

# The Rejected Werewolf Princess

## Chapter 11

Lauren has been watching over me for almost a week now and things have just gotten progressively worse. It started with the slippers but now it is like she tries to make my life a living hell.

She would always make passing comments about my weight. One time I overheard her telling one of the maids to reduce my portion because I was getting obese. I didn't eat at all that day until Ryker came back in the evening and forced me to eat something.

She also made sure to remind me every second of the day that Ryker was hers. I once tried telling her that I didn't want him but she laughed and said that I was lying because everyone wanted him.

Today when Ryker was leaving, I almost begged him to stay because his absence meant her presence and I didn't want to hear her continuously tearing me down.

I made up my mind to hide in the room and I hoped- no prayed that she would appreciate my absence and leave me alone but I quickly learned that not every prayer was bound to be answered when she walked into the room later that day.

She looked around the place with barely concealed jealousy and then her eyes landed on me, "I cannot believe that you still haven't gotten out of bed at this time."

"I wasn't asleep. I just don't have anything to do downstairs." I tried to defend but she gave me a dismissive hum, "You don't have to stay here; I'm not getting hurt up here."

"I'm your glorified babysitter," she said the last word in a patronizing tone, "it is my job to be wherever you are to make sure that you are always safe. Someone could sneak in through your window to kidnap you." Then she added under her breath, "I wish they would."

I knew she was just looking for an excuse to make my life horrible because there was no way that scenario could ever happen. My room was on the third

floor and the window overlooked a small field that was always guarded. To get me, the person would have to kill all those guards by which time others would have been alerted.

She walked over to me and lifted my arm with a disdainful look, "If only you knew how to defend yourself then I wouldn't need to be everywhere you are."

I closed my eyes and tried not to let her words affect me. I didn't need a reminder of how weak I was, I already knew it. I had been told every day of my life since I was born and you would think that I would be used to it by now but it hurts the same each time I hear it.

"I would like to train," I muttered it under my breath but I forgot how sharp werewolf hearing was because she raised a brow

at me.

"You," she began with an amused smirk, "Would like to train; don't make me laugh darling. You wouldn't be able to keep up with a newly turned wolf. I mean, look at you."

I felt my cheeks heat up in embarrassment and I turned my gaze to my hands in my lap. It was stupid of me to even try to utter the words out loud. I should have realized that she would have the same sharp hearing as other werewolves or even stronger considering she's a warrior. I mentally face palmed myself.

She stayed in my room for a little while longer before she grew bored and left the room; so much for wanting to protect me if someone tried to kidnap me.

I stayed inside for a few minutes more but then my stomach started to rumble so I made my way down the stairs and towards the kitchen. I poked my head in first to make sure she wasn't there.

"She's not here," I jumped when I heard the voice behind me and I saw the maid who used to bring it up to my room. "You could have waited for me; I was going to bring it up."

"It's okay," I gave her a small smile, "What's your name?"

She was shocked by my question. I could imagine why; when I was at Tyson's pack, no one cared to ask my name. They

dniu i even use it so I wasn't surprised that they never asked. I wouldn't even be surprised if most of them still dont know it

I'm sure that no one has bothered to ask her name either which is ironic considering she cooks for us and could easily poison us if she wished and would get away with it long enough to run far away from here.

"My name is Eve," she said finally, "Forgive me for not responding early; it has been a while since someone of your class

asked me that,"

"I'm more like you than you realize, Eve."

"You are the Alpha's mate." She said the words with so much reverence, "You may have been like me but you are no longer like that. Although it would-," she trailed off, "Forgive me, I was speaking out of turn."

"Please," I implored, "Tell me."

"You should eat," she picked up the tray, "Alpha Caine would be very upset if he found out that you have not eaten all day."

I knew she wasn't going to say what she wanted to no matter how hard or how much I pushed so I nodded and thanked her for the meal. She responded with a deep curtsy and then returned to her work.

A part of me wanted to stay down here because it is a familiar environment for me but I didn't know where Lauren was and I knew what would happen if she saw me eating so I ran as fast as I could to the room. Once I was safely behind the doors, I locked it shut.

I stayed in the room for the entirety of the day. Lauren tried to open the door a few times and each time it took a lot of effort to keep my breathing even so she would think I was asleep. She usually left after a few minutes and I think she actually liked the idea of not having to watch over me every second of the day:

It wasn't until the last time that the knocking was more frantic and harder that I realized that I could possibly be in trouble. I slowly got to my feet and unlocked the door. I pulled it open just as Ryker's hand was about to come

down and thankfully he stopped just before his fist came in contact with my head.

