

The Rejected Werewolf Princess by Didiadeyemi Chapter 16-20

Chapter 16

It took a week before I was able to walk on the leg without feeling like I was about to die. I was still limping badly but at least I could afford to move around on my own.

Every day during that week, Ryker would be the one to help me whenever I wanted to take a bath and help me out. By the second day, I was already used to it but he would always leave right after and return fifteen to thirty minutes after. I still don't know where he goes or what he does and a part of me is inherently curious about it.

Another thing that shocked me was the knowledge that Ryker wasn't leaving for the pack house. I had asked Eve one day when he left and she told me that he hadn't left for the pack house since I got hurt and had chosen to do his work in his office downstairs.

It was a real shock for me to realize that he willingly left his work and his usual office in favor of staying here because I had gotten hurt.

I made my way down the stairs despite the protest from my ankle and by the time I got the dining room and sat at the table, I was breathing deeply. That could have served as a workout.

Eve stepped out of the kitchen with a tray and when she saw me, she jumped slightly and placed a hand on her chest to calm

herself.

"I thought you were eating upstairs."

"I've decided that I needed a change of scenery," I said with a small smile, "I'd like to eat down here today."

"Of course," she placed the tray in front of me and my mouth watered when I saw the stacked breakfast burritos, bacon and eggs.

I thanked her and wasted no time in wolfing down the food. I was on the second burrito when I heard a door open not far from me and Ryker walked up towards me.

I have come to know when he is around even without looking at him. The air changes a little whenever he walks in and somehow his aura just takes up the entire room. The power shift is visible and when he walks into a room, his scent takes up the entire breathing space.

“Good morning, Camilla,” he said as he left a seat between us and took the next one.

I secretly thanked him in my mind for doing that for my comfort but another less educated part of me wished he took the seat directly beside me.

Eve hurried in with a similar breakfast tray for him and he thanked her.

“Good morning,” I said after a beat of silence.

“Lucy will be coming over today to check on your leg again.” He told me, “Are you having any pain with it?”

I shook my head, “I’m still limping but it doesn’t hurt. It’s just slightly uncomfortable to walk with.”

“She will be here around noon.” I didn’t know what to say about that so I just nodded.

We ate the rest of our meal in silence and although Ryker finished before I did, he didn’t make any efforts to leave the dining room. He just sat at his table looking at me. It wasn’t uncomfortable, like he was judging me; it was more like he was trying to assess me to know how to approach the situation.

When I was done eating, I stood to my feet and wobbled a little because of how much weight I had put on my injured leg. In a flash, Ryker was up and by my side. His hands weren’t on me but they bracketed me just in case I fell. I was so shocked by the move that my breath hitched and my movements ceased.

“Are you okay?” he asked and I forced myself to nod, “Do you need help?”

Chapter Th

“1” stuttered, “I think I’ve got it thank you.”

“Are you sure?” he asked and I nodded again.

Reluctantly, he stepped back and I was able to release the breath I was holding and find my balance. As I made my way towards the stairs I noticed Eve peeking through the kitchen door. When she saw me, she gave me a blinding smile with two thumbs up.

Just like Ryker said, Lucy came over sometime around noon to check on my ankle. She assured me that it was healing nicely but suggested that I still keep it wrapped so I don’t stress it more than necessary. She even rewrapped it with a fresh bandage and told me that within a week or two that I should be fine and as good as new. I thanked her for everything and she told me to send for her if I felt any more pain than usual.

After she had left, I stayed in my room for a while. I was so used to Lauren being a part of my day that it had started to feel weird being alone and not having anyone screaming at me.

I limped over to the balcony and looked down at the training field. It had been cleared of the equipments and now it was just a normal field of soft grass. I made a mental note to spend some time down there later.

A flash of light caught my eye and I noticed a lake not too far off from the field. I recognized it as the lake I saw the first time I arrived at the house and I itched to visit it. I decided it was worth a try to ask Ryker if I could go there although a part of me felt that he would say no because of my ankle.

I made my way down the stairs and found Eve dusting off the dining table. I asked her to direct me to Ryker’s office and if she was shocked by my request, she didn’t show it. Instead she nodded and led me down a corridor and towards a large oak door.

She gave me a smile that said good luck and left. It took me almost two minutes to gather enough courage to actually knock on the door.

Almost immediately I heard a gruff, “Come in,” and I pushed the door open.

When I walked in and Ryker noticed me, he did a visible double take as if he didn’t expect me to ever walk into his office. He quickly put down his pen and closed the book in front of him.

“Camilla,” he breathed softly, “Is everything okay?”

“Yes, everything is fine.” I swallowed deeply before continuing. “Is there by any chance a lake on your property?”

He was confused by my question that much was obvious, “Why do you ask?”

“I saw one and I didn’t know if it was your property or someone else’s.”

“Camilla, everything you can see from here on out belongs to me. So yes, the lake is on my property.”

“I was wondering if I could go to it,” I rushed out the words before my courage would dissipate, “I was just curious and I would love to just go there. It gets really stuffy at times being stuck in here all day.”

