

Unwilling 131

Chapter 131

“She is malnourished, the circumstances of you having sex aren’t optimal, to begin with. If

by some miracle she did conceive, she would have lost the pup since you are almost

starving her to death. That’s

the cramps are, her stomach is so not used to food that it cramps up when she has a fatty

meal. I suggest you lead her, cook for the two of you, Alpha.” He sneers, but David does

not seem to notice.

Obsessed with the idea of me cooking for him, my first impulse is to protest. To hate Jason

for what he suggested. But when I think about it, this will only suit me. I get more

freedom, and I can actually eat healthy foods. Eating regularly should help with the

cramps because I know Jason is right. But it’s not only, the fact that I can eat more food,

I’m sure healthier, less greasy options will be easier to stomach.

“I would love to cook for us, maybe we can even get some groceries. together in a human

store of course. Somewhere we will not run into other wolves” I suggest taking the

opportunity Jason has unknowingly given me.

Or maybe it was knowingly because Jason seemed quick to agree with my idea, almost too

quick. It could be he just hated doing so many chores for David. But it almost seemed like

he was trying to help me out. Or maybe he was just actively working against David, Jason

was smart enough to know the risk of me going outside even if it was in human territory.

For now, I just took the break, I could try to find out what Jason's motives were later on.

David did not seem all too excited about the idea of going grocery shopping with me. And

it was not until Jason proposed that he would take me out shopping if David-didn't want to.

That, he told me we would go out to the supermarket in the morning. Hearing so, I

excused

myself to go to sleep in my nest, stating I was still very tired. To an extent that was true of

course because with how my life was now I was always tired. That was not the reason for

me wanting to go to bed early tonight. I need to be up before David. If I was going to leave

another hint, I needed to be sure to be careful about it. I didn't have anything to write on

in my own blood anymore.

It still needed to be a hint that showed Griffin where I was, and that showed him I was relatively unharmed, and had left the hint on purpose. All I could come up with was to tear up one of the thin sheets that made my nest. Rip them to thin shreds and make bows out of them. It would smell of me, but the ribbons dropped in a trail should hopefully show Griffin it was a trail to the place David kept me hidden.

As I walked past Jason, he harshly grabbed my arm, and I was sure he would leave bruises on it.

“Don’t drink the orange juice” He whispered, and the way he said it even if he had to whisper unsettled me.

one

Especially since it was the luxury David let me have, every lunch where I would get the meal made up of scraps there was a glass of orange juice next to it. It was awfully sweet, but I didn’t care, I always drank it knowing my body needed the sugar. Before, when I was still allowed to eat, David hardly did anything except for getting me that one glass of

orange juice in the morning. Tomorrow, I would accidentally knock it over, to see if David would freak out about it.

Jason's warning might look legit, especially added up with the weirdness surrounding the glass of orange juice. But I was not naive enough to blindly trust him either. I trusted neither, and spilling my drink would be the easiest way to find out what was going on. I just nodded at Jason, letting him know that I did hear him and would take it into consideration. He could hardly expect me to just believe him instantly, and even if he did, I didn't care.

It was not like he could complain about me not listening to him. Because of the way he acted, it was clear he was going against David's wishes. And David was a ruthless man who murdered his entire family. To force the she-wolf he had rejected before to be his mate. again. Forgoing his entire pack that needed him to do so. And he did it all without any remorse, with a smile on his face.

Luckily, last night, it didn't take me long to fall asleep. And now I was waking up to the sound of David snoring. There wasn't any light filtering to the sunroof yet. So it was probably the middle of the night or in the early hours of the morning. Before the rays of the sun were strong enough to light up the forest. As I started tying the ribbons, I was thinking about the fact that this could very well be my last day in captivity. Of course, I would not only leave a trail of ribbons from sheets that smelled of me. I would also try to make a run for it at the grocery store. There wasn't a lot he could do when we were surrounded by humans.

He had to take the chain off too or else the authorities would be alerted because of the kidnapping. The human government had some connections to the Council of Elders and the royal family. Griffin and his parents had no doubt alerted them already, asking them to look out for suspicious behavior around these parts. Even David, being as stubborn and as arrogant as he was, knew this would happen.

I hated I might risk some of the innocent people in the supermarket, but it was the only

option. Luckily, I had memorized Griffin's phone number. Most stores nowadays have security, so my plan was to run out of the supermarket and into the closest store possible to ask the security guard to help me out. Then I would call Griffin, who I still sensed was close. He would come to collect me, and then I would try to lead him back to the dungeon with the help of the ribbons to find David and Jason and have them arrested. I had no doubt others are helping them.

And I still don't have a clue where Hannah has gone. Jason spoke about Griffin, but that would mean she would need to go back to the Blood Moon pack and from what I gathered the bond between David and his former pack was broken. There should be a new Alpha in place now, and they would never let Hannah just wander about the pack she used to live in. Not before she pledged her loyalty to the new Alpha or even their family if this new Alpha was already mated. Overthinking all of this, going over scenarios to escape in a few hours as I was tying the ribbons, made the time fly by.

The sun was high in the even, lighting the forest surrounding my hideout. Causing daylight

to stream into the room via the sunroof. I tied more ribbons for about an hour or so. Until I heard the telltale creak of the door to the dungeon opening. Signaling that Jason was here to wake us up to start the day. I rush to shove every single ribbon in my pocket before curling up like a baby again, pretending to be asleep.

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“Don’t pretend I know you are not sleeping anymore” Jason hissed at me, and I wish he would just let me be.

I was unsure how much he had seen exactly, or how he knew I was not asleep for that matter. All I did know was that it was unsettling that he knew. It shows me he was watching my every move, commenting on it without letting David know. It was confusing, not knowing why he was helping David. And if he really agreed with all that was happening here. At the moment, he seemed to be helping me. But most of the time it seemed as if he still hated me. Like I had actually done something to hurt his sister when it was the Moon Goddess who fated me to David.. In retrospect, I would never choose him in my mind, she could have him if she wanted him so badly.

you

“Why are you doing this Jason, you’re awfully loyal to the man who made

You, your fated mate, and your sister’s life miserable. Or did enjoy being rejected, because

of what the Birches told you to do? So I might be pretending to sleep to get a little more

rest. You are supporting the man who is hurting your sister every day. So maybe it is you

pretending you are pretending to love your sister. Because neither of my siblings would

ever let anyone do this to me. Yet here you are waiting on the hand or foot of the man who

uses your sister as his own. personal prostitute. To share with everyone who wants to if it

gives me an advantage. All to mate with the she-wolf he told your sister, she rejected to

be with her.” I scoffed at him, and I knew how vile the things I was saying were.

But I had to, I needed to provoke him. To make him lose control and say things he

shouldn’t have said. Or to at least get a read on him. If he lost control of his emotions then

maybe I could find out more, and find a way to get out of this hellhole.

