



When Embers Become Ashes (The BloodMoon Trilogy #1)

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Category: Fantasy

Description: For as long as I can remember, two wolves have appeared in my dreams to shield me from the bad ones, serving as the sole source of goodness in my life.

Throughout my seventeen years, I have faced abandonment by my biological mother and endured a series of unfortunate foster homes.

While there have been good ones and friendships that I cherish deeply, stored away like treasures in my heart, it hasn't been an easy journey.

Then, because of a hospital visit, my life takes a surprising turn for the better.

It turns out that broken little me has a family that wants me, and they have already saved some of my friends.

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Ember

For as long as I can remember, two wolves have appeared in my dreams to shield me from my bad dreams, serving as my life's sole source of goodness.

The only other constant is my social worker, Samuel Jameson, but let's forget him for the moment and start this story right, if not in a happy way.

My name is Ember Phoenix Ashes. I was born at 1:30 a.m. on December 31st, weighing 6 pounds 2 ounces. Other than some red peach fuzz on my head, my only defining mark was the birthmark between my shoulder blades, which is the shape of a soaring phoenix. It looks more like a brand than a natural mark, and I have some freckles that make it look like falling embers below the tail.

I only know the details because a rookie on clean-up duty found me by the firehouse's bins, wrapped in nothing but the paper lining you see on the bed in the ER. There was no diaper, only a Post-it note with the date, time, and birth weight tucked into the paper wrapping. Then, on the paper in different handwriting, presumed to be my biological mother's, the words 'NOT WORTH SAVING.' Luckily for me, the firefighter who found me thought I was worth saving.

He was a rookie in his early 20s at the time, and he went by Little Ash. Now that I'm older, and thanks to one of my foster placements being in the same town, I learned his real name Ashkii Usdi Yona Hania, which translates from Cherokee to boy baby bear strong.

When Ash found me, he automatically called me Usdi Ember while his chief called

child protective services. After they took photos as evidence, I was cleaned of the ashes, blood, and other newborn gunk, wrapped in a random sweater, and then tucked into a helmet to sleep.

In some places, it's traditional that if a baby is found, the finder gets to name that baby, so Ashkii got to name me, which is probably a good thing as my shitty social worker would probably just have given me an identification number or barcode.

Unfortunately, the social worker they tried to call wasn't available. Three towns over, another baby had been abandoned at a hospital, and the social worker was already on his way to retrieve him and take him to the named family. The mother had left a note for the baby to be returned to his father; at least, that baby's mom had a heart.

Unfortunately, I got SJ.

I was never fully put in the system because of him. If my name was searched in the database, I was adopted at six months old, and there is no trace of me after that. No DNA tests were done, no checking with hospitals if a baby went missing, or so I thought, and SJ tried his hardest to keep me off the radar – saving all my files on paper and hiding them in the trunk of a sickly yellow car where the spare tyre should be. Most Social workers use government-issued vehicles, but Jameson wasn't a by-the-book person, so he would use his own car, when he had Children, he wanted to keep out of sight.

He collected me from the firehouse and took me to a group home. There, any time a family came to look for a baby, I was hidden away in a warded closet so that my scent would be hidden. Turns out he had done DNA after another social worker called to check if I was a missing baby, for an influential Shifter family, and the other off-book people he worked with saw an opportunity all they had to do was keep me hidden. So, for four years, this was a continuous ritual until finally, I went to my first foster home.

I spoke the truth as a child until I realized I was different. The area I had been found in was warded, so only supernaturals could enter. To any shifter, I smelled human. To Mages, my aura appeared human, not one spark of magical essence, so they had no idea how I got through the wards.

Jameson had various tests done on me as a child, both human and supe tests.

It got worse when I would automatically know what supe type people were without being told. Jameson would get angry and ask how I knew; three-year-old me would answer,

“I can see them.” It made sense to me, just like when one of the nurses asked where my pretty colored hair came from, “It grew out my head.” Like, where does yours come from?

It wasn't until the kind lady with an odd tail told me to keep my sight a secret from those I couldn't trust, as grown-ups didn't like it when people didn't fit in nice, tidy, made-up boxes, that they believed all people should fit in. AINU was the first adult to show me what true love was at 4 years old when she became my foster mother.

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Ember

4 years old

Jameson ushers me out of my 'room,' and I use that term loosely as it is a closet with a sleeping bag on an old comforter on the floor and a broken bookcase. He puts me in the back of his car, and we drive for four hours.

When we arrived, I'm so hungry and thirsty, he got a burger halfway, but I wasn't allowed to as I had been bad. I'm not sure what I did, but I probably breathed the wrong way.

We arrived as the moon rose in the sky. It was another blood moon, the same as the one I was born under, or so I read in one of Cook's magazines.

The Pack Alpha and Luna are in the main hall with visitors, so I'm quickly ushered into a bedroom and told they will deal with me in the morning. I pull the desk chair over to the window because I don't want to make the pretty room dirty or crumple the couch.

The room is bigger than the dorm back at the group home, a huge bed in the center I would have to take a running jump to get on as it is high off the floor and has frilly cream trim on the top, flowery bedding with ruffles around the edges with loads of matching cushions, the dark wooden frame is paired with side tables and lamps with tassels hanging from the shades, there are two other doors I'm not sure what is behind them, a couch and two matching chairs sit in the window, then a desk that had the chair, that I'm now curled up on. The walls have textured floral paper; the floors are

wooden, but large patterned rugs sit between them and the various pieces of furniture, and heavy dark brown curtains frame each window.

My one shower a week was supposed to be tomorrow, so I'm definitely not sitting on anything other than this chair, I hope I don't dirty it. I fall asleep watching the moon rise, and the sky darken, but I wake to the noise of snuffling and a language I don't understand. It is definitely a boy I can hear, but I only hear one voice. I stay on the chair as still as possible and try to keep my breathing slow so I don't anger the voice.

“ Brother, come back.” Peeking my eyes open a little; I can't really see anything except a tiny bit of floor in front of me. I can still hear the sniffing noise. Jameson called this place a Pack. Wolves live in packs; I wonder if that's what I can hear sniffing!

“You're going to get us in trouble! Again!” The voice didn't sound angry; it was only annoyed. I stay where I am, not moving, peeking as little as possible, then nearly scream when a wide-eyed furry face pops up in front of me.

Two fluffy white paws are on the front of my chair, and a fluffy face with two white fox ears and a pair of big lilac eyes are looking at me full of curiosity.

The problem was that something was wrong with the physical view. What I could see and what my sight showed me was different.

The fox before me just looked like an Arctic fox, but my sight showed the same fox but with more tails, the white I could see swishing behind him. There should also be a yellow one, a dark purple one, and a grey/blue one, but they were blurred like how I saw the wolves, bears, and demons at the group home.

Before I have a chance to figure out why he doesn't look right, he flinches as the voice barks out a closer-to-angry demand, “Who are you?” I frowned at the fox, not

understanding the language or how he spoke it.

The fox goes back down on all fours as the voice sounds again.

“Answer me!” This time, a strange feeling brushed over me as the boy who spoke steps into my line of sight speaks. The feeling tickles me, so I giggle. This makes the fox tilt his head, and the boy frown, the boy sighs.

“Shift back, brother.” This time I understand him, as he finishes speaking, the fox turns into a boy who smiles up at me but stays crossed-legged on the floor.

The boy who had been speaking goes over and turns on the bedside light.

I needed names, or this would be confusing even in my head.

The Fox boy is smaller and has almond-shaped eyes and pitch-black hair. His eyes seemed to change color but are always full of mischief. The boy who spoke, I can see his wolf; he has brown hair that darkens towards the tips to an inky black that I can only see when the light catches it just right. His build is bigger than the fox, but they looked similar, as if they were brothers, maybe?

While I was still taking notes about their appearance, the wolf speaks again, and this time, I understand everything.

“Who are you?” I blink at him and then answer with new questions.

“What language did you speak before? Can you teach me? Are you brothers?” The fox on the floor smiles and starts to bounce in his seat, then answers me.

“Yes, we're twins. I take after Hahaoya, and he takes after our father. It's Japanese, and Hahaoya

would probably be best to teach you, but don't speak it to father as he gets angry!" The fox frowns, takes a breath, and then speaks rapidly,

"My name is Jenson, and my grumpy twin is Ren! What's your name? You smell odd!" Jenson stops talking, smiling at me. I blink and then looks at his twin.

"Hahaoya?" Ren, who is still frowning at his brother with his arms crossed, looks up at me.

"It means mother." He says with a sigh, then turns a stern look upon me.

"Are you going to answer the rest of our questions?" Again, I just blink at him and then realize I'd ignored everything they asked while I was in their home. I shrink in on myself and mumble out an answer.

"Sorry, my name is Ember. My social worker dropped me off and told me that the Alpha and Luna would deal with me later!" I keep my head down and take a breath. I can see Jenson lean forward and try to catch my gaze, but I don't look up, and then I answer the other question I was asked.

"I'm nothing! Jameson says I'm broken, but I'm just an odd human, nothing more. That's why I smell odd." I hear a growl rise in Ren's chest, and my head snaps up to look wide-eyed at him as he growls out.

"Don't say that! You're not broken!" Jenson steps next to him and smiles .

"You're just odd like me." He looks so happy about the statement as Ren mumbles something that sounded like

"That's not a compliment, brother!" The sun was starting to rise when Ren wanders out of the room and returns with a pile of clothes.

“Here! These are ours that don’t fit anymore, get washed up, and we will get some breakfast.” He hands me the clothes as Jenson shows me the bathroom.

“Meet us in the hall in 10 minutes.” The boys disappear out of the room.

Eight minutes later, and yes, I was counting in my head, I was standing in the hall in a pair of boys’ boxers, baggy sweats, a joker T-shirt, a hoodie with sleeves that I had to roll up, and fluffy purple socks with baseball bats on. I finger-combed my hair and put in pigtail braids or at least I did my best.

The boys step out of what I’m guessing are their rooms a little down the hall, I follow them down to a kitchen. There were loads of people rushing around, but an older lady smiles fondly at the boys as they sit in a booth-like area, like what I saw through the food place windows from SJ’s car.

“We eat here when the pack has visitors, as Father prefers us to be out of sight, so we don’t embarrass him,” Ren informs me as the lady brings over two glasses of apple juice and one chocolate milk. She places the apple juice in front of Ren and I, and the milk goes to Jenson. We all say thank you, and she again smiles fondly at the boys.

Her focus switches to me, and I see her sniff the air and look at me, confused. Her wolf shrugs at her, and the confused look quickly passes, as she smiles at me.

“My name is Margo, and I’m the housekeeper for the main house. If you need anything, let me know, or if these two try to get you in trouble,” she states with a snicker.

Ren scoffs, and Jenson tries to pull off an innocent look but fails. He’s about to say something when a beautiful lady walks in.

She has long black hair in a braid going all the way down her back, a pair of boho-

type pants, and a matching flowing long-sleeved tunic. She floats, is the only way to describe it, over to us and then, in what I now know is rapid Japanese, talks to the boys while trying to smooth out Ren's wild hair and wipe the chocolate moustache off Jenson. Once she seems pleased with their answers and gives up trying to correct their appearance, she turns to me.

"Hello, my name's Ainu. You can call me Mama Lou if you want, just like the boys' half-brother does." She smiles again as Margo fills the table with more food than I've ever seen.

Ren and Jenson all but pounce as I try to curb the hunger pains. I know I'm not allowed to eat until the supes are finished and only if there are leftovers, so I sip my apple juice. I notice Ainu watching me with a confused and worried look, which Ren also notices, and stops eating, looking from my empty plate to me, to the food, and back to my empty plate.

He frowns, then seems to have an internal debate while watching me, then proceeds to plop two slices of buttered toast, three sausages, four bacon slices, and two pancakes on my plate, and then says with a grunted growl.

"EAT"

I felt that strange feeling brush over me again, but I manage not to giggle this time. Ainu smiles proudly at her Sons as Jenson hands me the jug of Syrup that he was all but drinking out of.

While we finished eating, Ainu explains that she was the Pack Luna and that I would meet her mate, the Alpha once the guests left. She also tells me that she is 6 months pregnant, which has both the boys bouncing with excitement. They both want a baby sister as they already have two half-brothers. I'm not sure what that means, but unlike the fond look Ainu gives when they speak about Xander, she looks like she sucked a

lemon when Decimus is mentioned. It was the most welcome and cared for I've ever felt, but that soon changes when I'm presented to Alpha Gerald Firefall.

“WHAT THE FUCK IS THIS? THAT WEASELLY CUNT PROMISED A VIABLE, MOULDABLE FEMALE THAT CAN BE TRAINED AND brOKEN IN TO BE THE PERFECT DOCILE MATE FOR MY HEIR, AND HE SENDS A WORTHLESS HUMAN THAT'S NOT EVEN WORTH WHAT IS BETWEEN HER FUCKING LEGS! GET THE BITCH OUT OF MY SIGHT!”. Spit was going everywhere as the red-faced Alpha yelled at no one in particular. Ainu looks horrified, and Ren quickly grabs my hand and drags me away before the Alpha can lash out more.

Jenson looks like he is going to be sick, and we can still hear the Alpha bellowing out hateful comments from behind us.

They take me through the woods until we reach a lake with a meadow around it. Jenson shifts and starts hopping around and playing, his four tails swishing behind him. His body starts off grey/blue in colour but swiftly changes to deep purple as he bounces onto Ren's back, tackling him to the floor, which makes Ren shift, and they start to play fight.

Not long after, Ainu arrives with Xander, who is four years older than us. His mom is a nurse, so he spends a lot of time with Ainu; he also shifts, and the other two go from being competitors to being on the same team and taking down their big brother.

I help Ainu lay the picnic blanket down and start laying out the food they have brought with them. Nobody mentions the Alpha or what he said. We play, and Ainu reads quietly for what feels like a few hours while the three brothers and I run around the lake.

It's the first time I have seen a shifted shifter, and I have to ask why Ren's Wolf is so

much larger than Xanders even though there is a four-year difference, AINU explains that Alphas tend to be larger and because of evolution and Alphas need to survive to adulthood, they grow quicker to avoid being killed so they can't usurp their pack Alpha. Xander is a similar size to a natural wolf, his head level with Ren's shoulder, which is what he will grow to be, whereas Ren will grow a lot bigger; Jenson's Kitsune is currently the size of a natural Fox, but he will grow to the size Xander is, maybe bigger depending on his power level. The boys even let me ride on their backs when I start to get tired, so I don't miss out.

When AINU calls to say we need to head home, we realize it has not been a few hours, but the whole day, as the sun is starting to set, we eat dinner in the kitchen again. The boys thought it was best to keep me away from the Alpha for a while.

A few months later, Ren and I are down at the stream with AINU and Xander's mom, Lenny. Lenny is an odd name for a girl, but apparently, it's short for something. Lenny had a one-night stand with Gerald before he met AINU, who is his fated mate, which is how Xander is the boy's half-brother, same dad but different moms.

We were all helping AINU dye some fabric to make baby things. Lenny came as AINU isn't moving as well now that she's huge 'Jenson's description, not mine.' I'm sat drawing in a notepad until I need to help next. I hear a noise and look up to see Candice walking down the steps towards the stream.

She's a beta wolf who insists on killer heels and full makeup 24/7. The night before AINU arrived with her father, who was visiting packs to find her mate, the pack had a big bonfire and party, the Alpha 'just in case he met his mate and couldn't deflower any more virgins' held a competition, the unmated females lined up and took a ride to see who could make him cum the most in a 30-minute session, all this was done out in the open where everyone including Xander could see it.

The next day, Gerald met AINU. They were mated immediately and spent the next

month locked in his room until he was sure she was pregnant. By then, Candice had found out that she was Pregnant. She spent the next few months trying to convince Gerald to take her as a mate and have Ainu for breeding while going around telling anyone who would listen that's what was going to happen.

She had Decimus at 7 and a half months, which made him the older Alpha to Ren, who was born two months later. Unlike Xander, though, Gerald didn't claim Decimus, so he didn't get the Alphas name or become Heir.

As you can imagine, that didn't go down well with Candice, and her efforts to get attention and recognition steadily got worse, but back to today's drama.

As she makes it down to the stream, rocking on her heels on the pebble covered floor, she moves to walk over to Lenny, grabbing one of the bags filled with wet fabric and swings it towards Lenny, hitting her in the back.

Lenny falls hitting her head on one of the rocks in the stream bed, as blood starts to flow down the stream. Xander dashed straight to his mom, but as Ainu begins to follow him, Candice swings the bag at her. She lands with a yell, her hands going straight to her stomach.

Candice swings the bag a third time and slams Ainu in the face, throwing her head back with a thud to the stream bed smacking her head on the rocks too.

Ren pounces on Candice, shifting in the process and pinning her to the floor with his jaws around her throat, a constant growl vibrating through his wolf body. Some of the pack overhear the yelling and come to be nosey. On realizing their Luna was bleeding, they rush to help, taking Ainu to the Pack hospital, Lenny unfortunately was pronounced dead at the scene.

As Candice is dragged away to the containment cells, she yells to be unhanded, as

now the weak Kitsune is out of the way; she will now be Luna and her son, the Alpha's Heir. No one is really listening to her, though; their focus is on the Pack Luna.

After getting confirmation that Ainu was doing okay, but the fall brought on the birth and the baby might not make it; the Alpha went straight to the cells and snapped Candice's neck, then told his enforcers to drop her off at the local human crematorium and pay them off to get rid of her, to dispose of the ashes down a drain for all he cared.

While Ainu was giving birth, Ren and Jenson are pacing. I just sit with Xander, holding his hand. He didn't seem to acknowledge what has been said, and the shock seemed to be stopping him from crying.

Aimi was born at 4 pounds 6 ounces. She was a squishy little thing but just as pretty as Mama Lou. She was born through an emergency C-section as Mama Lou was still unconscious, but they needed Aimi to be born, or they would have lost her.

Mama Lou woke up, and all the Alpha did was nod at Aimi, kiss Ainu's forehead, and then leave. Mama Lou was then moved to her room, where she sat propped up with pillows, feeding baby Aimi.

Ren, Jenson, Xander, and I all sat on the bed; I'm sketching. Ren and Jenson are on either side of Mama Lou, and that's what I draw. I then draw one of Xander and his mum sitting with Ainu as it should have been, which he says thank you for when he sees. We all get to have a little hold of Baby Aimi. All of us but Xander are worried we will hurt her, but he was able to hold Ren and Jenson, so it's not his first cuddle with a baby.

Xander had recovered his mom's phone, and he takes some photos. Somehow, we managed to get a selfie with all of us. Mama Lou sits and tells us stories while Jenson

is curled up in his shifted form with baby Aimi curled up in his tails.

Two hours after Mama Lou woke up, she was changing baby Aimi's diaper, 'yuck', when she calls for the doctor.

We all quickly move off the bed and to the sitting area. Baby Aimi makes a choking noise and then stops breathing for 45 minutes. The doctor tries to get her to breathe again, but then he calls her time of death. He turns to his Luna and drops to his knees in our worry for baby Aimi; we hadn't realized that Mama Lou had also stopped breathing.

Her lips are blue, and her skin is so pale that it looks like she is made of wax.

Xander and Ren brake into mournful howls. Jenson buries his face in my neck, his hair turning grey/blue as I feel tears drip onto my neck and run down my face.

That night, we hide in Xander's room. The Alpha goes on a rampage and kills 70 people of all ages. His head enforcer took a stand and tranquillized him before he killed more. Margo explains all this the following day over breakfast and tells us that when your bonded-fated mate dies, most will go feral or die from heartbreak.

The next day, a raft is made of wood, and Mama Lou dressed in a traditional Japanese Kimono and is laid on the raft. Baby Aimi is wrapped in another Kimono and laid on AINU's chest, some cherry blossom branches are laid on them before they are pushed into the lake. When they are around the middle of the pack-lined lake, Xander shoots a flaming arrow at the raft and sets it alight, sending Mama Lou and baby Aimi off to the Moon Goddess; the Alpha isn't there. So, Ren was the head of the ceremony as the pack heir, and there is a small service for Lenny but nothing else.

The four of us learn very quickly to stay out of the Alpha's way and be as invisible as possible.

During his training to take over the pack, the only one he paid attention to is Ren. Jenson seems to make him angrier, as he looks so much like his mother that it was best Gerald didn't have the reminder. He acknowledged Xander's presence, but that was it. Decimus was sent to a shifter version of military school.

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Ember

Just before my sixth birthday, Jenson is sent away, and no matter who Ren asks he can't find out where, we were told it was a school to make him 'grow up and stop being a joker', but something about it doesn't feel right. Xander had already been sent to a private school. So, Ren starts making me sleep in his room so he knows I'm safe and won't disappear in the night, and I was safe... until I wasn't.

Usually, when Ren goes for his Alpha lessons, I would help Margo prepare vegetables or sort something in the kitchen. This time, I hadn't quite got to the kitchen when Pearl, one of the Alphas mistresses, told me my social worker was in the office.

I See Margo frown from the doorway, and then she grabs one of her girls and tells them to get Ren.

The girl, Claire I think, takes a glance at me, eyes wide, then runs towards the training yard.

I follow Pearl towards the Alphas office. Where she knocks, when the "come in" is barked through the door, she goes white and runs off, losing her 6-inch heels in the process, but leaves them there, not wanting to risk turning back. Something was not right, and I knew I was in trouble and not the detention type of trouble, the life-threatening type. As I put my hand on the doorknob, I feel the air change and a presence appears at my back.

I relax, Ren was here, and he would keep me safe. Trusting Ren to get me out of this

office alive, we step into the Alphas office.

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Something wasn't right. Pine, my wolf, and I had been sure of this since Xander had been sent away and then on full alert, since J went, worse still I was told I was to have no contact with my twin. Now Ember was being summoned to Gerald's office when I was conveniently not around.

We step into the office. I see Ember relax a little when she feels me at her back, Mama noticed not long after she got here she had a few shifter traits, her senses and reflexes are so much better than humans, but they aren't quite as good as shifters, a few times she let slip she could see more than she was meant to, Mama Recommended she show some traits like scenting the air when meeting someone new. When Mama asked Gerald about her heritage, he turned smug.

"Her Social worker has shown me proof of her breeding, shame she is a broken bitch, probably why her mother discarded her" Mama wasn't happy with the information and gave Emmy a little more love after that.

Both Pine and I like the fact she feels safe with us around. I don't fully understand why, and Pine just rolls his eyes at me when I ask. Gerald is standing by his desk when we walk in. He sees me, and his face forms into a sneer.

"You haven't been requested yet, son. I guess we will skip a step." Before Ember and I can blink, he grabs her, rips the back of her dress away, and has her pinned face down to his desk, her toes only just touching the floor. I've seen him do similar things to his mistresses when I'm being taught how to treat females, and I'm hoping he doesn't do the same thing to her. Luckily, his trousers are still done up!

Ember's eyes are trained on me, not blinking when I make eye contact. I can see how

much trust she has in me. She knows it will be worse if she fights, so she waits.

Pine is clawing at my insides to get Gerald's hands off her and back safe with us.

Gerald, still sneering at me, starts reaching for his belt, and even my lungs freeze, my heart beating in my ears is all I hear not even Embers ragged breathing, I hold my breath!

"You have a choice, son," he says, the word son like it is poison on his tongue.

"Choose, I can fuck this little bitch now, or Rafe can start breaking in your excuse for a twin." Rafe is the head Enforcer, and a blood mage/wolf hybrid. He has made comments to J for years about breaking him in.

I obviously take too long to answer, and he takes it as my choice for him to have Ember.

Emmy closes her eyes and if possible, she goes even more still, as Pine surges forward, shifting mid-leap.

I knock Gerald away from my mate, clawing at his chest as I do. He lets out a roar, but it gets caught in his throat as I tear his neck with my teeth, spraying his blood over the room, Ember and my fur.

Before his body settles on the floor, I shift back and turn to Ember, hoping she's ok, a quick glance and both of us blowing out a relieved breath, is all I get before the door opens.

I push Ember behind me, taking on a partial shift for the first time, my hands turning to claws, my face elongating to a snout, I claw Rafe from nuts to nostrils, then shift back to my Human form as I hear Ember gasp, at the same time, I see why.

Someone unknown standing behind where Rafe's body is now in a bloody pile, with his innards spilling out, his blood mingling with that of the Alphas Shit!

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“Maybe we should step outside!” The stranger says as he pulls out his phone and heads outside. Ren slips his hoodie over my head and pulls the dress off my arms before threading my arms into the sleeves. The hoodie falls to my knees, so it’s pretty much a dress anyway. He grabs my hand in a vice grip, his body tense and ready for another attack. Leading me outside. I knew he would never let me be hurt, and I was safe with him there in the room. I never expected him to kill Gerald for me; I hold his hand like it is my only lifeline; if I let go, I will start to cry, and I would rather do that after a shower when I’m curled up safe in Ren’s room later, not where the whispers about the weak, worthless human will start making rounds again.

More people we don’t know start to arrive. Margo starts barking orders and bossing the stranger around.

An hour later, Ren gets pulled away by a man who feels familiar, but I can’t work out why.

More time passes, I just sit and watch, trying to process what this means for me now, I hear a familiar car pull up, and before I can shout for Ren, Jameson grabs the scruff of my neck and puts something that smells odd over my nose and mouth – my last view is of Ren, standing tall as if he was an adult not six years old, he has been forced to become older, more mature when Mama Lou was around he had times he was allowed to be a boy since he has been heir to the pack nothing more, I reach up and feel the corduroy jacket sleeve under my fingers as everything falls black.

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I explain as much as I can to Enforcer Trunk. It's an odd name! He says his true name is a traditional Cherokee name, and it's easier to go by his nickname. I just want to get back to Ember.

All the new people are giving her a wide berth, thinking she's a poor human that's got mixed up in shifter problems. I've told Enforcer Trunk that's not the case, and I want her to stay with me wherever I go so she's safe, and he has promised to try.

