

The Female Alpha's Sanctuary by Sanctuary Chapter 201

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Chapter 201

That he'd be able to wedge himself into her life. That he'd easily make her forgive him just by showing his face. After all, they were mates. A wolf's weakness was always the mate. Selene would be no exception to that. So he thought it would only take a few gestures. Send flowers, messages, offer some sweet words and it'll be it. He had somehow deluded himself that he could still fix things. That he could patch everything up with makeshift tape.

That he could somehow salvage the future he so readily threw out for her when she was a sister.

He just didn't count on the fact the fucking Bloodlust Alpha would come in and sweep her off her feet.

It was then when it happened.

Pain shot to his neck where Hestia's mark was laid.

His hand shot up to the source of the pain and clutched around the area where it throbbed. Landon's mouth falls open to a soundless gasp as he felt every inch of his skin burn. Like his soul was tormented and acid was biting into his skin. He'll, he felt like his skin was peeling off. As though layers of his being was stripped bare. But it wasn't just external pain. It was worse Inside.

He couldn't breathe, couldn't think, couldn't even close his eyes as he felt it.

The last, tiniest strand that connected him to Selene broke.

It snapped clean.

(like Thanos)

It didn't take long for him to realize what had happened. Mid-gasp, his eyes widened in realization. The overwhelming sorrow he felt cloaks over him and his wolf rendered him silent. The furious growls, the thrashing of his body and the wild eyes of his deranged wolf is all he could see.

He didn't have the time to wallow in self pity.

Landon cried out when the pain intensified, his neck itching and burning so much that he was tempted to just rip a patch of flesh off his neck. Like somehow, it would remedy

the tenderness of his broken bond. A cry rips from his throat, his feeble attempts in desperately hanging onto their broken bond proved to be useless as he felt an emptiness in his heart. An emptiness that had been there for a while since Selene left, but not to this extent.

His mate was marked.

His mate had marked another.

Selene had turned away from him.

Raizel Locksworth had claimed what was his.

He couldn't seem to shake that thought away. The only thing he remembers is those haunting blue eyes piercing into his. Those very blue eyes that he'd once seen shed tears of pain and betrayal, those blue eyes that came back four years later harder than ever and now, the blue eyes he was dreading to see with a newly made mark on her neck.

Landon couldn't find himself to think of anything else.

Not when Hestia, his Beta and even his mother came barreling through the door to see what had caused his screaming. He couldn't even register the fact his father hadn't bothered to show up, couldn't even register how the bed was being torn apart in his hands. Or how the room was now slashed with claw marks.

He couldn't register that he'd stood up, torn his shirt apart and half-shifted in complete insanity.

15:03

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85.1%

But most of all, he couldn't register how his hand had wrapped itself around Hestia's neck, lifting her off the ground as she struggled to breathe.

I saw her eyes.

The fear in them.

The trembling of her lips.

Her small body shivering as she fought for each shaky breath she took.

I saw her eyes.

Her eyes ever so slowly beginning to shut and I couldn't do anything about it.

My body, paralyzed in its stead, aching to move but couldn't. The weakness I grew to hate mocking me as I couldn't even lift my arms to brush her curls out of her face. To

offer her some kind of comfort even if I knew it wouldn't do anything. Even if it was a lie. At least then, her fear would've lessened. Maybe her whimpers would hurt less. The blood that was pouring out of her stomach, the pain in her face, her helpless cries- I saw him.

His body torn and and laying there in his flowers. No one to see his last moments, no one to hear the pleas or his final words. He was probably calling after her. Telling her to run, and to find me. He probably thought of me. Wondered if I was alright and if I made it out.

Did he blame me?

Did she blame me?

Did I still blame myself?

Even when I know that in terms of my reality there was not much I could've done- since I've been sleeping for two days and had an attack over Landon's mating and marking- I couldn't help but feel that guilt. That guilt and mocking voice that always followed me.

You could've saved her.

You could've saved him.

You could've held on for a few more minutes and given her a fighting chance.

If you had been strong

maybe she wouldn't have bled to death.

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Maybe she wouldn't have died with her own tears and cries the only thing she hears.

Maybe she wouldn't have been alone.

Maybe if I wasn't so weak, she would have lived.

