

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 211

I stared at Maizie tiredly and nodded at her. This was the same conclusion both Rhys and I had come up with too. Both of us were too afraid to sleep, not that he would admit that. After leaving Sawyer's room, we had come right to the office. Neither of us had really said much. The whole thing was quite upsetting and honestly, I just wanted to block it from my mind, but it just kept replaying on repeat, no matter how much I didn't want it to.

"Why other gods?" Rhys asked curiously, bringing me back to the now.

"They were trying to kill you, not just chase you out of the realm. The protectors would have been warned by the Moon Goddess, but she was trying to keep you a secret, which leads me to believe that it has something to do with the other Gods."

Other gods? I hadn't even considered that to be a possibility. I hardly knew about Moon Goddess, let alone other Gods. I wasn't sure that the Red Blood pack worshipped anyone at all. I had never even

heard them talk about the Moon Goddess, let alone another God or Goddess. I wasn't sure where I

had even learned about the Moon Goddess. I surely hadn't paid her any mind growing up, but I had

always known she existed, hadn't I? My head hurt with all the possibilities. This was all too much,

but I was to be the Luna Queen. I needed to be brave.,

I took a deep breath in an attempt to steady myself. Right now, I was safe. Rhys and I would face it

together. We had no choice but to; we were in this together.

"Did the Red Blood pack worship anyone other than the Red Blood pack?" Sawyer asked, not taking his eyes off Maizie. I don't know if he knew it, but he had barely taken his eyes off her since they'd

walked in the room. I wondered if he knew how obvious he was, but Maizie didn't seem to notice or

care, if she did.

Maizie shook her head and turned to look at him. “Actually, we weren’t allowed to worship anyone. At least not in public. It was a little different when Luna Ava was alive. I know she herself worshipped the Moon Goddess, but when she died, Alpha Andrew banned it. No one talked about her. It wasn’t till I came here that I actually remembered she existed. Or at least was thought to.”

That was right. Luna Ava had been religious. Alpha Andrew, my dad, he hated it. He allowed her to pray, but that was it. We hadn’t had any ceremonies, dedications or rituals at all. At least not that I was aware of, but Maizie seemed to remember the same thing which made me feel better. I had been excluded from most of the daily life, and anything and everything important. I felt so far removed from that life, it was hard to think about it sometimes. I couldn’t believe I’d been **so** complacent. I would never go back to that life, I would rather die.

“Why wouldn’t you be allowed to worship where you came from?” Sawyer questioned.

Maizie looked at me and then shrugged.

“I don’t know. I just remember my mom took it really hard, but it was really important to not get caught breaking any rules. Things got really strict. I was pretty young when I was placed in the program. The program was built for experimentation and punishment. If your family broke any of the rules, you were placed in the program. If you asked too many questions, you were placed in the program. If you had the right blood, you were placed in the program. It didn’t take much to have your life ruined and your family torn apart.”

“It doesn’t make sense.”

Sawyer was leaning forward in his chair, his elbows resting on his knees as he shook his head.

“What doesn’t?” Maizie asked.

“Why religion would just be banned like that,” Sawyer answered with a frown.

“I used to think it was because Alpha Andrew was mad at the Moon Goddess for taking his mate,” Maizie answered with her signature shrug. “But when he died, and things got even worse, I don’t know. It could have been for another reason.”

“We need to start those meetings. I’m not sure that we can wait anymore...” Rhys answered tiredly.

“I’m not sure we have a choice.” I interjected. “Unless you are going by yourself, which I don’t think is wise, we need to follow the order of our plans. The second we start trying to rush things, the more unprepared we are going to be.”

“She’s right,” Michael agreed. “I’m more worried about you guys getting stuck in the Land of the

Gods.”

“I have that fear too,” I admitted. “If Rhys hadn’t been there, I wouldn’t have stood a chance. I just thought it was a weird, vivid dream.”

Rhys frowned, and I forced myself to stay in my seat even though I wanted to walk over to him and give him any comfort I could. But now wasn’t the time or the place for that. There was nothing I could do right now to make any of it less heavy.

“Listen,” Heather said, “Let’s go to breakfast, and then reconvene after the kids are in school. I think we all need a little time to process and think on this. Grace is right. We can’t rush any of our decisions. We just need a plan with multiple contingencies for every situation as well as the outcome likelihood of each of them.”

“Yea, that’s all.” Michael mumbled under his breath, and I gave him a small smile.

“Wait, no, I don’t want to miss this meeting!” Maizie exclaimed. “Do I have to go to school?”

“Yes.”

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“No.”

Rhys and I said at the same time, and I shot him a look of annoyance. I didn't want to argue, but it seemed we were already heading that way.

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I stared at my mate as she glared daggers at me. Even after everything, I fought the smile that tugged at my lips but kept a straight face. My mate was feeling feisty, and it made me proud of her. And she was hella hot like this, all worked up.

“Grace, this is important, they should be here,” I tried.

“And school is important.” She argued. “They need to be there, so that they can learn the skills to adequately deal with this situation”

“Babe, there is no adequate way to deal with this situation.” I responded gently.

“Maybe not,” She conceded before continuing, “But they will learn problem solving skills and other important things that will prepare and help them at school.”

I frowned. There was more that she wasn't saying, and I had a feeling wouldn't say. This was bigger than just school or no school, but I wasn't understanding, and she wasn't going to say in front of everybody.

“Alright,” I relented. “You guys heard my mate; you have to go to school. However, I do think it's important for you all to be a part of this, and join in, so we will meet

back here after training. It will give us all time to think and come up with ideas and plans on where we go from here.”

Maizie and Michael both protested, but I held my hand up to stop them. “This discussion is closed. Let’s go to breakfast now.”

Both kids sighed, and I saw a small smirk cross Heather’s face, and I didn’t really have to imagine why. She had never seen me as the parent type, so she found this all to be a little funny. But also, I knew she was probably imagining that this was how her future would look to some degree. Her kids were still little, but eventually, her kids would be teenagers too. They would argue about going to school and hating every decision she ever made even if it was in their best interest. One day, in a much later future, they would thank her for everything, knowing that it made them better people, but for now they were still little, and I knew a part of her wished that they would stay that way

forever.

