

# An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 71[ 1,021 words ]

## Chapter 71

The doctor assured everyone that Max would be ok. His left leg was broken and his throat had been bitten, but luckily the main arteries had been missed, allowing him enough time to get back to the hospital before bleeding out. Penny was sitting beside him, her face pale, her hands shaking as she gently stroked her

mate's face.

Patrick was leaning against the far wall, his face red, while Leo watched from the doorway. Wesley had gone on Kent's order to the training academy to adjust patrol rotations again.

Kent could barely concentrate on the doctor's words as he watched his best friend lay in the hospital bed. The thought of how close Max had just come to death filled Kent with both fear and rage. If it weren't for Riley holding his hand so tightly, Kent might have already been running towards the rogue encampment.

"What happened?" Kent managed to ask once the doctor had left.

Max winced, adjusting his position in bed. "I went to see that woman." His voice was hoarse. "I explained who I was, that I had her son and I was willing to see about returning him if she agreed to come take a DNA test and prove she was his mother."

He closed his eyes, sinking back into the pillows. "She said it was a trap. That we would kill her the moment she was within our boundaries. I even offered to take her cheek swab at the encampment, but she kept

screaming it was a trick."

Max opened his eyes. "She just shifted so quickly. I didn't have time to react. She went straight for my throat. Probably would have gotten me but Jeremy jumped on her. I managed to shift, but I thought she was going to kill Jeremy. Luckily Scott and Jaxon were nearby. They were able to get us out of there."

"Where's Jeremy?" Kent asked, looking at Patrick.

“Two rooms down,” Patrick answered quietly. “I already checked on him. He should make a full recovery but it will take longer than Max’s. Scott and Jaxon both had some minor injuries but they were already released.”

Kent nodded, thanking the Goddess for his warriors’ safety.

“She’s deranged,” Max whispered, closing his eyes. “Absolutely crazy. She’s not going to take any chance we offer her. She wants to kill us. The scouts have heard her offering our pack territory as a reward for killing us and getting her *son*. She has no plans of doing anything peacefully.”

“I don’t want my *son* to go with this woman,” Penny whimpered, tears streaming down her face. “I don’t care if she really is his mother. She’s violent and unstable. She could hurt him.”

“We’re not going to let that happen.” Kent tried to infuse as much reassurance into his words as possible. And he meant it. There was no way he was letting this maniac get her hands on that child, even if she was

his mother.

Penny looked unsure as she glanced from Kent to where Riley stood at his side.

“Kent’s right.” Even Kent was surprised by Riley’s words. “There’s no way that woman **should be allowed** around a child. I’ll make sure the council is aware of her actions.”

The relief shown on Penny’s and Max’s faces at **those** words. Leo murmured **his agreement from the** doorway.

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Kent looked over at Patrick. “Did you figure out your plan today?”

Patrick nodded. “I think Riley and I have a good idea of what we could do. We definitely need to flesh out the

details but I think it could work.”

“What plan?” Max asked.

“Patrick has an idea for launching an offensive movement against the rogues,” Kent explained. “He and Riley went out to look at an area today to discuss it.”

“We can talk about it more when Max is out of the hospital,” Riley murmured, squeezing Kent’s hand.

“Riley’s right,” said Leo. “Let’s focus on making sure the patrols are secure for now. Risks of another rogue attack are low right now. They need to build back after their last attack.”

“Agreed,” Patrick muttered, pushing off the wall.

Kent nodded, rubbing his chin with his free hand. “I’ll head over to the training building to meet with the evening patrols before they head to make sure their guard is up. Wesley should have the new rotations ready

to distribute.”

Kent turned towards the door, pulling Riley with him. Leo stepped out of his way and he heard Patrick saying something else to Max, but he couldn’t focus on what. He tugged Riley down the hall and out of the hospital to where the car was waiting.

They were silent during the short drive to the pack house. Kent couldn’t keep himself from wondering how close his best friend had just come to death. He didn’t know what he would do if something happened to Max. He had honestly never stopped to consider it. Max had always been such a consistent presence in his life, but the thought of losing him terrified him as much as the thought of losing Riley.

Once they parked at the pack house, Kent walked her to the door before grabbing her elbow and pulling her up short.

“I need *to go over* to the training academy right now,” he said quietly. “I need to make sure the rotations are right before the next shift comes on. I probably won’t be back before dinner, but if you need me, just come

find me.”

*She* stared at him with an indecipherable look before nodding.

He tugged her to him, flattening his hand on the small of her back and leaned down to kiss her. He meant for it to be a quick kiss, but something about her made it hard to pull back. She wrapped her arms around his *neck*, arching against him.

Finally he found the strength to pull away, catching sight of two pack members watching them. He turned on his heel and walked away before he could think about any of it.

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# An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 72[ 1,482 words ]

## Chapter 72

Riley ate dinner alone before retreating to her room. She took a long, hot shower, then dried her hair and

braided it back from her face. Slipping into a pair of soft shorts and a T-shirt, she lay down on her bed

The ache in her head and chest had worsened since dinner, and she was starting to feel truly sick again. Still, she did her best to ignore it. She didn't want to bother Kent at the training academy. He'd been practically radiating stress at the hospital. She knew his focus had to be on protecting the pack.

But she also knew she couldn't keep putting this off. The illness wasn't going away. She thought about **what** Alma had said: she couldn't survive without Kent, just as he wouldn't survive without her.

There really was no reason to keep pushing him away. There was nothing left for her at the Council. She was

going to lose her job either way.

She sighed and rubbed her forehead. But it was more than that. The idea of not being around Kent had

become unbearable. It was amazing how deeply she cared for him after just a few weeks. The thought of

leaving him, of not seeing him every day, made her want to cry.

*Are you done fighting this?* Rose asked.

Riley rolled out of bed, her feet hitting the floor. She didn't know if Kent was still **at** the academy, but she headed to his room anyway. It had been almost an hour since dinner. She prayed he was back by now.

The door opened a few moments after she knocked. Kent stood there, freshly showered, his damp hair tousled. He wore nothing but a pair of gray sweatpants. Riley's gaze involuntarily traced the defined muscles

of his chest, down his abs, to where they disappeared beneath the waistband.

Kent cleared his throat. "If you're done staring, what can I do for you?"

She flushed and looked up at him. His blue eyes danced with amusement.

"Can I come in?"

"Of course."

He stepped back, letting her pass. After he closed the door, he turned to face her, eyes briefly sweeping over her before meeting her gaze.

"What did you need?" he asked, raising a brow.

"I... um... I was thinking," she stammered.

"And?"

"I was thinking about what Alma said." She bit her lip, her eyes sliding down his chest again. Heat flared in her belly.

"And?"

"I want **to** talk about it."

"Okay. We can talk. Do you want to **sit**?" He gestured toward the couch.

Her eyes locked on his. Her body hummed with want.

"No," she whispered. "I actually don't want to talk."

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His throat bobbed as he swallowed, eyes flickering to her mouth, then back to hers. She **stepped forward**, wrapped her arms around his neck, and pulled him into a kiss. His lips crashed into hers with **the same** urgency that pulsed through her. He gripped her hips, pulling her against him as she arched her back **and** tangled her fingers in his hair. His tongue swept into her mouth, drawing a moan from deep in her **chest**.

