



Unloved Mate (Wolves Of Night Shade Pack)

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Description: A Wolves Of Night Shade Pack Novella

Valor ODonnell, the Delta of Night Shade Pack, comes back to life after dying at the hands of his witch friend.

Rejected twice by his fated mates, Valor doesn't think he'd get another chance at love. But here he is torn between the mystery of his best friend who left years ago and returned to the pack when he heard about his death, or the stranger he met in the woods and the foreboding enigma that surrounds him.

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Page 1

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Zeke

I told myself a lie for most of my life. I thought leaving my home would change everything, that it would bring me some sort of peace. And he'd never know I had always been in love with him. But it didn't. I was still in love with him. Now I'm working up the courage to confess what I feel for him, even if it's too late, even if he already has a mate now. I was ready. I couldn't hide behind the veil of lies and keep things to myself anymore. He needed to know how I felt.

Today I was returning to my home, Night Shade Pack, one of the most powerful werewolf packs in the country, their secrets protected by the forest of wild trees that surrounded their territory. My drive back to the pack started last night, and I was a few kilometers away from arriving at Night Shade. As I drove down the tarred road in the black CUV, my thoughts flew through the memories of my past, and I smiled, glancing over at the rearview mirror. None of my friends from the pack knew about my arrival. I wondered if they'd still remember me, especially considering that I'd spent the last decade as a part of The Eclipse. Even if they did, I had no intentions of reigniting the flame of old acquaintances for any reason. I just needed to see Valor and be on my way as soon as possible. The Eclipse—a group of solitary werewolves that helped wolf shifters who didn't have a home to find their packs. We didn't consider ourselves a pack, just a family of werewolves that channeled our existence into saving and protecting lives, pledging our honor to our cause and trusting each other. Every member of the Eclipse knew about each other's past, including mine with Delta Valor O'Donnell of Night Shade pack. We felt it was a way of being open and hiding no secrets from one another. I had informed them about the temporary leave I was taking to return to Valor and promised to join them on their journey as soon as I had reunited with him.

A few more hours on the road and I was driving into the pack's territory. The view went into dense forest trees with shadows of the moonlights peaking through the tall tree canopies. Clarifying with the patrol team, I continued my journey, driving through the forest path lined with wild clusters of trees that accentuated nature's ambiance. I was here. I didn't dare to imagine what would happen between us. How he would look if he still had his big goofy smile and a big heart. If he had a mate. The thought of his heart belonging to another made me clutch the steering wheel and release a deep grunt. Was I ready for this?

The pack house came into view. It looked just like I recalled, although I noticed the minor changes made by the incumbent alpha now I was closer to the building. Logan Kade. My father always said that his destiny was for great things. I parked the vehicle around the fountain and climbed down from the car. As I shut the door, I took a sweep at how far the pack had come with my absence. It was looking better than the last time I saw it. I turned to the flight of stairs and ascended them until I got to the front porch, now closer to the wolf guards on duty. I smiled at them as they walked toward me and I put up my hands in surrender.

They might not recall who I was, and that was ok. There was no harm in reintroducing myself. "What business are you here for?"

"Relax. I'm not here to cause chaos. I'm here for Delta Valor."

"Your name?"

"Ezekiel Wolfe?"

"You need to be patient enough to meet with the Alpha."

The other one added.

“Mm.”

I let out a throaty growl as they parted way through the entrance, leading me into the common room and asking me to sit and wait for the Alpha, which I obliged to.

The sounds of the creaking floorboards pulled me out of my hazy thoughts about Valor and I rose to my feet and faced the Alpha, tilting my head in submission. He gave me a big smile as he pulled me into an embrace. “Ezekiel Wolfe.”

He said. He recalled my name. Well, that’s a pleasant surprise.

“Alpha.”

I chuckled.

“It’s been so long. I never thought I’d see you again after you abandoned the three year Sentinel program.”

“Don’t say that out loud. I could get kicked back in there.”

I leaned into his ears and whispered.

“How has it been?”

He gestured toward the couch and walked to the bar at the corner of the common room, returning with a bottle of vodka and glasses. He set it down on the table, filling both glasses.

“Sorry, I didn’t give anyone a heads-up I was coming. But it was only for a short while as I wanted to see Valor,”

I said and took the glass from him, taking a sip from the alcohol that burned as I gulped it down my throat. I caught his deplored look and adjusted on the couch, my brows arching in concern.

“Valor died.”

He hesitated for a while, but finally let the cat out of the bag. I stared at him in complete disbelief. It took me sometime before I could swallow the pain that came with his words. Valor was dead. but how? How could it be?

“Is he buried?”

I managed to croak.

“No. It’s been almost more than a month...”

“And he hasn’t...”

“We’re hoping for some miracle. My mate is adamant about continuing with his burial rites, something about a witch’s intuition. We’ve used magic to preserve his body.”

He explained. I gently set down the glass on the table and exhaled a deep sigh.

“Ca-n Can I s-see him?”

I stuttered the words out, and Logan put his hands on my shoulder, giving me a tight squeeze, a look of compassion flashing across his face. I had expected that Valor had come so far in life, but this, losing his life. It was too soon.

We headed up the stairs and took a turn down the hallway after we arrived on the

second floor. I sighed and asked, “I heard you saying magic. Are there witches in the pack now?”

“Yes. A lot has changed since I became Alpha. Witches, werewolves. Even hounds. We’re all one now,”

he said. “I’m so sorry. That you didn’t get to see him one last time.”

“I’m happy about the progress you’ve made.”

I said, my heart still hurting from the new information I’ve learned. I was trying so hard to keep the tears that had welled in my eyes at bay. Just as it rolled down my cheeks, I swiped it off with the back of my palms.

We arrived in front of the room where they lay Valor. Logan reached for the door handle and twisted it, pushing the wooden frame backward and parting into the room. My heart broke even more when I saw him lying on the bed ahead of me, the room dimly lit by the golden yellow lights of the candle. We both stepped past the threshold and I narrowed my gaze at Logan, who let out an aching breath.

“You can stay as long as you wish to.”

Logan proclaimed and left me in the room. From the way he sounded, he hated this as much as I did. Perhaps they had grown to become good friends after I left the pack. He turned on his heels and walked out of the room, shutting the door as he left.

An expression of deep melancholy stretched across my lips as I stepped closer to Valor’s body, watching the paleness of his skin and the heaviness in his eyes. Oh, the monstrous death he must have died. I touched him. He was cold to the bone, and I withdrew my hand instantly, like I had dipped my fingers into a bucket of ice. I came here to speak my mind and pour out my heart to him. But he was gone. Shame that he

couldn't hear my confessions, that he didn't live to see this day. Perhaps if I hadn't taken that long. If I had just got it over when I had the chance earlier. Everything would have changed. He would still be alive. I would have kept him alive if I was around, but I wasn't. I just ran off like a scared little bitch. Now I'm back only to discover I had lost my revenge. That I had lost him.

"I guess no one would have to pick you now you're dead. I wonder why they haven't disposed of you."

I spat, disgust hissing from my lip as I worked up the nerve to push back strands of his pale brunette hair. This time I didn't pull back because of the cold, but something else... his heartbeat and the movement of his fingers.

Maybe I was just imagining things because I backtracked and got a good look at him; he just lay there, pale, immobile, just frozen in the space of time. Forever.

I pulled out the picture I had hidden in my black leather jacket. It was me and him at the clubhouse about ten years ago before I left the pack. I carried it, so I wouldn't forget how he looked or how he smiled. I moved toward his body and took his hands, caressing it and looking down at him with nothing but an expressionless look in my eyes. He had the perfect brunette hair, the perfect body, the perfect eyes, but if only he hadn't ruined my life repeatedly. Everything about him was just what I desired, but I couldn't have him. His death had nothing to do with this. It was something far greater than love or my past feelings for him rekindling.

I shook my head and clutched my grip around him. "Valor, I should have come earlier. I'm sorry you'd never get to know the truth, how much I love and hate you. I thought moving away from the pack would change everything, but I was wrong. It was stupidity to leave, and if I'd get another chance, even if it's a sliver of a chance to do as I please with you. I promise to make you feel alive, then steal that life away from you, so you'd have nothing left."

I knew I said that I was here to confess how I felt and my feelings were not from a place of love. And I'm willing to show Valor just how much, so I was hoping this witch's intuition was a miracle.

As I let him go, I felt his finger move against my skin, earning an unanticipated gasp from me. If I was looking for a sign, then this was it. His heart drummed for a second. His fingers moved. Heat returned to his skin and he was no longer cold to the touch. I looked intently, hoping to catch another sign, but there wasn't one. Nothing else happened.

If there was a chance that the moon goddess would give Valor a second chance at life, then I would ruin it all over again. I was here for revenge.

Page 2

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:12 am

Valor

Months ago

It's not news that I died. I mean, I basically did a long time ago when two of my fated mates rejected me for another man, and I'm uncertain if third chance mates truly existed. Anyway, I won't find that out. Cheers to that!

I was standing on the Bridge of Souls, my heart sullen from the act of betrayal that sent me here. I trusted Aiden. He was like a friend, maybe more than that, but he killed me without a second thought. I understood he wanted revenge for what Logan did to his father, but killing Logan wouldn't change his pain.

I was going to the other side. There was hope for me, right? At least I didn't have to deal with rejection or backstabbing friends anymore. I truly enjoyed the time I spent with Logan and my service to the pack. They would always remain my family forever.

Now I had to hope that Diana had the best for me, even in my untimely demise. Especially with the lore of the moon goddess pairing wolf bloods with their mates in the other world. In this case, the moon goddess only pairs mates that truly loved each other so they could continue their journey in the afterlife. Wolf bloods that didn't have mates or were treated badly by their fated were assigned new partners on the other side or werewolf heaven as some like to call it. Perhaps I'd have a chance to change my life story regarding the part where I was unloved. I had to hope that someone was on the other side, waiting for me.

I sighed and smiled at the veil of light that was at the end of the bridge. A trembling sigh escaped my lungs, and I pushed my hands through the veil and stepped over to the other side. There was a blinding flash of light, and I shielded my gaze with my palms before it faded. I lost consciousness.

When I woke up, my eyes met the kaleidoscope of colored skies that spread over the horizon. I slowly rose to a sitting position, holding my temple to ease my headaches. Sighing, I glanced around the area, which was a clump of forest trees with the sunlight filtering into the dense cluster of nature. I regained my footing with a smile. Everything here felt magnificent... peaceful. It was perfect. A smile tugged at the corner of my lips as I scrutinized the field of evergreen woodlands and chuckled under my breath. A feeling of extreme happiness washed over me. I had never seen a place so heavenly. Its ethereal beauty transcended me and just when I was reveling in the excitement, a beam of light came from the skies shining down before me. I stepped back and shielded my face with my palms. The light disappeared, revealing a flawless woman standing in my presence. If I was correct, it was the moon goddess, Diana. She was in a white silky floor-length gown and her black long curly hair flowed down her back, accentuating her doe eyes. Her dark skin was a perfect feature of her. I tilted my head in submission before her and rose when she had asked me to. "Goddess."

I beheld her gaze.

"My sweet child. So much pain, so much has happened to you, Valor,"

she cleared the distance between us and took my hands and held me. "I never wished for any of it to happen."

She comforted me with her words.

"I led a great life, although I'm feeling very accomplished but unloved."

I murmured, my tone laced with forlornness.

“But you haven't even touched the tip of the iceberg of the great things you'd become.”

She said to me. I didn't know what direction she was heading, but I would do whatever the moon goddess asked of me without hesitation. I was her child and would do any good thing my beloved mother asked of me.

“Your place is not just in the Night Shade pack. There is a world that awaits your greatness,”

she said. “You'll go back.”

“Thank you, goddess, for giving me a second chance. I truly appreciate you and would never waste this opportunity,”

I murmured, flushed with exhilaration and a new sense of life appearing in my eyes. I couldn't describe the level of excitement I was feeling at the moment. “What about my body? The pack must have buried me.”

“I asked the witches to preserve your body. Now it's time to go back home and find the path to your new destiny.”

She explained, her lips stretching into a smile that warmed my heart.

“I won't disappoint you, goddess.”

“I know you won't.”

She smiled and thrust her hands into my chest, sending me into oblivion.

Present Day

“... I promise to make you feel alive...”

Were the words I heard just when I felt the restorative power of life awaken through me. I didn't recognize the voice, but I felt the presence in the room. The feeling of our skin in contact. I didn't know the man who was next to my deathbed, but I felt questionable purity and sincerity exuding from him. I wanted to open my eyes and see who was confessing their feelings to me. But I couldn't.

As time passed, I didn't feel the heavenly touch again. It was like it was gone just the same way it came. But I heard footsteps departing from my room... hurried footsteps. I felt the power of life moving through my entire body, bringing back the essence of the living to every single bone and organ in me. I could move my fingers now and my eyes finally found the strength to open, beholding the dimly lit room. It took me some time to adjust to being back in my world, in my room, alive and well. I slowly rose to a sitting position, still readjusting to the rebirth.

Thanks to Diana, the goddess.

I rustled out of the bed, barely having the strength to stand on my own. But there was no one in the room. It was just me. My feet broke into steps, slow steps that led me to the exit. My body was still aching, but the pain subsided as seconds passed. I didn't expect pain to be the gift of life's restoration. I shut the door to the room after I had made it into the hallway, hoping to meet any of the pack workers or even the stranger who had infiltrated my room, but there was no one. Staggering down the hallway, I leaned on the wall to regain my strength when my legs grew weak. I managed to make it down the stairs, losing my step twice and holding onto the railing until I appeared in the common room.

“Is anybody here?”

I called out. I heard incoming footsteps and turned in its direction, seeing the entire family hurry out of the dining hall, their eyes filled with astonishment to see me here. “Valor.”

Gamma Alex murmured; he hurried toward me and pulled me into an embrace.

“Careful, my body still hurts.”

“He's alive.”

Frey announced, still awestricken.

“You shouldn't be out of bed. You should be resting.”

Logan added with concern.

“You must be hungry.”

“He’s back. He's here with us.”

“Was there someone here today?”

I asked through the ensuing chaos, and Logan reached out to my shoulder and gave me an affectionate squeeze.

“We need to get you to bed first, then I'll holler at him.”

Logan reassured me, signaling the others to take me back to my room and provide for me. I followed them up the stairs, listening to the praise they offered to the moon goddess for my well being and sharing endearing embraces from each one of them.

I was lying on the bed, fed, bathed and changed into the new clothes awaiting Logan, who was yet to return with the wolf blood that came to see me earlier. Now I was back, I had so much to do, not just lie on this freaking king sized bed. I had to check up on my father, considering if he was still alive and didn't die from the heartbreak of the death of his son, my duties to the pack, the training schedule, and perhaps Aiden. I rose from the bed, my entire body feeling better than the last time I took a stroll, and I paced the floor in anticipation of this stranger. The roughness of his voice as he said affectionate words to me replaying through my memories. If only I had seen him, even if it was just the color of his eyes, then maybe this wouldn't be as hard as it was. Still pacing the floor, I heard approaching footsteps. My heartbeat quickened, and I narrowed my gaze at the entrance, clutching the side of my shirt.

The door burst open, and he walked in with a relieved expression on his face. Before I could say a word, he had already wrapped his enormous arms around me.

“Ezekiel.”

I mustered, reciprocating the embrace.

“Valor, you're... you're alive. I thought I'd never see you again.”

He murmured as he held my face with a big sad smile. Zeke pulled me back into a tight clutch, squeezing like he never wanted to let me go. He was bigger, more muscular, even more handsome, and perhaps stronger than I last recalled.

“I am.”

Was all I could say, still taken aback that my best friend, who had left the pack a long time ago, was here with me.

“I thought you were gone,”

his voice was breaking, but he struggled to be strong. His eyes reflected the same yearning that raged within me. It had been so long. “You shouldn't be out of bed just yet. You need to get some rest.”

He said and took me back to the bed, helping me in and tucking me into the sheets. Between the two of us, I didn't know who was more surprised to see each other. That I returned to life, such things don't happen every day, or the fact I just heard my best friend in the whole wide world say things that no one has ever said to me. It was him. There couldn't be any other person who came to visit me except him. Was there? Was he still my best friend, though? Because I haven't seen him for more than a decade. These thoughts sifted through my head as he sat next to me while I glued my gaze to the ceiling and panted. The silence between us was short-lived when I asked, “How long have you been back?”

“A few hours ago. I came back to uh,... but I heard you were dead. I. I'm not sure you'd understand.”

He shook his head.

I didn't know why he wasn't open with his words, especially considering I had heard some parts of what he said to me. But I wouldn't force him to open up to me. I was kind of ok with a man confessing his feelings to me. The past encounter I've had with men, with Aiden in particular, left me asking me if I wanted more than just friendship with him. I guess I'd use my second chance at life to figure out who I truly am and what I want. “Yeah. But I'm glad you're here. It's been so long, and I don't want to stay locked up in my room. This is my room, and I should go and come as I please. They have the guts to lock me up here. I'm alive, and I should do lively things.”

I complained and grumbled, my tone laced with equal parts of exasperation and annoyance. He let out a chuckle and rolled his eyes.

“If there's one thing that hasn't changed. It's your bickering. You really are still Valor O'Donnell,”

he chuckled with an excitement in his eyes. “Come on, let's get out of here.”

He rose to his feet and walked to my wardrobe. He threw me a leather jacket, and I wore it, following him straight to the door.

“Where are we going?”

I asked with intrigue as we both exited the room, creeping through the manor until we had arrived downstairs.

We were almost at the foyer when we heard the incoming footsteps of Logan and his mate. Zeke took my hands and led me into the kitchen. He shut the door and placed me against it, caging me in his embrace. He closed his eyes and breathed an exhale. My eyes didn't leave his face or his lips, even when he had reopened his eyes. I had never been this close to a man and all I could think of was... I shook my head to get rid of the thoughts. Lucky for us, Logan and Frey hadn't caught us yet and had moved upstairs.

When he was sure the coast was clear, he took me out of the kitchen and we sauntered out of the manor. We walked down the flight of stairs and my eyes widened in astonishment when I saw the motorbike parked across the fountain. “This baby still alive?”

“Yes, she is. I mean, it still works perfectly. I had the time to look over at it,”

he said; he mounted his bike and turned on the engine. “Are you going to stand there and just watch me or join me?”

He flirted with his eyes, and I chortled with a wide smile.

“Are you having thoughts about joining a bike gang?”

I murmured the inquisition, my voice thick with a lifetime’s worth of happiness.

“Probably.”

No wonder where all the dripping hotness came from, I thought. I joined him on the back, and I wore the black helmet and wrapped my hands around his waist to support myself. He started the engine, clenched his hand around the clutch and drove off the pack’s premises, following the path lined with trees that led out of the territory.

Being on this bike let me feel some sort of peace in my chest. One of the rarest times I had felt such a feeling, and it was all thanks to Zeke. For a very long time I wasn't happy, and my best friend swept in to save the day the least time I expected.

Zeke brought the motorbike to a stop in the middle of the tarred road, and we both alighted together. He pulled off his helmet and held it as he looked at the skies. “You see that.”

He murmured.

“Yeah. You're the star sign genius.”

“It’s Leo.”

“As in my wolf’s name. You helped me name my wolf, remember?”

I recalled. “Why have you been my whole life, Zeke?”

“Clearly, it was a stupid decision. Leaving,”

he gazed at me for some second, then returned his glance to the skies. “But now I'm back here with you, and I, uh, I'm glad.”

He said, our fingers slowly finding their way to each other and touching.

“You are back now.”

I smiled and sighed.

Page 3

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:12 am

Zeke

I remember the first full moon that Valor transitioned into his wolf. Just like he said, I had helped him pick out his wolf's name, Leo. He had been pacing in the pack house, agitation quaking his bones as he thought what it would be like to shift into his wolf for the first time in his life. He was nineteen, and I was just a year older. Most wolf bloods get their wolves at eighteen except from Alphas whose wolves emerge even as early as childhood. Between the age of eighteen and twenty-two, our wolf manifested. Past that age, a wolf blood would remain wolf-less for the rest of their life. That wasn't the case for Valor on tonight's full moon. The moon rising in the skies was the wolf moon, and it was the only time that the wolves of Night Shade Pack could shift into their wolves for the first time. Valor's wolf had emerged about three days before the full moon, sending him over the hills with excitement. With the moon rising in the night sky, Valor paced the living room, muttering incoherent words. I rasped against the wood, and he halted and leveled his gaze with me. "Sorry I was held up."

I told him.

"It's ok. Let's go."

He said to me with a smile.

We both headed to the clearing where the full moon run was happening with the Alpha and the other ranked members of the pack, taking their places in the first rows, the royal blood werewolves following and then us. Valor had joined his family with the Alpha after I had countlessly reassured him he could get through this.

We gave ourselves over to the power of the full moon, using its energy to bring forth our wolves. We could shift without the moon as wolf bloods, but with it, it was more intensified. It drew us closer to the power of the bond of the goddess herself.

I morphed into a brown wolf, my eyes turning into a bright golden color, and I joined the pack of wolves in the run, moving through the forest in unison and breaking into boisterous howls of joy with our gaze tilted to the silvery moonlight. When we circled the territory and returned to the clearing, Valor was standing naked and covered in earth. He did it. He shifted.

He headed toward me with a hearty chuckle, his arms opened up in an embrace, but he stopped halfway in his tracks when he picked up a scent in the air. If I had to guess, he had smelled his mate. I watched as Valor searched for her in the crowd, but when he had found her, a cruel rejection awaited him. I spent the entire night with him, consoling him that they didn't know his worth. I did. But I wasn't sure if giving myself over to my feelings for him was the right thing to do.

I let out a chuckle, scanning through the clearing where his first shift happened about a decade ago. It had been so long, but it still felt like yesterday.

I had left the pack house after seeing Valor's deceased body in his room, and I headed toward the clearing where I reminisced about the first full moon run I had with Valor. Now I was back here and burdened by the feeling of nostalgia, I resumed my stroll back to my former home, where I used to live alone. I had spent most of my life in the sentinel training camp after I turned sixteen years old, relying on the pack to care for me as death had taken my parents as such an early time of my life and I've had to struggle with everything. That was until I met Valor. It seemed alright at first until it didn't. Of course, Valor had to be perfect. He had to be picked even if he wasn't well qualified for the task. His family treated me as part of them until they felt I was somehow stopping Valor from fully committing to his duties. They threatened me to leave, come the next full moon, I left Valor with a little parting gift. He had

found his second chance mate, but I made her reject him, a skill I had honed after my powers manifested with the presence of my wolf.

I made it to the housing areas, returning to my old home, which was now occupied by a family of wolf shifters. Someone I knew from training camp years ago. Luckily, he recognized me and he showed me to the small house behind the building where they had moved all my family stuff, including my father's motorcycle. I wondered if that baby was still alive. I took it out of the small compartment and worked on it with the little skill I had learned about bikes from my friends, who were part of the Eclipse, and half an hour later, the engine was running. I drove it back to the pack manor and parked it next to the car I had come with, hoping that Valor would come back to life, and we'd take off with the half moon guiding us through the night sky.

I waited out the rest of the evening at the clubhouse, reuniting with old acquaintances and praying earnestly in my heart that he came back. My plans for him wouldn't work out so well if he was dead and lying there like a limp fucking vegetable. He needed to come back to life just like the witches said he would, and I'd give him the best start of his second life, then leave him ruined as payback for what he and his family did.

I was rocking my body through the crowd of wolf bloods that dominated the dance floor with a glass of vodka in my arms, moving in sync to the music with the men and women. I threw back the content of the glass on my mouth and was about to head over to the bar when someone placed his hands on my shoulders, stopping me. "If you know how long it took me to find you here you wouldn't hesitate for a second. Valor is awake. The Alpha sent me."

The man said. He was a patrol wolf. My heart skipped a beat when he mentioned that the Delta had made it back to life, and I passed my glass to a wolf blood next to me, following the patrol wolf until we made it out of the clubhouse with the feeling of overjoy still fluttering in my heart. I sprinted off with the patrol wolf right behind me and I didn't stop running until I arrived at the front door of his room. He was pacing

the floor when I arrived, and the look of surprise when he saw me sent a thrill of joy through me. He was alive. I wasn't supposed to be as excited as I was by seeing him alive, but still my heart bubbled with genuine excitement. I didn't think twice before I pulled him into a tight squeeze. Staying with him made me recall our days together. The days I spent loving him in secret. Right now, with him present, I didn't even know if I wanted this so-called revenge anymore because all the feelings I had for him came crashing back into me, causing tears to well in my eyes. He was the same old Valor, always yapping whenever he felt comfortable and taking his duties as a ranked wolf blood seriously the next minute. As he just ranted about missing his duties and his family, I just looked at him with a huge smile on my lips. I shouldn't be feeling this. What I should feel was hatred, but with each passing second of watching the light in his eyes, the hatred diminished.