We all made our way down to breakfast, and I enclapsed Grace’s hand in mine as we walked. My

mate was putting on a brave face, but I knew she was scared. I could feel it through our bond, not

that she would admit it.

“Aunt Grace!” Sammy squealed the second she saw us.

The next thing I knew she was launching herself off her chair for Grace to catch her. But Sammy had misjudged her distance from us, by a lot. We were too far away to catch her, and my heart pounded. Sammy was a werewolf, it really wouldn't harm her, but it would still be a hard fall and hurt a lot.

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Before I even had the chance to process, Grace dropped my hand and lunged for the small girl.

I blinked as Grace swung her around in her arms with relief written all over her face. My jaw dropped. How the hell had Grace gotten there so fast and in time to catch Sammy? I had never seen my mate move so fast... Hell, I was sure I wasn't going to be able to move fast enough to catch her, and yet, Grace didn't even look like it had been hard.

I looked around and everyone was staring at my mate, their mouths wide open in shock. Okay, so it

wasn't just me who was surprised and impressed.

“She’s impressive, that mate of yours,” Heather said from next to me. “I’ve never seen anyone move

like that.”

“She’s Lycan, of course she’s impressive.” Maize answered as if the answer was obvious. “Most Lycan have speed that is faster than werewolves. It’s part of why this war you’re fighting is going to be

hard as hell.”

“What other things do we need to be aware of?” I asked her as we moved to grab our food. I wondered why it had never really crossed my mind to ask her what we were up against before.

“Well, I suppose it would depend on who you are up against. The Lycan warriors are actually a very small group from what I can tell. I think that was done on purpose. Couldn’t give too many people the skills to fight well or they could rise up against them, ya know? So, the actual trained warriors is a very small percentage of who you’d be fighting. Then there’s the ones that are forced into it. Again, it’s a pretty select group of people. Those tend to be people who do not agree with what Leadership is doing. They train half-heartedly, but for them it’s a punishment. They don’t want to be a part of it, so they’re forced to. And then there are the kids from the program. We’re all trained to be warriors from the second we are placed in the program. The benefit for them is that if they get us early enough, they can brainwash us, but also, they threaten our families, so we comply.

Clearly, it's not quite effective enough, since we were all granted forgiveness here, and chose to stay."

I gave her a small smile at that last part, but the rest had my brain racing.

"What about Lycan special traits?" I asked as we sat down at the table.

I placed Grace's plate in front of her, and she gave me a grateful smile before turning her attention back to Sammy who was begging for it.

"Well, in general, Lycan's tend to be a little bit stronger and a little bit faster. But every Lycan tends vary. I've met people to have one specific gift on top of those. It depends on the Lycan, and the g who can shapeshift into more than just a Lycan. There's healing, but that's rare. There's further enhanced speed and strength. There's air manipulation, energy creators, fire people, teleporters, telekinetics, mindreaders. I don't know, if you can imagine it, it's probably possible. Gifts tend to be stronger for people who are born Lycan vs created to be Lycan. And Grace is a rarity for having multiple abilities. I've never seen that before, and I was trained with what I was told was the best."

I nodded taking in every word she said. We had talked about this a little before, but this **was** so much darker than I imagined. I had decent warriors, I mean, I had never lost a war. But this? This was a whole different level of crazy that we weren't prepared for at all.

"Rhys," Heather said seriously as she placed her tray hard down on the table.

“Yes?” I asked, turning my attention back to her.

“You know who would know the most about gods?” She asked, the look on her face told me she had been really thinking about this, but I wouldn’t like the answer.

“No.”

“We need to talk to Arlo.”

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Grace's head swung back to us when she heard Atlo's name. I knew she was still furious with him after insulting **the kids** that she was so taken to. And I understood that. But Heather was right. We needed information on Gods and Arlo **would be** the best bet for that sort of information. He had studied all of that stuff for years. There was **a** reason he had been **asked** to teach a class on mythology before, not that our gods were mythological, but they sort of fell into similar categories. You couldn't study one without the other.

"I think that's not a bad idea," I answered.

Maizie and Michael both looked at me in surprise, and my Mate looked horrified at my easy agreeance.

"What's going on?" Alana asked as she sat down and looked at everyone's horrified faces.

"Rhys wants to have a meeting with Arlo." Grace responded bitterly.

Alana's eyes widened

in shock, but she didn't say anything. I rolled my eyes at everyone's drama. Alana had been really quiet during the **meeting** this morning. I honestly couldn't even remember if she had said anything at all. I think she just liked to be a part of the meetings now, to be in the know a little bit, but I knew she was much smarter than she gave herself credit for. I would like to hear her opinions sometimes.

"It is the smartest thing we can do." I told them. "I will set ground rules with him. He is to be respectful of Maizie and Michael, but we don't have another source or else I would ask them. He's been studying this sort of stuff for years. He's

our best shot at any actual answers."

"What if he purposefully lies?" Grace asked. The dark look on her face gave no misgivings for how she felt.

"That would be foolish on his part." I answered calmly. "I agree that he cannot treat Michael, Maizie or any other child with the disrespect he has in the past. We are all on the same side here. And he can either get on ours or he might need to find a new pack to reside in."

Grace's eyes met mine as she searched for something in them, but what it was, I wasn't quite sure. She must have found it because she nodded slowly, finally agreeing to the plan.

"I can talk to him if you want?" Heather offered.

"Thanks, Heather, but I think it's best if Grace and I handle this ourselves while everyone is at school."

"Does that mean Aunt Grace isn't coming to school with me?" Sammy asked, her lip quivering slightly at the thought.

Grace squeezed the small girl, and said, "I'm still going to walk you to school, and I'll be in there for a little bit while you get settled. Then when you're comfortable and ready, I'll leave for a bit to go do some grown-up stuff, just like I've done the last few of days, and then I'll meet you at training. And if you need me, you can have your teacher mindlink Uncle Rhys, and one of us will be there, okay?"

"Why can't she mindlink you?" Sammy pouted.

"Because I don't have a mindlink," I answered.

“Do you think if we join the pack officially we’ll get the mindlink abilities at least within the **pack?**‘ **Máizied questioned**

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thoughtfully.

Grace looked at me to see if I knew, but I just shrugged.

