

Owned by the Alphas |

The Friend

The alphas sat down in three huge throne chairs made of stone, carved in their respective symbols.

I twisted my hands in front of me, not sure where to go and feeling every set of eyes on me. The entire hall was filled with wolves, and they were being rowdy until I walked in with the alphas. Now it was deadly silent.

Kai pulled me onto his lap, and I looked at him instead of the faces I knew were staring.

Derik kept standing as Braxton took a seat to the other side.

“Stay quiet, human. Stay still,” Kai said against my ear in such a quiet voice I almost didn’t hear him.

I nodded once, and he kissed me before looking up at Derik.

“It’s been a while since we have gathered as largely as tonight,” Derik started. “But we have reason to. We have a human in our midst,” he said, looking to me.

I didn’t know what to do but resisted the urge to wave, staying quiet and still like Kai had said.

“She will remain unharmed and untouched while she is with us, do you understand?” Derik said in a deep voice that had the room vibrating with pressure.

Some of the wolves bowed their heads, but a few daring wolves glared. Especially the ones surrounding Taylor and Garrett.

“Who is she, and why should she have any kind of place with our alphas?” One of the women stood up. She had a choppy cut of hair with a ragged scar over her lip that dragged down her shoulder.

I wondered how she got it but turned my head away when Kai nuzzled into my neck in warning.

“She’s the general’s daughter. Lorelai Valarian. She is what we have taken as ours in retribution for what the human dared to pen to us.”

Derik was firm and strong in his words, daring anyone else to say something. They looked like they wanted to but said nothing.

I wasn’t sure if it was going to work, passing me off as a retribution thing, but they had said it would if I stayed quiet and did what they asked. So I did.

Finally, one of the wolves voiced their opinion. Fucking Taylor.

“And what does that make her?”

“Ours,” Kai grumbled, from beneath me.

Derik gave him a scowl that warned Kai to let him deal with it, a scowl I was learning very quickly.

“She’s our lover, our female,” he said, and that must’ve meant something more than I realized because there were gasps and an even tighter silence stretching over everyone.

A male stood up on the other side of the room, his eyes filled with fury as he almost barked his words out. “And what of our females? Their heat will be starting soon. The powerful ones will need the alphas’ magic to sate them. You would put this human before the pack’s needs?”

Another male spoke up, and I knew where this was going. They were gaining confidence.

“Taking an official lover right before the heat? And a human?” the wolf spat. “Fucking bullshit.”

“Don’t forget winter born,” Garrett snarled, and that had the wolves roaring, howling, slamming their drinks down on the multiple wooden tables filling the room.

The lights flickered, and I clenched my eyes shut.

The shadows felt the threat too. The ones inside me felt different and safe, like I could trust the alphas, but the fear of the wolves was making it harder to ignore the ones that wanted in.

I clutched Kai's hand tightly in mine, trying to keep them out, but the louder the wolves got, the harsher my headache got.

"They'll attack. You know they will. And then what will you do? There're only three alphas, against a city of werewolves. They will maul you as a human," the shadows whispered in my head, and I felt the coldness touch my skin, the ice burning as my body grew heavy.

The wolves were still shouting, but they were getting distant.

And then there was warmth on me, Brax's eyes staring into mine. He tugged me from Kai's grasp.

"I've gotta take her, Kai," Brax warned in a hushed voice as Derik tried to answer the questions that were coming from everywhere in the room.

Kai narrowed his eyes, holding me tighter before finally letting me go to Brax, who immediately pushed his warmth through me.

I shivered and went with him easily, the shadows already drowning out, the wolves' voices coming back to me.

Braxton put me on his lap just as Derik got fed up.

"Enough!" Derik howled, and the entire room fell silent, every single head bowing to his voice as it commanded them.

I swallowed, waiting for him to speak again as he glared over the wolves of the city, making sure they were all listening.

I kept hold of Brax's hand and he connected to me, making me gasp a little as his shadows and mine held on, locking out the bad ones that I really needed to figure out how to get rid of.

They had given me until the next full moon, and I had to be ready for them by then.

"We will not forsake this pack. We have taken a lover, yes. She is human. She is winter born. But she will stay in the manor. Her presence will not affect the wolves of this pack, female or not.

“We understand the needs of our females, however, and will discuss the heat at the council meeting tomorrow. Until then, do not doubt that we will put the pack first. We honor our own, we protect our own, and we lead our own.

“Our oath is still strong within our magic, and we are bound by it. Do not question it, and if you think you need to, then stand up now, challenge us. We’d be more than happy to put you in your place,” Derik said in the most passive-aggressive political statement I had ever heard.

