

Her Unwanted Mate On The Throne By Caroline

Chapter 51 You'd really just let me go

"You...you're the leader of the rogues?" Doris painfully sat up and tried to move further away from him in the small carriage. He watched her with a curious expression, but made no move towards her. How fast was the carriage moving? Would she be able to jump out? "That's right, I am." He pushed a blanket towards her, Doris didn't dare reach out to take it. "Please know I had nothing to do with your kidnapping. The moment I heard about it, I came looking for you." "If you're the leader of them, why would they go against what you want?" Doris shivered and wrapped her arms around herself. Her mind was close to shutting down along with her body. It would be so easy to lay her head back and let the sweet feeling of darkness overcome her senses. Enzo cleared his throat and brushed back his dark hair. "With every pack, there are those who think they know better than the leader. What they did will not go unpunished, Doris. You have my word." Doris shifted uncomfortably. How was she supposed to trust the leader of rogues? After all of the horrible things she'd heard over the years about the rogues and what they were capable of-she was now seated across from the leader of them all. Her eyes drooped a little, she forced them back open to watch him. "Where are you taking me?" She demanded in a much stronger voice than she felt. "Somewhere safe where you can rest. You're not

You'd really just let me go being taken as a prisoner, Doris. You're free to get out and leave now if you wish. Although, I would strongly advise against that considering you look as if you're about to pass out." | Doris glanced out the window and saw nothing but miles and miles of darkness and snow. Even if she wasn't in agony, she wouldn't be able to survive the night on her own. Her clothes were torn and bloody, her wounds hadn't even begun to start healing and every inch of her felt frozen from the cold. Being alive was pure torture, every breath was worse than the last and her mind tried to convince her to close her eyes and rest even when she didn't feel safe enough to "We still have a bit of a ride, you can close your eyes if you need to. You're safe in here." Enzo said gently. She probably looked like a scared, bloody rat to him. One of these days she wasn't going to survive being beaten like that. It wouldn't surprise her if she never was able to open her eyes again Doris watched him for a few minutes. He offered a small smile and leaned back against the seat to look out his window. Slowly, her eyes lowered despite her fight to keep them open.

Warmth dabbled at her wounds. Doris woke with a gasp, hands gripped her shoulders to keep her down against the bed. Bed? Where was she? "Lay still, it's not closed yet." A shooting pain forced her to focus. She laid in sheets of cotton with a dressing gown that was too big to be her own. Her hair was unbound and wild, a woman she didn't recognize was pressing a warm cloth to her shoulder "This one was pretty bad, but I think you'll be okay." The woman said with a slight smile. Her grey hair

Si Yould really just let me go was tied in a knot on top of her head, she had smooth brown skin with not a hint of wrinkles in sight. "I had to sew it closed to get it to stop bleeding. You'll have to eat something to get back a bit of your

strength." "Where am I?" Doris whispered, her voice was hoarse. She tried to clear her throat but it only felt as if blood would come out if she tried again. The woman helped her sit up and handed her a cup of cold water. It was pure pleasure feeling it against her sore throat. She gulped it down greedily. "You're at the main rogue camp, Lord Enzo brought you here." "How long have I been out?" "Not that long, he only just brought you here about an hour ago and I cleaned you up once he left. He came back to bring you a plate of food again but left to give you privacy." The woman placed another pillow behind her back and set a plate of food on her lap. "You better eat every bit of that, you'll be passing out again if you don't." Doris felt her face and ran her fingers across her cut lip and swollen eye. She trailed her fingers down her neck where the animal of a man had bitten her. Doris briefly wondered how William would react if he saw another man had bitten her. Not that... it should matter to him. Melody was still his lady and still his mate. She was the one that he had meant to bite, not Doris "Thank you," Doris shakily gripped the plate. "What may I call you?" "You can call me Eliza." She said with another smile that didn't reach her eyes. Eliza seated herself on the edge of the bed as Doris started to pick at her food. "Those men you met... they do not speak for any of us. Our pack doesn't torture innocent women

