

Unwilling 111

Chapter 111

David being here with me didn't offer me any relief. Sure I was able to take a hot shower.

And Hannah had stopped by with new clothes that did not smell like him. She got me ugly

stuff either way too baggy or way too revealing. But I would just have to make do. Little

did she know my scars had healed, and my fear of showing my body, and my skin was

long gone. Sure I did not want to dress sexy for David, but it wasn't for him. It wasn't like I

picked the clothes out to please him.

She had also brought some food over, burgers and fries. David's favorite, don't get me

wrong I love a good burger. I can even appreciate the big fast-food chain burgers every

now and then. Just not the cheap run-of-the-mill fast-food restaurant David loved to go to.

Still, it sustained me, so I did not complain, I knew I had to give him the idea that I was

getting used to this. Getting used to us. So I just keep quiet, not complaining but not

chatting with him either. Just co-existing in silence, David was playing games on his

phone. Saying I needed to earn the privilege of getting a book.

All of a sudden, David bends over doubled in pain. At the same time, I felt hope swirling in my chest. I don't know what was happening but Griffin must be close. I knew he was coming for me, I did as soon as I saw the video on his website. He must have done something to hurt David from this distance. I needed to get David to bring me to the packhouse. He can't possibly know Griffin in the reason for the pain in his chest.

"Do you not need to be home at the pack to care for our pack members?" I carefully ask him.

There is a sting in my heart as I refer to the BloodMoon pack as our pack. It hurts the bond I started creating with the Silver Moon pack. I didn't mean it of course but I knew that's what I had to say to keep him happy. To make him believe he could make me fall in love with him again.

"You're just saying that to make me leave you alone again. Don't think I don't see right through you" he snarled

Hmm, I needed to play this better, he still was too paranoid.

"No I wanted to come with you, did you not want me to fulfill my role as Luna?" I try to

sound as sweet and demure as possible.

Still looking at my hands, again to not show him the anger in my eyes. While acting like I was so obedient that I did not dare look him in the eyes. Something unreadable flashed behind his eyes. Showing me there was something terribly wrong. I just hoped Griffin wasn't in any danger. And I needed a way to either get out and go to the pack. Or at least go outside so that I can leave some sort of a sign for Griffin to find me.

For now, I decided to shut my mouth and make sure I kept David happy. Whatever just happened, might put him on edge. And he has proved himself to be very unstable. If I push him too much he might freak out and hurt me. More than just a slap to the face because I annoyed him. I could deal with those because, in the end, it was a sign of his weakness. Of getting under his skin so bad that he wanted to slap me.

Not that I need to aggravate him enough to slap me in the face either. I had to gain his trust. Even when every ounce of kindness I gave him made me feel physically ill. From how much I loved him and from how strong the matebond between me and Griff already

was. It was not like David noticed anyway he was so lost in his own mind, That he hardly noticed me and what I did. Not unless he wanted my attention, or if I did something extremely annoying to him.

Maybe I should come up with ways to make David notice me in a more positive light. Do something kind to him, I could swallow my pride just to make sure I was going to get out soon. I mean I should not be able to feel Griffin close to me as we hadn't completed the mating bond. And I don't know how but in my mind I knew that was what I was feeling.

Sleeping next to David had been horrible, I couldn't sleep most of the night scared he would try to snuggle up to me. The times I did fall asleep I woke up every single time he moved. And turns out David twists and turns a lot in his sleep. He was thrashing around mumbling things. For a while, I tried to listen in to see if he would say anything that would be useful to me. Either about where we are, or what his next plans are. But none of it made, sense Hannah came by again the next morning to bring us breakfast.

Maybe I could use the fact that Hannah was the one providing us food now. I could act like

the jealous mate. I need to be slow about it though even David would realize that

something was wrong if I suddenly became jealous about Hannah. However the fact that

we could not stand each other did help. It would make more sense for me to be jealous of

Hannah than it would be about a pack member I used to like.

Not to mention the stench of David coming from Hannah the first time I saw her after

being kidnapped. I couldn't care less whether they f ucked or not. But it would serve me

as an excuse.

Where I needed to be sure I did not annoy David, I had to try Hannah as much as I could.

Preferably in a way that David would not notice and see me as innocent. Something the

past between me and Hannah helped with again, he saw me as nothing more than her

defenseless victim. And annoying Hannah would be much easier than being kind to David

would be.

David was still showering when she came in, so I rushed out to get the food from her and

plate it up for David and I. Knowing he was out of earshot, I sniffed her. Immediately

triggering her.

“Thank the Moon Goddess you managed to shower this time. All though if it’s not for

David fucking you until he can get better things” I said waving a hand over my body

making it abundantly clear I was the better thing.

“I bet no one is desperate enough to fuck you, come to think of it I think the Omega you

rejected died because he was sad he couldn’t be the one to reject your skank as s first” I

smirked, and I loved seeing she was livid.

I heard the shower shut off so I put the plates and mugs on the table and started plating

the breakfast she brought. It was lukewarm again and I needed to know if that was

because we were too far from the pack to get the food here on time. Or because Hannah

was a lazy bitch who was taking her sweet time to get here.

“What did you say you filthy whore” Hannah growled at me just as David walked in.

Hannah was so angry she did not notice him, or maybe she just didn’t care. I normally

wouldn’t have either. Now I need to make him believe that I did.

“No-no-nothing Hannah” I stammered grinning at her when David couldn’t see.

Then I turned to him lips trembling, eyes as wide as I could.

“Please Dave, don’t let her do this to me again” I pleaded using the nickname I used when we were kids.

“Hannah, leave my mate the f uck alone” he roared.

As Hannah tried to explain what I said, I took a step closer to David no matter how much I hated that.

“Please, David why would I say that?” I pleaded again but something changed in David’s attitude and I knew I had to be careful now.

“You tell me, Ayla?” He said in a cold clipped voice.

Chapter 112

Before I could answer though Hannah came at me. And oh I wanted to fight back this time.

I let it happen to me, so that David could see that I was the innocent one. Hannah grabbed

my hair, which I had tied up in a ponytail. She used my hair to pull me closer to her and

raised her fist ready to hit me. For a second I wondered how far David would let this get

before he would intervene. Or if he would intervene at all.

But before her fist connected with my face, David stepped between us.

“ENOUGHH, Hannah I do not care for your opinion on Ayla, she is my mate she will be your

Luna. You will respect her” he growled at her as I winked at her.

David couldn't see but Hannah did and she was fuming, honestly, this was the most

entertainment I had since I got here.

“Is she now David, do you not know what happened yesterday? Did you not feel it?”

Hannah countered David's anger.

She wasn't scared or upset just thoroughly annoyed. It was funny they had both rejected

their first mates to be together. They obviously had, the entire pack knew and they had

whispered about Hannah and not me becoming their new Luna. Which was met with

mixed feelings. From what I gathered they started sleeping together from the first second

David rejected me. People bullied me with it, and it used to be heartbreaking. I got over it

and apparently they did too.