He went silent and for a moment I thought I had overstepped. Images of what happened when I overstepped back at Tyson’s pack flashed through my brain and I prepared myself for the onslaught of violence that would most likely ensue.

He would probably get upset and scream at me or hit me and then punish me with something extreme. I tried my best to come up with the worst case scenario of what he could do but each thing just sounded worse.

He could lock me up in the dungeons, or he could lock me outside. He could take me to the lake and try to drown me (that probably what Tyson would have done) or he could have me whipped. At this point, I don’t even know which of them is worse, all I know is that I would very much like to take back the last three minutes and pretend like all of this never happened

I looked up at Ryker and he was staring down at me in concern. Somehow I had gotten to my knees and so had he. His hands were framing my face softly which was a sharp contrast to the roughness and calluses that graced his own.

“Camilla; stay with me,” his voice was soft and that was when I realized how heavy I was breathing, “Where did you go?”

“Nowhere.” I lied but my voice came out hoarse so I cleared my throat, “I just-just forget everything I said earlier.”

“I’m not upset with you Camilla,” I didn’t realize how much I wanted to hear those words until he actually said it, “I was thinking about alternative ways for you to get there. It’s a long trek and I wouldn’t want you to do it in your condition.”

“You’re-.” I swallowed, “You’re not upset with me.”

“No, I’m not.” he assured me, “You did nothing wrong and I am glad that you were able to voice out what you want.”

He ran his eyes over me again in concern and his thumb stroked my cheeks softly. His touch was feather light and I wanted. nothing more than to lean into it and cocoon myself in it.

“When you’re healed we will see the lake,” he said suddenly, “And I will make sure that you don’t spend your entire days indoors.” The declaration was so sudden but the determination in his eyes was fierce, “I will do something about it.”

“Thank you.”

He gave my cheek another soft stroke and that was when I realized how close we were. He must have seen the shift in my expression as I pulled back because I saw hurt briefly flash through his eyes.

Guilt wracked through me as I pushed to my feet. He offered to help but I didn’t take his hand- I couldn’t take it. I swallowed deeply as an awkward silence washed over the both of us.

“Thank you, again,” I said and without another word, I ran- or hobbled as fast as I could out of there.

Chapter 17

For the next few days, I avoided Ryker as much as I possibly could. I stayed in my room all day and barely left it unless it was absolutely necessary. Whenever I saw him. I would mumble a greeting and leave the area as quickly as I could.

He knew I was avoiding him, hell, everyone knew I was avoiding him and I knew at one point he would get fed up with it and demand an explanation from me. What I didn’t expect was for it to happen today.

Today started like any normal day, I took a bath by myself and because I had no plans of going out, I put on a really pretty black night gown and lay in bed.

Eve brought me my breakfast as usual and when I was done, I took the tray downstairs because Lucy had told Ryker to inform me that I needed to walk around a little every day to make sure that I was exercising the leg.

While I was taking my tray down. I saw Ryker at the dining table. I flushed pink in embarrassment and hurried to return the tray to Eve. I rushed back upstairs not even realizing that he had spoken to me and I had ignored him.

I successfully locked myself in the room when a few minutes later I heard a knock. It was not soft like Eve's but it also wasn't overly violent. I ignored it the first time and it grew louder.

"Fuck this shit Camilla," I heard Ryker say through the other side; "We're talking about this today."

I still wasn't convinced on whether or not to open it but then he said, "I have a spare key downstairs and I am not above using it. I am only doing this because I want you to have a say in this. But so help me if you don't open this door in the next three minutes I will find my own way in."

I knew he was going to make do on his threat so I exhaled deeply and unlocked the door. He was standing there in a black button up shirt and matching slacks. He looked like he was prepared for a day of work while I was in frilly long sleeved pajamas. I'm sure it would have been a sight to behold for anyone who saw it.

He looked frustrated and annoyed but he managed to keep his composure as he walked into the room and took a seat on the chair directly opposite my bed. I remained standing and he gestured for me to sit down on the bed.

I hesitated for a second and I could see that it annoyed him because he clenched his jaw but he didn't show any other outward signs of his annoyance. I quietly took a seat at the edge of the bed and the room fell into an uncomfortable silence.

"Camilla," Ryker spoke up after a beat of silence, "Why are you avoiding me?"

"I am not avoiding you." I lied and he shot me a disbelieving look.

“Don’t lie to me Camilla,” he slowly stood to his feet and made his way over to me.

I sucked in a breath as he crouched down in front of me and I watched carefully wondering what his next move would be. If he touched me, I wasn’t quite sure of how I would react but I knew enough to know that it probably would not be a good reaction considering how strung up I already was.

“I cannot force you to tell me everything that you have endured. But it would make things so much easier for us if you do.”

He spoke softly, almost patronizingly, as if I was a cornered animal on the brink of running away, like I was a child who he had to explain things to carefully for fear of a tantrum. Some would find it insulting but I found it slightly endearing knowing that he was being careful and not imposing for my sake.

“Why do you flinch when I approach you?”

That was a relatively easy question for me to answer, “Because sometimes it looks like you’re about to hit me.”

“Has someone hit you before?” I hesitated before nodding and I saw his nostrils flare in anger, “Who did?”