I shot up from where I laid, eyes wide open and my heart rate rising. I could feel the sweat form on my skin, my hair damp from my nightmares. My heart pounded against my ears, the only thing I could hear being my own gasps for breaths. I shut my eyes, burying my face in my hands and leaned forward.

It'd been a while since I last had one.

A nightmare.

I honestly forgot about them. These nightmares that haunted me constantly over the last four years. The bliss of not having them in a long time broken with tonight. I glanced over to the clock and sighed.

3:32 am.

I felt cold again.

I felt myself slipping like I did ever so often when I got myself into these episodes. The chilling reality of who I am- was still latching onto me despite everything I've accomplished. Each life I saved, each life I took, I would remember them.

It didn't matter which one.

It was unforgiving all the same.

I tried to force my breathing down, tried to handle everything by myself once more when I felt him. Two strong arms enclosed around me, a bare warm chest pressing onto my back. His comforting scent surrounds me and I momentarily feel myself calm. The bond between us doing its wonders as tingles and waves of comfort meet my panic. His skin felt so right against mine. Like he'd been made to touch me.

I allow myself this bliss.

As undeserving as I was for it, I allowed myself to take comfort in the little good my life has given.
me.

"Are you alright?"

The husk in his tone makes me shiver and I unconsciously press myself into him. As if he was some form of solace I could have to shield me away from everything. From all the pain and hurt. It'd be so nice if I could pretend it was like that. If I could just forget everything and instead just relish in the way he held me.

My head falls to the side of his face, my temple resting at his cheek. The warmth his body was emitting calmed both me and my wolf. The kiss he so softly brushed against my temple only served to remedy the ache in my chest.

"I'm fine."

I tell him, but he could feel I was lying. There was no lying with mate bonds. I could only hope he chose not to say anything. Raizel trails another kiss to my exposed marked neck before he rests his forehead against my shoulder. His arms tightens around me. We sat there in silence, engulfed in the thick atmosphere I knew we would have to break soon.

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"Who's Lila?"

I tried to stay calm.

But the minute that name left his lips, I felt myself freeze up.

The lump that had been shoved down my throat was back again but this time the hurt I felt in my heart intensified. I was shaking. I know I was.

And I hated myself for it.

Stop it. Don't cry. Don't you dare cry. You have no right to. No right to at all. Not in front of him. Not in front of anyone. Not until you avenge them will you have any right to shed a single tear. Not until you proved yourself worthy to.

"You don't have to answer if you don't wish to."

I bite my lip as I force myself to smile. Ever the gentleman, Raizel brushes my hair from my face. He pets me, his hand soothing my hair back as he kisses the top of my head. His wolf is concerned, nudging his snout against my wolf. She nudges back halfheartedly, tail low and body sprawled over the ground in my mind. The thoughts of the little girl we were supposed to protect and considered our own haunting her as she offered me the slightest bit of comfort. One soul with two broken hearts trying to mend one another.

And then she does something I hadn't thought about.

Tell him.

Tell mate.

My mate.

My mate who was holding me right now. My mate who laid all his vulnerabilities in front of me.

My mate who held my heart in his hands.

The mate I never thought I would have or was deserving of after everything.

"I'm not from Greyhound."

Raizel stops mid-brush as he listens. I could feel my heart beat against my chest but I ignore it. Instead of stopping, I merely nuzzle the crown of my head against his hand, silently asking him to continue his ministrations.

He does so without a word.

"I was originally from Nightwake."

The other arm he kept around me tightened. I feel his anger toward the pack toward Landon, and let him calm himself. He breathed me in, using my scent to control his wolf that was so very close to wolfing out. My own wolf took note of his anger and trotted over to him, brushing her head against his to stop him from growling.

"The Beta Benicio Dixon is my father. The Luna, Hestia Walker, is my sister. And Landon Walker as you know was my mate. Or well, ex-mate."

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I sigh, silently drawing circles on his bare arm. I tried my best not to freeze up. Since Isaac, I hadn't opened up about the past. The only one who I verbally talked to was only ever Isaac. Noah just found out from the blood bond. Tracing invisible patterns on his arms somewhat distracted me from the attack so very close to holding me down. I needed to get through this. I needed to get this out.

Had Raizel wanted to learn about my past, all he had to do was look in my mind.

