

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 51[1,784 words]

Chapter 51

Once he was dressed, Kent knocked on Riley's door. She stepped out wearing a pair of jeans and a light green sweater that highlighted the green flecks in her hazel eyes. He couldn't help but lean down and kiss her.

He knew he should have been grateful to the interruption this morning, that he was the one who had been pushing for distance between the two of them, but the last week had felt unbearable. Being so close to Riley,

sitting in the same room with her day in and day out, holding her while they slept, and yet not pushing for

more was stretching his willpower to the very limits. Giving in had felt like bliss.

Now he forced himself to take a step away from her and maintain a respectable distance as they went downstairs and out to where his car was parked. It was a short drive to the hospital that stretched into an

uncomfortable silence as Riley stared out the window.

Penny and Max were waiting just inside the hospital doors. Penny beamed when she saw the two of them

walk in as Max raised a questioning eyebrow. Kent knew Max was going to question him later, asking why he

had brought Riley, but Kent couldn't explain why he needed Riley with him for this. Just that it was such an

important event for him and he needed her to share it.

"It's a girl," Penny said once they were close enough, throwing her arms around Kent. He smiled as she let go and turned to hug Riley.

"Pat's parents just left," Max said as Penny let go of Riley. "Lana's parents are still driving. They won't be here

for a few more hours, so Pat wants us to come up before they get here.”

“I can wait down here,” Riley said quickly, glancing around. “I know this is important for you guys. I don’t want

to intrude.”

Max smiled warmly at her. “You’ll come up with us. You’re not intruding at all.”

“Of course,” added Penny, grabbing Riley’s arm to pull her towards the elevator. “Pat and Lana will be happy

to see you.”

Kent smiled as he followed behind the two women, relieved that they hadn’t agreed to her plan to stay

behind.

Patrick was holding the baby when they walked in. She was wrapped in a pale yellow blanket, a small patch

of dark hair visible. Lana was reclined in the bed but smiled widely as they all walked in.

“She looks like her mom,” Max said, smiling down at the baby. “Thank the Goddess for small blessings like

that.”

Penny gave him a shot in the ribs but Patrick laughed. Penny carefully took her from Patrick’s arms and

cuddled her.

“How are you doing?” Riley asked Lana.

Lana laughed. “It’s kind of nice that you’re the one asking that question for once. But I’m good. Just a **little**

tired.”

“A little tired,” scoffed Penny, still looking at the baby. “I felt like I was ripped in half by the time Alex **was out**. He had such a big head.”

“**Like** his dad,” Patrick quipped.

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Penny chuckled, turning towards Kent. “Do you want to hold her?”

Kent felt his breath catch slightly as he nodded. Pau carefully passed the baby to him and Kent **awkwardly**

cradled her to his chest. He had held babies before, especially Alex when he was little. But the last time **he**

had held anything so small was the day he carried Evan.

His breath caught at the memory of all the things that had occurred that day.

The baby’s eyes fluttered open and Kent felt like it was a punch to the chest. Her eyes were the same as Patrick’s, a deep chocolate brown. Also, the same color as Lily’s. He studied her face and saw that while she did have a lot of Lana’s features, in her mouth and nose, her eyes and hair were exactly like Patrick’s – and therefore like Lily’s.

One of the last conversations Kent and Lily had was about babies. He remembered her nearly begging him

about it.

“Please *Kent*,” she had *lamented, stretching across the bed, “how long do we have to wait?”*

“I *just* want to be ready,” *Kent had replied, looking away.*

“Goddess,” *she chuckled, “is anyone ever ready to have a baby? Look at Max and Penny, they have no clue what they’re doing with Alex but they’re so happy. I just want a pup. Is that such a terrible thing?”*

Kent had relented that day, agreed that they could start trying, but they never really got the chance. She die

two weeks later.

And now she had a niece that she would never meet.

He felt Riley leaning against him as she looked at the baby. “What’s her name?” she asked.

There was a long moment of silence that caused Kent to look up. Patrick was looking at Lana, something unspoken passing between the two of them.

Patrick cleared his throat. “Well, we actually wanted to talk to Kent about that. We’ve already spoken to my

parents about it, but we want to name her after my sister. Lily

Kent barely registered the way Riley curled her hand around his bicep, clearly trying to steady him. All he heard was the rush of blood in his ears as the baby yawned, a small fist coming up from the blanket to sit just under her chin.

“That’s a beautiful name,” he managed to say past the lump in his throat, his voice hoarse. “I think it’s perfect

for her.”

“Thanks, Alpha.” Patrick sounded relieved as carefully took the baby back.

Kent looked around the room to find everyone watching him carefully. This should be a joyous moment, a moment to celebrate this new life. But all he felt was grief, thick and heavy in his chest, over the one **person**

who wasn’t here.

“If you’ll excuse me,” he managed to **say**, turning towards the door,

No one said a word as he walked out, but once he cleared the threshold – he ran.

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“I saw that going differently,” Patrick murmured after a **moment of** silence.

“He likes the name,” Riley said without thinking. **Everyone turned to** look at her. **She sighed. “He’s just**

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overwhelmed. He still misses her a lot.”

Patrick carefully handed the baby to Lana, rubbing his forehead. “He just seemed like he’s been doing better

the last year or so.”

“He’s supposed to be tough, right?” Riley suddenly felt uncomfortable as they all looked at her. “Strong alpha, strong pack and all that.” She looked at the door.

“You should go find him,” Max said softly.

She turned to look at him. “I don’t know where he’s gone.”

“Your wolf will know,” Penny explained. “Just ask her to tell you.

Riley nodded slowly before turning to the door. She walked into the hallway and realized that she had no idea where he was. She tried to follow his scent, but with so many other smells, his was getting lost.

Rose, she said, *how do I find him?*

Use the mate bond, Rose answered.

How? I’ve never *done that*.

Just close your eyes and focus on him. You can feel him.

Riley closed her eyes and focused on his feelings, on the sadness, grief and anger. She started moving before she even opened her eyes, letting her instincts guide her. She moved quickly through the hospital and found herself outside. She ran until she reached the trees, where his smell was stronger.

He shifted, Rose said.

Riley moved behind a tree and stripped quickly. Once shifted, Rose scooped up her clothes and started running. She found Kent, sitting on the bank of the stream that Pax and Rose had cuddled on the week before. He was wearing only a pair of jeans, his head bent down in his hands. She shifted and slipped her clothes on before approaching on foot.

“Just leave me alone,” he yelled without looking up.

She froze, his anger catching her off guard.

“Just go!” he hollered, still not looking up. “I don’t want you here.”

She cautiously continued forward but he stood quickly, growling as he turned to face her. She froze again, scanning his face for a clue. He looked angry, but she knew he wasn’t. He was just so sad. She took a few more steps to close the distance between them, wrapping her arms around his neck and pulling his head to her shoulder. He resisted for a second before burying his face into the crook of her neck, wrapping his arms around her waist and pulling her flush against him. She rubbed his shoulder, running her hand up into his hair as his breathing slowed.

Finally he lifted his head and she reached up, wiping the tear tracks from his face. She kissed his lips lightly.

“Come sit with me,” she whispered.

He released her and she led him over to the stream, sitting on the bank.

“Tell me what happened.”

“Lily wanted a pup,” he said, not looking at her. “Actually she wanted four. She talked about **it constantly**, **Two**

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boys and two girls. She had names picked out and everything. We were trying *for* our first **when** she was

killed.

