

Letters Sent To Eternity

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Chapter 231

It's one of the main reasons I stayed in this area for so long. Amy kept us here for her own agenda, but no one could miss the way the Luna interacted with her pack and the response she got, every single time. My wolf and I wanted that for this found family we created.

It took almost an hour to get to our destination. We meandered like time didn't matter at all. The large wall in front of me has huge lights pointing into it. I assume this is the arena. I've never spent any real time in a pack. Being a rogue doesn't offer a lot of chances to sight see. Some places are more accepting, but most, well, others let you know in very colorful ways what they think of your non pack status.

I am ushered through a set of doors and up four flights of stairs. Everything is industrial, practical but maintained well. We make it down another hallway until my speaking companion stops us.

"You're in here." The warrior next to me grumbles wearily as he opens the door. I see a basic finished room. But I

am confused.

"I don't understand." I croak out. It's been a while since I tried to speak.

"What's not to understand? This is your room, by order of the Luna."

"This isn't a cell. Why would she put me here?"

"Do you want to be in a cell?"

"Well, no, but..."

"Then stop b*tching. We are all tired. There are clean clothes over there. Towels and soap in the bathroom." He points to a chair next to an open door. "Be ready the Alpha and Luna can call you to trial at any time."

"Just one question." I raise my hands, as best as I can with the manacles on, in a sign of surrender. "I am a prisoner, why are you giving me a room and clothes? I'm really just curious, not complaining." I say moving into the room so he can't slam the door in my face.

He grabs my wrists and begins unlocking the cuffs. "Because, according to the Luna, you did nothing wrong and deserve to be treated the way you treated her. Our alpha is not going to deny her request as long as you are compliant. He is trusting her judgment, none of the

rest of us trust you, including the Alpha. There are guards at your door, you will never be fully alone. Don't mistake this for stupidity, you will only get this one chance.

"Understood." I step back and he closes the door.

I look around the sparsely decorated room. It is small but comfortable and furnished with a bed, dresser and side table. I wonder what they use it for. Surely all of their warriors have homes here in the pack. I grab the clothes left for me and head to the bathroom. The warrior said to be ready. Ready for what? I have no idea, but I haven't had a real shower in...well, I don't actually remember. I hope the rest of the pack is getting this basic luxury, we have all been roughing it for too long.

I turn the water on as hot as it will go, who knows when I'll get this again. The bathroom is fully stocked with men's and women's products. Interesting. There is a small stack of bright white, fluffy towels in a nook next to the shower stall. I step in and it is heaven. I think about all the things we, as a pack, have had to endure under Amy and her dad. We are essentially prisoners here at Dark Moon, but they are getting everyone fed and cared for. I

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+25 Bonus

don't know how I could have been so blind to Amy's endless lies. I know the mate bond has its effect, **but still**, there has to be some blame on me. She never went a day without luxuries like showering and a hot meal. She lived in Dark Moon as a pack member and who knows where Claude went. He only came around when he needed us to fight. And I never thought anything of it because they both promised us that all of this work would be worth it in the end.

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I spend extra time washing off all the grime from the forest multiple times. **It** almost feels strange **to** not have a layer of dirt coating my skin. Just as I move to turn the, now cooling, water **off**, a surge **of** pain rips through me and I just barely stop myself from hitting the floor. I can feel my chest constrict as my lungs try to take in air. Her pack is literally being held captive. Who could she possibly be f*cking right now? I rest my head on **the cool** tile as wave after wave **of** nausea runs over me. I don't know what she is doing, but it has never hurt this bad before. **I can't** take it, my whole body convulses.

I step out of the walk in shower on shaky legs, just barely making it to the toilet and emptying what's left of my dinner. I hope these walls are sound resistant at least, because **I can't** stop the cry of pain that bursts from me.

I curl up on the bath mat. I know this isn't over, it's punishment for letting the pack get taken. She has never once been with me. She said she wanted to wait to mate until we were able to mark each other at the same time. I didn't know what the pain was at first, not until I caught her with one of the guys from camp. She said she couldn't help herself. That the drive for s*x was too strong, but her father told her we can't, so she found an alternative. When I explained what the pain felt like, she just told me that I was strong enough to handle it and it would make us closer in the end. I have been with exactly one person since then. I didn't enjoy it, but I was angry and jealous and I wanted her to feel the same pain I did. She came flying into my room and literally tore the girl to shreds before walking out without a word. I couldn't do that to anyone else ever again. Amy has never cared about me, just about getting a Luna title she doesn't deserve. Another wave hits me, this time my body seizes. I am locked in this fetal position and can't break free, I can't even breathe. I don't know how long I stay like this, but I start to see spots when I finally fall limp to the ground, panting against the floor.