To his credit, Jason did get mad at me, but he managed to keep it in. He was balling his

hands in fists and I expected to see the claws grow from his hand. But none of that

happened. He swallowed harshly and then turned his attention back to me.

“You speak a lot for someone who is so out of touch with what is happening here. But you

have always been, haven't you, Ayla? The wonderful Ayla Hemming, the untouchable Ice

Queen, does not interact with anyone but her family and two best friends. Who always

got everything she ever wanted without knowing any struggle in her life. And now that

you are finally struggling, it is still over the backs of others.” He snarled at me, the

growing tension and the voices getting louder woke David up.

Getting into his protective Alpha role that gave me the ick right away. Screaming at Jason

to leave me alone. Like he was protecting his mate. from someone dangerous. And not his

own Beta arguing with his captive a little bit. The situation was ironic and if it wasn't for

the pain. and hunger, I would have laughed at the stupidity of the situation.

“I am mad at your mate because she is conspiring against you, just check her pockets

Alpha”

Shit s hit s hit, Jason must have seen, and my heart plummeted to the soles of my feet

when I heard Jason rat me out. There was no way for me to hide the tied ribbons fast enough. And not even David was dumb enough to believe any lie I could come up with as to why I was wearing so many ribbons with me.

David seemed to snap awake at Jason's words, jumping out of bed and rushing to me.

Roughly pulling me up, my arm so he could easily access my pockets. Where he found about fifty ribbons, I spent the entire night making.

"What is this you filthy bi tch do you really think you could hide this from me?? You need to realize what a man, is and does. A real man like me and what she-wolves can do. So I will show you" He told me raising his hand to the sky.

There was a foolish silly part of me left that hoped that Jason would stop David from hitting me. Hoping he would have enough decency left in his phone to stop David, right in this moment I couldn't even bet sure Jason would stop David if tried to rape me again.

I tried staring at Jason but the eye contact got disrupted as David's fist landed square in

my face. I could feel my nose break under the force of his fist slamming into my face over and over again. Jason silently witnessed with a facial expression that was somewhere between guilt. and feeling gratified that I had to go through all of this.

It wouldn't last long now I could feel it. A feeling that I was getting more and more often. A tiredness that seemed to settle directly behind my eyes. Sounds, sights, and smells getting muted. Like I was watching myself inside when I was standing outside, soon now I would slip back into that darkness where I would have to find the strength to fight my way out.

But today it didn't happen because just when I was about to pass out the door creaked again. David released his hold on my collar causing me to collapse to the floor. Jason turned around the door ready to shift. So whoever it was that just walked into the dungeon with us. They were not expecting them either.

It wasn't Griffin, I would have sensed and smelled him before the door would even open.

Still, it could be one of his guards it was not like I knew the entire pack by name and or

scent. Jason's sigh of relief was the first indication that it was not who I had hoped to be.

To all our surprise it was Hannah who stood in the dungeon with us. She rushed to David and told him to stop beating me half to death.

Then she whirled at her brother with fury in her eyes.

"And you Jason thank you so much for betraying me like you are doing now, I begged you and this is what you do." She yelled at him.

Hannah might have stopped David from beating me to death, and I might have been able

to eat three meals yesterday. He did still punch into me for the longest time. While he

didn't hold back at all, three filling but unhealthy meals didn't magically bring my body

back to health. I tried my best to listen to their conversation and to make sense of the fact

that Hannah was here again. The weird thing was that she was wearing one of Gerald's

hoodies.

I recognized it because Jessa hated that hoodie and had tried to get Gerald to get rid of it

ever since they found out they were mates. But the darkness kept pulling and pulling and I

was losing the fight. Eventually, I had no other choice than to let it pull me under and close. my eyes as I fell on my makeshift bed. Hoping that I would wake up soon if I would wake up at all.

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This time I had clearly slept the entire day. By the time I woke up, David was fast asleep, and it was dark. My lunch and orange juice. were placed on the ground beside my bed. I scoffed down the lunch, sipping the orange juice with Jason's warning still fresh in my mind. It was not that I did trust him, but I trusted David even less. And with him sleeping there was no way of testing my theory of knocking over the orange juice.

I wanted him to stay asleep longer; it gave me a bit of a break. But as soon as I got up to try and make my way to the bathroom. I noticed that they had not chained me back to the bed after passing out. I don't know if it was because they forgot, or if they tried to let me be as comfortable. as possible when passed out but I didn't care. Tonight was the night I was going to escape. The door was always locked from the inside out and David had the keys. He slept with them on his body. Wearing the keys to both my chains, metal collar,

and the door on a necklace.

I would have to tear it off his body and that would wake him up for sure. If he woke up I would be dead, he would lose his temper and I would end up in another shallow grave next to his sister. Since being here I thought about suffocating him with his pillow but I never had the guts to do so. Scared he would be able to overpower me. Today I was feeling a lot stronger, and even Willow's voice was stronger now. I knew it was my only chance in a few hours Jason would be here again and he would find David.

No matter if he liked it or not David was his Alpha. And he would. want to retaliate for his Alpha being killed. Not to mention Hannah. hanging around the dungeon again. Like the love-sick puppy she is she would want to get revenge even more than her brother would.

Taking deep breaths and summoning my courage I sneaked over to the bed.

Carefully taking the pillow I slept on when I was still "allowed" in bed.

He was sleeping on his side and I needed him on his back. So I tickled his right side hoping he would turn towards the feeling. And when he did he looked like a starfish. I realized it

couldn't have turned out

better so I sat down on his chest. Pressing my knees into his shoulder stopping him from moving. He opened his eyes surprised. When he saw me sitting on top of him he smirked at me.

“Finally could not resi...” I knew what he was going to say but he would never say those words to me ever again.

Before he could finish speaking I pressed the pillow down onto his face. His breathing had already become labored because of the weight of me on his chest. So I had expected him to die quickly but he did not. He kept thrashing scratching at me. Fighting against me, I felt he drew blood. We could probably both smell it, my arms got shaky and I felt myself grow tired but I knew I had to hold on so I did. It must have been about five or six minutes before he stopped thrashing. Just to be sure I sat there still pushing the pillow down on his face as I counted down two more minutes in my head. Until I was sure he was dead. Now I was a killer, a cold-blooded murderer but in the end, it was him or me. And I had to choose myself for the people I loved, the people who loved me.

I yanked the necklace of David's still warm but lifeless body and I quickly undid the collar.

The chain dragging behind me would only slow me down. There was no sense in hiding it as Jason and or Hannah would find out what I had done anyway. I just let it fall to the floor and ran to the kitchen. I had no idea if I would be able to find the Blood Moon Pack right away and I couldn't find David's phone. This all meant I had no idea how soon I would be safe, and the strain of suffocating David had already left me a bit shaky and dizzy.

