

SECOND CHANCE LUNA

Chapter 9

Jason anxiously watched the clock as dinnertime slowly crept closer. Returning to his room after the disastrous joint training, he hopped in

the shower to wash away the dirt, grime and frustration. Not only did the Rimrock pack's warriors lack discipline, but also strength and

stamina. His warriors could run circles around them.

However, when pressed by Luke's aura, they quickly fell into line and pushed themselves so there was some hope. What was truly lacking

was the pack's authority. The warrior' lackluster performance was clearly due to their Alpha's absence and lack of motivation. Even if just

their Beta participated in training, it would be a huge improvement to morale.

Luke's reaction to learning about the traps was predictably incredulous. He shook his head at the sheer idiocy of the whole idea, especially if

the pack's warriors didn't know the location or placement of the traps. Their movements would be equally hampered and the traps just as

deadly to them as their enemy.

For a small pack controlling a vast area, traps weren't necessarily a bad thing, but implementing them called for strategy. Placing them in

areas difficult to patrol would be smart, but not everywhere. Rimrock was a mid-sized pack, so there should be no reason to employ so

many traps given the size of their defensive force. It all came down to laziness and their Alpha's disconnection with his pack duties.

Stepping out of the shower, Jason shook his head to clear his mind. Right now, the only thing that mattered was his mate. He wouldn't let

anything interfere with his first meal with her. Tonight would be perfect. Not wanting to appear too formal, he dressed in a sweater and

jeans with his leather jacket as the final layer. Jason considered his reflection carefully.

Normally, he didn't care what he looked like, but tonight he hoped to impress. Touching his now smooth cheeks, he thought he struck a

handsome profile. Hopefully, his mate would be impressed. Lobo was practically climbing the walls of his mind, eager to see their mate

again.

Leaving the packhouse through the kitchen and out the back door, Jason avoided his hosts and any needless questions. Luke had already

prepared an excuse for his absence, blaming the recent rogue attacks for an emergency call home.

Following Luke's directions, as well as using Cameron as a guide, Jason had little trouble finding Phoebe's cottage. As his Beta described, it

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was a neat little structure making a cozy home tucked into the woods and surrounded by a garden teeming with herbs. The perennials had

long since gone to seed and minded themselves with little effort from their caretaker.

Though it was a picturesque scene, Jason bristled at the thought of Phoebe living out here alone, with no one to protect her but border

patrols whose abilities he now seriously questioned. Lobo growled in agreement. It simply wasn't safe for their mate to remain there.

"Alpha?"

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“Anything to report, Cam?” Jason asked without looking at his warrior newly emerged from the forest shadows.

“Allis peaceful.”

“Good. You can head back to the packhouse and get yourself a proper meal. I won't be needing you the rest of the night.”

“Planning to guard Luna on your own then?” Cameron asked with a smirk.

Jason growled at his warriors audacity, but Cameron was already off. With a sigh, he calmed himself. It was his hope to spend the night with

his mate. If she was uncomfortable with that idea, he was prepared to sleep on the porch. But tonight would be perfect.

“Remember, don't push her,” Jason said to his eager wolf.

“Tknow! I know! But...Mate!’

“Tonight is all about her so she is in control of what happens.”

“Right. Yes. Now go to Mate human!®

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Jason couldn't help but smile. A wolf's s* drive was generally high and tempered only by its desire for its one-true mate. Their wolf

counterparts seldom found anyone tempting if it wasn't their mate and so had no desire to be with them. It was the human counterpart

that lacked self-control and chose to engage in sometimes numerous trysts.

While it wasn't uncommon for young wolves to engage in s****| activities, Jason had abstained. The idea of touching any wolf who was not

his mate was nauseating, especially after learning about his parents' troubles. Jason was determined not to repeat his father's mistakes, so

he avoided affairs with others.

Apparently, other wolves found his level of self-control appealing and many sought to be his first partner, but Jason shrugged them away

following his wolf's instincts to save himself for his fated mate. He wanted her to be his first and, selfishly, wanted to be her first. Jason

certainly wouldn't have faulted her if she had taken other partners before meeting him, but now it seemed his selfish wish had come true.

When he held Phoebe and breathed her scent he hadn't detected any trace of another. It seemed her first mate had rejected her

immediately and, perhaps, because of that, Phoebe hadn't had any desire to be with another. Lobo was eager to express the urges they had

suppressed, but Jason insisted they take it slow. They had to be mindful of the trauma she suffered because of her rejection and gradually

break down the barriers she erected to protect herself.

Once again in control, Jason let himself through the garden gate and stepped onto the porch. With a deep breath, he knocked and

anxiously waited for an answer. What if she changed her mind and refused to let him in? Lobo whimpered at the thought.

After an agonizing minute, the door opened a crack. Verifying her visitor, Phoebe undid the last latch and opened it wide. Shyly she smiled,

"Come in."

Jason stepped across the threshold and was immediately engulfed in her scent. Around the packhouse he only ever caught a faint whiff, just

enough to tantalize him, but in her home he was practically swimming in it. Jason breathed deep, letting her scent soak into every fiber of

his being while Lobo rolled onto his back, belly up.

Blinking, he realized Phoebe was still anxiously watching him. Smiling, he said, "Your home is almost as beautiful as you."

Her gray eyes blinked wide, startled by his announcement, then a rosy blush colored her cheeks, "Thank you. Umm...dinner will be ready in

a few more minutes. Make yourself at home."

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She closed the door and hurriedly retreated to the kitchen where he could smell the tantalizing odor of chicken, sautéed vegetables and

rice.

Make myself at home. Jason smiled at the idea. He had every intention of doing just that.

Spying a coat rack next to the door, he shrugged off his jacket and hung it up. His eyes shifted to her front door and he frowned as he

counted the number of latches and deadbolts that had been installed. It wouldn't do much to deter a wolf from entering if they wanted, but

it was an indication she didn't feel safe.

Quietly he turned, taking in the small, neatly arranged interior. There was a sofa and chair set arranged in front of the fireplace with a coffee

table, side tables and lamps. An upright piano was tucked in a small nook and he immediately wondered if it was for decoration or if she

knew how to play. But what caught his attention was books. Books were everywhere arranged in several bookcases, on top of the piano, on

the coffee table, on the mantel. There were easily over a thousand.

Has she read all of them? He wondered.

He could count on one hand the number of books he had read. He recalled what Luke told him about how she related the plot of Treasure

Island around the pretend campfire. Approaching one of the cases, he read the bindings on the shelves: Great Expectations, Scarlett Letter,

Moby d**k, Frankenstein and the Prince and the Pauper among many others, all carefully arranged by the author's last name.

“So...have you read all of these books?” he asked, taking one from its place and paging through it.

“No. Over half...yes,” Phoebe answered. “My father used to read to me every night a couple of chapters at a time until I was seven or eight,

I think. After that, I read on my own. We used to debate different aspects of the plot or the characters over the dinner table.”

Jason smiled at the thought of little Phoebe curled up in her father’s lap as he read to her. Putting the book back, he quietly wandered to

the mantel where he found a framed family photo nestled among the books. Handling it with care, he studied the faces of her parents.

Phoebe looked a lot like her mother with a few characteristics from her father, though neither of them possessed her gray eyes. It was clear

they were a tight-knit family group.

He frowned. Her parents seemed older than he would have guessed. Werewolves, in general, aged slower than humans, often appearing no

older than their thirties well into their sixties or seventies, but Phoebe’s parents already showed some gray and fine lines around their eyes.

“Dinner’s ready.”