I won't stay here, there are nothing but bad memories for me here, and other than a few low-ranking pack members the other enjoy how Gerald ran the pack, and that wouldn't be my way, I want to be liked and respected not feared, as far as I'm concerned right now I never want my own pack, and it definitely won't be here, the place my Mother and baby sister was killed, the place where my Twin was shunned for not being a wolf, the place my Father tried to rape my mate, no I want us away from this place.

We hear a car backfire for the second time, and as I turn to check where Ember is and which car is making the noise, she isn't where I left her, I run over to where I had left her sitting on a wood pile. There's an odd smell I can't place, and I smell the scent of someone that I smelled on Ember when she first arrived. Enforcer Trunk follows me over and inhales, followed by a growl, "Jameson," is the only thing I understand before he starts yelling into his phone in what I can only guess is Cherokee.

"Jameson is Ember's social worker," I say but finish my statement in my head, that he's retaken her to goddess knows where. I snatch Enforcer Trunk's phone.

"I will go to this pack you want me to, but on three conditions."

He blinks at me as I slam the phone back to his chest. He presses a button so I can hear the person on the other end of the phone, too. I slam my Alpha dominance out, making a fair few people drop to their knees, and everyone looks at me. Ember used to giggle when I tried to use my Alpha commands on her, saying it tickled,

“Okay lad, my Alpha is on the other end of the phone, and it’s his pack you will be going to.” Enforcer Trunk’s Knees wobble with the force of my command.

I take a deep breath and pull back some of the dominance I’m throwing out.

“My name is Alpha Dominic Ivanova, I will be your guardian when you arrive at the TripleMoon pack. What are your conditions Alpha Firefall?” I look around and I can see I’m still being watched, Margo has a proud look and her face and she gives me a nod, before heading off else where, I look at Enforcer Trunk rather than a faceless phone.

“Xander, my half-brother, was sent to a private school. He comes with me!” Trunk nods, and Alpha Dominic, asks for the details of the school. I know some, as Xander has been sending me letters via Margo.

“You find my twin and bring him back to me.” Again, I give what information I have, but we haven’t communicated since he left, and our twin link is blocked. I can hear typing on the other end of the phone, so the Alpha must be making notes as we speak:

“Finally, you Find Ember before Jameson puts my mate somewhere she will never be found.” It was the first time I’d voiced it, and it only really clicked; that’s what she was to me when I saw my father pin her as he did. I may only be 6 years old, but I know the type of person he is just from Gerald’s first statement on Ember’s arrival.

“Okay, kid, I’ve got some basic information from you and will go more in-depth when you get here. Grab what stuff of yours and theirs you want to keep, and Henry

will give you a ride home while Trunk finishes up there,” Alpha Dominic concludes before hanging up.

When we realized Ember had gone, Pine started chanting in my head, “mate gone, find, need safe”. He’s known since that first meeting when she was curled up asleep in that chair. The stranger that had been behind Rafe comes over,

“Hey kid, I’m Henry. Do you want help getting your stuff?”

I shake my head and head off to Xander’s room. Most of his stuff is still packed from moving in after we lost our moms. I stack it all outside his door and then head to Jay’s room. Pulling down two suitcases, I throw his essentials in including the drawings and photos he has around the room and then whatever clothes fit, again sitting them at his door. Henry and a young guy called Jaelan are standing in the hall,

“Want us to start taking this down?” I sigh but nod. I will be out of here quicker if they’d helped. I head into Ember’s room, grab the few items that are still in there, and then dump them on my bed. Going back out, I Grab Mama Lou’s old travel set; they are massive trunks, the largest is still full of her Kimonos, and the smallest has her family Jewelry in them. They both get left in the hall; the other three I take in my room, the largest empty one I fill with Ember’s sketch pads and art supplies. I fold one of her blankets on top to stop it all moving around; the next, I put all her clothes in, adding the quilt Mama Lou made me. The final one, I collect all of the books and things of Mama Lou’s I managed to hide before Gerald got rid of them, including the photos of us Xander took on his moms phone before Mama Lou and baby Aimi died.

Finally, I grab my two cases down and pile as much of my clothes and stuff in. Grabbing my backpack and throwing what’s left of Jay’s snacks in that Ember and I have been munching since he left. I throw Lenny’s phone and charger in there, too.

We get the last of the stuff loaded into Henry’s Truck. I jump in the front seat, I don’t

look back as we drive away. There is nothing left for me there now; they can burn it to the ground for all I care. I know the pack was looking to me to lead, but those who knew me knew I was leaving as soon as possible, not wanting anything to do with the WolfBlood Pack.

I tried again to reach J through our twin link, but there is nothing there. Mama said it was a Kitsune thing, but I'm wondering if it doesn't work over long distances, I only ever got feelings when he was in his human form, but we could talk when we were both shifted. For the first time in my life, I'm entirely alone.

I've failed as an Alpha.

I don't deserve the pack even if I wanted it.

Both my brothers have been taken from me, I lost my mate when she was sitting a few feet away from me. I failed to protect them but once I have them back, I will not fail them again!

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Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 4:19 am

Aged 6 years old

I wake up slumped on the back seat of the car. Jameson ranting into his phone,

“I’ve driven all night, not stopped once. The TripleMoon pack Enforcer was there. I’m getting her as far away as possible. This broken brat isn’t worth it, no matter what her DNA tells us.” He’s running his hands through his hair and over his face,

“She is, think how we can use her to keep SRU if not Him off our backs, especially if we can keep her hidden until she is breed-able, the money some will pay for her to bare their offspring, knowing she is of that bloodline, whether she is broken or not” the voice has a southern accent but a very faint one, none of that charisma that normally accompanies it

“Let me know when the lab is back up and running, and I will bring her in, maybe they were wrong, I’m hoping this place will scare something out of her, it could all just be dormant.” He grunts and then turns the radio on, throwing his phone in the passenger seat. It’s been hours since I last saw Ren, and the GPS says four hours till the destination. I miss Ren already, but I won’t cry, not until I’m away from Jameson.

I hope Ren stays calm and doesn’t let Pine take over until he gets his brothers safe.

An hour later, Jameson pulls over for gas and leaves me in the car for 45 minutes. I guess he got food because he comes back smelling of grease and coffee—not the nice kind. He’d also changed his clothes and brushed his hair. I sat up while he was gone and put my seat belt on, not that he acknowledges me when he get back in.

I'm still covered in Gerald, and Rafe's blood which has gone crusty and flaking out of my hair.

Luckily, Ren took my dress off so the hoody isn't covered, so I was a little more comfortable, even more so with his scent around me; he always smelt of freshly fallen snow, and when his wolf came to the surface, he smelled of Pine trees, which is why I started calling his wolf Pine. We finally arrive at our destination, which is a barbed wire compound-looking place. HellBlood Motorcycle Club is sprayed on the plywood and wire gate that we enter through.

In front of the main building, rows of bikes are parked with men leaning against them. Women in underwear walk around and rub up against the men, and some women are on their knees in front of them, too.

I don't pay too much attention to them as Jameson heads into the building. Five minutes later, he exits with a boy around Xander's age. Jameson opens my door, "Out" is all the directive I'm given. Jameson shuts my door, circles the car, and drives off again.

"Well then!" I turn to the boy, hoping he has orders to take me to a shower, or some form of water so I can get cleaned up.

I let my sight work and see he's a canine-type shifter, but I'm not familiar with what type. It's definitely bigger than a wolf. His skin is like leather, and he has fire in his eyes. I pretend to sniff the air as if I'm scenting. Ren and Jenson always told me to show some shifter traits so I don't appear fully human and that it covers any slips I make about my sight.

When I look up at his face, he's staring open-mouthed at the gate from which Jameson left. Dust from his tyres drifting in the air.

When he finally snaps out of it, he gives me a sympathetic look then gives a head tilt to follow him; he walks to a building I hadn't noticed before. It's a cute little cottage, the type you find in fairytale books. Now I've seen it, I can't believe I'd missed it. It's so pretty and serene, homely, loved. I jump when the boy speaks, a small squeak leaving me.

"I'm Layton, but the others just call me Lay. Your social worker is a piece of work. Is he always like that?" I look up at him as he leads me around the side of the cottage,

"Erm! Yeah! I haven't seen him for a few years, but yeah, he's normally worse!" My stomach grumbles as the smell of food seeps out the open window. Lay chuckles and opens the door, kicking his shoes off, just as I'm getting my second one off, thinking they would be best thrown in the trash, but I might be able to get them clean. I freeze at a booming voice.

"Layton!! What are you doing sneaking in the side door?" I take a steadying breath as I step towards the door. Lay glances at me over his shoulder, then points with a thumb in my direction.

"Guessed Nonna didn't want her sprinkling blood flakes everywhere, not since she finally got the carpet clean from Ryland rolling mud everywhere." Layton walks over to the fridge and pulls out sandwich fixings. The man in the kitchen looks at me, then when his eyes go wide, he walks through a door behind him and down a hall.

"Nonna need you down here. Bring some of Cin's clothes he's grown out of." I don't hear a reply, but the man walks over to me and kneels down.

"Now, sweetheart, go through that door and get yourself cleaned up in the shower." He points to one of the doors behind me and gives me a sniff.

"My ma... Wife will bring you some clean clothes. Do you want to keep anything

you're wearing?" I nod and tug the hoodie slightly. He nods and smiles.

"Okay, then. Once you are clean and dressed, we will get you some food. Layton, you may need more than one hoagie. Her tummy sounds like a bear coming out of hibernation." He ends with a chuckle. I take a breath and head into the bathroom.

Behind me, I hear a stern but kind feminine voice.

"What do you mean you didn't ask her name?" the female voice sounds exasperated.

"Did you say she smelt of wolf blood? Is it hers? What has that son of yours done now!" The last part is a statement, and I hear the man grumble,

"Why's he my son when he's done something wrong but ours when he's good?" I flick the shower on and turn to take Ren's hoodie off when there is a knock on the door. I open it and come face to face with a plump woman who instantly makes me think of a grandmother baking cookies in the kitchen. She even smells like warm cookies.

"Hello sweetie, I bought you some clothes. They might be a little big, though. My dolt of a mate didn't ask your name!" She waits, holding out the clothes, with a kind smile on her face

", my name is ." My voice is croaky from the need for a drink. She smiles.

"Is any of that blood yours? Are you hurt?" she asks as I place the clothes by the sink.

"No, I'm not hurt. If you wash my hoody, will it lose its scent? It's my friends!" I don't give her any more information than I need to, even though she seems safe. I don't want to give too much away yet.

“I can use a special soap that leaves traces of scent on them but gets rid of dirt. Don’t worry about that. You get clean and then come get some food.” She pulls the door closed and leaves me alone, I can hear talking but not the words.

I quickly shower, not wanting to use too much hot water. I had to wash my hair three times to remove all the blood, and I still don’t think I got all of it. When I return to the kitchen, the sandwiches Lay made are waiting for me, along with a hot cocoa.

The grown-ups introduce themselves. Nonna is called Natalie, but as everyone else calls her Nonna, I’m to follow suit. Pops, her mate, is really named Reginald, but he hates it and don’t even think of calling him Reggy, so Pops it is – they are Grandmother and Grandfather to all, even those not theirs by blood.

Their son is the President of the motorcycle club. Pops used to be but retired when his son turned 21, just like his father before him, but he wanted to spend more time with Nonna and working on his bikes. Nonna and Pops look after most of the club kids, most being products of one-night stands with club bunnies (the girls I saw when I arrived). They try to get pregnant, hoping one of the guys will make them their old lady/wife, but none of the men are interested. They like the stream of new girls to play with on the regular.

Layton and Decon are the eldest at eleven years old; their mom ran off after she realized she wasn’t getting a ring on her finger; they are twins but not identical.

Then there’s Bear and Rachet, who are nine – different dads. Bear is the vice president’s son, Rachet is the Master at Arm’s kid, Silas is eight, and he’s the Priest’s son, Link is seven years old and the tech guy’s son, and then there is Ryland, who is the Pres’s son, Ajax is the master at arm’s son too, and Cin who is also the V.P’s son, they are all five years old, born a few days apart. Even though all but the Twins have different moms who are no longer around, Pops and Nonna have raised them all. Oh, and they are all Hell Hounds! Yeah, I didn’t realize that was a thing.

While I'm eating, Ryland appears at the door with a fluffy pink teddy bear under his arm. As soon as I'm finished, he says something to Pops, who shrugs. Ryland grabs my hand.

"She sleeps in our room." I'm then dragged upstairs, where I end up plopped in the middle of a queen-sized bed and become part of a three-hound puppy pile, Ryland curled around his teddy. Right before I zonk out, I hear Lay chuckle. "She's been snagged by the litter already, then." Then I fall asleep. I don't feel as safe as I did with Ren and Jenson, but it's a close second.

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Ember

I won't bore you with every group home and crappy placement I ended up in after I left the Hounds. We drove 6 hours to a group home. It was never a short drive between places. I realized when I was older, he was keeping me away from certain people, and if my name was flagged on a system somewhere, I was quickly moved again.

I was at the group home a month, before an 18-hour drive to the Twin-Trees pack. Again, when they realized I was 'human,' I was dismissed, given a room in the servant quarters, and put to work. By April, I was back in another group home. I met a boy called Creed; he was the first person since Ren and Jenson I told the truth about my 'sight.'

He was another new I didn't understand. One night, I found him sitting on the roof, watching a group of teenagers hanging out.

"Hey, mind if I sit? I can't sleep." I ask him, hoping he won't care. He just shrugs, so I sit with my legs hanging over the edge like his are.

We sit in silence for a while before I speak again.

"I know everyone thinks I'm human, but I just think I'm a broken supe. I can see auras kinda, no, that's not right." I hum an unknown tune, trying to think how to explain it. The easiest way, in the end, was to show him. I get my notebook out and draw him how I see him.

Half his face was him in his human form and how most of the world see him; the other looks airbrushed with wolflike features, sharp canines, pointed furry ears, a more pointed angular face but smooth, almost seductive even at 7 years old. When I was finished I hand him the pad

“This is how I see the world, but I’ve never seen anyone like you before.” He stares at the drawing for so long that I start to worry, I made a mistake by asking him, showing him,

“Is this why you don’t make eye contact and don’t look at people's faces often?” he asked in a gentle voice.

“Yes, it makes me dizzy sometimes, especially hybrids when their dual natures are fighting for dominance,” I say as he gives me the pad back before sighing.

“I’m a wolf/incubus hybrid, but my wolf side just changed my features. I can’t actually shift.” he starts to tense, then carries on,

“I come up here to feed on the older kid’s emotions. I don’t really like being touched, so I feed from residual stuff.” I hum, not really knowing what to say.

Sometime later, as we head back inside, one of the orderlies tells Creed he will be moving to a pack tomorrow and his brother will meet him there. Then, with a smirk, he informs me that I will be heading to the Den, a facility that only a few people came back from.

I was in the Den from May 1st till December 25th. It wasn’t as bad as I thought it would be, not good by any stretch of the imagination but not as bad, dry bread and a plastic cup of water twice a day and flavored water masquerading as soup in the evenings, weekly communal showers, as in we stand in a room with tepid water rained on us then given a clean scrub.

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I have been in this Hell for six years—no, that’s the wrong name. It must be Heaven, where only salad was a food option, no cake, milkshakes, or pancakes. ‘Mmmmmmm, I’m hungry.’ The fog was thick today, making it easier to zone out and not listen to or feel what was happening to me or around me.

She was due back soon. I’ll be force-fed those pills that make my ding-a-ling hard, and she would run her red-painted nails down my chest or through my hair while grinding her foot on me. They never take my boxers off, thankfully, but I will be strapped to a metal chair. She is always naked, thinking I was enjoying her rock-solid fake boobs in my face. I’m glad they shaved my hair last week when there was an outbreak of lice. At least she can’t use it to pull my head to try to kiss me with her granny-wrinkled lips. YUCK!

“The freak’ll spaz out.” Huh, I thought Brian had been moved to another place. What have I done this time? Maybe this time he starts shit, I’ll break one of his shin bones... maybe a wrist...

WAIT!

Something else starts breaking through the fog, someone is singing in Japanese

“rainfall moon hidden behind clouds when I am a bride, who shall I go with?”

Wait, that’s Amerfuri Otsuki Rainfall Moon. Mother used to sing that when she was sewing, but the voice is wrong! Slowly, I come out of the fog, but I must be dreaming. Quinny wouldn’t be here. Ren would have her somewhere safe, but as she smiles, I don’t care.

I pounce, holding her as tight as I can, and wedge my nose behind her ear, surrounded by her hair and scent. I just breathe her in 'Smores'; that's what she smells of to me. Ren was adamant she smelt of Cherry Blossoms and snow, but to me, it was always gooey, hot smores.

Just as I was getting over the shock that Quinny was here and in my arms, she breathes out,

“Trick, I’ve missed you,” with a sigh, then one of the dick orderlies, Calvin, speaks,

“Well, it looks like our broken fox has some kryptonite after all. Take them to the lab. I’ll get Doctor Smyth.” I couldn’t even croak a sorry to Quinny before we were both strapped to metal.

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Definitely not the type of lab I expected.

Trick looks like he is going to throw up as he sees them strap me into a similar chair opposite him. Doctor Smyth, or that's who I presume it is with the white coat that enters the room. I recognize the file he's going through as mine and internally panic when he raises his eyebrows and a cruel smirk works its way across his face,

"Human drugs react like they do in supes and burn through your system too quickly to influence." Trick starts to have a panicked look as he watches the Doctor not blinking,

"and it seems supe drugs have odd effects." He turns to a female nurse, who has a slight look of fear, but she doesn't try to help either of us,

"Give her a one-month birth control injection!" turning back to me,

"Have you started your monthlies?" I know there is no point in lying, so I gave the most honest answer I can, but I can tell he isn't happy about it.

"Yes, I started when I was nine, but I've only had six since then. They aren't regular." He hums, leaves orders for us to be left in our chairs but hooked up to monitors and have regular blood taken.

Forty-five minutes later, I feel odd, and I can see something affecting Trick, but I don't know what, as they have only taken his vitals so far. When the nurse comes in, she pricks my finger and makes a drop of blood fall into the test tube that has a cloudy liquid in it.

She swirls it until it turns a turquoise colour. Trick goes shockingly paler and starts to shake his head. An orderly walks in and forces blue pills down Trick's throat and then most of a bottle of water to make sure they have gone down.

He's then dragged out of the room, and I'm frog-marched in a similar direction, we are put in the same bedroom, and just before they slam the door shut, the Doctor appears again.

“You will remain in this room until the effects wear off. He is there for you to use as you see fit. He may say no, but he enjoys it. We will let Mrs Sinclair know you won't be available for this month's feed.” I see Trick flinch, recoil and sag in relief in the same breath, and I just blink at Doctor Dickhead.

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This book contains triggers that include:

Threat of child rape.

Child molesting.

Child torture.

Child abuse.

Child neglect.

Death of a baby. **

Murder/Manslaughter

Child Abandonment.

A child being forced to take drugs.

There are some references to trafficking.

Death of a family member (cancer)

Chapter 4 is a Trigger Warning

Also, because this series takes place in a supernatural view, there are references to

age gap fated mates.

The next Chapter holds the darkest moments of Jenson's time within this series, after this chapter things do get better, but my ARC (advanced readers copy) readers felt this chapter needed an extra warning.

Consider Yourselves Warned.

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Ember

It takes Trick an hour to explain that Mrs. Sinclair is a Succubus that comes, grinds on a Viagra-filled Jenson so she can feed, and sometimes her husband likes to watch. We also worked out that the pills the orderlies gave him were Viagra to help me through the mating heat caused by the birth control.

I guess I will have to find another way to stop pregnancies then, not that I wanted sex any time soon, after everything we witnessed with Gerald and then the club bunnies.

We overhear Doctor Dickhead on the phone saying if I get pregnant, they will have off-the-books specimens to see if I pass on my deformities but have a Kitsunes abilities.

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“Do you think I can cut it off with a plastic knork? Or will disinfectant work?” I try to be light-hearted with my question, but right now, I’m serious. Quinny looks sad.

“How long has this been happening?” she uses a soft voice, but I can hear the anger she’s trying to control.

“The first time I’ve had my boxers off, and she’s done more than just sit and grind. He’s never done more than watch before, either.” I don’t tell her about the whispered promises, and I hope like hell they never let the badger touch Quinny as Sune, my alter will take complete control, and I don’t know what will happen.

The door opens, and five vampires position themselves around Quinny.

As one, they lean down and bite into her; two take an ankle each, two on her hips, and number five bites her left shoulder. It takes me less than a minute to realize Quinny has pain in her eyes, which are still fixed on mine. The fuckers aren’t using their venom to numb the pain. She is feeling every pull of her blood.

After 5 minutes, they stop the fuckers don’t even seal the wounds.

We are returned to the shower room and again rinsed off before being given some scrubs to put on. I’m having to support Quinny as she’s so weak. I’m not sure how much either of us can take before we have to take matters into our own hands, or it just kills us.

Ember

Luckily for us, we are left out of experiments and visits for a few months. They then start doing blood tests, and the doctor bursts out laughing when he runs my DNA, then gleefully tells me my biological family wants nothing to do with a broken thing like me. I wait for the hurt, but it doesn't come, and I shrug, which seems to annoy him.

In August, something goes wrong, and the facility gets some new staff mixed with the old. When I say wrong, I mean for the doctors and orderlies, not us patients.

When THE CAGE is eventually shut down, we find out that some of the new staff were undercover SRU agents. We all end up at a temp group home, where we are stuffed with food, given three sets of new clothes each, some trainers, and a pair of winter boots, coat, sweater, hat, gloves, and scarves.

Proper doctors give check-ups, and no blood is taken unless necessary, but it is noted that I need to be added to the system and have my DNA run.

Surprisingly, Doctor Smyth wasn't really a doctor. He bought his White coat on Zon. A few social workers turn up at the temp home in September. Thankfully, none I recognize. We arrived on September 3rd.

On the 15 th, a Social Worker in his early 20s pulls Trick and Bram aside to let them know they are being taken to an exchange with Giovanni Michaels, who will take them to their new home with Tricks brothers. Some orderlies turned up 3 days ago, and some I do recognize. Unfortunately, one of those leans towards me,

“Jameson will be picking you up at five. Be ready or else.” I nod and decide to go for a walk.

I take a last look at Jenson and Bram, the former excited and worried to see his brothers again, a smile covers my lips before I try to bury my emotions, I turn and walk away.

Through the Grove of trees behind the home is a rock pool, which is where I end up. I sit looking at the water, feeling helplessness wash over me. I reach forward and find a piece of slate; I know Trick and Bram will be safe with Ren and Xander. I take the slate and cut between my right wrist and elbow.

I don't feel the pain like I should, I think after the Vampies pain is different now. I just watch as blood runs down my arm and drips from my fingers on to the mud under my knees, seeping into the pool of water before me, after a while my head feels fuzzy and I lay down and just watch the sky.

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I'm going back to Ren. I know where Quinny is, and as soon as I tell him, I bet he will return her to us where she is safe. She has always belonged with us, and I will be having words of how she ended up with me instead of staying with him when I see him.

During our month of isolation, she caught me up on what happened. I turn but can't see her, I catch her scent, and follow it. Maybe she's worried her shit social work is going to get her again.

Suddenly, Sune goes on full alert and takes over. He sets us off in a sprint just as I catch the scent of her blood. Who the fuck hurt her? As I break through the tree line, I realize she's alone, slumped on the floor by the rock pool, her blood seeping into the water and earth and a piece of slate in her hand. There is a cut on her right forearm.

I grab her princess style and using an extra boost from Sune. I sprint to the hospital. The group home is 5 minutes closer, but I doubt they can help her there. Somehow, the cut is starting to heal, and there is a subtle lilac glow to it. As I pass a reflective surface, I notice my hair has also turned Lilac. 'Great Sune, what's that mean? Come on, Quinny, wake up so you can explain you're the smart one here.' I get to the main desk, and the nurse has her back to me.

"Help, please, my friend needs help." Thank God the nurse is a supe.

"She's allergic to supe meds, and human stuff doesn't work. She has wolf blood but can't shift." The nurse blinks but one glance at Ember, and she tells me to follow her. She uses butterfly bandages to hold the slash together. That lilac glow disappears if I'm not touching her, so I hold her left hand. Maybe the lilac is healing? Hopefully

Ren took some of Mamas books with him so I can work out what makes Sune tick.

Max, the social worker who told me about returning to Ren, turns up, but I refuse to leave until she wakes. I explained that HER social worker was bad news and that she did this because he would be coming for her.

He promises to see what he can do and calls Giovanni to say there has been a delay. He asks about her going with us, but where I'm heading only takes in boys. They will see if they can find somewhere close by, but that could take some time, which Quinny doesn't really have.

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I wake to the pressure of someone holding my hand. “Thank the goddess, you're awake. I need to leave soon, but I wanted to know you're okay.” I open my eyes to a ruffled Trick. The clock above the door says 7 p.m. Trick looks so sad, and his hair has gone grey/blue, the color of the sky right before a storm.

“Promise me, ! Never again!” I blink. He hasn't called me since before his mom died,

“I promise, Trick, I'm just scared to be alone again.” I try not to cry, but I'm drained physically, mentally, and emotionally. He kisses my temple as Max walks in.

“Jenson, we need to go. Someone is on the way to take over Miss Ashes' care, but you and Bramley need to be taken to Giovanni, as he has someone else to collect.” Jenson nods and kisses my temple again.

“Remember your promise, Quinny,” he sighs.

“ Remember, we love you, and you will be home with us soon .” He slips into Japanese. Tears stream down my face.

“ I love you.” I reply, He hugs me and whispers,

“Home.” I hear him say ‘soon’ as the door shuts. Blackness then takes me as I fall asleep.

