

Chapter 52 - The Collision

"If someone pushes you, you push right back." — Sara Farizan

Kiya

Sounds of hits to nylon resonated through the noiseless air of the gym. My fists hit the red coating of the punching bag, grains of sand rippling with each impact. Alternating, my feet hit the bag in rapid succession. The corner digital clock read 4:35 A.M. in bold red. Most of the pack was asleep and here I was, beating the crap out of the gym bag because I couldn't sleep.

How could I, knowing that my ex-mate was hunting for my heart?

I'm pissed as hell. Does the ol' bastard think he could have me? He had another thing coming! Every time I punch the red, I see Neron's face. That stupid smirk refused to leave my mind. His expression alone told me he was up to the challenge, oozing self-assurance that he'll emerge as the winner.

Not by a long shot!

Chapter 52 - The Collision

Fucking mate bond! I hate that thing! I thought once you accept the rejection, the initial bond should be gone for good. But now that Neron didn't mark Odessa and withdrew his rejection, it put me in a tough spot. How long until I feel it? Can I weather this crap for the entire summer?

I roared, fury hammering the punching bag faster than my eyes could track. No matter, that Alpha is still the monster who ruined my life. He gave me a permanent scar on my shoulder blade! I cannot lose sight of the clear-cut truth, Neron was my abuser and I'll never mate with him.

I rather see him suffer than kiss those damn lips.

My vision flashed. Wisps of white spiraled around my wrists, dancing across my digits. Tiny explosions of white emitted from the contact between the nylon and my flesh like tiny fireworks, lighting up around me. My power had come out to play, and it was having fun. It dances the tango with my anger, my vision flashing redder than the punching bag.

If Neron wanted a fight, I'll give him a war.

With a final yell, I punched as hard as I could. The big bag flew off its hinges, landing on the gym floor in a pathetic thud with sand dribbling out of its lesions. Sweat amassed my body, dripping from my

Chapter 52 - The Collision

temples. The white around my finger disappeared, bathing me in darkness with only a dim light shining behind me.

"No one will use that again." Artemis chuckled in our mind-link.

"Hilarious." I rolled my eyes while walking to the gym bleachers, grabbing my phone. "I'm beyond frustrated. Who the hell does Neron think he is?"

"He is a pompous jerk, and so is his wolf." She grumbled, her anger matching mine. **"They won't stop until they mark us."**

"That won't happen!" I snapped, holding my sweaty head in my hands. "Neron doesn't deserve me, and Onyx does not deserve you. I don't care what destiny says."

"As will I. When you fight, I will fight right beside you. The pain they caused us cannot be forgotten. We're fighting this together and we will emerge victorious in this war."

"You're my ride-or-die Artemis. You're stuck with me, no matter what."

"I wouldn't have it any other way."

Chapter 52 - The Collision

The noises of the gym opening cut our conversation short. I turned to see Sapphire walking in with two crisp water bottles in her hands. She was still dressed in her warm orange capri pajamas, sporting two braids in her hair.

"I figured you'd be here." She handed me the bottles. With much appreciation, I chugged down the first one, pleasurable cool washing over me like an ocean wave.

"I couldn't sleep."

"Is it Neron?" She asked. I nodded. "I can't believe he took back his rejection. I didn't know wolves could do that."

"They can, apparently." I opened the second bottle. "He's on the pursuit for my heart."

Sapphire grimaced, disapproval warping her face. "He must be very desperate if he thinks he could win you back. And now, we have a deranged she-wolf blaming our arrival for the fall of her relationship."

"Did Jackie try to toss her in the trees?"

"Almost, but Abi calmed her down." My friend chortled, folding one leg over the other. "Something tells me this summer will be one we'll remember for

Chapter 52 - The Collision

a long time."

"These next three months are going to be hell." I groaned, chugging down my second bottle. "How can I concentrate on my job when I have a fucking Alpha breathing down my neck?"

"...We could always poison him with wolfsbane." My eyes widened in shock at Sapphire's cool, unwavering tone. Seconds later, she burst out laughing. "I'm kidding! I wouldn't do such a thing! But we do need to do something about him."

I shake my head. "Neron is my problem, I'll deal with him."

"Are you sure? He won't leave you alone, Kiki. Alphas don't give up easily. They're possessive, demanding, and will fight to the end for their other halves. I mean, you saw how Anthony is with Alesia, and your Dad with your Mom."

