

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 61[1,184 words]

Chapter 61

Kent did not sleep well. He had slept in his own bed at Riley's insistence. She had demanded space from him

to clear her head so she could focus on making the right choice. He didn't really feel in a position to bargain

with the woman who had saved his life and then felt betrayed by him, so he acquiesced to her demand.

Then he spent the night struggling to get comfortable, torn between the discomfort of his still bandaged arm

and shoulder and Riley's illness that pulsed through the bond all night. Pax had begged him to go to her, but

Kent resisted. He knew it was not the time to push her. If she needed space, he would give her all the space

he could, even if it pained him to do so.

He had asked for breakfast to be sent up and was sitting behind his desk sipping coffee when Riley walked in

without knocking. She looked rough, her skin pale with dark bags under her eyes. Her hair was pulled back

into a tight bun and she wore a pair of jeans with a soft cream sweater.

She nodded at him before beelining to the coffee and bagels that sat on the coffee table. She sunk into the

couch, sipping coffee slowly.

"How was your night?" he asked, watching her over the rim of his coffee cup.

“You know how it was,” she muttered, leaning back into the couch and closing her eyes. “It was about as

good as yours was.”

He smiled slightly. “I would have slept better if someone didn’t have such awful nightmares.”

She glanced at him, her cheeks reddening. “I wouldn’t have had nightmares if someone didn’t almost get

himself killed.”

He grimaced, looking away. It killed him to think she was dreaming about his injuries. He had held her for a while the night before when she broke down in her bedroom. It hadn’t occurred to him how strongly she would react to his near death experience until she had been going into a panic attack right before his eyes. He hated that he was causing her any more pain than he already had.

“I have a call scheduled with the commander in half an hour.”

He felt what little blood remained in his face drain. “What are you going to tell him?”

“Everything.” She didn’t look at him, just stared across the room, taking another sip of coffee.

“Everything? Even about us?”

. She nodded. “It’s what I should have done in the first place.”

He ran his good hand through his hair, wishing she would look at him.

“Does that mean you’re going to accept our bond?” He refrained from adding the word ‘again’ to the question.

“No, it doesn’t.” She took another sip of coffee. “It just means I’m going to accept my mistakes and deal with the consequences. You and this bond have been clouding my judgement. I need to do what I should have

done to begin with.”

Kent narrowed his eyes. “Our relationship wouldn’t be clouding your judgement if you just accepted it.”

When she finally looked at him, her eyes were black. It was the first time, he realized, that he had *seen* her

angry enough for her eyes to change.

1/3

< Chapter 61

+o Ports >

“Don’t,” she muttered, standing up. “I’m not trying to start an argument, but you and I both know I’m not the

only one who has made mistakes here.”

He frowned at her, still not moving from his chair. “I never said you were.”

She set her coffee on the table, turning towards the door.

“Hey,” he called, when he realized she was leaving, “you didn’t eat.” He sighed, rubbing his forehead. “Just

stay. I’ll shut up.”

She stopped at the door, turning to look at him. “I’m not hungry and I’m not staying. I need to get ready for my

call.”

“Will you come tell me how the call went when it’s over?” He tried not to make it a plea, but he knew it

sounded like one.

Her gaze softened slightly. “Of course.”

Riley accepted the request for the video call as soon as it came up on her screen, ignoring the pounding in her chest. Commander Whey was sitting in his office, his dark hair neatly brushed, wearing a green shirt with

a silver tie. He smiled when Riley came up on the screen.

“How are you doing?” he asked, his voice cheery. “We were all worried for you the other week when you ended

up in the hospital.”

Riley forced a pleasant smile. “It was a rough few days, but I’m getting back to normal.”

“So how are things at Red Moon? Leo’s report came through yesterday about the last attack. I understand it was pretty brutal. Even the alpha ended up hurt pretty badly.”

Riley’s chest constricted at the thought, but she forced herself to nod. “He’s going to be fine. He’s already

back to work this morning.”

“That’s good.” Whey nodded, his face growing solemn. “I am concerned about these attacks though. This pack can’t keep sustaining these losses. I’ve been reading through all your reports. Any more ideas on what is driving the attacks?”

Riley took a deep breath. It was now or never.

“Yes actually. I finally have the answers, but this might be a long story.”

Whey nodded. “We’ve got the time. Tell me what you know.”

She nodded, looking down at her hands. She twisted her fingers, trying to decide the best place to start.

“Riley?” She looked back to the screen, aware he was watching her.

“I think...” She paused, swallowing hard. “Well, I know that I’m going to get in trouble. I’ve made some poor

choices.”

Whey’s forehead furrowed. “Well, let’s just start with what’s happened and we’ll worry about the

consequences later.”

She nodded. With a deep breath, Riley started talking. She explained Lily’s death and Kent’s attack on the rogue camp four years prior. She explained about the discovery of the baby in the tent and how the ranked members chose to hide the child in fear of Kent’s leadership being called into question. She then discussed

2/3

Chapter 61

the interrogation of the rogue two months prior and how they had learned that the rogue leader was a woman seeking the return of her child.

When she finished, Whey was leaning back in his chair, rubbing his chin.

+ Points

“So they’ve known the motives behind the attacks for two months and did not disclose it to the council?”

She nodded. “Correct.”

“And when did you learn of this?”

“I learned most of the details the night before last, but I was aware that the ranked members were hiding

information for over a week.”

He tilted his head slightly as he watched her through the camera. “How did you become aware that they were hiding information?”

Riley bit her lip, looking away. She clenched her hands to stop them from shaking.

“Riley?”

It’s now or never, Rose prompted her. Just get it over with.

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 62[1,370 words]

“I can tell when the alpha is lying,” Riley admitted, “because he is my mate.”

There was a long silence. When Riley finally looked back at the screen, Whey was staring at her, his brows raised, eyes slightly widened. He glanced away for a moment, clearing his throat before turning back to her.

“The alpha of Red Moon is your mate?”

“Correct.”

“You are his second chance mate, then?”

She nodded. “And he is my second chance as well. I had a mate prior to going to the academy who rejected

me.”

Whey gave her another surprised look before glancing away. Finally he shook his head, a soft chuckle escaping him.

“You are full of surprises today, it seems.”

She frowned, looking down at her hands.

“You’ve known this for two weeks?”

She nodded.

“But you’ve not disclosed finding your mate? Wesley disclosed his mate the morning after he met her, as protocol dictates.

She rolled her bottom lip between her teeth. “I haven’t decided if I’m going to accept him.”

Whey narrowed his eyes, his lips parting slightly. “Why? Is he cruel?”

It was, she supposed, an easy assumption for someone who didn’t know Kent. He did have a reputation of being an asshole, but she still felt a surge of anger at the thought of Kent being considered cruel.

Paul had been cruel, And she knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that Kent was not Paul.

“No,” she said finally, “he’s not cruel or mean. He’s actually been very kind and patient. It’s just that...” She looked across the room, thinking. “My first mate’s rejection was brutal. It nearly killed me. I’ve worked very hard to be who I am and to be good at what I do. I’ve built a good life and a good career and accepting Kent

means that I have to give up everything I’ve worked for.”

“You’re concerned about losing your position with the council?” Whey’s eyebrows were so high it seemed they might disappear into his hairline.

She nodded. “I know what will happen. I’ve seen it happen with other warriors when they’ve found mates who

are ranked members of a pack.”

Whey shook his head, taking a deep breath.

“You’re correct. You will have to leave your work at the council, but finding your mate is a good thing. And finding a second chance is such a rare blessing from the Moon Goddess.”

He sighed, leaning towards the camera. "If he is a good man, then you would be a fool to turn him away."

She looked down at her hands. "But I love my job. I love who I am now."

