

CHAPTER 103

103 Lucas: Bring Her Home LUCAS Selene follows us to the Blackwood pack lands, only veering off once we get close to Ava's family home. She refuses to listen when I try to herd her back in the direction of the alpha's home, slipping around my besotted wolf to trot her way into the front yard, inspecting every inch. She won't talk to me, my wolf whines pathetically in my head. f@ck, is that what I sound like when I complain to him? I hope not. He sounds like a lovesick teenager. Why won't she speak to me? It must be your fault. She's mad at you. I told you not to reject our mate. Again, with the me-blaming. I already know it's my fault; he doesn't have to rub it in. She's a dog, not a wolf. She's not talking to you because she can't. But my own explanation sounds... wrong. There's no way that husky is a normal dog. 15:21 103 Lucas Bring Her Home 103 Lucas: Bring Her Home LUCAS Selene follows us to the Blackwood pack lands, only veering off once we get close to Ava's family home. 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None of them know why we're stalking a half-starved domestic dog in wolf lands. I can't blame them for their curiosity, but I want to rip all their throats out for even questioning Selene's presence here. My wolf growls in agreement, and Selene suddenly looks back at us with a distinct look of disapproval. Is that possible? She just looks like a dog, and yet every bit of her radiates her disapproval of our frustration with the onlookers. There's an enforcer watching us. One of mine. You. Go open the doors for her. Every single one. I'm not sure what she's looking for, but let her search. Understood, he acknowledges, immediately jogging for the door. 15:21 My wolf snarls when he gets a little too close to the husky, but he's already used to our bad temper and continues on, opening the unlocked door. The house is under guard at all times, so there's not need to keep it locked. Selene stalks forward with purpose, her fluffy white tail held high, her hackles bristling. Ice-blue eyes narrow as she sniffs the entryway rug, a low snarl rumbling in her throat. She's angry, my wolf observes with concern. Why is she angry? Is she hurt? What's wrong? Selene whips her head up to glare at me. Did she hear that? Her lips pull back, revealing sharp white teeth as she growls again, the sound echoing off the high ceilings. My wolf lowers his head and whines, his ears flattening back. Sorry, sorry. Don't be mad. We're here to help. I snort inwardly. She's a dog, remember? She can't understand you. Shut up, stupid human, my wolf snaps at me. Our mate is upset. We have to fix it. 103 Lucas: Bring Her Home Our mate? I shake my head. She's not our mate. Ava is. This is just a dog. Ava's dog, but still. She's determined to find something, based on the way she's sniffing every inch of the entryway. What does she smell? I lower my nose to the hardwood, inhaling deeply. Bleach, pine-scented cleaner, the musty smell of the rug. Traces of Ava's scent, honey and orange blossoms, along with the bitter tang of her fear. It raises my hackles, even now. But nothing unusual. Nothing that would warrant Selene's intense reaction. Her nose must be inferior to ours, I muse. She's a dog, after all. Our senses are far more acute. Shut up, my wolf snarls, startling me with his vehemence. Selene is perfect. She's not inferior to anyone. His anger takes me aback. He's not usually this hostile when he's angry with me. Annoyed, sure. Frustrated, definitely. But this is new. We follow Selene through the house, my wolf's fannination with har hahavior amouine at mu mind Che 15:21 103 Lucas Bring Her Home huffs and grumbles as she investigates each room, her demeanor far too intelligent for a mere dog. It's unsettling. When we reach Ava's bedroom, Selene's agitation peaks. She leaps onto the bed, rolling and whining amidst the sheets. I can't help but take a deep breath, Ava's scent flooding my senses. Honey and orange blossoms, tinged with the faint trace of her fear. It makes my heart ache. She needs Ava, my wolf whimpers, hunkering down in the doorway. We have to take her to Ava. I was already think

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ing about flying her out there tonight, I assure him. Yes! My wolf perks up, his excitement palpable. We can see Ava too! We watch as Selene continues to burrow into the bedding. Her whines grow more pitiful by the second, tugging at something deep in my chest. We can't leave her like this, my wolf insists. She's hurting. Ava will make it better. Too bad she can't understand us. 15:21 100 Les Bring Her Home Or can she? The signals are pretty mixed. Shifting back into human form with my wolf's consent, I sit on the edge of Ava's bed. Selene stops frantically rubbing herself all over the blankets, staring at my approach with caution. "Easy, girl," I croon, reaching out to stroke Selene's once-soft fur. It's grimy to touch, and she needs to be brushed out. Her ears twitch, but she doesn't shy away from my touch. Relief trickles through me as she accepts the gentle caress against her head. My wolf's agitation settles somewhat as I rub her ears, the repetitive motion soothing us both. "I'm going to bring you to Ava tonight," I murmur. "You need to trust me." Selene stares at me for a long moment, her ice-blue eyes disconcertingly intelligent. As if she understands every word. Finally, she licks my hand, a soft whimper escaping her throat. She trusts us, my wolf sighs, the tension bleeding out of him Walltala agro of har Wa'll taka har to Arm 103 Lucas Bring Her Home We will, I agree, continuing to pet Selene. Her eyes drift shut, her breathing evening out as she slips into a restless nap atop Ava's bed. Even in sleep, her paws twitch and her nose wrinkles, as if she's chasing something in her dreams. Closing my eyes, I reach out to Vester through the pack bond. Bring me a change of clothes and a phone, I order. I'm at the Grey house. And book me on the next flight to Granite City, with a dog. On it, boss, he replies, his mental voice tinged with curiosity. But he knows better than to question me right now. For once, thoughts of Ava and Clayton's relationship aren't tearing me apart. My sole focus is on the husky curled up beside me, and the inexplicable need to reunite her with Ava as soon as possible. My wolf hums contentedly in the back of my mind, pleased with our current mission. Ava will be happy, he rumbles. We're bringing her Selene. I can only hope he's right. After everything I've put Ava through, the least I can do is return her beloved pet. Maybe it'll even earn me a few points in her good 103 Lucas: Bring Her Home graces. Though at this point, I'm not holding my breath. I have a lot to make up for when it comes to Ava Grey. Starting with Selene is as good a place as any.