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### Dawn

I woke up to the sound of deep rumbling. Once again, my wrists hurt and my vision was foggy. This time the pain didn't stop after I opened my eyes.

Harsh streaks of sunlight threatened to blind me, while my wrists felt like they were being sewn in with silver.

I stifled a sob and touched the right one. A jolt of silvery pain shot through my finger as I made contact with it. There was no physical sign on my wrists but the finger I'd used to touch it was badly injured. It hurt so much that I found myself rushing back to the stream I'd used the night before to douse my burning hands in.

The pain dissipated as soon as I submerged my hands in the cool water. I threw my head back and tried to bite back my tears.

What was this? It only seemed to get worse.

My hands remained in the flowing water for a long time. I was scared to pull it out because the pain might return.

It was only after several minutes had passed that I realized how late I was. The rays of the morning sun filtered through the branches that cast shadows in scattered angles in the forest.

Slowly, I retracted my arm and inspected it. The pain was gone. I collapsed on the muddy ground feeling weak. I knew that I should be returning to the pack house, but I couldn't find the energy to move.

Tears began to pour out of my eyes. I needed answers. I needed the pain gone for good. I needed to return to my old self. I also needed answers on what was going on.

Gingerly, I got to my feet and trudged back to the pack house. I didn't bother going back to my balcony. I was too tired. Ignored the weird looks from pack members as trudged on. Luckily, they couldn't look well enough nor approach me because of Rhys' decree.

I'd just gotten to the front door of the pack house when Kaden and Lex busted out.

"Where on earth have you been?" Lex scolded.

Kaden's eyes widened and like clockwork, he wrapped me with a blanket. His eyes changed as he communicated with someone. We'd barely made it into the foyer when Princess came running.

"Answer me!" Lex growled.

"Shut up, Man." Kaden countered as he guided me to the Alpha's Lair.

The outskirts of the pack house was oddly quiet, there was not a single soul lurking around. Princess looked tense and Kaden's lips were pressed into a thin line. Both of them avoided my gaze as we processed.

"Have you called the triplets back?" Lex asked, breaking the terse silence.

Kaden grunted in affirmation.

Lex sighed. "All of this bullshit wouldn't be happening if you guys didn't coddle her as much as you did. She's an Omega for a reason. You're spoiling her."

Princess' head snapped up and she nudged Lex.

"What?" he growled, "Keep lying to yourselves. She is not a Noble or Luna."

"Why don't you say all this to Rhys?" Kaden snapped. "Stop filling our ears with your rubbish whining and take it out with Marcus and the Council which you're also part of."

I tried to catch Princess' eyes, but she successfully avoided me.

What happened? Their fear was so obvious.

"Oh please. All I'm saying is that she's going to get all of us into trouble one day if she continues pulling stunts like this. Both of you are clamping your mouth shut like Alpha Rhys wasn't threatening to rip you to shreds a few minutes ago. It's all her fault, yet no one scolds her."

We'd just arrived at the entrance to Rhys' den. The sight of the huge doors effectively shut Lex up. A wave of Rhys' anger slammed into me and I staggered back.

I suddenly wanted nothing to do with him. I stopped and looked at my companions. Weren't they feeling what I was feeling?

Lex chuckled. "It took you this long to feel how angry he is?" He mocked. "Didn't you take a hint from the oppressive silence in this place of the fact that both of them look like they're about to pass out?"

He gestured to Kaden and Princess.

"Cut her some slack." Princess sighed wearily. "She's not Pack. Right now she's a lone wolf tethered to Rhys' by force."

Lex rolled his eyes, but I could still feel the terror emanating from him.

"Come on," Kaden grunted, tugging at me. "He's waiting."

I gulped as I imagined how they felt. But it wasn't enough to convince me to enter Rhys' den. I wanted to run as far away from them and him as possible.

The doors swung open automatically revealing Rhys' sitting with clenched fists and an even tighter frown than I'd ever seen.

His eyes had me skidding to a stop. They shone bright gold and were too similar to the golden-furred wolf in my dream. His eyes locked with mine and despite the fear coursing through me, I couldn't bring myself to look away. It was like he was piercing through me. Like he was drawing me in.

"Take the fucking blanket off." His voice rumbled.

The blanket was immediately ripped off my body.

Rhys sucked in a breath and gritted his teeth.

"Where'd you find her?" He asked, his eyes still on me.

"At the entrance to the pack house." Kaden and Lex said simultaneously.

"How convenient." Rhys snorted at me, and he said, "Come here."

I didn't want to move an inch. What I wanted to do was run away. But my body had other plans. My legs began to move forward.

"You're resisting me?" Rhys growled, getting his feet.

Who wouldn't? He was scary and a big bad wolf. What was he even angry about? And why was he so invested in me?

As soon as I was close enough, his hand shot out and he grabbed me and pulled me close. My wolf purred.

