

The Princess's Revenge Chapter 5 Read Online

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Valencia's POV

The cold air bit at my exposed skin as Alpha Logan finally set me down on the muddy ground. My legs nearly buckled beneath me, weak from a month of starvation and the shock of everything that had just happened.

I'd made peace with death. Accepted it. Almost welcomed it.

But now I stood in the fading twilight, alive and utterly uncertain. The unknown terrified me in ways that my scheduled execution hadn't. At least with death, I knew what was coming. This dangerous man with his gray eyes and commanding presence—I had no idea what he wanted from me or where he was taking me.

"Follow me," he commanded, his voice as cold and sharp as the winter wind.

He didn't wait to see if I would obey. He simply started walking, his long strides eating up the ground.

I tried to keep up, I truly did. But my body was failing me. Every step sent pains through my legs. The wounds on my back from the guard's whip burned with each movement. Still, I forced myself forward. Something told me this man wouldn't tolerate weakness or hesitation.

As we walked, I realized with growing dread where he was heading. The silhouette of Mistmarsh Pack's pack house loomed ahead—a massive stone castle that seemed to grow directly from the marshland itself. Dark towers clawed at the grey sky, and narrow windows stared down like hollow eyes.

Fifteen years. I'd spent fifteen years within those walls as a slave. Every stone, every corridor, every shadowed corner held terrible memories.

And now I was walking back through its gates.

The irony wasn't lost on me. I'd been prepared to die to escape this place, and here I was, returning to it alive.

Logan's POV

The slave was struggling to keep up. I could hear her ragged breathing, the uneven rhythm of her footsteps behind me. Part of me wanted to slow down, to accommodate her obvious weakness.

But I didn't.

Knox growled disapprovingly in my mind. She's injured. Starving. Show some mercy.

If she can't keep up with a simple walk, she won't survive what's ahead, I responded coldly, though even I wasn't entirely sure what I meant by that.

The truth was, I didn't know what to do with her yet. The mate bond pulled at me with uncomfortable intensity, but she was wolfless—an aberration that defied everything I understood about how these bonds worked. I needed time to think.

As we approached the stables, a middle-aged man emerged, leading two horses. His eyes widened in shock when he saw the girl behind me.

"Alpha Logan," he greeted with a respectful bow. His gaze kept darting to the slave. "I... I thought she was..."

"Is there a problem, Bowie?" I asked, my tone making it clear there had better not be.

"N-no, Alpha. Of course not." Bowie cleared his throat, visibly collecting himself. "I just wanted to inform you that the roads are blocked. Heavy snow in the northern passes. You won't be able to return to Cliffwatch Pack tonight." He glanced at the darkening sky. "With night falling, it would be dangerous to travel anyway. Perhaps it's best to stay until morning?"

My jaw clenched. I didn't want to spend a night in this gods-forsaken castle, but the stable master was right. Traveling mountain roads in darkness and snow would be foolish, even for me.

"Fine," I bit out. "I'll need quarters for the night."

Bowie nodded quickly. "Of course, Alpha. The guest rooms in the castle are prepared. I'll inform the steward."

Valencia's POV

We approached the castle's main entrance, and my stomach twisted into knots. The massive wooden doors, carved with scenes of wolves hunting prey, stood open like a mouth ready to swallow me whole.

The exterior was exactly as I remembered—dark stone walls covered in creeping vines that looked dead in winter, narrow windows with iron bars, gargoyles perched on the corners of the battlements. The whole structure seemed designed to intimidate everyone who entered that they were stepping into a place of cruelty.

I'm back, I thought, a hollow feeling spreading through my chest. After everything, I'm back where it all began. Alpha Logan's pace didn't slow as he climbed the stone steps. I hurried after him.

Inside, the castle was exactly as I remembered. Torches lined the stone walls, casting flickering shadows. The air smelled of smoke and damp stone. Slaves bustled about with their heads down, carrying linens and trays. When they saw me, they froze. Their eyes went wide with shock and confusion.

I recognized most of them. Nella, who used to share her meager bread with me. Old Marcus (not the dead Alpha, but the elderly servant who'd worked here for forty years). Young Pip, barely twelve, who'd been taken from his family just last year.