“A lot of people,” I deliberately kept my answer vague, “I am an omega-,”

“Was,” he cut in and I looked at him in confusion. “You were an omega; you are to be Luna of this pack. You are not an

omega any longer.”

I nodded hesitantly, “I was an omega and that is the normal hierarchy of the pack. The omegas are the punching bags surely you understand that.”

“What else did they do to you?”

I hesitated before responding. I didn’t know how much he wanted to hear or how much I was allowed to speak of. I didn’t want to seem like I was dumping all my problems on him.

As if he heard my thoughts he added, “I want to hear it all.”

I inhaled deeply and I told him everything- the summarized version of it. Without mentioning any names I told him about the jobs I did and how I struggled to make ends meet. I told him about my time working in the club and the restaurant and how the pack members took their anger and frustration out on me.

When I got to the part about Tyson, I stuttered and fell silent. I didn't want to tell him how Tyson had assaulted me in my room or what he had told the pack- I still had a little shred of dignity left so I summarized by saying he rejected me and I left the pack.

When I was done, I couldn't bring myself to look him in the eyes. I didn't want to see the disgust or the anger or the disappointment. Surely by now he would realize that he wasn't given a fair bargain in this mate exchange. He is one of the most powerful- if not the most powerful Alpha ever and here I am; a lowly damaged omega.

"Camilla," his voice broke slightly as he said my name, "Look at me."

I slowly lifted my eyes to his and was shocked to see his eyes swirling with anger and sympathy. I slowly let out an exhale grateful that he didn't look at me with pity. I can take his anger but not his pity.

"What you went through was horrible and no one should ever have to go through that," he said softly, "You do not have to fear me or my pack. No one will ever dream of hurting you like that. You are no one's slave here."

"What if I was?" I could tell my question confused him so I explained, "What if I wasn't your mate? If I was an omega would it still be the same?"

"We don't hit our omegas Camilla," I didn't believe him and he knew it, "You can ask Eve or anyone else. They are treated like every other member of the pack. They have pack links and are allowed in meetings."

"Then why do you refer to them as omegas?"

"Because they don't hold corporate jobs," he explained, "here, omegas simply refer to the people who work in the pack house and take care of it. That includes the cooks, the cleaners, gardeners, everything. They are not treated differently because of the nature of their work."

He knew I still didn't believe him so he stood to his feet and stretched out his hand to me, "Come; I'll show you."

I hesitantly took his hand and let him lead me down the stairs and into the carriage. He placed his hand on my waist to lift me into the carriage and I felt the skin under his fingers heat. My cheeks flushed pink but I kept my gaze directed outside the window so he wouldn't see it.

The drive to the pack house felt extremely long- longer than usual. When we arrived, he helped me out the same way again and I cursed my cheeks for turning pink when he touched me. It was when my feet hit the grass that I realized I was still in my frilly pajamas and my cheeks heated once more as I paused mid stride.

"Are you alright?" Ryker asked and I nodded, "What's wrong?"

"I'm wearing pajamas," I whispered, "Everyone else is so formally dressed and I am in pajamas."

"No one will bat an eyelid," he assured me then tugged on my arm slightly, "Come."

I knew there was no other option so I followed him. People looked at me but no one stared for longer than a few seconds and I wondered if it had to do with the fact that they didn't care or the death glare that Ryker sent anyone who looked.

for longer than was deemed appropriate.

He led me towards the back of the palace and towards a set of massive oak doors. He pushed it open and all my senses were attacked at once.

There were more people than I could count in the large space. It looked like a living room of sorts with massive couches and a huge fireplace. There was a huge chandelier in the centre of the ceiling and on the large coffee table were snacks of all kinds. People were deep in conversation with themselves but the moment they saw Ryker and I, the chatter reduced.

"Do not stop on my account, I am simply giving my mate a tour of the pack house."

There was a chorus of greeting and once again I flushed pink as they all referred to me as their Luna. Once they greeted, they all went back to their conversations and pretended like we weren't there.

"This is the omega quarter." Ryker whispered to me, "Look at them and tell me that you believe they are being hurt here."

I opened my mouth but words wouldn't come out. They looked happy and carefree and without a care in the world. I thought back to my time at Tyson's pack and scoffed to myself at how vastly different things would have been if he were to walk into the quarters.

"You're safe here Camilla," he said, "No one will hurt you here, Luna or not."

Chapter 18

Over the next few days, Ryker and I developed some sort of cordial arrangement between us. My fear of him wouldn't disappear in a day, that much was obvious but now I had less reason to fear him after seeing how he treated the omegas in his pack. I also didn't actively try to avoid his presence anymore and I took that as a huge win.

On a lighter note, my leg was almost perfectly healed and now it didn't hurt at all as I made my way around the house.

I was sitting at the dining table waiting for Eve to serve breakfast when I realized I hadn't seen Ryker all day which was a surprise. He usually joined me during breakfast before disappearing for work.

"Where is Ryker?" I asked Eve and she looked as shocked by my question as I was shocked that I even asked it in the first place.

"He should be outside training."

