

## The Warrior's Broken Mate Chapter 07

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LYRA POV

I could sense that Alpha Elias was uneasy. His heartbeat quickened, and the sound of it unsettled me. Why was he nervous? Where were we going? As if in response, my own heart began to race. He glanced at me, wide-eyed, like he was dreading something.

"It's a few hours away," he said eventually. "We live pretty secluded. I should probably warn you—it's not like your old packhouse. It's nothing fancy. Definitely not as luxurious as what you were used to."

His heart was still thumping loudly. Was that why he was anxious? Was he worried I'd be disappointed with a less impressive house? That didn't make any sense.

"Less for me to clean," I replied simply.

He gave me a strange look that I didn't understand. I wasn't joking or trying to be clever—I was just being honest. A smaller house meant less work. I knew my father's mate never cooked or cleaned. That was always my job. That's what mates were for, weren't they? I didn't expect anything different.

The drive was slow and quiet, like neither of us was in a hurry to get where we were going. I didn't talk much. I wasn't used to real conversations. I'd only ever read about them in books. That's how I learned to speak, by reading and imagining dialogue. Alpha Elias kept glancing over at me, probably trying to figure out what to say. I knew I wasn't exactly pleasant

company. Even I knew that much.

"So... what kind of books do you like?" he asked, catching me playing with the frayed hem of

my dress, something I did when I was feeling anxious. But his voice was calm and kind—not

the tone I expected from someone who carried the title of Alpha.

"I like a bit of everything," I answered. "I loved the Harry Potter books. They were great. I also

liked A Tale of Two Cities. And I've read a lot of V.C. Andrews. Her stories are really

interesting.”

As I spoke, I stopped picking at my dress without even realizing it. I turned my gaze to the front windshield, and for the first time in a long while, I felt a small sense of calm settle over me. I caught a glimpse of Alpha Elias smiling softly.

“Well then, I’ll make sure to get you every one of those books again,” he said, still smiling.

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I let out a quiet laugh before instinctively clapping my hands over my mouth. His eyebrows pulled together in confusion.

“I’m sorry—I didn’t mean to laugh at you,” I said quickly.

“What do you mean?” he asked, clearly puzzled. “There’s nothing wrong with laughing.”

But I knew better. I wasn’t supposed to laugh at anyone. Especially not at men.

“I’m not allowed to laugh at people,” I said quietly. “It’s considered rude, and I get punished.”

He stiffened at that, the tension in his shoulders returning, but he took a few slow breaths

and seemed to calm himself down.

“It’s okay,” he said gently. “You can laugh. What was so funny, anyway?”

“Well... you said your house wasn’t very big. And I was thinking, if you’re planning to replace all the books I left behind, you might need a bigger house after all,” I said, sneaking a glance at him from the corner of my eye.

I was terrified that he’d be angry. But instead, he burst into laughter. I jumped at the sudden sound—it was loud—but when I realized he was genuinely laughing, I relaxed back into my seat, a small smile forming on my lips.

I knew I had already left the Crystal River pack behind the moment we crossed the border, but I still didn’t know what Alpha Elias expected from me. I was only fifteen. I was broken. I wasn’t the kind of mate he probably wanted. I had no idea how to be

someone's mate—let alone a Luna. The more I thought about it, the more impossible it all sounded.

I noticed Alpha Elias sneaking glances at me, and I tried my best to ignore it, but resisting the urge to glance back at him was difficult. I didn't understand what he saw in me. He claimed I

was his mate, yet he was ten years older than I was.

That thought led me down a spiral. What did he expect from me once we arrived at his pack? How far did he want things to go? The panic started to rise again, creeping into my chest, and I knew he noticed it right away.

"Lyra," Alpha Elias said gently. "You don't have to be afraid anymore. Where I'm taking you, there are no slaves. No one will beat you."

"Father's going to be furious when you take me back," I muttered, barely above a whisper.

"What? No. I'm not taking you back. I'm never taking you back there. I swear it," he said firmly.

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"I can't give you what you want," I said, voice cracking. "You're not going to want me as your mate. You'll realize I'm not what you hoped for and send me back to him."

