

And Then There Were Four by Lilith Carrie

Chapter 106: Waking a New Lycan

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Damian.

For days stayed locked within that room, food being brought to me occasionally until at last, I was brought back before the Council and staring up at them and utter disbelief to what they were saying.

My heart broke with every word as I realized there was nothing I could do.

“Damian, we find you guilty. However, judgment has been sent to your pack that, if for some reason, Ivy, your mate, the Luna of your pack, did in fact, kill those people, she can take your place during the reckoning.”

The Grand Elder seemed almost robotic in nature as I watched him speak with no single sense of emotion; Alokaye smirking in the distance. His eyes trained on the Grand Elder as Allison’s eyes were focused on me with utter disgust.

What the hell was actually going on?

There was no way they could punish me for something didn’t do, and even though Ivy had done it, there was no way! would allow them to punish her. She was my mate, and I would protect her with my last dying breath.

All Ivy did was protect her people—her pack and family from those conspiring to cause them harm. It was what any Luna or Alpha would do in her situation.

0004 “This is absolutely absurd. You are sentencing an innocent

man to death while trying to hold that death over an innocent woman who did nothing wrong,” I yelled at them, my roar echoing off the walls as the people looked at each other with confliction.

“Elders, I ask upon you to not let this situation go. Even with his death, his brothers and mate are a threat to our ways. We must stop them before they try to destroy us all by killing him. We must confront the problem at it’s root,” Alokaye said as his words flowed off his lips like silk.

“What is it you suggest Alokaye?” another elder questioned as their eyes stared at him with suspicion. “Are you suggesting the council declare war with the largest pack in the country?”

“Yes, actually. I am.”

Shocked whispers flooded the entire room, and with them, I thought surely this couldn't be the response they would agree upon. War was never the answer, and what happened wouldn't have been basis enough for it anyways.

“What plan of action would you have?” the Grand Elder asked with a curious glint in his eyes as he leaned back within his chair, watching Alokaye closely.

“It's very simple, honestly. We hit the pack when they are at their weakest. The summer solstice. They will celebrate as packs always do, and we will strike out against them.”

“Are you kidding me?” | yelled once more, jerking against the chains that bound me. “You cannot do this. We are innocent. There are women and children there. They are all innocent and have done nothing wrong!”

“Enough!” the Grand Elder bellowed. “Your pack's fate is not my problem. They followed you and that woman they whisper about, the false god. She is no god, and I will not have her brainwashing the people with such nonsense.”

“You're listening to a man who is lying. Alokaye has no real proof!”

A blow to the back of my head had me seeing stars, and as | steadied myself, I peered up into the cold glare of Alokaye. “If that is the case, then your mate would have replied by now in order to bring herself forward instead of leaving the suffering of the innocent at the hands of the council. Do you think they are fools to be blinded by your arrogance?”

“What I think is foolish is to listen to a man who doesn't even seem like a man, one who is seeking his own retribution and his own salvation,” | spat.

“You dare mock this court!” the Grand Elder yelled, standing to his feet as he slammed his hands against the desk in front of him. “Who do you think you are?”

Slowly I stood from my place on the ground where I had knelt. The power of the chains holding me down were not enough, and though I was weak, I was still strong at heart. “I am Damien, the Alpha of the North, and there's no way I'm going to allow you to kill my mate or take my pack.”

Laughter consumed a small voice to the side, and I realized it was Allison who was laughing. Taking small steps towards me, she bowed her head at the Grand Elder and

then turned her glance once more in my direction. "Who said about killing her? It's you that's going to die."

"What?" | muttered in confusion, not understanding what was going on.

Leaning closer to me, she whispered. "When she unleashes her fury on the world, he will be free... it all starts with you dying first. Funny how things work in the end."

"Who will be free?" | asked her, searching for any answers that I could get.

"Oh, that would ruin the surprise," she whispered. "I can't wait to see her face."

Lashing out, I tried to hit her, bite her in anger. However, she moved out of the way, laughing. The elders stared at me with disdain in their face at the actions I had taken.

"It seems that you still are hell – bent on causing problems," the Grand Elder said clearly as he narrowed his gaze at me before turning his attention to Alokaye. "Do what you must, but do it with grace."

"NO!" | yelled loudly as the guards gripped my arms, pulling me back as Alokaye bowed his head to the elders and turned towards me.

"Take him back to his room, and stick him again. We leave in two days."

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Ivy.

Darkness fell outside, and as it did, I couldn't help but find sorrow because I was a captive in my own home. Prevented from leaving no matter how much I protested and tried to

make them realize we could make this work.

That we could do this without me being put at risk.

It was pointless, though. They were all determined to protect me and the children. Making sure that they held me behind a barrier I couldn't break no matter how much I wanted it to be.

After hours of crying and hot concoction Priscilla gave me, I drifted off to sleep.

It seemed like hours went by where I tossed and turned in the dark dreams I had. Dreams of watching Damian die before me, and being unable to save him. Unable to do anything to try and get to him.

“No!” I cried out softly as I jolted from my sleep, dripping in sweat as I peered into the darkness, realizing it was just an other dream. I was speechless, and with the eerie darkness in the room and the silence within the house, I cast my glance towards the nursery and saw the twins silently sleeping.

Their bodies laid peacefully next to each other, and not far away was my mother fast asleep. She had made it known she would help with the children whether I wanted it, and I tried to protest, but now I was grateful.

As much as I wanted to be the perfect mother, I was a mess.

How was I supposed to be the mother I wanted to be for the twins when all I could do was think about things I couldn't actually change?