You'd really just let me go for answers. I'm sorry for what you went through." Doris paused half way through her sandwich and blinked. The voice in the back of her mind warned her to remain cautious. They could only be trying to fool her into trusting them. Perhaps they would think she might tell them everything she knew about the palace if they were nice enough to her. Doris decided to play along into it for the time being, at least until she could get away from here and be safe again. "Thank you." Doris lowered her gaze. The woman patted her knee gently. "You try to sleep once you're finished. You lost a lot of blood and you won't feel better until you do." The bed shifted as Eliza stood and gathered the bloodied supplies, "If you need anything, don't hesitate to ask. I live right across the way." She headed for the door. Once it was closed behind her, Doris got up as quickly as she could manage without passing out again. The room was plain with a wooden dresser and rocking chair but not much else. Obviously no one else lived here, it had to be for the wounded or even for people that they wanted to keep here for questioning, Doris looked through all the drawers for some sort of weapon but only found extra clothes and towels. She carefully changed out of the night gown and pulled on a thick sweater and pants before she stepped into the boots she came here with. The room started to spin a little, she gripped the dresser and closed her eyes until everything was set right again. It would be so easy to lay down and sleep for a few more hours, it would be smart of her to do it... but the longer she stayed here, the longer she left herself vulnerable to them. Doris gripped the door handle and threw it open She immediately bumped into a hard chest and had

You'd really just let me go large hands reach out to steady her. "I think you forgot your coat, it's quite cold out there." Enzo looked almost amused to see her trying to escape. Doris quickly stepped out of his grip and backed away from him. He stepped inside and closed the door when a gust of wind blew in harshly. "I brought you some cake, it's still warm from the ovens." He took a large slice out from his pocket, she could see the steam when he unwrapped it. The smell of sweet chocolate almost made her groan-it's been a long time since she was able to enjoy something warm and fresh. "Are you sure you've gotten enough rest before you go? You're free to stay as long as you need." Enzo set the cake on her dresser and put his hands in his pockets. "I can have a bag prepared of food and supplies if you need." Doris lowered to the bed and rubbed her eyes." You'd

really just let me go?" "Of course I would. I'm a man of my word, you're free to go when you please." Enzo seated himself on the chair across the room. He looked around the bare area and shrugged. "I thought you'd like to stay here for a while until you're better." Doris looked around as well. "Here? Alone?" "Of course alone. We have spare rooms for travelers that need them, this is one of the bigger ones though it's still not much to look at. I would say you can decorate it with whatever you wish but I don't think you'd stay around long enough for it to matter." "Why are you being so kind? I thought the rogues were..." Doris let her words trail off, but she could tell he knew what she meant. "Allow me to tell you a bit of our story, if you're

You'd really just let me go willing to listen."

Chapter 52 You're safe here, Doris.

When Doris didn't object, Enzo dragged the chair a bit closer so he wouldn't be so far away. Still, he made sure to keep a respectable distance between them. "I know you've probably heard some horror stories about our pack—and had to live through one unspeakable experience but I hope I can help you understand us a little more." Enzo leaned forward and rested his elbows on his knees. After what she went through, she didn't think it would be possible for her to see them in any other light no matter how nice he was to her. "Years ago, our pack was able to break away from Royal House Arnold and their corruptive ruling. We made a life for ourselves out here—". "Excuse me," Doris interrupted. "Did you say Royal House Arnold has a corruptive ruling? What do you mean by that?"

Enzo looked at her with furrowed brows.

You're safe here, Doris. Doris shifted under his gaze. She knew how they treated her at the palace, but not the other citizens. "I've worked at the palace for over five years, I'm not allowed to venture into the towns away from the palace." Understanding lightened his eyes. "You're a servant to the palace, aren't you?" "Yes, of course I am. What else would I be?" "I thought you might have been the prince's—never mind. It doesn't matter. I'll tell you how they treated their own citizens." He stood and hovered near the unlit fire place. "You don't mind if I light this, do you?" "No, you can." Doris said. She watched as he leaned down to light the logs and warm the room. It was a small sense of relief to feel a bit of comfort from the flames. When he turned back to take off his coat, she noticed how handsome he was for the first time. His jawline was sharp and his eyes had a softness to them that made him look young. He scratched his scruffy jaw as he draped his coat over the back of the chair and seated himself again. "The kingdom has always made sure the citizens knew how they felt about them.

