

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 241

I stared my mate with a longing and fear that I didn't know I had. He was here with me because I begged the Moon Goddess for **a chance to** talk to **him**, to tell him not to come. That it was a trap. But being here held its own dangers. The Moon Goddess had warned me not to stay here too long. Bad things would happen if we did, but she didn't know the exacts. She had said she would try and keep us safe for as long as she could, which really didn't seem that promising.

Rhys was staring at me too. His dark eyes drinking me in, filled with worry and outright fear. There was no hiding his feelings. Not here, **not now**. Right **now, everything was** laid out, right in front of me, and I was just grateful he was here.

“How do you know this place is safe?” He asked finally, taking my hand in his, and gently rubbing circles on the small part that **didn't** have ugly bruises or burns.

“The Moon Goddess told **me**,” I answered. “I begged for her to allow us **to** meet, and she made it happen.”

“Can you come home with me?” He asked hopefully.

I shook my head sadly. **As much as** I wanted to, as bad as I missed him, I couldn't.

"Why not?" He asked with a frown.

"I can't leave them." I answered quietly.

"Who?" He asked, narrowing his **eyes** at me.

"They need me, Rhys. Please try to understand. The plan doesn't work without me."

"What plan?" Rhys' eyes narrowing even more.

"The plan of how we break me, Leon, Caleb, and all the other prisoners out." I answered, feeling a little uncomfortable under the intensity of his **stare**.

"Grace..." He warned. "Tell me your kidding."

I shook my head again.

“No. I’m serious.”

“But we have a plan to rescue you!” He argued. “If you can just hang in there.”

“And it’s a trap to take you out!” I shot back. “I need you to trust **me** that I have a plan. I can’t lose you **Rhys**, and I **won’t** have to if for once **you can** just

trust me.”

“It isn’t that I don’t trust you, Grace,” He ran his hand through his hair in frustration. “**It’s** that you shouldn’t have to **get** yourself out of this mess.”

“Rhys, I know that you’re trying to help. And that you are used to being a knight in shining armor, but I need you safe. **And** I do have a role for want to hear it?” I asked hesitantly.

you,

if

you

He looked up at **me** with hurt and sadness in his eyes, but also curiosity. I knew that he only wanted to help, and I understood that, but this time, he was going to have to help in a different way.

“Can’t Leon and Caleb follow the plan without you?” He pleaded. “You’re already hurt... You could **just** come back with me...”

I shook

my

head slowly. “They need me, love,” I told him.

“We can find a different way to rescue them. Can’t **we** pull **them here too?**”

“And leave all the others to suffer? No. Plus the Moon Goddess only agreed to allow **you** and me to meet. **She didn’t want to mess too much with fate.**”

“**Grace...** With every word **you are** saying, **I’m** more worried.” He confided.

1/2

Chapter 241

“I know.” **I whispered.** “**I’m** scared too, Rhys. But **it** has to be like this. We have a responsibility **to** those who **can’t** fight for **themselves.**”

“And **can** you fight?” He questioned uneasily.

“**I feel better than I look.**” I told him honestly. “**I** won’t lie; I hurt. But my Lycan is healing me, **as much as she can...** She’s just leaving marks still, so they **don’t know I’m** healing **or** connected to my Lycan.”

The **worry** on Rhys’ **face** didn’t **ease**, but I knew him well enough to know that he wasn’t going to fight me on it anymore. He was **going to let me do what I wanted**, and I **was** grateful for that, even if he was reluctant to do **so.**

“Okay, theoretically, if I was to let you do this, and not **force** you home, what exactly is your plan?” He asked.

“How bad is our relationship with the Golden Pack?” It **was my** turn to ask a question.

“I met with the Alpha last night actually,” He answered in surprise. “Why?”

“You met with him?” I frowned. “**Isn’t** he dead?”

“Yea, that’s a whole complicated matter,” He stated uneasily. “I met with the real Alpha this **time**, and depending on what **you’re asking**, it might **benefit** as both.”

“I need you to station there.” I blurted out before I could truly question my plan.

“What?” He frowned.

“I need you to station at the Golden pack border, closest to Red Blood pack.”

His frown deepened, his dark eyes searching for something, but what exactly it was, **I** wasn't sure.

“Why would I station there?”

“Because I'm going to need your help to save everyone. I can't do it without you, but I also can't get them all the way to the Alpha King **pack**. It's **too far**, and we're all too weak. The Golden Pack is the closest pack to where their prison system is. I can **get** us there, **I'm sure** of it. I **just...** I can't finish it. I'll need help.” My voice breaking on my last word.

Goddess. I told myself I wasn't going to cry.

“Hey, hey,” He soothed, pulling me out of my chair and into his lap. “I'll be there, alright? Wherever **you** need me, **Gracie**, I'm there.”

I swiped at my tears and straddled his lap so I could face him. I could **cry** when I was home. Right now, I needed to be brave. We had some things to iron out. There couldn't be much time left, but our plan had to be perfect. We would not fail.

Chapter Comments

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

I woke up and immediately reached for my mate, but she wasn't there. Her side of the bed was empty, except for the small corner that Sammy was curled up in like a cat. I didn't quite understand why she was sleeping like that, but I didn't question it too much. Immense sadness filled my chest as I remembered that I had left Grace there to go back to that horrendous place. She had seemed so sure that she couldn't return here, but I would never get the image of how beaten and bruised she was out of my head. I hated myself for leaving her.

We had 48 hours to get to where we needed to be in place in order to help Grace. We would be pushing it. I needed to talk to Alpha George: I wanted to do this the right way. To Grace that was important, but I wouldn't be taking no for an answer. I would be in the Golden pack at the meeting place whether i had permission to be or not. I would not let Grace down if it was the last thing I do, and it very well might be.

I got out of bed and stretched my body; everything ached with exhaustion. It was till early, but early didn't matter. We had a long couple of days ahead of us. I could sleep when Grace was back safely in my arms. I did have to say though, I felt a little better after seeing her in the Realm of the Gods again... She looked like shit, but she was alive, and that was enough for now. And at least I got to kiss her goodbye, and our leaving there hadn't been quite as traumatic at last time.... Except I had to leave her.