Any formed bonds would allow this. Blood bond, mate bond- but out of respect for me, he never intruded on my memories. Like how I never intruded on his. He took what I gave him and I found myself loving him more for that.

"She was always the favorite. The better daughter, the better Luna candidate. And that was fine. It was reality. Her reality was simply that. Mine was to be the quiet daughter who plays in the dirt with her garden. The one people often forget was there to begin with. Which was, again, fine. Because everyone had a role to play and I was perfectly content with mine. And then one day, on my nineteenth birthday, I found him. It was always odd, but years after the moment I should've known, I realized Landon was my mate."

Flashes of that day ran through my mind.

"Landon and Hestia were together. In fact, they were engaged already. To cut it short, I was temporarily kicked out. Landon and my father both thought it'd be best to keep me away until after they've bonded. Supposedly my connection with Landon would've lessened with the distance. Hestia said she loved him and just couldn't live without him. I wasn't Luna material, they told me. I wasn't fit to be one. And so, they sent me away. They sent me away because I was a burden to their precious daughter's future."

I swallow as my chest tightens up.

"They sent me away to Duskfall."

To his credit, Raizel doesn't flinch. He's quiet and the only thing that actively tells me he's listening is that the way he caresses me softens when things get rougher in my story.

"They sent me to Duskfall for an indefinite amount of time. But Goddess, I was so naive."

I shake my head, feeling the all too familiar sting of remembering how they'd purposely sent me to a pack planned for its demise.

"I was so damn naive, waiting and hoping that things might change. That they'd call me back, realizing their mistake and that my mate would want me. I was so hopeful in the beginning, but then a week passed. Then two. Then a month. Then two months. While I was there, I made a

life for myself. A life I never thought I'd have. I met people who were so genuinely kind and caring people who remembered my name after the first meeting."

I smile to myself as I recalled my first meeting with Alpha Thompson.

The way that the brutish man looked so intimidating only to be one of the most kindest men I've ever met. Then his wife and their little son, Jason.

"I met a kind old man. Bentley Everdale. He had his own garden, offering me to work with him but it wasn't possible if I hadn't met her."

I suck in a strangled breath,

"Lila. A little girl who'd been hurt for far too long. She was the most precious little thing. So precious my wolf considered her our own. As much as I loved my life there, I knew I would eventually be called back. They didn't make it a quick and simple bonding. No, they mated over and over and each

time I felt it. Each time I felt the pain until I would pass out. The last was the worst one I ever had. I passed out for two whole days. My body was growing weaker as my wolf was. I didn't know how much more I could take. Then Bentley told me he spoke to Alpha Thompson, telling me that he knew of my situation. They offered me a place."

I smile despite the tears threatening to spill over my eyes,

"They offered me a place with them. They offered me a home."

Laughing softly to myself, I was glad he wasn't facing me. I knew if I saw those pretty grays looking at me I would break. All the walls I spent years fortifying would break with one look.

"But then the rogues. The damn rogues took everything from me. The Alpha, his wife, their son, the pack. That day I killed a man. That day, I lost my innocence. They took my happiness. They took Bentley...they just took it. They took my home."

I bit into my lip as I felt a sob nearly rip from my throat but I forced it down.

No.

I will be strong.

I will not break.

www

"They knew. My parents. Hestia. Landon. They knew there'd be an attack at Duskfall. Apparently Xeneron has something he wants in Nightwake. He'd sent warnings about an attack months prior. I guess the rogue thought the treaty with Duskfall meant something to the Walker's. That they would respond if an ally was threatened. But no. They ignored them, but they sent me there too. So they did what they promised. They took them. Took Duskfall and burned it to the ground."

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My wolf whined in agony, her head dropping low as Raizel's wolf rubbed himself against her.

"But it wasn't enough because they had to take her too."

I curled my hands around his arm.

"They took Lila. And you know what's the worst part? I saw it happen. Draxyn, Xeneron's commander, ripped into her small body. He didn't give her a quick death. Probably because he wanted me to think I had a chance. So I fought him, managed to knock him out and carried her as far as I could. Ran straight toward the pack borders hoping the neighboring pack could help. I was so desperate. So desperate to save her life. I prayed to the Goddess, begging her to take me instead. I reached out to my parents, to Hestia, hoping one of them would answer. They didn't. So I reached out to the last person who could help me. I reached out to him. To Landon."

