

The Princess's Revenge Chapter 12 Read Online

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Logan's POV

The words came out before I could stop them. I felt her freeze, the cloth still pressed against my forearm.

"Knox and Axel," I continued, my voice deliberately flat, emotionless. "The black wolf you saw at the funeral—that was Knox. The silver one tonight... that was Axel."

I could feel her staring at me, her mind struggling to comprehend.

"Two wolves? I've never heard of anyone having—"

"No one does," I cut her off. "Because it's not supposed to happen."

I turned my head to look at her directly. Those purple eyes met mine with an intensity that made something in my chest tighten.

I forced my expression to remain blank even as emotions churned beneath the surface.

"Axel is Lycan bloodline," I said. "Extremely dangerous. I cannot fully control him."

Her hand had stilled on my arm, but she didn't pull away.

"Every full moon, Axel wants to come out." I kept my voice cold. "He fights me for control. Tries to break free."

"So every full moon, you..."

"I must fight alone," I confirmed. "Suppress him. Force him back until he gives up."

"You torture yourself?" The words burst from her, raw with emotion. "Every single month, you put yourself through that agony?"

The horror in her voice did something to me. Made that tightness in my chest spread, made it harder to maintain my detachment.

"It's the only way." I gave a single nod. "But tonight was different."

"Different how?"

"Axel has never been so..." I paused, searching for the right word. How did I explain something I didn't understand myself? "Calm. It was easier to suppress him than it's ever been."

I locked my eyes onto hers again, and this time I couldn't hide what I was feeling. The impossible hope.

"Because of you."

The words echoed in my mind even as I spoke them aloud. And suddenly, everything I'd been telling myself—about the mate bond, about base animal attraction—felt like the lies they were.

This wasn't just the mate bond.

The mate bond explained Knox's recognition. It explained the physical pull, the possessiveness, the need to protect what was mine.

But Axel? Axel was Lycan. Ancient, violent Lycan bloodline that predated the werewolf mate bond by millennia.

Yet tonight, Axel had submitted to her. Had gone calm under her touch.

That shouldn't be possible.

What are you? I wondered, studying her face in the firelight. What is it about you that reaches past every defense I have?

I watched her finish cleaning the last traces of dirt from my skin. Watched her prepare to leave.

"Don't go." The words came out as command.

She turned back, those purple eyes questioning.

"Alpha?"

"I need someone to tend to me," I said. "Stay."

It was a weak excuse. But before she could question it, I reached down and pulled a thick fur blanket from the chest at the foot of the bed. I tossed it toward the fireplace.

"Make your bed there. By the fire."

I closed my eyes before I could see her reaction. I turned onto my side, my breathing already evening out.

Through my closed eyes, I tracked her movements by sound. The soft rustle of fabric as she spread the blanket. The quiet groan of the floorboards as she settled onto it. The whisper of the fur as she pulled it around herself.

She was so close. Close enough that I could sense her presence like a warm flame in the darkness.

The exhaustion that had felt crushing moments ago became bearable. Even Knox, restless and worried in the back of my mind, settled into peaceful quiet.

The mate bond didn't explain Axel's submission. It didn't explain why, for the first time in my life, I'd let someone see me vulnerable and hadn't wanted to kill them for the weakness it exposed.

Valencia's POV

I stared at the blanket, then at him, then back at the blanket. But he'd already turned onto his side, his breathing evening out. The discussion was over.

With careful movements that made my bruised ribs ache, I spread the fur blanket on the stone floor near the fireplace. It was thick and soft, far better than anything I'd had access to. The warmth from the embers reached out to envelope me as I lowered myself onto the makeshift bed.

I didn't fear the cold—I never had, even during the harshest winters when other slaves had frozen to death. But that didn't mean I couldn't appreciate warmth when it was offered.

I pulled the edges of the blanket around myself and settled into a half-awake state, my senses alert for any sound from the bed. If he needed me, I wanted to hear him immediately.

Every time I closed my eyes, I saw him. Alpha Logan's cold, expressionless face as he'd beheaded that man in a single stroke. The careful gentleness of his hands as he'd cleaned and bandaged my wounds. The raw vulnerability in his voice when he'd spoken about his curse and the fear that flickered briefly in his eyes.

The contradictions made my head spin.

For the first time in fifteen years, I felt something other than hopeless despair or numb acceptance.