We had returned from the unplanned expedition of driving out of the pack house on the motorbike, meeting the entire manor in grave silence. We crept back into our room, ensuring we didn't wake anyone from their deep slumber. Once we had entered Valor's room, he locked the door gently and turned on the light, pulling off his jacket and tossing it on the ground. "So, are you going to take your bath or something?"

"Yeah. Sure."

"Alright. You go first. I'll wait. You can take any of the clothes from my wardrobe."

He murmured as he took off his shirt. My gaze lingered on his perfectly lined abdominal muscles and the hairs on his chest. I swallowed hard and looked away once I realized I was staring. I smiled and dashed into the bathroom, returning a few minutes later, feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. Valor finished in the bathroom as well and joined me in the room. He dressed up in a tight black short and climbed into the bed, covering himself with the sheets, his gaze glued to the ceiling. "So tell me more about what you do these days?"

“I’m part of a werewolf club known as the Eclipse. We dedicate our lives to helping wolf bloods and other supernatural creatures to find a home.”

“That’s a good cause.”

“We would use another member. That's if you want to.”

I glanced at him and smirked. He let out a breath and returned his gaze to the ceiling.

“Well, I'll think about it.”

“Yeah? What about you? You should have a whole series of stories to tell me after leaving for twelve years.”

“Sometimes I wish I never left. No goodbyes, you know.”

“Yeah, me too.”

He shrugged and lay on his side.

“Well, the mates I thought would be my all rejected me twice, and since then I've isolated myself, keeping to my duties as the Delta close to my heart above everything else. Until Aiden showed up. There was something about him. We didn't spend so much time together, but each time we were alone, it felt safe and right. But he killed me without hesitation when I tried to save the Alpha’s mate. I guess his hunger for revenge bested our friendship.”

Valor explained with a devastated expression. His words echoed in my head, leaving me to question if coming back here for revenge was the best thing. Was I going to let this hunger for revenge ruin everything I felt for him?

“Don’t say that, Valor. You deserve to be loved. Everyone does.”

I said out of the blue and took his hands, giving him a soft caress.

“Then why? Why does it have to be me? The moon goddess said I should do some soul searching, but it's really hard for me. I don't think I deserve a second chance.”

“Hey, Valor. You are a good man, and those who rejected you did that because they couldn't afford you,”

I beamed at him and put my hands on his jaw, directing his face to mine. We were so close that I could feel his breath against my skin. The impact of our skin touching each other sent a thrill of sensation through me, something that I never wanted, but it came. Our lips came into a mild contact, and he exhaled deeply. “You’re special to me. Always remember that.”

I said to him and he turned away from me, his breath pacing as he shot to a sitting position. He cleared his throat and pressed his hands into the bed.

“I need to take a walk alone.”

“Sure. Anything you need.”

Page 4

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:12 am

Valor

It was a few hours past midnight, and there was no one outside. I sighed and spread out my arms, feeling the wind that whistled past the manor. I walked down the stairs, a smile stretching on my lips as I strutted past the fountain, knowing the feeling of what it was like to sense these things again. Alive and well. But the thought of what had happened with me and Zeke couldn't get out of my head. I kissed him. It wasn't deep or passionate but I still did. Goddess, what was I doing? Sneaking around with him, going out with him, holding his hands. I sighed. I had to think of something else.

I took the path down to the forest, a new sensation of nostalgia hitting me as I recalled running through these woods with Logan in wolf form during pack patrol. I couldn't find the words to thank the goddess for giving me a second chance to live. Being reconnected with nature was one of the best feelings in the world. And my wolf was excited as I was especially about the return of my best friend or whatever he was to me these days.

I came to a halt when I sniffed a scent in the air, the smell getting my wolf excited. I turned on my heels, glowing my eyes and scanning through the woods. As I wheeled back on my feet to continue the path, I stumbled into a man's chest, pulling back immediately and taking three steps back. "Who are you?"

I clenched my fist and narrowed my gaze at the man standing in front of me, his face hidden in the shadows of the darkness.

"Part of the patrol team. Just came out to let my wolf out for a run. Why are you out here?"

He asked and stepped into the light. He had shaved hair and a stubble on his jaw and his irises were very dark brown, matching the color of his black skin. I swallowed hard, my throat suddenly dry as I tried to find my voice. Damn, he was so gorgeous.

“Just walking in the midst of nature, eh? I have never seen you before. Are you new?”

I managed to croak and his lips curled into a hint of a smile.

“Yeah. I'm Kane,”

he introduced himself, extending his hand for a handshake, and I shook him. “Still available for a short walk? I'm not really feeling sleepy tonight. We could talk about anything?”

He proposed, and I shrugged. There was this feeling that this stranger who bore the name Kane brought with his presence, and his smile was just one of the most beautiful I'd ever seen. I gave him a nod, and we both headed down the path in silence.

“So I heard you're the one who came back to life?”

“How did you know about that?”

“Word gets around,”

he shrugged and glanced at me with a smirk. “So, how's the new life and rebirth?”

“It's a bit overwhelming. I'm not sure if you'd understand.”

“Please, try me. I could.”

“A lot happened in my past and now my best friend is back, and I think he wants to be more, and I don't know what to...”

“How do you feel about it?”

“I don't know. I mean, I had a friend who was close to me and maybe it was more and I can't... I don't know.”

I was saying, starting to even wonder why I was talking to the stranger in the woods, in the middle of nowhere. I turned to him, looking at my feet and raising my gaze back to his eyes which had this glint of unexplainable expression in them. Probably fascination if I had to guess, and it made me blush.

“It takes time to figure out what you're feeling. You don't have to hurry through it. If your best friend really cares about you, then he'll give you the chance to get to understand what you want for yourself.”

He proclaimed and smiled, stepping closer.

“Hmm. Thanks for the information. So, tell me about you?”

“Nothing much. Grew up in an orphanage. Moved around until I found my way back home. There's nothing really interesting about my life.”

“Please don't say that. I'm sure you'd have something that would interest me.”

“Well, I'm a good fighter,”

he chuckled. His lips twitch with the ghost of a smirk, and I rolled my eyes at him. I wanted to know if he was lying, but it looked like my lie detection power was on detour. If I had to guess it was due to coming back to life. “And I know when I run

into the most beautiful man I'd ever seen.”

He flirted and I chortled, a sudden wave of panic clutching at my chest.

“Thank you, but I have to go now.”

I murmured out of the blue.

“Sure.”

He nodded and backed away, and we headed back to the path that led to our various destination, the rest of the walk leaving me to battle if I wanted to see him again. I finally gave in. I turned and asked him and offered a small hesitant smile, “Am I going to see you again?”

“If you want to.”

He smirked and stepped closer until he could reach out to my cheeks. He caressed them with my knuckles and smiled at me. “I need you to know that what you feel is ok, and that you're the most beautiful man I've ever seen.”

He showered me with praises, bringing a warm feeling to my chest. All my life only three people had seen me as special, this stranger included. But how could I believe him? I wanted to, but the people in my life hadn't exactly made it easy to believe. There was something about him that made me want to come back and take one of our midnight strolls again.

“This time tomorrow?”

I proposed with a tensed breath.

“Yes.”

He nodded.

The next morning came, and I got up, smiled over at Zeke, who was still in bed, and headed downstairs for a coffee, only to meet some of the pack workers performing their duties. While I was sipping from a cup of coffee, Logan entered, already prepared for the morning pack patrol. We both exchanged greetings, and I helped him pour a cup of coffee, passing it to him. “Shouldn’t you be in bed?”

He questioned.

“Wanted to let my wolf out for a run with you. We haven't gotten back on speaking terms since you know.”

“Yeah. Sure. Come on, let's head out.”

Logan downed his coffee, and we both strolled out of the pack house, heading over to the forest entrance. During this time, he briefed me on everything that had happened with the werewolves and how his mate, our Luna, had broken a curse that drove the hunger for the blood of the hounds. Like Logan said, it was progress, and I was glad that in the middle of all the chaos, he found a way to bring peace to us all. Not just him, but him and his mate. We shifted into our wolves and circled the pack territory with ease, letting our wolves feel the air and the sensation of losing ourselves in the center of nature. By the time we returned to the field, the sun was already peeking out from the horizon. We shifted back and changed into our shorts and singlet, returning to the pack house. Somehow, my run with the Alpha had reminded me of the man I met yesterday in the woods.

He said his name is Kane. There's something strange about him. My wolf chirped into my thoughts as we both strode back to the pack manor, and I hummed in response.

There was truly something, but I had to focus on figuring out my feelings and the nature of my relationship with Zeke first. I knew there was a little awkwardness between us, considering the closeness we had last night and how I just bolted into nowhere without informing him I was back or that I was heading out with Logan.

I returned to my room to freshen up and change into a new set of clothes, but I couldn't find Ezekiel. I gathered that he must have gone for a run himself or maybe went to reignite the bond of old acquaintances. I headed downstairs for breakfast, but to my surprise, he was already there, dining with the family. As I walked into the dining hall, the wolves met my gaze and they cheered, inviting me to join them. I noticed the new face in the group and if I had to guess; he was my replacement. The young, tall man, who shared the same color of my eyes and a darker shade of my hair, was no other than my cousin, Anthony O'Donnell. I gave him a small smile and settled next to Zeke. "Hey. I thought you were..."

I was saying, but he interjected.

"I figured you needed some space, and I had a bath in another bathroom. Is that ok?"

"Yeah, sure. I'm not complaining. I was just worried. Besides, I had to catch up with the Alpha. I missed it. You should join sometime."

I nudged his shoulder playfully.

"I don't think that would be possible. I will be returning to the Eclipse soon."

"Oh, ok."

I shrugged and continued on with my food completely surprised that he had no intentions of staying home. That he would run off the same way that he did years ago.

We finished breakfast, and everyone headed to their various duties for the day. The Alpha and Beta were taking care of the pack businesses and housing construction while Frey and Alex concerned themselves with the pack training, which included the witches and wolves. Zeke and I didn't get to talk after breakfast, as he went to join the construction workers while I prepared to visit my father at the hospital. Though I was absent for sometime, knowing my father's condition, Logan told him I was taking on a very important mission for the pack and would return as soon as possible. This idea came when the witches had the intuition that there was hope for me. I was really grateful for Logan because I didn't know what my old man would have done if I didn't come to visit him ever again.

I recalled the day the wolf bloods carried my almost dead father into the hospital. They had left the country for some important meeting that involved another pack in a different country, and the pack asked my father to represent the Alpha. Upon his return, wolf shifters, formerly known as hounds, attacked them, and when I heard his predicament, I didn't stop running until I got to the hospital, seeing the condition he was in. He had lost his sight and also sustained injuries that left him with broken bones that healed over time, but unfortunately, he didn't regain his sense of sight. I spent that night crying myself to sleep and waking up with a headache from the only person who stayed with me throughout the ordeal to be Zeke. Perhaps this was it, his little way of showing his affections for me without being upfront about it. Perhaps there was something about me that had fascinated him all this while. I smiled. My thoughts returning to my father. I've had to visit him every week at the hospital and keep in touch with his needs as well. I had opted for him to return home several times so I could look after him, but he said he was ok staying at the hospital because he thought it was best for me under the pressure of being the Delta of the pack.

As I leaned against the doorjamb, I pressed my knuckles on the door and gave him a smile. He was lying on the bed, facing the ceiling, and as if he knew who was standing at the door, he slowly rose to a sitting position. "Valor, is that you?"

“Yes, dad. It's me.”

“Oh, dear goddess. Thank you for returning my son to me.”

“There's no need to worry.”

I said and hurried to the bed, joining him and taking his hands. Since he started staying here, the healers had made better accommodations for him.

“How was your journey?”

“It went fine, dad. How are you? I missed you so much.”

“I'm here, son. I'll always be here,”

he muttered and offered me a smile, clasping my hands. “So tell me, what did you find? Any mates?”

He pried with a chuckle. I couldn't tell my father the truth about my predicament with the fated mates I had. I felt with what he was going through, there was no need to bother him with such sadness. But even as he asked those questions, my thoughts ran straight to Zeke and the man in the woods last night, and I smiled. I wanted to talk to him about what's happening between Zeke and I. But I wasn't sure he'd understand that my best friend had feelings for me and I might feel the same. Besides, it had been a while since he heard about him. Anyway, I wasn't worried about telling him if I eventually developed feelings for a man, this just wasn't the right time. I should focus on reuniting with him because it has been months since we've spoken to each other.

“No luck.”

“Maybe you should choose a mate for yourself. You're almost thirty-one, and before

you ask, I still remember the night you were born.”

He chuckled.

“Don’t worry, dad. I’ve got it all figured out.” I lied.

We spent the entire day reminiscing on old memories and laughing and chuckling at each other, and this time, I felt closer to my family again. Being with my father made me realize I could do this second chance at life thing, that I could find the path of a new purpose in my life.

“Dad, I have to get back to the pack house. I’ll see you tomorrow. Is that ok or do you want me to stay over?”

“Nonsense. I don’t want you sleeping over at the hospital. Go home and get some rest. You’ll be needing it.”

“Thank you, dad. Goodnight. I love you.”

I giggled and laid a kiss on his scarred cheeks. Then I rose from the bed and headed back home.

But the stranger from last night’s encounter interrupted my short stroll from the hospital to the pack house, shaking me from the thoughts of the suggestion of finding a mate and dealing with whatever that was going on between Zeke and I. He pulled me into the nearby woods and held me against a tree with a smile dancing on his lips. “Were you waiting here for me?”

“Not sure if I could make it tonight. Just wanted to see you beforehand.”

“Well, that’s very thoughtful of you. I thought I would run into you during the early

morning patrol, but you were a no show.”

“My schedules are on Thursdays only,”

he pocketed his hands and looked at me with the ghost of a smile. “So did you get to talk with your best friend?”

“Not really. He’s, uh, a no show as well. It’s like he’s avoiding me.”

I shrugged.

“That’s his loss. I’d do anything to spend every second of my life with you,”

his knowing gaze slides to me and a soft smile played on my lips. “Would you like to talk about it?”

“I mean, I feel attraction with guys and it scares me a little.”

“You don’t have to be afraid, little wolf…”

The term of endearment rolled off his lips catching me off guard. I halted. My face flushed with color. The ghost of a smirk hovered on his lips as he walked up to me. I struggled to hide the rich excitement in my eyes and glare at him instead.

“Day two and you’re already giving me nicknames.”

“I mean, it suits you. You’re my little wolf.”

Yours? I thought and shook his head with a chuckle, my wolf clawing into the surface. Was he claiming us?

“I mean, I like it.”

I shrugged. He stepped closer to me with a savage smirk and reached out to my cheek, caressing me with the back of his palm. I shut my eyes as a spark of pleasure coursed through me, and reveled in the contact of his body on mine.

“Does that feel wrong?”

He asked, his voice holding a hint of a forced back growl. A possessive growl if I had to guess.

“No.”

I breathed out and shook my head meekly.

“You don’t have to be afraid of what your heart yearns.”

His voice was a low soothing rumble. I let out a staggering breath as he leaned close and drew a lungful of my scent, unable to fight the urge to resist my alluring fragrance. I backed away and turned on my heels, shutting my eyes and inhaling deeply to relax my tensed muscles. Him being close to me like that wasn’t helping my celibacy and he was driving my wolf, Leo, nuts.

“Who are you really, Kane?”

I whipped back on my feet and asked him.

“Come on, Valor. I’m part of the patrol team.”

I had that feeling and I knew he wasn’t telling the truth. Not the mind-boggling one I had when I met him for the very first time. This was different. My power told me that

he was withholding the truth from me.

“You are lying, Kane. I know when someone is lying.”

The intoxicating feeling of meeting him might have blinded me last night, but not now. My powers were back.

“Have I given you a reason not to trust me?”

He questioned and stepped back, putting his hands up.

“No. But I don't know who you are. Besides, I'm now in full control of my lie detection powers, and if you don't speak up, I'll have to inform the pack of your presence.”

“You really think you could take me down?”

He grimaced, seeing this as some sort of challenge.

“I know I can.”

I growled at him and stepped forward, a rumble coming from Leo, but it wasn't of aversion, but fascination. There was just something about this man, and I knew he was lying about being part of my pack, but I wanted to know what he was hiding.

“Do you want to know my secret, Valor?”

He purred, sending a shiver through me, and I caught a glint of the flash of crimson in his eyes. Now I knew.

“You're an Alpha. What are you doing here?”

I growled at him.

“I came for you.”

“Me? Why do you want me?”

“I came to kill you, Valor.”

He smirked, and my eyes widened in utter disdain.

Valor

“What are you talking about? Kill me?”

I'd be fucking damned if I let Kane think he could take me down. Not today. I wouldn't die again. I watched his movement. My wolf was ready to attack and defend himself from the threat posed before us. He came into my eyes, a faint golden color enveloping my irises, and I growled defensively, ready to propel myself to the enemy. Before he could make a move, I shifted right there and plunged myself into him, and we both stumbled down the path. I regained my footing, watching him crouch, his eyes gaining their crimson glow. “Run, little wolf, run! You know what happens if I catch you!”

A growl lodges in his throat, his tone tinged with authority, and I watched in complete awe as he shifted into his beastly form, towering over me. He didn't give me the time to get a good look as he plummeted toward me, but I was lucky to escape his grasp and dash into the forest. He was much larger than me and in all my existence of knowing about shifter creatures, I never knew that Lycans truly existed. From what I saw, the man had turned into a large six feet tall Lycan standing on his hind limbs with black fur coating his entire body, his claws sharp and his fangs ready to draw blood. He snapped as he moved through the brush, tailing behind me, the sound of his limbs stomping into the earth sparking a primal need in me. This was supposed to scare me, but the idea of being chased through the woods by a Lycan Alpha brought yearning to my heart. His scent enveloping my senses, driving my wolf into a frenzy and a feral need of wanting. For him, just him. Leo wanted to stop running and let this unknown alpha claim him, but I willed him to just keep running. I enjoyed this. As I kept leaping through the forest, the desire kept building and building to an extent

where I could feel the heat burning for a man who was supposed to kill me. And the worst part was that he could feel it, too. I knew he did. I was about to make a turn down the path when he pummeled over me and settled in front of me, and Leo and I skidded to a halt, slowly pushing back. He growled, his eyes glinting the perfect shades of red as he shifted back into his human form, standing there stark naked without the intention of taking my life. At least that's what I saw from the look in his eyes. Fascination. Intrigue. Wanting. Desire. I morphed back into my human form, the ground pinning me, his delectable scent swirling in the air. I drew a long, satisfying breath. A moan escaping my lips as my dick twitched at the thought of having him worship my body. Even as he stepped closer, knowing the danger that came with his presence, I couldn't move. I didn't want to.

He cleared the distance between us; the heat of my arousal hanging in the air. His domineering presence and scent did things to my senses. He leaned into my neck and buried his nose right where my mate would mark me and inhaled a lungful of my scent, finding me irresistible. His fangs brushed against my skin but not deep enough to break and draw blood. Goddess, I wanted him to bite me, and it took so much of my will power to keep those desperate words from escaping my lips.

“You smell so good, little wolf. I’m becoming obsessed with you.”

He and his wolf purred, the unwavering certainty in his voice causing me to shudder as he smirked at me. His tongue drew a long strained swipe over my skin, and I dragged my bottom lip, a squeal of sexual pleasure spilling from my lips. He reached out to my cheeks and gave me a soft caress, then he leaned closer, closer until our lips were one inch away from claiming each other, my wolf rumbling with excitement.

Do it, Leo said.

He kissed me, and I didn't stop him. I had never kissed a man before, but this didn't come with any form of guilt whatsoever. I was enjoying it. He didn't stop. I didn't

stop. I just let him ravage my entire body with kisses, the moan that escaped my lips driving him with pure need as his lips moved from my lips down to my neck, swiping and claiming every inch of me. I wasn't supposed to be doing this. I was supposed to figure out what I wanted. But here I was kissing a man and it turned out to be pretty great.

“I’ll lose control, Valor.”

He stepped back suddenly, the hunger for me still battling with the new decision in his eyes, and somehow he balanced through the chaos. My wolf whimpered at the loss of his touch. No one had ever shown us affection in this way.

“I... Kane. You're the first man I've ever kissed.”

I stuttered, trying to find my voice.

“I shouldn't do this with you.”

He said and turned on his heels.

“But I want you to.”

I pleaded with my eyes and took his hands pulling him back to me. “Please, please, please,”

hopelessness laced the words that tumbled from my lips. “Don't go. I'll keep your secret,”

I whimpered, and he eyed me with an expression I couldn't put into words. “There's just something about you and I don't know what it is but...”

I was saying, then he kissed me again. This time more fierce, backing me into a tree, his hands caressing my naked skin eliciting pleasurable ministrations from me. “Oh, fuck.”

I stuttered and he broke off from the kiss.

“Valor.”

He cooed and reached out to my cheeks caressing them softly.

“Will I see you again?”

“I don't know.”

“You're just going to leave after this.”

My voice shook as I walked closer. Why does everyone have to leave? Why did I even care if he stayed in the first place?

“I have to. I have a pack.”

“I'll come with you.”

I murmured, despair clinging to my voice. I couldn't believe I had just said that.

“I'm not taking your word on that decision. I'll always find you, little wolf. No matter where you are.”

He assured me and cleared the distance between us, holding me in place and ruffling through my hair, his lips claiming mine once more. He leaned on my forehead and let out a hearty chuckle. “There is something about you that intrigues me, Valor. You're

special.”

He said and before I could find my words, he was gone. I had to trust that he would come back. That he would find me.

With a heavy heart, I sneaked back to the pack house, until I made into my room and took a shower. I was dressing up when the door pulled open and Zeke walked in, the stench of alcohol replacing the fresh air. I didn't have to ask where he was. “You didn't tell me you were leaving as soon as you arrived.”

“I don't think this is something we should discuss right now.”

“You haven't been speaking to me all day.”

“Well, that's because we were both busy.”

“And we are just about to forget the fact that you were confessing your feelings to me while I was coming back.”

“You weren't supposed to hear that.”

“Then you shouldn't have said it,”

I hollered at him, my anger coming from Kane's abandonment. “You know what? You're free to do whatever you want.”

“Where did this come from? I'm giving you time to readjust to your life and you think I'm being selfish,”

he barked, anger etched into his features. “Fine, Valor. You want to hear it. I've been in love with you for most of my life, and I've spent the past twelve years denying that

truth, but somehow my feelings claw their way back into my heart. I can't anymore because my feelings haven't changed, and they never will,”

his words wash over me like a balm, soothing the ache clutching my chest. He tried to keep his tone even and measured. “All I have to do is be patient with you, so you can figure out what you want for yourself. If you want me,”

he declared. “I care about you, and I always will.”

He professed, and all I could do was pull him into a passionate embrace. What kind of game was I playing? Putting myself in between these two men.

“I’m sorry I didn’t consider your feelings, Zeke.”

“It’s ok. You’re going through a lot, and I don’t want you doing it alone. I’m sorry for giving you the impression that I was avoiding you.”

“It’s ok.”

I reassured him.

This morning my father was in his usual position, lying on the bed and facing the ceiling. I told myself that it was the first thing I’d do once I woke up today. I was leaning against the door jamb with my hands crossed on my chest. Clearing my throat, I stepped into the room and moved to his bed, helping him to a sitting position.

“Valor, shouldn't you be preparing for the full moon run?”

“Dad, the full moon doesn't come until three days.”

“Yeah, well. Sometimes I lose track of time, you know. When you were a kid, you were so excited about the full moon and all, and would always beg me to shift into

my wolf so you'll touch my fur.”

He recalled, his face falling in melancholy. I took his hands and gave him a comforting squeeze. I'm sure he could tell I was smiling right now.

“I miss that,”

I recalled with a nostalgic feeling. “How are you?”

“I’m fine, but I can tell you're worried. What is it?”

“I’m in a position where I don't know what to do. I just don't think I'm enough.”

“You are always enough, Valor. You're the reason I live, my dear. Don't you ever doubt yourself. Yes, you've faced rejection, but that doesn't make you less worthy of love,”

he raised his hands to my face and caressed it. “So who?”

“Zeke and someone else.”

I muttered, astonished by my words.

“Two mates. Well, I think you hit the jackpot, son.”

He snickered.

“We’re not mates, dad.”

I murmured lazily and stifled the smile stretching on my lips.

“But there's still a chance you could choose. Tell me all about them.”

“They confessed their feelings to me, and I might feel the same way for both of them.”

I sighed, clutching my hands nervously. My mind instantly ran to the strange Lycan Alpha in the woods and the possibility of ever seeing him again, recalling his words. How he said he was becoming obsessed with me. How he looked and smiled at me and the way he held my body like I was the most precious person on earth as he kissed me. Why couldn't I stop thinking about him? Why was there this instant attraction between us? Why did I feel something stronger for him than Zeke? I've known Zeke all my life. It should be him. But it isn't. Every time I was in my thoughts all I could think of was last night's kiss.

