



Healing the Ruthless Alpha

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ONE

I had one day until I turned twenty-one then I could leave the hellhole I called pack and live as a lone wolf. At eighteen, wolves are considered adults but lone wolves are a rarity as living without the ties of a pack can drive a wolf to insanity. Our laws prohibit wolves under the age of twenty-one from living solitary lives to keep the rogue population in check.

“Tomorrow, Rena, you and I will leave this hell and find a real home.” I stroked the fur of the stray black wolf that became my friend a year ago.

“What are you doing lazying about?” A sharp voice cut into the serene air behind the pack house. “Do we keep you here to waste our air?” I hurried to my feet as Felicity approached me. “You article of no commercial value!” My face snapped to the side and I stumbled as her palm connected with my left cheek in a resounding slap.

“I am on my break.” Indignation rang in my tone as I cradled my cheek. “I deserve to rest after working nonstop for twelve hours –“ Another slap cut me off.

“This filthy bitch!” She screamed, red in the face. “How dare you talk back at me?” She stepped closer but paused when Rena growled low in her throat.

“Rena, back off,” I warned my friend. She had suffered enough cruel torture for my sake yet every time I pushed her to leave, she came back to me.

Unlike me, Rena was an ordinary wolf and not a shifter. I could not tell if she understood me when I told her to leave the pack, to find somewhere else or to stay in hiding. She always stood beside me and it always ended in her getting hurt.

“You and this your stupid mutt,” Felicity grumbled, eyeing Rena who kept growling, the intensity of the sound rising the more time passed. “Whatever,” she rolled her eyes, pretending the sounds coming from Rena’s throat didn’t terrify her. “I am reporting you to my father.” With that, she brushed past me, her shoulder hitting me hard enough to make me stumble.

“Rena, no –“ Without looking back, I knew what would happen next. Rena charged at Felicity, claws sinking into her arm as the other girl tried to shift. “Get off her. You’ll get in trouble!” My eyes scanned the place. I couldn’t hear anything but with the scent of blood rising in the air, people would soon be here.

“Rena –“ I cried in a voice choked with emotions. “Please –“ If she could understand me, she showed no sign. She fought Felicity like a rabid dog. The Alpha’s daughter shifted to her brown wolf but she lacked the murderous intent to combat Rena who fought like a crazy animal ready to kill.

“Felicity!” A voice thundered from behind me. Turning, I faced Kade as he ran over to the battling wolves. Two others came with him and they separated the fight in seconds.

“What did you do?” The expression on Kade’s face made me gulp, covering backwards. He glared at me with red eyes, taking a step forward while I stepped back again.

“Kade,” Felicity cried with a wretched sniffle as a man put his coat over her. “She set that violent wolf on me.” She pointed a shaky finger in my direction.

“That’s not what happened. She bumped into me on purpose and Rena defended –“ I jumped to argue for my friend.

“Enough.” I flinched at the icy venom in those words. “Why can you not stay a day without causing trouble?” He growled in my face. “What will you gain from hurting Felicity?” He put a hand around his sister, hugging her to his side.

I would say something in my defense but no one ever believed me. My words held no water against Felicity’s. In truth, if he came to see her pummeling me to the ground with only a scratch on her face, it would be my fault. Felicity was the precious daughter of the Alpha and a beloved member of the pack while I was the wretched omega daughter of the Beta, the wicked child that killed her mother. These treatments were not new to me. I spent all my life trying to earn their love but now, I gave up. Their hurtful words did not faze me anymore. After dealing with them for twenty-one years, one last day meant nothing to me.

“I am sorry.” I bowed my head, fighting back the tears that threatened to spill from my eyes. The entirety of Silver Moon had seen enough of my tears. They didn’t deserve the satisfaction of seeing me broken one last time.

“Be sorry for the wolf you just killed.” My blood ran cold at those words spoken with hostility and hard eyes. “Chop off its head.” He gave the command to the men standing at alert behind him.

“No, not Rena! It was my mistake –“ I screamed, unable to hold back the tears as I heard Rena’s whines. Two hefty men pulled my friend away while she fought. “It was my mistake.” I tried to run after them, to help Rena with my useless hands but Kade stopped me.