I hopped in the shower and tried to rinse off the bad feeling that I had in my gut. Fuck. I shouldn't have left her. I should have gone back with her to her prison. I should have hid there or something. I should have included myself in her plan. I should have done anything, but let her return alone.

"They would have found you." My wolf reminded me.

I was surprised at how calm he was. He wasn't calm on a normal basis, so I didn't understand the sudden change of heart.

"Mate needs us." He answered quietly. "Our feelings are irrelevant until she is back in our arms."

And with that I could agree. Grace needed us. Plans fall apart when people go rogue. If she was right about them laying a trap for us, then I couldn't deviate from it even if I wanted to. She needed me to do this. I had to do this.

4

"Kate, get as many soldiers as we can spare ready to move out." I mindlinked the one person who could help me get everything set.

"Yes, Sir," She responded immediately. "Are we going after Luna Queen Grace?"

“Sort of. We are giving her the best chance at success.” I replied.

“I don’t understand-” She started, but I cut off the mindlink. She didn’t have to understand, and I couldn’t tell her that. There was no point. Grace needed me to do this, and goddamn I would do it.

I made my way to the kitchen leaving both Sammy and Michael still sound asleep. I wasn’t planning on leaving the floor yet, and as Grace had mentioned a million times, kids should not have to be responsible for kids. I just hoped that the homes we had found for all the kids that had once occupied this space, were working out. I would need to check up on that, but not right now. Right now, we had to get Grace and the others. One problem at a time. That’s what she had told me, and she was right. We can’t control everything, but what we can is imperative that we do.

Both Maizie and Sawyer turned to look at me. I hadn’t even noticed them until I felt their intense stares as I grabbed the milk from the fridge.

“Why are you both awake?” I asked, trying to stop them from staring.

“I don’t like to sleep.” Maizie admitted. She never looked tired to me, so I found this surprising, but given the way she had lived before, I could understand why sleep might be unappealing,

“And you?” I asked my brother.

“My mate’s awake, so I’m awake.”

“Ew.” Maizie groaned, pulling away from her mate. “Drop the sap or you won’t be mated for very long.”

A trace of a smile pulled at Sawyer’s lips as he stared at her as she drank her coffee before he turned back to me.

“Why are you awake?” He asked, and I didn’t miss the way he pulled Maizie back into him, which made me long even more for Grace to be home again. But if everything went right, she would be soon enough.

I rubbed the back of my neck, and hesitated, not knowing exactly how much to share with them, causing my brother to narrow his eyes at me. He knew me

2425

probably better than anyone... Grace and I were still learning each other, and Leon was truly the only one who could compete with him at this time, but he was with Grace in a prison cell, far far away. And Gods that thought hurts more than it should.

“Rhys?” Maizie straightened up when I didn’t answer.

I debated if there was a way around it, but they were my friends, my family. I had told them about it the first time. Only this time, I feared there would be a different reaction, and I didn’t know what it would be.

“I met with Grace in the land of the Gods.” I dropped the bomb, but no explosions sounded. The only sound that met my ears was silence, which was so loud. I thought I was going deaf, but I had already said it. And there was no going back now...

Chapter Comments

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The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 243

Drip. Drip. Drip. The sound of the water dripping from somewhere a few cells over was driving me crazy. This place was driving me crazy. The daily beatings.

Worrying about Grace, and Leon. Worrying about home and how my brothers were doing, how my Sammy was doing. Good god, Sammy. I couldn't wait to get back to her. I had to get back to her. Grace had been telling me stories about her just earlier today. How she had enjoyed the movie night, how school was going, and how they had been at the picnic when everything went to shit, She had told me anything and everything she could think of, and i was grateful for it. I missed that little girl, even if she had only been in my life a short time. Goddess, I could have had her whole little life if I hadn't been in stupid... How could I have ever been so fucking stupid?

A rustling in the cell next to me drew my attention out of my head. Grace was moving restlessly and her chains clanged loudly. My worry turned fully to her

“Grace?” I tried.

“Hm?” She whispered, her squirming stopped.

“You okay?”

I could see Leon watch us from across the hall. I knew he longed to be closer to her. The beta in him wanted to protect her with his life, but the reality was there was no protecting anybody in a place like this. There was only complacent and empathic. There was no saving, and that hurt the most. Even with the semblance of a plan coming together, there was a limited window of opportunity, and an even small chance of everyone getting out safely. We would do our best, but that was all we could do. The rest of it? Was up to fate.

“I want to try something, but I’m going to need you to cover for me.” She answered in a low voice. I was surprised she had a voice left at all, they had had her screaming all morning, and not in the good way... Fuck. Now was not the time for those kinds of thoughts.

“How the hell am I supposed to do that?” I hissed a little too loudly, I had to look around and make sure we **were** both still alone. At least as alone as we could be.

“I’ll get me all setup... You just have to make sure they don’t look too closely...”

Her last words were mumbled, and I knew why. She wasn’t asking though. I thought she would at least ask if **I** would be willing to do it, but she wasn’t. She wasn’t asking, and that’s what was throwing me off about this.

“What exactly are you planning?” I questioned with a frown.

“It might not work,” She answered, slightly breathless, and I wondered how bad her injuries really were. I could only **see** so much in the dark. “It won’t matter if it doesn’t work.”

“If I’m putting my body on the line, Grace, then I think I deserve to know why. Especially since you aren’t even asking.”

She paused, her whole body freezing, her chains going quiet, and I almost felt bad for my comment. Almost.

“I’m sorry, I should have asked.” She whispered.

“Tell me what you’re up to, Grace. I don’t like the whole secret thing.” I growled slightly. Her apology was cute, but it wasn’t enough. I’m not sure anything was, honestly.

“I’m going to try and talk to Rhys,” Her voice was barely whisper with the admittance.

“What?” I gasped.

“I’m going to try and go meet with the Moon Goddess and convince her to let me talk to Rhys.” She answered casually, her voice still barely audible, but more confident.

“And how do you plan to do that?” I hissed.

“The same way I did last time.” She answered

“Last time? What the hell do you mean last time?” I growled.

“Well, last time I was asleep... This time I’m going to try and meditate sort of. I don’t know if it will work, but I have to try. He can’t come here. It’s too

dangerous.”

