

## Luna Aleksa's Escape Chapter 11

\*Aleksa\*

As Mason opens the big red stained glass door to the diner, and holds it open for us, Kaia and I walk in with the twins still secured in their car seats. We walked to the nearest booth and started to unbuckle Liam and Layla. I have their bottles in my bag. Kali had passed them to me before her and Caleb walked off. This would be the perfect time to feed them and give them their bottles, because I was unsure of when we would be stopping again like this soon.

I gave Kaia a bottle to feed Layla with and she is a natural. It appears that she has definitely done this before.

“Thank you so much Kaia, for everything. I couldn't have gotten this far without you”. I said to her with appreciation.

“You are very welcome Aleksa, it is my pleasure”, she says as she sits Layla up a bit higher and repositions her bottle.

Mason gets the attention of the waitress to order some food. He orders an all-day breakfast and a chocolate protein smoothie. Kaia orders hotcakes and bacon and a large almond mocha, and I order the same. I then order some peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the twins, and some glasses of milk, so that we can refill their bottles before we leave.

It isn't breakfast time, it's actually getting close to dinnertime, but this is our first proper meal in a while, so we chose what can stomach right now.

The diner is packed, there is a juke box playing in the corner of the room playing “ Little Lies” by Fleetwood Mac. The vibe in here is the swinging 60s. The booth seats have a deep red leather interior, there is a huge fluro clock above the jukebox and sixties memorabilia everywhere. There's a mix of teenagers, twenty-something-year olds and middle-aged people here. The place feels homely and welcoming.

I looked out the window nervously. We have a view of the forest from this dinner. I can't see anything specific right now, although beyond the lush green trees and shrubbery the forest is dark and unforgiving. I have no doubt that we are being watched. I then turned my attention to Mason, who started coughing to get our attention.

“We need to get out of here as quickly as possible without being seen. Lachlan will have spies watching us, perhaps even in this diner before long, so we need to think of a way to get to our new transportation without being seen”. He says in a low voice.

“Perhaps there is a back entrance we can use when Caleb and Kali return?” I suggested.

“That would be too easy, Lachlan would have thought of that already,” Mason tells me.

“A distraction perhaps?” Kaia offers.

“Good idea, we need a distraction, hmmn what I wonder?” Mason asks.

“The fire alarm?” I said. “If we could set the fire alarm off and activate the sprinkler system, surely chaos would ensue. Could that be the distraction we need? What do you think?” I proposed.

“That is an excellent idea. I will create a disturbance, once the alarm is activated, while you girls slip out to the car with Caleb. Do you think you can manage that?” Mason asks.

“Of course we can!” I said enthusiastically.

Just then, the waitress arrives with our food and drinks. We thank her and she leaves us to eat.

I started to eat my hotcakes first, as the children had just had their bottles and would be having their mini sandwiches, as they sat propped up on our laps.

It was about half an hour later when we had all finished our meals, the twins were starting to look a little sleepy, which couldn't have been timed better as we had been able to concentrate on our escape.

Mason gets up and walks towards the bathroom. He is going to attract the attention of the smoke detectors, then trigger the sprinkler system, so we need to be ready to move. We quickly strap the twins into their carseats.

We place some cash on the table that we found in the car, to pay for the bill, and in no time the alarm is blaring and there is a big commotion.

Kaia and I grab the twins, and head towards the kitchen, as we are planning to leave via the back entrance. Mason followed us through the kitchen. No one is paying attention to the random group walking through the kitchen as everyone is running around fussing, trying to exit the building.

We make it out of the diner and start making our way to the car. Caleb and Kali are waiting there for us but we can't see any new cars.

"Hey guys, we managed to find two new rides, we've parked them on the road for obvious reasons, come on, let's go" Caleb gestured.

We follow Caleb and Kali for a few streets when we see an SUV and an old mustang parked next to each other down a side street.

"I thought you guys could take the SUV and we would drive this thing. We don't have much time, so we should get going, hey um what happened at the diner?" Caleb asks curiously.

"I set off the fire alarm and triggered the sprinkler system to cause a distraction, just in case we had any stragglers, hopefully no one saw us leaving the back of the diner", Mason said.

"Nice work man, I am glad you are with the girls. Take care of them man, or I will hunt you down and I will beat you senseless", Caleb says with a dark and serious look on his face,

Mason looked at him with a reassuring look, "Caleb, man, I swear that I will protect them all with my life, you have my word. Hey you guys take care too." "Hopefully we can all catch up again one day", Mason says meaningfully.

With that, we start putting the twins in the SUV. They are already in their carseats, so we just strap them into the car, and Mason jumps in the driver's seat and starts up the car. We wait for Caleb and Kali to get into the mustang, then we go off in our separate directions.

I looked out the window on the left rear side of the car, with a deep look of concern in my face. I pray that Caleb and Kali make it to her cousin Alpha Callum's pack unscathed. And I pray that we make it out of here too!

The sky is a gorgeous orange color now, signifying that the sun will be setting soon, so we need to get some serious distance between the pack and us.

We will be driving through human towns for the next few hours so we will be relatively safe. It's when we get on the interstate that we become more vulnerable to the pack wolves, although I do wonder how far they will venture out, given that they will have to cross onto other packs' territories in order to inconspicuously follow us in their wolf forms.

The potion we took will still be in effect and we are traveling in a different car, so I hope that will be enough to buy us a bit of time. Right now, we are in a vulnerable position being that the only real back up we have is Mason and he can't take on all the elite warriors of the pack. We need to try to keep a low profile.

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We have been driving for about ten hours now and we haven't stopped once. It doesn't appear that we are being followed. Liam and Layla have pretty much slept the whole time, they will wake soon and will need some milk and some food.

Mason drove the entire time, despite both Kaia and myself offering to take over so that he could have a rest. He refuses to, though he won't let his guard down.

"Mason, the twins will be waking shortly, and they will be hungry. I don't have any milk or snacks left for them. Could we stop at a seven-eleven to get a few supplies?" I asked him.

"Yeah OK, we can stop at the next one we drive past. It shouldn't be long, probably a good time to make a bathroom stop too". Mason agrees.

Before long, we stopped at a seven-eleven and Kaia and myself, have both refreshed ourselves in the ladies' room and fed Liam and Layla, as well as changed their diapers.

We are back on the interstate again. Mason chucks a phone at each of us. "I picked these up in the shop. It's all they had. So it's better than nothing. Caleb gave me a smartphone. It's a new one, so it won't be able to be tracked. I need you to start googling while I drive", Mason says with a determined look on his face.

"We need to figure out where we are going next. You mentioned Colorado previously, is that still where you want to go?" Mason asks me.

“Yeah I guess so, I didn’t really get to plan this part of my escape, everything kinda went pear shaped, but it looks like a great place to bring up my pups, plus it looks like a great place for a couple of shifters to live – what do you think?” I ask Mason and Kaia.

“I’m in!” Kaia says. “The more distance between Ezra and I the better I say!” she adds.

“You know I’ll go wherever you two girls and the twins go” he said with a genuine look on his face.

“Then it’s settled, we are off to Colorado. Now to figure out the best way to get there”, I say as I look at the smartphone, looking for nearby airports.

“We can’t go straight to Colorado, we will need a diversion, so we should fly to a midway point, hmmn let me think..” I said out loud.

“Iowa!” “The midway point is Iowa. We can get a flight out of the next human town. How far away are we, Mason?” I asked.

“About two hours away,” Mason replied.

“Brilliant. Oh, we have no credit cards that we can use without getting tracked.” I said sadly to the others.

“Oh but we do, Aleksa, you can thank Caleb for that one. We even have fake passports.” Mason smirks.

“Oh my goddess, I can’t believe it! That man is a godsend!” I said, beaming with relief.

I sit back in my seat and start booking our flights enthusiastically when Mason clears his throat and looks in the rearview mirror.

“Ladies, don’t look now, but, we have company” Mason says while looking in the rear-view mirror.

\*Aleska POV\*

Mason stares into the rear view mirror looking at the car behind us that has been following us for many miles now. “I could be overreacting. We aren’t necessarily being followed, but we can’t take any chances”, Mason tells us.

“Just keep looking ahead, act normal, and let’s hope for the best”, Mason says calmly.

He keeps driving the car at the same pace. We don’t want to make it obvious that we know we are being followed. It is possible that it is a harmless passerby, but we need to assume that it is someone from the pack following closely behind us.

Mason tells us we are less than thirty minutes away from the boundaries of the city, and that once we get within the city limits he will try to lose whoever is following us. Assuming it is someone following us.

After some time, as we are driving around the city, the car that was originally behind us is nowhere in sight, although we don’t let our guards down like we did before. Mason pulls into the airport. It’s not a large airport, rather a small one, but it has what we need; a plane.

Once we get through the security checkpoint, we start boarding the plane. I have booked all of us front row seats so at least we can get off the plane quickly if we need to.

Time goes by pretty quickly, being that it’s only a two and a half hour flight to Iowa. The flight attendants kindly provided us with some snacks for Liam and Layla, as well as some milk for their bottles. They even refilled them for us for when we depart the plane.

We are all pretty exhausted but we can’t sleep. Mason has had a few power naps but he too appears to be on edge. I assume it will be like this for some time yet. The twins have been awake the whole flight, but that suits me fine, it just means they will sleep later, which will be helpful.

We haven’t noticed anything suspicious on the flight, no one seems to be taking any undue interest in us, but we will still need to be smart about our next moves.

Before long, we are departing the plane. We now have no transport, but it’s okay because there are plenty of car rental stands at this airport. We make our way to one of them and start the process of renting a car.

As much as I wish we could just jump on another plane, we need to make sure no one is following us, so that once we reach our destination safely, and in this case it means that we will have to drive the remainder of the journey.

In no time, we are all in our chosen car. It's a Jeep Grand Cherokee, with plenty of space for us all, so at least we will have a bit of comfort, being that we have a lot of driving ahead of us.

Mason starts driving, but agrees to let us take turns this time around. We are all exhausted, and in the event that we need to fight, we need to have some rest.

It was almost twenty-four hours since we escaped, so I realized that the potion that hides our scent would start to wear off soon. Luckily, we have a small supply in our backpack, so we all take another mouthful each.

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After just over ten hours of driving, we made it to Denver, Colorado. As we drive interstate, we are taken aback by the beautiful scenery. As we drive down the peak to peak highway we are greeted by the lush aspen trees mixed with some evergreens. Being that it is winter here, the mountains in the distance are snow-capped, creating a view of perfection. We are now officially entering the Rocky Mountain National Park area. I had picked this as our destination because it was so serene and picturesque, as well as being approximately 1600 miles away from the Evergreen pack. It is one of the largest national parks in the country, as well as being the most elevated national parks, consisting of mountains and alpine lakes, from wooded forest to mountain tundra. It really has it all.