I know as I wake, I'm not in the hospital anymore or in a car. I have no idea where I am, and I'm lying on something cold and hard. The air smells damp and musty like I'm underground. I can hear the buzz of artificial light, so that's a bonus?. I think! I

sit up and look around: concrete walls, steal door with a viewing window, dirt floor, there's a wooden toilet in the corner, but it looks like there is a bucket in the base not plumbed in, there's a wooden shipping crate with a thin blanket for a bed, which I am laid next to.

Yup, Jameson is pissed, and I'm fucked. Ren and Jenson won't ever find me here, and I will be lucky if Dex and Levi can reach me here. I get 'My Chemical Romance-I'm Not OK' in my head – brilliant, nothing like my inner monologue confirming my fears.

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“Third times the charm,” she whispers, and then the smell of blood hits my nose.

Using my shadows, I hold the wounds together and stop the blood loss. In my nightmare form, I can only speak demon, which is basically Latin, I mutter to myself as I take note of the markings on the wall when the girl in my arms speaks perfect Latin.

“ You can escape the runes; only stop a level nine or below! You’re a level ten, nearly an Alpha! Go, find someone to help the others.” I growl my answer,

“ If I leave to get help, my shadows won’t hold long enough for your wounds to heal, and I’m not strong enough to take you with me unless I fully feed and the door is open.” which will break one of the runes, ‘idiots.’

The one on the floor is pointless against a level ten. I look down and notice her eyes catch a small amount of light and shine like stars as she gives me a small smile,

“My biological family abandoned me at birth as they didn’t want a broken supe. I can’t take any more of this. Let me go, but first feed from my bad memories and save everyone else.” She presses her forehead against mine, not caring what I look like, and whispers,

“See.” In Latin, she shows me all the bad things in her life, trusting me with every ounce of her being.

It’s like watching the worst of foster care in fast forwards. No wonder she has given up and tried to end it all. She’s good at keeping those she cares for out of view or

fuzzy. I decide as the reel starts to slow to her time here in the pit that I will save her, even if it takes a month for her arms to heal. As she gets to the end, I see why I scared her when I looked up.

I tell her I will get us both out and that she should try to get some sleep. Thankfully, she does, somehow trusting I won't hurt her even in this form.

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It's been two weeks since my Dark Angel saved me.

My arms are nearly healed, and he made me make a shadow promise that I would never try to take my life. I now have a small black rune on my forearm; if I am ever close to death, he will know and come for me. Apparently, when I showed him the bad cliffnotes of my life, he also saw all of my oddities, including how I knew he was showing as a lower level than he actually is.

I understand why he does it, and I don't care.

We start to plan our escape. He insists on taking me with him as he doesn't trust Bodhi or the other guards but Troy while he's finding someone to help.

One night, after the lights go out, there is banging and yelling in the hall.

Our door is flung open, and before I can blink, my dark angel shadow travels us. I feel my consciousness slip. We'd been on bare rations, only getting fed every other day.

"Hello, she needs fluids but no drugs. She's allergic." I black out before I hear him finish telling the nurse, but I did notice he had shifted to his human form, but because of the angle, I couldn't see anything but his hand around my leg.

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Ember

“Good morning, Miss. Today is a sunny day and a new month. It’s July 1st. I always love this time of year.” I hear shuffling, and then the kind female voice sounds again. She has an accent, but I can’t place it,

“I do hope you wake up today, or they are going to try drugs, and your friend said that would make you worse.” I lick my dry lips,

“I’m awake! What, friend?” My voice is raspy and more of a croak. She squeaks and spins to face me before smacking the doctor’s bell and then getting a plastic cup with a straw and holding it to my lips,

“Small sips,” she says with a smile before answering some of my questions,

“The nice young man said you called him Dark angel!” She smiles again,

“Odd nickname. His hair was so blonde it was nearly white. He said he would come back to check on you, but he had to find his baby brother first.” The doctor comes in and does my vitals. I try not to flinch, but Nurse Shield stays with me because of my obvious fear of doctors.

They want to keep me in for a bit to get my weight up and my appetite back to healthy, rather than in small amounts, like I’m used to.

Nurse Shield is lovely, as I don’t have visitors, she brings her lunch or cup of tea in during her break and has a chat with me about her hobbies, whether she’s trying to

decided which knitting pattern to try next or a recipe she isn't sure she will like, she did completely lose me when she was talking about her garden as she was using the Latin names, I speak Latin but I have no idea about plants.

On my fifth day, her husband pops his head in because she left her phone at home. I end up choking on my own tea when I see him. He is a Gold and Green Dragon; I breathe out a shakily and wince as I realize my mistake,

“Highness” while averting my eyes and dipping my head.

Mama Lou had home-schooled us and told us about most of the Royal lines.

His eyes go wide as Nurse Shield quickly closes my door.

“My name is Dantillian Scaith or Dan Shield, and this is my mate, Elise. You're not in trouble, but how do you know I'm from the royal line?” I look between him and his mate, who is very human and looks worried, and take a deep breath.

“All my life, I have been able to see what people are when they have an alternate form. I can see your dragon side as clearly as your human face.” I went on to explain. I keep some things back not ready for all of my oddities to be on show. Somewhere in my life, I gained the ability to know if someone would harm me if they knew my oddities or if I was safe. After some extra questions, I explained to Dan that my social worker was bad news and gave him pretty much my entire history, including the confirmation I've had DNA done but they just don't want me. He was satisfied and reached out to a lawyer friend to see where I stand on getting help. It takes a gentle look from Elise for him not to track down my Bio family, and pointed out that could alert my social worker to where I am.

On July 8th, Dan and Elise took me home. They found a trustworthy social worker, and I was, for the first time in my life, legally placed in a foster home. It was odd as

hell, and I felt like Dan and Elise always looked at me with sympathy and anger that wasn't directed at me. Elise burst into tears so often that I started to feel like I was causing problems, it stopped after a few months, when we all realized I was safe.

I have my own room, new clothes and shoes, three hot meals a day, school, and two people who care about me.

The money the government gives to those who foster Dan and Elise decided they would put it in a bank account in my name to use for whatever I wanted. They also gave me an allowance that I got paid for getting good grades and helping with chores.

Elise teaches me how to cook, including an English roast with Yorkshire puddings, which was a definite favorite. She grew up in Wales, and Dan was originally from Ireland. Dan teaches me something new every Saturday after I've finished my homework.

He found out I could speak Russian, Irish, Cherokee, Japanese, and Latin. He was also shocked at my knowledge of runes and Supernatural types. He has taught me Welsh, French, Italian, and German, as well as Supernatural History and anything else that caught my eye in his Library.

He soon found out I had a photographic memory; I can read, write, or draw anything, and I will remember it. I had a habit of picking a random book off the shelf and reading it; then, over Sunday dinner, Dan will quiz me.

When I restart school in September, I'm called in for a meeting with my Guidance Counselor.

Ms Volks is a Succubus, but she's unlike the pampered princesses I've met.

She lives in Primark clothes minus the killer shoes and handbags that probably cost

the same as a house. My oddities show she's a strong succubus, and she can feed from residual emotions, which are huge in high school. She's best friends with and has a huge history with the AP English and Art teachers, which are two of my favourite classes.

I learned that the art teacher is next in line for the Vampire throne. The English teacher is his personal guard and has been for at least two centuries, if not more.

Prince Liam Gideonson is eccentric, to say the least. You never know the music soundtrack to our art lessons – one week was ABBA, and the week before was Slipknot, but he is a fantastic artist, and I've learned so much from him. The same for Sir Nathaniel King. He was born solely to protect Liam. They are 6 days apart in age – he's not as eccentric as Liam but just as much a fantastic teacher.

When I get called into Ms. Volks's office, I panic a little as I see Dan looking so disappointed that I can't bring myself to look at Elise, trying to work out what I've done wrong,

"Why didn't you tell us, Emmy? We would help and support you!" Dan says, almost sighing the words. I can't bring myself to look up from my feet; I still don't know what I've done.

"What is our next step?" Elise asks. Fuck! Are they sending me away? Ms Volks answers, but it just makes me more confused,

"Once the exams are over, she will then need to make a choice. This could get her out of the system and become more independent." I look up, frowning, and finally say,

"What exams? Do you want me to leave? Have I done something wrong?" I say all this, fighting back tears, and Dan's face changes. His dragon flashes in his eyes as he speaks,

“Emmy, you’re not going anywhere. If we didn’t think it would bring Jameson back on your scent, we would adopt you. This is because the teachers are struggling to teach you. You are so far ahead of your peers. They want you to take your exams, graduate, and go to college.” He says this with a pleading tone and sympathetic eyes. I release a massive sigh.

“Ok, I’ll take the exams. The classes are starting to get boring.” Elise laughs, and Dan rolls his eyes, but I see pride shining through them.

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Creed

“Jay, you got mail!” I yell through his door, it swings open.

He grabs the box and stomps back to his bed. As he opens it, her scent hits me – 'Ember.' I drift forward, ignoring my usual hesitation, and step into his room.

He's generally okay with us guys, but he doesn't trust girls, so why would he have things that smell like Ember? He's muttering in Japanese. I know a few odd words, but I'm not fluent. Out of nowhere, he nearly pops my eardrums,

“DARBY, I NEED YOUR HELP!!!!” Jay yells at the top of his lungs, the bang of a door is followed by a panicked voice.

“Brother, what's wrong?” Ren rushes in half-dressed and freezes, like he's looked a Basilisk in the eye. Darby wanders in, followed by Devin, both casting Ren strange looks for his frozen state. I don't understand why they hide their relationship. We all know well those who live in the pack house, and none of us care.

“Darby, can you see if you can track a USB that was used on this laptop and find out where it is fast?” Jay asks.

He looks like he's on the verge of tears. He goes to his bedside table, pulls out some rich tea biscuits, and starts munching on them.

“Jay, what's going on? Is Ember in trouble? How do you know her?” I ask as calmly as I can when I hear Ren Whisper out

“Ember?” Ren then snaps out of his trance,

“ Brother?” At Ren’s prompt, Jay sighs, puts away the remnants of his sugar fix, and stands defiantly looking at his twin,

“I’ve been in contact with her since just before school started last year.” I immediately see the hurt in Ren’s eyes.

“Why haven’t you said anything?” Ren asks, struggling to keep the hurt and anger from his voice and failing, he is normally the most controlled so it's freaking me out seeing him like this.

“She was happy at school and said she would come home when she finished! But I got a text yesterday. Jameson took her before she could leave!” Jay looks crushed,

“I’m sorry, Brother , I knew if I told you, you’d basically kidnap her, and that’s not what she wanted! Not yet!” Jay looks at me.

“We were her first foster home. When did you meet?” I smile.

“At the group home before I came here. She was the first one to be nice and accepting of my hybrid nature.” Jay smiles and gets a far-off look before talking to Darby again. Ren wears a similar expression,

“That’s Emmy. She sees so much and has a big heart, even with everything she has been through.” He turns and heads back to his room to finish getting dressed. She really does have a big heart, and I wonder if they realize just how much she actually sees.

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Jameson barely speaks to me as I'm dropped off at a small cabin on the edge of the Lennox Pack lands. They own most of the town, including the schools.

When I tried to catch a bus, I was quickly questioned as to where I was going and who I was meeting, the Alpha even tries to make me submit with his dominance, which I found very hard not to laugh in his face about, turns out every business in town is owned by the Alpha or he has people working there to report back, even the humans doing Uber rides, log who's being picked up from where, so I was stuck.

The high school doubles as a community college, and I manage to get a job as a teaching assistant in the art department of the high school.

About two weeks in a dick Jock notices me and starts trying to chat me up. I'm not interested, as he gives me the creeps.

I'm ok for the first week.

The second I'm more direct, this pack leads by fear, and the barely there Beta is the Alpha's nephew, so I know I'm pushing the line.

For the third week, I can feel him watching me, but he doesn't try to talk to me until December 11th as I was leaving school.

It's a Tuesday, so nothing big is on, no football training or cheerleader practice.

I'm grabbed from behind and feel a prick on my arm.

SHIT!

I should have been more aware of my surroundings than trying to work out how to contact J without triggering Jameson, my crap-ass phone was taken off me when I arrived and I've not been allowed to buy one in the store any time I've tried.

What the fuck did I just get injected with? I start to feel woozy, like I'm drunk. As the body behind me speaks, it clicks who has me,

“This could have been as good for you as it will be for me, but you had to be a stuck-up bitch and play hard to get. Now my patience is over, but your cunt will be mine. You should be feeling weak about now that the Rohypnol I gave you will make you pliant to my needs, nice and submissive.” I can feel the effects stop getting worse. Human drugs don't last long in my system, the same as any supe, but he thinks I'm human with the knowledge of supernaturals, but I'm supe enough to start burning off the effects.

So, I do what anyone would. I start fighting back, kicking, punching, headbutting, and even girly scratching anything. If I can get my arms free, I have two knives on me, one in my boot and the other in the waistband of my jeans. My vision is still blurred, but I get a kick to his chest.

He's grabbing me everywhere I don't want him to, and when he uses the word cunt he squeezes over mine with bruising pressure, but he's not trying to pin me thinking the drugs will help him.

I manage to roll onto my front and push up, ready to make a run for it, fuck my stuff at the cabin; it's only clothes. I'll walk out of this shit town and hitchhike if I need to, even just to a Truckstop where I can use a phone, Hopefully the family Trick is with can help.

“Stupid human bitch,” he sounds breathless, not good for the school running back, ‘not the time for internal jokes ; you can barely focus, get up, get away, then crack jokes’

“Why the fuck are the drugs not working?” I can hear his voice change as I get to my feet. The air shifts with his change. Suddenly, I’m screaming out as a claw runs from my right shoulder to my left knee, pushing me back to the floor. I roll and continue to fight, getting scratches on my chest, stomach, and the tops of my thighs. He isn’t entirely shifted,

“You will submit to me. I want my money’s worth.” He snarls out, saliva dripping from his mouth.

What the fuck has Jameson got me into now? I manage to roll again, and I feel some more scratches break through my clothes. If I reach for either knife, I leave myself open. I manage to kick backwards again.

The Vampires from the Cage hurt more than this; I can fight through this. Suddenly, the weight on me stops, and I hear hurried footsteps and voices,

“Fucking hell, I know Mika wanted this pack investigated, but I never expected this shit.” I don’t recognize the voice, so I don’t fully relax, but then I hear it...

Someone is singing Uncle Krackers Follow Me, and the voice makes me relax

“Troy?” I ask, my words slurring, then footsteps get closer

“Shit, she was in the Pit, long time no see, girly” Troy chuckles, then groans

“Get her to the hospital, and I’ll call the boss.” I can’t see who is talking as I have blood in my eyes, but I can see three shadows and a pile towards my left where the

swearing and snarling is coming from.

“Human drugs no work, allergic to supe stuff, no drugs, please.” I’m fully slurring by the end and I have no idea if anything makes sense

“yeah, I remember, try to stay awake, ok?” and then everything goes black.

I keep getting flashes of Dex and Levi with the word “Sestra ” in an unknown voice.

Next is a giant bear, and the word “ Agilisi ” growled with a slight whimper.

Finally, a silhouette of a man with glowing red eyes, “ Deirfiur ” is whispered. I still need to look up that word, but if the other two means sister, maybe that does too.

I wake as I’m put on a gurney and mumble that my medical files are on a green USB in my bag and then the word Giovanni Michaels. I tried to say Ignatius’s name, but I pass out again.

I wake again to a female voice,

“I think this needs your touch, Xan. Her files say she’s allergic to medications, she smells like a wolf, but I can’t feel her wolf, and has asked for Mickey G. However, his case files don’t have anyone matching her description. He is on his way, though.” There’s a pause,

“Yes, the DNA test is running, and some SRU guys are sitting in the hall.” Another pause.

“No, Trent is with them, but I don’t know the others.” Another quick pause,

“Yes, the bleeding has stopped, and it looks like things are trying to heal up, but it is

so much, and her back will need stitches. We also want to run a rape kit.” I hear

“WHAT!!” Yelled through the phone, and then the female voice sounds a little amused,

“See you in five!” There is some shuffling,

“I don’t know what happened to you, girly, but you’re a mess. Xan will get you sorted. He’s a young doctor, but he cares so much. I went to school with him and tried to date him till I found out he likes guys, and then we became friends. He’s a great wingman. My name is Chloe, by the way.” I drift off again.

I wake to the sound of the door opening, and a familiar smell of oranges and soap hits my nose as I hear a shocked and pained gasp.

“Glow bug! What the! I can’t believe it! I’ll get you patched up and home to my brothers.” Xander says

“Hey, caterpillar, I’m glad you’re here,” I start to cry as I fall unconscious again, getting the image of two familiar wolves, a bear, and a man with glowing red eyes. “Sister?”

I wake again to Xander talking to someone, but it’s a male voice, not Nurse Chloe. Xander puts his hand on my shoulder.

“Hold still, Glow bug. I’ve nearly finished your stitches. Then I want to get you clean and in some scrubs.” I feel five more tugs near my knee and then hear the water before a warm cloth wipes down my legs,

“Chloe, can you help me sit her up and over?” Xander asks.

“Mickey, throw me those scrubs, please” Usually, I would panic, but Xander trusts this person.

“Yes, of course, I’m on your left, Miss Ashes,” I know the voice and don’t feel threatened. I nod as my throat burns with thirst. I’m slowly and carefully flipped and now standing, holding nurse Chloe’s forearms so I didn’t collapse

“Hold on, Glow bug, I’ll clean your legs, then get some trousers on you. Then you can sit as I do your torso. I’m sure you will feel less vulnerable with pants on than in a hospital gown; Mickey will close his eyes when we switch your top” I nod again before he finishes talking. He’s already helping my legs into some dark green scrubs. As Xander starts to do my torso, the stranger holds up a cup with a straw. I smile and drink while he speaks.

“I’m Giovanni, but most call me Mickey G. You requested me before you passed out on poor Trent. I’m a social worker, but I’ve never met you before.” I finish my second glass of water as Xander drops a t-shirt over my head, threading my arms into the sleeves. He then starts to brush the blood and knots out of my hair, which Chloe tuts at, then takes over, muttering that if he carries on I will end up bald, I smile at Giovanni,

“I was with Jenson Fall when Max told him you would meet them halfway. I took a gamble and guessed you would be a better option than Jameson, who has been my controller all my life. I was also with the Hound family and hid while you were talking to Nonna and Pops.” I say.

His face goes from a kind smile to a slightly green, concerned look. He flashes a glance in Xander’s direction as he finishes my pigtail braids, Chole giving him an impressed look

“Quinny has always been special to my brothers,” Xander states as he gets up to wash

his hands. Recognition flashes in Chloe and Gio's eyes at the mention of Trick's nickname for me.

Chloe excuses herself once she checks that I'm okay with the two men. Gio pulls up a chair and asks me to give a rundown of my history. He didn't want to go through the system and alert SJ to my whereabouts, so I do.

"I've typed up most of what I remember, it's on the laptop I sent to Jenson, there is a rough timeline on my medical USB" I add and he holds up the USB, to confirm he has it.

Troy brings in some food, and I say a quick thank you to him.

"I'm glad you're awake I wanted to say I'm sorry and why I left you where I did for so long" I blink at him and look down at my food, but wait for him to continue

"I was undercover at the time, trying to get as much information as I could so we could take that place down, I risked fucking the job up, by sneaking you in food and water but I couldn't fully leave you alone, they were harsher towards you than anyone else there, well until..." He shakes his head as if arguing with himself about what to say, then sighs and looks at me again

"I told my superior about you and what was going on, so we escalated the plan, to shut the place down, even more so when I was told about the Nightmare they planned to pair you with, I have a couple of questions, off the record but I need to know" I watch him, his singing and dancing has always been so carefree and now he looks so tense and stressed, I give him a nod

"Why was there no information on you at the facility? Nothing not even your past foster placements or social worker was listed, nothing" I give him a smile

“Samual Jameson,” I say and Troy snarls and nods, he doesn’t look any happier

“He had me from birth Troy it's not your fault, he worked hard to keep me out of the system, I heard odd bits over the years but nothing solid, I was to be a tool nothing more and if I got broke and dented along the way till I could be used as a baby machine he didn’t care” he looks me over and gives me a nod

“Have you ever been anywhere good? Or have they all been shit?” he tries to smile but fails

“Yeah, the Nightmare got me to a hospital, the Nurse, he left me with took me in with her husband until she passed away” my voice cracks and I sip some water before continuing

“I was there till I moved to do a year of college; I was on my way to meet up with Xanders younger brother Jenson when Jameson got me again, and here we are. There have been good and bad times over the years, but the good though smaller amounts far outweigh the bad times, and thanks to you I have an eclectic music taste” I chuckle at the last words which has him cracking a full smile

“I’m glad I could add a little light into your world, and I’m glad you are heading to TripleMoon, it’s a good pack I was born there, I think you will like it, the Alpha is relaxed to normal standards” he explains a little more about his family, then groans when he looks at the time

“I need to head out and give the report on what happened, can I have a hug? Or are you not ready for that yet?” I open my arms he feels safe and Xander is here and would let me get hurt, then introduces me to Trent, the lynx shifter who was the first to me during the attack. I thank him for saving my life. He turns a brilliant shade of red as Gio and Xan laugh at his sudden shyness. He mumbles, “Welcome,” before ducking back out the door.

We sit for hours talking. Gio excuses himself to make some calls. Xander says he needs to do some rounds but will get a nurse to drop me off some paper and pencils, giving my twitching fingers a pointed look.

When Gio comes back, I'm sketching. It's of me sitting on the floor with a book resting on one knee and my sketch pad on the other. I'm looking down at both items. Laid down on either side of me are Dex and Levi. Over my right shoulder, you can see a giant bear on its hind legs. Directly behind me is the man with glowing red eyes. He's in silhouette other than his eyes. The scene behind is a lake surrounded by redwood and rowan trees, and you can see an outline of a log chalet. A triple crescent moon is in the sky with a phoenix flying across it. Before Gio has a chance to comment on what he sees, Xander walks in with a solemn look, opening something on his tablet,

"We've had your DNA results back." I blink at him, shrug, then look back down at my work,

"It doesn't matter. They've been contacted before. They don't want a broken thing like me. That's why they threw me away in the first place." Gio makes a strangled choking noise as Xander asks,

"How many times has your DNA been run, Glowbug?" his finger poised over his tablet, and wide eyes looking at me.

"Six, to my knowledge, always the same response." I shrug.

Gio finally looks at my sketch properly and frowns.

"Erm, where have you seen them, ? I can't see you meeting Mika's boys and still living under Jameson's rule!"

“Oh, erm.” I look at Xander. He knows a little about my dreams and sight. He nods and focuses on his tablet again.

“I saw the image when I passed out from the Lennox attack.” I don’t say more as Xander swears and holds the tablet out to Gio. He looks at me with fury but not directed at me.

“There is no way your family was contacted when your DNA was run, as they have been looking for you all your life.” I stare open-mouthed at Xander before looking back at Gio, who has tears running down his face,

“He’s right. Your dad is one of my best friends.”

There’s a knock on the door. Instead of calling them in, Xander peeks out at the door. Gio walks into the bathroom, and I hear the water run and a splash noise. I guess he’s washing his face,

“Dad’s here and wants to talk to Gio and the girl.” There is something about the voice, but I can’t place it. Gio moves close to me and tells me everything will be okay, calling to the voice that he will be right out:

“Where were you left? You said a firehouse, but where?”

I give him the info.

When I was at the group home nearby, I asked if anyone who still worked there was there when I was left. James, the cleaner’s son, said he remembered his mom talking about it. A few days later, he dropped some photos of me wrapped in a sweater, asleep in an upturned helmet.

I tell Gio where they are in my bag. He leaves as Xander says bye to someone and

walks in with Trent, who hands over a brown paper fast-food bag, chicken burger, chips, chocolate milkshake and a bottle of water, a massive smile on my face and a thank you. I nearly burrow into the bag he leaves, muttering about how I'm just like Declan. I frown and look at Xander, who points at the Vampire in my sketch, kisses my head, and leaves.

If the man in my drawing is Declan, who called me Deirfiur, he called me sister! Does that mean Dex, Levi, and the huge bear are also my brothers?

I fall asleep with tears running down my face, the realization that I may have brothers, a dad, and a family that actually wants me—or so Xander and Gio claim. Do I dare to hope?

I wake up to Xander and Gio talking.

"I didn't have a chance to tell Mika about as Brayden collapsed. He and Dec rushed home when Nic called." Gio explains, and Xander sounds worried,

"I hope he's okay. I wonder if it's related to Em. He had that scare just before Jay came, and she was in the cage with him. I wonder if she was hurt like Jenson was." I answer his not-asked question,

"Vampires fed on me, and it took a week to get back to normal. They nearly took too much." I move to be more comfortable with how I'm slumped, wincing as the stitches pull; I get a frown from Xander, who helps, then takes his seat again.

"Who's Brayden?" Xander smiles.

"Your twin, Jay and Ren, will kick themselves when they notice the link between him and your dream wolves." Gio looks confused but doesn't ask.

One morning, Xander and Trent walk in with balloons and a teddy, I frown, confused.

Trent plonks the teddy on the end of my bed, returns to the still-open door, and returns with four gift bags and a cake. I'm still frowning in confusion at what's going on. Trent looks worried, so he looks at Xander, who shakes his head at me,

“Happy birthday, glow bug.” My mouth drops open as I do the math. Happy seventeenth to me, I guess.