“Do you know something I don’t know?” I questioned, her words making me think that I was losing it.

“Yes.” She whispered.

“Care to tell?” I asked.

“No. Not right now. I have to talk to him though. **He’s** walking into a trap.”

“You’re scaring me, Grace.” I told her.

“I know. But I need you to trust me.” She answered.

“How do you wanna play this?”

“I need you to cover for me. I’m going to try and hide because I don’t know what happens to my body while I’m **away**.”

I hesitated. That was a dangerous game. Her plan wasn’t a plan; it was a hope. A hope that I didn’t really want to be a part of it, but I didn’t really have a choice now, did I?

“And how do you want me to do that?” I questioned bitterly, as she started to squirm again.

“Don’t let them look at me too closely.” She answered with barely a whisper.

I glared at her, I would do it. I didn’t have a choice. She wasn’t backing off, and I knew that there would be no talking her out of it. She seemed to think that Rhys was in danger, and that made me nervous. If he got caught, then we would be in trouble. There would be no leaving this place alive. So if she thought that the Moon Goddess would grant her an audience, she had to try.

“If you don’t want me to do this, I won’t.” She whispered.

“It’s not that, I just don’t know how to protect you while you’re gone.” I answered honestly.

“I just need them to not interrupt *me*.” She said quietly.

I stared as she positioned herself to be curled up under the blanket and tried to set herself up so if she disappeared, it wouldn’t look like it. I handed her my blanket through It didn’t look right exactly, but it was believable in the lowlight.

“Okay...” I said finally, “Okay, be careful.”

She nodded, and now it was just a waiting game.

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The unwanted **Daughter's Alpha King**

Chapter 244

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 244

I hated the silence, but there wasn't anything else for me to say. Not at least until they asked any questions. I had hesitated to even tell them, so Ess going **to** offer up answers without them even asking. Fuck that. Instead, I just went back to making my coffee and ignored the ten pairs of **even** that were **boring** holes into my head.

When I finally turned back around, they were both gaping at me.

“What?” I growled.

“Rhys... Are you sure that you weren’t dreaming?”

“I was in the Land of the Gods with her.” I answered, confused by their serious expressions. “It wasn’t a dream,”

“She **wasn’t** here to pull you in with her though... I know you **miss** her, and maybe that was all it was.” Sawyer tried to rationalize, but **I was** having none **of** it.

“No. It was real. She did pull me in. She said she begged for the Moon Goddess to give us time. She wanted to warn us that we were walking into **a trap**. **The** Moon Goddess only gave us a little bit of time, but it was enough to **get** everything sorted out.”

“Why didn’t you just bring her back here then?” Maizie asked softly.

“She wouldn’t come, I tried.” I answered, not understanding why they were looking at me like that.

“Rhys, no one in their right mind would go back there.” Maizie said gently. “I think you were dreaming. It’s okay, I used to do it **too** when I missed home after being taken. I dreamed that I was talking to family members **and** friends. Like **they** were **really** there. **But** it was just **my mind trying to process that** f would never see them again.”

“I agree with Maizie,” Sawyer nodded, giving his mate a worried look before turning back to me. “I think you should try and **sleep** some more...

“I’m not losing it, guys!” I slammed my fist down on the counter. “I was **not** dreaming. I **was** in the Land of the Gods. I **met** up with Grace. She warned **me** that we were walking into a trap, and that she has a plan. She didn’t come back because she couldn’t **leave** the others behind, which is a very Grace thing **to**

do!”

“Rhys...” Sawyer tried.

“No!” I shouted. “I am not crazy. It was real, and we need to scratch the plan, and follow Grace’s!”

“What’s going on?” Michael asked sleepily as he entered the **kitchen**, and the door to the Alpha floor opened **revealing** Alana and Heather, both looking wide awake.

“Rhys says that we need to scratch our whole plan that we’ve poured hours and hours into because he had a dream.” Maizie answered bitterly, **never** taking her eyes off me.

“It wasn’t a dream! I’m telling you that I was in the Land of the Gods.

“Land of the Gods?” Heather asked with intrigue. “And you saw Grace?”

Finally. Someone fucking believed me!

“Yes, and she told me that it was a trap **to** come after them, and that she had a plan. We **have** to go to the Golden **Pack** as soon as possible. We will **send a** diversion team to Elm Wood pack to just tease them on the border, and we will be there at the Golden pack **border for Grace** and the others.”

“What others?” Alana asked quietly, her **eyes** wide with fear.

“Caleb, Leon and her, and everyone else they can rescue from **the** prison according to her. She has **a plan to get everyone out.**

“How many people is everyone?” Heather asked.”

“I don’t know exactly. She didn’t say. She **just** said that

it

was imperative that **we** follow her plan.”

Chapter 244

“**And how** do you know that this plan isn’t a trap?” Sawyer demanded, but honestly there **wasn’t** much fight in his **voler, just** exhaustion

“I mean that is possible,” Alana spoke up. “What was Grace’s condition?”

I sucked in a sharp breath. “She **was** beaten and bruised. She didn’t look good at all. But she said that she **was** making it look worse than it was to ther would leave her alone more. She also didn’t want them to know she was still connected to her Lycan. She didn’t look good, but she was her

“**And** are you sure that they weren’t forcing her to meet with you?” Maizie pressed.

“They would have to know that she had been to the Land of the Gods before. That’s not an average interrogation question, and I **highly doubt** that the **Moon** Goddess would allow such a thing.” I answered angrily.

“Unless it wasn’t the Moon Goddess who allowed it...” Maizie sighed. “It could have been the God of Death or some other bullshit person **they’re** worshipping.”

“Did you see the Moon Goddess?” Alana asked with a hint of eagerness.

“No, not this time, but Grace had talked to her, and led us to a house that the Moon Goddess had said was safe to talk **in.***

“I don’t know...” Alana said softly. “It could be a trap...”

“I still think it was a dream.” Sawyer argued again, running a hand tiredly over his face. think **it’s** a psychological effect of your trauma, **and** you are dreaming up different scenarios that allow **Grace to** be with you, even if it **isn’t** physically.”

“I’m not crazy!”