So I packed all the candy bars and sodas I could find in David's backpack and then I made my way to the door of the dungeon. The

door creaking startled me like it would make David come alive and come after me. Or it would summon Jason to stop me from running away. But after the creaking stopped my world was covered in silence again. Nothing was stopping me from climbing the raggedy ladder we needed to use to get in and out of the dungeon.

Suddenly I was outside in the dark and quiet forest with not even the birds to keep me company. I was fairly sure the Blood Moon pack was on the left side. so that

shift but I felt I was st, as where I started to run towards. I tried to

unable to. So it was not something about the

dungeon itself that stopped me from shifting. It was something about me and since I was not wearing any silver. The only thing I could come up with was the orange juice Jason had told me to stop drinking.

Even in my human form. I had always been quick, but it was nothing compared to my wolf form. Now the exhaustion and malnourishment of the last weeks had done a number on me. And I regretted packing the heavy soda cans and chocolates with me because it

slowed me down. Something I could not afford so after contemplating for a little bit I

dropped the backpack. Hoping I would find the pack soon enough. I grew up in these parts

and I was sure I could still find my way to the pack. Whoever the new Alpha of the

BloodMoon pack was, they were appointed by the royal family and so they would tell them

about the fact that the missing Princess was found.

But as I kept running and running I started to lose momentum. I was growing tired and I

still hadn't seen any sign of the pack. The sun was rising and that meant David's corpse

would soon be found by one of the siblings. I had hoped to be safe before that moment.

But seeing as that wouldn't be happening anytime soon. I decided to look for a safe place to have a bit of rest. If I could just eat the one candy bar I had kept in my pocket. And take a quick little nap I wouldn't be so disorientated and I would be better able to find my way back Griffin had still felt so close, so the chances were high that he was still at the Blood Moon pack trying to find a way to find me. Imagining the surprise on his face as he would get the call from the guards that I was on pack ground was what kept me hopeful. And as I lay down in a shallow cave, hidden from view I whispered a quiet See you soon to the man I love. The man that I would be reunited with today

Chapter 134

Ever since arriving two days ago, Hannah had been too careful. After I had spoken to her.

It had been clear she was lying to me about her reasoning for coming to visit me.

"I just came back to the pack Prince Griffin, the decision Alpha David and Luna Ayla made

to switch mates hurt me. I really did love David you see. When I saw you here at the Blood

Moon pack I realized it was a sign from the Moon Goddess herself that you and I are meant

to be together” She had told me, looking up at me through fluttering eyelashes.

The only time I noticed some sincerity in what she was saying was when she told me she

loved David. Maybe she was yet another victim of his games. Yet she chose to help him.

She could even involved in the murder of his entire family. And she had been abusive to

Ayla even before this sh it started. So I could not pity her not at all.

Still, I had to act like I did like I was going to give her a chance. She needed to feel safe

enough to allow room for slip-ups. To make her believe she still stood a chance when I was

staying over at the pack I had given to Ayla’s parents. I tried to act heartbroken hearing

that Ayla was actually living with David. Pretending I was a grieving mate going back and

forth between believing the letter and not wanting to believe. my mate would ever do

such a vile thing. Especially the latter seemed to resonate with Hannah.

She was smarter than I/gave her credit for though. Because she seemed very aware of the

fact that she was being followed. Nothing was giving a clue about where she was going.

The next morning she went for a run. She was still being shadowed by one of my warriors

but she clearly had the home advantage and so he lost her. The only thing he

could tell me was that she tried to steal one of my hoodies. But all she did was grab the one Dillion had left in my temporary office.

Getting desperate to find Ayla. I invited her to have breakfast with me. I told her that I wanted to get to know her better. Since I finally started believing that Ayla had really dumped me to be with David. Now we are sitting here, in the kitchenette of my small temporary living room in the pack house suite I am staying in. She seemed nervous, maybe it was because she sensed I was not genuine in wanting to get to know her.

Looking back maybe it would have been better if I tried a little harder..

I hadn't even bothered with making the breakfast myself. The last time I made breakfast it was for Ayla and I. And the next breakfast I would make would be for her too. Suddenly Hannah's eyes glossed over, she was mindlinking with someone. She must not know that I am aware of the fact she is no longer a part of this pack. She is a part of David's pack, so whoever is mindlinking her now is too. It might even be David himself.

She turned so pale I could almost see the veins in her face as she pressed one hand

against her stomach.

“S-S-Sorry I h-h-have to go” She stuttered not giving me any explanation. Whatever the person mindlinking her told her it scared her. And it made her lose sight of where she was.

“Attention, everyone this is it, Hannah just ran out scared after someone mindlinked her.

Follow her” I mindlinked every warrior.

Within a second Krystel told me she told Daniel who mindlinked every trustworthy

member of the Blood Moon pack including his parents. Of course, I ran out myself too. I

felt it in my soul, I felt it in my bones. Today would be the day I would finally find Ayla

again and I could not

wait.

As we expected Hannah, ran into the forest again. This time she wasn't bothered with

trying to keep us of her back. She either knew we were following her or did not care. Or

she was so scared she was blind and deaf to her surroundings. The latter seemed to be

the most logical but in the end, it didn't matter, all that did was that she was leading us

straight to David.

Lizzy had been right, and Hannah ended up leading us to a trap door. The door was open and she rushed in. We waited for two minutes knowing that they could not exit without us seeing it.

Or so we thought because when I was the first to rush in twenty seconds later I heard the commotion.

“You stupid whore you lead them to me” The voice was distorted, rasping for breath.

Hannah cried and I could not make out what she was saying. And the warriors who were already inside followed me to the room the sound was coming from. The room we entered looked like a simple, barren living room connected to an open kitchen. We piled out into a simple bedroom and the small nest at the end of the bed made my heart sink.

My poor sweet, beautiful, precious mate had been forced to sleep at the end of the bed like she was a rabid dog. Hannah was the last to try to crawl underneath the bed.

I roughly grabbed her ankle and yanked her back. She was guilty this was enough to put

her on trial.

“Follow the others” I roared at my warriors and they did. One by one they crawled into the tunnels that were dug even deeper than this prison was.

“Where is she” I roared again this time looking at Hannah.

Who was cradling her stomach sobbing but I couldn't care less. I could not be this close to finding Ayla only to miss out on the last minute.

“She tried to kill him, she tried to murder him, my mate, she can have you if you ever find that bi tch” She sobbed at me.

I couldn't quite make out what she was saying, all I knew was that I was seeing red. I

wanted to know who tried to murder who because Hannah wasn't making any sense.

