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Dawn

Instead of turning out to be the punishment that I thought it was, spending a week in my room became a blessing. It meant I stopped going for the Luna lessons which I'd come to despise.

It was obvious that I was never going to have or completely copy the poise and etiquette that the noble females embodied and exuded. Frankly, I was tired.

So instead of dragging myself to their daily insufferable lessons, I lay in my room and was supplied daily with books about etiquette and history to read.

Sure, I missed the lab more than anything, there were a few concoctions I was supposed to make but reading was fun.

According to Lex, who enjoyed policing me around from outside my door, Rhys was out of Golden Crest for important business. And so he was in charge. He threatened me daily and promised that he wouldn't take my nonsense.

Most of the time, I blocked him out and ignored him.

I hadn't even known that my punishment included no interactions with anyone but him. I hadn't seen either Princess or the Triplets in days. I was a bit bored. The best thing was the fact that the pain in my wrists had disappeared.

My week of confinement flew by faster than expected. And I was grateful that it wasn't as bad. Instead, tomorrow, I would be set free with an armload of knowledge bigger than what I would have learned from those snotty nobles. Their endless discussions and passive aggressiveness made me want to tear my hair out.

I didn't look forward to it. I only looked forward to seeing Princess, Kaden, and the triplets again. I had already prepped my apology to them. They didn't deserve to get into trouble for my recklessness.

I'd already promised myself that I wouldn't do anything stupid anymore. And at least not get them in trouble. They were the nicest people I'd ever encountered in life.

I went to bed wondering what the next day would be like. I wasn't sure I wanted to leave my room without Rhys explicitly telling me that I was free.

My sleep was dreamless and I preferred it that way. I didn't want dreams because I was almost certain that they would involve the Old Alpha.

I didn't get the chance to fidget about leaving the room the next morning, because Princess was already by my side when I woke up.

The triplets were also in the room. They bore passive expressions and had strategically placed themselves at different corners of my room.

Tayla was on the balcony. Kayla was at my window and Layla was at the door. Unlike Princess who bore a wary smile, they didn't bother acknowledging me.

"Hey," Princess said, handing me a printed document which I guess was the list of activities I had for the day.

I sighed. Rhys meant business. "Hey," I mumbled back and flipped the itinerary. It was basically the same thing every day. Breakfast, Etiquette lessons, Lunch, and Lab time. I breathed a sigh of relief because he hadn't maliciously barred me from visiting the lab.

"Guys. I'm very sorry for yesterday," I apologized. "I didn't know what came over. I wasn't interested in meeting or seeing anyone because I didn't want pity but I was hungry so I did something stupid without thinking of you guys. I'm sorry."

"Apology accepted," Princess replied, "We were all worried. Plus Rhys became an even bigger asshole when you left. You could have fallen to your death, you know."

"Yeah," I mumbled.

Princess laughed, but it didn't sound genuine. "Well, I'm sure you had enough time to sulk and think about what happened. Now that your punishment is over, we're free to roam about again. Go and get ready."

The triplets however were yet to acknowledge me. It made me feel awkward. I padded to my closet and grabbed my outfit for the day before heading to the bathroom.

I was packing my hair when I heard hushed arguments coming from within the room. I was certain it had something to do with me. As soon as I tried to eavesdrop they went dead silent. After a while, I gave up and went back

to my mirror.

As soon as I exited, the room was awkwardly silent. We walked together for breakfast. Even breakfast was weird. My supposed freedom felt more like a gilded cage with open doors.

Everything was different. Even Princess regarded me in a certain way. There was a curious distance in her eyes, a forced joviality in her voice. Her laughter was a bit too bright.

Worst of all, the triplets were everywhere. The triplets were glued to my side, no, but a constant lingering presence. They started following me even for etiquette classes. Their presence made everyone sit up and become a lot more respectful to me.

They were at every angle and corner. It was stifling, suffocating. They refused to talk to me, yet they were with me everywhere. On the other hand, Princess was trying to play detective or psychologist with me.

Our conversations had become a lot more clinical. Her questions were weird. Why was she asking me about my relationship with her father, a man who I'd only seen two or three times?

What did Rhys tell them that had them acting up to this extent?

The labs were the worst. They poked their head in every concoction and asked silly questions. It was getting on my nerves.

"Alright, enough!" I finally snapped.

We were in the Lab. Before now, it was one of my favorite places in the world. Now, it felt like a trap, their eyes fixed on me like hawks.

"Dawn?" Princess faltered. "Is something wrong?"

"Oh please! Everything's wrong!" I threw my hands up in exasperation. "Why are you all following me around like lost puppies? Don't I deserve some goddamn privacy?"

There was a beat of stunned silence. Then, Kayla stepped forward. "Dawn, it's just... the Alpha gave us instructions."

"Instructions?" I scoffed. "Instructions to turn my life into a constant surveillance mission?"