“Okay,” Heather interjected, putting her hands **up**, but whether it **was** to surrender **or silence** the others, **I wasn’t sure.** “**Okay, I’ll** play along. Why **did Grace** want you to go to Golden pack?”

“Because she said it’s closer. She said that the prison **was** closer to that border, and she could get **there**, but she didn’t think she **could** get **to any** of the

others.”

“Okay... That makes some sense...” Heather said slowly, but I didn’t miss how **everyone** exchanged **glances** around her.

“Believe what you want,” I snapped. “But I am going to be in Golden pack when my mate **shows up there. And** if she **doesn’t you** can **have me** committed **to** the nearest psych ward, and I will sleep or whatever the fuck **you** want me to do, but for now, I **need you to** get up, get **packed, and** trust **me that it was**

real.”

Chapter Comments

Visitor

any word on an update?

Visitor

Great story. wish it was finished!

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 245

I stared at where Grace had disappeared from. The blankets did make it sort of look normal, but if they looked closely, it put be sure that she was gone... I feared what sort of retribution she would receive if she was caught. I had no idea how she had done it either. She Red casually just druped that she had been to the Land of the Gods. A realm we hadn't even known was even real, and yet, she wasn't here she wasn't in her cell the sve gone and that terrified me.

I had looped Leon in, and I kept watch on Grace while Leon was keeping an eye down the hall. If anyone came down here, we were screwed. I hoped she would be able to choose not to return if there was danger, well, at least more danger than usual, but something told me she wouldn't be able to. I wasn't sure how she even planned to meet with Rhys, but she seemed sure that it was possible, and for her sake, I hoped it was. Clearly, i had no room to say t much because I hadn't thought that she would just disappear like that and she did,

"How's she doing?" Leon asked, not taking his eyes off the dimly lit hall.

“She’s just gone.” I told him quietly. I really didn’t want the other inmates to hear this. It would be enough to condemn us all if they knew we were helping her, even if they swore, they were trying to help us escape. The girl in the cage next to me had said that she had a plan. Grace was clearly working on a plan herself, but would it matter? I highly doubted it. I might be eating, but I was growing weaker by the day. Leon was actively avoiding the food and was withering away by the day. And Grace, I didn’t know what she was doing. Could she get a good meal in the Land of the Gods? Would she even want to the had said just this morning that the pain was making her nauseous.

Gods, we were all in so much pain.

I straightened up as the door down the hallway opened with a bang. I hadn’t seen Alpha Adrian much since I’d been here, but he seemed to have a special interest in Grace that I found a more than a little concerning and creepy. Even when I had lived in this pack, Alpha Adrian had asked invasive questions about Grace. At first, I really hadn’t given it much thought, but as time went on, I realized he bordered on obsessive about her. He wanted to know everything, and nothing was off limits. I told him often that I didn’t know much about her. My brother kept her on a tight leash, which wasn’t exactly true.... She was just on a tight leash kept away from me. It wasn’t until I really found my mate and my daughter that I started to question why he was like **that**. And now, he had been down so many more times since she arrived, that I was again questioning his motives.

“Oh Grace,” He called out when he was close enough.

Leon gave me a look, but he didn’t need to. We both knew what this meant. And we were in trouble.

“She’s sleeping.” I told him as he approached her cell.

His head snapped to mine, and he walked right past her cell to mine. She better be fucking successful with whatever her endeavor is if I’m about to get the crap beat out of me for her. I hated how cynical I was being, but I was tired and in pain, and that was enough for me to be mad.

“Well, well, well,” He sneered, all of his attention on me where it was supposed to be. “Look what we have here.”

I stared at him, refusing to take the bait. There would be enough going on soon enough that I didn’t need to bait him yet. Not when his attention turned to me so easily.

“Are you in love with her too?” He snickered. “Does your brother know?”

I glared at him. I didn’t love Grace. I didn’t love anybody, except my daughter, and until her, I didn’t even know I was capable of love. She made my whole world light up, and she was the reason I was doing this. She loved Grace, she loved Rhys. She needed them to make it out alive, even if I wasn’t going to.

“How did such a witch of a girl manage to seduce two of the most powerful Alpha’s on the planet?” He questioned as he entered my cell.

He was lucky that I was chained to a wall, and unable to do shit for the things he was saying. Of course that was the fucking point, but still.

His fist made contact with my face, but I held steady. I could do this, even if I really didn't want to.

“She bares his mark, but she'll never bare yours, huh?” He taunted with another hit. “She's bared two Alpha's marks now, and she'll bare another one when it's all said and done. I will destroy every single shred of evidence that ever made her think that you and Rhys were worth anything. How will it feel for you to lose to both your brother and me? She has always wanted me, you know. She was just too shy to let me know it fully, but she could never hide her interest.”

My stomach twisted. Grace had been marked before she had come to the Alpha King Pack. She had been abused and tortured and had made the decision to not speak... Was this why or at least a part of it? Had Adrian always insinuated that any move she made was in interest of him? Was he the one who had forced his mark on her? Oh gods, if that was true, it would only be a matter of time before he attempted to force himself on her again. Especially since it would render Rhys useless in pain tog. It would be one of the best weapons at his disposal... But I could play this game too...

“Who doesn't love her?” I asked as he kneed me in the stomach with a strength I didn't really know he had. “She's lovely, and kind and one of the sweetest souls. My brother is lucky to have her.”

“He won't have her for much longer.” He answered snidely, and I wanted so badly to hit him for it.

A stir in the cell next to me caught my attention, but I refused to look, to draw attention to her. I would take this beating with grace, and it would be worth it if she figured out a plan on how to get us the hell out of here.

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The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

My teeth chattered violently as I wrapped the blanket tighter around me. My whole body was shaking with exhaustion, but there were still & more people I needed to heal before I could be done. They needed me to do this. They needed to be able to stand a chance once we got out there to escape. I wouldn't be able to protect anyone out there. I was already at my limits, but I could do this. We were on a time crunch. Time had no meaning here, but if we missed our opportunity, there was no telling if we would get another. At least not any time soon, and that would lead Rhys right into a trap. I couldn't do that to him. No. Failure was not an option.

“Grace?” Caleb whispered.