While we don't know much about the packs that reside here, we will do our research before we wander too far. We are hoping to link up with a pack, although we are happy enough to just live here as humans for now.

While the twins slept, I managed to find a quaint log cabin in Estes Park through the book a bach app. We started to pull off onto the gravel road that would lead us to the log cabin. It was definitely off the beaten track and after half an hour of driving we finally reached our destination.

"Wow! Kaia yells. "This place is amazing!" she says, looking very impressed.

"Oh, my! It truly is perfection!" I added, with a stunned look on my face, as I pushed open my car door.

We all got out of the car slowly and stretched our bodies, after what felt like the longest car drive ever.

I take in a whiff of the crisp clean mountain air. "It feels so fresh out here" I say to the others.

I realize we came from a forested area, but this fresh alpine air is something else.

I looked up at the cabin that we would be staying in and started walking towards it. The host said that the keys would be under the old shoe located next to the front door. I bend down and lift up the old boot, and sure enough the keys are there.

We will be staying in a historic mountain house log cabin situated on the banks of the Fall River. It has a large deck that overlooks the river and lush forest. There is an outside jacuzzi on the deck. A huge fireplace greets us as we open the front door. It has a very rustic vibe about it, but at the same time, it feels very homely. This seems like a nice place to base ourselves while we figure out what we will do next.

It's nestled in a forest, and accessible by a gravel road. It is off the beaten track and, most importantly, it is private. This will be so good for our wolves. It means we will have privacy to shift freely, without having to worry about humans being so close by.

I started to take the twins out of their carseats. They are awake and full of energy. After our mammoth journey, it's time for them to have a well deserved run around. It will also be a good chance to explore our new surroundings.

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I'm lying in the hammock, on the deck of our new accommodation. It is late at night and the forest is covered in darkness. I can hear owls howling, and I hear shuffling in the woods, probably hedgehogs and other nocturnal creatures. I was not worried, I could sense if there was another shifter or person nearby and I couldn't detect anyone else. It's just me and the moon, and my thoughts right now.

I take a moment to think about what we have left behind. For me, other than the other pack members, who I loved like family. I only really miss Caleb and Kali. I pray that they have made it safe to the Crimson Moon pack. I can no longer mindlink them as we are so far away from each other. I hope I hear from them soon. Assuming Caleb took down the number of the phone he gave us, perhaps they might call us when they arrive at their new pack.



Surprisingly, I can't feel anything through the mate bond. Not even the pain I have been subjected to for the past few years. I'm not sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing. Even though I rejected Lachlan, he didn't accept it, so unfortunately our bond remains. I should have renounced the pack when we crossed the border but we were in such a hurry. It was a fight or flight situation, and well, I took the flight option. I just wanted to get my pups to safety.

Hopefully, when we find a pack to align ourselves with and when we bind ourselves with the new pack, our ties to Evergreen will break, and I'm hoping that will help sever the mate bond between Lachlan and I more.

Mason has been researching packs in our immediate area and there is only one pack nearby. It's the largest pack on this side of the country. It's called the Rocky Mountain pack. It appears that the Alpha has just stepped down and his son has taken over as the current Alpha. Not much is known about this pack as they appear to keep to themselves. Although we do know that they have such a large land territory and are a wealthy pack, and are well respected and feared nationwide.

Mason is trying to get in touch with some shifter acquaintances he has here in Denver. I'm not sure how he knows shifters here, but I feel that he would tell us when he was ready to share, if he ever was.

We decided tonight before we went to bed that Kaia and I would stay home tomorrow with the twins and set the place up as well as put some security measures in place, and Mason would go for a drive and see if he could link up with some other shifters. Technically, we no longer belonged to a pack when we left our territories, so we are all now considered rogues.

We are unsure what this pack's feelings were in regards to rogues, but we knew that generally rogues were frowned upon. More often than not, they were hunted, imprisoned and killed. So, for now, we will stay in human territory.

I rub my eyes and pull the cozy blanket next to me over my body. I will just close my eyes for a minute, I think to myself. Before I know it, I am drifting off into darkness.

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I woke up to the sun shining brightly, causing me to grimace and pull the blanket further over my face.

“Oh my goddess!” I yelled out loud. “I slept here!” I must have been so tired that I just fell asleep here. “Liam and Layla!” I yelled as I slapped myself on one cheek. I turned to stand and the door opened before me.

“Mommy!” Liam and Layla both squealed in excitement. They ran up to me and hugged my legs. I looked at Kaia who is smiling with a coffee in her hands.

“Good morning Aleksa, someone was tired last night, huh?” she grins, handing me a coffee.

“Here, take this. We have a big day ahead of us. Oh and don’t worry, the twins have had breakfast.” Kaia tells me. Pointing to Mason standing by the stove in an apron, flipping pancakes.

“We found ingredients for pancakes in the cupboards, so I made some. There’s plenty, dig in!”, Mason tells me.

“Oh my goddess, Mason, Kaia, I don’t know what we would do without you. Thank you so much – for everything! We are so blessed to have you in our lives!” I said, fighting back the tears of joy and gratefulness.

“I don’t know how I fell asleep outside. I just went out to get some fresh air last night and, well, that’s the most sleep I’ve had in months!” I said in a state of astonishment.

“No problem, Aleksa, it was my pleasure” Mason said with a smile on his face.

At that moment, we heard a knock on the door. Our faces drop in shock. We all looked at each other in fear. There are no houses for miles. Who on earth could be knocking at our door? Kaia and I quickly and quietly grab the twins and silence them with our hands. Slowly creeping down the hallway. Mason takes off his apron and walks slowly towards the door.

\*Aleksa POV\*

Kaia and I creep down the hallway with the twins, not knowing what to expect, and wondering who could be knocking on the door. Have they found us? We hadn’t noticed anyone following us. We had been so careful to cover up our

tracks. We had taken the scent hiding potion from Aunt Meadow. We look at each other knowingly and slowly pat the twins on their backs, trying to quietly shush them. Thank goodness they had been up for a while and had full tummies so they were starting to look sleepy.

We listened quietly as we heard voices from down the hallway. Luckily, being werewolves, we had heightened hearing.

“Hello?” Mason said as he opened the door.

“Good Morning, My name is Asher, I’m the head ranger for this side of the Rocky Mountain National Park. I was in the area and I noticed your car. We don’t usually get guests out this way, so I thought I would pop in and say hi, see who was here, give you a friendly welcome”. Asher said in a cherry disposition.

“Oh, hey, yeah we are new to the area, we were planning on staying here for a bit while we found a place to settle”, Mason says.

“We? Your family is with you, I presume”, Asher says inquisitively.

“Ah yes, well, my two sisters and their children, that is,” Mason shifts uncomfortably.

Kaia and I look at each other and decide to go out and say hello, as Mason seemed to be faltering a bit.

As we move down the hallway, we can’t see the mystery visitor, all we can see is Mason’s back.

As I was walking towards the door I was taken aback by the rugged good looks of the man known as Asher at the front door.

He has very short shaved hair, and is wearing a cream coloured cowboy hat, he is wearing a tight white singlet, with worn-looking blue denim jeans, his muscular arms stand out as they are practically bulging out, and he has the cutest smile. I looked at Kaia, who clearly approves, and I give her a look as if to say mind the drool.

“Well, good morning ladies,” Asher said, as he tipped his hat towards us.

“Good morning” we both said at the exact same time, smiling at our guest.

“Asher here is the local park ranger, and says they don’t usually get guests here, so he was just wanting to pop in and introduce himself and make sure we were settling in”, Mason said to us.

“That’s very kind of you Asher,” I said. “We just got here. So we are still trying to settle in. We appreciate you coming in to say hello”. I say, meaning every word.

Asher’s aura radiates kindness, and I don’t perceive him to be a threat at this stage. He is most definitely a werewolf though. Luckily he can’t scent us. I realize then that we must be near pack lands. We will have to look into this further, I thought to myself.

“Where are y’all from?” Asher says.

We looked at each other and froze. We weren’t prepared for this question. And none of us can mindlink, so I quickly blurt out “the east coast”. “We’re from the east coast”.

“Oh, nice. And these two are...?” He questions, pointing to the twins.

“This here is Liam, and that is Layla”. I said with a smile on my face. “They are my babies”. I say before Asher has a chance to ask.

“They’re so cute!” Asher says. “Where is their father?” He asks.

I looked at Asher. It’s only natural to ask this question, I thought to myself, but this man, as polite as he is, asked too many questions.

“He passed away” I said. Looking down at the floor. I felt bad about lying, but what was I supposed to tell him? Oh, his dad is the werewolf and alpha of the pack that we escaped from. I took his children from him, and now they are probably chasing us right now as we speak. No, for now I had to lie to protect my babies and to protect myself and my friends.

Asher looked at me and his brows furrowed for a moment. Then he raised his eyebrows and smiled, “Well, If you need anything at all, don’t hesitate to contact me, here’s my card”. He says and he passes Mason his business card.

Then he tipped his hat toward us and says “it sure was a pleasure meeting you all” and walked off into the forest.

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After that unexpected visit from Asher, we decided to start settling in and get a better idea of our surroundings. Mason jumped into the car and took a drive into town to talk to some locals and get a feel for the area. I put Liam and Layla down to sleep in the double bed in the back room, as we didn't have cots and they couldn't sleep in their carseats.

Kaia and I started writing down any weak points, or things we needed to address, and we started formulating a potential escape plan. We hoped we would never have to initiate it, but we needed to be prepared.

Once we were happy with what we had come up with, we sat down for a coffee.

"How about Asher? He's all sort of scrumptious, isn't he!" Kaia giggled.

"Yes, well, he was definitely easy on the eyes, that's for sure!" I agreed.

"I wonder how Mason is getting on," Kaia said, looking at the clock.

He had been gone quite a few hours now. I went up the hallway to check on the twins. They were still fast asleep. They had been through so much over the past few days, so I wasn't surprised they were sleeping a little longer.

When I walked down the hallway, I heard a knock at the door, and Mason called out. Kaia got up to let him in.

"So how did it go?" I asked, and we both looked at him apprehensively.

"Well, the good news is that I managed to get some work, which should help us with food and rent," Mason said with a half smile on his face.

"Why do I get the feeling there is bad news?" I asked with great trepidation.

"Well, I haven't decided if it is bad news or not. Basically, the general population here consists of werewolves. There are some humans, but not many." Mason drops the bombshell.

"What? Are you serious? I thought this would be a human town. How do I get it so wrong? Could anyone tell? Did they know you too were a werewolf?" I asked, still trying to pick my jaw up off the ground.

