

To heal a Rogue #Chapter 4: The Tragedy of Bon

Bon 2 - Read To heal a Rogue Chapter 4: The Tragedy of Bon Bon 2

BONNIE

Those words turned in my empty stomach like a key.

Something happened in me then. Not the hum. What the hum lived on top of. The thing underneath it that had no name and no true color, until all at once it did, and the room went red at the edges, and then everywhere.

It was so thick that I could not help but blink. When my eyes opened again, the Beta was gone; his sentinels were gone, too. So was my mother and the other man.

All that remained in the space was just me, kneeling on cold stone with blood drying on my hands and nothing else left.

That was where the nightmare always ended.

The knock hit the door hard enough to shake me all the way awake.

I was on my feet before I was even awake, moving on years of habit. My binder came first. My fingers found it in the dark, muscle memory steering me, the familiar squeeze locking around my chest before I'd caught my breath. Then the wig cap, flattening my hair, hiding every silver strand of my short hair. The wig went on last, dark and short. I checked the mirror for a heartbeat. I looked exactly how I wanted. An unremarkable, tired male, but that was fine. Every sentinel here looked tired.

I opened the door.

Sentinel Ryker stood in the hallway with his arms crossed and the expression of someone who had done me a favor and was keeping score. He looked me over once and said, "You even sure you want this?"

"Why would I not want it?"

"You look like you had a rough night, which I would pity you for on any other day." He tilted his head. "But it is the fucking ball. I thought you needed the money. For your sister's tuition."

I nodded. My sister, who had never existed, was dreamed up in my first month here to explain why I needed the pay so badly, and I kept my head down. She lived in the human world, wanted nothing to do with pack life, and I sent money every month for her schooling. I'd told that story so many times it almost felt true.

"Of course, I do."

"Well... it is almost five," Ryker said. "Get there fast if you want to be the one standing post for the King today. You know how the retainer roster works. First one there, first one on the register."

Something pulled hard in my chest. Not emotion. Just the raw, physical ache of being near something I'd hunted for two years.

"Thank you," I said. "Genuinely."

He shrugged. "Just buy me a meal when you get that first pay bump."

"Done," I said. He walked away.

I shut the door and stood there for a single breath.

Screw bathing.

I got ready in under two minutes, with my crisp uniform laid out the night before, because I needed to be prepared.

I then pulled the suppressant tin from the drawer, stared at it for a moment, then shook two pills into my palm. I swallowed them dry. They tasted as they always did: chalky, bitter, like a promise to my own body I probably wouldn't keep. I'd been taking them at a rate that would have horrified any self-respecting healer, if they had a clue what I was doing.

After the last heat season, I spent three endless weeks trapped inside the castle, no way out and no excuse convincing enough to justify my absence. I tore through more suppressants than I ever had before, desperate to keep my secret safe. Even after, I couldn't slow down. If I slipped up just once—if my scent changed, if my skin burned too hot, if I made a single wrong move—everything I'd worked for here would fall apart in an instant.

It had been over two years of this. Presenting as a male and somehow passing sentinel evaluations. Building a reputation for being quiet, reliable, the kind of person no one questioned. I had a cover story, a record, and a goal.

The goal was a house.

Not in a pack. Not in a territory where Alphas and Betas and hierarchy crackled through every interaction like a current you could never silence. A house with ordinary human neighbors who didn't care about my designation because they didn't even know what one was. Somewhere, I could stop wearing the binder to bed. Somewhere, my hair could be any color it wanted, and the only opinion that mattered would be mine.

I was six months away from being able to afford it, maybe less if I got this assignment.

Royal retainer was the highest-paying sentinel post without military deployment. Standing personal guard for the King meant a stipend three times the standard, extra provisions, and a rank bump that would shadow me for the rest of my career. I needed it. I'd been running the numbers since the job opened, spending the last week engineering every detail to make sure I was in the right place at the right time.

I grabbed my kit and walked out.

The corridor was empty. The dormitory was wrapped in that pre-five stillness, the hush of a building full of people who didn't yet know the day had started. My boots were soft on the stairs. Outside, the pre-dawn air hit me cold and sharp, and I moved through it fast but didn't run. Running drew attention, and attention was the one thing I couldn't afford.

The assignment hall sat across the south courtyard. I crossed it in four minutes,

pushed through the door, and the head sentinel on duty looked up from the register, his expression shifting from neutral to amused when he saw me alone.

He looked at the empty room behind me, looked back at me before proceeding to write something in the register.

"You lucky bastard, Bonner," he said. "You're going to be taking care of the King today."

Relief surged through me so strong it almost twisted my face inside out. I reeled it in, kept my expression balanced between pleased and desperate, and said, in the low flat voice that lived in my chest now as if it had always belonged there, "Fuck yeah."

He laughed and slid the register across the desk for my signature.

I signed the name I'd worn for two years. Not mine. But mine now, the way a skin you wear long enough starts to feel like it grew from you.

I put the pen down, straightened up, and looked at the post assignment on the board.

I was one step closer to getting what I wanted.

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.