We have a day of playing games and eating cake. I told them off for buying me stuff, but it was all practical stuff, like clothes, shoes, and some art supplies. Chloe nipped in quickly before her shift and drops off some underwear—boys never remember things like that—and some decent wash stuff. Trent quickly left the room before his replacement turns up, just as Xander's phone rings,

“Hey, bro, I was starting to forget what you looked like. You hardly come home, got yourself a sugar daddy?” It's Ren's voice, and I can tell it's him. The difference from when we were six years old is profound, but he still sounds like a grumpy Alpha,

“Oooo, who's that? He looks like our older brother. What's his name again?” Jenson chirps.

Xander has a smile on his face. He looks at me off the camera as I hear Ren and Jay grumble about his attention not even being on them. I give him a nod and shuffle over slightly on the bed so he can sit next to me,

“Well, I've had a much smarter and prettier person to keep company,” he says as he angles the phone to capture me in the frame as well.

The boy's faces are a picture of shock as I smile. Xander pushes something, and ' screenshot saved ' flashes across his screen.

I'm glad Chloe helped me wash the rest of the blood out of my hair and brushed it properly a few days ago so I don't look like a hot mess. The scratches and bruises on my face have now healed, even though I have some new faint scars.

I barely hear the gasped words from Trick.

“Quinny?” Ren seems to go from shock to pissed,

“Where the hell have you been? Since your stuff arrived, we have been trying to find you.” Trick the shocking voice of reason,

“ brother, she's in a hospital bed. Ease off. When can she be moved here, Xan, so she's safe?” Xander quickly answers,

“Soon, Mika is looking into stuff. She has a 24-hour guard at the door.” Xander starts to explain as we hear a door open. The Vampire from my sketch, Declan's voice rings through the phone,

“Guys, come down. We're letting the lanterns go soon. Sorry, Xan,” he says finally when he sees who the guys are talking to. I lean out the shot before he can see me.

“Can you film it for me, Jay? I'm sorry to miss it. ” He gets an affirmative and a quick bye.

A few hours later, Xander shows me the video. Apparently, they do the lanterns every year for Mika's missing child. Me!

Xander holds me while I cry. He gets another video of Trick shoveling smores in his mouth with a muffled,

“Happy birffday Qwinny,” or that's what I presume he says with five s'mores in his

mouth. Ren smiles at the camera and blows a kiss.

Christmas and New Year pass while I heal in the hospital. I woke on January 18th to the sound of crying and whispered words. I don't know the voice, but the words are Russian. "Sorry," "I'm so sorry." "My baby girl," "Daughter." Are being repeated over and over, I open my eyes and look at the chair Xander is usually sitting in.

There's a big guy hunched over, head in his hands, shaking with sobs. His grey-streaked brown hair is ruffled, and he keeps pulling at it and running his fingers through it.

I try to speak softly in Russian. He doesn't feel like a threat. He feels familiar in a way, and his wolf looks like Dex.

"It's not you who should be sorry. Jameson kept me hidden, even more so after my first DNA test. I'm probably not what you were searching for, so maybe we should start with introductions and get to know one another." His head snaps up with my first word. As I finish, he shoots forward and gently squashes me in a hug,

"anything my baby girl, anything."

We then talked for hours, and for the first time in my life, I told someone EVERYTHING about my life, including all my oddities, there are a few things I leave out as he looks worried about most of it,

"My sight is the hardest thing to explain. When I look at your face, I see half-human, half-wolf, unless I focus one way or the other. When I was younger, it was only who I looked directly at. As I got older, it was anyone in my line of sight. I noticed when I wore sunglasses, it went back to being directed at who I was looking at again, so I started wearing prop glasses." He nods along and occasionally asks questions if he feels he needs more:

“I wondered why the glasses. You mentioned you’re not fully human, and from what Xander has mentioned, your healing is quicker than a human but not shifter level”. He seems nervous when he mentions anything that could be taken as criticism or that I could take offence to.

“My eyesight, hearing, healing, and reflexes are all way better than a human, but I’m not as good as a shifter, even though I think my eyesight is pretty close,” I explain with a wince. It’s usually what I’m bullied or dismissed for. He smiles and seems happy. I have some defences. I take a breath before I do the next part, as it can be dangerous if the wrong people know.

“I can also tell the level or strength of someone’s Alter and if they are about to shift or use abilities.” He raises an eyebrow, so I carry on,

“I knew when we were five years old that Ren’s Alpha was already stronger and more dominant than Gerald’s.” I breathe out, barely wanting to look up, but when I do, he looks shocked and then sad.

“I wish we had you and Jenson that day. It was a bad day, and Brayden was sick, so I didn’t go. Instead, I sent two enforcers. Is that all your secrets?” He says with a chuckle.

“Erm, no, I can feel when someone means me harm or has bad intentions, and my blood is weird.” I try to think of something other than my odd blood but can't.

“I’m glad you have built-in defenses, but what do you mean your blood is weird?” He asks and leans back in his chair, looking equally amused and curious.

“When they tested my blood as a child, the first time I had human and wolf parents, the next time was mage and wolf, the third time was wolf and wolf. They did more tests, but it was always a combination of those results.” He stares for a moment, then

blinks, rubs his face, and fills in some of my blanks:

“Your mother was a wolf. I have no idea about her family. I knew nothing of them. I looked when she disappeared but found nothing.” I wait, hoping for more. Not on my egg donor, as I couldn’t care less about her, but I do get more.

“My mother was a wolf, but her grandmother was an Elemental Mage. It’s never shown up on DNA before.” he smiles.

“You look like my mother. I will have to warn Dad, sometimes he still gets upset at her memory”.

He tells me a little about his dad and brothers. He’s the oldest triplet, and Dominic is the middle. When their dad stood down, Nic took over as Pack Alpha. The youngest, Lucian, is a Beta. They are identical but slightly different in size and style. He then moves on to a harder topic.

“When I met your mother, she already had two boys. Declan is four years older, and Bastille is two years older than you and Brayden. She didn’t know who Declan’s father was, claiming it was a one-night stand. She found out months later that she was pregnant. Bastille’s dad was working at a local community center. He was also a one-night stand, but she found out before he left, and he brought her back with him. He was killed with a few others during a rogue attack.” He looks sad as he explains his mum and 42 others were also casualties of the attack.

“She stayed, and one night, I gave in. Three months later, she disappeared, leaving Declan and Bastille, asking me to look after them, and had a legal document signing them over to my care.

Six months after that, Dominic took a call from a hospital saying twins had been left with my name and number and a note ‘can’t do it anymore. The boys are yours.’ Nic

thought she meant the twins, but only Brayden was there when Mickey G arrived, and we were told the other was a girl. I flew home early from my deployment and started looking for you. Eight months later, we got a call that a body had been found with my card in her bra. I ID'd the body as your mother, but there was no trace of you.” he pauses, watching me closely

“She overdosed on various drugs.” He watches to see how I will react, but she left me to die instead of for him to collect, so I don’t care, so I shrug.

Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 4:20 am

Ember

On January 20th, we drive for an 8-hours.

I learn more about Mika, like he can't sing but has excellent taste in music, Fall out Boy, ACDC, Billy Joel, Cher was a shock but Meatloaf, Queen and Bon Jovi isn't. He puts mayo and mustard on his beefburger 'Meh ok! ' And he likes half strawberry half banana milkshakes 'Excuse me while I gag.' We arrive at sundown, and a Pack meet is in full swing, I tense a little, worried about past experiences within packs.

“Wait here while I grab yours and my brothers. Dad is away, so he will have to wait.”
He smiles and heads off.

I'm standing in an open area, I would say the entrance hall, but it stretches to the back of the Chalet, a floor-to-ceiling window wall that looks out at the lake. I see Trick and Bram messing around and singing. Creed and Paxton are there, too, and a few I don't recognize. I feel eyes on me and turn to see Ren watching me.

A pretty blonde strokes his arm while talking to him. Something in me hurts to see him with a female, but I smile anyway. Mika speaks to the guy next to Ren. As he turns, all the air leaves my lungs, and blackness starts seeping in, but I don't hit the floor.

“Emmy, baby, breathe,” is the last thing that breaks through the fog.

Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 4:20 am

Trinity is yet again trying to drape herself over my best friend. He's tried to get them all to back off for years, but none listen. He notices something over my shoulder, and before I have a chance to glance over, Dad walks over,

"Son, can I have a word in my office, please?" I get a sharp pain in my heart as Ren's eyes go wide, and then he shoots past me, knocking Trinity over in his haste. Dad shoots after him. I stagger after them a little slower, trying to take it easy after I collapsed the other week and still not knowing why, it has happened a few times in my life, but nothing is physically wrong with me; my wolves panic, and then I can barely feel them which is normally when I collapse, now they are not panicking but, I can feel their nerves, and they feel like they are pacing. I reach Dad and Ren at the entrance

"Emmy, baby, breathe," Ren barks out an Alpha command,

"Come on, Emmy!" He starts CPR on the girl, and I feel my wolves sink as far back as they can. As the girl takes a huge breath, my wolves return feeling relieved and smug.

"Sister," they say in unison, wait, what? She's my?... how the fuck does Ren know my sister enough to call her baby?

Trinity Saunters up next to me,

"Renny, leave the trash and come walk with me. You need to say sorry for knocking me down." My best friend still holds my sister in his arms as he stands up. Her words cause a growl to vibrate through his chest, and he becomes deathly still. He growls

out,

“Leave.” Alpha Dominance pushed into it so much that even Dad flinches.

Trinity wails and 'runs' away in fake tears. Run isn't really the right word, as she's teetering on hooker heels. Audrey tries to get to Dad; she's another who has got an idea in her head and won't take no for an answer,

“Who's the new brat?” My turn to snap,

“Call her a brat again, and I will not be held responsible for my actions.” I shoulder-check her as I plough a road for Ren to Dad's office. Grabbing Miles on my way past, my omega mate's hand in mine calms me, but Ren still has a growl going, and his nose is in my sister's hair.

“Dad? Did you find her?” Dad grunts at Bas's question, “Office.” Uncle Nic tells everyone to get out and eat before Alma gets insulted by the amount of leftovers, the door shuts as we settle into chairs.

Miles sits on the arm of mine, stroking the nape of my neck. Ren sits in the chair next to me.

I suck in a breath as I hear her voice, and Ren's growl becomes a purr. 'What the fuck!!!' I sit staring at my grumpy best friend like he's been abducted by aliens.

Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 4:20 am

I can feel a rumbling chest holding me, and I know it is Ren from the Pine trees and fresh snow scent. I also feel the brush of unease I've only ever felt around omegas. I decided to take a gamble and hope I'm right.

"Grumpy, stop growling. You'll scare the omega." He sighs and starts to purr. I hear a startled squeak and a chuckle from Ren's left, which is in front of me as he's holding me bridal-style.

Opening my eyes I see a gorgeous man with blue pinstripe slacks, a light blue shirt with black suspenders, and black Converse shoes. When I reach his face, his features are more feline but more kitten than cat, ice blonde hair and striking blue eyes with unique smokey eye shadow. He's an albino Panther, but not entirely because of his eyes, and I instantly want to snuggle and have a movie day with him.

He won't make eye contact, but I don't often myself. I then notice he's sat on the arm of my twin's chair, with Brayden's hand on his thigh, Dex and Levi are giving me smug looks their tails wagging in happiness. The omega is my twin's mate. I smile and relax more into Ren as I notice Brayden watching me guardedly. I averted my eyes and turned to look at Mika. Wow, he wasn't joking when he said he was identical to his brothers, I'm glad he showed me photos of everyone, not only so I know who to trust but so I don't go insulting my new uncles.

"Ren, are you going to put my daughter down so we can talk?" Mika asks.

Ren tenses and starts to growl. I see Brayden's mate recoil, and I twist and swat Ren's nose. He promptly stops growling and whines at me,

“Emmy, don’t do that. You know it hurts,” he says while burrowing his nose back in my hair and complaining about my braids.

He spins me round and busies himself, taking them out. I look at Mika and raise an eyebrow. Lucian, Bastille, and Brayden burst out laughing, Dominic smirks, Declan and Brayden’s mate looks confused, Mika sighs, rubs his face, and starts to explain,

“Boys, this is your sister . I won’t go into how she came back to us right now, know it wasn’t brilliant. It might take her a while to accept that she is wanted here.” Ren hums behind me, happy my hair is now loose and knowing a little of my story.

“You’re safe now. They all know how my brother and I feel about his Quinny!” Ren says, and recognition flashes in everyone’s eyes.

“, what happened just now? Do you need a doctor?” Mika asks, already reaching for a phone. I decided to lie slightly, not wanting to say it was the shock the wolves from my dreams were both inside my twin, does that mean one should have been mine?

“I think I was just overwhelmed. I saw a few faces I recognized, but the recognition I got when I saw Brayden was just too much.” It then clicks. I’m still sitting on Ren’s lap and can feel things, hard things, knotted things. I stand up; he holds my hips to keep me steady if I fall again.

“If it’s okay, can I go to bed? It’s been a long day?” Mika takes in my pleading look and agrees, asking Miles, who is Brayden’s mate, to show me to my room and find out my sizes so he can get me clothes tomorrow, as winter is still in full swing, and I have the bare minimum.

Ren follows us out, but the rest start firing questions at Mika as the door clicks shut. Ren has yet to let go of me; I turn slightly, already seeing the pretty blonde from before watching us.

“You best get back to your girlfriend; thank you for catching me, and it’s good to see you again, Alpha Firefall!” I state and try to keep my emotions on lockdown.

I turn and follow Miles upstairs as he rapidly fires questions about clothes, style, makeup, and underwear at me. I laugh and shake my head. He stops and pouts at me, putting his hands on his hips. I smile.

“I’m Curvy, think Marilyn Monroe, but no pink or frills. I prefer emo/steampunk/skater style, and panties need to cover my arse, so no dental floss. I need supportive bras, I’m self-measured, so I might be wrong on actual sizes.” I take a breath and tug on my hoodie sleeves.

“I need long sleeves and nothing above my knees to hide my scars. I can cope with leggings as long as they don’t have big seams and nothing tight, as they rub on my scars.” I’m mumbling by the end, and I’ve not looked at his face once.

“I haven’t cut my hair for years, other than snipping the split ends myself and doing a little shaping round my face, so I tend to wash and condition with what I can get hold of, then dry it in braids so it’s easier to tame. I’ve never worn makeup, and I could do with some period things soon.” I look up as I finish.

"My diet's been poor to starving, until three years ago when I got a decent home, but I'm naturally curvy, so don't get any hopes that you'll find a Barbie doll under my baggy clothes." I try to laugh, but it's hollow. When my eyes finally get to his face, he's crying. Before I apologize, he flies at me, turning into an octopus—not physically, but it feels like it. He hugs me so tightly.

“You are gorgeous. If Brayden wasn’t my mate and you had a dick, I would be shaking my ass to get your attention.” I laugh, and the hug starts to loosen a little,

“We start covered, but we will work together to improve your confidence. You're hot

and the official badass pack princess. I will have you wearing your battle scars with pride like armor. We finally have someone to fight the pack princess wannabes off and show them who's boss." I burst into giggles. Pleased with his work, Miles nods, releases me, kisses my forehead, and leaves with

"Goodnight, sweet cheeks, the bathroom has basics. I'll get you better tomorrow." I manage to get out

"Good night, pretty kitty. Thank you." as the door clicks shut.

I shower and put on one of the T-shirts Xander got me, along with a pair of panties and some socks. I braid my hair and slip into bed.

I fall asleep with tears running down my face, but I'm not 100% sure why.

I'm safe,

I have my friends back, and I'm wanted here.

I feel so vulnerable, and I'm safe to be that way—I hope so anyway.

I stir sometime later. hearing the door click and then feel someone slide into bed,

"Shh baby, it's just me. Go back to sleep. You're safe." Ren pulls me into his chest, and I fall into a deep sleep.

I startle awake. The sky is still pitch black.

I feel Ren against my back, but he waits for my breathing to slow before saying anything, just lays running a soothing hand up and down my side, until I start to relax.

“Tell me what you need, Emmy.” I turn to look at him, really look. His brown hair is still wild but now shorter on the sides, long enough to run my fingers through the top. He's lost the baby face and is all chiseled jaw and defined muscles. He has stubble covering his cheeks, giving him that lazy Sunday afternoon in bed look. I sigh,

“Your girlfriend won't be happy you're in here.” I'm flat on my back before I can move away from him.

The 6-foot 6-inch grumpy Alpha is now above me, his thighs pinning me to the bed as he straddles my hips, his left hand supporting his weight next to my head and his right cuffing my throat. He leans in so our noses are almost touching, and his voice takes on a growl full of Alpha dominance,

“I don't have a girlfriend. Since I was four years old, I've known who I was destined for, and no female has tasted my kiss, felt the caress of my touch or the heat of my body against theirs as only one female is worthy of me.” He leans closer, his lips brushing my ear, his breath heating my skin.

“Now, my Luna, tell me who hurt you and why you were chanting no, don't touch me in your sleep.” My thighs clench as I feel and hear the possessiveness in his demand. I've never touched myself before, never felt the need to, but I may have to, or at least have a cold shower.

“Before I came here, I got hurt., that's why I was in the hospital” I don't look into his eyes, and I hope that will suffice, but it doesn't. He squeezes my throat a little, so I carry on with a sigh, closing my eyes with shame,

“I have a claw mark from my right shoulder to my left knee. I was getting away, but he started to shift. H...He injected m...me with something that m...made me w...woozy and t...tried to....to.” I can't say it. Tears fall, and I shake my head. I can feel Ren has gone stone still.

“He tried to rape you?” he inhales as he says the word rape but continues after a beat.

“He tried to rape my mate?” His weight changes on me, and his voice goes softer.

“You will tell me who! But not right now!” He moves so he’s between my legs, his weight on his elbows on either side of my head. My core is pulsing from the feel of him against me, not all shifters have Knots only Alpha Wolves, and I can feel his pulsing in time with his heart against my core.

“Open your eyes, baby,” his voice has gone from Alpha Bark to soft request, and now it’s a fucking croon,

“Emmy baby, I need you to tell me how to banish your bad dream so you can rest as you need.” As he speaks, his lips brush my forehead, eyelids, cheeks, and nose everywhere but my lips. I need something, some form of relief.... deep breath, , internal pep talk for the win!

“I can still feel his hands on me.” My voice is shaky but good, . Keep going, open your eyes for him.

“he never got under my clothes, but he was rough and left bruises.” Ren shifts to only lean on his left arm as I open my eyes. His thumb strokes my cheek,

“Where did he touch you? Will you let me replace it with my touch?” I hold his gaze as Pine flashes in his eyes as he speaks. Before I have time to second-guess myself, I nod but make a request before answering his questions

“Kiss me! Be the first, please!” Ren starts to purr again, but his lips touch mine. He starts slow and shy, but with my gasp when I feel his tongue against my lip, every nerve ending in my body seems to light up, and with the moan that slips out of me, his kiss becomes a claim.

I feel my whole body submit to him. As he pulls back, I whimper slightly, but he doesn't go far. He rests his forehead on mine, once his breathing has slowed, his lips still brushing mine as he speaks,

“Fuck baby!” he swallows some more breaths.

“Goddess baby, you are everything! It is taking so much to keep Pine locked down, as he wants our mark on you.” He kisses me again. This time, his hands roam, stroking my breasts. He circles my nipple with his thumb through my shirt, making me gasp,

“Did he touch you here?” he whispers against my lips. With my nod, as I don't think I can speak right now, he pulls my shirt up, revealing my perk breasts with a moan, he lowers his mouth to my nipple. Using his tongue to circle the peaked bud. As he starts to suck the bud into his mouth, his thumb begins to circle my other nipple. My hips give an involuntary buck, grinding on his hard thick length, which causes us both to moan at the action, he switches which bud is in his mouth, and his free hand slides into my panties to cup my ass, urging me to keep grinding up into him.

“Did he touch your delicious ass, baby?” I nod and start to regret it as he lets me go and goes up on his knees. His cock is tenting his boxers as he slides his hand down to cup my core. He puts his hand in his boxers and moves his cock so it's facing up and the tip now peeking out the top. He squeezes himself, and I see precum seep from his tip.

“What about here?” he asks with a sneer but swipes the precum with his thumb and then swipes it around my nipple, getting another moan from me. I nod, but I still can't find words. He snaps my panties off in one quick motion and falls forward, kissing me like only I can give him oxygen.

“Can I taste you, ? I want your cum on my tongue.” I finally find my voice.

“Please, Ren, I need... I need....” what do I need? I don’t know, I try to think, and then I work it out, I need him, just him

“You, I need you.” I manage to voice, then my voice leaves me to fend for myself once again. I manage to suck in a breath before I even realize he’s slipped down my body, then I feel his tongue trace over my folds.

“Oh fuck,” I breathe, I feel his chuckle, and his hands are back cupping my ass. I don’t have time to be conscious of how big it is, but I do take note. His hands cup each cheek like they were made for each other, he feasts on me like he hasn’t eaten since we were 6 years old, he alternates between thrusting his tongue inside me and nibbling on my clit, one of my hands ends up in his hair as he flattens his tongue and licks from my core to my clit in one smooth slow motion, I can see the smirk in his eyes, he repeats the motion five times but gets quicker adding an extra flick with his tongue as he reaches my clit, one hand slides from my ass his pinky finger brushing over my rear hole, getting a gasp from me, he slips his middle finger inside me, giving three slow pumps.

“Play with those tits, baby, pinch those nipples, pluck them till they're sore and need my mouth to soothe them, get as much of them in your small hands as you can and squeeze! Fuck baby, you’re so tight!” He gives me a few more pumps, leaning up to kiss my lips,

“Your so fucking hot, Luna baby. I can’t believe you're mine.” His voice ends in a growl, and I can feel the precum dripping from him onto my stomach.

He kisses back down my body, still pumping me with one finger. He sucks each nipple. Then as he slips a second finger inside me, his thumb flicks my clit at the same time his tongue does.

He slips a third finger inside me as I tire of his teasing. Grabbing his hair with both

hands, I pull him back up to kiss him as I start to ride his fingers, him swallowing my moans, his purr adding a vibration to the sensations.

“Ride my fingers, Luna, take it all. It’s yours as you are MINE!!!! He will never touch you again. This right here is what you will think about whenever you get a flash of that pain.” His hand slows to drawn-out movements, and he mimics the movement with his hips rubbing his cock against the scar on my left hip.

“Tell me you’re mine?” his words are a plea, not a demand.

“I’m yours.” I breathe out, and his thumb starts to swirl my clit with each inward stroke of his fingers.

“Tell me I’m yours,” I hum, loving the feelings that move through me at those words.

“You’re mine, Ren.” I feel my climax coming as Ren’s hips start to stutter.

I don’t think I say the words continuously if I had an alter I would say it was in control, but I start our mating bond

“Mind.” Thrust

“Body.” Thrust

“Heart.” Thrust

“And soul.” Thrust

“I’m yours.” Thrust

“For eternity.” Thrust

“I love you, my Alpha.”

My climax hits on the last syllable. I bite his right pectoral over his heart, breaking the skin. His blood coats my mouth, and I feel something shift within me. I feel warm liquid hit my hip and stomach as Ren’s mouth finds the juncture between my neck and shoulder, as he bites. His cock pulses again, and warmth hits the base of my boobs. Something else moves inside me. I now feel an awareness of Ren. He pulls away slightly, leaving us forehead to forehead.

“Mind.” Pant

“Body.” Breath

“Heart.” Pant

“And soul.” Breath

“I’m yours.” Pant

“For eternity” Deep breath

“I love you, my Luna.”

He kisses me, mingling our blood in our mouths, and something else clicks into place. He pulls back again slightly and doesn’t move while we get our breath back.

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Fuck! I finally get my breath back and give Ember a small kiss on the corner of her mouth as she's still panting. I pull her shirt back down, trying to decide if I should smirk or grimace at my cum painting her stomach and the base of her tits. I stand, tucking my cock back into my boxers.

"Come on, let's strip the bed and get cleaned up." Ember flinches and nods, and with her head down, she starts to strip the sheets off the bed, trying not to focus on the feelings that seeing my cum running down the side of her leg ignites in me.

I step up behind her, being conscious not to rub more cum on her fantastic ass. I kiss her shoulder over my mark, which causes her to arch her back, pushing the aforementioned ass against my already semi-hard cock, and jutting her beautiful tits out, mmmmmm focus!

"I only said to strip the bed to save Alma from doing it. We will be going to my room to shower, and then WE will be sleeping there." I kiss her temple

"WE?" she asks in a small unsure voice.

"Yes, baby WE, I'm yours, Ember, your teeth mark confirms that," I smirk, she hadn't realized what she did, but I'm not letting her regret it now,

"Now get the bed stripped, and in my shower before I bend you over fully sealing our bond by giving you my Alpha mark as you cum around my Knot while my cum continues to drip off those perfect tits of yours!" I chuckle

Wow, that got her moving. Once the bed is stripped, I drop the sheets in the shoot on

the way to my room. I push her towards the bathroom, flicking on my shower, then heading into my closet to grab her a shirt, boxers, and socks in case she still gets cold feet at night, I also grab a clean pair of boxers for myself. I walk back into the bathroom, kicking my soiled boxers in the direction of the hamper. I step into the shower with Ember, still not quite believing she's here, even with the taste of her cum and blood on my tongue, I take over washing her back without a word, making a note of the new scars and the 10 mate marks under her birthmark, they run down her spine finishing an inch above her panty line, I recognize some including my twins, but right now I focus on mine, kissing it, I then spin her around.

Ember is only 4ft9 with curves for days, all in the right places. However, there is tone to them, but she has always been... I don't want to say chubby cause that feels wrong.

She has wide hips, thick thighs, and a trim waist, and her tits and arse are the perfect size for my hands, more than handfuls. Her hair is normally wild curls, but as it's wet, it just falls straight down past her ass. My baby is just perfect; she always has been.

