

Owned by the Alphas 2: Claimed by the Alphas |

The Boundary

LORELAI

I was jostled awake by my body being shaken, panting and howling in my ear.

My eyes flung open, and I frowned up at Brax, who had gritted teeth and was carrying me in strong arms. He was running, and I had no idea why, but his glance down at me was filled with worry.

“What’s wrong?” I asked as he ran.

“We’re being followed. Probably hunted, and they are taking this all the way to the city,” Brax growled, glancing over his shoulder.

I looked back over his shoulder too, gasping as I saw the humans chasing us. They weren’t being shy; they were focused on keeping up.

“Put me down, we can both run,” I said, hoping that would help, but he shook his head.

“You’re too slow.”

“Am not,” I bit back, but he chuckled through his labored breaths.

“Yeah, you are, Spitfire. You’re about to pop, there’s no running for you,” he said, and refused to untuck me from his arms. He was probably right anyway.

The forest blurred around me before there were arrows sailing through the air toward us. I froze and threw up a shield, the arrows bouncing off it.

I blew out a breath of relief, the idea that he could have gotten hit while I was passed out stressing me out.

I rubbed my stomach as the tension pulled at it, hating that the fight wasn’t over yet.

“Why are they chasing us? Surely they know the city is protected by wolves?” I said.

He shrugged, pushing harder with the shield stopping their waves of attack.

“That’s what I’m worried about. The wolves are feral right now, and the wind has turned. The chill means snow will fall within the day. They will get stuck in it, and yet they advance.

“None of this makes sense anymore, but I need to meet with the others before we can decide what to do,” he said just as the city came into view over the hill.

He moved faster, and I had to admit, he was fast, much faster than I thought a wolf could move.

I had seen them run before, but with my shield stopping anything from reaching us and the humans forcing us to keep moving, it had us making up time unlike anything I had seen.

“The humans are still on us!” Brax growled in our link.

Kai growled and Derik huffed.

“So are the wolves. Winter is here. Run, Brax,” Derik ordered.

I curled farther in, holding as much of my own weight as possible so he could move us faster across the plains.

The humans were closing in though. I had no idea how they were moving so fast, how they were keeping up, but they were.

They were coming closer, and their swords were drawn. The arrows stopped, and they bashed against my purple shield, testing it for weaknesses.

I had to admit, it was weaker than normal. Every hit felt like it was directly on me. I winced, grimacing as I fought to keep my shield up against them as we barreled into the city.

Brax put me down inside the gates, and I kept my shield up at the threshold. The humans stopped, most of them grinning and smirking, pacing.

Brax snarled, his roar making the gates clank as they closed.

Then the snow started. Soft puffs of white that seemed so innocent and gentle but were detrimental to the wolves. There would be no full moons for three months, and they were already feeling it.

The gate sealed shut. I left my shield up, but the humans didn't retreat.

"What are they doing?" I trembled as the snow soaked through my clothes.

Brax pulled me into him, his frown and worry piercing our link.

Howls and roars erupted in the eerie silence, and we turned our heads in the direction.

"We have to get to the mansion," he said, but his eyes went back to the humans.

They weren't leaving. It was creepy as hell and made my skin raise in little bumps across my skin as they watched us step back.

"Do the spell," one of the humans said, his voice deep and husky.

I stopped Brax from retreating. "They're doing a spell."

"Impossible. Humans cannot wield magic," Brax said, but he stepped closer to the gate to watch with me.

The humans ignored us, pulling pouches from their belts, satchels of a black dust. I coughed as I felt it. It was suffocating, making me choke and draw in ragged breaths.

I backed up quickly with Brax as they sprinkled it across the line of the gate and my shield.

They poured it along the wall line as well, and I coughed again, the snow and eerie tension still making me uneasy.

Cain came over then, his lithe body running toward us as he snarled.

He shouted some words in a foreign language, and every human flicked their eyes to him, black and unmoving, before they went back to pouring their dust.

"Fuck," Cain bit, and pulled us back. "Don't touch the wall. You'll burn," he said in a deathly dangerous tone.

"Burn?"

"Yeah. They're locking us in."

“It’s winter, we locked ourselves in,” Brax argued, but Cain shook his head.