Because before David could introduce Hannah as his Luna. Hannah was looking for bigger

and better things in life. She must really get tired of playing my second violin. If she

wasn't such a vile and vicious bitch maybe I would have pitied her. Now I just hated her

guts, as she

did mine so we were even in that regard. After all the abuse I never guessed there would

be something she could do to make me hate her more, but she did.

When she was going back and forth between David and waiting to see when Griffin would

reject me. David had started rethinking his choice of rejecting me. Which all led to him

killing his parents and me getting kidnapped. While he was arguing with me like an old

mated couple, hell I felt more like their pup than the mate of either of them.

And like a small pup, I kept quiet, not because I feared them. No, I was right about the fact

that something happened. Hannah seemed eager to remind David who in turn seemed to

be deadset on keeping that information from me. The more he kept it from me the more I

wanted to know. The two of them had entered a screaming match. The second I would so

much as move either one of them if not both would notice me. Blowing my chance of

overhearing whatever happened at the Blood Moon pack.

Hannah said she doubted the chance of me becoming her Luna because of it but that could be everything. Griffin overtaking the Blood Moon pack could be a reason. The council interfering with just all about everything could be a wrench in the works. Hell even me not accepting him would in the end f uck everything up for David.

No matter how many mistakes the Moon Goddess made, because I was sure she was flawed like all of us. Her making sure that you could only complete the mating process as both of the partners agreed was some solid thinking. It gave me a sense of safety, it meant David had to try for me too, which I could use for my benefit. It also meant he could not mate with me. Because of how strong our matebond had gotten over time I feared that could be the end of Griffin.

“No, Hannah, not today and that is my final say. I am still your Alpha no matter what happened and as such you will listen to me.” David must have used his Alpha voice.

because Hannah looked to the floor,

whispered “Yes, Alpha” and she walked away,

David did not speak about what just happened and I was smart enough to keep my mouth shut too. I was unsure what to do next, I used to think I knew who David was. What he liked and what he would want me to do. But I learned the hard way that I had no idea who David Birch really was. And I needed to act exactly how he wanted me to now more than ever.

“Sit, let’s talk about what just happened,” He said and his tone was hard to read.

I decided I needed to show my submission, most Alpha’s would not want their Luna to be submissive to them. David however deemed women to be beneath him. Where with my true mate I was his equal, David wanted me to be submissive to him. More of a maid than a mate.

“I am sorry David, now our breakfast got cold, even if it was already lukewarm when Hannah brought it here. I am so sorry she must have been tired from walking all the way here. Only for you and her to get into a fight. When I know you are best friends” I stared at my feet again.

I had come to find out that David liked feeling like I was too scared of him to look him in the eyes. Now that I knew what to do, now that I had a plan to get out of this I was going to. Whatever David needed to feel secure and like he was having power over me. I would do until I could escape.

“She doesn’t have to walk far, she is just a petulant little bitch, but that is not what is bothering me” He exasperated.

I knew what was bothering him, this entire morning had been a shit show, and now he was having a cold breakfast. On top of whatever it was that had happened to the pack. All I cared about was the fact that I knew more about where we were now. We could just walk to the pack in less time than it took for our breakfast to cool down.

“I wish I could just be with you at your home” I started careful to not mention the pack even if it was. Or well should be because with what Hannah was talking about I wasn’t sure about anything anymore.

“Oh is that so, I thought you didn’t love me anymore” Right away the cold, clipped tone was back when David spoke.

This man had more mood swings than a pregnant she-wolf. It made me need to tread extra carefully and it was honestly exhausting but I had to deal with it. Stroking his ego might be a good idea, so I tried a new approach.

I sighed deeply before answering him. “I don’t know anymore David, I used to more than anything. You know I wanted you to be my mate. And when I smelled it was you it felt like a dream come through but you rejected me and stopped being my friend. Did you not know what Hannah and her friends were doing to me?”

He didn’t answer me he was listening to me his arms crossed. I had forgotten he did that and how much I hated it. Even when we were friends, even back when I was hoping he would turn out to be my mate.

“Then Griffin found me, because Hannah made me, I needed to get away from the abuse. I didn’t like him at first, but he was so good to me. Everything you never was, you would never be. For most of my life, I would have never considered a man who wasn’t like you.

But with how much you hurt me how could I not? I thought I had gotten over you but when

I heard Hannah brag about the two of you having sex without protection I didn't know

what to feel" I lied through my teeth, when he almost forced himself on to me he told me

he wouldn't want protection convinced that wolves cannot get pregnant when not mated.

All I could do now was hope he was the same with Hannah, and that, it was the little detail

that would make him believe me. I didn't even have a plan ready for when he would not

believe me, for when he used protection with Hanah.

Chapter 113

"Jay, I know you and your family left the pack only partially because of its leaders. That

several packmembers beat up your daughter regularly. And even more who bullied her or

mocked her. I do believe that this had something to do with the leadership" I started

because I wanted him to know that I was not making this decision light-hearted.

"I agree, and I know Ayla wanted to become the Luna of the pack still to make it better. To

have this pack thrive, but I don't know if I like where you are going with this?" Jay was

hesitant.

And I understood why, he came from a long line of Alpha's so he knew how this was going to play out. Tessie, Dan, and Krystel who I all wanted to be part of this conversation all did too. Their faces showed it all.

"You probably won't but knowing your daughter, my mate wanted to help this pack thrive only makes me more certain. So please Jay Hemming would you be the BloodMoon pack's new Alpha? Or at least for the time being because a trial will have to commence. And we won't know the ou..." As I was asking Jay to take over as Alpha.

There was intense shooting pain in my skull, my hands flew up to my head. It felt like someone was viciously pulling my hair and I wanted to slap away the hands. But everyone in the room with me was just staring at me worried about what I was doing.

"Someone is hurting Ayla" I mumbled still clutching the back of my head

As fast and as suddenly as I felt the pain it disappeared. Hopefully because whoever was pulling on Ayla's hair. Most likely David let go

“This is the answer I needed, I will become the Blood Moon pack’s Alpha at least until we have my daughter back,” Jay said standing up.

He wanted it to be over, he wanted to be the Alpha so we could start our rescue mission.

All the members had to talk to him. even if he would not use his Alpha voice. Which he wasn’t allowed and knowing him he wouldn’t. And even with how depleted and poor the Blood Moon pack had gotten, we would still have an army to help find Ayla. A small army would be better than no army at all.

Since it was relatively early in the morning, we immediately gave Jay his Alpha rights. So once again and hopefully for the last time, I used my Alpha voice to summon all the pack members to meet in the main room.

I felt no love for this pack, not ever what they had done to Ayla. Still seeing a pack small enough that they would have been able to gather in a normal living room made me pity them. I never understood why we were told to not speak ill about the dead. If they had not

been good people in life then why would we act like they were when they passed away?

Like Alpha Philip Birch and his mate Luna Jenna Birch, they let their pack wither away.

From what I understood from the Hemmings on several occasions.

