

CHAPTER 102

102 Lucas: Jealousy LUCAS She's going to talk to Clayton tonight. She won't let me call her, but she'll talk to him. f@ck. I'm going crazy. My wolf gives me the silent treatment, a palpable wall of disapproval and resentment radiating from him. I know he blames me for this mess. "I'm trying," I mutter, pacing the length of my office. "I'm doing everything I can to fix this." There would be nothing to fix if you hadn't rejected our mate in the first place, he snaps, his voice dripping with accusation. Rubbing my hands over my face, I struggle not to groan in frustration. He's right and I f@cking hate it. If I hadn't been so goddamn stupid, Ava would have been with me long ago, Safe. Marked. Mine. But I can't change the past. I can only try to salvage the future. 15:20 102 Lucas Jealousy Go to her, my wolf demands. Claim her before he does. I shake my head. "She needs space. I have to respect that." Space is the last thing she needs. She needs her mate. She needs us. The temptation to give in, to storm over there and drag her back to my bed, is almost overwhelming. But I can't. I won't be that kind of alpha. That kind of man. I won't be enslaved to the urges of the fate bond inside of me. I need to clear my head. Get out of this suffocating office and just... run. Without a word to anyone, I strip off my clothes and shift, letting my wolf take over. He surges forward, all coiled power and barely leashed aggression, and we race out into the woods. The cold night air whips past us as we run, the scents of summer filling my lungs. Out here, with nothing but the wind and the trees, things seem simpler. Clearer. I know what I have to do. I have to fight for her. Show her that I'm the one she belongs with, the only one who can riva harwŴw.nôve1wôRm.com

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varuthing cho nooda. 15:20 102 Lucas Jealousy But I have to do it the right way. Earn back her trust, her affection. Prove that I'm worthy of her. My wolf growls, impatient and unsatisfied, but I push on. One step at a time. One day at a time. The steady rhythm of our paws against the forest floor drowns out the chaos in my head. With each stride, the turmoil fades, replaced by the simple joy of the run. My wolf revels in the freedom, the wildness of it all. This is what we need, he rumbles, content for the first time in days. I can't help but agree. Out here, the complications of pack politics and the tangled web of my love life seem far away. There's only the wind in my fur and the earth beneath my feet. We run for miles, losing ourselves in the primal pleasure of the hunt, even if we're chasing nothing but our own shadows. The worries melt away, leaving only the purity of the moment. And then, a scent on the breeze. Something that doesn't belong. Stray dog, my wolf snorts, his nose twitching as he 15:20 102 Lucas Jealousy catches the odor. Probably some human's lost pet. But there's something familiar about it, something that tugs at my memory. I can't quite place it, but it draws me in like a magnet. We change course, following the trail deeper into the woods. The scent grows stronger with each bound, urging us on. And then we see it. A husky, its fur matted and dull, ribs showing through its skinny frame. It looks up at us with wary blue eyes, hackles raising slightly at the sight of a wolf. But I'm not just a wolf. And this is no ordinary stray. Selene. The name whispers through my mind, a half-remembered fragment from days of watching Ava in Cedarwood. But what is Selene doing out here, alone and bedraggled? And why do I get the feeling that there's more to this dog than meets the eye? Slowly, cautiously, I approach the husky, my wolf watching intently from behind my eyes. Selene stands 15:20 47 107 Lucas Jealousy her ground, her gaze locked with mine. There's an intelligence there, a depth that no ordinary dog should possess. As if she knows exactly who and what I am. My wolf's reaction catches me completely off guard. One moment he's all aloof disdain over stray dogs, and the next he's groveling on his belly like a pup begging for attention. I can only watch in stunned disbelief as he army-crawls his way over to Selene, his tail wagging so hard it blurs. What the hell are you doing? I demand, but he ignores me, too intent on his goal. Selene watches his approach with a cool, assessing gaze. She doesn't move, doesn't react, even as my wolf wiggles closer and closer, his nose stretched out to sniff at her paws. I brace myself for her to snap at him, to put him in his place. But to my utter shock, she allows the contact, her eyes narrowing slightly as his tongue darts out to lick her muzzle. Stop that! I growl, mortified by his behavior. You're making us look like an idiot. 15:20 57 102 Lucas Jealousy But he pays me no heed, too lost in his own world of puppy-like adoration. He lavishes Selene with frantic ki*ses, his whole body wiggling with the force of his excitement. And Selene... tolerates it. Oh, she's not exactly thrilled, if the faint snarl curling her lip is any indication. But she doesn't lash out, doesn't reject his overtures. It's the damndest thing I've ever seen. My wolf, the fierce and proud beast that he is, reduced to a slobbering mess at the paws of a half-starved husky. And Selene, aloof and mysterious, deigning to accept his worship with a queen's grace. Enough, I finally snap, exerting my will to rein him in. You're embarrassing us both. He whines, low and pleading, but reluctantly pulls. back, his tongue lolling out in a dopey grin. Selene regards him with an inscrutable canine expression, her blue eyes glinting with some secret knowledge. I shake my head, trying to regain some semblance of dignity. This whole encounter has thrown me for a loop, leaving me questioning everything I thought I knew. 102 Lucas: Jealousy Mate, my wolf whispers. That's crazy. My wolf iswww.nôve1wôRm.com

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