As soon as I regain some use of my muscles I stand and stumble back into the water to rinse off the sweat and vomit. The water is freezing, but this is what I am used to, bathing in whatever lake or stream is closest. It clears my head too which I am going to need.

I dry off and dress. When I head back out into the room I notice a tray of food on the dresser. Someone was here, just great, someone had to hear what was happening to me. At least whoever it was let me be. I sit on the bed and eat the sandwich, chips and apple. My room doesn't have a window so I can't see what's going on outside.

I set the tray back on the dresser and lay on the bed, deciding to rest. Maybe I'll get some rest while I just sit here and wait. I'm dozing in and out of sleep when there was a bang at my door. I sit up as the door opens. Calvin stands there with the hot warrior.

"You are needed, Sir. The Alpha and Luna want to talk to you."

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Chapter 233

Why is it that the hot ones or the nice ones are always taken? Seriously. Calvin here is ready to tear arms off for his mate. Now he seems to be Kennedy's b*tch now that he knows she is being cared for. The healer even said we can stop by as soon as the Alpha lifts the watch protocol, so now he's on a mission.

The problem is the mission we are on has me face to face with a panty dropping enemy. I mean, come on. This dude is a poster child for wet dreams, with his too **big** stature and boy-next-door looks. He's the kind of guy it would be fun to throw around for a night and teach a few things about women. His dark blue eyes are guarded, but still innocent. He can't be more than nineteen or twenty, but he has seen the worst of the world.

And I am a sucker for long hair. I don't know why something like that is a weakness, but... No! What the hell am I thinking? This douchebag had Kennedy kidnapped.

I shake my head of the thought of man— handling this guy and squeeze my thighs to get rid of the pressure building there. “Let's get t his over with.” I hold out the silver manacles with a gloved hand and he doesn't even balk at them, just holds his hands out.

It's not a far walk back to the arena, but more people are paying attention now that we have their leader in cuffs. I can't wait to see what Ryker does to him. Kennedy was hurt badly. I'm surprised she was even conscious with all the hits she took to her face.

As we get closer Ryker calls, “Gather round!”

I notice he places Kennedy between him and the rogues. Either he's lost his mind or he thinks this will gain their trust. They all seem to have taken to her quickly, like Calvin. I notice the tension in his forearm though. Ryker's ready for a fight and even his mate won't stop him if someone even looks at her the wrong way. His patience is wearing thin. I'm surprised it's lasted this long, but that is probably because of her too.

“Finn, you have been brought forward to give testimony on the attacks of Dark Moon pack and the abduction of our Luna. Who was involved in the planning of the attack on the Luna and her five warriors back in the Fall?”

“The Commander gave us our final plan, Amy gave us our insight to the patrol schedule, and the warriors who attacked Alpha.” Finn is looking Ryker in the eye, not ashamed of what he is saying, just giving facts.

“And the attack on the little girl this spring?”

“Also the Commander and Amy. They know of the Luna's attachment to the girl.”

“How was that accomplished?”

“The opportunity was found while the girl was separated from her friends. Three of our warriors, one being Dirk,” He looks from Kennedy to Ryker and back again. “Corralled her into running towards the wolfsbane grove. The goal was to capture her, but she attempted to get away by climbing the tree at the edge of the ravine. The branch broke and she fell. I watched from the other side of the gorge. We thought there was no way she would survive that fall.” Finn takes a shaky breath. “I would have looked for her if I thought she had any chance of survival.” Copyright © 2024 Miss L Writes and Ember Mantel Productions

“Why doesn't she remember being chased?” Kennedy asks. “She said nothing of being chased when we asked.”

“We have learned over the last year how to be stealthy, Luna. Sometimes, the things you can’t see are more scary

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than the ones you can.” His posture feels uncomfortably rigid next to me. He feels bad for disappointing

Kennedy. That’s a stupid feeling towards someone who isn’t your commanding Luna.