Sliding from the bed, I considered going to get a drink.

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Though when I made my way outside of my bedroom door, I felt a wave of heat rush through me that took my breath away. “The hell...” | muttered softly, placing my hand on my chest.

Something inside me was pulling me down the hall away from the stairs. I hesitated, but when I did, I felt the heat grow higher inside me. With reluctance, I let my body follow the draw leading me down and around the corner until I came to a halt in front of a bedroom door.

It was James' room.

Like a tether binding me to his room, I opened the door and stepped inside. A rush of uneasiness washed over me, giving way to clarity I had never felt before. Closing the door and locking it, moving towards his bed slowly.

With every step I took, I felt the power growing with in me. The desire to prey on him was like a force I had never felt before. Captive.

It was the only word that rolled through my mind. I was a captive in my own home, and while they thought they were protecting me, they weren't. It was I who had to protect them, and I would in whatever way I had to.

Tantalizing desires coursed through my veins, and as I stepped closer, I pulled the blanket from him, slowly letting the sight before me of his naked body spur a fire in my core that had to be quenched. It was a thirst, primal hunger, that pushed me forward.

James didn't know what was to await him.

He laid peacefully, sleeping, unaware of the monster lurking

within his room. Unaware of the danger he was in, because the darkness inside me was clawing to escape. A sweeping wave of wind blew around me as I let the nightgown I was wearing slowly slide from my body onto the floor.

"James," I whispered softly, watching him stir in his sleep. My hands ran across his bare skin until his eyes opened slowly.

"Ivy-" he murmured as I climbed onto the bed, straddling his waist. My hips rocked in circles as I ground myself against him feeling his thick erection spurting to life.

"I need you, James," I said in a seductive tone that seemed to float within the air.

As his eyes finally focused on me, they widened in shock. "Ivy, what are you doing,"

"Can't I claim my mate as he once claimed me?"

"Ivy-" he muttered as my lips brushed against his. "Your eyes... you're not you."

"Oh, but I am," I grinned as I bit playfully at his lip.

A moan of satisfaction left him as I slid my wet, tight cunt over his thick erection, letting him penetrate me in such a slow movement by the time his entire length was buried inside me, it felt deeper than it ever had. The sensation caused me to gasp, and as I did, something inside me came to life.

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Reaching out, I gripped his throat. My claws extended, and my teeth bared as I rode him hard and fast. "Ivy-oh fuck. God, you're fucking amazing."

He grabbed at my hand as I continued. "It's time for you to awaken, James."

"What?!" he gasped out as I felt us both coming closer and closer to our peak. "Ivy, you have to stop... what's-"

Moaning loudly, he came, and as he did, I opened my mouth and bit down into the side of his neck, feeling the spark of something deep inside him awaken as our connection strengthened even more.

His cock twitched inside me as a low growl left his lips, and darkness swirled within his eyes. "Ivy,"

"Shhh..." I whispered. "It will be over soon."

Slowly a roar left his lips as he shifted beneath me into the Lycan he was meant to be. My claws were no longer enough to contain the power within him as he pushed me back, sitting up with a carnal hunger in his gaze. "Mate."

Small laughter escaped me as I kissed him. "Welcome, Ad nan. The last of my champions. It's time to join your brothers."

With them, I would take back what was mine and leave a wake of destruction in my path. The council wouldn't stand a chance.

Nor would the evil hiding behind them.

Chapter 107: Freaking Out James

James.

Sitting at the kitchen counter the next morning, I stared off into the abyss, thinking about everything that had happened last night. Ivy had come into my room and rocked my world as she usually did, but she said something I couldn't explain.

A feeling that overwhelmed me, and like a passenger in a car, I was forced to take a back seat while something else moved forward. Thinking of it now, how whatever it was moved with Ivy in sexual pleasure all night long, slightly haunted me.

My Lycan was brought forth, awoken from its slumber, and I wasn't sure how it had worked for my brothers, but for me... it was completely done in a sexual nature.

And now that it was awake, I could feel it underneath my skin.

Waiting to break free.

Cackling in the back of my mind.

"Hey, James," Talon exclaimed happily, causing me to jump-six inches off my chair as I spun around, staring at him with wide eyes.

"Don't do that."

Laughter escaped him as he stared at me with an odd

smirk, furrowing his brows. "What the fuck is wrong with

you?”

“I don’t want to talk about it,” I replied quickly as I tried to divert my attention back to the soggy cereal in the bowl in front of me.

How was I supposed to explain to my brothers what had happened? How Ivy was acting was completely unnatural.

It was like she was her, but also not.

As Talon stared at me, I tried to ignore his gaze, but then Hale came bounding into the kitchen with a smile upon his face and an empty bottle in his hand. He had taken shifts this morning with Ivy to feed the twins. We kind of rotated it just to make it fair, seeing as I spent most of my time with her and them, and they didn’t get to that often.

I was grateful, though, for the rotation this morning because, honestly, I didn’t think I could face her. After what she had done with me last night... I was in shock.

Whatever was inside me, she put it back to sleeping and just left, and I lay there in the dark, staring at the ceiling, trying to wrap my head around whatever the fuck had just happened.

“What the hell is the matter with him?” Hale replied, causing me to glance up as he and Talon exchanged curious looks.

“That’s what I’m trying to figure out. I came in here and said hey, and he jumped out of his seat as if the boogeyman was after him.”

As their eyes both turned back towards me, Hale stepped

forward, raised a brow, and placed the bottle down on the counter. “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing’s wrong. Why would you think something’s wrong? I’m perfectly fine.”