“No idea,” I answered when I realized they were all waiting on me. “I’m not sure if it’s a pack thing or if it’s a werewolf thing, but I would say stranger things have happened recently, so I won’t outright say no. According to Ethan, Lycan‘ don’t have mindlinks, but they can sense each other.”

Maizie and Michael both started laughing, leaving the rest of us confused.

“I don’t understand,” Grace frowned.

“Blonde hair, blue eyes, Ethan?” Maizie asked laughter still in her voice as she wiped away tears from her eyes.

“Yes...” Grace answered slowly.

“My Goddess, he was such a fucking suck-up!” Maizie exclaimed. “**He** was the first ever to join the program. When he was 18, he joined their official ranks and was in charge of several of our training facilities. No one knows where **he** came from, but he was also a few years older than us, so that wasn’t really surprising. He was one of the worst to work with. He was completely incompetent. But he got sent on a mission and never came back.”

“He was sent here to pretend to be my brother,” Grace answered, her **voice** tight. “He was trying to bring me back to the Red Blood pack on the night you guys attacked. I killed him.”

“No shit?!” Maizie’s smile was so wide, it was clear that she didn’t understand how sensitive of a topic this was for Grace. We rarely talked about Ethan or what had happened that night.

“He probably deserved it,” Michael answered, reading Grace’s expression a bit better than Maizie had.

“He did.” Grace whispered.

“It’s just so wild that we knew the same person!” Maizie continued on. “But anyway, back to the whole mindlink thing, I don’t know if Lycans as a whole can’t or if our pack was just too stupid to figure out how, you know? Sensing each other is an interesting way to put it, but it’s also true. Usually/there’s a sort of bond

with the leader of a pack, but I've never really felt it with Luna Kinsley or Alpha Adrian, though every time I saw them it was usually for punishment. But I think it's supposed to feel like it does with Grace, wouldn't you say Michael?"

"Me?" Grace's eyes widened in surprise.

"I would agree." Michael nodded, looking at Grace in a different way than he usually did. "It's more similar to how it felt with Luna Ava and Alpha Andrew. I was pretty young then, but I remember that bond well."

"There's just something about you Grace that pulls us to you." Maizie responded. "And I for one am NOT complaining because I do not want to be a part of that stupid pack ever again!"

Heather's alarm went off forcing the conversation to be put on hold. It was time for the mad rush of getting everyone ready for school. We all dispersed on cue, but the conversation replayed in my head **over** and over again for the **rest of the** day, but yet, I was no closer to figuring out what the meaning of it was than I was when I had heard the words **for the first** time. They felt bonded to Grace... Grace was going to be my Luna Queen... Was that what they were referring to or **was** there something else that we were completely missing?

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I was in the classroom with Sammy as her teacher started the day the way she always did. Today there were **plans** for a big arts and crafts project that I was helping to set up for. Ms. Ellen was a wonderful teacher. I loved how

creative **she** was with so many of her lessons, putting a lot of things into perspective **for** such young kids to understand. I didn't **know** how she ever managed to do it all. I was always ready to help, but I was still learning everything myself, so there was **only** so much I could do. Ms. Ellen and all the teachers here, really, did everything themselves with such little support. I felt for them. Once the war was over, and I was officially Luna Queen, I would figure out a system to help them and give them

more support.

"Luna Grace," Ms. Ellen drew my attention back to her.

"Hm?"

"Can you read this story with the kids, please? I have to go get something for the project."

My eyes nearly bulged out of my head. "I can go get the supplies," I offered.

"No, no, I'll be right back, you'll do great."

She didn't give me the chance to protest anymore. She just pushed the book gently into my chest and left the room. **I** swallowed hard. I had hardly read out loud since

my days working with Arlo. His name left a bitter taste in my mouth, and I was not looking forward to seeing him later.

I pushed the later problems to the back of my mind and approached the stool that Ms. Ellen had left for me. The book wasn't terribly long... I had seen some of the kids read it during their free time on occasion. I just didn't want to be the one reading it...

I took a deep breath and steadied myself. It was just a book: A children's book. A children's book that I truly was more than capable of reading.

I gave the class a small smile and pretended that I knew exactly what I was doing. Before I knew it, I was adding in voices and gestures, forgetting all about the fear I had felt only a few minutes before.

"The end." I finished, and to my surprise, the kids all clapped.

I hadn't expected them to care so much that I had read them a book, but I must not have done a bad job. Heat rose to my cheeks when I noticed a louder clap than the kids. I turned toward the door and saw Ms. Ellen, and Rhys.

My heart fluttered as I stood up and scurried out of the center of attention as Ms. Ellen took back over her class and began asking questions about the book.

I made my way slowly over to Rhys and wondered how long he had been standing there.

When I got close, he immediately opened his arms, and I walked right into them.

“What are you doing here?” I asked, not sure I wanted to know **the** answer.

“I came to support my mate,” He answered, giving me a kiss on my temple.

“You knew I was going to be reading?” I asked in surprise, ushering him out into the hallway, so we wouldn’t **disrupt the** class anymore.

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“**Ellen** told me that you’ve been working even harder than the kids in the class **to** catch up on all the things **maybe you missed** as a kid. She said you had been doing really well, and she wanted to give you this opportunity **to** succeed.-

“What if I had failed?” I asked in horror, completely taken aback by being setup like this.

“She and I both knew you could do it, but didn’t want you to overthink it, and she was ready to rescue you if she needed **to**, or I would come in and pull you away for a disaster. But I knew that wasn’t necessary. I just came to **support** you **and** see you succeed on your own merit. And you did amazing, my love. I’m so proud.”

I could see the pride in his eyes, but I still felt a little embarrassed about being setup like that.

“Next time, a little warning would have been nice.” I mumbled, as I leaned back into his embrace tiredly. I wasn’t a big coffee drinker, but I had had multiple cups today.

“You would have overthought it. You needed to be thrown to the wolves, literally, so that the next time something like **this** happens, you’ll know you can do it.”

I rolled my eyes. The next time something like this happens, I’m immediately going to think it’s another freaking **setup**.

“This is why you were adamant about Maizie and Michael coming to school today, isn’t it?” Rhys asked after a **moment of**

silence.

