

The Rejected Werewolf Princess by Didiadeyemi Chapter 21-25

Chapter 21

I hid myself in my room for the entire duration of the day. Eve brought me lunch but I couldn't bring myself to eat a bite. I felt undeniably guilty for what I had done to Lauren and I cannot imagine how she feels about my presence in the house.

Evening came around and I had rehearsed the speech I was going to give to Ryker over a thousand times already. I would wait until we are eating dinner and then I would thank him for everything he has done so far and tell him that I would like

to leave.

I don't know how he would react to it but the last thing anyone needs right now is my presence and I am willing to give him and Lauren the space they need to get back together no matter how much it hurts me.

Evening fell and Ryker still hadn't returned. I finally emerged from my hideout when I saw how dark the sky had become and made my way down the stairs hoping that he had returned but no one had told me. I checked his study first but it was empty and I made my way to the dining room to meet Eve.

"I was just about to bring you dinner," she said as soon as she saw me, "Just give me a second and I will bring it to the table."

"That's fine but that's not why I'm here. Have you heard from Ryker?" I asked and she shook her head. "That is very unlike him, he should be back by now."

"He could just be running late, it happened quite a lot actually," she offered, "I am sure that everything is fine."

"Have you seen Lauren?"

"The guards told me that she left a while ago in a hurry. I don't know where she went or if she will be back."

Just as those words left her lips, Lauren rushed into the house in a sort of panic. Her eyes fell on me and I could see how annoyed she was just to be setting her sights on me.

“Come, we have to leave.” She didn’t offer up any more explanation but I was frozen in place, “Are you deaf? We have to leave.”

“What is going on?”

She made her way over to me and dropped her voice to a deadly whisper, “Believe me, I want nothing to do with you just as much as you want nothing to do with me but Ryker is hurt and for some godforsaken reason, he asked for you. So are you going to ask any more stupid questions or can we leave?”

I wasted no time in following her out of the house and into the waiting carriage. It was after the doors had shut that I looked down and realized that I was still in my night dress but I couldn’t worry about that not when Ryker was hurt. How did I not

know that he was hurt?

I spared a quick glance at Lauren. She pressed herself against the opposite end of the carriage so that our bodies wouldn’t touch by mistake. She had her eyes cast on the window and I knew it was in a deliberate attempt to ignore me and pretend

like I wasn’t there.

“I’m sorry.” I said softly, “It was never my intention to hurt you today” She ignored me still, “I truly am sorry and I hope that you can forgive me.”

“Why don’t you start by leaving me alone?” she spat, “I do not want to see you or hear you. Can you do that for me?”

She didn’t wait for my answer, she turned her attention back towards the door and my guilt rose.

The rest of the ride was silent and I thought we were going to the pack house but we passed the large building and continued down the tarred road. I wanted to ask where we were going but I knew asking any more questions would ultimately annoy Lauren so I stayed silent.

We ended up stopping in front of a large building that read 'hospital. I couldn't help but worry about how hurt Ryker would have to be for him to be brought here.

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The carriage pulled to a stop and before I could even say a word, Lauren had gotten out and was sprinting towards the doors. I followed her as fast as I could and we ended up in front of a pair of double doors.

The scent of antiseptic and blood was overwhelming and it brought on a huge migraine but I managed to tune it out long enough to hear Lauren speaking to me.

"Ryker is through those doors but you have to sit here" She instruct

"But you said he asked for me."

"Only one person is allowed in at a time and I am going in her voice was cold and chiding. "Are you really going to cause a scene in here of all places? Are you that selfish?"

She was cut off from saying any more by the door opening. Lucy emerged in her doctors scrubs and when she saw me, she smiled

"I'm glad you're here Camilla," she gestured for me to walk in, "The Alpha has been asking for you."

I looked to Lauren carefully who was glaring daggers at me, "I think Lauren wants to see him as well."

"My duty is to my patient not his guests and my patient wants to see you," she pushed the door open for me, "I don't think we should keep him waiting."

Without looking at Lauren I knew how she must have felt. I could feel the weight of her gaze as I made my way into the room. I made a mental note to apologize to her later but a part of me knew she would never accept it. It is always easier to hate someone than to forgive them.

Ryker's hospital room was large by many standards. There was a table with different tools and ripped bloody clothes. Judging by the amount of blood on those clothes Ryker must have been seriously hurt.

I finally lifted my eyes to him lying on the hospital bed. He was in a pale blue hospital gown but the top part was rolled down and a bandage was wrapped around his torso. A gasp left me involuntarily and his eyes snapped up to mine.

“What happened?” my voice was barely over a whisper.

He gestured for me to come closer and I obliged mainly because I didn’t have it in me to refuse and I wanted to see his wounds up close.