Chapter 62

+8 Points

"A job doesn't define you, Riley." She looked up to see him smiling gently. "There will always be other jobs. And who you are, who you have become, doesn't cease to exist just because your circumstances have changed. You are still a fierce warrior who has proven herself ten times over, no matter what your previous

mate did to you.

"You can always find work that makes you happy. But you will never find another mate. You have been

blessed with a second chance. Please don't sacrifice that. You will never find the joy here that you could find

with your mate. Trust me. I met my mate when I was nineteen and I would do anything for her. I would give up anything for her."

Riley smiled slightly, nodding.

"At least think about what I'm saying," he said with a heavy sigh. "I'm certainly unhappy at the prospect of

losing my best advisor, but I am happy you've found someone."

He rubbed his chin. "Let's get back to the child though. I have more questions about him and this situation."

"Of course, sir."

Has the pack ever been approached previously by a rogue requesting information on the child?"

She paused, thinking. "Not that I'm aware of. I feel like they would have told me that."

"Is the alpha available to join us?" They asked. "He may add some more clarity to this conversation."

"I'm not sure. I can run down to his office to check. It's just down the hall."

Whey nodded. "Do that. I want to speak to him directly."

**

Kent had mindlinked for Max and Patrick to come up a few minutes after Riley left. He had yet to speak to

them since Riley had dismissed them from his office yesterday after forcing them to admit what they had

told her.

Patrick had gotten there first, hesitating at the door before Kent gruffly told him to sit. He had reluctantly sat

on the couch as they waited for Max who came a few minutes later.

Max had hesitated in the center of the room, not sitting as Kent stood up and approached him.

"Can I ask you a question, Beta?" Kent asked softly.

He saw the fear in Max's eyes as he nodded.

"When I agreed to your terms about keeping our secret from Riley, when I said I would wait for her to accept me, what was the one thing I asked?"

Max swallowed. "You asked to be the one to tell her."

Kent raised an eyebrow. "And why did I ask that?"

"Because you were worried she would misinterpret things if you weren't the one to explain. Because she can tell when you lie, so she would know you were being honest."

"So why didn't you wait?"

Max flinched slightly. "I'm sorry, Kent."

"I don't want your apology," he snarled. "I want you to tell me why you thought it was ok to f**k things up

2/3

< Chapter 62

between her and I."

“He wasn’t trying to do that,” Patrick cut in.

+0 Points 3

“Shut up.” It came out as an alpha command, even though that wasn’t his intent. Patrick’s mouth snapped shut, but Kent could see the hurt that flashed in his eyes.

“Kent,” Max whispered, taking a deep breath, “I know you’re mad, but you need to understand.”

“I don’t *need* to do anything,” he growled, taking a step towards Max. “She had told me only hours before that she was ready to accept our bond and then you opened your f*****g mouth.” He knew he was yelling, but he felt unable to stop. “I lied and hid things from my mate for you! For you! And then you couldn’t even comply with the one request I made! You had to open your f*****g mouth!”

“I thought you were dying,” Max cried, his face reddening, his eyes suddenly swimming with tears. “I thought you were f*****g dying and I was sitting there with her, knowing it would be my fault if you died. Don’t you think I know what position I put you in? Don’t you think I realized that you were doing these things for me? I was such a d**k to you and insisted you owed it to me and then you were dying!”

Max turned away, gasping as though he had been struck, his throat visibly tightening as a tear escaped his

eyes. “You could have died and she would have died too, because she has this weird illness that’s connected

to you. I realized that if you died, she was going to die too and it was all going to be my fault. I just cracked! I

just started talking because I didn’t know what else to do!”

Suddenly the door to the office opened and all three of them turned to see Riley in the doorway. She froze, her

eyes widening in surprise as she took in the scene.

Max turned away sharply, wiping away his tears and striding across the room towards the window. Patrick

flopped back into the couch, heaving a heavy sigh.

“Sorry,” she said. “I should have knocked.”

“It’s fine,” Kent said tightly, trying not to growl at her. “Are you done talking to the commander?”

“Um... no.” She glanced between the three of them. “The commander is asking to speak with you. I was

coming to see if you could join the conversation.”

He nodded. “Of course.” He turned to look at the other two men. “Wait here until I’m back.”

H

595

Comments

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 63[1,603 words]

Chapter 63

He had only taken a step when she grabbed his good wrist.

“Is everything ok?” she whispered.

Kent looked at her, trying to tamp down his anger. “I was just discussing my frustration with my beta’s

choices.”

She squeezed his wrist. “You need to calm down before you talk to the commander.”

He swallowed hard, suddenly registering the worry on her face. He gently pulled his wrist from her grasp and

moved his hand to the back of her neck, stepping closer as he angled her head back so he could press her

forehead against hers. He took a deep breath, inhaling her sweet vanilla scent, allowing it to soothe the

anger that simmered in him.

She reached up, running her hands up his chest, leaving a trail of sparks in their wake until she rested her

hands on his shoulder.

“Better?” she whispered.

He nodded against her forehead. “Yes. Thank you.” He pressed a soft kiss into her lips before he stepped

back. “Does he know about us?”

She nodded, taking his good hand and leading him towards her room. “He has questions about Evan that I

can’t answer.”

Kent pulled one of the armchairs in her room over to the desk where the computer was so he could sit beside her. Riley ran through a quick introduction as the commander nodded.

“I understand you’ve brought some problems on your pack,” the man, Whey, said calmly.

Kent sighed. “It seems I have.” Riley grabbed his hand under the desk, squeezing his fingers in a silent plea for him to stay calm. He squeezed her hand back in reassurance.

“I asked Riley if anyone had ever been approached by this woman or anyone else, asking about this child.”

Kent shook his head. “No, sir. We didn’t even realize that the attacks were connected to the pup until two

months ago. I assumed that I killed the boy’s parents before I found him. I never had a reason to believe that

he had a living parent out there.”

Whey nodded. “Which makes sense. What I don’t understand is why it took this woman so long to **try** to recoup her child. If she knew that you had the child, why has she not taken a legal route to get her child

back? The Council still recognizes the rogues as having rights. If she knew her child was there, she could

have requested Council assistance in getting her son. Do you grant audiences to rogues if they request

them?”

Kent nodded. “Of course. Occasionally we get rogues requesting a place in our pack. I’m willing to talk to

them to determine if they would be a good fit for our pack. If someone had approached us claiming to be that boy’s mother, I would have spoken to her. I would have been willing to work something out with her about returning the child, though I would have had questions about why he was found in such poor condition. He was injured and malnourished when I found him.”

“I’m aware,” Whey said calmly. “Riley told me that.” He tapped his chin for a moment. “What does the child

< Chapter 63

look like?”

“He has dark brown hair and brown eyes,” Kent said. “He’s taller than most kids his age and very thin.”

40 Points

Whey pursed his lips, staring away from the camera for a moment. “Did either of you ever hear about how the luna of the Green River pack was killed?”

Kent and Riley shook the ?

heads in unison.

“Well,” Whey said, looking back at the camera, “about five years ago, the luna of the Green River pack was murdered. The story goes that the alpha of Green River met his first mate when he was young, but she died tragically. The alpha was nearly destroyed by her death but eventually recovered. Years later, he decided to take a chosen mate. He was set to take this woman as his mate, but prior to this an alpha from a neighboring pack came for an alliance meeting. He brought his daughter with him and the alpha of Green River discovered his second chance mate. The woman who was to be his chosen mate became upset and angry, lashing out. The alpha felt he had no choice but to banish this woman as he feared she would hurt his

new mate.

“Eventually his new luna became pregnant and had a baby boy. When the boy was a few months old, this deranged woman came back to the pack. She snuck in, killing the luna and stealing the child. The alpha couldn’t handle losing a second mate and died that same night as well. The beta took over as alpha and he launched a large-scale search for the child, but the boy was never found.”