“Yea,” My voice came out much softer than I meant it to. “I didn’t get to go to school. Being able to go to school is a privilege. They don’t realize that because they’ve never been behind before. Their program at least gave them that despite all the other horrendous things that happened there. They’re smart kids. And they’ve made the best of their situations, but they’re still kids, and I don’t want them to grow up too fast because they think they need to. They deserve to be kids, and hate going to school, and to hold onto this all for just a little bit longer. They just don’t understand that yet. But **they**

will.”

Rhys kissed my forehead again, and I knew that meant he understood.

“I didn’t fight you on it because I figured you had your reasons,” He told me gently. “I love it that you care so much for them. And I can’t wait to see you with our own kids in the future.”

“I’m not sure I’m really truly ready for that yet,” I replied hesitantly.

“That’s okay.” He answered, wrapping his arm around my shoulders as he guided me toward the front of the building. “We have a lifetime together to figure it out.”

I smiled at him, but as the front doors came into view, I froze.

“Where are we going?” I asked.

“We are going to see Arlo.”

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My stomach **twisted** uncomfortably. I used to think this walk was so pretty, but now I hated it. I hated **it with every fiber of** my being because every time I made this walk, I knew I'd be walking into a battle that I didn't want **to fight** or think I even should have to fight. But I would. This wasn't a choice. Rhys' people needed us to figure this out... **My** people needed **us** to figure this out. We wouldn't survive if we didn't. I feared no one would.

Rhys squeezed my hand, and I gave him a small smile. I wasn't spiraling. I wouldn't. There was too much at stake. I was sort of proud of myself for that. A few weeks ago, a few months ago, I would have shut down with all this pressure. I **might** have gone silent before. I might have started to revert back to my old habits. But I was standing strong. Facing my fears. Facing the world head on, even when I didn't want to. Even when I was scared,

Arlo's cottage came into view and my heart started hammering. I swear that Rhys could hear it with his **stupid special** Werewolf hearing. I mean, my own hearing has become so much more sensitive lately. I never used to be **able to** hear **quite** so well. Now, I could hear a butterfly flap their wings, and a dove deep in the woods coo. I loved **it**, but I also found **it** somewhat disorienting.

We approached, the tension hanging over us like a wet blanket it. I couldn't help but stiffen as Rhys knocked on the **door**. Whatever was going to happen, was going to happen. All we could do was hope for the best.

Arlo opened the door and did little to hide **the** surprise he felt when he saw **us**.

"Alpha King Rhys, Luna Queen Grace," He bowed slightly. "I was not expecting **you**. To what do I owe this **pleasure?**"

I raised my brow at the formalities. Just days ago, he had been rude to me and Michael. I wasn't sure if he **saw** the error of his ways or if he was **just** trying to be on his best behavior because Rhys was here. Time would tell.

“We came to ask a favor.” Rhys stated in his deep baritone voice that I loved. “May we come in?”

“A favor? What could I possibly do for you?” Arlo questioned in surprise. It was clear that he wasn’t happy with his relegation of several positions within the pack now. But they were all his own fault, and he had to know that.

Rhys, however, ignored the jab and moved on as if it hadn’t happened and moved into the house, not waiting any longer for permission, tugging me along with him. The house looked very much the same as it had the last time we were here, but it was a little messier. The floor had a thin layer of dirt that had been tracked in over time. The table that I had spent most of my lessons was littered with half-drunk teacups and half eaten banana and cinnamon plates. Clothes were thrown **all** over the living room. It looked as though as disgruntled as Arlo had been about what was going on in this pack, it had

carried over into his home.

Arlo leaned over the back of one of the kitchen chairs, and Rhys and I both stopped short just a few feet away, barely even

inside the kitchen.

“Do you guys want to sit or something?” Arlo asked bitterly, annoyed that we were in his house.

“Have you researched the history of gods before?” Rhys asked, jumping right to what we needed, not waiting for anymore

interruptions.

Arlo stumbled back a step **as if** someone had actually hit him. It was not the reaction that I was expecting from **him. He**

almost looked... scared?

“Why?” Arlo asked once he had his wits about him again.

“The why isn’t really important,” Rhys answered coolly. “**It’s sort of a need-to-know basis. So have you studied gods**

before?’

“When I was in college, I did my dissertation on them.” Arlo answered slowly, **giving us** each a **weird** look as **if** we wer **aliens or** something. It’s been a while since I’ve really touched on any of that stuff.”

“Do you still have your books on it somewhere?” Rhys asked as he looked around the house. I knew he **wouldn’t** be **above** just searching **the** house and taking the books if it came down to it, but Arlo was a good teacher, when **he wasn’t holding** a grudge. **We** really could use him to guide us a little bit, he would hopefully know where to at the **very least** start.

“Yea,” Arlo stammered. “Yea, somewhere.”

“We would like you to join our evening meeting debrief today,” I told him with a false confidence **in my voice**. “**Bring** everything you have on gods.”

“Wait, does this mean I’m back in?” He faltered, looking at Rhys with a look that reeked of hope and **desperation**.

Rhys nodded toward me, and Arlo’s gave snapped to mine anxiously.

“I am not willing to label it.” I answered, making sure my voice was strong, that I was strong. “Where **you are** within **this** pack is completely up to you. You respect me, those kids, everyone who is working hard as hell to **make this** place **safe** again, then we will not have a problem. If you choose to not be respectful, continue to think **you** are **above the** others, then you choose to fall on your own merit. Your fate is in your hands, Arlo, not mine.”

Arlo swallowed hard. I could tell that he wasn't sure that he could hold up his end of the bargain, but I **could** tell **he also** wanted to try. Finally, he nodded, and I nodded back.

“We'll see you tonight then. Don't be late.”

“Is there something specific you are looking for?” Arlo questioned as we turned to leave.

“We want everything you have on the Land of the Gods, and who the hell might have a problem with the Moon Goddess.”

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I **paced my** office anxiously. **It** was nearly dinner time. Nearly tline for our meeting. Grace was still **out** at training they

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line for our mee **were going** on a group run today. **I** had popped over, but I preferred to have **my** workouts **in the gym**. **Leon and I** used to **spar** several times a week, and my body was itching to move in that raw way, but **without Leon here**, I didn't really **have** an **equal** match. I knew I should train more with

h some

of the warriors, but that would be **too** easy for me. I **needed** a challenge to get all this pent-up energy out.