“Cut the shit. I can tell something’s wrong with you. I haven’t seen you this fucking nervous since the day you lost your virginity,” Hale replied, causing Talon to snort with laughter as he crossed his arms over his chest, giving me an amusing look.

“Fuck you. Tracy Ann was a complete fucking psycho bitch, and you, Talon, were the one that set me up with her,” I snapped at him, narrowing my gaze as I crossed my own arms over my chest, trying to show him he couldn’t get underneath my skin.

Not that he’d be able to.

There was something else lurking beneath there now. Something that laughed in the back of my mind at the current situation.

“Oh, stop it,” Hale snorted. “I can tell that something is wrong with you, so either you tell us now, or else Ivy will worry when I explain to her you’re not yourself.”

Mentioning her name, I froze and both of them stared at me and then looked at each other, seeing how I reacted upon saying her name. “There’s no need to tell her.”

“Did something happen between the two of you?”

Shaking my head rather quickly, I was doing a horrible job and trying to show them I was perfectly fine. So, deciding to

avoid the conversation, I quickly stood from the chair, taking my bowl to the sink and rinsing it out. “No. Why would you think that? I just had a bad dream, that’s all.”

“A bad dream?” Hale replied. I could feel his eyes boring into the back of my head, but I refused to look at him.

“Oh look, here she comes. Now, why don’t we ask her?” Talon said, making my heart lurch as I spun around, only to see an empty doorway and Talon and Hale, looking at each other with smirks on their faces.

Fuck, they caught me.

“OK, now that we got that out of the air, we definitely know that it has to do with Ivy. But what I don’t understand is why. You were perfectly fine with her yesterday, and now all of the sudden, you’re acting as if you’ve seen a ghost. So you can either tell us what’s been going on, or we can go ask her.”

Hale had a point. I couldn’t keep it from them forever. I had to tell him what she did, not that I didn’t enjoy it. I did enjoy it. I enjoyed it very much.

But she pulled the Lycan from me, awoke it, or whatever she did.

Glancing around, I stepped forward, looking down the hall, and then looked back to my brothers before gesturing to them with my hand to follow me out back. The last thing I wanted was for Ivy to hear the conversation I was about to have with them.

Opening the door, I stepped out into the cool air, and looked over my shoulder at them, waiting. They looked at each other and back at me, letting out a scoff that was almost

the sound of laughter as they stepped outside.

But even being out here just on the other side of the door wasn’t good enough, so instead, I started walking toward the guest house. Towards the woods that laid on the other side of it.

I had to get far enough away from the house so Ivy would not hear me tell them what I was about to, or anyone else for that matter. The last thing I needed was somebody else laughing at me.

“Dude, where the fuck are you taking us? We don’t have time for this shit today,” Talon said as he rolled his eyes, following behind me.

“Will you just shut the fuck up and follow me? Jesus,” I whispered harshly as I glared at him.

By the time we made it to the tree line, I looked around at the house, making sure she wasn’t looking at any of the windows or anything like that, and when the coast felt clear enough, I finally let out the breath I had been holding.

“Well...” Hale said with irritation. “Speak, now that you have us all the way out here.”

Glaring at him, I hesitated a moment before rolling my eyes. “Okay, so... last night I was sleeping. We all went to bed, remember?” I said, starting off the conversation.

“Yeah, You were one of the first people that went to bed and said you were tired and had a headache,” Hale replied, giving me a scrutinizing gaze.

“Okay, well, I know that’s true. I hadn’t been feeling well all

day yesterday. But that’s beside the point, because I woke up in the middle of the night to Ivy standing in my bedroom naked... and not just that, she was calling my name like some weird... ritual or something. Then she straddled me! We, you know....”

Gesturing with my hands, I tried to get them to understand what I meant without actually saying it. The two of them smirked at me again, crossing their arms with laughter.

“No, we don’t know. Can you be specific about what you did?” Talon asked, causing me to groan with frustration.

“We fucked okay?” I snapped at him, running my hand over the front of my face before it reached up to rub the back of my neck as I thought about what had happened.

“Okay, so why are you acting like that’s a bad thing? You’ve had sex with her many times.”

Hale’s statement was true, but none of those times were quite exactly like they were last night. “Trust me, I know. The problem being though, is that she was like different and not just regular different like she was really different. Eyes black, wing whipping... you know that kind of difference. To top it all off.... she did something...”

“She did something?” Talon said with annoyance. “Well, you just fucking tell us exactly what it is she did and stop beating around the bush... I have shit to do today.”

“Fuck my life,” I sighed. I just had to say it. It was going to be like ripping off a Band – Aid. I just had to take a deep breath and do it. “I think she awakened my Lycan.”

Both of my brothers stood there stunned in silence with

dead panned expressions on their faces as their arms that were once crossed over their chest fell loosely at their sides,

“Dude, did you hear me? I think she awakened,”

“I fucking heard you,” Hale said, cutting me off and mid sentence. “What exactly... in detail... not the sex detail, but that situation detail...” he sighed. “What exactly happened?”

Now they want fucking details on that shit!

Like it was something I really wanted to explain. I mean, being a werewolf is one thing I had years to adapt to. The fact that I shifted into a wolf, that is,

This, though, was not natural to me at all.

“She was... you know...” | shrugged. “Riding me, and then she kind of like, I don’t know, said this name. It’s a name I don’t want to say because I don’t want to accidentally wake myself up again... but it was like I was pushed into the back of my mind and watched as a passenger. As she and the animal, whatever thing I was kind of like, continued to fornicate.”