He grabbed her ass, lifting her as she wrapped her legs around his waist. Without breaking the kiss, **he** turned and pressed her against the door. She felt the hard line of his

arousal through the thin fabric between them. He broke the kiss with a sharp gasp, moving to her neck. When he reached her marking spot, he sucked gently, sending heat straight to her core. She groaned, grinding against him, her arousal thick **in the**

air.

“Kent,” she gasped, dragging her nails down his shoulder.

“f\*\*k,” he breathed. “I love the way you say my name.”

He thrust against her and she pushed back, drawing a hiss from him.

“Don’t stop,” she whispered as he scraped his teeth along her throat.

“Not planning to,” he muttered before capturing her mouth again.

He carried her to the bed and laid her down, climbing over her. He looked into her eyes.

“Are you sure?” he asked, voice low.

“Positive.” She pulled him closer. “I want this. I want you.”

He kissed her with surprising tenderness, then slid his hand under her shirt, cupping her breast through her

bra. He tugged her shirt over her head, and she unhooked her bra. He tossed it aside and slid her shorts and

panties down in one motion. She lay beneath him, completely bare, and his gaze swept over her slowly.

“Goddess, you’re beautiful,” he whispered, voice thick.

He kissed her again, tongue tangling with hers as she arched toward him. He pushed her back gently and

began a trail of kisses down her neck, across her chest, taking her n\*\*\*\*e into his mouth. She moaned,

clutching his hair as he worshipped each breast. His hands roamed her body, leaving sparks in their wake.

Moving lower, he kissed down her stomach to her mound. Gently parting her legs, he kissed her inner thigh,

then met her gaze with hooded eyes. He slid a finger along her seam and parted her folds.

She gasped at his touch.

“You’re so wet,” he groaned, so close she felt his words vibrate against her. Then he licked her, and she cried

out, fingers tightening in his hair. His tongue danced over her clit, sucking gently until she bucked against

him.

“Goddess, Kent,” she moaned as he slid a finger inside her. Her back arched, but he pressed a steady hand **on**

her stomach, adding a second finger. His mouth never stopped, tongue swirling and licking, building her

higher.

“I’m going to come,” she gasped. He curled his fingers just right, and her orgasm hit like lightning. **She cried** his name, her body tensing, clenching around him.

He looked up at her, lips glistening. “You taste amazing.”

He kissed his way up her body, teasing her **breasts** again **before returning to her lips. She could taste herself**

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on him. She wrapped her legs around him and rolled them over, straddling him now.

“I recall you liking this position,” she whispered, kissing his ear.

“I do recall that,” he murmured, hands sliding over her ass.

She kissed his neck, then down to his marking spot, nipping it. He groaned and gripped her hips, grinding her against him. She slid down, pulling his sweatpants and boxers off. His erection sprang free, thick and hard.

Riley wrapped her hand around him, giving him two firm strokes. His head dropped back with a deep groan. *She* kissed the bead of precum at his tip, then licked him slowly, base to tip. He bucked his hips, hands diving

into her hair.

“Holy s\*\*t,” he gasped as she took him into her mouth, deep and slow. She sucked, swirling her tongue, savoring every sound he made.

“Riley, stop,” he groaned, pulling her away. “I need to be inside you.”

She climbed back over him, intending to ride, but he rolled them again, pinning her beneath him. His erection pressed against her thigh, and she lifted her hips, guiding him to her entrance. He pushed in slowly, stretching her, filling her completely. He paused, eyes closed.

“You feel so good,” he whispered before moving again, slow and steady.

Too slow.

She moved beneath him, craving more. He placed a hand on her hip to slow her, smiling as he twisted his hips just right. Her breath caught.

“Faster, please,” she gasped, digging her fingers into his ass.

“Not yet,” he groaned, licking his lips.

Gradually, he increased the pace, reaching between them to circle her clit. She moaned his name, back arching. When he braced himself and began thrusting harder, she met him thrust for thrust, a *knot* tightening

in her belly.

“I’m going to come again,” she whispered. He lifted one leg to his shoulder, changing the angle. Her eyes flew open as the orgasm overtook her, her body clenching around him.

He lasted only a few more strokes before he groaned and spilled inside her, face buried in her neck.

“Hell,” he breathed. “You’re amazing.”

“So are you,” she murmured, fingers tracing the sweat on his shoulders.

He kissed her softly. “I love you.”

Then he rolled to his side, pulling her into his arms.

She kissed his chin, then his neck, her hands roaming his body. He dipped his head to kiss her again, slow

and deep, before she rested against his chest, listening to his heart calm.

He trailed his fingers up and down her back.

“Thank you,” she whispered.

“For the s\*x?” he teased, chuckling. “I should be thanking you.”

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She laughed too, lifting her head. “No, though that was amazing. I meant for being patient with me, I know

this wasn’t easy.”

He smiled. “You’re worth it. I’d wait forever if that’s what it took.”

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## **An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 73[ 1,232 words ]**

Chapter 73

Riley woke to the feeling of Kent’s hand skimming along her side. She was lying on her side, facing him as he slowly dragged his hand up and down her body. She stretched and smiled at him.

“Good morning,” she whispered.

“Good morning,” he murmured, running his hand down her side again, leaving a trail of sparks in his wake.

She reached out and traced her fingers up his chest to his collarbone, her touch lingering on his marking

spot.

“What happened to your mark?” she asked. “The one from Lily.”

“It faded after she died,” he said. “Took about a month to fully disappear.”

“Did it hurt?”

“When it faded?”

She nodded.

“It was more emotional than physical. It was my connection to her. Losing it felt like losing her all over again.”

“What about being marked? Does that hurt?”

**S**

He looked at her for a long moment. “Yes,” he breathed, “but it also feels incredible. There’s no real way to

explain it.”

“I want you to do something.”

“Anything,” he whispered.

“I want you to mark me.”

His hand stilled on her hip, his eyes widening slightly. “When?”

“Right now.”

“Are you sure?” he asked. “Once we’re marked, there’s no going back.”

“I don’t want to go anywhere,” she said, tracing his lips with her finger. “I was never actually going anywhere. I

see that now. This is where I want to be. Here. In this pack. With you.”

He slid his hand up to her neck, tilting her head so he could kiss her tenderly. She leaned into him, and he wrapped his arms around her, pulling her close as if he needed her right against him. He kissed her again, this time with more passion. She ran her fingers through his hair as he gripped her hip, holding her tight.

He pulled back slightly, searching her eyes. “If you’re sure,” he whispered.

“I’m sure,” she whispered back, her heart pounding. “I love you.”

The smile that spread across his face was breathtaking. “I love you too.”

He rolled over, settling on top of her, and kissed her hungrily. His tongue slid into her mouth as he deepened the kiss. She nipped his lip as he pulled away, making him growl.

His kisses moved down her neck and chest, nipping and sucking at her breasts. She moaned, wrapping her legs around his hips, guiding him into her with ease. He entered her slowly, savoring the moment. His

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P

movements were gentle at first, his lips brushing hers as she moaned softly into his mouth. As her pleasure built, she dug her nails into his back, urging him on.