I needed to do something. There was still too much time before the others would get back. Fuck it. I made **my way** to **the** ‘secret’ gym here on our floor. Most people only thought that our offices were up here, but we actually **had** our **own** private gym. I used it a lot more before Grace had come into my life. I hadn’t even told her this one existed. When we trained before, I had used the pack one. And I honestly didn’t know why I had never showed her this one. There **was** something about it that felt sacred between me and the guys. Sawyer had never really liked to train, he still didn’t, **but it was** something I shared with Leon, and Heather when we were younger. And **for** a while **it** was the only **thing that Caleb** and I ever did together. We both had liked to beat the crap out of each other, especially in our teenage years. Before **there was** too much distance that even fighting together couldn’t fix.

I hadn’t been in our gym since Leon had been taken. There really hasn’t been any time, or reason to. I mean, **I probably** should have been training to be better prepared for whatever was coming, but besides the **basics, I hadn’t really been able** to force myself to do it, and now, **I was** feeling it.

I creaked the old door open and to my surprise, the lights were already on and the sound of someone punching **something** met my **ears**.

“Sawyer?”

My scrawny little brother looked up at me in both surprise and a little bit of horror. I studied him carefully. I hadn’t seen him **use** the gym in years. I had thought he was at the clinic working, not whatever this was. His dark hair **was plastered** to his forehead with sweat. He also looked as though he hadn’t been sleeping, **just** like the rest of us. And his hands were **so** raw, they were bleeding.

“What are you doing here?” He asked a little aggressively which wasn’t really like him. He was usually the peaceful one between the three of **us**.

“I came to beat the shit out **of** something, same as **you**.” I answered.

“I-”

Before he could argue any further, I nodded at his raw, bleeding hands. He looked down, and he immediately deflated.

“Is everything okay?” I asked tiredly. I may have a lot going on, but so did he. He had also lost his brother and his beta. **He** had taken up some of the slack with Heather’s help, but he was still doing his job as Gamma and still running the clinic doing doctor things. I had Grace to help keep me balanced, but Sawyer was handling it all on his own, and obviously not well.

“It’s fine.” **He** answered shortly, wrapping his hands the **way they** should have been wrapped when he started punching things,

“It’s not.” I responded gently. “You’re drowning.”

Sawyer stiffened, and I knew I was right.

“You can take **a** step back, Sawyer, I **won’t be** mad. **I’ve** asked you to take on too much. I’m **sorry.**”

Chapter 216

“You need me **right now.** His **voice** came out **soft, and** vulnerable. **This wasn’t my gamma or** doctor speaking this little brother.

“**I do. I** need you always. But not to the point that you’re hurting yourself. This isn’t worth **anything to me.** I will reallocate some of your tasks. Heather might be willing to take on more. **Or maybe** we **bring** someone else **in** **But** that’s **not** your problem to figure out. It’s mine.”

“I just want to help, but I feel useless.” He admitted.

“I also feel useless,” I revealed. “It isn’t easy knowing my mate is in constant danger and there is literally **nothing I can do** about it. All we can do is prepare the best we can, and handle it all just one problem at **a** time.”

“The old you would have gone on a killing spree.”

“The old me would be dead already.” I replied bitterly. “I want to do this right.”.

“You look like you hate that option.”

“I do.”

“Well, do you want to spar till the meeting? **Get** some of that energy out?”

“Are you volunteering?” I asked in surprise.

“I don’t normally spar... But you’re the best. I think we both need it for different **reasons.**” He **answered** with little

hesitation.

“Are you sure?” I questioned. I didn’t want him doing anything that he didn’t want to.

He nodded and took the mat. I rolled my shoulders back, relaxing a little, knowing **I** was about to **get** exactly what I needed. I would not go easy on Sawyer, even if he was my brother. **He** knew that when he asked to spar. It would be a disservice to him, and a disservice to myself. We both needed it. Badly.

Sawyer made the first move. Speed had always been his advantage in any fight. Despite hating to fight, he had been trained as a fighter from a young age. Dad had wanted us all to **be** warriors. When he died, I had told Sawyer to pursue a path that made him happy, and he immediately dove into medicine. It had been a long time **since** he had trained like this. It had been a long time since we had sparred.

I dodge the hit easily, returning one **of** my own. Sawyer took it and swiveled out of my reach before I could get another. **I** steadied my stance and prepared for his next move. When he didn't take it, I advanced. I gave him three quick punches to his stomach, and used my momentum to swing behind him, and pull him down, pinning him to the ground. It was too

easy.

He scrambled to his feet and retook his fighting stance before surprising me and saying, "Again."

Chapter Comments

LIKE

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

I was one of the **last** people to enter the office, but to my surprise, Rhys wasn't there. Maize was **in** her usual spot, sprawled out on the floor with Michael next to her as they looked at some magazine together. Alana sat in her kitchen chair next to the door, and Arlo stood next to her, unsure if he should be there or not. And Heather was standing on the opposite wall, glaring in Arlo's direction, and I wasn't sure if she had a reason to be mad **at** him or **if** her **anger** was misplaced.

"Where's Rhys?" I asked after doing my initial headcount.

"I don't know." Maizie answered, not bothering to look up. "Sawyer's missing too."

"Has anyone seen them?" I questioned as my heart began to race a bit. It wasn't like Rhys to be late to anything. He was too type A for that.

"No." Heather gave me a sideways glance. "I haven't heard from them either. Maybe they're both upstairs?"

"Yea, maybe," I answered hesitantly **as** I took my place behind Rhys' desk. "I guess **we'll** give them a few more minutes."

I sat there nervously. Maizie and Michael continued to flip through their magazines. Arlo began to pull things out of **his** bag and **place** them on the desk in some sort of organized manner. Alana just sat quietly, and Heather just continued **to** glare at Arlo.

A minute passed. Then two. Then five. When I couldn't stand it anymore, I stood up and went to search for them. **If** it was an emergency, he would have at least mindlinked Heather, right? There was no reason to think the **worst, yet** here **I was** beginning to spiral because my mate was a few minutes late.