“We had been mated for four years when she died. After two years together, she started talking about **pups** but I just wasn’t ready. I kept asking her to wait. I think I was scared. I didn’t want to be like my father. But she convinced me and we finally started trying a couple weeks before she died. Sometimes I think, if I hadn’t been so resistant to having pups, she wouldn’t have been in the woods that day.”

“That’s not your fault.” Riley frowned at him. “Her death isn’t your fault.”

“I know that.” He sighed, turning to look at her. “Sometimes I just wonder how different things could have been. When I held that baby, all I could think about was how much Lily should have gotten to have her own pup. She would have been so excited to be an aunt, but she never even got to meet Lana. Patrick met his mate a month after she died. But she would have loved that baby.”

Riley took his hand, bringing it to her lips. “But you like the name?”

He nodded. “I think it’s lovely honestly.” He rested his head on her shoulder and she rubbed his knee.

“Thank you for coming to find me,” he whispered.

“I can’t just let you wander around unsupervised,” she replied, making him laugh.

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An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 52[977 words]

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Riley woke up the same way she had gone to bed last night alone. She knew Kent had come during the night, she recalled feeling his warm arms around her and the room still smelled of him as she woke up. With

Patrick taking a leave to be with his baby, Kent needed to spend part of his afternoon and evening attending to Patrick's duties. Riley took a shower and got ready before wandering into the hall, checking the sitting

room and the office for Kent. After not finding him in either spot, she knocked on his bedroom door.

After a minute he opened the door, wearing only a towel around his waist, his hair still wet. Riley's eyes

wandered down his chest, which was still damp from his shower.

"You ok?" He was smiling at her as she looked back up at his face, her cheeks reddening slightly.

"You weren't there when I got up," she finally said.

"I came in late last night, but you were asleep." His smile widened slightly. "I needed to get up early. There's a

lot to do today and I'm going to be short of help for a few weeks while Patrick is spending time with Lana **and** the baby."

"Right," she muttered, taking a step back to resist the urge to touch him. "I'll head on down to breakfast."

"I'll be down in a few." He took a step forward, giving her a soft kiss before disappearing into his room.

After breakfast, they listened to a scouting report. Scott expressed concern that they seemed to be preparing

for an attack. There were even more rogues in the camps. The warriors from New Dawn were due to arrive

tomorrow morning and Riley prayed the attack wouldn't happen before they arrived.

Riley spent her morning in the office, working on her reports. Kent was in and out, going to check on training sessions and patrol schedules that Patrick normally handled.

After lunch, Riley changed into her workout clothes and went out to train. After working with her regular group of warriors, Riley found Leo and Wesley sparring while Max sat on the ground outside the ring. She sat

beside him as they watched Leo knock Wesley onto his pack, pinning him.

"Can you really take Leo down?" Max asked, looking at Riley. "I haven't seen anyone but Alpha take him down.

"

"Of course I have." She rolled her eyes.

"Care to spar?" Max inclined his head towards the ring.

Riley smiled. "It's your funeral."

Max was a strong fighter, but Riley was quicker than him. She had pinned him once by the time Kent

wandered over, joining Wesley and Leo where they watched outside the ring. Max wanted a second round, adamant that he was just warming up, but she took him down just as quickly the second time.

"Ok," Max laughed, as he climbed to his feet, "that's enough humiliation for me today." He grabbed his water bottle, wiping the sweat from his head. "Have you sparred with Kent yet?"

She took a drink. "No." She glanced at Kent who was watching her, the corner of his mouth turning up slightly.

"She doesn't want to lose to me," Kent said with a grin.

"Not to burst your bubble, Alpha," Wesley said, "but you would lose."

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"She actually could take you down," Max said with a laugh.

“I doubt it.” Kent rolled his eyes. “I’ve seen her spar. I could take her down easily.”

Riley turned slowly to look at Kent. “Really?” She smirked at him. “I’ve seen you spar too. I wouldn’t even

break a sweat.”

“Prove it.” Kent nodded towards the sparring ring.

Max let out a whoop as Riley walked into the ring, Kent a step behind her. The other three men took spots outside the ring to watch.

“I won’t go easy on you,” Kent warned, getting into his ready position. “Mate or *not*, I don’t lose.” She smirked again. “I don’t need you to go easy on me, Alpha.”

Riley got into her ready position and waited for Kent to make the first move. Sure enough he lunged at her. She dodged but he changed direction quicker than she expected, catching her off guard and landing a blow on her side. She wheeled away, letting out a hiss of pain. He definitely wasn’t holding back. They circled each other and he lunged again, but this time she was ready and dodged before landing a blow of her own. As he turned to move away, she dropped quickly and kicked him just under the knee. He came down hard and she jumped up, grabbing his shoulders in an attempt to flip him but he swung her off, getting back to his feet quickly.

They circled each other slowly again, but this time it was clear that Kent wasn’t going to make the first move. His expression was serious, his eyes dark as he watched her. She feigned right and when he went to block, she jumped left, grabbing him under the arm and knocking his feet from under him. He slammed hard on his back and she jumped up, driving her knee into his chest and bending down to nip at his neck.

“Got you,” she whispered against his throat.

The men outside the ring were laughing and clapping as Riley moved off of Kent. She watched him as he laid on his back, staring up at the sky, his chest heaving. A fear bloomed through her. Maybe she shouldn’t have beat him in front of the other men. Maybe she shouldn’t have embarrassed him like this. He was the alpha after all, and he had made it clear that being a strong alpha was important to him

He slowly turned his face towards her. Slowly he smiled.

“That was f*****g impressive.”

**An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 53[
1,009 words]**

She smiled back, standing up and offering her hand to him. He took it, climbing to his feet. He didn't release.

her hand right away, pulling her closer to him when she tried to let go.

"It was kind of hot too," he whispered in her ear, making her whole body go warm as he slid his free hand around her hip.

"Careful, Alpha," Max said with a laugh. "You don't want people to talk."

Kent let go, taking a step back, his eyes wolfish as he watched her. She walked over to her water bottle, taking a drink to cool herself off in more ways than one. She kept her back to Kent, trying to get herself under control as the men started talking. After a few minutes, Leo, Max and Wesley said goodbye to her and

headed back to the pack house, leaving her alone with Kent.

"You're really fast," Kent said, drawing her gaze. "I mean I knew that, I've watched you spar, but actually

having to fight against your speed is a challenge."

She shrugged. "I don't have the strength of an alpha male so I learned how to use my speed to my advantage.

"Well, you do it well." He smiled at her as he took a drink of water. "No one has taken me down since I became

alpha."

"Then it was about time someone knocked you down a peg."

He laughed. "You think pretty highly of yourself."

"Well, I just put you on your ass."

He looked away for a moment, his smile slipping. When he looked back, his face was serious.

"I'm not upset that you took me down," he said, taking her by surprise.

"I-I know that," she muttered, looking away.

He reached out, gently turning her chin to look at him. “But you were worried about that. I saw it in your face. You thought I was going to be pissed.”

She felt her jaw tremble as she jerked her chin away from his touch, looking away.

“I’m not Paul,” he said, coming up behind her. “I’m not threatened by the fact that you’re good at what you do.”

She turned to look at him.

“If anything,” he continued, “I’m thrilled. Who wouldn’t want a mate like you?”

She felt her cheeks redden as he stared down at her, running his thumb along his bottom lip.

“How about we go best two out of three?”

Riley rolled her eyes. “If you’re that eager to lose again, I guess we can.”

He laughed again, rolling his shoulders as he walked back into the ring. Riley looked across the training field

for a moment. It was almost dinner time and everyone **had** ended their training for the day, **leaving** Riley **and** Kent basically alone on the training grounds.