“You think the child we have is this missing boy?” Kent asked, frowning.

“I think it is a possibility.” Whey rubbed his forehead for a moment. “You see, this boy is special. The alpha and his luna were both from long lines of original alphas, making this child a true alpha. This is exceptionally rare, but what this means is that the blood from both sides of his family is alpha blood. This child was destined to be stronger and more powerful than an average wolf. In the wrong hands, this child could be used as a powerful weapon.”

Kent felt his face pale as he considered what the commander was saying.

“What do you know of the woman who is behind these attacks?” Whey asked.

“Only what the rogue we interrogated has told us and what my scouts have reported back,” Kent answered. “They say she is deranged and vicious.”

Whey frowned. “We have to attempt making contact with this woman. Offer her the opportunity to have a DNA test performed. If she is in fact the child’s mother, she deserves the chance to recoup her child. If she **isn’t**, we need to determine if he is the missing pup from Green River.”

“What if he’s neither?” Riley asked quietly. “What if she is mistaken about the child and he is truly an orphan?”

Whey shrugged. “That seems unlikely but I guess we would cross that bridge only when we needed to.” He leaned forward again. “Alpha, send one of your warriors out to request a meeting with the woman. Have the warrior explain that we want to discuss how to return her child to her in the most peaceful way. Once she

comes into your territory, request she submit to a DNA test.”

Kent nodded. “I’ll send someone out right away.”

“Good. Take a DNA sample from the child as well. Have it sent to the Council Hospital right away. I’ll contact Green River to ask if there are any living relatives of the alpha so we have someone to compare it against.”

“I’ll have that done as well,” Kent said quietly. “But I do have a question, sir.”

2/3

< Chapter 63

“What is it?”

“What repercussions will my pack face over what I’ve done?”

+8 Points

Whey sighed. “That’s a good question. I’ll have to present everything to the Council Elders in ten days time, so the more information I have before then the better. They will ultimately decide your consequences. If he is the rogue’s child and you make a good faith effort to return the child, I think consequences will be mild. If the child is the missing pup from Green River, the Elders will wait to see what the current alpha of Green River wants. He may request harsh action or he may not. He is a reasonable man, but he has searched for this child for many years.”

Kent nodded. “Ok, then I guess we just wait to see.”

“Indeed,” Whey said, “but I will warn you not to keep any more information hidden from the Council. That will not help your situation.” Whey cleared his throat. “Now, Alpha, I would like a word with my advisor in private. I appreciate your time.”

Kent squeezed Riley’s hand as he nodded at the commander. “Please let me know if there is any more information you need.” He stood up, leaving without a backwards glance at Riley.

Kent had forgotten that Patrick and Max were still waiting for him until he walked back into his office. He froze, looking at Max, at his best friend who was still standing by the window.

How was he supposed to tell Max that no matter how this played out, there was a good chance he would be losing his son?

It didn’t matter how angry he was about what Max had said to Riley, Kent didn’t want to see Max’s family torn

apart.

He suddenly didn’t know how he had gotten here, in this situation. His pack was being attacked, his warriors were being killed and he was no closer to stopping it. Now everything he had done to protect Max and Penny had been for nothing. The council would still likely take their son. His pack could face harsh sanctions for his poor choices. And his mate was still undecided on whether she was going to reject him or not.

He didn't realize his legs had buckled until his knees hit the floor. Patrick and Max were across the room and beside him in an instant, asking him what had happened, but it sounded like they were talking to him from

underwater.

His eyes stung with tears as he looked at Max. "I'm sorry," he gasped. "I've ruined everything."

Comments

[Get Bonus \(Ad\) >](#)

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 64[1,082 words]

Chapter 64

Riley went searching for Kent after ending the call with Whey, but Patrick had stepped out of the office when she knocked, blocking her entrance. He had been unwilling to tell her what was going on, only **that** she needed to leave Kent alone for a while. She could sense his pain through the bond, but *no* matter how much she pressed, Patrick had been unwilling to tell her anything.

She skipped lunch, opting instead to hide in her room and replay her conversation with the commander over and over again. He had ended the conversation by making sure she understood that *no* matter her decision with Kent, it was very likely she would be losing her job.

It was sometime around three when someone knocked on the door. She opened **it**, slightly surprised to **see** Max standing there. He looked rough, his blond hair a mess, his face unshaven. He had dark circles under his bloodshot eyes.

"Alpha has requested a meeting," he said softly, his gaze running over her.

She nodded, stepping into the hallway and closing the door behind her.

"Are you ok?"

The question took her by surprise. She turned to look at Max, his forehead creased in concern.

“I’ve had better days,” she admitted. “Is Kent ok?”

“I don’t know what happened with the commander,” Max murmured, “but it’s like something in him has snapped.” He bit his lip, staring past her for a moment as though lost in thought.

“What happened?” she asked, reaching out to touch his arm.

Max shook his head. “You’ll need to ask him. I’ve already overstepped when it comes to you.” He sighed, taking her elbow and steering her towards the office.

Everyone was already there when she arrived. Kent was slouched behind his desk, his eyes red. He didn’t even look up when she walked in. Patrick and Penny/were sitting on the couch while Leo and Wesley were in two of the armchairs. Max flopped down beside Penny, wrapping an arm around her shoulder. Riley reluctantly took the only open armchair, glancing at everyone’s solemn expressions.

After a moment of silence, Wesley cleared his throat. “I’m assuming we’ve been called here for a reason.”

Kent glanced up, as though realizing that there were other people in the room. He nodded weakly.

“Riley and I spoke with the commander today,” he said quietly. “I thought we should discuss what he said.” He

motioned towards Riley.

She sighed, giving the highlights of the conversation regarding the commander’s thoughts about Evan and his possible heritage. She left out the discussion regarding her relationship with Kent. When she finished, Max was pinching the bridge of his nose while Penny wrung her hands. Patrick dropped **his** head back against **the** back of the couch, looking as though he wanted to disappear.

The only people who seemed remotely put **together** in **that** moment were Wesley and Leo.

“So he’s either the son of a dérangé woman who has been attacking this pack for **two years or he is a lost** alpha heir with incredible strength and power?” Leo said, **incredulously**.

↵

Chapter 64

“Basically,” Riley sighed, rubbing her forehead.

“I don’t know what’s worse,” Max scoffed, dropping his hand.

“It doesn’t matter,” Penny cried, tears streaming down her face. “Either way, we lose him.”

Max wrapped his arms around her shoulders, pulling his mate into his chest. He buried his face **into** her **hair**, but not before Riley saw the tears in his eyes. She closed her own eyes, her heart breaking for **them**. Penny was right. Either way, they were going to have to give up the child they have loved like their own for the last four years.

“So what do we do?” Patrick asked, his voice hoarse.

“We have to send someone out to meet with this woman,” Riley explained. “We have to request that she come into the pack and prove that Evan is her son. We’ll have to do a DNA test on both of them. The commander has also asked that we send Evan’s DNA sample to the Council Hospital so they can compare **it** against **a** relative of the alpha of Green River.”

“Send Jaxon out,” Kent said, staring at his desk. “He’s the most diplomatic.”

“I’ll go.”

Everyone turned to look at Max.

“He’s my son. Regardless of what happens. I will go meet this woman. I will explain to her that I have been raising him and that he is healthy and well. And then I will bring her here to see him.”

“Max,” Kent started, his voice strained.

Max held up his hand. “No, Kent. I’m going to do this. He’s my son. I will do this.”

Everyone was quiet for a moment as the alpha and beta stared at each other. Finally Kent relented, nodding.

“Can I ask a question?” Leo asked.

All eyes turned towards him.