"Where are you going?" Alana asked when she noticed me making my way to the door.

"I'm **just** going to find Rhys," I answered, trying to keep my voice normal. "It's not like him to be late, he might have fallen asleep or something since last night was rough."

It was the wrong thing to **say**, Arlo's interest in the matter immediately piqued. "What happened last night?" He asked.

I rolled my **eyes**. Of course he wanted to know. Did he need to know? I wasn't sure. He was here to help us learn about the

gods and the land of the gods. Would it help him to know that we went there? At the moment, I didn't **see** the relevance, so **I just** ignored him.

"I'll check the kitchen and the clinic, if you want," Alana offered.

"That would be great, thank you." I replied, unable to keep the relief from my **voice**. Alana was such a good friend. She always seemed to know what I needed before **I** needed it. "Meet back here in 5 minutes."

She nodded, and we both took off to try and find the missing members of our group. I took the stairs two at a time, and punched in the code with a vengeance, but I forced myself to walk through the door calmly. I didn't want to alert any of the kids that something was wrong. Especially if my mate **was just asleep** in our bed, and I **was** worried for nothing. I tugged on the bond but found myself plooked out the way Rhys had explained that he was sometimes. Or at least, **that's** how I envisioned it was anyway.

I threw open our bedroom door, hoping to find him lounging on the bed, but my heart sunk when I realized he **wasn't** there. I immediately raced to Sawyer's wondering if they **were maybe** having a brotherly moment that I would hate to interrupt, but I needed to calm my racing heart. Oh goddess, please be in here.

1/2

I knocked on Sawyer's door with an **urgency** that if **he** was in there, **he** couldn't ignore. But he **didn't** answer floded the handle, hoping to just take a **peek** in, but the door was locked much to **my** dismay.

I leaned against it with a sigh. Maybe Alana had found them in the kitchen **or** in the clinic. Oh goddess, **what** if thys **had** been hurt? We had only been a part for several hours, but a lot could happen in such a short time.

"Aunt Grace?" Sammy's sweet little voice called out.

My eyes popped open, and I forced a smile. "Yes, Sammy?"

"What are you doing?" Her nose crinkling with the question.

"**I was** just looking for you Uncle Rhys and Uncle Sawyer, have you seen them?" I answered honestly.

"Nope." She replied, popping the p. "Do you need help looking for them?"

“That’s okay.” I told her gently. “But if you see them before I do, tell them I was looking for them, okay?”

She nodded, and I started to walk back down the small hallway to leave when she called me back.

“They aren’t lost like me daddy, are they?”

“No, sweetie,” I answered, hoping that I wasn’t lying to her. “They’re here somewhere, there’s no need to be **worried.**”

She accepted my answer and ran off to play with her friend Jack who was waiting patiently for her at the other end of the

hall.

I smiled after them and headed back down to the office floor to find Alana and Heather both standing outside Rhys’ office

with the door shut.

“Any luck?” I asked, but I already knew the answer.

“No.” Alana sighed. “I didn’t see them anywhere.”

“I swear to god if they are where I think they are, I’m going to kill them.” Heather grumbled and she started down the

hall.

I hurried after her, but I had no idea what she was talking about. She led me to a door that I had never been through/**never** knew existed and barged in.

The room was dimly lit, but spacious. I was surprised to **see** gym equipment. There were weight machines of various types, treadmills, a punching bag, and in the middle of all of it, was a sparring mat. And in the middle of that mat was my mate and Sawyer beating the shit out of each other.

Chapter Comments

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

I stared at **my** mate in shock. Blood dripped down his chin. Sweat clung **to** his **body**. He **was** shirtless. **Oh** Goddess Help i **now**. **I shouldn't** have been so turned on at the sight as he lunged toward Sawyer, but my goddess, he was attractive like **this**. In two swift movements, he had Sawyer exactly where he wanted him. Sawyer was able to give him a **couple swings** but there would be no getting out of that. In this moment, he was completely himself. He wasn't playing **politician**. He wasn't trying to solve the world's problems. He wasn't mine. He was just raw, sparring with his brother, **letting out all the** emotions he had been feeling lately, and there was a lot of them.

Sawyer got another shot in; bur Rhys was unaffected, still closing in on his prey in the exact way he wanted **to**. **They still** clearly hadn't noticed us, lost in their own worlds of whatever this was.

Heather cleared her throat, and Rhys' **eyes** snapped to mine, releasing his brother from the hold he had had on him.

"Grace!" He exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

I crossed my arms in annoyance, and didn't answer. He had the nerve to hide here and worry me, but he was fine other than some pent-up rage. I hadn't even known this room existed which made me even more mad.

"The meeting started 30 minutes ago," I said angrily.

Surprise filled Rhys' face as he looked from me to Heather. He then grabbed his phone out of his pocket **and** looked **at the**

time.

"I'm so sorry, I didn't realize the time." He apologized. "We got distracted."

"I see that." I answered, not budging, mad he had made me leave Maizie and Michael alone with Arlo.

I glanced at Sawyer, who was sporting a nice black eye, and blood dripped from his shoulder.

"Are you alright?" I asked him a little more gently.

"I asked his to spar me," Sawyer responded tiredly, maybe even a little defeated.

"And do you feel better now?"

"No." Sawyer whispered.

“I’m sorry.” I told him. “Come on though, they’re waiting on us.”

Heather and I turned on our heels, and the guys followed, their heads hung low as if they **were** in trouble. In truth, they weren’t, but I was annoyed that I had been worried for nothing.

Rhys wrapped his arms around me, and I squirmed trying to get out of his grip.

“Ew, you’re sweaty. You can hold me again when you’re clean.” I told him **as** I pulled away.

“So, you want me to go shower before the meeting?” He teased.

“You are incorrigible,” I told him, turning so I could face him, leaving Heather and Sawyer to **make** their way to the meeting without us.

Chapter 218

That’s a big **word**, He answered sounding impressed.

“I know a lot of big words.” I told him, feeling a little snippy.

“**Bet** ya can’t spell it,” He taunted just before his lips crashed into mine.

