

## THE MOON GODDESS' CHOSEN

### Chapter 17: Chapter Seventeen

The wolves dashed, weaving through trees trying to shake the hunters off, but regardless of how they tried to evade the pair, the hunters just kept on coming. Cole pushed forward putting more power into his strides passing Katie and Sandra who weren't fazed at all by his sudden appearance until he was right beside the wolf at the back. Katie was close behind, the look in her eye telling him she was choosing now to strike. With one energetic leap, she quickly closed the gap between her and the rogue, fist clenched, a silver glint catching Cole's eye from within the sleeveless jacket that she wore.

The rogue swerved to the other side in an attempt to avoid the gigantic wolf on its right and the hunter aiming for its back. If it hadn't been for Cole's abilities as a Royal, he probably wouldn't have noticed the flying kick that was aimed at the rogue by Sandra colliding clean with the werewolf's neck, the two tumbling into a rolling frenzy. 'Ouch, that has to sting,' Cole thought, looking back to see Katie continuing in pursuit of the other wolf, paying this one little to no attention at all.

"Sandra," she yelled, placing a hand into the insides of the jacket and throwing something out of it. Sandra jumped off the werewolf and grabbed what appeared to be a knife in mid-air like it was nothing. 'What training does Katie take her through?' he thought to himself. Cole stopped the chase to aid Sandra as it seemed she needed more help. The heavy sound of her panting was a clear indicator that she was exhausted and yet, her eyes were steeled with determination like no other than Cole had seen in a long time.

The rogue looked between the royal and the tired hunter in a defensive stance. It was two against one and there was nowhere left to run that we couldn't... or at least I couldn't catch him. When werewolves were cornered like this, it was obvious what they would do and that was to go for the weak one of the group they were against. If the group that they fought worked like a pack, then it was likely that they valued each other equally, and that would be their way out. A weak link, one might say, that would then be used to start a hostage situation.

Sandra raised her hand, barring me from defending her before she got up and took a stance. The wolf lunged straight for her going for her neck, a quick sidestep to evade could have sufficed but the hunters were not wasting time. As Sandra sidestepped the wolf, she stabbed the side of its neck precisely

where a vital artery was meant to pass and brought it down, holding the convulsing werewolf until the life left its eyes. Sandra collapsed right on top of the wolf, exhausted to no end, "Royals are huge... if I didn't know who you are, I would be freaking out right now. Thanks for the assistance, Cole."

The black wolf lowered his head in respect and to show they were on the same page before rushing off in the direction Katie had taken. Sandra wanted so much to stay where she was and rest, but she knew Katie would be disappointed if she slacked off when the job was not yet done. She got up and retrieved the poisoned knife from the wolf's neck, wiping it clean with some grass before she began jogging in their general direction, keeping her senses sharp for any sign of movement. 'It's been long since I last saw Katie this serious about catching a rogue... brings back memories.'

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Cole pressed on eventually catching up to Katie who was right behind the rogue she was chasing. Something was odd about it though, Katie wasn't catching up to the wolf, but at the same time, she wasn't tired yet. For a human, she had incredible stamina. It soon became apparent to Cole that he could just spare her the trouble and kill the rogue himself.

The heartbeat of the wolf they were chasing only sang a song of defeat. All its comrades were either dead or in enemy hands. There was nowhere to run and he was being chased by a Royal and a hunter, both enemies that it stood no chance against. Cole pressed forward only to see Katie raise her hand making a gesture telling him to back down. Cole couldn't tell what it was she was trying to accomplish for the time being. This was frustrating for many reasons, including the fact that he was a Royal and thus listened to no one at all.

His slightly rough breathing started to ease up and that's when he noticed the wolf was slowing down. The wolf could barely keep its eyes open. Its breath came out much more laboured than before. The sound of metal from a knife being drawn from its sheath reached the royal's ears in time to see the hunter rush forward and quickly cut all the tendons in the wolf's legs that allowed it to run. The wolf collapsed with a loud thud, the wounds on its legs turning an ugly shade of purple due to the wolfsbane on the knife. The colour of the wounds and the acrid stench of the poison could make any werewolf sick just by looking at it.

"If the other wolf that is going through the Prometheus evaluation does not pass, then we will have to extract all the information we need from this one

and if it does pass the test... well, this one dies,” Katie explained her reasons for not killing the wolf and grabbed it by the tail, dragging it back in the direction of the clearing. The sound of footsteps approaching got Cole on high alert, “Relax, it’s just Sandra.”