He had hardly taken his eyes off of me since I returned from the Land of the Gods. He had taken a beating that was meant for me. I hadn't even asked him. He was right, that was a terrible move on my part. I had just been so wrapped up in my plan I forgot to even ask him if he would be willing until he reminded me. I had wanted to take it when I returned, but he had kept the attention off of me. I just started trying to take away his pain, and then when they left, I started to heal him. He was first because he saved me in ways that he didn't even understand yet.

Since I had wrapped up his healing, I had moved on to Leon, and then one by one everyone else who was in this godforsaken place.

"Grace, maybe you should stop for a while..." Caleb requested quietly, and through the dark I could see Leon nod his head in agreement on the other side of the hall.

"I can't." I told them.

I might not be able to physically see who I was healing, but I could tell it was a young girl who needed it more than I did. I remembered being young and trapped here. It never got easier. The only difference was this time I knew I didn't deserve to be here. I knew my worth was more than my past, more than my fear. I was a me that past me could have never dreamed of, but I was proof that you could make it out of here. Sure, I was still working on things, and I'm sure that there will always be things that will haunt me, but I was lucky. Rhys would be there, every step of the way, and for that I was grateful.

A bead of sweat dripped down my face as I leaned against the cell bars connecting Caleb and I. Goddess, this was hard, and it was only step one of the plan.

“Grace, stop.” Caleb commanded in an Alpha voice I didn’t even know he had.

I whimpered, but didn’t stop. Lycans didn’t have to listen to Werewolves. At least, that’s what the voice in my head told me. But that didn’t mean that an Alpha command didn’t still effect me.

“Grace...” He growled.

“We are on a time crunch.” I snapped at him, but it didn’t have nearly as much of a bite as I wanted it to.

“All the more reason to stop.” Leon encouraged from across the way. “You need to be at full strength for this to work, and you’re two minutes away from passing out.”

“I’m not stopping till everyone has a chance to survive.” I argued back, using it to fuel my powers.

“You can’t save everyone.” Caleb said gently. “You have to save yourself. The only thing Rhys cares about is you. You **have** to come back to him, Grace. He won’t make it if you don’t.”

He was trying to guilt me, and I would be lying if I said that I was immune to it. I was most definitely not immune to it. A large part of me, the part that was two minutes away from passing out wanted to stop. Wanted to self-preserve. But the other part of me said if I didn’t help them, I didn’t deserve to make it out either.

“I just want everyone to have a fighting chance.” I whispered.

“We aren’t asking you to stop forever, just take a little break, replenish your strength.” Leon tried gently, he was always a little softer than Caleb, and it was really clear to me that he was a girl dad. And not *in* the way that my dad was a girl dad but like in a good way.

“We don’t have time for that.” I argued, but black spots filled my vision, and I knew I didn’t have much time left as I moved onto the next person.

“It’s our plan,” Caleb answered. “Rhys is smart enough to engage or delay if we’re a little off. We’ll make adjustments, but right now, you need to rest.”

I nodded, finally relenting. I had barely even started on the person I had been working on as I pulled back my energies. I was hanging onto consciousness by a thread as the dizziness hit in full **force**.

“Grace?” Leon called out worriedly.

“1” But whatever I was going to say died on my lips. My head fell back hard against the bar, hard, but I couldn’t even lift it. That felt like ton much work. Fuck. This was not good.

I couldn’t open my eyes, but I heard shuffling next to me, and when someone touched me, I knew it was Caleb... He gently shifted me the best he would vo that I was laying down, my head supported by something I couldn’t see. But I was grateful for him as I let the darkness take me under. If we were lucky, this would be the last time I ever slept in this cruel and unforgiving place. If we were lucky, the next time we slept, I would be in Rhys’ arms, and that was enough let me finally let go, and let the darkness pull me under.

Chapter Comments

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The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 247

I awoke groggily to a door slamming down the hall, but I was still so tired. I didn't bother opening my eyes **or** even trying to look to see who was coming. **didn't** care. With any luck, it would be dinner, and we'd get a little extra strength before we committed out escape heist. As long as they didn't know about it **anyways** and weren't going to try and poison us more.

Click. Clack. Click. Clack. I knew that sound. How did I know that sound? I urged my brain to work, but all I wanted to do was go back to **sleep**. I was **us out** of it, and that never boded well for around here.

"Grace?" Kinsley asked in astonishment.

I **lifted** my head at the sound of her voice, but it felt heavy. I could barely see her. My eyes didn't seem to want to open all the **way**.

"What the hell happened to you?" Kinsley growled, the bars in front of me rattled with her weight.

"She isn't well, obviously." Caleb answered, his voice gravelly with worry.

“She’s burning up.” Kinsley exclaimed with something that sounded like worry in her voice **as** her hand touched my forehead. “Here, drink. “

A hand forced my jaw open, and water was poured down my throat causing me **to** sputter.

“Someone get my husband, now.” Kinsley barked, but I didn’t understand. **Didn’t** she **want** me dead? **Wasn’t** that the whole point of everything she had done lately?

More footsteps came rushing, but Caleb’s steady presence didn’t change.

“What’s going on?” Adrian’s gruff voice demanded.

“She’s dying.” Kinsley responded with anger in her voice.

“I thought we hadn’t beaten her today.” Adrian answered.

“You’ve beaten her enough for it to be lasting damage.” Caleb retorted angrily.

I was grateful for his cover. He knew it was mostly because I had pushed myself to the brink earlier. I had no idea how much **time** had **passed since** then, but it couldn't have been that long. My head was still swimming. But then again, I had never done what I did before. I had never had **access to my power** like that, and now I had power. Well, actually, with how I was feeling, I wasn't sure I did, but it didn't matter. If they got out, it would be worth it.

“We need her alive.” Adrian growled. “Get her to the infirmary.”

The guards grabbed at me, and I didn't fight it. The only thing that mattered was that the plan was going to still happen. I screamed it in my head, **begging** Leon and Caleb to do it without me. I knew I didn't have a mindlink, but maybe the Moon Goddess would have **mercy** on me and share **my** words, my **wants**. My desires. They couldn't bail on the plan just because **I was** gone. They had to **go**. They couldn't deviate. We **were** only going to get one chance at this. Failure was not an option.