Tears welled in my eyes, and I tried to blink them away, but the moment I said that, Elias pulled the car off the road and brought it to a full stop. He turned to face me, eyes locked on

mine.

"Lyra," he said slowly, his tone intense but steady. "I didn't take you away to hurt you or to demand anything from you. I would never do that. I won't force you to do anything. Ever. If anything happens between us, it'll be because you want it, and because you feel safe. I promise I'll never harm you."

I didn't know how to respond. All I could do was nod.

"I'm sorry," I whispered.

"You don't need to apologize," he said. "Lyra, have you ever spent time with anyone besides your father and Luna?"

I shook my head. "No. I was never allowed. I don't even know if the rest of the pack knew I

existed."

"I don't think they did," he admitted.

I wasn't shocked. Deep down, I'd always suspected it. There was clearly a reason my father had kept me hidden—he didn't want anyone knowing I was alive. That thought had always lingered in the back of my mind, but I never let myself fully acknowledge it. I didn't want to. I knew no one would stand up to him, no one from his pack would ever risk helping me. I had accepted that a long time ago.

But now I couldn't help wondering—why keep me alive just to treat me like a servant? Why let everyone think I was dead? If he hated me so much, why not get rid of me? And if he didn't want me, why was he so desperate to keep me? Was it just his pride—refusing to let anyone, especially Alpha Elias, "take" something that belonged to him?

I hadn't even been gone that long, and already these questions were gnawing at me, filling my head with confusion. None of it made sense.

Then, suddenly, Alpha Elias's head jerked to the side, and I saw his eyes glaze over. He was mind-linking someone, and his body immediately tensed.

I looked around, trying to spot what had him so alert, but I didn't see anything. Without a word, he started the car again and slammed his foot on the gas. The tires screeched as we sped down the highway.

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"What's going on?" I asked, gripping the dashboard as the car swerved at high speed.

"We're being followed," he replied grimly. "And they're not coming to say hello."

I peered into the darkness outside, but the woods on either side of the road were too thick and shadowed to make anything out. Whoever it was, they were using the trees as cover.

Then, out of nowhere, something massive landed on the roof of the car with a deafening thud. The entire roof caved slightly under the force, and I let out a terrified scream, shrinking into my seat.

## The Warrior's Broken Mate Chapter 08

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Alpha Elias was swerving erratically across the road, trying everything he could to dislodge the werewolf clinging to the roof, but the beast wouldn't budge. I could see its paws crashing down on either side of the car, swiping dangerously close. One of them finally slammed through the window beside me, sending shards of glass flying.

The creature's paw reached inside, clawing at me. I fumbled to unbuckle my seatbelt and slid across the seat to get as far away as possible. Elias reached over and grabbed me, pulling me into the backseat. There was more space, and I crouched down on the floor just as he

ordered, heart pounding in my chest.

Suddenly, his claws extended, long and sharp, and he slashed at the wolf's paw still intruding through the broken window. His strike hit home—he ripped a bloody chunk from the attacker's limb. The wolf let out a high-pitched yelp and yanked its paw back, but it didn't jump off the roof.

Elias kept swerving wildly, but the wolf held on. Realizing that maneuvering wouldn't shake it, he slammed on the brakes hard. The wolf flew forward off the top of the car, landing with a

sickening thud and rolling down the road ahead.

"Stay here," Elias ordered, voice clipped. I nodded quickly, pressing myself against the seat. He jumped out of the car while I cautiously raised my head, peering through the windshield.

I didn't recognize the wolf lying in the road, but Elias walked toward him without hesitation, his form already starting to shift. He didn't need to stop or even slow down—his body morphed mid-stride until a huge black wolf replaced him, charging straight for the other one.

He collided with the enemy wolf in a blur of muscle and rage, tearing into him with savage force. The attacker tried to fight back, but he was slower, weaker. Elias's black wolf struck again and again, relentless. His fury made him terrifying to watch. The fight wasn't even—it

was a slaughter.

I was frozen, watching the brutal scene, when suddenly the back door flew open. A strong arm reached in and seized me, yanking me from the car before I could react.

I screamed and thrashed as I was dragged into the forest. The man was huge and powerful; I was no match for him. Thin and weak, I couldn't fight back effectively. Another man was waiting deeper among the trees, and as I struggled, he grabbed my legs and helped haul me further away from the road.

