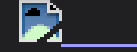
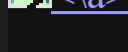


## Chapter 77



77 Chapter 77-That magic ingredient is called love

"Stop fooling around. How can you trim my beard when you aren't my girlfriend? If you agree to be my girlfriend and are willing to give me your heart, body, and soul, then I will allow it," Ryker said with amusement, knowing she wouldn't accept the offer, so this was the best way to come out of this hedge.



Ryker exploded into laughter as he served the noodles. It was amazing that Valerie had a good sense of humor. No one ever made him laugh the way she did right now.

"For your information, my beard is neatly

kept, and if you must know, it's very special to me as it serves as a symbol of something important. Your meal is served, my dear Luna."

He pulled a chair for her, and she sat as he placed the cutlery before her. She was about to dig in but suddenly stopped.

"We should eat together." She wanted to ask about what symbol he was talking about but felt she was getting too much into his personal life. Perhaps that was what gave him the idea that there could be something between them.

Ryker smiled at the offer, but she hadn't eaten all day. He had equally forgotten about food because of how eager he was to see her but was still stronger than her, thanks to his wolf.

If she refuses to eat on time, she would just

grow weaker and weaker. Until he was sure that she ate to her satisfaction, he wasn't going to take a bite.

"Don't worry. There are leftovers, but I have to make sure that you are first well-fed."

She was about to say something when Ryker spoke again. "So, how does it taste?"

Lost for words, she could only close her mouth and taste the food to give him the right response. A moan escaped her when she took the first bite. "This is delicious. What magic ingredient did you use?"

Ryker smiled at how cute she looked. "That magic ingredient is called love. Will it be a problem if I brought you gifts during my next visit? The Alpha might be back by tomorrow, so I have to lie low or sneak in here when I confirm he's asleep." [W@W.N@v&LS@OMe.cOM](#)

Not planning to return to Las Vegas any

time soon and having made all the necessary arrangements, he didn't want to go a day without seeing her. [www.noveLSHOme.com](#)

Valerie wished she could receive his gifts, but, "the Alpha might see. I'm sorry, but I can't receive gifts."

"I understand. One day, we shall be together, and I will buy you all the gifts in the world." [www.nov\(e\)LSft\(s\)ME.com](#)

Ryker was determined as he began to set up the fireplace. Valerie stared at him dreamily. There was just something about the way he behaved and the way he spoke with certainty and authority.

There was something about him that she couldn't quite put a finger on, but at least, she remembered her place in this pack. "I'm a slave, Ryker, please don't forget that."

Ryker's gaze darkened at her words; he lost control of the dimension of his disguised voice, making it lose its sweetness. "No. You are not."

Before she could explain, he hurriedly added, "now hurry up and let me help you with some moves. While you eat, excuse me to get some firewood for the fire. I guess the Alpha had the fireplace in here already. It was just never used, and you seem cold."

Valerie's mouth was stuffed, so she didn't stop him as he rushed out of the room to do as said. Valerie realized how hungry she was, increasing the pace of her food. But she had to agree that Ryker's food was so good, just like Alpha Denzel.

As she made the comparison between that toast Alessia brought her and these noodles, she wondered if this pack took their men through culinary training. Both men cooked so well. She ate to her fill but

left his portion.

Too bad she couldn't reserve some for Alessia. How would she explain Ryker's presence in her life?



Ryker brought the firewood and carefully lit the fire. "It should be warm by the time we return."

Valerie was so grateful for his kindness. Even after throwing the hint that she could not love him, he was not upset and still cared for her.

How she wished the moon goddess had rather mated her to Ryker. It wouldn't have been hard to love him. Now that she thought about it, it was such a shame that he wanted something she couldn't give.

"You should eat or I'm not going," Valerie pouted childishly, her arms crossed over her chest. Ryker smiled and went to eat. He

was hungry anyway. [W@W.N@v&LS@OMe.cOM](#)

A few minutes later, two people were running through the woods, a man and a woman. Until they stopped at a huge tree.

"Before climbing a tree, your analysis of it must be made from a distance. Look out for strange shapes or turns in the trunk. Those are risky but sometimes safe. Deep cracks. Large areas of sunken or missing bark are equally dangerous."

"Even under the moonlight, I'm sure you can make out the best tree to climb. And your decisions must be swift. If the pack is under attack and you are being chased by wolves, I don't think you will have so much time."

"Even with a powerful wolf like yours, I'm sure you won't be able to take down six wolves together. In times like that, a tree

would be your safest option in addition to running speed."

Ryker addressed all her weaknesses without making her feel bad. "I managed to climb a few times when you weren't around, but I still can't do it with your kind of speed."

"Since you don't want to use your wolf, it will be great to continuously practice for speed. But if you are able to analyze the tree well, you can look out for the nearest branches for support. And do not climb a tree during thunderstorms."

Valerie took his advice seriously. "Thanks. Let me give it a try," she said with determination. Ryker perceived something and said,

"Wait."

Valerie obeyed as he pressed the screen of his smart wristwatch. "I've set a timer to know how many minutes you take and how fast you are improving."

Valerie was so grateful to him, her heart filled with gratitude. "Your time starts now," Ryker said, surprised when Valerie moved away from the current tree, running towards another.

A smile lined the corner of Ryker's lips. "Smart move." That was stronger and with more branches.

"I made it." Excitement blossomed in Valerie's voice as she spoke from the top of the tree. Ryker could not help smiling. Because of her strength, it made her a very good student.

"Good, but you are slow. Take it again. Make it faster. If you don't want to use your wolfy

abilities, then accept fully that you are human to unlock that potential too," he encouraged her, hinting for her to forget her dead wolf.

His encouragement got Valerie a little distracted as she kept thinking through his words. Indeed, she had become human but must she accept it? Would Ryker have given that advice if he knew that she lost her wolf completely?

Valerie tried five times, but the speed was not improving as expected, so Ryker said, "don't worry. You can practice more when I'm not here. It's three hours to training, and I need to have a little rest before then."

Knowing how important training was to packs, Valerie could only sigh. "Do you mean we've spent close to six hours already?" She couldn't believe how fast time moved when they were together.

"Yep, but I still want more," Ryker said as they ran back to the cottage, giggling like kids. When they reached the entrance, Ryker followed her but did not attempt to go in.

"In that case," Valerie stopped at the door as she turned to face him. Standing on the entrance stairs with Ryker on the lowest, their heights were almost the same, as she pressed her lips against his.