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“Are you coming?” Kent called.

She chuckled, walking into the ring. They got into their ready positions again, but this fight took longer. Kent was ready for her speed and didn’t make the same mistakes as the first time. They were both sweaty and out of breath when Kent lunged and Riley managed to get under him, kicking him in the back *of* the knee. He went down hard on one knee and she grabbed him from behind, slamming him backwards. She leapt over him, straddling him and nipping at his neck again.

“I win again,” she whispered, dragging her lips along his throat. “That’s two.” She kissed the tip of his chin and sat up, looking into his face.

“I don’t know,” he panted, reaching out to grab the back of her thighs. “From my perspective, I’m pretty lucky. I kind of like this position.” He moved his hands up her thighs to her, skimming the bottom of her ass.

She realized that she was straddling his waist, her hands resting on his bare chest. His fingers moved over her ass to her hips, shifting her backwards to feel the edge of his erection. She felt a rush of heat to her core. He abruptly flipped her over so her back hit

the mat and he was over her, pinning her to the ground. His forearms bracketed her head, his nose almost touching hers. He rubbed his fingers into her hair as she reached up to wrap her hands around his neck, pulling him closer. He kissed her deeply, his tongue probing

into her mouth.

When the kiss ended, he started kissing down her neck to her collarbone. When he reached her marking spot he kissed it gently before sucking on it. She felt a jolt of heat rush to her core and she moaned, burying her fingers in his hair. He kissed up her neck to her ear, gently biting her earlobe.

“Goddess, you’re beautiful,” he whispered in her ear before kissing it. “How did I get this lucky?”

He started trailing kisses down to her marking spot, where he gently nipped and sucked, sending even more heat through her.

“Kent,” she moaned, hooking her ankles around the back of his thighs as she writhed under him. He moved his hips against her, his hard c**k rubbing her s*x through their clothes. He continued to grind against her as he kissed and nipped at her neck, causing her to moan again as she dug her fingers into his shoulders. “Oy, get a room,” someone hollered.

Kent jerked his head up, looking over his shoulder. Riley could see two young warriors walking from the academy to the barracks.

“S**t, that’s the alpha,” one of them said and they both took off running and laughing.

Kent looked back at Riley, swallowing hard. They were laying in the middle of the training grounds, but it seemed they had both forgotten that for a moment. Kent rolled off her, laying on his back in the sparring ring, looking up at the sky.

“I should go inside,” she muttered, as she sat up.

“Go ahead of me,” Kent murmured, rubbing his forehead. “I’ll need a minute before I can walk again.”

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An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 54[894 words]

Kent had decided on dinner in the sitting room again after a very cold shower that had provided very little relief. The interruptions were becoming a bit maddening and he was pretty sure if there was one more, he

was going to lose his mind.

He knocked on Riley's door and then took two steps back across the hall, leaning on the opposite wall, telling himself that distance was for the best. He shoved his hands in the pocket of his jeans as he waited.

When she opened the door, Kent had to use every ounce of willpower to not move. Her hair was loose around her face. She was wearing a pair of soft-looking leggings and a loose red sweater that hung off one shoulder.

"I got us dinner," he said quickly, feeling his cheeks flush as he watched her. "I promise to keep my hands to myself."

Riley tilted her head to the side for a moment, considering him.

"That sounds like a terrible promise," she finally said, shutting the door behind her.

He couldn't help but smile as he followed her to the sitting room, watching the sway of her hips as she

walked.

Dinner was shrimp scampi and a nice white wine. Kent quickly uncorked the wine as Riley sat down on the couch. He poured them both a glass and then sat down next to her, passing her a cup. She was close enough that he could feel the heat radiating from her. He took a bite of his food, trying to ignore her closeness.

He could feel Riley's eyes on him as she sipped her wine, but he tried to keep his gaze focused on his food. He could feel her lust through the bond, which was doing nothing to calm him down.

Plus Pax was being less than helpful, offering plenty of suggestions and vivid images of what they could do

right now.

Finally Kent cleared his throat, still not daring to look at her. “I’m going to need you to think about something

else.”

“What if I don’t want to?” He could hear the amusement in her voice.

He gave a strangled sigh, setting his glass down. “Goddess, Ri. I’m hanging by a thread here. Don’t taunt me.”

She laughed softly and he finally dared to glance at her. The apples of her cheeks were red as she bit her

bottom lips, her eyes somewhat hazy.

“I told you before,” Kent said softly, “that I want you to be sure about our relationship and I’m still serious. I may have gotten carried away a few times in the last couple days, but I still stand by what I said.”

She leaned forward and set her glass on the table before turning to look at him.

“I know what I want.”

His heart rate picked up. He was positive that she could hear his heart pounding against his chest.

“What do you want?” he challenged quietly.

Riley shifted, moving to her knees. She put a hand on his shoulder and pushed him back **into the couch** before straddling his legs. He rested his hands on her hips as she leaned forward, dragging her **teeth** along

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his throat.

“I want you,” she whispered against the shell of his ear.

“In what way?” His voice was hoarse. He was painfully hard, his erection straining against the zipper of his

jeans.

“In every way.” She shifted so that she was looking him in the eyes. She ran her hand along his cheek. “I want this. I want us. I want to stay with you.”

Kent was pretty sure he forgot how to breathe for a moment, staring into her gorgeous hazel eyes, close enough to count every emerald fleck in them. He grabbed the back of her neck and pulled her mouth to his. The kiss felt triumphant as his heart pounded in his chest. She dug her fingers into his hair, dragging her nails along his scalp in a way that made him growl. He pushed his tongue into her mouth, tasting the wine, as he used his other hand to push her center down onto his erection.

She undulated on him, causing him to groan into her mouth. He moved his hand from her neck to the small of her back, forcing her even closer. He could feel her heart pounding against his chest, keeping time with his own erratic rhythm.

Finally he pulled away, gasping. “Can we go to my room?”

“Please,” she whispered, rolling her hips against him again.

He was honestly surprised he didn’t come in his pants like a teenager.

She moved off of him and he made to stand when he felt it. Max was trying to mindlink. He flinched, because one more f*****g interruption was going to be the death of him. He forced the connection closed, refusing to answer the intrusion as he stood up.

He grabbed Riley’s hand when he felt it again. He was about to throw up a mental block to stop all mindlinks when Max attempted to force the connection in a way he almost never did.

Kent froze, pulling Riley against him as he answered the connection.

This better be f**g good,*** he said harshly.

Rogues on the western border, Max said instantly. ***A f**k ton of them.***

And then the connection ended.

Comments

**An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 55[
1,080 words]**

“What is it?” Riley asked, attempting to push back from Kent’s chest *to* see his face.

She had been about ready to cry when she realized that Kent was mindlinking. They had far too many interruptions the last couple days and she was pretty sure she was *going to* combust **if** they didn’t make it to the bedroom within the next two minutes. Kent had crushed her so tightly to his chest when he took the mindlink, as though afraid she might disappear in the ten seconds it took him to have whatever conversation

was going on.

But she knew instantly that something was wrong. Everything about Kent changed within the blink of an eye.

“Rogues,” he finally said, letting go of her.

It was like someone had thrown a bucket of cold water over her.

“Where?” she asked, stepping back.

“On the western border,” he replied, already turning towards the door. “A lot of them.”

She made to follow him when Kent turned abruptly, grabbing her shoulders.

“You stay here.” It was an alpha command. She could feel the power behind it, but it had no effect on her since she was his mate and also not technically part of his pack.