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Just as suddenly as it had started, they stopped. A low growl echoed through the trees, and the second man dropped my legs. I looked up to see a grey wolf crouched ahead of us,

baring its teeth. It was ready to attack.

The man holding me didn't back down. He shoved me in front of him like a shield and ordered

the other man to handle the wolf. Without hesitation, the second man shifted into a dark brown wolf and lunged at the grey one.

But the grey wolf was lightning-fast. It dodged the attack with ease and spun around, latching onto the brown wolf's hind leg with a vicious snap. The two fought in a violent blur, but it was clear who had the upper hand.

The first man kept barking useless commands, but the brown wolf was no match. The grey wolf managed to sink its teeth into his opponent's neck and shook violently until I heard the gruesome snap of bones. The brown wolf collapsed, lifeless, and the grey wolf stood over

him, blood coating his muzzle—but none of it his own.

Then the grey wolf turned his attention to us.

The man holding me adjusted his grip, keeping me between himself and the predator. But

that's when a second growl erupted—this time from behind.

He spun us both around, still using me as a shield. Emerging from the shadows was a massive black wolf, eyes glowing with fury.

Even without being told, I knew exactly who it was.

It's my Alpha, my Alpha Elias.

The man clutching me looked utterly panicked, torn between which direction to run. Before

he could make a decision, the grey wolf crept up silently behind him and lunged, its jaws clamping down on his lower back and yanking him backwards with brutal force. At the same

time, I was also dragged back, falling hard onto my back. But when I hit the ground, I realized he was no longer holding onto me.

Distant sounds of snarling, tearing, and bodies colliding echoed through the woods, but I barely registered them. My hand instinctively went to my head, where I could feel a wet, sticky sensation—blood. My fingers came away red from a shallow wound at my temple. I must've hit my head on a rock or branch during the fall. It throbbed, but I hadn't blacked out. I was still conscious. I was okay.

"Lyra!" I heard Alpha Elias shout, his voice full of urgency. He ran toward me and dropped to

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his knees beside me. His eyes immediately went to the cut on my head, and his fingers gently examined it. I could tell he was concerned, but honestly, it was nothing compared to what I'd endured before. I knew I was going to be alright.

Still, he didn't take any chances. Without saying another word, he lifted me into his arms bridal style. His chest was bare, warm and firm against my side, and despite the chaos, I felt a strange mix of comfort and embarrassment. I curled closer to him, taking in the quiet protectiveness in the way he carried me.

We were surrounded by several wolves, all tense and alert. Elias gave a quick command for

them to search the woods and make sure no attackers remained. Then he turned back toward the car with me still in his arms.

Back at the vehicle, he gently laid me down across the backseat. I watched him walk to the

trunk and return with what I realized were clean clothes. He crouched beside me again and

pressed a sterile gauze pad gently to my temple.

"I'm okay. Really," I whispered.

"You could have a concussion. Stay still," he said firmly, not moving the gauze.

"I've had worse, I promise. That barely counts as a scratch," I insisted, trying to sit up slightly.

"Were those rogues from Crystal River Pack?"

He let out a short, bitter laugh. "No. Crystal River's fighters couldn't pull off something like

that. They're pathetic. These were from another pack—one I've pissed off before. I'm sorry, Lyra. I didn't mean for you to be caught in the crossfire."

He leaned forward and rested his forehead gently against mine. The sudden closeness made

my breath hitch. I didn't know how to respond. No one had ever apologized to me before-

never sincerely. I was used to pain, to blame, to being invisible. Now here he was, taking

responsibility for something that wasn't even my fault. It left me speechless.

I reached up and placed my hand over his, the one still holding the gauze. He didn't pull away. We stayed like that, connected by touch and breath, until a voice broke the moment.

"Alpha. I'm so sorry," Luke said as he approached, clearly distressed. "I didn't know the bastard would pull her back when I grabbed him. I thought he'd let go. I didn't mean for her to get hurt."

So, he was the grey wolf. I had guessed right.

"Enough, Luke. I know you'd never intentionally harm her," Elias growled, his voice low and firm. "You saved her. That's what matters."