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“And the attack yesterday?” Ryker asks. He’s getting impatient.

“It was a three–fold attack. The two groups of warriors were to divide you and the fire was to pull everyone else including the Luna closer to our current camp. This also left your packhouse vulnerable, or so we thought.”

“What do you mean ‘or so you thought?’” Kennedy asks again.

“The former Alpha and Luna and your young warriors are not as helpless as we thought.” Finn smiles and if I didn’t know better, the look on his face says that’s what he wanted his warriors to think. To underestimate the people Amy and her dad thought would be easy to pick off.

“You paid attention to the work Kennedy was doing with the pups.” It’s a statement, not a question from Ryker. He caught it too.

“Yes, Alpha. I have suspected not everything is as it was presented for a while now. When you spend as much time watching and analyzing from a distance, you tend to pick up a few things.”

“I take it you did not share all of your findings.”

“No, I did not Alpha.”

“You set up your warriors to fail?” A murmur of grumbling ripples through the mostly still crowd.

“I have watched how you operate for far longer than I care to admit. Warrior to warrior, I can respect the choices you have made from the time I started watching your pack up until now. I knew that you and your fighters would not kill blindly. As long as they went peacefully, they would not be harmed. That is what I instructed all of our fighters to do. If surrounded, or at the mercy of your warriors, surrender and go peacefully so this can end.”

“YOU SABBOTAGGING SON OF A B*TCH!” Amy flies out of the crowd, hair cut short, grub by clothes camouflaging her. The stench wafting off of her has played a part in her concealment. I wouldn’t want to go near her scent if given a choice.

Kennedy moves to get in between Finn and Amy, but Ryker holds her back and lets Bennet block her path with a solid right hook to Amy’s face. Josh joins him and then restrains her while Danny locks her in cuffs. She is thrashing and spitting every combination of profanities she can. Finn tenses but makes no other outward sign that he notices his mate being captured.

“ENOUGH!” Ryker shouts and every one of the rogues bows their head in submission, even Amy.

“Amy, I will give you one chance to explain yourself. You came into my pack three years ago looking for refuge. You were given a place to stay, food to eat, and a job within my pack. Was any of your story true?” Ryker lets his aura out and even I bow this time. He is making sure she can’t fight him and will give an honest answer. I don’t know how long it’s been, but I don’t remember the last time he’s had to use it like this.

Amy winces and all her muscles tense at trying to fight it. “Mmm...urgh...” She pants in pain.

Finn tenses next to me. He’s fighting the same pain as Amy. I have only heard about what matebonds can do, but this doesn’t seem right. Why would he feel her pain in fighting Ryker’s aura? She doesn’t want to answer truthfully, that has nothing to do with Finn. But his breathing is heavy and shallow. Like a true warrior, he’s

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taking what is given to him and Amy is barely breaking a sweat. This b*tch is using him somehow. I move to stand between them, but before I get a whole step in, Ryker shouts.

“Finn. FINN! Your mate is accused of crimes against my pack and yours. She will be brought to trial and found guilty from my pack, can yours say the same?”

Finn is in too much pain to answer. Ryker looks around for one of the rogues to come to his aide.

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“Yes! Yes, she is guilty!” A woman at the edge of the crowd shouts. “She promised to help us after our pack was destroyed. After we pledged loyalty, we were left to starve if we did not help her gain access to your pack. We have helped attack innocent people. Do what you want with her.” The woman spits. “But leave Finn be. He has always taken care of us, gone without food so we can have enough. Gone against her wishes when she wanted us punished.”

“Finn, you have the right to reject your mate. She will die, and we can save you the pain of feeling her death.” Ryker says solemnly.

“..I can....I can't...she's my mate, I can't” He cries, dropping to his knees next to me. My heart breaks for him.

He knows she has to die, but he doesn't want to lose his bond either.

“Finn...” Kennedy whispers, waking up next to us. “Please, Finn. Please let her go. Let us help you, help your pack.” She is shaking, and then I smell the salt from her tears.

“I can't Luna. She's my mate, my only mate...”

“I don't believe that.” It's like a switch flipped. Kennedy is mad. Mad at him, for him, with him. I hear the intake of breath of the crowd around us. Her aura is out to play, soft but demanding. “Finn, the only reason you are mated to her now is so you could be here to counter everything she has tried to do. You stopped her from hurting Emily and the pups at the packhouse, you stopped her from harming me, and you stopped her from abusing the people who have trusted you as a leader. It was your job to bring them here, now let us help you. Let her go, now!”