A soft delicate hand wrapped around the wrist of the hand I raised to slap some sense into

Hannah. For a split second, my heart soared with hope that it was Ayla. This hole was

overflowing with the scent of her. But of course, it wasn't her, David would never leave her behind.

“Griff, don't, she loves David, and she is obviously pregnant with his pup. The entire

BloodMoon pack knew Hannah was in love with him, believing they were mates. David did too and that is why he f ucked her even if he did not love her. There are better ways to make her talk” Jessa implored and she was right.

No matter how angry I was, no matter how panicked I was, I could not hit a she-wolf. Let alone a pregnant one.

“My mate is right, she is crying about David almost getting murdered did you not hear his voice” Gerarld added in and he was right, David’s voice had been very h oa rse.

“We are going to find David, you are both guilty of treason punishable by death do you want that for your pup?” I asked Hannah hoping this was indeed the way to make her speak.

She wrapped her arms closer around her stomach and shook her head.

“Then I need you to tell me exactly what happened and where my mate. is. And maybe I will spare your life and his” I growled barely able to contain my anger.

“Fine, I will tell you can we go back to the pack house I don’t want to be here anymore”

Her answer was quick and sure even if there was a tremble in her voice.

Chapter 135

I don't know if I am dreaming or if I have died. I really hope it is the first one because I am too close to being back with Griff to die now. But on the other hand, I have never felt as peaceful as I do now. I stand up to look around and I notice I am wearing a white flowy dress. It reminds me more of a robe than it does of a dress.

Suddenly I see a figure looming in the distance. The person is watching me but makes no effort to come closer. I'm unsure of what I should do, it feels as though they are calling out to me. It feels familiar and before I know it, before I even decided to. I am moving towards the figure. As I get closer I see that it is a female, with long blonde hair that is so light it is almost white.

She is wearing a robe similar to mine but hers is embroidered with sparkling silver. This is my answer I must have died, and the Moon Goddess deemed me worthy enough to ascend to the heavens. Here I can live in her valley now. The eternal pack house. I will have long- lost family members and friends waiting for me here

But there still is this urge to go back to Griffin. I do not want to be dead, I finally had a life I wanted to live. And now it has been taken away from me before I could do the things I really wanted to do. Like finally being Griffin's mate in all senses of the word. My tears leave stains on my robes as I make my way towards, who I suspect is Selene the Moon Goddess and mother of all werewolves.

"Sit with me my child, tell me why are you crying?" She asks me, gesturing at a white wooden park bench I could have sworn wasn't there seconds ago.

"I am sorry, you are the Mood Goddess right?" I stammer having no clue how to speak with her.

"I am, and you are Ayla Hemming, daughter of Jay and Tessie Hemming, fated mate to David Birch. And second chance mate to Griffin Taylor" She tells me and hearing Griffin's name alone hurts me.

Like she is stabbing me with a burning knife. She must see me winching in pain. As she gestures to the bench again. There is no use in standing up against the Moon Goddess herself so I just sit down next to her. Not speaking because she wants to know why I am

crying. But I am really not sure how to tell the Moon Goddess that you do not want to be in her presence because you rather be with your mate longer.

The mate you have not completed the mating ritual with all because you were too scared to get hurt again. I wonder if she knows how often I cursed her, how I wanted to stop believing in her. Or how I was so convinced that they made mistakes. That I thought for so long that having fated mates is bulls hit. As is the pain when someone rejects you.

Because how is it fair to be rejected by the one who is supposed to love you unconditionally? And then to be in pain because of it.

“You seem to have a lot on your mind, my child. Which I guess is fair since you’ve been through a lot haven’t you?” Selene asks me.

When we are young, we are taught that the Moon Goddess is the mother of all werewolves. It is why the one who helps lead the pack with the Alpha is named Luna. The Latin word for moon, because in her likeness, us Luna’s are supposed to be the mother of the pack. Where the Alpha is strict, the one setting down the rules. Luna’s are the ones

that oversee the rest. That takes care of the pack, listening to Selene's soothing voice

telling me that I have been through a lot.

Makes me feel like I am listening to a mother. And I cannot bear to tell her just how mad I

am with her. Just as I would not tell my mother I no longer look up to her. I would never

imagine telling Selene that. Not

out of a fear for her and her anger. No, because it feels bad to tell her that. Because

suddenly the idea of disappointing her feels like such a heavy burden. A burden that I

need to avoid at all costs. just answer her, not letting her know how I still feel that it is her

fault.

90 instead I

"I have, and I don't understand why. Not that it matters much, the reason I was crying is

because it all was for nothing I still lost him"

Selene looked at me questioningly, I expected her to know what I was talking about. But

her next question indicates that she doesn't

"Griff, I lost him now and I know this is supposed to be a better place," I tell her as I make

a wide gesture trying to capture the entire valley.

“But to me, there is no place better than right at Griffin’s side. It took me way too long to realize that. And now I am too late” I sob

“Well your body is indeed giving up, it has been through too much. But our spirit is stronger than our body is. I wanted to talk to you, tell you why I picked David as your fated mate” She explains and suddenly I feel a little bit of hope warming my heart.

“Wait so you mean to tell me that I am not dead?” I ask because I need to be sure.

“No your body has given up, your spirit is still fighting to find your way back to your mate.

Eventually, you are going to have to decide if you want to keep fighting. Or if you are going to join me here” Selene states, and right now I cannot think of any reason to not keep fighting to get back to Griffin.

But there must be a reason she feels I might not want to fight when I have heard everything there is to be said. I sit back and nod, signaling for Selene to continue talking.

Because I am speechless, my throat feels so dry that I am sure no words are going to

come out.

“You must be wondering why I chose David as your fated mate. Wondering if I knew what he was capable of. Admittedly Griffin is a far more suitable mate for you. He is my apology of sorts” She starts

It was weird knowing that being mated to David, wasn't a mistake. I had been telling myself it was a mistake. That I should have been mated to Griffin to being with. It had been easier. to believe that the Moon Goddess never saw a man as vile as David match me. That she did not believe a man like him was the one who could make me a better person.

“I am taking in Hannah for questioning, you follow the others through

her kidnappers. We need to search the woods for her” I mindlink the warriors, as Jay mindlinks his pack members.

the tunnels and arrest them. Princess Ayla has ese rough

We rush back to the pack house, without needing to speak, we both know where we want to go. Likewise, we walk her to Jay's office, his eyes glossed over on the way there. As we

arrived, Tessie was waiting for us, arms crossed over her chest and a face that spelled trouble.

“I am sorry, I had to, she is Ayla’s mother after all” Jay whispered to me.

Now that I was so close to having my mate back, I could hear the double meaning of Jay’s words. It made sense that he told Tessie, as she was his mate and Ayla’s mother. But I just knew he made it clear that Ayla’s fierceness came from her mother and not him.