How the Birches led the pack was the main reason for the pack's number to dwindle as

they did. Not only did they not want Omega's in their pack which are a vital part of the

back. There are only so many high or mediocre ranks a pack could hold. And we are pack

creatures, the bigger the pack the stronger you are. As everyone could see here at the

BloodMoon Pack. Hopefully, Jay could fulfill Ayla's wish and make the pack thrive again.

And I hope she won't be too mad at Krystel for not being able to be her Beta. First, though

I had to tell the pack.

"Dear members of the Blood Moon Pack,

As I have told you, and you should have felt last night David Philip Birch is no longer your

Alpha. With no living and present family members remaining in the pack you all need a

new Alpha that is not a Birch. I have spoken to all of you and neither of you had any issues

with Jay Hemming as your Alpha.

With that, the Royal family and the Council of Elder Wolves have decided that Jay

Hemmings will indeed be your new Alpha”

There is a loud roar of applause and approving howls as the new pack bond forms. So far

the only wolves who did not come to the meetings were David, Hannah, and her family.

This meant David still had a pack, but it was a small pack so in a fight we would be able to

win. The only thing was, that by the laws of the council, I had to go home to the castle

now. I had to let the new pack bond form and leave the pack alone. Without interference

from the royal family for a week.

I understood the need for this rule, I really did. But not now, I would mean a week where I

could not go look for Ayla. Of course, the Blood Moon pack would continue searching for

her. I was sure of that, especially now the pack was being led by Jay. But I noticed I was

feeling better as soon as I arrived at the Blood Moon pack.

Most likely because I was closer to Ayla now, normally a matebond shouldn't be this

strong. Not without having completed the mating process. I do not know why our

matebond seemed to be so much stronger. After all no royal wolf had ever been in a situation like this. What I did know was that if I felt it Ayla would too. And I would hate for her to think that I had given up on her. Or on finding her when she would feel I was getting further away from her again.

I wish I was able to mindlink her, but that was about the only thing we would gain from finally completing the mating process. Then again if I had been able to mindlink her this close. I could have just asked her if

she knew where she was. We could use the mindlink connection almost as a sonar. The louder it would get, the easier it would be to mindlink the closer I would be to her.

Suddenly I was overcome by the fear that I would never be able to hear my mate's beautiful voice in my mind. My entire chest started getting tighter and tighter like my lungs were going to implode from the pressure. My vision is blurring, like I am watching the pack celebrated their new bond. Even the Hemmings are joining in on the celebrations, and I got it that is what they needed to do now. To show they are going to be

good leaders to the pack. Their pack members needed to have that sense of hope.

I just didn't have any hope left, all the voices were so loud but still I could not hear a word they said. My legs are about to give out from under me. Something was wrong, but I did not know if something was wrong with me or if something was happening to Ayla. Daniel came running up to me, but he ended up going in slow motion. I tried to tell him to hurry up but my voice didn't come out when I opened my mouth no words came out. Before he could reach me every everything went black. The last thing I could hear in the pitch-black of my mind was Ayla calling out to me. That was the moment I knew something bad was happening with her. Something I might have been able to stop if I had only found her in time.

Chapter 114

When I come to I am in a hospital bed in the BloodMoon pack with Tessie at my bedside, not as my worried mother-in-law but as the pack doctor. Without her, the pack had been without a doctor. So she got right back to it even temporarily. Now that her mate was the new Alpha, she was the Luna and the doctor to the pack. She seemed fairly relaxed, I

figured that was because it had to do with Ayla being in pain again. Not with my body.

“Griffin, you had a panic attack. Do you know what triggered it?” She asked me.

I couldn't register what she was saying, I was a strong royal Alpha wolf. I should not be

having a panic attack.

“I don't want to offend you Tessie, but I don't think it is possible for a wolf like me to get a

panic attack” I tried to reason with her.

She crossed her arms and glared at me, almost motherly. I do not know if this is because

of the bond we have. Or if this is how she looks at every patient in the hospital. But it

makes me feel small.

“No, you're right it's not like you've been under a lot of stress lately. It's not like the most

important thing in your life is missing” She shrugged making me see how ridiculous I was.

“I was suddenly scared that I would never hear Ayla's voice through the mindlink. And that

I understood why I had to go back to the castle but it feels bad going away when I can feel

she is close” I just lay it all on the table.

If I am getting panic attacks I am not as strong as I used to be. As I

thought I was, I had been so deadset on being the one to find clues. The one who saved her, but I was getting nowhere, the more time that passed the bigger the chances were she got hurt. Maybe the panic attack was what I needed to realize I couldn't do this on my own.

After having to stay in the pack hospital for the rest of the afternoon, just so Tessie could keep an eye out on me. She worried and hovered over me like my mom would do. Mom had even visited me, both insisting I needed to take better care of myself. They are not even wrong but I couldn't rest before I had Ayla back in my arms.

Still, I felt a little better about asking for help when I had to leave to go back to the castle.

Alpha Jay had promised me he would send out patrols twice a day. With how small the army had gotten that was the most he could do. Meanwhile, Father had ordered some heat-seeking drones. Once I could control from my castle with an app. They would land at the edge of the BloodMoon pack. In a designated spot. Where the guards on patrol around

the borders would pick it up and place it in the charger.

That way I did not have to stay here to try and find some clues. Of course, I would also contact more Alpha's than we did before. And I needed to contact the human government to see if they could help me. Usually, they do not get involved with the pack business. But since this was a crime against the royal family they might be more inclined to help out. To make sure that the peace among the packs would remain. A reasonably small war between two packs did not hurt the humans and thus they would not get involved.

If an all-out war broke out between several packs including the royal pack and at least one other pack. It could hurt the humans, and that had always been enough motion for them to get involved.

Part of me hated that I had to sit in an office, going to stuffy meetings

instead of being out there actively searching for her. But I knew it was what I needed to do.

And I had done for the past week, there was still another week left before I finally could go

back to the Bloodmoon pack. It had been almost three weeks now since I got the letter.

Four weeks since I last saw her. Not wanting to leave me she had stayed until Monday morning, she had already quit her job at that time. So she didn't have to leave at the crack of dawn.

Still, I had been so tired that I overslept. Her alarm didn't wake me. Neither did her getting ready and leaving me. By the time I woke up, all that was left was a sweet note on her pillow. I still have the note. At the time I sent her a sweet text thanking her but I wasn't too bothered about it. Sure I was a little bummed out but I thought I knew I would see her at the end of the week.

I would get nightmares about her blaming me because I did not wake up to see her off. Or that she would fall for David again because I didn't even get up to see her off the last day she saw me. I would wake clammy, my heart beating wildly. It never lasted long because when I was awake I knew my sweet, kind, loyal Ayla would never do something like that.

Still, it made me worry about how she was feeling. Did she regret slipping out and letting

me sleep? Did she realize her last message never got through? When I made the video announcement after letting the pack know it was all a lie. I felt so certain this was the way to go. That she would instantly see all the hints I put in the clip. In my mind it would comfort her to see the hints, knowing I was coming for her. Ever since getting back to the castle after being close to her, I was second-guessing every decision I made.