It's not a question, but a command from a Luna. This girl is going to try to save everyone.

Ryker looks from Amy to Kennedy deciding who to choose. The fact that he has a choice should tell him everything. He isn't as loyal to Amy as he thinks. He knows she's trash. I can see the minute she realizes he won't pick her.

“AAAGHH! NO!” Amy screams. “You are mine, she can't have you too.” She looks at Finn. “This little unwanted human b*tch can't have both of you. NOOOooooooo!!!” Her blood curdling scream pierces the air. She snaps her focus back to Kennedy. “I f*cking hate you, you s!t! Ryker do you know she has slept with all of your warriors? Did you know that? Huh?! While you were busy working for your pack and taking care of her she was taking each of them to bed. Kill them all, Ryker, and take me as your Luna like we planned. We could be so powerful together.” Her eyes are wide and red-rimmed. She is grasping at straws, lying with anything she can come up with and crazy as sh*t.

Ryker and Kennedy don't react, but growls can be heard around the arena. It's a low rumble at first and it grows as it spreads through the rogues here. She insulted every single one of the Dark Moon warriors in the vicinity and then insulted the rogue pack by trying to claim Ryker instead of Finn. She just put the last nail in her own coffin.

“I rejected you as my mate.” Finn sobs out, crumpling further to the ground.

Amy screams again. “Nnnnoooo! I won't let you. Not until Ryker accepts me. I will not be mateless.”

“You already are.” Kennedy growls out and lets her aura flare. “Accept. His. Rejection.” For the first time since this whole exchange began, Kennedy steps out of Ryker’s arms. Her eyes are flaring a bright vivid blue, almost

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glowing.

She steps so close to Amy, that their noses almost brush. She only has about an inch in height on Amy, but her confidence makes her seem so much larger. The dangerous tone to Kennedy’s whisper even has me afraid.

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“Accept the rejection. Accept your fate. Tell us where your father is, and this will end now.” Amy drew in a slow, deliberate breath, and suddenly her aura flared out in a sharp pulse. The sensation was strange—intense but not painful to me—and oddly, no one else seemed to be in distress. Except Amy herself. She winced, as if the energy affected her differently. How was she able to channel her aura in such a unique way toward different people? It was baffling.

“No,” she whispered, her voice trembling with a fake sob. “I can’t... He’ll kill me if I tell.”

“He won’t get the chance. Just tell us.”

“You have to promise me.”

“Promise what?”

“Promise you won’t let him kill me. Make it binding.” Amy’s tears were false, drying quickly on her cheeks. She believed she had Kennedy right where she wanted her.

“You have my word as Luna,” Kennedy said with a raised eyebrow, her tone steady and commanding. “If you give up your father’s exact location and accept Finn’s rejection, he won’t have the chance to kill you.” Well played, Luna.

Amy hesitated, then muttered, “He’s been hiding in no-man’s land. We have a small house there. He won’t stay in the camp—too bougie for that.”

“Go. Check it out. Be careful; it’s probably a trap or a way for them to signal we’re onto them.” Ryker called out to a few of our best trackers, linking Josh, Danny, and me into the plan.

“And the rejection?” someone asked.

Amy sighed, clearly irritated, “Fine.” Then, with a sudden scream that was real this time, she went limp in the arms of the guards holding her.

I had heard that breaking the bond willfully was more agonizing than death itself. Yet, as I glanced at Finn, he didn't seem to be suffering the same torment. Was it acceptance? Or something deeper?

Amy, panting, forced herself back onto her knees. "Now what?" she snarled at Kennedy.

"Are you okay? Have you recovered from the bond break?" I asked, though it wasn't the question I would have expected to ask. Still, I was curious to see what would come next.

"Yeah," Amy snapped, her defiance returning full force. The bond between them clearly hadn't been strong enough to keep her down for long. "I only want one bond anyway. You've made the biggest mistake letting me live. And you can't do a damn thing about it—"

Before she could finish, Kennedy's hand shot out, clamping tightly around Amy's throat and forcing her back down to her knees. Around us, the warriors stood poised, waiting for their Luna's command.