“Jay, Grillin, please tell me that you did not hurt a she-wolf, however despicable she is?”

Tessie asked, there was an edge to her voice I could not quite place.

She has been through a lot too, so I didn’t think too much of it. Not until I noticed the regretful look on Jay’s face. I knew it wasn’t because he hit Hannah because he hadn’t been alone with her. The answer came in the form of Tessie’s fist, socking Hannah right in the nose. There was a sickening crunch like someone crumbled up a cracker. Then my sweet, caring, and gentle mother-in-law shook her hand to loosen her fingers. Preparing

for the next punch.

“Tessie, she is pregnant” I yelled at her, I knew she wouldn’t want to

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beat up a pregnant wolf.

“Lucky you, I care for your unborn mutt more than you did for my pup” She snarled at

Hannah.

But she opened the door to the office and took a seat. We had Hannah. sit down across

from Tessie. As we sat down next to our respective mate and mother-in-law.

“Like I told you, Hannah, I can give both you and David a royal pardon for the execution.

But only if you tell me what happened. Starting by what caused you to run out this

morning” I told her.

I wanted to know all that had happened, and how my sweet mate had been treated. That

wasn’t the priority now, though. Knowing how she had managed to escape. What she had

with her, how long she had been gone etcetera, etcetera would provide me with the most

answers.

“Nobody, gets this, but I love David, I do. He isn’t as bad as you all think he is. But the things his father did to him. That would mess with everyone’s head” She s obs, I roll my eyes and am about to snap at her to hurry it along.

But

When Tessie speaks up; “Then why did you two not mate, it is his pup you are carrying is it not?”

Hannah, by the looks of it, still rightfully scared of Tessie, just nodded. at this. But Tessie surprises all of us by putting her hand on Hannah’s. The latter flinches, but she doesn’t pull her hand back.

But

“I am a mother too Sweetheart and your pup comes first, make us understand why we should not just execute you and David. And your pup with it” The sweet caring Tessie that held Hannah’s hand was replaced by the ice-cold venomous woman that just punched a younger girl in the face.

Honestly, she was kind of scary, and I was glad I was on her good side. It was effective

though because Hannah crumbled and started sobbing again. But this time she wasn't just crying, telling all of us how much she loved that son of a bitch. Now he told me about the punishments. About Ayla being chained to the bed, and not getting fed enough. My knuckles turned white from the force I used to hold the top of the desk. All to try to stop myself from lashing out at Hannah, either verbally or physically.

"When we were having breakfast this morning Jason, my brother mindlinked me that Ayla had escaped and that he had found David unconscious" While I resent, I lannah I understand why she ran out of her like she did.

I would have done the same if anybody at all had mindlinked me that they found Ayla unconscious. While David, did come to, he had trouble speaking and when Hannah arrived we did too so she didn't have a lot of time to talk to him.

What her brother let her know he suspects though is that Ayla' realizing, David forgot to chain her to the bed after she had passed out again and had tried to kill David. All so she could get the keys from his body and escape. She succeeded in getting the keys and

escaping,

knew by now. But she didn't succeed in killing David.

as we a

Everything indicated that she had suffocated David, he was found with a pillow on his

face. He must have passed out and stopped struggling, and she must have seized the

opportunity and ran. Leaving us with the question of why she wasn't here yet. More so

since Jason, thinking David had died, ran out again to find Ayla to make sure that she

couldn't escape and tell me or the others about his involvement. And

he had not found her, so he went back and mindlinked his sister.

It must have been hours ago and she knew the way around these parts because it is

where he grew up.

"Crown prince, we followed them for as far as we could but they blocked the tunnel. With

silver netting and rocks, there is no way we can break through it. This must have been a

planned escape route.?" One of my warriors mindlinks me as we are just wrapping up

questioning Hannah.

“You can come back to the Blood Moon pack, you can take a break. I’ll go out to join the search for the princess with a fresh group of warriors” I answer.

“None of us want to come back when the Princess is still out there. We much rather join the search for our Princess.” Another warrior answers

me.

Their answer warms my heart and the thing is, I know they will not get rest. Not when they want to be out there searching for Ayla. The pack bond is a wonderful thing. It makes us stronger, it does more for us than anything else does.

“She will be happy to hear how much all of you care for her, I will see you out there in a bit,” I tell all of them before I step out of the room. To be met with the rest of my warriors, who all have heard that Ayla has escaped but seems to be lost or hurt in the woods.

“We are here to help you find our Princess,” one of them tells me, I feel the swirl of warmth you can only feel when the pack bond is getting stronger.

And I hope Ayla is out there somewhere, and she feels this warmth in

her heart too. Hopefully, it gives her some strength to hold on and wait for me.

Now that we are safe, we all shift to our wolf forms because that makes it easier to find

Ayla. Everyone stayed between the entrance of the dungeon and the pack house. But we

cannot find her there, and the thing is if she did that. She would have already found her

way back to the pack house.

“I think we need to go in the other direction” I mindlink everybody

They all follow me and soon it turns out I was right. The scent of Ayla is getting stronger

and stronger. At first, it seems like she has just passed through here because we do not

see her. Until I suddenly spot a secluded cave, what if she needed a rest? Which makes

sense with all that Hannah told me. So I rush up to the entrance to the cave only to be

met with a horrifying sight”

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My sweet, wonderful mate, unconscious on the cold cave floor. Even now that she was

curled up. I could see how matted her hair was. How skinny she had gotten. And I saw her

body covered in bruises. It triggered something protective deep inside of me. I just barely

managed to tell the others to leave the two of us alone. She is fully dressed, but the

clothes are draping off her body. They are too big on her now. I remember when we first

met. She was so ashamed of her

scars, that I never minded them. And if these wounds turn into scars. too. I still would not

mind, but I know she would. So I want to hide as many wounds and bruises as I can.

I shift back to my human form, not minding I am as naked as I was the day I was born, and

I walk over. She seems so peaceful on the one hand. But on the other hand, it is so clear

that She is not okay. That she wasn't just sleeping because she was exhausted. So, like I

intended to do. I covered her bruises the best I could before I lifted her in my arms and

carried her out of the cave.

I carried her like that in my arms all the way to the pack house. Asking her to come back

to me, whispering sweet nothing's in her ear all the time. Asking her to come back to me.

Telling her about the plans I had for the two of us. Every single thing I could think of to get

her to get back to me, but nothing helped. Of course, Jay and Tessie had been brought up

to speed. The two of them were waiting for us, together with Daniel and Krystel, Collin,

Dillion, Jessa, and Gerald had been in the forest with me when I found Ayla, and they had

walked alongside me as I carried her to the pack house.