A part of me knew that Ryker trained. He had to be doing some sort of training to be able to obtain the kind of body he had. He hadn't said anything about my training and I was beginning to wonder if I would ever be allowed to train again after what happened.

I left my untouched breakfast and made my way around the house until I heard the sound of flesh hitting something and sharp grunts. I followed the sound a little further into the woods around the house and saw Ryker.

He was shirtless and his entire upper body was gleaming with sweat. His shorts hung low on his hips and his hands were wrapped in a bandage as he delivered swift punches to the trunk of a tree. I couldn't help but wince at how painful that would be but Ryker wasn't bothered. He kept hitting the trunk as if he was punching a feather- with no care in the world.

I accidentally stepped on a twig and his movements ceased. He turned around and when he saw it was me, I saw the tension. in his shoulders deflate.

"I didn't mean to bother you." I said softly, "I should be going-."

"It is fine," he assured me. When I didn't move, he gestured for me to come closer, "I lost track of time. I should have been back by now."

I obliged and moved closer to him and I tried my best to keep my attention on his face and not his perfectly defined and chiseled chest. If he told me he was carved from stone I would have believed because no one should ever look this good.

I flushed pink at the thought and chided myself. I shouldn't be having those kind of thoughts about him especially not when he is right next to me.

"Can you help me?" I didn't realize he was talking to me until he called my name, "Camilla, can you help me unwrap my hands."

I flushed pink again at being caught but I nodded and slowly made my way over to him. This was the first time I was consciously being close to him and his scent hit me full force for quite possibly the first time.

He smelled manly, musky, like the woods and himself. There was something about his natural scent that led me to take a discreet sniff. He looked up at me and I wondered if he knew what I had done but if he did, he didn't show it. He just held up his hands and I slowly unwrapped the bandage.

"Will I ever train again?" I decided to break the tension with a question.

"Do you want to train again?" I wasn't expecting for him to ask my opinion on the matter. Every time I think I know what Ryker is going to do, he ends up surprising me.

I stayed silent as I worked through the bandage on his other hand. When I was done, I tried to pull back but he grasped my hand softly but firmly in his and kept me in place.

“You didn’t answer my question,” he reminded me.

“I would like to,” I admitted, “But maybe not as rigorously as before. I know it makes me sound lazy but I would very much like to start at the beginning.”

I tried to gauge his reaction as I spoke but he kept his features carefully blank, “Would you like me to train you?”

“You,” I spluttered. “But, you’re the Alpha; you’re extremely busy.”

“Let me worry about how busy I am. I asked if you wanted me to train you.”

“I would like that.” I admitted.

He let go of my arm and took a step back. “You might have to change your outfit.”

“Did you mean now?”

“There’s no time like the present.”

I blinked once- twice- three times before I turned on my heels and made my way back up

the stairs. Eve looked at me with confusion but I couldn’t even articulate what had just happened so I made my way silently into the room.

I dressed in the outfit I would usually use to train with Lauren- leggings and the skin tight top. I made my way down the stairs and out the back door to where Ryker was waiting.

When he saw me, he did a double take and I saw him swallow deeply before clearing his throat and leading me back into through the woods and into the clearing. The place was very much the same except for two bottles of water that he placed on the ground next to the tree he had been assaulting before.

“It is important to always stay hydrated while training,” he explained when he saw my gaze, “You’re healing from an injury and you have never trained

before so we will start with the easy things; stamina, core work and basic stretches.”

I hung on to every word he said and tried my best to imitate him as he led us through a series of stretches. Training with him was a lot different than training with Lauren. He was patient and never pushed me past my limits. He also explained everything in detail so I was never confused.

We were doing basic form work for throwing a punch when I saw the corner of his lips quirk up.

“Your form is bad,” he moved until he was behind me and gestured to my waist, “May I?”

I was shocked and grateful that he had asked for permission. He waited until I clearly nodded before placing his hand on either side of my waist and turning my hips so they were facing forward. I wobbled a little at the feel of his hands on my bare skin but he gripped me tightly keeping me steady.

“Camilla,” he breathed and goose bumps rose on my skin as his hot breath fanned my ear, “You are-,”

He stopped mid statement and I felt him go rigid against my back. I opened my mouth to speak but he clasped a hand over my lips keeping me quiet. That was when I heard what he heard- footsteps and shuffling. A horrid burnt smell infiltrated my nostrils and I immediately knew that we were in danger.

“How fast can you run?” he asked and I shrugged,

“I’m pretty decent.”

“Good, I need you to run back to the house and tell the guards that there are rogues.”

“But-,”

“Now!”

The urgency in his voice stopped every argument I had in me and I took off in the opposite direction. I heard the ripping of clothes and a loud growl but I didn’t turn back to inspect, I didn’t stop until I got to the front of the house.

The guards were confused and shocked to see me and honestly, I didn't blame them. I was in sweaty training clothes and I just came in looking like I had run a marathon.

"There are rogues," I said, "In the forest; Ryker is there and he asked me to get you." They shared a look and one of them gently grabbed onto my upper arm, "What's going on?"

"I have to get you to safety Luna."

"What are you talking about? He needs you more."

"The Alpha gave clear orders that should there ever be a threat then you should be taken to safety."

