

A Gift from the Goddess by Dawn Rosewood Chapter 4

An all-out fight broke loose causing mass panic to ensue inside the meeting room.

Everyone quickly jumped to their feet to make as much distance as possible between themselves and the fight, but there wasn't much space to work with. Before long, snarling and snapping were the only noises heard coming from my father's wolf as Aleric fought him off in his human form.

"Brayden!" Aleric yelled finally, huffing from the exertion of the fight.

My father was strong, almost as strong as Aleric. It was true that Aleric would win in the end during a one-on-one fight, but my father would give him severe wounds on the way out. He would not be taken down easily.

Brayden didn't hesitate even for a second before he grabbed at my father from behind and pushed him to the ground. Together with Aleric, they used their weight to pin the large wolf down.

"Get me silver cuffs and have him taken down to the cells immediately!" Aleric ordered furiously to everyone in the room.

They all scattered quickly to obey the Alpha, not wanting to upset him any further.

"And you," he said, turning his cold eyes to me with disgust. "Get the fuck out of my sight and stay in your room until I say you can leave. You will remain there and conduct all of your business from within those walls. Do I make myself clear, Ariadne?"

I couldn't talk. Words wouldn't come to me as I stared in fear at this man. I was sure he would send me down after my father or kill me if I misspoke at that moment. And so, I did the only thing I could do.

I mutely nodded my head, hastily returning to my room in a daze.

The days passed quickly after that as I organised the final touches of my escape. And soon, everything was ready. I had packed my bag, noted instructions for my Luna duties over the following few weeks, and had even left a letter for my father. I wasn't sure if he would receive it given his current incarceration, but I needed to tell him that I was thankful for what he had done for me. It was nice to know he had loved me after spending all these years believing otherwise.

It pained me to even think of leaving him behind, but there was nothing I could do to save him now. The cells were the most heavily guarded place in the whole territory. Even attempting to break him out would lead to me being instantly caught.

The night of the escape I was having a final dinner with Sophie. We had decided to leave once dark so it would hopefully hide our presence better. Tonight, there would be a large celebration happening in the main square so the guard patrols would be at their lowest.

So far, there hadn't been any issues or even any visitors since Aleric had banished me to my room. I was grateful for the peace and quiet, and happy I didn't have to see the stares of my pack members as I walked by. I was sure their opinions of me had only gotten worse now my father had committed one of the highest offences possible; attempted murder of the Alpha.

"It's time to go," I said nervously to Sophie.

I was scared. I was scared that we would be caught, that I would be dragged back to this hell and possibly executed. But if we could pull this off, leave and finally be free, it would be worth everything.

Sophie nodded her head as I grabbed my backpack, getting ready to leave.

"Where did you put your bag?" I asked, noticing she hadn't put anything by the front door yet.

But before Sophie could answer, the door then suddenly crashed open and several pack warriors stormed in.

They grabbed my arms and pushed me up against the wall, stripping me of my backpack before restraining me in silver handcuffs. Immediately, a few of them started searching the house and began sifting through all my belongings, as if looking for something in particular.

I wanted to call out to Sophie to make sure she was okay, but then, out of the corner of my eyes, I was just able to witness as they forced Sophie outside. It happened so quickly there was nothing I could do.

"What is the meaning of this?!" I screamed, my face still pressed against the wall. "I am your Luna and I demand that you stand down and explain yourself."

I could tell the weight of my authority washed over them, making them hesitate... but only for a moment. The one holding me loosened his grip slightly but they didn't completely let go. This meant the order had to have come from Aleric himself. He was the only one who would have had enough authority to allow them to ignore me.

Another minute passed before Brayden finally walked in the door, glancing only quickly towards me. "You can ease your grip and turn her around," he said to the one holding me.

They spun me to face him but his face was unreadable. Were they doing all of this because they discovered my plans to escape? It seemed a little over the top for something like that. No, this felt like something bigger was happening.

One of the warriors then suddenly walked up to Brayden, a few items in hand.

“We found these, Gamma,” he said, presenting them to Brayden. “It also looks as though she was planning to run away before we caught her. She was wearing a backpack full of clothes and supplies when we arrived.”

I couldn't see what the second item was but the first one was the letter to my father I'd left on the bed. And instantly, a sinking feeling hit my stomach. I knew that letter could be misconstrued as sympathising and thanking the man who had almost killed the Alpha. I had planned to leave before anyone read it.