Not a single wolf rose to the challenge, keeping their heads bowed.

Derik nodded. “Good. Now we feast,” he said, and then food was being brought through double doors at the end of the hall by younger wolves.

I had read about those earlier. The initiate wolves, the ones that wanted to be part of the main pack and had to go through rigorous hazing-type things for years before they got the chance to be one of the wolves at the table.

I watched as they served the alphas first. Steaming hot plates of roasts and veggies were brought out, ale and wine were served, and then the wolves descended into chaos. But a good chaos.

They were loud and laughing as they chatted among themselves, roaring and fighting every now and then, but Brax reassured me that it was normal. Three fights a night at least was considered the expectation.

The wolves were so much like humans, it threw me for a loop. They could blend in, be human, and the feast was like some kind of family dinner that was almost comfortable. Well, now it was.

“You okay now?” Brax asked, before picking a bean from his plate and eating it.

I nodded. The shadows were gone, and he released mine. I let out a breath, then stared at the plates hungrily. Derik turned to me, feeding me a fork of meat. I ate it as he licked his lips.

“Well, that went as well as expected,” Derik breathed, sipping some wine from a goblet that had the Forest Territory carvings in it.

“What’s the heat, and why is it bad for the females?” I asked quietly.

Brax tensed under me, and I frowned at the reaction. Derik took another drink as Kai leaned over to talk.

“The heat is when the females need to ‘mate,’ but really it means they get super horny. It’s painful for them if they don’t give in to it, and it’s when their wolf is looking for a mate.”

“And that’s bad? Or affects you?” I asked, trying to understand the wolves and their rules that seemed to be affected by me being there.

Kai leaned back and waited for Derik to answer, who let out an exasperated sigh.

“It’s why we knew they would have an issue. There’s an unwritten rule that gives the females of the pack a chance to mate with an alpha. We are meant to sleep with the powerful ones. There’s a whole event that happens, the females fight and the top three get the alphas. Usually.”

“Oh. But this time, I’m here.”

I realized why they were mad. Why Taylor had been so threatened. She was probably first in line or knew she was the strongest. She looked strong.

I shuddered remembering her hands on my throat, then nodded, picking up a cup of water and sipping it.

“But we’ll figure it out,” Braxton said from beneath me, but I wasn’t so sure. The heat sounded like a serious thing for the wolves.

“When is the heat?” I asked.

Derik shrugged. “We just had the blood moon, so it could start anytime. Once it hits one female, it hits them all.”

I raised a brow and looked at my alphas. That was something they really should have mentioned.

“And you didn’t think you should have told me that before bringing me here as your lover?” I snapped.

Derik narrowed his eyes at my tone, but I didn’t care. He never mentioned sharing them with a whole bunch of potential mates.

"We are bound by a lot of rules. Navigating them is...tricky," Derik muttered, and I wondered if that was his way of saying he actually wasn't allowed to tell a human of the laws.

But he had sidestepped that by letting me be at dinner and listen to the questions and answers earlier. And the library.

"Which is why you let me go to the library. So I could read what I needed to," I realized, and he smirked, putting his finger to his lips.

I smiled and leaned forward to kiss him. He cupped the back of my neck the way he always did and brought the fire to my core like he always did with a simple flick of his tongue against my lips.

He kissed me fiercely, and I forgot where we were, leaving Brax's lap to climb on Derik's. He held the sides of my face, kissing me, teasing me, his dick hard and waiting as I grinded down on him.

Everything else fell away. Every doubt and worry about the wolves' traditions and what that would mean for me didn't exist.

I danced my tongue with his, my breasts heavy, my pussy throbbing as my nipples tightened against my dress. It was bunched up between us, draping over his legs, and I wouldn't have cared if he had fucked me right there in front of every wolf.

Instead, there was an interrupting cough from behind us.

I broke away, breathing heavily as Derik composed his face with that stoic alpha mask and looked over my shoulder.

I turned to look and found one of the wolves in front of the alphas' table. He had a mohawk of all things, a black one that went with the eyebrow, lip, and nose piercings on his strong-featured face.

A forest tattoo peeked up from his collar, and the roots of a tree spread out over his hand. Then there were the eyes of dark, deep brown that were almost moving. I looked back at Derik so I didn't stare.

"Say what's on your mind, Cain," Derik sighed, and Cain looked between me and the alpha.

“Just want to make sure you know what you’re doing,” he said, and Derik nodded once.

“Thanks. We do.”

“A winter born though? I couldn’t care less about the heat or the females, they’ll find someone to fuck, but the shadows? At a time like this? Risky move, friend,” Cain said, and the way he talked to Derik made me think they had more respect for each other than the others.