“How did you get hurt?” I asked again.

“We were ambushed by some rogues,” his voice was hoarse and tired- he sounded almost weak, “We didn’t expect there to be so many. Rogues usually move in bands of threes and fives but there was an entire pack of them. One of them took out a large chunk of my side.”

“I am so sorry.” I reached out to touch him but remembered that I shouldn’t and I snatched my hand back almost immediately.

The action didn’t go unnoticed by Ryker and I saw his eyes narrow ever so slightly. I expected him to call me out on it but instead he cleared his throat and forced himself into a half sitting position.

“Have you eaten?” he asked and I shook my head, “I figured as much. I asked for someone to get us both food from the pack house.”

“Ryker,” I began but he cut me off.

“Just because I am hurt doesn’t mean I still won’t force you,” he warned, “I will be out of here by tomorrow morning. And I will be back in the field in two to five days. I heal very quickly Camilla.”

“That’s not it.

He stopped whatever argument he was going to present and calmly looked up at me. I knew he was giving me the time to say what I wanted to say and just like that, all my rehearsing and my entire speech flew out of my head.

I opened my mouth but no words would come out and no matter how hard I tried I couldn't form a sentence. He didn't rush me, he just sat there in silence and waited for me to regain my bearings and I was grateful for that.

"I am grateful for everything you have done for me," I began, "You helped me get back on my feet and you have fed and clothed me without asking for anything in return. I want to thank you for that."

"That is my job Camilla; you don't have to thank me for that."

"Okay but I am fully healed now and I was thinking that it would be a good time for me to be on my way." I snuck a glance at him but his face betrayed no emotions so I took that as a good sign. "I probably upended your life when I came and I just want to say that I am sorry and I hope that when I leave, you are able to get your life back in order."

I waited for him to respond but instead he stayed silent. He was quiet for three whole minutes- I counted- before he finally cleared his throat.

"Are you going to tell me what this is really about or are you going to make me guess?"

"It isn't about anything." I lied, "I just want your life to go back to normal."

"What is normal?" he asked, "Since you seem to know everything. What is my normal life?"

"1. I trailed off because I didn't know what to say, "I just don't want to be a burden to you anymore."

"I never said you were a burden so try again." I opened my mouth to speak but words wouldn't come out and I ended up sighing deeply.

Ryker lifted his hand and ran it through my curls softly and for once, I didn't flinch. He noticed that too because I saw relief flash through his eyes. His hand trailed down to my chin and he lifted it so I was staring into his eyes.

"Tell me what this is really about,"

There was something so compelling about the soft tone he took on and the way he held me. I didn't realize when the words left my lips.

"I know about the nursery."

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A dark look crossed his face and I saw the raw sadness that grew beneath his irises. I almost felt bad for bringing it up in the first place but I knew that it was necessary for me to leave.

“What do you know about it?” he asked finally.

“I know that you and Lauren were having a child.” I thought of how to explain what I knew without putting Eve in trouble, “I know it was a recent loss because of how Lauren reacted to it.”

“What do you mean how she reacted?” Gone was his sadness, now he was looking at me with narrowed eyes. “Is that way you want to leave?”

“She was just upset when she saw me in the nursery. That’s understandable because it was her kid.”

“What did she do?”

“Nothing.” I answered too quickly and I saw that he didn’t believe me. “Does it even matter? I don’t want to be the one who comes between your healing process.”

He opened his mouth to speak but just then, the door opened and Lauren walked in with a very large tray of food. She started to place it on the small metal table next to Ryker’s bed but he stopped her, took it from her hands and put it on his lap.

Lauren looked between us almost as if she wanted to be privy to the conversation we were having.

“I’m glad you’re okay.” Lauren said as she crossed past me and took the only available seat. “This is why I want to be on the field, I could be of use there.”

“You are enough use where you are.”

His voice held no tone for discussion and I saw that it annoyed her because of how she clenched her jaw but she nodded and swallowed down whatever retort she was going to give.

An awkward silence fell over the place and I wondered if I should leave them alone. I slowly took a step back hoping that no one would notice my

movements until I was out of the room but I didn't judge how perceptive Ryker was because the moment my foot shuffled a little, Ryker's head snapped up to mine.

I froze like a deer in headlights and his eyes narrowed towards me. Lauren seemed oblivious to the entire thing or she was just doing a good job at ignoring whatever was going on around her.

"Lauren," she perked up when she heard her name from Ryker, "I think you're done for the day."

Her smile faltered slightly, "I don't understand."

"My mate is with me, you can leave now. There is an array of guards here who can take her back home when she is ready."

Lauren was embarrassed, that much was obvious but she nodded curtly and stood from the chair. As she passed by me, she shot me the meanest glare that she had ever conjured and I found myself shrinking back a little.