“Are you crazy?” She made to move past him. “I’m an excellent fighter. Your warriors need all the help they

can get.”

Kent grabbed her elbow, pulling her towards him. “Please, stay.” This wasn’t a command, but a plea. He looked anguished.

“Kent,” she said, pulling his hand gently from her, “we don’t have time to argue. I’m a warrior. Let me do my

job.”

He swallowed hard and nodded, motioning for her to go. They ran out, shifting as soon as they were out of

the pack house.

Rose's feet hit the ground, following Pax as he ran full force towards the western border. They entered the woods, weaving between trees and leaping over rocks. It didn't take long to find the rogues, at least fifty of them. The reinforcements were arriving and the rogues were quickly being outnumbered.

Rose paused, taking in the scene, something feeling off.

This is a diversion, Riley said.

Just like before. There will be a second attack somewhere else.

On the northern border, Rose replied, turning in that direction. The rogues are camping on the northwestern part, so they're staying close to their camp to have a safe space to fall back to.

Rose had just started running when Pax let out a howl, drawing her attention. He ran past her, along with multiple other warriors. Clearly they had received word of the second attack and knew the exact location. Rose followed quickly and it wasn't long before they could smell the blood and hear the growls.

They came upon about fifty more rogues. The warriors here were vastly outnumbered. Pax dove **into** the **fight**, tearing into the closest rogue. Rose leapt on a rogue that had a warrior by the throat. She took **him down to** the ground and bit into the rogue's throat, her mouth filling with blood. She turned, **working through** more

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rogues until she felt a sharp pain through the bond.

Rose wheeled around, scanning the field.

Find him, Riley yelled. He's hurt!

Rose sniffed the air, finally catching his scent. She took off running and found Pax not far away. He **had a** large gash on his left shoulder. Three rogues were circling him. One lunged forward and bit into his right **hind** leg. When he turned to bite at the one, another lunged forward, grabbing his left front leg and pulling it hard enough for a sickening crack to ring through the air. Pax howled in pain as the third rogue leapt onto his back, biting into the already bloody part between his left shoulder and neck.

Rose ran full force and took the rogue off his back. She drug the wolf to the ground and ripped his throat out. She turned, seeing a familiar gray wolf with a black stripe take the rogue that had Pax's front leg and she leapt on the one that had his hind leg. She quickly disposed of him and ran to Pax. He was shifting back to human form, the wounds carrying over from his wolf.

Rose checked the surroundings for safety before letting Riley shift back. Riley pressed her hands into the wound on his collarbone and neck, the blood pouring out quickly despite her pressure. Kent had already lost consciousness, his head lolling to the side.

He won't heal in time, Rose cried in her head. *He's bleeding out.*

"Someone help me," Riley screamed, the panic overtaking her.

Patrick's wolf returned and he shifted back, kneeling beside him and pushing Riley's hands out of the way to use his larger ones to apply more pressure to the wound. Riley moved her hands lower to his forearm, feeling the bones to be clearly broken.

"We have wolves that run our wounded to the hospital," Patrick said, his voice far calmer than Riley felt he should be. "I have the fastest one coming right now. We'll get him to the hospital."

"He's bleeding too much," she cried, the tears threatening to fall.

Patrick had no reply as he pressed his hands harder into the wound, cursing under his breath. A minute later a large brown wolf skidded to a stop in front of them and dropped a rope from its mouth. Riley and Patrick moved Kent onto the wolf's back and Patrick used the ropes to tie him in place.

"You go with him," Patrick said as the brown wolf started running. "I need to help the others. I'll come find you

after."

Riley shifted and Rose ran after the brown wolf. He was exceptionally fast but they were far from the hospital and he was carrying a large alpha on his back. The wolf never faltered though and Riley was grateful as the hospital finally came into sight.

Nurses and doctors were standing at the doors, taking in wounded warriors as they arrived.

"It's the alpha," someone cried and a team rushed forward, pulling Kent from the wolf and putting his body onto a stretcher. Riley shifted and moved towards him when someone grabbed her arm.

"You can't go in there with him," a woman told her.

"She can," a voice boomed from behind her. Riley turned to see Max walking towards her. "Get her some clothes. She goes where the alpha goes."

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 56[1,480 words]

Someone gave Riley a pair of shorts and a shirt before leading her to the room where Kent was laying on the

table, covered in blood.

“Don’t go further,” the woman warned. “You don’t have shoes on. Just stand here. I’ll ask someone to find you

some shoes.”

She watched as they worked over him, packing wounds and starting an IV. A burly man was barking out

orders as others rushed around.

“He needs surgery,” the man was yelling, throwing bloody gauze onto the floor. Riley felt panic welling up in

her chest as the doctor cursed, blood dripping from the table onto the floor.

She felt gentle hands curl around her shoulders. “Come away,” Max whispered in her ear. “You have to let

them work. He’s going to need surgery. You can’t follow him there.”

“No,” she said forcefully, shrugging his hands off. “Go back and help the others.”

She took a step towards the room and the doctor glanced up, his eyes widening slightly as he realized she

was there.”

“Beta,” the doctor barked, “you two need to get out of here. I’ll let you know once he’s out of surgery.”

“Come on,” Max said to Riley, again tugging on her shoulder. “The rogues have been driven back. Pat, Wes

and Leo are checking the border right now. I'll stay with you."

She pulled away and he sighed, stepping in front of her to block her view. She tried to move around him but he wrapped his arms around her, forcefully hugging her to his solid chest. She tried to get away, but her whole body was weak and trembling. After a moment she gave up, burying her face into his chest as she

started to cry.

"It's ok," he whispered, stroking her hair gently. "They'll do everything they can. That's their alpha. Just come

with me, please."

She reluctantly nodded into his chest and allowed herself to be led into a small waiting room.

Max sat her down in a chair and then sat beside her, taking her hand for comfort. She gripped his fingers

hard, resting her head on his shoulder. At some point, a young woman brought in a blanket and shoes. Max covered Riley with the blanket before sitting back, letting her rest her head on his shoulder again.

As the time ticked on, Riley's head hurt and her chest started to ache. She found herself wondering what would happen with her illness if Kent died, but quickly pushed the thoughts out of her head. He had to be ok. There wasn't another option.

"This is all my fault," Max whispered after a while.

"Why do you say that?" Riley murmured, her eyes closed.

"You're going to be so angry with me," he said, his voice hoarse.

She sat up, leaning away from him so she could see his face. She could tell he had been crying as she gently let go of his hand. He bit his lip, staring at the floor.

"Because you know what the rogues are after?" she whispered.

Chapter 56

He nodded.

"You're the reason Kent won't tell me." Max's head jerked towards her at those words. "He said he was

protecting you.”

Max’s eyes widened. “What has he told you?”

“Nothing at first. But I overheard you the day Kent left for New Dawn, when you were outside his bedroom. I had woken up when you guys were talking. I didn’t mean *to* eavesdrop, but you said that whatever the rogues are after effects you more than anyone else. You and Penny. I tried to get him to tell me, but he insists that he has to protect you.”

Max stared at her for a long moment. “He thinks the rogues are after my son, Evan.”

“What?” Riley exclaimed. “Why would the rogues be after a child?”

Max sighed, rubbing his hands over his face. “You know that he is adopted, but there is so much more to his story. Did Kent ever tell you what exactly happened with the rogues in the forest four years ago? The ones we

hunted down after Lily died.”

“He said that he killed them all himself,” she said slowly. “He said you and Pat just watched. That some of the rogues were defenseless.”

