

Training

Getting off the couch, I unlocked the door and opened it. My brother was on the other side looking like he was about to knock. I gured he might show up.

“Richard.”

“Claude. Can I help you?” I asked.

“You want to tell me why I helped you lie?”

“I needed some time alone and I didn’t want Gwyn to think she was a burden. Thanks for helping out.” I said.

This was one of the things we would do for each other. We didn’t tell anyone. It was always our secret.

“Were you getting overwhelmed?” Jean-Claude asked.

“No. I needed space to think. Being alone for so long gave me some habits. Don’t worry. I’ll let you know if I need help.”

“Fine, but remember to talk to me. I’ll walk you back to your place.” He replied.

I nodded and we headed down the hall toward the stairs. On some level, I felt bad for not talking to my brother. He would want to help, but I also knew he’d tell his husband. Dillon couldn’t keep a secret from Bellamy and Cara. If I told Jean-Claude, everyone else would know inside of a day.

“Did you and Gwyn want to come watch the recording we made of the kids’ play tomorrow? We can have dinner after. Dillon likes her and it might help for her to bond with more people in the pack.” Claude suggested.

“Yeah. I think she would like that. Bellamy was saying that Gwyn’s good with kids. It would be a good idea. Better than vegging out in front of the television again.” I chuckled.

“You didn’t make her watch a ton of movies, did you? She’s a wolf, Rich. You can’t do that. You need to go for runs and play.”

“She likes movies. We’ll play more tomorrow. Sometimes, Gwyn just needs to relax. She’s not a ranked wolf who needs to have a lot of stuff to keep her busy.” I replied.

He huffed at me. Everyone was always surprised at how much Jean-Claude talked when we were together. The only other people he talked to as much as he talked to me were Dillon and their kids.

For his part, he was a really good brother and a strong warrior. Claude was a good man, even if he made mistakes from time to time. I was really lucky he was my brother.

“Ryan and Nolan are doing ne, by the way. Probably won’t be healed until tomorrow afternoon. You want to tell me what happened there?” He asked.

“Not particularly. I got mad. I beat them up. That’s it.” I answered, nonchalantly.

“That’s not like you, Rich. Ever since you took over, you’ve been calm and collected when dealing with even the most irritating and aggressive people. Everyone’s a little worried.”

Jean-Claude told me.

“Tell them not to worry. I’m ne. Everything is ne.” I grumbled.

Jean-Claude sighed but didn’t say anything else. Not telling him Gwyn was my mate was a struggle. It always seemed to be on the tip of my tongue. For our entire lives, Jean-Claude has been my condant. He was my other half. This felt like a betrayal.

We got to my door and he pulled me into a hug. That made the feeling even worse. I was doing this for my mate, though. If they pressured her too much, it would be harder on her.

Mating into the ranks of a pack could be intense. It was a lot of responsibility and pressure for someone who didn’t grow up in it. Gwyn might be as big as an Alpha, but I didn’t sense ranked blood in her.

Jean-Claude let me go and patted my shoulder. “I’m heading home. Get some rest. I’ll see you at training. Are you bringing Gwyn?”

She would need to get used to it if she accepted me. Bellamy expected all ranked members to be able to protect the pack. We were supposed to be the best ghters and she held all of us up to her standards with only a few concessions.

“I offered and she seemed interested. We just need to keep an eye on her during the run. I think that may make her wolf side come out more. Today she ended up running almost to the furthest west border. She didn’t mean to and she was embarrassed when she realized what was going on, but I don’t want to risk losing her. If it looks like she’s going to take off, I’m going to shift and follow her.” I told him.

“You should have told us. What’s going on with you today? You’re not acting like yourself.” He replied.

“Claude, don’t worry about it. I’ve got it. I’ll tell Lucien and Bellamy tomorrow. I’m watching Gwyn. This is my job. I can’t run to them with every little thing. I’m the Gamma and I don’t need to tell the Alpha everything.” I reminded him.

“What if she attacks you?”

“She won’t. If she does, then I’ve done something to deserve it. Go home.” I said and went into my quarters.

I locked the door behind me and felt a sad pressure push against me. Jean-Claude didn’t mean to piss me off. I shouldn’t have locked the door until I knew he was gone. The sadness was his.

Twins had a special connection and we could feel a lighter version of what the other was feeling if we were close to each other. When I started having trouble, I gured out how to block it. I didn’t want Claude to feel the loneliness and emptiness I was feeling.

He had a mate and a family to think of. There weren’t a lot of chances for me to protect my little brother, but I always took the ones I found. Now, it was like second nature to me. He could only feel that I wasn’t unhappy. It was like a disguise I used for my real feelings.

His sadness made me sigh and lean against the door. I’m sorry, Claude. It’s for my mate. I know you’ll understand.

I headed up to my room. Gwyn was curled up with her head on my pillow and the rest of her body on the other side of the bed. I smiled. It was cute.

After taking off my clothes and putting them in the hamper, I shifted into Niall. He was eager to get on the bed with Gwyn but managed to climb up carefully.

Alphas had the largest wolves. Usually, the next largest were Alpha blood wolves, who were slightly smaller. Betas and Gammas were the same size as an Alpha blood wolf. Beta and Gamma blood wolves were slightly smaller again, but still larger than a standard werewolf in wolf form. Omegas were the closest to the size of a natural wolf. It was why they needed us to take care of them.

Rogues either had Alphas or not Alphas. The size of an Alpha depended on their power. Bellamy’s wolf was about the same size as Lucien’s, but there were some rogue Alphas we’d seen who had wolves the size of mine.