I watched her disappear through the doors and Ryker gestured to the open seat for me to take. I was hesitant, but when he threatened to drag me into the seat- injury or not- I forced my legs to move and I sat in front of him.

"Eat," he gestured to the plate, "This is too much for me to finish." I opened my mouth to argue but he cut me off, "I'm not above force feeding you Camilla."

I sighed and picked up a piece of toast and bit into it softly. He obviously wasn't happy with my choice judging by his frown but he didn't say anything about it.

We ate in silence until all the food was finished. Once we were done, I picked up the tray and he told me to set it on the table next to him for someone to retrieve it in the morning. I was doing that when he grabbed my arm with his

I was so shocked by the action that the tray fell from my hands. Thankfully, it was already close to the table and nothing broke. I turned to him but he wasn't looking at me, he was looking at the transparent sleeves of my night gown. More specifically, at my upper arm where a nasty red bruise was forming, probably from where Lauren grabbed me earlier. His nostrils flared the longer he looked at it and I tried to tug my arm out of his grip but he wouldn't let me go.

“What happened to you?” he asked and I shrugged. “I’m not going to ask again Camilla.”

“It was nothing,” the lie rolled easily off my tongue, “I was a little clumsy, that’s all.”

“You got clumsy and a hand shaped bruise formed on your arm.” The way he said it made me feel stupid for even saying it in the first place, “I want the truth Camilla.”

I kept my voice soft as I responded, “I already told you the truth and please let go, you’re hurting me.”

My answer seemed to piss him off more but he finally released my arm and I stood at the far end of his bed. He muttered a few choice words under his breath and I saw him try to calm his breathing before he spoke.

“Whoever hurt you had to be in that house because I get informed when anyone new walks in and as far as I know, there were no visitors,” he began, “If you won’t tell me who it is, I will simply have to punish them all.”

“No: you can’t possibly punish them all.”

“There is very little I cannot do Camilla,” I stared at him hoping he was bluffing but from the anger swirling in his eyes, I knew that was a foolish thought, “Tell me what happened or everyone in that house will suffer for it.”

I debated my options in my head. I could simply tell him what happened or I could keep to my story and everyone will get hurt because of me- including Eve.

“I’ll tell you,” I began, “If you promise to allow me leave.”

“You’re in no position to make demands.” He said simply, “But, if you tell me then I’ll explain the story behind the nursery.”

I opened my mouth to refute and demand to leave but my curiosity was greater and against my better judgment, I ended up agreeing to the deal.

To show that I agreed, I took the seat next to him and crossed my arms over my chest to hide the bruise from his line of sight.

“Lauren grabbed me.” I admitted and when I saw the raw and undikuted rage in his eyes, I knew I had to fix the situation before he hurt her, “But it was an accident.”

“How did she accidentally grab you?” he didn’t believe me but he was humoring me to see what lie I could come up with.

“I was truly being clumsy,” I lied, “And I almost fell from the top of the stairs so she grabbed me. I bruise easily.”

I wondered if he believed me, his face was too unreadable. I prayed he would because the last thing I needed was for Lauren to get punished for something that was my mistake. If I had not gone to the nursery, then she would have never had to grab me and nobody would be in this situation.

After a long beat of silence he nodded, “I will still have a talk with her so she is extra careful when grabbing you.”

I let out a breath of relief, “Your turn.”

He looked forlorn, almost like it hurt too much to think about it. I waited patiently as he gathered his thoughts and sighed.

“I’m sure you already know that Lauren and I were together for a while.” it wasn’t a question but I nodded anyway. “It was never a relationship, it was strictly physical. I made sure that she knew I never wanted anything more. The idea of being with someone wasn’t so important to me at the time.”

I wanted to ask whether he still felt that way. I wanted to know whether he was just keeping me around because he wanted something physical or because he had changed his mind. But I knew it would change the trajectory of the conversation and

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I truly wanted to hear the rest of the story so I forced myself to stay silent.

“One day she came to me and told me that she was pregnant. My first response was to walk away because I don’t want children. I never have and I don’t think I ever will”

I was shocked by his admission; most Alpha's want at least a son to carry on their legacy. But here he was, admitting that he never wanted children. I didn't know how to react to that so I just filed away the information.

"But she wanted it and I knew that I would never leave a child fatherless so I planned to take care of it. I made her swear not to tell anyone until it was absolutely necessary. She tried to get me to bond with her and the child more but I couldn't. I tried but I couldn't and I think it got to her because she came to me a while later and told me that she had gotten rid of it."

I don't know what I was expecting to hear but that was not it. I peered up at him hoping to see some traces of dishonesty in his expression but he was being completely sincere. He is either telling the truth or he is a very good liar.