I tried to argue but he firmly guided me into the house. Eve saw me and the guard relayed the situation to her and she took off without another word. I was guided up to my room and that was when the guard finally stopped pulling me around like a rag doll.

"I will keep watch out here," he said, "Rogue attacks can take a while so I suggest you get changed or something. Eve will be up as soon as she is done rounding up the other omegas."

I wanted to complain or fight or do something but I knew that I would be more of a hindrance downstairs so I forced my feet to carry me into the room. I locked the door behind me and did as the guard asked. I took a bath and I changed into a comfortable pair of leggings and a shirt then I started to worry.

I paced back and forth to calm my nerves. Eve came in to check on me but I barely even glanced at her as she placed my breakfast tray by my bed. She left when she realized I wasn't going to start eating anytime soon.

I don't know how long I stood pacing but the door to my room opened and Ryker came through. He had a few splatters of blood on his skin but he looked otherwise fine. I couldn't help myself when I threw my arms around his neck.

I realized what I had done and tried to pull back but he wrapped his arms around my lower back and held me tight against his body. He nuzzled his nose into my hair and I felt him take a long inhale.

“Are you hurt?” I asked as he finally let me pull back and he shook his head, “I’m sorry I couldn’t be of any help; if I knew how to train then maybe.”

“Maybe nothing,” he cut me off, “You could be the best warrior in the entire fucking world and I would still ask you to be sent to safety.”

“What?”

“You are my mate and my responsibility Camilla. There is no way in hell I was going to let you stay out there while rogues were attacking.”

“But-,”

“I don’t want to argue about this. I haven’t had breakfast yet, have you?” I shook my head, “Why don’t I get cleaned up and we can eat. Does that sound nice?”

“Yes.”

He smiled at my answer and left me standing there in the room. I just stood there staring at the door he had gone through and thinking about how nice it felt to have someone worry about your safety over theirs.

Chapter 19

For the rest of the day I didn’t see Ryker. After eating breakfast with me, he disappeared and Eve told me that he probably went to the pack house. I was so used to his presence around the house that it felt very weird and quiet to not have him around.

I spent my day with Eve and she educated me on life in the pack. She wasn’t born in the pack. In fact, she was a rogue up until she was five when she accidentally stumbled into the pack and the former Luna took pity on her and made her an

omega.

Her story brought a lot of questions about what happened to Ryker’s parents. In Tyson’s pack, I heard a lot of stories and rumors about what people think happened but I’m starting to realize that not every rumor should be taken seriously.

Some people said that Ryker killed his parents so he could become Alpha. Some people said that they died in a horrible accident that made Ryker cruel and heartless. Another group of people said his family ran away because they couldn't bear to watch him act as cruel as he did to his pack members. Judging by how I've seen the pack members, none of those stories sound true.

I wanted to ask Eve but I realized that some stories are meant to be heard from the source and I filed my curiosity away for another day.

I helped her out with dinner even though she refused at first. It was fun to have something to do around the house rather than just sitting on my butt all day. And as weird as it sounds, I actually enjoyed cooking. Even when I was at Tyson's pack, I loved doing it. I just hated the circumstances under which I was forced to do it.

We made shepherd's pie and I paired it a meringue topped with strawberries. I was setting the table when the main door opened and I saw Ryker walk in. The corner of my lips tugged up but my smile fell when I saw who was following close behind.

The plate in my hand slipped and fell to the floor with a loud crash prompting Eve to rush out of the kitchen. She took in the scene in front of her and her eyes flickered to mine in barely concealed panic.

"Alpha," she bowed to Ryker then turned to the person next to him, "Lauren; it is a pleasure to see you again."

She was impeccably dressed in skin tight pants and a sleeveless corset like top with a jacket thrown over it. Her hair was in a slick ponytail and her lips were painted the color of a freshly plucked strawberry.

She had on leather boots to complete the edgy look and her arms were crossed over her chest. She caught my eye and the corner of her lips tilted up slightly.

"I'm

sorry about your leg, fake sincerity bled through her words. I've been around enough people to know when someone isn't being genuine and judging by the twinkling in her eyes, she isn't.

"It's fine." I was grateful that my voice came out strong and not as shaky as I felt on the inside.

"Did you cook?" she asked as she made her way over to the dining table, "I haven't eaten all day. Is it okay if I sit?"

I knew it would be rude if I said no especially since she hasn't eaten so I just nodded. She thanked me and took a seat on the immediate right of Ryker which would be in the middle of both of us. Eve shot me a sympathetic look as she set the dish on the table.

I didn't want to sit next to her so I took my plate to Ryker's other side. This would be the first time we are sitting next to each other and I saw the shock that crossed his features as I sat next to him but it was quickly replaced by pride and something

else.

Ryker seemed oblivious to the brewing tension between Lauren and I. She would occasionally look up and smirk at me almost as if she was trying to tell me that I failed to get rid of her. The tension between us could be cut with a knife and it was very uncomfortable. I wanted nothing more than to get up and hide in my room and I would have done so if it wouldn't raise questions with Ryker.

"I'm sorry for ambushing you like this," he began and I saw Lauren's eyes widen at his apology.

