

**Chapter 0571**

I tried my best to concentrate on the conversations that are happening around the table. It sounds like Ava and Brett have a good start on the warriors moving to the ranked street. She seems to be enjoying having something to focus on. She doesn't engage as much as she used to as the pack's Luna, but I don't know if that is from the loss of Lucas or because the guys and I have taken the titles or a combination of both. It's good to see her smile and engage with the other former leaders. I should sit down and talk with her like I do with Elena and Gentry, because this pack is going to be a complete circus when everyone gets back. It's been months that they've been in the Alpha King's pack. I'm just glad that we were able to get the innocents out before anything big happened. But, maybe that was by design. Maybe Adrielle and the Rogue King let us get them out since their focus was on me.

I can hear Nathaniel talking about the computers and surveillance, but I can't concentrate. Ever since I found out we were in the tornado for almost a month I have been antsy. I need to move, to train, to physically work myself over. And I want to do that with my team and my guys.

"Okay, can we go please?!" I blurt, looking at Cam. I have a feeling he's going to be my hardest sell on most things. I can feel his frustrations, both over being thrown into leadership and over the mate bond not being complete, but I feel like I can't even focus right now, like I am trying to shed a skin that no longer fits. I don't know what it is.

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"Someone's in a hurry." Dakota looks at me with an eyebrow raised.

"Yeah, to kick your ass." I wink back.

"Oh, it's on, Smalls." He jumps from his chair so fast, but I'm faster.

Soon we are all running out of the house, like the kids we are supposed to be, and headed toward the smaller of the three arenas. I can hear all of my friends laughing behind me as we make our way and I try to memorize the sound. I know that something is coming, my wolf and I can feel it in the ground and smell it on the breeze. We are not out of this yet and I hope we all survive to tell the tale. 1

No one hesitates when we get inside the arena. We all immediately pair off and start doing basic arm drills to warm up. Everyone is laughing and enjoying themselves. I will have to remember that this is something our whole team enjoys as a downtime thing. I know the deeper we get into this thing with the Rogue King the less we will have of this precious commodity.

We move into leg work and sweeps turn into who has the best reaction time, which then turns into 'who's the fastest' and every contest of strength and speed we can think of. I have no idea how long we are out here, but I do know that I have gone up against everyone at least once and I have raced Sam three times just from one end of the arena to the other. Naturally I won, and just as naturally he thinks I am using my hidden Alpha genes and magic against him.

My brother being the egotistical Beta and big brother, challenges me to see if my abilities have changed since


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
being marked. Cam was quick to point out that I could take him down before any extra abilities so it's not going to be that hard, but my brother doesn't back down.

We start to circle each other and I can see he is favoring his left side. I'm not sure what that's all about, but I don't want to hurt him either. That doesn't mean I'm going to let him win, but I should probably spot injuries sooner than this. Something my wolf agrees with me. Part of our job as one of the Alphas is to make sure our pack members are safe, even our warriors who are on the battlefield. If I can save their lives, by removing them from the situation, that's exactly what I am going to do.

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Mateo lunges at me and I counter, by twisting out of his way. He can't get a hold of me. I am going to play keep away for as long as possible. I want to see where he is injured since he won't tell me himself. I spin and push him from behind. He reaches back to try and grab one of my hands, but he misses. As the Beta he should have more range of motion than that. We keep at it for a while. He comes at me, but misses. This is not like him, so I stop. Most of our friends are engaged together. My Alphas are watching us closely though, always on guard when it comes to me. I know I will come to accept this eventually, but it still feels like they don't trust me to handle myself, even going up against my own brother. Who seems more likely to injure himself than me right now. 1

"Mateo, what's going on?" I ask moving close, speaking low. I don't want to make a big deal since it seems like he's hiding something.

"Nothing, I just haven't worked out this hard in a long time. You were right to bring everyone out here. We can't get behind in our training, like this."

"Okay, that was a plausible answer. Are you going to tell me the truth?" I cross my arms, not letting this go.

"That was the truth. I appear to be out of shape against my beast mode, magically enhanced Alpha blood sister."

I roll my eyes. "You know you have the same Alpha blood right? Like you and Jena are more than likely going to produce Alpha children as much as we are." I gesture to Cam, Oliver and Dakota. Mateo's face goes ghostly white.



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"Can we hold off on the kids talk, please. I might actually throw up." He whispers and then steps closer. "You're only just about to be seventeen, which is way too young. And we still don't know if Jena can have kids. It's still a sore subject. The healers said it's highly likely, but she still gets in her head about it and I don't think she'll get over it until we actually have one. And I am not ready for any of that anyway. Especially after what happened to mom, or I guess what we thought happened to mom. That sh\*t is scary." I smile and give him a hug, squeezing tight.

I whisper in his ear. "You would tell me if your injury was really bad right? I can't risk losing you in a fight because you didn't say anything, or risk other's safety either." 1

"It's not that kind of injury, Sky. I'm okay really. In a real fight I will give my all. Right now, I'm not going to push it, that's all."

"Will you tell me ever?" I questioned. I don't like the shady run around.

Just then Dakota wraps his arms around me and breathes in my ear. "It's the kind of injury I'm hoping to have later, Sweetness. Apparently, Jena likes it rough and your brother is learning to be submissive the hard way."

I look between the two of them for what was probably way too long and then my intelligence kicked in and my eyes went wide and my brother's grin spread across his face, along with an unashamed blush.

"I'm good Sky, let's just leave it at that. You can get details from your friend. I don't think that's something you want me to share with you." He winks and heads over to Jena and plants a kiss on her neck, right where his mark is.

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"I think we have indulged you for long enough tonight." Dakota grumbles. "Can we please take you home now?" He asks as he lifts me up in his arms, not really giving me a choice.

"I guess my answer is yes then." I giggle as Cam and Oliver follow us to the entrance to the arena, but we are met with my dad and Kyle.

"We have a problem." My dad grumbles, "And it can't wait."

"I might throat punch the next person that says that phrase." Cam says and Oliver and Dakota grumble their agreement. 3

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