

Owned by the Alphas |

The Trek

The Summit. A mountain with three clear sections, even through the snow that bit into my skin.

I huddled close to Kai and Brax as Derik stepped ahead, his feet crunching in the white beneath us. It was windy and horrible, the squeal in the air reminding me of humans screaming.

I shivered and tucked my hands around me, underneath my coats that had made me sweat my ass off the entire carriage ride to the entrance of the Summit.

The entrance had been hidden to me for most of it.

We had ridden in the carriage to the flatlands between Water area and my villages, but to me it had looked the same as usual: a vast, flat grass area stretching up to the dense forest lining our borders and wrapped around to Forest area.

And then there had been a shimmering transparent wave in front of us, and the alphas had said we were there.

Stepping through the portal had been a shock to the system, the intense cold hitting my body so fiercely it had taken my breath away, but then they had started walking and I'd had to keep up.

Now we were still squinting through the blizzard, Derik testing the snow before leading us through it.

"How do you know where to go?" I asked, trying to keep my teeth from chattering.

"We sense it. Drawn to the magic," Brax said loudly, the howling getting worse.

My fingers were numb, my face pink and stinging as I nodded. I could feel the magic, a warm glow within me that was the only part not frozen. But it was weak, and I was pretty sure I was just getting residue from the link.

“And how long will this take?”

Kai shrugged. “Nobody knows. Time works differently here. The witches control this plane—the time, the atmosphere, everything. It means nobody can come after them for their powers and use it.

“Not that anyone would. If they die, so does our world. They are the balance; most of our magic stems from them. If they cease to exist, so will werewolves and vampires.”

“But what if it takes too long? I have to be back by the full moon.” I had a meeting with my psychotic brother and his parasite.

“We should get to First Camp soon. Then the second section—it’s mostly rocky hills. Second Camp isn’t far from the Summit. But after that we lose our magic. Even now, it’s weakening.”

Derik huffed, sniffing the air and changing direction a little to the left.

We followed, and I swallowed hard. I was already frozen; if it was still cold on those rocky hills, I was going to fall and snap every bone in my body before I made it to the Summit.

“You think we would let that happen?” Kai grinned at me, speaking in my mind after reading my thoughts.

“I don’t know that it would be up to you.”

Kai chuckled but didn’t argue the point, which had me even more nervous.

We walked for what felt like hours. My bones ached, my skin stung, my boots were filled with soggy stockings, and I just wanted to turn around.

I was so tired. I hadn’t slept properly in days, and I was starting to drag my body, holding the wolves back.

They were ahead, peering over their shoulders every few seconds to check on me as we climbed, but I was too tired to try and keep up.

The sky had started darkening over an hour ago, and it was almost pitch black inside the blizzard that was still assaulting the journey.

I rested against a tree, catching my breath, my eyelids fluttering closed for a second.

“Lorelai!” Derik called.

My eyes flung open and he ran over, skidding in the snow down to me, yanking me off the tree as I slumped against him, trying to go to sleep.

He shook me awake. “Don’t fall asleep!” he called as the wind howled louder.

“So tired,” I mumbled.

“You can’t sleep before camp, beautiful. It’s too dangerous. It’s because we’re close. It’ll get stronger, but you’ve got to fight it because if you fall asleep before camp you might not wake up,” he warned.

I whimpered, fighting the lead in my eyes open. “You could’ve warned me,” I murmured.

He chuckled. “You seem to have a preference for doing what we tell you not to do, so we thought it’d be safer if you didn’t have it in your mind until absolutely necessary.”

I just nodded, knowing he was right but not having the energy to talk. Or walk.

Derik stood me up, and I fell back into him.

“I can’t carry you, beautiful. You have to make every step of the journey yourself or it’s considered cheating,” he said, helping me, urging me forward.

I clutched him and dragged my feet through the snow. He stayed with me, keeping to my snail’s pace as I fought to keep myself awake.

