

### Chapter 9: Leana

We push hard all day the next day, only stopping for food, and it isn't until well into the night that we stop to rest. I'm tired again, but since Drake and Lily let me sleep last night, I agree to take the first shift.

Drake lays next to where I'm sitting by the fire. He lays beside me, holding my hand and putting it up against his face, so he can smell my scent.

I'm looking down, watching him sleep when I hear a twig snap. I jerk my head up, lifting my nose into the air. I can't smell anything, but the wind is at my back.

I disengage my hand from Drake's and stand. Besides my mother's Guardian gift of being able to tell when someone is lying, my strongest Guardian gift is being able to sense auras. I push out and suddenly, I can see the auras of a pack of wolves that have surrounded us and are closing in.

I howl a warning as I leap and shift, jumping at the first wolf that breaks through the trees around us. Another comes up behind him and then several others come running out from all around us. As soon as I am close enough, I can smell them. Rogues.

I hear Hera shift behind me, and Drake jumps up, getting into the fight, snarling as he attacks the wolves. I can tell immediately that Drake has never fought werewolves before. He's fast, but the wolves are stronger and there are many more of them than us.

As Kella is fighting, used to this type of fight and being able to manage the five wolves that we're fighting off, I'm keeping my eye on Drake. I see when two wolves grab him, one on each side, his own growl reflecting his anger and fury. Kella rips out the throat of the wolf in front



of us and then we leap at the wolf that is jumping at Drake, going for his throat.

The movement allows Drake to take out one of the wolves that has a grip on him and I spare a glance at Hera who is also taking on five wolves. However, now I have nine wolves coming against me and Drake and he is not experienced enough to fight this many.

One of the wolves rips a chunk out of Drake's arm as more wolves join the fight. I realize that Drake is trying to protect me, but by doing so, he's making it harder for me to protect him. His fighting style may work with vampires or other supernaturals, but it's nearly ineffective against this many wolves.

I'm trying to fight, while keeping Drake from getting more injured and staying out of his way as he continues to get into mine. Because I'm dancing around Drake, I'm taking more bites and scratches than I normally would.

Then suddenly, Hera is beside me and I breathe a sigh of relief. Hera and Kella have been fighting side by side our entire lives and we fall into an easy, effective pattern of fighting and killing.

Between the two of us, we take out the rest of the rogues, easily bringing them down as Drake takes down one, maybe two more. When they are all dead, lying on the ground at our feet, we move to the nearby lake to wash the blood, guts and stench of rotten food off of us.

As Kella rinses her body, I'm mentally fuming at Drake. I'm a Guardian. It is my job to protect others, including him. Add to that, he's my mate. Throughout the time of the Guardians, our main goal of protection has always been our mate. It's why so many Alphas in the past forced mate bonds with the Guardians. We are a powerful force, and we will die before we'll let anything happen to our mates.



When Kella has washed the blood off of her muzzle and fur, I shift back and stomp over to Drake who has a nasty gash on his arm and one on his leg. I will probably feel my own injuries soon, but right now, I'm furious and that anger is directed at my mate.

"What the fuck, Drake?" I say, moving to stand in front of him, hands on my hips.

Undeterred, he gets in my face, leaning over me as if his height will intimidate me, his own anger flashing in his eyes. Newsflash vampire, every one of my brothers and my friends' brothers is taller than me. If he thinks this will intimidate me, he's got another thing coming.

"You don't protect me, it's my job to protect you!" I snarl at him. I see Lily walking away, giving us space to argue this out. She understands the position we're in as Guardians and the battle most of us have with our mates about it.

"Wrong! I'm your mate, I will always protect you. And let's not forget that you are already weakened...by me!"

"That is not how this works, Drake."

"I don't care how it's worked for you in the past, Leana, that's how it's going to work now," he snarls back at me.

"I don't think so, vampire," I growl, slapping my hand on his chest.

He wraps his arm around my waist, pulling me against him. "I don't take orders from you, werewolf, even if you ARE an Alpha. You are my mate, and I will always fight to protect you."

It suddenly occurs to me that I'm naked and pressed against Drake's cool body. He took his clothing off to wash off the rotten smell of blood, so

now, our bodies are naked and pressed tightly together. As angry as Drake is, he's also very aroused, his cold, hard length pressing against my stomach.

"Fuck, Leana," he says and in the next instant, I'm pressed tightly against a tree, Drake's lips pressing against mine. He nips at me until I open my mouth and give him the access he desires. Unlike before, there is no hesitation on his part now. He is dominating my mouth, trying to tell me that he won't back down or allow me to get hurt for him. His hand goes into my hair, holding me as he deepens the kiss even more, as our tongues fight for dominance. He doesn't let up until I begin to whimper, clinging to him, heat flaring in my body and pooling between my thighs.

When he pulls away, his hand still holding my hair, he looks at me, his eyes a bright red. This time, I know that the desire in them is for me, not my blood. I know, because my own desire for him is raging inside me.

"You don't give your life for me. Not ever," he growls, but it's softer, deeper than it was before.

"It doesn't work like that. It's not something I can control," I tell him, my voice not sounding like my own. It sounds like some of the women I've accidentally come across in the woods when they were with their mates. I never expected that my voice would sound like that.

Drake's nostrils flare and the red color of his eyes brightens. He releases my hair then slowly makes his way down my body, taking deep breaths of my arousal that is perfuming the air around us.

When he's kneeling in front of me, he leans in, burying his nose in the apex of my thighs. He inhales deeply, then I feel his cool tongue licking against my lower lips.

Faster than I can see him, he's gone. When I finally spot him, he has



moved far away, his back to me as he leans his arm against a tree.

"Drake?"

"Fuck, Leana, your arousal tastes better than your blood," he says and when he looks at me, his eyes are shining like red beacons in the night and his fangs are fully extended.

"What..." I'm not sure what I'm asking. What can I do? What does he want to do? I know that the momentary touch of his tongue sent waves of pleasure through my body. I want to feel it again, but not if he's afraid he can't control himself.

"Just give me a moment," he says, turning away from me. I stand still watching as he takes deep breaths, keeping his back to me.

When he's gotten himself under control, he turns back around. "We should get back. I'd rather not lose control with you again. And honestly, I have no idea what I might do this time if I did lose control, but I can smell that you are a virgin. If we ever get to the point where we can make this work, I don't want to be out of control for your first time," he says, reaching his hand out to me.

Maybe I should be embarrassed that he can smell that I'm a virgin, but I'm pleased that he knows that I've saved myself for him. I know he probably hasn't done the same, I'm not even sure how old he is, but I know from what I saw in that feeding room that feeding and fucking go hand in hand with vampires. If he's ever fed on a human, then he's no virgin.

When we get back to the campsite, I can smell that Lily is burning the rogues. The smell is so awful that it takes away any lingering arousal that I have. We decide that we'll leave just as soon as the fire burns down since none of could sleep next to this scent anyway.



It's a couple of hours before we can finally leave. I ask Drake about his injuries, but he assures me that they will heal. Before we leave, I subtly check the injuries that I can see and realize that he is healing at almost the same speed as Kella is healing me. I wonder if that's because he's had my blood or if it's a natural vampire healing process. I sigh. There is a lot we still don't know about each other.

When we finally begin to run again, our pace is slow as we all have healing injuries. Hours later, when we finally stop to get some sleep, it's early morning. We're all exhausted, but Lily agrees to take the first watch. She sleeps until dawn before waking Drake and it's early afternoon before we're all up and ready to continue on our journey.



Cooper author

*What do you think of Drake and Leana so far? They have a lot of obstacles to overcome.*

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