My explanations were exaggerated as I used my hands to kind of show the motions of fornication. All of which made Talon burst into laughter, as if it was the funniest shit he had ever seen in his life, slapping his hand against his knees, clutching his stomach kind of laughter.

Hale, however, didn’t laugh.

He stared at me with that scrutinizing gaze once more, as if he was unsure to believe what I was telling him. But I was being honest. I wouldn’t have been freaked out if it was all a fucking joke.

I mean, come on, it’s not every day your girl comes in and wakes you up playing with your Johnson and then decides she’s just going to awaken the beast like a tickle me fucking Elmo.

"I think we may have a problem," Hale replied before he reached over to Talon and shoved him to get him to shut up.

"Hey man, why did you do that?" Talon yelled at him. "You can't say this shit ain't funny. I mean, we all knew it was going to happen one day. She just did it a lot sooner."

"The problem is though, Talon, she shouldn't have been able to do that until he had already shifted, and he hasn't. The Lycan awakens in battle. That is the story. That is what we've been told, even what Father wrote down in his journals. The Lycan always awakened in battle."

Never once had I heard that, and perhaps that was some thing Kale and Talon should have shared with Damien and I a long time ago when he researched it. However, I was also always too busy with the different women, so I can see where that lesson would have been lost in translation, so to speak.

"Can I read the journals?" I asked, watching as Hale turned to me with a curious glint in his eyes.

"You know, I did try to get you to read them and learn about it years ago, but instead, at the time, you're only thinking with your dick. So now that your dick has gotten you in trouble, you finally want to heed the warning I gave you."

Nodding slowly, I bit on my bottom lip until a voice called through the air that made me freeze on the spot. It was Ivy, and as I glanced towards the house, she was standing at the backdoor calling for me and my brothers.

"James, where are you?"

Fuck.

What the fuck was I supposed to do now? I couldn't confront her. What if she was gonna, like, make me change again? I was panicking, and my brothers must have been able to tell because they each laid a hand on my shoulder and smiled at me.

"Hey man, you need to calm down," Talon said softly before Hale spoke up.

"Talon is right? You need to get your shit together, because right now, Ivy is herself, and if she feels like she's done something to upset you, there is a good chance that she will fucking snap at you. So unless you want to have an argument with her, pull yourself together. You're acting like she just gave you the fucking plague."

As my brothers turned and walked towards her, clearing the massive grassy space in between where we were standing at the back of the house, I could see the smile on her face light up as they drew near.

The same smile that drew me from my panic and urged me forward.

They were right. I did need to get my shit together, but I could not believe the crap that happened last night.

I wasn't sure what exactly she was, but she was my mate, and I had to trust her.

Maybe this was for the best... or maybe I was delusional, and she was up to something.

Chapter 108: Teasing James

Ivy.

Standing at the back door, looking at the guys by the clubhouse, I found confusion about what was happening. It wasn't like them to ignore me the first time I called, but I knew I wasn't the center of their world.

At least, I didn't think I was.

However, what caught my attention the most was how uncomfortable James looked. I had watched them before I came outside, and I saw how James dramatically flailed his arms around as if he was telling them a story. A story I fully knew already.

I could tell what happened last night had been on his mind this morning. The link we shared going crazy as he tried to push his thoughts aside and think of baseball, of all things, as I was trying to read him.

It was all too obvious though, and chuckling internally, I found amusement in how the great 'playboy' James was acting right now.

Power surged through me like nothing I had ever felt before, and for once, I was content, determined to get Damian back instead of feeling depressed.

I missed him, but I was taking the initiative instead of whining and crying about something I couldn't change. I was going to fix this.

I was going to get him back one way or another,

"What's going on? Is everything okay?" Hale said with a soft smile as he looked at me.

I could sense the beast lurking beneath his skin. It called out to me. Purring in a sense, but he held him back quite well. The Lycan respected him and chose to stay held back, not that it couldn't break free if it wanted to.

Hale and Talon had years of experience, though. Years of practice at control.

James was new to it, and the more he freaked out, the more out of control he would be.

I could almost see the electrifying aura that flowed over their skin. After awakening James last night, something in me changed, and I awoke this morning with a whole new outlook on life. I could see things I had never seen before.

“Yes, of course. Everything’s okay,” I smiled. “Is James okay? He looks absolutely flustered.”

The boys turned back to see James walking up towards us. A forced smile upon his face before he stopped, rubbing the back of his neck as he stared at me with a lopsided grin. “Hey Ivy, everything okay?”

Taking a moment, I stared at him as the corners of my lips turned up into a small smirk. “I’m great. A better question would be, are you okay?”

The amusement in my tone and the seduction of the way I asked him seemed to startle him. Both Talon and Hale looked between James and I before he burst out laughing again,

shaking his head as he walked past me back into the house.

My suspicions had been correct. Then James had told them what had happened last night and as I gave Hale a side glance, he hesitated for a moment before nodding and walking inside as well. He knew I needed a moment with James.

Yet, as James realized this, his face went pale.

“James, you a little out of sorts after last night? I can see that something’s bothering you, and nothing else has happened to you since then that I know of, and considering the fact Talon was just laughing, I can only assume-”

Tilting my head from side to side with a smile, I waited for him to finish the conversation I had started. If he was honestly that worked up about what happened last night, then, of course, I would apologize.

I didn’t mean for it to happen-it just did.

“Ivy, about last night. I wasn’t going to say anything,” he said, trailing off as he swallowed deeply, my eyes watching his Adam’s apple move up and down with his hesitation. “I honestly don’t even know what to say.”