“You won’t be able to leave until they break that seal. They control you now.” He shook his head sadly, then looked over his shoulder toward Derik and Kai, who were coming along the stone path between buildings.

“The wolves are riled, but they’re not stupid. They’ve gone to their homes, ready to settle in and fuck for the winter.

“Thank the witches for werewolves valuing sex over ripping things to shreds.” Kai grinned and leaned down to kiss me.

I met his mouth and lost myself for a moment to his taste. It was what I needed, the comfort, the warmth, the pleasure. It filled my body, and after everything that had happened, I needed that moment.

He pulled back slowly, his thumb brushing down my cheek. “Our turn, Little Human,” he said huskily, and I smiled, but it wavered when Brax’s hand captured mine, squeezing lightly.

“She used a lot of magic. Cain needs to check her first. I’ll fill you two in,” Brax said.

I shook my head, rubbing my stomach. I didn’t feel weak like I thought I would, almost like using my magic buildup had been exactly what it needed not to overwhelm my body.

“I can sense it from here, the little guy’s okay. Mom was watching over him anyway.” Cain smiled, and I returned the gesture.

“What happened? The humans chased you here?” Derik asked, frowning as Brax nodded toward the gate where the humans were chuckling like creepy little elves and retreating.

“They’ve spelled the city. We’re caged.”

“Annoying, but not an immediate problem. It was the intention for winter anyway,” Derik said, rubbing his cheek before running a hand over his head.

I moved into him and snuggled into his side as his arm came around me, my hand still entwined with Brax’s, my other going behind Derik to rest in Kai’s.

Together, like we were meant to be, and that was all that mattered in that brief moment.

“They seem too smug to not consider this an issue, D,” Kai said.

He was right. The humans were smirking over their shoulders, heading back slowly, no care in the world.

“Then let’s hope that blade our girl here stuck in her father slows whatever they have planned down,” Brax said.

I hoped so, but my stomach was tightening in that moment, and something in that told me they were only just beginning to fuck with us.

“Will the wolves be okay to fight back if the humans attack the city?” I asked, and Derik shrugged.

“I hope so. Depends on when in the winter cycle they do it. If it’s near the end of it, then they are just as likely to attack us as the humans.”

“And the humans here?” I wondered, hoping they were going to be able to stay safe like we promised.

“We’ll keep them protected, even if we have to fight our own to do it,” Derik promised.

I cuddled in closer, not sure what to say. I didn’t want us fighting a war within the walls of the city when the enemy lay beyond that, not caring about the side effects of what they were doing.

“Let’s get back to the city before the wolves scent you,” Cain urged, and I nodded, separating from my alphas to walk with Cain ahead of them.

They were talking humans and strategies, war plans and pack forms, which I would wait to ask them about until they were finished.

I figured they were coming up with some kind of solution, and asking questions before they had the answers was just going to frustrate us both.

I also had tiredness weighing on me. My stomach was aching, and so were my bones.

Not magically, that felt warm and powerful within me, even my shadows were fluffing around my body like there was nothing wrong, but my human body was spent.

I needed a damn good sleep and a warm meal, and a bath would be amazing.

I was thinking about the soak I was going to put in my bath to help with my aches and pains when a wolf blocked our path to the mansion.

We were between two buildings: the back of a bar that was dulled from its usual life and an armory.

The sky was closing in on darkness, the snow falling faster, the cold biting, the wind ruffling the fur on the wolf. It was the same wolf that had jumped into the room not long ago.

“Tobias,” Derik warned as it snarled at me and inched forward.

Cain held his hand out and stepped in front of me, pushing me back as the alphas came forward.

“Derik let you live once before for this, Tobias. Don’t waste your second chance,” Kai bit, his claws extending, his red eyes glowing.

Tobias snarled and his teeth gnashed, frothing and wild. My alphas growled back, and I shivered, swallowing hard at the hostility in the air.

“C’mon, Lorelai,” Cain whispered in my ear, and I frowned as he tried to pull me away.

“But the alphas—”

“They’re not going to give Tobias a third chance. His wolf has claimed him,” Cain said sadly. “You shouldn’t see it. Let’s get to the mansion before it happens again.”

I followed Cain quickly. We had only just rounded the corner out of sight when the snarling, clashing, and whimpering began.

I curled into Cain and blocked my ears as he rushed me through the streets, his long black cloak hiding most of me and protecting me from the snow.