“Tell me again,” he gasped against her neck. “Tell me how you feel.”

“I love you” she said, smiling.

He caught her earlobe between his teeth and groaned, thrusting harder.

“I love you too.” he whispered against her ear before kissing her again. He trailed kisses across her face and neck as he moved faster his rhythm intensifying. She raked her hands down his back, moaning, and grabbed his ass silently begging him to go faster.

His mouth moved to her marking spot. He kissed the spot gently, then began to suck on it, the sensation alone nearly sending her over the edge. She felt his fangs emerge, and then he bit down. A sharp sting hit her just before a wave of pleasure crashed through her. She cried out his name as she came. He released the bite

and licked the spot tenderly as it began to heal.

His thrusts grew erratic. She knew he was close and grabbed his shoulder, pulling him down so she could reach his own marking spot. She kissed it, sucking gently to prepare him. He moaned, the sound low and

urgent in her ear. Her fangs slipped out, and she bit down, his blood filling her mouth.

He let out a loud moan, his body trembling as he came inside her. She held the bite for a few seconds longer,

then released it and licked the wound closed. She kissed the spot once it healed.

Bracing himself over her, he kissed her softly. “I love you,” he murmured against her lips.

“I love you too.

He smiled and brushed his nose against hers. “I’ll never get tired of hearing that.”

She smiled back, shifting her hips to feel him still inside her. He pressed down slightly, stilling her movement,

and nipped her ear playfully.

“Settle down,” he chuckled. “We have plenty of time for more after I catch my breath.”

Kent had put a block on his mindlinks. Only emergency calls from Pat or Max could get through. He was more than done with the constant interruptions he and Riley had dealt with. He only lifted the block briefly to

request breakfast be brought up.

He wore a clean pair of sweatpants but no shirt. His hair was an unruly mess, thanks to Riley’s enthusiastic

tugging, but he had no plans to fix it. Riley, on the other hand, had insisted on brushing and braiding her hair,

which had become thoroughly tangled. He’d given her one of his shirts to wear, and she looked better in it

than he ever had.

He leaned back on the bed, watching her set the coffee on the nightstand. The shirt rode up as she moved,

revealing the smooth curve of her ass. Blood rushed south as he watched her settle beside him.

“Are you staring at me?” she asked, catching his gaze.

“Just admiring the view.” He grinned.

A sudden knock at the door startled them both.

Kent sighed. Why couldn’t he get one day of peace?

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“Kent! Are you in there?” Patrick’s voice sounded annoyed as he banged on the door again.

+S Points

Kent motioned for Riley to stay quiet and rolled off the bed, his bare feet hitting the floor. She shifted, pulling the blanket over her lap. He padded to the door and opened it just enough to block Patrick's view of the room.

"Where have you been?" Patrick demanded. "I've been trying to mindlink you. So has Max. He's out of the hospital and we want..." He stopped mid-sentence, eyes shifting to Kent's shoulder. "What's that?"

"What?" Kent asked, though he knew exactly what Patrick had seen. The fresh mating mark on his

collarbone. He hadn't bothered to throw on a shirt.

"You're marked." Patrick's eyes narrowed for a second, then widened. A smile lit up his face. "Riley's in there. I

can smell her all over you."

Kent glanced over his shoulder. Riley was on the bed, rolling her eyes.

"Yeah, she's in here."

"This is great!" Patrick exclaimed, clapping Kent on the shoulder. "Congratulations! No wonder you blocked

the mindlink. I would've done the same."

Kent couldn't help but smile. "Thanks, man. What did you need?"

Patrick waved a hand. "Max is out of the hospital and we wanted to meet about the rogues. But it can wait

until after lunch. I'll text you the time."

Kent nodded. "Sounds good."

"Bye, Riley," Patrick called.

"Bye, Pat," she replied, rolling her eyes again.

Kent closed the door and turned back to her. "Looks like we've got a couple of hours. What should we do?"

"I have a couple ideas," she whispered, pulling him back into bed.

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## **An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 74[ 1,379 words ]**

### **Chapter 74**

Kent had lunch sent up as well, setting the breakfast dishes outside the door. They ate sitting cross legged

on the floor on either side of the coffee table. Afterwards, Kent took a quick shower and then went to Riley's

room to collect some of her clothes while she showered. She was out of the shower and twisting her hair into

a knot at the top of her head, wearing only a towel, when Kent walked in with her clothes. He laid them down

on the counter and then leaned against the door frame, watching her with wolfish eyes.

"I don't get privacy to get changed?" she asked with a smirk.

"Nope," he answered, the corner of his mouth twitching up. "Now that I got you, I'm not letting you out of my sight. Plus I like the view."

She rolled her eyes as she dropped her towel and reached for her underwear. He was in between her and the

clothes in a second. He ran a hand down her arm arm while the other grabbed her ass, pulling her against

him. She could feel through his clothes that he was already hard.

"Kent," she gasped as he buried his face into her neck, kissing her. "They are going to be waiting for us. We

don't have time."

"Let them wait," he murmured against the skin of her neck, his breath hot. He picked her up and sat her on

the bathroom counter, kissing her deeply. He ran his hands up her thighs, his fingers brushing against her

core. She moaned as he ran his fingers over her slick folds.

Someone banged on the bedroom door, but Kent continued as if he heard nothing, slipping a finger inside her.

"Kent, stop," she said, her voice rising up an octave. "Someone is here."

"Don't care," he murmured, grazing his teeth over her fresh mark as his fingers kept stroking her, making her

body shake.

"Kent!" Max's voice boomed on the other side of the door as he banged on it again. "Open the f\*\*\*\*\*g door!"

Kent sighed, slipping his fingers from inside her and taking a step back. "Get dressed," he said, looking her up

and down as he put the two fingers that had been inside her into his mouth.

"Kent!" She felt her body heat up as he grinned at her, taking a step out of the bathroom.

Max pounded on the door again.

"Yeah, yeah," Kent shouted as he pulled the door to the bathroom closed. Riley quickly got dressed, throwing on a pair of jeans and a black sweater as she heard Kent open the door.

"We're waiting for you," she heard Max yell as the door opened. "Why the hell do you have a block on your

mindlinks right now? I wanted to meet this morning and Pat gave me some lame ass excuse about you not

feeling well. Now we've been waiting for twenty f\*\*\*\*\*g minutes in there and Leo has no f\*\*\*\*\*g idea where Riley is."

Riley straightened her sweater and pushed open the bathroom door. Max was standing a step inside the

room, his face red as he yelled at Kent, but he froze when the door opened. She could see the bandages

wrapping down one arm and peeking up around the neck of his shirt. Max stared at Riley for a moment, his mouth agape. She could see the moment he realized what was happening as a wide smile spread across his

face.

1/3

© Chapter

Prants

“Glad to see you’re feeling better,” she said as she walked across the room to where Kent had set her shoes by the bed.

He stared at her for a moment longer before laughing. “I get it now. Pat was covering for you two.” He clapped Kent on the shoulder. “It’s about damn time.”

Kent laughed. “Thanks, I think.”