"There's no need to apologize," she began but he cut her off.

"I was talking to my mate."

I saw the hurt fill her features before she quickly clamped down on it. She turned to me with barely hidden disdain and I almost laughed. I wondered how long she would be able to hold up her bravado of glee I actually thought she would last through the night.

Ryker turned to me. The rogue problem is worse than we thought. We found a lair not too far from the pack border and until the issue is dealt with you need to be protected at all time."

"I'm safe right here, aren't I?" I asked in a desperate attempt to get him to rethink the decision I know he is about to take.

"The rogues attacked us not far from here. I am not willing to take that chance," he held my eyes as if searching for something. "Lauren will watch over you until the pack is safe. You are not to leave without her knowledge and she will report back to me. I will be extremely busy during this time and may not be around as often. I want to ensure your safety."

He looked like he had more to say but a guard walked in and whispered something in his ear. He excused himself and followed the guard out of the room. He was barely out of the door when Lauren slammed her palm down on the table.

"You must be so proud of yourself right now." She spat

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Oh please, don't act stupid," her voice was dripping with barely concealed jealousy, "You have him eating out of the palm of your hand with your fake innocent act."

"I don't know what you're talking about. There is no act."

"I can see through you." She ignored my earlier statement, "And just remember that I'm not fooled by you and neither is he I am here and I am going to make sure that you don't get away with it."

"Get away with what?"

"You may have gotten him to take me off your training but you cannot get rid of me easily. I am-" she stopped mid rant and sat up straight.

As soon as she did that, the door opened and Ryker returned. I wondered how she heard him from so far away but I guess. that is why she was made general. She probably has more skills and powers than I could even imagine and she is determined to use all of them against me.

As Ryker took his seat, she shot me a hidden glare warning me to behave and a part of me wondered what would happen if I didn't. What would happen if I actually told Ryker what she had said? I decided it wasn't worth it and instead looked away from her and down at my now empty plate.

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I actually felt bad for her with the way he dismissed her. Her cheeks flushed crimson but she nodded and quietly rose from the chair. She walked to the door without looking back once but when she was about to shut the door behind her, she shot me a glare as if to say it was my fault that he dismissed her.

In a way, it was my fault but I wasn't the one who dismissed her and I wonder why she won't project her hurt and anger at Ryker instead of me. But then again, he is the Alpha and I am no one.

“Camilla,” I turned my attention back to Ryker, “How do you feel about the arrangement?”

“Do I have much of a choice in the matter?” I asked and the corner of his lips lifted.

Chapter 19

“No, you don't actually. I have to know that you are safe or I will not be able to do my work.” He sighed, “And I would feel safer knowing what Lauren was watching you. She might be a little tough but she is the best at what she does.”

“How did she become General?” that question had been plaguing me for a while. “She is young and she's a woman. It is unusual for a woman to be general. How does she get the men to listen to her?”

“Lauren might be young but she can hold off her own. When she was seventeen, she killed off a group of rogues by herself. The old general saw that and knew she had potential so he started to train her. When he was killed, we held a contest and she won by a landslide. She beat everyone who stepped in the ring with her in less than ten minutes.”

“That is impressive.” I admitted and he nodded.

“She is the best option to keep you safe and if she is with you I will not have to worry as much.”

“I could just stay alone.” I offered but from the expression on his face, I knew it wasn’t an option.

I didn’t want to be a bother and I didn’t want to put him in an uncomfortable situation so I sighed and nodded.

“I’m fine with the arrangement.”

For the rest of the day I didn’t see Ryker. After eating breakfast with me, he disappeared and Eve told me that he probably went to the pack house. I was so used to his presence around the house that it felt very weird and quiet to not have him around.

I spent my day with Eve and she educated me on life in the pack. She wasn’t born in the pack. In fact, she was a rogue up until she was five when she accidentally stumbled into the pack and the former Luna took pity on her and made her an

omega.

Her story brought a lot of questions about what happened to Ryker’s parents. In Tyson’s pack, I heard a lot of stories and rumors about what people think happened but I’m starting to realize that not every rumor should be taken seriously.

Some people said that Ryker killed his parents so he could become Alpha. Some people said that they died in a horrible accident that made Ryker cruel and heartless. Another group of people said his family ran away because they couldn’t bear to watch him act as cruel as he did to his pack members. Judging by how I’ve seen the pack members, none of those stories.

sound true.

I wanted to ask Eve but I realized that some stories are meant to be heard from the source and I filed my curiosity away for another day.

I helped her out with dinner even though she refused at first. It was fun to have something to do around the house rather than just sitting on my butt all day. And as weird as it sounds, I actually enjoyed cooking. Even when I was at Tyson's pack, I loved doing it. I just hated the circumstances under which I was forced to do it.

We made shepherd's pie and I paired it a meringue topped with strawberries. I was setting the table when the main door opened and I saw Ryker walk in. The corner of my lips tugged up but my smile fell when I saw who was following close behind.

The plate in my hand slipped and fell to the floor with a loud crash prompting Eve to rush out of the kitchen. She took in the scene in front of her and her eyes flickered to mine in barely concealed panic.

