

## Battle Scars~

Hey!! Sorry for the long wait for the update, I've been working endlessly on classes. But I had to update. It's not fair to keep y'all waiting. So, prepare yourself for this chapter as everything winds down...

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Please don't forget to VOTE and COMMENT!

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That day the pack hospital was packed to the brink with wolves—All from the tragic explosion. People were going in and out at an alarming rate, and the casualties...Well we had yet to count, but it was going to be high. We wouldn't be able to take count until everyone who was admitted to the pack hospital was either cleared...Or dead.

And all day, I had seen some fortunate members go in, and luckily they got to come out alive. Others weren't so lucky. Others didn't get to the pack doctors quick enough to stop the bleeding.

And some...Well it was clear that it was their time to go. No matter what the doctors were doing to save someone, if the Moon Goddess decided that their time was up, then it was up.

But that didn't make it any easier—In fact, it made it worse. It made my anger towards the Moon Goddess sky high. How could she let something like this happen? How was she able to take so much life, without so much as a warning.

But that's the other thing that made me angry. She did give a warning. She did tell me that tragedy was coming. Though, I never thought it would be to this extent. I never thought that the casualties would include children—Young children. And so many of them.

It was excruciatingly painful—Way beyond words could ever describe.

And through the entire grueling and grim experience, the only thing on my mind was vengeance. I wanted the person responsible for this, dead. And if it was a group of people, then I wanted every single one of their heads on a platter.

Setting my desire for revenge aside, I focused back on the scene in front of me.

I was at the pack hospital, and though I had sustained some deep wounds, as well as other injuries, I wasn't here for myself. I was here for my pack.

The doctors tried to fix me up, they begged me to at least let them give me pain meds. But until everyone in my pack had received the care they needed, I would wait. Besides, I was already healing faster than everyone else. I figured that something the Moon Goddess had done to me made me heal faster, so I wasn't going to bother with my injuries.

I was watching the doctors and surgeons head in and out of rooms, when I saw a familiar face. And this face was the one that I needed to see the most. This face belonged to my mate.

Ignoring my pain, I rushed over to my mate, who barely had enough time to see me before I flung my arms around him and hugged him. It was a bone crushing hug, the type that you hear about in movies. Except this hug had the anguish of the attack, mixed with werewolf strength. So it was a very bone crushing hug.

But I knew Kaileen didn't care, as he hugged me back with the same strength. In fact, he was hugging me to the point that I couldn't breathe. And to be honest, I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. This was the hug that I needed, I needed to know that he was physically okay. Because throughout the explosions, the mate link didn't go on once. I didn't hear from Kaileen once. And I truly thought he was dead.

I hugged him tightly for just a second more, before I pulled away slightly. His hands immediately shot out to cup my face, as he stared at me with watery eyes. The big, tough alpha was now on the verge of tears. That was enough to make me tear up as well. I placed my hands over one of his hands, needing to feel his skin. I needed to believe that he wasn't hurt.

"Kaileen," I choked out, "You didn't answer me. I called you in the link, and you..."

I let a tear slip down my face.

"I thought you died."

My voice cracking at the end seemed to crush him, and he yanked me back in for another hug. This time, he didn't squeeze me as tightly. This time, it was him who spoke to me.

"Estrella, baby please don't cry," He begged, "The first explosion...It knocked me out."

I pulled away from him slightly, so I could get a better look at him. Though I had noticed his cuts before, I hadn't noticed the severity of some of them. On the side of his face was a deep gash, one that ran from the top of his head, down to the base of his ear. And then on his chest, there was another one that looked as if something had punctured him. It was deep, and it was obviously not healing.

I immediately placed my hand on his body, preparing to heal him, when he stopped me.

"Estrella, no, I'm fine." I started to protest, but he just shook his head, "I heard that you saved Cassie's life. And I can't tell you how thankful I am. But you need to rest. You don't have the strength to heal me."

"I do-" I interjected.

"No, I don't want you to overdo it and then you get hurt. Who will help you if you get hurt? I'll be fine, the doctors will fix me up."

I stared at him, my wolf in agony over the fact that my mate wasn't letting me heal him. And even though I wanted to heal him, he was right. I needed to save my energy, I needed to allow myself to recover. Each time I healed someone, it took something away from me—I could feel it.

It was as if it was the Moon Goddesses way of preventing me from healing everyone. It was like a "get out of jail free" card, and like the game, I only had a few of them. I needed to be careful with how many of those second chances that I used.

I looked back at Kaileen, eventually giving him a short nod to say that I understood. He gave me a small, sad smile, before he kissed my forehead. It was a short kiss, but it was enough to make me feel a little bit better.

"I'm going to go see Cassie, did you wanna come?"

I debated on going with him, but eventually I went against it. He needed time with his little sister, on his own. And there was still one person that I needed to check up on.

"No, thanks. I'm going to go check on Zach. I kinda used him as a human charger, so I should probably go apologize."

Despite the situation we were in, I still managed to make Kaileen laugh a little bit. I wished I could've stared at his smile for longer, before it disappeared, and he left me alone. I lingered in that hallway for a bit longer, before I left to go to Zach's room.

The walk there had me thinking about what an ass I was. Poor Zach was just as injured as I was at the explosion, but I still used him as a way to save Cassie. I had to, I had no other choice. I knew that Zach would live, but I didn't know if Cassie would. And I knew that Cassie meant the world to Kaileen, so he would be broken if she died.