“How official is this?” Max asked, gesturing between Kent and Riley.

“Completely official,” Kent said, pulling the collar of his shirt enough to show Max the fresh mark on his collarbone. “I’ll need to inform the elders and we’ll have to plan a Luna Ceremony.”

“Wait. A what?” Riley felt the color drain out of her face.

“A Luna Ceremony,” Kent said slowly, raising an eyebrow. “Surely you know what that is, right?”

“Of course I do.” She rolled her eyes, knowing he was talking about the ceremony in which she would be officially announced and then accepted into the pack as Luna. “I just forgot that would have to happen. I’m not good with planning parties.”

“That’s why we have Penny,” Max replied with a smile. “She lives for these things. She’ll handle it all. Don’t worry about it.” He took a step forward, leaning down to hug Riley gently.

“Thank you,” he whispered in her ear, “for being good to him.”

Max let go and straightened up. “Everyone is waiting in your office,” he said, looking at Kent. “I think you’ve kept everyone waiting long enough.”

Kent took Riley's hand as they walked down to the office.

"I found Kent in his room," Max announced as they walked in. "I also found Riley in Kent's room."

She heard a murmur of voices as she walked in. Pat and Penny were sitting on the couch while Leo and

Wesley sat in their usual chairs.

"I suppose it's just a coincidence that you both disappeared and reappeared at the same time," Leo said, winking at her.

Riley smiled at him as she sunk down into the empty chair and Kent moved to his seat behind the desk.

"You should be excited, my dear," Max exclaimed to Penny as he sat down beside her, taking her hand. "You're

going to get to plan a big party."

Penny's eyes lit up. "A Luna Ceremony? I've got so many ideas already." She looked at Riley. "I started planning it as soon as I found out about you two. It will be amazing. You're going to be such a great luna, especially since I heard you are the only one that can kick Kent's ass in a fight."

"Did you *know*?" Wesley asked, looking at Patrick. "Is that why you could only come up with some lame-ass

headache as an excuse?"

Patrick smirked. "Yeah, I knew. I went to see him this morning and saw the mark on him. I just wanted to let

them tell everyone themselves though." He shot a pointed look at Max.

Max shrugged. "What can I say? I like to share good news."

Kent rolled his eyes. "Ok, Beta, whatever you say. Now let's get to the point of this meeting."

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Max raised an eyebrow. "Somewhere else you'd rather be?"

“Obviously,” Riley replied.

There was a collective chuckle.

18 Points

Max smiled for a moment before it flickered away, his forehead creasing. The atmosphere shifted dramatically in a matter of seconds. Gone were the jokes and happiness for Kent and Riley, replaced by the

worry of what was going to happen with the rogues and Evan.

“I am not willing to entertain the idea of giving Evan to that woman,” Max finally said quietly. “I know that he

isn’t technically ours to keep, but I don’t think she is safe for him to be around. Penny and I have discussed things in depth and we want to speak to the commander at the council. We want to let him know what has

happened and see what he suggests going forward.”

Kent nodded and looked over at Riley. “What do you think?”

Riley considered it for a moment. “I agree with you that I don’t think she is stable or safe for Evan. I agree that reaching out to the commander for guidance in this case would be best. I can call him to discuss your

concerns. I have other things to discuss with him as well.”

She assumed they all knew that the other things were Kent.

Max nodded and looked at Penny. “Anything else?”

Penny bit her bottom lip, her cheeks turning red. “No,” she whispered. “I just want him to be safe.”

“I’ll make the call and I’ll let everyone know what he says,” Riley said.

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**H**

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Chapter 75

## An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 75[ 1,067 words ]

Riley packed up her belongings while she waited on the commander to call her back. She didn't have a lot,

the majority of her things were still at her apartment near the council compound. She would have to make a

trip there after everything at Red Moon was resolved.

Kent had shown her the space in his closet – now their closet to hang up her clothes and what drawers were empty before he had gone back to his office. It didn't take longer than an hour to get everything moved and situated. She was folding the last of her clothes when the cell phone buzzed,

“Riley,” Whey greeted her when she answered. “I was hoping to hear from you soon. What's the update?”

Riley ran through what had happened when Max went to see the rogue woman and his wish to keep Evan away from her.

“That's unfortunate,” Whey sighed. “I guess it was too much to hope that this case could be easily resolved. I do understand why the beta and his mate don't want the child to go with this woman, and I agree with them. She hasn't shown herself to be exactly stable.”

“Exactly,” Riley replied. “I don't think it's wise to pursue reunifying Evan with her, even if she is his mother.”

There was a long beat of silence. “I think the safest option is for this boy to come to the council compound until we figure out where he belongs.”

Riley cringed. “His parents won't want to part with him.”

“They're not really his parents though, are they?” Whey sighed again. “I'm sure they care for the boy, but he

isn't safe in their pack right now. Not with this mad woman trying to get to him. We need to move him to

safety while we figure things out.”

Riley knew he was right, but she didn't want to be the one to tell Max and Penny that their son – or whatever –

was being taken away sooner than expected.

“I'll need you to bring the boy here,” Whey continued.

“Me?”

“Yes, you. You are still the lead advisor on the case. Is that an issue?”

Riley chewed her lip for a moment, looking around the empty bedroom.

“I accepted the alpha,” she admitted.

There was a long pause. “That's wonderful, Riley.” Whey sounded genuinely happy for her. “So I assume that's why you don't want to come here. You don't want to leave him?”

She sighed, sitting on the edge of the bed. “Well, yeah. We only just marked each other.”

Another long pause. “I understand, Riley. I really do, and if I could think of a different plan, I would. But I need you to be the one *to* explain things to the Elders. You are still technically an advisor with the council, but you can make your resignation final while you are here.”

Riley pinched the bridge of her nose. “How soon do we have to be there?”

“The sooner the better,” Whey replied. “I can give you three days' time. Is that doable?”

1/3

Chapter

“Yes, sir. I'll make it work.”

Kent leaned back on the sofa, staring at the ceiling of his office. He had been going over the winter prep lists, making note of what still needed done. The papers were still on the coffee table in front of him, but he found himself wondering what winter would be like this year. It would be his first with Riley.

The door opened and he turned *his* head to see Riley stepping in. He felt a warmth bloom through his chest as he smiled at her. She was finally his and there were no words to describe the joy he felt knowing that.

She stood at the door, giving him a hesitant smile and he knew instantly that something was wrong. He sat up, leaning forward to rest his forearms on his thighs.

“How was your phone call?” he asked, already knowing he wasn’t going to like the answer.

Riley sighed, walking across the room to sit next to him on the couch. She rubbed her hands on her knees for a moment before telling him about what the commander wanted. As she spoke, he felt the blood draining out of his face.

“Did you tell him about us?” he demanded, turning to face her fully.

She nodded.

“And he still wants you to leave? Knowing that we just fully mated?” Pax was howling in his head, causing pain to erupt behind Kent’s eyes.

“I explained it,” she said with a sigh. “He said I had to be the one to talk to the elders. He said I could fully

resign while I’m back there.”

He saw the slight tremble in her bottom lip and pulled her tightly against his side. He couldn’t let her just go.