"I don't think so. They couldn't scent me. Thanks to Aunt Meadow's potion. They will figure it out soon enough though, if they don't already suspect it." Mason reminds us.

"Okay, well we have a few more days up our sleeves, all going well. What we need to find out is if this pack will give us a chance, especially with us being rogues," Kaia says.

"We still haven't heard from Caleb and Kali. I'm starting to worry about them. I hope they are safe" I said, looking at Mason and Kaia.

"Maybe we could try calling them?" Mason remarks.

"Okay, let's do it!" I added excitedly.

Mason passed the phone to me. Caleb had saved his name on speed dial. I pushed the button and the phone started ringing. Some time went by and then I heard a voice at the other end.

\*Aleksa POV\*

"Caleb? Is that you?" I ask, almost holding a breath in anticipation to hear his voice.

"Yes, Luna, it's me. Are you okay? Are you safe?" Caleb asks.

"Yes, we are all safe and well thank you. How are you and Kali? Are you safe?" I ask in a panicked tone.

"We are now. We have encountered a bit of trouble, but nothing we couldn't handle." Caleb says in a reassuring tone.

Although I am now wondering what trouble they encountered, and if they aren't trying to keep me calm.

"What kind of trouble Caleb? Did you make it to Crimson Moon?" I start firing questions away at Caleb.

"Not quite Luna. We have to keep moving. But don't worry about us, we will be fine. You need to keep hidden. Lachlan has most of the warriors looking for you, as well as others from nearby packs." Caleb says to me in an almost pleading tone.

“Luna, Lachlan has told everyone that Mason and Kaia have kidnapped you and the twins. None of you are safe. So please lay low. I’ll call you when we are in a better place. Kali sends her love. Talk soon” Caleb says, and with that the line goes dead.

I look up at Mason and Kaia who are shaking their heads inquisitively, wondering what was said.

“Well, are they okay? What just happened?” Mason asks.

“Something is wrong, he couldn’t talk. They haven’t made it to Crimson Moon yet, it seems they are still on the run, and there’s more...” I say pausing.

“Caleb said that Lachlan has a lot of people out searching for us, and he has told everyone that you both kidnapped the twins and I.” I say biting down on my lips and furrowing my brows.

“Oh, well that makes things a bit more complicated then doesn’t it.” Mason says.

“Not to worry, we just won’t let them find us. And, if they do, we just tell them otherwise.” Kaia adds.

“I didn’t think he would just stop, I knew he would keep coming. Maybe I should continue on with the twins? I don’t want you two putting yourself in further danger for me and the twins” I say adamantly to Mason and Kaia.

“Don’t even think about it, You and Liam and Layla are like family to us, and family sticks together”. Kaia says.

“Absolutely! We will face this together. I’m not letting that prick anywhere near you, or the twins.” Mason adds.

“You guys are amazing! What would I do without you?” I say to them, as I turn to walk down the hallway. I can hear the twins giggling in the back room.

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\*Asher POV\*

I was running through the woods as I usually do, every morning. But something felt different this morning. As I reached the end of the forest edge,

nearing the old cabin, that has been in our families for generations now, I noticed there was a large jeep parked outside.

As far as I knew no one should be there. We never used that cabin, it was a bit rundown, sure it had rustic charm but we really had no use for it. One of our pack members had suggested we put it on the book a bach app, then at least it would be in use and maintained. But no one had actually tried to book it as of yet, not when there was five star accommodation further down the road.

We didn't need the money by any means but Grandpa would have been happy knowing that someone would be using it. It signified our once humble beginnings. Everything started here from this small log cabin, on the edge of the Falls River in the national park territory.

My name is Asher. I am twenty eight years old, I am a decent height at 6"2, with short shaved sandy blonde hair, and blue eyes. I spend most of my time outdoors, and work out a lot so I have a solid tan and fairly decent physique. I am the Beta of the Rocky Mountain Pack. I serve the pack alongside my best friend Kingston, who is the Alpha of our pack.

Running in a southbound direction, in my wolf form, I took a whiff of the air nearby, I couldn't pick up any new scents. Although, I could still sense there were people inside, not to mention that the Jeep was a giveaway. I ran back to the pack house and took a quick shower.

I had decided that I would take a shower, get changed, and then investigate further. If someone was staying there, I needed to check them out. Then once I have more information I would inform the Alpha.

After my shower I was just starting to head down stairs when I saw Kai, "Hey Kai, are you aware of anyone staying at the old log cabin on Falls River?" I asked. If anyone would know it would be him. Nothing goes past him in this pack. Kai is the Gamma of this pack, he is also in charge of all of our real estate, land and holdings.

"Yeah, come to think of it, I do recall seeing a booking for the old log cabin near Falls River in my emails, to be honest I haven't checked it out yet though." Kai replies.

"No worries man, I might pass by and check the place out, see who's staying there and why" I inform him.



“Yeah man, sounds like a plan, I’ll catch ya later” he says as he jogs off, probably to training, as most of the wolves of this pack will be about to start training at this time of the morning.

About twenty minutes later I’m walking up to the old log cabin, I knock on the door. I am greeted by a pretty impressively sized male. I can’t detect any scents so I would say he was human, but there’s something about him that isn’t quite right.

We start talking when two of the most beautiful women I have seen in a long time walk towards me. One of them stands out to me more than the other, there’s just something about her. She has the most beautiful face and the most piercing eyes I have ever seen. She looks so sexy, and she’s just wearing a short black leather skirt, a black low scoop tight fitting top, with a patent leather fitted bomber type jacket, topped off with mustard yellow combat boots. She gives off this vibe that looks like it is effortless for her to look like such a beauty.

I am snapped back to the current conversation when I notice they are standing directly in front of me, staring at me, waiting for me to say something.

They are each carrying an infant, one a boy and one a girl.

We all start talking, and they are polite but I get the feeling they are hiding something. I can’t scent any of them, but something is telling me that they are not human.

As we chat I ask them where the babies’ father is, that’s when the conversation seems to sour. Looks like I hit a sore spot I think to myself.

There is more to them than meets the eye, and I feel as though they are hiding something, but they are starting to get a bit guarded, so I stop my subtle interrogation.

I say my goodbyes and leave the old log cabin. For some reason my wolf and I are happy that they will be staying for a while, but we are concerned and wondering what it is that they are hiding.

I walk into the woods and when I am sure that I am out of sight I shift into my wolf and take off towards the pack house.

I shift as I approach the steps leading into the pack house. I head up the internal staircase and make my way to the alpha's office.

I knock on the door, there is no answer. That's strange I think to myself. The alpha is usually in his office this time of day. I push the door open. He is on the phone and he does not look impressed.

"Like I said before, we have not encountered any wolves or otherwise matching those descriptions. And yes, feel free to send me through the details. Yes. Okay. Alright. No problems. Okay goodbye."

And with that Kingston slammed the receiver down on the desk.

"That looked a bit heated, everything alright Kingston?" I asked my friend.

"That was a pack on the East Coast, their Luna and her pups have been kidnapped by two rogues, and they have no leads, so they are reaching out to all the packs in the country." Kingston tells me.

"Oh really, did he give out any names?" I ask curiously.

"No, I didn't ask, but they are gonna email some photos and information shortly" Kingston said.

"That's heavy," I said to my friend.

"So did you want something Asher? I'm kinda under the pump this morning. I'm trying to get everything in order for the Royal Pack Summit later this year.

"Oh it's nothing important. We just have some guests at the old log cabin by Falls River. I went in and introduced myself to them early today. Just wanted to see who was there. They seem friendly enough, although I think I will keep an eye on them for now" I say to Kingston.

"Fair enough, I trust your judgment, send me a report later when you have the time, I would like to know who is staying there also." Kingston says as he stares at his computer.

"Okay, I will send one through later, see you at lunch" I say to Kingston. I need to get on with my day, my workload is pretty heavy too.

I start to walk to my office and my mind drifts to the girl that I met earlier this morning. That's when I realized I got so distracted I didn't even ask their

names. Nice one Asher. I think to myself. And I call myself a Beta. Oh well I will just have to go back and visit again real soon.

\*Aleksa POV\*

We have been here at the old log cabin in Falls River for about three weeks now. Mason has recently started working at a local club as a security guard. He works from Wednesday to Sunday, so that's keeping him busy for now, and it means that we have some money coming in. Kaia had managed to get a job there also, which she seems to be enjoying. She works as a hostess, at the front entrance of the club. As luck would have it, they work the same shifts, so they are carpooling. They told the club they were siblings and everyone seems to have bought it so far.

I enrolled Liam and Layla at one of the local daycares and they seem to be enjoying themselves. I am planning to look for some work, so that I can contribute and pay for mine and the twins' share of the bills and food. I was hoping to find some realtor work but I am starting to wonder if I should try something completely different, given that this is a fresh start for us. As much as I enjoyed my career in property, I am not the same person that I was a few months ago. So much has changed in my life since then.

I now feel so much stronger and more independent since leaving Evergreen and Lachlan. I want to leave as much of my old life behind as possible. I was always so serious and I put everyone before me, which was expected, as Luna and I didn't mind, but things have changed now. I am not a Luna, and there are only two little people that are reliant on me now, so there is less pressure on me. As much as I didn't realize back then, Lachlan controlled me and everything that I did. He knew my every step, and I was always wary of disappointing him or the pack. It took us leaving for me to realise the level of control he had over me.

I just want to do something a bit more carefree, something that doesn't hold a lot of responsibility, because that was my life for the past few years and I need a break from it.

That's it! I am going to do something well outside my comfort zone and apply at an inn or bar in town.

I didn't have a CV but I wasn't worried. I would just walk in, introduce myself and tell them I wanted to work there, and hopefully that would be enough.

I walked into the room that I shared with the twins and looked at my choices. Hmmn, not much to choose from, I thought to myself. Last week Kaia and I went to some thrift stores. We didn't have much money to spend so we needed to stretch it as far as possible. We wanted to get some clothes since we had left everything behind in our packs. I had a few new outfits that I had yet to wear. I looked at them and considered my options.

I had decided I would wear a cute little black dress with spaghetti straps, with a small slimming denim jacket, and some tan knee-high boots I managed to find for \$50. I looked at myself in the bathroom mirror, not bad, I said to myself. I would wear my hair down, it looked tidy enough. I suddenly felt a surge of confidence. I can do this! I repeated to myself.

I jumped into the jeep and started to drive towards the town. We were about a forty-five minute drive from the township. I still had a few hours before I had to pick up the twins, so I had decided that I would use this time to look for a job. I felt bad that we had been relying on Mason and Kaia. I had hoped that I would have been able to take some money that I had saved from the packhouse, but I didn't anticipate being locked in the dungeon and having to escape, so I was very unprepared. We were just so grateful that our new friends, or more like family, had been there to help us.