You're safe here, Doris If you were rich, you were favored and treated well by everyone. If you were poor..." Enzo sighed and leaned back. "The poor were treated... horribly. If you slept on the streets and stood in the way of an official, they would kill you to prove a point. Children were beaten, women were raped and sold. The poor had no rights and it was impossible for us to live. "They took advantage of us, and they still do for those that remain there. Even those of us who were alphas had no rights. The king took pleasure in knowing he could control those who couldn't afford to eat. He held so many lives in his hand and did nothing to help any of them. He encouraged the abuse, if anything." Enzo twisted a golden ring on his finger. "You were sold to the palace too, weren't you?"

When you were young?" Doris swallowed and nodded. She didn't want to talk about what she had been

through. "I was. When I was sixteen." "Then you know a bit of what I mean. You know how unfair it is to have your life sold away to the palace and not even get to breathe without their permission. You're a young girl who should have choices. Us rogues, we came here to be able to have a life where we could

You're safe here, Doris. choose what to do and not be killed because we don't have money." "I—I don't understand. Why are there so many horrible stories about the north? Why do you have rogues that torture others?" Doris asked. Her eyes flickered to her bruised wrists where the ropes burned her. He must have noticed, his face softened a bit as did his words. "We had to make a name for ourselves out here. We couldn't have the kingdom coming to rip apart what we made here. They tried when they heard we wouldn't listen to their ruling any longer. They came with hundreds of guards to tear us down but we were prepared and fought more viciously than they expected. We only allowed a few guards to survive to tell the story of how they were beaten." Doris pulled her sleeves over her hands. "It seems some of the rogues are still vicious towards others." "Unfortunately so. Some rogues think it's their job to make sure anyone that comes to the north is taken care of. Especially if they're royal. I know the royal members are resentful of us and our freedom from the kingdom, when they heard a prince was passing through -everyone was on edge and I should

You're safe here, Doris. have guessed they would react this way. I should have done more to prevent it." "Not all of the royal members are as resentful as you think. Not Martin or Daniel, not even William." Or she believed that at least. As horrible as some of the royal members were, she saw goodness in those princes. Even William-deep down. "Are you referring to Prince William?" Enzo said with disbelief in his tone. "Yes, of course I mean him-" "Prince William has been brutal since the moment he came into the north. He's been acting crazed since you were taken." "What do you mean? I know he defended himself when we were ambushed but surely you understand" "No, he's hunted down rogues who wished him no harm looking for you. Last I heard, he was tearing through each village to make sure you weren't there." Doris's lips parted, there was no way that was true. She thought he would have already been to the market by now and forgotten all about her. Why would he be searching so wildly for her? "I—I'm sorry," "Why are you apologizing for his actions?

You're safe here, Doris He clearly wants you returned safely to him, but you are not a piece of property. You can choose to go to him if he's near and I wouldn't stop you, but you can also choose your own path." "I am like a property to him and the palace. I'm a slave maid to them, they choose my fate." "Ah, but you're in the north now. Aren't you?" Enzo smiled at Doris. "Their rules don't apply to us." Enzo stood and grabbed the cake from the dresser. Doris watched as he neared her and placed it in her hands. It was still a little bit warm, but no longer steamed. She breathed in the scent before she took a small bite. "His mother was once a part of our pack when I was a child." Doris's brows raised, she paused her chewing. "Prince William's? The king's fated mate was part of the pack?" Enzo seated himself next to her on the bed, she felt a bit of heat raise to her cheeks. "Yeah, I had to be about four or five so I don't remember her well, but I've heard the story a hundred times. "The king had come through to speak to another alpha about the rogues. He was highly protected and no one was able to