I laid limply in the guard's arms. My brain was already shutting **off** again. And the darkness **was** pulling me under, not taking no for an answer, **despite** me not having any **way** to protect myself from wherever **I** was going...

The next time my eyes opened, I awoke to an incessant beeping and a small sterile white room. I attempted to move, my body back in **my** control, but I **was** strapped down to the bed. My arms, legs, waist and even my head **was secure**. Shoot. This **was** not good.

I tested the restraints, but they didn't budge, and this position on **my back** was terribly uncomfortable.

“Ah, you're **awake**, and looking much like **yourself** again.”

Adrian's **voice called** out, chilling me to the bone as he came into my line of sight and **silenced** one of the machines.

I didn't say anything. I **was** good at this game. I would only get **myself** in trouble if I talked, and this seemed like trouble **enough**.

“The doctor stated that your Lycan must still be able to **help** you **because** you **were** actually pretty healed. Not a single broken **bone** in that **pretty little body** of yours, but I know I broke some bones yesterday. Severely dehydrated. Under nourished. Exhausted. But healed. And **you** shouldn't have **access to your** Lycan now, should you, Gracie?”

Chapter 247

I hated **the way** he said **my** name. It left a bitter taste in **my** mouth. **Only Rhys and the Alpha** King Pack could call me **oracle**. No. He dido e vai the **Not** after everything he had done to me.

“Don't worry little Lycan. I have a witch on her way to rectify that little situation. But I do admit, there is a bonus to you **being** able to heal that quickly *is* means I can break you over and over, and over again, and there's not a thing you can do about it.” He taunted.

“**Why?**” I rasped. “Why bother keeping me alive?”

He looked surprised that I asked, but he quickly schooled his features back into his normal mask.

“Because unfortunately, we still need you. You have a big role in plan, Grace. Don’t you want to find out what it is?”

“No.” I whispered, but it was a lie. I did want to know. I had to know, so that I could prepare for whatever hell they were going to **put** me through.

“I know you, Gracie,” He hissed. “You do want to know. But this is bigger than us. It always has been. But soon, you will be wearing my mark on your neck, and you will stand beside me. We will be the rightful leaders of the Supernatural world. Everyone will bend to our will, cater to our every need. Follow **our** every word without question. We will rule this world with an iron fist, and no one will be the wiser!”

My heart clenched at his words. I didn’t **want** that. I didn’t want his mark. I didn’t want to betray **Rhys**. But he leaned down and kissed my lips, and there was nothing I could do about it. My future was **set**, and all I could **do** was **cry**.

Chapter Comments

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The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 248

The hours passed slowly. Another two food trays were brought before I really truly began to worry about Grace. There was no sign of hat. Mabod guards who brought our trays had been down at all. Everything felt like it was spiraling out of control fast, but it **wasn't** lost. **At** least not yet

“What do we do?” Caleb whispered.

Our plan was supposed to start tonight. According to Grace, Rhys would have troops on the border to cause a scene and draw as much attention away from us as possible, and we would run the other way, hopefully without too much of a fight, toward the Golden Pack border. But now, we **had the** added complication of Grace not being with us anymore. It **was** my job to protect her, and I couldn't. I hadn't been able to do a damn thing since she was brought down here.

Goddess. I missed Heather. She would know what to do right now. She wouldn't hesitate. She would just do what needed done. **She always** would **have made** a better Beta than me. Growing up, I had always thought that we would be Betas together, but she hadn't wanted that. She was my **counsel** when I asked for it, but

that was it. And even knowing all of that, I still knew that she would do a better job than I was.

“I think we have to continue with the plan and add in rescuing Grace.” I answered after a long moment. I knew everyone around us was listening **with hated** breath. They wanted to be free **as** much as **we** did, if not more, most had been here far longer than us. The relief in the cells around **us** was **palpable**. Proving that I they had been worried that we were no longer going to do the plan.

“How **are we** going to get Grace? And how will we know when it’s **time?**” A young **voice** from a few cells down asked quietly.

I looked at Caleb, whose face wore a serious expression that I knew to be **fear, but** to anyone **else just** looked **a** little menacing. “We have to split **up.**” I **said** the words I knew he didn’t want to hear.

“We don’t even know if she’s alive.” Caleb argued in a hushed tone. “She could be dead by now, and **we’d be** wasting **our time and resources.**”

“She’s not dead.” I answered sure of my answer.

“And how do you know that?” Caleb asked.

“I just do. They were worried about her. They need her for something. They wouldn’t let her die. She was **just** exhausted and dehydrated. She pushed too far. I’m sure they’re just taking precautions.”

“How do you know?” Caleb pressed.

“I don’t know. I just do.”

“That’s not helpful at all.”

“Trust me.” I told him as if it was easy when it **was** anything but..

He rolled his eyes, but didn’t argue anymore. It wasn’t a win, but it **wasn’t** a fight either.

“Which one do you want?” I asked. “Grace or the **group**?”

It was an important question. One that would determine the **success** of everything going forward.

“I’ll take the group.” He said after a long moment. “You get **Grace**, but we again have no **idea** where they’re keeping **her**.”

“I have an idea,” A woman to my left answered. She looked sort of familiar, even in the dark. There **was** something **about** her that I couldn’t **put my finger** on, but yet it was like I knew her. Fuck. I had spent too much time down here. Of **course**, she was familiar, she had been **my** fucking cell-neighbor since **we** got here. I **was** just losing it,

The woman quickly explained her thought process, and I nodded in agreement. If **we were** lucky, **the key** we would **need** would be **on the** key **ring** that we were about to steal within the hour. At least, that’s about how long I thought it would be when **they** came down next. **One of the Lycans** about **6 cells away** had started to feel his Lycan again yesterday after he had stopped eating the food. He said his **power** wasn’t **very strong**, but he should **be** able **to use his** power of summoning, to summon the keys from the guard without him noticing. **With Grace**, me and Leon all here, **they had been** a little **careless with their** other prisoners, hence not knowing that their **powers** were coming back.

We had a back-up plan in case the summoning didn’t work too. I just didn’t like **that** plan **nearly** as much. **It** was a lot **more risky** t

than it needed to be bur

Chapter 248

we would make it worse, Grace was right. We were really **only** going to **get one** shot at **this**.