The desperation was clawing at my intestines with cold iron claws.

Leaving me restless and desperate. I was back to the point where I could hardly swallow any food down. Only now I was hiding the fact that I was surviving on coffee and the mandatory dinner with my parents. A dinner that was always followed by a run, Conan seemed to be the only one who truly understood me. Which makes sense he is missing her just as much as I am.

I am on one of my runs again when I get dizzy, my breathing gets labored only this time my vision isn't blurring. I am still well aware of where I am, it is nothing like the panic attack I had the other day. This time I feel claws wrapping around my throat cutting off my air supply. Then I hear her voice in my mind

“Griffin help me”

I know it cannot be we are miles apart from each other and we do not have the ability to mindlink yet. But I know it is her, I don't care how I am suddenly able to hear her when I shouldn't be able to. All I care for is the fact that my mate needs me and I am going to get her out. We tried to do it the right way, tactical, careful to not hurt innocent bystanders.

We tried so for three weeks and are no further to find her. I am over it I will find her this week no matter what it costs me. I will travel back to the BloodMoon Pack tonight with the entire army and I will burn down every inch of the forest surrounding the pack until I have my mate back in my arms. And I don't care about the enemies I will make along the way.

Not my parents, not the council.

It is high time I let the world see what truly matters to me. Because Ayla is the only thing that does. There will not be a trial needed when I kill David with my own hands and then finally mark my mate next to his dying body so that this can never happen again. With renewed purpose, I stride back to the guard's quarter to inform them of my plans.

Chapter 115

It has been another week, it's been three weeks now and it is hard not to lose hope. Much too soon after I felt his presence near, Griffin seemed to have left the area again.

Convincing David I am giving him a second chance seems harder than I expected too. He had soon grown bored of my squabbles with Hannah,

Expecting me to do something for him in return on the occasion he did defend me. I

wasn't stupid either I knew they still sneaked off to have sex. I should be more bothered

with it if I was really giving him a chance. But it kept me off his back it would always be

the same. He would be on my case for two days. Telling me how much he missed me. How

much he loved me and how he would prove to me that he was my only true mate.

Nodding along, giving vague hints of me wanting to believe him or seeing he was trying

more and more already took everything out of me. He would then follow his word with

touches. Rough demanding touches I was sure he figured would please me. They never

would not even if I did actually feel something for him. All his touches did was make it

clear to me that I dodged a bullet when he rejected me.

The problem was no matter how much I wanted to play along. No matter how important it

was for me to make David believe that he stood a chance with me. I could not stop my body from shuddering, backing away on instinct from his repulsive touch. He would get frustrated, Hannah would notice and she would start brushing up on him when she brought us our supplies. She would call him Alpha in sensual whispers, barely dressed. He would always grunt he was going to see her out and be gone for at least thirty minutes. Often, even more, coming back with the stench of sex and Hannah surrounding him. I would scrunch up my nose on instinct at the smell of it. Something he seemed to take pleasure from. Maybe in his mind, this was a part of him breaking me down. Showing me how easy it was for him to be with someone else. To try and make me so jealous that I would want him to mark me, so I had some claim over him. The cruel thing about this is, that if your mate has sex with another wolf you feel it. It is one of the cruelest things you can do to your mate. It feels like your heart is breaking, your skin will crawl. And the blood in your veins will get so boiling hot it hurts and burns you from the inside out. As your body spasms trying to fight the overwhelming sensation

flooding your body.

I was sure David and I weren't mates, in fact, Hannah and him didn't seem to be able to keep their hands to themselves when they were close. So he should just mark her and go on with his life. With their lives. But he didn't because he was still so convinced that I was his mate. And yet thinking I was, he risked hurting me like that every time he took Hannah outside to fuck her. I saw this place as a dungeon, he saw it as the home he built for the two of us. Talking like he didn't care about being the Alpha anymore as long as he had me. So in his mind, he was cheating on his mate, doing so on or against the home he built her. Enjoying any reaction he would get from me when he returned.

It showed me the depths of his insanity and wickedness. Making me wonder how in eighteen years of being friends I missed how horribly vile he was. How dark and evil the boy I thought I loved for so many years truly was.

Just like the fact I seemed to have been blind to the fact that Hannah truly liked him. I always knew she did, but like most of the pack members, I figured she liked his status. She loved the idea of becoming his Luna. The leader of the pack but the more I saw the two of

them together I saw the truth. For some fucked up reason she seemed to

really love him. Her eyes would light up when he would growl at me that he would see her

out. It was something more than lust I was sure of that.

It explained why she hated me so much too, even after he rejected me he did not choose

her. It did make me wonder why she had seemed so excited about the idea of Griffin

choosing her as his chosen mate. Even now she seemed to get deadset on getting Griffin

instead. Was she just doing what David wanted to make him happy? Was she so sacrificial

in her love for him? I could hardly imagine Hannah as sacrificial, then again I never

considered her capable of loving either. And somehow she did. Somehow she managed to

love the most despicable person known to our kind. She knew about him killing his parents

and she still loved him.

Today when she came in looking pained at how close David and I were sitting. Something I

did to make him believe in the fact that I was getting used to the idea of taking him back

as my mate. I was certain she really did love David. The other thing I was certain of was

the fact that he would have sex with her again today. Since I had been refusing him for three days straight again. Hannah seemed to sense it too. Brushing up against him more than ever, she somehow smelled of feromones. To the point where she even smelled good to me.

We both seemed surprised at David's utter lack of response to her flirting. The heady scent of his arousal filled the cramped dungeon. Where on days like this he would normally tell me he was going to walk her out. He didn't even look at her now when he dismissed her. Thanking her for the supplies and telling her, we would see her tomorrow.

She snarled at me to have fun, saying she hoped I liked it rough. Her words chilled me to the bone ever since arriving here I was scared to death he would force himself on me.

Up until now, he had seemed determined to make sure the sex was consensual. Which it would never be, but him trying to get me to, all while he was letting out some frustrations on Hannah benefitted me.

Not only was the thought of having sex with David absolutely repulsing to me. The only thing that would be worse was the knowledge that Griffin would feel the pain of his mate

having sex with- someone else. He might even understand or feel it was not consensual

but it would only make him hurt more.

And even now that it had been three weeks, even now that he had been so close only to

leave again. I was still sure he would come for me, he would never leave me here to die.

“Dress cute, we’re going out today you are about to see your sister-in- law again” David

addressed me completely ignoring Hannah and her

remarks.

The odd situations, the sudden change of heart about me going out. And the petrified look

in Hannah’s eyes made me swallow with fear. There was a ball stuck in my throat now

blocking it so I could not swallow down my breakfast. Something was so terribly wrong and

I was about to find out what it was.

As promised after breakfast David had taken me out of the dungeon. He had placed a

collar around my neck like I was a da mn dog with silver spi kes. If I tried to run away from

him the spikes would stab me in the throat and they were long enough to kill me. I had no other option than to obediently walk alongside him.