You're safe here, Doris. get near him enough to even think about harming him. He must have scented that she was his mate across the camp because he was drawn to her immediately. I'm told it was love at first sight for him, even though he already had two children with his lady at home, the Luna Queen. "His mate despised him and what he stood for at first. Eventually, she fell for him too and he took her back to the kingdom. She promised she would sway him to change his ways-and he had, for a little while. Once she died, everything went right back to normal. Some even say it had gotten worse once she was gone." "I heard he found her on one of her journey's, I never knew it was in the north." Doris wondered if William knew this, or if it was kept hidden from him. *Were* there members of his mother's family still alive in the camp? She wasn't sure how he would take the news, but she knew he should find out about it eventually "Yeah, the king didn't tell his people where he found her. It wouldn't sit well with them if they knew he had fallen for a rogue when he had been trying to take us down." Enzo stood. "As the leader, I

You're safe here, Doris. speak for most of us when I say you're safe here. We only wanted to have a home where we weren't killed for being poor. We will do anything to protect our own and our home, but we would never harm the innocent." "How many rogues are...like the two that took me?" Doris asked hesitantly. O "I'm trying to make it so none of them are like them, but there are a few that won't be tamed. You're in my camp now, Doris. You won't be harmed here." Enzo walked to the door and glanced back with his hand on the knob. "When you're ready, come and find me. I'll introduce you to others."

Chapter 53 You could be free here.

Sleep caught Doris within seconds of laying her head down. She wasn't sure how long she slept. It could have been days or hours but she knew that her body was thankful for it. Not one person interrupted her or woke her abruptly like they usually did in the palace. 3 When she finally woke, she felt ready to face the day and all the secrets she had yet to unfold. Her mind was conflicted with Enzo's speech about the rogues and what they believed in. On one hand, she had been kidnapped and tortured by members of his own pack. On the other, she knew there were always black sheep in a pack. Ones that wanted to take control of things on their own terms. She had seen some of that in the palace firsthand Food and water was left for Doris by her door. She filled her stomach with fresh bread and oats before she ventured out into the snow to find Enzo. It felt good to be able to breathe fresh air. She felt determined. She felt...brave.

You could be free here, "Ah, there she is." Doris found Enzo almost instantly when she stepped out of her room. He was surrounded by Eliza and a few others who eyed her curiously. It was better than being glared at, she supposed "Were you waiting for me to come out?" Doris slowed her steps as she approached them. "Oh, no my dear. I came to grab Eliza and she lives across the way from you. Are you feeling better?" "Yeah, my shoulder doesn't hurt that much anymore." Doris ran her fingers over the bandage but she felt as if she wouldn't need it for much longer. Still, she was afraid to look at what was underneath. A knowing look passed between Enzo and Eliza. He turned a smile towards her and held out his arm for Doris to hold

"May I show you around?" "Oh, yes, thank you." Doris gripped his arm. Her eyes went to the two she hadn't met yet. "Don't mind them, they haven't met many

outsiders. This is June and Eli. They're among the younger ones in the pack_ "We're 17, not that young." Eli was quick

You could be free here. to point out. He held out his hand and Doris shook it. He brought the back of her hand to his lips and gave her a chaste kiss. "Pleasure to meet you, my lady." "Who said rogues couldn't be gentlemen, eh?" Enzo grinned and knocked Eli's hand away from Doris, Doris laughed and followed him down a path. She waved goodbye to the group and began to scan her surroundings.

The camp was rather large. It had so many cabins spread out, she would have called it a village. Perhaps Enzo enjoyed the comfort the word 'camp' offered, but it was no small camp. There was a tavern near the edge, a butcher and store. More than enough people to fill a village as well Everyone they passed turned to stare at her. Enzo listed off each of their names but there were too many to remember. A group of men near the tavern watched her with a more intense stare, part of her wanted to hide against Enzo's side. But she didn't. She raised her chin and walked right past their glares as if they weren't burning right through her. 3 "Some of the rogues in the village weren't happy to hear about Jules and