"Where the hell were you?" He growled, taking a sniff of my neck.

"Nowhere important," I mumbled.

He grunted and took another sniff. This time I couldn't fight the sigh that escaped my lips. His anger seemed to have melted away and was being

replaced by something else entirely. It felt like care and even fear.

As if he could read my thoughts, he pulled away immediately.

"She was in the forest behind the pack house." He declared.

Princess gasped. "How the hell did you sneak to that place?"

I opened my mouth to speak but the glare Rhys gave me had me shutting up.

"Leave us." He said, "And get her something to eat."

"Yes, Alpha." They chorused.

"I see that I've been too lenient with you." He said icily once we were alone.

I gulped. If what he'd done so far was being lenient, then what would happen when he was strict?

"How'd you sneak out without being seen?" He asked.

"From the balcony," I mumbled.

He took in a sharp breath. "Do you know how many people have fallen to their death from that balcony?" He roared. "It wasn't enough that you threw a tantrum and wanted to die at the mention of the name of your stupid mate. You decided to take it a lot further. What exactly were you thinking?"

I opened my mouth to retort but he waved me off.

"All of this wouldn't be happening if I killed you that night." He growled.

"You're not rogue, yet it seems that you're very interested in death. This should be the last time, Dawn. One more misdeed from you and I'll personally grant the wish you requested when we first met. I'll kill you, rid the world of my uncle and the council. Do you understand?"

I nodded. My body had begun to shake. My vision swam.

Stupid, stupid, stupid. I echoed in my head. I wondered how he must have threatened Princess and Kaden. What he must have said to them. I'd unknowingly put everyone who'd cared for me in grave danger.

"Never go anywhere without me, Dawn." He declared.

I flinched, instinctively taking a step back. What? Never go anywhere without him? Was that even possible? I couldn't do that. Why was he so angry anyway?

"You don't get it, do you? Do you even have any idea what you've done?" His voice was a tightly leashed snarl. "You disobeyed me. No one disobeys me, Dawn."

"I... I just needed some air," I stammered.

"Air? You need my permission to go out for air. You need my permission for every damn thing in this pack. You're in my territory. You belong to me!" He snapped.

"I'm sorry," I choked out, feeling dizzy.

"Sorry doesn't mend a broken leg, or soothe the fear you instilled in the pack by your recklessness!" he roared, his voice echoing through the room. "What were you thinking, running off into the woods alone at night? Or jumping out of that freaking balcony!"

I couldn't answer. My gaze darted around, searching for escape, finding none.

"Look at me," he commanded, his hand reaching out to grip my chin, forcing my gaze to meet his.

They were filled with a cold anger that chilled me to the bone. "You will never," he stressed each word, his voice like ice, "go anywhere without my permission. Ever again."

The words were a declaration, an absolute law. His dominance rippled through the air as his power compelled my wolf to obey.

My heart hammered against my ribs.

"But..." I tried, the protest dying on my lips under his withering stare.

"You are not listening. Listen well, Dawn" he hissed, his voice dropping to a dangerous level of calm. "From now on, you will go nowhere without my knowledge. Nowhere."

The command sunk deep into my bones. My wolf resisted but echoed it. I was bound to him. I would not go anywhere without his permission.

"You will do nothing without my permission." He continued. "There are consequences for disobedience. For this first infraction, you will remain on bed rest for a week."

My stomach churned. A week of remaining confined to my bed was a light punishment, but the underlying message was clear: I was his property and

a possession that had disobeyed him. There was nothing more. Shame burned in my throat...

"Do you understand?"

"Yes, Alpha," I choked out, the title heavy on my tongue.

His grip on my chin tightened, his eyes burning into mine. My breath hitched and the fear suffocated me. Then, as suddenly as it started, it was over. He released my chin, his touch lingering for a chilling second and then his face became a mask of cold indifference.

"Your food is in my dining room. Tend to your wounds. Remain inside until you're completely healed." He turned his back to me, then paused. "And Dawn," he threw over his shoulder, a warning, "don't even think about disobeying me again. Don't push your boundaries again. Get out."

I hurried out, feeling powerless like a small animal trapped in the cage of his dominance. How was he different from all the masters I'd served?

Princess was waiting for me in front of my door holding a first aid kit. I couldn't bring myself to look her in the eyes.

"What'd he say to you?" She asked, gesturing for a hug.

I recoiled. "My body hurts," I mumbled.

"Oops," she mumbled and gestured for me to enter the room.

"She's supposed to be eating in his dining room?" Lex called out, stopping us.

"What is he doing here?" Princess scoffed.

Ignoring her he pointed at me, "Do you just enjoy getting into trouble or what? Can you get your ass to his dining and eat before commencing your punishment? He put me in charge of you because Kaden is being too lenient."

"Punishment? What punishment?" Princess asked wide-eyed.

Lex smirked, "She's serving a punishment just like the rest of us." He said smugly. "Now let's get going."