I stumbled a lot, but he never complained about my weak human body holding us back. Kai and Brax moved ahead of us, but they stayed close.

I felt it inside me that they were worried I wouldn’t be able to stay awake and were willing to fight through whatever that meant for my safety.

I trusted that, but I didn’t want them getting hurt over me again, like with the vamps, and I didn’t want them to make the witches angry, so I tried harder.

I needed a distraction, to keep talking, something to make sure I stayed awake.

"I can give you a distraction." Kai grinned, lifting his shirt over his head and chucking it to me.

I laughed and clutched the shirt to my chest, amazed they weren't freezing like I was. Even Derik was warm against me as we walked.

Kai started walking backward, keeping his abs toward me, flexing them and winking.

I laughed again and wanted to turn away so I wasn't stroking even more of that ego of his, but I couldn't because it was an effective distraction. Even warmed me up a little.

And then I noticed his tattoo. It was moving. I gasped and moved forward to look at it. He stood still, letting me touch over the moving waves of the water, the blowing blades of grass, the rustling trees of the forest.

And the vines...they moved everywhere over his arm, his chest, the flames on his chest flickering against them.

"This is amazing," I breathed.

"Yeah, it's the witch's connection. Pretty cool, huh?" he said, and I nodded.

"Beautiful," I said, running my fingertips over it.

Kai sighed at the touch, his eyelids fluttering closed as his abs tensed.

"Does it feel good when I touch it?" I asked, and his hooded eyes came to mine.

That one look and I knew the answer. The searing heat in his look filled me with the same heat, and I gasped.

I didn't have time to think about it before he was against me, kissing me, his mouth demanding on mine as his tongue slid against my own.

I gripped him, my hands running through his hair as I kissed him back.

Kai held me so tight against him his warmth defrosted me just a little, until he dropped me to the ground, pressing me into the snow as his huge body came over me.

His cock was thick and straining against his pants as he ground it against me. Even through all my coats and layers, I could feel it.

I moaned as he reached beneath me, wrapping his arm around my waist, holding me close against him as his other arm held him steady over me.

His kiss reached inside my body, the snow underneath melting me, wetting my coats, but I didn't care because I had him to keep me warm.

Kai finally pulled away, kissing me lightly before grinning down at me.

"Enough of a distraction for you to stay awake until we get there?" he asked, smirking because he knew my answer.

I bit my lip and nodded, wishing he wasn't stopping but knowing he was going to because of the link.

He helped me up out of the snow, and with a new energy from my pesky libido being teased, I surged forward, not even a little sleepy.

No wonder I was getting an inhumane amount of sleep lately, one searing kiss and I was a lost cause. It would be pathetic if I wasn't so sure that they were just as desperate.

"So, if we have to keep walking up a snowy mountain that has no time measure or any indication when we are going to be at the camp, I think now is a good time to ask some questions," I said, and Brax laughed.

"Called it," he said, and I frowned at him. "I said you'd break out the hard questions for us since we can't run away and don't have time to distract you." Brax chuckled. "They said you wouldn't."

"They were wrong. And stop trying to distract me from the questions," I said, before taking a deep breath and voicing something that had been on my mind since I had come back with the wolves after the choosing ceremony.

"Why do you need virgins on the blood moon?" I asked, and all of them stopped midstep, looking at each other with wary eyes.

I took that to mean I wasn't meant to know the answer but they wanted to tell me.

"It's not knowledge for humans."

"But I'm linked. And that night, during the blood moon, you told me there was a good reason for the virgin thing. Now I want to know what it is.

"Especially since the idea of you fucking a bunch of virgins on the next blood moon makes me green with jealousy," I admitted, knowing there was no point in hiding it because they would feel it within me.

Kai shrugged at the death glare from Derik, smirking back at me. Derik walked ahead as Brax waited for it to play out.

"We should keep walking."

"You can walk and answer my questions," I reminded, catching up to him, sinking in the snow more than him, which was surprising since he was so damn big next to me.

"I don't know if it is allowed now that we are linked," Derik huffed.