Something in the way the interaction felt was warm, like there was genuine concern for each other.

“A time like this is when we need risky moves, but thanks for your concern.”

I had no idea what they were talking about, but I was going to find out as soon as Cain left.

He looked at me and bowed respectfully.

“Welcome to our city, Lorelai,” he said. “I’m Cain Emerson. The alphas’ adviser, which is a completely useless position with three stubborn werewolves, so I am more commonly known as the best friend.”

He smiled, and I gave him one in return. He offered his hand, and I went to take it, but Derik snatched mine back.

“Back off, Cain,” he warned, and I frowned.

“Is not shaking hands with humans another archaic rule?” I asked, and he shook his head as Cain laughed.

“It was a test, and Derik knew that. I wanted to read your aura.”

He shrugged, and I raised a brow.

“Are you magic too?”

I wondered if he had the shadows like Brax and me, but if he did, I couldn’t feel them.

“We’re shape-shifters; all of us have magic in us. Some of us just have more than others. I happen to be a hybrid though, leaving me with a few extra goodies from my mother’s witch ancestry.”

He smiled and rolled a purple ball of magic between his fingers before squashing it in his fist.

“Speaking of my mother, she wants you to bring your lover to meet her. She loves the idea of seeing a true winter born. You know how she gets,” Cain said, and Derik rolled his eyes.

“Your mother should be at the pack meeting,” he said, but there was a hint of a smile in his voice.

“My mother would slap you if she were here, so let’s let her do it in private, yeah? See you tomorrow night at her hut for dinner. Don’t be late, or she’ll put eyeballs in your stew again. That goes for all four of you,” Cain warned, then walked away, whistling a fun tune before whispering in one of the females’ ears and walking out of the hall with her under his arm.

I turned to Derik, so many questions in my head. I had no idea which one to ask first. “What did he mean—”

Derik covered my mouth with his again, silencing my questions. “Not here,” he said, then stood up and took my hand.

“Can you two handle things for the rest of dinner, or do I need to end it before they all start fucking on the tables and have them wanting to challenge us more than they already do tonight?” Derik asked, and Brax chuckled.

Kai’s eyes raked over me before he nodded once and turned back to the dinner, emptying ale from his cup before tapping it for a refill.

Brax rolled his eyes and nodded to the waiter so Kai couldn’t see. I frowned, then hid my chuckle as the waiter gave him a top up of water.

Derik pulled me into a room through a door behind the hall we had been feasting in. It was a small room, intimate, with another fireplace that warmed the air.

There were leather couches and a hide rug with wooden side tables. There was a pitcher of ale and a vase of wine, but he didn't go for them. Instead, he sat down in front of the fire and pulled me down to him.

I straddled his lap and kissed him. He kissed me back with the same passion as before, but this time we were in private, and it wasn't long before I was yanking at his clothes and he was shredding yet another beautiful dress.

He laid me bare in front of the fireplace, kissing everywhere on my body, taking his time with me as I fought the pleasure inside me, the fire within raging higher than the one next to me.

I moaned as his mouth closed over my nipple, the other one tugged at by his fingers, shooting my core with pleasure. I arched into him as his rough tongue kept me writhing beneath him.

But I didn't stay beneath him. I pulled in his knee and rolled us, pulling his face to mine so I could kiss him hard.

I loved his kisses, his mouth with mine. It sent so much desire and want pooling between my thighs I was already ready for him when he placed his thick length at my entrance.

"We'll have more time to play next round, beautiful," he breathed, and I nodded, sinking onto him, gasping as he filled me so well.

My pussy sucked him in, throbbing and leaking as he buried himself to the hilt. It was so intense I could barely catch my breath.

My nails dug into his biceps as I started moving, his hips thrusting inside me so hard that it hurt, but it was a pain I wanted.

I wrapped my arms around his neck as his went around my waist, slamming me down on him over and over again. Our panting breaths mixed as we kissed, my tongue slid along his, and I sucked it before biting down on his bottom lip.

He groaned and fucked me faster. His strokes were so deep, his cock so hard I thought I was going to break something, but then it was there. The edge he had been pushing me to.

I cried out as the pleasure of him overwhelmed me, bouncing on his lap, my body tensing with the storm that crashed through it.

Heat engulfed every nerve, burned every thought, and I exploded in a wave that had me breathing hard, sweat dampening my skin.

My thighs burned as I rode him through my orgasm, sending him into his.

He bucked into me with two rough thrusts of his hips before stilling and groaning, his eyes closing as he hung his head back, then slowly lay down on the floor with me still on him.

His cock throbbed inside my pulsing pussy and I sighed, looking down at him.