Luke hesitated, then asked, "So why is your father still coming after us?"

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Elias's jaw clenched. "I don't know," he said. "But now that he's touched my mate, I'm done playing games. The next time I see him, I swear I'll kill him."

His voice was full of fire and certainty, and the words made my heart race for a different reason. He would kill his own father for me?

Why?

What made me worth that? I didn't understand. I wasn't someone worth dying—or killing—for. Sure, we were mates, but every werewolf had a mate, didn't they? Why did Elias care so much

about me?

Elias returned to the driver's seat without another word. He started the engine, and we pulled away into the night, leaving behind the blood, the bodies, and a hundred unanswered

questions.

The motion of the car was starting to make me nauseous as I lay there, so I slowly pushed myself up into a sitting position. I caught Alpha Elias's eyes watching me through the rearview mirror.

"I told you to stay lying down," he said, his tone calm but firm.

"Lying down was making me feel sick. Sitting up feels better," I replied quietly.

He was silent for a second, then asked, "Have you ever even ridden in a car before?"

The question caught me off guard. It seemed so random, and I couldn't imagine why he would think to ask something like that.

"I've never left the packhouse," I admitted, barely louder than a whisper. But he heard me. I could tell by the low, guttural growl that rumbled in his chest after I spoke.

"I wasn't growling at you," he said quickly. "I'm sorry. That reaction wasn't meant for you."

I gave a small nod to show I understood.

Then, hesitating for only a second, I asked, "Why does your father want to kill you?"

## The Warrior's Broken Mate Chapter 09

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"My father did the same thing to me that yours did to you," Alpha Elias said, his voice steady. I leaned forward slightly, intrigued by the unexpected confession.

"Really?" I asked, curiosity piqued.

"Not quite as bad as what your father did. He was... something else entirely. But abuse is what ties the whole Vanguards Pack together. I founded it when I was seventeen. Since then, I've been rescuing werewolves who've suffered just like we did. I built this pack from the ground up," he explained.

"So all of your warriors used to be abused?" I asked, trying to understand.

"Yeah. Some were kids, some were adults. Many were Omegas, or treated as slaves in their former packs. I get tips from people—warnings about others who are being mistreated. I help them escape and bring them here," he said.

"Did you ever think your mate would be one of them?" I asked after a pause.

"No. Honestly, I didn't think I'd ever find my mate at all. So when I did find you... it meant a lot more than I ever expected," he replied quietly.

A strange feeling settled over me after he said that. I couldn't quite name it—something warm, unfamiliar. He said he was happy to find me. Was this... happiness? I don't think I've ever truly felt that before. Whatever it was, I liked it.

Because Alpha Elias's pack location was secret, he told me we'd take a longer, more discreet route to avoid being tracked. When we finally arrived, I saw that the territory was nestled deep within a gully, surrounded by forested hills. It was a perfect place to hide—naturally guarded,

with lookouts stationed above.

The homes here were all small log cabins, some completed, some half-built, and a few dozen already occupied. We drove through the center of the little village and stopped at the largest cabin at the far end. Even then, it wasn't grand—just a single-story cabin, unlike the sprawling

packhouse I grew up in.

Alpha Elias stepped out first and came around to open the car door for me. The bleeding from my head had stopped, and I didn't feel dizzy anymore, so I stepped out on my own.

I looked around at the village. All I could see were cabins—no stores, no gathering places, nothing like what I'd known before. I couldn't help but wonder where they got food and

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supplies. And it was so quiet—no lights, no voices, no movement. We were surrounded on all sides by trees climbing up the hill around the gully. It was oddly peaceful... but a little eerie.

"I told you it's not much," Elias said, coming up beside me.

"It's peaceful," I replied honestly.

He nodded slightly. "This is my house, behind us," he said. We turned and headed toward the largest cabin. As we walked in, he flicked on the light in the living room. The space opened right into the kitchen and dining area—simple and functional.

To my surprise, the inside was really nice—modern, even. Definitely better than I expected. There was electricity, an oven, a microwave, and plenty of cooking tools. Everything looked

clean and familiar.