He was still in his clothes that he left and there was frustration etched on his features. I closed my eyes tightly as I waited for him to yell at me for locking the door but instead, he let out a sigh of relief.

“I thought you were hurt,” were the first words out of his mouth, “Lauren told me that you hadn’t been out of the room all day and your door was locked.”

“1-,” I didn’t know how to respond to that. I have never had someone worry about me before, “I was just tired so I spent the day inside.”

“Are you ill?” he placed his palm on my forehead, “I could call Lucy; she will know what to do.”

“I’m not hurt,” I said quickly. The last thing I wanted to do was have Lucy called up from wherever she was to check on me, “I just wanted to be alone.”

“Have you eaten?” he asked and I nodded, “When?”

“This morning,” I whispered the words but he still heard it.

He opened his mouth, most likely to yell at me but he closed it instantly and took a deep breath to calm himself then he pinched the bridge of his nose between his thumb and pointer finger.

“Come with me,” was what he finally said and without waiting for a response, he turned on his heels and started walking

I was so stunned that for the first few seconds, I just stood there staring but then I realized he wasn’t waiting and hurried up to catch up to him. He walked down the stairs and I noticed he was going towards the dining room.

He sat at the head of the table and gestured for me to take a seat too. I hesitated for a second before leaving one chair empty between us and taking the next one. My actions didn’t go unnoticed because I saw his jaw tick lightly but he otherwise Caved

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Chapter II

silent.

I was about to ask why we were here when two maids- one of whom was Eve- started arranging various dishes on the table. They put at least six different platters before they left.

“Eat,” I stared at the assortment of food in front of me and the back at Ryker, “You haven’t eaten all day so eat.”

“I- I’m not hungry.”

“Ask me if I give a shit.” His tone was crude, “Eat or I will force you and I don’t care if you hate me afterwards.” I knew he

would ahead with his threat so I piled a little pasta onto my plate, “Fill up your plate or so help me, I will make good on go my earlier threat.”

I swallowed deeply and piled helpings of food until he finally made a hum of encouragement. I stared at my full plate and knew there was no way I would finish it but I also knew there was no way that I was going to be allowed to leave this table until I did. That was the entire point of him forcing me to eat with him I realized, to make sure I ate what he would consider enough.

“When you finish it,” he began as he started helping himself to food, “We can talk about the idea of you training.”

I paused with my food halfway to my mouth, “What are you talking about?”

“Lauren told me that you wanted to train with her and I am willing to consider it if you finish the meal.”

If there was no reason for me not to finish the food before; then I just got one because I don’t want to train with Lauren. And

I know I can’t tell Ryker because he will ask questions and potentially ask her about it so now I’m in a debacle.

“Eat Camilla,” Ryker said when he noticed I hadn’t moved, “We don’t have all night.”

Chapter 12

After weighing my options I realized that no matter what I would have to find the meal so I focused on finishing my meal and I prayed that Ryker would forget about the training issue I don't even know why I bothered praying because it seems that when I pray about stuff they always seem to blow up in my Face

The first time being when Lauren came into my room earlier despite me praying she wouldn't and the second time being when Ryken told me that I would be training with Lauren commencing immediately

I knew he was just trying to help but in all honesty, I wish he wouldn't. I don't know what he's trying to prove but being nice to me isn't going to change everything I already know about him and how he treats his pack All I want right now is for him to reject me so I can leave

The last thing I want to do is to be tied down and mated to another Alpha who is cruel and horrible to his subjects. There could be someone just like me suffering under him right now and how terrible would I be if I allowed myself to freely mate

with him

I didn't want to argue about it so I thanked him for the training opportunity and locked myself in the room. I didn't step out until the next morning when I heard a subtle knock on the door. I opened it to reveal Eve and she handed me some folded clothes and shoes that I knew were for training.

I put them on and felt uncomfortable in them. The leggings were even tighter than the ones I usually wore and it felt like if I as much as bent over they would rip. I wasn't to wear a corset under it because the top was as tight as the leggings. It stopped just below my belly button and when I stretched or bent over, a silver of skin was revealed.

Eve smiled when she saw me and helped me put on the new sneakers. They came from a box so I knew they were brand new and a part of me didn't want to wear it because I knew it would get dirty but Lauren appeared at my door and I knew I didn't have much time left.

I stood up and her eyes raked over my body in a way that made my skin crawl and made me want to curl up into a ball and hide. Finally, she met my eyes and made a dismissive sound.

“Honestly you couldn’t look worse if you were a trash bag.” She laughed to herself at her own joke.

I looked over at her, “You’re wearing the same thing.”