“Yeah.” Max nodded, swallowing hard. “It was like that. Kent lost his mind after Lily died. The scouts had tracked the rogues involved to that small camp. Pat and I went with him, but no one else from the pack

came.

“Once we got there, though, we couldn’t stop him.” Max’s face twisted at the memory. “He ran into that camp like he was rabid. He started killing everyone. We could only watch. It didn’t even take that long. When he was done, his fur was matted in blood and he looked absolutely feral. But then...” He trailed off, looking at his

hands.

“What happened?” Riley prompted.

Max swallowed hard again. “We heard this crying. Pax walked into a tent but Kent walked out. He was carrying this baby, a pup who was about a year old. We didn’t know what to do. We didn’t know which of the rogues the boy belonged to. We took him back to the pack. He was so small and undernourished. The doctor said he hadn’t been cared for properly in quite some time. He had marks on him, bruises, like someone had been hitting him. He had old, healed fractures they found on X-rays. There was one in his arm that didn’t heal properly and it had to be rebroken and reset.”

“That’s awful,” Riley whispered.

“It was,” Max agreed. “He was just a baby and he had already suffered so much. We debated for weeks about what to do. Since I was the only one with a kid at the time, he just became my responsibility. I already had clothes that fit him and a space prepared for children so it just made sense at first. We were worried that if we reached out to the council that they would question the attack. We worried that they might question Kent’s state of mind and his ability to lead, so we just didn’t say anything.”

Riley frowned, her forehead furrowing. “But what did you do about the baby? You have to declare a rogue orphan before one can be legally adopted. How did you end up adopting Evan?”

He shrugged. “We just told people that Penny and I had taken in an orphan from a neighboring pack. No one really questioned it.”

< Chapter 56

“You never formally adopted him?” she whispered. “You have an undeclared orphan in your care?”

He nodded, biting his lip again.

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“You have to declare orphans so that bloodlines can be traced,” Riley exclaimed. “You can’t just keep a baby. It’s not a f*****g dog. He could have family out there. Family that could take care of him.”

“I am his family,” Max snapped, his eyes darkening. “I take care of him. I have for years.”

She shook her head, pressing on her temples to clear the pain. “I didn’t mean it like that, Max. I know you love him. I know that you are good to him. I just meant that blood family is always the first goal with an orphan. Not declaring him is illegal. You could get in trouble. The Council can take him away from you.”

“Don’t you think I know that?” he spit out, his face red. “We knew the risk we were taking, but we never thought someone from the Council would find out. We’d never had Council involvement in our pack. We had no reason to think we ever would.”

“s**t,” she whispered, looking up at the ceiling for a moment. “What makes you think these attacks are related to him?”

“We captured a rogue about two months ago during an attack,” Max said softly. “We only had some Council warriors at the time and a head warrior, but it wasn’t Leo. It was the other guy, Doug the prick. We didn’t tell him we had a prisoner. He kept screwing s**t up

and he was a real pain in the ass so Kent didn't want him involved. We interrogated the rogue without him knowing."

Riley shook her head. "Do you guys follow any rules?"

"The rogue told us about the woman leading the rogues," Max continued, pretending that Riley hadn't spoken. "He told us that she was searching for her child, a child that was stolen by this pack. We knew immediately that he meant Evan."

"So you've had this information for over two months and you've chosen not to share it," she exclaimed. "Do you realize that you've been putting this entire pack in danger?"

"I've been protecting my son," he cried, standing up. "I had to do what was best for him."

"Fuck."

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 57[1,579 words]

They both turned to see Patrick in the doorway, his face pale as he stared at the two of them.

"How much have you told her?" Patrick asked, his voice strained.

"Everything." Max shouted. "I told her f*****g everyting."

"Why would you do that?" Patrick yelled back. "We agreed to wait."

"Wait for what though?" Riley exclaimed, looking between the two of them. "How many attacks were **you**

going to wait through before you told me what they are after?"

Patrick and Max exchanged glances.

"What were you waiting for?" she demanded...

"We've come this far," Max said to Patrick. "We might as well tell her everything."

Patrick held his hands up in front of him. "This is all you, Max. I'm not doing this. I'm not f*****g doing this!"

His voice rose at the end, his hands shaking.

“What are you yelling about?”

The three of them turned to see Leo standing in the doorway, looking between the three of them warily. He

was wearing only a pair of sweats, his chest streaked in dried blood. It was clear he had come directly to the

hospital.

Riley shook her head, grabbing her temples as a wave of pain pounded through her head. A moment later she

felt Leo’s arms around her, hugging her tightly to his chest. She could smell the blood on him as she tried to

stop her tears.

“Her mate is hurt,” Leo said accusingly over her head. “Why are you upsetting her like this?” He rubbed her

back soothingly. “Does anyone even know what is happening with the alpha right now?”

“He’s still in surgery,” Patrick said quietly. “I checked right before I came in here.”

“I didn’t mean to upset her.” Max’s voice sounded strained. “I was trying to explain something to her. I guess

apologize in a way.”

“Apologize for what?” Leo asked, his voice sharp.

Riley gently pushed out of Leo’s embrace, wiping her face. He looked her over, frowning darkly.

“I guess...” Max took a deep breath. “I guess I feel like this is my fault.”

“How?” Leo looked confusedly at Max, his forehead furrowing.

Max rubbed the back of his neck, sighing. Slowly he started explaining to Leo what he had already told Riley, explained how he knew that the rogues were after his son. When he finished, Leo opened his mouth but **no** words came out. He looked around the room for a moment before his eyes landed on Riley.

“You knew that they were hiding this?” he asked incredulously.

She sighed. “I knew they were hiding something. I just didn’t know what **it** was. Kent refused to tell **me**. **He** said he had to protect Max, **that I** needed to wait.”

Chapter 57

“Wait for what though?” Leo said, shaking his head.

“I don’t know,” she exclaimed, feeling close to tears again. “They haven’t told me that.”

Leo turned his eyes to the other two, his lips pursed. “What were you three waiting for?”

Pants

Patrick shook his head, sinking down into a chair and dropping his head into his hands. Max raked a **hand** through his blond hair, his face red.

“We were waiting for Riley to accept Kent as her mate,” Max finally said.

“What?” Riley felt confused, pressing her fingers against her forehead to try to stem the throbbing pain.

“We agreed,” Max said slowly, his voice soft, “that once you accepted Kent, we would tell you everything. We knew that you would help us keep this secret once you were our luna.”

She frowned, looking at Leo. He was staring at Max, his mouth agape and his eyes wide. Patrick looked up through his fingers, watching Riley.

“Who...” She paused, looking between the three men. “Who said I was ever going to accept him?”

Max swallowed. “Kent said so. He was so sure about it when he got back from New Dawn. He didn’t think it would take much longer.”

Riley felt her mouth go dry as the world suddenly tilted. Leo grabbed her arm, keeping her on her feet as she staggered slightly. He guided her to a chair, sitting her down gently. She could hear Max saying something else but his words weren’t registering.

All she could think about was the last week. She thought about going to sleep in his arms every night and waking up with him in the morning. She thought about the passionate moments over the last couple days, of

being on his lap just hours earlier, so ready and willing to accept him.

Was it all part of his plan? Get her to accept him so that she would keep his secret?

“It’s not like that.” Patrick’s voice cut through her fog. She looked up to see him watching her. “I know what

you’re thinking and it’s not like that. Kent cares about you. He really does.”

“He does,” Max echoed, taking a step towards her. “You don’t realize it, but you’ve brought him back to life. I

haven’t seen him as happy as he’s been the last few weeks with you.”