“About Zeke? When did he get back?”

He quizzed, intrigued.

“Not too long, and he says he loves me, and I'm scared because no one has ever said that to me.”

“Valor, you're my son, and I want you to feel every possible emotion this world has to offer and that includes love.”

“But I'm worried that I might ruin this thing between us.”

“You haven't even tried yet. If that were the case I wouldn't have found your late mother,”

he chuckled. “It's ok for you to love. I want you to know that. How do you feel about him? Zeke, I mean?”

“The same way. But...”

“I’ll stop you right there, young man. No buts. What about the other guy?”

“I don't know much about him, but he's unrelenting in his pursuit. Every time he's around, it's like the whole world fades and it's just the two of us. I don't get that feeling when I'm with Ezekiel, but I feel something. And I know that sooner or later I'd have to maybe make a choice.”

“Hey, you know what you want. Until the time comes, I need you to make sure you don't make a mistake with who you'd be mated to forever.”

“Thanks, dad. What will I do without you?”

“You’ve done a lot, my son. Now go find Zeke and tell him how you feel. That's a start,”

he persuaded, and I placed a kiss on his cheeks. “Bye, son.”

He added. I rose to my feet and walked out of his ward, wishing him a wonderful day. I was glad my father had helped me get the clarity I was seeking. Now all I had to do was find Zeke and tell him how I truly felt.

Page 6

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:12 am

Zeke

I was running away from the fact that I felt something for Valor and that feeling might be greater than my hunger for revenge. Right now I was at odds with myself, but after last night, after my confession. Maybe I could give this a try. Maybe I could forget everything that happened in our past and move on with the present. I was sitting under the shades of the trees opposite from the crystal clear lake with Valor. I had planned our picnic together as a way to foster our relationship and so far it had been going well. Except the part where some of the food I made were too spicy and that had Valor grumbling the whole time we had lunch together. He was lying on the floor with his hands under his head, looking through the canopy of trees that partly clouded the skies, the rays of sunshine spilling through and brightening his beautiful face. As I looked at him, I imagined what it would be like to actually give myself over, to fall in love with him and to have him in the way we both deserve and bring pleasure to his body. These thoughts were still a battle in my head, but as each moment passed, my desire for revenge blurred into a line of longing. For him.

“Why are you looking at me like that?”

He bit back a smile as he eyed me still in the same position.

“Nothing,”

I chortled and lay next to him. “Just charmed by the man lying right here with me.”

I smirked at him, then there was a sudden silence that followed my words. I reached out to him and ruffled his hair. “What is it, Valor?”

“I talked to the guy who killed me. I know things didn't go well with us, but I...”

Sadness masked his face as he struggled with the words. He rose to a sitting position with that look in his eyes. I drew closer to him and pulled him into an embrace.

“You know you can show me, right? If you can't speak about it then show me.”

I reassured him. He sighed and we knotted our hands together and shut our eyes.

Valor

I woke up early the next morning, joining Logan and the other wolves for an early morning run. Zeke joined this time around and I was head over heels into him. My wolf seemed indifferent, like something was wrong. But I had to give him time to readjust after all—Kane had chased us through the woods and tried to kill us.

After the patrol, we all headed back to our rooms for a shower and returned downstairs for breakfast. This time I had to catch up with my cousin, Anthony and how he was dealing with the duties since my absence. Anthony was away at the Sentinel Training Camp as one of the warrior wolves that oversaw the cadets in the camp. With me gone, Logan had pulled him back home to take on the duties at the pack, and I was glad he did because he had equally helped to take care of my father. “Hey, Anthony. I haven't gotten the chance to speak to you since I came back. Thank you for everything you did for me and my dad.”

“Sure, don't sweat it. We are family.”

“Yes. We are.”

“Besides, my brothers are out there trying to make babies and, like you, I'm unmated, so I don't have anyone to dedicate my time to, do I?”

“No, we don't. Just the pack. Um, I have to catch up with the Luna. It's really important.”

“Of course. I'll see you later.”

He said and headed out of the house.

I sauntered into the common room where Frey was pacing on the floor with her son. She gave me a smile and raised her brows when she saw the look of concern etched on my face. “Is anything wrong?”

“Um, I'm not sure if Aiden is still here. Is he?”

“He is, but Shannon asked us to put him away after he tried to kill Logan and I.”

“And successfully killed me.”

I chuckled and pocketed my hands.

“But you want to see him.”

“Yeah, but if he's still a danger to the pack, then no.”

“Don't worry. I can protect us. I, uh, have to put Killian to bed before I show you to the basement where he is.”

“I can handle it.”

I shrugged warily. I wanted to be the only one who would see him and talk to him.

“You should know it's the same dagger Shannon used on Logan that we used to put

him down.”

“Only witches can take it out, right?”

“I’m really sorry, Valor. I know how close you were to him.”

“Yeah, I used to think that until he killed me. How did you guys find my body?”

“He brought you back home and put a spell to preserve your body. I guess he wanted to work on something to pull you back from the other side.”

“But that's not possible.”

“It is. But it's dangerous and if it works, you won't be a wolf anymore among other things. See it's better to resurrect a witch than a werewolf.”

Frey explained and held her son, continuing the lullaby she was singing before I interrupted.

I found my way to the basement and saw the casket he was in. I pulled it open and glanced over at his body with a twinge of ache as to the unimaginable pain he was going through. I reached for his face and smiled, petting softly. Being here with him reminded me of the time that Frey was coming into her powers and we left the pack to find a way to pull her out of the dream state—when I put myself to save the Luna and

have the witches draw from the Delta spark.

Aiden ushered me into the house's kitchen and asked me to sit on the stool after I had tried to convince him I was alright. He didn't listen. Instead, he pulled out tissue paper and used it to stop my nose bleed, then he took my hands and muttered some

enchancements that helped me regain my strength and hasten my healing factor. And the moment he closed his eyes, his beauty took me unawares, and I lost myself in it, and the way he smiled and talked. But I promised not to let myself think that way about him.

This man right here was the first to awaken a feeling in me, although we never really had a chance to explore that part between us, especially considering he was also a fuck boy. I rolled my eyes and chuckled, wiping of the tears that trickled down my cheeks. "I forgive you, Aiden. I need you to know that."

I professed and pulled away from him, shutting the coffin and turning on my heels.

Kane

I saw images of some memories in Valor's head and a flash of anger boiled in my blood. Just then, Valor reopened his eyes and a line of tears pooled from his eyes. I had no choice but to hide the rage with a smile, showing him affection by swiping off his tears and reassuring him that everything would be alright. That he had me now and I wasn't going anywhere. But what could he be doing with that monster, Kane Creed? How was he even alive? The last time I saw him, he was in his own pool of fucking blood. I needed to know more. I had to know how far that bastard had dragged him into his swindle. I placed my hands on his temple and for a moment, it was like the world stopped. His mind was open to me and I could see every single moment of his life, like movies playing on a television screen.

"Let's see what you've been up to. Hmm, he calls you little wolf,"

I chuckled, and he sat there oblivious to what was happening to him. "Just a little tweak and we are back on track."

I pulled back after implanting memories into his head. He regained his senses

instantly and smiled, pulling me into an abrupt embrace.

“Zeke, you didn't leave.”

“I told you I wouldn't.”

I answered and forced a smile, caressing his cheeks in the most pleasant way. My skin still crawled that somehow my nemesis had wound back into my life after more than half a year of losing contact. I would do everything and anything to get rid of every single memory of Kane in his head.

The buzz of my phone saved me from giving into the anger I couldn't bear anymore, and I rose to my feet and took three steps away from him, answering the phone call, completely surprised that one of the wolves from the Eclipse was calling me. “Hello.”

“How many times have you guys fucked?”

The guy at the other end of the phone asked, and I rolled my eyes, certain that Valor heard him because of his heightened senses.

“Seriously, was this the reason you called me?”

“No. Just checking on you. I wanted to tell you what the leader said about you getting back on the team.”

I walked farther from Valor because I didn't want him hearing this either.

“Well, what's the news?”

“No luck, Ezekiel. I'm so sorry. I tried to be convincing, but he just wouldn't listen to me. Besides we're out of the country, not sure if we're ever going to come back

again.”

“Yeah, I know. I won't miss it,”

the realization that I just lost everything hit me and I instantly knew that the only person I had left was Valor. And Kane was coming after him. I wouldn't let him take him even if I had to manipulate Valor to keep them apart. I would do anything. I sucked in a deep breath, and hung up, turning to Valor with a sense of urgency lingering in my gaze. “Valor, I'm heading back to the Eclipse. They need me.”

I shot at him and he bolted to his fist with astonishment bleeding into his eyes.

“What? You can't just leave. You haven't even stayed up to a week.”

“I told you earlier. It's really important. We need to get together for something very important,”

I declared. Valor just stood there watching me with an expression I couldn't decipher etching on his face. “I know we should talk about this, but...”

I was saying, desperation seeping from my voice as he cut me off.

“You are just going to leave the same way you left twelve years ago. You just left...”

He frowned, anguish appearing on his delicate features.

“Well, that's because you found a mate, and there was no reason for me to stay. I couldn't compete with her for you.”

“A mate who rejected me. You told me you were going to come back after you left before and now you're leaving again,”

I winced at his words. He's clearly confused from the memory manipulation I had used on him, making him think I was Kane. But either way, it still hurt him like a deep knife wound. "You know what it's fine. Go, leave! After all, that's what everyone in my life has done. If they don't try to kill me or maybe even succeed, they fucking abandon me, so go! I don't need you!"

he roared at me, his tone laced with annoyance. I was supposed to love seeing him in pain, but right now, all I wanted to do was comfort him, to hold him and tell him that I would never leave again. I shouldn't feel this. Not for him. Not even in the slightest. But I did.

I cleared the distance between us and reached up to his face, but he swatted my hands off and barked, "Don't touch me."

I leaned in so close that we could both feel our breathing moving in sync. He didn't struggle. He just let me hold him. I claimed his lips in a kiss and pulled him closer to me, deepening the affectionate embrace, my lips finding its way into his tongue and tasting his sweetness. I pulled away, watching his eyes, which were captivated in awe, and I played with his brunette hair, grinning at him.

"I don't want to leave you."

I mustered and leaned on his forehead. My eyes reflected the same turmoil that raged within me. What was I doing? This wasn't part of the plan.

"I don't want you to leave either."

"This thing between us. It's complicated, and I know we've spent these past days getting back to each other and putting the pieces of our lives together. I just want you to always remember that I care for you."

“Please, don't leave me, Ezekiel.”

He cried. I had to actually wonder if he felt something for me, if this was for real. Maybe his love was enough for me to let go of every horrible experience I've been through. Maybe I should find the strength to subdue the hunger for revenge and just love him. I brushed my knuckles on his cheeks and grinned. “Do you want to come with me?”

“Yes, yes. I do.”

He answered without hesitation.

“What about your dad?”

“Anthony is here. He'll care for my dad. He's been taking care of everything while I readjusted with my life. I can't lose you again. I want you.”

He tugged at my shirt, but I could still see the uncertainty in his eyes, like he's torn between the decision he's making right now and not having to see me again. Or the fact that he felt something stronger with Kane and shared his first kiss with him. The thought of that monster having him sent a growl lodging in my throat. I had to ask myself again. Why am I feeling this for a man I had pledged to ruin his life? When I signed up for this, I wasn't supposed to fall for him. For a moment, I had to ask myself if he was so dumb that he didn't tell when his lie detection powers were working or the fact that I was telling him the truth. That I genuinely wanted him to come with me and that I enjoyed kissing him and would love to do more to his perfect body and make him cry out my name.

“You can come. But first you have to talk it over with your dad.”

I agreed with a hopeful smile.

“Alright. I need you to go back home and get our stuff ready. We'll leave tomorrow morning.”

Through out getting ready to leave the pack, all I could think of was how Valor managed to run into the bastard Alpha Kane Creed. He wasn't supposed to be here. He was supposed to be dead, but I guess he survived after I abandoned him in a pool of his own blood. What bothered me most was the uniqueness of the bond he felt with Valor. It was so genuine I felt it when I got into his head and manipulated his memories. That leech had crawled into his life and wanted to take him away from me. I grumbled under my breath. Valor was mine not his. He would never ever be his, and I would do anything to keep him away from Kane. I would make him see what I wanted him to see, twist his mind as much as I wanted it to be twisted. As long as he didn't end up with Kane and was always with me then I had no problem.

These thoughts moved back and forth in my head as I headed downstairs with our bags and put the luggage in the car. I had spent the rest of the evening getting ready for the journey while waiting on Valor to return from the hospital. He needed all the time with him because once we left, he was never coming back. I stayed on the hood of the vehicle as darkness encroached the earth and it was almost pitch black when Valor made it back to the pack house. “Sorry, talking with Logan and Anthony delayed me. My dad’s ok with it. Says we can visit from time to time.”

“Are you sure you're ready to leave all this behind?”

“Yes, yes. I am...am,”

he stuttered. He wasn't sure what he wanted. I had to make sure. I moved toward him and placed my hands on his temple. “I want to go with you. I know it's sudden, but it feels right.”

He proclaimed more excitedly than last time. I gave him a nod and proceeded to the other side of the vehicles, opening it and letting him inside. He thanked me and I crossed over to the bonnet, to the driver's side and got in. I turned on the engine of the vehicle, glancing at him. "There is something else,"

I continued, and he leveled his gaze at me. "I want to apologize for leaving you years ago..."

I was saying, but he interrupted.

"You don't have to."

"No. Maybe if I had stayed, then I would have saved you from all the heartbreak you experienced."

"Well, that heartbreak is what brought us together again. You see me for who I am without judgment, and I appreciate that. And I love you very much."

The genuineness of his words still bothered me. I only smiled at him as I put the vehicle in reverse, drove around the fountain, and headed out of the house. Valor spent most of the journey telling me how his father approved and how his cousin was on board with everything. He also informed me about Logan and Frey's agreement, and I chuckled at him. Most of the journey leaving the pack and driving half way through the country was spent with sharing our past life experiences. We had left the city by the time the clock struck midnight and Valor was already asleep after hours of his ramblings. I looked over at him, watching as he slept peacefully, with the feeling that he was protected in my arms. In that moment, all I wanted was to just hold him and never let him go, make him mine forever. I smiled and got my eyes back on the road. Maybe this revenge thing was wrong. Maybe I should just abandon the idea of killing him because the worst thing that could happen to me was Kane stealing him away from me. I couldn't bear the thought. I'd rather have him than anyone else.

I needed to get rid of that bastard because he was here to ruin things for me the same way he was the reason the Eclipse kicked me out.

Page 7

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:12 am

Valor

The vehicle pulled into the mansion, settling in on the large acre of land. For most of the journey, I was sleeping, and we didn't stop at all. Ezekiel drove all night, and he was still awake until now. I woke up from my slumber a few hours from sunrise and all I could see since then was trees, making me believe we had already left the city since last night. I was happy to be here with Zeke. I smiled over at him and asked, "Don't you think I should take the wheels? You've been awake since last night."

"Don't worry about me, Valor. I'll be fine. We are just a few kilometers from home."

He answered and gave me a wink. There was a sudden flash in my memories and I saw myself kissing a man in the woods in the middle of the night. This man wasn't Zeke. I shook my head to get rid of the thoughts and Zeke asked me if I was alright. I gave him an awkward smile and ran my hands over my thighs, letting out a deep breath.

We drove for a few more minutes, time that I spent watching the green of the forest, the blue of the skies and the golden yellow of the sun rising from the horizon. Being out here with Zeke was all I wanted. Nothing would ever separate us again. Sometimes I had to blame myself for not picking up the signs of him having affections for me that he had to leave, but that was in the past. We were together and where ever he goes, I go. I glanced at him again and gave him a warm smile. "I want us to try something."

"What?"

“You know what.”

I said, heat suddenly burning in my cheeks.

“What?”

He pressed.

“Please don't make me say it.”

“Unless you tell me what you want. I'm sorry, I just can't figure it out. I'm not psychic.”

He teased and dragged his lower lip with his teeth, a smirk lacing his lips as his eyes roamed my body. I rolled my eyes at him and got my gaze back on the road. I wanted to explore more of this relationship and that included the sexual part. I didn't want to dive into the sex right now because I didn't think I was ready to have a dick inside me. But I was ready to try something new since the kissing wasn't so bad. We could start by just simple things. My mind dwelled on these thoughts until I saw a mansion ahead of us. “We have arrived, Valor.”

Zeke announced, pulling me out of my thoughts. He followed the driveway which led up to the gate where a lean muscled dark skinned man was standing. He opened the gates after inspecting me and Zeke. We drove toward the building, following the drive that led through the field. We arrived in the center of the compound where the luxuriant building stood. The car came to a halt and I let out a sigh, glancing at Zeke's way, seeing him undo his seatbelt. He stepped down and walked over to the bonnet, arriving at the other side. As he crossed over, I saw another image from the man that chased me through the woods and the mere thought of that sent heat straight to my core. My Adam's apple bobbed as I swallowed. Zeke unlocked the door and held it open, scanning the expression on my face. “Aren't you joining me?”

“I am. I just need a second.”

I said and exhaled deeply before I rose to my feet. My eyes widened in excitement at seeing the magnificent building standing in front of us. Tall columns with intricate stonework, lush gardens and fields, multiple stories and wings. Zeke took out our luggage and led me up the stairs, which led to the entrance of the building. We walked through the large door, strolling down the foyer and appearing in the main room which had lavish furnishing, landscapes and portraits attached to the wall, rich wood paneling and plush carpets. We took the stairs and walked down the dimly lit hallway and arrived in our room. After we left the luggage on the bed, Zeke took his time to take me around the house, showing me several rooms which were expensively furnished.

We finished the tour and returned to the living room, which had a crystal chandelier hanging from the high ceiling. The same guy from the gateway sat on the expensive couch, pouring himself a glass of vodka. He smirked at Zeke, who gave him a nod as we sat opposite from him. “You must be Valor. Zeke said great things about you. Actually, you're the reason we haven't fucked,”

he murmured and took a sip from his glass. I chortled and rolled my eyes at him, feeling slightly embarrassed and annoyed. “I’m Ben. Nice to meet you.”

“You as well.”

“When are the others arriving?”

“Tonight. We will sort everything out tonight. Besides, we need to help a witch find a new pack. Her name is Leda Fairfax.”

“Mm. That's why you reached out to me, isn't it?”

he shrugged and kissed his teeth. “Mm,”

he added and leaned back on the couch, looking over at confused me. “I’ll explain everything to you, I promise.”

“Oh, ok. I think I need to take a bath and brush before everyone arrives.”

“Great. I’ll cook you guys breakfast.”

Ben said, and shot to his feet and sneered at Zeke. Ezekiel put his hand up in protest, rising to his feet and walking with me to the room.

Once we were behind closed doors, I pulled him into a kiss and he purred, his wolf coming into his eyes as he deepened the kiss, our lips splaying against each other, his lips claiming mine in a possessiveness that left me to wonder what else he had in store for me. All I knew was I didn't want to stop. I didn't stop, because I loved it. I gasped as he rummaged his soft hands through my body, kissing every part of me, a growl spurting from his throat. Everywhere he touched my body manifested sparks of ecstasy, and I couldn't help but moan in delight. His hands found their way to my shirt, and he ripped it off. I let out a squeal and threw my head backward from the pleasure, dragging my lips with my teeth. He moved down to my chest, tracing every inch of my body with his tongue. He circled my hard nipples, one after the other, and sucked on each of them, sending thrills of sexual pleasure that went straight to my cock. My length was straining against my thighs, begging to be freed. I wanted to know how it felt to have his mouth buried deep on my cock. I wanted his lips to tighten around my cock and elicit growls of pleasure from me. I desired that I came inside him and filled him with fullness, and watched as he swallowed every single fucking drop of my release. Fuck, this man was driving me fucking crazy with the works of his hands on my body. I could feel the heat oozing from him, the want in his eyes, driving him and his wolf with feral need.

“Fuck, Ezekiel.”

Was all I could muster, the tension of pleasure in the air, growing thicker. We backed into the bed and he playfully tugged me forward. I fell against the bed and he unbuttoned his shirt and removed his belt. He climbed onto the bed, straddling on me and taking my lips into a kiss. “I want to take your cock into me and know how it feels to have you at my mercy.”

He whispered against my ears, his fangs brushing on my earlobe. My mouth formed into an O as he traced his tongue from my neck until he got to my groin. His hands pulled down my trouser and set my aching length free. He wrapped his hands around it, his eyes holding a glint of pleasure, as he ran his tongue over the slit, swiping off the pre-cum.

“Tell me if this is ok.”

He asked with a smile and took me into his mouth, his lips tightening around the base of my dick. I threw my head backward from the zap of pleasure I felt, my fist tightening against the bedsheets. I braced myself for the feeling of thrill each time he gagged on my cock, stroking and sucking, driving me to the edge until I came.

“Ezekiel.”

I hissed. His eyes glinted their golden color, and he narrowed his gaze toward me, my come dropping from the corner of his lips.

“You taste so good, Valor.”

He smiled and climbed onto the bed, pulling me into a cuddle.

“You are safe with me. You know that, right?”

He sounded like he was trying to convince me to believe him. When I looked into his eyes, there was an expression of genuineness in them, and I knew he was telling the truth.

“Yes.”

I grumbled, sleep slowly taking me.

I woke up later in the day and found myself alone in the bedroom. Groaning, I stretched and rustled out of the bed, finding my way into the bathroom still half awake. I almost bumped into the door frame when I regained my complete sense of direction. I walked through the door and headed for the sink, twisting the faucet and letting the water pour into the sink. I put my hands under the warm water and splashed water across my face, keeping my hands on the sink and facing the vanity mirror. I groaned, this time from the ache as I remembered the words of the stranger from the woods.

“I came to kill you.”

He said, and I pulled back from the mirror, rubbing my eyes to get rid of any traces of sleep. I grumbled lazily and headed into the shower, washing up and changing into new clothes. I was about to leave for downstairs when I had another flash, like my memories were forcing its way back to my head, like someone had tampered with them.

I headed out of the room, walking down the hallway and carefully slipping through the parlor and kitchen area but there was no sign of Ben or Zeke. Something was definitely wrong. You know that feeling I get. Besides, where the hell was Zeke and why did I feel a sudden pull toward the trees by the lawn? I sneaked out of the house and headed toward the forest entrance where I felt some sort of connection beckoning to me. The tether grew stronger as I sauntered closer. I just couldn't resist it.

As I crossed the tree line into the forest, my heart hammered against my chest, and I kept walking until I was halfway into the woods alone and unable to know if I had made it out of the property. As I regained my sense of self and turned to walk back to the house, I stumbled into the arms of a man. And I remembered him. Kane.

Valor

I stood there, realizing that somehow Zeke had altered the memories in my brain. I remembered everything now, how Kane chased me through the woods with the urge to claim each other, taking hold of us faster than we both expected. This man wanted to kill me, but even from that moment when he made his goal clear, he still had that look of captivation in his eyes. Even now we were standing in the middle of nowhere on the Eclipse's property. He still looked at me the same way.

I had questions for Zeke because he had manipulated me into believing he was Kane and I followed him out here. If he had just told me the truth, I would have followed him anyway because we still had unresolved issues between us, but with this happening, I was doubting how true everything that occurred from the start was. I let out an exhale of frustration and Kane just stood there watching me. Kane's presence excited my wolf, Leo, and I had to shut him off after several telepathic warnings. This wasn't the time to get back to becoming obsessed with an Alpha. I had to think with my head not with my dick. "I need to get back."

I told him and gestured toward the path, but he stopped me even before I took three steps forward.

"I came here to ask you for a favor."

"What could I possibly have?"

I was saying and turned on my heels to leave, but he reached out and tightened his grip around my wrist. His expression unreadable, his eyes still holding that look in

them.

“Everything, little wolf. You have everything.”

He remarked with a smile.

“I just want you to leave me alone.”

“Look, whatever Zeke has planned for you isn't good. What do you think would happen to you when he figures out that you know? I'll protect you, Valor. I just need you to come with me.”

He declared, a hint of fear lingering in his eyes. I shuddered and turned on my heels. I didn't even know what to do at this point. Trusting this stranger seemed like a better option than going back to Zeke. Besides, he would be too busy with the Eclipse to even notice I was gone. Kane put out his hands for me and I sighed with contemplation and took it. Before I could tell what was happening, he shifted into his beastly form, ears slanted, claws and fangs drawn, black fur coating every part of his body. He picked me up and carried me like I was the most precious thing in the world and made a run for the woods. He looked at me with yearning burning behind those beautiful crimson orbs. And it made me wonder what he saw in me. Of all the wolf shifters in the world, he saw me.