“Yes, but I don’t look like a pregnant sea urchin,” she spat, “We don’t have all day.”

She turned on her heels and I was left to follow her.

I thought we would be training with the other guards and soldiers but instead she led me to a secluded spot behind the house. It was the field that my window overlooked and I saw that someone had arranged training equipment for us. There were makeshift weights, a ball and some other things that I did not recognize.

“Give me two laps around the house now,” The command in Lauren’s voice was not to be mistaken and I quickly took off because I didn’t want to annoy her.

I have had a lot of practice running considering I ran for almost a full day so the lap was relatively easy for me.

Her eyes narrowed when she saw I hadn’t broken a sweat, “Did you really think that was it? Give me another ten laps now.” I swallowed deeply and realized I was in for it.

By the fourth lap, I was exhausted and it was a chore to even get through to the fifth one. I had just finished it when I tripped on a root and fell down. Lauren blew on a whistle to tell me to get up but I couldn’t bring myself to rise, my lungs and my limbs burned.

“I should have known you would be weak,” she spat, “Fine then; let us do some core work. Let’s see how many pushups you can do.”

“I can’t move my hands,” I whispered and she made her way over to me.

She squatted until she was eye level with me, “Get up or I will make you get up.”

The threat was clear and I forced myself to rise. “You see, there was a little more energy left in you. Now start the pushups”

I did three before I fell on my face and couldn't rise again.

The rest of my morning was basically the same thing. She would push me past my limits and I would crash and fall on my face. By the time she said we were done, I was fairly certain that my face got more training from hitting the floor repeatedly than I did with everything she made me do.

Even arrived with two glasses of water and I watched Lauren reach out for them. I expected her to hand one to me but I watched her drink everything even though she didn't do anything today. When she was done, she gave the glasses to Eve and dismissed her but Eve cast a wary glance at me.

“She's fine.” Lauren spat. “Now go inside and do your job before I tell Ryker that you were being a hindrance to our training”

Eve gave her a curt nod and shot me a sympathetic look before walking back into the house. I let out a small groan which brought Lauren's attention back to me.

“Your final workout for the day,” she grabbed a towel and wrapped it over her neck, “Make it into the house by yourself and if you don't pass out then you can have a drink of water and your breakfast. I'll be waiting inside.”

Without another word, she walked away leaving me lying face flat on the grass.

I was too exhausted to be insulted or annoyed so I just stayed there. I was willing to risk a heat stroke if it meant relaxing my limbs for a few seconds.

I buried my head back into the grass when I felt a soft tap on my shoulder. I looked up and saw Eve offering me a glass with a soft smile.

“Hurry so she doesn't realize that I'm here.”

I gratefully took the glass from her and downed the contents. When I was done, she handed me another one and I drank half of it then poured the other half over my face.

She took the cup from me and hooked her hands under my pits to assist me in standing to my feet. I wobbled a little and she reached out to stabilize me.

“Thank you.” I whispered to her and she shrugged.

“You said you were just like me,” she whispered, “We help each other out.”

When she was sure I was able to stand on my own without falling over, she hurried back into the house. I stood there watching her and for the first time in my life, I felt a sense of solidarity with someone.

It was that newfound knowledge that gave me the courage to lean against the wall and lead myself into the house. My limbs ached and burned and I wanted nothing more than to fall over but I made my way into the living room where Lauren was. She was smiling but when she saw me her smile fell.

“I did it,” I said with a deep exhale, “Can I have my breakfast now?”

My newfound energy left me the moment I was done speaking. My knees wobbled and I had to hold onto a table to prevent myself from falling. Even rushed over to help me into the dining room chair and she served me breakfast.

For the first time ever, I didn’t notice the portion or even complain about it being too much. I ate like a person starved and it wasn’t until I was done that I realized just how much I had eaten.

“If you’re going to eat like a pig then training would be a waste,” Lauren said with her nose upturned then she faced Eve who had arrived to take my plate away, “I want to put her on a diet.”

“I’m

sorry

but I can’t do that.” I was shocked to hear Eve speak back to her and apparently so was Lauren because her eyes narrowed into slits.

“Did you just say no to me?”

“The Alpha gave me strict orders regarding her feeding and he said I shouldn’t adjust it for anything.”

“I will be having a word with Ryker about this,” Lauren spat then she scribbled some words on a paper and threw it at Eve. “Hold onto that because he will be agreeing to this.”

She strutted out of the room, presumably to try and implement her way and I dropped my head onto the table harder than I should have in frustration.

“Don’t worry,” Eve whispered to me, “Alpha Caine will never agree to it.” I hoped she was right, I really did.