“Your whole plan depended on me accepting him,” Riley whispered, the words tasting bitter as they came out.

“Stop,” Leo said softly, stepping in front of Riley, blocking her view of the other two. “Just stop. I don’t know what you two have been thinking. I don’t know what to think right now, but I can’t believe you’re doing this to her now. Her mate is seriously hurt, in surgery and she’s still covered in his blood. Yet you decided the best time to clear your conscience was right now. You’re both pretty unbelievable.” He shook his head. “I’m taking her back to the packhouse to wash off and get clean clothes. I expect you will send word the moment the alpha is out of surgery.”

The beta and gamma murmured agreement as Leo turned, taking Riley under the arm and guiding her from the room.

Leo went down to his own room to shower and change clothes once he got Riley safely **to her room**. **She felt** tired and sick, her body aching sorely as she walked towards the bathroom. She **wanted nothing more than**

< Chapter 57

to lie down in her bed and sleep, but the sight of Kent’s dried blood still on her hands propelled her into the bathroom. She turned the water so hot she was sure it would burn her skin and stood there, watching the water tinged pink with blood as it swirled around the drain.

Once she was out of the shower, she pulled on a pair of sweatpants and a sweatshirt, forcing herself to braid her long hair before laying down in the bed. Her chest throbbed as she pulled her knees to her chest as she closed her eyes. There was no relief though. All she could see was the blood pouring out of Kent’s wound as she pressed her hands against it. She saw his lifeless body hanging from the back of the wolf that ran him to the hospital and she could still hear the shouts of the doctor who was trying to stem the flow of blood before.

he went to surgery.

She heard the door open and looked up to see Leo step in, his hair damp from his shower, wearing a pair of black sweatpants and a black t-shirt. He climbed into the bed beside her, heaving a heavy sigh.

“This is a mess, Ri,” he muttered, staring at the ceiling.

“I know,” she murmured, her chest aching. “I should have told you the moment I realized he was hiding

something.”

Leo rubbed his forehead. “Yeah, I guess you should have but...” He turned his head to look at her. “I don’t know what I would have done in your position. You’re one of my best friends. I’ll always trust your judgment. If you had a reason for not telling me, I’m sure it was a good one.”

She smiled faintly. “You’re a good friend. But I still should have told you. We’re supposed to be a team. I feel like I’ve been off my game since meeting Kent. Like I can’t think straight.”

Leo nodded. “That’s what having a mate does to you. Did you think clearly with your first mate?”

She scoffed. “Of course not. I was a complete i***t with him.”

Leo stared at her for a moment before looking back to the ceiling. He chewed on his bottom lip for a moment before sighing. “For what it’s worth,” he said after a moment, “I think Kent cares about you. They said that he was sure you would accept him once he came back from New Dawn, but he wanted to be with you before he came back. I spent a lot of time talking to him on that trip.

She closed her eyes tightly. “I can’t think about this right now, Leo,” she whispered. “I just need him to be ok and then I will figure the rest out.”

“I’m sorry,” he said soothingly, taking her hand. “I’ll stop talking about it. I think you’ve been through enough

today.”

“Can I tell you something?” she whispered, opening her eyes to see him watching her.

“Of course.”

“And you won’t repeat it?”

He nodded.

“I wanted to accept him tonight, right before the attack.”

Leo’s eyes widened. He opened his mouth to speak when someone knocked on the door.

“Riley,” Max called. “He’s out of surgery.”

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 58[1,011 words]

The first thing that Kent registered was pain. Excruciating pain. He tried to open his eyes but everything hurt,

He felt her hands on his face, her warm breath against his brow

“It’s ok,” she was whispering. “Just go back to sleep.”

“Are you... ok?” He tried to look towards her but she ran her fingers over his eyelids, keeping them shut.

“I’m fine,” she whispered. “You need to rest.”

“Stay,” he pleaded, his voice sounding small, almost child-like.

“Of course,” she replied, her fingers dancing over his brow, pushing his hair back. “I’m not going anywhere.”

He wasn’t sure how long it was before he opened his eyes. The room was dim. A machine beeped out a steady rhythm somewhere behind his head. It took a moment before things came into focus, the hospital room slowly forming before his gaze.

Glancing to his right he saw her.

Riley was curled in an armchair, wrapped in a blanket. She looked so peaceful, like she had every morning. He almost always woke up before her and he had gotten used to watching her sleep. She always carried some tension around her eyes when she was awake, but it faded when she slept.

He tried to shift and pain shot through him. He tried to stifle the groan but clearly failed as Riley’s eyes shot

open.

“You’re awake,” she said, quickly moving out of the chair to his side. She pushed the hair off his forehead

“Don’t move. You’re really hurt.”

“I can tell,” he whispered through gritted teeth.

“I’ll get a nurse,” she said, turning towards the door.

He wanted to beg her not to leave his side, but she was already gone before the words had formed on his lips. A moment later she came back, followed by an older man with a shock of gray hair.

He recognized Dr. Harting immediately. He was the same man who had told Kent about his father’s death ten

years ago.

“You’re awake, Alpha,” the doctor said warmly. “I always knew you were a fast healer, but having your mate nearby has certainly helped.”

Kent tried to stifle his shock that the doctor knew about Riley as the doctor began explaining the extent of his injuries. A broken leg, the bones in his forearm crushed, his collarbone crushed and a deep laceration to the shoulder and neck that had required surgery to stem the blood loss. Dr. Harting asked about pain as he took Kent’s vitals and checked the bandages around some of the wounds.

“Overall, I think you could go back to the pack house today if the leg is healed,” the doctor finished. “I’ll order **an** x-ray. The shoulder and arm will take longer to heal because the damage is **so** extensive, so you’ll not be able to do much for another day or so.”

Kent nodded as the doctor headed out. He turned to see Riley watching him apprehensively **from her chair**.

Chapter 58

“The doctor knew you were my mate,” he whispered, smiling slightly.

She didn’t smile. She chewed her bottom lip for a moment before nodding.

“He wasn’t going to let me stay so Max told him,” she murmured.

Kent frowned. “Is something wrong? Did you not want him to know?”

Had she not told him just last night that she wanted to stay with him? He was positive he hadn’t imagined that. She had made her decision. So why did she suddenly look so scared?

“It’s not that,” she whispered, looking away.

Before she could reply, there was a knock at the door. A young tech walked in to announce he was taking

Kent down for x-rays. Riley scrambled to her feet, muttering something about breakfast before she disappeared out the door.

Kent’s stomach twisted with unease throughout the x-rays, his mind racing about what could have possibly

happened with Riley.

When he came back to his room, he was somewhat disappointed to see Max and Patrick waiting for him and no sign of Riley. He noted how exhausted both of his friends looked, an odd look of apprehension on both of

their faces.

“What’s wrong?” he asked the moment the tech was out the door.

Patrick and Max exchanged a look.

“What do you mean?” Patrick finally asked.

“Something is wrong,” Kent snapped, his anger rising. “Don’t treat me like I’m stupid just because I **got** hurt.” He glanced towards the door. “Riley was here when I woke up but something was off. And now you two are acting like you got caught doing something wrong. So what happened?”

Patrick and Max exchanged another look. Kent was ready to smash their heads together if he could have gotten out of the bed.

“Let’s just focus on getting you out of the hospital,” Max said wearily. “We can talk about it later.”

“We’ll talk about it now,” Kent snarled. “I’ll command it if I have to. You won’t keep information about my mate

from me again.”

Both men flinched.

“We will talk about it later.”