Niall carefully curled up in the curve of Gwyn’s body. She moved one of her forepaws to drape over our body, but she was still pretty deeply asleep. This was the most comfortable my bed had ever been.

‘Our mate is with us. She’s nally here.’ Niall sighed.

‘Get some sleep. If things work out tomorrow, we could talk to her soon and really hear her.’ I told him.

He had never been so eager to go to sleep. Neither had I. Having Gwyn with us was great, but I wanted to have her awake. I wanted to start getting to know her and showing her that I would keep her no matter what.

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My alarm went off half an hour before training was set to start. Niall grumbled. He didn’t want to wake up.

Gwyn started licking our ears and nibbling them. Niall suddenly had ideas that didn’t include training. I pushed forward, trying to force a shift before he destroyed what trust Gwyn had in us.

‘I’m not going to mess this up. I’m allowed to dream about it, though. For a lot of werewolves, our rst time in wolf form with our mate is the rst time we’re intimate with them in this form. I don’t have the chance to indulge myself, I deserve ve minutes to think about it.’ He told me angrily.

‘We need to shift and get ready. Bellamy can’t know anything is different. That means we have to be on time.’ I replied.

He got up and shifted back into me. I turned off the alarm and went to change into my clothes and use the bathroom. It was best not to try talking to Gwyn while I was naked.

Niall was attracted to her and that could sometimes translate into a physical reaction in me.

When I came out, I led Gwyn down to take care of her needs and we went out to the south eld for training. She was excited. I could see her trying to take in everything.

We reached the eld early, as usual. Jean-Claude and Dillon were there and a few elite warriors were milling around the eld. The warriors nodded as we made our way toward my brother.

“Didn’t know if you two would show up. Hey, cupcake.” Dillon said.

I managed to hold back a growl. He wasn’t interested in her and he was mated to my brother. Niall and I didn’t like it, though. He was too friendly with our mate. I glanced at my brother.

Jean-Claude was just as possessive of his mate. My reaction wasn’t surprising, considering Jean-Claude marked Dillon without his permission a couple of days after they rst met. At least I knew I wouldn’t do that, even if I could.

“Of course, we came for training. Gwyn needs exercise. It’s hard to live as a house pet when you’ve been wild for years.” I replied.

“Everyone ready?” Bellamy called out.

She and Lucien usually got there a minute or two before training started. Bellamy could be impatient and we usually started exactly on time.

“We have a wolf with us. I want everyone to give her space on the run. Gwyn, stay near Richard, please. I’ll have you sit out most of the training, but we’ll include you in the game. Come on. Heavy day. I expect to see you all sweating!” Bellamy shouted and started running.

We all followed. I normally tried to keep pace with my brother, but, this time, I kept pace with Gwyn and we ended up running beside Lucien and Bellamy.

My brother hadn’t accepted the Lycan gene when it was offered. All of the ranked members did, though. It was decided that the pups born before it was given would be given the gene when they turned eighteen.

The goddess’ rule was that whoever got the gene would have to create a child within the next ten years. I’d talk to Heather about getting it when she woke up. I decided back then that the goddess would bring my mate to me before my time was up, or I wasn’t meant to have the gene.

That meant I was faster and had more endurance than most other werewolves. Not everyone elected to have it. The information was given to the pack and they decided what they wanted to do. It was entirely up to them, we did ensure that gay couples could keep the gene by helping them match with female couples and inseminating them medically.

Once the gene was established, it would be something people were just born with. It gave us more resistance to silver. We could touch it without burning, but we could still be killed with enough damage and silver could slow our healing.

Bellamy grinned as we reached her and Lucien. Suddenly, they burst into their wolf forms. I knew how much they hated ruining clothes, but they were excited about running with Gwyn.

‘I want to run with our mate! Let me out!’ Niall demanded.

I rolled my eyes and shifted, too. I also hated ruining clothes. A few others decided to shift behind us. Not everyone did. It was always exciting when the Alpha and Luna decided to shift. Remus and Aurora were very different from Lucien and Bellamy.

They moved, so Aurora was running right next to me. She yipped at me. I knew she wanted me to let her get closer to Gwyn. Niall didn’t want to, but she was our Luna.

He moved back and to the other side of Gwyn and Aurora moved in closer. She bumped Gwyn a little as they ran. I wondered if she was trying to knock her away from Remus.

Gwyn bumped her back, then they took off in an even faster run. Niall tried to keep up, but couldn’t and ended up falling back to run next to Remus. I didn’t like them getting so far ahead.

‘Don’t worry, Richard. Aurora isn’t threatened. They’re bonding. She’ll be able to keep up with Gwyn if she runs off and I’m here as a backup if she needs help getting you there. We’re ready to give you a ride to wherever Gwyn ends up.’ Alpha Lucien linked me.

‘Thank you, Alpha.’

‘You’re doing a great job with her. Jean-Claude told me about the running incident. You were right. That wasn’t something you needed to run past us until it was necessary. I trust your judgment, but Bellamy would like things like that reported immediately. She doesn’t want to lose Gwyn.’

I didn’t either.

We nished our run and found Aurora and Gwyn rolling around on the grass next to each other like they were trying to scratch their backs. They were bonding in the way of wolves. Running, playing, and hunting. That was what I needed to do with her.

I’d make sure we had time over the next few days to do all of those things. Once I could talk to her, I’d make sure she knew how much we all wanted her to stay at Lune Rouge.

Gwyn needed to realize she was one of our people before Heather woke up. This was their home. I’d protect them.