I stayed at the table long after I had eaten not because I didn’t feel dirty- I did- but because I needed to give my limbs a few minutes to regain their strength. I knew if I got up immediately I would fall over and the last thing I wanted, was for someone to have to peel me off the floor.

I must have been there for a while because I heard the main door open and Lauren stormed in looking very angry and frustrated. I realized that Eve was right and Ryker had refused to approve the diet plan.

She saw me looking at her and her eyes narrowed into violent slits, “Take a bath; you smell like a dump.”

She stormed out of the room and I let out a small chuckle to myself. I will take her venom and anger as long as it means that she has one less thing to lord over me.

## Chapter 13

I wasn’t able to drag myself up the stairs. Eve and another maid had to help me up the stairs and into the bathtub. Eve offered to bathe me but that felt weird and I assured her that I could do it myself but as I struggled to get out, I realized I should have taken her up on her offer.

I finally made it out and I couldn’t be bothered to put on an outfit so I settled for a black nightgown. It was the easiest thing to wear at that moment and as soon as it was on, I crawled into my bed and was out like a light.

I don’t know how long I was out, but by the time I came back to consciousness, I felt long fingers stroking my hair. I was too tired to move or acknowledge them.

“Have you eaten?” the gruff voice made me realize it was Ryker and I responded with a grunt, “That isn’t an answer Camilla.”

“What time is it?”

“It’s nighttime.” That had me sitting up quickly and I regretted it the moment I felt a burning sensation all over my body.

I looked out my open window and sure enough, the sky was dark and I could see the full moon glistening in the night sky with the millions of stars. I cannot believe that I slept the entire day away. I didn’t think I was that tired, I thought at best I would sleep for a few hours.

“I didn’t realize I slept that long.” I said slowly.

Just then my stomach rumbled and Ryker gestured for me to go with him. He had gotten to the door when he realized I wasn’t following him.

“I can’t get up,” I whispered, “My legs hurt.”

“Of course,” he face palmed, “I forgot you trained for the first time today. It is completely normal to be in a little pain.”

I didn’t know how to explain that it wasn’t a little pain, it was a lot of pain and I felt like I was about to keel over and die.

“Is it okay if I have my dinner in here?” I asked and he nodded.

He exited my room for a while and returned with two trays filled with food. He placed one on the bed for me and dragged a chair from the vanity over to the foot of the bed and sat on it. I wondered why he didn’t just sit on the bed but I respected that he didn’t.

I wasted no time in devouring the food. I felt like I hadn’t eaten all day and by the time I was done, I felt a little better. I still felt like my body was weighed down with lead but it wasn’t as bad as before.

It wasn’t until I was done that I realized that Ryker had been looking at me the entire time. My cheeks flushed pink as it dawned on me that he probably watched me devour my food like a pig. Maybe I should have listened to Lauren earlier.

"I knew it was a good idea not to agree to the diet," he said mostly to himself but I heard it.

"Will I have to train again tomorrow?" I asked, I prayed he would say no. I felt like I couldn't move.

"The only way to get rid of the pain is by training more," he explained, "Although tomorrow will not be as hard as today. I promise. It will most likely be more stretches and stamina building."

I held back a groan and settled for a nod instead. The last thing I wanted was to be stuck training with Lauren again but I had no other choice.

Ryker took my empty tray and placed it in his. He hesitated before leaving the room and I realized there was something else he wanted to say. He placed both trays on his chair and walked over to the door then returned with a bag.

"If you don't like this one; don't hesitate to tell me," he reached into the bag, "You've been using leather shippers for a while and I can't imagine how uncomfortable they are."

The slippers he brought out were a pale blue color. They weren't like anything I had ever seen. They covered my entire leg- like shoes. The soles were made of rubber but the top and the inside was made of- I think it is wool.

I put it on and it somehow felt softer than the first one. It was also prettier and I couldn't help but stare at it in awe.

"I love it. I admitted as I made a mental note to never wear it out of the room so Lauren wouldn't see it. "Thank you"

"I just want you to be comfortable." He opened his mouth to say something else but closed it at the last minute. "Have a good night:, Camilla."

"Good night, Ryker."

By the next morning. I was in a better mood. My better mood didn't stop me from limping everywhere I went. My better mood also seemed to irritate Lauren because when she walked into the living room and saw me laughing with Eve a huge sneer took over her features.

“What are you smiling about?” she spat, “You were supposed to be outside ten minutes ago.”

I quickly apologized and limped as fast as I could to the training field. Even though I was walking as fast as I could, it wasn't fast enough for her and she punished me by making me run a lap around the house. After my lap, she said I wasn't fast enough and made me run an extra two laps.