For a moment I thought I had figured out where we were, but when we started walking he started walking in the opposite direction of where I believed the pack would be. Until I noticed a shallow grave in the woods, my heart clenched hoping it was just a coincidence we walked past this.

But as David stopped I knew it wasn't.

"He lies your beloved sister-in-law" He spoke not even mentioning her name

"My father made me reject you, he made Hannah try to be with the prince before being with me. So I killed them, to have you back but she" he said as he angrily waved at the shallow grave

"She did not obey my Alpha voice, she ran off to warn that prince of yours I wish you were different but I guess I need to force people to do what I want even you, my mate. So the nice David is gone now" He snarled as he yanked me closer by the leash he was holding

connected to the collar. I closed my eyes knowing what would happen to me now

“He lies your beloved sister-in-law” He spoke not even mentioning her

name.

“My father made me reject you, he made Hannah try to be with the prince before being

with me. So I killed them, to have you back but she” he said as he angrily waved at the

shallow grave.

“She did not obey my Alpha voice, she ran of to warn that prince of yours. I wish you were

different but I guess I need to force people to do what I want even you, my mate. So the

nice David is gone now” He snarled as he yanked me closer by the leash he was holding

connected to the collar. I closed my eyes knowing what would happen to me now.

Chapter 116

But before I could even reach the guard’s station I fell to the ground. I felt the pain. I never

expected to feel before. The pain I thought I would never feel. The pain of my mating

having sex with another wolf, The worst thing of it all was that I could feel it was forced.

Not just because I knew Ayla would never betray me like that. I felt it, apart from the pain

of her being with another wolf. I felt her fear, I felt being repulsed. Most of all I felt the crippling guilt she must be feeling.

I want to reach out to her and comfort her. Hold her and tell her everything would be okay.

Tell her that I would never blame her for this and that we would deal with whatever the consequences would be. At the same time, I wanted to kill David even more than I had before. I wanted to go over to him and rip his throat out with my bare hands,

And to do all of that I need to know where they were. I needed to find her, he was getting increasingly more annoyed and violent with her. For three weeks he had not hurt her much, or not enough for it to come through via de matebond. Now in one day he had choked and raped her. And I still wasn't doing anything for her.

I changed my mind about how to handle the situation now though. So instead of going to the guard's station, I went to Dad's office. Maybe if he knew what was happening to Ayla he would change his mind on how to go about this. He was way too gentle and patient. I needed him to be the King. He needed to control the entire county. He needs to rage war

on David and make him an enemy of the country. So we can be sure no wolf can help him anymore. Isolating him from the majority of his pack didn't seem to be enough. Meaning the only thing we could do was isolate him more.

Dad had to have noticed something happening to me because before I could reach his office he was already walking up to me. Lips a thin tight line, eyes creased with concern.

"Griff what happened, I saw you fall to the floor. Is it Ayla?" He asked me still walking towards me.

It caused some of the other wolves walking around the hallways to look at us. I trust every single one of them but some things you still should keep private. Ayla would have had enough to deal with when she came back. If she came back because with every passing day, I was more and more scared that she would never. We were closer to my office than we were to my father's office.

"Let's talk inside," I told him pointing towards the door.

He nodded as his face showed more worry. He knew me enough to know that if I wanted to

talk about this inside. That if I wanted to keep this private from the rest of the pack

members it was something serious. He must have understood it was most likely

something to do with Ayla too.

“He raped her dad, and I could feel it all” I didn’t wait for Dad or me to sit down. I needed

to get this burden off my chest and make him feel the urgency.

Make him feel we needed to act now, that what we had been doing so far was not enough.

“Griffin, I am so sorry are you okay? I’m sorry of course you are not but I don’t know what

else to say” He told me.

As much as I wanted to be mad at him, as much as I wanted to blame him for not doing

enough I knew that wouldn’t be fair. Seeing the genuine hurt and empathy in his eyes

comforted me. Another gentle reminder that I was not alone in this. On the worst days, I

felt like I was. Like I was all alone with no one who got me. But in moments like

this, I was reminded of the fact of how loved she was. How many of us wanted her back

home? And like always it would give me a little bit of hope.

“Don’t you see it Dad, we cannot stop this from being a war. We need to act now, make David the country’s number one enemy” I shouted, I noticed my voice getting louder but there was nothing I could do to stop it with how terrible I felt about it all.

“I get you want to son, but think about it for a moment” Dad warned me I wanted to scream at him.

Tell him that had done nothing else but think about it ever since Ayla went missing. He shot me I look and I know what he was thinking. And he was right about it I panicked about it. I stressed about it and I thought about how much I missed Ayla. How badly I wanted her back in my arms. Not about the consequences of my actions. I had almost done something rash and impulsive.

“But nothing we have done so far is working either, I don’t know what to do anymore” I complain as I start pacing the room.

I realized Dad was right, raging an all-out war and declaring David the country’s enemy would not only isolate him. It will make him desperate, and desperate people do crazy things. He could just as well lash out and kill Ayla and himself.

“I am not going to tell you I have all the answers” Dad started and I appreciated his

honesty but I needed someone with all the answers

now.

“Maybe we can come up with some halfway solution, I still think declaring a war is the

wrong thing to do. Not because I want to spare David but, because I hate him for what he

is doing to Ayla. I just fear we need to give him some hope so he has a reason to keep her

safe. You can however contact Alpha Jay, and ask him if we are allowed to

set up camp on his pack ground. You can bring the entire army, even though I would

suggest you leave enough behind to keep our pack safe. Then you can scout the

environment until you find her.” He goes on to explain.

I get his idea if I find him and I have most of the royal army to back me up, and the

BloodOak army he will stand no chance. Not even with the small pack he managed to still

keep. It feels like I am finally doing something that is enough and for a split second I am

excited to call Jay. Because I am sure he will be more than happy to let us set camp on his

pack ground. Hell, the pack had so many empty abandoned houses.

And knowing him he is going to offer us to sleep in the homes. One more week of waiting.

But a week where I can get the pack ready, train the army tell them all I know about

David. Until I realize it also means I have to tell Jay I think his oldest baby just got raped,

close to him without him being able to help her. And suddenly I fear the conversation.

Chapter 117

After raping me on his sister's grave, David helped me up like we were a couple that just

had some sneaky fun in nature. I wanted to refuse, but I needed him to get up, I was

barely able to walk, with how rough he had been. On top of that, I had to deal with how

guilty I felt over the fact that Griffin had felt all of this. I just hoped he somehow could feel

how much I hated it too. Not that I wanted him to feel my pain but that would still be

better than him thinking I was having consensual sex with David.

When we got "home" I took a shower so hot it burned my skin, as I kept scrubbing myself.

I felt so dirty, and I wanted to be clean, not that I would ever be again. Still, I wanted to be

as clean as I could be. To wash the places where David touched me as much as I could. For

some odd reason, he used protection, telling me he could get me pregnant since we were real mates.