You could be free here. Darrell's punishment." Enzo spoke quietly as they walked. "They might hold a bit of resentment for you, please let me know if they approach you at all." "What was their punishment?" Doris asked, she glanced up at him. His face darkened a little. "Nothing for you to worry yourself over. They won't be coming near you again. Or any other innocent women. Doris swallowed and nodded. He patted her hand and led her on. Two small children rushed through the snow laughing. They paused and watched them hurry by. "Hi Lord Enzo!" They shouted as they passed. "Hello, little ones. Be kind to our guest." He said in a voice that sounded like a fake demand. They stopped and bowed. "Hello, pretty lady." They said together. Doris realized they must have been twins. One boy and one girl. Doris smiled and curtsied. "Hello there, how're you doing?" "Well!" They laughed before rushing off and waving their goodbyes. Doris watched them leave. "How many children live here?" "Oh, more than I can keep track of. The

You could be free here. males here can't keep their paws off their wives so there's always one popping out. Wolves can't control themselves sometimes." Doris felt her cheeks heat. A flash of William entered her mind. She shook her head and tried to forget the night he pinned her to the wet grass. If she wasn't careful, her shame would rise with it. Briefly, she wondered where he was and if he was okay. She was sure he was, Enzo would have told her otherwise. Word seemed to travel fast to him. A stunning tall woman dressed head to toe in black walked straight towards them. Enzo straightened at the sight of her. "Elena-" "Lord Enzo," she nodded her head and smiled. She shifted her gaze to Doris and she noticed her smile faltered a little but not completely. Doris dropped her grip from his arm quickly. "You must be Doris. Come, Sir Anthony would like to speak to you." Doris glanced up at Enzo with a question in her gaze, he only smiled at her. "You'll like him, don't worry. I promise he doesn't bite, he's too old for that." "Ah, don't let him here you say that, Enzo. He'll show you just how hard his

You could be free here. bite is." Elena smirked. Enzo watched her turn and lead the way with his gaze drifting lower to take in her body. Doris blushed and looked away until he snapped out of it. "This way," He said. She followed him

towards one of the larger, more fancy looking cabins. Of course, it was hard to pass off a cabin as fancy out here but this one sure looked it compared to the others. It had an elegant design carved into the wood that looked like flowers and art on the walls of glorious places she'd never been. An old man was seated by the roaring fire with his back to them, Enzo gestured for her to sit on the couch. When the old man turned to look at her, recognition flickered in her mind. "Oh, I know you!" Doris said. It was the old man from the cell in the palace, the one that healed her wounds when Prince Jack had beat her nearly to death. He smiled. "Doris, I'm glad to see you're okay. Although, I had hoped you would've had a few less bruises." His eyes roamed over the marks on her face. Doris quickly turned to look at Enzo. "You! You were the masked man, weren't you? That's where I know your voice

You could be free here, from!" Enzo held up his hands. "I would have saved you too-if I had known you were this lovely at the time." Elena glared at Enzo and stepped on his foot. He winced. Sir Anthony chuckled. "Nonetheless, I am glad you're alive, Doris. I haven't stopped thinking of you since the day I met you." "I never got a chance to thank you for healing me." "No need, my dear. No need." He waved away her words. "Sir Anthony is the founder of the rogues. One of the men from the kingdom had taken advantage of his kindness and kidnapped him to bring back to the palace as if he was a prize. I thought I would be the hero that I am and rescue him that day we met." Doris raised her brows. "Founder of the rogues? Oh my," Perhaps she was wrong about them after all. The founder had healed her wounds in the cell and the leader had rescued her from kidnappers. These were not actions of beasts, they were actions of good men. "I apologize we couldn't get you out that day. When we went back for you, you were already gone and at your trial." Sir

You could be free here. Anthony leaned forward slowly to pat her hand Doris offered a smile and shook her head. "You did enough for me, please don't worry yourself about that." "I was showing Doris around the camp to get a bit of an idea of how we really are and how we live. We're not complete animals." Enzo leaned against the mantel and crossed his arms. "Oh and how are you liking it here?" Sir Anthony asked kindly. Doris hesitated. "I... I suppose it's nice. It's not at all what I expected." "Were you expecting wild wolves and bonfires?" He asked. Doris laughed a little. "Something like that."