We left the building's premises after moving through the forest of trees at a precise speed and arrived in the middle of the road where a black SUV parked. He set me down and morphed back into his human form, walking naked to the trunk of the vehicle. I stole a glance at his solid back muscles and the tattoos that covered them while he shuffled through the bags there until he found shorts and pulled it on. He turned to me with a smile, almost catching my gaze. This time I saw the inked tattoos splayed over the dark skin of his chest, abdominal muscles and his arms.

“Would you like me to put a shirt on?”

He teased, and my cheeks burned red. I couldn't let him see the effect he had on me, but he knew from the fact that he walked over to the other side of the car shirtless, inviting me over.

“If he had worn a shirt, I wouldn't talk to you until next year. I mean, don't you see how hot he is. Oh, goddess. I want him. I want him. I want him. I want him. I. Want. Him.”

Leo screamed in my head, and I rolled my eyes, getting into the vehicle. Kane crossed over to the other side and got in; he turned on the engine and glanced my way, putting the car in motion.

“If you have questions, I'm all ears.”

“Where are you taking me?”

“My pack. I want you to be my date to a ball.”

“A ball? Are you serious? So you came all the way from your pack to an unknown territory just to ask me out?”

I let out a hearty chuckle and rolled my eyes. He sure knew how to surprise someone.

“Valor, please,”

he whined. “But if you'd say no, I'll accept it. I want it to be what you want.”

He added, and I went silent. I wouldn't give him an answer now.

“How did you get into my pack?”

“I was keeping tabs on Ezekiel for some personal reasons, and it led me to you. I got information about the chances of you coming back to life and stayed for a while.”

“So you were stalking me?”

“No, I wasn't. If I was, I would have fucked you by now.”

His voice contained more than a touch of his wolf's growl, and that was enough to stir my cock to life. I wanted to know what it was like to take him against the bonnet of the vehicle. I shouldn't be thinking about this, but that was all that came to my mind. And he wasn't helping by the way he stared at me. This man right here was so fucking handsome.

“What is it like in your pack?”

I asked as a form of diversion from my lewd thoughts.

“We are not much because some of my people left when the former Alpha died.”

“I thought that gave you the mantle of leadership. Or are you one of those spoiled children who runs away from their duties?”

I arched my brows.

“No. I only discovered I was an Alpha months ago. I almost died, but luckily I survived.”

“That's the scar on your chest.”

“Yeah, very observant,”

he smiled at me. “I don't know Valor, but you've charmed me. Being with you feels so right. I want to be with you all the time. I don't want you to go back to Ezekiel.”

He professed with a strict tone, his eyes never leaving mine. Was he trying to convince me to leave my best friend behind? But after what he did—getting into my head and manipulating my memories after I had given him the access to share something special with me. He misused that opportunity, and it hurt me.

“Well, you have until the end of the ball to convince me.”

I said to him.

“Mine, little wolf.”

He told me. There was a feeling of rightness that came with his words.

By the time we had moved through the path in the forest to the houses in the pack, the sun was already overhead. Like Kane had said, their population wasn't large, and it showed from the number of houses I saw while we drove through the pack dwellings. We arrived at the mansion and headed into the house. The staircase led to a double-door, flanked by towering columns and adorned with intricate carvings. The walls creamy white with expansive windows and doors. As we walked through the doors, the foyer opened into the living room—an elegant space which had high ceilings, hardwood floors, a crystal chandelier in the center of the space, and beautiful tables and couches, the walls adorned with exquisite artwork and the fire place crackling with flames. I let Kane take the direction, and he led me from the living room to the kitchen, the basement, the ballroom and second and third floors of the buildings

which had different rooms allotted to the ranked Lycans of the pack. During this time, he took his time to explain to me how he's been adjusting to the life of an Alpha and trying to get his life back together with his Beta, Gamma, and other family friends. The day had rolled by when we finished the tour, and Kane took me to his room, asking me to make myself comfortable. He left and returned with a tray of food and set it down on the center table in his comfortable apartment which had a king-sized bed, an extensive wardrobe with a polished brown surface, walls covered in exquisite wall papers and plush carpets with intricate designs. "You have a really nice place."

"Thank you. Um, I need you to make yourself comfortable. The pack workers will bring you a suit for the ball..."

"Add corsets to the list,"

I informed him. "I wear it once in a while."

"Yeah, well, my Gamma is obsessed with those. If there's anything you need, just ring me."

He beamed and hurried to his drawer, pulling pen and paper and scribbling down the number.

"I'm sure I have everything I need here, Kane."

"I can't wait to dance with you, little wolf."

He smiled and walked toward me, brushing his knuckles against my cheeks. I let out a heated breath and leaned into his touch, feeling something extraordinary with the contact I had with him. My wolf hummed with excitement, unknown to me that he had manifested into my silver irises, turning them golden. When I leveled my gaze with Kane, his eyes were a fleck of crimson and his wolf hummed in agreement with

mine. They were both staking claim on each other, and this elicited an unadulterated feeling of joy in my heart. “I’ll see you tonight.”

He said and pulled away from me. My wolf mourning at the loss of his touch.

After he left, I took my time to finish the food on the tray, humming at the delicacy that he had whipped up. I finished eating and hurried to the bathroom to have a shower, which lasted almost an hour, and when I came back to the room. I saw my dress lying on the bed just the way I wanted.

I sat next to it and lay back on the bed, pinning my gaze to the ceiling and wondering how I got myself here. How right it felt to be with Kane, to be here in his pack. I know everything was happening so fast, but it still felt right. Maybe this was what the moon goddess wanted from me—the new path in my life. From what I’ve heard from Kane, his pack was in shambles, and he needed help to get everything back on track. I wanted to be part of that help. I needed to be.

I rose back to my feet with these thoughts still streaming in my head and dressed up, putting on the black shoes, hooking my belt against the dark blue trouser with the same matching color for shirt. I was about to put on my corset when the door pulled open and I turned on my heels meeting Kane, who was ready for the ball. He was in an all black attire with a long tailcoat jacket. His eyes zeroed on me with a smirk and he stepped closer. The way he looked at me sent a thrill through me, causing my dick to twitch.

“Let me help you with that.”

He offered. I put on the corset, and he laced it, tightening his grip until he had successfully knotted it at the end. “Is that too tight?”

He leaned closer to my ears, pressing his hands on the small of my back.

“No. I can breathe just fine.”

I said, and let him hold me, reveling in the sparks that came with our bodies being so close. I sucked in a deep breath, and he leaned closer, his lips brushing against my ears.

“Before the end of the night, I'll be the one unlacing your corset and claiming your body,”

his deep, throaty voice grumbled, doing things to my insides. “You are so hard to resist, little wolf.”

He nibbled on my ear, sending a shiver down my spine. Goddess, every time this man was close to me, he drove me to the edge, awakening desires that left me yearning for him. Just like that night in the forest when he chased me or when he carried me in his arms and escaped from the Eclipse's territory.

“Kane, I need to...”

I was saying, but he interrupted me, “You'll tell me whatever it is when I have you at my mercy.”

“Mm.”

I groaned and he took my arms with a smile and ushered me out of the room.

The pack was waiting for us.

Page 9

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:12 am

Valor

Tonight was a fucking full moon. I guess I was so wrapped up in what was happening with these two men that I had lost track of fucking time. I didn't want to be here on a full moon because, since my double rejection, I hated going to the full moon runs. Although I did once in a while, it was a reminder that I wasn't enough and I didn't want that. Not when I was with him. That feeling has somehow gotten rid of the joy I was feeling at being with Kane.

We had arrived at the venue of the ball, which the pack members dedicated to their new Alpha. It was the same thing Night Shade did for Logan when he ascended as Alpha. Except in this case, the Midnight Shadow Lycans celebrated their Alpha's survival. I didn't bother to listen to them eavesdrop because I believed Kane would tell me his story whenever he felt it was the right time. He still had his hands wrapped around my waist as he introduced me to the family. "This is Valor, my date."

He said with an excited expression on his face.

"Hello, everyone."

I replied to them, extending my hands to the first man. He had a light brown skin tone that matched with his curly black hair and brown irises. "Beta Rohan."

He introduced himself.

"I'm Asher,"

the other guy said. He had a brown skin color, and gray irises. His eye color made him stand out from the others. “Gamma.”

“This is Leda. The pack’s witch.”

Kane introduced the woman in their midst.

“I can introduce myself, Kane. I’m Leda Fairfax,”

she took my hands in a handshake. She smiled at me, her blue irises holding my silver with her long, straight black hair cascading down her ivory skin. “Welcome to Midnight Shadow Pack.”

“Thank you so much, all of you.”

I prattled with a grin.

“Come on, let’s get a glass of wine.”

Kane said, still holding onto me. I gave him a smile, and we both sauntered to the bar at the corner of the room, which was overflowing with wine. They were servers helping with distributing the wine and I wondered why we weren’t taking from them.

“I just wanted to know if you’re ok.”

“I am.”

“I know you have a lot of questions about all of this, and I promise to answer them,”

he reassured, leaning closer and placing a kiss on my earlobe. I gave him a nod. We arrived at the bar, and he leaned against the counter, signaling the bartender for a

bottle. “Anyway, I don't want us to take what they're serving, because I'm sure Asher must have fucked it up. We don't get drunk, but he adds some sort of shit to it, heightening its effect. Just for the fun.”

“Mm hmm.”

I nodded. The bartender poured us two glasses of wine, and we took them, taking a swig and turning to the Lycan bloods present.

We went from drinking wine to dancing to the music. I enjoyed having Kane so close to my body, holding me, my wolf giddy to be with him. But I still felt a chill of fear running through my spine, knowing that I would have to face turning down Kane's offer to join him for the run. I didn't think I wanted to be out there. Of course, I loved running in wolf form and feeling the bond with other shifters, but I didn't feel like it all the time. Kane was really concerned about my welfare during the time we danced together, asking me if I was alright but my response was always the same.

“Yes, I'm fine.”

I answered when he asked for the umpteenth time.

“Then say it like you have life in yourself,”

he chuckled, concern in his eyes. The other shifters had left to prepare for the moon run, and it was just me and him in the ballroom, swaying to the music. “Valor, I'd understand if you want to go back. I can take you back.”

He reassured and let me go, turning away and palming his face in frustration.

“No, it's not that.”

I shook my head.

“Then what is it?”

He quizzed and cleared the distance between us, taking my hands and placing it on his chest, a possessive rumble emerging from his throat. “I know we don't know each other very much. But I want you to understand that I'll listen to you whenever you're ready to share your problem.”

“I can't go to the full moon run.”

I wrapped my hands around his and led him to the stairs. We both sat down facing the moon, which was halfway up in the sky. “I'm sorry.”

I said, averting my gaze from him.

“Hey, you don't have to apologize. I would never make you feel less about what you want, even if it's not in my favor.”

“It's just that it reminds me of the rejection I faced. I mean, what if it happens again?”

“I won't let that happen,”

he answered quickly, faster than I expected, and I narrowed my gaze at him. “Look, Valor. You don't have to put your life on hold because a bunch of idiots didn't see you for who you're. Beautiful,”

he reached out to my cheek and brushed his knuckles against it. “You can't let them have that power over you.”

“But sometimes it makes me feel like I'm not enough. But I know I am. It's just that the experiences I've had just keep reminding me. I know I should move on, I know, I know, but it's hard. Some days, everything is good and the next, it's like you're having the worst days of your life.”

“Hey, hey. You have me now. I won't let anything happen to you. I'll be here with you during the good days and the bad days. You and I, Valor.”

He took my hands, placing it on his chest so I could feel his heartbeat. He put his hands on mine and I chuckled. I was now feeling a renewed sense of confidence.

“Thank you so much.”

“Now come on, let's go to bed. The full moon run can happen without me.”

“No. You're the Alpha. You need to be with your people,”

I convinced. “I'll find my way back to the house and maybe you'll keep your promise on unlacing my corset,”

heat burned in my cheeks as I said the words. A possessive growl rumbled in his chest. “I'll be there waiting for you.”

I wasn't lying to him. I would stay and wait for him because going back to Zeke didn't feel safe for me. Not until I figured out what he was up to. I had to stay here and see what my next step of action would be.

He nodded at my words and rose to his feet, helping me up and placing a tender kiss on my forehead. I smiled at him and watched as he walked away.

My wolf wasn't pleased that I was letting Kane go to the full moon run alone. He was

really having a good feeling about tonight's run. Again, I had to double back on Kane's words. What did I see in myself? Was I going to let the experiences of my past continue to dictate how I lived or loved forever. Would I look in the mirror and like what I see every damn time? Or would I keep hiding in the corner, waiting for some miracle to happen?

"Please, Valor. Don't leave him alone,"

my wolf purred. "I need to be with Creed."

"So you've been communicating with his beast behind my back."

"Yes, and he wants you. He wants you so bad. I want him too, and it just feels so right. What if he's our mate? We can only find out after the full moon run. I know he's our mate, Valor. Please, just..."

My wolf was saying, and I tried to force him back, but he didn't budge. I wasn't surprised. With the full moon on the rise, if we had a bond, Leo would detect it first. This time, he was stronger. "Come on, Valor. He's leaving."

He continued to protest.

"Kane!"

I called out, finally giving into my wolf and letting him win.

I ran to him until I caught up and watched the puzzled expression adorning his beautiful face with his arched brows. "Shouldn't you be heading back to the house?"

"My wolf wants to run with you. I... I want to run with you."

I let out and groaned at Leo. Whatever the outcome was tonight. I'll live with it. Maybe, maybe I'm enough. It's really funny how Leo has been silent around Zeke and now I'm with Kane, he just can't keep quiet in my head.

“Come on, the pack is waiting.”

The full moon ended as quickly as it started. Lycans shifting into their beastly form and leaping into the forest. I tailed on behind, keeping up with Kane's speed until we all rounded the pack territory. When the run was over, and I shifted back into my human form, I stood in front of Kane transcended by his scent. “Mate.”

I muttered.

“Told ya so.”

My wolf thundered at me.

“Mate.”

He said, opening his arms for me. I let out an exhilarated chuckle and ran into his arms, and he embraced me, holding me tightly. Tears sprung from my eyes, knowing what it felt like to know the tether of fate, to be accepted by someone who truly saw my worth, who looked at me like I was the most beautiful person on the earth. Oh, goddess, how beautiful it felt.

“I, Kane Creed Diallo, Lycan Alpha of Midnight Shadow Pack, accept you, Delta Valor Leo O'Donnell of Night Shade Pack as my mate.”

He said heartily and claimed my lips in a kiss.

“I, Delta Valor Leo O'Donnell, of Night Shade Pack accept you, Kane Creed Diallo,

Lycan Alpha of Midnight Shadow Pack as my mate.”

I responded and deepened the kiss between us.

“You won't be taking off the corset anymore. My wolf literally ripped it to shreds.”

“We'll have other balls and weddings.”

“Weddings?”

“Of course, I want to spend the rest of my supernatural life with you. I knew it from the first moment I laid my eyes on you.”

“Well, I'll have to think about that.”

“You don't have to give me an answer now. Take your time, little wolf. You're my mate. We'll always be together.”

Kane smiled at me, and we headed back to the house. He carried me in his enormous arms until we arrived in his room. He kicked the door open and closed it with me in his arms, taking me to the bed and laying me on it.

“There's something you should know.”

“What is it?”

“I've never had sex with a man before.”

The thought of having him rock my world sent heat to my core, causing my dick to twitch.

“It’s ok if you don't want to complete the bond now. We could wait until the next full moon.”

“No, I want this now. With you.”

I said, still shy from my own words.

“Mm,”

he sat on the bed and faced me. “I want you to enjoy your first time. See, tonight isn't just about me. It is about us. If you're not ok with what I'm doing, be open about it, ok? Because I want you to feel as much pleasure as I do.”

He explained and I nodded. His lips curled into a smirk and he knelt on the bed, leaning closer until he claimed my lips in a desperate kiss. The fierceness of the lip lock showing how much he wanted to have me. A moan of pleasure croaked from my throat as I splayed my hands over the ink that covered his chest. He broke off from the kiss, ravishing my neck with kisses, down to my chest, taking each of my hard nipple one after the other. A light shiver raced through my spine, and I grunted in ecstasy, pressing my body closer to his. His tongue traced from my nipple down to my groin, his fangs brushing against my skin. He kissed my cockhead, swiping his tongue over the slit and licking off the pre-cum. He put his hands on my chest, and I threw my head backward, overwhelmed by the sudden pleasure. Smirking, he leveled his gaze at me, a growl spurting from his throat, the look of pleasure in his eyes doing things to my insides.

“Eyes on me, little wolf,”

he hummed, crimson flashing in his eyes. “By the time I'm done with you. You wouldn't want any other man touching your perfect body.”

He said and kissed my cock again, this time swallowing me whole. An unexpected exhale escaped my throat, and I grunted out, my eyes rolling to the back of my head, overwhelmed by the delectation of having him worship my body. He drove me to the edge to the point of my orgasm, then he pulled away and moved back to my lips, claiming them once more.

I exchanged our position, straddling on him with my hands on his chest. He held my waist, guiding me as I ground on his erection. “Fuck, little wolf. You really know how to awaken my beast. Creed wants you as much as I want you.”

He hissed through gritted teeth. I smiled and leaned in, kissing him, rough and desperate. A raspy moan escaped my throat as my lips left his mouth and descended to his chest, moving until I reached his throbbing cock. His cock length was thick and dark in color, not too long or short, and it had a curve that I knew would hit the spot every damn time. I gently wrapped my hands around his length and swiped my tongue over the slit, tasting his bitter-sweetness. My lips stretched around his cockhead, driving him with intense pleasure and I swallowed him some more until I was stretching at the base of his cock. He had a concerned look in his eyes, but I gave him a nod of reassurance that I was fine. I was enjoying this. I choked on his cock, bobbing against his length, the tingle of pleasure moving from my lips to my entire body. My eyes rolled to the back of my head as I pulled away, drawing a strand of saliva with my movement.

“I want you inside me.”

I hissed, and a smile tugged at the corner of his lips. He let out a throaty growl as a sign of his possessiveness, his hands curling around my arm and pulling me closer. As our bodies collided softly, he turned me over, pressing me against the bed, his arms caging me as he smiled. “I’ve waited for this moment my whole life.”

He said, ravaging my body with kisses until he got between my ass. With my legs

tilted backward, he buried his face between my ass cheeks, the stubble on his jaw gently brushing against my skin and sending goosebumps through me, his tongue teasing my hole, tasting my sweetness. He kept working on me, gently sliding his fingers into me and stretching me until I was ready for penetration.

“Are you sure you're ready for this?”

He reached out to the drawer and took out a lube, spilling some in his hands and coating my crack with it.

“Yes, I am.”

I told him. This was the fucking freaking mate bond, something I've desired to have all of my life. Now it was at my grasp. I wouldn't turn it away. I wanted to complete the bond, to be with Kane. He gave me a nod of approval and held my hips, positioning his cock at my entrance and gently pushing inside. My mouth formed an O at the intrusion, feeling the fullness that came with having him inside me.

“I'm not all the way in.”

He chuckled and pulled out, pushing back inside until he buried his length deep inside me. My cock twitched and his hands tightened around my hips, holding me in place as he pushed in and out of me. He started with gentle thrusts, until I had adjusted to his size, the sting turning into pleasure. I grunted out, overwhelmed by the feeling of ecstasy as he drove into me. “Oh, fuck, Kane.”

My voice squealed and the crimson in his irises flashed, showing me that his beast, Creed, was present. My wolf came into my head, all excited and giddy with the completion of the mating bond. Kane pulled me up, and I braced my hands around his neck, leaning on his forehead and kissing him as he continued to pump his cock into me. He let out a gruff sound, and I chuckled at him as he moved out of the bed, our

bodies still meshed in the contact, his huge cock stretching and filling me with fullness. He placed me against the wall and this time he thrust into me in rapid pace, each time the tip of his cock brushed against my prostrate, causing me to cry out in undeniable sparks of rapture, driving me crazy. My lips dragged against my bottom lip, and I tried to stifle my moan, but Kane's voice stopped me. "I want to hear your filthy moans, little wolf. I want you to fucking cry out my name as I come inside you and mark you so the whole of Midnight Shadow Pack will know that you belong to me. That we belong to each other."

"Oh, fuck, yes."

I cried and tightened my grip around him, the rings of muscles clenching around his cock as he continued to drive into me without stopping.

That ethereal feeling designated by the moon goddess for fated wolves washed over me in pleasure and I could feel the strands of our lives, that of Kane and I, becoming one. The goddess tethering our bond to each other. Creed manifested in Kane's eyes, his fangs lengthening as he leaned closer to my neck. He drove them into me, slightly above my shoulder, and pulled away, swiping his tongue over the blood and licking me clean.

"Oh, you look so sexy when you fucking bleed, little wolf,"

he purred. "Ours, ours, ours."

He and his wolf hummed. I felt the same tingling just when he titled his neck and I buried my fangs into him, pulling away and swiping off the blood with my tongue. Just when I felt the mating bond snapping into place, Kane took me to the bed and placed me on the mattress cover, my ass hanging off from the edge of the bed as he hammered into me. Sweat trickled down his scalp as we both neared our orgasm.

“Oh, fuck, Valor. I'm going to come.”

He grunted and quickened his pace, shoving me deeper into the bed. My tight hole clenched around his swelled dick and he continued to fuck me, faster and harder with each pound. “Mine, mine, mine!”

His deep baritone rumbled each word, his gaze lifting to meet mine in an intensity that steals my breath away.

“Yes, fuck, yours, Alpha.”

“Mm, so fucking tight, little wolf. For me, all for me. My mate,”

he rasped. “Fuck, my knot.”

He snapped his head, crimson flecks appearing in his eyes. My hole clenched so tight around his cock. He slammed all the way into me, giving me the best orgasm of my life. He came, grunting and growling as he finished. I tried to move against him, and his cock brushed against my prostate, sending a thrill of pleasure through me.

“What is that?”

“It's my knot. I...”

“Fuck, it feels so good.”

I moved against his cock, and suddenly, he hauled me to his chest, our bodies still joined together.

“How long is it going to last?”

“Probably half an hour,”

he answered and sat on the bed with me straddling on his hips, feeling the swell of his cock brush against the nerves of my prostate. I kissed him and he just let me. “If I start again...”

He growled and looked at me with affection in his eyes. He bucked his hips and I sucked in a deep breath and he let out another growl. I didn't need to say that it felt so good. He knew from the look in my eyes. “How do you feel?”

He inquired and kissed my forehead.

“Great. I just don't want to lose your scent. I want to wake up with you.”

I said to him.

“That you will always have.”

He kissed me over and over until I couldn't hold back my laughter anymore.

Today was the best day of my life.

Page 10

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:12 am

Valor

I rolled over on the bed, and my eyes fell on the lamp on the nightstand. I let out a grunt and turned away, seeing that I was still in Kane's arms. His grip around my waist was possessive. I chuckled low and slowly took his arms off my waist, sitting up on the bed. "Little wolf, you can't leave the bed just yet."

He whined in his sleep.

"Leo wants to run,"

I told him and smiled. "I'll be back before you know it."

I replied and rose from the bed. He reached out to me and pulled me back to the bed, claiming my lips in a kiss.

"Bye. Don't stay out too long unless you want me to chase you again."

He grumbled, and I rolled my eyes.

"I won't."

Sighing, I regained my stance, walking to the wardrobe and taking out his shorts and shirt. I changed into them and walked out of the room, finding my way to the compound.

Something had changed in me. I thought to myself as I strode down the field, heading

for the nearby forest where I would shift.

“You don't expect us to remain the same after having a night with our fated mate,”

Leo purred in my head. “After all these years.”

“You were right about last night, Leo. I'm sorry I doubted you,”

I apologized. “But what about Zeke?”

“Zeke isn't our mate, and he's a cunning bastard. We don't know what he's up to yet, but with Kane's help. We are going to find out.”

Leo continued.

“We'll have to. He's my best friend and I don't want to hurt him.”

I replied to my wolf lazily, reaching the forest grounds. I pulled off my clothing and put them into a pile, hiding it under the root of a tree.

“I liked him at first when he returned, but I don't trust him now. I trust, and I want Creed.”

“Zeke and I have history, but there's so much we don't know about Kane.”

I informed.

“He's our mate.”

“I'm not doubting our bond, Leo. I just want to know more about him.”

“Ask him when you get back to the house. If he doesn't answer, then we'll know he's hiding something.”

“Ok,”

I nodded. I was about to shift when I heard a movement in the brush. Carefully stalking toward the source, I kept my eyes and ears open and drew closer and closer. Something moved behind me and I turned, but I couldn't find anything. “If this is a fucking joke, Kane. Stop it!”