I don't know if this man does not understand how fertility, sex, and pregnancy work. But the fact that it is easier for wolves to get pregnant when they're mated is not the same as always getting pregnant when you have sex with your mate. Unfortunately, it goes both ways, even when having sex, or being raped by someone who is not your mate, you still can get pregnant. I wanted to get pregnant, but not with David's mate, not to mention the fact that it would probably make David go even more crazy.

I tried to look at the positives, I had managed to leave the picture of me and Griffin I had printed, behind in the forest. Not only that, but I had it on me when they kidnapped me.

David had been "kind" enough to let me earn my purse back. Since that moment, I had kept the picture on my body. To make sure, David wouldn't find it and destroy it. Secondly, it felt good to have a part of Griffin so close to me.

David had been so occupied with raping me he did not notice, I pierced my finger with my canines. I had used the blood to write "luv u" on the back of the picture. Every other wolf

would still be alerted by another wolf's blood for at least a week. Probably more because it

didn't rain a lot in these parts. Griffin had been here, whatever the reason was for him

leaving again. He was here, so I was sure wolves he trusted would be on patrol now. Not

BloodMoon pack members loyal to David.

Even if they were, either they knew and nothing would change, and if they did not know it

could go one or two ways. Either they stood behind their Alpha and nothing would change,

or depending on what Griffin had done during his visit. They were scared of Griffin or did

not agree with what David was doing, and they would get me help. I liked these odd

enough, that I had no idea when I would have the chance to do something like this again.

Maybe, just maybe, if this was the reason Griffin would find me, it would be worth it. As

long as he wouldn't blame me for it, but I knew my mate. Now I trusted him enough that

he would never blame me. He had saved me before, he made me whole again. I was sure

he would again. Just by being him, just by being there for me.

Slowly, I started to pull myself back together again: It was my fault, I had tried suggesting

to David that he liked Hannah more than he did me. That I would forgive him if he wanted

to be with her again. After raping me, had told me he knew what I was trying to do. I

shudder thinking back on his words.

“I know what you are doing Ayla, you are still wanting to go back, trying every trick in the

book to get me to trust you. So now I took you outside like you claimed to want so much. I

just hoped it was everything you longed for.” He had grinned at me and then licked his lips

before continuing.

“If you are not going to love me for all the caring things I did for you, I

just guess I need to give you some tough love.” There had been a glint in his eyes that

scared me.

And I was right to be scared, as soon as we got back to the dungeon he had chained me to

the bed. I could make it to the bathroom, and the kitchen. I was unable to reach the living

room. Now I had to earn the right to eat or to sleep in bed with him. He had thrown the

ratty blankets in a messy heap on the floor. This was my bed for now, I could still use the

bathroom. Meaning I could pee, shower, and drink water but that was about it. It was

enough, though, I had hated

sleeping next to him these past weeks. Now he had done the last thing I always thought

he wouldn't, sleeping next to him was even more unsafe now.

Sure, not eating would be a bad thing. And go against my entire plan to stay strong and

full of energy. But there was nothing I could do about it. There was no way I would be

doing the no doubt wicked plans David would come up for me to earn my privileges back

with.

There is no way I am going to keep strong when he keeps on doing to me what he just did.

Sure, not eating would weaken my body. But it would not break me. What happened a few

hours ago had almost broken me. I would not survive something like that one more time.

Exhausted physically, and emotionally, I crawled down on my blankets. Curling up in the

fetal position, I fell asleep like that. I never noticed David had gotten into bed. My heart

grew cold instantly, and it dropped to the ground. I had been sleeping in vulnerable

around David. I scrambled up, but I soon noticed I was still in my pajama pants, so he

didn't do anything to me. There was nothing else I could do, and I needed to be sure I wasn't sleeping so deep I would not notice David doing anything to me. So I laid down again to get some more sleep.

When I woke up the next time, Hannah had squad down next to me with a syringe in her mouth. She quickly took it from her mouth and hushed me. Before, I would have wasted no time in screaming to alert David. Hannah used to be my worst enemy. Placing all the attention on the tension between us. And the fear I used to feel for her served me well. Or I thought it did. But yesterday, David had proven he was the biggest threat to me. So when Hannah let me read and see what was in the syringe, I took the chance. Trusting her over David now, hoping she had become so jealous that she wanted to kill David.

Chapter 118

Finally, it was time to return to the BloodMoon pack, and this time I would not go back without my Ayla in my arms. For the past week, I had been training the guards. I made sure every single one of them knew what Ayla looked like. That they all knew what David

looked. like, and that they all knew they should kill them if that meant they could save

Ayla.

I did as Dad requested, or should I say suggested, and I kept about 30% of the army back

at the castle. While 70% joined me in the BloodMoon pack. Of course, Dillion, Collin,

Gerard, and Jessa joined me too. They would always be there for me and Ayla. I knew they

would. But the fact that so many of us meant that we could not take the jet. It's not a

commercial airplane, so we cannot fit the hundred. wolves that joined me into the

BloodMoon pack. Somehow I liked that because driving there might take longer, but it was

more active. It felt like I was actually doing something to get closer to her. To get her back,

I just knew I would have been restless on the plane. Now I needed to focus On the road

ahead of me, that is why I chose to drive. alone.

It is funny how the same journey can feel so much shorter or longer depending on the

reason for the journey. Knowing this time I was going there, this time to rescue her. And

how much time I would need to finally find her the road to the BloodMoon pack seemed

too long. That would have been the only upside of using the plane. It would have been there so much faster. Now I need to stop halfway through the journey. We had made a reservation on forchard. Claiming to be a football team here for practice, still, the hotel staff looked at us funny when we all entered the hotel. As was often the case when a larger group of wolves was residing on human property.

Another downside of having to travel like this. But the biggest downside was, how human we needed to act. We couldn't shift to go for a run when most of us had a lot of pent-up energy. Eating as much as we wanted to in just one restaurant. Because we eat more than an average human does, Dillion, Gerald, and I have been kicked out of an all-you-can-eat restaurant before. Since they thought we were stealing food with how much we were eating. To solve that, we go our separate ways in different groups. So that we do not draw so much attention to ourselves. We would also all eat at two restaurants. Making this a costly trip, but I would drain the entire treasury and my own accounts. to get Ayla back,

and it would all be worth it.

I knew that I could not get away with eating on my own. Dillion and the rest of them insisted on all of us going together. Which would mean they would watch me. Keep an eye on what I was eating, and if I would make do with the bare minimum because I was hardly able to swallow anything down. Not with the lump in my throat. Not with the ball of nerves and worries about my mate longed in my throat.

Dinner last night could have been worse, the others did carefully watch what I was eating.

Still, the fact that I wasn't alone all night made the time go by faster. Now I was on the

road again, on my own in my car. Doing something to get closer to Ayla. Blasting songs

that reminded me of her. Talking to her, promising her that I was getting closer to her. I

didn't hear her voice anymore. By now, I didn't even know if it had been real or not. Still,

talking to her, believing, or maybe just hoping that she could hear me made me feel

better.