“It’s been bothering me since the night in the hospital. You guys said you learned about what the rogues were after over two months ago, but we captured a rogue less than a month ago. We were going to try to get

information out of him but he died unexpectedly in his cell.”

Riley felt the blood drain from her face. She had completely forgotten about that.

“Did he really die of his injuries or did you three do something?” Leo asked.

Kent sighed, shaking his head. “We went to interrogate him without you two, to see if he would give the same information. The guard had given him wolfsbane but had logged the dose incorrectly. We gave him a dose,

but...” He trailed off with a sigh.

Riley flinched. Wolfsbane was highly controlled poison. It was incredibly dangerous to werewolves. In small doses, **it** could block one’s **access** to their wolf and their healing abilities. In high doses, it was deadly.

“So you expect us to believe that you accidentally overdosed him on wolfsbane?” Wesley raised a skeptical eyebrow.

Kent shrugged. “Believe it or don’t, but it’s what happened.”

“For what it’s worth, he’s telling the truth,” Riley muttered. “I would know if he **wasn’t**.”

Chapter 64

Wesley stared at her for a moment before rubbing his forehead, “Forgive my skepticism, but you haven’t exactly been trustworthy either.”

“Does it even matter anymore?” Patrick looked exhausted as he stared at Wesley. “We killed the rogue, whether we meant to or not. It’s done. Can we just move on?”

Comments

Get Bonus (Ad) >

604

⚑

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 65[1,366 words]

Riley could feel Kent’s turmoil throughout the evening, even when she tried to ignore him completely. She

tried having dinner with Leo and Wesley, but her splitting headache dampened her appetite. She tried resting

in her bed, but Kent's misery was constant. Finally she gave up, venturing down the hall to knock on his

bedroom door. He opened it, his eyes bloodshot as he looked at her, the smell of whiskey strong.

"You're a mess," she said, frowning as she pushed past him into his room.

"What do you want?" he asked quietly, shutting the door.

She walked over and sat on his couch. There was a half-full tumbler on the coffee table in front of her. Kent

leaned against the closed door, shoving the hand of his good arm into his pocket.

"Should you be drinking while you're still recovering?" she asked, raising an eyebrow.

"I don't really give a f**k right now," he muttered. "Why are you here?"

"To check on you."

He scoffed. "I don't need you to check on me. I don't need you at all."

That stung, but she tried to keep her face blank as she looked at him. He wasn't looking at her though. He

closed his eyes as he leaned his head back against the door.

"Talk to me, Kent," she said gently. "What's bothering you?"

"Everything." He sighed heavily, keeping his eyes closed. "You shouldn't be here."

"In your room?"

"No, in my pack. Here at this pack. I should have never requested you. I should have never asked for Council

intervention at all." His words slurred slightly, his eyes still shut. "If I hadn't asked for the help, if I hadn't

insisted on the f*****g best for my pack, I wouldn't have to deal with you now."

She bit her lip hard and looked at the tumbler on the table, trying to focus on the way the amber color almost

matched the color of the wood on the table, instead of feeling the way that his words cut her.

Part of her wasn't surprised though. Part of her had been waiting for Kent to turn out just like Paul, using his

words to tear her down at every opportunity. Paul used to tell her all the time what a mistake meeting her

was, how having a mate felt more like a curse than a blessing. His words echoed in her head.

"Stop feeling like that!" Kent snapped, putting his good hand over his eyes.

"Kent," she said softly, "could you look at me?"

"No," he said tersely as he finally moved away from the door. He opened his eyes but kept his face turned

away from her. He sat on the edge of his bed, squeezing the bridge of his nose and rubbing his eyes with his

good hand.

She stood up, walking over to him. He kept his gaze fixed on the floor as she approached him, chewing her lip.

"Look at me," she said again./

Finally his eyes flickered to hers and she saw what he was hiding, what she suspected. His eyes were

Chapter 65

bloodshot and glistening. He was clearly a breath away from crying. She sighed, reaching out to cup his

cheek.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

He closed his eyes, leaning his head into her hand. He reached out with his good arm and grabbed her hips to

pull her in between his legs so he could rest his head on her shoulder. She carefully wrapped her arms

around his shoulders, being cautious around his injuries. He wrapped his arm around her waist to pull her

closer as he took a deep, shuddering breath.

“Why do you have to smell so good?” he murmured into her shoulder before turning his head to kiss her neck

softly.

She smiled slightly and pulled his head back to look into his eyes. “Tell me what’s wrong.”

“Everything is wrong,” he whispered, his eyes earnest. “I’ve made so many mistakes that I can’t find my way. out of this mess. I’ve gotten my pack into trouble. I’ve lost far too many warriors, both mine and warriors from my allies. My best friend is going to lose his child.”

He paused, taking a deep breath, looking at the ceiling before continuing. “And then there’s you. You’re going to lose your job because of me. You don’t trust me, which is my own fault for not being honest with you. You’re sick all the time so now you have to be stuck around me even when you’re pissed at me.”

She frowned, opening her mouth to talk but he quickly put the tips of his fingers against her lips.

“If you hadn’t come here,” he said, “if I hadn’t asked for the best advisor, you wouldn’t be in this position. It would have been better to have never found you instead of feeling like I’m just messing up your life.”

She pulled his hand away from her mouth. “You’re not messing up my life.”

“You’re losing your job because of me,” he exclaimed. “You’re losing everything you worked so hard for just because we’re mates. That isn’t fair to you. I should have never asked for you to be here. This is all my fault.”

She put her own fingers over his mouth. “Will you stop talking and listen?” He nodded, his eyes bright. “I’m glad I came here. I don’t regret being here. There is a lot in this situation that isn’t your fault and that isn’t my fault. It’s just happening and we can’t control that. It’s not your fault that we’re mates. My being here isn’t your fault. It was just fate.”

“Do you really believe that?” he asked, his breath hot against her fingers.

“I do,” she replied, as he ran his hand up her back. She slid her fingers from his lips, cupping his chin, feeling his stubble scrape her hand. “Now things would probably have been a lot easier if we had just been honest

with one another from the start.”

“Absolutely,” he murmured.

“But we can’t change any of that now. We just need to focus on doing what’s best for everyone moving

forward.”

He stared in her eyes for a moment. “What’s best for you right now, Riley?”

“You,” she whispered, leaning forward to press her forehead against his.

“I’m sorry for what I said earlier,” he whispered back. “When you first came in, I said I wished you hadn’t come. That’s not true. I’m just so scared of losing you.”

Chapter 65

“I’m not going anywhere,” she murmured. She leaned forward, pressing her lips gently against his in a soft kiss. When the kiss ended, he wrapped his hand around the back of her neck, pulling her mouth back to his and kissing her with hunger. She felt heat rush through her body as she leaned into him, gripping his good shoulder hard. She pushed her tongue against his lips and he opened his mouth. She could taste the whiskey

still on his tongue.

He groaned softly before pulling back with a shudder, pressing his forehead to hers again. “We need to slow down,” he whispered. “I’m not supposed to do anything strenuous and I’m not going to be able to stop in a minute if we keep going.”

She smiled. “That’s a shame.” She kissed him again, biting his bottom lip as the kiss ended.

“Goddess,” he moaned softly, “you are trying to kill me now.”

She laughed. “I’ll stop.”

“Lay down with me,” he said as she straightened a little in his embrace.

She raised an eyebrow and he held his good hand up in the air.

“I’m not suggesting we do anything,” he said with a smirk. “Just lay down with me, please. I just want to *hold*

you.”

She sighed, smiling and he smiled back. He climbed into the bed as she kicked off her shoes. He laid back in the pillows and she snuggled against his good side, resting her head on his shoulder. He kissed her forehead as he wrapped his arm around her shoulders and pulled her tightly against him.

“I’m glad you’re here,” he said softly, stroking her hair.