I was turning back in the first direction when I walked into someone's chest. Looking up, Zeke smirked wickedly at me and slammed my head into the nearby tree.

All I saw for the next two hours was darkness.

When I woke up, I was lying in the living room in the mansion where Zeke had brought me. I let out a scathed grunt and rubbed my temple, soiling my hands in my blood. Fuck, I was still bleeding. Ezekiel must have hit me so hard. I slowly rose to my sitting position, turning to the incoming footfalls. It was Zeke, and he had a tray of food in his hand. “Hey, you are awake. Knocking you out naked wasn't ideal, but I enjoyed watching you bare,”

he smirked at me and put down the tray in front of me. My face twisted in disgust at his words. “Eat.”

He coerced.

“I'm not eating anything from you. What did you do to me?”

“He's marked you. That would make it hard to implant memories into your head now,”

he said, trying to touch me, but I swatted his hands off my face. He was even admitting the fact that he had been manipulating my memories. Thankfully, he had clothed me. I rose to my feet and backed away with a growl. “And he's fucked some bravery into you. If you don't eat, you're going to starve,”

He added, his tone rich with amusement. “I don’t intend on letting you go anytime soon.”

“I’m not staying with you. What did you do to me? Why did you make me think you were Kane?”

“Because I was protecting you.”

“Protecting me from what? Him? The only person I need protection from is you.”

I pointed at him and a growl rumbled in my throat. If I had to fight my way out of here, then I would.

“You can leave now if you want to.”

He shrugged and carried the tray back to the kitchen. I sighed and sauntered toward the exit. I opened the door and tried to get past the threshold but I couldn't. I tried over and over, but it was pointless. It was like there was an invisible barrier stopping me from leaving. I turned to Zeke and saw him standing opposite me with a wicked smile on his face. He knew exactly what he was doing.

“Let me out.”

“No.”

“Why? What did I do to you to deserve this?”

“Everything! Your family ruined my life. They were the reason I left in the first place,”

his tone was rich with pain and torture. “I worked so hard for everything while you just had it handed over to you. I suffered while you lived in your luxurious home. I lost everything just to make you happy, and even when I loved you. You just didn't care and now you get to walk into the arms of another man and have your happy ever after.”

“Ezekiel, I didn't know. You could have just told me. I would have...”

“Apologize? Or what? Fought for me?”

He cut me off.

“Yes, I would have fought for you!”

I asserted.

“I don't need your fucking apology. I want you fucking dead!”

he roared at me. “And I hate that because underneath everything I still love you, and I just want you to stay here with me.”

“But...”

“You have nothing with Kane. He's just deceiving you, luring you into his den of lies until you were foolish enough to let him trap you with the mating bond.”

He said in a very convincing tone, making me almost believe him. Kane didn't lie to me or manipulate my memories to lure me out of here. He didn't kidnap me and bring

me back to his own home, and he sure as hell didn't implant memories of his past into my head. With him I had free will and he respected my choices, but Zeke had become someone entirely different. Like I hadn't known him all my life. Maybe I didn't.

“That's not true. Our bond is real,”

I shook my head. “Ezekiel, you're hurt, and I understand that. We need to talk about this. You know I've never done wrong to you. Please don't do this. Don't ruin what we have.”

I remarked and closed in on him, taking his hands and giving him a soft caress. Tears sprung from his eyes and I pulled him into an embrace, holding him as he shuddered in my arms.

“You're wrong. I have nothing left. Kane has you. He took you away from me.”

He whispered as tears trickled down his cheeks and pushed me off himself. He gritted his teeth and took back my hands, trying to drag me back, but I tussled out of his grip.

“Don't.”

I replied, shaking my head.

“Valor, you need to come with me,”

he commanded with a deadly serious expression, and I shook my head. I wouldn't go anywhere with him. He seized my arms and pulled me closer. “You fickle Omega. I'll always be stronger than you,”

He disparaged but I backed away. Leaving him with one option—an attack. He moved toward me at an unnatural speed and thrust me into the wall, and I grunted

out, overpowering his weight on me and exchanging our position. He struggled until he pushed me over, the impact of his strength sending me toppling into the living room. I forced myself up, but before I regained my stance; he had cleared the distance between us and seized my throat, strangling me and knocking the breath out of my lungs. My throat burned at the tightness of his grip and I struggled to breathe, my eyes rolling at the back of my head. I thrashed and struggled, choking out a plea, but he didn't listen. He lifted me from the floor, his hands still around my throat, my feet hanging inches away from the floorboards as he hurled me to the wall. I slammed against the wall then it was darkness.

Kane

My original intention was to just use Valor as a pawn in my scheme of revenge against Ezekiel. But when I met him for the first time, he basically took my breath away. My beast became obsessed with him. I just couldn't stop thinking about him. For the first time in my life, everything felt just the way it was supposed to feel when I was with him. Goddess, the first kiss we shared in his pack. That was one of the best kisses of my life. I chose not to take revenge, but to ensure that I stole Valor from the monster's ensnare. Zeke didn't deserve a person like him. He was impulsive, jealous and driven by his egotistical emotions. I didn't want him being with such a man.

I couldn't believe he was all mine now.

My mate.

“Ours.”

Creed, my beast, hummed in response to my thoughts.

I went back to sleep after Valor had told me he was going for a run. When I woke up, the sun had colored the skies, and I freshened up and headed downstairs to join the rest of the family for breakfast. To my surprise, Valor hadn't returned to the house. I wondered what was keeping him from coming back and after I had asked my family about his whereabouts, and they couldn't give me an answer. I commanded the pack warriors to search for him through the entire pack.

About an hour later, they came back, stating that they couldn't find any trace of him except the pile of my clothes which he had left with for the run. The only explanation was that someone had kidnapped him. The first person who came to mind was Ezekiel. That bastard. He must have found his way into my pack. Fuck. Fuck. I wasn't supposed to let my mate out of my sight. Who knows what he would do to him when he saw the fucking mating mark?

Dismissing the pack warriors, I took my car keys and headed out of the house. Entering the vehicle, I turned on the engine. I pressed on the gas as I navigated my way out of the pack, my thoughts burdened by the unrest of losing him. I couldn't lose him. He was the man who completed me. His wolf and my beast were one. I was approaching the pack's border, the trees that lined the path blurring as I zoomed past them. As I tried to drive past the territory, the car slammed against a barrier that sent the vehicle tumbling backward. I grunted as the vehicle slammed against the ground, the windshield shattering and the shards falling on the forest floor. A line of blood dripped from my head at the collision, and I wiped it off, kicking the door open and crawling out. I regained my stance and stormed toward the border. I tried crossing over, but I couldn't.

“No!”

I roared, kicking and struggling at the barrier. I mind-linked the pack's witch, explained to her that I couldn't leave the pack and asked her to meet me at the pack's border with a new car. Pacing the floor, I waited for her to come as quickly as she

could. The more time I spent without Valor was driving me crazy. I needed to save him from the claws of that monster and tell him everything he needed to know before he implanted twisted lies into my mate's head.

Not too long, Leda drove through the path, parking the new car next to the crashed one. She stepped down with Beta Rohan, their eyes widening at what had transpired. “What happened? Are you ok?”

Leda asked while Rohan lifted the wrecked vehicle back on four feet.

“Yeah. I'm fine. I tried crossing over, but some sort of barrier stopped me.”

“Mm,”

she answered and approached the border, waving her hand over. A blue veil appeared before her, the barrier now visible for everyone to see. “It’s a force field.”

“Can you take it down?”

“Yes, of course.”

She revealed and pressed her hand into the field of magical energy, muttering some sort of enchantment. When she finished, I tried to crossover again, but the barrier stopped me.

“Why isn't it fucking working?”

I roared, overwhelmed by anger and frustration.

“I think it's a magical object.”

“How long would it take to bring it down?”

“I don't know. I'll have to find the object and destroy it.”

“Valor is out there, and I can't even get out of here to save him.”

I asserted.

“I have an idea,”

she remarked and placed her hand on the barrier, shutting her eyes and speaking in an unknown language. She pulled away from it and put her hands out, still chanting. “I'm using the object's magic signature to find it.”

Some sort of object appeared on her hands and before I could get a good look at it, it caught up in flames. The veil disappeared, and I took the keys from Rohan, got into the car, and drove off.

“I'll be back.”

I told my Beta through the mind-link. Valor comes first. Always and forever.

Kane

I turned off the engine of the vehicle and climbed down without bothering to shut the door. Glancing over at the setting sun, I bolted toward the entrance. I had spent the entire day driving from my pack to this godforsaken place to find my mate. If Zeke hurts Valor, I will tear his flesh from his skin and feed them to him. I moved up the flight of stairs and kicked the door—the impact sending the wooden frame down into the foyer. With the house open, I saw Zeke standing just mere inches from where the door fell, and I growled at him, my eyes glowing crimson. I stepped into the house and reached for my alpha spark, using it to propel him against the stairs. “Where is he?”

“Is that the best you've got? After what happened between us.”

“You tried to kill me.”

“Because you betrayed our cause.”

He was getting back on his feet when I curled my fist into his face, sending him back to the floor.

“No, that's not true. You're just so fucking full of shit, Zeke. Greedy and jealous. Nothing is ever enough for you. I can't have you stealing a pure soul like Valor away.”

“Instead you stole him from me?”

he barked. “Does he know the things you've done to survive? The people you've killed. See we are not so different. You just hide behind a veil of lies.”

He declared and wiped off the crimson on his lips.

“He doesn't belong to you.”

“What would happen when Valor learns that you wanted to kill him to get back at me? Eh?”

“He knows.”

I said and kicked him to the stairs.

“Or that you knew he was an Omega, and you wanted to trap him with the fucking mate bond.”

“Our bond is real,”

I barked at him. “Unlike what you have for him—a dark, twisted lie that you've been trying to keep hidden for years. It ends now!”

I barked and moved to him, seizing his neck and twisting it until it cracked. “No one touches my mate and lives to tell the tale.”

Zeke's body rolled down the stairs and dropped.

I looked over at him and cursed under my breath, moving through the entire house until I found Valor, chained and locked up in the fucking basement. He was half-conscious, barely knowing what was happening around him and sustaining injuries. That bastard must have been torturing him and possibly tried manipulating his

memories. “Ezekiel, please let me go!”

“Valor. It's me. Sh, sh,”

I comforted. “I'm here. Valor, I won't let anything happen to you.”

I cooed and hurried toward him, falling on my knees and trying to touch him. He recoiled with fear in his eyes, the chains around his wrist, tearing his flesh and drawing blood.

“Oh, it hurts so much. Please go away from me. I just need Kane.”

He stuttered, overpowered by pain. Tears rolled down my cheeks, seeing my mate in a position where even my words couldn't help him. Heaven knows what Zeke had done to him. I got him out of the chains and carried his frail body back to the car, regardless of his struggles. I put him in the passenger's seat and navigated my way back to Midnight Shadow.

Valor

I stirred back to reality and groaned as I stretched on the bed. I was sure that the last place I saw myself was in the basement. At first, the thought of Zeke taking me to the room in the mansion crossed my mind, but I was in a different place, and it took me some time to recognize it. I was back in the Midnight Shadow Pack. I gently pushed up from the bed and rose to my feet, walking toward the door. Before I could reach the exit, it pulled open and a dark-skinned man walked right through. It took me sometime to recall who he was and the scintillating scent that came with his presence, my wolf confirming my suspicions with one word. “Mate.”

He hummed.

“Valor. You need to get back to bed. You've been unconscious for over a week and a half. At some point I thought you wouldn't make it back,”

with concern etched on his face, he led me back to the bed and helped me in, covering me with the sheets. He crossed over to the other side of the bed and climbed in, pulled me closer to himself, nuzzling against my cheeks. “Leda has been watching over you since I brought you back. She did a spell to clear your head from Zeke’s memory manipulation. He really messed up your head and it'll take you some time to remember everything.”

“What happened to him? Zeke?”

“He’s the least of our problems now, little wolf,”

he brushed his hands through the strands of my hair. “All you need to do now is rest.”

“No. He said you're a liar and that I'm an Omega. Is it true?”

The scenes flashed back in my head sending a shiver of fear through my spine.

“Valor, I'll answer all your questions when you rest.”

“No, I want to know. Did you know I was an Omega? It's not really hard to tell apart.”

“Yes, I did, Valor, and I'm very certain your family knew, but they refrained from sharing that part of your life with you.”

“They were supposed to tell me the truth. Why does this keep happening to me? I

didn't do wrong to Zeke. I'm not even from a fucking Delta bloodline. The entire Night Shade Pack must have known, but they couldn't speak because I'm a ranked wolf."

Resentment seeped through my voice as I stuttered each word.

"Valor, you're panicking."

He cooed, and I pulled away from him and got on my feet.

"I have a right to fucking panic. It's my life. You only walked into it like a week ago. I shouldn't have come out here. Fuck, I was so stupid,"

I bawled, tears rolling down my eyes. "Everyone just secretly hates me. I mean, my best friend did, and he wanted me dead. How could I have been this stupid?"

I was saying when he tried to hold me, but I stepped back. "No. You used me as a pawn in your selfish game with Ezekiel. You speak of betrayal and manipulation, but you're just the same. Both of you."

"Valor, please listen to me. You're hurt, and that's ok. Please come here."

"I just want to go home."

"Fine, then I'll take you home."

He reassured and stepped closer to embrace me.

"I don't need you! I don't need anyone because the only thing I've gotten from giving all my heart is betrayal. Zeke did it. Aiden did it. I just can't deal with this pain anymore. It hurts so much,"

I barked, an expression of pain etching on my features. Before I could register what was happening, he pulled me into an embrace. “I was so stupid for believing in Zeke.”

My voice broke as tears rolled down my cheeks, and he clutched his hands around me.

“It’s okay now. Everything’s fine.”

“I don't know what to do.”

I couldn't even tell what was happening to me: all the emotions of betrayal, secrecy and pain blending into one thing—frustration. Maybe I just needed to get some rest, like Kane had said. Maybe I just had to stop worrying and let him take care of me.

He helped me back into the bed and covered my body with the sheets, laying his lips gently on mine.

“I’m hungry.”

“I’ll make you something to eat, ok. Just sit here and wait for me. When you're rested well. I'll tell you everything you need to know, little wolf.”

He smiled with sadness in his beautiful eyes and regained his stance about to leave, but I pulled him back.

“Please don't leave me.”

I sniffled and curled my hand around his wrist. He sighed and bent over, carrying me from the bed and taking me to the kitchen downstairs.

“You have a beautiful home.”

I told him as we entered the kitchen, my body still carefully wrapped around his arms.

“You said that the first time.”

“What did he do to me? Zeke?”

“He tried to implant memories into your head. When I brought you back, you couldn't even recognize me. Leda had to put you to sleep until your wolf fought back to the surface. Your lie detection ability gives you a greater fighting chance than others,”

he said with a glint of happiness in his eyes, making me frown like he was trying to keep something from me. Maybe it's good news. Except there was nothing exciting about burning holes into my memories. “Why do you look so happy?”

He set me back on my feet in front of the door, still holding my hand.

“I can't tell you now. I'll tell you, eventually.”

He gave a toothed grin, leaving me to wonder.

“I'll cook you something.”

We stepped into the warm glow of lights above the center island of the kitchen. The lights casted over the polished surfaces, the dark oak flooring beneath my feet. Elegant hardware, white cabinets, drawers, a stainless steel refrigerator, microwave, farmhouse style sink, and a built in coffee maker adorned the expansive space making it look aesthetically pleasing. He led me to the dining table and pulled out a seat for me. I sat down. He returned to the kitchen and worked his magic while I just watched

him, reveling in the silence between us and turning over what had happened in my head. Some of my memories returned to me occasionally and it left me in my thoughts. Still in my head, the aroma of the food and the domineering aura of his presence pulled me back to reality. I smiled at him as he poured me a glass of juice, then he slid into the seat and gestured for me to eat. “I will answer all your questions truthfully.”

“You know, from what I recall, I wonder why he hates me so much. Why did you come for me, Kane?”

“Because I wanted to get back at Ezekiel for what he did to me. But when I saw you with your family, your dad, your Alpha. You were different, and my beast felt something about you. It made me second guess my revenge. I mean, Zeke shouldn't have that much power over me.”

“I knew you were stalking me,”

he let out the words, his expression holding immense amusement. I rolled my eyes at his words, pulling myself away from any form of argument. He was happy, and I wouldn't ruin his mood. “Would you have changed your mind if I weren't your fated mate? If it was a different person.”

He quizzed.

“I think at some point I would have realized that he wasn't worth my time. I got a second chance at life just like you, and I'd rather spend it on something worthwhile than hunting him down. I'd rather spend it loving you.”

He grinned at me, the highlights of his eyes glinting.

“Now he's after me?”

“I’d kill him without a second thought. Whoever comes after what's mine won't live to tell the story,”

he asserted without a doubt. “Come on, eat more.”

He said, pouring me another glass of juice. I gave him a nod and continued with the food.

“You need to tell me what happened between you and Zeke in the past. I need to know.”

“You will. I’ll tell you everything. I promise.”

Kane

I recalled vividly the first time I saw Valor, his first smile, the shades of the color of his eyes and the light he brought with his presence. It was so sad knowing that a man with so much love had suffered so much during his time of existence in this world. Yes, my original plan was to kill him and inflict the same amount of unbearable pain Zeke caused me. But that one encounter where I saw him in the woods and felt a connection with him changed everything. Now I was going to tell him everything he needed to know about my past, since he already knew the circumstances of meeting with him.

After having lunch, Valor and I took a walk from the pack house. This time I took my time to show him how big our territory was, and explained to him how I had only discovered this pack a year ago. I wouldn't lie to him. Everything that would come out of my mouth would be the truth and nothing but the truth because, at this point in his life, he didn't deserve the pain of another betrayal and mistrust, especially from me, his fated mate.

We settled in front of the lake; a body of crystal clear water surrounded by trees, which exuded a sense of calm that accentuated nature's ambiance. I brought him here because it was the place where I sensed peace. I came here very often after waking up from a coma Zeke had put me in.

I sat on the shores of the river, picking up stones and tossing them toward the water. He joined me and leaned against my shoulder. I smiled, knowing that I had my mate by my side as I was about to go back to one of the most excruciating experiences of my life. "Are you ok? I can feel your unease. If you're not ready to talk about it..."

“I am. How are your memories?”

“Returning slowly.”

He shrugged.

“It’s just that ever since it happened to me, I’ve never talked to anyone about it.”

I revealed, my tone laced with trepidation. He leaned off my shoulder and we locked our eyes together. Reaching out to my cheeks, he gave me a soft pet, and I reciprocated with a beam, seeing sympathy creep into those magnificent silver orbs.

“Valor. I’ve done terrible things to survive. I’ve killed people and I... I know I don’t deserve someone like you...”

“Hey, don’t say that. Right from the beginning, you’ve been very honest with me, and I appreciate that. I understand that you haven’t talked about your trauma and it’s ok if you don’t want to talk about it now. But if you do, I’ll listen to you and I’ll hold your hand through every single moment. I promise.”

I proclaimed and smiled bravely at him, and he gave me an affirmative nod.

As a Lycan blood who was never born into a pack, I had spent my entire life on the run, fighting for survival against hunters and other supernatural creatures that posed a threat to my existence. My only inclination was to live to see the next day as my life wasn’t driven with any purpose whatsoever until I ran into the Eclipse: a group of werewolves that ensured every supernatural’s safety by helping them find homes where they’d be accepted for who they were and the powers they have. I joined the Eclipse because it was the first time in my life something felt right. That’s when it all started; my friendship with Ezekiel Wolfe, the second in command of the Eclipse. But little did I know that these acquaintances would lead to a dark testimony in my

life.

I spent over six months going to several adventures with my found family and established relationships with them until one day when I met the witch.

I was sitting alone in a bar under a bubble of music with a bottle of beer clutched to my palms. It was almost midnight and the bar would close in a few minutes. I had a fallout with the shifters back home and decided to take a break from everything concerning them by sitting this one mission out and spending some time alone. The Eclipse leader had instructed Zeke to stay back and watch over me just until they returned from their mission. I gulped down the content of the bottle and dropped a tip for the server, then I took my jacket, rose to my feet and walked outside the bar. Appearing on the sidewalk, I took a deep breath and walked over to my car parked on the other side of the road. I wore my jacket and unlocked the car, getting into the vehicle and putting the key in the ignition. I was about to step on the gas when I saw a shadow lingering in the dark path ahead. My eyes squinted through the dark pathway and the trees that lined the road. “Who’s there?”

I called, watching as the darkness moved closer. I hurried out of the car with extended claws, ready to defend myself. The feeling of the darkness approached me and seized my wrist swiftly. I couldn't defend myself. All I could feel was the touch of the woman tightening her grip around my arms. “Meet me at the outskirts of the town three nights before the full moon.”

She said to me. I saw a few strands of her black hair, the rest of her face covered by a black hoodie.

“Who are you?”

I managed to ask. Somehow, I couldn't fight her and I believed she was using some kind of supernatural ability against me.

“Meet me on the outskirts, and I'll tell you everything you need to know.”

She compelled and left as swiftly as she came. When I realized what had happened, she was long gone, but I couldn't get her words out of my head.

I returned to the car and drove back to the mansion where the Eclipse resided. I parked the vehicle by the corner of the house, and alighted, then I hurried into the house, my mind still preoccupied by the woman that had suddenly appeared in my life. If there was one thing I had learned after fending for myself for a very long time; it's the fact that I couldn't trust anyone, but there was this feeling about her. A feeling I couldn't shake off.

I headed up the stairs and into the foyer, still bothered by the uncanny experience I had that night. “Where are you coming from?”

The voice in the large room echoed, pulling me out of my thoughts.

“What? Am I not allowed to have some free time anymore?”

I retorted, knowing full well whose voice it was. Zeke appeared into the light with arched brows and folded arms.

“I never said that.”

“Then quit the stupid questions. I don't answer to you.”

I gave him a smirk as I proceeded to the stairs.

“I don't know what it is you're up to, but I just want to remind you about the code of honor. I will take you out if you try anything that puts us and our cause in jeopardy.”

He said, as his eyes gained their golden glow.

“I don't know where all these suspicions are coming from, but keep searching. You won't find anything.”

I grinned at him, then headed up the stairs.

Once I was in the safe space of my room, I shut the door and released a deep exhale. I peeled my clothes off my body and had a quick shower, hoping I'd come to a final decision of the encounter I had with the woman. I didn't want to go, but there was this little voice in my head compelling me to accept the invitation. After all, I had learned how to defend myself and could easily take down rogue wolves if there was a need.

I spent the next two days in the turmoil of the decision to make with Zeke watching my every move. To be frank, I didn't care because I knew I had nothing to hide. And soon the rest of the Eclipse would return and we'd settle this misunderstanding brewing between us. The reason that led to our disagreement was that I was only concerned with the wolf bloods they were taking to a wolf pack. This wolf didn't just need a pack; he needed to come to terms with the horrible things that happened to him, heal from his scars before starting over. But these people viewed him as too much of a burden and stated I didn't have a say in the way things turned out to be. Courtesy of my nemesis Zeke Wolfe. He had his way of screwing with the minds of the team to make them do whatever he wanted.

When the night the woman had told me to meet her came, I took the black sedan vehicle and headed straight to the roads that led to the outskirts of the town. I turned on the stereo, which kept me company until I had arrived at the destination. Turning off the engine, I alighted and shut the door, taking the path that led into a clearing in the forest of wild trees. “I’m here now. Aren’t you supposed to be waiting?”

I announced, squinting through the night forest.

“I just had to make sure you came alone.”

The female voice hovered behind me, and I turned in its direction, but she wasn't there.

“Stop this mind trick.”

I heralded when I couldn't see her, then I felt her hands on my shoulder. I wheeled on my heels and faced her, taking in the gorgeous blue eyes and the jet black hair of the lady standing in front of me.

“Forgive my manners. I love to show a tiny display of my craft. I'm Leda Fairfax. Nice to meet you.”

“Kane Creed,”

I smiled at her. “So why have you brought me out in the wild?”

I questioned and crossed my arms.

“I have been searching for you since your first shift. But you're really good at covering your tracks.”

“It's too dangerous out here, so I got acquainted with a friend and he helped me with some dark objects I use to protect myself.”

“You're something else,”

Leda smiled and motioned toward me. I backpedaled, and she chuckled. “I won't hurt you. Not after what I just learned about you.”

She added quickly and raised her hand to my cheeks, giving me a soft caress. She pulled back with a grin.

“Why were you looking for me?”

“You're the Alpha.”

“Alpha? I'm very sure my beast, Creed, is a Beta Lycan, and I took his name as my surname because I never knew my parents. I spent most of my life in a lot of foster homes. They just couldn't handle an unhinged kid.”