"Alpha," she bowed to Ryker then turned to the person next to him, "Lauren; it is a pleasure to see you again."

She was impeccably dressed in skin tight pants and a sleeveless corset like top with a jacket thrown over it. Her hair was in a slick ponytail and her lips were painted the color of a freshly plucked strawberry.

She had on leather boots to complete the edgy look and her arms were crossed over her chest. She caught my eye and the corner of her lips tilted up slightly.

"I'm sorry about your leg," fake sincerity bled through her words. I've been around enough people to know when someone isn't being genuine and judging by the twinkling in her eyes, she isn't.

"It's fine." I was grateful that my voice came out strong and not as shaky as I felt on the inside.

Chapter 19

"Did you cook" she asked as she made her way over to the dining table. I haven't eaten all day Is it okay if I u

I knew it would be rude if I said no especially since she hasn't eaten so I past nodded. She thanked me and took a seat on the immediate right of Ryker which would be in the middle of both of us Eve shot me a sympathetic look as she set the dish on

the table

I didn't want to sit next to her so I took my plate to Ryker's other side. This would be the first time we are sitting next to each other and I saw the shock that crossed his features as I sat next to him but it was quickly replaced by pride and something else

Ryker seemed oblivious to the brewing tension between Lauren and I. She would occasionally look up and smirk at me almost as if she was trying to tell me that I failed to get rid of her. The tension between us could be cut with a knife and it was very uncomfortable. I wanted nothing more than to get up and hide in my room and I would have done so if it wouldn't raise questions with Ryker.

"I'm sorry for ambushing you like this," he began and I saw Lauren's eyes widen at his apology.

"There's no need to apologize," she began but he cut her off.

"I was talking to my mate."

I saw the hurt fill her features before she quickly clamped down on it. She turned to me with barely hidden disdain and I almost laughed. I wondered how long she would be able to hold up her bravado of glee. I actually thought she would last through the night.

Ryker turned to me, "The rogue problem is worse than we thought. We found a lair not too far from the pack border and until the issue is dealt with you need to be protected at all time."

"I'm safe right here, aren't I?" I asked in a desperate attempt to get him to rethink the decision I know he is about to take.

"The rogues attacked us not far from here. I am not willing to take that chance," he held my eyes as if searching for something. "Lauren will watch over you until the pack is safe. You are not to leave without her knowledge and she will report back to me. I will be extremely busy during this time and may not be around as often. I want to ensure your safety."

He looked like he had more to say but a guard walked in and whispered something in his ear. He excused himself and followed the guard out of the

room. He was barely out of the door when Lauren slammed her palm down on the table.

“You must be so proud of yourself right now.” She spat

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Oh please, don’t act stupid,” her voice was dripping with barely concealed jealousy. “You have him eating out of the palm of your hand with your fake innocent act.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about. There is no act.”

“I can see through you.” She ignored my earlier statement, “And just remember that I’m not fooled by you and neither is he. I am here and I am going to make sure that you don’t get away with it.”

“Get away with what?”

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Chapter 20

The next morning, Ryker and I trained together again, although this time he chose a spot closer to the house. I knew he was still concerned about the rogue issue but I was grateful that he took time out to still train me when he could have simply just delegated the job to someone else.

Lauren arrived while we were training. In fact, I saw her spying on us from behind some bushes. I don't know if Ryker saw her too and I didn't want to ask because I didn't want to think about her or my impending bad day spent with her

After training, we freshened up and I thought Ryker would have left right after but he came down to the dining room and ate breakfast with me. Lauren joined us once again and a part of me couldn't help but wish that she would just disappear I didn't like her presence and more so I didn't like it when she was around Ryker especially because she would try to keep his attention on her and pretend like I wasn't there.

I hated that I felt jealous over him. I never felt this way about Tyson so what was different about Ryker? It could be that he treated me like a person and not an object and the fact that above all, he had my best interests at heart.

Ryker finished his breakfast first, but then again he didn't really eat much. All he took were two slices of toasted bread and cup of black coffee.

"I have to go," he said more to me, "I will be back before nightfall. Lauren will watch over you."

I nodded. "I'll be fine."

He walked over to Lauren and whispered something in her ear that had her skin turning a papery white color. She swallowed harshly and nodded then with one final hard look from Ryker, he was gone.

I cast a wary glance at Lauren from beneath my lashes. Her skin was still white and she looked slightly terrified and a bit horrified. I couldn't help but wonder what Ryker had told her. I knew asking would be a terrible idea so I clamped down on my curiosity.

She seemed to notice me looking at her because she shot me a glare. It didn't have the same bite as her usual ones and if anything, it was weak in comparison.

"Don't you have shit to do?" she sneered as she stood up from the table. "I hope you don't expect me to follow you around like a lost puppy. Just stay in the house and we won't have a problem."

She didn't even wait for me to give her a response; she just stormed out of the dining room and went out through a door that led to the back of the house. Eve appeared almost immediately from where she was hiding behind a pillar.

"What's up

with her?" she jerked a thumb in the direction Lauren went through and I shrugged.

"I don't know; I expected more force from her if I'm being honest."