Comments

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 66[960 words]

Chapter 66

They laid there for a while as Riley listened to Kent’s breathing as it evened out. She laid there long after **he**. had fallen asleep, just enjoying the feel of being in his arms.

I could get used to *this*, Rose murmured in her mind.

Me too, Riley admitted, burying her nose into his chest to breathe in his scent. She had been fighting this bond for weeks and she was realizing how exhausting that fight was. Her body and soul yearned to be with him to the point that being away from him caused her physical pain.

There was a knock at the door that drew her attention. She glanced at Kent who was sleeping peacefully before sliding out of his embrace. There was another knock as she padded lightly across the room, cracking the door open to see Max standing in the hall.

His lips parted in surprise as he saw her standing in the door.

“I was looking for Kent,” he explained softly.

“He fell asleep about an hour ago,” she said, opening the door more so Max could see Kent sleeping in the bed. Max glanced in at Kent before looking back at her.

“That explains why he wasn’t answering my mindlink,” he said. “He doesn’t usually sleep this early.”

She shrugged. “Well, he was kind of drunk.”

Max scoffed softly, shaking his head. “Did he run his mouth? He can be a real prick when he’s been drinking.”

She shook her head, smiling slightly. “He wasn’t that bad.” She stepped in the hall, shutting the door softly so

they wouldn’t wake Kent. “What did you need him for?”

“I’m getting ready to head out to look at the rogues,” he explained. “I’m going to meet with the scouts and

spend the night with them, then I’m going to approach this woman in the morning. I just wanted to let him know, but I don’t want to wake him. Will you let him know in the morning?”

“Of course,” she said.

Max turned to go but hesitated, looking back at Riley. “Can I ask you a question?”

She shrugged. “I guess.”

“What’s going on with you and him?”

She hesitated, pulling her bottom lip between her teeth. “That’s not really your business,” she finally said.

“I know.” He rubbed the back of his neck. “And you don’t have to tell me, but I just…” He sighed. “You like him though? It’s obvious.”

“That’s also not your business.” Riley turned to go back into the room when Max caught her wrist.

“Kent’s my best friend,” he said quietly. “I’ve watched him lose both his parents, his brother, his mate. I’ve been there through all that. If you’re going to break him, you need to tell me before you do. I’m not **sure** how many more heartbreaks that man has left in him.”

She opened her mouth but closed it quickly, not sure how to answer him.

“I know this isn’t my place,” Max whispered, leaning closer to her. “And I know Kent will kill me **if finds out, but**

Chapter 66

that man loves you, Riley. I haven't seen him come alive like this in years. I thought he would never recover what he lost when Lily died. I didn't think he would ever really come back, but he is coming back. **And that's**

thanks to you."

She felt her heart hammering in her chest, her mouth dry as she stared into Max's intense brown eyes.

"I've made issues for the two of you," he continued. "I know that and I am sorry. I should have listened to him

when he said we could trust you. I should have trusted you from the start. I see that now. I just wanted to

protect my son. But I should have realized that you weren't the threat. I should have never forced Kent into the position I did. I don't think I could ever tell you how sorry I am for that. But please don't hurt my friend

because of me. Please."

His plea was soft, his eyes wide and earnest. She felt a thick lump in her throat as she swallowed hard.

"I don't want to hurt him," she finally said. "I... I..."

He released her wrist, taking a step back. "I know," he said. "I know how you feel about him too. It's obvious."

She bit her lip for a moment. "I understand why you did what you did, even if I disagree with your choices. But

if I'm going to stay here, you can't do that again. You have to trust me."

"I do trust you." He stepped forward and pulled her into a tight hug. "I would be honored to have you in this

pack. You would be a great luna," he whispered into her hair before taking a step back.

"Tell him I left," he said, walking to the stairwell.

She watched him go, listening to the door shut quietly behind him. Finally she took a deep breath, stepping

back into Kent's room. Kent was still sleeping on the bed, his chest gently rising and falling with each breath.

That *man loves you*. That's what Max had said. His words had been similar to what Leo had told her a week

ago. The thought was both thrilling and terrifying at the same time. She had loved someone once and it had ended so badly.

But Kent wasn't Paul and she wasn't the same girl she was nine years ago.

She climbed back into the bed and Kent stirred, opening his eyes slightly.

"Where did you go?" he murmured, his voice thick and hoarse.

"Nowhere," she said, curling back under his arm.

Comments

Get Bonus (Ad) >

Vote

604

Chapter 67

Chapter 67

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 67[1,049 words]

Chapter 67

Kent woke up alone the next morning. He could still smell her in the room, but she was gone. With a sigh, he rubbed his face, trying to shake off the headache leftover from too much whiskey. Finally he rolled out **of** bed and headed to the closet to change. He chose a pair of jeans and a loose black shirt that he could get on around the bandages. He slid his arm back into the sling and headed down to Riley's room.

She was stepping into the hallway when he approached, her hair braided away from her face, wearing a pair

of jeans and a soft purple sweater. She stopped when she saw him.

“You’re awake,” she said with a smile.

“You were gone when I got up,” he replied.

“I wanted you to get some rest.”

He took a step towards her, closing the distance so he could wrap his good arm around her waist, pulling her

close to him.

“Thank you for coming to check on me last night. I’m sorry I was an ass.”

She wrapped her arms carefully around his neck, rolling up on her toes to press her lips against his. He

splayed his hand against the small of her back, pulling her tightly against him. When the kiss ended, he

pushed his forehead against hers.

“Are we ok?” he whispered.

“Yes.” She kissed him again and stepped back. “Should we get breakfast?”

He smiled, relief rushing through him. He followed her towards the elevator.

“Max came to see you last night,” she said as they waited for the elevator.

“Really?” He raised an eyebrow. “When?”

The doors opened and they both stepped in.

“About an hour after you fell asleep. He said he was going to meet with the scouts and spend the night with

them and then approach the woman this morning. He wanted to let you know, but he didn’t want me to wake

you.”

Kent frowned. "I wish you had though."

She grimaced. "Sorry."

He shook his head. "No, don't worry about it. I was really harsh on Max yesterday. I wish I had apologized

before he left. You couldn't have known that."

They stepped out of the elevator and Riley looked up at him.

"I don't think he's holding it against you if that makes a difference." She turned towards the dining hall but he

caught her hand, causing her to turn back to him.

"Why do you say that?" Kent raised a brow. "Did he say something else last night?"

She rolled her bottom lip between her teeth. "Yeah, he **did**. He talked to me for a few minutes **about you.**"

Chapter 07 67

"And?"

She shrugged, gently pulling her hand from his. "It wasn't bad. It was just..." She sighed, glancing around. "I guess I just want to think about what he said for a while before we talk about it."

"Will you tell me eventually?"

She nodded. "Sure."

They reached the dining hall and found Patrick and Lana sitting at table with baby Lily. After getting some food, they sat down to eat with them.

"What's your plan for the day?" Patrick asked Kent after they finished discussing where Max had gone.

"I need to go to the hospital for a check up. Hopefully I'm getting these stitches out and getting rid of this sling. If I'm all healed up, I'd like to get some training in this afternoon and start getting my strength back."

Riley frowned at him. "Don't you think you should avoid doing too much too soon?"

"I'll be fine," Kent said, waving off her concern. "What are you doing?" he said to Patrick.

“I had an idea last night,” Patrick said, glancing around to make sure no one was listening. “If things don’t pan out well with this rogue woman, if she’s not willing to cooperate, I think we need to discuss a more offensive move.”

Kent frowned. “Offensive? We’ve already risked enough warriors as it is.”

Patrick sighed. “If she doesn’t cooperate, we can’t keep playing the sitting ducks game. We need to be more strategic, try to get the upper hand.”