Stepping forward, I kissed his lips, gently running a finger over the side of his face. “There’s no need for you to be afraid, James. I’m sorry that things happened the way they did last night. I didn’t mean for that to happen, but it was like something else inside me came alive. A name that was there... to fix all our problems.”

"My name?" he whispered, staring at me.

"Your true name... yes."

Letting the information slowly sink in, he nodded his head before wrapping his arms around my waist, pulling me close ly. "I'm sorry that I acted a little weird."

"A little weird?" | teased playfully, letting a small giggle es cape my lips.

"OK, maybe I was acting a little weird, but Ivy, you scared the shit out of me. I was literally a passenger in my own mind. You can't do stuff like that." There was seriousness in what James said, and I felt guilty. At the same time, though, I didn't feel guilty.

It was a complicated feeling I didn't understand but knew eventually I would.

"I know, and I'm sorry that I upset you. Did you really not enjoy the moments we had last night?" Looking up at him, batting my eyelashes, I sought forgiveness, and, of course, the puppy dog look I gave him instantly melted as he pulled me closer, kissing me gently.

"You know, I can't be upset with you, and last night was absolutely amazing. I mean, we've had a lot of amazing sex, but last night it was almost electrifying."

That was not a word I had thought to describe what had happened, but with the rush of sexual tension and power flowing around his room last night, one could almost assume that I had been electrifying.

"Hmm... I never really thought about it, calling it electrify ing. But perhaps the next time we have fun, it could be a lot more intense." Placing my lips against his once more, I bit playfully before turning round and sashaying my happy ass back inside the house.

James was a complicated man. Once upon a time he had been a complete ladies' man looking to take whatever woman looked appealing to him. That was until he met me, and in a way, I turned his life upside down.

| turned him from the town playboy into a gentle family man who only thought of others, and what he could do for them. I knew he would be the perfect father as the years went on, and honestly, I couldn't wait to have more children with him.

He was perfect in every way... even if he got spooked easi

1. ly.

James just wasn't expecting things to turn out the way they have with us, I suppose, which does honestly make a lot of sense because I don't think anybody normally would have been able to comprehend what the fuck we had going on.

Making my way inside, I passed through the kitchen to wards the living room, where Hale and Talon sat talking with Kate. I had gone off the day before on them when they had done what they did and I felt guilty because I could have handled it better.

I could see now they were trying to protect me and bless their hearts for thinking that putting a binding spell on the house would keep me locked in it.

Now that my warriors were awakened, breaking from this place would be a lot easier. I simply needed a few more things.

And to fulfill what I needed, of course-I needed Damian.

But getting Damien was the problem. Once I broke the

barrier, I would have to find a way to surpass everything the Council was doing and the darkness hiding behind them.

"Hey guys. What are you up to?" I asked as I stood by the opening to the living room, watching. Their eyes turned to me with curiosity.

"Not much," Kate sighed as she gave me a small smile of reassurance. "Angel went back out past the border to see if he could make his way to getting another audience with the council, but they turned him away, saying that they had business elsewhere and that they wouldn't be available for a few weeks."

Business elsewhere? I thought to myself as I tried to comprehend what she was saying. What kind of business could the Council have that they would refuse an audience? There were always elder members there, so it didn't make any sense.

Deep inside me, though, had that answer, and as much as I wanted to ignore it, I had learned from the goddesses and also Priscilla to listen to the voices and to take my gut instincts seriously. Because at the end of the day, they would give me the answers I needed.

"You don't think that they're possibly coming here, do you?"

I watched as both Hale, Talon, and Kate sat quietly, glancing between each other before looking back at me. "Honestly, Ivy, there's no point in lying. I was just trying to protect you before, and I do apologize for the things that we have done. However, that

doesn't mean that I'm going to let the barrier down, because keeping you protected is the most important thing to me right now. You and the children."

I wanted to argue with him, to tell him he was incorrect in his statement, but I chose a different path. "I understand, and even though I'm not happy with it, I'll accept it for now."

Lies. It was all lies. I wasn't going to sit idly by.

"Good," he replied before he stood to his feet. "I have a feeling that they might come here, Ivy, to get you, and that is another reason why the barrier was put up. Because we can protect the house, but not if you try to run out and give yourself up in order to protect one of us."

He knew me too well, and as a small smile tried to force its way onto my lips, I held it back. I didn't want him to see I knew very well what he would do if they came for me. Each of those men would turn around and lay their lives on the line to protect me and the children from whatever forces tried to take me. But what they didn't realize was I was prepared for that game should the Council come seeking to take me.

It would honestly make things one hundred times easier if they came here because it meant I had fewer miles to travel. I needed to seek the guidance of the Goddesses to speak to Frigga and make sure what was coming was what I had thought I had seen before.

"Well, I'm feeling a little tired after everything from last night, so I'm just gonna go take a nap. Is that okay with you guys?"

Talon snorted at my comment as he laughed, knowing full well what I was referring to. James pushed past me though, entering the living room and did not find amusement in what I said. "It's not funny."

Tod"Of course, it's not James. Nobody's laughing. Talon sim

ply seems to have lost his mind this morning," I replied as a twinkling glint of amusement loomed within my eyes as I glanced over at Talon.

"Am I missing something?" Kate asked as she looked between all of us.

"No, nothing too serious, but I'm sure the guys can fill you in. Anyway, I'm going to go take a nap. You guys try not to get into too much trouble and wake me up if anything happens?"

My hanging question in the air caused them all to nod in agreement. But as I made my way up the stairs, I sent a tantalizing vibe directly towards Talon. He had been a very naughty boy, laughing at his brother in his stressed-out situation.

Perhaps it was time he had his fill of me.