"You thought I was going to let you walk away?" Kennedy's voice was cold and hard, inches from Amy's face. "After everything you've done? You don't deserve to die with witnesses around." She leaned closer, her tone dropping to a deadly whisper. "You deserve to rot in a hole where no one will even bother to find you."

Amy's hands scrambled to grip Kennedy's wrist, trying to pry her off, but she failed. "You... you can't. You promised. You can't let me die." She coughed, her voice strained. "You'll die too." A cruel smile twisted her lips—she still thought she had the upper hand.

Ryker stepped quietly behind Kennedy, wrapping his arms around her waist in a steadying embrace. This would be her first kill that wasn't in self-defense. He wouldn't let her face it alone, though he wouldn't interfere either. Taking a life was never easy, even when it was the right thing to do.

"You've got this, baby," he murmured softly into her ear, pressing a gentle kiss to her temple.

"You'd let your mate die just to get rid of me? Ha! What kind of alpha are you?" Amy choked out, struggling as Kennedy tightened her grip just a little more.

"The Luna only promised not to let your father kill you," Kennedy replied calmly. "She never said anything about anyone else."

I caught the moment Ryker's eyes glazed over as the warriors checked in with him through the mindlink.

"She gave us solid information, Lamb," Ryker said quietly. "Let's finish this. May 1?"

Suddenly, a roar erupted through the arena, followed by screams and shouts echoing from every direction.

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Chapter 237

6 – Finn

The scene around us descends into utter chaos. Kennedy still clutches Amy tightly in her grasp. The fierce warrior standing beside me leans in close, his voice low and fierce as he growls, “Don’t make me regret this, warrior. Prove to us what you’re truly capable of.”

Before I can fully process his words, my cuffs suddenly fall away, and without hesitation, she darts headfirst into the melee. She actually freed me—just like that. What the hell?! I don’t linger on the shock for long; I push myself up and dive into the fray. Claude’s men are here, but these fools couldn’t fight their way out of a paper bag, at least not against me.

I glance back at my mate one last time. Her eyes plead silently for my help, but I feel nothing but cold indifference. She’s selfish, and if I save her, she still wouldn’t choose me. Despite her claims of accepting my rejection, I can’t deny the lingering pull she has on me. Maybe my rejection didn’t fully take, or perhaps there’s some residual effect—I don’t know. Whatever the case, that’s the last thought I give her as I sprint toward the battle, ready to stand with the Dark Moon pack against these wannabe warriors.

Claude must be desperate; his usual right-hand woman is actually fighting alongside us instead of clinging to him like always. I zero in on Rick. That arrogant little prick has been the bane of my existence for far too long, strutting around like he’s better than everyone else, barking orders whenever Claude isn’t around. Nobody dared challenge him—until now. Now, all bets are off.

“RICK! You’re mine!” I shout as I charge straight at him.

His eyes widen in shock, and he throws his hands up—whether to block me or surrender, I can’t tell. Either way, he’s had this coming for a long time. I land a solid right hook to his jaw, snapping his head back and sending it flying over his shoulder. His body follows, but one hit won’t do. I drive a punch into his stomach, then rain down a series of blows wherever I can land them. He crumples into a ball on the ground. I grab his head, forcing him to look up at me—at the one who’s about to send him to the Goddess.

“Don’t do this, Finn. You’re better than this. Better than him. Don’t do this,” he begs, his voice trembling. He should’ve thought twice before being an abusive jerk who blindly followed a tyrant. “I can help you.”

“You should have helped before,” I say coldly, snapping his neck and letting his lifeless body drop.

I stand up and immediately take down two more of Claude’s fighters who are battling Dark Moon warriors. Suddenly, a searing pain ignites in my body. My wolf growls in agony as my skin is being ripped from my bones. My breath catches, and I collapse to the ground.

I’m paralyzed, unable to move or escape the torment. My wolf howls in pain, and I feel everything crashing down at once—then nothing. All my senses shut off. Someone stumbles over me; I catch a glimpse of them hitting the ground in my peripheral vision, but

everything is hazy. My head pounds, my body numb. What the hell is happening? I try to stand but falter. I've never been drunk, but I've seen a few of the guys after they've had too much.

"Get up and move your ass, warrior! Learn to take a hit." The voice is familiar. I search for the fierce Dark Moon woman I saw earlier with Calvin, but my tunnel vision keeps me from tracking her before she disappears.