"Stay awhile and I'm sure you'll see one or the other." Sir Anthony smiled. "You are free to stay with us as long as you

wish."

"I-I have to return to the palace. I'm still a maid there." "Not if you don't wish to be. You could be free here."

Chapter 54 You've opened my eyes.

She could be free here. For the first time in five years she could be free. D She could start over in a place where the palace wasn't able to control her. She could live among those that fought to be free and lived peacefully away from the terror of the palace and the corruption that dwelled there. No more politics or being pushed around. No more wondering if she was going to be screamed at

that day or not. No more Melody trying to embarrass her and make her regret the day she was born. Here, they offered her somewhere to live *free* with no restraints... they didn't realize how much that meant to her. How many nights she dreamed of running far from the kingdom where they would never be able to reach here. This was... all she ever wanted. But But-Beth. "Would you excuse me? I just need some air." Doris stood quickly and almost knocked over the stool in front of her.

You've opened my eyes "Of course, are you alright-" "Thank you." Doris quickly hurried out the door and into the cold to take a deep breath of fresh air. She felt suffocated and dizzy from her thoughts. She crunched across the snow and seated herself on a fallen log-far from the eyes of anyone nearby. How could she forget Beth? If Doris ran away, Beth would be forced to stay there forever. There would be no freedom for her under William's say. Doris would never be able to live with herself if she knew that Beth was suffering. Her friend would never do that to her-ever. She always had Doris's back and was there to take care of her when she couldn't take care of herself. She stayed with her throughout her most awful nights and never once complained. Beth-Beth was her best friend Doris brought her legs up to her chest and hugged them tightly. It was strange wearing pants, she never owned a pair at the palace since it was proper and was always used to wearing dresses. Not that she minded, she liked dresses too. But it felt so good to have a pair of pants for whether like this. She laid her forehead against her knees and closed her eyes tightly—the only thing she saw was

You've opened my eyes Beth's face. How could she even think to trust these people after a day? They could be showing her some type of utopia on the surface to lure her in. Once she did, she would be at risk of their cruelty and betrayal. But... it was getting harder to convince herself of that. Enzo seemed too kind to be acting. Sir Anthony was kind to her in the cell and healed her wounds not knowing that one day she would be in the north. Their kindness was too bright to be false. Wasn't it? If she returned, there was always a chance that she wouldn't be granted her own freedom. William could speak against it and keep her there, or the king could cancel it altogether and she would never get to feel the fresh air on her skin again. She would never get to travel and see the world and live free. She would only be known as a maid and treated like one. But what kind of monster would she be if she stayed? "Doris?" Doris turned her head to see Enzo standing behind her. He was alone with his hands deep in his pockets and concern on his face. "May I join you? Or

You've opened my eyes if you'd rather be alone, I can leave." She lowered her feet to the ground again and shook her head. "You can join me." Enzo seated himself next to her and looked out at the frozen lake in front of them. The air was still and quiet, though in the distance she heard a bit of laughter. "Have you ever skated on ice before?" He asked without looking at her. "Oh! No, I would probably fall." Doris said, she pulled at the hem of her sleeve." During the winter, the small lake at the palace freezes over. No one goes near it except the children. Sometimes they like to skate around it if it's thick enough." "It's quite fun. I could show you to if you'd like." Doris offered a weak smile but didn't respond. He finally looked over at her, but she wouldn't meet his gaze. "Staying troubles you. Is it the prince you're worried about?" Enzo asked. "No-well, sort of. It's more of my friend at the palace." Doris said. "A lover?" Enzo asked with raised brows. Doris laughed and shook her head. "Oh, no. I don't have a lover." Enzo tilted his head a little. "My best friend, Beth. She was to be on the amnesty that's