“Yes, that is something which runs in your family bloodline. Like I said, your pack needs their Alpha. Everything is crumbling and I and the others are doing our best to keep it up, but I don't think we can hold it any longer.”

“Look, I appreciate the information, but if I was an Alpha. I would know. Besides, I have a life with my family and I enjoy what I do.”

“An unappreciated life, huh? Midnight Shadow Pack needs you now more than ever, and you have to come with me. I'll give you some time to think about it. We'll meet here tomorrow. We don't have time.”

She said and faded away just the same way she came.

“Wait,”

Valor reiterated, pulling me out of the story. “Zeke mentioned Leda with Ben.”

He revealed, stunned, and I arched my brows in inquisition.

“After what happened with Zeke and I. The Eclipse found out about his

manipulations, they exiled him and left the country, saying their job here was done. There's no way Ben would have made it back. They all hated what he did to me, and that he also screwed with their memories.”

“He was implanting memories in my head just like he did back at my home. Making me think he was you.”

He explained, his expression set in astonishment.

“He won't ever do that to you again,”

I looked up at the dark crystal blue skies, smiling at the stars. They were so beautiful, as beautiful as the man sitting next to me and helping me get through the most traumatic moment of my life. “We better get back to the pack house. It's dark already.”

I said and stood up, lending him a hand. I pulled him up and he drew so close to me that my lips almost brushed against his and our chest made an impact. Holding his gaze, I watched as he breathed. I leaned in slowly and took his lips in a passionate kiss, and he moaned into me, desperation seeping from him as he claimed me frantically.

“I need to know everything.”

He pulled away and leaned against my chest, breathing out a sigh.

Valor

We walked back to the mansion in the pack in silence, shuffling through the path lined with trees and houses until we arrived at our destination. It gave me the chance to actually think of everything that Kane had told me. As a wolf blood, I could detect lies when my best friend wasn't spinning my head with his tricks, and I knew that every word that escaped Kane's lips from the beginning was the truth. I needed to know more. I needed to know why Zeke became such a manipulative monster. How I fell for that.

Kane invited me over for dinner to join his family. We were all sitting under the glow of the candle lights eating our dinner as we chatted about how our day went. Leda and the others were really concerned about my health and asked me to spend the rest of the week resting while they took care of the duties and anything I needed. I didn't want that. But at this point I didn't think I had a choice because Kane wouldn't let me overwork myself for some sort of reason he had failed to mention. As I feasted on dinner, my eyes kept darting at my mate and how happy he was to be with his family. And this was enough to tell me he was so much happier being the Alpha of Midnight Shadow Pack than being part of the Eclipse that Zeke was lying about. His gaze met mine, and he gave me a smile, looking at me with so much ardency in his eyes. He looked at me like I was the most precious thing existing on this earthly plane. And I was. To him I was, and he hadn't failed to establish that fact. Being with Kane felt like home, but it left me to wonder if these things I felt were real, if it would all crumble when I had given myself over to it. I wouldn't allow myself to fall victim again after what happened with Zeke. I didn't doubt the bond of the goddess. Right now, I was just exhausted from everything that had happened to me.

We finished dinner and Kane and I bid the others goodbye, and we both headed upstairs to continue our story. “Hope you enjoyed yourself.”

He asked, holding my hand as we arrived at the top of the stairs and took a turn to the hallway.

“Yes, yes. I did,”

I answered as we stalked down the hallway. “It hasn't been long since you became Alpha. But I just want to know if there's anything I can help you with, even if I have to be there to just support.”

“You know I don't want you getting your hands dirty. I should do all the work.”

“Well, I'm not used to that. So please tell me.”

“I will, but you'll only start working next week. I want you to rest and maybe we can go on a couple of dates together if that's ok with you.”

We both halted and faced each other.

“Sure.”

I embraced him. I let him go, and we turned to the entrance of our room, walking in and shutting the door behind us.

“Since the last alpha died, most Lycans left the pack. I intend to bring them back home. We also need to get back on track with training and that's really hard considering we don't have enough volunteers for the team. There's also the need to tend to the pack business, but Beta Rohan is handling that, and we are at the verge of expanding our territory and erecting more buildings for our people.”

He led me to the bed and we sat down facing each other.

“Well, as your mate, I’m here to ensure the growth of our pack.”

I was saying, and he was smiling sheepishly. “What?”

“Nothing. Continue.”

“As for the pack training, I’ll talk to my Alpha about merging with another pack. We have a three year Sentinel program to train wolf bloods officially. Training could still happen here, but at the camp, I guarantee you stronger and skilled warriors,”

I suggested. “You don’t have to worry, Kane. You’ve been alone most of your life, but I promise I’m here and I’m never leaving.”

I reassured him.

“Thank you. How are your memories?”

“They’re all back now, and Leo has healed up. Now let’s get back to the story, shall we?”

Kane

I returned to the mansion after my encounter with the Fairfax lady. For most of my journey, everything I had learned tonight preoccupied my thoughts. The whole pack drama and alpha-ly things. Trust me, if I was an alpha, I would know. I wouldn’t have spent most of my life on the run, depending on dark objects to shield myself from the malevolence in the world. But like she said, I just had to think about it and follow that

feeling in my gut. That feeling was telling me to trust her.

I moved into the living room and climbed the stairs. Just when I was halfway down the hallway, I heard footsteps from the space, and I narrowed my gaze and saw Zeke standing there and watching me intently. “Here we go again. What are you going to ask about tonight?”

“The family is coming back the day after tomorrow. I hope you get your secret agent shit done before then.”

“Ok. Finally, we can get this all sorted out.”

The fact that my loving colleague had completely turned into an entirely different person bothered me. What did I do wrong that would make him suspicious of my actions? I would always be on guard and wouldn't let him get a sliver of opportunity to manipulate me. I spent the night locked up in my bedroom, steeped in turmoil, as I thought about what to do with this new knowledge. A Lycan pack, an alpha. These things didn't make sense. I said I would trust my gut feeling, and that feeling was right there, pushing me to get more information about this so-called pack.

When the next day came, I took the vehicle and returned to the location where I met the Fairfax woman and this time she wasn't alone. They were other Lycan shifters with her as a testament of the genuineness of her words. I had a pack because when those shifters saw me; they tilted their heads in submission. There were about five Lycan bloods and the witch, which made them six. Leda Fairfax told me everything I needed to know that night, ranging from the rankings in the pack, the territory and the population of Lycan shifters. It was enough to convince me—at least I had to see my people before concluding about what to do with it. So Leda proposed that I meet her the following day, only this time not at night, but during the day. She gave me the opportunity to end things with the Eclipse since I had a new path waiting for me.

But unfortunately I didn't get that chance because Ezekiel Wolfe took it from me.

The Fairfax woman had left with her people, or should I say my people, while I prepared to return to the mansion. I got back into the vehicle and held the steering wheel, exhaling deeply. I wasn't leaving the forest yet because I needed that calmness that it brought with the silence. That was the greatest mistake I made, as it gave Zeke the chance to strike.

An arrow pierced through the windshield of my car, missing my shoulder by just one inch. I tore through the door of the vehicle, rose to my feet, and growled as I looked into the forest with night vision. As I moved closer to the center of the clearing, another arrow pierced through my leg and I screamed as I lost my balance. Footfalls came at me and I raised my field of vision—a powerful kick thrust me into the trunk of the tree. I stumbled down as blood trickled from my nose. “I knew it, you monster. What are you doing now? Collaborating with the rogues? I knew letting in an orphan like you would only cause harm to our cause.”

“You know nothing about me.”

I spat blood from my throat, pulled out the arrow, and regained my footing. He shot at me again, but I caught the arrow in my hands, dropping it when I felt pain pulse through my palm. Wolfsbane.

“I’ll take you out before you ruin everything we've worked for.”

He growled as he dropped the crossbow and proceeded toward me.

“I think there's something more.”

“Yes, there is. Your orphaned ass working too hard to leave an impression. And I know, very soon, they'll pick you over me and dump me at the sideline like everyone

had done.”

“So this is about your paranoia and jealousy.”

I coughed out blood. I regained my footing and tried to move toward him, but a sudden strike of pain in my head caused me to lose my balance again.

“I discovered your little secret. Your dark objects.”

He smirked as he tossed a bracelet with the power of body immobilization toward me. I couldn't move nor deal with the pain, either. Zeke moved toward me with supernatural speed and thrust me into a tree, driving a dagger into my chest. My eyes widened in horror when I felt the wolfsbane invade my bloodstream. He twisted the blade and blood spurted from my throat, sliding down to my lips. He pulled out the dagger and smirked, watching me drop to the floor.

“Go to hell, Kane.”

He murmured and turned on his heels as he walked away.

I could barely keep my eyes open as I struggled to breathe. The pain was unbearable, and I had a few minutes to survive because of the wolfsbane being close to my heart. I saw a bridge... a veil of light, one of the most beautiful sights I'd ever seen. With the last ounce of strength in me, I screamed, hoping that someone would hear me and come to my aid.

Valor

I saw the look of melancholy in his eyes. Tears sprung from them, and I pulled him

into an embrace. I had never seen a man so vulnerable as he was shaking and crying in my arms. It hurt me so much he had bottled up this level of pain for a very long time. It was like he had relieved the moment Zeke drove the dagger into his chest. A memory he had been running from after his survival. “Leda and the Lycan shifters saved you, right?”

“Yes, they did. Luckily, Leda had put a spell on me to know when I was in danger. I survived thanks to her, and when I made it back, I couldn't get over the fact that a person I trusted would end my life without even considering the side of my story. I vowed to take everything from him.”

“That is why you wanted to ruin everything he held close, why you came after me.”

“You were different. I promised myself that I wouldn't let you fall into the arms of a man like him.”

“So you stalked me?”

I chuckled.

“Fine, I agree. If that's going to make you happy,”

he chuckled dryly as I wiped off the tears in his eyes. “I was just admiring from afar,”

he said and brushed his knuckles against my cheeks. “You are really special, Valor. Maybe your other mates didn't realize that. But I see you, Valor. I see you.”

He smiled at me.

“I remember what we did that night...”

I said with a sultry smile. "I want that again."

Grumbling, I tugged at his shirt and slowly unbuttoned it, seeing the mark of the injury Zeke inflicted on him. I gasped when he pulled me fiercely into his arms and lay back on the bed with me straddling on him. I leaned in and kissed him, our lips interlacing in a hurried exploration of pleasure. I moaned into his mouth as he turned me over, my back pressed against the bed, his muscled body domineering over mine as he ravaged my body with kisses. "I want you to make a mess of me."

I let out a squeal of the words and he ripped off his shirt, tossing them over his head. He continued to paint my body with kisses, sending sparks of pleasure through me, pleasure that hardened my cock. He climbed down from the bed and grabbed his bulge, giving it a tug, and watched me as I stroked my length gently. Kane unhooked his belt, intense need in his eyes as he stepped out of his boxer briefs and trousers, letting his cock free. He walked to the drawer and took out the lube then he hurried back into the bed. He put the liquid into his hands and pressed it on my hole, sliding his fingers into me and stroking. He worked on my hole, stretching me until I was ready for him.

"Fuck, I want your cock so bad."

"Beg for it."

He growled and slicked up his length with the lube, positioning his dick at my entrance. A tensed breath escaped me and my hands wrapped around the sheets. His eyes didn't leave my body as I dragged my bottom lip and spewed the words from my throat. "Please, I want your cock, stretching me, filling me with fullness. Please. Please, please, please give me your cock."

"Mm, little wolf, you greedy little thing. I'll be feeding you every length of my fucking cock."

He rumbled and gently pushed into me, and I gasped at the intrusion. With my legs parted, he leaned closer, his clenched fist pressed into the mattress as he slammed into me.

“Oh, fuck, Kane.”

“Yes, I love the way you take my cock. Such a good boy,”

he hissed, overwhelmed by pleasure. “By the time I'm done with you tonight, I'll be leaving bruises on your body to show everyone that you're mine.”

He grunted, his fangs lengthening and brushing against my shoulder and pricking my skin. He swiped off the blood with his tongue and reveled a grumble from the pleasure.

“Fuck, it feels so good.”

I cried out as he quickened his pace, the impact of his thrust pushing me further and further into the bed. He pulled out of me with a loud pop and positioned me on my knees with my ass tilted upwards. As he knelt behind me, he spanked my curves and pressed his hands into my ass cheeks, leaving bruises on my skin. He slicked his cock and pushed inside me, the intrusion sending a zap of pain which soon turned into pleasure. “Good boy, taking my cock just the way I like it.”

He rumbled and pumped into me, each stroke faster than the latter, stretching me, driving me until all I could feel was the line that blurred between pain and pleasure. He pulled me back with him and lay back on the bed, letting me straddle on his cock. His hands wrapped around my waist, his claws raking against my skin and drawing blood, the pain sending a thrill of pleasure through my body. “Goddess, you're so fucking sexy when you bleed.”

“I want you to stroke your cock for me.”

He whispered, his fangs grazing my ear. I reached out to my cock, wrapped my hands around it and pumped aggressively.

“Ah, oh, fuck, Kane.”

I cried out, almost losing my balance. He held me in place, and continued to plunge his length into me rapidly, the tightness of my hole driving him to the edge until he came. He buried his fangs into my neck and just when he pulled away from the marking, I orgasmed. His grunts filtered into the room, his cum leaking from me, although his cock was still inside me. He laid me back on the bed with a wicked smile and grinned. “You were so fucking good, little wolf.”

“And so were you.”

I smiled at him, his hands still wrapped around my body as we drifted to sleep.

Kane

Before first light, I woke up for a patrol run around the pack territory. I returned to the house after and made breakfast for Valor and me, then I took it upstairs only to meet him in the bed, still covered in the sheets and resting. Putting the food on the side table, I crossed my arms, watching over him as he slept. I walked to the bed and brushed my knuckles against his cheeks and stirred him awake. He smiled when he saw me and stretched on the bed, pulling me closer and kissing my cheeks. “Hey, you.”

“Good morning. How are you feeling?”

“Good, actually.”

“I’m sorry if I went too hard yesterday. I shouldn’t have gotten lost in the moment. I mean, you’re still getting used to this.”

“I know, and I’m fine with the sex.”

He answered and rustled out of the bed. Before he could step away from the bed, I lifted him from the floor and wrapped my hands around him, taking him to the bathroom.

“You know I can walk, right?”

“Yes, I do. but I’d like to hold my wife.”

He set me back down and put the paste on my toothbrush, standing behind me and watching as I brushed my teeth. “You’ll need to go back to your pack, you know, and tell them how things went down with Zeke. Just temporarily, because I want to spend the rest of my life with you.”

“Yeah. I have so many questions for my dad, especially regarding my Omega bloodline. It just doesn't make sense to me.”

I confessed and finished up, and we returned to the balcony and settled in front of the table, digging in.

“Well, I'm sure he'll answer every question you have.”

He smiled at me.

“You’ve been so happy since I woke up. Like extremely happy.”

“Shouldn’t I be excited that I'm with my fated mate?”

“Yeah, you should. I'm very rare.”

We finished breakfast, sharing our childhood memories and laughing heartily at each other. I told him about the circumstances of my birth. How my pregnant mother went on the run and abandoned me at the doors of an orphanage home when I was born. I told him what it was like to grow up in an orphanage and how it was to move from one home to another as an aggressive child. Lycan genes and all. I also told him how Leda saved my life. My birth mother bound my Alpha side before she left me at an orphanage and fortunately, Leda was powerful enough to break the curse, giving me a better chance at survival after what Ezekiel did to me. Valor also shared the adventures he had during training in the Sentinel he had told me earlier about and the nature of his relationship with his father. A past that Ezekiel was a part. From the way

he talked about him, I saw how much he cared about him and the excitement in his eyes when he talked about the moments they had together. Valor had such a good heart. It was just too bad that Zeke turned out to become something entirely different. I promised myself that I'd spend my entire life making him happy and building a family and a pack together. We were both like two sides of a coin and he was what completed me, the same way I completed him.

We headed into the bathroom, and I turned on the shower, helping Valor out of his clothes. We stepped into the trickling water and took time washing each other up. I put the soap in my hand and helped Valor wash his hair. He chuckled as we rinsed our body under the shower, the soap foams from our bodies moving down the drain. When we finished, we dried our bodies and returned to the room, changing into new clothes.

“Is there anything I can help you with today?” He asked.

“I talked to Rohan about your idea for the training program during the patrol, and he's agreed to work with you.”

I answered and buttoned up my shirt.

“Alright. I'll meet him. What about you?”

“I'm with Leda. She's doing a spell to help find some Lycans that left the pack, and she needs me. I'll be back in the evening.”

“Alright. Have a great day, and I'll miss you.”

He walked closer and pulled me into a kiss.

“Don't stress yourself, ok? Remember if you need anything tell me. I'll be here to

take care of you and give you whatever you need.”

I kissed his forehead and let him go, walking out of the house.

I headed downstairs to where Leda had been waiting. Her usual all black attire flowed down her body and she had a scowl on her face. I gave her an apologetic glance, and a smile tugged at the corner of her lips. “Good morning, Kane.”

“Leda. Come on, let's head over to wherever the spell's happening.”

“You should be excited about this. Magic saved your life and that of your mate. Have you told him the good news yet?”

She was saying as we both sauntered out of the house.

“Oh, Leda! Can you be discreet? Anyone could hear and tell him.”

“That means you haven't told him. He deserves to know, Kane. Besides, it's been weeks and he'll be getting signs soon.”

“But I'm not prepared for this.”

I answered as we hurried down the stairs together. We both cornered on the path that led into the forest, heading straight for the cabin at the lake.

“No one is. You just have to go with it. You love him, don't you?”

“Yes, I do. He's so special to me. I never thought I'd ever see someone how I see him. But I do.”

I chuckled, amazed by my own words. Growing up, I didn't think I'd end up with a

future like this. I used to think that it would always end with fighting for my life and not settling in a place or finding some sort of peace. But I had those things now, and I had a pack that I needed to bring home and lead. In the end, everything worked out.

We arrived at the cabin, where Leda set everything required for her spell on the kitchen counter. She had a map of the country, candles, a dagger and other important witch objects used for spell casting. We stood opposite each other, and she took the dagger, asking me to put out my palm. She sliced through and my blood dripped onto the country map. As my hand healed, I pulled away while her hands hovered over the map and the candles came to life as she chanted her witch spell. My blood gathered together at the center of the map and dispersed to five places on it. She marked it and wrote the names of these places.

“There’s one in the city.” She said.

“I think we should start by rescuing the ones closer to us. Like these two.”

I pointed out.

“Yes, true. Do you think we should send out the warriors right now?”

“Tomorrow. I have to speak with them about the importance of this mission.”

“That’s very thoughtful of you,”

she smiled at me. “Let’s head back.”

“Mm.”

I agreed. On our way back to the pack house, I mind-linked the warrior wolves to meet up with Leda and me on the training grounds, and when we arrived, they were

already waiting there. They were about twenty-five in number, and I explained everything to them and our course of action. Then I asked them to return to their homes and rest up for what was to come for tomorrow. I bid goodbye to Leda and continued with the rest of my duties on my own. By the time I finished through my scheduled duties for the day, it was already evening, and I was giddy to return to Valor and spend the rest of the night with him. My beast has been humming all day, wanting to be with him, and now he was going to get what he wanted. We were both obsessed with our little wolf.

I was heading back to the pack house from the workplace, which was only about five buildings away from the mansion where I spent most of my day dealing with the pack businesses with the Gamma of the pack. He had left earlier, leaving me to finish and close up. I sauntered down the path that led to the mansion with the starlight guiding me down the road. Halfway through my destination, I heard a movement behind me and I turned in its direction. My claws extracted from their fingertips and a growl rumbled in my throat, my beast coming forward and becoming defensive. "If you value your life, I suggest you step into the light and stop hiding in the dark like a fucking coward."

I declared.

"I'm not a coward. I'm just a cunning, manipulative werewolf who will always outsmart you and your pathetic mate."

I heard a voice behind me, and I turned to the source, seeing a person who I never thought I'd see again.

"Ezekiel. How are you alive?"

"I learned from the best. All I needed was a dark object to make you believe you killed me. Meanwhile, it was all a projection."

He answered with a smirk.

“Stay away from Valor.”

I growled and swung my arms at him, but he ducked, using his unnatural speed to move behind me, gutting me with a dagger. I grunted and tried to pull the weapon away, but an immense amount of pain coursed through my body, forcing me to my knees. He placed his hands on my temples and chuckled manically. I tried to fight him from putting memories in me because I knew that the only reason he came here was to put Valor and me apart. I struggled, but the level of pain I was feeling now from the mystical weapon he had used against me was unbearable.

He had his way, poisoning my mind with memories of him and Valor being intimate and when he was done, he asked me to send my mate away and never go back on that decision. He disappeared just like he came, like he was never there, leaving me to wonder what had happened to me. Until the memories hit and I realized Valor was having an affair with Zeke, who he had claimed to hate so much. I growled as I made my way back home driven by the one desire to ruin everything I had with Valor.

Valor

As soon as Kane had left the house with Leda, I found my way to the dining room where Rohan had said he would wait for me. We were both going over the procedures of how the Lycan shifters would sign up for the Sentinel training program. I had to make sure Midnight Shadow was ready before I got back to Logan. I think it was high time I returned to the pack to keep them updated on my whereabouts so they wouldn't have to worry, especially if Zeke tries to pull a stupid move by going back there. "Hey."

I said to Rohan and settled into the seat next to him. He gave me a big smile, and we started by arranging the list of every eligible Lycan blood in the pack—those eighteen years and older. By the time we had compiled the list and sorted out the already available team and other requirements for training. It was almost afternoon, and during our work, my body was tired and my unexplained grumbles raised concern in Rohan.

"Is everything ok?"

"I'm just easily exhausted. It has been happening for days now, but I didn't want to tell Kane."

"Hmm. Do you think it's related to what happened a week ago?"

"No. I've healed from that and..."

"Maybe we should go to the pack hospital. I'll finish this up while we are there."

“I’ll be fine.”

“You’re the Alpha’s wife and if anything happens to you, he’ll have my head.”

“We are not married yet!”

I said, my cheeks flushing with embarrassment.

“I know, but you will be. Now come on, let's go, let's go.”

He said giddily and packed up his laptop and paperwork.

We headed over to the hospital, and Rohan helped fill in the patient's forms while the nurses assigned me to a ward. I didn't know that these shifters already knew the Alpha and I were mates, and the smiles and words they gave me had my heart bubbling. I was glad that not only Kane's closest family had accepted me, but even his pack. I changed into the patient's gown and lay on the bed while the pack doctors ran their tests. Rohan sat outside the ward and kept working on the project. I heard him cuss a few times, and I giggled.

“I can hear you, you know.”

“Yeah. I’ll be out of here soon, and we can finish it together.”

I sighed and knotted my hands together, coming up with scenarios of what the examination result would be. Maybe my wolf was sick.

“I’m not sick, you motherfucker.”

Leo barked at me. Well, that's me assuming wrong. I put up my hand, backing away from any further protest with him. But what could it be? Maybe somehow Zeke’s

manipulation had affected my brain. But that couldn't be the reason for the fatigue or the sudden food cravings or the constant urination. Fuck, what was happening to me? I was beside myself in confusion when the door pulled open and the doctor walked in with a clipboard in her hand and a big smile. Hey, that smile belongs to me. You know, the goofy one.

"Hey, how are you feeling?"

"Better. Is something wrong?"

"No. But it's good news,"

she said with an excited expression, and I cocked my brows at her. "You're pregnant."

She revealed, expecting some enthralled reaction from me. But I didn't say or do anything. I just sat there, lost in my own thoughts. How is this even fucking possible? How was I supposed to know that mating with an Alpha would get me to this situation? I'm not even ready to raise a fucking kid. How am I supposed to carry this baby for five months on my own? Does Kane even want this?

"But how is this..."

"Possible? You're an Omega, Valor. Every male Omega shifter can bear children."

"So you're saying we have a uterus?"

"Don't think about it. You're only going to get confused further. Anyway, that's how it is. I have a brother and he's an Omega like you. He had a child two years ago,"

she said. "You know it's beautiful that two men or women are able to raise kids

regardless of their children being biological or adopted, and show them the love they truly deserve. And this baby is in luck because I know you'll both make wonderful parents."

"But I don't think I'm ready for this."

"I wasn't ready for my first child either. I think what you should do is talk with the Alpha to know what he wants. Once you've both decided, I'll give you every necessary information you need,"

she told me and sighed, turning on her heels. "I'll leave you alone. Anyway, you're ready to go back home if you want to. I'll ask Beta Rohan to get your clothes."

She said. It wasn't too long that she left and Rohan came into his room with my clothes. I sighed and looked at him. "Are you ok?"

"Yes, I am. I just don't know how to react to this or what Kane would say."

"I guess you'd have to wait and find out."

