

46 DUTIES

Once I got into the healer's quarters, the guard who had accompanied me stood at attention and said, 1

"Alpha Xaden has requested that she reside with you from now on." He said.

Loren looked at me through his glasses. I half expected him to grumble at how I disturbed his peace, but he said.

"Alright." And then he went back to his work. The guard nodded and turned away, closing the door behind me.

Loren resumed his mixing of potions and reading his books while I just stood by the door, unsure of what to do.

Then he looked back up at me.

"What are you waiting for?" He asked me. "An invitation?" 1

I jumped up. "Oh no, uhmm no."

"Then come on in." He invited. "Go down that door; you will find a small room with a bed. Take it." 1

And after that, he returned to the work before him.

"Thank you," I said quietly.

He didn't make any comment on my disgruntled appearance or what had happened—that I was being brought into the room late at night.

He just went back to his work.

I didn't see the need to disturb him, so I walked on ahead to the room that he had pointed to, and then I walked in.

There was a small bed in it, and then I just lay curled up in it and willed myself to sleep, but I couldn't.

I sobbed silently so as not to disturb him, and I wondered what the point of my life was.

No one, not one single person, acknowledged me or cared about me.

I was a nobody in the eyes of these people, the same way I had been back home.

Eventually, I fell asleep.

I woke up the following day before it was even breaking dawn.



It was extremely dark, but I knew that it was already morning.

I slowly got up from the bed and found a mirror facing me.

My lip was swollen, and my head was bruised.

If I were a shifted wolf, then I would have healed by now, but here I was with proof of what had happened to me the previous night.

I arranged the bed and stepped out of the room.

Loren was asleep on a bench.

There was a makeshift pillow under his head, and he had no blanket over his body.

I turned back to the room that I had come out of and saw tiny personal things.

Then, it dawned on me that I had slept in his room.

I looked around the living space, which was filled with his desk and work table, along with his potions and a small couch.

There was no other door to show that there was another room.

I felt awful that he had given up his bedroom for

me and even slept outside in the cold.

It was rare for someone to extend such kindness to me—especially an older man.

Why?

I quietly swept the entire room and arranged it to what I felt was neat enough, and then I picked up the blanket from the bedroom and put it over his body.

I walked out of the room and went about my chores.

The paper that was filled with my duty schedule was folded in my dress, and I still had no idea how I was going to read through it.

I decided to do the chores that I had been given the previous day.

I'll find a way.

I worked in the kitchen, scrubbing pots and washing the dishes. The chef came in and let me in.

He was shocked.

"What are you doing here?" He asked.

"My duties," I explained.

He just stared at me vaguely and went on to start his cooking.

The chefs in packs were always the first to begin the day's work.

I knew he was stunned to see that I had even arrived before him.

He turned to his work and ignored me, and then I left the kitchen as soon as I was done.

I scrubbed the floors and mopped them clean, and then I went to the boiling rooms to set water for the baths.

As soon as I saw the girls who were going to be the ones carrying the water come in, I left and went down to the farm.

I began the planting and seeding.

Once it was daybreak, I was already done.

I bumped into the woman who gave instructions on work.

"Where are you going, missy?" She sneered at me.

"Oh, I was just going up to have my breakfast," I told her.

"You haven't even begun your work, and you want to eat?" She asked me. "Have you even had your bath?"

I swallowed. "I'm done with my work."

Her eyes widened in disbelief. "So you're a liar too, and just as bad as they say you are."

I chewed my fingertips in anxiety. "I'm not lying, ma'am."

"You're trying to take me for a fool, right? You think I don't inspect the works, huh?" She demanded, and then she jacked my dress and dragged me down the hall to the kitchen.

"Where is it done?!" She demanded.

The chef looked at her and me.

"She said she did her work? Have you seen her here?" She asked him.

I expected the chef to say that I hadn't done anything.

But he quietly said. "I don't know about her other jobs, but she is done with this one."

Her mouth dropped in shock, and she closed it back and then turned to me.

"You're lucky about this one."

She took me to all the places where I had done my chores, and her face was written in disbelief when she discovered that I had indeed finished them.

"Please, may I go now, ma?" I asked.

She was speechless, and then she said. "Uhhh... y-yes, you can go."

I nodded and went off to Loren's quarters to have my breakfast while she stood dumbstruck.