There were actually a lot of bars in the local township, I thought as I drove down the main street. The nightlife must be popular here, I thought to myself.

I lived in a human town growing up. I was actually raised by humans. I was adopted by the people I knew as my parents. They have raised me since I was a baby. I had no idea who my actual birth parents were. According to my adopted parents, I was dropped off in a basket outside their church. They had told me this when I was in elementary school. They had wanted to be honest with me from the start, and I appreciated that.

I know this all sounds unbelievable, but it's true. There was a note attached to me that said "I'm sorry we couldn't protect you, we hope the person that finds you can do what we couldn't and a small locket was placed on it.

I still wear the locket now. It's an antique looking rose gold locket with what looks like rose vines decorating it front facing. There is no photo inside. There is a gem of some sort in the place where you will usually find a photo. It's actually a velvety blue colour, almost like a sapphire, it actually reminds me of my eye colour strangely enough.

I don't know why it means so much to me. But I guess I cling to it because it's the only piece of my birth parents that I have.

I have never tried to look for them. I would not even know where to start. Apparently, my adoptive parents tried. They tried so that I could have some closure as I got older. But they had no luck. They hired a private investigator and everything, but he had no leads.

I'm okay with it though. I'm not even mad at them. I imagine that they had no choice, judging by the note they wrote. Plus, my adoptive parents were so loving and treated me like I was their own biological child. I have no regrets. I hope they (my birth parents) are okay wherever they are out there.

I felt comfortable living around humans, I guess because I was brought up to believe I was one for the majority of my life.

Most werewolves live in their packs and prefer to live away from humans. I get it. It's to protect our secrets and to be able to live our best lives without having to worry about prying eyes.

I didn't mind though. I was happy wherever I was.

When I met Lachlan and we mated, I moved straight away to the packhouse with him. It took a lot to get used to, learning the culture, the practices, the rules, their way of living. I had never even been to a pack house before, so I felt very intimidated by it initially.

I knew I was different growing up. I was always faster than most, I had heightened senses of smell, hearing and vision. I also had super fast healing abilities which both my parents and I both found strange, but they never questioned it. They just said I was blessed.

It wasn't until I turned eighteen that I shifted for the first time under the full moon. It was very drawn out and painful. I thought I was dying at the time. I had no idea that I was a werewolf.

I was alone that night. I was on my way home from a friend's house and I had cut through a forested area when my transition started.

After what felt like forever, I had shifted and I went for a run. I ended up stopping by a lake, the moonlight was reflecting on the water and it was then I saw my wolf form for the first time. I must have stared at myself for hours.

I almost had a full blown panic attack. After crying myself to sleep on the grass edge by the lake, I fell asleep. I had the strangest dream that night and I was visited by the most beautiful woman.

She had long golden blonde hair which flowed down past her hips, crystal blue eyes, and she was absolutely gorgeous. She wore a long white satin dress. She explained to me that I was a werewolf and that my parents had to make the ultimate sacrifice to save me. She said that I would meet my mate, after explaining what a mate was, and she told me to have faith, even if things didn't turn out as I had hoped. She didn't elaborate on anything she was telling me, it all seemed very cryptic.

She told me her name was Selene. She had told me that when the time came, she would reveal herself to me again, and explain my purpose in life to me. She said I had so much more to learn. And to have faith that things will work out in the end. Then she just disappeared and I was blinded by a bright light.

I have always had strange dreams, but that one seemed to stick with me. I sometimes wonder if it was a dream or a premonition.

I snapped myself out of my thoughts and walked towards a bar that seemed to appeal to me. I took a deep breath as I walked to the door.

The security guard was very tall, tanned and very muscular. He was dressed in a smart black suit and wore an earpiece. He pulled the red rope across for me, smiled at me and let me pass.

I scanned my eyes across the room. Wow. I thought to myself. This place is a lot bigger and a lot fancier than I had imagined, based on how it looked from the outside.

From the outside, it almost resembles a ski cabin that you would find at a ski resort. Large timber logs notched at the ends and laid upon one another with the ends filled with plaster or mortar.

From the inside there was a deep rich red coloured carpet which almost resembled velvet. It had booths on the sides of the tavern, with circular tables forming the majority of the room. There were candlestick type chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. Directly facing me as I walked in was the bar. It was a very long wooden bartop. It was littered with beer taps and glasses of all varieties, as well as jugs of lemon water and crates of ice. It had a warm and

welcoming vibe about it. It looked immaculate, no beer stains on the carpet or markings on the tables like in other bars.

I walked straight up to the bar and asked to speak with the manager.

“You’re looking at her darling, what can I do for you?” the beautiful tall and lean girl with the long dark black hair and emerald green eyes said to me with a smirk on her face.

“Hi, my name is Aleksa, I am looking for a job, and wondered if you have any vacancies?” I said with a hopeful smile on my face.

“Hi Aleksa, I’m Sierra, well girl, you are in luck, one of my fulltime workers just resigned yesterday and I haven’t placed an ad yet. Can you start tonight, we are super short-staffed?” She asks, emphasising the super part.

“Ah, yes, that should be OK, but I just need to organize a sitter for my pu.. babies. Can I make a quick call? I asked hopefully.

“Sure hun, you can use the phone over there” Sierra says as she points to a phone on the wall near the cash register.

I called Kaia, who picked up straight away. “Is everything okay?” she asked worriedly.

“Hey Kaia, everything is fine, I think I have a job!” I said excitedly.

“That’s brilliant! Where?” Kaia asks.

“At a tavern, in town,” I said.

“That’s great Aleksa! We all have jobs now! I’m so excited for us!” Kaia says loudly.

“The thing is Kaia, they want me to start tonight, as someone has just left and they are super short-staffed” I say, not yet finished explaining myself before Kaia interrupts. “Of course, you don’t even have to ask. I will watch Liam and Layla. No problem! Hey, can you still pick us up from our day shift? Kaia asks.

“Of Course. I will be there shortly.” I said to Kaia.

I hung up the phone and made my way over to Sierra. "That's fine. I've got a sitter sorted. I can start tonight. Ah, what time did you want me here?" I ask Sierra.

"Seven o'clock hun. You will be working late with Accalia tonight. It will only be the two of you at the bar. The chef, Steve, will be out back making bar snacks, and Tony will be at the door. Unfortunately, tonight is one of our busier nights, and you girls will get slammed. Hey, I forgot to ask, have you ever worked at a bar before?" Sierra eyed me.

"Ah not technically, but how hard can it be right?" I said, flashing a big smile on my face. Hoping that Sierra doesn't take her job offer back.

Sierra looks at me with a questionable look on her face, as if she is pondering her options. "Tell ya what. I'll give you a trial run. I'll stay on a bit later tonight to show you the basics. That should be enough to get you going. Most of it is talking to the punters and keeping them happy. A pretty thing like you should be able to manage that." She says as she walks off.

"See you at seven -and Aleksa, don't be late!" Sierra yells as she walks out to what I imagine is the kitchen.

I turned on my heels and exited the tavern. A surge of excitement goes through me. Oh my goddess. I did it. I got a job! I'm so optimistic as to what the future might hold.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I put on some cherry red lip gloss and rubbed my lips together, plumping my lips to give them that glossy full lip look. I took one last look in the mirror, said my little mantra to myself "you've got this girl!" and walked into the lounge. I grabbed the keys off the table and said goodbye to Mason and Kaia, who were watching the late news on television.

I was feeling pumped and ready to start my first shift at the tavern. This would be the first day of the rest of my life, of our lives. This was for the twins as much as it was for me. Financial independence was part of our journey. I needed to be able to provide for them, to give them the life they deserved, I thought to myself.

I walked out the door and made my way towards the stairs. It was at that moment that I had the strangest feeling as I walked in complete darkness



towards the car. It felt like I wasn't alone. I don't know if I was on guard because Lachlan was probably still looking for us, or if it was my heightened senses warning me that someone was close by.

I shrugged it off and sat in the driver's seat. Here goes nothing, I thought to myself. I pulled out of the driveway and made my way down the gravel road. I had left extra early as I wanted to make a good impression.

I put the radio on and listened to some music; Cold Heart by Elton John and Dua Lipa. I love this song, I think to myself. I turn the volume up high. Dancing from my car seat while driving through the darkness.

In no time I arrived at work. Gosh, time goes fast when you are having fun. I miss cranking the music up and dancing around the house. I hadn't done that since before I met Lachlan. Life had gotten serious so fast. Anyway, no time to dwell on the past. I was walking into my future.

I walked up to the entrance, and looked at the security guard. "Hi, you must be Tony", I said in a loud voice, because the music was pumping in the tavern.

"I am, and who would you be?" He looked at me suspiciously.

"I am Aleksa, tonight is my first night. I'll be working at a bar. Sierra hired me today" I said enthusiastically.

"Welcome to the tavern Aleksa, please go inside." Tony said to me, pulling the red velvet rope across for me to pass.

I walked past Tony and stopped just before I entered. I take a moment to center myself. I hear that mantra in my mind once again. Then I pulled the door open and stepped into the tavern.

I am taken aback by how many people are currently here. The place is packed. The lights are dimmed. The music is cranking. There is even a dance floor in the far corner on the left-hand side of the bar.

Sierra wasn't joking when she said we would get slammed tonight. I feel fear overtake me. Can I do this? What was I thinking? I have no experience. As I start to delve into self-doubt, I am snapped out of my thoughts when a familiar voice speaks to me.

“Well hello again, uh I didn’t catch your name last time we met?” the unknown voice says. I moved to stand in the light and then I recognized the person standing right in front of me. It’s Asher, the park ranger we met the other day.

“Oh hi, it’s nice to see you again, I’m Aleksa.” I said politely.

“Nice to see you again Aleksa, hey uh, what was your friend’s name? I forgot to ask the other day”, He asks with a shy smile on his face.

“Oh, Kaia, her name is Kaia.” I said back to him.

“Kaia – nice,” he says deep in thought.

“Well, I better get moving, it’s my first shift and I don’t want to be late” I said to him.

“Yeah, sure,uh, good luck” Asher says, still preoccupied with his thoughts.

I pushed past him and walked up to the bar. I couldn’t see Sierra anywhere and the girl at the bar looked super busy, so I walked around to the back of the bar, thinking there would be an office somewhere out back where I might find Sierra.

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What a night. I thought to myself. I found Sierra in her office earlier and she gave me a crash course on the most popular drinks that are ordered at the tavern. Fortunately, it appears that most people prefer beer.

I managed to make it through the night without making any major mistakes and even started to learn a regular’s name or two.

The other girl working at the bar, Accalia, didn’t talk much, or even look at me most of the night, but I’m thinking that might possibly be her personality type.