“I don’t know,” Kent said, leaning back in his chair. “That’s risky.”

“I think Pat’s right,” Riley said, taking a sip of her coffee. “You guys have been fending off these attacks for two years and it just keeps getting worse. We really need to take things into our own hands.”

“Exactly,” Patrick exclaimed. “I’m not saying we have to do it, but I’m going to go look at some stuff this morning. I have an idea, but I need to go out to the ravine and see if it would work. If **so**, maybe we can

discuss it later.”

“Can I go with you?” Riley sounded excited at the idea.

“Sure,” Patrick said at the same time Kent, “Absolutely not.”

Riley frowned, looking at Kent. “I wasn’t asking you.”

“You can’t be gone that long,” Kent said. “That’s a couple hours and you could get sick.”

“**I’ll** be fine,” she said with the same tone Kent had just given her a few minutes ago, waving off his concern

the same way.

Patrick laughed, trying poorly to cover it with a cough while Lana smirked.

Kent narrowed his eyes. “It’s too far,” he repeated.

Riley rolled her eyes. “It’s not that **far**. I can be away from you for a few hours. I won’t die.”

“Like you almost didn’t die already?” he retorted.

“Goddess,” she muttered, “you’re impossible.”

~ Chapter 67

Patrick gave Lana an amused look and she snickered softly. When Kent and Riley both looked at her, she

cleared her throat.

“I’m not a doctor today,” she said, shifting the baby in her arms. “Just a very tired new mom. The baby has finally gone to sleep so I’m going upstairs to put her down and then try to rest myself. You all do whatever the hell you want as long as you leave me alone.” She leaned over to kiss Patrick softly before leaving.

“I need to go to the hospital,” Kent said, standing up. He pointed at Riley. “You are not to go with Patrick.”

She rolled her eyes and made a face at him.

Comments

Get Bonus (Ad) >

H

Vote

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 68[1,651 words]

Chapter 68

Riley wasted no time in ignoring Kent’s order as soon as he left. Patrick didn’t even attempt **to** discourage her, telling her he was glad for the company. They reached the ravine quickly, heading straight there after they shifted. Once they were both shifted back to human and dressed, they walked down into the dry river bed, examining the sides and structure as Patrick explained his idea.

“I want to draw the rogues into a trap,” he said, running his fingers along the edge of the ravine. “If we can lure them here, there’s a spot not too far ahead where the ravine narrows before curving and opening up again. We could stack debris at the narrowing and cause some sort of explosion, capturing a large part of their force in a narrow, inescapable area. We hide a bulk of our warriors outside the ravine. They jump in **right** after the explosion.”

Riley nodded. "It would be a slaughter."

Patrick stopped, pointing to an area ahead of them. "That's the narrowing right there. See how the right side is taller than the left. We rig the explosion on that side, forcing the right side to cave in."

She looked around. "It really could work," she admitted. "I see what you're saying. But how do we lure **the**

rogues here?"

"With something they want."

Riley looked sharply at Patrick. "What they want is a child? You're not suggesting we use him, are you?"

Patrick rolled his eyes. "Of course not. We've risked our whole pack to protect that child, I'm not throwing him

into danger now. We just need to make the rogues think he's with us. Clothes with his scent or something like

that."

She nodded. "Ok. That makes sense." She looked at the space again for a moment. "You need to time the

explosion right though. Too soon and the rogues can still escape on this side. Too late and they can escape

on the other side with minimal injuries."

Patrick considered this for a moment. "You have a good mind for battle. You'd be a good luna here."

She frowned, kicking a rock on the ground.

"You don't like that idea?" She looked up to see Patrick watching her. "Being a luna?"

"I have nothing against being a luna," she said. "Luna's are vital to the running of a pack. It's a really

important role. It's just..." She shrugged, sighing. "I really like my job. I'm having a hard time with the idea of

giving it up."

“Well, I’d be proud to have you as my luna. And you’re good for Kent. I know you’re hesitant after whatever happened with your last mate, but he’s a good guy.”

“I know that,” she muttered, her head starting to hurt. “Kent isn’t Paul.”

“Paul?” Patrick raised an eyebrow. “Was that his name?”

She nodded, her chest aching. “Yes.”

“Do you ever go back to your **old pack?**” Patrick wasn’t looking at her **as he took a few steps forward.** “**Do you**

ever have to see **him?**”

Chapter 68

She rubbed her temples. “Um... no. I can’t go back to my old pack. I was banished.”

Patrick whipped around. “Banished? Why?”

Riley felt a sharp tearing sensation in her chest and nearly doubled over. It suddenly felt impossible to breathe, her lungs burning. The world seemed to tilt sideways and she was suddenly pulled tightly **against**

Patrick’s chest.

“Damn,” he muttered against the top of her head, “Kent was right. I shouldn’t have let you come **out** here.”

She squeezed her eyes shut, leaning against Patrick as she tried to take a deep breath.

“I need Kent.”

“Can you shift?”

She shook her head against his chest.

“Ok.” He shifted her so he could see her face. “I’ll shift and carry you. There’s a house not too far from here

that we can go to. I’ll mindlink Kent to meet us there.”

After Patrick shifted, Riley carefully climbed onto his wolf’s back and wrapped her arms around his neck. He ran as fast as he could without her sliding off, breaking through the tree line fairly quickly. He ran towards a house that Riley had seen a couple times. It was a small brown cottage with white shutters set not too far

from the trees. The wolf howled as he approached and by the time they got there, an older woman was

standing at the door.

“Oh, dear,” she said. “Gamma, what have you brought me?”

Riley slid off his back, recognizing the woman as one of the Elders, Alma.

Alma nodded at the wolf before he turned to run off, clearly having had a conversation via mindlink. She

helped Riley to her feet and guided her into her cottage. It was small, but neat. The front room had one side

that was a living room and the other was a kitchen/dining area. She led Riley over to her couch and helped

her sit. She went to the kitchen and returned with a glass of water.

“Thanks,” Riley said, accepting the water as Alma sat down next to her.

“What happened, Riley?” Alma said.

“I’ve been sick,” Riley murmured, sipping the water. “I’m not feeling well.”

“Is this the same illness that put you in the hospital a week or so ago?”

Riley nodded.

“Perhaps I can help,” Alma offered. “I was a doctor at the hospital for a long time. What’s causing this illness?”

”

“It’s a long story.” Riley frowned into the cup of water.

Suddenly the door burst open and Kent rushed in, wearing only a pair of jeans and no shirt. He also no longer had bandages or a sling, but she could see the lines on his skin from where the stitches had been. He **rushed** to her side, wrapping an arm around her waist and pulling her close to him. She rested her head on his shoulder, waiting *for* the pain to subside.

“Thank you, Alma,” Kent said over Riley’s head, “for taking care of **her.**”

Chapter 68

Pounts

“So it’s true then?” Alma asked. “I’ve been hearing a rumor about you and this new advisor. Is she your second chance mate?”

“Yes,” he said softly.

“How wonderful,” Alma said, clapping her hands. “Our alpha is blessed by the Moon Goddess. Did you know that Gamma?” Riley looked up to see Patrick standing just inside the door, also shirtless.

“I did,” he replied. “So is his mate.”

Alma turned back to Riley. “The alpha is your second chance as well?”

“Yes.” She nodded, turning her face back into Kent’s shoulder as he rubbed her back.

“Doubly blessed,” Alma said with a sigh. “The Moon Goddess is smiling on you both.” She smiled pleasantly for a moment before shaking her head. “I have been wondering though, why haven’t you announced this to the Elders? And I can see that Alpha is clearly unmarked, which is very unusual for the amount of time you

two have known each other.”

“It’s complicated,” Kent said as Riley lifted her head from his shoulder.

“It’s only complicated if you’re complicating it,” Alma replied, waving a hand at them.