We made it to the stairs of the mansion, and I gasped at the blood staining them.

“More wolves?”

“Fractum has made the descent into winter madness swift and harsh,” he murmured.

I swallowed, hiding the tears that threatened, going into the mansion. Cain locked the doors as I stepped into the foyer, rubbing my arms to warm them up.

We had only been there for a few seconds when a flash whipped past me. I spun to the motion as Beenie landed on Cain, kissing him harshly, feverishly, ripping his cloak off as her mouth moved down his neck.

“Don’t leave me like that, Tatts. I’ll rip your face off next time,” she snarled before kissing him again.

He chuckled and kissed her back before pulling back and pushing her hair from her face.

“If I leave you to face the loneliness for a single second longer than needed then I will let you, sweetness.” He smiled, then kissed her again, the love pouring from them.

It was enough to make me crave my own mates.

Cain finally put Beenie down, and she grabbed his hand, dragging him toward the stairs.

“As much as the winter has its cold, dead fingers well beneath my skin and the thoughts of you chasing that away is well and truly preferable, I have to stay with Lorelai,” he breathed out, and she huffed, looking at me.

“She reeks of anxiety. Did Kai do something dumb?” she asked me, and I shook my head.

“No.”

“Can you use your magic? Cain said you’re powerful.”

I nodded. “I can use it.”

“Good,” she said, then tried to drag Cain upstairs again.

I looked away as he whispered something in her ear. She pursed her lips back, and he whispered again.

She sighed and rolled her eyes, then stomped back down and grabbed my arm, dragging me through to the seating area. She pushed me down onto the couch, the fire lit, the room warm.

“Fine. Let’s babysit the winter born and all be miserable,” she snapped.

“Cain, I’m fine if you want to go,” I said, kind of preferring solitude to tantrums. I wanted to go find my mom anyway.

“Beenie can benefit from putting someone else first for a change. It’s a work in progress, but we’re getting there,” Cain smiled at her, and she huffed, sinking back into the couch.

Cain sat next to her and grabbed her hand in his, rubbing it gently. It persuaded her to drop the scowl for a split second. Then she was grinning.

She leaned in and kissed along his neck, his jaw, licking over his pierced lobe as his eyes fluttered closed, his body going tense.

“Beenie…”

“Baby.” She smiled, then her hand went over the bulge in his pants.

I shot up. “I’m just going to go find my mom. Thanks for getting me back,” I grinned, then left them to it.

I wasn’t innocent anymore, and I would probably be the same with my alphas if I was needy enough. Something told me that winter made them all needy enough.

I moved across the lobby, the cobblestones clicking under my boots as I went through the door to the humans.

I figured Mom would be there like usual and went looking. The rooms were even warmer than the rest of the place, the fires roaring, and warmth filled my heart.

The women and children were smiling, laughing, talking, eating, sipping wine and ale, playing games. They were happy.

It was everything I wanted for them, even after the existence they had given me in the village. It seemed so long ago.

The way they were now was what I wished for them all, but the others were never going to know such fullness.

A sinking stone in my stomach warned me that it wasn't permanent, that the other humans I had thought of were making plans, and we had no idea what they were.

But for now, I was going to let the happiness live.

I moved through them, saying hello and chitchatting when I was talked to, but I still couldn't find Mom.

Ryleigh was sitting down on a cushion by the bookcases with a baby-name book, and I knelt down to her.

"Hey."

She smiled up at me. "Lorelai. How are you?" she asked with a bright smile.

"I'm okay. How are you? Are the pains gone?" I asked.

She nodded, rubbing her stomach that was smaller than mine. I had no idea how I had surpassed her but then figured the wolf thing played a huge part.

"Yeah, nothing to worry about, just growing. Galen reassured me this little mite will stay tucked in through the winter, so no winter born here, thank goddess," she breathed.

I tried not to take offense, but it was a strained effort.

"Oh shoot, I'm sorry. I didn't mean it like that. I...just, the shadows and the—" Ryleigh rambled, but I wasn't a stranger to contempt and shook my head.

"It's fine, Ryleigh, I get it. Have you seen my mother around?" I asked, looking around the room again.

Ryleigh nodded toward the door. "Galen called on her. She had some herbs he needed."