For a moment, I forgot myself. Goddess, the sweat on lips tasted salty, but I barely noticed as his tongue forced **entry into my** mouth, not that I really fought it. Why did I have to find him so attractive white sparring? **A few months** ago, **I would** have coward in a corner, now, I knew exactly who Rhys was. Blood, sweat and all. He was mine.

“I am sorry for worrying you,” He said as he pulled away.

“I’m just glad you weren’t really lost.” I admitted.

“Me too. Because then I wouldn’t be able to do this.”

He leaned in and kissed my lips again, long and **sweet**, but nothing more, and it was perfect.

“You can do that forever,” I told him.

“Good,” He smiled. “I expect everyone is waiting on **us?**”

“Yea,” I answered. “We should go.”

“Yea, we should,” He kissed me again.

“If you keep kissing me, we’re never going to make it. And I left Arlo with Michael and Maizie, **so** we **really** should go.”

He gave me another kiss and then grabbed my hand to tell me he was ready to face whatever was in the other room down the hall. Neither of us had particularly high expectations for Arlo to actually be polite, but Maizie **was** a firecracker. She wouldn’t tolerate disrespect. She gave Alpha wolf vibes to me, even if she wasn’t born one. I wasn’t really worried about her, but I still felt the need to be there to protect them in anyway **I** could.

We walked into the room, but nobody bothered to look up. Michael was flipping through the magazine still. Alana and Arlo were looking at something he had setup on the desk. Heather was scrolling on her phone. And Maizie and Sawyer **were** in stare down...

“What happened to you?” Maizie finally demanded.

“Nothing...” Sawyer answered with blood dripping from his eyebrow, and his eye black. And those were only the obvious issues. I wasn’t sure what other injuries lied underneath his simple white t-shirt, but I knew his wolf would heal him soon enough.

“Nothing?” Maizie shrilled. I had never heard that amount of worry or care in her voice ever. “You call showing up here late, looking like that, nothing?!”

“I was just sparring with Rhys...”

“You were just sparring with Rhys?” She repeated aghast.
“Sawyer, **you** are **like** half his size!”

“Hey now-” Rhys interjected, but I placed my hand on his arm to silently tell him to let it **go**, and they both glared at him with looks that said ‘This is not your fight.’

2/3

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place to sit.

They hickered for another fo

Rhys looked around at everyone before saying, “Alright... Now that whatever that was is seen how rate to fully begin?”

Chapter Comments

LIKE

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GSHIPE

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 219

“Alright... Now that whatever that was is over. Are we ready to finally begin?” I asked, rubbing **my** temple tiredly. **My head** was protesting my lack of sleep, and my

y body was hating me for sparring with Sawyer the way I did.

“Actually no, the pizza is here.” Heather answered, looking up from her phone. “I’ll be right back.”

“You ordered pizza?” Grace asked in surprise, her eyes lighting up a little. I couldn’t help but be surprised by her **reaction**. I couldn’t remember ever even eating pizza with her. I couldn’t imagine that the Red Blood pack had allowed her pizza, especially if Luna Kinsley and Alpha Adrian had anything to do with it.

“Yep, I thought we could use a little pick me up, be right back.”

“I haven’t had pizza in ages,” Maizie exclaimed happily, forgetting her quarrel with Sawyer for a moment.

“I don’t get the excitement.” Michael mumbled.

“Well, that’s because pizza was banned ages ago in Red Blood, though I never figured out why.” Maizie answered, rolling over so she could go back to looking at the magazine with Michael.

“Oh, I can answer that,” Grace piped in. “It’s because when I was little, it was my favorite, and on my birthday one year, my dad gave me a slice, and Kinsley got pissed that he would actually give me something I liked, even if it was only one single slice of pizza, and she convinced him to “outlaw” it within the pack. The worst part was, it wasn’t even the good pizza, it was one of those oven ones. Which was still good, but not the same as getting it delivered.”

Everyone stared at my mate with their jaws on the floor. I knew my mate had had it rough. Hell, I had counted the scars on her body more times than I could count. But to hear her story of loving something as simple as a food, and having it banned throughout the whole pack, was something that I couldn’t even comprehend. The cruelty she had faced as a child was unmatched by anything I had ever heard before.

“That’s **so** sad.” Maizie said finally.

“I mean... Of all the things that happened, that wasn’t one that really stuck with me. I honestly kind of forgot about it till you said something...” Pink rose to Grace’s cheeks, and I could feel how much she hated everyone staring at her, but it wasn’t for me to step in... She didn’t need that. She could handle herself. She was going to have to.

“Alright, eat up, it’s going to be a long night, so get your dinner, settle in, and let’s **get** started.” Heather called out as she reentered the room, saving Grace from

the moment. Her arms carrying 4 large pizzas, a smaller box of who knows what, and another four boxes of what appeared to be wings and maybe breadsticks, and on top of all of that **were** paper plates,

and paper towels.

“Yes! You got dessert!” Michael exclaimed as Heather set up and opened each of the boxes. I couldn’t help but find it comical that I was **a** rich Alpha King, and **yet** we were setting all of our food up on the floor due to lack of **space**. And to be fair, this office wasn’t really made for this amount of people, or food **really**, but it was where we **felt** the most comfortable, and safest. Even if safest was only relative.

“Mmmm, I understand the hype now!” Michael said to no one in particular with his mouth full.

“Do you?” Grace laughed, raising her own piece to her mouth. Goddess, she was perfect. Even as **she** took a big **bite of her** pizza, and her hair was messy, and she had dark circles under her **eyes**, she **was** still absolutely perfect.

“It’s **just as good as** I remembered it.”

“Can we please get started?” Arlo asked, glaring at the pizza in **disgust**.

Chapter 219

The room fell into a bit of an awkward silence, and I felt my jaw clench. I wasn't sure if he hated pizza or if he was just grumpy, **but we** unfortunately, needed him. And knowing Arlo, he probably felt that **we** were waiting his skills and **time**.

Instead of dignifying him with response, I just gestured to him to start if that's what he wanted. He **didn't understand** that the rest of us **had** been at this for weeks, and every time we thought we were getting close to answers, something else would come up. He didn't understand how exhausted everyone in this room was. **He** didn't get it, and I honestly **hoped** he never would. But if he wanted to push it, I wasn't going to stop him. They were his bridges.