Kai and Brax walked next to us before Kai chuckled. "I'll take one for the team then. We can't tell you, Little Human, until your shadow friend leaves you alone.

"After that, we'll give you whatever answers you want, but the answers to those questions will put us all in danger if Elias gets a hold on your mind. We can't risk that, or the pack will be in danger," Kai explained.

Even though it wasn't an answer, it wasn't a no either. It was actually a totally fair explanation. Which they should have already given me, but my alphas were stubborn.

"Okay," I said, and kept walking.

I was already a few feet ahead when I realized they weren't walking with me. I looked behind me to see Derik looking at me with a what-the-hell expression and Kai chuckling beneath his hand as Brax looked smug.

"I told them you'd be fine with an explanation. Derik said you wouldn't be, and Kai said we should just tell you anyway. I won again." He grinned wider, and I laughed.

"Stop betting on my reactions, and Derik, maybe next time bet on me being reasonable. It's been known to happen every now and then." I shrugged, then kept walking.

The wolves caught up within a second, Derik's hand slipping into mine.

"I should have more faith in you, sorry," he whispered.

I caught his lips with mine before he pulled back.

"Yes, you should, but I'll take the apology, and you can make it up to me later," I said, and he grinned, kissing me back.

"Deal."

We walked further, and just when I thought my legs were going to snap, lights sparkled ahead of us. Little bulbs of light, like glowing stars suspended in a pathway with no other explanation other than magic as to how they were even there.

I had no idea where they led. From where I stood, it was just a black pit, and it had my footsteps hesitating.

Derik walked ahead as Brax took over urging me forward, Kai bringing up the rear.

I walked down the lit path into the nothing when we climbed a small ridge in the snow, stepping onto a landing that had been cleared of snow but was a tiny place to put a campsite.

It was on a ledge, and we had to walk around a tight space to get to the rest of the landing, where there was a cloth hut set up with an outhouse and a pitcher of what smelled like soup.

It made my mouth water thinking about the warmth.

I went to step forward, but Brax stopped me. "Wait. Derik will check it out."

"Why?"

"Because we may not be the first ones here, which means we have to move on to the next campsite," he explained.

I frowned and looked for another one but couldn't see it.

"The next one? Where?" I wondered if maybe my human eyes were worse than I thought.

"Further around the ledge." Kai frowned, sniffing the air, staying behind me, his pecs brushing me as he protected my back.

Derik edged along the side of the mountain, the ledge not making sense since we had just climbed the mountain, but since there was nothing about this trek that made sense I left that one alone.

He edged along it, the pit below just black. He got to the ledge and checked the hut and outhouse, then the soup. He pulled a note off it and rolled his eyes, his curse words falling heavy in the wind.

"The vamps were here first," Derik growled, the thought strong in my head.

I tensed and looked around as Derik nodded for me to come over. I planted my feet.

"If the vampires were already here, then why am I still heading to that site?" I asked before moving.

"They left a note. They gave us the campsite because it's the first one and we have a human to get up the mountain, winter born or not. *Consider it a favor,*" Derik read off the note, then screwed it up and chucked it off the ledge with a scowl.

"I'm guessing that means something bad?"

"It means we owe them," Kai rumbled, angry and clenching his fists as he walked over to the ledge.

He nodded to me to go first. I went to step, but I did not like the idea of owing the vampires. So, I tested how tired I was now that I had a second wind.

"Or we don't owe them because we don't use the campsite at all. The second one is over the rocky mountain of death, right?" I asked.

“No, we have to stop,” Derik said.

“That could be hours or days if the witches want to play games,” Brax tried to convince him.

“You think you can make it?” Kai asked, just as put out by the vamps as I was.

“If it means we don’t owe them.”

“This is the only place we can sleep. You were dead on your feet before. We’re camping here, end of discussion,” Derik ordered, and I raised a brow at the alpha tone in his voice.

It annoyed me and brushed against my aversion to authority.