Slowly, I regain enough control to move and jump back into the fight. My movements are awkward and clumsy, but I can at least defend myself and help thin out Claude's ranks. One by one, his men fall. Our best fighters have all rallied to the pack we've formed. These idiots came with Claude, and now I understand why he lost his pack. They relied on rank and status without real leadership or effort. As I send my opponent crashing lifeless to the ground, a cheer erupts.

I whirl around, taking in the excitement. Everyone is celebrating, but I can't bring myself to care. I lost my mate—she finally accepted my rejection completely. I feel shattered. I've always felt broken, but this is different. She was supposed to be the one thing in my life that was right.

"FINN!! Finn! We did it! Well, we didn't do it—Alpha Ryker did—but Claude is gone! We're free!!!" Sammy rushes over, his enthusiasm infectious. I force a smile, as I always do. This is how we cope—grin and fake it until we make it.

"About damn time, man." I clasp his hand and pull him into a brief hug. "Did the Alpha give any orders, or are we just supposed to take off?"

"Goddess, please let them stay," I think silently.

"He left with his Luna. She killed Amy, and I think she might be in shock from it. He told his warriors to check on anyone injured and make sure we all have what we need to clean up and rest. That's all I know."

"Well, that's something at least. I thought maybe we'd be told to hit the road."

"I don't think they're like that, man. Alpha Ryker's taken over so many packs now. This is probably how he handles all of them. Do you think he'll let us stay?"

His hopefulness mirrors my own. We've wanted to belong to a pack for as long as I can remember. Sammy's old enough to recall losing his pack; I have no memories before this rogue camp. Nan was good to us—like that crazy aunt who never let you talk your way out of trouble but loved you fiercely.

I shake off the memories. Dwelling on the past won't help. We have to keep moving forward. "I hope he lets you all stay. Me? I was mated to the enemy, and I led this whole group. I had the Luna taken, and she was hurt under my watch. I doubt I'll get the same consideration."

He opens his mouth to argue, but another voice cuts sharply through the night air.

“Let’s move! We need to get everyone checked and settled in quarters. The Alpha and Luna will conduct an inquiry tomorrow. For anyone harboring ill intentions toward our pack, we are offering shelter, food, and care. Please maintain peace today. As you’ve seen, we have zero tolerance and show no mercy to those who threaten our members. For now, everyone here is under our protection.”

I can’t help but wonder—how long will this protection last?

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Chapter 238

7-Finn

It’s been half a year since the brutal clash that claimed the lives of Claude, Ainy, and many of their loyal followers. The scars of that battle still linger, yet somehow, we’ve been granted permission to remain here—myself included—which feels utterly surreal.

Together, we’ve worked tirelessly to repair the damage we once caused, rebuilding the very neighborhood we set ablaze. In return, the community has offered us shelter in the new apartments constructed above the shops. Food is never scarce, and everyone is gradually settling into fresh roles, carving out their places within the pack’s hierarchy. Everyone, that is, except me.

I’ve begun training alongside the warriors, but the rigid schedules, the endless rules, and the strict protocols grate on me relentlessly. Since I was six years old, I’ve trained alone—on my own terms. I rise when I please, practice however and whenever I want, and scavenge for enough food to keep us all fed. This whole “be here on time” nonsense is suffocating and, frankly, exhausting.

“Thanks for joining us, Rookie,” Greta calls out with a smirk. I choose to ignore her snide remark and slip toward the back of the group.

I’ve done my best to keep my distance from the fiery warrior, but I know it won’t last forever. Her constant “rookie” jabs are starting to get under my skin. I’ve paid my dues—probably more than her pampered, pack-protected self ever has. Her strict training regimen restricts what we’re allowed to do, but in real fights, there’s rarely a perfect scenario. Sometimes, training goes out the window, and it becomes a battle for survival. That’s something her inflexible nature fails to grasp. Still, many of the male warriors match my size, and sparring with them has sharpened my speed and strength.

Sweat drips down my face, adrenaline surging through my veins as we work through a submission technique. I’ve already bested four of the five warriors I’ve sparred with. Now, facing the sixth, I’m determined to correct the mistake I made last time. I grip the warrior’s arm firmly as he struggles, trying to resist the momentum pulling him toward the ground. He attempts a sweep at my leg but misses. I adjust my balance, and we tumble forward together into a roll. Using the momentum, I twist and pin him beneath me. He taps the knee

I press lightly against his neck, signaling his submission. I stand and offer him a hand up, both of us grinning.

