

## Chapter 15: I'll Take Care Of You

~Kieran~

"How did this happen?" Kieran sought, his eyes narrowing at Jaxon and his gammas.

Jaxon, being his beta, was Kieran's right hand. The gammas were under Jaxon's supervision. They were the best among the fighters of the Stone Blood Pack. In front of Kieran, four gammas stood, their eyes on the floor. There was Seth, Ace, Sam, and Rob.

Seth was the youngest, Kieran's distant cousin. He took charge of the east boundary. Ace was the most senior and the strongest, in control of the front perimeter. Sam and Rob took the remaining frontiers.

Kieran still had other gammas leading the war on the coast. Others were visiting the other territories belonging to Kieran's control.

"Alpha Kieran, I regret to inform you that the scouts that regularly roamed the mountains were found dead, two of them," Jaxon reported. "They wandered too far from the territory, blocking their ability to mindlink. They were attacked two kilometers away from our eastern border."

"We think they were lured out. Aside from our scouts, we found a boy. A human child, dead," Jaxon described.

Kieran clenched his jaws. He mumbled, "human? Is it one of our own?"

Humans rarely lived in their nation. Many took refuge in Azenna, a country located north, above Taplean, and another nation, Paredon.

Werewolves pack often fight for power, and humans get caught in their kind's conflict. Being the weaker specie, many humans die in Taplean.

The humans that lived in Taplean were mated to werewolves or were protected by a particular pack. In Kieran's pack, there were a few, but they rarely left the pack's territory.

"No, alpha. We do not know the human," Jaxon reported.

Kieran shut his eyes. What was worse than killing a defenseless child? Much more a human? Only the rogues could have done it. On the run, rogues had practically sold their souls to the devil. They had no remorse. All they think about is earning money and addressing their

selfish needs.

"Seth, what have we found out about the rogues?" He sought.

"I think it was just a random attack, Alpha," Seth answered.

"I doubt it was random. The rogues put too much effort into climbing the mountains for it to be random!" Kieran growled, disappointed at Seth's reply. "Did you not find out anything relevant?"

"I'm - I'm afraid not, Alpha," Seth admitted with his head down. "They were immediately on a rampage. The best solution was to execute them. We did not have time to interrogate anyone of them."

Seth quickly kneeled on one knee, saying, "I will accept any punishment, Alpha. I led the patrol, and the two rogues entered the territory under my watch. It was my fault that our luna and Rae were chased by the rogues -"

"Damn right, you were at fault!" Kieran snarled. "You could have sent someone to follow Rae and your luna! Alexia has yet to come of age! What if something had happened to her?"

"As for your sanction, you are not allowed to take any holidays this year. Build your strength and that of your warriors. Your unit needs to be strong enough to defend your assigned border! Recruit as necessary. Once you have recovered, ensure that your luna is trained!" Kieran ordered. "Teach her! Give her the tools to defend herself against a werewolf!"

"Yes, Alpha!" Seth replied. "Thank you for being considerate."

Kieran turned to Jaxon and instructed, "Connect with our contacts among the rogues. Find out if any of their group had initiated the attack."

"Yes, Alpha Kieran," Jaxon acknowledged.

"Locate the family of the deceased child," Kieran added. "Extend our condolences and provide help in any way we can. Give the same support to the families of the warriors that lost their lives today."

"Yes, Alpha Kieran," Jaxon replied.

"You are all dismissed!" Kieran instructed.

All of Kieran's gammas left. Jaxon stayed behind and studied him intently. With how his beta looked at him, he asked, "What?!"

"You care about her?" Jaxon suggested. "I've never seen you so worried. Earlier, you ran to her as if your life depended on it!"

"Admit it, Alpha. You like your luna, don't you?" Jaxon sought.

'Like Alexia?' Kieran wondered himself.

He sucked in a breath, and his eyes tightened while considering his beta's words. His nose flared, and then he replied, "I." He cleared his throat and added, "I simply feel sorry for her, Jaxon. Nothing more. Don't misinterpret my actions."

Jaxon raised a brow and asked, "But -"

"And why are you asking me questions when security matters still need to be addressed, Jaxon? Follow through on my orders now! Don't waste my time - putting words into my mouth - Leave!" Kieran demanded while glowering at his beta.

"Y - yes, Alpha," Jaxon acknowledged.

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~Alexia~

'Looks like I'm going to stay in the hospital for a day. The doctor wanted to check on the stitches tomorrow before letting me leave,' Rae mindlinked with Alexia. 'Are you going to be okay?'