Everyone agreed with me not to stop at a hotel again tonight. We all wanted to get to the

BloodMoon pack as fast as possible. Not just to be able to shift and act like ourselves

without having to be overly aware of the fact that humans might notice something “weird”

about us.

Everyone was just as determined to get Ayla back as I was. We talked about the fact that

we would arrive so late in the night, and it would be dark out already. And it had been one

of our guards, Nicky, who suggested we could just go on a nice run. To give our wolves

some freedom after a long road trip.

“We can’t help being wolves, and being alert and maybe finding some clues when we do

now can we Prince Griffin” She had smirked.

I had just hugged her and everyone knew enough at that moment. Now I was a

to finally arrive and go on that run we talked about. She had a point, going out as wolves

might be a smarter idea than going in our human forms. Our instincts and senses are

much better developed than those of a regular human, even in our human forms. But it

still was nothing compared to our instincts and especially senses when we were in our wolf

forms. Combined with the fact that we will be closer to the ground to notice clues like

scents and footprints. I felt bad I didn't up with this idea myself.

come

After being in the car for another nine hours, with a thirty-minute break to get some food.

We finally arrived at the BloodMoon pack at dusk. Alpha Jay and Luna Tessie were already

waiting for us at the entrance. They both looked awful, which made sense. Alongside their

daughter being missing, they had taken over a pack that was ruined to the ground. And

while they were rebuilding it, they learned their little girl was raped. Raped by the wolf the

once hoped she would be mated

to.

The second Tessie saw me, she burst out in tears. Now was the time for me to be strong.

Not because I was, but because it was what Ayla would want for me to do. I walked over to

Tessic and wrapped her in a tight hug.

"Don't

worry, we will get her back, and we will make him pay for what

he has done" I told her.

"I know, and I am so happy she found a mate so understanding. Thank you for not

blaming my little girl. I don't think she would survive losing you" Tessie answered me.

"Well, that won't happen because I would not survive losing her either. But listen, none of

us could shift yesterday. Do you mind if we go for a short run before we settle in?" I asked

both her and Alpha Jay.

The last gave me a knowing smile, but they agreed. Even as befriended packs, as family.

Werewolves are sticklers for traditions and rules, showing our respect for one another.

With me asking the Alpha and Luna for permission to do something good for my pack. The

guards I brought with their written permission. I made sure not to upset any of the other

pack members. Which in the end would make my life so much easier. The loyalty in this

pack still was fragile, and we needed the pack to be strong enough to take on their former

Alpha. Because more and more it seemed like that would be what we were going to have

to deal with. Hopefully sooner rather than later.

“Come on guys, we can go on a run for about an hour before we have to settle in”

I shouted at my army, who stood at attention, paying their respect to this new Alpha and

Luna. I felt a swirl of pride in my chest as I looked at them, I truly did not understand how

the Birches had run this pack to the ground because they only wanted higher-ranking

members. But I had no time to think about that, I needed to go into the woods to find my

girl, and so I did...

Chapter 119

The past week had been horrible, David had not touched me again. In his twisted mind,

mating with me was another “privilege” I had to earn. Just as getting enough food,

sleeping in a bed, and having freedom were. He allowed me one meal a day. Which always

consisted of his leftovers. And probably was just to keep me alive. I could still freely access

the bathroom so I had access to all the water I needed. I could go to the bathroom and not

soil myself.

In theory, I could even shower myself but in reality, I was unable to. Missing my mate,

missing my wolf. Not getting enough food all weakened me. To the point, I could barely stand on my feet. The injection Hannah had given me the morning after I got raped was a contraception injection. I know of this injection which is mostly used to keep from getting pregnant during the heat. Since mom was a pack doctor I knew of it. How it looked like and what it did. I had enough knowledge to be sure she was actually giving me contraception.

“He somehow doesn’t quite get how pregnancies work. I don’t hate you enough to bring a child into this” She had shrugged, but there was a tenderness in her voice I couldn’t really place.

It was the first and kind thing she had ever done for me. Hannah had never liked me. She was a year younger than David, and he always looked up to him. They hung out together a lot when their fathers met up. Seeing as Hannah’s father was Alpha Philip’s Beta that had been a lot. It is why Jason and David ended up being best friends, with Jason as the next Beta. After Hannah gave me the injection I felt that there was more going on between her and David. Or that she wanted there to be.

At the beginning of this new normal, I was trying to come up with

Vas

plans to use it to my advantage. But with how weak I was feeling now I couldn't gather my own thoughts. It felt like something was missing. Something just out of reach, hidden by the blur of hunger. Tonight no different as I saw the sunlight slowly fading through the sunroof. Listening to David snoring as he was taking an afternoon nap, I tried to come up with ideas but all I could think about was missing Griffin.

Every time I fell asleep I dreamed of better times, I would dream about meals we had in the past. Or maybe they were just random dreams where I was eating all my favorite foods while chatting with Griffin. The two things I missed most now. Just as I was getting overwhelmed with frustration again I felt something else. Griffin was back and he was so close. I watched David still peacefully asleep and I wondered if I should just place a pillow over his face and suffocate him. This a recurring thought I had ever since I found out he was the one who had me kidnapped.

At first, I figured it would have been a dumb move. Hannah or any of his other goons, would find me and surely kill me. From past experiences, I knew I could outsmart and outrun Hannah. But not several of the BloodMoon pack members. And I was sure he had more wolves helping him, there was no way the two of them could do all of this. Back when I thought I knew him, when I would see him daily, David could not build anything. He didn't have a lot of practical skills as he focused all his energy on his education. So I was sure he hadn't been able to build all of this on his own.

Now there was a high chance Griffin would find me as he was so close. Even if Hannah would come in here to bring David his breakfast in the morning. Taunting me with the fact I still hadn't deserved a good breakfast, I could escape and outrun her. If Griffin was still so close he would be able to find me if I would be able to hold out for a little while.

And that was the issue now, I was so weakened I could not hold on at all. Not to mention the high risk that David would wake up as I was trying to suffocate him. He would easily overpower me. And I shuddered thinking about what he would do to me if he woke up to me trying to kill him. Wanting to be saved I opted

for the Mo onGo ddess. instead. to keep me safe and to make sure Griffin found me.

Whatever his reason was for going away two weeks ago, he was back now. And I needed

him to find me as soon as possible. I had no idea. how long he was able to stay for this

time. I hated not knowing anything, I could very well be he wasn't even allowed at the

Blood Moon pack. Then again maybe he was because David hadn't gone back one. Not

after the night, he acted funny, something must have happened to the back looking back.

Hannah had tried to hint at it too, but David had aggressively silenced her about it. I tried

to think of what would happen if an Alpha stayed away from his pack for weeks on end. It

was another memory I couldn't reach. Eventually, I fell asleep wracking my brain for ideas

on how to make sure Griffin could find me.