You've opened my eyes. being signed to free her. I was too, actually. We were going to leave together and get as far as we could away from there but-" Doris paused. Enzo spoke lightly, "But what?" "But I was sent on this journey with Prince William. If I don't return, she's not allowed to ever be free." A mix of understanding and a new confusion fell across his face. "Why would it depend on your return?" "They wanted to make sure I wouldn't have run off somewhere... exactly as I'm considering doing now. They know we're close and they know I would never leave her to that fate." "I see." Enzo let out a sigh and crossed his leg over the other. "It's not easy having people to care about. Our minds make us think of them before ourselves and we're forced to be unselfish." "Exactly." Doris said. "All I've dreamed about for the past five years of my life is being free. I went to bed every night pretending I was somewhere far from there where I wouldn't be punished if I dropped a plate or yelled at to clean someone's laundry. I would be free to live how I wanted. So much of my time

You've opened my eyes has been stolen, but I don't think I could allow Beth to grow old there because of me. She deserves to be free, too." Enzo hummed in agreement. He scratched his jaw in thought. "I could kidnap her and bring her here. Then she could live free with you." He tossed her a grin, Doris laughed a little. "I don't think the palace would appreciate you taking two of their servants. I wouldn't want a war started over this." "If you return home and they allow you both free, would you choose to live somewhere like here?" Enzo asked quietly. Doris thought for a moment. She looked around at all the snow and took in the sounds of laughter. "I don't know. I don't think I would want to stay in one place so soon. I think I would travel first and see more of the world before I decided where to stay. Who knows, perhaps this would end up being my favorite place and I would come right back here." There was also the darker side of the rogues that concerned her. Sure, most of them seemed nice enough. But she experienced what darkness was in this pack and she didn't want to meet more

You've opened my eyes of them. She didn't want to live in a place where she would be afraid to look over her shoulder. The men at the tavern sent chills down her spine. Were they just as bad as the ones that took her? "I think you're brave for wanting to return to the palace for your friend. Many people would run the first chance they got and never look back, no matter who it hurt. Your heart is too good for that. Your friend is lucky to have you." Enzo lightly bumped his shoulder against her own. Doris offered a small, sad smile. "You've opened my eyes, Enzo. I feared the north for so long but now I know what it's like. Perhaps others like me would find their place here once they were free, too." "We would welcome anyone like you, Doris. Count on that." Enzo stood and held out his hand to help her up. Doris stood and smoothed out her sweater. "We've lost sighting on where your prince is, but I'm sure he will show up sooner or later. He wasn't very happy with my pack the last time he saw them." Enzo said as they walked. "If he hasn't forgotten about me, that is." "Oh, I don't think he's forgotten about you. As you recall, he was pretty

You've opened my eyes. desperate in his search for your wellbeing." Doris snorted and then blushed at her own sound. That wasn't very proper for her to do, but Enzo only laughed. William must have felt guilty she was captured

since he was the one that made her come on this journey. At times, she felt they had some what of a bond but other times she wasn't sure. Enzo broke off from her to walk with Elena down another path. Doris tried to remember the one that

led back to her room and got a bit turned around when she found herself lost in thought. "Ay, you!" A deep, gruff voice called from behind her. Doris hesitated before she turned to see a tall man at the end of the road. "Get over here, I'm talking to you."

Chapter 55 A full moon.

Doris stood her ground and didn't move an inch towards him. She glanced at her surroundings, but didn't see another person near enough to see them. How had she strayed so far from the path? Would anyone even help her if they were near? "Can't you hear? I said to get over here!" He shouted, the sound made her flinch when it echoed around them. Doris curled her hands into fists at her sides. She was tired of people screaming at her and telling her what to do. "No. I'm going to my room for the evening, good day." Doris turned to continue down the path. She regretted turning her back on him the instant she heard his footsteps smack against the snow. He grabbed her arm and forced her to turn and look at him. His breath smelled like alcohol and death, she blinked away the flashbacks of the night she was attacked and pushed him away from her. The movement knocked the hat off his bald head, he angrily picked it up and shoved it back on his