Not now that she was finally his.

“What about your illness?” Kent asked, an idea forming. “Did you tell him about that?”

She sighed, pushing away from him slightly. “Kent, the illness is gone.”

He blinked at her.

*She* shook her head. “I’ve been away from you for well over an hour and I haven’t felt remotely sick.

Remember what Alma said? Completing the bond would end the illness. She was right.”

Kent cursed under his breath, looking away across the room. He clenched his jaw, trying not to think about

what her leaving might mean.

“I’ll come back,” she said, as though she could read his mind. “I’ll come back as soon as they let me. I swear

I’ll come back.”

He turned back towards her. “I know you will,” he whispered. “I just don’t want you to go to begin with.”

She leaned forward and kissed him softly.

“I’m worried about Max and Penny,” she said as she sat back.

Kent nodded, looking at his hands. “Me too. They won’t want him to go, even though I agree with the

commander. It would be safer to take him away right now.” He looked back at Riley. “At least that’s the silver lining. You’ll be with Evan. They’ll trust you with him. You are their luna now.”

2/3

Chapter 75

+8 Points >

Riley nodded. “I guess there’s that, but I doubt it will make things easier for them. We’ll need to tell them.”

He scrubbed his hands over his face. “Yes, I suppose we do.”

Comments

## **An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 76[ 1,371 words ]**

Vote

Chapter 76

40 Points

## Chapter 76

The sky was dappled with pink and orange as the sun slowly slid behind the trees. Riley clasped her hands

between her knees, watching people move about from her spot on the front steps of the pack house.

Max and Penny had taken the news about Evan as well as Riley had expected, which meant it had not gone well at all. They tried to argue, Max even insisting that he wouldn't let the child go, but sense had ultimately prevailed.

The following day had involved a meeting with the elders to officially present Riley as the luna. The elders had wanted to set a date for the Luna Ceremony, but Kent and Riley insisted that there would be no event until the situation with the rogues was resolved. That hadn't stopped the news from spreading through the pack though, and Riley had been approached by an innumerable amount of pack members expressing their congratulations. All of them seemed elated that their alpha had found a second chance, many of them voicing how deserving he was of that blessing. It helped to remind Riley of how loved Kent was by his pack.

"Riley?"

She looked up to see Kent striding around the pack house. She was unable to stop the smile she felt at the

sight of him. He smiled too.

He was being trailed by a man who was maybe an inch shorter than Kent with short cropped blonde hair and bright blue eyes.

"This is Jaxon," Kent said as they came even with her.

"Nice to meet you, Luna," Jaxon murmured, tipping his head towards her.

"He's one of my best warriors. I've chosen him to accompany you and Evan to the council."

Riley's smile faltered. It was the one point of contention that Kent and her had in the morning. Kent was insistent that a luna traveling outside the pack without her alpha had to be accompanied by a warrior. It was

actually a common practice among packs, but it still grated her nerves. Even though she had insisted she

was more than capable to protect herself and Evan, Kent would not be dissuaded.

She was still ready to argue, but when she called the commander to discuss travel details, Whye had even asked if she would be bringing a pack warrior with her. He had not been surprised at all to hear Kent was insisting on it and he had actually been the one to finally convince her to give in, telling her it wasn't worth

the battle in the long run.

Whey was probably right, but that didn't make her feel any less irritated.

"Nice to meet you, Jaxon," Riley replied, trying her best to be polite.

"I've already fully briefed him on the details of your trip," Kent explained. He considered her for a moment before adding, "I've also made sure he knows that you are a superior warrior and that while he's officially accompanying you, he would do better to focus his energies on Evan."

Jaxon smirked at this. "I heard you took the alpha down. I would pay good money to see that myself."

She smiled at that. "I'm sure there will be plenty of chances to see that in the future."

Kent rolled his eyes, but he was smiling.

Chapter 76

\* **Points** 7

"I'll stay out of your way, Luna," Jaxon said. "I'm just looking forward to seeing the council compound. I've never been." He glanced at Kent and then back to Riley. "Plus, I haven't found my mate yet, so more traveling means more chances at finding her." He looked so sweet, his cheeks reddening at that admission.

"Well, hopefully you'll find her." Riley glanced at Kent, who was shaking his head and smiling.

"Ok, Jaxon." Kent clapped him on the shoulder. "You'll leave tomorrow at one. Go back to the barracks and get packed. I believe you have one more patrol this evening, as well."

Jaxon bid them both goodbye. They watched him walk away before Kent turned back to Riley.

"He's a good guy. I think you two will get along well. Plus he has a slew of younger siblings so he'll be good with Evan."

"You know your pack members well," Riley noted.

Kent shrugged. "A good alpha should know his pack's strengths and weaknesses. That means I need to know everyone, but especially my warriors."

"I hope to get to know them too," she said, glancing over to where Jaxon was disappearing around the pack house.

"You will," Kent murmured, stepping closer to her and wrapping an arm around her waist. "Once you're back, we can discuss what you want your duties to look like."

He pulled her flush against his chest and leaned down, kissing her gently under the ear, sending a shiver through her body..

"I wish I wasn't going," she whispered.

\*\*

Kent had woken in a panic around 4AM, telling Riley about an urgent mindlink from Patrick. All she had managed to get from him before he rushed off was something about a couple warriors missing from patrol. She had gotten up with the intention to go with him, but he had insisted she stay and get some sleep before her trip. She had reluctantly agreed to stay as long as he mindlinked her about anything important.

Of course, she had not actually managed to fall back asleep. Rose provided her with brief updates that she was getting from Pax, but Riley had the sense that Rose was holding something back. She finally gave up around 5:30AM and had gotten a shower before settling down at the desk in her old room to work on some

reports.

Around 8AM she was headed to the elevator for breakfast when Kent appeared out of the stairwell. He was only wearing a pair of joggers and sneakers, his shirt in his hand. His hair was disheveled and his eyes were dark. She could feel the anger and worry radiating off him.

He froze when he saw her, his jaw clenching.

"What's wrong?" she asked softly, taking a step towards him.

His fists clenched and unclenched at his side. "Jaxon is missing, but we suspect he's dead."

Riley froze, her stomach dropping. That wasn't possible. She had just met him last night.

"He and his patrol partner, Holly, never checked in after their last patrol run," Kent explained, lifting a hand to run through his hair. "They sent out an extra patrol to look for them, but all they found was Holly's body along

Chapter 76

43 Fonts

with three dead rogues. It was some kind of skirmish. Jaxon's blood is everywhere, but we didn't find his body. More than likely he was drug into the woods past our border but it's not safe for us to *look too* far beyond the border for him. There appears to be even more rogues than our scouts have accounted for."

Riley took another step, closing the distance between them to wrap her arms around his waist. Kent folded into her, burying his face into her neck. She ran her hands gently over his back while he took a shuddering

breath against her.

"You have to go," he whispered into her neck.

"I am going," she reminded him. "In just a few hours."

He pulled back slightly so he could look at her. "No," he murmured, his eyes pleading. "We're moving up the

time. You're leaving within the hour."

"What?" She tried to pull back but he held her tightly.