Or was it I'd have my fill of him?

Chapter 109: Preparing for War

They say when you are with someone long enough, you can almost feel their intentions before they even move. With the guys and I, it was just like that. Heading up the stairs slowly, I knew, without a doubt, Talon was following behind closely.

He had felt the taunting pull I had sent him, and as soon as I hit the top steps of the second floor, he grabbed me, spun me around, and pushed me up against the doorway.

"What are you doing, little wolf?" he whispered huskily into my ear, my lips parting as my tongue brushed against my bottom lip just in time for me to bite down upon it with a smirk.

"Little Wolf? I think you know I'm way more than just a wolf."

My taunting reply was just what he wanted before he dragged me into his bedroom and threw me down onto the bed. "I could feel you pulling me. Calling me to you. Is that what you want, Ivy? Do you want my hard, throbbing cock shoved down your pretty little throat?"

God, the way he spoke to me with his stern glare did nothing but make my cunt tighten with the desire to have him fill me. I wanted him more than anything. My mouth watering at the thought of tasting him again. "Yes."

Walking towards me, I slowly gazed up at him under dark lashes, just to feel the powerful tug on my hair as he yanked

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my head back with a sinister gaze.

"Do you wanna taste?"

"Yes," I said breathlessly, licking my lips as I watched him use his free hand to undo his pants, releasing the monster he kept hidden away. The curve ridges of his cock were hard and waiting. The shimmering glint of pre-cum across the head called my name.

I wanted it, and from the hungry look in his eyes, I could tell he saw my desire.

| slid from the bed and onto my knees on the floor; my mouth quickly wrapped around the length of his cock as I moaned in pleasure, closing my eyes, relishing in how good he tasted.

Over and over again, he used my hair to guide my head along the length of his throbbing erection, the soft moans coming from his lips as my eyes cast up to his face, watching his eyes close and his head tilt back in pleasure. He was enjoying this, and so was I.

Wet with arousal, my core ached as I clenched, wanting him to fill me and do terrible things to me.

I honestly couldn't wait for it, and also, I wanted Hale to join.

I knew I had to be patient, though. Hale wasn't in the mood for something like this, but eventually, I would get to lie with him again, and he would share my body with his brothers. Each of them took a piece of me.

All of their Lycans claiming me-especially now that Ad

nan, James' Lycan-was awake.

With a small pop of my mouth, I slid his erection from my throat, slowly standing to my feet. He didn't waste time grabbing me by the throat as he pulled me close.

"You are an amusing creature, aren't you?" his Lycan side said with a twisted grin. "Pulling me forward, taunting me. Do you want me to ravage you, girl?"

Out of the three of them, Talon's Lycan was the one who got my body on fire the most because he was more primal, whereas the others were analytical and cautious, more likely to surprise their prey before ravaging them.

"Yes," | whispered as I slowly slid the dress over my head, revealing my naked body beneath it. "Want this?"

His eyes flickered over my body, taking in every curve, every inch of naked flesh, until a growl of pleasure bellowed from his chest.

Not wasting time, he crashed his lips to mine and lifted me to wrap my legs around his waist. My dress was gone, and his clothing soon followed. He thrust inside me, ravaging me as a cry of pleasure escaped my lips.

But I couldn't wait for the day when the four of them would take me at once.

He was relentless in his venture, taking me over and over again before pulling out and tossing me down on the bed. He flipped me over, grabbed my hair, arched my back, and slid into me from behind.

The way he possessed my body was addicting.

“You’re a good girl,” he whispered in my ear. The sensations of our shared pleasure brought me closer and closer to the edge until I couldn’t take anymore.

“You’re a good girl,” he whispered in my ear. The sensations of our pleasure brought me closer and closer to the edge until I couldn’t take anymore.

With a loud roar, he pulled out, spilling himself all over me. As I came undone with him, I had to admit I was a little disappointed he didn’t come inside me, but then again, I just had children I didn’t need anymore right now.

Laughter escaped me as I stood to my feet, sticky from his release, and walked towards the bathroom, turning on the shower. Talon was a caring man when the deed was done, and he didn’t waste a moment joining me.

His hands slowly cleaned away the mess from my skin as he kissed the side of my face.

“Can I ask you something?” he said softly, causing me to smile.

“Of course, you can.”

“Why did you awaken James’ Lycan?”

The last thing I expected was for him to bring this up right now, but now that he did, I couldn’t help but feel slightly amused. “Because he will be needed.”

“What do you mean, needed?”

With a sigh, I turned to face him, raising my brow before reaching over and shutting off the water. “Not really a topic

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for the shower, is it?”

“Ivy,”

Stepping from the shower, I grabbed a towel, wrapped it around my body, and went out into the bedroom. I knew very well he was following right behind me, and the conversation was far from over.

“Will you stop?” He grabbed my arm gently as he turned me around to face him. “What’s going on?”

Taking a moment, I stared at him with curiosity. “War is coming, Talon. You, of all people, should be able to feel that.”

| “War?” He laughed, shaking his head. “We’re the strongest pack in North America.”

“That’s missing its leader.”

Shaking my head, I grabbed my dress and pulled it back over my head, ensuring it was in place. Talon didn’t understand right now what I was talking about, but in time he would. He would see what was coming. de

“You have changed, Ivy.” The whispered response stopped me in my tracks as I made my way toward the door. Deep down, I knew what he said was true, but I wanted to pretend it wasn’t.

I wanted to pretend I was the same person, but I couldn’t keep lying to myself.

I was changing.