Somehow, I cannot see Lauren ending the life of their child. She is so clearly still in love with Ryker. She would have done anything to make sure that child came to life. I honestly don't believe that she would have done that.

I couldn't say that to Ryker without proof so I just nodded slowly, "I'm sorry for your loss."

"The child was better off that way than having a father who didn't want it."

I didn't know how to react to that so I just glanced at the clock on the wall. Ryker's eyes followed my gaze and when he saw the time he blanched.

"You should be in bed," he said, "I will call someone to take you home."

Before I could respond, his eyes glossed over and I knew he was mind linking someone. Not a minute later, the door opened and two guards walked in. I had never seen them before but they bowed to Ryker and I.

"Take my mate home," he paused before adding in a deathly cool voice, "If anything happens to her, it will be your skin on

the line."

Chapter 23

I found it hard to fall asleep; something about the day's experiences prevented me from being able to sleep well. I didn't want to admit it but I knew it had something to do with Ryker.

Before I knew it, the sun was rising and I knew it would be impossible to fall asleep again. I knew I wouldn't be training so I lay in bed for longer than I usually would. Before I got here, I had never gotten a day in and now it's almost all I do.

I stretched in my room by myself and took an early bath. I had just finished getting dressed when someone knocked on my door.

I recognized the knock as Eve's so I crossed the length of the room and pulled the door open. I half expected to see her with a tray of breakfast but she was standing with her arms crossed and debating whether or not she should actually walk in but from the look on her face I knew she was worried.

"What's wrong?" I asked and she opened her mouth but closed it immediately, "Tell me, Eve."

"Lauren just arrived, and she looks pissed." She explained, "I just wanted to give you a fair warning before you came down."

"Thank you."

She still looked pensive but then she turned on her heels and walked down the stairs. I followed closely behind because I knew hiding in my room would only make her bad mood worse and cause her to project it on Eve.

The first thing I noticed when I got down the stairs was the tapping of her shoes against the floor. I think Eve downplayed her annoyance, she looks genuinely pissed. She saw me and her eyes narrowed but she didn't speak to me.

Instead she turned to Eve, "Where's my breakfast?"

Eve shot me a look as if to say 'can you see this?' then she disappeared into the kitchen. I took my usual seat on the opposite side of the dining table and pointedly kept my gaze off her. I didn't want her to have any reason to blow up on me.

Eve returned a few seconds later and Lauren rolled her eyes and sat up straight expecting Eve to take it to her but Eve walked around the table

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and placed the tray in front of me.

“Are you fucking kidding me?” Lauren slammed her hand against the table and jumped to her feet, “I asked for breakfast so why the hell are you serving her first?”

“She’s the future Luna,” Eve said simply, “And the Alpha hired me to work for her.”

That was the subtlest jab I had ever heard before and Lauren noticed because her eyes narrowed into slits and she reached for the tray but Eve pulled it back and out of her reach.

I never expected Eve to stand up for me and it made me feel guilty because I knew Lauren would come for her with the force of her anger.

“She’ll get yours next.” I tried to defuse the situation but it was the wrong move because Lauren’s heated eyes turned to me.

While her attention was on me, I gave Eve a subtle nudge and she took it for what it was- an invitation- and she scurried out of the kitchen.

“You should just stay out of it.” She spat and I raised my hands to show I meant no harm.

“I wasn’t doing anything. I understand you’re upset but-,”

“You don’t know anything you little snitch.” I was taken aback by the force of her words, “I’m sure you bruised the area after to gather sympathy from him. You were the one who went looking in places she shouldn’t have so it is your fault.”

“I know you’re upset but you bruised me and I covered for you.”

“I don’t need you to cover for me.”

“Please don’t scream at me. I was trying to do you a favor.”

When the words were out I doubted they came from me. If not for the stunned expression on Lauren’s face I would have never believed that I said those words. I wanted to take them back immediately but I knew apologizing would only make it worse.

Just as she was gearing up to respond, the door opened. I was surprised she didn't hear the footsteps earlier but I guess she was too clouded by her anger.

Ryker walked- more like limped in. He was wearing black slacks and a simple t-shirt that was left open and I could see his bandages through it. I didn't expect him to be back till later and neither did Lauren because she was staring with her mouth wide open.

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"You're back," she said, "I- welcome back."

"Thank you." She rushed over to help him but he stopped her with one hand, "You can leave now, I'm going to be here so your presence isn't needed anymore."

She flushed pink but she nodded and scurried out of the room. I saw Eve poke her head out from behind a pillar and she gave me a wide smile before disappearing.

"Do you need help?" I asked and he grimaced before nodding.