“Can we take our things and move along to their campsite then? Share the space so we aren’t taking what they offer? Or no tent and no food? Surely there are loopholes,” I said, huffing in annoyance, partly because we were in the situation, but mainly because I was starving.

Missing out on the food sounded like the worst idea I’d had in a long time.

Kai laughed then. I had forgotten they could hear my thoughts for a second there.

“We’ll get you fed and rested, then we’ll deal with the vampires,” Kai said, then urged me forward onto the ledge.

I wanted to resist, but my mind was taken up by the black pit staring up at me.

It was the side of the mountain I hadn’t seen and foreshadowed the next part of the trek quite well, with spikes of mountain and rock threatening to stab me if I dared step out of line.

Literally.

I backed up against the ledge, the snow swirling around me a little softer as I edged, inch by inch, step by step, sideways along the ledge until I reached Derik.

Kai and Brax came across next, Kai being smug and taking the ledge in two steps.

“Tabby won’t let me die up here,” he said confidently, and I laughed, but I was pretty sure it was true. She had a definite favorite.

“And what makes you the favorite?”

“She likes my spirit,” he mimicked, and I laughed harder.

My laughter stopped short when there was a flash of red in the snow. A figure in all black besides a red velvet cloak appeared in front of me.

I gasped and shrunk back as Silas grinned, his fangs low as his eyes assessed me. My alphas growled, the sound shaking the side of the mountain.

“Cashing in your favor already? Because me not tearing your throat out right now for getting so close is the only favor you get,” Kai warned, his eyes red, his fangs salivating as his talons twitched with his hands.

Silas straightened his cape and brushed off the snow that landed after the wolves growled.

His black hair was slicked back, and he was handsome, a dainty, pale handsome that was pretty almost, but the eyes...they were pure seduction.

“The winter born. I must say, I expected someone beautiful, but you are much more than that, aren’t you, sweetheart?”

Silas used that pretty voice on me and something inside me turned. That poison taste filled my mouth, and my shadows thrashed despite having been subdued since we entered this plane.

But then there was the slight fluttering, the recognition of his seduction that made me want to move closer.

I wanted to say something. I wanted to tell him to go fuck himself, but I knew nothing of vampires. I didn’t even know the rules of this place—what wasn’t allowed and what was while we were on the landing.

I also wanted the vampires to know I was not answering to them, I was with the wolves.

I belonged to my alphas, so I did the one thing that would show my loyalty despite it going against everything in me: I narrowed my eyes and stepped back behind them.

Kai gave an impressed chuckle as he stepped in front of me. Derik and Brax closed me in behind them too, their faces stoic, daring the vamp to make a wrong move.

I stayed behind them, trusting them.

"You heard her, Silas. Fuck off," Brax warned.

Silas ignored him and Kai, looking at Derik. "You cannot possibly hope to keep her without consequences. Especially with the brother in your territory too," Silas scoffed, his gaze breaking past the wolves and clashing with mine.

"We'll see you at the Summit, Silas," Derik warned.

Silas laughed and shook his head, wrapping his cloak around his body. "Yes. I find the fact that this human should be so loyal to wolves who hold her kind hostage with false promises and the illusion of safety interesting. But then again, when have humans ever really seen what is right in front of them?"

Silas smirked before he disappeared into the white night. The wolves were tense when he left, and I had so many questions.

"What did that mean?"

Kai turned to answer when Derik collapsed, falling to his knees with a grunt.

I dropped to my knees in front of him, going for him as Kai and Brax helped him up. I held my hands on either side of his face, his eyelids fluttering, trying to close.

"Derik?" I asked, panic seizing the strength in my voice.

He shook his head, shaking off the other two wolves and kissing my hand that was holding his face.

"I'm okay," he breathed, going to stand but falling again.

Kai swore, then lifted him up, helping him over to the log that was acting as a seat in front of the hut. Brax lit the campfire with some of the magic I still needed to ask about, and Derik shivered.

I knelt down in front of him, looking over his face as he tried to stay awake, his breathing raspy.