Oh, how true that statement is. Alphas were formidable for a good reason. Dad is possessive and very protective of Mom. When the rogues attacked Garnet Moon last year, he was a war machine. He slaughtered every rogue that made the momentous offense of looking at Mom. Mom was an excellent fighter in her rights, but Dad was merciless against

Chapter 52 - The Collision

enemies. So was Anthony. When Alesia was pregnant with Ximena and rogues dared to intrude again, he cut them down swiftly. I've seen it firsthand how Alphas would stop at nothing to protect their mates.

I couldn't imagine how they were when they first found them.

And here I am, the trophy that Neron intends on getting by any means necessary.

I'm in *deep* shit.

"There has to be a way to make Neron look elsewhere," I mumbled, "He has to get back with Odessa or with another she-wolf. It is the only way to end this for good."

Sapphire was silent, eyes pointed to the side. I could smell her doubt intermingled with her apple pie scent. My confidence suddenly depleted when my friend didn't offer any words of advice. It was like she could see how hopeless this situation is.

Well, I wasn't giving up. The bastard could bark and howl all he wants. He deserves to suffer from the broken mate bond.

I won't be his victim again. I'll put a silver bullet in

Chapter 52 - The Collision

my head before that happens.

Cracking my knuckles, I cavedropped on the echoes of battle from behind me. My friends and I split our batch of warriors into groups of three to work on a specific war specialty. A smile slinks on my face as I watched Darien bark out orders to his group in their wolf forms. He looked better this morning, ready to buckle down and deliver. Galen and Sapphire worked together with their group in weaponry while Jacqueline and Abigail oversaw the hand-to-hand combat regimen.

I oversaw the training the young wolves to get their feet wet in warfare. I've met some morning during breakfast. They voiced their eagerness for their start. It made me happy to see fervent young pups ready to become stronger for the good of their pack. The youngsters would make mighty fine warriors.

As I walked to the training grounds separate from the adults, that accursed scent drifted in my nose. *His* scent. The scent I wished to rid for good.

I watched Neron lead the group of the newly shifted pups towards me, many of them sporting exercise gear, hopping with untamed excitement. I spotted

Chapter 52 - The Collision

Adama in the crowd, trailing next to his Alpha with springs in his step. The older man's oceanic blue eyes met mine, a gleam of desire shining in them as he marched closer.

Goddamnit.

"Good morning, Kiya." He spoke, a slight purr pervaded his voice. Neron's eyes raked my body up and down, flickering to black. "You look good." 

"Why are you here?" I got straight to the point, fists on my hips.

"An Alpha is not allowed on his training grounds?" Neron grinned. "I've collected the pups for you." He gestures to the 30-something children behind him. "All are ready to learn from a renowned Delta."

Young echoes of cheers resounded between us. I smiled warmly at the youngsters but frowned when my eyes flickered back to my ex-mate. "I could have done it myself, Neron."

"A little 'thank you' would suffice, my dear."

"Not going to happen." I gagged at one of his probable pet names for me. I wanted to shed my skin and smack him with the molt. "All of you, line up in

Chapter 52 - The Collision

rows of six!"

Ignoring the heated gaze and deep chuckles from the Alpha, I get straight to work. The pups obeyed, lining up in rows of six with five wolves behind the first six children. I study them, trying to spot any falters or fear in the sea of colorful eyes, but I see none. They all were ready to learn.

I beamed, crossing my arms. "I'm happy to see that this bunch of young wolves are up to the challenge. You all will refer to me as Delta Kiya. I will oversee your training indefinitely until we find your new Deltas. We have a long journey ahead of us, little ones. Training for battle and war is not for the faint of heart. I look at each of you and I see untapped potential. I'll be the one who will help you let it out. We'll start by strengthening your human selves, and then we will slowly move to wolves and weaponry. Understood?"

"Yes, Delta!" All shouted in unison. My heart thudded in excitement, cracking a bigger smile on my face. Just as I was about to start, I felt a tap on my bare shoulder. Tiny, yet noticeable sparks erupted from that single touch. My smile instantly fell as I turned to the bastard, smiling smugly.

"Mind if I offer a suggestion, Delta Kiya?"

Chapter 52 - The Collision

'It's for the pups' I tell myself. Swallowing down my anger, I give Neron a strained smile. "What do you want to say, Alpha Neron?"

"The pups deserve a demonstration of what they are about to learn." He grinned, his face shielding any detection of mischievousness. "They'll work harder if they see what their Delta is made of. Sparring would get their hearts pumping."