I quickly made my way over to him and he draped a hand over my shoulder and I assisted him up the stairs. To be honest, he did most of the work, I don't know why he asked for my help when he clearly didn't need it but I didn't want to ask because I wasn't sure I wanted to hear the answer.

We walked towards his room and I realized that it would be the first time. I was walking in. My steps faltered when we got to the door and he gave me a curious look almost prompting me to speak. I just gave him a weak smile and pushed the door open.

I expected a room of pure black but this room was almost an exact opposite. The room was a little bigger than mine and everything was in shades of cream and gold. The bed in the centre of the room was massive and could probably f

it up to four people. To the right sat a large wooden table and chair set that had a lot of scattered papers over it.

There were two doors to the left and next to them was a large cream settee. A fluffy carpet lay in front of the bed and I couldn't help but stare at the room in awe as I led Ryker to his bed.

As soon as he was seated I turned to leave but there was a knock on the door. I opened it to reveal Eve balancing one very large breakfast tray. "I hoped you were hungry Alpha." She said as she made her way into the room, "I presumed you would both want to have breakfast together."

I wanted to refuse but Ryker thanked her and she gave me a sly wink before leaving. The sneaky little minx did it on purpose.

I knew I had no other choices so I made my way towards the bed. Ryker moved over to create space for me to sit next to him. I kept my eyes cast down as I took a bite from a piece of bacon. I could see that he had a lot of things he wanted to say but he was holding himself back to make me comfortable.

"You look better" I said once the silence had become too unbearable,

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"You seem to be healing well."

"Thank you; I'll be back to work in two days."

"It must be fun being able to heal fast."

"I guess so," he said after a beat of silence, "I can't remember a time I didn't heal like this so I've never actually sat down to think about it."

"Trust me; it is a lot better than being stuck in pain for a month when other people will heal within days."

He chuckled softly, "I guess so."

The silence descended once more and I cleared my throat because I knew I was about to ruin the atmosphere with my next statement but I didn't want an incident like this morning to repeat itself.

"Did you think about what I said yesterday?" I didn't need to clarify, by his expression I knew that he was aware of what I was referring to, "I just hoped you would have an answer for me."

"I thought my answer was clear yesterday; you're not leaving Camilla."

"What if I want to?"

"Why do you want to?" he asked and my words dried up in my throat, "Is being mated to me that horrible?"

"It is not about you and me."

"Then what is it about?" he threw his hands up in frustration, "And don't say Lauren because I know it isn't about her. I have told you what happened between us and I have told you about the child. I have told you that there is nothing going on between the both of us anymore."

"She doesn't think that."

I didn't realize what I had said until I heard him ask, "What do you mean?" I stayed silent wondering how I would get out of the pickle I was in, "What do you mean by she doesn't think that?"

"If she didn't mean anything to you then she wouldn't be here."

"She is here because of you," he sounded exasperated, "What do I need to do to prove to you that she doesn't mean anything?"

"I'm just saying that-,"

He was tired of hearing me talk because he gently placed the tray next to him then he cupped the back of my head with a grip that was both soft

and firm and then he kissed me

I was so shocked by the action that I froze for a full second but then against my better judgment I kissed him back. My hand rested on his bicep and until then I never knew how toned and well muscled he was. I had seen it but seeing a

nd feeling it were two completely different things. His other hand cupped my cheek to angle my head how he wanted and his tongue brushed mine softly, almost tentatively. It felt like fireworks exploded in my mind and a sound filled the otherwise quiet room. It took me a second to realize that the sound came from me and as soon as I did, I pulled back.

“Camilla,” his voice was soft and husky and the way he said my name, it was like a silent plea. What exactly he was asking for, I wasn’t sure.

His lips were swollen and I was sure mine were too and we were both breathing heavily although I am sure it was for vastly different reasons. My gaze went from his lips to his eyes and then I did what I knew how to do best- I ran.

Send gift

Chapter 24

I avoided Ryker for the entirety of the day. I knew he would be in his room but I didn’t want to risk seeing him and locked myself away in my room.

I knew Eve was curious as to what happened but she didn’t push me to answer any questions and simply nodded when I told her that I would be having all my meals from the comfort of my room.

My avoidance tactic lasted up until the next morning. I had taken a bath and was getting dressed when there was a knock on the door that I instantly recognized as Eve’s. It was a bit early for breakfast but I didn’t think much of it as I pulled open the door.

Eve stood there but right behind her was Ryker and as soon as they saw me, Eve turned on her heels and left. I tried to shoot her the harshest glare I could muster but she just responded with a smile of her own and disappeared around the corner.

“You look better,” I began not sure what else to say now that he was standing in front of me.