He shrugged. I got to my feet and changed into my clothes, and we walked out to the hallway and finished up the paperwork at the hospital before returning to the pack house.

Now all I had to do was wait for Kane to return from his work and I did that by lying on the large bed, rolling from one end to the other, rising from the bed and falling back, pacing from the bed to the door until night time. I was so excited to see him, so happy to tell him I was carrying our child and maybe I needed time to think about how this pregnancy would work by getting more information from the doctors. I stood in the middle of the living room, hearing his footsteps from the hallway. As he walked closer, my heart grew with anticipation until he had walked through the door.

I tried to embrace him, but he just shrugged me off, unbuttoning his shirt and moving away from me. I walked up behind him, but he just stepped away.

“Where is all this attitude coming from?”

“Attitude? Are you seriously going to tell me that after fucking Zeke?”

“What are you talking about? You're the only man who has ever.”

“You slept with Zeke and you're fucking denying it.”

“What is wrong with you? Why are you saying this?”

“Everything is wrong. You need to leave. Now!”

“But you promised...”

“I don't fucking care what I said in the past. It was just me and you, and you went behind my back to sleep with him. What happened to hating him, after everything he had done to you. You just fucking walked back into his arms.”

“Can you just listen to yourself? Zeke is manipulating your memories the same way he did with me.”

“No, I think we are past that. I think we should stop fucking blaming him!”

“You're stronger than this, Kane. Please don't do this.”

I murmured in a pleading tone and cleared the distance between us, pulling him closer and palming his cheeks. He sighed, and I saw a glint of uncertainty in his eyes before he tugged me off himself, turning away and taking two steps forward.

“Kane...”

my voice broke as tears wormed its way down my cheeks, and I wiped it off. “Kane, please listen to me.”

I tried to touch him, but he turned to me with the flash of his crimson, ordering me out of his house. He slammed the door into my face, and I brushed off the tears on my cheeks and turned on my heels, seeing Rohan at the other end of the hallway. His room was on the same floor as the Alpha’s. I headed for the stairs, hoping to beat him to it. It was worse that he kicked me out now I had to face his Beta. I was halfway down the stairs when I heard Rohan’s voice behind me. “Valor.”

“I just want to go home. I can't do this anymore. The running, the stupid decisions. I just want to go home to my dad.”

“I’ll drive you.”

“No. Just give me the keys.”

I sniffled, and he dug his hands into his pocket, pulling out the keys and tossing them to me. I walked down the stairs without looking back, getting into the Beta’s car and leaving the pack.

I didn't stop driving until I had made it far away from him. I wasn't ever going to return to him for any goddamn reason. I was so stupid to think that someone would ever fight for me, that I'd find love. It was one heartbreak after another, except this time I ended up with a baby. I just couldn't handle this anymore. My leg hit the brake in the middle of nowhere, and I burst out into a full-blown cry. How could I have fallen for this, fallen for him? He didn't even make it exactly hard. All the memories, the first time we met, how magical it felt, the chase, the ball and the dance, the full moon run, the way he smiled, laughed and the way he looked at me. How could I

have convinced myself into believing that it was real. That someone would truly see through me and love me with every single thing they had. It was all a lie. Everything about him that made me happy. Now all those things blurred into frustration, hurt, and heartbreak. My broken heart just couldn't handle it anymore. This time I wasn't sure I'd be able to pick up the pieces because it hurt much more than I had imagined.

Kane

Today was the day we were going after the Lycans Leda and I had tracked outside the pack. Before the sun rose from the skies, I had already woken up and joined the patrol team for the morning run which went as expected. I used the rest of the morning to prepare myself breakfast, not waiting for the pack workers, and getting ready to leave the pack. Beta Rohan had put the Sentinel Training Program on hold, so he was free and could come with me. Gamma Asher would stay back at the pack to get things ready until we returned. We didn't know how many Lycan bloods we'd find, so we had to ensure the houses available were in good condition and the house already finished was well furnished. Our people would have to manage what we had just until we made accommodations comfortable for everyone.

As I waited for the rest of the gang to join me, I downed a glass of water and my hands trembled as I set down the glass on the counter, pictures of a man stabbing me with a dagger burning through my mind. I winced in pain at the point of impact, but when I pulled up my shirt, there was nothing. As I raised my gaze back to the entrance, Leda sauntered in on her high heels. "What the fuck happened to you and Valor? I only left for a few days to visit my parents and I came back to this."

She said with her hips propped up. I chuckled and walked toward her.

"My relationship with Valor isn't your business."

I replied to her and tried to walk past her, and she pulled me back.

"You can't just send him away like that. Rohan told me everything."

“Mm, you have all left your actual duties to discuss my relationship, huh?”

I raised my brows, but she didn't say a word. She let me go and I walked away, heading outside of the building where Beta Rohan and the warrior Lycans were waiting. There were three cars and two large buses. We didn't know the number of people we would run into in the mountains hence the number of vehicles. Leda tailed behind and joined us in the vehicle, her and Rohan taking the first vehicle while I sat alone in the last one.

We left the pack and followed Leda and Rohan's direction, driving for hours until we had arrived at our destination, which was a mountain side farther from the pack. It was at the foot of a mountain. As we alighted from the vehicle, I took in the green of the forest that stretched and extended through the elevated land. We gathered in front of the vehicles, and I shared the group into three parts, telling them on which path to take.

We headed up to the forest, some Lycans shifting into their beastly form, others holding onto the weapons. I had reiterated that there was no cause for alarm unless they attacked us first. But from what I had heard from Rohan and the others, I could tell these were members of their pack before my father, the former Alpha, died. There was a tendency that these people would recognize each other. Before noon, we had made it up to the settlement in the mountains, and we cautiously proceeded into the forest of Douglas fir and redwood trees, the earth covered by towering trees with leafy canopies stretching to the skies, sunlight spilling into the forest through canopies and casting shadows on the forest floor carpeted by dark brown leaves. We had all arrived at the clearing where there were tents scattered, fallen trees, clothes lines, even claw marks on tree barks, pieces of wood, buckets, etc.

“You said they would be here.”

I turned to Leda.

“They are.”

“Then where are they?”

I inquired with a scoff, my hands parted.

“Hiding, I guess. Spread out.”

Rohan commanded the warriors. They were obeying Rohan’s orders when a dagger came flying toward me and I caught it before it could strike. I winced in pain, dropping the weapon and looking at my bleeding hand. “Wolfsbane.”

I growled, my eyes catching their crimson glow. I moved toward the direction where the weapon had come from, capturing the culprit before she could make it far. I seized her and pressed her shoulders against the tree, showing dominance from the color of her eyes. But Rohan interrupted me with unnatural speed, pushing me away from her. “Don’t hurt her.”

He growled in response, ensuring I had agreed to his terms before letting me go. I turned to face the woman standing before me, knowing exactly who she was.

“Kalyani,”

Rohan said and embraced her. I stood down and watched their reunion, knowing instantly that they knew each other. “We are here to take you home. Are you hurt?”

“No, I’m not.”

She shot me a glare.

“Come on, let’s get you to safety.”

“But the other shifters. I have to tell them it's ok.”

She said to him, and he nodded and let her go, watching until she had walked down the slope.

Rohan grimaced at me and crossed his arms, and I shrugged with an apologetic glance before returning to the rest of the team. We waited until Kalyani had made it back with other Lycan shifters. They were in hundreds and I wondered if the buses we came with would be enough to contain them. Clearing my throat, I stood in front of them, pocketing my hands and informing them of my recent ascendance to the Alpha of Midnight Shadow Pack and how Leda had saved my life. I also told them it was time to go home and there was no need to be afraid that our pack was safe. I didn't want any of the decisions I made to be hurried, so I stuck around while Kalyani and the others talked about their choice.

I was leaning against the trees, my mind doubling over what happened with Valor and me and the irresponsible decision he made with Zeke after everything we'd been through. If I had known that he would have walked right back into his arms, then I would have just accepted defeat right from the very beginning. “Hey,”

Leda said as she came to stand beside me, crossing her arms as well. “They're finally agreeing on something.”

“You know, the only reason they left in the first place was because of the attacks after your father died. But fortunately Rohan, Asher and I could curb it. They'll come back.”

“Hmm.”

“So, tell me what happened to you and Valor?”

“Nothing. I'd rather not talk about it.”

“Hmm. Look, Kane. I know how you feel about him...”

she was saying, but I interrupted.

“You don't.”

I shrugged.

“Rohan spent the entire day with Valor. There was no way Zeke could have gotten to the pack.”

“Or maybe he went to him.”

“What is wrong with you, Kane?! Valor is carrying your child. Doesn't that bother you? You know how dangerous Zeke is, but you still believed he did these things when all Valor has done was fight for your love.”

She hissed in disappointment, but I didn't say a word to her.

“Enough of this, Leda. I don't want to talk about Valor and that's final.”

I said and leaned off the tree, walking away.

By the time Rohan and the others had decided, we descended the mountains and found our vehicles where we had left them. Kalyani and the others shuffled into the bus and put their belongings in the back. I stood and inspected, ensuring that we didn't leave anyone behind. When everything was clear, we boarded the vehicles and headed back home.

Valor

Days had passed, and I had gone from hiding away in my room and crying to actually interacting with my family. It was over and Kane was never coming back, so it was better that I moved on. No one knew about my Omega bloodline. Neither have I spoken about the pregnancy or done anything about it. I didn't even know what to do. Every time I remembered what happened before this, it just broke me because I gave my heart to him and he shattered it into a thousand pieces. Today was a new day and I sure as hell wouldn't let what had transpired in my past weigh me down. I was going to sit with the family and have breakfast. I put on my shirt and buttoned it down, glancing at my stomach and releasing an exasperated sigh. Finishing up, I left my room, walking down the hallway and down the stairs. I arrived at the dining room where Frey and the others had gathered for the morning meal, sharing in the banter between the kids. Giving them a forced smile, I slipped into the seat, putting food for myself. I had told them the circumstance of my return, but they had to at least guess that it was related to Zeke. There was a sudden silence, and they were looking at me with compassion in their eyes, bringing sadness to my heart. I didn't want to feel sad, and I wanted to forget everything that happened, but they were making it hard for me. "Eh, I need to eat elsewhere."

I rose to my feet, taking my plate and leaving the dining room. I was halfway up the stairs when I heard Logan's voice calling behind me. "Hey, is everything ok?"

He questioned, following me.

"Yeah."

I gave him a slight nod.

“Ever since you came back, you haven't talked to anyone about what happened.”

“I know.”

I shrugged and sat on the stairs. He came forward and settled next to me, putting his hands on my shoulder.

“Talk to me. You've always talked to me.”

“I got myself in a really huge problem, and now I don't even know what to do anymore. I rushed through things.”

“Hey, what about Ezekiel?”

“He’s been manipulating me. It’s too complicated. I have a mate now, but he sent me away because of Zeke and now everyday I blame myself for not being a good friend, for not being enough to fight for. Logan, I've never been enough, and it just hurts so much.”

I professed my hurt and looked at Logan, seeing the helplessness in his eyes. Tears trickled down my cheeks and I wiped it off.

“Frey used to feel like that under different circumstances. But you're strong, Valor and you are special. And if anyone hasn't told you, you're going to make a good uncle to the kids. You're enough. You just have to remind yourself that. If you can't, then I'll be here to.”

“You have always been there for me, Logan, even though we aren't so close.”

“We are brothers and you put yourself to save my mate twice, and I truly appreciate that. If there's anything you need, just tell me, ok.”

“Yeah, sure. I'll see you later.”

I finished breakfast with a renewed sense of hope bubbling in my chest. Now it was time to visit my father and ask him numerous questions about my birth and bloodline. I headed toward the hospital and in no time; I had arrived. As I pressed my knuckles against the door, I pushed it open and saw the nurse helping my father with breakfast. “Hey, I'll finish up, ok.”

I told the nurse, and she gave me a nod, rose to her feet and left.

My father was surprised to see me, and he had a smile on his face as I sat next to him and started feeding him. “Hey, you're back so soon. Is everything ok with you and Ezekiel?”

He asked. I sighed and dug up the courage to explain everything that happened between me and him, and when I finished, all he did was pull me into an embrace and hold me tightly, bringing tears to my eyes. My heart warmed with joy at the fact that I wasn't alone and I still had my family who'd always put me first, regardless. “Was I born into an Omega bloodline?”

“No, son. You're full on Delta.”

“But I'm an Omega now. Can't you scent it or is it just me?”

“I mean, ever since you came back from your unplanned expedition, you seemed different. You and your wolf. I felt it, but I chose not to bother you. Did anything happen to you?”

I guessed it was time for me to come clean to my father about lying that I had died. Because with all that was happening in my life right now, I didn't think I could keep secrets anymore. “There's something I've been hiding from you.”

“What? Is there something I should be worried about?”

“I died, dad. A witch killed me.”

“What are you talking about? Logan told me you left the pack for something important.”

“No, dad. They had to lie to you because they thought I'd come back and I did.”

“And you didn't think it was right to tell me what happened to you?”

“I didn't want to bother you. You know it's difficult for you.”

“I'm your father, Valor. You are literally what gets me going. What if you never came back?”

“But I did.”

“Well, what if you didn't?!”

he was livid with me. “I would have spent the rest of my life thinking that you left, and one day when the truth would come out, I'd look back with regret that I wasn't there to protect my little boy. I would fall apart. You are the only thing I have left, son. I can't lose you.”

“I know, dad. I know. I'm so stupid.”

“No, you're not. It's not your fault the world is so cruel to you. I want you to always remember that you have a good heart and always hold on to that.”

He took my hand and gave them a reassuring squeeze. A streak of tears rolled down

my cheeks and I couldn't help but give myself over to a full-blown cry. My father pulled me into an embrace and held me, my shoulders shaking as every wave of emotion known to human flashed through me. My father held me until the tears in my eyes had dried.

“I guess your Omega rank came with your rebirth. You still have your lie detection powers?”

“Yes, that's how I could resist Zeke's manipulation, or at least fight it, unlike Kane.”

“Do you still love him?”

“If I didn't, I wouldn't be crying. I care about him, but I don't know if he's ever going to come around, especially when I'm carrying his child.”

“You're pregnant?”

“Almost two weeks. Do you have any idea how Omega male pregnancies work? If it's normal.”

“Of course it is. Many male Omegas mated to the Alphas of this pack have been able to conceive. There's nothing to fear. You'll get through this.”

“Ok.”

I shrugged.

“Valor, do you want this child?”

“Kane and I created this together. It's going to be really hard to decide what I want to do with it.”

“Mm. I also want to remind you that this is your own body and you're free to make your own decisions.”

“Thanks, dad. I think I should get back to the pack house. I've literally spent the entire day here.”

“Alright. I'll see you tomorrow.”

“Goodnight, dad.”

I laid a kiss on his cheeks and left him again. Now I was feeling a little better than how I was yesterday, and I knew I could get through this on my own, being unloved. As I sauntered down the dark hallway, I heard a movement behind me, and I turned on my heels, but I couldn't find anyone. I sighed and continued in the hallway, walking to the elevator. I headed out of the building after arriving on the last floor and when I was halfway through the premises, I heard an explosion and it was from my father's floor.

Kane

The wolfsbane injury I had sustained from Kalyani's dagger had spread from my palms up to my arm. We had returned from the mountains to the pack, and Rohan and the others were showing the newly arrived Lycans the houses where they'd spend the night. I was in the kitchen, cutting my flesh to bleed out the poison. After Leda had unbound my wolf and I became an Alpha, I developed the power of invulnerability to poison.

Hearing incoming footfalls ahead of me, I raised my gaze to Leda, who was now leaning against the doorjamb. "Are you here to talk to me about Valor again?"

I demanded even before she said the words.

"Definitely yes. I need to know everything that happened."

"I saw him. I saw everything."

He murmured with complete sadness in his eyes.

"Or maybe that's what Zeke wants you to see."

"Zeke is dead. I killed him."

I let out.

"If you did, then how did it go down with Valor?"

She inquired and stepped closer. “What does your beast say about this?”

“We haven't communicated for almost a week.”

“Whatever Zeke did to you. It must have affected Creed.”

She was saying as I finished bleeding myself out. The cuts healed, and I twisted the faucet, letting the water wash the black blood down the drain. I rinsed my hands and wiped it with a towel, heading out of the kitchen.

“Are you seriously walking out on me?”

“I don't know what you want, Leda.”

I shrugged and turned to her. She stepped closer until she took my hands.

“I want you to realize the mistake you've made, and I'm sorry that it has to go this way.”

She sighed and before I understood what she meant, I dropped to the floor, my vision clouded by darkness.

When I woke up again, I was in a room illuminated by the golden yellow flames of the candle glow. My hands and legs were bound by some tree roots and when I tried to fight it. The roots tightened. I heard voices in the room and the scent of the people present. “Get me out of here.”

I growled and struggled against the grip. I was shirtless and beads of sweat covered my entire body. “Rohan, fucking untie me now. I command you.”

I roared, and my eyes glowed crimson.

“I’m sorry, your Alpha aura won’t work. I’m in charge.”

“Both of you are going to regret this.”

I snarled with desperation in my field of vision, still struggling. Turning my gaze to the left, I saw Leda, and she was mixing some sort of ingredients in a bowl. She wheeled to me after she had finished the pasty mixture, her thumbs coated by the gray substance. She sauntered toward me and put her hands on my temple, muttering some sort of enchantment. “I knew something was wrong. He manipulated your memories and used some sort of weapon to bind your wolf. That is why you can’t fight his deception,”

Leda declared, her eyes moving from my trashing body to Rohan. “Stop moving and it hurts less.”

“Is there anything you can do to help?”

Rohan inquired.

“I can help him, but after that, we have to find whoever’s helping Zeke get these weapons.”

“Kane used to have them, but we couldn’t get them from the Eclipse after we found him.”

Rohan explained.

“We need to secure every single one of them, so it doesn’t fall into the wrong hands.”

Leda proclaimed, and I lay against the table breathing heavily, my vision blurring as I tried to keep my heavy eyes open. The candle lights lengthened and Leda started her

chant. A sharp ache attacked my head from every corner, and pain pulsed through my entire body. I let out a groan, screaming and thrashing as crimson appeared in my eyes. Black fur covered my arms and my nails extended into claws, my teeth turning into fangs. I fought until I broke free from the chains, falling to the ground and curling as every single bone in my body broke. Leda didn't stop chanting. I grunted out, my limbs stretching backward, my spine bulging and twisting back, darkness seeping into the crimson in my eyes.

“Kane.”

Creed, my beast, hummed within me. I shifted into my Lycan form, the memories of what had happened with Zeke burning through my mind. The way I talked to Valor afterwards breaking me completely. The things I said to him. All those memories came rushing back to me until all I could see was complete darkness.

Waking up, it was past midnight and Leda was still in my room watching over me as I slept. I grunted and palmed my forehead, supporting myself on the bed with my elbow. “I, uh, I passed out.”

“Yeah. Don't ask me how I got you back here.”

She chuckled. It took some time before I remembered everything, and tears sprung from my eyes.

“I sent him away,”

I cried, completely overwhelmed by the consequences of my actions. “He’s never going to speak to me again.”

“You don't know that.”

Leda gave her word of reassurance that everything would be alright.

“I... oh, goddess, what have I done? He was...”

I stuttered. “He was supposed to be here with me. Damn it, what have I done.”

I cried, tears trickling down my cheeks. Leda drew closer to me and threw her hands around my shoulder, hugging me tightly.

“Hey, Kane. It's ok. You don't have to worry. Tomorrow, we'll go to his pack together. You'll get him back.”

“No, you don't understand. He's never going to trust me again. I should have fought harder.”

“There's no way you could have. Zeke took it too far.”

“I'll stop him. I won't let him come between me and Valor.”

“We'll go to Valor's pack. This time, you won't sneak around.”

“Hmm,”

I murmured. “What if he doesn't want to see me? What if he hates me?”

“What if he doesn't? What if he's waiting for you to come back to him?”

Leda reassured me with a fervent smile. Whatever would happen between Valor and me tomorrow, I'd have to live with it, but I promised myself that I'll kill Zeke even if I had to do it repeatedly.

Valor

Upon hearing the explosion coming from my father's ward, I turned on my heels, hurrying back to the hospital. I didn't stop running until I had made it inside. Even when I was in, I had to fight my way through the crowd, who were trying to stop me from going upstairs. I saw Frey by the elevator and lunged toward her. Luckily, she held onto the doors long enough for me to slip in. "My dad, he's up there."

"Don't worry. I can heal him. He'll be safe, Valor. I promise."

She reassured me. I tapped my feet until the door claddings opened up to the floor my father stayed on. The first thing that hit me was the smoke that coated the air in the hallway. Frey used her magic to gather the thick gray smoke, making it disappear as a spell escaped her lips. The hallway was clear now, but the fire was still burning. I pounced into my father's room, kicking the door in, and it slammed into its hinges. My eyes gained their golden glow as I searched through the room, which was on fire. My father was curled up against the corner wall, shivering from the fear of being close to death. I didn't care if there was something in my way. I went after him and held his body covered in soot and scars from the fire. He was still alive. Frey was right behind me, and she stopped the fire with the snap of her finger. As we headed out of the room, I supported my father on his feet and headed toward the elevator. Hearing a movement behind me, I turned on my heels and saw a dark silhouette hiding in the shadows. The shadow stepped forward with a wicked grin on his face and a growl rumbled in my throat.

That bastard had the guts to ruin my entire life and come after my father. "Frey, you need to get him downstairs."

I told Frey and handed my father over to her.

“Valor, what are you doing? We have to go.”

“Go. I got this.”

She moved to the exit with my father and disappeared into the elevator.

“Just me and you like old times and we’re not training.”

“You tried to kill my father. You ruined my life. Is your ego that fragile to an extent that when you can't have something or someone, you seek to destroy it?”

I questioned as we stepped closer to each other. I was prepared for this encounter. I wouldn't let him win, nor would I try to reason with him because at this point he was just a monster.

“Your mind tricks can't work on me anymore.”

“That’s why I'm here to kill you.”

He smirked and unsheathed a knife, moving toward me with unnatural speed. He tried to strike me, but I duck and seized his arms, twisting until he lost the dagger. I kicked it down the hall and shoved him into the wall, spinning on my heels and slamming a kick into his face. Blood colored his lips as I kneed his belly, curled my claws into his hair, and shoved him down the hallway. He stumbled down and coughed out blood.

“That's not the first time someone said that to me, and somehow I always make it out alive,”

as he tried to get back on his feet, I sped to him and delivered another powerful kick, the impact sending him against the wall. “I’m not weak and I'm not stupid. The only

thing I did wrong was our friendship.”

“And I've loved you all my life...”

he hollered, his expression blurring between anger and aching. “All I wanted was for someone to choose me. But, it's not me, it's you and Kane. No one cares enough to put me first. I'm the dispensable wolf. The one who doesn't mean anything. That ends today.”

“You ruined all that love in seconds when you crawled your powers into my head. I trusted you, Zeke. I was happy that you came back, that I got to have my best friend with me because I lost everyone I've been close to. But you destroyed everything and now my father?”

I asserted out of frustration, kicking him again. I wouldn't give him any chance to get back on his feet. I would kick and kick until there was no life left inside of him. I was about to slam my boot into his face when he rolled off, regained his stance with werewolf speed, and moved behind me. His claws dug into my back and he forced them into me, twisting and tearing flesh, sending a buzz of pain through me. He slammed his feet on my back, and I lurched forward, my bones cracking as I slammed against the floor. He chuckled and shoved his boots into my limbs, breaking my leg. I let out loud grunts as he slammed repeatedly.

“You're weak. Where is your fucking fated mate Alpha to save you, eh?”

He chuckled and kicked me in the stomach, sending me against the wall. He walked to the dagger and picked it up, fiddling with it as he walked closer. I sat up, holding my stomach and leaning against the wall. The fear of losing my life and that of my little pup made me tremble with great trepidation. He squatted in front of me and waved the weapon at me. “How would you feel if I slammed this into your throat?”

“Do it, you fucking bastard. Get it over with.”

I dared him and he raised the weapon and made the strike. Before he could make the impact, I held his hand and slammed my left leg into his balls. He fell back, groaning in pain. I rose to my feet, limping as I picked up the dagger and tried to strike him, but he rolled off, causing me to fall forward, pain shooting through my body. He regained his stance and domineered over me and when he tried to finish me off. The ding of the elevator diverted his attention, and Frey appeared, pushing her hands forward and sending her magic toward Zeke. Her power shoved him down the hall, and she waved her hands to the left, pinning him at the left side of the wall. She hurried toward me and knelt, using her magic to heal my leg. I grunted out in discomfort, but the pain turned into something soothing. With Zeke still pressed against the wall, fighting Frey's magic, I regained my footing, picked up the weapon, and marched toward him.