She shrugged, and I nodded, standing up, about to head off when I slammed straight into Vaughn. He steadied me with an easy smile.

"Easy there, you'll pop." He laughed, looking down at my swollen stomach.

I grinned, rubbing the ache in it away. "I can only hope it will be that easy," I joked, then moved past him.

"Being a winter born, I doubt anything comes easy to you," he said, and I had to agree.

Well, everything except my alphas. They came quite easily for me. I didn't say that though, leaving with a smirk as I headed to Mom's chambers.

I climbed the stairs, shaking my head with a smirk, my face flushing as I heard Beenie and Cain fucking in the room beside the lobby.

She was not shy or quiet, but if Cain was as good as my alphas, I couldn't blame her.

I took the stairs faster, wincing as my stomach tightened, an ache settling low in it, like I had strained the muscles there.

I held it, pausing as I clutched the railing. The ache lasted for a few seconds, and then it was gone, thank the witches.

I tested the link of my alphas, backing off when I felt the strain in it.

They were saying goodbye to Tobias as alphas and as friends of who they had just put down, so I left them to their private moment and stopped at Mom's door. I knocked before heading in.

"Mom?" I called, her room dark, the only light coming from under the door to the bathroom.

I heard rustling and hushed voices before she burst from the bathroom, smoothing her dress down and touching the curls in her hair like she was self-conscious or something.

I frowned at her, about to ask why she was being weird when Galen strode from the bathroom, his face showing no emotion as he wiped the shine from his lips.

“Have a good evening, precious.” He nodded toward Mom before looking at me. “Lorelai,” he said, then left.

The door shut, and my jaw dropped as I turned to Mom, a grin spreading across my face. “Mom!”

She blushed, holding her cheeks. “Oh hush, Lorelai. I don’t want to talk about it.”

She fanned her flushed face before heading to the small table with her teapot on it.

“We’re definitely talking about it. Pour the tea.” I grinned again.

She said nothing, but she poured the tea.

An hour later, after a lot of tea and laughing about her blossoming relationship with a werewolf, Derik knocked on the door before coming in.

His expression was tight, his face sad, his heart heavy with mine. My smile faded, and I stood up, knowing they needed me now.

“Mom, thanks for the tea,” I said, and she nodded.

“Of course. Now go, I’ll see you in the morning,” she said, hugging me.

I nodded, then moved into Derik.

“She won’t be at training tomorrow. Can you run the class with the humans?” Derik asked, and my mother nodded.

I didn’t ask why I wasn’t or what he was thinking. I didn’t even go into his mind to find out. Instead, I said goodnight and left with him to our room.

I got there just as Brax finished the bath. Kai was peeling off his bloodied shirt, chucking it in the fire before turning to me, his eyes dark.

“Little Human,” he breathed, and I went to him, hating the pain that surrounded my alphas. They were empty, hollow, a darkness circling that I hated being there.

Kai pulled my mouth to his, covering it softly as I sighed into him, my nails raking down his chest.

He lifted me into the bath, and I leaned up against Derik, Brax between my legs as Kai sat next to the tub.

He picked up a cloth and began bathing me as I relaxed, watching every movement, the room silent aside from the sloshing of water.

Once I was clean, Kai moved the cloth over my breasts before leaning in and meeting my mouth. His kiss was sensual and slow but just as intoxicating as ever.

Derik’s hand moved down between my legs, teasing my pussy with pressure that had me rolling my hips against him.

I savored the feeling, my body lighting up under their touch.

Brax climbed from the bath, grabbing towels for us. Kai stepped back, his eyes never leaving mine as Derik helped me up, holding my hand as I climbed out.

I knew that for the next few hours, I was not leaving the bed. There was a nagging feeling in my lower stomach, that niggling ache still there, the pressure still pulling a snippet of my attention.

But my alphas needed me, and I had to be there for them, considering what they had just done to protect me.

I also felt my shadows.

They were darker, prickling, swirling, and I knew it was a warning that winter was going to change everything, that the other humans had been waiting for it, that the boundary was more of an issue than Derik had made it.

I knew it meant that something was about to happen, so if this was the last night I had to be with my alphas in blissful peace and pleasure, away from what the realm was demanding of us, then so be it. I’d take the night for us.

I just hoped that we got even that much because even as I thought of it, the warning got stronger.