Memories flash through my mind before I could stop it. The memories I didn't do well in shielding away from him.

I know he saw them.

I know Raizel saw them.

His body goes frigid and although there was no use in saying it out loud, I felt compelled to.

"I tried to call for him, but he ignored me. He mated my sister. Marked her as she did him. With Lila dying in my arms, bleeding out to death as I pushed myself to keep running, they've bonded. I couldn't handle it. My body couldn't handle it. It was too much. I couldn't keep myself going because I was so weak. I couldn't move. Couldn't speak. The only thing I could remember was Lila. I passed out, and the next time I opened my eyes it was too late."

"I woke up in Greyhound. Meredith was there. She found me outside of their borders, said I was only six minutes away from reaching them. If I hadn't passed out, I could've saved her. I'm not stupid, the chances were slim but still, a chance was a chance. A chance I would've given anything for. Meredith offered me to take my place in Greyhound. To avenge the deaths of Duskfall. And I took it. Found Isaac, Bentley's son, and began again. I was the only one who lived from Duskfall and I wasn't even formally a Duskfall member yet."

I hold my breath, knowing damn well I could just barely hold on. I couldn't say anything more, think anything more. I've laid out my cards to him. My faults. My weakness. Everything.

I waited for some kind of disgust to pulse in our bond.

To feel some sort of pity.

Anything.

But instead, I feel him turn me so that I was facing him and crushed me into his chest. He held onto me so tight, arms bound around me like steel as he breathed out a ragged breath. His warm breath fans over my skin in our silence.

"My little wildflower is so strong."

He whispers, kissing my face as he held my head between his hands.

"You are not weak. Not then, and not now. You were never weak, my love. You were always strong."

I couldn't help but laugh at that.

A pathetic, broken laugh as I stared up at him.

"Don't lie to me, Raizel. You know I wasn't. I couldn't save any of them. I couldn't save her. I was

weak. Not strong. Never strong."

He shakes his head, cupping my cheek gently before pressing his forehead against mine. The tip of his nose bumps with mine but I don't pull away. Not even when I know he's going to deny everything. I've said.

"The woman who'd been pushed down in every way in her pack for eighteen years without once hating the life she was given is not weak. The woman who saw the brighter part of every bad situation is not weak. The woman who never hated her sister for having everything she didn't is not weak. The woman who killed a man about to rape a little girl is not weak. The woman who chose to stand for herself, to pick herself up after life drowned her in sorrow is not weak. The woman who sits before me is not weak. My Selene is not weak. Not then, now and ever. She is not weak. Being mortal is not weak."

The roughness in his voice, the surety in his tone almost makes me believe him.

Almost.

"Even when I failed them?"

My voice broke,

“Even when I couldn’t save a single person? Even if I couldn’t stay awake for six measly minutes?”

Raizel shakes his head, curling his fingers in my hair. He scrapes his nails gently across my scalp, trying his best to comfort me despite the growing tension in the air,

“Any wolf who had to suffer their mate marking someone else would have been the same. Especially an unmarked mate. No wolf can withstand that pain, not even an Alpha.”

I open my mouth to object but he continues,

“A woman who treated an abused pup like she was her own, gave her a reason to smile and loved her like a daughter is not weak. Without you, Lila wouldn’t have opened up. Bentley would’ve been lonely. If you hadn’t picked yourself up, Isaac would’ve been a drifter. He would’ve been alone, wandering around and essentially becoming rogue. A Gamma trained wolf like him would never be accepted in a pack for the fear of tension with another wolf. Not unless he found his mate but even then it would be a problem. He wouldn’t have the home you gave him. Noah would have went abroad had you not picked him as Beta. He would’ve joined his sister in Europe and quite possibly have never met his mate. Had you not been strong, Meredith would not have an heir. Greyhound would have been fought over. Challenges for the land would have come. Wolves were taking note of her aging, some already conspired ploys about her territory. She would’ve been killed, Selene. You were not weak. You rose to the challenge, picked yourself up after countless times and that alone is strength. You could’ve very easily given up. Allowed yourself to wither away or beg to come back to Nightwake. But you didn’t. You pushed yourself to stand on your feet. To strive for better. You are strong, Selene. You always were.”