“Go to hell, Zeke,”

I said and slammed the weapon into his throat, watching him as he choked on his blood. “You crossed the line when you came after my dad.”

I stepped backward and watched as he died, tears rolling down my cheeks. I killed my best friend. Oh, goddess. I fell to the ground, my body covered in our blood as a wave of unadulterated melancholy waved through me. Our story wasn't supposed to end like this. He was supposed to make the good choices. He was supposed to be good for me, but he got so lost in his quest and hatred that he couldn't recognize who he was anymore. “He uses his mind manipulation powers to make us see things and sometimes magical objects. How am I sure if this is the real him?”

I managed the words while sitting in the middle of the hall.

“It is. If it wasn't, I would have felt another magic's presence. Come on, your dad is

awake. Let's go meet him.”

Frey told me.

“Thanks for saving my life.”

“You saved me twice. It's only fair I repay you.”

I took one last glance at Zeke and regained my stance, then I headed downstairs. It was all over.

Valor

I stood in front of the bed, watching my father as he slept. I was awake throughout the night looking after him. After Frey and I had arrived on the first floor, the nurses checked me as well to ensure that my injuries would heal, and that was when everyone heard the good news. I was pregnant, and that nothing had happened to the developing fetus. Turning on my heels, I unbuttoned my shirt, heading into the bathroom. I stripped and had an hour long shower and changed into a new set of clothes, returning to look after my father. A few hours into the morning, the nurses came to check on him, and I used the opportunity to go downstairs and grab myself a bite. The kitchen was empty, and it gave me the chance to dwell on my thoughts as I made egg scrambles and pasta. By the time I finished, I sat on the stool close to the counter and feasted on my food. I was almost done when I heard the honking of the vehicle, and I hurried out of the kitchen, entering the common room and plodding down into the foyer. I reached for the door handles and pulled it, seeing the SUV stop in front of the fountain. My heart skipped a beat when I saw the man stepping down from the vehicle.

“Don’t let him in.”

I informed the two guards posted at the entrance and turned on my heels after I had locked the door. I mind-linked Logan and the other wolves, knowing that he would try to fight his way through, and we needed more wolf warriors to keep him out of the manor.

As I struggled back to the living room, a new sense of aching settled in my chest as events of what had transpired between us rushed through my memories. What was he

here for? Why was he here? He wasn't supposed to come here. Kane should be back at his pack, helping his people and not be here. I was pacing the floor of the living room when I heard clamoring at the entrance. Kane struggled with the wolves at the entrance. "Let me in. I need to see my mate."

He hollered at the wolves. I swallowed hard, and a breath escaped me as I worked up the courage to head toward the door. I wouldn't invite him in. He had to go back to his pack because I didn't want to see him. Not that I wasn't ready. I just didn't want him here because I was moving on from everything that had happened in my life, all the chaos, and I didn't need him back here, disrupting the peace I was finding. I marched toward the door and pulled it open, seeing him pacing the polished floor of the porch whilst Leda stood by the stairs. When he saw me standing at the entrance, his eyes roamed over my body, torture appearing in his eyes as tears broke free. I shook my head and said to him, "I don't want to see you, Kane. Please go home."

"I'm not leaving. I'm not leaving without you."

"I don't care, ok. Just go. Go home."

I said, my voice shattering. I couldn't let him see me break. I stepped back into the threshold and shut the door, covering my face with my hands as tears flowed freely down my cheeks. I was moving on, right? I wasn't supposed to be crying. I was supposed to be free from all this pain. But unfortunately it all came flooding back because he was here. Because I cared about him. I sauntered back into the living room and dried my cheeks of the tears, seeing the nurses coming down from the stairs.

"Your father is awake. He would like to see you,"

she informed me. "I will be back to check on him tomorrow."

“Thank you.”

I sniffled and headed up the stairs without waiting for her response.

I strutted down the hallway and arrived in my room, walking into the apartment and seeing my dad sitting on the bed. Sighing, I hurried toward him and pulled him into an embrace. “Hey, son. You don't have to cry. I'm ok.”

“I almost lost you last night.”

“But you saved me. I'm alive. There's no need to worry.”

“Yes, there is. You're my dad, and you're the only person I have left. I can't lose you.”

I smiled at him. He looked at me with happiness and ruffled his hair, searching my eyes.

“Is everything ok with you?”

“No, I'm fine, I muttered, tearing my gaze away from him. “Kane is here.”

I finally let out.

“Do you want to see him?”

“Yes, but I can't.”

“Valor, does it still feel right? Wanting him? Do you want to be with him?”

“Yes, but I can't. What if he breaks my heart again? I don't think I can handle it.”

“But you love him.”

“I do.”

I rose to my feet and ran my hands through my hair, the stench of frustration oozing from me.

“Then go to him.”

“I can't, dad. Can we just talk about something else? Anything?”

I shrugged and sighed exasperatedly. He gave me a nod of approval and patted the bed, and I came to sit beside him. We spent the entire day discussing the happy memories of our past and laughing at one another whenever a silly, fun memory came up. My mind darted to Kane a few times, but I kept myself immersed in the conversation with him. After he had finished dinner, I gave him his meds and put him to sleep.

I showered and headed downstairs for dinner. Luckily, the family had finished and gone to bed, and it was just me again making myself supper. I was halfway through when I heard a knock on the door. I raised my gaze from the counter to Frey, who was leaning against the door frame. “Hey, Frey. How are you... and the kids?”

“I think I should ask you that,”

she said and sauntered closer. “Kane is still here. He said he isn't leaving until he has spoken to you.”

“Well, I hate to dash his hopes, but he's never speaking to me.”

“His witch, Leda, explained everything to me and you really need to talk with him,

Valor.”

“What if he leaves again?”

“He won't.”

“You don't know that. You weren't there when he told me to leave. You didn't see the way he looked at me, the way he made me smile. I can't feel that way again, not when it won't be forever.”

“You have to. You've been alone most of your life, Valor.”

She was saying, and I saw Kane step into the kitchen.

“Frey, you let him in. You shouldn't have let him in.”

“I'm sorry, but he wouldn't leave, anyway,”

Frey shrugged. “He literally threatened the entire pack for you,”

she turned on her heels and walked out, shutting the door behind her palm. “Look, Valor, you have to fight for your bond with him. If you don't, no one else will.”

I hurried toward the door and tried to get out, but I couldn't. “Valor.”

He breathed, and I stopped struggling with the door. I turned to him and shook my head with a trembling sigh. “I'm sorry.”

“That is not enough. You sent me away!”

I roared at him, completely overwhelmed by anger.

“I know. I wasn't in my right mind.”

“You promised you would never hurt me.”

“I know.”

He tried to step closer, but I warned him with a glare.

“You promised,”

I cried. “Is it a crime to want love? Cause I've tried, and it doesn't always work out for me.”

“I know, little wolf. I know.”

“Don't call me that when you hurt me.”

“I'm sorry,”

he cried, his voice having a sense of urgency and fear. Fear that he would lose me forever. I had never seen that in any man's eyes. Especially an Alpha that held power at the tip of his fingers. “Tell me what I can do to make up for it.”

He stuttered, pleading with his eyes.

“Just go.”

“I can't leave you. Not like this. I don't want to,”

he said and tried to touch me, but I sidestepped and shook my head. He dashed toward me and pulled me into an embrace. “I'll do anything. If you want me on my

knees, then I'll go on my knees,”

he collapsed helplessly to his knees and looked up at me with nothing but complete forlornness and wanting in his eyes. “If you want me to take out my heart and hand it to you, then I'm ready to do it. As long as I get to be with you,”

he choked, and his claws extended. He forced them into his chest and curled around the shape of his heart, blood spilling down his shirt. “I would do anything you want, little wolf. I am at your mercy.”

He bowed his head and his shoulders shuddered as he knelt heavy-hearted.

“Kane, please, stop. You're hurting yourself.”

I quivered and fell in front of him.

“For you, little wolf. I would do anything for you, and I would never let nothing drive us apart ever again,”

he drove his claws deeper, and I pulled them out of his chest and brushed my hands against his cheeks. “From the moment I saw you, I knew it was... it was me and you,”

he took my hands and placed it on his already healing chest. “And I know, I, I know that I messed it up, that it hurt you so much. But I promise I will never leave you again, and I'll protect you always. From him, from anyone who threatens our love. You don't have to be alone again. You have me. Me.”

He confessed to me, and I just held him in my arms, the bond that tethered our wolves coming back to life once again. We stayed there for over an hour, drenched in our tears and blood. I wanted to be with him. I needed to be with him. He was the

only one who didn't want something in return. He just wanted to love me, and he did. It was Zeke that wanted to ruin everything. I wouldn't let him. He didn't have that power over us, over our love. "I love you,"

Kane muttered, with his nose buried against my neck. "You don't have to say it back. I just want you to know that your mate loves you."

He held my cheeks and caressed softly. I nodded and helped him to his feet.

"Come on, we have to go to bed. I'm not hungry anymore. I just want to be with you."

I smiled at him, and he sighed with a bittersweet smile. He curved his hands around my waist and lifted me from the floor.

Once we were behind closed doors, he carried me to the bed and laid me gently, covering me with the sheets. I sighed and watched as he took off his shoes and jacket, joining me and pulling me into a cuddle. He wrapped his possessive arms around me and laid a kiss on my neck exactly where he had left the mark of the bond, his beast humming in agreement to his claim.

"Our mate is here with us again."

Leo bubbled with excitement and I smiled.

"Goodnight, Kane."

"Goodnight, little wolf. I'll be here when you wake up. I promise."

He laid a kiss, and I shut my eyes with the unwavering assurance that he would never, ever leave me again.

Kane

Before the crack of dawn, I left for the pack's kitchen and whipped up a quick breakfast for Valor and I. I promised him we would wake up in each other's arms and I was intent on keeping that promise. As Valor grumbled in his sleep and rolled on his side, I glanced at him with a smile on my lips. He looked so beautiful when he was asleep, all cuddled up in my protective arms. I was never letting him go, never letting anyone come between us ever again. And if I ever find that bastard Ezekiel. I would rip his throat apart. Valor's eyes twitched as he stirred awake and he smiled at me. I placed a kiss on his forehead, and he grinned. "Hey, beautiful."

I teased and brushed my knuckles against his cheeks.

"Hey, you're here."

"Yeah, I'm not leaving your side ever again,"

I reassured him, placing kisses on his body. He giggled and squirmed in my arms.

"Come on, I made breakfast. Let's brush up, ok?"

"Sure."

He answered, and I rose from the bed, carrying him to the bathroom. I set him down in front of the vanity mirror and we took our time brushing one after the other. After we had finished, Valor sighed and leaned against my chest, taking my hands and putting it on his belly. "Do you feel that, our child?"

he smiled, and I lowered my gaze as despair sneaked up on me. “Is there a problem?”

The smile on his face slowly disappeared.

“No. I just wanted to tell you about the baby you know before everything, and we haven't had the chance to talk about it. If you want to keep it.”

“So that’s the reason for the odd excitement back then. Of course I want to keep it,”

he faced me and held my cheeks. “It’s our child. Come on, we’ll talk about it over breakfast.”

I led him back to the room, and sprawled on the couch, held my hand out to him and pulled him onto my lap when he took my hands. I caged my arms around him and began to feed him the contents of breakfast. I started with the scrambled eggs and this time he didn't struggle. He let me treat him because he deserved it. “I’m really concerned about you having a child. It won't be easy. Your entire body will change and even after birth, you might feel different.”

“I know my body will go through a lot of changes, and I want you to be there with me cheering me as I try to find myself again even if I don't feel the same way for some time. I want you to always look at me the same way, hold my hand and get me through every single day.”

“Always, little wolf. I would never stop loving you. I promise,”

he reached out and wiped off the eggs off my lips. “I really missed you, and I want to spend all day long with you.”

“Me too, but we have duties. I need to take care of my dad. He's blind. Zeke attacked him and almost got him killed.”

“Zeke was here. He came after you. Where is that bastard?!”

My chest rose as anger flared through me., and I wrapped my protective arms around him.

“You don't have to worry. I drove a dagger into his throat.”

“Hmm, little wolf, so feisty.”

I rumbled with pride in my eyes.

“He’s gone, and he's never coming back, but sometimes I wish I had treated everything very differently, but he didn't exactly make it easy for me.”

“It isn't your fault, Valor. You tried the best you could. He was just blinded by the paranoia, hate and jealousy.”

I indicated and sighed, letting the few seconds of silence pass us by.

“There’s no need to worry. He's gone now.”

“Leda returned to the pack yesterday to take care of things with Rohan, and that includes some of the mystical objects I used to protect myself when I was alone. Zeke must have found them. That was how his hold on me was so strong I couldn’t resist.”

I uttered with despair and regret coating my voice. “I hope you can forgive me, little wolf. I really messed up.”

“It’s ok. We’re good.”

I told him. We finished through breakfast and hit the showers, stripping and stepping

into the steamy water trickling from the showerhead. Kane put the hair shampoo in his hands and washed my hair, smiling at me as the water from the shower trickled down our naked bodies. When he finished, he put my hair under the shower and helped me rinse off the soapsuds. I chuckled at him and carded my hand through my brunette hair, brushing it backward. He pulled me closer and wrapped his hands around my waist, pressing his rigid body against mine. I claimed his lips in a kiss, which turned frantic as each second passed, desperation tugging at us as we kissed and kissed until our lips were swollen. I pulled off, my lips aching, my eyes never leaving him as he brushed his knuckles over my cheeks. "Everything about you is so perfect, little wolf. You're so beautiful."

He smiled and wrapped his hands around me. I rested against his chest and the water from the shower rinsed off the rest of the soap foams clinging to our skin. We finished and returned to the room, changing into a new set of clothes.

Valor

I went to the room my father was occupying and saw that one of the pack workers had helped him with breakfast and his meds. Now all I had to do was sit with him through the morning before I did anything else. Kane was with me and he was standing close with his hands on my shoulder, bringing me support. I would finally introduce the man, who I had cried my heart out for to my father, and I'm sure he would be so happy to meet him. I sat on the bed and took my father's hands, reassuring him that I was here now. From what I saw, he was getting better, and I had the feeling we were going to have a splendid morning together. "Dad, I'd like you to meet someone. Kane."

I said and Kane came closer, taking my dad's hands.

“Hello, sir.”

“Nonsense. Please, just call me Dominic,”

he chuckled and tightened his grip around his arms, a scowl masking his face. “Hurt my little boy and you'll see the other side of me.”

“Dad.”

I cautioned, surprised by my father's words.

“Nice to meet you, Kane,”

he released his grip and let out a hearty chuckle. Looking at Kane, I saw the expression of fear on his face, and I fought so hard to bite back a chuckle. “Now you boys should leave old me alone. Go take a walk or something.”

“Alright, dad. If you need anything. Just mind-link me, ok?”

“Sure.”

We walked out of the room and I took my time to double back at Kane. I let out a hearty laugh and bumped his shoulder, and he rolled his eyes at me. “He didn't exactly make it easy.”

“Well, my dad is being my dad. He's cool though. You don't have to worry.”

I said to him and we headed down the stairs.

“I want you to show me around your home.”

“You sure?”

“Yeah, of course. I'm sure.”

He murmured, and we continued down to the common room. We left the pack manor, and we moved through the pack dwellings, the lake, the cabin, the school, training grounds, and forest. By the time I was done with the tour, it was almost evening and I had gotten a mind-link from the Alpha to meet up at the pack manor with Kane. It was time to put our plans of the Sentinel Programs into motion and for me to properly introduce the love of my life to my family.

We made our way through the path that led to the pack house, and we arrived at the common room where the Alpha and Luna were already waiting for us. They both offered us a seat, and I started by introducing Kane to them properly since he had caused a scene from yesterday. Kane took over after I had touched the surface of the introductions. “I recently ascended as Alpha in my pack and so far my mate, Valor, has helped me through a lot of things. We are looking to expand our territory and bring other Lycan shifters back to the pack,”

he said, ensuring he had our attention. “I also want to forge alliances with other packs as well, especially with the home of my fated mate.”

He looked at me with a smile tugging at the corner of his lips.

“That is very thoughtful of you. We'll put your offer into consideration,”

Logan told him. “If there's anything you need help with, don't hesitate to tell us.”

“Yes. We are also looking to join the Sentinel Training Program of Night Shade Pack. That was actually Valor's idea. He wanted to run it through you first.”

“That is not a problem at all,”

Frey added. “This is really a good thing for both of our packs, and your union helps to solidify it as well.”

“We’ll talk about it and give you the feedback you need before you return to your pack. I also need you to know that you're welcome to stay as long as you want.”

Logan added.

“Thank you so much for your hospitality, Logan.”

The two Alphas rose to their feet and shook each other's hands.

“You’re welcome.”

We finished through the short meeting and parted ways. Kane and I returned to the bedroom, and we spent the evening cuddled up together on the bed. Kane wrapped his hands around me while I fell asleep in the arms of the safest man in this world. Oh, goddess. I can't thank you enough for how everything worked out in the end.

Valor

We spent the rest of the week in the pack before we returned to Midnight Shadow Pack. This time I told my father that I was taking him with me and thankfully he didn't argue this time. After we arrived at the Midnight Shadow pack, I helped him get acquainted with his new room and ensured that the pack provided everything he needed. I also had the time to catch up with the Sentinel Program Rohan was handling since Logan had signed a contract with Kane to merge both packs for the program. In celebration of the union of our pack together, we were hosting a ball in the Midnight Shadow by the end of the coming month. I also had the privilege of attending Zeke's funeral back at Night Shade and saying my last goodbyes to him. Now I was back at my new home with my fated mates and father, I wasn't going anywhere. Kane and I were meant to be together, and ensuring Midnight Shadow's progress was one of my priorities. We were in this together and I would hold his hands through every single moment of our life.

After I had finished the day's duties with Rohan, I headed upstairs to wait for Kane to make it back home from work, but when I entered the room, he had already made it back and had set up the table for our dinner. I let out a chuckle and shut the door behind my palm, walking up to him and pulling him into an embrace. "I told you not to stress yourself."

"I'm not. I spent the whole day in the living room with Rohan. You know I'm doing this for us."

"Well, yes, I know. But I'm putting your comfort and that of the baby first."

“I can handle myself, Kane.”

“I know, but you're my little wolf and all I want is to just take care of you,”

he held my cheeks and placed a gentle kiss on my lips. “Come on, let's have dinner.”

He was showing me to the table, but I pulled him back.

“Kane, I don't want dinner. I just want to be with you.”

I smiled at him and unbuttoned his shirt slowly, without averting my gaze from him. I beamed at him as he leaned in and captured my lips in a fervent kiss. Gasping, I placed my hands on his shoulder, and he lifted me from the floor, my legs wrapped around his thighs. He held my ass cheeks and pressed me into his chest, kissing me without hesitation, our lips and tongues intertwining. A lewd moan escaped my throat, and I threw my head backward and he buried his lips on my neck, kissing and biting, his fangs raking across my flesh. He looked up at me and crimson bled into his eyes, his beast humming in excitement as he pecked my forehead. “Mate.”

He rumbled.

“Mate.”

I leaned on his head and kissed him again. He turned on his heels and faced the bed, gently laying me on it.

“Take off your shirt,”

he commanded and purred. “Slowly.”

I reached out to the buttons on my shirt, taking them out one after the other, my eyes filled with lust as they roamed over Kane's body. I pulled off my shirt and tossed it

toward him. “Hmmm.”

Kane growled, the sound of his voice sending a zap of heat through me, causing my hardened cock to strain against my thighs. He pulled off his shirt and smirked at me, tugging at his belt and cupping the bulge in his pants. He stepped out of his pants and climbed onto the bed, and wrapped his hands around my thighs. Kane pulled me closer and undid my belt, tugging down my trousers and boxer brief, setting my length free. His hands caressed my skin in feathery touches and I bit back a squeal of ecstasy. He kissed my thighs and looked up at me. “You look so beautiful, little wolf. Beautiful for me.”

He mused and dragged his fangs across my flesh. He held me against the bed and came up to my throbbing cock, swiping his tongue over the slit. “Oh, fuck, Kane.”

I breathed, rolled my eyes, and narrowed my gaze at him. He teased me from the base of my cock to my cockhead, then he swallowed me into the heat of his mouth. I bit back a luscious purr and reached out to his head, holding him in place as he sucked on my cock, driving me to the edge of my orgasm.

“Talk dirty to me, little wolf.”

“Mm, so fucking good when you suck my cock like that,”

I murmured in between my moans, thrusting my length into him. “Good boy, keep taking my cock into you, you filthy thing,”

I grunted and quickened my pace, his lips stretching around my dick, my cockhead hitting the back of his throat. “So fucking good. My cock is only for you,”

I dragged my lips and hissed, my body vibrating at the intense pleasure overwhelming within me. “Oh, fuck, I’m going to come.”

“Yes, let me taste you, little wolf. Every single drop.”

He leveled his gaze at me and took a final drag along my length. I grunted out of delectation and I came, my release hitting the back of his throat, my cock throbbing inside his mouth as it softened. He pulled back and swallowed, a line of cum escaping his lips and rolling down his stubble.

“So good for me, little wolf.”

He growled, his wolf coming into his eyes. He grasped my thighs and spanked me thrice harder each time, leaving an imprint on my skin.

“Yes.”

I hissed. The pain at the point of impact soon turned into pleasure that traveled through my entire body. With my legs tilted up and my thighs held by his powerful arms, he buried his face in between my ass and inhaled deeply. He swiped his tongue across my hole, putting his fingers in and stretching me for penetration. “That’s it, mate. Moan for me,”

his words emerged as a breathless rasp, his tongue working on my hole, sending a flash of heat that coursed through my entire body. “Are you ready for my cock?”

Still holding onto my thighs, he knelt between my legs and greased my crack, fingering me some more. He pulled out and positioned his length, his cockhead teasing my entrance. He pushed into me and I tensed up, my mouth forming an O as the word fuck escaped me. “I’m not all the way in,”

he breathed, and I nodded, relaxing and letting him push deeper into me. “Mm, so fucking tight for me.”

He grunted and leaned closer until he rested his forehead on mine. He pumped into

me, each thrust sending ripples of undeniable sparks of pleasure through me, stretching me, the rings of muscles clenching around his cock.

“Taking my cock so well, little wolf.”

His pace became rapid, his movement pushing me back and forth. He captured my lips in a frantic kiss, and we kissed and kissed until our lips swelled. He pulled off from my lips and buried his face in my shoulder, his fangs scraping my neck, but the pressure wasn't strong enough to break my skin.

Kane pulled out entirely and thrust back in and my breath hitched. He chuckled at me and kissed me again.

“Kane.”

I said and placed my hands on his abdominal muscles, but he kept pounding into me, hard and fast that I could no longer catch my breath. The only thing I could do was minister at the work of his hands.

“Oh, fuck, I'm coming.”

“Yes, Kane. For me,”

I hissed and held his cheeks and he uttered a deep guttural sound as he came. He pulled out and lay next to me, panting. “I love you, Kane.”

I told him and took his hands, giving it a caress.

“I love you too.”

By morning, I woke up next to my fated mate, and we went through the regular morning rituals of washing and brushing. I looked after my father, ensuring that he

had enough rest, and we went on our usual father-son conversations. I also helped Kane with the housing constructions for the new Lycan bloods, and we saw that those who had applied for the Sentinel Program joined in two weeks after we finalize everything.

Months later...

Kane

I cradled my little baby in my arms and watched over my fated mate, who was resting from the labor pains of bringing our little bean into the world. I played with her fingers and paced the ward, my eyes never leaving her as a smile tugged on my lips. Damn, goddess, she was so beautiful, just like her fathers. I took her to the seat close to the patient's bed, seeing that Valor was stirring back to consciousness. I sat down and looked at him with an affectionate smile. "Hello, love,"

I said to him as his eyes fluttered open, looking at him like the most precious thing in this world. And of course he was. They were both my diamonds and I would spend my whole life loving and protecting them. "Hey, how are you feeling?"

I told him. He slowly adjusted to a sitting position and exhaled deeply.

"Like myself."

"Here's our daughter, our littlest wolf,"

I slowly passed her to him, and he took her in her arms with bliss and tears in his eyes. "Hey, don't cry."

"She's so beautiful. Do you think we can do this? Be parents?"

"Hey, of course. We can. Remember what I told you. I'll be here holding your hands

through every step of the way. I promise.”

I said to him, and he raised his gaze from our daughter to me.

“I love you so much, Kane.”

“Me and you,”

I replied and put my hand on my chest. “Here.”

I reassured him.

“So, have you picked out a name yet?”

“How about Ayanna Diallo–O’Donnell?”

“You never told me we were combining surnames.”

“Well, hell yeah, we are.”

“Kane!”

he warned. “Language. We have a kid now.”

“Ok. Correction taken.”

I chortled.

“Welcome home, Ayanna.”

Valor smiled at her.