Kent sighed. “Maybe it’s a story for another time, Alma. Right now I just want to make sure Riley is ok.” He

looked at her sternly. “I do recall telling you not to go with Patrick for this very reason. I knew you would get

sick. Luckily I was already coming this way to find you when Patrick mindlinked me.”

“Pardon my interruption,” Alma said, “but why is the new luna sick?”

Kent frowned at the woman. “Patrick’s mate thinks it has something to do with the mate bond. She only gets

sick when she isn’t around me.”

Alma nodded. “Souls are sensitive, you know. Damage to a soul can result in physical symptoms if severe

enough. Loss of a mate, by death or rejection, is one of the worst injuries a soul can endure. That's why so

many die from losing a mate. I'm sure the two of you know that better than anyone."

She tapped her chin for a moment. "What doesn't make sense though is that you both have been given a second chance. A second chance is the only way to heal the damage that has been done to your soul. Having

a second chance should actually make Riley better, not sicker."

Kent considered Riley for a moment, his brow furrowing. "So why is she sick?"

"I guess," Alma replied, "it would have something to do with why you are both unmarked weeks after meeting.

"Could we not do this now?" Riley muttered, turning her head back into Kent's shoulder in order to avoid

looking at anyone.

Kent rubbed her back. "You're the one who doesn't want to be glued to my side for the rest of your life. Maybe Alma knows. She was a doctor and is probably one of the smartest people I know."

Riley glanced up at him, nodding.

"Riley hasn't wanted to accept me," Kent explained. "There have been... issues. Riley's last mate wasn't exactly

... ideal."

"Can you tell me more about the mate?" Alma asked.

3 Chapter 68

"I can't," Kent muttered. "I don't know a lot. Only that he was abusive."

"Is that why you got so sick so quickly?" Patrick asked from the door, drawing everyone's gaze. "We were talking about him. I had asked about you going back to your pack. You said you couldn't, you were banished and then you could barely stand up."

"Why were you banished?" Alma's face creased in confusion.

"I don't want to talk about this." Riley felt the tears in her eyes and turned again into Kent's shoulder.

“Riley, please,” Kent murmured against her head. “We need answers. Please just tell me what happened. All of

it.”

Just tell them, Rose pleaded. *It won't change anything. Kent's not going anywhere. Please.*

Comments

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 69[1,812 words]

Riley pulled back from Kent, shifting so she could see Alma and Patrick more clearly. **She ran both hands** over her face, taking a deep, shuddering breath.

“I met Paul on my eighteenth birthday. The pack had a tradition that all women had to **go** through **the** warrior barracks on their eighteenth birthday in case they were mated to a warrior. I was going towards **the barracks**

to present myself when I ran into Paul. He was the beta of our pack. He was ten years older than me **and he** had taken a chosen mate three years ago.

“It was not a secret that Paul didn't want to take his chosen mate, but the alpha forced it. Paul had been

messing around with the alpha's younger sister and she ended up getting pregnant. When the alpha **found**

out, he forced Paul to take her as his chosen mate. By the time I met him, he had one pup and his mate was

expecting their second.

“When I saw Paul, I knew instantly that he was my mate. I started running towards him, but when I went to

hug him, he grabbed my arm.” She flinched at the memory. She could almost feel his fingers digging into her

skin. She had bruises afterwards. “He wasn't gentle. He told me not to say anything. To act normal.

“He took me to this house on the edge of the pack property. His family owned it. It was pretty there. **The**

house was small, but there was this river that ran right by it. Once we got there, he was gentler, kinder. I

thought maybe he only acted so harshly at first because he was surprised. Once we were there, we... I thought it was fine. We...”

She shook her head, her breath catching in her chest. Kent took one of her hands, squeezing it between both

of his gently. She couldn’t bring herself to look at him.

“We mated that same day, but he refused to mark me. He said if he marked me, it would sever his bond with

his chosen mate and it would cause her too much pain. He said she would probably lose the baby if he did

that, so he asked me to wait until after the baby was born healthy. He said as soon as the baby was born, he would tell everyone – that we could be together. He asked me to stay at the house, to live there and not tell

anyone about us.”

She scoffed, shaking her head. “I thought it was romantic. We had this secret love that no one could know

about. I was so naive.

“He came more often than he didn’t, but he wouldn’t stay the night. In the beginning he was so sweet. He

would bring flowers and all my favorite foods. He would talk to me for hours about how great our life was

going to be together. He built these huge dreams in my mind and I believed every word he said.”

She looked down at where Kent was still holding her hand. “I loved him. I really did. I had never experienced anything like the mate bond. It was so consuming and I was so young. I couldn’t imagine my life without him. For that first month, everything was so beautiful.

“But I also wanted to be a warrior. The alpha didn’t let many women train as warriors, but I was **one of** the best, so he let me continue. I had been accepted to the academy, but

Paul didn't want me to go. He didn't want me to keep training as a warrior. He wanted me to quit my training, to stay in the house, **to wait** for him. At first I thought he just didn't realize how strong of a fighter I was. I thought he would change his mind when he realized, but he didn't. He got so mad when he realized I was still going **to** training. He started **yelling at** me, telling me how embarrassing it was for him to watch me spar. How i wasn't even **that good**. He **kept**

Chapter 69

telling me that women can never be strong warriors, that he could take me down **with his eyes closed**"

She shook her head. "He never even sparred with me. He had no idea how well I could **fight**, even **back then**. I

thought he would just get used to it, so I didn't listen to him. I kept going to training."

Riley bit her lip, trying to take a steadying breath.

Kent gently kissed her temple. "Keep going," he whispered. "You're doing great."

"When I still didn't listen, that's when he started hitting me. The first time he promised it would **never happen** again. He was beside himself, crying and apologizing, saying he had no idea what came over him. He promised he would never get carried away again. But he did it again a few weeks later. **It** became almost like this routine for us. He would get angry, hit me and then apologize, bringing flowers and telling me **that** he loved me so much it made him crazy. He kept saying that once the baby was born, once he could **tell** everyone about us, things would get better.

"And I wanted to believe him. I loved him so much. I just wanted to believe that it was the stress of the baby and hiding our relationship. I just convinced myself that things would get better.

"But one night he came over, when we had been together for about four months. He fell asleep in my bed and didn't wake up until morning. It was the only time he ever stayed for the night and it was a complete accident. During the night, his mate went into labor, but no one in the pack knew where he went. She ended up having the baby alone while he was asleep in my bed." Riley bit her lip hard. "The next morning, he was livid. He said it was all my fault, that I shouldn't have let him fall asleep, that I was complicating his life."

She closed her eyes. "He hit me so hard that day. My right eye swelled shut. He had never hurt me that bad." Riley took a ragged breath. She could feel the anger radiating off of Kent as he wrapped his arm around her shoulder, pulling her tightly against him. She took a deep breath of his scent, trying to calm down. "Luna," Alma said, reaching out to pat her knee, "I know this is hard, but I need you to finish the story."

Kent kissed her forehead as she sat up, giving her a tight smile.

“I told him I didn’t want to be with him anymore.”, Riley closed her eyes. “I told him that I wanted to reject him and leave. He got so mad, madder than I had ever seen him. I tried to run away from him, but he cornered me in the bedroom. He threw me down on the bed.” She trailed off, her throat dry.

“I didn’t want to,” she whispered, tears stinging her eyes. “He didn’t give me a choice though. He was too big, too strong. He said I was his, that I didn’t get to leave him. I didn’t want to...” She shook her head, the tears breaking free. “But I couldn’t stop him.”

Kent stood up abruptly, startling Riley. He paced away a couple steps. Riley couldn’t see his face but she could feel the rage radiating off of him.

“Alpha,” Alma warned.