He was standing tall and fully dressed in slacks and a simple shirt. I couldn’t see the texture of his bandages under his shirt so I assumed he had gotten rid of them- he did say he would be fully healed in about two days and half that ti

me has already gone. His cheeks also had a little bit more color and honestly if I didn't see him in the hospital bed two days ago I would have never thought that he was hurt in any way.

"You're avoiding me." Ryker said simply not wasting any time with pleasantries.

"I'm not," I lied, "I just-,"

"You don't have to lie to me." he cut me off, "Come, we have to leave now."

"Where are we going?"

"You told me you wanted to see the lake, didn't you?" I was shocked that he remembered, I was more shocked that he was offering to go with me when he was still healing, "Or do you not want to go anymore?"

"I do, it is just that I-,"

"Then let's go."

se et me expectantly and although one part of my

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brain wanted to refuse and continue my self imposed isolation, the more curious part of me nodded and stepped out of the confines of the room. He led us towards the back of the house and towards a trail in the woods. that I hadn't noticed before. As

we walked, I noticed a few guards walking a few steps behind us and I knew it was for our protection in case some rogues wandered onto the territory.

I smelled and heard it before I saw it; the sound of rushing water and the smell of an array of flowers. By the time we walked into the clearing, I was staring in complete and utter awe. The view from my window had done no justice to the view sitting in front of me.

It was like the picture perfect image of springtime with a wonderful flowing stream and a small waterfall I didn't notice before. Different flowers bloomed around the edges and all over the large expanse of land and I wondered if someone planted them or if it was just nature taking its

course.

Ryker placed his hand on the small of my back and led me to the edge of the lake where we sat and I could help but take off my slippers and dip my toes into the water.

“This is beautiful,” I breathed, “Thank you for bringing me here.”

“You’re welcome.” he waited for a beat of silence before he spoke again, “The guards are close enough that they can see us but not close enough that they can hear us so I wanted to apologize.”

I tried to clamp down on my hurt as he spoke. Of course he would have realized by now that kissing me was a mistake and I wasn’t who he wanted but it still hurt to hear him say it.

“You don’t have to apologize; we both did it so it wasn’t your fault.”

“I am not apologizing for kissing you Camilla,” the sincerity in his tone had me looking up at him and his eyes told the same story his words did, “If I had the chance

I would do it again. What I am apologizing for is the timing. You weren’t ready- I know that now.”

“I don’t understand.”

“If I were to kiss you again would you run?” I stayed silent but he already knew the answer, “I should have thought about that before doing it but I didn’t know how else to show you that you were the one I wanted not Lauren. I figured we could try to be friends.”

“Friends,” I echoed not sure I heard him right.

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He chuckled softly, “It is not ideal for me either but that seems to be all you are ready for and Camilla I want you in any way that you can have me. If being friends is all that you have to offer then I am ready to take it.”

I swallowed not sure how to respond. My mouth opened and closed. repeatedly but no words would come out. That was as close to a declaration of love that I had ever heard and that was the first time since. Even that anyone had ever expressed the desire to want to be my friends. I still wasn’t sure how to react to that.

He seemed to notice that I was unsure of what to say next because he turned to face the waterfall.

“My nanny used to bring me here when I was a child,” he began, “My parents weren’t the best parents and when things got hectic at home, she would bring me here and I knew that I wanted to live here. At the time I wanted to live in the lake but I guess I took the next best thing.”

I couldn’t help but laugh softly at his revelation, “What are you doing?”

“Well friends know things about each other and I figured that since we are friends now, you should know things about me.” he ended his statement with a small smile, “Most of what you hear about my pack are true- or at least they were.”

I didn’t know how to react to that revelation. “What do you mean?” “My father was a brutal leader. People were hanged and executed for as little as talking out of turn or speaking back to him. His tyranny never stopped in the pack, he always brought it home. My mother and I took the brunt of his rage. She wasn’t his mate but an omega that he wanted to have but would not have her so he took her by force. He wasn’t even loyal to her, he still fucked anything that moved.”

That sounded awful and I suddenly felt bad for his mother because I could relate. Although I was Tyson’s mate he took me by force too and he planned to have other women on the side. I wondered how Ryker would react if he knew the truth.

“When I was ten, she got pregnant again and for a while everything stopped until she delivered. She gave birth to a girl and that infuriated him. He said it wasn’t his child and he beat my mother to the point I couldn’t recognize her anymore. I shifted for the first time that day.”

“What happened to her?”

“He took her life the day after and it was just me, my sister and him for a very long time.” He cleared his throat before continuing, “When I was seventeen and my sister was seven, she was playing around the house and broke a vase. I had gone for patrol and I got back and saw him choking her so I lost it and I killed him. I wasn’t thinking about being Alpha in that moment, I just wanted

d to save my sister and it worked. Not one missed him much if I am being honest.”