“I’m fine, Talon,” | replied softly as glanced over my shoulder at him. “And soon... we all will be in a much better

position. Our family will be whole again.”

Talon

As soon as Ivy left the room, I stood clueless in the center, staring at the closed door she exited from. She was acting more bizarre than I had remembered her being, and the way she pulled me from the conversation downstairs still confused me.

Thad felt the pull. Felt a swirl of calm and longing tugging at the beast inside me. As soon as I cleared the room, he came forward, pushing me to the back of my mind as he took over and went after Ivy.

Taking her this time was completely different from before.

She was different.

Power coursed through her, and the moment I touched her, I became drunk on the feeling she created. Then when | acted in... that way... fuck me.

Running a hand over my face, I groaned before grabbing a pair of shorts from my dresser and pulling them on, Ivy's words echoed through my mind, and as my eyes glanced out the window, I couldn't help but wonder if she was right.

Deep down, I felt like something was coming, but I didn't want to admit it.

"Talon!" Hale said, coming through my bedroom door. "We need to talk."

esset. Turning, I watched Hale stop in his tracks as his eyes slid

around the room, taking in a long whiff of the air. "Ivy was just

here"

"Yes, and we fucked. Now, what do you want?" I snapped.

He opened and closed his clenched fists before sneering in my direction, pressing his lips into a fine line. "Lose the atti

tude."

"Well, don't waste my time."

"Waste your time?" Hales scoffed. "Anyway... Derek from the Blue Wolf pack just called and said his scouts got a whiff of council warriors near his land."

"What?" I sneered as I felt the shift burning beneath my skin. "When?"

"This morning. He said they didn't see the rest of them, but guessed two, maybe three. It looks like they are heading this way, but I don't want us to jump to conclusions. Perhaps they are simply heading somewhere."

"Without notifying packs?!" | growled. "I doubt that. They re on their way here."

Hale stared at me for a moment before laughter escaped his lips. "Why would they be on their way here? To get Ivy?"

"Are you insane?" I asked him with disgust. "Do you not re member the letter?"

He was quiet for a moment and then sighed. "I know, but come on... do you really think so?"

"Yeah. I do."

Pacing back and forth, I pushed past him into the hallway and stormed down the stairs with Hale on my heel. There was no telling what was going to happen, and if, for some reason, they were on their way here, we needed to be prepared.

All warriors meet at the pack house.'

I called out through the mind link. We didn't need to procrastinate any longer. Perhaps they weren't on their way here, but we needed to be ready either way. I would not risk the pack being hurt because of my lack of protection.

"Talon, what are you doing?" James called out as he and Hale stood behind me with confusion. "Why are you assembling the warriors?"

"Because..." I said, looking over at him. "We need to be prepared if something is coming. Damian would expect this, and I will not let us be blindsided."

The look on my brother's faces was one of shock but determination. They knew how dangerous our world could be, and the woman and children inside were what we had to protect.

Our pack was something we had to protect, and if we didn't, we would lose everything.

Chapter 110: Chaos at the Border

Damian.

It didn't take long for them to decide they were going to move forward with the plan, and before I knew it, I was dragged from the room, cuffed and blindfolded, and thrown into a vehicle. I knew deep down the destination they had planned. It was going to be my pack; it was going to be my family. —

Everything I had worked so hard to protect was going to fall.

Call me a pessimist if you will, but what was I supposed to think?

I wasn't there to protect my family.

I was an alpha, not able to protect his pack. What kind of alpha did that make me? Weak... pathetic.

I couldn't allow myself to go ahead with this frame of mind. I was better than this, better than them, and I spent my entire life trying to show I could be more than just damaged.

Plans started formulating in my mind.

Had to find a way to divert the attention.

If I could cause a distraction, perhaps I could find a way to escape. Find a way to make it back to my pack before it was too late.

From what I could tell, the Council had sent scouts ahead to assess the situation from the whispers and murmurs of the guards surrounding me. They were going to try for a surprise attack.

They were going to take down my pack little by little, with no warning.

There were defenseless women and children in my pack. I didn't make my women fight unless they wanted to. They had that freedom, so those who could not protect themselves, even though they had gained strength when Ivy completed the connection with the pack, would still be defenseless.

A sense of hopelessness washed over me, and before I knew it, the chitter chatter around began once again.

"I still can't believe that we're actually going to go in there and do this." A man with a gruff voice to my left proclaimed. "If she's anything like they said she is, she'll kill us before we get there."

I couldn't help but chuckle internally. He had a point. If Ivy could escape, pregnant or not, she would kill them all.

She was fearless when she wanted to be, and looking at her, you would never think such a thing because she was such a delicate woman, so petite, so thin and beautiful. She didn't seem like she'd be the type of person to hurt a fly, yet she was the most deadly out of all of us.

"Man, stop being such a little bitch. That stupid whore won't stand a chance if I get my hands on her."

A low growl echoed from me, and I moved to jolt forward and hit the man at my right, who said what he did. However, I

was restricted and unable to move, and because of it, I found myself even angrier.

I couldn't even defend her honor. No matter how much I tried.

"Oh, look, the Alphas decided to try to be brave. What, you don't want me messing with your little whore? Maybe I'll try her out myself before I kill her."

"Fucking touch her, and I will rip you apart and then kill everyone you love dearly," I threatened in a low and menacing tone as I gritted my teeth together, wanting nothing more than to tear this man apart at my side.

No one would touch my mate, no matter the circum stances.

If they laid one fucking finger on that pretty little head of hers, I would kill them all. I had worked too hard to ensure her happiness, to ensure she had a life with my brothers, a life that she deserved, and for the Council to unhinge that...