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The tears that glazed over my eyes could no longer be withheld. My heart and walls alike breaks in front of him. I sniffled, clenching my fingers into tight fists,

“So how come? If I was so strong, how come I still lost everything?”

He runs his thumb under my eye, wiping my tear away when another spilled over my lids.

The endless streams of my weakness spills forth and I found myself hastily trying to stop it.

Raizel kisses my forehead, nuzzling his head with mine as he spoke softly,

“The world is never fair. Especially for the strong. The strong are always the ones who suffered the most. How else would they have gotten to the point they are at now?”

I tried my hardest to steel myself.

To ignore the pricking pain stabbing into my chest.

But each time I tried their faces would flash by and until i could no longer pretend. I give in. I lean forward, bury myself into his chest, rest my head against his skin and cried.

The tears pour down my face, his hands soothingly rubbing my back as I let his words sink in.

The bitterness I felt as the stray tears rolled down my cheeks remind me of who I was. Who I am. But I try not to let it bother me. The truth that he spoke about my confession makes me feel lighter, but I wouldn’t know that until later. I wouldn’t know that speaking of this helped lift the weight burdening me over the years.

In this moment, i let myself cry for the people I’ve lost.

The people I still constantly think about and wonder how things would’ve been had they lived. If i hadn’t lost them all too soon.

Four years ago, I’d lost everything.

But now, sitting here in the arms of the man I love with a pack waiting for me at home and a

family waiting right outside that door, I felt a little glimmer of hope.

Hope that maybe.

Just maybe.

I haven't lost everything.

"So you're telling me..."

Noah points at Raizel who arches a brow at the gesture. His arm loosely wrapped around my waist as we watch Noah for the hundredth time look between the two of us in pure astonishment. The first time being when he noticed the marks on our necks. He had screamed legitimately squealed with his hands cupping his reddening cheeks as he practically hovered over my neck to stare at the teeth indents like it was a diamond ring I was showing off.

Well, in a way, it kind of was.

I lean against the cushions of the couch, glancing at Raizel when he suddenly pulls his arm away from my waist. If I felt any tinge of disappointment at the loss of contact, I didn't have much time to dwell on it as he lifts his hand to inspect my mark once more. I try to hold my composure, I really did, but the fluttery feeling of Raizel drawing circles at my neck right across my marked skin sent waves of euphoria down my spine. The both of us were still in a weird haze of pure bliss. For the most part it was difficult to stay away from each other too long. Nothing that I didn't expect to happen. Newly marked pairs would feel a need to stay close by just to ease their wolves' tension. It's Noah's voice that brings me back to reality.

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"The Bloodlust Alpha and"

He then points at me,

"The Hellhound are mates. Like, legitimately mates. As in, hey this is totally a life time guarantee and there's no returns or refunds even with free shipping to the Moon World if I kill him kinda mates. And that her ancestor was the mate of Romanuv Locksworth- who, by the way, sounds like a total dick for rejecting that poor girl"

He stops midway as if catching himself, turns to Raizel who only looks amused at the whole thing. and adds a half assed: "No offense."

Before wiggling his finger between the both of us again.

"And that they totally had a sex marathon before coming here. Yeah, I know you didn't say that in your story telling earlier but its obvious with how much you smell like him right now. If someone made Raizel scented perfume, you'd be the prime example of what it would smell like. But anyway, Benicio got stabbed, you met a witch, went back to the magical pool, marked one another, met the in-laws, watched Brandon Walking have his ass handed to him not in that particular order"

Noah glides his gaze to Isaac,

"Yet you didn't record any of it."

There's a beat of silence in the office. This was the quietest it had been for the last fifteen minutes since we've arrived in Greyhound sporting newly made marks on our necks to the joy of Greyhound members. To say there was an uproar is an understatement. Meredith practically fainted on sight and was now sitting across from us with a wistful grin never once leaving her face. I felt her happiness shine through our bond, but even then one look on her face you could tell she was overjoyed. Bond or no bond, I saw it. Admittedly I felt a little embarrassed when Noah mentioned the pack felt a sudden connection to something stronger, yet not knowing exactly what it was, the moment I was marked. In a way, Greyhound was linked to Ignis Red now- unofficially.