So much for it being stretches and stamina work.

By the time I was done with my laps, I felt like I was going to throw up and when I told Lauren she dismissed it as me being lazy and forced me to do some burpees. On the fifth one, I felt bile rise up my throat and I dry heaved all over the grass.

“Faking a vomit isn't going to get you out of training,” she tsked, “In fact, you just bought yourself an extra half an hour of burpees.”

I was feeling dizzy and it took everything in me to stay upright. I didn't even know how to say it as my mouth wouldn't form the words. I just stayed there, hunched over and worked on steadying my breathing.

“Get going Camilla!” she blew her whistle directly in my ear and I forced myself to keep going.

Against all odds, I finished the burpees and I started on the laps. I did the first one and stopped but she told me to keep going until she blew her whistle. This was worse than any torture I had ever faced in Tyson's pack and a part of me wished I had never run away. I would have gladly faced their humiliation over the pain I was in.

I was so far in my head that I didn't notice the root until I had tripped over it and I fell. The first thing I registered wasn't the pain from the fall, it was a burning pain in my ankle and thighs and I let out a small scream.

“Get up,” Camilla sneered, “Your pretending won't work.”

“I can't; it hurts,” I choked out the next words, “Please.”

She scoffed and made her way over to me. I thought she was going to help me up but instead, she leaned down and pulled on the leg I was clutching

hard. The pain I felt was blinding and spots danced in my vision as I let out a blood curling scream of pain.

Lauren jerked back in alarm and I think she realized in that moment that my pain was real. I heard hurried footsteps and through my blurry vision, I saw Eve.

“Is she okay?” Eve’s voice was panicked, “I heard her scream.

“She is; now get out of here.”

“But she’s crying.”

“I said get the hell

Eve looked over at me and back at Lauren and walked over to me. I saw Lauren burn with fury at the fact that Eve just disobeyed a direct order from her. Eve leaned down and tried to help me to my feet but the moment I put any form of weight on my injured leg I screamed again and crumpled to the floor.

“I’ll ask one of the guards to get Alpha Caine,” she whispered to me as she helped me back to the floor.

She was leaving when Lauren stopped her. “You aren’t getting anybody”

“She is in pain,” Eve exclaimed, “Look at her.”

“I don’t care; I said you-,”

She was cut off by the sound of thundering footsteps. Even I was compelled to turn to the sound of the noise. Ryker burst through the garden and he took in the scene in front of me.

“Ryker.” Lauren exclaimed, “I was just about to call you.”

He ignored her and rushed over to me, “What happened?”

“I don’t know,” I choked out, “It just hurts and I can’t stand on it.”

With one quick move, he ripped the leg of my leggings and that was when I noticed how red and swollen my ankle had become. There were angry green veins around the area and I knew that whatever it was- it was bad.

“I don’t know what happened; one minute we were training and the next-,”

“Shut up!” Ryker cut off Lauren’s rant with a growl, “You had one job and it was to watch her and train with her. If you couldn’t do it then you should have said it. I do not pay you to sit around while my mate gets hurt.”

“I wasn’t sitting around, I was training with her.”

“That explains why you’re not sweaty or winded,” she had the decency to look embarrassed when she was caught.

Ryker turned away from her and back to me. He tucked his hands under my knees and behind my back and gently lifted me up. I whimpered slightly and he cursed under his breath.

“Eve, send one of the guards to bring Lucy,” I was shocked that he knew Eve’s name but she wasn’t because she nodded and rushed out of the garden.

Ryker walked past Lauren and started carrying me inside. He was halfway up the stairs when Lauren appeared.

“It was all an accident,” she said, “I swear it.”

“I will deal with you later Lauren; for now stay here. You’re relieved from training her.”

## Chapter 14

While we waited for Lucy to arrive, Ryker wrapped a bag of frozen peas around my ankle. He replaced it every few minutes to keep it iced and the ice numbed the pain long enough that I didn’t feel it, or maybe it was just that my body had gotten

used to it

Lucy arrived after almost an hour and she was sweating profusely and in a doctor’s coat. I would assume that she just came from something or somewhere important.

“I am so sorry, I was in surgery,” she took the bag of peas off my leg and analyzed the swelling. “I don’t think it is broken but I’m going to have to check but it might hurt.”

She slowly lifted my ankle and squeezed it between her pointer and thumb. Squeeze is too harsh of a word for what she used, I am pretty sure she just held it a little firmly but it hurt so bad that I had to bite down on my bottom lip to stifle my scream. I bit down on it so hard that I drew blood.