I felt... curious. Drawn to something—someone—I didn't understand.

I drifted off to sleep.

I jolted awake to find daylight already streaming through the window. My eyes immediately flew to the bed—Logan was gone.

Fear gripped me instantly. I'd overslept. This makeshift bed had been far too comfortable, lulling me into a deeper sleep than I'd had in years.

I pushed myself up quickly, bracing for the sharp pain from yesterday's beating. But the agony I expected never came. My ribs felt tender, but not broken. The cuts and bruises that should have left me barely able to move were already fading.

I touched my face gingerly—the swelling had gone down significantly. I could open both eyes now. Even the deep bruises on my arms had lightened to a dull yellow.

This was one of my peculiarities—one of the few advantages of whatever strange constitution I possessed. My body healed unnaturally fast. That, and my inability to feel cold. Small mercies for a wolfless girl.

A burst of noise from outside pulled my attention. Raised voices. The sound of many footsteps on stone. Commotion.

My heart began to race. I rushed to the window, pressing myself against the frame to peer down into the courtyard below. Guards were rushing back and forth near the entrance to the dungeons, their faces grim. More people were gathering—slaves, warriors, even some of the visiting Alphas' entourages.

My stomach dropped. The dungeons. Where Logan had left those two bodies last night.

They found them.

My hands trembled as I gripped the window sill. Now Alpha Logan would have to answer for what he'd done. I couldn't just hide up here while Logan faced consequences for my sake. I made my way to the door. The hallway outside was empty, but I could hear more activity coming from the lower floors.

As I descended the main staircase, I caught fragments of conversation from servants rushing past.

"—both of them, throats cut clean—"

"—Luna Kestrel is furious—"

"—calling all the Alphas to the great hall—"

My heart hammered against ribs. I reached the ground floor and pressed myself into an alcove near the entrance to the great hall. The massive wooden doors stood open, and I could see figures gathering inside.

Luna Kestrel sat at the head of the long table, her face pale and drawn. She'd aged ten years overnight. Soren stood near the window, his expression thoughtful. Elton was already positioned prominently, his Beta Zephyr at his shoulder.

And Logan. He stood apart from the others, his posture relaxed, his face completely impassive. Luna Kestrel's voice rang out, sharp with grief and fury. "Last night, two bodies were discovered in the dungeons. One was Elijah, a slave of this pack. The other..." Her voice cracked slightly. "The other has been identified as belonging to Emerald Grove Pack."

A murmur rippled through the assembled Alphas and their people.

"Both men," Luna Kestrel continued, "had their throats cut. Clean kills. The work of a trained warrior." Her red-rimmed eyes swept the room. "I have just lost my son. And now, during what should be a time of sacred mourning, there is murder within my walls. This is an insult to Mistmarsh Pack!"

The silence that followed was suffocating. I pressed harder against the wall, making myself as small as possible while still maintaining a view of the proceedings.

Elton stepped forward, his face arranged in an expression of deep concern. "Luna Kestrel, this is terrible. Simply terrible." His voice dripped with sympathy. "That someone would dare commit such violence during this sacred period of mourning... it's unthinkable."

He turned to address the room, his gaze sweeping over each Alpha present. "I propose a thorough investigation. The killer must be found and punished. Not only for the sake of justice, but out of respect for the dead. We cannot allow such dishonor to stand."

My breath caught. He was setting a trap.

Soren remained silent, but I noticed his gaze moving between Logan and me—or rather, where I was hidden. Could he see me? His green eyes seemed to linger on my hiding spot for just a moment too long before moving on.

"I suggest," Elton continued, his voice growing stronger, "that we bring in trackers. Let them examine the scene, identify the scent of the killer. The truth must not be buried."

Several heads nodded in agreement. Luna Kestrel looked like she might actually agree to the suggestion.

My fingers dug into the stone wall. Terror gripped me. Logan's scent would be all over that dungeon. The moment trackers got down there, they'd know. And then what? Would he deny it? Try to fabricate some story? Would he throw me under the carriage to save himself?

Just as Luna Kestrel opened her mouth to speak, Logan's cold voice cut through the tension.

"That won't be necessary."

Every head turned toward him. The room fell into absolute silence.

Logan's expression remained completely neutral. "I killed them."

The words hung in the air like a death sentence. I stopped breathing.