After I had brought her to the pack hospital, placed her in a bed, and

washed her. Because I could not stomach the idea of anyone else touching her. Tessie

came over to check up on her daughter. Not as a mother but as a pack doctor, for me, it

was a bonus to know that her doctor loved her as much as I did. But I was not stupid, I

realized how critical her condition was. So for Tessie to work on her own daughter as a

patient who might not make it must be terrifying and

heartbreaking.

“What happened?” Tessie asked me, her tone cold and professional.

I feel like she was keeping herself detached from the situation. So she could be as

professional as she could. Without falling victim to the emotions that would come into play

from seeing her doctor like that.

“I do not know we found her like that, on the floor of a hidden cave, though. One of the other warriors found a backpack full of candy bars. and cans of sodas. So our best guess is that she was too exhausted and hungry with not having been fed enough. The bag got too heavy for her, so she dumped it. And it seemed like she had just laid down for a little nap. I have no idea why it has gotten so much more than just a little nap. All I do know is that she is not waking up” I told Tessie all the information I had.

I knew it wasn't much to go on, but it was all I knew. Tessie asked me to leave the room so she could examine Ayla. I did not want to leave her side, I had missed her for so long. And she had missed me so I wanted her to feel her close to me. I knew in my heart that feeling me close, would make her come back to us, back to me sooner. Still, I did not want to bother Tessie as she was doing her job, and neither did I want her to think I did not trust her. Reluctantly, I got up to leave the room and give Ayla and Tessie the privacy and space that they needed. But not before bending over and giving Tessie one last kiss on the forehead, whispering to her.

“Come back to me, Darling, I cannot do this alone, I need you here. with me”

That last kiss to the forehead was two hours ago. Tessie still had not come out of the room

she was in with Ayla. And I was getting anxious, why would she not come out to tell us

what was wrong?

A firm hand on my knee stopped me from shaking it so much.

“She is in good hands Griff, and there is no way our Fire Cracker is not pulling through.”

Dillion told me, but he was pale, and his eyes were glossy.

He was trying to reassure himself as much as he was trying to reassure me. The two of us

and everyone else in the waiting room breathed a sigh of relief when Tessie finally walked

out of the room.

“She has been getting a medicine that I did not know of, and finding out what it was or did

wasn't easy. I managed to find out it is a medicine given to control someone's shifts.

Meaning that with all the abuse she has been through, she has been forced to ignore her

wolf too. The exhaustion and hunger combined with the medicines and. their effects made

her slip into a coma. “Tessie's explanation made me boil with anger. At the same time, I

am sick with worry, wanting to do anything and everything I can do to get Ayla out of her coma.

When I asked Tessie what I could do to help Ayla if there was anything I could do to help her with. She told me I needed to take care of Ayla. Be with her care for her and talk to her. There was no proof that what I would tell her would matter. People are known to just read a story to the person in a coma. Because it is more the sound of your voice than the words coming out.

First, though I wanted to take care of her just like Tessie suggested I would. Not wanting to leave her side for even a second. I had asked Jessa to get Ayla all her favorite toiletries and lotion and whatever it was that she used. I had handed her my black card and she was back soon enough with a ton of stuff. She had saved me the receipts. I just crumpled them up and threw them away. Not only do I fully trust Jessa. If she had stolen from me that would have been fine too. As long as she did get the items I needed. The items Ayla liked the most and since I recognized a few of the bottles from our bedroom I knew Jessa had done a great job.

I crawled into the bed with Ayla, lifting her until she was like in a sitting position when I was done. It gave me free access to her hair just as I wanted to. Starting with spraying in some detangling spray and then patiently brushing small bits of her hair. To make it soft and bouncy again. And as I did I sang for her. There was so much I wanted to tell her it stopped me from talking to her at all. I could not find the words that would do justice to what I was feeling now.

Chapter 138

It takes a long time before Selene continues. Normally that would make me feel anxious or jumpy. And I am not a fan of it now either. But, in an environment that is as peaceful as this is. I cannot feel too anxious.

“I have seen a rise in chosen mates in the recent five years or so. Not situations where you lost an earlier mate. Or if you never found your mate and fell in love with someone. No situations where wolves think they can find a better wolf than the one I picked out for them” Selene suddenly starts, and I blink at her in confusion.

For most of my life, I had an opinion about chosen mates just because you think you can do better too. Still, I do not see what this has to do with my situation.

“David comes from a long line of chosen mates. You Ayla Hemming on the other hand come from a long line of people who stayed loyal to their loyal mates. Even your great-grandfather who found out he had a human mate, and even more special his human mate.

The one who did not grow up with the idea of ever finding a soul mate that was created for her” Selene continued and I could not hold back the scoff.

Because where Selene is now praising me for my honorable heritage. with my human great-grandmother. It was one of the main reasons why David rejected me. And it was the main reason why most of the pack had whispered behind my back. It fueled the bullying, even if I now believed it was because Hannah never got over her petty little jealousy, not even when David had rejected me.

“I know what you must think, I truly thought that having a mate so close to him. One who he grew up with, that it would stop him from

rejecting you. Sadly I was wrong, both in David's capability to love. and in Phillip's capability to let his family make their own decisions." Selene looked guilty and I still had a lot of questions left. I sort of got why I was mated to David and what it would bring him. Or would have brought him if it was not for him rejecting me? I still couldn't come up with anything David could bring me. Nothing that was in it for me so to speak.

"What would have been in it for me, what made David the perfect mate for me?" I asked Selene, unable to hold back even with her looking as guilty as she did.

"Nothing, only he could give you. You are meant to be a Luna or the Luna of all Luna's but I figured that out later. There is a reason why sometimes mates get rejected. Or that some mates turn out to be terrible. All of you still have a free will. All of you will develop your personality. And those personalities will either make the pairing better. or worse. It is not an exact science" She pauses speaking for a minute. to smile a nostalgic smile.

Almost like she wishes it could be an exact science. That she could. make sure every mate would be as perfect as Grillin is for me. Weirdly, she is the Goddess. The one I have been told to honor and praise for all of my life. But as we are sitting here speaking she doesn't

seem unreachable or untouchable. She reminds me of a young mother is still finding out

what she needs to do to best raise her pup/?

Who

She tells me all about mates, and how she hoped I would be the one to save the

BloodMoon pack. How her heart hurts every time she sees a pack failing. The longer she

speaks the more I get her reasoning. David. might not have been right for me. Not even

when I tried to believe that he was. He could have made me happy if he had tried better. If

he would have been a mate like Selene intended mates to treat each other'

He would have never made me as happy as Griffin is doing now. And his first fated mate

would never have made him so happy as I make Grillin. But it's not like we would have

known about each other and what lives could have been like. You cannot miss what you

never heard. So the four of us wouldn't have been unhappy. We would feel like we had all

we could wish for.