Ario's gave me the side-eye, but started anyways.

"Why do you want to know what I know about the gods anyway?" He asked.

"It doesn't matter," I answered as Grace opened her mouth. I wasn't sure what she was going to say, but I didn't want Arlo to have more information than he needed right now. I used to trust him completely, but his reaction to the kids being **just** simply in the pack was changing my opinion.

"Well, you asked me to look into the land of the gods, yes?"

I nodded, and he grabbed one of the books he had laid out.

“Everything we know about the Land of the Gods is broken up. We obviously worship the Moon Goddess. She is who **we go** to if we need anything, and she seems pretty all knowing, at least that is how we’ve always used her. She has never let her ‘children’ go without.”

“Right... That’s not new information...” Heather said slowly.

Arlo shot her a glare this time, and I rolled my eyes and rubbed my temples. This was going to be a long night if this was going to be how it went.

“Well, it is a little bit,” Maizie spoke up, looking up from the magazine she was still flipping through. “The Red Blood pack didn’t worship her. We didn’t worship anybody.”

Chapter Comments

LIKE

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

“Well, it is a little bit,” Maizie spoke up, looking up from the magazine she was still flipping through. “The Red Blood pack didn’t worship her. We didn’t worship anybody.”

“Well, that isn’t exactly true,” Michael interjected. “We used to worship the Moon Goddess, until it was forbidden.”

“Do you think that’s what happened?” Maizie asked eagerly, fully sitting up now, and staring at Arlo with wide eyes. “Do you think the Moon Goddess abandoned us when religion was forbidden? And that’s why everything went bad in our pack?”

Arlo looked at her with a little bit of fear in his eyes. I wasn’t sure what that was about. Was it because she was from Red Blood? Or was he remembering how she had hurt Sawyer? Or was it something else entirely? I raked my brain for anything I might have missed between the two of them, but I honestly couldn’t think of anything.

“The Moon Goddess doesn’t abandon her people, even if they abandon her.” Arlo said after a long moment with a tightness in his voice, like it was hard for him to talk to her.

“Yea, I don’t think that would fit with what we know either,” Grace added, her face thoughtful. “I mean, Ethan, as much as he lied, he stated that the Lycans were

created by her. And I don't think she would have pulled us into her world if she was abandoning Lycan kind to warn us that things were coming."

"You were pulled into the Land of the Gods?!" Arlo exclaimed in surprise.

Grace looked at me with wide eyes, realizing she had told Arlo something my gut had told me not to tell him, but the damage was done. Maybe it would be more helpful for us for him to know it though. We might get answers now a little faster.

I gave Grace as reassuring smile, and a nod to encourage her to just go ahead and tell him.

"Well, yes, I was, and somehow, I pulled Rhys in with me... I thought it was just a dream until I woke up, and we realized that we both had had it. We both sustained injuries. We were both there. And at first it was peaceful, but in the end, it was intense and terrifying."

"And what did the Moon Goddess tell you?" Arlo asked eagerly.

"She just gave us a warning." I answered flatly. "And then we were attacked by creatures that we didn't get a clear view of."

"She attacked you guys?!" He asked with what sounded like glee in his voice.

“No.” Grace replied, giving him a weary look. “We think either it was the protectors of the realm, or another god set them

on us.”

“The protectors of the realm or another/god,” Arlo mumbled under his breath repeatedly as he dug through his bag for something.

Heather gave me a ‘what is happening’ look, and I just shrugged back at her. I knew as much as she did. Everyone else in the room seemed to share her confusion, except Sawyer who was just staring awkwardly at Maizie, and Grace who looked surprisingly relaxed.

“Why does Grace look pleased?” Sawyer asked through our mindlink, finally tearing his gaze away from Maizie.

“I honestly don’t know.” I replied.

But she did feel relaxed. I could feel it through our bond. It made me wish I could mindlink her even more than I usually

did.

“And you said you didn’t see what the creatures looked like?” Arlo asked, twisting around to face us with two hands still in

the bag.

“No. They stuck to the shadows. They tried to intimidate us first before attacking.” Grace answered thoughtfully. There was something really weird about her mood right now, that was beginning to freak me out a little.

“Stuck to the shadows...” Arlo muttered under his breath as he finally pulled out a book and began to flip through it

urgently.

“It doesn’t sound like protectors of the realm to me.” Arlo answered, finally finding the page he was looking for, and passing it to Maizie to look at then pass around, as he again began to frantically dig through his bag again. “Protectors of the realm are practically giants. They tend to be like 8 feet tall, and from what has been reported through multiple mythologies, they tend to stick to guarding the border. If the Moon Goddess brought you there, you would be considered her guests, and they would not have bothered with you. The Moon Goddess is known to live in the middle of the realm where the moonlight is always shining. It would be odd for her to be at the border where she would be at her weakest. It would be easier to portal you in to her space.”

“We didn’t see the moon while we were there though, did we, Grace?” I asked with a frown.

She shook her head. “No, we didn’t. But we also weren’t looking for it. Maybe we were in neutral territory? Wherever we were, we weren’t supposed to be there, and I honestly don’t think she was either based on how she acted.”

“Well, can you describe what it looked like?” Arlo asked in irritation, which I was sure was about us not giving him all the information he needed to do what he thought was his job.

Grace looked at me, and I gave her a subtle nod. I was sure she would be able to give better details than I would. She always had an eye for detail, which was one of the many things that would make her a great Luna Queen.

“Well, it started off when I got there, I was in a field of wildflowers, but the wildflower field was surrounded by these really dark woods, which is where Rhys emerged from. It was a very dark contrast.” She paused for a moment, thinking, before continuing. “The far side of the woods, seemed to be dying, but it had less of a dark and scary vibe. The noise came from that direction though. And so we fled to the woods nearest to us, but everything was dead it seemed. And if not dead already, it was dying. We thought we would be able to hide somewhere or lose them in the woods, but it was like they were home. They knew every turn; they clearly knew the woods better than us. And as I stated, they stuck to the shadows.”

Arlo sucked in a breath, and nothing prepared me for the words that came out of his mouth next, as he held up a different book with an eerily familiar picture. “It sounds like you are being hunted by the god of death.”

Chapter Comments