Cole willed himself to shift back into his human form once he confirmed it was indeed Sandra who was coming towards them. The sound of his bones being reformed and snapped filled the air, slightly bothering Katie. His clothes came forth while the fur receded seamlessly as though it was intended that human skin was not meant to be seen during the shift. He continued to shrink down more until he once again stood on his two feet before them. “That looks excruciating,” Sandra said indifferently.

“How does someone become a werewolf that large?” Katie asked, scepticism laced in her voice.

“Am not really that small?” Cole asked her looking himself over and flexing his muscles. Thoughts of checking Cole out rushed to Katie’s mind while he looked himself over as if that was going to solve anything. She looked away, the image of the white wolf flashing in her mind if only for just a second. Something about Cole triggered the wolf to stir even under the heavy medication that was keeping it suppressed. There was a high chance that the wolf would seek him out if it ever broke free which was something that Katie did not want to see happening.

“Let’s get back to the others,” Katie said, starting to drag the wolf back by the tail.

“Hey, Katie,” she heard Cole call back, his tone serious and low, stopping her in her tracks.

“I know you hate rogues... or werewolves perhaps in general, but you don’t have to treat them like garbage,” Cole approached the rogue on saying that lifted it, placing it on his shoulder like it was a sack of nothing.

Normally Katie had no care what a werewolf would think of her, but she couldn’t shake the feeling that she never wanted him in particular to have the wrong idea, “I don’t hate werewolves,” Cole stopped walking ahead of them, startled from the rushed confession before he continued on his way without another word. ‘There goes the chance we were going to have to talk after the fight that just occurred.’

It took them fifteen minutes to make it back to the clearing. As they approached the clearing where they had left everyone, Katie spoke up

breaking their silence, “Sandra, make a call to the hunter’s guild and inform them of what has transpired here.”

“They will only listen to a pro hunter, not a junior.”

“Tell them you have been given permission by me to speak in my stead, they will listen then and if they ask you to put me on the phone, you bring it to me. Much as I doubt it will come to that considering they know that we are almost always together,” she explained.

The crowd was no longer as tense as it had been when the rogues had attacked though they didn’t make any unnecessary noise. They were still shaken up by the appearance of rogues. This had been the first rogue attack in years to happen in this town. Cole dropped the wounded rogue on the ground and walked up to the one that still lay unconscious with the Lycaon family crest shining on its forehead.

Katie walked up to the hunters that were guarding Shaemus’ unconscious body and turned to address the entire crowd. She took in a deep breath, preparing to be heard by all those that were present, “Can I have everyone’s attention?” The low murmurs that were milling through the crowd ceased, everyone, turning to her.

“The rogues that had attacked have been dealt with. The occasion that took place here was in violation of many laws and the one responsible for it put many civilians at risk. He will receive his punishment in due time, but as for now, here is what is going to happen. Night patrols are going to get tighter starting at 8:30 pm. Everyone should be within their households by that time whether human or werewolf. Werewolf proofing procedures are to be adhered to in every household. If any house is found after the agreed curfew time without their houses barred with the necessary locks and precautions, they are to be held accountable for their incompetence. Considering the time it would take for the rogues to mount another attack on our town, everyone has a window of twenty minutes to get back home this very instant and not a minute later. Are there any questions?”

“Yes, there are questions...” a single voice stood out. The cacophony that the whole panicking crowd was producing seized on hearing the voice that spoke up. “What gives you the authority to make all these laws on the spot? You haven’t spoken to a single pro hunter. We aren’t obligated to follow anything you say.”

“Well, that’s quite simple. I am a pro hunter.” This seemed to quiet everyone down... shock was written on everyone’s faces as they stared at the youngest pro hunter in hunter history.

“So they let just about anyone in these days... as long as you were born in the right family, I guess,” the man said, the crowd murmuring in agreement, a new wave of commotion taking over them.

Katie cleared his voice to speak up and began once the crowd was quiet, “The minimum requirement for one to go for the hunter exam is simple. One must already possess a Prometheus gift... in other words, it is only the god of mankind, Prometheus who has the power to decide who gets a chance to be a hunter and who doesn't. That way, everyone has a chance to become a hunter and there is no bias in the selection process. Now if there are no other questions I would ask that you all get...”

“Katie...” I was interrupted by Sandra, her face had ‘urgent’ written all over it while she waved the phone at me.