I reached Zach's room, and before entering, I knocked. I didn't wanna just barge in on him, in case he was like naked or something. Then he really would be dead if Kaileen found out.

"Come in," He croaked. I slowly stepped into his room, giving him a small smile as I saw his face. I wanted to let my smile drop as I saw his face, seeing as though he looked like he'd just crawled up from a grave.

But despite the grizzly look on his face, he managed to crack a smile back.

"I was wondering if you were going to come see me."

I smiled, sitting down in the chair next to his bed.

"What kind of friend would I be if I hadn't?"

"You just got done draining the life from me," He paused, "I don't think our friendship pertains to the normal "friendship guidelines.""

"Yeah..." I trailed off, glancing down, "Look Zach, I'm really sorry that I did that to you—Without at least telling you first."

I slowly glanced back up at him, feeling guilty for putting him through that kind of pain. But Zach didn't seem to care that much, and he shrugged it off.

"I'm alive, Cassie's alive. Aside from feeling like I was dying, there was no harm done."

I could tell that he was trying to lighten the situation by joking about it, but I really still felt bad. His screams when I was using his energy still echoed in my head, the agony that he must've felt was unimaginable. And I was upset that I had to put my friend through that.

Zach must've seen that I was still upset, and he spoke again.

"Listen, I betrayed you a couple months ago. Let's just say this was a form of payback and that we're even now."

This did make me feel a little bit better about nearly killing Zach, and I nodded in agreement. Deep down I had already put our bad blood aside, I had already forgiven him for betraying me. But now, it was solidified. Zach and I could be the friends that I always wanted him and I to be.

We gave each other a small smile, before his smile seemed to drop. His good mood also seemed to leave. And I knew exactly what he was about to bring up. It was the conversation that I was trying to avoid. But I couldn't avoid it, neither could he.

"How many casualties?" He asked quietly, and I felt a pit form in my stomach.

"We've counted nineteen so far," I whispered, "The number is still going up."

For a pack of over five hundred, nineteen didn't sound like a lot. But those nineteen lives, they all meant something to someone in this pack. Whether it was someone's mom, or their child, or even their neighbor. Every single life meant something.

And to think that the number would only just go up nearly brought me to tears. I couldn't bare to see anybody else die, we had already lost enough.

I looked at Zach, who I could tell was trying his very best to hold back his tears. We were all hurting, there was nobody in this pack who wasn't hurting...At least nobody in their right minds.

And though I wanted to be there for Zach, I couldn't stand to see him break down. I wouldn't be able to hold it together if he couldn't, so I had to leave him. I had to go check on my pack, and I had to be strong for them. They didn't need to see their Luna in a weakened state, because then they would feel weak as well.

I walked through the hallways yet again, giving my condolences to all of the pack members that I ran into. No matter who they were, they deserved to feel as if their losses mattered.

I was about to check in on another pack member, when I saw Grace walking aimlessly around the hallway. She had a look on her face that made her look like she'd just seen a ghost. Her face, despite being normally very tan, was pale. And on her pale face, she was covered in splotches of blood. I wasn't sure if it was her blood, or somebody else's, or maybe even a mixture of both.

But whoever the blood belonged to, it didn't matter. What mattered was that she looked lost.

I walked over to her, gently tapping her on the shoulder when I reached her. She jumped a bit, making me wonder if calling out her name would have been a better way to get her attention. After all, we were all in a lot of shock, and we were all easily startled.

I stared at Grace, who stared back at me with wide and crazed eyes. She looked like a deer in headlights, as she stared at me as if she couldn't believe what had happened. And then she began to talk.

"I'm here, but I don't know why. I don't...I don't know what I'm doing here. No family, no friends, no one. Estrella, I don't know what I'm doing here."

It was easy to tell that she was in shock, and though we were all in shock, we all handled it differently. Grace's way of handling it seemed to be standing in the middle of a hospital in disbelief. Which I didn't really blame her, even seeing it made it hard to believe that it had happened. In fact, I think seeing it made it harder to believe. It was so much worse in person, it didn't seem real.

I scanned her body up and down, looking for any injuries. I noticed that her elbow was sticking out at an abnormal angle, and the tip of her ear seemed to be missing. I scanned around for a doctor, waving one over when I saw one.

"Grace, you need to go get taken care of. We'll figure this all out, just go get help."

I was about to walk away, when her hand shot out to grab me. I turned around, slightly startled, and even more startled as she looked at me with horrified eyes.

"I saw them explode—The last of my friends. I...Theresa's head landed in my lap. Kami's arm hit me. Is that normal? Is seeing your friends explode normal?"

I felt sick to my stomach. I felt as if I was going to throw up everything in it, but I reluctantly held it back. I also had to hold back the tears. That was one more person who lost people that they cared about, and this person just happened to have nobody left.

I watched Grace as the doctor and nurses helped her away, but the entire time she looked back at me. She watched me with wide eyes, and even when I closed my own eyes, I could still see her expression—I could still hear her words.

This pack had lost so much today.

And unfortunately, I had a feeling that we were going to lose a lot more.

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Kind of a gruesome chapter, but I think it was good. What do you all think? Leave some feedback!!