he offered, now facing his opponent.

'Only when you don't come back to me with broken bones,' I fired back.

'Pshh, piece of cake,' he replied with raw arrogance flooding his aura. This was the Aero I first encountered when I arrived in Phanteon months ago and honestly, I missed it.

My father pointed to a nearby stone bench where I could sit. I did so while he just stood beside me with arms crossed.

"Your Majesty, it is a pleasure to meet you in the training grounds," the future alpha started and was about to lower his head when Aero cut him off.

"Skip with the introductions, future alpha," he grounded, his eyes glowing slowly. "You are not supposed to bow down to your opponent unless you yield."

General Russel straightened and stood before him now displaying a determined face. Gone was the reverential aura I picked up in him earlier and I realized, this was exactly what Aero wanted: to be treated equally inside the arena.

“I heard you’re the second-in-command in my army?” he continued as a gust of wind added to the intense mood they were in. “Let’s see if you’re worthy of gaining my blessing and trust.”

The latter clenched his hands and positioned to a fighting stance.

“I shall do my best to show you, Alpha King Aero,” he replied and in a blink of an eye, he was gone.

I gasped when suddenly he materialized in front of my husband with a flying kick. This seemed to catch Aero off-guard because he was unable to block or dodge the attack. The leg contacted his face that instant and it sent him flying across the other side of the coliseum in a second.

Nearby, I heard some soldiers wince and some cheered at the destruction they just witnessed.

Debris from the coliseum steps buried my husband yet not an ounce of worry filled me. He wasn’t dead. In fact, I could hear him laughing maniacally in my thoughts.

Tsk. Crazy husband.

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