“I started to reform the pack. I changed a lot of his rules but I realized that the fear of him had instilled respect in other packs so I never cleared up the rumors and I allowed people to believe that I was just as ruthless as he was. My pack members agreed to fuel the rumors as well.”

“What happened to your sister? Is she still here?”

“She went on some trip a week before you came. She should be back soon but I’m not quite sure with her. Riley has always had a mind of her own.”

“She sounds lovely.”

“She is, although she is a huge pain in my ass.” I laughed at his choice of words, “Tell me about you Camilla. You don’t have to tell me the details but tell me about you.”

I paused wondering what was safe to tell him and what was not. I was quiet for a while before I finally cleared my throat.

“You already know that I was an omega.” I began, “I never knew my parents. According to the Alpha, I was left in front of the pack house as a baby in a blanket and his mate was the one who advocated to be taken in. When she died, all my privileges died with her. I was five when she died. so I can barely remember a life before the one I had.”

“There isn’t much to say except I was mated to the Alpha’s son and he rejected me on the spot because he found out in front of his friends. It hurt but I didn’t quite mind it to be honest. Somehow it got out that we were mates and he made a public statement that I lied about being mates. because I was obsessed with him. I couldn’t take the shame so I ran. That’s all there is to know honestly.”

“I am sorry that happened to you.” He placed his hand over mine and I knew he was being sincere so I offered him a smile, “Who was your mate?”

I pondered over his question for a while and wondered what use keeping Tyson’s name would be. If Ryker wanted to find out, he could and keeping Tyson’s name wasn’t doing me any favors.

Ryker had turned back to face the waterfall, probably thinking I wasn't going to respond to his question when I spoke in a soft voice. "Tyson Woods of the Two Moons pack"

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Chapter 25

A dark look crossed over his face when I mentioned the name and I held my breath as I watched him carefully wondering what he was going to say or do next.

"I know of him," he said finally, "Although if I'm not mistaken, he isn't Alpha yet."

I nodded, "His father is Alpha but he practically leads already."

"He rejected you," it wasn't posed as a question but I knew he was expecting an answer so I nodded, "Then he's a fucking idiot."

I wasn't expecting that response and my eyes widened to the point of saucers. Ryker noticed and he laughed at my expression.

We sat there at the bank of the lake telling each other random facts about ourselves. He told me that he wrote letters to his sister every week even though she never wrote back because she felt like he was smothering her too much.

He told me that his favorite color used to be blue but as of lately, it has become a warm hazel and when I asked why, he didn't respond. He also told me that when he was younger, he enjoyed to paint but ever since he became Alpha, he hasn't had time to do it.

It was fun just being able to sit and listen to each other talk. I didn't realize how late it had gotten until my stomach grumbled loudly. I flushed a crimson color and Ryker just laughed and led me to my feet.

"It's alright," he assured me on our walk back, "I should have realized how late it was getting."

Despite his assurances, I couldn't help but feel embarrassed. Back at

Tyson's pack,

I could go days without eating a decent meal but ever since. I got here, it is lik

e my body has gotten so used to being taken care of that I cannot even fathom going back to the life I lived before.

A part of me wondered how long this would last. But another part- a more hopeful part- wanted to believe Ryker when he said he wanted me and believe that he wouldn't hurt me or delegate me to a life like the one Tyson and his father made me live.

By the time we got to the house, Eve had already set the table for the both of us. I knew he must have mind linked her because there was no way she would have known that we were returning at that exact moment

and have set the table in time for us to arrive.

"How do you do that?" I asked before I could stop myself, "Mind link someone."

"You don't know how?" he asked and I shook

"I don't have a wolf remember,"

"Did you ever try?"

my head.

"I was never an official member of the pack. Alpha Jackson said he would make me one after I shifted but I never did," I tried to play it off as a casual thing, but the thought still hurt, "I was never able to try it out."

"I'm not that upset though," I assured him, "if I was part of the pack then running away would have been a lot harder."

He opened his mouth to speak but closed it almost immediately. I saw him exhale

sharply and he clenched his fists on the table until his knuckles turned white. After a second, his body relaxed and he opened his eyes to look at me.

He opened his mouth to speak but at that exact moment, Eve walked in with a huge

jar of what smelled like fruit juice. She placed it in the centre of the table then bowed to both of us and disappeared back the way she

came.

“It’s like talking only you do it in your head,” he made a sound that was a mixture between a sigh and a laugh. “I’ve never had to explain it to anyone before but it is like a bridge between your mind and everyone else’s. Just picture that bridge and whoever you want to talk to at the other end.”

“I didn’t realize it was that easy.”