She did her little tests and which each one, I could feel my ankle throb more. By the time she finally put my foot down. there were tears streaming down my face and into the pillow.

“Thankfully it isn’t broken,” she said and I heard Ryker sigh in relief, “I think you just twisted it badly. I advise that you stay off it as much as possible and keep it elevated at all times.

“If it hurts this much when it isn’t broken,” I forced out, “How much will it hurt when it is and why does my thigh hurt so bad:”

“Let us hope you never have to find out about a broken bone,” she gave me a small smile, “And as for your thigh, I think you may have pulled a muscle on your way down. All you need to do is ice it up and you will be fine.”

She reached into her bag and took out a roll of bandages that she used to tightly wrap my ankle. I winced the entire time she was doing it because it was tight as hell and it was throbbing by the time she was done.

She placed a pillow under it to keep it elevated and told me that I would be fine in a while. I didn’t quite believe her because my leg felt like it had been run over by a carriage and I could not see a possibility in the nearest or farthest future when I was

fine.

She gave a curt bow to Ryker and was about to leave when Ryker asked her to call in Eve. Eve arrived and Ryker instructed her to feed me breakfast and to watch over me until he returned.

He waited until Eve had brought my breakfast tray before he walked out of the room. I wondered where he was doing and what he was going to do but I didn’t have time to think about it as Eve delved into a fit of apologies.

“How is it?” she asked

"It hurts like hell," I admitted, "But Lucy says that it will be fine in a while; she says it is just sprained. I hope she means a week plus."

"When my brother sprained his ankle he was healed in a day but," she trailed off and lowered her voice to a whisper. "There are rumors from Lauren that you don't have a wolf. If that is true then it will take longer but you do have some werewolf blood in you so I assume it will not take as long as it would a human."

"How did Lauren know about that?" I asked and she shrugged.

I mentally face palmed as I realized that Ryker must have told her. If Eve knows then probably the entire pack knows. That would explain why they were staring at me weirdly the day I went to the pack house. They were probably wondering how Ryker could have picked someone like me for his mate.

I let out a loud groan.

"It is not a terrible thing." Eve tried to patronize me, "It just means that you are different and sometimes different can be good."

"Not this kind of different"

She gave me a weak smile and gestured to the food tray. "You should eat. You will need your strength if you are to heal"

I had lost my appetite but I knew that I had to force myself to eat everything on the tray or else Ryker would get upset and force me either way. The last thing I wanted was to see him after realizing that he had told Lauren my secret.

**RYKER'S P.O.V**

I was fuming as I made my way down the stairs. It took my entire willpower to leave Camilla there alone knowing that she was fragile and in pain but something else needed my attention and that something was currently sitting on the dining table snacking on an apple.

"She is going to be fine, thank you for your concern," she jumped when she heard my voice and tried but failed to hide the apple, "Come with me, Lauren."

She followed me quietly until we were in my home office. It is one of the few rooms where I know we will not be disturbed and there is no risk of anyone overhearing because as much as she deserves what she is about to get. I do not want to disrespect her position by giving other people the chance to hear it.

“What happened?”

“I was training with her just like you asked and she was running laps but she refused to pay attention. She kept on zoning out and I told her over and over again to focus or she will get hurt and she wouldn’t listen to me. She never ever listens to me.”

“So you’re telling me that this was her fault.”

“No,” she waved her hands frantically, “it was a horrible accident but she never listens to me. She knows about us and she thinks it is a reason to not listen to me.”

“There is no us Lauren,” I could see the hurt flicker on her face at my words, “And Camilla does not know anything. I did not tell her about it.”

“I don’t know how she figured it out then but she does. I notice the way she looks at me and I swear that is exactly why she doesn’t listen to me.”

If there was one thing I knew about Lauren, it is that she is a very skilled liar and sometimes it is extremely difficult to know if she is telling the truth or not but this time, it is extremely easy for me.

First of all, Camilla is not the kind of person to defy any kind of authority and although Lauren has no real power or status over her, she would still listen to everything she says. It is very unlikely that Lauren gave her instructions and she refused to follow them.

Second, Lauren has a bad habit of always wanting her way with things and I know it is more likely that she tried to force her way and it didn’t work out the way she had planned and she panicked.

“Do you know how I realized she was hurt?” I ended up asking.

“I assumed you were just around and heard her scream.”

“No, she drew energy from me,” Lauren’s eyes widened, “It is a rare phenomenon but it happens sometimes between mates when one of them is at their physical end, they begin to draw from their mate. I knew something terrible had to be wrong for her to unknowingly draw from me and I felt her life force begin to flicker.”