“What happened? Was it Silas?” Kai demanded.

Derik shook his head. “No. But I knew he would come. He left the note so we wouldn’t be able to deny him meeting her before the Summit. Tabitha warned me about it before we left,” he breathed.

“You knew he would be here?” I asked, and he nodded.

“She gave me a spell to say so I could hide the link we made until we made it to the Summit. She said it would make me like this, tired and weak, but she didn’t mention the nausea.”

He turned away and coughed, spitting out some blood, staining the white snow.

A queasiness in my stomach stirred as I felt what he felt, but it was nowhere near as powerful as whatever he was feeling because he coughed up more, then fell forward on his hands and knees as I moved out of the way.

The wind picked up and howled again, the fabric of the hut shaking. I caught the soup before the pitcher toppled, then looked up to the worried faces of Brax and Kai.

“I’m fine. Stop stressing, it makes it worse,” he ordered, and I tried to relax but it was hard.

He tamed his labored breathing and spat out more, then leaned back against the log and closed his eyes.

“That sucked, but it worked. So worth it.” Derik smirked before wiping his lip with a lazy drag of his arm.

“You should have told us what you were doing,” Kai growled.

“One of us could have done it,” Brax said.

Derik shook his head. "Shadows." He pointed to Brax, then Kai. "Hot head." Then he pointed to himself. "Leaves me to do it," he said, and I couldn't believe he had just done that for me.

"How did you hide that from the link?"

"It was a temporary thing to cloud it. The link didn't exist for those few minutes. But more like turning out the lights so it blends in with everything else he would have sensed.

"He will sense our bites, our claim, but he won't know it's a binding link until the Summit, which is the ace card we need," he said, then hauled himself up, clutching his stomach.

I stood up too.

Kai and Brax helped Derik into the tent. He fell on the floor, letting out a big breath as he closed his eyes. He lifted his arm and peered out at me peeping into the hut.

"You coming in, beautiful?" he asked, and I grinned, nodding.

I climbed inside. Brax and Kai followed, doing up the hut strings on the door.

We used the wooden bowls in the hut to have our soup (which was insanely good for being left out on the snowy mountain, but apparently magic was that good) and I appreciated it fully, devouring every last drop of my portion.

Derik offered me his, but I knew he was hungry too so I said no and fed the last of his to him, glad I could finally feel the queasiness leave us both.

He was still tired though and weak, lying down with his hands behind his head as I crossed my legs next to him.

Kai was next to me, Brax on the other side of Derik, both of them hunched in the small space. It would have been bigger, but with three massive werewolves in there, it might as well have been a shoebox.

I put our bowls to the side and they disappeared. I gasped as the pitcher disappeared too, replaced by another one that filled the tent with the aroma of coffee. My mouth watered again.

Kai moved it away from me when I went to reach for it.

“After.” He grinned, reaching behind him and pulling his shirt off.

I smirked and roamed my eyes over his impressively sculpted muscles, his abs and pecs shiny with the light coming in from the outside.

His eyes twinkled with a mischievous glint. “I think we should give the witches a little show.” He grinned.

I blushed and looked over to Brax, who was undressing, pulling his boots off. Derik licked his lips, shuffling back a little further.

“Derik needs to rest though,” I said, feeling his lethargy.

He brushed his fingertips along my thigh. I climbed over him, leaning down to kiss his waiting lips, knowing he couldn’t sit up to reach me.

“I’m going to enjoy the show too, beautiful,” he said, before kissing me in a way that made resisting impossible.

We’d never done that before, fuck two while the other watches, not ending with having all three inside me. It made my core burn to think about.

His tongue teased mine, his taste making me sigh against him, and then Kai was pulling me back to him, peeling off my clothes.

Brax moved over to us, helping shed my layers, leaving me in my underwear and corset.

The hut was warm, the icy weather outside not making it to us, which I was grateful for because the way my alphas were looking at me had me reaching for the strings of my corset.