Layla cleared her throat and spoke for the first time. "He's just worried.

After what happened..."

"Worried? Or controlling?" I spat. "I can take care of myself. I don't need a pack of babysitters!"

They exchanged a helpless look, their eyes glinting to show that they were communicating through their bond.

Finally, Tayla sighed. "We understand how you feel. But we have to follow orders."

"I don't care about that!" I countered. "Did he also order you to never speak to me? This is the first time either of you have spoken to me. And don't even try to exonerate yourself, Princess. Our conversations have been awkward as hell. What type of questions have you been asking me?"

They winced collectively.

"Look, Dawn, we—" Princess started to say.

"Don't 'look' me," I interrupted, my anger rising. "This isn't okay. I was cooped up for a week, and now I can't even breathe without you three hovering around me? What is this, some kind of punishment extension? To make matters worse you all are treating me like I'm some sort of pet project or handicap! I get it. What I did was silly. I'm deeply sorry for hurting you and I'm also sorry for whatever Rhys must have said and done to you. My apology may not be able to undo what you experienced but I fully regret it."

"We're sorry too." The triplets chorused.

"Yeah, I'm sorry." Princess added, "Rhys can be very intense sometimes. He has a way of using your weakness against you. He did that to all of us. We'll do better."

"We promise to try and give you some space," Kayla mumbled.

The other two nodded, but their eyes held a flicker of fear. Fear of the Alpha, fear of disobeying him.

I groaned. "Fine. How do I make it up to you guys? How do I get you to trust me again?"

They exchanged looks before they collectively said, "Train with us."

I dropped the beak I was holding. "Huh?" I echoed.

"Train with us," They repeated, this time around, Princess added her voice.

My wolf yipped in excitement. It loved the idea. It loved the challenge. However, all I could think of was the immeasurable pain I was going to endure.

"Have you taken a good look at me?" I scoffed. "I'm as weak as they come. You want me to train? With you? Enforcers? Can you compare your wolves to mine? Just say that you want to use me as a punching bag."

Princess burst into genuine laughter. "Let's make a deal. You'll meet us early tomorrow, And you'll test it out. No pressure. If it's too much for you, you can quit. If not, you try and make it up to them."

I sighed and collapsed on my workbench. "Why this? Out of all the possible things you can have me do."

Tayla shrugged, "Because, we need to be sure that you're strong enough to protect yourself. It's part of our duty to you."

I groaned and tugged the ends of my hair. "Deal," I muttered. Besides, I truly needed to be able to defend myself in worse-case scenarios. I was going to become a lone wolf soon.

Princess squealed then squeezed my shoulders affectionately. "You'll love it I promise."

I woke up the next morning to a knock at my door. At first, I thought it was Rhys but I remembered that he would rather rip off my door than knock. It was still too early.

Groggily, I found my way to the door and propped it open.

Kaden stood at the other end with a stoic expression.

"The Alpha commanded that every single being residing within the pack must train every morning and evening." He announced in a robotic voice. "You have an hour to join the others."

With that, he spun around and left. I watched him go with a sad feeling in my chest. I was to blame for everything. Now even Kaden, who was the nicest male I'd ever met, was stiff with me.

If I had my way, I would have confronted Rhys about it. Because he was an asshole to me, didn't mean that others should become assholes too.

I stumbled to the bathroom, washed my face then put on the training gear provided. By the time I was done, the triplets were outside waiting.

Princess met us halfway to the large training ground looking like she wanted to be anywhere but there.

"It's too early." She yawned. I giggled while the triplets snickered.

"Princess might be worse than Dawn," Tayla joked, "The only advantage she'll have is her dominant wolf."

Princess sighed, "If I win, does that mean I get to go back to bed?"

We all laughed. We'd arrived at the training arena. Most of the pack members were already gathered.

It was easy to see the different expressions of the different social strata in Golden Crest. I found it oddly amusing. The Nobles were pissed, their expressions were worse than Princesses. While the Commons and Omegas seemed to accept their fate.

Kaden cleared his throat and the morning chatter was immediately silenced.

"War is coming!" He declared, "And so it has become imperative that we all prepare for it. Each morning and evening we'll train. Everyone must reschedule daily activities around this. The training will take place in two parts. The first one is the general training that we'll have here. And the second will happen in groups. Take this seriously. Your life will depend on it."

I exchanged a look with Princess.

"War?" I mouthed. The concept amazed me. Who would be crazy enough to want to go to war with Golden Crest? The mountains alone were impossible to gain access to.

"Have you heard about the Crest Mantle of the Alpha Prime?" She whispered.

My eyes widened. My heart skipped several beats. I knew of the Crest. Was Alex now Alpha Prime?

"It's missing and all the Alpha's are racing to find it. Somehow, my dad has convinced most of them that we are hiding it." Princess added with a frown.

I breathed relievedly. But somehow, her words remind me of the Old Alpha and my dreams.