

512 Can't Feel

26:00:04 1

Frostfang

With two hours before they crossed into the third and final day of the blood moon, again they returned just as Maera anticipated. Silas was already healed up and according to his words 'ready to go'. But he was still paler than usual. And Maera feared that he would become a casualty before she got to ask him why he saved her. When even her son wanted her dead.

It was beyond perplexing. 1

Something had fundamentally changed ever since the turn of events but there had been no time to speak and untangle whatever was going on. But still they got into formation again.

James's gammas had the same formation as they did before but the difference was that on both sides, their number had dwindled. They were both left with 65% of what they started with.

The playing ground should have been leveled except for the four primes that continued to flank James. They were and would still be a

problem.

They charged. Guns fired in exchanges while some of the Obsidian gammas shifted to pile on the prime ferals. While the shooters were led by Maera, the shifters were led by Silas.

The strategy started to work, now that they had studied the movement and strategy of James's division. The primes would overwhelm, the Obsidian gammas having to tactically multitask which in contexts like these was barely ever effective.

So distracting the primes with six shifters on each, defending and dodging while trying to take them down, tilted the tides by 25%.

It was working, and James, still in the distance flanked by one prime, noticed that.

He howled in obvious frustration but did not come any closer as he spoke to Maera again, staring balefully at her, his glower could have melted platinum. "Are you fucking him, mum?" he yelled. "Is a lycan screwing you?" 3

The instant his question reached her ears, she stopped dead, confusion and horror contorting her face. He had even called her mum, not mother. This was not just some well-aimed jab to

distract her.

Even in the distance where he stood, she could feel the heat rolling off his form. There was not a hint, not a sliver of wicked humor in the eyes he inherited from her.

The cacophony of the battle, the deafening clamor of gunfire, growling, snarling and howling —his rage made his voice carry. "Answer me! Why did a lycan save you, if you are not spreading your legs like a common whore!" 1

The accusation, however outlandish, was a blow she doubted she would recover from. Everything in his hardened expression told her that he was certain and serious of the accusations he had leveled against her.

It was no time to be wounded by the words of a psychopath so Maera tuned him out of her head and continued to fight alongside her faction, paying no mind to the son still staring daggers at her.

If he was so pissed, he could join the fray of battle and slit her throat with his claws instead of ripping her heart out with his words.

Maera keyed her comm. "Six gammas, eyes on the Beta. Don't let him out of your sight."



"Copy," came the responses.

Six rifles swung toward James, tracking him.

But he didn't move.

Just stood there.

Watching.

His prime feral shifted restlessly beside him, but James remained still—arms at his sides, expression unreadable.

Maera fired at an enemy gamma. Reloaded. Fired again.

Around her, the battle raged—Frostfang holding, barely, the primes being contained by the shifter teams.

Then—

Movement.

James reached behind his back.

"BETA'S MOVING!" one of the six gammas shouted.

Maera's head snapped toward him.

James pulled something forward—heavy, metallic, mounted on a shoulder harness.

A cannon.

Miniature. Portable. Military-grade.

"FUCK!" Maera screamed. "TAKE HIM DOWN!
NOW!"

The six gammas opened fire—bullets streaking
toward James.

His prime feral launched.

It slammed into the first gamma, tearing him
apart. The others scattered, trying to reposition,
still firing—

But James was already lifting the cannon.

Aiming.

At her.

Maera's blood turned to ice.

She didn't think.

Just ran.

Not away.

Toward Silas.

Silas was thirty feet away, locked in combat with
a prime feral—claws and teeth, blood spraying
across the snow.

He didn't see James.

Didn't see the cannon.

Maera sprinted, legs burning, lungs screaming.

"SILAS!" she roared.

He didn't hear her.

James's finger tightened on the trigger.

The cannon was aimed at her—locked on,
tracking her movement as she ran.

Silas finally looked up—saw Maera running
toward him, saw the panic on her face.

"What—"

Then his eyes shifted past her.

To James.

To the cannon.

His expression went from confusion to horror in
an instant.

"MAERA, NO—"

James smiled.

And swung the cannon.

Away from Maera.

Directly at Silas.

It had been a trick.

A feint.

Maera had been the distraction.

Silas was the target.

"NO!" Maera screamed.

The cannon fired.

A deafening roar. A flash of heat and light.

The projectile screamed through the air—

Maera dove.

She hit Silas from the side, driving him down—

The projectile hit her instead.

Lower back.

The explosion was catastrophic.

Maera's lower body erupted—flesh and bone and organs spraying outward in a grotesque burst of red.

She didn't scream.

Couldn't.

Her body jerked, momentum carrying her

forward, and she collapsed on top of Silas.
Blood—so much blood—poured over him. Hot.
Thick. Wrong.

"MAERA!" Silas's voice was raw, desperate.
He tried to catch her, but she was already falling,
her body limp, eyes wide and unseeing.

She hit the snow beside him.

Her lower body was destroyed.

Not gone—but mangled beyond recognition.
Bone shards jutted through torn flesh. Blood
pooled beneath her, spreading fast. Her legs
were still attached—barely—twisted at
impossible angles, held together by strips of
muscle and skin.

But it was her spine—

The base of her spine was obliterated.

Silas scrambled to her, hands hovering, not
knowing where to touch, where to start.

"No no no—MAERA!"

Her eyes were open. Staring at the sky. Mouth
working but no sound coming out.

In shock. Dying.

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"DELTA!" Silas roared, his voice cracking.

"DELTA, NOW!"

He pressed his hands against the worst of the bleeding—her lower back, where the explosion had torn through—but blood just kept coming, hot and slick, pouring between his fingers.

"Stay with me," he begged. "Maera, stay with me —"

Her lips moved. A whisper.

"Can't... feel..." 2

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