I lift her, pressing her to the cool tile wall, I step into the cradle of her legs. My cock is rock solid again and is pointing up at my stomach, so as she wraps her legs around my waist, linking her ankles together over my ass, it pulls me closer, and my cock throbs from the heat of her core. I kiss from my mark up her neck, then take her mouth. She starts to grind against me, using her grip on my shoulders and her thighs over my hips, urging me to join, which I do willingly. Our combined moans start to fill the room. Soon our joint climax hits, with her gasping out my name and fisting my hair. I fucking love her hands in my hair. I lean in and give her a soft kiss on the lips.

"I love you, Ember." I lock eyes with her, and I don't let her look away.

"I've never stopped loving you, ," she says with a smile, which becomes a smirk as I put her down to rinse off our joint release from our stomachs.

“Pine gives the best hugs, though,” she says, stepping out of the shower and wrapping a towel around those moreish curves. I twist and catch the bemused look I give her in the mirror as she wraps her hair in another towel, grabbing my hair brush and some of the hair elastics Jay leaves everywhere she steps out of the bathroom. Pine is bouncing around in my chest like a puppy. I wash my hair and then follow Ember back to the bedroom. Her hair is irritatingly braided again. I prefer it to be loose, but I know why she does this at night, especially now that I’ve seen its current length. I make a note to tell Miles not to cut too much off it. She’s curled up in bed, facing the window with the curtains still open. I slide in behind her, pulling her to my chest. We don’t say anything for a long time. Just before her breath evens out, she whispers,

“It’s a blood moon tomorrow night, just like the first time we met.” Well fuck, sorry, Mika, but I’m marking your daughter fully tomorrow under that moon. I fall asleep planning how to tell Mika I’m about to defile his newly found baby girl.

Ember

I feel the bed move, and Trick's scent starts to mingle with Rens, who seems to pull me closer into his chest. I doze off and on until the light in the room begins to change behind my eyelids. I wiggle a little, but neither of the hard bodies surrounding me moves. I mumble about needing to pee first in English, then in Japanese, and they both move. Well, I need to remember that one, I guess.

I pee and wash my face, my hair is falling loose from my braids, but I don't want to make a noise while looking for the brush. I use Ren's toothbrush and make a mental note to apologize. He shouldn't complain after where he stuck his tongue last night. I shiver at the memory, dipping into his closet and grab a hoodie and some 'cropped' sweats. Well, they would be cropped to Ren. I pad across the room to the double doors that head to a balcony. I notice some sketchpads and pencils on his desk and swipe them, which is odd as he doesn't draw.

I head outside. The balcony has three other doors leading to it. One looks like it goes straight onto the hall outside Ren's room, and the other two go to bedrooms. I move over to the rail, leaving the door cracked so I can hear when they start to move. There is a table with four chairs around it, and some more chairs are dotted around. There is also a patio corner sofa with a coffee table and two matching chairs, but near the railing are four loungers. One of which I pad over to and sit with my pad on my lap. The balcony looks out over the back of the property towards the lake. We are more to the right than what I could see through the windows last night, and the Chalet looks more L-shaped from this angle, and another balcony serves as the corner pivot.

I'm going to have to explain the Dex/Levi thing to some people, so I start to draw the

memories I have of them, starting with the first, one I remember.

We were 3 years old. I had been locked in the closet in the laundry room as visitors were looking for a child to adopt. I fell asleep, and Dex & Levi turned up to play! I drew the heather-filled clearing, me into dungarees that were too big, and the two wolf pups that kept falling over their feet.

By the time I had done some more sketches, including one where Dex is jumping off the dock, I can see from here,

I'm not sure how long I've been sat here, but I've half-filled the book, Rens scent starts to fill my senses, and he's fully dressed.

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I wake up, and I can feel a body next to me, but it's not soft against me like my mates should be. Cracking an eye open, my brother rips out a fart, followed by a giggle then he starts to snore again. Fucks sake, when did he come in? I open my eyes fully to find out where Ember is, the sneaky fuck probably snuck between us to steal all the snuggles, but she's not in bed. Jay starts to hug a pillow, burying his nose in it as I sit up and look around the room. Pine isn't worried, so I shouldn't be. Where is... then I notice the balcony door is open, and I spot the silhouette of her sitting on the lounge. I grab my phone and head to the bathroom, sitting down on the toilet. While morning business is conducted, I fire off a text to our resident tech genius, then change my relationship status on social media from it's complicated to in a relationship .

I would put engaged, as we are basically engaged now. We share each other's marks, but I want Mama Lou's ring on her finger first. I've never been single, as I knew one day Ember would come home.

ME: Can you set up a new phone for Ember? Transfer the stuff from the dinosaur she sent Jay, but don't wipe it in case!

DARBY: I did that ages ago. Nic wants her to have a full kit, school laptop, etc.

DARBY: Any ideas? Jay just told me no pink *wide eye emoji *

ME: Yeah, no pink, she's likely to beat you with it. Think similar to Jace or Devin, she's a smart ass and likes to write stories

ME: I don't think she needs for school, though. Something Jay mentioned led me to believe she was at college – definitely no pink or girly, but she does have a

fascination with the moon

DARBY: On it *thumbs up emoji *

I finish my daily meeting with the toilet, wash my face, and brush my teeth, which from the taste Em must have used my brush as I get a lingering taste of her. Everything of her tastes sweet, but the sweetest part is her pussy, FUCK! She tasted amazing. I could feast down there for days. Mmmmm, focus, . If you go down that route, it will be cold shower time. I finish washing up and head to my closet.

Jay is now impersonating a starfish in the middle of my bed. Ember's scent hits me as I enter the closet. She must have grabbed some clothes. I pull on some dark Jeans, a Navy Henley, and a pair of grey ankle Converse, and I ruffle my hair so it's kind of tidy. My hair has always been wild, not curly like Embers, but other than using a ton of product to get a 'style,' which I hate doing, nothing I do matters; it always looks like I've just woken up.

I head for the balcony and end up double-checking on Jay as he's now curled in a ball under the comforter in the middle of the bed. It wouldn't surprise me if he hasn't shifted into his Kitsune. I pause at the door and take in my mate. God, it feels good to say that I didn't lie to her last night, There has never been anyone but her.

The thought turns my stomach and makes my skin crawl. After some problems I caused by kicking off at girls trying to rub their tits on me and trying to stroke my cock through my jeans, Dominic told me to try to keep them at arm's length. He understood why I didn't want them touching me, and I soon noticed he had to deal with something similar.

Ember is sitting on a lounge. One of the sketchpads I had ready for her sitting on her lap, her hair is escaping those frustrating braids. I always prefer it down, but she used to say it got in the way, and Mama Lou, Lenny, or Margo would put it in a braid for

her. Jay, Xander, and I got pretty good at them, too. She's curled up in my school hoodie and a pair of cropped sweats I use for training. Still, the hoody must reach her knees, and the sweats cover her feet. My gorgeous mate is so small, It makes me want to wrap her up and keep her extra safe, but I know she can look after herself and would kick my ass if I tried to lock her away. Bray used to ask a lot why I would buy art supplies with my allowance when I could barely draw a house, but every Christmas and birthday, I got her something and stored it in one of Mama's luggage trunks.

Deciding I've been creepy enough, I move over to where she's sitting. The sketch in front of her makes me pause. It's Ember in a dark room with Brayden's wolves ripping apart a Python, fucking idiot. Ember has always dreamt of two wolves, and her birthday is the day after Bray's, who has two wolves. That's not common knowledge. How the fuck have I not put together the links between my best friend and my mate, fucking idiot!

I crouch down next to her, and she stops, a small amount of fear showing in her eyes when she looks at me,

"What's wrong, baby?" I ask as she closes the book and hides it below the seat padding,

"You weren't meant to see that part of my past." she closes her eyes as tears start to fall,

"I know I need to explain my dreams, so I've drawn all the times they saved me." She huffs, grabs the book again, and flips to a page, turning it so I can see,

"well, save me from the memories," she says the last in a small voice as I look at the drawing of Gerald's office. Ember hands frame the image, and I'm there. Well, Pine is there, standing on a dead Gerald's chest. Dex is on the desk snarling at the door,

which has Rafe's silhouette on it, and Levi is standing in front of Em.

I take a breath as I close the book, putting it near her sock-covered feet. I take her mouth with mine, flooding the bond with love, hoping she feels how much I love her in the kiss and bond. I pull back, resting my forehead on hers,

"Jay is still asleep. Are you staying here or coming down with me? I need to talk to your dad about us!" She looks bemused for a bit,

"I'll stay here and get more done, if that's okay? " She smiles as I gently kiss her lips, and she turns back to her sketch. She'll tell me when she's ready about the rest; I won't push.

Hopefully, Mika knows who tried to rape her. I swallow the growl, kiss her temple, and head downstairs.

I don't go through my room, leaving Jay to sleep. Like Em, he suffers from bad dreams. He never tells me about them, but having me close and, I guess, Ember helps.

I'm just approaching Ember's room when Brayden appears, looking frantic.

"B, what's up? Miles, hidden your favorite t-shirt again?" He startles as if he hadn't seen me.

"She left! How are we going to find her again? Why did she leave?" I blink and feel like I'm missing something,

"who left?" I ask. He rolls his eyes like I'm the idiot. Now I know he's Ember's twin. So many things stand out that they do similarly.

"Ember. My sister. The girl you held while she was unconscious yesterday. Jenson's

Quinny.” He’s getting more panicked the more he speaks,

“Her room is empty, the bed has been stripped, and the window is open. She’s gone. I would think you would care more. I saw how you looked at her.” Again, he’s getting hysterical. I laugh, pat his shoulder, and head downstairs, “Chill, bro. She’s on my balcony. She had a bad dream, so we stripped her bed. She showered, borrowed some of my stuff to sleep in, and then slept in my room.” I leave it at that. Telling her dad, I marked her is nerve-racking enough. He deflates in relief, then tenses as I start down the stairs.

“What do you mean slept in your room? , you best not mess with my sister, or I’ll kick your ass! ? Seriously?” I keep walking, not letting what he says affect me. I reassure Pine that he isn’t insulting us; he is just protecting his sister.

I hear Mika in the kitchen and ask if I can speak to him. He automatically goes on guard, but I keep my dominance locked down, so he doesn't see me as a challenge. He indicates for me to follow him, and we head to his office.

I nearly walk into Brayden as we leave the kitchen, and thankfully, he doesn’t say anything when he sees his dad. We get to the office, and he sits behind his desk and waits. I sit opposite and mimic his relaxed pose.

“Can you let me finish before you ask questions, please?” He gives me a nod but nothing else. I take a deep breath.

“I’ve known Ember is my mate since we were five years old. I have never shown interest in ANY female and have stayed 100% loyal to her.” I pause. He seems to think, and I get another nod.

“Pine wouldn’t settle last night, so I went to Ember’s room.” I see his muscles tense, but I carry on,

“I just climbed in bed and went straight to sleep. She woke due to a bad dream, a memory of how she ended up in the hospital this last time.” I see regret, sadness, and anger flash through his eyes,

“Because she saw Trinity doing her usual and trying to get me to claim her, she thought Trinity was my girlfriend and told me to leave. My control over Pine was loose enough that he pushed through and put her straight.” He has gone deathly still, probably thinking I took advantage,

“She told me she could still feel that piece of shit’s touch. He was only on top of her clothes, but it was enough for her to feel...” I take another deep breath, no longer being able to look at him, as well as keeping my rage at bay.

“I asked what she needed to get back to sleep. She asked for a first kiss so it could never be taken from her! I then replaced his touch with mine. We didn’t have sex, but when she came, her instinct hit, and she marked me.” I lift my shirt, showing my mark proudly, and a slight smirk appears on my face,

“I gave her the first mark too, I nearly fucked up, making her think I was regretting it, but we talked, and we know where we both stand.” I look him straight in the eye now, and he raises a brow.

“After we stripped her bed, I gave her some clean clothes, and we showered. I saw her mate marks.” He’s lost that relaxed look and looks annoyed at my smug look,

“She has 10 marks in total; Jenson and mine are among them. I recognize a few others, too.” I can’t work out if he looks more sick or angry. Maybe both.

“I’m not asking permission, as it is Ember’s choice, but I wanted to make you aware Ember and I were born under blood moons. The first time we met was a blood moon – tonight is a blood moon, and I plan to fully seal our bond, give her my mother's

ring and my Alpha mark.” I stop and wait. It takes nearly five minutes. He sits, running his index finger across his lip

“You’re right. The decision is hers. I’ve been her father for two days; you have been her friend for years and have been faithful to her, and I value that. I care for you as much as my own son, her twin. I also respect that you had the balls to talk to me, not that I would expect anything less from Alpha Firefall. If she agrees, you have my blessing to mate my daughter.” I sag in relief, the tension I didn’t know I had leaving me.

“BUT you hurt her in any way. What you did to Gerald and Rafe will be a cakewalk.” His voice is full of Dominance, and it hits me. I suck in a breath.

“If I hurt her, I’ll sharpen your claws for you first.” He nods, happy with my answer, raises and leads me out, ready for breakfast. He puts a hand on my shoulder.

“I couldn’t ask for someone better for her. Let’s hope the rest pass the test, too,” he laughs.

“I also want your mating to be Alpha blessed, so talk to Nic about a ceremony.” He adds, and I give him a confused look

“Why wouldn’t we?”

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I hear Ren speak to someone as the door clicks shut, but I don't think anything of it. I spend a few more minutes, working on this sketch.

I then sit up and look at the view, trying to decide what to do next.

My dark angel was next, but I don't want to share him yet, which would make Dan and Elise next. I smile and turn to a clean page, making sure to leave one spare.

I see the curtains open over one of the other sets of doors, I promptly swallow my tongue. I don't move, my pencil poised over my page, but out the corner of my eye, there is a guy 5ft 9ish, lean build, broad shoulders like a swimmer, tousled blonde hair, and very, very naked. I force myself to start drawing. I chance a glance again out the corner of my eye, not turning my head. He's rubbing his face, his mate mark that is 3 inches down his side from his right armpit. It looks like a paw print or a hand, but the palm is a crescent moon shape.

I continue to sketch the outline of Dan and Elise's back porch. I glance again and reach his face, canine features, but they are mixed with a Fae-like perfection just like... fuck Creed, no, it can't be. Creed doesn't have a wolf, and this guy does. I keep my focus on my page, I hear a muffled "FUCK!" from his direction.

I swallow a smile, and the figure moves out of view. I sigh, unsure if I'm relieved from him not coming out or him walking away. I carry on drawing and hear shuffling coming from Ren's room; Trick's scent fills my nose as a grunted

"Shuffle" comes from my sleepy trickster. He slides behind me. His nose sinks in behind my right ear, and both arms around my tummy, legs on either side of me.

“I woke up, and you were gone. I thought I’d dreamed it, then heard you sketching.” he huffs but says no more.

“Sorry, I felt restless. I decided to do some of my wolf dreams.” He hums behind me, and we sit. Part of me thinks he’s fallen asleep.

“Where’s Ren?” he asks, still not moving. I leave it a beat before answering,

“He went to talk to Mika about the fact we marked each other last night.” I feel him tense, and I panic I’ve triggered something for him. He sniffs, then pulls the hoody and t-shirt away from my left shoulder, careful not to touch Ren’s mark.

His voice is cold and sharp, like a knife’s edge, when he finally speaks,

“He didn’t force you, did he?” Wide-eyed, I turn and look at him. He’s serious. His hair and eyes flash with his warring emotions. Putting my sketch pad down, I turn, going up on my knees, cradling his face in my hands,

“Your brother would never force or hurt us, you know that!” He relaxes but keeps my gaze.

“I woke from a bad dream, and he helped banish those memories. We didn’t have sex. Well, he gave me oral, but he kept his boxers on. We did what you and I HAD to do, nothing more, but when we came, I marked him, and Pine pushed forward,” I bow my head, ashamed I kind of forced Ren into the bond. Trick kisses my forehead,

“I doubt it was all Pine. Ren has loved you since we were kids.” He smiles, then my tummy grumbles, and he chuckles at me,

“I need to shower. Can you put my faux hawk back in, and then we can feed the monster that is your stomach?” I smile.

“Do you have clippers?” I follow him out of the room, putting the pencils in my hoodie pocket.

Twenty-five minutes later, we head down for breakfast. Trick introduces me to Alma, who gets a quick rundown of my likes and dislikes before she passes me a mug of English tea. We make our way to the breakfast room and take a seat; only those who live in the pack house and a few older folks are allowed in this part of the chalet.

Trick explains that unless there are visitors, we can sit wherever we want, even in the Alpha's chair.

As we sit down, like Ren did all those years ago, Trick loads up my plate for me. I smile at him, and then over his shoulder, I see Creed walk in. Freeze, and someone bumps into his back, sending him flat on his face. The new guy and Creed lean down to help him up... wait, does Creed have an identical twin? The first guy isn't Creed, but the second one is. Once his brother is on his feet, Creed swaggers over to me, hauling me out of my chair and into a huge hug. He still smells like dark chocolate, but now it's accompanied by something else, like bourbon and cigars. As he pulls back,

“Smudge, I'd like you to meet my brother Jace.” I smile at said twin,

“Hello, Jace, it's nice to meet you.” Turning to Creed, I punch his chest

“You said brother, not mirror image.” I say with a laugh.

“Not like you can't tell the difference, smudge,” he says so quietly that only Trick and I can hear.

“You told him?” Jenson breaths out next to me, I can't tell if he's hurt or upset by the fact.

At a glance around the room, everyone feels safe. I smile as I sit back down and turn to Trick as I sip my tea,

“He felt safe, but I was curious what he was. I’d never seen someone like him before.” Trick relaxes. Creed pats his shoulder and sits next to a very red-faced Jace. The dark-haired guy looks thoughtful and then sits opposite me. He seems familiar, but I don’t know why. Bram and Miles Walk in and sit near the dark-haired guy.

Bram kisses my crown on the way past, and before his ass hits the seat, he starts talking music with the unknown nightmare. Brayden walks in with Bastille and two other bear shifters. A vampire and a dragon come in next.

Trick puts a hand on my thigh, thinking I’m tensing at the vampire, which I kind of am, but it’s more because the dragon has some gold scales. Trick frowns when he notices who is making me tense. He looks at the dragon, then back at me with a raised eyebrow. I shake my head, and he thankfully leaves it. Trent walks in and blushes when he sees me, along with another bear shifter who, again, seems familiar, and I smile when I realise why.

“Enforcer Trunk, it's been a while.” He double-takes at me before the pieces click into place, seeing me next to Jenson.

“Miss Ashes, we’ve been looking for you everywhere. Call me Aqiduda , or Gramps, like all the rest.” He pats the boys on the head on his way past to his seat. Dominic and Lucian come in, deep in conversation, and sit down. Mika and Ren walk in; Mika kisses my crown, ruffles Brayden’s hair, and pats Bastille's shoulder.

A few minutes later, Declan walks in, seeming to second-guess himself as if he wants to interact with me but is unsure, if he is allowed or I would want him to, He kind of slumps and goes to sit next to Mika. The two guys behind him surprise me; Silas Hound walks straight over and picks me up.

“Sparkplug, what are you doing here?” I answer his following questions before my stomach yells again, and Si plonks me back in my chair with a chuckle.

The final person walks up and takes my chin between his thumb and index finger, forcing my gaze to his. Everyone has gone, still watching this exchange. My dark Angel looks into my eyes as if they hold all the answers he needs.

“ Starshine,” he whispers in Latin. He kisses my nose, then sits next to the dark-haired nightmare opposite me... his younger brother, of course, that’s why he looks familiar. The hair color was throwing me off.

“WHAT THE FUCK!” from Declan; everyone starts to eat again. Most take joy in ignoring Declan’s question.

Ember

Shortly after breakfast, Miles, Creed, Jenson, Ren, and Bram disappear into town. Dominic asks me to come to his office to go over pack rules, receiving a dirty look from Mika in the process.

“I need to call Lily before she finds out we found Ember from somewhere else,” Mika says as he walks off. I glance at Brayden.

“Lily is Dad's mate; he only found her five years ago through an old friend. She has some bad history, so they are taking it slow,” he tells me as he comes to my side.

“Want me to come for 'the talk' with Uncle Nic?” he says shyly.

“Sure, I have something to give you afterward, if that’s okay?” He looks shocked, but I walk to the office and take a seat. Nic doesn’t seem surprised to see Brayden following me. Mika, Luc, Declan, and Bastille all file in, and I start to panic. Bray takes my hand, giving it a squeeze and a smile.

“I know you’ve lived in packs before, but we’re different; our rules,” Dominic states. “Anyone can challenge or be challenged unless one of the parties is pregnant. If a female challenges a male or vice versa, a substitute will be asked to stand in. No concealment charms or spells can be used while on pack lands.” That last one I frown at.

“If there is a problem, come to me or Luc before stating a challenge. That’s it.” To say I’m shocked is an understatement. Lakeview Pack had a binder.

“No arranged matings can happen without the full consent of both parties, Uncle,” Declan says with a scowl, and Nic gives an affirming nod.

“Erm, that blonde girl standing with Bray and Ren when I arrived has a concealment charm. She’s a low-level succubus,” I say quickly, ducking my head.

Bray has gone still and then laughs,

“And she still can't get in Ren’s pants.” I flinch at his words, and he starts to apologize as Bas smacks him upside the head.

“Think baby brother. They are newly mated! How would you have felt if we spoke of Miles that way?” Brayden looks like a kicked puppy after Bas tells him off, and I get another mumbled sorry from him. He's still holding my hand, so I squeeze it.

"Baby girl . I know you’ve shared some of your story with me, but can you tell us again? Not right now, but soon. I want detailed information, as it will help us at the SRU (Supernatural Relations Unit) and others who may face similar situations you've lived through," Mika asks then looks at the others

“I expect all of you to keep your tempers. Ember can give as little or as much information as she is comfortable with right now, once Ember has been here longer; only then can you push her for more, when she is comfortable with you all and fully understands she is safe with all of us” he says, watching Declan, who gives the slightest nod, and gives me a apologetic look.

Once he is happy with their reactions, Mika grabs some bottles of water, placing them and his phone on the coffee table in front of me.

I take a breath and give him a nod. He puts his phone on the voice recorder, kisses my crown, and then sits back down. I can tell he is still tense and he already knows some

of what's happened.

For the next two hours, I tell my story. When I reach my time in The Cage, Declan goes pale and bursts into tears before leaving. Bray and Bas mumble that they've never seen him cry, but I'm urged to finish. We hear a smash and some yelling, which makes me flinch, but I wrap up; it only takes another half hour.

Once I'm done, Brayden leads me out to the deck. The decking seems to be sectioned off into different areas. There's a fire pit and seating outside the kitchen and breakfast room doors that everyone seems to use. With my back to the Chalet and looking to the left, I see various sections that all the pack uses, complete with chess, checkers, and card tables set up, as well as a small children's play area with swings and slides and a picnic area featuring a projector screen. To the right are all the Chalet's private areas and various seating spots, including what looks like an outdoor gym. Brayden leads me to a seating area below Ren's balcony, where there is a big round chair covered in cushions. Alma brings out some food; I have no idea what it is, but it's all delicious. We sit in silence, and halfway through my cup of tea, Brayden wraps an arm around my shoulder and rests his cheek on my head, staring out at the lake.

"I told you I had a gift for you, and now you know some of my story; parts will make more sense," I say, putting my cup down and grabbing the sketch pad.

"For as long as I can remember, two wolves have appeared in my dreams. The first time I tried to kill myself, I was 7 years old. The wolves told me their names: Dex and Levi. After that, they spoke to me more and more, teaching me languages and even basic school subjects when they realized I wasn't being sent to school." I hand him the sketchpad and pick my tea back up, and he opens the book.

"I had this dream!" his statement should shock me, but it doesn't. I just hope he only shared the good ones, not the bad ones.

"I never saw your face; you were always blocked by the sun, or it was too dark. I could feel you riding on my back a few times," he says as he flicks through.

Some he asks where I was or who a person is. We spend time swapping stories, and it seems some of the fun times he had with our brothers Dex and Levi have shared with me on dark nights. I tell him about the time Trick and I filled Ren's bed with silly foam just as the others start to file in and join our storytelling. I end up curled between Ren and Creed, with Jay laid across my legs, his head on my stomach. Just as the sun is setting, Ren pulls me away, asking me to go for a walk with him.

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I probably should have asked before I pulled her away, but I'm crossing everything, hoping she says yes. We walk up to the waterfall. It takes 45 minutes with her shorter legs, but she never complains. Well, one complaint as we reach the falls is,

"It's so beautiful. Why didn't you say something so I could bring my sketch pad?" I chuckle behind her. As she turns to face me again, I drop to one knee and hold Mother's ring out, and her face goes slack.

"Marry me, Ember? Let me be yours in every way."

He just! And that's!

My thoughts are chaotic, but his question is foolish.

I fly forward, knocking him into the frost-covered grass. I kiss him with everything I have, pushing love, lust, obsession, trust, and faith down the bond. I pull back, and he follows until we are still kissing, but he's seated with me, straddling his lap.

My left hand is over his heart, and my right is in his hair. I feel the ring slip onto my finger, his other hand resting on my collarbone, his thumb rubbing the bite mark. He pulls back a little, lips still touching but enough for him to speak.

"Can I give you my Alpha mark, baby? I want to do it under our moon!" His husky growl tells me Pine and he are both in control right now, slick flooding my core.

"Make me yours, my Alpha; make me burn and soar." I'm lifted as he starts to kiss my neck. He walks to the side of the pool, where a blanket and battery candles are waiting. He lowers us slowly to the blanket, pulling his shirt off with one hand. He undoes his belt and flies with the other hand; then his mouth is back on me; he kisses down my neck over the swell of my breast, down my cleavage to my belly button, then pulls back to rip my hoody and t-shirt off, growling at my lack of bra.