I was startled awake when David stumbled out of his bed, done with his nap. Not that I

knew what this man needed naps for as he wasn't doing anything. The dungeon had

turned into a pigsty. He would wake up, scoff down the breakfast Hannah brought him, and

mock me for being hungry. Then spends the entire day playing stupid games on his phone up until lunch. After his lunch, he would feed me his leftovers before lifting some of the weights he asked Hannah to bring. Claiming it was to keep him fit, so he could defend me if push came to shove. Like thirty minutes of weightlifting in between hanging on the couch and playing games was going to make the difference between winning or losing the fight.

In the beginning, he would interact with me a little, he would watch me clean his mess up. He would take regular showers usually after I took mine. Almost like this grown-as a wolf, who now had to lead an entire pack however small the pack might be. Needed a reminder to take a shower and brush his teeth. In my annoyance, I came up with an idea. For the longest time, I had been utterly unwilling to do anything. to earn privileges back.

Feeling Griffin so close to me had changed everything, though. It would be virtually impossible for him to find me in this dungeon without help. Back when I still had been hopeful I kept reminding myself I needed to be strong so I could help Griffin. With all that

happened to me. I kinda let go of that idea. Which was foolish because if it wasn't for me being so weak I might have been able to help Griffin find me. Or at least try to come up with some ideas to leave more hints. The first privilege I had to earn back was to cat, and as much as I did not want to. I think I had an idea of what I needed to do, so as David stumbled out of bed towards the kitchen to get himself a drink I pushed myself up and crawled to the bed. Still too weak to walk there, and just as I hoped this drew in David's attention. He was staring at me, I could feel from his eyes burning holes in my back.

Chapter 120

Even if this was just a run, where we would keep our eyes, ears, and noses open for clues.

It was not the same as a patrol or a mission. Still, we agreed to go on a run in a few

smaller groups. This way we could cover more ground. Running alone would be unwise,

both for safety concerns. And because we might find a clue we needed to secure, the

leader of the group could stay with the clue. As the others would help the rest of the army

to find us. Eventually, we would always find each other, but here on unknown terrain, it

could take us a little longer. Time was a luxury we could not afford ourselves.

We divided the army into five groups, Dillion, Colin, Gerald, Jessa and I all leading one group. As soon as I shifted I let Conan take over, there was a bigger chance he would find something. We agreed he would give back control the second my human form was needed. I told my team Conan would be in control and of course, they all agreed. As the Crown Prince, I have had to lead and train the pack in both forms. So letting Conan lead them was nothing new for the pack.

Even now, when my entire world is crumbling down around me, I enjoy the feeling of being along for the ride. Experiencing the speed at which we were running, the scents and sounds around us when I was not in control was different. I was along for the ride, and it felt like it. I also noticed Conan seemed unwavering about the direction where to run to. Hoping he had noticed something I could not, I was feeling good about the decision to go on this late-night run.

And then it hit me, the overwhelming scent of blood, and not just any blood. I could smell it was Ayla's. If I had been in my human form, I would have probably crashed to the floor.

My legs would have given out from under me. Now I heard Conan mindlink everyone they needed to hurry in/our direction.

“It’s her blood, you all smell it right,” Nikita, Nicky’s wolf asked. through the mindlink.

We all knew it was, and normally a question that redundant had pissed me off, and it would have pissed Conan off even more. He must have heard the fear and sadness in her voice too. Nikita wasn’t stating the obvious, she seemed distraught about the fact that her future Luna and Queen had lost blood here in the woods. I had noticed how loyal the pack was to Ayla already. I knew she made an impression during the BBQ, but I never knew Nicky, and her wolf seemed to adore her.

In fact, Nicky had been one of the very first to ask if she could join me. on this mission to get Ayla back. She had become a guard just to be able to. While she had always been a very skilled fighter, Nicky had seemed a little flaky about what she was going to do.

Almost like she was scared to make a decision that would change her life.

“Griffin, I am sorry, but I am going to have to give you control back” Conan’s voice pulled me from my thoughts.

My brain had drifted somewhere else as Conan had been getting closer and closer to the source of the blood. It was like my mind had tried to protect me for as long as it could.

Now it was my time to see what we had found. To stay as calm as I could, so as to not make matters worse. My stomach clenched together and that weird feeling in your throat that makes you feel like you are about to vomit was back.

“It’s a picture, but we need our human form to read the back,” Conan told me before giving back control.

Our wolves cannot read at all, it’s nothing something an animal can do. When our human spirits are in control of our wolf body, we can still read. But holding a picture in your hand is far easier than holding one in your paw. I told the rest to stay in their wolf forms to give me cover if needed. I send two of them out to walk ahead and hopefully guide the rest of the pack towards us.

The picture was of me and Ayla during the BBQ, where I introduced her to the rest of the pack. I had to blink a few times to see clearly again as my vision blurred with my unshed

tears. There was so much love in this picture, it hurt me to know it had been weeks since I had been able to make her feel that love. With no time to be sad about that, I turned the picture around to find a message written in Ayla's blood.

"Luv u"

It wasn't a lot, but she must have written it in a hurry. The letters were shaky, wiggly lines. It was a smart move on Ayla's part, I was sure she was in this forest somewhere now.

The blood had made it so much easier for Conan to find the picture. The message let me know that she left it on purpose. I told myself that if she was able to do all of that and think about it like she had. It had to also meant she wasn't in any critical danger.

Gerald was the first one to reach our group, the others soon followed after.

"She told me about that picture, she must have had it on her body when she was kidnapped" Jessa confirmed what I was thinking.

"So what is next Griff" Colin asked me refraining from using my titles. Rather, addressing me like the friends we are.

It kept me grounded, reminding me of the fact I was still here with my friends. Close to

Ayla's family, my family.

"Let's go back to the BloodMoon pack house. Alpha Jay, and the rest of his family, will want to see this too. Princess Ayla left us a clue, so we owe it to her to come up with a plan on how to get her out. As much as I want to find her tonight. Going on a wild, unprepared goose chase in the middle of the night isn't going to help her." I addressed everyone through the mindlink, seeing as most of them were still in their wolf forms. They could hear me regardless of mindlink in both forms. But when in wolf form, we could only communicate through the mindlink. And they did because my mind soon flooded with shouts. of agreement and loyalty to both me and Ayla.

To keep up with the rest of the pack, I shifted back again. After carefully placing the picture between my teeth. Making sure I wasn't damaging the picture, and I was not losing it either. We all took off running back towards the pack house.

When we arrived it seemed as though the lack of wolves, and the lack of a strong, big

army, was solved by other forms of security. Because again before we arrived Jay, Tessie and now even Dan and Krystal were walking up to us, worry etched on their faces. Not that I could blame them, even I wasn't sure of how much good news this was.

"I made sure the homes for the warriors are done. They just need to decide who to bunk with, we can comfortably fit six wolves inside a home. I have 15 empty homes, so I figured maybe you and the others can stay at the pack house with us." Jay told me. His hint was clear, I dismissed my warriors and followed him to the meeting room. Hoping one of them would be able to make more sense of the clue I had found.