"That doesn't sound like a bad idea," I mutter, rubbing my chin.

The pups could get a glimpse of what is coming, to set goals to reach the level the others and I are on. Maybe if I could pull Jackie away from her teaching for a second to spar with me in front of the kids...

"Yeah, can we see it, Delta Kiya?" Adama asked me, his red-brown lips curling into a grin. I could see the anticipation on his face as the other students mumbled in agreement. God, children were my weakness. They always know how to warm my heart.

"Alright, alright." I nodded. "But just this once. After that, we are to start your official training."

I was about to mind-link Jackie until Neron spoke again. "Why don't you spar with me?" I look at him in frank disbelief, a scoff escaping my mouth. The

Chapter 52 - The Collision

game he was trying to play is obvious. It was an attempt to get closer to me. Our spar would involve a lot of touching, something I couldn't avoid.

"No way. Don't you have work to do?"

"Come on, Kiya." Neron chuckled. "Afraid that I might beat you? Too scared to fight an Alpha?"

"I fought a *better* Alpha."

The pups ood in a roaring unison, enjoying the little spat.

"You wound me." The werewolf faked hurt, his hand over his heart. "Why interrupt your friends amid their teaching when you have an available and willing participant right here?"

"It's a trap," Artemis growled. **"He's trying to rile you up."**

"I want nothing more but to beat him, Artemis. No one makes a fool out of me, not even Neron."

"I know, but I feel it. Even Onyx is excited about the fight, more of an excuse to strengthen his connection with me. We can't do this."

Chapter 52 - The Collision

"Forget it, Neron." I snapped. "I'm not sparring with you."

"Very well." He shrugged his shoulders calmly. "It's a shame that a warrior of Garnet Moon ran from a fight. The last time I checked, Deltas run *towards* the battle, armed and ready. They are the best fighters for a reason and you're denying a simple request of sparring, and from an Alpha, nonetheless. Not a wonderful image you're giving to your students, Kiya."

Deep, guttural growls rumbled deep in my chest, spilling out into the balmy air. Neron casts his glare down at me, knowing well that his words of snarkiness got to me. His smile and power stance were triumphant, his pearly smile glittering underneath the sun's rays. The fool thinks he has won, but goddamnit, he was right.

My presentation mattered. Deltas don't run. We were the vanguards in all battles, whether it be against one or fifty. It was not a title to take for granted. If I walk away now, what does that say to the pups? They will never take me seriously again, and that was a problem I needed to avoid.

The thought of Neron touching me infuriated me. His touches, until now, have been violent. And now, he wanted to change things, to rectify all his wrongs.

Chapter 52 - The Collision

I'll beat his pathetic ass to the ground.

I glared at him, my eyes burning with the fire of my willpower. "If I spar with you, will you leave me the hell alone?"

"Probably not," He laughed. "But I want to see how strong my little mate has gotten. I love a woman who could kick my ass."

And an ass-kicking is what you're about to get!

"Fine. Get in position." The kids hurriedly backed up a safe distance from us, but not without forming a semicircle with the shorter pups peeking through the gaps. We both stepped back until we were about six feet from one another. I stretched my arms and legs briefly before going into my fighting stance.

This man was built like a building, but he is going down just like one—!

Oh no.

His hands went to the hem of his shirt and peeled it off. Holy hell. ⁴

The sun kissed his muscled torso, his six-pack abs showing off themselves proudly to me. His muscles flexed and rippled with every movement he made,

Chapter 52 - The Collision

his thick blue veins protruding under his tan skin. My sight followed the thick indentations of his physique from his arms to his chest, right down to the forbidden V-line that disappeared beneath the hem of his dark jeans.

My eyes widened like plates. *Oh, dear Goddess. Why did he have to be so gorgeous?* ²

"Like what you see?" His eyebrow quirked, satisfied with the reaction he got from me.

"Shut the fuck up!"

"Watch your language around the little ones."

He finally got into his fighting stance, eyes tracking my movements. Both of us have advantages and disadvantages. I was smaller and leaner; thus, I have speed on my side. Neron was taller, and bulkier, which means his strength was his best asset. Using my powers to my advantage was something I didn't like. I wanted to fight my opponents on equal ground, and powers were only to be used when necessary.

Thus, began our war the moment our fists collided.

Chapter 52 - The Collision

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yuck. I'm sorry but even a
gorgeous abuser is vile



18

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22



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