He pointed toward the television and started telling me about all the apps and streaming services he had, but I didn't really understand any of it. I just listened quietly, trying not to

look confused.

The cabin was fully furnished, and I realized how big it actually was. It felt strange that he lived here alone. But I guessed it made sense—the Alpha always got the biggest house. Still, he didn't seem like the type to flaunt authority. I'd heard how he talked to the others. He didn't lead through fear or dominance. He was different from any Alpha I'd ever known.

He had told me he was raised like me. Maybe that's why he didn't take his people for granted. He remembered what it felt like to be nothing. To be used. And according to him, I'd had it

even worse.

"Come on, I'll show you the rest of the place," he said, breaking me from my thoughts.

I realized I was still standing in the entryway, so I slowly stepped forward. He led me down the hallway and showed me around: his bedroom at the far end, a bathroom beside it, an office on the opposite side, and a spare bedroom next to that.

He flicked on the light in the spare bedroom and gestured for me to go inside, telling me this would be my room—at least until I felt more settled here.

"I get this whole room to myself?" I asked, astonished, stepping inside and taking in the space. There was a real bed with a soft-looking mattress, big windows covered by curtains, and even a wardrobe—though I had no clothes to fill it.

"Yeah, it's yours. Do you like it?" he asked, and I turned around to look at him. He seemed a little nervous, like he wasn't sure how I'd respond.

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"I love it," I said with a soft smile. It was far more than I ever imagined. And this only confirmed what he'd said—he wasn't going to pressure me into anything. We weren't even sharing a room. He meant it when he said he'd take things slow. He kept his word.

"We've been on the road most of the day. It's pretty late, and we haven't eaten," Alpha Elias

said.

"Oh—dinner!" I perked up, brushing past him as I made my way to the kitchen. "What do you

have in here?"

I began rummaging through cabinets, trying to figure out what I could cook when Alpha Elias walked in behind me. Without saying much, he gently took everything from my hands and

motioned for me to sit down.

So I did, settling at the kitchen table, watching in confusion as he moved about preparing food. I had no idea what was happening. Why was he cooking? Wasn't that supposed to be

my job?

"You don't strike me as someone with a big appetite," he said, glancing over his shoulder at

1. me. I shook my head.

"When was the last time you ate?" he asked.

"I'm not sure. Maybe four days ago? Something like that," I replied quietly.

"Four days?" he repeated, frowning. "Was that normal for your father?"

"Yeah. He'd feed me when he felt like it. Sometimes it was shorter gaps, sometimes longer," I explained. I noticed his eyes darken to black for a moment before fading back to their usual

clear blue.

"Well, that's never happening again," he said, turning his attention back to the stove. I only hoped he didn't give me too much food—I knew I wouldn't be able to finish it.

While I sat there, my thoughts wandered to how quiet the entire village was. I hadn't seen or heard anyone else.

"Where is everyone?" I asked suddenly.

"They'll be back tomorrow," he said. "After we were attacked on the road, I sent everyone to our secondary location—just to be safe. Once we're sure it's secure, they'll return. The warriors are still around, though. They're out in the woods, taking turns on patrol to keep this place protected."

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I nodded and looked around the house from where I sat, noticing the little things. Objects I would've never been allowed to touch before.

Alpha Elias ended up making a really nice meal, even though it was something quick because of how late it was. When we were done, he went to his bedroom, and I stayed back to clean the kitchen and wash the dishes.

When he returned, he stared at the spotless kitchen, looking almost stunned.

“I was only gone five minutes,” he said, clearly surprised. I smiled at him.

Then he handed me some clothes—his clothes—since I didn’t have anything of my own to

wear.

“You probably want a shower. Everything you need is in there,” he said.

I took the clothes and headed to the bathroom. I ended up scrubbing myself three times just to feel clean, and washed my hair again and again until the grime was gone. When I finally stepped out, I felt cleaner than I had in years. My hair, wet and curly, had returned to its

natural light brown.

I slipped into one of Alpha Elias’s shirts—it fit more like a dress on me—and a pair of basketball shorts. When I came out, he was sitting in the living room watching TV.

“Wow,” he said, sitting up straighter. I immediately looked down at myself, panicked something was wrong.

“What?” I asked, tense.