"We have to get Evan out of here," he explained. "The numbers that are being reported are huge. There's an

attack coming, I can feel it. We need to get that boy out of here."

She stared into his blue eyes, chewing on her lip. Slowly she nodded.

"Max will drive the two of you to the airport, but you will not have a warrior accompanying you. I don't have

anyone to spare."

"It's ok." She reached up to cup his cheek and he pressed himself into her touch. "I can take care of him."

"I know."

Comments

**Get Bonus (Ad)** >

H

**Vote**

608

< Chapter 77

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## **An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 77[ 943 words ]**

It felt too soon, but within the hour Riley had managed a small breakfast and packed up the last of her things. She had no idea how long she would be gone from the pack, but she didn't need to take too much.

She had most everything she needed back in her apartment. She had already spoken to Leah about getting her spare room set up for Evan by evening time.

She carried her bag out the front doors of the pack house where Kent stood with Max, Penny, Alex and Evan.

Evan was in his mother's arms, his face buried into her neck while Alex held Max's hand, clearly trying to hold

back tears.

Kent stepped away from them, grabbing Riley's bag to load it into the car.

"I don't want to go," Evan cried into his mom's shoulder.

"I know," Penny whispered, rubbing his back, tears streaming down her face. "I don't want you to go, but it's

really important. You have to be strong for me."

Kent grabbed Riley's hand, pulling her away slightly. He wrapped an arm around her waist and pulled her

against him.

"Please call me as soon as you get there," he whispered, kissing her cheek softly.

"Of course," she replied, leaning up to kiss him gently on the lips.

"I love you," he breathed against her lips.

"I love you too."

"We need to go soon," Max interrupted, reaching out to take Evan from Penny's arms.

Riley stepped away from Kent, turning to see Max pull a walking Evan from his mother.

"No," Evan cried. "I'll be good, I promise! Please let me stay! Please!"

"It's ok, buddy," Max whispered, trying to soothe him. "You didn't do anything wrong."

"You said you loved me!" Evan screamed towards his mother.

Penny looked away, sobbing harshly. Kent gave Riley one last kiss on the cheek before walking away. He grabbed Alex's hand and Penny's shoulder, steering the two away from Max. Evan writhed in his father's grip,

trying to get away.

"You drive," Max grunted. Evan's elbow caught him in the chin but Max barely flinched.

"I'll have to hold him in

the back."

"Let me go!" Evan wailed, clawing at Max's hands and arms. "LET ME GO!"

Riley's heart clenched at Evan's screams. He was only five, far too young to understand what was happening. to him. She opened the back door of the car so Max could climb in with Evan. Once they were both inside, Evan still desperately fighting, Riley got in the driver's side.

Luckily the GPS was already set up so Riley didn't have to attempt to ask Max directions as he tried to calm his son. By the time they had gotten through most of the town of Red Moon, Evan's screams had subsided to

soft sobs, his face buried in Max's chest.

1/2

Chapter 77

46 **Points**

As they pulled onto the road that led out of Red Moon, bracketed by the tall forest, Riley tried not to think

about what might happen at the airport. What would Evan do when pulled away from Max? Would they even let her board a plane if Evan was as hysterical as he had just been?

She tried to push the thoughts out of her head and focus on the road. Fall was slowly fading to winter and

leaves had fallen, coating large portions of the road. She was lost in thought when Max gasped from the

back seat.

“Stop!”

Riley hit the brakes, gliding to a stop in the middle of the road.

“What’s wrong?” She looked at him in the rearview mirror. The glazed look told her he was in the middle of a

mindlink. Even Evan lifted his head to watch Max’s face. When his eyes came back into focus, Riley saw the

fear in them.

“There’s an attack on the other side of the pack,” Max said after a moment. He glanced over his shoulder

through the rear window as if he could see it. “Patrick said they pulled all the patrols from this area to help

with the attack. He thinks we should turn around.”

Riley’s stomach dropped, her mind immediately going to Kent and what had happened during the last attack.

She reached to put the car into reverse when a loud howl reached her ears. Several howls quickly followed.

“s\*\*t!” gasped Max, grasping Evan tightly.

She could see the shapes moving through the trees, growing closer.

***Kent!*** she tried mindlinking. ***Kent, there are rogues here!***

Max quickly pushed Evan into the seat beside him, moving to open the door.

“Drive,” he ordered, barely sparing her a glance. “I’ll hold them off. Drive as fast as you can. Get him out of

here.”

***I’m coming,*** Kent’s voice broke through the mindlink.

Before she could say another word, the door slammed shut and Max had already begun shifting. She barely

registered Evan’s scream for his father as she threw the car into drive and hit the gas.

The car lurched forward but had barely moved a hundred feet when a huge wolf jumped onto the hood, the

impact shattering the windshield. Riley screamed as the car swerved and she struggled to correct it. Another

loud crunch told her that another wolf had jumped onto the car and judging by Evan’s shrieks, this one on the

rear end.

She hit the gas again, hoping to throw the wolves off, but she couldn’t really see where she was going. Within

seconds they were veering off the road, the wolf on the hood slid off in time for her to make out the tree right

before she slammed into it.

**Comments**

**An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 78[  
1,307 words ]**

608

## Chapter 78

Pax had never run so fast in his life. Kent could feel him pushing the limits of his strength. The patrols that

had been headed towards the eastern attack had returned to the west at Kent's orders, but they only provided

brief updates about what was happening near Riley. They were vastly outnumbered. The strongest of the rogues numbers were at the western point.

Patrick was rerouting **all** support towards the west, but it did little to ease Kent's worry. Riley wasn't

responding to mindlinks. He couldn't **feel** any emotions through the bond. The only thing he knew was that

she was alive. Max was also not responding to mindlinks. He had initially, but everything had gone silent.

Goddess only knew where Evan was right now

Kent's stomach pitched at the thought of that little boy in the middle of danger. They were going through

everything to keep him safe and they had unknowingly put him right in the line of attack.

Kent could smell the blood before he got there. He saw one of his warriors on the ground, a rogue tearing

viciously into his shoulder Pax barely thought as he tore through the rogue, ripping out his throat with ease,

the metallic tang of blood filling his mouth. He moved on, apping through rogue after rogue with the singular focus of locating his mate

At some point, reinforcements armed Kent started recognizing more and more of his own warriors and allies in the fray. The sheer numbers of rogues was incredible though. They may not be the trained fighters like

Kent had, but they seemed to have a never ending number of fighters

It felt like madness. There was blood everywhere. Pax had scratches on his side. Someone had bitten his

back leg but Pax had made short work of tums, Kant could feel Pax's pain, but Pax refused to stop. His mind

was only on locating Riey

Suddenly a long hovel, one that Kent had never heard before echoed through the woods. Nearly every roque

echoed that howl, sounding like munder as it rolled through the trees

And then it was over

The howl had been a signal to fall back. All the rogues were suddenly leaving

This makes no sense, Kent said to Pax. They were winning by sheer numbers. Why fall back?