"I think the Alpha gave her a stern talking to after the last incident." She dropped her voice to a whisper, "From what I heard from my friends at the pack house, she is at risk of losing her position as General if anything happens to you"

"He wouldn't do that." I said but Eve's expression had me believing otherwise, "She is his best fighter, he wouldn't remove her from the position because of me."

"You underestimate the lengths and Alpha would go for their mate."

"But we haven't even mated yet," Eve shrugged as if it didn't matter, "Why would he do that?"

"I don't know, but the Alpha would. You should start by asking him." She gave my hand a soft pat then retrieved the dirty dishes. "If I were you, I would enjoy the fact that I don't have her breathing down my neck. Have you explored the house?"

"No," I admitted, "She said Ryker wouldn't like it."

"I could show you around if you like. Of course there are certain rooms I'm not allowed in but I'm sure the same rules don't

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“Are you sure?”

She nodded. “You can think about it. I have to finish up in the kitchen and if I come out and you’re not here then I can take it as you don’t want to but if you are, then I’ll show you around.”

Against my better judgment I sat at that table and waited for her to return. She didn’t take long- maybe half an hour but when she walked out and saw me she smiled and I figured that I made the right choice.

We explored the main floor first and I had already seen most of the rooms; the kitchen, dining room and Ryker’s office. There was a storage room I hadn’t gone into before an Eve told me that they all had strict orders not to go in.

I pushed open the door and it was filled to the brim with stuff ranging from boxes to furniture and I even saw some clothes. lying around. The room was completely filthy with cobwebs hanging over every inch of the room and dust particles flying around. If I had to guess, I would say nobody had opened it in at least five years.

Although my curiosity was not abated, I figured there must have been a reason for that so I quietly closed the door and allowed Eve lead me up the stairs.

Upstairs was a different ball park. The only room I had been in was my own. There were at least four other doors there. The first she led me to was Ryker’s bedroom and I refused to open the door. His room is probably his solace and it would have been rude of me to invade on that.

I went to the next door and pushed it open and I was in awe. The room was completely bare but the walls were painted a soft golden color and it was massive with a huge balcony that overlooked a field. There was no speck of dust to be seen anywhere so I knew it was being cleaned frequently.

“What used to be here?” I asked, “Or has it always been empty?”

“It was a nursery

once.”

When those words left Eve’s lips I turned to her in shock and confusion, “Ryker had a child?”

“He was going to,”

She opened her mouth to explain but a livid looking Lauren walked in. I thought I had seen her pissed off before but it was nothing compared to the raw and unfiltered anger that drowned her features. She genuinely looked like she was a second away from ripping my head off.

“What the hell are you doing here?” she spat.

“I was just taking a look around.”

She grabbed me harshly by the upper arm and all but threw me out of the room. I stumbled and if not for Eve who grabbed me to stabilize me, I would have probably fallen on my ass.

Lauren slammed the door shut and grabbed my upper shoulders in a bruising grip. She slammed me hard against the wall that stars danced around my vision for a second.

“If you ever enter that room again I will rip your heart out of your chest with my bare hands.”

“Lauren,” Eve began but Lauren shot her a death glare.

“And you,” she spat in her direction, “You’re encouraging all this bullshit. I will have you thrown out of the pack in a split

second.”

“I didn’t mean to offend you.” I wanted to get Lauren’s attention off Eve, “It was my idea to look around and she just followed me. She had nothing to do with any of it.”

“I don’t care whose idea it was,” Lauren sneered, “Stay the hell out of that room and don’t taint his memory with your presence” With one final harsh look, she stormed off.

Eve rushed over to my side to check on me but I raised a hand to let her know I was fine. I took deep breaths to calm, 1999

racing heart and when I was sure my voice wasn't going to break I turned to her.

"It was her child, wasn't it?" I asked and she nodded solemnly, "What happened?"

"I don't know. One second the Alpha was building a nursery and the next he was tearing it down." She took a step closer to me. "It was never confirmed that it was hers. But we all assumed because they were together at the time. I'm sorry; I didn't think she would react that way."

"It is fine." I stopped her rant, "I just need to go to my room."

"For what it is worth: I truly am sorry."

"You should go back to work Eve."

I couldn't bear to cast her even a sparing glance as I slowly made my way back to my room. I wasn't upset with her but I didn't want her to see the hurt that I was inevitably feeling.

What if Lauren was right this entire time? Why else would Ryker keep her around if it wasn't because he still felt something for her? They were having a child; you don't do that with someone that you don't care for.

Different thoughts plagued my mind as my body moved on auto pilot. I locked the door to my room and changed my outfit for a night wear. I knew I wouldn't be leaving the room again. I didn't want to face Lauren, not after what I did.

I cannot imagine how she must have felt seeing me in a room that was meant to be for her child, a child she probably lost because that is the only reason why the room would have been torn down.

The room started to get a little stuffy so I made my way to the balcony to get some air. I let out a heavy sigh when I saw Lauren sitting by the lake beneath my room. She was wiping at her face furiously and I knew she was crying. I decided to go back inside before she saw me so she could at least have the dignity of crying alone.

As I thought about the new information I had acquired, I knew what I had to do- I had to leave.