Kent looked up to see Riley standing in the doorway, holding a cup of coffee. The force of her voice shocked him, as though she had decided she was the alpha instead of him. He opened his mouth to argue and she

cut him off.

“If you command them to tell you,” she said sharply, stepping into the room, “then you and I will be done.” He froze, the blood draining out of his face. Every bit of fight fled him as he read the seriousness in her expression, the cold glint in her eyes.

She was clearly pissed and he had no idea why.

“I’m going back to the pack house,” she said firmly. She turned to Patrick and Max. “**I trust the two of you to**

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get him back there. I’m sure you two can at least do that without f*****g it up.”

Both men flinched again.

“What the hell?” Kent muttered, glancing between all of them.

“We’ll talk later,” Max whispered, his expression pained. “Please, Alpha,”

Comments

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 59[1,613 words]

Chapter 59

It was Patrick who knocked on her door this time. She opened it to see his disheveled hair, **dark bags** under

his eyes. Any other day she might have chalked that up to the new baby, but today she knew **better. It brought** her an odd level of satisfaction to see him looking so terrible. He softly asked her to come to Kent’s **office**,

that Kent was insisting they talk.

“We haven’t told him anything,” Patrick explained as she stepped into the hall. “We wanted you *to* decide how

to handle this.”

“How considerate,” she muttered sarcastically, walking past him. She pushed open the door to see Kent sitting on the couch, wearing a pair of black sweatpants and a green t-shirt. The bandages were still visible

on his shoulder and neck, his arm still in a sling. Max sat in a chair across from him, leaning forward to rest

his elbows on his thighs. Riley noted that Max looked as exhausted as Patrick.

Kent looked up as she walked in. “What the hell happened? These two are being so quiet it’s scary.”

She walked over to sit in a chair as Patrick sunk down heavily on the couch beside Kent. She moistened her

lips with the tip of her tongue, looking between the three of them.

“I think Max can tell you,” she said finally.

“Fuck.” The color drained out of Max’s face as he looked towards her. He rubbed his face, sighing.

“Tell me what, Max?” Kent demanded.

“..” Max sighed again. “Listen, Kent, I’m really sorry. I was just so upset last night. I couldn’t help but feel like

you getting hurt was partially my fault. I asked you not to tell her about Ev but maybe if you had..” He rubbed

his face again.

Kent straightened, his eyes widening as he realized what Max was saying. “What the f**k did you tell her?”

“Everything,” Patrick cut in. “He told her f*****g everything.”

Riley leaned back in the chair, watching the three of them carefully. Kent looked at her, his eyes still wide and

she calmly raised an eyebrow at him. He looked back at Max.

“Keep talking,” he growled.

“I told her about Evan,” Max said, dropping his head into his hand but continuing to speak through his fingers. “I told her how you found him. I told her how we never officially adopted him, how we never disclosed his

presence to the Council. I told her about the rogue we caught a couple months ago. How we interrogated him

and what he said.”

“f*****g hell,” Kent cried. “I told you to let me handle it when you were ready. I told you she would be f*****g

pissed.”

“It gets worse,” Riley said quietly. Kent’s eyes snapped to hers, the color draining from his face.

“How is that possible?” he whispered.

“I misspoke,” Max groaned, looking up. “Riley, I didn’t mean for it to sound like **that**. You just misunderstood.”

“No, I didn’t,” Riley snapped, “You said what you said.”

Chapter 59

“What did you say?” Kent yelled.

“She wanted to know what we were waiting for, what we were waiting to happen before we told her,” Max explained quietly.

“He told her that we were waiting for her to accept you,” Patrick cut in, slumping back on the couch. “He **told** her that you were pretty positive she would accept you soon.”

Kent opened his mouth but no sounds came out. He closed his mouth, swallowing hard.

“Holy f**k,” he said, his voice sounding strangled. “Max, why would you say it like that?” He looked at Riley.” That sounds way worse than what was actually said. I never meant it like that. You have to believe me.”

Riley narrowed her eyes. “I don’t have to believe anything.”

“Riley,” he pleaded, his cheeks reddening, “come on. You told me you were staying last night. I thought we were going...” He trailed off, as though remembering that there were two other people in the room.

“Oh, f**k,” Max whispered into his hands. “f**k, f**k, fuck.”

“Max, Patrick, please leave.” Riley sounded far calmer than she felt as she looked at the beta and gamma. Patrick stood quickly, seemingly relieved to be able to go but Max hesitated.

“Listen, Riley,” Max started.

“Just shut the f**k up, man,” Kent yelled. “You’ve already done enough. Just f*****g go.”

Max looked at Kent for a moment before nodding. He stood up, walking to the door where Patrick was waiting. After they left, Kent leaned back on the couch, looking up at the ceiling. The silence in the room was deafening, but Riley knew she wasn’t going to be the first to talk.

Finally Kent looked at her. “Riley, please listen to me.”

“I’m listening,” she said carefully.

“I wanted to tell you about the boy. I really did. I told Max that we should be up front with you about it, but he

insisted that it was too much of a risk. He’s worried about the Council taking his son. He’s worried how Penny insisted that it was too much of a risk. He’s worried a

and Alex will handle losing Evan. They’re a family and they’ve been so for four years. They love that child like

he’s their own.”

“You still should have told me,” she said simply.

“I know,” he moaned, leaning back into the couch. “But Max is my best friend. He’s been with me through

everything. He’s never let me down. He was there when my mom and brother died, when my dad died, when

Lily died. I couldn’t **just** go against his wishes. I was stuck between my mate and my best friend, but my best

friend hadn’t been toying with the idea of rejecting me. So I went with what he wanted.”

She flinched at the last comment, trying to ignore how much that stung. “Even so,” she said after a moment, “you just decided to get me to accept the mate bond so I could keep your secret.”

“That wasn’t my idea,” he said miserably.

“How could it not have been?”

“Max said that if you were to **accept** the bond, then he would be willing to tell you everything because you would be his luna. He thought you would be more loyal to him and Penny in that **position**. He asked **if I** thought it would happen soon.”

< Chapter 59

“And you said?” she asked quietly, raising her eyebrows.

“I’d just gotten back from New Dawn,” he muttered. “We spent the night together in your bed for the first time. I thought things were going well.”

“What did you tell Max?” she asked, louder than she meant to.

“I thought it would happen soon,” he yelled. “I told him that I thought it would happen really soon, that I was feeling good about our relationship.”

“So you figured you would just get me to accept you and then your secret would be safe?” she sneered.

“That’s not true and you f*****g know it,” he snapped, glaring at her.

“How do I know that?” she challenged.

“I told you that I didn’t want you to feel pressured into this bond with me. I told you we needed space and I never wanted you to say you felt forced. I told you that right after I talked to Max and Patrick.” He was yelling, his face red as he leaned forward. “Don’t you remember? You had just finished talking to that f*****g alpha at New Dawn and then you tried to take my pants off in your bed.”

Her face flushed at the memory of it. She looked away, remembering how frustrated he had looked.

“This is exactly why I asked for space,” he said after a moment, his voice much gentler. “I knew at some point we would have to talk about this and I didn’t want you to feel like I tricked you. I didn’t want you to be with me because of this secret or the child. I wanted you to be with me because you want to be with me. Because I... I

... care about you.”

She looked up, his expression gentle. “I don’t know what to think, Kent.”

“Listen,” he whispered, leaning forward. “I would never purposely hurt you. I would never force or trick you into accepting me. Anything I’ve done for you or with you in the last week has been about you and my feelings

towards you.”