"I forgot you didn't have a bra on, fuck I would have been like granite all day if I had realized." He leans down, taking my nipple in his mouth, running the tip of his tongue around the pebbled nub, letting his breath heat my skin, as he moves to the other bud the salvia left cools, adding to the sensations. I whimper once and he starts to kiss down my cleavage with a smirk, grazing his teeth in a mock bite on the base of my

heavy breasts before nipping each hip bone, he rubs his nose over my clothed core, inhaling deeply.

“Are you wet for me, Luna? If I take these sweats and boxers off, am I going to find you dripping for me?”

What the hell is he doing to me his voice is making me tremble with anticipation, he cups my crotch with his mouth and blows out a huge warm breath, the heat of which makes my pussy gush with slick and my back arches.

“Please, Alpha.” I whimper.

Suddenly I’m naked and he repeats his action on my bare pussy. He runs his nose over my lips, I feel him lick his own lips in anticipation, my skin is prickling with heat, even with the frosty breeze, before I have a chance to whimper another plea he starts to feast on me, tongue, teeth, lips he uses them all, as my hand slide into his hair, his purr starts to vibrate through him adding to the sensations.

“Ren I need to cum, please.” I start to try to move, getting the friction I desperately need and where I need it.

“Not yet, baby. Need you gushing to take my knot, I don’t want to hurt you.” At the mention of his knot my pussy clenches on nothing, and my hips start to cant with the bob of his head as he licks me.

“Please, I need you inside me, please.” I pull his hair so he raises to where I can kiss him, tasting my juices on his lips, which has me clenching more, I realise his hair with one hand sliding it down my body as I start to rub my clit, slipping my toes into the waistband of his jeans. I push them down over his ass releasing his gorgeous cock from their cage, as his cock falls free the heavy length smacks down onto my tortured button, making me arch and moan. Ren stops the kiss to look down where I’m still

stroking my clit, now mixing the precum that's leaking from him into my juices to help. He stands up taking his jeans and socks off, still stroking my clit I go up on to my knees, licking his cock from base to tip, even with my tongue flattened his girth is more, he's at least the length of my forearm, with two throbbing veins running along the top, ok maybe bigger than my estimate he seems to grow as I slide him in my mouth, I hum at the taste of him.

"Baby, you can't do that." he groans, cupping my chin in his hand,

"I don't wanna cum in your mouth before our first time." He slowly pulls out of my mouth, using his thumb to wipe the pre cum left on my lips away, before letting me suck in from his thumb, he pushes me back to lay on the blanket, crashing to his knees he licks me once from dripping core to my belly button in one lone lick then again. but this time only to my clit, then next time his tongue dips into my core before he starts the same path he does this a few more times, only ever dipping his tongue in enough for me to feel before on the final lick he sucks my clit into his mouth making me detonate on a scream.

He kisses up my body, again grazing my breasts with his teeth, kissing each nipple as I come down. He kisses my lips gently as I feel the blunt end of his, throbbing member rest at my core's opening. I look down and take in the sight of his abs flexing. Ren could be carved from obsidian, he's so perfect, so different from my soft curves, I notice his Knot has started to grow at the base of his cock, making my pussy clench and my mouth water.

"Look at me, Emmy! I want your eyes on me as I stretch your tight little body to accommodate what's always been yours." his words end on a moan as he starts to sink inside me, and starts to rub my clit.

"Fuck I can feel your innocence brushing my tip; I need you to cum, baby; it will help with the pain." He groans as my channel starts to flutter.

“You’re so tight, baby, I don’t think I’m going to last.” Now, it’s his turn to beg.

“Come baby, so that I can sink hilt deep into your gorgeous cunt.” his voice becomes a growl, and he pinches my clit, my climax hits, I feel myself gush, and he bottoms out inside me.

“Fuck so tight! So good! My perfect mate! I was made for you, Luna! I love you, , so much!” His mouth is now by my ear, each breath warming my skin and sending pulses of pleasure to my nerve endings. I can feel his breath in small pants, him trying not to end too soon.

“I need you to move, Alpha. Please Ren” He sucks my earlobe into his mouth grazing it with his teeth,

“Not until you answer my question.” Question? I don’t remember any...

“What question?” I ask, confused and desperate for him to move. He’s pinning my hips to the floor with his.

“Will you marry me?” he whispers into my ear. Oh, that question. As he pushes up to look into my eyes, it was never really a choice.

“Yes, I’ll marry you.” Before he has the chance to react to my answer, I decide to share something I’ve told nobody about ever, I push out my Alpha dominance

“Now fuck your Luna and claim her fully as yours.” He growls, defying what I ask by doing slow, deep rolls of his hips. He makes love to me, constantly kissing everywhere he can reach with whispering compliments.

“Feels so good.” Kiss.

“Fucking made for you.” Kiss.

“Such a strong Luna.” Kiss.

“I love you.” Kiss.

His hips start to stutter, and I manage to push him off me, his cock leaving a trail of cum down my leg, he looks confused, but I roll to my front and 'present ' myself to him.

“I need your fucking knot Alpha and your Bite on my neck or are you just going to leave your Luna wanting,” my voice has gone husky, and I notice his eyes change.

“I’m already Ren’s. Time for you to make me yours, Pine,” I say with a smirk and wiggle my arse at him; before I can blink, his cock is thrust into me, and the hands on my hips start to shift into his partial form, which makes everything bigger.

“Fuck yes, stretch me, Alpha.” He doesn’t give me time to get used to the bigger size, using his thumbs he spreads my ass cheeks so he can see our connection better, I keep pushing back trying to get his knot in me,

“Please, Alpha, I need what’s mine.” As his Knot sinks into me, he growls out a

“MINE.”

Before he starts to rut into me, his left claw is on my hip, and the right finds my hair, which has come loose from my braids. He fists my hair, yanking me up onto my knees, and his left hand moves to cuff my throat and his jaw clamps round my throat and left shoulder. My left hand goes up to hold his head to me as my right drops to rub my clit, but its knocked away as his hand drops to-do that job, he uncuffs my throat to tease my nipples, so my right hand reaches behind him to hold his ass,

digging my nails in urging him to fuck me faster, hoping they break the skin and leave another mark, he's twisting and tugging on my nipples, strumming my clit like a fucking banjo and I can feel the cliffs edge racing toward me, I feel the first throb of his release and I shatter, feeling myself go limp in his arms, he licks my mark, before pushing me back down onto my elbows, brushing my hair over my right shoulder so he can see his new mark, a hand slowly strokes down my spine making me arch before grabbing my hips and thrusting into me in a punishing pace, two more times I shatter, each time I feel Ren have a small release ' I could explain why small releases but who's got time right now ' as I feel him shift back to his human side, he cuffs my throat again pulling my back to his chest, he kisses me deeply, rolling his hips hitting me in all the right places, his right hand grabs mine and brings it to where our bodies are joined, he positions our hands so I can feel him entering me, and our combined release trying to seep out, the hand on my throat leaves to tease my breast and he uses our thumbs to stoke my clit, my left hand is again up in his hair, holding him to me

“Gonna fill you so full of my cum, it will be dripping from you for days, I love you Luna Baby, my perfect mate” is growled against my lips, I bite his lip hard drawing blood and then kissing him hard, our bond fully clicks into place, two more earth-shattering orgasms for me and one for him that makes him roar and howl to the moon, we end up curled up on the blanket, when an Alpha is mating, to fill his mate fully he cums in small amounts, so he will cum more often before needing to rest, each time he comes his knot shrinks a little, when he is in a breeding rut things work a little different, but we have time before I need to think about that, we lay there watching the moon waiting for his knot to ease enough for him to pull out safely, I fall asleep to whispered love yours.

I wake up to Ren slipping boxers and a hoody on me.

“Go back to sleep, baby, I'll carry you home. We can shower, then cuddle in the warm bed.”

I drift back to sleep but wake to Ren running a cloth over me in the bath, I twist so I'm on my knees between his legs, and I lean forward to kiss him, I move again not breaking the kiss, but I straddle his hips, dropping one hand from his shoulders to guide his cock inside me where I need him, I roll my hips taking it slow so we don't slosh water everywhere, he keeps one hand in my hair and the other goes to my scarred ass cheek, urging me to get going, I have one hand in his hair tilting his head back to the angle I want, my other drops to my clit, I barely have to graze it as I fall with a whimpered moan, him grunting his release as I feel him pulse inside me, once we have our breathing back to normal, we step out of the bath, get dried off and slip still naked into his bed.

I wake up needy a little later, Ren's snoring softly on his back, one arm below my head, the other on his stomach, holding my hand.

Slowly, I slip down the bed, keeping under the covers, and take his semi-hard member into my mouth. I can't get all of him in, so I make a fist around the base and match the bob of my head with the pump of my hand, keeping my tongue flat to the base of his cock as I hollow my cheeks. I keep a slow pace. His hips start to move with my actions. Then the covers get thrown off my head as his hand grip my hair.

"Baby, I'm gonna cum" he groans out, I push him as far back in my throat as I can and swallow around the tip he gasps at the action, keeping my head still but pumping my fist I swallow with every upward pump, I grip his knot in my other hand and give it a squeeze in time with my swallows, making him cum down my throat, he takes 3 deep sucks of air as I lick him clean, then kiss up his body, purposefully sliding my dripping cunt over him so he fully understand why I woke him, to my pleasure he does understand and rolls us, so I am underneath him.

"That was mean, baby! So fucking good, sinfully good but mean!" he rocks his hips against me while he kisses me hard before rolling over onto his back again.

“To make it up to me, your gonna sit your cunt on my face and ride my tongue while you grip the headboard.” Without further talk, he grabs me, pushing me up the bed so my ass is hovering above his face and my slick pussy is level with his nose. His hands on my hips lock me in place, and he starts to fuck me on his tongue. Four orgasms later, I flop next to my smirking Alpha and fall asleep.

Only waking to his tongue thrusting into my cunt once more, I wrap my legs around his head and grab his hair, to ride through two climaxes. He takes my mouth with his as he slides into me fucking me slow and deep, pulling one leg up over his shoulder, and holding my ass to help get the angle he wants. He alternates between slow deep kisses to match his thrusts and teasing my nipples with kisses and sucks. As another orgasm hits me, he drops my leg, fearing he’s about to pull out. I lock my ankles over his ass and pull him quickly to me, thrusting his knot inside me in the process making us both sigh a moan, rolling our hips as we have another drawn-out kiss.

I hear the door click open, I can feel the sheet between my feet and Ren’s ass, and thankfully his body is covering mine.

“I love you, my Luna” is growled in my ear as I look over his shoulder to find the blond succubus standing there, her bottom lip starts to stick out, so using the full force of my Alpha command

“GET OUT, SHUT THE DOOR, AND DON'T ENTER THE PACK HOUSE WITHOUT EXPRESS PERMISSION FROM THE ALPHA.” One final push as Ren starts to pound into me.

“GO!!!!!” I bellow as my moans break free. The door slams shut, and the distant screeching begins to descend the hall.

“My gorgeous badass mate”, he kisses me, the pounding picking up pace, my tits bouncing with each of his thrusts, they going to ache later on.

“So fucking hot when you use your command.” he starts to make love to me again in deep, slow rolls of his hips matched with a slow, deep kiss. I cum so suddenly my whole body spasms. Something in Ren snaps at this, and with a growled, “MINE.”

He starts to rut into me again, the bed giving a subtle creek at the abuse. I feel the orgasm hit, but I pass out from it.

I wake much later, noticing it's 10 a.m. Ren's missing school. I grab some clothes that Miles dropped off: leggings, a baggy bottle green cable knit sweater, and some underwear. I take a quick shower and dress, then curl up on the window seat, trying to block my feelings from escaping through the bond.

Each time my gaze moves to him I swallow my fear, I thought I was smart, but obviously I wasn't. I just hope Ren doesn't hate me for forgetting, I know it's not only my responsibility but it's my oddities that break the norm.

Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 4:20 am

I wake up noticing Ember isn't in my arms again. I look towards the balcony, but the doors are closed. Rubbing my face as I sit up, I see she's in my window seat, dressed, and her hair wet, so she must have showered, and she's not in my clothes anymore; I don't like that she's washed my scent away either. I walk over, sitting behind her. I see tear marks streaked down her cheeks.

“What's wrong, baby? Did I hurt you? Was I too much? I'm sorry baby, forgive me....” She stops me.

“it's me who should be sorry. I got caught up and didn't think, I'm sorry .” She's full-on crying now, so I pull her into my lap, she is so small in my arms, and I love it; I feel my cock getting hard again at her closeness.

“Why are you sorry, Ember? What did you forget?” I try to keep my voice soft and remove any panic, so she doesn't get more upset. She takes a deep breath.

“I'm allergic to modern medicine,” she says. I remember when we were kids, some stuff reacted to her, and Jay told me about what happened while they were in the cage. She watches my face, obviously realizing I'm not getting her point.

“I can't take birth control,” she says more directly. Yeah, Jay mentioned the first month she was in the cage, she reacted to birth control. She sighs and tries to move off me.

“You didn't wear a condom.” Right, I'm still confused.

“I can't wear them when knotting as they will rip from the stretch and then..... oh.”

I've just realized why she's upset. We're 17, and now she thinks there's a chance she could be pregnant.

"Oh." She mimics looking at me like I'm about to hulk out, blame her, and reject her in my next breath. She's still trying to get off my lap, which I use to my own advantage, lifting her and spinning her to face me, then pulling her more securely into my lap, noting I'm still naked. I best make this quick before I incur Miles' wrath for dirtying his carefully thought-out outfit, which she looks fantastic in. The leggings and sweater combo is definitely a favorite, hugging her curves just right, even if the sweater isn't tight. Focus, , no making a mess!

I kiss her slow and sweet, and when I pull back, I leave our foreheads touching, which seems to be becoming a thing with us.

"Baby, everything will be ok!" She goes to speak, tears still escaping her beautiful eyes. I kiss her nose.

"Luna, I knew you couldn't take anything, and because of my Knot I knew condoms weren't an option, so when I turned 16 I spoke to Xander, explained our situation, and that as soon as I had a chance I would mark you even if that was tomorrow, he then looked into getting the male contraceptive to work on Alphas, once Nic found out all of us in the pack house and a few of the enforcers now have yearly injections, so no whoops moments can happen or females trying to trap certain members of the pack, there is always someone claiming that Declan has knocked them up almost weekly and he just laughs!"

I can see she looks relieved, but there is some sadness coming from the bond. I cup her ass pulling her flush against me so my erection is now squashed against her core.

"The thought of you growing our pup in your belly is getting me harder than stone. Pine doesn't understand why I'm not rutting you until you are, BUT it can wait until

we are both ready, I do want soon though baby; I plan to have plenty of kids around us for years to come” She gives me a watery smile, closes her eyes, and melts onto my chest as I hold her. I should have thought and told her before something happened. But it's time for a cold shower...

“Luna baby, as much as I love having you in my arms, I need to shower and get dressed before I make a mess of the outfit Miles got you. I don’t want him bitching at me.” says into my hair. I kiss where I marked his chest. Even that’s odd. Over the bite mark is now what looks like a tribal wolf and phoenix entwined like Yin and Yang. I sigh and stand, I hear him mumble,

“Cold shower, definitely a cold shower.” Before he has a chance to stand, I drop to my knees, taking him in my mouth and help relieve that problem.

“Baby. Fuck. Luna, you need to stop doing this to me.” He groans but strokes my head, resisting his urge to fist my hair; hollowing my cheeks, I take him in my throat and swallow, remembering how much he liked it last time; his hips buck, and with a groaned

“Ember Baby,” from my grumpy Alpha, his release hits the back of my throat.

Licking his now semi-hard cock clean, I stand, kiss his cheek and go to the bed to start stripping the cum soaked sheets off.

He’s just slumped back against the window. He eventually walks past, smacking my ass as he goes making me moan.

I hear him mumble something but don’t hear what as someone knocks on the door.

Opening it expecting another bimbo, so I open it with a raised eyebrow, but my expression soon turns to a smile when I see it’s Creed. Leaving the door open, I head

back to stripping the sheets; until I hear an odd noise, I turn to see Creed has gone stone still and is a strange shade of puce. Shit, the room is filled with the scent of mine and 's combined multiple releases.

“Creed, you never have to ask permission to feed from my residual emotions. Please feed” He doesn't move

“Feed, bro. Like Em said, you don't have to ask us.” states as he leaves the bathroom and heads to the closet. I don't turn and see him half or fully naked; that won't help Creed right now. Creed closes his eyes and inhales deeply. His features flicker to his alter side, but I'm distracted. It's like I can feel the scent of sex, orgasms, and love being sucked out of the room. I watch the changes to Creed happen like I'm watching a slow-motion camera. His skin smooths and seems to have a glow to it, his hair looks thicker and shinier, and his muscles become more defined, not bigger, but it's as if someone has just airbrushed him before my eyes... appears at my side.

“What the?” I glance up at

“Instead of snacking when he gets hunger pains, he's just had a 10-course meal and filled his tank.” I explain to , knowing what Creed has been doing,

“Why didn't you tell us you needed more? We would have helped!” growls at a star-struck Creed, who just mumbles,

“It's different when it's Ember!” A blush forms.

“I need to go shower, but Nic wants to see you both at breakfast.” He dashes out of the room, his ears turning pink, which causes me to giggle. looks at me for an explanation. I go up on my toes and kiss his lips as I pat his dick with a giggle, then walk off to head downstairs. I hear an “oh,” followed by a chuckle.

“Before we go down, can I take a photo of your mate marks? I have a hunch.” asks as he throws the sheets in the hamper.

“Sure, do you want to clue me in on the hunch?” pulling the jumper off, I stand waiting for him to take a photo. Instead, a purr starts as he presses up against my back and kisses his bite marks.

“Why are you not wearing a bra again?” He takes a deep breath and pulls back. I hear the click, so I put on my sweater again.

“Miles didn’t supply me with one, and I think the strap would rub on my scar, even though I’m big, so I need one, or I will start to sag.” He hums and kisses my nose.

“I want to send the photo to your dad and uncles in case anyone tries to claim you as a mate. They can nix them before talking to you, and I want to show the guys that are ready to swear to my pack when I turn 18, as I think a few if not all of your mates are in this pack house.” I nod an ok, and we head to Nic’s office via the kitchen for Coffee and Tea.

Ember

Ren knocks once and walks into Nic's office. The patio doors are open, and the plastic succubus is fake crying outside them. How do I know it's fake? Well, no red eyes or nose; her makeup is still perfect. The male wolf inside is short compared to most shifters and pear-shaped, with what can only be described as relaxed muscle, as if he just gave up on maintaining it. His hair and beard are unkempt, and his face keeps flashing between anger and cunning.

Lucian sneaks in, bringing two Irish coffees from the smell, just as the door behind us swings shut. He gives me a wink and nods toward the chair in front of the Alpha's desk, where another tea sits waiting for me, keeping Ren between me and the unknown male. I sink into the chair, pulling my feet up under me. The motion gives me a few twinges, reminding me of what I got up to last night, but I just sit, sipping my tea.

If it weren't for the whining, this would be a rather tranquil setting before a busy day. A random thought hits me.

"How come the boys aren't at school?" Lucian gives me a cheeky smile.

"Snow day! We couldn't get out of the lodge! Nic is also the headteacher at the school, so the boys tend to work from home if he has pack business." It makes sense, so I give him a nod and a smile, ignoring the daggers from Mr. Pear-shaped and the death glare from Plastic. I just look to Uncle Alpha and sip my tea.

"Mika is on his way; he had a work call, so he was delayed," Luc informs Nic as he

hands him his cup of coffee. The door opens as if he was waiting for a cue.

"Alma wants to know if we are doing the pack meet tonight or tomorrow so she knows what she needs to cook." Mika informs Nic, and Luc sends a quick text and mumbles that tonight might be best, giving a head tilt towards the guests.

"What the fuck is going on Dominic? Why do the three of you need to be present? Just so that you can discipline your charge for having a human whore in his bed?" the male growls at Nic.

The air in the room instantly goes still at his tone, and a growl begins to vibrate in more than one chest. I can't stop the Ivanova's, but I can calm Ren. I place my hand on his back under his shirt. He immediately stops, turning to me, picking me up with one hand, settling into my chair, and placing me in his lap without spilling our drinks. He kisses my temple and then sips his coffee. I hear Luc snort a laugh into his coffee, which quiets the other two Alphas' growls. Nic sighs,

"Trinity, Barnaby, please come in and take a seat." Plastic, I mean, Trinity steps carefully over the threshold and sits daintily on the edge of a metal office chair, Barnaby 'snort' slumps into the chair next to her.

"Let's start at the beginning, without the name-calling, please. I have a migraine coming on from being woken up by your daughter screeching down a hallway she shouldn't have been in this morning." Nic rubs the bridge of his nose as he looks at them, waiting for a response.

"The young Alpha asked my Trinity to come to his room this morning. When she arrived," he pauses, holding Trinity's hand and giving her a sympathetic look,

"she found him... in the middle of..." it's like he can't finish as he's embarrassed, but it's obvious he's playing it up.

“She found me Knot deep inside My Mate!” Ren says, maintaining a straight face and devoid of emotion in his voice, ending with a raised eyebrow as he sips his coffee. He slips out his phone to send a photo of my mate marks to Nic, Mika, and Luc, along with a picture of his own mark. Then he texts Darby, but I can’t see what he writes because Luc starts to choke on his coffee at Ren's comment, while Nic and Mika just stare at him in shock. Barnaby clears his throat.

“Yes, that! I know he’s an upstanding young man, and I feel he’s been tricked into that position. I know Ren...” Before he can finish, there’s a knock on the door. Ren and I rise as he goes to answer it, and I address Barnaby.

"You should show respect to your superiors. Call him Ren again and see where that gets you. The same goes for Dominic and Maykal. The term you're forgetting is Alpha. Also, when talking about ALPHA Firefall, you will address him— not Alpha Dominic. He is old enough to speak for himself." Darby walks into the room, followed by Declan. Darby sets a laptop in front of Nic and Leaves, giving Ren a nod on the way past. Barnaby comes at me quickly, but I’ve had worse come at me.

I grab his wrist with both hands; using his momentum, I swing him around, making him trip over my chair, causing him to fall to his knees, his arm now twisted behind his back. I push my weight onto him to hold him in place. I can feel Saint's shadows surrounding the room, and with my Dark Angel as backup, I know I’m free to speak, injecting some Alpha command into my voice.

“You think you're strong enough to strike me?” I chuckle, “Worse Alphas have tried and failed, and you don’t even have a designation.” He lets out a low growl,

“I’m an enforcer. You're just a human with access to witch charms.” He’s trying to push me off. I glance over my shoulder as Declan approaches. He secures the cuffs before I’m even fully upright,

“Was an enforcer. You’re lucky to still have your throat intact; Gerald Firefall wasn't so lucky when he struck me in front of his son.” I inwardly flinch at the term "Son," but Ren’s arm is already around me, a possessive hand over my stomach. I raise my eyes to his face, a fake pout forming,

“He made me spill my Tea!” I blink at him, a smirk breaking through as he kisses my temple with a chuckle. I turn to Trinity while still addressing Barnaby.

“You accuse me of wearing charms when your stepdaughter is wearing three of them to hide her succubus nature,” I scoff, pulling in an audible breath as if I’m scenting her,

“Not that she needs them she’s a low level, she needs to fuck to feed, can't even feed from residual energies in the air.” Trinity pales at my words, and Barnaby starts spluttering excuses. Saint appears behind her and removes the charms, dropping them into the evidence bag that Declan is holding.

"I’m pregnant with your baby. You promised me that when you took my virginity, you would mate with me. I’ve been faithful only to you,” she blubs in Ren's direction, who just laughs.

“I’ve been on the pack contraceptive injection since I turned 16, knowing next time I saw Ember I was making her mine, and she is the first and only female I’ve kissed, let alone anything else,” he states as he pulls my sweater down over my shoulder, bringing my Alpha mark into view. He kisses it, then takes my hand, scooping up the discarded mugs.

“I sent you three a copy of Embers' marks and my own. The promises she claims are false, and if—and that’s a big IF—she is pregnant, it’s definitely not any of the guys.” He waits for a nod from everyone in the room.

“Come on, Em, if we wait much longer, J won’t have left us anything for breakfast.” Ren’s voice sounds carefree, but I can hear the strain. I follow him out of the room, and as the door swings shut, I pull him down and give him a gentle kiss.

“I know.” Kiss

“I trust you.” Kiss

I leave him after grabbing my mug, setting off in search of more tea.

Alma tells me to take a seat while she brings me a pot of tea. I walk through the room and spot J with his eyes closed, about to put a forkful of waffles, chocolate cream, and strawberries in his mouth. Leaning down, I swipe the forkful and kiss his cheek, aware that I have cream on my lips. Then I chew and plop down in the seat next to him. He growls slightly at me.

"If you’re going to growl at me, I might as well take the whole plate," he mutters something under his breath as he swaps my empty plate for his waffle-filled one and starts building his masterpiece again.

"Thanks Trick, you’re the best!" I smile at him, then thank a chuckling Alma as she drops off my pot of tea.

“Anything for you, Quinny.” He kisses my temple and we both dive in. I eat three of the four waffles, but he easily finishes the one I left behind.

“I have no idea how you eat that much sugar, J. I’d be sick, and I’m three times your size!” The bear shifter across from me comments. I hum into my tea and hear Creed chuckle.

“Like vampires need blood, Incubi and Succubae need sex, and nightmares need fear.

Kitsunes need sugar, whether it's natural or synthetic; it's what fuels their magic.” The boys around the table blink at me and then look at Jenson.

“None of you asked, and before I forget, it's not common knowledge,” Trick replies to their stunned looks as Nic walks into the room.

“Boys, can you help set up for the pack meeting tonight, please? We need to make announcements about Ember!” Nic asks as Alma walks in with some kind of smoothie.