She has that whole alternative vibe going with purple highlights on her black hair, she has pale white skin as if it were kissed by the moon. She has thick glossy lips. And her eyes, her eyes are so dark but captivating at the same time. I can’t actually make out their color. She was wearing black leather pants and a skin-tight leather vest, with chunky leather and studded bracelets on her wrists.

She looks like the kinda girl you don't want to mess with. She's great with the customers though. They all love her. I would imagine she has been here for quite some time.

I finished wiping the last table and looked up at the clock. It's three am. Time went by so fast. My feet are aching, it's been a while since I spent so long on my feet and I didn't wear the most comfortable shoes, so I will be paying for that later today.

I said goodbye to everyone and walked towards the car. I rubbed my eyes as I turned on the engine and started to make my way back home.

It's so quiet at this time of the morning and there is no one else on the road. As I pulled into the gravel road that would lead me back to the old log cabin, I saw a black shadow go past the side window.

I rubbed my eyes again and slowed down a bit and glanced to my right side. I can't see anything or anyone so I guess my eyes are playing tricks on me since I am so tired. I am feeling a little weary though, so I push my foot down on the accelerator and drive home a bit faster.

When I got home, I saw that Mason and Kaia had left the porch light on for me, thankfully. As my mind is taking me to a strange place today. I feel anxious for some reason. As I turned off the engine, I started to walk at pace to the front door. As I pulled out my keys, I turned back and looked at the lake and then again at the forested area. Nope Aleksa, there's no one there. It's just your overactive imagination.

I opened the door and walked into the house and kicked off my boots that I wish I hadn't worn tonight. I locked the door and headed towards my bed with a smile on my face. I did it. I survived my first night at work.

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I woke up to the warm sun streaming in through the windows. I must have fallen straight into a deep sleep because I felt well rested. I looked up at the old alarm clock next to me. Uh oh. It's 10am. No wonder I feel well rested – I've overslept. I was supposed to have Liam and Layla at daycare already. I looked at the twins. They looked so peaceful. I didn't want to wake them just yet.

I bit down on my lip and sighed. Oh well. I might just make a sneaky coffee and enjoy a bit of peace and quiet before the twins wake up. I started to look for the phone so that I could call the daycare and let them know that the twins would be staying home today.

Once that was done, I put some water in the jug and waited for the water to boil. Coffee is what I need right now. I thought back to when I bumped into Asher last night. He seemed quite interested in Kaia. I must remember to tell her about that. He's very sweet and I think they would look so cute together. With what she has been through, she deserves a little fun.

The house was so quiet right now, with the twins still asleep and with Mason and Kaia at work already. It was nice of them to let me sleep in, I thought to myself. I'm glad they didn't wake me this morning, it will be nice to have a day to just enjoy Liam and Layla's company.

The jug had boiled and I was making my coffee when I heard a noise at the door. My heart started to race and my breathing quickened. A feeling of terror took over me. I heard a loud knock at the door. I just stood in the kitchen not moving, hoping the knocking would stop and whoever it was would think no one was home and go away.

I had nowhere to run. I would never be able to get out of here in time. The twins were still sleeping. I had to face up to this. Whoever it was. Whatever it was. I had to be brave. I could face whatever life threw at me. I wasn't the same Aleksa I was a couple of months ago, I told myself.

I took a deep breath and I slowly opened the door. And I was utterly shocked by the man who stood in front of me. What is it with this log cabin and gorgeous strangers appearing at our door? I just hoped this gorgeous specimen of a man had good intentions and wasn't one of Lachlans' lacheys.

"Good Morning, you must be Aleksa?" the handsome stranger said to me with a breathtaking smile.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I stood there in shock, wondering how this handsome stranger knew my name. I took a deep breath and I was immediately alarmed. He is a werewolf and, judging by the aura and scent he is exuding, one of power, I assume, probably an alpha. I take a moment to compose myself although I am overcome with fear.

So many questions are swirling around in my head at this moment. Has he been sent by Lachlan? Is he here to hurt me? Does he know we are rogues? Are we encroaching on his territory? What does he want from me? Is he here for my pups?

At that moment, the stranger in front of me starts to clear his throat, pulling me out of my own thoughts. He stands there with a questionable look on his face as if he is trying to figure me out. He must sense my fear, I thought to myself.

“I believe you have met my Beta Asher”, he says with a smirk on his face. I looked at him, with utter realization, smashing into me. He is the alpha. We must be on his territory.

“Uh, yes, uh, we don’t mean any harm. We didn’t come into your territory intentionally. We didn’t know. We can leave right away! Please, we don’t want any trouble.” I said, panicked in a pleading tone.

The penalty for rogues entering pack lands is generally death or imprisonment. I started to panic and hyperventilate, looking at the wolf in front of me with sheer desperation and fear. I must protect my pups, I think to myself.

Clearly sensing my fear and panic, the alpha in front of me raises his hand towards me. “It’s OK. Don’t panic. I’m not here to hurt you, I just want to have a chat with you. Would you invite me in?” he politely asks me.

I took a deep breath and tried to calm myself down. I opened the door further to allow him to walk past. He slowly walks past me and sits on the couch, placing his arms on the top and side of the couch, sitting with his back against the corner of the couch, and placing his right leg over his left, looking relaxed. I just stood there dumbfounded, wondering what was to come next.

“Please, Aleksa, take a seat. This is just a friendly chat. I just want to know why you are here, on my pack lands. You don’t smell like rogues, but here you are out here on your own. Please explain yourself.” He says to me with a serious look on his gorgeous face.

I slowly sit on a chair next to the couch, sitting towards the edge of the chair. And I think to myself, and wonder how much I should tell him. I decide to go with the light version of events, skimming past the fact that I am Luna of a pack, and that my fated mate is currently hunting me and my rogue friends down.

“Start at the beginning, Aleksa, tell me. Is that even your real name?” He asks suspiciously.

I cleared my throat. “Yes, Aleksa is my real name. I guess I will start at the beginning then. I met my mate about two years ago. Everything seemed perfect. We had pups pretty much as soon as we met, twins actually.

“How old are you?” He asks me, interrupting my story.

“I’m twenty years old” I said to him. Wondering why he would ask that question. But I continue on telling my story to him.

“Pretty much as soon as I got pregnant I started experiencing intense pain, daily. I would see the pack doctor often, and she would put it down to growing pregnancy pains, and even when they continued after the twins had arrived she put it down to a traumatic delivery and said they would eventually disappear.”

“Well they didn’t, it wasn’t until one day when I had to leave work early because I couldn’t bear the pain that I walked in on my beta- uh- best friend and my mate in our bed together.”

“Long story short, although I planned to escape with my babies, my plan was cut short and I was thrown in the dungeons, until I escaped with the help of some friends, and we made it here.”

“Please, we have no intention of causing any trouble, we didn’t even realize we were on pack land. We can leave today, please don’t harm us” I pleaded, tears falling down the sides of my face.

I can’t read his face. I don’t know what his plans are. I am praying for mercy from the moon goddess, if just this once, things could go our way.

He took a breath. “I am sorry you had to go through all that. I can’t imagine why a mate would betray their bond given to them from the moon goddess. That is sacrilege.”

“Where are your pups and your friends now?” He asks.

“My friends Mason and Kaia are at work at the moment. They got jobs at a club in town. Uh Headquarters.” I told him.

“And the twins, well, they’re safe, they’re sleeping right now” I said.

“How old are your pups, and what are their names?” He asked me.

“Liam and Layla, they are two years old.” I said, biting down on my bottom lip, wondering what he would do with this information.

“You aren’t technically on park land, you are on the outskirts. I will allow this for now. But we will be keeping an eye on you. We will need to verify that you are who you say you are.” He warned me.

“Which pack are you from?” He asked me. His eyes rested on my face.

I don’t know what to say. If I tell him which pack we are from, he might contact Lachlan. He would tell him something different to what I have, and we would be imprisoned again for Lachlan to find us. I can’t tell him.

“It’s okay. We will leave today. Please, we don’t want any trouble. We just want to be left to ourselves,” I said defiantly.

“You will tell me which pack you are from now!” He says in a loud alpha command.

I cannot refuse a command, so I proceeded to tell him “Evergreen Pack”, “We are from the Evergreen Pack on the East Coast”. I say sadly.

“Evergreen, you say. You are missing Luna, are you not?” He questions me with amber flecks sparkling in his eye.

I looked at him with a tear-stained face. I say nothing but my face deceives me.

“Alpha Lachlan said you were kidnapped by rogues. Tell me Aleksa, have you been kidnapped?” He asks me with a curious look on his face.

“No! No I haven’t. Mason and Kaia are my friends. They helped us escape. Please, Mason and Kaia have nothing to do with this. Please don’t punish them. This is all my fault!!” I pleaded with him to spare my friends.

“I believe you, but I think you had better explain things to me more truthfully this time, Aleksa, and don’t lie to me. I am not here to harm you. I want to help you.” He says in a soft tone, and for some reason I find that comfortable and I believe him.

We talk for some time. I fill him in on how I came to meet Mason and Kaia, as well as explaining how they came to be in the dungeons. I explained how we escaped and the events leading up to us arriving here. I explained how Lachlan treated me, and about his plans to make Eva his Luna, and me his mistress. As well as his plans for our pups. He sat there and listened intently to my words.

Although I couldn't read him and had no idea what his train of thought might be, I also felt safe around him. I finished my story and sat there in silence waiting for him to respond.

Some time passed, as well as an awkward silence, and it felt like time was moving ever so slowly, then he spoke.

"I am sorry Aleksa. I am sorry that the moon goddess fated you with such a mate. Mates are supposed to be sacred, and if what you say is true then Lachlan has made a mockery of the sanctity of the mate bond. I will look into your account of events. If what you are saying is true then we will grant you the ability to live here on the pack border for now" He said to me.

"I will need to meet Mason and Kaia, as well as verifying their version of events". He proclaims.

"I understand. Do you want me to call them for you?" I ask him.

"There's no need for that. I will go into Headquarters and speak with them there." He says.

"But, they are working, and there are humans around, are you sure you want to do that?" I ask.

"I think it will be fine. Especially considering I own that bar. In fact I own almost the entire town." He says with a smirk on his face.

I look at him in shock. That means he probably owns the Tavern, where I work. That means that this isn't a human town after all. We had really messed up here. Of all the places.

"It was nice meeting you Aleksa. I will be in touch." He says standing up from the couch.



“Uh, it was nice to meet you too, uh, I just realized that I don’t actually know your name?” I say to him realizing that he never introduced himself.

“Kingston, it’s Kingston.” He says with a cheeky grin on his face.

Kingston, I think to myself, for some reason hearing his name makes my heart happy. I feel warm all over. It’s at this point I realize I have been staring at his face a little longer than I should have. He just grins at me.