“Nothing,” he said softly. “I thought you were beautiful before. But this... it’s nothing compared to now.”

He asked if I wanted to watch a movie with him. I agreed and sat down on the opposite end of the couch. At some point during the film, I must’ve dozed off, my head resting on the armrest.

I didn’t know how long I had been asleep, but when I opened my eyes, there was a dark, looming figure standing over me.

“Father,” I gasped, my voice sharp with fear.

## The Warrior's Broken Mate Chapter 10

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"Did you honestly think you could get away from me?" he snarled, looming over me. I turned to look at the other side of the couch—Alpha Elias was gone. Panic surged through me. Where had he gone? How could he just disappear like that?

"I... I..." I mumbled, unable to string a proper sentence together.

"You're going to wish you were never born," he growled, voice laced with venom. "If thought things were bad before, just wait. Your life is about to become a living hell."

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My heart pounded violently in my chest, and sweat poured from my forehead. He reached down, clutching my shirt to haul me off the couch.

I flailed my arms and kicked wildly—and then my eyes flew open.

Alpha Elias was crouched beside me, his expression alarmed. He leapt back when I shot up

from the couch.

"It's alright, Lyra. You were dreaming. Just a nightmare," he said gently, trying to soothe me.

"He found me. My dad found me," I gasped out, repeating it like a broken record.

"No, he didn't. You're safe here. He doesn't know where you are. Even if he tried, my warriors would never let him near you. He'll never touch you again. I swear it," Elias said firmly.

"Were you asleep too?" I asked, my eyes darting around the room.

"No. You weren't out long, but you clearly needed the rest. Why don't you try sleeping in the bedroom? You might be more comfortable," he suggested, inching closer once he realized I

was okay.

"No. It'll happen again. I'll just relive it." I rubbed my eyes, dragging my hands across my face.

He didn't say anything for a moment, just stood there. I noticed his gaze dip toward my legs where his basketball shorts failed to cover the old wounds. Raw red marks from the silver whip were still visible. Quickly, I grabbed the blanket and pulled it over my legs, feeling exposed and ashamed.

I didn't want him to look at them. They were ugly, a painful reminder of what I'd been through. I could only imagine what he thought of me now. His expression gave away nothing good. I knew he didn't find them—or me—appealing. The sight must have repulsed him.

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"Alright. Let's try another movie. Maybe a comedy this time? Something light-hearted might help," Elias said, walking over to the other end of the couch and grabbing the remote.

He started scrolling through the apps on the TV, searching for something to lift the mood.

It all felt surreal. Just sitting there watching TV like a normal person—it was unfamiliar, unsettling. I wasn't used to stillness. I kept thinking I should be doing something, anything. But Elias kept insisting I didn't need to. He said I had to learn to relax. Easier said than done.

Honestly, I didn't even know what relaxing felt like. Even now, curled up with a blanket, watching a movie, I felt strange. Wrong.

I glanced at the clock—it was 3 a.m. No wonder I was exhausted. We'd had a long, chaotic day with barely a moment to breathe. And yet Elias looked fine. No yawning, no signs of

fatigue. He just sat there calmly, watching the screen.

I knew he was staying up to make sure I was okay, and I appreciated it more than I could say.

Every so often, I'd steal glances at him. A couple of times, he caught me and I quickly looked away, pretending I hadn't been staring. But out of the corner of my eye, I caught a faint smile forming on his lips.

Not long after, a disturbance broke out outside. Alpha Elias immediately rose from the couch and headed toward the front door. Something told me he already had an idea of what was going on. Still, I stood up and followed him slowly, stopping at the doorway and leaning against the frame, only half of me visible from outside.



Three of his warriors were holding a man between them. Elias stood facing him, his expression unreadable, but it was clear from his eyes—he recognized the man.

“People are going to come looking for me. You know that,” the man said, his voice full of smug defiance.

“They won’t find you,” Elias replied coolly. “And if anyone dares come near this place, they’ll end up just like you. Isn’t that right?” His tone made it obvious that no answer was required.

“How do you know I didn’t come with backup?” the man shot back.

“Because my warriors aren’t careless. And you know that better than anyone,” Elias said,

voice hard as steel.