We went over the plan, over and over again. Everyone had a role, and everyone knew what their role was. I **was beginning** to **think** this might

My heart pounded as the door to the end of the hallway opened. I looked down hopefully, hoping it was Grace, but **no. It** was just the **food** trays. I lowered **my** head and **did my** best to act inconspicuous. Our plan relied on no one giving us a **way**, and that was a dangerous game,

My tray **was** shoved through the slot in the cell with little care. There **was an** urgency in the guards' movements tonight, and a nish of excitement flooded **my** system. That could mean that Rhys' people were in place. I knew Caleb had his doubts about his brother being able to do **this, but I** also knew **that** it came from a place of fear, not disbelief.

"I'm **so sick of** this shit!" Jerry, a middle-aged prisoner shouted when the tray **was** shoved into his cell. "This is not real food! **This** is poison! **Why** not just fucking kill us all right now?"

Step one: Distraction. The plan is officially a go.

The guard opened **Jerry's** door and began a beating. I couldn't **see**, but I could hear, and I hated that this was **a part of the** plan, even if he had agreed **to** it. I stared into the dark, trying **to see** the **keys** be summoned, but I couldn't see shit.

Not until a **young girl** made a cooing sound signaling **that they had been** returned.

Luckily for **Jerry**, the Guard left fairly quickly, and the keys **were** passed **down** till they **were** in my hand. I made **quick** work of **my** locks and made **my way to** Caleb and then the others. I did the cell doors and **gave Caleb** the keys **to** the chains that held **most people in place**. **And soon** everyone **was out of the** cells, and step **two** was a go.

Chapter Comments

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The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 249

The chatter among the prisoners was what was going to get us caught, I knew that they were all excited for at least getting a chaner in 10 not going to get very far if they didn't shut up.

"Zip it!" Caleb hissed angrily as he stared down at the end of the hall at where two guards usually stood, yet, surprisingly, there was no one there. I Nederi even seen them exit, but we weren't going to wait around for them to come back.

“Do you know where you’re going? I asked Caleb. We had been over it a thousand times, but I needed him to confirm it again.

He nodded somberly. At the other end of the hall there was a hidden door according to one of the prisoners. She had said that no one ever uses that **passage** anymore. Grace had also mentioned it. It’s where she had escaped through one time. Caleb moved that way, and him and Laura, **the** woman **who** could summon began to search for it. I didn’t wait to find out if they found it though. I went the other way. I was going straight into the Lion’s **den to find** Grace. I didn’t know if the passage would take me to her, and we didn’t have a lot of time. If I got caught, I would put all of them in danger, **and** that **couldnt** happen.

I took the steps two at a time, but I could hear anxious chatter at the top of the stairs. I stuck to the shadows and listened to what **they** said.

“Do you think they’re here to attack?” One whispered.

“I don’t know, but you would think we would fortify the guard around the **prison**, not weaken it. They’re goal is probably to come for Grace.

“But Grace isn’t even in the prison.” The one guard whispered.

“But they don’t know that. If I was them, that would be the first place I looked.”

“**Is** she safer in the infirmary?”

“No. There’s only 8 guards left in the whole packhouse,” The older guard with all the **answers** told him.

“That’s not good.” The younger one whined.

And I took it **as** my opportunity to attack.

“No, it’s not good at all.” I told him, and knocked him out without giving him a chance **to respond**.

The older guard looked at me tiredly but shrugged his shoulders. “Well, come on then, I’ll take you to her.”

I froze. I had been prepared for a fight, but he didn’t seem to want to **engage**.

“Unlike some of the others around here, I value my life. So come on, I’ll take you to her. You are in search of **Grace now**, aren’t **you?**”

This was not a part of the plan. Every part **of** me was screaming that this **was** a trap. The older man looked so calm and cool **and** collected. Like he **had been** expecting me, and maybe he had been, but it couldn’t be for any good reason...

“Well come on now, we’re wasting time.” **He** growled angrily. “I won’t risk my neck to help you if you are going to be that slow, and there’s **probably** only **a** small window of time before your distraction wears off.”

I followed the man. A million questions ran through my head, but I held my tongue. Hopefully, he really would take me to Grace, and **I** wasn’t walking **into** a trap, but my gut was screaming at me. Did he know about the prisoners downstairs? Was he somehow a part of their escape plan?

They **hadn’t mentioned** him, but I had been told that some people were soft to their cause. There **was** nearly no one outside the prison now that didn’t **have** family **who had been** imprisoned or sent to the program. It just depended on who needed kept in line....

“Why should I trust you?” I asked, when we stopped outside of a door labeled infirmary.

“You shouldn’t,” He answered. “I’m just trying to **save** my own neck. **You’re** Leon, right? The Alpha King’s beta?

Your **reputation proceeds you**. **I know how** ruthless you can be. **My** fellow guard was lucky you only knocked him out, and didn’t kill him.” He

dipped **into** one **of the** rooms **across the hall from the** door I think Grace was behind and came back with a uniform. “Put **this** on. Quickly.”

I shrugged the button up shirt on, and quickly buttoned them.

Everyone **always** thought **I was** ruthless. I

mean, **best friends and beta of the Alpha King**, but I wasn't cold like him. I couldn't **just** shut off my heart when I wanted to.

Unless **necessary**, I **almost always chose to wound, not kill. Not that I would ever**

Chapter 249

tell anyone that.

“**Sir,**” The guard I had been following called out as he shoved me into one of the rooms across from the **Infirmary**.

“**What?!**” Adrian called out from inside the infirmary, and **my** stomach sunk.

“Didn't I tell you not to **bother** me, **Lewis?**”

“You did, sir, but you are needed on the frontlines.” The Guard, **Lewis** answered.

“**Can't** they handle those stupid imbeciles themselves?” He growled.

“Apparently not, Sir.” Lewis responded tiredly and motioned for me to join him now that I was fully in uniform.

Lewis opened the door, and Adrian spun around to face us looking flustered and irate. I tried my best not to show any reaction, but it was clear he **had** been leaning over Grace. I didn’t dare look at her though. I didn’t want to give any reason for Adrian to be suspicious of me. I knew I could take him, **if I** had the

revenge. I squeezed my fist tight to keep my feeling inside But now **wasn’t the** time. I had to get Grace out, and then we could work on

“I told you not to come in here!” Adrian raged.