“Thank you Kingston, I appreciate you considering this. I promise we won’t be a nuisance.” I say to him gratefully.

He turns and walks off. I shut the door. Then not a minute later I hear little feet running down the hallway.

“Mommy! Mommy!” Liam and Layla yell at me happily. “Pancakes Mommy!” They yell in unison with great big smiles on their faces, as I pick them up for cuddles. I then place them on the bench top in front of the kitchen window so that they can help me make the pancake batter.

They position themselves front facing towards the window. “Wolf mama, wolf!” They yell, and we watch a huge black wolf run into the forest.

Kingston. I think to myself. His wolf is magnificent. His human seems to be quite alluring to. I scold myself for thinking of him that way in a time like this. I need to be practical and think clearly. I can’t allow myself these thoughts. “But he’s so gorgeous Aleksa!” I hear Amber say and giggle in my head.

I haven’t heard anything from Amber since we were thrown in the dungeons. I wondered if she would ever speak to me again. “Ofcourse Aleksa, I am always here I just needed some time to heal. We can trust him Aleksa.” Amber says. “How do you know that?” I ask Amber. “Trust me, Aleksa. All will be revealed in due time”. She says to me cryptically.

\*Kingston POV\*

I am twenty eight years of age and I am the Alpha of the Rocky Mountain National Park Pack. We are the second largest pack in the country. I took over as Alpha from my father when I turned twenty two. I met my mate not long after becoming Alpha and we were happy for a while. Until she got sick. After a short battle with a terminal illness, she passed away. We didn’t get the

chance to have pups, we had planned to enjoy our time together for a while before settling down to have pups, unfortunately fate had other plans for us.

For the past few years I have managed to dodge the council's plans for me. There has been huge pressure from the werewolf council for me to take a chosen mate as the pack's Luna, but I have no inclination to.

My sister Quinn takes care of most of the luna duties for our pack, and my mother supports her with this for now. I realize she can't do this forever, as she is yet to meet her mate too. Although, I have a bit of time before I need to figure out what happens next. Quinn is a bit younger than me, she's only twenty two.

Usually, you meet your mate when you gain your wolf at around eighteen years of age. So Quinn is feeling the pressure of not having met her mate. She has faith that he is still out there though, so she's just biding her time until she finds him.

With no heir to take over as Alpha, I will most likely have to pass it down to my Beta or his offspring. Although, I have no plans of relinquishing my role as Alpha any time soon.

Being that we are such a large pack and that we have a well respected and feared reputation, we are for the most part a warrior pack. So we almost never have any trouble here, other than the occasional rogue.

But that doesn't mean we are complacent. Everyone in our pack is required to train from three years of age, regardless of gender. We pride ourselves in knowing that everyone can fight to defend themselves, especially our most vulnerable wolves.

Right now I am busy organizing the Annual Royal Pack Summit which is taking place here at Rocky Mountain in the summertime. It's a big deal, alpha's from all around the country come to pay their respects and allegiance to the Royal Werewolf family, as well as network, and party. Since we have been tasked with hosting this year, there is a lot to do to ensure it all goes smoothly.

I have a committee of volunteers that are organizing most of it, but there are a number of packs that aren't on good terms and it is my duty to ensure that no hostility presents itself. So I am ringing each and every pack in the country to personally welcome them and get an idea of what we are dealing with when

the time comes. We need to be able to separate rival packs to avoid any disturbances, and ensure it all goes smoothly.

I am on the phone in my office making calls to packs on the East Coast, when my Beta Asher comes into my office. I rub my forehead and look up at him sighing. I put my hand up and point a finger at him to gesture that I will just be a minute, and I continue on with the phone call I'm on.

I'm currently speaking with the alpha of the Evergreen Pack. He's a real piece of work, this guy, he's giving me some convoluted story about his Luna and pups were kidnapped by rogues. Apparently he sent an email, but I've yet to receive it.

I tell him I haven't seen or heard anything that would be helpful to him, and give him my offer of assistance should he ever need it. I agree to put up some fliers, and keep an eye out for anything suspicious. After some small talk I ended my call with him.

For some reason that phone call irks me. I feel disdain for this man. He sounded ingenuine and I believe there is more to this story than he is letting on. I have no idea why I feel this way but it's just a feeling I have.

Asher starts rattling on about some humans staying at the old log cabin, well he assumes they are human, but isn't overly convinced, so he's going to dig a little deeper and keep a close eye on them. I'm too busy to deal with this right now, so I agree with him and fob him off for now. I feel like a little guilty, but I'm under so much pressure right now, and I'm sure it's nothing he can't handle.

While he was telling me about them I felt my wolf stirring inside me. Maybe he's been stuck indoors too long and he wants to get out of this office and go for a run. I look up at the clock. I've put in a few good hours so far, so I decide that I'll take an early lunch break and get back to this a bit later.

I walk out of the pack house and jog down the stairs. I look around from one side of the pack grounds to another. It's pretty quiet this morning, most wolves are at school or work or training at this time of day. I rip my clothes off and start shifting and run into the woods.

My bones start to c\*\*\*k out of place and extend then slowly fall back into place, fur sprouts out all over my hands and arms and body. I start to pound into the forest floor feeling the crisp air hit my snout. This release is exactly

what I needed right now. A break from the mundane office work and never ending pack calls. Just me and Sabre and the great outdoors.

Sabre takes over and he runs in a specific direction. He runs to the far right side of the woods, and he starts running alongside the Falls River. Before long we are approaching the area that Asher was talking about this morning. If only I could remember what he was saying earlier, my curiosity has piqued.

We have reached the old log cabin and there aren't any cars outside, perhaps no one is home we ponder. We take a few deep sniffs and we are intrigued by one of the scents we pick up. So we start moving towards the front window. A few yards in we stop in our tracks. From where we are standing we can see the most beautiful woman.

She's gorgeous with long thick darkest brown hair, crystal blue eyes, perfectly plump pink lips and snow white skin. She looks like she is deep in thought. We wonder if this is one of the humans Asher was telling us about. We will have to find him and ask him for more information when I get back. For now I just watch her for a while discretely from behind a great old oak tree.

We watch for a while, then we turn back into the forest determined to find out more about the mysterious woman at the old log cabin.

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I feel restless tonight. I can't stop thinking about the beauty I saw at the old log cabin. I decided to take Sabre for a late night run in the dark. We are running for hours when we decide that we've had enough and start making our way back to the woods. We are weaving in and out of the trees when we catch the faintest whiff of the scent we picked up at the old log cabin.

Sabre decides that we need to investigate. We are in the middle of nowhere running alongside a dusty old gravel road when we hear a car. We can hear music playing, it sounds like cold heart. I know that song everywhere it's been played over and over again on almost every radio throughout the country.

We pick up our pace to match the car, glancing to our right side, we can make out that long dark hair flowing in the wind. It's her! At that moment she catches us with her eyes and turns to look at us, so we pick up the pace even further and boost past the car.

We make it back to the Falls River just before she does, and we watch her exit the car, from the shelter of the old oak tree. We watch as she makes her way to the front door, watching her slowly look back at the river and then amongst the trees we are standing in. She then turns and walks into the house. Once we are happy that she has made it safely inside, we turn back towards the woods and make our way back to the packhouse.

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Sabre and myself are both pent up full of energy this morning. We have woken up at the c\*\*\*k of dawn and we plan to meet the mysterious beauty that is currently dominating our thoughts.

We managed to find out from Asher that the woman in question was Aleksa, Correct me if i'm wrong but Aleksa translated means "defender", that's a pretty impressive name. According to Asher, she has two children.

Mason and Kaia I was able to identify from their security swipe card photos, as they are working at one of my clubs in town. Asher says they are already settling in, and making friends, and although he can't scent anything specific, he still feels all is not as it seems with them.

After jumping in the shower, I head to the packhouse kitchen for a light breakfast. Then I shift into my wolf form and dash off into the woods. I take a change of clothes with me to change into once I reach the edge of the forest where the old log cabin is.

In no time, I am outside the cabin, walking up the porch stairs and knocking on the door. After a few moments the door opens and I am face to face with Aleksa.

The first thing I notice is that her scent is even stronger, she's a werewolf! She smells delicious – like peony blossom and peach nectar. My senses are overwhelmed.

I wonder how Asher could have missed this. Her scent is doing all sorts of things to me right now. For some reason I find myself wildly attracted to her, and it is taking all my willpower to not act on these feelings right now.

I can sense her fear radiating from her, it's practically palpable. I can smell the perspiration building on her forehead. At this moment she appears to be lost in her thoughts, so I clear my throat to get her attention back. I start by making

small talk, but I won't beat around the bush. I need some answers and I need them now.

She starts to plead with me. It was not my intention to scare her, I try to relax her and tell her that I mean her no harm. I just have a few questions to ask her.

I ask her to explain herself, and she starts to tell me about what happened in her pack with her fated mate, and how she had to flee the pack to get away from his cruel ways, as well as protecting her children. I am repressing my growls, as I don't want to scare her any further. But I am beyond pissed off, how someone could treat their goddess given mate that way was beyond me.

She explains how Mason and Kaia were rogues but through no fault of their own, it would appear they found themselves in positions similar to that of Aleksa and they formed a bond together. I would need to do some investigation to make sure their stories checked out, although I can't imagine they would have much to gain by lying to me, they seem genuine.

I ask her which pack she is from and she starts to panic. She is reluctant to give me this information, and I am struggling to keep my cool. I don't mean to but before I realize what I have done I have alpha commanded her to tell me. So she does.

I am not surprised when she tells me she is from the Evergreen pack. As she was telling me her story I started to link it to what I had heard from Alpha Lachlan on our phone call the other day.

I am not surprised she is Luna. She is beautiful and strong and she has a kind and caring aura about her. But I need to verify this story. People have a tendency to lie when they are scared or desperate. And she is clearly very scared. I don't think she is lying though. I sense she is being truthful.

We talk some more, I advise her that I will be having a conversation with both Mason and Kaia separately, she doesn't seem concerned, she even offers to help organize the meeting, although I explain it is not necessary as I will be seeing them at the club.

Before I leave she asks for my name. I was so wrapped up in asking her questions, I didn't even introduce myself. She stares at me for a few moments and I can't quite figure out what she's thinking as she stares at me with a

sweet smile on her face. Then as if she realizes that she is staring at me she thanks me for my visit and farewells me closing the door.

As I am walking down the stairs I hear two little voices calling out to their mommy, with my werewolf hearing. The twins must be awake I think to myself. I really want to meet them for some reason, as does Sabre. But we resist the urge. Once I get to the tree line, I shift into my wolf, seeing that the twins are watching from the window. Sabre and I leap off following the forest path, feeling quite happy with myself and thinking about that sweet scent of peony blossom and peach nectar.