I had to shut my eyes to push the feeling away, “Do you know what it feels like to feel your mate’s life force fading away? It feels like absolute hell. I was in a meeting with the elders and I ran out of it like a man possessed because I thought she was dying. I had barely gotten through the gate when I heard her scream.”

“I didn’t,” she began but I cut her off

“You didn’t realize she screamed that loud,” I chuckled darkly. “I figured; I got in when I heard you arguing with Eve I didn’t hear what about because I was too focused on getting to my mate and praying she was alive. So I will ask you one more time,

what the hell happened?”

“It was an accident,” she stuck to her original story. “I didn’t realize she was actually in pain; she wouldn’t tell me. All she said was that her thighs burned and I thought that was normal.”

That did sound like something Camilla would do. She would pretend that she was fine unless you forced her to tell the truth.

“You were in charge of her and you should have noticed,” Lauren bowed her head in shame, “You are stripped of your general duties for a week.”

“But I apologized-,”

“You will no longer be taking her training courses; I will handle that myself,” I ignored her pleas, “For your week of punishment, you will also be on community service; when you return, if your behavior is satisfactory then I will consider reinstating you as general.”

“But I earned that position; you said so yourself.”

“And now you lost it by letting your future Luna get hurt on your watch. A good general would not do that,” I deadpanned, “When you finish your service; we will consider your reinstatement.”

Lauren was upset now, it was obvious but she knew better than to speak out against me at this moment so she settled for silently stewing and nodded, “Yes, Alpha.”

She turned to leave but I stopped her, “One more thing Lauren; the next time my mate is in pain under your watch and your first instinct is not to get her to safety you will be stripped of your duties permanently.”

She clenched her jaw but nodded and exited the room. I gave myself a single minute to calm down before I made my way back

up the stairs.

Lauren can wallow in her anger for as long as it takes her to learn her lesson. My mate needs me right now.

## Chapter 15

After I finished eating. Eve gave me some medicine that was supposed to numb the pain but it ended up knocking me right out. I was already a little exhausted so it wasn't hard for me to fall right asleep.

I was woken up later on by Eve to have lunch, I can barely remember the details of her visit because I was still half asleep but I remember Rykar standing in the corner of the room. As soon as I was done eating, I fell asleep again.

I finally awoke around nighttime and it was at that moment I realized I hadn't taken a bath all day. I decided to try to make my way into the bathroom. It was a chore to get my foot and the floor and the moment I did, I felt a sharp pain shoot up my entire left leg. The pain blinded me for a second and when it had cleared, I noticed Eve and Ryker standing at the door to

my room.

I didn't even realize I had made any sounds until I saw their panicked expressions. Ryker came over to me and crouched down until we were eye level.

“Do you have an uncanny desire to hurt yourself?” he was scolding me but his voice wasn’t overly harsh, “Lucy gave you one job and that was to stay off your foot and elevate it.”

“I haven’t taken a bath all day,” I muttered under my breath, “I just wanted to feel clean.”

Understanding dawned on his features and I heard him let out a heavy sigh before he turned to Eve, “Draw a bath for her.”

She wasted no time in running into the bathroom and it was a few minutes before she returned and gave him a nod to acknowledge that she had done as he asked. He picked me up with a hand underneath my knees and another supporting my back and he led me into the bathroom.

He sat me on the wooden counter, “I’m going to have to undress you but I swear I will not look.”

I weighed my options and realized that he was my best bet. There was a very little chance that Eve could actually carry me into the bathroom and even if I say that I want Eve to undress me, he would still have to be the one to carry me in which means he will still see my body. I swallowed deeply and gave a short and barely visible nod.

I saw still in my training wear with the ripped pants. I thought he would ask me to lift my hips but instead, he gripped the pants between both hands and in one sharp tug, they fell off my body. I gasped at the sudden movement because I was not expecting him to do that.

Next, he fisted the bottom of my shirt and pulled it right over my head. Regardless of his promise, I expected him to peek a look but his eyes never strayed further than my face.

Once he was done, he picked me up again and slowly lowered me into the tub making sure to keep my injured leg above the water. He retreated from the bathroom and returned with a clear wrap and he wrapped it around the bandage presumably to protect it from the water.

He turned his back to me so I could have a semblance of privacy as I washed myself. A part of me wanted to rush it so I could get out of this slightly awkward situation but another part of me- the dominant part- just wanted to

take my time so I could wash off all the dried sweat, grime and dirt that had stuck to my skin.

By the time I was done, I cleared my throat slightly and Ryker returned with a towel in his hands. He picked me up using the towel and deposited me back in bed after which he finally excused himself from the room.