“I put something in to help with the headache,” Alma tells him before placing it in front of him and taking his coffee cup away

“Alma would you like some help in the kitchen with the food? I've worked in pack kitchens before!” I ask as it's something I can do, Nic mumbles a Thanks as he holds his nose to drink his Smoothie

“yes please, Devin can I steal you as well, to help with all the chopping, you are least likely to eat everything or chop your thumb off” Devin blushes but says he will, we all split off to do the tasks asked of us.

Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 4:20 am

I walk into the kitchen to find Devin laughing while Ember sings and dances. She's singing about feeling blue in a blue world when she notices me, I freeze and shrink a little.

"Brilliant! Just who I need!" She steps onto a stack of cans to reach the pan on the stove. My bear rumbles in joy at the delicious smell. She hops back down and hands me a bowl and a spoon.

"Try this and tell me if it needs something more." I take the bowl, as she frowns, which makes me freeze again. I still worry that my size might upset her or scare her.

"Please don't try to shrink yourself on my account, I've dealt with a lot bigger and scarier creatures than you could ever be" she states, my bear rumbles not liking the idea of her being scared by something bigger than me, but I rise to my full height and take a mouth full, and fuck me it's like my mouth just had an orgasm, I moan as my brother and Bas walk in the room both stopping and giving me an odd look.

"Hum, I'm not sure; I might need a few more bowls to figure it out," I say with a cheeky smile.

"These two definitely won't like it." Devin gives me a look as if I've grown a second head, while I try to decide how bad it would look for me to lick the bowl clean. Tim, being himself, puts the back of his paw to my forehead as if checking my temperature.

"Don't even think about it, Treefall; that goes for you two as well," Alma says, pointing her wooden spoon at Timber and Bas, who raise their hands and slowly back

away. I clear my throat

“Miles is up in your room Ember, to get you ready for the pack meet” I smile, but she groans, mutters a thank you, and stomps off, praying to every goddess she knows that Miles will be gentle with her. I turn to Devin.

“Ren called a meeting before we all go get ready.” He nods, and we head to Ren’s room. I hope it’s nothing bad. I like Ember, and I’m kind of jealous that Ren has found such an amazing mate, but I’m glad she will be my Luna. I wonder if she will be friends with more of us besides Jay, Creed, and Bram.

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Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 4:20 am

“Ren, why the last-minute meeting? I hate it when you give me no information like this,” Jace whines from next to me.

“I’ll be quick, but I want this done before the meet,” Ren states, not giving anything away.

The last of our future pack enters; Ren will be our Alpha when he turns 18. Jace and I are his Betas, while Creed, River, Kodi, and Jay are his Enforcers. Trent, Paxton, Saint, Marcus, James, Xander, and Calum are older and have jobs that keep them from direct pack work. Devin, Darby, and Miles have their own roles to play, but Ren has already made it clear he doesn’t want a traditional pack.

He likes how Uncle Nic runs Triple Moon and isn’t fully setting up until we’ve all finished college or until those who want to go have completed their studies. Ren takes a breath as he stands.

“This will be quick as we all need to get ready. You’ve all met Ember by now, even if just at mealtimes, and you probably know I’ve mated and marked her.” I see a few shrink and look sadly at the floor. Odd! Ren clocks the reactions too, but continues.

“I’m not Ember’s only mate, she has ten marks” WHAT!! I didn’t know she had that many, a few of the guys perk up again; Ren turns the TV on.

“This is a photo of her marks” he looks at me,

“she’s aware I’m showing you all this if you are one of her mates, but don’t wish to see the mating through; she understands and accepts that not everyone will be happy

mating someone that is viewed as different, not that those were her words” he pauses, and I hear J mumble something in Japanese and Ren nods, J looks pissed

“I, on the other hand, don’t understand why you wouldn’t want her and think you’re a fucking idiot if you can’t see how amazing she is, there is no rush, all I ask is if you are hers please talk to me before you seal or deny the bond so Pine doesn't freak out” He looks around the room, nods, pats J on the shoulder, then heads to his bathroom as everyone leaves, each with various emotions.

"J, what did she say? Ren said she didn’t use those words?" I ask. He looks at his feet as he heads to the door.

"She called herself broken. She’s been told all her life that she’s broken and worthless, not even worth what’s between her legs. After a while, she started to believe it." He leaves us with shared looks of horror on our faces. After everyone has left, I turn off the TV, head to my room to change, and then go to Ember's room to help her against Miles.

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Thankfully, Miles has chosen long sleeves and dark colors, but that's all. The sweater dress stops mid-thigh and has a panel of lace down my spine, ending at my panty line, so it shows a lot of my scars, and Ren's mate mark is on full display. I threw the heels in the hallway and told him to wear them himself; he replied that they weren't his size. Bas stopped our disagreement when he very shyly arrived to put a family braid in my hair.

Miles has been stood with crossed arms, glaring at me while tapping his foot until Brayden enters, the offending heels hooked in one hand.

"Creed and Jenson did warn you she wouldn't wear heels, babe," Brayden says to a now-pouting Miles.

I take a deep breath.

"Miles, can I wear flats if I stop arguing about the dress? Also, do you have shorts or something for underneath so I feel less vulnerable, please?" That's my main problem with the dress; too much skin is on display. Even my mating marks show through the fabric too much, making me feel like I could be rejected multiple times.

Miles seems to understand what I mean, takes the heels from Brayden, and disappears into my closet.

He emerges with blue and purple diamond-patterned high-tops and what looks like black cycling shorts.

"These are meant to be worn under dresses and things to help with chub rub; I got

you some ankle socks, too." Then he seems to freeze and sputter,

"Not that I'm calling you chubby or fat! You may not be a twig like the other girls here, but your curves are amazing and natural, and you look..." He struggles for the right word; I wasn't insulted to begin with.

Miles is still sputtering, trying to dig himself out of the hole he created, when Bas rumbles behind me,

"Healthy; she looks healthy." He smiles down at me when I turn and just nods toward the mirror. I notice the small braid tucked into a Viking braid, adorned with different colored hair, charms, and feathers. Bas points at it,

"This has some of mine and Declan's human hair, along with some from Dex and Levi's tails. The charms and feathers are from Bou's collection, my bear, and some I've carved myself." He blushes, and I hug him.

"thank you big bear" He mumbles a welcome and leaves to get changed. I look back at my reflection; I have a thick braid where my center parting would be, with two small braids on either side, resulting in five braids overall. The central larger braid is teased so it appears looser, while the four side braids combine into two and stop at my nape. The single large braid stops at my crown, and my natural curls fall down my back. Brayden comes up behind me and hooks a wooden dog tag on a leather cord around my neck.

Wide-eyed, I stare at him in the mirror.

"You have always been part of this pack, sister. Dad will probably get a leather cuff made for you, but for now, you can have my tag since I only wear one of them anyway." The tag has a triple moon carved into it. He pulls me into a hug, which I return. As I hear the click of a camera, as he whispers,

“I love you, baby sis,” into my hair.

“Thank you for always being there; I may have given up a few times,” I say, rubbing my wrists.

“But having your wolves there in the dark saved me more times than I can count.” I hold him tight. I hear Miles snuffle, so I hold out a hand to him, and he joins our cuddle. We all seem to take a breath and pull back. I look at Miles.

“Come on, pretty kitty, otherwise your makeup will smudge.” He squeaks and spins to the mirror. I go to the desk and grab the charm I made for Miles. I look over to him and decide to turn it into a bracelet.

Grabbing the supplies I got from Alma, I use a leather cord and wooden beads—redwood, rowan, and yew—threading them together to create a stacker bracelet effect, with my charm, made from oak, holding the stack together.

“Miles, I made you this; it should help with all the Dominance floating around.” The charm has two Xs standing on top of each other with a line straight down the middle, a rune for protection. Miles takes it as Brayden sniffs.

“Why can I smell your blood on it, Setsra ?” Miles freezes as Brayden raises an eyebrow at me.

“Unless someone with stronger Alpha blood than me tries to command Miles, it won’t affect him while he’s wearing the charm,” I state, not looking at my brother but at his omega mate, who slips the bracelet on, shudders, then pounces at me.

“Thank you, thank you, thank you!” It takes five minutes, and Jace knocking on the door to stop Miles from smothering me.

“Miles, can you do outfit checks, please? River and J mentioned something about...”
He doesn’t get to finish as Miles kisses my cheek and dashes off to Brayden.

“I’m going to follow, or he may end up making someone change like last time,”
Brayden says as he kisses my crown. Jace chuckles at the shared memory.

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Ember nervously moves around, tidying the already tidy room. I push the door, leaving it ajar, so we both have an escape route.

“Ren showed us all your mate marks.” I see her stiffen.

“Mine is among them. I want to get to know you before anything happens.” I’m looking at my feet now, but she speaks; her voice is small and vulnerable.

“I don’t expect any of the other marks to accept me. I fully expected all of them to reject me because of my oddities, but I’m happy to accept friendships, even if that’s all it will ever be.” She has a shy smile but a guarded look. The door opens, and my mirror image appears, and he’s pissed off.

“Any fucker that rejects you, I will use my abilities so they never cum again but will have a 24/7 erection!” he states before approaching her, kissing just below her eye.

“I have one of your marks, too, and I will be claiming my spot.” My brother beams at her, but she looks confused. What the hell happened for her to think all ten would reject her? I try to lighten the mood.

“I think that if anyone rejects her, her brothers will be the first in line for the beatdown. And if you believe there will be more than just a groaning bruise left, you’re an idiot, brother”. I shake my head at him, a smile playing on my lips. She still looks confused about why anyone would care; she will learn, just like J, River, and Trent learned. The three of us head downstairs laughing when we hear Miles scolding J for his outfit, and then we hear Alma threatening starvation to the next person who tries to taste-test Ember's cooking.

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I checked in on Alma to make sure she didn't need anything from me, but she was now in the flow, and I knew I would just be in the way.

I walked outside to the lodge's deck area; Bram has his guitar out, and the Hounds are singing The Sound of Silence. I love Disturbed's version.

There was no sign of Pops; I just stood watching. They always achieved perfect harmony. I wonder if Bram knows how honored he is to join something like that with them. When they were younger Nonna would make them sing together, any song, she would pick something at random and when they were finished if the disagreement was still there, they would talk it out, as time went on they would sing just for the connection it gave them, Nonna was always singing or humming if she wasn't you knew to give her space it meant she was angry and no one wanted to be on the wrong side of Nonna.

Pops walks in with Trunk and an older version of Dominic, who must be Nikoli. Pops whispers something to Bram, and Tim McGraw's "My Little Girl" starts to play.

Tears sprang to my eyes; I never told Bram who got me into McGraw's music. Silas is the only one aware I'm here, and he's watching me. Pops used to sing Me Back to Sleep after Bad Dreams with this song. Pops' deep croon breaks through my memories.

"Now look at you; I've turned around, and you've almost grown. Sometimes when you're asleep, I whisper 'I love you' in the moonlight at your door."

I take a breath and start to move towards Pops.

“As I walk away, I hear you say, Daddy love you more!”

I join in, but instead of Daddy, I sing.

“Pops, I love you more.” Which has all the Hounds spinning to gawp at me, then I walk tearfully into Pops’ now open arms. Together, we finish the song. The 'boys' are in shock; well, all but Si, who’s been filming since Pops started to sing. Pops is now holding me close and whispering various things.

“Finally.” “Thank you.” “You're safe now .” in Latin.

I can feel tears falling into my hair as Ryland gets two steps from me before taking a deep breath. His head whips in Ren's direction, and then he charges at him, rugby-tackling him with a girly squeal of “Daddy.” He then starts asking what Ren wants to be called; I haven’t explained that to him yet! Whoops?

When a tortured croak behind me makes Pops pull away, as I hear a choked out,

“Bunica.” I turn to see Declan and Brayden supporting Nikoli. Mika says something, and then Pops, Trunk, and I follow them to an office I haven’t been in yet.

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Dad looks like he's seen a ghost as we enter his office, and I guess he has. It never got chance to warn him, how much my daughter resembles mother at her age. Pops still holds my daughter's hand, as if he's afraid she will disappear, and I don't blame him. Silas explained how they 'lost' her last time, and I still find myself pinching myself that she's here.

Declan has set up security cameras so he can see where she is and that she's okay while we work from home, even urging Silas to keep checking it while we're at the office. Again, I don't blame him. Dec and Bray help Dad into his chair while Bas gets him a glass of bourbon. As always, Ember looks like she wants to leave us to our family moment, but with Pops and Trunk on either side, She doesn't move; she just looks down at the floor, ready to be scolded.

"Grandpa, are you feeling better? You're worrying, Ember. My sister looks like you're about to take her toys away." At Declan's Russian Spoken words, Dad's head snaps up.

He rambles an apology in Russian, then shakes his head.

"I'm sorry, my precious granddaughter," he translates, not realizing that Ember speaks Russian.

"I mistook for Wife, Bunica; you look mirror her, not your Papa." His broken English is slow, and full of emotion, He opens his arms for a hug. Unlike the softness my brothers and I inherited from our mother, he is what you would find in a dictionary under 'grumpy old Russian': all cold eyes and sharp edges, the kind that most people shy away from. Even my sons, who have grown up around him, approach him with

care.

"I'm glad I can give you part of her back, but I'm sorry it made you sad, Grandpa," Ember replies with a perfect accent as she breaks away from Pops and hugs my grumpy father. We're all in shock until Pops grunts,

"Grandpa?" as Dad croaks out,

"My Beautiful Granddaughter speaks Russian?" I go to answer them both, but Brayden answers first.

"It seems that when I've only felt my wolves from a distance, they were visiting Ember in her dreams. When she was isolated, they would teach her what I was learning at school; they also taught her Russian, Cherokee, and Irish." Dad chuckles. Pops turns to me, his eyes full of apology. I raise my hand.

"It's okay, Ember has explained a lot. She's met a few of the boys and Mickey G on her way back to us, but she's here and safe now," I say.

Pops nods and looks over at Ember, who seems smaller curled up with my father. She looks at me, then at Pops, sighing,

"I have ten mate marks. Can you explain to Mi... Dad, Uncle Nic, and Luc? Probably Grandpa and my brothers, Ren as well, About being Mater Aeterna , to the litter, but not today since we have a pack meet tonight." Bas informs her that they call Nikoli Grumps, Pops is still Pops, and Trunk is Gramps or the Cherokee word for Grandpa, which is Agiduda . Ember smiles her thanks

Pops gazes keeps darting between Ren and Ember and then he speaks to her in Latin, I don't fully understand but I get the jist of the question

“It was Ren’s hoody you wanted the scent saving on the hoody? It was his Alpha and Enforcers blood you was covered in when you arrived at our?” she gives him a nod, then he rubs his face,

“explains why the litter always listen to Ren” again she gives him another nod and then turns to Brayden.

“I bet you a slice of cake that Ryland, Ren and Miles are trying to listen through the door.” He raises an eyebrow.

“Deal.” He flings the door open with a smug smile at his sister. Which drops when Miles, Ryland, and Jenson fall to the floor while Ren, Alma, Cin, and Ajax look sheepishly at the now-open door.

I burst out laughing as Brayden starts to whine at Ember, who sticks her tongue out at him.

She then disappears over the snoop pile, telling Alma she’s getting all of Brayden’s cake this week.

“I take it back; I don’t want a baby sister anymore,” Bray mumbles, then looks at Ren.

“I now understand your annoyance with J sooooo much more.” I chuckle looking around the room at our family, I actually think I would have had to retire years ago to help keep Nic sane if Ember had grown up here.

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"I never connected your looks to Bunica's. I feel silly for not realizing it, especially so Nikoli could be warned," Alma says sadly.

"You have memories of her from when she was older, so those images are fresher in your mind than just photographs. It makes sense," I say while serving three bowls of Nonna's Gumbo and fresh cheesy cornbread muffins. Alma hums as Timber sticks his head in the window.

"The oldies are going to chat while announcements are made. They asked if they could have drinks, please, Alma. They need you on the platform, baby bear." I raise an eyebrow, but he smiles and leaves.

"I'll take this to the oldies. Are you okay with sorting drinks?" I ask Alma with a chuckle, and she gives me a nod.

I place the tray on the table before them, giving them each a kiss on the cheek, but Pops get some words too

"Just like she taught me to make" he blinks away the tears and pats my cheek before I move away from them.

I pass the front of the platform, heading for the steps.

"Lily is stuck in traffic; she says to start without them." I hear Mika say to Luc, I probably should start calling him Dad, even if it's just in my head. As I step up, I can hear mutters of,

"Who am I?" I move so I'm standing next to Miles, who's behind Brayden and Ren. I don't know if it's on purpose, but he has a solid wall at his back and a wall of muscle in front of him; he's safe and protected. I smile and link my pinky with his.

"Thanks again for my bracelet, sweets; it's made moments like this so much easier." I squeeze his pinky and give him another smile, turning my eyes to Alpha Dominic as he steps forward and starts the pack meeting. He covers the basics: training, rogue sightings, events, visitors, nothing exciting. I watch the crowd, speaking quietly so only those closest to me can hear.

"Saint, there are seven more with concealment charms."

I'm barely moving my lips, but I know he and Declan hear me. Brayden, Bas, and Ren probably hear too. I feel Saint's shadow brush over my ear, sitting like a hearing aid would. I whisper "see" in Latin so Saint can understand what I do. I focus on the individuals I notice. Miles squeaks and I realize it's because I'm still touching him, so he's seeing what I see. He squeezes my pinky too. Miles mutters,

"One of Trinity's followers," and the next person I focus on is an older lady.

"Trinity's mom," Miles states, but he doesn't know her name. Meh, moving on. The next is a male Fox shifter who looks like he stepped off a Teen Heartthrob magazine.

"That's Fox. He's been trying to replace Creed on the school team for years," Miles informs me.

"A fox shifter called Fox? How inventive," I mutter, moving on as my eyes drift to the girl hanging off him.

"Maria, she keeps getting in trouble for giving hand jobs in class," Miles informs me with a slight shudder. She looks more like a size 10 than the 2 or 4 that Trinity and

Nikki are. If it weren't for the sneer, she would be cute.

"Using guys to feed, low-level succubus like Trinity, she needs to have contact with cum, like on her skin or in her mouth to feed." I inform Miles,

"yuck too much info, sweets, yuck." He gives another shudder, and I just chuckle.

Next is an older man in a posh suit that isn't tailored. He seems nervous and keeps glancing around; his salt-and-pepper hair is ruffled, and he has nicks where he's cut himself shaving.

"He's a stone mage. They're rare. Basically, he can manipulate wards, charms, and things like that, but he can't create his own." Saint whispers to Trent at that one who moves off the platform and inside.

"His name is Lionel, but that's all I know," says Miles. So, I move to the last two who are sitting. I would say talking, but I'm not an idiot.

"Is Stacey doing reverse cowgirl on Brett during the meeting?" Miles gasps. Brett looks like he wants to be a rock star, but he's more suited for a boy band and realizes he looks like a jerk. He's an incubus-sun bear hybrid at a low level again. Stacey is in her cheer uniform, and even though Brett has touched her hair a few times, it's not moving; someone used too much hairspray. She's a wolf shifter. I feel Saint's shadow leave my ear, making me shiver now that the cool sensation has left me. Declan steps next to Dominic as Saint partially shifts, showing as a level eight. A few people screech at the sight, and I smirk, wondering how they would react to his full form. The thought makes my core flutter, and I feel my panties become damp... whoops.

Levels 1-5 are classified as night terrors. Some have horn nubs, fangs, and claws, but that's it. At level 6, they possess horns the size of a goat's. At level 7, they develop a second set of horns. Level 8 beings have small bat-like wings, which are more

decorative than functional, and their horns are larger as well. At level 9, their wings become functional and resemble those of a dragon, and one set of horns begins to curl like a ram's horns; they also have visible fangs. Level 10 introduces a third set of horns, with the ram's horns curving forward from above the ears, the second set positioned on the top of the head like cat ears, and the third set appearing as nubs on the forehead, resembling bull's horns. The wings change shape similar to a bird's but are leathery with no feathers. Then you have my gorgeous Dark Angel. His wings are black angel wings, hence the name, and his entire being seems to pulse with shadows. He has clothing, but again, they are more shadow than cloth. His ram horns are white, while the other two sets are black onyx. The white ones change to gray when he uses his abilities. He has four-inch claws at the end of each finger; his index and middle fingers are both curved like an eagle's talons, while the others are straight. You can see his defined muscles, and I won't mention his size or I'll end up being a panting mess, but 'MONSTER COCK' doesn't quite define that weapon yummy.

Dominic glances at Declan and then steps back as Dec starts to speak.

"To say that having sex while being addressed by your Alpha is disrespectful would not fully convey my disgust. Also, while we're at it, concealment charms are illegal within this pack." As Declan finishes, the seven offenders are surrounded by Saints' shadows long enough for everyone to see who they are, and then they disappear. Saint shifts back.

"I put the chair the two brats were having sex on in the trash", he informs Dominic as he steps forward again, and Declan returns to his place with a proud smile and a nod to me.

Ember

Dominic wraps up his speech as four familiar faces appear beside him. Giovanni is among them, and he gives Dad a cheeky thumbs up before heading over to sit with the older folks. Dad steps forward, and together, Declan, Bastille, and Brayden circle behind him.

“I have a few announcements to make, but after recent events, I want to make one thing perfectly clear: every person on this platform wants to meet their marked mate before making a choice on a chosen one. Therefore, the 284 requests that have crossed my brother's desk this week are pointless and a waste of your Alpha's time. You all know that Dominic lost his mate when we were 17, and he swore she would never be replaced. Don't mistake his kindness for an invitation to his bed. Additionally, the 12—sorry, 13 as of this morning—claims that one of us has gotten you pregnant are void, as we are all on guaranteed contraceptives. At the next pack meeting, anyone sending claims of mating or pregnancy will be named and shamed in front of the entire pack.” Maykal takes a breath letting it sink in; a female has started to move, so she's in front of him, her boobs and ass only just covered in her bodycon dress.

“Most of you know that when Brayden was born, he had a twin; what most of you don't know was the twin his mother took with her was a little girl, one who is now a woman and has found her way back to us.”

Dad turns, holding his hand out to me. After a final pinky squeeze from Miles, I step forward with a smile, focusing on my family and praying this isn't a trick. I take my place at my father's side with Brayden over my right shoulder. I hear a sob and

glance over to see my guidance counsellor stomping her way over, tears running down her face. She strokes Dec, Bas, and Bray's cheeks on her way past, ignoring my father, before she engulfs me in a spine-crushing hug.

" Little Sister, you're here ." Her voice is hoarse from crying.

“I think it should be daughter now, mother dearest ,” I reply in Russian and nearly laugh at her offended face as she mutters something about not being old enough to be a mother.

Dad continues his announcements,

“My last piece of news is that Lilliana has finally agreed to marry me, so we will be sealing our bond after my next deployment.”

As Dad finishes, the woman I saw moving closer screeches and dives for Lily. Bas spins Lily behind him. Brayden mimics the action with me as Declan grabs the woman.

“Audrey, I think some time in lockup will cool you down before you explain why you attacked my father's Luna,” Dec sneers at her as they vanish into a puff of Saint's shadows. Dominic steps forward again as Dad pulls Lily into his arms, and Brayden offers a comforting arm around Miles.

“After all that excitement, let's...” but before Uncle Nic can finish, Ren grabs my hand and pulls me to level with Nic.

“Before everyone starts diving into Alma and Embers' amazing feast, I want to clarify that Ember is my marked Mate, and aside from the blessing ceremony, we are fully mated.” There are a few mournful “no's” from the crowd, not all of them females, as Ren finishes, and Uncle Nic quickly tells everyone to dig into the food.

The Bears and Hounds scramble to be the first to the Gumbo. As my old art teacher and English teacher join us, I'm starting to feel tired. I mumble to Ren,

"Can we get a quick bite to eat and head to bed?" As I look up at him, he smiles and kisses my temple, then picks me up bridal style. As my eyes fall closed, I hear him ask one of the guys to grab food and bring it up to his room.

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Ren starts to carry Ember off toward the pack house as he passes me, he pauses,

"Can you please grab her some food and bring it to my room?" I pat his shoulder and head to the kitchen, grabbing one of the breakfast trays from the larder. I fill it with a selection of everything in sight. Alma gives me a look and then tucks some cutlery into my pocket,

"You might need these." She winks at me.

I freeze at the door. They are nowhere in sight. I expected to find them in bed; their scent is fresh. I notice the balcony doors are open; when I reach the doors, I find them curled on a blanket, some cushions spread around to lean on; I walk over and pop the tray on the floor in front of them as I go to stand and leave them to their new bond, Ember pats the spot next to her as Ren passes me a drink from his stash, we all started hiding our favorite fizzy drinks from J as he will chug the lot and none of the rest of us were getting any, now Ember has explained why he has such a sweet tooth it makes sense.

I sit down, and we work our way through the tray of food, not a word between us. Partway Ember disappears, I notice she's only wearing Ren's shirt, and I ponder to myself if she's wearing panties... stop! I take a calming breath.

"I want to bond with her. I have since I met her. Is Pine expecting to be part of our first time, or can that just be between me and her?"

I don't look at him when I'm finished. I just sip my drink and wait.

“He doesn't have a problem not being there physically. He just wants to be told, not us, to go to school and come home to find an unknown mark, and the person hasn't even told me they are interested. There are enough unknown marks on her gorgeous body without one made by a friend,” he ends on a growl.

“I have no problem with anyone having one-on-one time with her. Same as I will want the same now and then. I just want to know who has accepted her so if for any fucking reason something happens and one of her mates regrets it after; I know whose ass I'm kicking and who to grab to comfort our mate while I'm busy,” he says this all so unemotionally, and we both burst out laughing as Ember comes out, smiling at us.