“That’s not how we were taught, but it works, Rookie,” Greta says, arms crossed, irritation clear in her stance as she stands behind me. Well, she always seems annoyed when she looks my way. She hasn’t forgiven me for what happened to the Luna, despite the Luna herself having pardoned me and the Alpha backing me up.

I turn fully to face her, mirroring her stance. “Most fights don’t present perfect opportunities to execute moves exactly as taught. Fighters have to adapt to what’s happening in the moment, ma’am.” Her eyes flash darkly at the title, and I know I’ve found the perfect way to needle her. The subtle flex of her jaw when I say it only encourages me more. Her uptight approach to training makes me want to provoke her at every chance. If she wants to hate me, I’ll at least give her a reason.

“For your information, Rookie,” she replies sharply, “that move, as taught, has saved countless lives. It’s also led to the capture of over a dozen prisoners.”

“I’m glad for your success, ma’am. But honestly, it makes you predictable—and therefore easier to counter.”

I can feel the eyes of the gathered warriors on us, but something about Greta draws me in, making it impossible to stop.

“Want to test that theory, Rookie?” she challenges.

“What’s the prize if I win?” I ask, smirking.

She doesn’t respond immediately, just fixes me with a steady gaze.

“I’ll learn your real name, Rookie. But if you lose, you’ll address me as Warrior Greta.”

“Understood, ma’am.” This time, she rolls her eyes and flexes her jaw again. This is going to be a lot of fun.

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Chapter 239

I trail behind her until she reaches her place at the forefront of the training group, where a crowd has already begun to gather around us. This moment is bound to be humiliating for her, especially since she’s the lead trainer here. But sometimes, a little humility is necessary to keep egos in check.

We stand face to face, and she wears an unreadable expression. That’s curious. Until now, I’ve only observed her fighting from a distance, carefully avoiding interfering with the other warriors. She lifts her fists, signaling that she’s ready to begin, and I respond with a slow nod. She gets the first strike—patience is one of my virtues.

Without hesitation, she darts forward. Her speed catches me off guard for a split second, but then the familiar cross and jab come at me. I manage to dodge the first blow, but the second one lands squarely on my cheek, sending a sharp sting through my face. She steps back, giving me a moment to recover, and I hold my ground. I can't help but admire her skill, even if I'm reluctant to admit it. Still, she'll have to step up her game to actually beat me.

She attacks again, this time from my left side. I anticipate her usual double strike and evade both with ease, but then her leg sweeps out, catching my front leg. We both fall, rolling across the ground as we struggle for dominance. She regains her balance first, dropping to one knee. With a swift backhand from her left, she strikes me, then wraps her strong right arm around my neck. I lurch forward, flipping her onto her back right in front of me.

She twists away from my punch and slips behind me once more, now standing. Her knee presses firmly into my back as her arm snakes around my neck again. She's smaller than I am, so this position is more about buying time than overpowering me. I could flip her over my shoulder all day if I wanted. Reaching behind me, I grab her leg and pull her body forward. But as she comes around, she jams the base of her palm into my nose with a sharp force that dislocates it. Blood sprays across us both. It's a brutal move, but effective. My vision blurs, and just before I hit the ground, I feel a kick to my chest. I'm flipped onto my stomach, one arm pinned behind my back, and her knee presses hard against my cheek.

Laughter bursts out from the crowd, mixed with teasing shouts of "Rookie!" echoing all around me. I should feel angry. And I admit, there's a flicker of irritation that her reckless move actually worked—but that's on me. I'll need to study her moves more carefully and come back stronger.

She smirks and taunts, "You alright, Rookie?" I roll my eyes and let out a frustrated sigh as I push myself up from the ground. Slowly, I turn around and brush the dirt off my clothes.

"Yes, Warrior Greta, ma'am," I say with a playful wink before striding away, hearing some of the other guys chuckle behind me.

"You do realize she's going to kick your ass one of these days, right?" Sammy jogs up beside me, grinning.

I gesture over my shoulder with a thumb. "Wasn't that just now?"

He laughs. "Nope. She fights just like you, actually. I saw her take down three guys during that fight with Claude's crew. She went easy on you—only made you bleed a little."