Just looking at the carnage that had happened now showed how much better the Kingdom

would have been if Selene's first plan had worked

out.

Now that I had her next to me and she seemed to be so eager to speak I wanted to take advantage of the possibility.

"Okay, I get that you cannot stop people from changing and becoming crappy mates. Or even rejecting mates but why do you punish the rejected mate? When David rejected me and I was hurting like that. I felt abandoned by you" I asked her and her face fell.

"It was not meant to be like that, the reason I made a way to reject your fated mate. Was to make sure you would not feel the bond, the sparks if your mate was unworthy. All coming back to the fact that I foolishly thought that you would all be so happy with your fated mate. That no one would ever reject their mate, not unless they had a very good reason to do so" She says and she gives me that same sad smile she has given me a few times.

While it is still weird to see the Moon Goddess so humanlike sad and vulnerable. It does make sense why wolves that get rejected hurt so much. It was meant as a punishment.

Not punishment for getting rejected as much. But punishment for being someone so bad, so vile that not even your fated mate was left with another option than to leave you. It could have been beautifully poetic if only Selene had fully taken our free will into account.

And talking about free will she had told me a lot but nothing that had made me rethink my want to get back to Griffin. I was shocked and sad about how things turned out. Deep down I wished that Selene had made me and Griffin fated mates at the beginning because it would have saved me a lot of pain and trouble. I couldn't change the past, and since it had led me to Griffin I wasn't too sad about it either.

"Selene you said you would tell me something that might make me reconsider wanting to go back and be with Griffin. But nothing you said so far those. Because honestly, part of me is still hoping you just hurry up so I can go back to Griff, you know I think he needs me." I tell her and this time her smile is not timid or broken.

Her smile is radiant now and bright as she looks at me. Before telling me to listen closely.

For a few seconds, I have no idea what she is talking about. But then I hear it, Griffin's

voice in the far distance.

“Come back to me now baby, I need you” I cannot see him, and his voice sounds too far away.

“He found your body, you’re in a coma and of course, Griffin wants you back, but I have put you through so much. You are welcome to just stay here. And I will make sure Griffin doesn’t hurt too much after you die.

Chapter 139

Ever since that first day of taking care of Ayla, I had been at her side. I would shower at the showers in the hospital. Eat the foods family and friends brought me. And every day like that first day I took care of her. I would wash the body with her favorite soap. I would massage her with her favorite body lotion. After that, I would brush her hair. Either blow-drying it after having washed her hair. On other days I just used the leave-in conditioner to keep her hair soft and shiny now that she was lying on it so much.

For seven days, I had been caring for her like that. And of course, it was worth it. Of course spending time with her was still better than not being able to spend time with her alone. I

just wish that it would help, that I would get the slightest bit of a reaction. And now for the first time in a week, I needed to leave her side. Mom and Dad had come over to discuss some of the issues with the BloodMoon pack and how we would handle it from here on out. I understood why I needed to be there with them. I just hated that I had to be away from her for more than ten minutes.

“Knock Knock” Dad’s voice interrupted my somber thoughts.

I told him to come on in, and of course, mom was with him too. We had been on the phone every day and most of these days they asked to be put on loudspeaker wanting to talk to Ayla. Now they brought her flowers and scented candles. Another I noticed Mom carrying was Ayla’s copy of Pride and Prejudice.

“There is no need for the three of us to be there with her. You need to be present for the meeting. But I don’t so I will just be here reading to my daughter-in-law” Mom stated that she would not accept anyone trying to stop her. She just sat down next to Ayla and opened up the

Not that I was about to stop her, I still rather would have been the

one sitting next to her.

Like Mom said though I cannot, I need to be present in this meeting. But doing so knowing

that Ayla wasn't alone. That she was someone close to her, and someone who loved her

was reassuring, to say the least. After kissing my mom's cheek and Ayla's forehead I led

Dad to the big meeting hall where we needed to be.

Dad and Jay caught up for a little while before we all sat down to have a good

conversation.

"I am going to come right out of the woodwork with this one" Jay started the meeting.

As I had suspected he was not happy being the Alpha. There was no doubt it wasn't

because he could not handle the responsibilities to be an Alpha. He handled them well,

after all, it was in blood. He had told me before that he was willing to make the pack

better. It was his daughter's wish and for that alone, he tried to do more than his best.

This pack however was so damaged by the previous Alpha that there was no real pack

bond left. No loyalty, as much as the pack seemed to love the Hemmings a their new

leaders. Some of the pack members. were already looking at moving to neighboring packs. Or moving back. home to the packs they or their partner came from. It was why Jay wanted to stop the battle to try and rebuild the pack. Because he seemed to be the only one that did.

“I propose we just revoke the Blood Moon’s pack rights. It will mean every habitant needs to find a new place to live. They can just stay in here as long as they need to. As long as they know that it would be a temporary solution, nothing long-term.” Dad suggested and everyone agreed with him.

In the end, I do think it is the best solution to all the issues. It was a shame but there was no way we to salvage this pack. Everyone was happy to know there was an end coming to this mess.

Sadly enough that wasn’t all we needed to discuss. We needed to discuss what we were going to do with Hannah the council of elders would want to speak to her to see if she was indeed guilty of kidnapping Ayla. Because she did not physically kidnap her. Nor was it her idea, but she knew that Ayla was being kidnapped and abused, and not only did she not

help her.

She not mention it t anyone, in fact it was the other way around and she was lied to keep the kidnapping hidden. She helped David where she could. The fact that she did it out of some twisted idea of love did. not help her case. It could only work against her because she had personal gain from the kidnapping. She had told us she never cared about Ayla being with me. Her master plan in all of this was to make David see she was a much better mate than Ayla was.

However, I told her we as the royal family would vouch for her being executed. Sure I could break my promise but that isn't the kind of man, the kind of King I want to be. And there now was a pup involved. And no matter how much I hate that pup's parent. The pup is innocent and deserves my protection too. It was a difficult decision and we we made. some plans but we were unable to come up with a set plan on what to do.

The Elder council would have to take the lead on this one. The fact that we still had no clue where David and the others were was not helping either. Hannah had sworn up and

down that she did not know where the others went to. Maybe if she had ever proven herself worthy of our faith we would have taken her word for it. Even if she would have assisted David in the kidnapping, Hannah, however, has shown herself to lie to get whatever she wanted.

The last topic on the agenda was Ayla, we needed to decide if we would still try to keep her alive at the pack hospital. And which pack hospital because I am not sure the BloodMoon pack hospital would be fully equipped and working for much longer. Not with the pack doctor wanting to go home to the White Oak pack.

Ayla would just go home to the castle with us, Where she needed to be I would even look into hiring a private nurse so she could just lay in the bedroom. She would feel me getting into the bed that was full of the scent of me. Then I would fall asleep with her wrapped up in my arms. I kept telling myself that it was all on her behalf. That I was sure that this was the one trick to would finally pull her from her coma.