“He raped you?” Kent turned to look at her, his eyes black. Riley flinched at his expression, looking away. “Kent,” Patrick said, his voice full of warning as he took a step towards him.

Kent looked away, his shoulders heaving. Riley swallowed hard, watching him. His anger was **palpable and** her stomach twisted as she looked down **at** her hands.

Suddenly Kent was beside her again, wrapping an arm around her waist, pulling her **tightly against him**.

Chapter 69

“It’s ok,” he breathed into her hair. “I’m not mad at you. I might go kill him, but you did **nothing wrong**. It wasn’t your fault.”

Until that moment, Riley didn’t realize how long she had waited to hear those words. She started **crying**, burying her face into his chest, her fingers digging into the skin of his back. Kent held her **tightly**, gently rocking her until her sobs subsided.

Once she was finally calm, Kent loosened his grip, allowing her to sit back from him.

“What happened after that?” he asked, rubbing her back.

She took a shaky breath. “He told me he was going to leave his chosen mate. He told me to give him three weeks. He kept telling me I was too weak to survive a rejection. And I felt too weak by then. I didn’t **know** what to do. I had no one to go to for help. My father was a drunk and I didn’t have friends anymore. Paul **had** kept me in that house, away from everyone and I felt so trapped and alone.

“Then one day Paul came with the alpha. I thought that he had finally told people about us. I thought things would be better now, that he was going to actually leave her. But then the alpha ordered Paul to reject me” She shook her head. “And he did. He didn’t even blink. He just rejected me and the alpha ordered me to accept it. Then the alpha banished me. He said I was the problem, that I had tried to ruin Paul’s relationship with his chosen mate.”

Riley chewed the corner of her mouth, staring at the floor for a moment. “Right before he left that day, Paul looked at me and said that the Goddess had made a mistake. He said the mate bond isn’t a blessing, but a

curse. That was the last thing he ever said to me.”

“Sounds like he was the curse,” muttered Patrick.

She smiled wanly. “I thought that later actually. Being his mate would have been a punishment for me, at least. I realize now that he never would have changed, but when I was with him I had just wanted to believe he was good. But after I left, after I got to the academy, I was determined to be stronger and better than any man I met. I was never going to let anyone bring that low ever again. I was never going to rely on someone like that and I was never going to need a mate to feel complete.”

“So you’ve pushed the alpha away.” Alma nodded as Riley turned to look at her. “I think I know why you’re so

sick.”

Comments

[Get Bonus \(Ad\) >](#)

604

M

An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 70[1,170 words]

Chapter 70

Alma patted Riley's hand. "The mate bond is the connecting of two souls to create one. When a **mate** is lost, it's like having your soul ripped in half. It causes physical illness too, but a strong wolf can recover **eventually**. But your soul has endured more damage than most. The abuse you suffered at the hands of your **mate goes** against the Goddess and against the mate bond. It causes damage, not just to your soul, but his as well. But then the banishment created an additional wound as well. You were sent away from the one place **that you** should always belong, severing your connection to your pack. It's honestly a wonder to me that you are even alive."

"But I never felt sick before I came here? If this wound is causing my illness, why wasn't I sick before?" Riley asked.

"Because you are fighting against a second chance. You are reopening old wounds on your soul. Every time you try to create distance with him, every argument or bad memory you've had recently, has been tearing open these old wounds, making your illness worse.

"In time, not only will you grow sicker, but Kent will also begin to fall ill as well. His wounds are not as severe as yours, but they are also slowly being pulled open as well. You will both die eventually if you don't accept each other."

Riley felt her stomach drop. "We'll both die?"

Alma nodded. "You cannot lose a second chance mate. No one survives that loss. Since you are both each

other's second chances, your souls, and your lives, are tied to one another."

"What do I do?" she whispered.

"You accept your mate," Alma replied simply. "You complete the mate bond and mark each other. You repair him and he repairs you. That is how a second chance is supposed to work."

She looked at Kent, his forehead creasing as he met her gaze. She opened her mouth to talk but no words

came out.

Riley stood up, looking around the cottage. "I think... I think I need a minute." She didn't wait for anyone to respond, rushing past Patrick and out of the door.

**

Kent sat on the couch, staring at the door where Riley had disappeared, trying to absorb everything he had

just heard. He reached up to push his hair back from his face, and only then did he realize how bad his hand

was shaking.

“Are you ok, Alpha?” Alma asked gently.

He swallowed, looking at her. “I’ll be fine,” he managed to say. “It’s her that I’m worried about.”

Alma nodded. “She’s been hurt very badly. And she’s been carrying it by herself for a lot of years. It will **take a** lot of time for her to truly let go of that kind of pain. You need to be there for her. Make sure she knows how much you care, how much she can rely on you.”

Kent looked up to Patrick, who was staring out the still open door that Riley had fled **from**.

“**Can** you see her?”

Chapter 70

Patrick nodded. “She’s standing in the garden.”

“She’s overwhelmed and scared.” Alma stood up. “You should go to her. She needs you even if **she doesn’t** want to admit that right now.”

Kent stood too, following Alma to the door. “Thank you, Alma. I really appreciate your help.”

“Of course, my dear.” She patted his arm before turning back to her house.

Kent turned to Patrick. “Go ahead of us. You should go check on your baby and mate. I’ll **stay** with her.”

Patrick nodded and turned to go, but Kent caught his shoulder.

“Thank you, Pat,” he whispered when Patrick looked back. “Thanks for being there for her.”

Patrick gave him a small smile and a nod before striding around the house to shift.

Kent walked over to where Riley was standing at the edge of the garden. She didn’t move or give any sign **that** she heard him as he approached, but he was sure she knew he was there.

“I knew you were strong,” Kent said as he stopped beside her, “but I had no idea.”

She turned to look at him and he could see the tears in her eyes.

“I wish I could take that pain away,” he whispered, turning to face her. “I’m so sorry you had to go through all of that with him. You never deserved any of it.” He reached up to cup her cheek gently. “I would never do that to you.”

“I know,” she whispered. “I’ve known that for a while.”

She turned away from his touch, looking across the field towards the pack house in the distance.

“We should head back,” she said finally. “I feel well enough to shift now.”

“No,” Kent said, “I think we should walk.” He held out his hand. She considered it for a moment before taking

1. it.

They walked in silence for a while before Kent spoke again. “I would do anything to protect you.”

“I don’t need protecting,” she whispered.

He pulled her up short, causing her to turn to look at him.

“I know you don’t now, but you did back then. It kills me that there was no one there for you. I get why you’ve worked so hard to be such a good warrior. I get why you never want to lose a fight, why you don’t let any man bring you down.”

He reached up to push the hair off her face. “But Riley, I would do anything for you. These last couple weeks with you have been some of the best I’ve had in a long time. You are so smart and funny and beautiful and

strong. And I feel lucky the Moon Goddess gave me a second chance and I’m so grateful that my second chance is with you.”

He leaned forward, pressing his lips into hers in a gentle kiss. Her hands grasped at her arms as he cupped her cheeks between his hands. When the kiss ended, he pressed his forehead against hers.

“I love you.” The words tumbled out of him before he even realized what he **had** said. But he **knew**

immediately how true they were. “I love you so much.”

“Kent,” she whispered, her eyes widening, “I…”

1 Chapter 70

“You don’t have to say anything,” he quickly cut in. “You don’t have to say it back. I just want you to know. You are the best thing in my life and I’ll gladly show you that every day if you let me.”

He kissed her again, hungrier this time, pulling her against him. She ran her hands up to the back of his neck, her fingers digging into the short hair there, pulling a groan from him. Her lips parted, her tongue running

along his lower lip.

“Alpha!”

They both pulled apart to see Leo running across the field towards them.

“It’s Max! He’s been hurt!”

Comments