“Stay.” The command of an Alpha was impossible to disobey for any wolf under their command. When Kade spoke in his Alpha voice, my body complied, forcing me to a stand still.

“Please, she is the only one I have. I promise – I promise I will never cause any trouble again. We will never cause any trouble if you –“ I begged, my legs locked underneath me.

“Shut up, you are giving me a headache,” he snapped, pushing his hair out of his face while holding Felicity who pretended to be hurt. The injuries on her arms were knitting themselves together thanks to her Alpha blood but she breathed harshly through her mouth in pretense.

“Your punishment will be decided later,” he said. Felicity raised her head a fraction to smirk at me before going back to her limp position in her brother’s arms. “I gave you numerous chances to get rid of that dog but you kept it. Her blood is on your hands.” I looked down at my trembling hands as he walked away, leaving me with those words that weighed heavy and crushed my soul.

My friend’s distant howl echoed in my ears and unfroze my legs. I trembled from head to toe as I ran, following the pungent scent of blood that belonged to my only companion. Unfortunately, I bumped into my superior as I rounded a corner.

“There you are.” She grabbed my hand. “Your thirty minutes break ended ten minutes ago. What are you still doing out here?” As she spoke, she pulled me with her. “Never mind that. There is a lot that needs to be done or have you forgotten we will receive guests from tonight?” She took my hand and stirred me back into the pack house.

“Ma’am –“ I tried shaking her off but her grip on my hand was like iron. She lost her temper when I tried to shake her lose the second time.

“There is no time for your drama!” She snapped, all forms of nicety evaporating from her tone. “We have too much to be done to prepare for tomorrow’s handover. If you don’t behave yourself, I will have to call the Beta,” she threatened, wagging a finger in my face.

“But my friend –“ I looked in the direction where I heard Rena’s howls.

I expected Beta Maria to understand how I felt in this situation as she was the only one in this pack to show any bit of affection for me. She may be stern and focused on work all the time, but she showed me empathy from time to time. I hoped this would be one of those times.

“That wolf is dead!” She snapped, putting her hands on her hips. “Do you want to follow after it?” She demanded, her eyes sparkling with impatience. “If you want to keep your head, you must get back to work. Kade is about to become our Alpha. Tomorrow will usher in a new dawn for Silver Moon pack. We must all do our work except you want to offend the incumbent Alpha and his Luna,” she warned me. I nodded in understanding but I did not understand. Not fully. Why could I not mourn my friend who I just lost because I had to plan a party for someone I hated!?

“If you abandon your duties, you will suffer more and I am sure that wolf would not like that.” Maria patted my shoulder. “Keep her in your heart and mourn her later. Right now, you must attend to your duties.”

It was easy for her to advise me in a situation she had no experience of. How easy it was for her to tell me to postpone my mourning and continue my duties as a slave for a pack that never valued my hard work. All my life, I bent over backwards for this pack, hoping that one day they would see my sacrifices and appreciate me. I gave up everything – my person and dignity – to please these people but the only thing they did was take more than I could give, strip me bare and punish me for crimes I did not commit.

My Rena died for nothing.

My heart ached. Pain crushed me from the inside while I went to the laundry room to continue my work as the slave of this pack. Despite my father being the Beta of this pack, they never allowed me any luxury. I lived from hand to mouth for as long as I remembered, living as an orphaned slave despite my living father’s high status.

For the next seven hours, I had to iron the sheets and take them up to the guest rooms. My tears splattered against more than one bedsheet as I lay the bed in more than twenty rooms in preparation for the arrival of the guests invited to celebrate Kade’s succession as Alpha.

The longer I worked, the more tears fell from my eyes. My limbs were tired but my sorrow and grief fueled my work. The weight on my chest suffocated me and I felt the need to run, to leave everything behind and never look back. Yet the fear of turning rogue made me continue working. Until I was old enough to survive as a lone wolf, I stood a high risk of turning feral if I left my pack.

I changed the last sheets after midnight and made my way downstairs to my room on legs that wobbled. By four a.m, less than four hours from now, Maria expected me in the kitchen to join the preparations for the pack’s breakfast.

Upon entering my dark and clustered room, I met Kade half-sprawled on my bed with a pinched expression.