"Fantastic," I mutter. "Now I'm the rookie and a pansy. I'm sure all these warriors are wondering why I was ever in charge. I need to clear my head with a run. Catch you later."

"Come on, don't be like that," Sammy calls after me, but I don't look back.

Lately, I've been running the pack borders alongside the other warriors as part of our integration into the Dark Moon pack. We're still on probation for a year before Ryker will officially accept us as members. Most of us remain here, though a few have moved on to other territories within this vast pack.

Even during probation, we've been entrusted with a surprising amount of information. I don't quite understand it. Growing up as a rogue, knowledge was a matter of survival. Not knowing something could get you killed, and knowing the right things was how you kept people in line. But Alpha Ryker shares his information openly. Well, not everything, of course, but enough to make us feel involved and heard. He gives us just enough to follow orders without questioning his reasons. It's a strange concept to me, and I'm not sure I'll ever fully get used to it.

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Chapter 240

My wolf and I share a deep bond, and we both relish the freedom of running along the vast borders of Dark Moon's territory. After three hours of relentless pace, we've barely scratched the surface of the expansive land. The cool evening air brushes against my skin as we finally return, just in time for dinner, which is already bustling with activity. One tradition we've never been able to escape is our communal meal. We've arranged a spacious patio area, complete with several fire pits casting a warm glow, two enormous grills sizzling with food, and enough seating to accommodate forty souls. Every night, without fail, the pack gathers here—even those who don't reside within the main building. Most of us live in the apartments along the southern edge of the pack's domain, near a place ominously called 'No Man's Land.' No one has ever explained why it earned such a name or what caused the land to become barren and incapable of supporting growth. Perhaps that's a piece of pack history we'll uncover if we're fortunate enough to stay and be accepted as official members.

"Finn! Where have you been?" Rosie calls out as I weave through the crowd, exchanging greetings and nodding to familiar faces.

"Just patrolling the borders, Rosic. I'll be down shortly—I need to shower first," I reply, already turning toward the stairs leading to my room.

"Don't take too long this time. You don't have to eat last anymore, you know," she warns, a teasing edge in her voice. "Don't think I haven't noticed your little habit of avoiding dinner, like you're scared to die next to that cranky old man." She jabs a finger at me playfully. I arch an eyebrow, attempting an innocent look.

"Don't give me that look, young man. We need to keep you healthy too," she adds, a hint of sternness beneath her warmth.

"I'm healthy, Rosie. Really, don't worry about me," I assure her, trying to sound confident.

"Your Nan would never have let you get away with this, and neither will I. If you don't come down here and eat with us like a normal person, I'll come up after you," she threatens, still pointing firmly.

“That sounds like an invasion of privacy. What if I’m just relaxing in the shower?” I tease, stepping closer to keep her from raising her voice and drawing too much attention. “Are you just going to barge in? I think I’m a little too old for that kind of thing, don’t you?”

She straightens up to her full height, lowering her gaze until her face is level with my chest. “No, I don’t think you’re ever too old to be told off for avoiding us.” She steps closer, her voice softening as she rests a hand gently on my arm. “I know what you’re doing, and old habits die hard. But you don’t have to protect us anymore—not like before. Dark Moon is looking after us now. We’re part of this pack.”

“But for how long, Rosie?” I interrupt, letting my usual confidence falter for a moment. Since Nan passed away, Rosie has stepped in as a kind of mother figure to those of us who came into the pack as kids, even though we’re all adults now. It’s comforting to have someone to be vulnerable with. “None of you did anything wrong. You’re all safe here, and I want to keep it that way... just in case...” My voice trails off as I look down, unable to voice the nightmare that haunts me every night since we arrived in Dark Moon.

“You can’t seriously believe the Alpha and Luna would send you away after all this time,” she says firmly. “You have to see how much she cares about you.”

“That might not be enough,” I admit quietly. “She was taken on my orders. Alpha Ryker might agree with it for now, but her beta, gamma, and lead warrior don’t like me. If they get a say in whether I stay, her vote might not carry the day. I have to be prepared for that.” I straighten up, trying to steady my voice. “We still have six months left, Rosie. Don’t worry about me right now. I promise, I’ll be down soon.” I press a gentle kiss to her forehead before heading up the stairs, leaving her no chance to argue further.