'I don't know,' Alexia replied with a heavy sigh.

'What do you mean, you don't know?' Rae sought.

'Kieran asked me to join him for dinner,' she replied. She sat on the bed and slammed her back on the sheets. 'I'm nervous.'

'Oh.' It was a simple reaction from Rae, but even while mindlinking, Alexia could read her tone. 'So you are on a first-name basis now. Haha! I told you he was in trouble.'

'What?' Alexia asked. 'Don't jump into assumptions, Rae.'

A knock on the door interrupted her thoughts. She heard one maid say, "Luna Alexia, Alpha Kieran is waiting for you."

"Okay, I'll be down," She replied.

Addressing her friend, Alexia mindlinked, 'I need to go now, Rae -'

'Wait! Wear something beautiful!' Rae suggested.

'I don't have something beautiful,' Alexia said back.

'I bought you two dresses last week, remember? Wear the off-shoulder one. You look sexy with your slender neck and shoulders flaunted,' Rae suggested.

Alexia hesitated for a moment. Why would she even want to look pretty in front of Kieran? It's not like her relationship with him would ever change!

'Alexia! Change!' Rae demanded. 'And wear those shoes Mara gave you!'

'Fine! I'll change! You are going to get me in trouble for being late!' Alexia complained.

In her head, Rae was laughing her heart out, saying, 'Again, he is in trouble, not you. Haha! Good luck!'

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~Alexia~

"Where is she? Why is she letting me wait? Go get her again!" Alexia heard Kieran instruct Lydia. Alexia was ten steps away from the dining area and could tell Kieran's patience was wearing thin.

'This was Rae's fault!' Alexia said inwardly before letting her presence be known to Kieran. 'I'm here! I'm here!'

She hurried her steps, her heels speedily tapping on the tiled floor. When she stood in front of Kieran, she let out a sigh. With her hands, she pushed back her long brown hair.

"I'm sorry." Chasing her breath, she added, "I decided to change last minute. I'm sorry."

Kieran stared at her. His eyes casually studied her face, and gradually, they traveled down to her skirt, which flowed three inches above her knee.

"Hmmm." He said. He gazed at the seat next to him and suggested, "Let's have our dinner. Rae and Jaxon won't be joining us."

His reaction made Alexia believe that perhaps "Hmmm" meant good. Right?

Within the next few minutes, Alexia and Kieran ate quietly. Now and then, Alexia could feel his eyes on her. She did not have to peer in his direction to know he was occasionally studying her.

She became mindful, her face blushing as she ate the last piece of her braised beef. Recalling the earlier attack, Alexia found something to raise. She cautiously looked at Kieran, and when their eyes met, she asked, "Kieran, I know that I have to earn my money, but in my free time, can I please train?"

Instead of answering her question, Kieran revealed, "Alexia, I will be away for the alphas' council meeting. After that, I will visit the coast and help our warriors at the front. I invited you for dinner to discuss what you will do while I am away."

'Oh,' Alexia said in her head. "To think I dressed up for dinner. It wasn't anything special after all. Seriously, Rae. You and your suggestions."

"I'll need you to take charge of the packhouse while I am gone. You shall not go to the borders. Jaxon will cover the boundaries and matters of security." Kieran cleared his throat and resumed, "And for the rest of your time, you will train to defend yourself."

"Don't worry about earning money." Kieran leaned back. He foiled his arms against his chest. In Alexia's view, the alpha appeared to be frowning. He put his fist against his mouth. He said, "I'll ta - you."

His reply muffled into his fist that Alexia had to ask again, "I'm sorry, Kieran. I missed your reply. What did you say?"

"I'll take -" He coughed and, yet again, ate his words. "You."

Then he let out a low growl. He seemed to dislike the words that rolled off his tongue.

"You'll." Stopping in the middle, Alexia observed Kieran closely and resumed, "take what?"

"Do you not hear me, Alexia? Do you need to have your ears checked?!" Out of nowhere, Kieran's voice fortified, and Alexia leaned back in her seat in reaction.

'Seriously,' she thought. "This man is so unpredictable. One second, he seems calm, and in the next, he raises his voice!"

Standing up, Kieran gave her his back and said, "I said!" He sighed and resumed, "I'll take care of you."

'I'll take care of you?' Alexia stilled. The words echoed in her mind again and again. Her eyes fixed on his athletic frame, and she felt her ears burning.

He appeared to be untouched. He never looked her way. However, he clarified, "I'll take care of you, as an alpha should do for his pack members."

"Don't misunderstand me. I am just doing my job as an alpha," Kieran added before walking away.



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