Eve

sprung into action after he had left. She dried me off and wouldn't listen to me when I assured her that I could do it myself. When she was done, she helped me put on a long white nightgown that was made from the softest silk. It was very light so it highlighted my nipples and if you looked hard enough, you could see my creamy skin underneath.

When I was cleaned and dressed, I was laid back in bed with my foot elevated. It wasn't even up to one day and I was already tired of being in bed but I knew it was for the best if I wanted to get healed.

Eve left to get me some dinner and when she returned, Ryker was nowhere to be seen. I wanted to ask where he was because this was the first time since I got hurt that he left my presence according to Eve but I didn't want to seem like I was too interested.

I was so distracted that took almost twice as long to finish my food Eve even asked once if I enjoyed the food or if she could get me something else I assured her that it was fine and that was when understanding dawned on her features.

"He's she told me. He probably just went out on a run or a walk"

"You didn't have " she said with a sly smile. "It's obvious that you're worried about him but he's fine; he hasn't left your

see you got hurt'

de

I wouldn't admit it but hearing that brought a strange feeling to my belly. It felt good to know that someone cared enough me to watch over me not just because they were being paid to do it but because they actually wanted to and because they were worried

“He will be back before you know it she promised me. “Just you wait and see.”

She took the empty tray from me and placed the painkillers on my nightstand along with a bottle of water.

“This knocks me straight out,” I told her as I stared at them.

“Lucy and they’re just normal over the counter human medication,” she explained, “But you don’t have to take it now; you just have to take it before you go to bed.”

“Thank you Eve.” I said when she had reached the door. “For everything today: I am truly grateful.”

“We stick out for one another, don’t we?” with one last smile in my direction, she shut the door behind her leaving me in complete silence.

I waited in the silence for a few minutes, wondering when Ryker would return. I don’t know how long I had waited but I started to feel a little drowsy so I had decided to take the pills and go to bed.

I was about to take them when my door creaked open and Ryker’s huge frame filled the doorway.

“I thought you were asleep,” he admitted as he saw me staring up at him.

“I was about to.”

“I’m sorry I interrupted; I should just-,”

“No wait.” I stopped him, “You can come in; it’s fine.”

He looked at me for a second- two- three- before he nodded and made his way into the room. He took a seat in the chair that I know has to be uncomfortable as hell but that is where he sat all day.

“Earlier, did you know I was hurt?” I asked, “Or were you just in the right place at the right time.”

He paused for a second as if debating what to tell me, “I knew.”

“How?” I asked. I’ve never heard of that happening between wolves before. I’m also not a member of his pack so it makes no sense to me how he would have known.

“We are mates, Camilla,” he began slowly. “In extreme cases; we can feel each other’s pain and draw power from each other. That is what you did and I knew you were hurt.”

Thank you for coming to help me.”

“You don’t have to thank me for that. Anyone else would have done the same.”

A sad smile crossed my lips at his words. Not everyone would have done that. I know for a fact that Tyson would not have. he would have known and probably not cared or even if he came, it would have been to watch me writhe in pain.

Chaper 23

“What are you thinking about?” Ryker asked and I shrugged

“It isn’t important.”

He didn’t seem to believe me but he also didn’t want to push more than necessary because he nodded. The room went into comfortable silence and I decided that now would be a good time to take the pills.

It would take a few minutes for them to kick in anyways and I’m sure it would be enough for me to ask what it was I needed.

I had to muster up the courage to speak. “Will Lauren be returning to watch me tomorrow?”

answer was quick and there was no hesitation, “She will not be returning until you are healed and even then, her return is to be determined. She will be serving the appropriate punishment for her actions.”

“Please don’t kill her.” She might be a horrible person but I don’t want her to die.

ould 1-“he trailed off and awareness settled on his features, “Lauren will not die; I assure you of that.”

I let out a sigh of relief. I wouldn't want anyone's death to be on my conscience. The pills had started to kick in and I was starting to feel a little drowsy but then I heard Ryker's voice.

"She said it was an accident; is that true?"

I opened my mouth but then closed it. It could be classified as an accident depending on how one looked at it. I wasn't paying attention and I didn't see the stump, the fall wasn't planned by anyone.

"Don't think too much" Ryker said, "Just answer the question."

"I tripped when I was running" I said finally, "I was not focused on the track and I fell."

He frowned as if he was expecting me to say something else but then he nodded.

"You should rest, Camilla," his voice was soft but detached: "We will talk about it tomorrow."

His voice was like a command, one that my body willfully obeyed because my eyes fell shut and sleep took me