\*Aleksa POV\*

It's been a week since Kingston appeared at my doorstep, and I haven't seen him since that day. We are all settled into life in Denver, having been here a couple of weeks now. Liam and Layla are loving the daycare that they attend. The ladies who run it, and work there, are so kind and nurturing, the twins are really thriving there. They've even managed to make a few friends and have a few playdates. I've even made a few mom friends myself. We go for coffee on the weekend while the children play at the park. It's a far cry from our life at Evergreen, which was so much more isolated. I didn't have any mom friends. I mean I only had Eva and Kali, and look how Eva turned out. Kali is a keeper though, I sure miss her. I think of her often.

Mason and Kaia are enjoying working at the club, naturally they have already been promoted since starting there. Their natural leadership skills are obviously hard to ignore. Mason is now running the security team there, and has been asked to manage security for another two clubs in town. Kaia is no longer working as hostess, she is working within management. They both seem happy. We didn't talk much about our lives before we came here, we all decided we wanted to move forward and focus on our new lives. We didn't want the negativity of our pasts constantly hanging over us.

Recently we heard from Caleb and Kali, they had finally safely reached Crimson Moon and were greeted with open arms by Alpha Callum and his Luna Cadence. They had to lay low for a while in a human town initially as they were surrounded by the Evergreen pack warriors, but they managed to escape a week later. It sounded like things were pretty tough for them for a while. I am so happy that they are safe now. I still feel guilty that their lives were uprooted the way they were. However, they assure me that they would do it again in a heartbeat. I'm grateful for such loyal and courageous friends.

Every day I count myself lucky that Lachlan hasn't found me or the twins, or my friends yet. We have no way of knowing where he is looking for us, although I imagine he would be looking high and low for Liam, being that he is the rightful heir to Evergreen Pack. I know the day will come when he finds us and we will have to fight for our freedom once again. All I can do right now is make sure we are ready when that time comes. Mason, Kaia and I have been working on multiple escape plans for the twins and I, and we are almost ready for when the time comes.

Today I have the day off work. I have dropped the twins off at daycare, and Mason and Kaia are both at work, so I don't know what to do with myself. I've been working a lot recently. Since we left Evergreen in such a hurry, we were unprepared. We had no savings or back up plans, so I've been working extra shifts so that I can put some money inside for when we have to move on again.

I look around at the cabin, it's pretty immaculate so that rules cleaning out. I look in the pantry and it's looking a little empty so I guess I can go grocery shopping. Although I am feeling restless at the moment, so, I try to channel Amber to see if she would like to go for a run.

After a few attempts I hear no reply from her in my head, so I guess shifting is out of the question right now. I almost can't remember the last time we shifted. Amber has been so distant since everything that went down with Lachlan, I think she misses Cyrus, Lachlan's wolf. She has only spoken to me once since we escaped from Evergreen, and that was when we met Kingston.

A cheeky smile erupts on my face when I think of Kingston. Gosh he is divine. He's tall, he's tanned, he's muscular, he has a smile that just makes me want to melt. He has a commanding no nonsense type of aura about him. But then he's understanding and seems sincere. I feel so attracted to him. It's so unlike me. I'm not that girl that falls all over a guy. It's so bizarre, I should be mourning the death of my relationship with Lachlan, not getting all turned on but the hot alpha of the Rocky Mountain Pack. Get a grip Aleksa – I think to myself.

I figured that because I had rejected my fated mate I would be sick. I had always been told that rejecting or being rejected by your fated mate would make you weak and potentially k\*\*l you, but I wasn't feeling any of that. In all honesty, I had never felt better. Maybe a little weak physically, but mentally I feel freer than I ever have.



I can't even feel Lachlan being intimate with someone anymore. Perhaps my rejecting our bond was enough? I thought that he needed to accept my rejection though. It's so confusing. Perhaps I needed to see someone, a witch or a healer or perhaps a shaman. I wouldn't even know where to start come to think of it. Perhaps I would discuss this with Kaia later on tonight and see what she thinks about it all.

Thinking about Kingston had gotten me all wound up. So I decided I would go for a run, and since Amber isn't talking to me I will just go in my human form. I look around my room to find something acceptable to run in.

I picked up some black leggings and a black sports bra and put them on. I grab the only pair of shoes I have that would be suitable, my black converse shoes, and pull my hair into a high ponytail.

I walk through the house, shut the door, run down the stairs and start stretching. I take a deep breath in of fresh air, and decide that this is exactly what I need. So I started jogging off into the woods to relieve myself of some s\*\*\*\*I frustration.

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I've been running for about forty five minutes now and I realize I am completely lost. I thought I was following a trail but clearly I went off track at some point. I'm not worried because I am a wolf and I love the woods. So I try to communicate with Amber but she's still not reachable. I slow down to walk a bit and take a look at my surroundings. If I could just find some sort of landmark, or listen for some sort of sound like running water or traffic or something.

I didn't bring anything with me so I can't keep track of the time. Although I don't have to pick up Liam and Layla until much later today so that doesn't concern me.

I start to backtrack hoping that I am going back in the right direction. After a few hours I stop. Great one Aleksa. Lost in the middle of nowhere, with no wolf to rely on. My stomach starts to growl and I wish that I had some breakfast before I left, or even a drink of water.

I decide that I will keep walking straight until I find the river or the road, or something resembling the right direction.

After some time passes, I get the feeling I am not alone. I can't hear anything but I can sense company is near.

I start regretting this bright idea I had to go for a run in the woods without my wolf. I hear a twig snap and I look behind me. I can smell them before I see them. Rogues. There appears to be two of them. They start to snarl at me. They both look pretty mangey, and they smell terrible like rotten meat. I would imagine it has been a while since they last showered. I am fighting the urge to vomit right now. My gag reflex is going strong. They slowly start to stalk towards me, both coming towards me, one from the right and one from the left.

I start to panic and try to wake Amber up, "Come on girl I could really use your help right now, we need to shift. Amber!!! Please! Rogues! I need to shift." I yell at her desperately in my head.

"What's a pretty she wolf doing out here all on her lonesome?" The brown one with white stripes all around its torso says to me.

"Looking for some fun, shewolf?" The other rogue says licking it's licks and smirking at me, it is also brown, with red stripes over it's back and belly.

"Uh, no thank you. I was just on my way back to.. My pack." I say.

"Liar. You have no pack. You don't smell like a rogue." he sniffs the air near me. "You smell so sweet, and I can sense that you are ranked, but you don't smell like a pack wolf". The brown and white coloured rogue says matter of factly.

"That's right so you better back off – NOW!" I say. Hoping that will make them think twice, but deep down inside knowing that it won't. I am well aware that I am outnumbered and out wolfed.

"Hahaha. Nice try, she wolf. You are weak. Your wolf is not with you right now!" the brown and white rogue says with a sinister smile on it's face.

I take a defensive stance, as I am well aware that these rogues want more than a chat from me, and I am resigned to the fact that I will have to defend myself in human form.

I only wish I was trained to defend myself. I never got a chance to train at Evergreen because I had gotten pregnant straight away and then I was

constantly weak from the pain of Lachlan cheating. I had done a few self defense classes back in the human town I grew up in before meeting Lachlan but that was about it. Moon goddess please protect me! I prayed silently.

The brown and white coloured rogue lunged towards me, and I was able to move out of his way just in time, only to be pounced on by the brown and red striped rogue. He furiously bit into the side of my waist, taking a chunk of skin out of my side. I could feel the excruciating, stabbing pain take over my body. "Aahhhhh!" I screamed in pain and shock. I could smell the overwhelming metallic odor of my blood oozing out of me.

At that moment, the brown and white striped rogue got back up on it's feet, and plunged towards me as I stood up. He knocked me hard onto the ground. I tried to push him off me but he had me pinned to the ground, and I was feeling weak from the bite on my waist. He started to snap at my neck, going for my jugular. I felt an unimaginable fear inside me at that moment. Was this it? Is this how I would die? No f#\$%ing way! I will fight to my last breath for my pups, I tell myself.

I punched the rogue in the throat as hard as I could, and used all my strength to push the rogue to the side, it started to choke, and took a moment to get it's breath back then got ready to charge me again. The other rogue was circling me with a feral and satisfied look on it's face.

I clutched at my side trying to place pressure on my wound. I could feel that I was losing too much blood. I started to feel dizzy. I could see the rogues smirking and mumbling something. I saw the red and white one lunge towards me, and just as it was opening its mouth to snap its teeth at my neck, I started to fall to the ground, and all I saw was darkness.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I woke up to the sound of machines beeping. I took a few deep breaths and I could smell bleach mixed with antiseptic. Where am I, I asked myself. I tried to open my eyes and everything felt so bright. And I felt so tired, so I gave up and faded back into sleep.

I could hear a faint voice calling out my name, multiple times. Then I smelt the faint scent of fresh pine, it was my favourite scent, as the forest was my favourite place. I started to open my eyes again and this time even though it was overwhelmingly bright, I succeeded in fully opening them.

I felt slight tingles on my hand, It must be static electricity from the bed and the machines I thought. Then I looked down. It was Kingston. He was holding my hand, sitting beside me, looking at me with what looked like relief on his face. I tried to speak but my mouth was so dry, I managed to croak out "water".

Kingston obliged and helped me with some water in a cup and a straw. I took a few sips initially, then I greedily took more. The thirst within me was intense. I felt like I hadn't had any water in days.

I tried again to speak, this time I was successful, although I had to cough in between words.

"Where am I?" I manage to say in between coughs, looking around confused. As I tried to sit up a bit, I was engulfed with pain, a stabbing pain at my waist. I grabbed it with my hand and I could feel a large dressing. I looked back up at Kingston.

"The rogues? But how did I get here?" I asked.

"I can explain, don't panic, you are safe Aleksa". Kingston reassures me. He then proceeds to tell me how I got here.

"I was out for a run in the woods, when I smelt rogues, I could sense danger, so I kept running until I saw you." Kingston tells me.

"You were bleeding profusely, and the rogues appeared to be going in for the k\*\*l, so I took them both out, and then I rushed you here." He tells me, with anger starting to radiate from his aura.

I look at him, I'm overcome with emotion, I feel so grateful to him, if he hadn't been out there, I would be dead. "Thank you, I don't know how I can ever repay you for this." I say to him with a sincere look upon my face.

Then I realize I am here, but my pups are not, "Oh my goddess, Liam and Layla! Daycare! I was supposed to pick them up. I've got to go!" I say as I try to pull myself up in a hurry leading to my stitches bursting. I feel the blood start to rush out of my wound, the metallic smell overwhelming my senses. What on earth? I think to myself. I am a werewolf. Why have I not healed?