“Sir, you are needed. Samuel here can guard Grace, but we are needed.” Lewis pushed.

Adrian immediately started muttering obscenities under **his** breath but followed Lewis out of the **room without** hesitation. **It** wasn’t **until** the **door** shut did, and I knew that **we** were alone that I rushed over to **Grace** to **access the** damage.

Chapter Comments

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 250

Tears streamed down my face as someone walked toward me. I couldn't turn my head to see, but fear filled me from head **to** toe. Oh pullers. I was ser **If** this person **was** anything like Adrian, he wasn't going to stop.

"No!" I cried as his shadow fell on me, "Please, please don't do this. Please."

"Gracie," A gentle voice pleaded with me to calm down. "It's okay. I'm not going to hurt you. It's me, Leon."

I sucked in a breath as he leaned in front of me so I could see him. I didn't like that he was so close to me, but I also knew that he wouldn't hart **me**. **The** panic in my chest just wouldn't cease.

"Breathe." He whispered kindly, "It's okay. We're going to get you out of here, okay? I'm going to work on these restraints, you just breathe.*"

I tried to nod, forgetting that my head was locked firmly in place causing Leon to chuckle slightly.

He tugged at the restraints, and grunted when they didn't budge.

"I'm going to look around the room to see if there's anything to cut them with. None of **the** keys are working." He told me.

Keys... Keys. Did that mean that they were following the plan?

"The others?" I asked eagerly. Anything to stop me from thinking about what just almost happened. Anything to keep my mind from spiraling.

"They're with Caleb." Leon answered, sounding farther away. "He **was** leading them through the passage **we** talked about. At least that was the plan. I didn't wait around to find out. I came straight here to get you once **everyone** was out of their cells."

"Thank you for coming for me." I whispered. I had so badly wanted them to follow **the** plan even without me, but I was **even** more grateful that **they** did that AND still found a way to make sure I had a chance to escape too.

"You think I could go back to Rhys without you?" Leon laughed.

"Not **a** chance. **I** might be his best friend, but I would be a **dead** man. No thank you. **Plus**, without you, none of this would have been possible. There was no way in hell I was leaving you behind."

I smiled slightly at his kind words. I didn't think Rhys would kill him, but then again, the Rhys I got was **often** not the same **Rhys the rest of the world** got.

Leon's shadow fell over me again, and he carefully cut the white restraints off me, starting with my head, then my middle, then my hands **and feet**. I moved, flexing the muscles that I hadn't been able to in longer than I could remember. I might have been healing quickly, but **my wrists still hurt** where the chains had cut into them back in my cell.

"Are you okay?" Leon asked as he gripped my elbow because I wobbled when I tried to stand.

"I will be." I answered, carefully pulling the IV out of my arm. "Right now though, **I just** want to get out of here."

Leon nodded and I knew he had the same sentiment. This place was brutal. It always **had** been. I just hadn't seen it that way before. I had always thought that everyone lived like this, but the truth was, it didn't have to be like this. Rhys had created a life out there that only used violence when threatened. He didn't burn villages for fun. He didn't torture people because they shared a different opinion or had a lower status than him. No. He ran a tight ship, but it was built off respect, and that **was** the difference here.

Leon and I slowly walked toward the door **as** I tried to get my bearings. I knew that I **was** disconnected from **my** abilities this time, **the** Lycan side of me, and that

filled me with anxiety. Who knew what we **were** going to **face** when we walked out that door, so I needed to have my shit together. **Come on**, Grace.

Leon grabbed the door handle and **gave** me a look, asking if **I was** ready, **and** the truth was, **I wasn't** sure, but I nodded anyways. Leon turned the door **knob**, but the door didn't budge.

“Fuck!” He growled angrily, yanking it so hard the handle actually came off.

Anxiety flooded my system, and it took all I had not to start spiraling. **I** gripped at the wall to stay upright as the world **spun around me**. **We were stuck** here. We weren't going to **get** our chance **to** escape. We were never going to get another chance. Not when **everyone else got** out. They better **freaking get** out, or else this would all be for nothing.

“Okay, okay, think,” Leon took a step back into the center **of** the room and **began** scanning it. “The door **isn't** an **option**, but there's **got to be another option**.”

1/2

Chapter 250

Maybe the **vents... or** the... The window!” He exclaimed **in** excitement, **and** I turned to see **what** he was looking at. Yea, **there** was a window ? **open**. None of **the** windows in the packhouse did, causing it to **always** be so stuffy.

“The glass is at least **3** inches thick. They always said it was unbreakable.” I told him.

To **my** surprise, he just smirked, and grabbed the chair that was in the corner.

“What are **you** doing?” I asked, my frown deepening.

“What **does** it look like? Breaking a window.” He answered **as** though that **was** obvious.

He ripped the leg off **of the** chair and then began to feel the window.

“I just told you, it’s unbreakable.”

“And I’m telling you, it’s a **fire** hazard for **sure**, but I’ve broken windows thicker than this before. I just need to **find** the right spot.”

His fingers skimmed along the glass, tapping every **so** often before he finally found what he was looking for.

“Aha!” **He** exclaimed, tapping the same spot a few times for good measure. “Okay **Grace**, stand back.”

I took two steps back, and gestured for him to do whatever he **was** about to.

Leon marked the spot with a little smudge and then with all of his might slammed the chair leg into the window. To **my surprise**, the glass cracked a **little**.

I started to say, “What the-” But I didn’t even finish it because Leon was right back to ramming the chair leg into the window a second and **third time**. On the fourth try, the window shattered. Or at least a part of it did.

“Hey! What was that noise?!” Someone down the hall shouted.

Leon quickly swept the edges so there was a small and only slightly lethal hole for us to climb through before he jumped through it. He then **held his** hand out to me and I took it gratefully as the door handle jiggled behind me and the door **swung open**.

The second my feet hit the ground, we took off running.

“Hey! They’re escaping!” Someone shouted, but I didn’t dare look back. It was all up to fate now, and all **we** could do was **run**.

Chapter Comments

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