They all stared at me like I was a ghost.

I supposed, in a way, I was. And now here I walked, alive, following behind the most dangerous Alpha.

Alpha Logan headed straight for the main staircase, his boots echoing on the stone steps. I followed, my legs trembling with exhaustion. Up one flight. Then another. Then a third.

We stopped at a heavy wooden door. Alpha Logan pushed it open without ceremony and strode inside.

The guest room was large. A massive four-poster bed dominated one wall, draped in dark fabrics. A fireplace held fresh logs, ready to be lit. Tapestries depicting hunting scenes covered the walls. A table and chairs sat near the window, and a large wooden bathtub was behind the screen. It was the kind of room reserved for visiting Alphas and honored guests.

Alpha Logan placed his sword on the table with a heavy thunk. He rolled his shoulders, and I heard the joints crack. Then he turned those penetrating gray eyes on me.

"Prepare my bath," he said in his deep voice.

I looked up in surprise. I glanced toward the door, but there were no other servants. He was talking to me.

Years of slavery had trained me to obey immediately. I struggled to my feet and hurried toward the door. Each step sent pains through my exhausted body, but I forced myself to move faster.

When I reached the second floor, I followed the familiar path toward the kitchens. The scent of roasted meat and fresh bread grew stronger as I approached—smells that

made my empty stomach clench painfully. How long had it been since I'd eaten real food?

I pushed open the wooden door to the kitchen.

The warmth hit me first—blessed heat from the massive stone ovens that lined one wall. Then came the sudden silence as every head turned toward me.

At least a dozen slaves were scattered throughout the space. Some stirred pots over the fire. Others kneaded bread on the large wooden table in the center. A few were scrubbing dishes in large basins of water.

They all froze when they saw me.

"Valencia!" Nella whispered, her flour-covered hands going still.

"A ghost," someone muttered from the corner. "She's a ghost."

"I'm not dead," I said, my voice hoarse. I didn't have time for explanations. "I need hot water. Now. For Alpha Logan's bath."

A harsh laugh cut through the shocked silence. My stomach sank as Elijah stepped forward from where he'd been leaning against the stone counter near the ovens.

He was a large man—easily over six feet tall with the kind of muscles that came from years of heavy labor. His face was scarred from some long-ago punishment, giving him a permanently cruel expression. Unlike most slaves who learned to keep their heads down and survive, Elijah had found a different path. He'd become Luna Kestrel's favorite enforcer among the slaves, the one she called on when she wanted someone beaten or intimidated.

And he'd always particularly enjoyed tormenting me.

"Well, well," Elijah said, crossing his thick arms over his chest. His lips curled into an ugly sneer. "The sacrificial lamb returns. How interesting." He took a step closer, his boots heavy on the stone floor. "Tell me, Valencia—how exactly did you escape the funeral pyre? Did you fuck one of the guards? Or maybe you spread your legs for whoever would save you?"

The other slaves shifted uncomfortably, their eyes darting between us. No one spoke up. They never did when Elijah started.

Heat flooded my cheeks, but I forced myself to meet his gaze steadily. "I don't have time for this, Elijah. Alpha Logan is waiting for his bath. He needs hot water prepared immediately."

Elijah threw back his head and laughed—a harsh, mocking sound. "Alpha Logan? You expect us to believe that one of the most powerful Alphas in the kingdom wants you to prepare his bath?" He looked around at the other slaves. "Did you all hear that? Our little wolfless whore thinks she's important now."

"I don't care what you believe," I said, my voice low and steady. "Alpha Logan gave me an order. If you don't help me fulfill it—" I paused, letting my eyes harden. "—we'll all die when he gets angry."

The kitchen fell silent again. Even Elijah's smirk faltered slightly.

I pressed my advantage. "You know what Alphas are like when they're made to wait." I looked around at each face. "Help me or don't. But if Alpha Logan comes down here looking for hot water himself, I'll make sure he knows exactly who refused."

The threat hung in the air like smoke.

Elijah's jaw clenched, his scarred face darkening with rage. For a moment, I thought he might hit me. His hand actually twitched toward me.