She knew he was being honest. She could feel it, but it still didn’t take away the sting of feeling betrayed.

“I think I’m glad you know now,” he said with a sigh. “I’m glad you found out before you accepted me. Because now there’s no more secrets. You don’t have to feel like there is a hidden agenda in our relationship. I want to be with you because of you and for no other reason.”

He sounded so genuine that it hurt. She wanted him to be the villain, she wanted to be angry, but she couldn’t. She just felt exhausted.

“I need to think,” she said, standing up. “I’m going to get something to eat and then lay down.”

He nodded weakly. “I can ask them to send up some food if you’d rather not go down right now.”

“That would be good,” she muttered, walking past him. “Thanks.” She stopped at the door, turning to look back at Kent. “I am going to have to call my commander. You do realize that, right?”

He nodded. “I always knew you would. I’m not going to stop you. Just tell me after it’s done.”

Comments

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589

**An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 60[
1,412 words]**

Riley felt terrible after lunch, trying to sit at her desk to work was proving useless. Her body was achy and sore as she closed her laptop. She had managed to confirm with the commander for a video chat the next

morning to update him on the situation, but she couldn't focus long enough to write the report on the attack. When she tried to write out what happened, all she could see was Kent's body on the ground, blood pouring

from his wounds.

So she gave up, pushing the laptop away. She had just stood up when there was a knock at the *door*. She

opened it, surprised to see Leo and Wesley standing on the other side.

"We wanted to check on you," Leo said with a faint smile. "I heard that the alpha got out of the hospital today.

She nodded. "He did."

Wesley shifted his weight from foot to foot for a moment, frowning. "Leo filled me in on some stuff," he said

finally. "I was hoping you would feel up to talking about it."

She sighed, motioning for them both to come in. Both men sat in the armchairs while Riley sat on the edge of her bed, rubbing her forehead.

"How are you feeling?" Leo asked, his forehead creasing.

She shrugged. "I've had better days. I need space from Kent to think clearly so I guess I'll just feel miserable."

"The last time you had space from him I thought it was going to kill you," Wesley said softly. "Maybe space

isn't the answer."

She frowned at Wesley. "What did Leo tell you?"

"I told him everything that happened at the hospital," Leo cut in.

"We don't have to talk about it if you don't want to," Wesley said quickly. "I know you've had a rough night and

morning. It can wait until tomorrow."

“There’s no sense in that.” Riley waved her hand dismissively. “We may as well just talk about it. Kent got out

of the hospital this morning and we talked.”

“What did he say?” Leo asked.

She sighed. She didn’t want to go into a lot of detail about their conversation. It just felt so private to her. She

chewed her lip for a moment, deciding how best to explain it.

“Kent said that it was Max’s idea to wait until I accepted the bond. He admitted that he thought I was going

to accept him soon, but he has also been making it a point for the last week to tell me how he doesn’t want

me to feel pressured.”

“Do you believe him?” Wesley asked quietly.

She shrugged, looking at the ground. “I know he isn’t lying.”

There was silence for a moment before Wesley spoke again. “Are you going to accept him?”

She bit her **lip**, frowning her forehead as she continued **to stare** at the floor. “I don’t know. I was going to but

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now I... I don’t know.”

There was a beat of silence. “Can I ask you a different question?” Wesley said.

She looked up to find him watching her. “I guess.”

“If you knew that Kent was lying a week ago, why didn’t you tell Leo or I?”

+ Points

It was a fair question, but one with no easy answer. “At first because I thought I could get him to tell me quicker if you didn’t know. I thought he would talk sooner if I tried to make it seem like it was just between me and him. But then... I don’t know. He just kept asking me to wait and I just wanted to believe that he knew what was best, that he was trying to

do what was best. It was just so important to him to protect Max and I guess I wanted to respect that.”

Wesley stared at her for a long moment. “I do understand what you’re saying. I think you were in a bad position with your mate, but…” He took a deep breath, glancing at Leo before turning back to her. “I think you need to make a decision about Kent and make it soon. I think this whole situation has clouded your judgment considerably. You are acting in ways that seem very unlike you and keeping secrets from Leo and I, your teammates, when we would have been able to help you.”

Riley’s chest tightened. “I’m sorry. I know I’ve been hiding a lot of things lately. It’s not acceptable and I won’t

do that again moving forward.”

Wesley rubbed his chin for a moment. “We need to tell the commander everything.”

“I know,” Riley said with a nod. “I’ve scheduled a video meeting with him tomorrow morning. But I would prefer to talk to him on my own. I’ll take full responsibility for my actions. I don’t want to see any consequences for either of you.”

Wesley raised an eyebrow. “Are you sure? I can be there, I can take whatever comes at me.”

She smiled slightly. “I know you can, but I need to do this myself.”

“Are you going to tell him everything?” Leo asked quietly.

She nodded. “Everything. Even what’s going on with Kent.”

“Good.” Wesley stood up. “Now you need to find your mate.”

“Why?” She frowned at him.

“Because you clearly don’t feel well,” he said simply.

She shook her head. “That doesn’t matter.”

Wesley rolled his eyes. “You’re too stubborn for your own good.” He turned, heading towards the door.

Leo chuckled when the door shut behind him. “That went well.”

She stared at Leo for a moment. “It actually did. Wesley was pretty level headed which isn’t a way I’m used to describing him.”

Leo smirked. "His mate has mellowed him out quite a bit. Plus I may have threatened him to be nice."

"You didn't have to do that," she muttered, rolling her eyes. "I could have handled him yelling at me."

"Perhaps, but you've had a rough day."

There was a knock at the door and this time she knew who was there just by the way her heart fluttered in

2/3

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her chest at the sound.

"Come in," she called towards the door.

Kent opened the door, looking from her to Leo and back. "Wesley told me I needed to come here."

Leo laughed, standing up. "I should go."

"I'm going to punch him," Riley muttered, shaking her head.

* Points >

"He's just trying to help," Leo said with a smile as he moved to the door. Kent stepped out of the way as Leo

walked out and then turned back to Riley.

"I take it you didn't request my presence," he said, his voice soft.

She sighed and stood up, walking towards him. "No. Wesley thinks I'm being stubborn."

"Well, you probably are. You're always stubborn."

She scoffed. "You're one to talk."

He frowned at her for a moment. "You have been feeling sick though. I was trying to ignore it."

"I'm fine," she said, sighing. "You're the one that just got out of the hospital this morning."

He smiled wanly. “Yeah, I’ve definitely had better days. That was a hell of an attack. I’ve never been hurt this badly before.”

Riley suddenly remembered the blood pouring from his neck, the way her hands did nothing to stop the flow. She remembered the panic and fear in the pit of her stomach, convinced he was dying before her eyes and

she was useless to stop it.

“Hey,” Kent said, wrapping his good hand around her shoulder, “what’s wrong?”

It was then that she realized she was shaking, tears pooling in her eyes as she struggled to catch her breath. Kent wrapped his good arm around her shoulders, pulling her gently against her chest.

“It’s ok,” he whispered into her hair. “Tell me what’s wrong.”

“I thought you were going to die,” she managed to say into his chest, her voice strangled. “I was so scared. I kept thinking you were going to die and I didn’t know what I would do if I lost you.”

“I’m ok,” he said soothingly, kissing her hair. “I’m fine thanks to you.”

She wrapped her arms around his waist, burying her face into his chest. She took a deep shuddering breath, inhaling the smell of him.

“I’m still mad at you,” she whispered into his chest.

“I know,” he replied, but she could hear the smile in his voice.

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