Because they have what they want, Pax replied

Kent knew he was right. The only reason the rogues would leave when they were at such a clear advantage

was because they had what they came for

Evan

Despite Patrick trying to insist that Kent go get checked out, Kent was still walking through the c\*\*\*\*\* of the battle. He canly wore a pair of shorts that someone had handed him. His feet were sticky with drying blood as

he watched the last of the wounded being cared off. Bodies were everywhere. Plenty of roques, but too

many wamors as well. Kant didn't even want to begin counting the losses.

(Chapter 78

He turned to see Leo walking towards him. Similar to him, Leo only wore a pair of shorts. Also similar to Kent, he was covered in blood, though how much, if any, of it was his was impossible to tell.

"We found something." Leo motioned for Kent to follow.

“Is it Riley?” Kent hurried to follow. He had still been unable to mindlink with her. All he could tell for sure was

that she was alive, but nothing else.

“I think it gives us an idea.” Leo walked down a short embankment where Wesley and two other warriors

stood.

Kent froze.

It was the car, crumpled into a tree. All the windows had been shattered. All four doors were flung open. But it wasn't the scene that made him stop.

It was the smell of her blood.

“Where is she?” Kent rushed towards the car, looking inside. The front airbag had deployed. There was blood

on the seat, wheel and door. He could tell from the scent that it was Riley's. He looked into the back seat and

cringed at the sight of blood there. It was Evan's.

“We don't know where they are.” Kent straightened up to look at Wesley. He was also covered in blood, his

pale hair falling into his eyes. “We're assuming Riley is alive, given you would know if she wasn't.”

“What about Evan?”

Wesley shrugged. “We're assuming he's alive too. I mean, all of this has been to get him, right? I doubt this

woman wanted him dead. She claims this is her son.”

“Where are they then?” Kent fisted his hands, his teeth clenching. “Where are they?”

“They have to be back at the rogue camp,” Leo said, stepping between Kent and Wesley. “They must have

taken both of them there.”

“Then we need to go to the camp!” Kent turned towards the northwestern direction he knew the camp to be

1. in. “We need to get all the warriors we have and go!”

“That would be... unwise,” Wesley murmured.

Kent wheeled around. “Unwise?! My mate and my beta’s son have been captured by rogues – the same rogues that have been relentlessly attacking my pack for two years! I will not just leave them in the hands of the

people that want to see my pack destroyed!”

“With what forces will you fight them?” Wesley yelled. “Your beta was on the brink of death when we got to him. Half your forces are injured. We don’t even know how many are dead yet! And you saw how many rogues there were! Our estimates weren’t even close to the right numbers. We need to fall back and regroup!”

“They could kill them while we regroup!” Kent cried. “They could kill her!”

“Kent!”

They all turned to the voice. Standing at the top of the embankment was Penny. Her red hair was down and wild, her face pale.

“You shouldn’t be here,” Kent whispered.

“He’s my son,” she replied, walking down the embankment. “I have every right to be here, same as you.”

2/3

Chapter 78.

“How’s Max?” Leo asked quietly.

She turned to look at him. “He’s still in surgery, but the last update I got was that they are confident he will pull through.”

“That’s good,” Kent breathed, turning to look back at the car.

“Wesley is right, Kent.” He swung his head to look at Penny. “I know you want to go get them. I want *to* go just as much as you. I understand, but we could just be putting us all at risk if we’re *not* careful. We have questions we need to answer. We can’t just launch ourselves blindly into an attack.”

“What questions?” Kent challenged.

“How did they know we were moving Evan today? How did they know to anticipate the car on the road? Why did they take Riley instead of kill her?”

She shrugged. “Plus all the tactical questions that Wesley wants. How many rogues are still there? How many in fighting condition? Do we have the numbers to take them? Do we need to call for reinforcements?”

“You have a good mind for strategy,” Leo pointed out.

She cast him a glare. “I was a warrior before I had Alex. I know how to fight.”

Penny turned back to Kent. “I know this is hard. I understand more than anyone here. But Kent, we have to be careful. We have to be smart about this. What if they expect you to rush blindly in? What if they know she’s your mate and they expect you to go feral like you did last time?”

Kent flinched.

“You know she’s right,” Leo said softly. “We need to go back. We need to let our forces heal. We need to scout.

Kent finally nodded. “Ok.”

Comments

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**H**

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608

3/3

**An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 79[  
721 words ]**

[< Chapter 79](#)

Points >

“So you are the luna, then?” she asked, her putrid breath hitting Riley in the face. “You are his second chance? That’s what the boy said.” She shook her head, laughing softly. “They all say a second chance is a blessing, but they’re wrong. Second chances are a curse.”

There was a scuffling sound and Riley turned to see Maddox half dragging a man towards them. He dropped the man on the ground in front of Riley and she watched as the man wearily lifted his head to look at her.

Jaxon.

His face was bruised and swollen, covered in blood, but she had no doubt that it was him as she stared into

his eyes.

It made sense. He had gone missing the night before they were due to leave. He had been captured and tortured by the look of it. That, she realized, must have been how the rogues knew that Evan was being

moved.

“I’m sorry, Luna,” Jaxon whispered, tears streaming down his face. “I’m so sorry.”

“It’s ok, Jaxon,” she managed to say, her throat raw.

“It’s not ok,” laughed the woman, still kneeling next to Riley. “He told us everything. It really didn’t take that

much for him to break, either. You should be ashamed.”

The woman stood up, cackling. “But I have to thank him, honestly. Without his information we wouldn’t have gotten my boy back.”

Riley flinched. So she did have Evan after all.

“You should be ashamed,” the woman said again. She reached into her pocket and produced a knife before kneeling back down to cut the bindings around Riley’s wrist. “Because of this boy, right here, you are at my mercy. When your dear alpha comes for you, which I know he will, I will kill you right in front of him.”

Riley lurched forward, her hands hitting the damp ground, shutting her eyes against this woman’s words.

“I will kill you,” she continued, “because I know that no one can survive losing a second chance mate. Once I kill you, your precious alpha will die too. The man who stole my child, who hid him from me for years, will finally meet his fate.

“Did you know?” The woman leaned closer to Riley, her breath warm against Riley’s face. “He killed every person in that camp. Women and old men who couldn’t fight. I was out hunting. When I came back, they were all dead and my son was gone. Innocent people who had done nothing wrong except choose to camp with a couple rash idiots. It wasn’t my fault or their fault that those three idiots decided to attack his luna. We did nothing, yet he punished us all.”

Riley’s stomach churned and she was sure if she had anything in her, she would have thrown up right then. She closed her eyes against the words, but all she could hear was Kent asking if this was the Goddess’ punishment for the wrongs he had done.

“Your beloved mate is a murderer and a kidnapper.” The woman grabbed Riley under the chin, forcing her to look at Jaxon. “And this boy has betrayed everyone you love. You shouldn’t be ok with that,” she snarled. “You should be furious. Furious at him, at your mate, at the Goddess who thinks she knows all.”

The woman pushed the knife into Riley’s hand. “You should want to kill him.”

Riley stared at the knife for a moment and then at Jaxon.

2/3

< Chapter 79

“No,” she whispered.

“*Kill* him,” the woman urged.

+8 Points >

“No,” Riley said again, her voice stronger. Before she could think about it, she swung the knife towards the woman. But she was too slow, her movements slowed down by her injuries and the wolfsbane.