“When you’re part of the pack you’ll be able to try it out for yourself.”

“If I’m part of the pack,” I corrected but he shook his head.

“It’s going to happen Camilla,” he assured me, “The only thing that’s stopping it is your readiness. I have zero plans of letting you go. I think it’s time that you realized that.”

If someone else had said that, I would have probably been alarmed and a little scared but coming from Ryker, it had the exact opposite effect. It made me feel special and my lower belly clenched as the words left his lips. I cursed my body for being a traitor and I saw the corner of his lips lift up as he watched my ears turn pink.

I instantly turned away from him and shoved a forkful of eggs into my mouth in an attempt to wash away the previous conversation..

After dinner, I thanked Ryker for taking me to the lake and all but ran off to my room. Once I was safely behind my door I finally let out a breath I didn’t know that I was holding.

I stripped out of my clothes and after a long awaited and needed bath, I changed into a pale pink night gown. I was about to get into bed when I heard a knock on my door. I slowly and hesitantly made my way over to it and opened it to reveal Ryker.

He was still in his clothes and I wondered what he was doing at my door.

“We will resume training tomorrow,” he told me with an amused expression, “Unless of course, you don’t want to.”

“I’ll be there.”

“Well then, goodnight Camilla.”

“Goodnight,” the word was barely out of my mouth before I had shut the door.

I knew it was a bit rude and I heard his laugh echo from the other side of the door so I knew he wasn't upset. I waited until I heard his footsteps recede before I made my way over to my bed and buried my face into my pillows.

The next morning, I was awake and waiting at the foot of the steps before Ryker even came down. Eve handed me the bottle of waters that we would need during training and I had just taken them from her hands when I felt Ryker's presence behind me.

He was completely shirtless and I felt my mouth dry up as I drank him in. His wound- or what was left of his wound was now just a scar on his otherwise perfect skin. He walked over to me and took the bottles from my hand and I couldn't even form a sentence as his entire presence threatened to overwhelm me.

“Good morning,” he breathed by my ear and I felt an unfamiliar rush of wetness between my thighs, “Are you ready to train?”

“I- yes,” I was thankful that my voice sounded stable even though I was anything but at the moment.

He placed a hand on the small of my back and his fingers grazed my bare skin as he led me out of the kitchen and towards our training spot.

I **could** barely concentrate on whatever he was teaching me. I don't know

why I was reacting like this but it had never happened to me before, not even with Tyson. My skin prickled once he was near and I was feeling things in places I didn't know I could feel things.

In that moment, I was actually grateful that we didn't have a mind link or else he might have been able to feel everything that I was feeling and that would have been very embarrassing for me.

“I think we should take a break.” Ryker's voice snapped me out of my thoughts.

I looked over at him and he was hunched over a tree. His hands were clenched and I could see the veins on his arms and neck bulging.

“Are you okay?” I asked and I didn’t realize when I rushed over to his side and placed a hand on his arm.

He let out a groan but nodded, “I shouldn’t strain myself because of-,” he trailed off, “Because of the injury.”

I nodded in understanding, “I am so sorry, I didn’t even think about that. Do you want to sit down?”

I placed a hand on his back to lead him away from the tree but he suddenly stood up straight and placed a hand over my shoulder and began to steer me in the direction of the house. I was so shocked by his change in behavior that I couldn’t do anything but allow him lead me in whatever direction he wished.

“Why don’t we go freshen up and come back down for breakfast?” he asked as soon as we got in through the doors of the house and without waiting for a response from me, he disappeared up the stairs.

I was shocked by his actions, usually I was the one avoiding him but I tried to calm my raging thoughts and instead focused on doing as he asked. I hoped that when we returned for breakfast, he would feel a little better. Maybe his side was hurting and a long soak in the bath would help.

I got down for breakfast before him once again and this time I actually started to worry. I waited thirty minutes before he came down and he took a double take when he saw me. Eve had roped me into wearing a dress and I didn’t mind because it actually looked pretty.

It wasn’t supposed to be a form fitted dress but barely anything isn’t form fitted when you have an array of curves. He swallowed deeply and took his usual seat at the head of the table. Instead of taking the seat I usually would, I took the one right next to him.

He was shocked but he didn’t say anything and instead chose to start eating. We ate for a while in silence before he broke it.

“You look beautiful,” the words left his lips in a breath, almost like he wasn’t sure whether he should say them.

“Thank you,” I felt my ears heat up and I knew they would have turned pink, “Does your scar still hurt?”

He looked confused for a split second but then he shook his head, “I’m fine; it’s fine.”

I opened my mouth to speak but was cut off by the door opening. A guard rushed into the house looking panicked and I could see traces of blood on his armor.

“Alpha; there has been another rogue attack.”

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