She sinks back into her spot, pulling out a sketch pad and watercolor pencils. She fidgets a bit, trying to decide what to draw, getting comfortable as she ponders. I pick her up, making her squeak, plonking her so she can lean against my chest, but her shoulder is near my mouth, how I'm laid on my side. Ren moves over so he's in a similar position but her legs go over him and her biteable ass is pressed against his crotch, and he curls up so his head is level with her chest, we both give her kisses and strokes now and then. Ren and I are talking, but not about anything in particular.

We can hear the meet winding down. J comes in and says goodnight, kissing Smudge on the head. Jace and River head to bed; they share the balcony with Ren, but they don't come out. Ren has been feeding Ember every now and then, but there is hardly anything left now. All of Ember's sketches are of things from tonight.

“My favorite so far is the one with the oldies and Alma,” I say. Ren hums,

“I like the one with Miles over I'm guessing mine and B's shoulder.” She confirms his suspicion while packing up, taking care to put her pencils back in the right spot in their box.

“I never have a favourite, even though I hate some. I sometimes draw bad dreams to

get them out of my head, it helps me go back to sleep most of the time.” She says it so casually, and we just watch her as she heads in.

"I'll take the tray down. Do you want anything while I'm downstairs? Go curl up with her," Ren asks while organizing the tray so nothing falls.

“Bottle of water if you don't have any up here,” I say, chuckling when Ember calls the same thing.

"There's some in my fridge. Help yourselves." With that last statement, he's off.

As Ember is crawls onto Ren's bed. I strip to my boxers and climb in next to her.

Ren walks in and copies my actions, but he grabs the clothes and throws them in the hamper. As he climbs in he leans over Ember kissing her deeply

“ I love you”

She repeats the sentiment, I have no idea what it means, She rolls so she faces me, kisses my peck over my heart, and curls into me. Ren acts as her big spoon, and one by one, we fall asleep.

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I wake up to a very hard body behind me. Someone is kissing my face, I move slowly so I'm on my back, but that's made the person in front of me move more comfortably between my legs. The kisses are now over my mate bite.

"Ren" I breathe and all he does is hum and grind his solid cock on my throbbing core.

"Dude, seriously, I'm full. Take it in the bathroom, have a cold shower," Creed groans.

I feel Ren pulse against my core and a warm wet feeling appears there as he groans out my name,

"Your ass has been rubbing against me all night, but now Creed is awake. Maybe he will help you with your problem, baby; I need to get to the gym before Brayden comes knocking." He kisses me deeply again. My core is fluttering, begging to be filled.

"I love you." Then he's gone.

I hear water run in the bathroom, and then he struts naked into the closet. Not even a minute later, he appears in a stretched tank and shorts, kisses my lips again, and leaves. I lay staring at the door for a few minutes before huffing and rolling on my side, planning on going back to sleep.

"Fucking asshole," Creed grumbles; the next second, I'm thrown over his shoulder, and he's striding from the room, entering another down the hall; from the scent, it's his.

I'm thrown onto the bed. He walks over to the door and locks it before sending a text on his phone and tossing it onto the chair. When he turns back to me, he takes a deep breath; he's happy, but I'm guessing it's due to the lingering smell of Ren. His skin has transformed, and his sun-kissed blonde hair has taken on a more golden hue. He seems to radiate a glow, his wolf ears have appeared, and his features are more canine. Everything about him feels airbrushed.

"Our Alpha is a tease to both of us; he left you smelling so sweet, but the first time I kiss you won't be in another's bed." I wouldn't even call it a croon or a purr; it's closer to a purr, but even that doesn't seem to explain the tone he's speaking with! He stalks forward,

"Can I mark you, ? Will you make me yours?" He's now over me on the bed but not touching me as he slides one knee and then the other between my legs. He speaks again,

"Can I taste every inch of you? Memorise the taste of your skin!" His nose rubs my neck, keeping away from Ren's mark; his lips hover over mine,

"Can I memorise the taste of your slick pussy?"

He hums, pulling my t-shirt off me,

"I wonder if you taste differently after you climax for me!" He kisses away any answers I could verbally give him. then moves from my mouth, kissing down my neck, working his way down my collarbone, back to my right side over the swell of my breasts. As he kisses around the side and the base, his fringe tickles my nipples, making me gasp and rise slightly from the bed. He goes from my belly button to my hip, then hums again.

"It's been driving me nuts since you went to get your sketch pad last night. What you

had under that shirt, and you're wearing Corpse Bride panties.” he chuckles and kisses round the outline of my panties again.

I can feel the brush of his hair where I really want him; he works his way back up my body, skimming the edges of my breasts; just when I think he’s going to kiss me and relieve that ache, Ren started, I’m flipped over, he whispers, “Fuck!!!”

I feel one hand on my hip, I glance over to see the other hand stroking his cock inside his boxers, with a tight squeeze, he removes his hand from himself, he’s not as thick as Ren but it’s just as long sticking out the top of his boxers precum leaking from the tip, making me lick my lips.

I look up to his face, but his eyes are on my sizeable ass, I feel my lust start to leave as I become self-conscious of my scars.

“I can wholeheartedly say I am an ass man your tits are amazing but this right here, I nearly came at the sight,” he groans as he runs his hands over my ass cheeks. His thumbs teasing the crease between my legs as he gets his fill. I feel a kiss between my shoulder blades, as his finger circles my tail bone.

“I’m going to mark you right here!” he says as he kisses back up sucking on the pulse behind my ear.

“Do you know how incubi mark their fated?” he asks, his voice getting more husky. I manage to nod, feeling my core flood and pulse.

“I need words, . Tell me what I’m about to do to your soft little body.”I clear my throat.

“While...”

‘Deep breath, come on you know this’

“While you're inside me, the tip of your tail will suction onto my skin and brand me as yours.” by the end, my voice is a breathless whimper; he’s started stroking up my legs and ass again, squeezing my ass now and then.

“You forgot it will prolong your orgasm for as long as my tail decides so that you could be milking my cock for the next week solid.” I moan at his words, my pussy clenching around air

“I won’t let it last that long, not for our first time, but that’s because I want your mark on me too.” With his last words, my hips are pulled up, so I’m on my knees, and he presses his nose to my still-covered pussy.

“I want to taste everything, but if I don’t get inside you soon, my beast will take full control.” With that, my panties are ripped from me, and his cock is sliding inside.

“Fuck I wanna thrust right in but I don’t wanna hurt you, but don’t expect me to hold back when you’re used to my size.”

He’s panting with restraint; inch by glorious inch, he stretches me to fit around him. By the time he bottoms out, I’m panting.

“Yes! Please! Creed! Please!” My hand twitches to rub my clit

“Don’t even think about it, ; your pleasure is mine to gift you!” he growls between his teeth.

I whimper as he swats my ass, and then he starts to pound into me, my tits swaying with the motion, his balls smacking into my clit with every thrust.

“Fuck, your ass jiggles with each thrust, not gonna last if I keep seeing it,” he moans, suddenly I’m on the move again, and now I’m on the floor facing his full-length mirror, my hands pressed to the glass, I look at the floor embarrassed by how I look.

“Look at me, .” His voice is soft but confused. As I make eye contact, I see him realize why I’ve started shutting down.

His cock is pressed to my ass, and he starts to massage my breasts and strum my clit, his tail slips round and teases the entrance to my pussy, his lips and breath brushing my ear.

“You are gorgeous, you can feel how hard I am for you, just the sight of your curves and the feel of them pressed against me makes me want to cum all over your ass.” He is thrusting his hips against my ass, his tail starting to match the pace inside my pussy,

“cum,” he whispers in my ear, and I shatter over his tail.

I can see my release drip down my thighs in our reflection while my cunt is still pulsing, sending shockwaves through my body.

He manoeuvres me so my face is closer to the mirror, making my back arch and my ass stick out. Creed’s tail leaves me and starts rubbing my clit, but before I have time to feel empty, he fills me with his cock again; as I moan from the sensation, his tail slips in my mouth, making me suck my release from it.

As Creed's fingers start to tease my clit again, he takes both my tits in his hands; as he begins to pound into me harder so he stops the painful bounce of them, and his tail slips from my mouth.

I cum again as I feel the caress of his tail across the top of my ass; Creed starts to

smirk as I feel a slight pinch over my tailbone followed by heat. Creed speeds up, tilting my hips a little so he's hitting my G-spot with every thrust. My heart is beating in time with his thrusts.

“Creed, please.” Without missing a beat, one hand moves to my hip, and the other grabs my chin, turning my head so he can swallow my screams, moans, and whimpers.

I lose count of the times I’ve reached the end only to start falling again; it then seems to intensify before I feel his tail detach and begin to stroke my body lovingly. Creed pulls out of me, and I feel a trickle of our shared release run down my thighs. I’m laid on the bed before a cloth is run over me. I think I nod off a few times. Creed climbs into bed with me, pulling me to his chest.

“You did so good, , so good.” He kisses my forehead,

“I love you, .”

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She tilts her head up and leans in kissing me softly, after how hard I just took her and for three hours I'm surprised her eyes can open, her kiss is deep but still soft, her leg slips over my hips, and she wiggles those gorgeous curves on top of me, fuck I'm never going to have a soft cock again.

While I'm admiring her, the little Minx has slipped my cock back inside that addictive tight little cunt of hers.

"Ember, you gotta be sore; rest a little." I moan as she starts to roll her hips, and I feel her fluttering around me already. She leans forward, her tits brushing my chest, her tits are so big I think even Kodi would struggle to fit one fully in the bear paw he calls hands. Her lips brush my ear, her breath warm on my already flush skin fuck Payback is a thirsty bitch.

"Humm, do I really need to teach my Incubus about his abilities?" She rolls her hips, placing her hands on my chest she rises a little then starts to circle her hips, pushing those tits out making them look bigger, fuck how has she kept them so perk with the weight of them, my hands finding her perfect ass, cupping her cheeks as much as I can.

"Yes, school me, teach me all the things." I pant to her, and she bounces a few times. Then, she goes back to circles, leans forward again, and sinks her teeth into my peck.

"FUUUUUUCK!!!!!" I feel myself cum as she licks the mark; well, that is an embarrassing three-pump chump of an incubus right here. I feel Ember moan as she licks the mark, our bond fully clicking into place when she bites her lip, making herself bleed and then mixing our blood in a heated kiss. She's still rolling and

circling her hips, her clit rubbing against me giving her the friction she's craving, she pushes back up.

"An incubi's cum has healing properties, so every time you cum inside me it just makes the ache disappear and me ache in other ways," she rasps.

'Well, ok, then', She starts to bounce and ride my cock, my tail around her middle, helping her keep pace, but I need more; I roll us so I'm back on top. As I kiss her, I move her hands above her head, holding them in one hand, using my other to hook her leg over my elbow, her arse cheek firmly in my palm I start to drill into her. Gasps and moans are all I need from her right now. Six orgasms later, I begin to slow, wanting to give her one more. I let go of her hands, and they sink straight into my hair. I drop her leg but hold her close and start to make love to her. I hear my door open but quickly shut as my mirror image enters, and realizes what's happening, putting my mouth to her ear so Jace won't hear me.

"My twin told me he flashed you the other morning." She flinches.

"Did you think it was me?" She nods.

"But he had a wolf, so I didn't turn as I was confused." My clever girl.

"But I bet now you're using that imagination of yours to think of you as a twin sandwich." She sighs, and I can feel her getting close.

"He's not ready. Don't push." Oh, I'll push all right.

"When you cum I want you to moan his name; if you don't, I'm gonna hold you on that edge and not let you fall." I tilt our hips so I'm hitting that sweet spot again, getting a gasp out of her with every thrust. I move my hand so I can rub her clit with my thumb, and it barely takes anything she's so responsive,

“Jace,” she screams as I empty myself inside her.

She then breathes my brother’s name three more times, and the little aftershocks that hit her somehow pull us both into another, where the minx moans again.

“, fuck yes, Jace, please.” I hear the door click again, and I roll us so she’s on top; I feel my cock slip from her, and our joint release drip down over my balls to my ass crack ' lovely '. I run my hand up and down her spine.

“I’m guessing we are needed if Jace came in when he knew I was with you.” She hums.

“How did he get in if you locked the door?” She pushes up slightly so she can see my face. I give her lips a peck.

“He has a key, so does Bray.” She nods.

“Come on, let’s shower. I’ll text Miles to bring you some clothes.” She nods again.

“Ember,” as she looks at me.

“I love you.” I smile as she blushes, and then she walks to the bathroom. I quickly text Miles, strip the bed, and then follow Ember to the shower.

Ember

Miles leaves me some cropped jeans, a Stone Sour t-shirt, a purple and black checked hoody, and some purple vans. Before we leave the room, I'm pressed to the door and have my breath stolen. I walk down the stairs, putting braids in the front of my hair to keep it off of my face. Trick hugs me and passes me a mug of tea. Ren pulls me into his lap, kisses my temple with a smile, and then makes me up a plate of food.

I notice Trent watching the actions and smile at him.

"The first morning I spent at the BloodWolf Pack, I was used to only getting leftovers and dismissed for being human. So, when Ren and J started eating, I just sat there waiting to see if they would leave any. Ren noticed and made a plate for me and then grunted 'eat' at me while Jay passed me the syrup jug. It was the first time a supernatural being had shown me kindness and a chance at being equal. Trent looks so sad. When I look back, I just shrug at him.

"I've been through some shit, but meeting Ren, Jenson, Xander, Pops, and the Hounds—Creed, Bram, and even Saint over the years has helped me get through. Even though I needed a reminder to survive three times."

Bram plops down between Trent and Miles and starts talking about the happier memories. The guy's head out to finish packing away the tables from last night. I go up to my room and grab the notebooks I've filled over the last few days.

Saint is the first one from SRU I find. I stand and wait while he's on the phone. I feel a little hurt from him talking to a female which is daft as I rolled out of Ren's bed into

Creed's, moaned Jace's name while his brothers cock pulsed inside me, then told Creed I loved him while he licked me clean in the shower, followed by me sitting on Ren's lap while I ate breakfast.

"Yeah, bye." There's a pause.

"Yeah, tomorrow," Saint says in a calm tone. I hear the phone hit the desk, so I hold out the books.

"I have tried to keep them separate based on the facility, but some people crossed over. I still have a few I need to finish, and then I will give you that book." He doesn't take the books, so I place them on the table, turning to leave, but I can't. His shadows are holding my legs in place.

"You should reject me, Starshine. I'm not a good person, and my monster isn't safe," he states as I feel him stepping up to my back.

"And I'm a worthless human that you should have let go all those years ago." I let out a breath.

"I never told Elise and Dan what you were. I was confused when Elise described your human side. You were my Dark Angel, not the blonde boy she described. I could reject you as easily as you could let me die back then, but if that's what you want, do it at night when I'm safe in bed, please."

I try to move again, but I can't. I turn my head and find myself nose to nose with Saint.

"It might be best to reject you, but I won't. I'm going to be selfish, which means making you mine." His finger strokes my cleavage over my shirt.

“My mark WILL go here, but not yet, my Starshine. I need my beatdown from your brother, who is my best friend, then a talk to your Alpha before I have the pleasure of feeling your heat around mine.” Well, my panties are wet again. Saint’s phone starts to ring again

“That’s my work phone; there is no one else. I don’t ever want to sense jealousy from you again, not over me.”

He slips off an onyx and obsidian bracelet. He slides it on my wrist before letting out a moan, pulling me onto his seated lap so I’m straddling him; the bracelet is infused with his shadows, and there are a few lava beads too that have power pulsing in them, which means I have some of him with me at all times. He knows what I’m feeling, which at the moment I just want to rip his slacks off, swallow his cock down my throat until he's begging for my dripping cunt... stop Ember. His shadows are caressing my skin, his erection is pressed to my core, 'not helpful, ' and the need to grind my hips is there on a cliff edge. A throat clears behind me; I glance over, and then I rest my forehead to Saint’s.

“Guess the beatdown is scheduled soon, then,” I say with a mock pout.

Saint just hums and keeps eye contact with Declan, who watches us. Saint’s phone goes off again, and I see the name Lisa flash on the screen. I swipe it up and answer, using my best breathless receptionist voice.

“Saint's phone, he can't come to the phone right now. His hands and mouth are otherwise occupied. Let me transfer you to Declan.” I chuck the phone over my shoulder towards my brother. Using some confidence, I have no idea where it came from, kiss Saint full on the mouth, giving two hard rolls of my hips and a moan at the sensations. I stand and give him a little finger wave at his shocked expression, giggling at the scowl on my brother’s face as he deals with the yelling female.

That evening, while eating our meal. Alma is pestering Uncle Nic about what's happening this week so she can plan meals. Liam is trying to get her to react as he keeps butting in, adding his reviews of her culinary creations of the past. Dad is still in bad books with Lily as he hadn't told her they found his daughter. She was in a meeting when he tried to call her, so he left a message. Just could she visit because they had news. She's also pissed about the succubae and incubi that had concealment charms.

It was like the family meals you see on the Hallmark channel. I decided to help Alma a little with Liam's situation. He knew Dan and Elise and had been around for meals several times.

"Alma, can I cook one day?" She looks over at me with a proud smile,

"Of course you can, Petal. If all your food is as nice as what you helped with for the meet, then I have no complaints. What do you want to cook so I know what to order?" I smile at her, take a drink; before I answer,

"I had a few good teachers over the years. Mama Lou taught me traditional Japanese recipes, which I will admit I'm a little rusty with, Nonna had me in the kitchen from day one, and then Elise taught me some British recipes." I state this as an Enforcer walks in. He's partway to Alpha Dominic.

"Don't you mean English recipes!" he sneers at me, he smells heavily of body odor, and I'm on the other side of the room.

He's of average height and looks like he spends as much time in the gym as he does in the pub. His arms are toned, but he has a beer gut. He's a similar age to Declan, Saint, and Xander, the former giving him a death glare. I take a sip of tea.

"No, I mean British, but if you want specific, she taught me English, Scottish, Welsh,

and Irish dishes,” I state in a rather prim tone that I learnt from Elise.

I hear Darby snort, and Bram is chuckling. I can see him gear up for another sneer before Dec steps in,

“Is there a reason you’re disturbing our family meal Calloway, and if you don’t stop leering at my sister, I don’t know who will be first to kick your ass.” Declan is basically growling by the end.

Calloway ignores him and turns to Dad,

“Alpha, there has been some interference with the wards. I’ve marked the patrol map with each place.” He looks so proud of himself, and he holds out the map

“That’s Alpha Maykal, not Alpha Dominic. Might want to give it to the correct Alpha.” Laughter is clear in my voice as more chuckles sprout up around the table. Calloway blinks at him, stumbles over his words, drops the paper on Declan’s lap and storms out of the room.

“Never liked that slimy brown noser; was the same at school,” Declan grumbles.

Paxton, Saint, Xander, and Marcus agree. Trent and Calum say his younger brother is just as slimy, a year younger than Bas. Dad seems to perk up at the mention of school.

“Ember, we need to sort out your schooling, so you don’t get behind.” I look at him, completely confused,

“Now don’t look at me like that Monday you are starting school. No amount of pouting will get you out of it.” He sounds like he’s trying to pull off a dad voice. I look at Lily, who has a smile on her face, while shaking her head as she goes to

speaking. Nate and Liam nearly fall off their chairs, laughing. Declan, Bas, and Bray aren't far off. Uncle Luc is choking on his waffles. Apparently, he also has a sweet tooth, so waffles are a breakfast and evening dessert thing here.

Uncle Nic manages to scoff.

"You're joking, brother,"

he asks Dad, who looks around.

Then I see the General step up to the plate.

"No, I am not joking. She HAS to go to school." I can see he is getting pissed; luckily, we have Lily to the rescue 'Woman power mentally flash the peace sign as the spice girls do.'

Lily places a hand on Dad's arm.

"Oh Mika," she sighs, taking a sip of her wine.

"My lovely, lovely sweetheart, Ember graduated high school at 15 and then took a college course; she now just needs to get a job." Lily beams at me. Nikoli and the other Oldies walk in as Dad lost it, and now Grumps expresses his views.

"must get her brains from her grandmother. At least they weren't lost; they just skipped a generation," Grumps states as he kisses my head.

"probably a defect with the men in the family that affects the women," Lily states smugly, then smiles at Dad. Dad turns back to me.

"I remember you telling me about school at the hospital. Sorry that I forgot ,

babygirl.” he gives me a shy smile.

“It's ok Papa. I forgot not everyone knows.” I smile, then hug him when I notice he's tearing up and realise it's the first time I've addressed him as Papa or Dad out loud.

After dinner, we head outside. Just as I sit down, I hear a car grind to a halt and then backfire.

I freeze, then start to shake.

Knowing what that means. Ren, Trick, and Bram are next to me in seconds. Trick has a crushing grip on my hand and a slight tremor in his body. Bram stands between me and the door, his dragon so close to the surface that his scales keep rippling across his skin. Ren has one hand on his twin's shoulder and the other cuffing my throat. I feel his Alpha command brush against my skin.

“This is YOUR home. He won't take you again! I WILL kill him first!” At Ren's words, everyone else is on high alert.

Miles goes and sits with Lily and the Oldies, Creed moves to Trick's side, and Brayden and Kodi move to Bram's sides.

Dad stands.

“Explain.” It's a single command as Trick, Ren, Bram, Saint, and I say,

“Jameson.” Some growl; mine is barely a whisper as I look at Maykal, feeling tears fill my eyes.

“Listen to your Alpha baby girl , but he's wrong. If he tries to take you, it WILL.BE.ME who kills him for keeping you hidden all these years,” he states as he

kisses my crown, just as Calloway appears, cocky as fuck.

“There’s a Samuel Jameson here to see the Alpha about Emily Ashleys.” By the time he’s finished talking, I’ve pulled myself together.

“Show him to my office!” Grumps says.

“Why he call you wrong name, Sweetie?” Calloway has already swaggered away.

“He rarely uses my real name. It makes it harder for people to find me after I’ve been moved.” When I finish, there are quite a few annoyed expressions, but Saint arriving with Giovanni helps defuse the tension. Saint has an arm full of clothes, and Gio is standing in Spider-Man pyjamas, wearing a Thor bathrobe and Iron Man slippers and holding a Hulk coffee mug.

“Could have let me get dressed! Jeez, they are never gonna let me live this down.” 95% of the people here use their phones to take photos or videos. Lily, who is phoneless, but Miles has two, so I guess he has hers, takes point.

“Gio, that vile Jameson has arrived to collect Ember. Get dressed,” she asks kindly but firmly.

Gio chugs his coffee, passes the mug to Alma, and snatches the clothes from Saint’s hands.

“Luc, I’m stealing some shoes as Saint forgot mine.” As he leaves to get changed, Grumps snaps into Alpha mode.

“Lily, Liam, Nate, can you go out of sight and keep an eye on Miles. Boys?” ‘meaning Dad, Nic and Luc,’ “My office. Can you do a perimeter check Saint, Bas, Dec, Pax, Trent and Timber? You two pointing at Pops and Trunk, go sit and play

checkers in the seating area near my office where you can eavesdrop; you kids stay here and try to act like you're calmaxing ." Nikoli finishes.

"You mean chillaxing Grumps, but close," Bray mumbles with a thumbs up.

I look out over the lake, and for once, Jameson isn't our biggest problem.

"Might want to change your orders, Dedushka, Pops, call the guys. There's forty demons in the tree line." Saint, River, and Pops step up beside me, the only ones who can see what I can see. An alarm sounds as a lone figure steps to the end of the dock on the other side.

"We are here for the female with a claw mark on her back. She is human. Hand her over, and none shall be hurt." He steps back, disappearing from sight again, and everyone looks at me.

Well, shit, what have I done to piss off Demons this time?

Miles

I've been feeling odd since Liam, Nate, and Lily arrived. Even though Xander has confirmed I'm not having a full heat, I'm having a mini one, but that shouldn't happen until I've met all my mates. I'm heading back from my check-up with Xander when I hear Nate on a call; he has it on loudspeaker as he is also typing on his laptop.

"Mateo, why am I talking to you instead of your supervisor? I swear you're doing more than you should as an intern." Nate owns a publishing house called Princely Printing. I wonder if that's where this person is from.

"I know, sir. I did try to tell Miranda that you would want to talk to her, but she had other pressing matters and told me to deal with it." The voice is heavily accented, but I can't place it. My Panther has turned into a purring kitten at the sound.

"Right, I want you to send me a full report on what she has had you do over the last two weeks, and then I want you to send me daily updates from now on and don't tell her you're doing it. I've signed the forms and sent them back to you to send to the authors. Can you also send me an essay on what you want from this internship and what your goal is, please?"

Nate seems to have gone into teacher mode, which is funny. He's a great teacher. I had him for a time in college.

"Yes, of course, Sir. If that's alright, I will use my private email so she doesn't see." I feel myself move closer to Nate's phone.

“Yeah, that sounds good. Thank you, Mateo. Get home; it’s late.” Nate finishes and with a goodbye from Mateo, the call ends. I can feel myself pout and I look at Nate.

“Don’t worry, Miles. You’ll probably see him sooner rather than later. Plan to pair him with Ember when she agrees to get published.” Nate smiles, shuts his laptop down, and then heads out of the room with a pat to my shoulder.

I wonder if one of the guys will have snuggles tonight. I might suggest movie night; I can get snuggles that way, but I need something.

I head outside and am just about to sit between Bram and Bray. Mmmmm, mate, sandwich when a car backfires, and Bram goes on alert. I move to sit with Lily when we find out it’s Jameson. The bastard won’t get my Sweets. None of the guys will let her get hurt, but when Ember notices Demons, Lily nudges me.

“Safe room, go; I’ll be there soon.” I nod and head to the safe room, grabbing Bram and Bray's hoodies on my way past and a sketch pad so I can start designing Lily and Ember's mating ceremony dresses. I wonder if they will have a joint ceremony. Somehow, I nod off, and Bram wakes me up sometime later, telling me I can leave the safe room now to find out what happened while I was taking a kitten nap.