The shadows from the dark room and fireplace danced over Derik as he put his hand behind his head. His abs were sucking in and out with his fast breathing, the same as my breasts.

It was so primal and raw what had passed between us that I couldn't help but feel something toward him. I wasn't sure what, but it was an affection of some kind.

I leaned down and laid my head on his chest.

"I like the way you look after sex. So peaceful. Like you're not in alpha mode," I whispered, and he chuckled, rubbing my bare back, dragging his fingertips back and forth.

"Alpha mode?" he teased, and I grinned.

"Yeah. The mask you put on tonight, it was your alpha mode. Well, that's what I call it anyway. I like that you don't wear it when it's just us."

He sighed, and I didn't think he was going to answer, but eventually he did.

"That's because I don't have to be your alpha, beautiful. I can just be Derik, a werewolf fucking his girl, human or not. Nothing else matters."

He sighed again, and I smiled, leaning up to kiss him.

"If I ask you my questions, will you go into alpha mode?"

He shook his head, his eyes closed as he relaxed. I smiled and rolled off him, snuggling into his side, pulling the throw from the couch with me.

I covered us from the waist down then leaned on his chest, tracing his abs with my fingers.

“What did Cain mean when he said ‘a time like this’?” I asked, and Derik tensed, as I had known he would.

“I’m not meant to tell anyone outside the council,” he murmured.

I didn’t care, which he knew, so I waited for him to answer. He gave another long pause, then sighed again.

“Now I know why Cain gets mad at us for being stubborn.” He laughed halfheartedly, then kissed the top of my head.

“A couple of humans from my village went missing. Just after that, there was a border breach. Then we had a string of vampire sightings along the border.

“It’s been years since we had issues with them. It’s like they’re testing our defenses, trying to learn from us or something. It’s got the pack on edge. Bringing in a winter born at a time when there has been vampire stuff happening is probably not the best timing, Cain is right about that.”

I blinked a couple of times, not sure what to say to that.

“Why the hell would you bring me here then? Me being here has caused issues with the female thing, the shadows thing, and the vampire thing, so why am I here then, Derik?

“If I’m putting you in danger or making it harder for the pack, then shouldn’t I just go back?” I asked, hating that they were keeping me when I was obviously such a burden, but he pulled my lips to his and my anger turned to a simmer.

“Do you want to be here?”

“Am I a total idiot if I say yes?”

Derik nodded, and I laughed despite the gravity of the situation.

“Seriously, Derik. Why? You could have just stripped my father of his title and been done with the whole retribution thing, so why go to this much trouble?” I asked, not wanting that to happen, of course, and definitely against the idea of being sent away, but the pack looked murderous and I hated that it made things so tense and stressful.

I was already hated in the village for being winter born, I didn’t want it to be that way here.

“The blood moon changed everything, Lorelai. We’d heard that a winter born offering would be powerful, but we didn’t expect it. We had no control of our will with you that night. We shouldn’t have kissed you, let things go to the extent they went, especially Kai, but he’s a glutton.

“But it was the magic you gave in your offering. It was so pure and strong, it made us strong. Our magic was powerful in our veins, our pack was high on this power we were feeding them, and the rush was intense. The barrier that keeps us protected from the vampires was radiating power, glowing with it, and we knew we had to keep you,” he explained, but it wasn’t what I wanted to hear.

“So you keep me because of the power I feed your magic? Because I’m winter born?” I asked, and Derik shook his head.

“Not quite. Brax, the way he is, he gets these feelings, senses when we’re on the right path for the pack, and sending you away the next morning made him so sick. He was pale and shaky. He knew we had to come get you. As soon as we had decided, he started improving.

“I don’t know why and I don’t know what fate has put in our path, but I know—we all know—that you are meant to be here, meant to be a part of it. And the pack will too, eventually,” he said, and I felt marginally better. “And that is why you are here, beautiful. Because you belong here.”

He kissed me again, and I climbed back over him to succumb to the fire, but in the back of my mind, I couldn’t get rid of a nagging question.

“Wait,” I breathed against his lips, then sat up.

“I need to know about the heat thing. Will you really sleep with the females? I know I’m yours and I want to be, but I want you all to be mine too. I don’t want to share,” I murmured, not sure why I was embarrassed to admit it.

He grinned and sat up, kissing my breasts. "Greedy little winter born, aren't you?" he said against the flesh, before stroking my nipples with his tongue.

His kisses fell over me before he pulled me down and slipped his fingers between my thighs.

It wasn't until much later, when I had been fucked four times and almost fallen into an exhaustion coma, that I realized he had never answered my question.