

Grace of a Wolf - Chapter 263: Grace: Nothing Happened[1,153 words]

My whole world implodes.

Not literally—I mean, after today’s adventure, I wouldn’t be surprised. But, no, there’s no raining hellfire or mile-long sinkholes to mark this absolutely seismic moment.

It’s just my brain trying to process the casual way Caine announced he’s going to *mark* me. Tonight. No big deal, just penciled into our calendar like it isn’t something we should probably have an entire discussion over.

My mouth hangs open for a while, but no matter how much my throat works, I fail at bringing up a single sound to start the discussion in question, my brain no longer in processing mode and happily gallivanting in the gutter with the spicy memories we’ve already accrued in recent days.

Hmm. Yes. Suddenly, my lower body insists Caine’s idea is amazing. After all, if not mate, why mate-shaped?

I find myself nodding along to this entire thing without a single discussion actually had.

Caine’s fingers give my neck one more gentle stroke, the touch so light it might be imaginary. Then he reaches across me, pulls the seatbelt over my chest, and clicks it into place with practiced efficiency.

The truck door slams as he hops down, but I’m still busy thinking about how good things felt before... well, pain.

I watch him walk around the front of the vehicle, his long legs eating up distance like he owns the ground beneath his feet. Which, technically, he probably does. Lycan King and all that.

I blow out a shuddering breath, hoping my eyes aren’t as glazed over as they feel. My brain still hasn’t recovered, practically salivating in my head.

Marking.

Such a permanent thing, but instead of worrying about the future and what happens when Caine brings me home, I'm still stuck on how his firm his thighs are and how his chest would be nicer without a shirt on it.

Ah, shit. No. That is *not* what's important. What's important is that the man wants to bite me.

Which... hmm, yes, I'm not opposed, but I'm pretty sure I shouldn't be letting my *you-know-what* make such big decisions. It's in Girlfriending 101 somewhere, I'm sure.

The driver's door opens. Caine slides behind the wheel with fluid grace, keys already in hand, and the engine rumbles to life.

That's what finally snaps me out of my drooling.

"Wait!"

My hands fumble with the seatbelt buckle, fingers suddenly clumsy. "Wait, I need—"

His hand covers mine instantly. Large, warm, steady.

"What's wrong?"

My hands lock onto his fingers immediately, certain memories immediately crowding into my brain with seductive temptation. But I manage to shake it off, urgency giving me some small measure of clarity. "Uh—the cat. I need to bring the cat."

Wait, where *is* the cat?

I was overwhelmed with relief, snuggling into his arms... then he princess-carried me to the truck and I ogled his butt. The cat existed somewhere between those moments, but a frantic glance outside gives me absolutely nothing. Nope. No idea where the cat is.

There's a large number of semi-conscious wolf shifters, though.

His fingers tighten around mine, and I jerk my head back around, my eyes falling back to his hand.

Such talented, talented fingers.

Ah, no. No. Think about Chaos, not sex.

"The cat isn't what's important right now," he says, not understanding how absolutely detrimental to my brain cells those words are right now.

Heat spreads from where our skin touches. It races up my arm, pools in my chest, makes my thoughts go sideways again, and...

And...

Wait.

This time I notice what's *not* happening.

I stare at our joined hands again, finally truly diverted from my debauched thoughts.

The heat is just heat. Warmth from skin-to-skin contact. Nothing more.

No pull. No drain. No desperate scramble to control the flow of energy between us.

My eyes go wide.

I yank my hand away. Grab his again. Let go. Grab it one more time, this time with both hands, turning his palm over like I'm reading his fortune—which, for the record, I can't do.

But the point is, there's still *nothing*.

"Grace? Is something wrong?"

I look up, a manic smile curving my lips. "Nothing's happening."

His brows pull together. Then he looks down and suddenly yanks his hand from mine. "Shit. Are you okay?"

But I'm already moving, excitement taking over. The blasted seatbelt catches me halfway across the console, and I make a frustrated noise as I fight with it again. This time it releases, and I half-crawl over the center console.

My hands find his face, both palms pressing hard against his stubbled cheeks, fingers splayed wide to maximize skin surface contact. My eyes are probably glittering like I'm deranged, but who cares?

Nothing.

Is.

Happening!

If I was alone, I'd squeal. But I'm not, so I don't. I have *some* self-respect... somewhere.

The grin pulling at my lips is a little too wide, impossible to control. There's no overwhelming transfer of energy, no surge with a mere brush of skin against skin. Just the heat of him, warming my chilly fingers, and the way his pupils dilate when I lean even closer.

"This is..." I breathe the words against his mouth, barely a whisper. "This is *amazing*."

His hands come up to circle my wrists, but he doesn't pull me away.

"Grace." My name sounds oddly strangled in his throat. "What are you—"

I brush my lips against his. Barely a touch. A butterfly landing and taking off again.

Nothing happens, and I wiggle a little with glee, fighting the urge to do an awkward, cramped-space dance right there on the bench seat.

Okay, well, if you want to get technical, it isn't quite true. *Something* happens. Heat coils low in my belly, and my heart does this stupid flutter thing, and I can smell the dark, warm, I'm-a-walking-temptation scent uniquely Caine.

But no magic.

I squeal after all, unable to hold it back. It's high-pitched and giddy and probably ridiculous, but I don't care.

"It's still not happening!" I pull back just enough to see his face, hoping I don't look as dopey as I feel, unable to stop a cackle of triumph. "Do you know what this means? We can—"

My words falter as I see it happen. There's an exact moment his gray eyes go dark, the precise second his hands shift from my wrists to the back of my neck.

Then his mouth crashes into mine, and thought becomes impossible.

This kiss is nothing like my butterfly touch from seconds ago. This is possession. Claim. A devastating assault on every nerve ending I possess.

His tongue sweeps past my lips, and I make a sound that might be surprise or might be surrender. Hard to tell when my bones are melting again, when his hands are tangling in my hair, when the only solid thing in the universe is the press of his mouth against mine.