Before I could suggest hiring the private nurse though Mom called out for all of us through

the mindlink, she was in the room with Ayla. Telling me that whatever made her call out

for us through the minlink had to do with Ayla. Not wanting to wait for a second later than.

Chapter 140

We had moved Ayla to the Silver Moon pack's hospital. Partly because the BloodMoon pack

no longer existed. Partly because, unlike the Blood Moon pack had, we have been thriving.

So we have more staff and a better-equipped hospital. When I first brought Ayla here, I

had hoped it would mean she would recover quickly.

Maybe I wanted too much too soon, after all, it has only been two days. since we have

been back at the Silver Moon pack. The reason Mom had called us in was because Ayla

had twitched when she was reading to her. It had given my mom hope, she was waking

up.

And it still could be the case. Tessie told us that she would have to show more signs of

being responsive in the next few days. If she did. not, that would mean she had slipped

too far into the coma. And it would mean we would have to consider taking her off life

support at the end of the week.

“I feel like you should be the one to make the decision, Griff, not to unload something like this onto you. She wanted to complete the mating process and it would have made you the next of kin. Not use ast parents and I pray to the Moon Goddess, that it does not come to it. But if it does, I want to honor her wishes and have her mate be the one who decides”

She had added, and I could only nod because she was right.

It was not a decision I would make lightly and like my mother-in-law, I prayed to the Moon Goddess every day that she would help Ayla pull through. But if she wouldn't, I would want to do the last things that a mate can do before losing the love of his life.

I already regretted not being able to bring her home to our chambers.

With all the life support she needed to be on, it was impossible to have her sleep in a regular bed. And me climbing into bed with her, twisting and turning as I was sleeping.

Meant a risk, I pulled out one of the threads keeping her alive. Tessie, however, had been very clear about the importance of keeping track of Ayla's movements and twitches to see if she was waking up.

So I got myself a notebook, I had Ayla put in a private room and I did. not leave her side.

Not even allowing me a full sleep, all I would allow myself were little catnaps when others were visiting her. Because my wonderful mate had clearly made a lasting impression on our pack. Every day. pack members came by bringing flowers and gifts. Several people had asked if they could read to their Princess, hoping it would help her wake up. And of course that was just the pack members. Our family and closest friends were coming over more often.

Krystel was determined to believe that her sister-in-law, new friend, and her future Queen would come back to us. Had started on her Beta duties, compiling files of what Ayla needed to learn, and making shopping lists so that Ayla would have everything she needed in her office. She would come over at nine in the morning every weekday. Going over the tasks she had performed for Ayla. She started this when Ayla was still in the BloodMoon pack's hospital. And she kept up with it now that Ayla was home. Today was Friday again, and Krystel said her weekly goodbye.

“Well, that was a productive week, although I could have done more with your help. But I

will leave you be for now I know you and Griff like to have your weekend off” Only this time Ayla seemed to smile.

I rushed to get the notebook and wrote down the date, exactly what had happened, and the reaction I saw in Ayla. Even Krystel agreed that it had seemed like Ayla smiled at her.

“See, I know her she would want me to keep busy to make sure she can be the best Alpha and Queen to the pack she can be” Krystel had beamed before leaving me alone again.

“Come on, Darling, smile for me too. I miss that smile of you so da mn. much. I remember the first time you genuinely smiled at me. It was when you bit into the snickerdoodle that made you give me a chance. Maybe I should have told you that before but it was the best moment in my life. Seeing you smile after agreeing you would give me a chance” I pleaded with her, holding her hand in mine.

The memory made me think, perhaps I could bake some Snickerdoodle cookies for her.

Tessie explained scents can trigger a person in a coma too. Ever since that first time. I

would so often make her Snickerdoodle cookies. On occasion, I had sent couriers to bring them to her the same day I baked them. It always seemed to make her happy. But making the Snickerdoodle cookies would mean leaving her for at least an hour. Something I still did not feel comfortable with.

Suddenly I sensed Dillion, who was coming over unannounced and without any schedule or reason for it. Yet he was the one who came over to visit her most often, sometimes just staying for five minutes. I had asked him about it once, only to find out he had some rhyme and reason for his visits. After he first visited the BloodMoon pack he had told me about Ayla, stating he would like her as his Luna and Queen.

They had formed an instant connection, to the point where it made me jealous before I was secure in my relationship with Ayla. Ayla had described it as a platonic love at first sight. Like she knew, Dillion was destined to be a close friend. True to his chaotic nature, Dillion would always pop over when Ayla was at the castle. Sometimes to go out and do something, to discuss something serious with her. Other times to just show the new jeans he had just bought or brought her a coffee just showed the new jeans he had ju and

donut since he had been on a coffee run. Where he would give

her, the treats he got her, and would go on about his busy day.

So when he told me the reasons for his erratic visits, I finally understood how much they

loved each other.

“She will come back to us, and I don’t want our friendship to chance. She hates being

pitied, so every time I would have visited her if she was still healthy. I visit her now. That is

why I still bring her coffee and donuts, even if I know she cannot have them now. Or show

her my new shirt, when she cannot tell me how good I look in it. Because one day she will

wake up and thank me for the coffee. One day, she will look at me and tell me the shirt

brings out the color of my eyes.”

He had nodded, not to make anything clear to me. He nodded to hide the tears forming in

his eyes. His nod was to confirm to himself that he was right that his Fire Cracker would

come back to us.

“Da mn. Grill you are reek, are you not bathing?” He asked as soon as he walked into the

room.

He was probably right, with not leaving this chamber I would wash myself with hand soap

and paper towels before changing in the fresh clothes Gerald would bring me every

morning.

“Well there is only so much I can do with this bathroom sink” I shrugged at him, thinking

he would understand me and leave it be.

But of course, Dillion didn't, he told me to go home to shower, and have a longer nap,

promising he would stay with Ayla. Write down. every single movement and not take his

eyes off her.

“I cannot leave her, Dillion, you know I can't,” I told him, ready for this conversation to be

over.

“Firecracker, please tell your man to go shower. I mean, it would be bad enough for a

human, but with our wolf scent, my eyes are watering. Please squeeze his hand if you

want him to shower and sleep?” He asked Ayla and just as I was about to snap at him that

it wasn't that bad.

I felt her squeeze my hand, and it felt like the entire world came to a

standstill. This has been the most obvious response to anything ever since we found her

“Did I see that correctly?” Dillion whispered in shock at the possibility that his pleading

had helped.

“Please Darling, can you squeeze me once more if you do I promise I will shower, sleep,

and then I will bake you your favorite?” I begged her, her hand twitched, and then....