The woman easily grabbed her wrist, twisting her arm until Riley dropped the knife with a groan of pain. Then the woman struck Riley across the face, sending her flying sideways into the ground.

“Luna!” Jaxon gasped.

“Stupid,” the woman grumbled, climbing to her feet. “Stupid and predictable.”

Riley laid in the dirt, tasting the blood in her mouth. Her body ached, her head throbbing. She could feel the tears stinging her eyes. She desperately wanted to see Kent.

“Bring me my son,” the woman demanded.

Comments

## An Unwanted Second Chance Ripped 80[ 1,450 words ]

Riley forced herself upright at the mention of Evan. Maddox walked into a nearby tent and reappeared a moment later with Evan. He had a bruise down the side of his face and his arm was in a makeshift sling. His wide brown eyes looked at the sight in front of him, landing on Riley. She could tell he was on the verge of

tears.

Maddox walked Evan to the woman before retreating a few steps. The woman laid her hand on Evan’s

shoulder, pulling his back against her.

“I know what it means to sacrifice for the ones I love,” the woman said, brandishing the knife at Riley. “I gave up everything for the man I loved. I gave up everything for my son. I didn’t have a stupid mate *bond* or a Moon Goddess telling me who to love or who to choose. I made up my own mind, unlike weaker wolves who are so willing to let fate decide.”

Evan cringed, closing his eyes tightly as though he could make it all go away. Riley saw the tears squeeze out of the corner of his eyes.

“You’re scaring him,” Riley managed to say.

“Who?” The woman frowned. “My son?” She glanced at his face, barely sparing a second to take in his tears. “The only reason he is scared is because he was stolen from me when he was a baby. He doesn’t know who I

am.”

She shook his shoulder fiercely, causing him to yelp in pain and attempt to cradle the arm in the sling.

“This is my son!” she shrieked. “He will remember soon enough!” She shook him again.

“Careful, Cheree,” Maddox exclaimed, walking forward. “His arm is broken and not properly set.”

The woman, Cheree, whipped the knife up, pointing it at Maddox’s face.

“Don’t tell me how to handle my son!” she growled.

Maddox halted, eyeing the knife warily.

She wheeled her arm *around* so the knife was pointing towards Riley. “I have always had to make the hard choices when those around me were *too* weak. I loved a man for years, since I was just a girl. He was the future alpha of our pack. He promised me we would be mates when we turned eighteen, but the Moon Goddess made a fool of him. She gave him another mate. A weak, silly girl who was not fit to be his luna, I was the daughter of the gamma! I was a trained warrior! I was the one fit to be his luna! But he claimed to love her,” she sneered the word love, as though it was tainted.

“He had claimed to love me for years, but suddenly he has this weak mate and she is all he can talk about.” She shook her head, sneering. “I knew I had to solve this problem for him. He was too weak to get rid of her, so I did it. I took her out on a hunt and I killed her for him.

“I told him there was an accident and he didn’t question me. He never really questioned me because he knew I always wanted what was best for him. He was devastated after she died. It took him years to really get back to himself, but I waited because I loved him and I knew it would be worth it.

“And it was! One day he said he was ready to take a chosen mate. He asked me to be with him. I thought he had finally seen sense.”

< Chapter 80

The woman shook her head, laughing at the memory. Riley felt her stomach twist with unease as she

watched Evan continue to cry.

+ Points >

“We were going to mark one another on the next full moon to make sure our bond was strong,” the woman continued, “but two days before the full moon a visiting alpha came with his daughter. Suddenly he had a

second chance mate!”

Cheree's face twisted in rage. "They said it was a rare blessing," she snarled, spit flying from her lips. "But I know better! I worked so hard to be the perfect mate for him. To be the perfect luna and he didn't even think twice before he marked that b\*\*\*h! He didn't even tell me until after it had happened.

"And the worst thing was, he expected me to be happy!" She was yelling now, waving the knife in the air, her face red with rage. "To be happy that he was tossing me aside like yesterday's trash after everything I had done, everything I had sacrificed for him!"

Evan wailed, suddenly trying to pull away from Cheree. She yanked him back forcefully, causing him to cry in pain again. Maddox shifted forward like he was going to stop Cheree, but froze as she continued ranting.

"Second chances are a curse, but when I tried to tell him. When I tried to make him see reason, he told me I

was mad. He and everyone in that pack acted as though I was crazy! Can you believe that?"

|

Riley could believe it as she watched Cheree continue ranting, the knife coming dangerously close to nicking

Evan's chin several times.

"He cast me out," she continued, her voice shrill. "He exiled me. Told me to never come back. But I wasn't

going to just let that b\*\*\*h steal my place. She was pregnant. She was carrying the baby that should have

been mine! I was supposed to carry his child, not her. But everyone kept going on about how this baby was

special, how he would be stronger than other wolves when he grew up. So I knew what I had to do. I waited

until she gave birth. I waited until the right chance came and then I went back into the pack.

"It was so easy to sneak in. The alpha was foolish and he trusted the wrong people. They never changed the

patrol rotations. They never thought I was a real threat. It was so easy to sneak back in. I found the luna and I killed her. I *knew* the alpha would die too – no one survives losing a second chance. But he had been dead to

me for a while. I took the child. I took this child,” She shook Evan for emphasis, causing him to cry again. “He was supposed to be *mine* anyway. And one day, we will return to our pack. He is the rightful heir and everyone will realize the mistakes that were made. They will realize that I was the one who should have been

Juna. They will finally see.”

“She’s crazy,” breathed Jaxon.

She pushed Evan until they were only a step away from Riley. She could see the way his lips were trembling.

the tears caught in his eyelashes. She couldn’t help but think how small he was.

“Alphas are all the same in the end,” Cheree snarled. “And your alpha will pay the price for what he has done

to me.”

“Cheree,” someone called as Evan let out another soft cry, “your boy is scared.”

Riley looked away from Evan and realized that a crowd of rogues had gathered around them, clearly listening to Cheree’s rants. Some of them were smiling and seemed pleased by what she was saying, but others wore frowns, watching her with warily.

“He is scared because he doesn’t know me,” she cried, shaking his shoulder again. “He doesn’t know his own

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+8 Points X

mother. But in time you will all see. My son will be one of the strongest wolves of his generation. He will be an incredible leader. He will avenge his mother.”

“Let me go home,” Evan cried, trying to pull away from her.

“Home?!” scoffed Cheree, pulling him again. “You are home when you are with me. I am *your* mother.”

“You’re not my mother!” he screamed, trying again to break free.

She smacked him hard on the back of the head, causing Evan to crash to his knees beside Riley.

“I am your mother!” she roared. “And you will not disrespect me!”

“Just do what she says,” Riley whispered desperately to Evan, as he clutched the back of his head with his good hand. “Just listen so she doesn’t hurt you.”

“I want to go home,” he sobbed.

“She’s right,” Jaxon added quickly. “Just do what you’re told right now.”

“Stop talking to my son,” Cheree growled, grabbing Evan under his good arm and yanking him away.

“Take care of them,” she told Maddox as she drug Evan into her tent.

2

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