The man shifted his gaze past Elias, locking eyes with me. I instinctively pulled back into the shadows of the doorway, but not fast enough—he saw me.

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“Well, well. What’s this?” the man sneered. “Has the great Alpha found himself a new little

plaything? What about the others? They’re not going to like that very much.”

Elias turned slightly, realizing I was still standing there. His jaw tightened.

“Take him to the cave. Post a guard around the clock,” Elias ordered. Without hesitation, the

warriors dragged the man away, and Elias turned back inside, shutting the door behind him.

I didn’t speak. I simply returned to the couch, pulled the blanket over my legs again, and

turned my attention back to the movie as if nothing had happened. But inside, my thoughts

churned.

What did he mean by ‘others’? I knew what a bedwarmer was—I wasn’t naïve. But he said it in

plural. Did Elias really have more than one? Were women constantly coming through this house?

I didn’t want to ask. I was scared of the answer. And it wasn’t really my place to question it.

Who he brought into his home—or his bed—wasn’t my business.

“You know what?” I said, standing up. “I think I’ll go to bed. Try and get some sleep.”

I started toward the hallway, but Elias stood quickly and caught my hand. That same tingling

current zipped up my arm—strange and pleasant all at once. No one else made me feel that.

It had to mean something. Maybe it was a mate thing. I didn’t know.

“Lyra,” he said gently. “If you’re upset about what that man said, don’t be. There’s nothing for you to worry about. Especially not other women.”

His voice was sincere, but I kept my gaze lowered. “It’s not my business,” I muttered.

He stepped closer and lifted my chin with his thumb and forefinger, guiding my eyes to his.

“I swear, there is no other woman for me. Not since I met you. Whatever happened before—

whoever they were—it’s done. I would never hurt you like that.’

“Hurt me how?” I asked, confused. “We’re not... anything.”

”

He paused for a moment, then asked, “How much do you know about the mate bond?”

“Not much,” I admitted quietly. “Hardly anything.”

“When a werewolf discovers their mate, that becomes their whole world. I don’t care about

anyone else anymore. Now that I've found you, making you happy is all that matters to me. You're the only person I want in my life. Not anyone from before," he told me, his voice soft

but certain.

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More Rewards >

I knew I was clueless about everything involving mates, bonds, intimacy—even about being a werewolf in general. It wasn't like I ever had someone to teach me. I didn't have anyone to speak to about anything. Father and Luna would never sit down and have a conversation like that with me. And the library back at our old packhouse didn't help either. There was nothing in it about our kind's history or real information about werewolves. Just fantasy novels we all knew were made-up. So no, I didn't know nearly enough. I was painfully aware of that.

When he was done saying all that, I didn't really know how to respond. I just gave him a small

nod.

He let go of my hand, hesitantly, and I made my way to the bedroom. I shut the door quietly behind me, then sat down on the bed. A strange mix of emotions started bubbling inside me -ones I didn't recognize. I'd never experienced anything like this, and I had no idea how to

deal with it.

I crawled under the blankets and lay on my side, facing the window. We were tucked too far down in the valley for me to see the sky or the moon. But I could see the tree line running up

the surrounding hills. That was enough for me.

I didn't end up sleeping the rest of the night, even though I hoped I would. I just stared out the window. And the sunrise took its sweet time here. When it finally arrived, I got out of bed, sat

on the edge, and looked outside again.

The village was stirring—more people had returned, and I noticed children running around. Life was picking up out there, and it was getting a little louder. I decided to head into the kitchen for something to drink. But the moment I stepped into the room, I saw Alpha Elias already there, standing by the counter.

Without a word, he poured me a cup of coffee and handed it over. I'd tasted coffee before, but this was different. It didn't have that bitter, metallic aftertaste. It was surprisingly good.

He took a seat at the table and motioned for me to join him. I sat down.

Just as he looked like he was about to speak, the front door slammed open. The loud noise

made me jump in surprise.

I turned to see a woman with fiery red hair standing in the entrance, her expression blazing with anger.

"Lenore, what the hell is your problem?" Alpha Elias snapped, his voice hard.

"I'm not here for you," she spat. "I came to speak with that little b\*\*\*h who thinks she's your