Brayden scanned the letter, his face still completely emotionless, before he sniffed at whatever else he had been given. His immediate reaction was to grimace and turn his face away.

“Is this yours?” he asked, showing me a small bunch of herbs. I didn't recognise them, but then again, I'd never been great at herbalism.

“I've never seen that before in my life,” I replied, spitting the words back at him. “I don't even know what it is.”

“They were found in her bedroom, Gamma. Hidden under the bed,” the warrior interjected.

“What?! You're insane! I don't keep herbs in here. I don't even know the first thing about identifying the different types!”

“It's Mortwert,” Brayden answered calmly, his dark brown eyes piercing mine. “It induces miscarriages during pregnancy.”

“What?” I gasped.

Why would something like that be in my room? Who could have even put it there?

“Ariadne Chrysalis, I hereby place you under arrest for the murder of the unborn Alpha heir, and for the harm inflicted to another pack member, Thea Woods. You will be detained immediately pending trial in a week's time.”

“What? Thea lost the baby?” I asked horrified, my body feeling paralysed.

Of course, they would all think I had something to do with it. Why would anyone believe the Luna who had publicly made a scene about her pregnancy?

“Take her down to the cells,” Brayden said, his face finally showing the disgust I knew he had been trying to hide this whole time.

They began to push me out of the door but I kicked and fought against them.

“You’re insane! You’re all insane!” I screamed. “Where is Aleric?! Let me see Aleric and clear this whole thing up! I am your Luna! I demand you take me to the Alpha immediately!”

“That won’t be necessary,” a deep, chilly voice then said behind me in the hall.

I craned my neck as much as possible to see the familiar eyes I dreaded so much. The hatred filled in them was more than I had ever seen before in another person.

Fear quickly gripped me, my legs almost giving out from just the sight of him in such anger. Because whilst the common expression was ‘if looks could kill’, it wasn’t remotely required here. He looked plenty ready to snap my neck with his bare hands himself.

“Aleric...,” I cried. “I didn’t do this, I swear. I didn’t kill your baby. I didn’t even want to be here anymore. I was giving up, letting you have Thea just like you always wanted.”

“So, you admit to trying to run away then,” he growled in a low voice. “Your motive seems clear here. Don’t worry though, you’ll be getting your wish.”

Several of the elders now made themselves present and a chill ran down my spine. I had a feeling I could guess what he was about to do. Even the admittance of wanting to escape was punishable, putting aside the false charges against me for Thea’s miscarriage.

“I, Aleric Dumont, Alpha of the Winter Mist Pack, along with the majority agreement of the elders present, reject you, Ariadne Chrysalis, as my mate and Luna to this pack.”

The bond snapped and the pain blinded me instantly, falling to my knees in the process. I had never experienced anything so excruciating before. I couldn’t see, my vision was blurred, but I could faintly hear my own scream filling the air. Everything inside me burned as if it were purging something from deep inside my soul.

It lasted for longer than I could comprehend, the seconds feeling like hours. Even once the burning faded and the worst of the pain was over, a complete hollow void was left pulsing inside my chest. There was nothing there anymore. No love, no desire, no lust. A large part of my world had been Aleric. Without him and the influence of the mate bond, half of me now just felt... empty.

...And the other half of me felt scared.

My love for him had been the only thing blinding me to my true fear. Without it, his very presence felt like death itself was looming over me.

The type of rejection he had done was rare; one where the majority vote of elders was required for completing the process. I'd only read this happening in history a handful of times and it was virtually unheard of. It was only ever used for ranked members and was a rejection that needed no consent or agreement from the second party. The process was reserved for when crimes had been committed or for when there was a greater purpose as to why a forced bond-breaking must occur.

When I finally regained some of my strength, I looked up to Aleric, expecting him to have felt what I had... but he only stood completely emotionless as if nothing had happened.

So, it was true then. He had never loved me. Not even a little bit. The rejection should have hurt him just as much, but instead he felt nothing. He just looked down at me with those icy cold eyes as if I'd never been anyone remotely special to him.

And so, without even so much as a flinch, I watched as Aleric then turned his back on me... and walked away.

"Take her down to the cells," he ordered over his shoulder, not even bothering to check his command was carried out.

Immediately, Brayden hauled me to my feet and began to drag me to the stairs. But I didn't fight back this time. There was no point anymore.

I just let him move me towards the prison I would call home for the next seven days.