A full moon. head as if he were ashamed of his lack of hair. He grabbed her arm again when she started to back away from him and held her tighter against his body. "What's your problem? I heard you liked listening to orders at the palace." He hissed, Doris pushed on his chest to get away from him. "Let me go, you animal! You're hurting me!" Doris started hitting his hand that gripped her, he laughed as if she was acting like this for his own entertainment. It infuriated her. "Listen here," he grabbed her shoulders and shook her harshly like a rag doll. "I don't trust you in this camp. I know you're more than you claim and I won't let them feed you information that'll get us all killed." He leaned closer to her, Doris stomped on his foot as hard as she could but he didn't seem to feel it. She wondered if his feet were frozen from the cold, or if he was simply too drunk for it to phase him. "I'm not-" "Save it, little one. Jules and Darrell knew exactly what was best for this pack and I'm going to finish what they started." He picked her up off the ground as if she

A full moon. weighed nothing. Doris panicked and punched him directly in the throat like Erik had once told her to do. The man dropped her and coughed roughly as he held his throat. Doris quickly stood and ran from him, but she could hear his steps close behind her. He grabbed the back of her sweater and yanked her back, she fell to the ground and grabbed at anything she could reach before he lifted her up again. "You have some fight in you, don't ya?" He laughed like a madman. It was as if he got some sort of sick thrill from watching her fight for her life. The joke was on him, Doris was tired of being the victim. He straddled her and went to wrap his hands around her throat. Doris tightened her grip on a sharp rock and smashed it against his head. He fell off her instantly with a scream. e Doris wiped the blood off her face before she crawled away from him and went to stand. He caught her leg and forced her back down to the ground. "Oh no you don't, you bitch!" He growled. She could hear the wolf in his voice and felt her veins freeze over. If he changed into his wolf, he would rip out her throat in

A full moon. seconds. Doris kicked at his face and tried to crawl away from him. He was so much stronger, even as wounded as he was. He pinned her face to the

ground and straddled her back. She could hear the sound of his belt buckle being fumbled with and her stomach twisted with pure fear. "You stupid bitch, you deserve this," Suddenly he was off her as if he was never there. Doris took a deep breath and slowly turned to see Enzo holding him by his throat off to the side. A group formed around them quickly, Elena helped Doris stand and they both stepped away from the men. "What do you think you're doing, Stephen?" Enzo asked the man with a voice dipped in poison. He held him as if he weighed nothing off the ground. Stephen gripped his arm and struggled for breath. Those around them watched nervously. Elena put her arm around Doris to comfort her, Doris watched the scene almost as if she was detached from the moment. She didn't feel as if she was even in her body anymore, almost as if she was watching it from beside herself.

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A full moon 1 pathetic man on the floor. "You heard the lady, she says you're lying." Enzo pulled a small knife from his pocket and leaned over to grip Stephen's head. "You know what I do to liars and to those who disobey me." "No, please! I just wanted to talk, I'm sorry she got scared!" Enzo gripped his tongue and cut off half of it without a hesitation. Doris gasped a little with the crowd around her. No one could dare look away from Enzo at the moment.

Enzo tossed his tongue on the floor and cleaned off his knife on Stephens jacket. "There. Now you won't be able to lie to me again." Enzo took a step back from the screaming man and tried to speak over his agony. "If I see you talking to her again, you won't like what I'll cut off next. Got it?" Stephen screamed and nodded at the same time. He was desperate to get away from Enzo, he slipped in his own blood as he tried to stand. Once he finally did, Enzo slapped his shoulder so hard, he almost fell again. "There. Now, if your wife wants to know what you did to deserve this, point her to me. I'll let her know exactly what you tried to do to this

A full moon you." Enzo gripped her hand that held his arm as if to give her a bit of his strength. "Thank you for that." Doris whispered. She lowered her eyes to the ground. "Never thank me, ever. I don't deserve to be thanked for such things." They stopped at her door and Doris rubbed her tired eyes only to see a few scrapes on her hands. She hadn't noticed them during the fight, but they were there now. "Will you be alright?" He asked and stepped back. "I will eventually." "Good, I wouldn't want you to miss tomorrow." "What's tomorrow?" Doris asked weakly. "A full moon." a