Well, it made me more lethal than I ever had been before.

"I'd like to see you try," the guard sneered.

"Yeah, you keep talking, big boy, but if I weren't tied down right now, you wouldn't have a mouth to talk from."

Laughter consumed the surrounding air, and as much as I wanted to rip them apart, I couldn't. I was drained, weakened by the silver in my veins and the silver on my wrists. There was nothing I could honestly do, and that upset me because I wanted to get revenge for my mate.

I wanted to be the strength she needed.

"You talk a lot of shit about a man who's unable to do any thing," the man to my left said with amusement in his voice.

If only I could see them. I had their scent, but I wanted to see what they looked like. Remember their faces so I could watch the fear drain from their eyes when I hunted them down.

"Yeah, and you guys talk a lot of shit for two men who have me downed with silver and afraid of a tiny, petite woman as if she could end your life at any moment."

My retort earned me a blow to the back of my head. I could tell the man to the left of me was not pleased with what I had said because I was pointed out a fact. They were terrified of her, of what was to come, because they knew we were not normal.

They ripped the blindfold from my head, and as it was; my eyes had to focus in order to see what was around me.

The two men, both burly and grim, stared back at me. The one to my left was fat and balding, while the man to my right had a large jagged scar down the left side of his face. Both of them tried to be intimidating and sinister, but it wasn't work

ing.

"There's no point in having him blindfolded. He can't communicate with them anyway; plus, it'll be a lot more fun having him watch us prepare to destroy his pack."

The sadistic comment from the man to my right, the burly one with the scar, and he stared at me with hatred. I wasn't afraid of him, though. Only one thing could scare me, and it

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wasn't anywhere near me-right now.

If I got free, he would be the first one I ripped apart simply for thinking he could fuck my mate as if she would actually allow it.

"You really must compensate for that tiny dick you have. Sitting there talking and thinking about raping a woman," I spat. "Not to mention you have a death grip on the knife like you think you will actually use it on me. He'd kill you for that."

His eyes widened as his jaw clenched, his knuckles turning white against the blade's hilt. Before he could even say a word, though, the other man quickly hit me again, and eventually, black spots invaded my vision, causing me to slip into darkness.

"Fucking let him watch. It'll be more fun seeing the terrified expression in his eyes when he realizes he's going to die." One of the men said, his voice getting shallower and shallower until they tossed me into absolutely nothing.

I wasn't sure how long I was out, but as I slowly came to, realized one thing.

We had stopped moving, and I was not alone in the van.

Fear crept through me, wondering if we had made it to my back yet. If we were here, and my people were dying.

However, approaching footsteps caused my mind to calm a little as the door opened, showing Alokaye and Allison standing before me. His eyes trained on me with a smirk.

"Good, you're awake. It's time to prepare for the final event."

"What are you doing? This is absolutely ridiculous. There are innocent people behind those borders," I snapped at him, rage showing on my face as the effects of the silver slowly dissipated in my veins.

However, not enough for me to be able to fight back properly.

"That is their problem. They chose their side," Allison sneered as she placed her hands on her hips. "Plus, they're not the goal that we want. It's that stupid little bitch you call a mate I want."

Chuckling to myself, I shook my head. "You have no idea what you're messing with regarding her. She will kill you all."

I was warning them, hoping they would heed that warning and turn back and realize how foolish they have been, but that was not the case. Instead, they were going to continue pressing forward and learn how unforgiving my brothers could be.

"She can try. She is nothing compared to me."

Alokaye turned to her with a narrowed gaze and shook his head. "You're foolish to underestimate her, Allison. She will kill you."

He knew it to be true, and thinking about her now, a pit of guilt formed in my stomach.

All I wanted was one more kiss, one more night with her, one more chance to tell Ivy how sorry I was and how much I

loved her. Instead, I was dragged from the van, put on my feet, and forced to walk. I knew what was coming as if the fates had sent out a calling song to take me home.

Walking and walking, my feet crunched against the dirt and gravel on the ground. The men of the Council were both dressed and, in their wolf forms, and slowly maneuvered through the woods towards my border.

I knew by now my brothers would have had the guards on full alert, and I would have prayed they heeded my warnings and taken serious precautions.

Goddess knows, though, I had given them plenty of guidance on what we would do in case of an attack, and Talon being the man that he was... knew what to do.

Talon wasn't like the rest of us. He was murderous, and his Lycan had a taste for blood far surpassing anything I had ever seen. He would fight to protect what was his until his last dying breath.

"We're closing in on the border," one warrior said softly as he approached Alokaye and Allison, who stood with smiles on their faces.

Casting his gaze up towards the sky, Alokaye smiled brightly. "It's almost time."

"What is?" I snapped with worry.

He turned to me with a wicked grin and laughed. "We can not proceed properly until she is present." Turning from me, he smiled at the warrior. "Let them know that we're here. Let them know that I have arrived."

Shock filled me, realizing just how serious this was and exactly what would happen. They were going to be awoken in the middle of the night; unprepared, unaware, and Ivy, my children, they all were going to suffer because of this because I allowed the Council to get me.

This was all my fault.

“No!” | cried out, trying to break free. Trying to get word to them to be prepared.

There was not much fight left in me, and now with every piece to the puzzle fitting together, I could have a little more clarity. I was the bait to get to Ivy. I was the sacrifice they were going to make.

I wasn't sure why I was being sacrificed... but nothing was done under this moon unless ritual. Something big was brewing, and with me being incapable of doing anything, my people and my pack's fate were literally in the hands of my brothers and my mate.

Goddess, protect them.