

Chapter 3 – Healing the Broken Alpha

The touch of her fingers on my hand was feather light, but I felt it like a lightning bolt up my arm. I turned my head on the pillow to glare at her. She had matured since I last saw her, if possible she was even more beautiful. Her glossy black was pulled around to one side and braided, and bits and strands of the silky hair had worked loose to frame her face. She was small for a werewolf, but her curves were voluptuous. Her wide, brown eyes blinked at me in confusion.

She looked so sweet and innocent, which only made me feel like more of a monster. “Seen enough of what?” Her eyes raked up and down my body on the bed, as though she were looking for something special. Her eyes settled back on my face, and I could see the fear and uncertainty there.

I looked away from her lovely face and forced my hands to relax. I looked back up at the ceiling and waited for the woman to leave my room. However I was alerted to her movements by the scraping of a chair, and found that she had dragged one of the wingback chairs closer to my bedside. “What are you doing?”

She perched in the chair, resting her hands lightly on her lap. She stared at me wide-eyed, her face serious. “I have no idea.”

“What?”

She shook her head, “I have no idea what I’m doing here, or what you expect of me, Alpha Blackstone.”

I blinked in surprise at her directness. I might have laughed, under different circumstances. A small smile played around my lips. “I expect you to act as my mate, Miss Moore, in every sense of the word.” I thought it would shock her, or at least make her blush.

“Maybe you better start by calling me by my first name, then.” She narrowed her eyes at me. “You do know my name, right?”

“Yes,” I gritted my teeth, “I know your name, Lenora.”

She nodded, apparently satisfied. Our stilted conversation was interrupted by another knock on the door. The butler poked his head in. “Apologies, Alpha. But where shall I take the Luna’s bags?”

“Put them in here,” I instructed. “We will be sharing my room, naturally.”

Originally I had planned to put the woman in the guest room across the hall, but now that I had her sitting next to me, I felt compelled to keep her close. I watched her face grow

pale as she surveyed the room, and realized there was only the one hospital bed. I waited for her to complain or question, but she did neither.

I would have a regular bed moved in to accommodate her, but I took a little bit of pleasure in her present discomfort.

The butler left two suitcases and a backpack near the door, and quietly excused himself again. I surveyed the battered luggage. "Where are the rest of your things?"

Lenora turned her head to look at the modest suitcases. "That's all I have," she said simply, and offered no further explanation.

I used the controls on my bed to adjust myself into more of a sitting position. "Fine. Now, my wife, I would like you to bathe me."

"What?"

"Yes, you heard me correctly. You see that package of wipes on the table?" I nodded toward the purple package.

She stood and took halting steps to retrieve the disposable cloths. She read the label and then looked back at me. "You don't have a nurse to take care of your personal needs?"

Clearly, the woman didn't want to touch my body. Her reluctance stung more than it should have, aggravating my temper. When I spoke, I was deliberately harsh. "Why should I employ a nurse, when I have already paid for your services?"

A little frown wrinkled her forehead, but she didn't get angry. She opened the package and pulled out a cloth. "I've never done this before. You will have to instruct me."

"Unbutton my shirt, and start with my upper body," I said, watching her through hooded eyes. I thought she would refuse, but after only a moment's hesitation, she reached for the buttons on my pajamas, and her small fingers worked deftly down the line, until she pushed the shirt apart and exposed my chest and abdomen. I saw confusion flicker over her face again as she observed my body.

Perhaps she had been expecting to see a body shriveled up and withered from months of being paralyzed. But whatever she thought, she didn't speak the words out loud. It irritated me that I could not tell what she was thinking.

Lenora spread the cloth over her fingers and began slowly and methodically wiping it over my skin, beginning at my neck, and working her way down my arm. Her face was screwed up in concentration, and when she reached my fingers, she meticulously cleaned each digit and the skin in between. When my hand was cleaned to her satisfaction, she moved back up to my chest.

I closed my eyes and allowed her to continue, wondering if she was aware that she was using the cloth to discreetly explore the lines and hollows of my musculature. She even dipped into my navel with her index finger. When she reached the elastic waistband of my pajamas, she stopped, and moved around the bed to work on my other side.

I had given her the task on purpose to make her uncomfortable. I wanted to see the pity and revulsion on her face. It would make it easier to hate her and push her away. But as her fingers glided over my stomach and then lower, I was the one feeling acute discomfort.

She hesitated at my pants, and then started to hook her fingers under the elastic. I caught her delicate wrist and pulled hard. She was already off balance, so it didn't take much force to bring her crashing across my body. When she turned her face, her nose was only inches from my own, and her lips were puckered into a small o of surprise. "Do you always do what you are told, Lenora?"

She braced her hands against my chest and tried to push away from me, but I wasn't ready to let her go. "No," she said breathlessly, "Not always."