Kingston panics and calls the doctors in to tend to my wound, he holds pressure on it, until they arrive, then they start stitching my wound up again.

“You need to be more careful Aleksa, your wolf is not with you right now, your healing will be that of a human’s healing right now”. He tells me.

He then goes on to tell me a healer came in earlier and said that my wolf was away, but would be back, that she just needed some time to heal.

“Liam and Layla, are here, at Rocky Mountain. So are Mason and Kaia, you have all been granted an exemption, you are here as my guests. They will be in shortly. I have mindlinked my Beta Asher to inform them that you are awake.” He says.

I sigh in relief. I am glad that my pups are close by and that I will get to see them. But I have so many questions. I look up at Kingston and I start to ask him “How long have I been out?”.

To which he replied, “Three days. You have been in a coma for the past three days.” He says with a sadness exuding from him.

I am shocked “Three days? How can that be? Why did I sleep so long?” I ask, starting to panic that I have worried my pups and friends for the past three days.

“Your wolf wasn’t with you to speed up the healing process, and your injuries were critical. But you’re awake now and your body is slowly repairing itself” Kingston exclaims.

Kingston looks at me as though there is something on his mind. “Tell me, Aleksa, what were you doing in that part of the forest alone at that time of day?”.

I look at him perplexed. “I was going for a run, I got lost, then I came across the rogues”. Remembering my encounter with them.

“You really shouldn’t be so careless in future, that part of the territory isn’t often utilized by our pack, although it is our territory we generally keep away from it. It borders on the forsaken territory.” He warns me.

“When you are recovered, we can show you the territorial boundaries, and explain it all a bit more. For now, I would advise you to keep to the main track or even the main road, if you are running in human form” he then pauses, looks at me and continues, “There is something I need to discuss with you but it can wait until you are out of hospital.” Kingston says.

At that moment, the door bursts open and Mason and Kaia walk in with two very energetic and happy children “Mommy!” They call to me in sync. “Mommy, we missed you! They tell me. They are about to jump on me when they are pulled back by Mason and Kaia.

“Slow down there pups, we don’t want to hurt mommy now do we?” Kaia says to Liam and Layla.

They just look at me wide eyed. “Mommy is so happy to see you both. I have missed you so much while I was sleeping.” I tell them with tears ready to fall from my eyes.

We all chat for a while, and Kingston stays sitting next to me the whole time. I find it strange that he seems so protective of me, but at the same time, I really don’t want him to leave. Something about his scent keeps me calm and makes me feel safe. Two things I haven’t felt in a long time.

After about half an hour I am struggling to keep my eyes open. Mason and Kingston start to notice, and suggest it might be time for everyone to leave so that I can get some sleep. We all say goodbyes and I am able to hug my pups goodbye gently. I thank Mason and Kaia for looking after them and promise I will be out tomorrow, to which Kingston looks at me doubtfully.

They all leave, but Kingston doesn’t. “Are you not going to leave as well?” I ask him, struggling to fight against my heavy eyes. “I will wait for you to fall asleep, then I will leave to attend to some pack matters, close your eyes Aleksa, get some sleep” he says.

Then I lose my fight to stay awake and drift off to sleep.

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I had been in hospital for a total of five days now, and the medical team were satisfied that I was medically stable, and I was able to leave this morning. To say I was excited was an understatement. I couldn’t wait to get out of here, don’t get me wrong it was a state of the art hospital, everything was so bright and white and clean, it was a simple room with a bed in the middle of the room connected with monitors and equipment, and a panel above the bed with oxygen and suction and various other switches and medical supplies. Beside me was a small bedside table with a jug of water and cup on it. To the left of me there was a door leading to an ensuite bathroom with a walk in

shower and a gorgeous sink and vanity with a large mirror. It was well stocked with environmentally friendly sustainable products.

Everyone here was so professional, from the Nurses and Doctors to the healthcare assistants and kitchen staff that brought me my meals.

The food was first class. I don't think I have ever eaten so well. I mean I have always cooked healthy and tasty meals, it's just you notice it more when someone else is cooking for you and you are on the receiving end.

However, that all said. I missed my pups greatly, I had never been separated from them like this before, with the exception being when Lachlan threw me into the dungeon at Evergreen.

I was also worried that I had missed too many shifts at work, but being that Kingston owned the Tavern, he said he had told Sierra that I would be off for a week or so, so there was no pressure there, but I still felt guilty letting my new team down, especially since I had just recently started.

I just wanted to get back to my new life, which had barely just started. I had told myself that this was just a temporary setback and I wouldn't let it hold me back.

One thing I would definitely miss about being here was the daily visits from Kingston. I could look at his face all day. I felt butterflies just thinking about him. Drool.

I walked to the bathroom to have a quick shower. Mason would be in shortly as he was picking me up to take me back to the old log cabin.

When I walked out of the shower Kingston was waiting at my bedside for me. I was standing at the ensuite door with nothing but a towel on. I stood there shocked. I was not expecting anyone else to be in the room, or I would have changed in the bathroom.

I stood there with my mouth wide open, looking at Kingston, feeling uber anxious that he was seeing me this way.

He was sitting there with a smirk on his face, something flashing in his eyes, amber flecks, his wolf surfacing perhaps.

“I’m sorry I didn’t realize anyone else was in here, I’ll just grab my clothes and change, I won’t be long” I say picking the outfit that had been left for me the other day up off my bed and darting for the bathroom.

Nice one Aleksa, I scold myself. My heart racing and my body responding to the gorgeous wolf sitting only meters away from where I was getting changed.

I quickly throw my black halter neck dress on and my black crossover sandals on and brush my hair in front of the mirror.

Once I feel I look acceptable I walk out of the bathroom to greet Kingston.

“Aleksa, you look beautiful, please sit, there is something I would like to discuss with you” Kingston says sitting on the chair next to my hospital bed, with what looks like I\*\*t in his eyes, trailing my every move.

## **Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 12**

\*Aleska POV\*

Mason stares into the rear view mirror looking at the car behind us that has been following us for many miles now. “I could be overreacting. We aren’t necessarily being followed, but we can’t take any chances”, Mason tells us. “Just keep looking ahead, act normal, and let’s hope for the best”, Mason says calmly.

He keeps driving the car at the same pace. We don’t want to make it obvious that we know we are being followed. It is possible that it is a harmless passerby, but we need to assume that it is someone from the pack following closely behind us.

Mason tells us we are less than thirty minutes away from the boundaries of the city, and that once we get within the city limits he will try to lose whoever is following us. Assuming it is someone following us.

After some time, as we are driving around the city, the car that was originally behind us is nowhere in sight, although we don’t let our guards down like we did before. Mason pulls into the airport. It’s not a large airport, rather a small one, but it has what we need; a plane.



Once we get through the security checkpoint, we start boarding the plane. I have booked all of us front row seats so at least we can get off the plane quickly if we need to.

Time goes by pretty quickly, being that it's only a two and a half hour flight to Iowa. The flight attendants kindly provided us with some snacks for Liam and Layla, as well as some milk for their bottles. They even refilled them for us for when we depart the plane.

We are all pretty exhausted but we can't sleep. Mason has had a few power naps but he too appears to be on edge. I assume it will be like this for some time yet. The twins have been awake the whole flight, but that suits me fine, it just means they will sleep later, which will be helpful.

We haven't noticed anything suspicious on the flight, no one seems to be taking any undue interest in us, but we will still need to be smart about our next moves.

Before long, we are departing the plane. We now have no transport, but it's okay because there are plenty of car rental stands at this airport. We make our way to one of them and start the process of renting a car.

As much as I wish we could just jump on another plane, we need to make sure no one is following us, so that once we reach our destination safely, and in this case it means that we will have to drive the remainder of the journey.

In no time, we are all in our chosen car. It's a Jeep Grand Cherokee, with plenty of space for us all, so at least we will have a bit of comfort, being that we have a lot of driving ahead of us.

Mason starts driving, but agrees to let us take turns this time around. We are all exhausted, and in the event that we need to fight, we need to have some rest.

It was almost twenty-four hours since we escaped, so I realized that the potion that hides our scent would start to wear off soon. Luckily, we have a small supply in our backpack, so we all take another mouthful each.

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After just over ten hours of driving, we made it to Denver, Colorado. As we drive interstate, we are taken aback by the beautiful scenery. As we drive

down the peak to peak highway we are greeted by the lush aspen trees mixed with some evergreens. Being that it is winter here, the mountains in the distance are snow-capped, creating a view of perfection. We are now officially entering the Rocky Mountain National Park area. I had picked this as our destination because it was so serene and picturesque, as well as being approximately 1600 miles away from the Evergreen pack. It is one of the largest national parks in the country, as well as being the most elevated national parks, consisting of mountains and alpine lakes, from wooded forest to mountain tundra. It really has it all.

While we don't know much about the packs that reside here, we will do our research before we wander too far. We are hoping to link up with a pack, although we are happy enough to just live here as humans for now.

While the twins slept, I managed to find a quaint log cabin in Estes Park through the book a bach app. We started to pull off onto the gravel road that would lead us to the log cabin. It was definitely off the beaten track and after half an hour of driving we finally reached our destination.

"Wow! Kaia yells. "This place is amazing!" she says, looking very impressed.

"Oh, my! It truly is perfection!" I added, with a stunned look on my face, as I pushed open my car door.

We all got out of the car slowly and stretched our bodies, after what felt like the longest car drive ever.

I take in a whiff of the crisp clean mountain air. "It feels so fresh out here" I say to the others.

I realize we came from a forested area, but this fresh alpine air is something else.

I looked up at the cabin that we would be staying in and started walking towards it. The host said that the keys would be under the old shoe located next to the front door. I bend down and lift up the old boot, and sure enough the keys are there.

We will be staying in a historic mountain house log cabin situated on the banks of the Fall River. It has a large deck that overlooks the river and lush forest. There is an outside jacuzzi on the deck. A huge fireplace greets us as we open the front door. It has a very rustic vibe about it, but at the same time,

it feels very homely. This seems like a nice place to base ourselves while we figure out what we will do next.

It's nestled in a forest, and accessible by a gravel road. It is off the beaten track and, most importantly, it is private. This will be so good for our wolves. It means we will have privacy to shift freely, without having to worry about humans being so close by.

I started to take the twins out of their carseats. They are awake and full of energy. After our mammoth journey, it's time for them to have a well deserved run around. It will also be a good chance to explore our new surroundings.

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I'm lying in the hammock, on the deck of our new accommodation. It is late at night and the forest is covered in darkness. I can hear owls howling, and I hear shuffling in the woods, probably hedgehogs and other nocturnal creatures. I was not worried, I could sense if there was another shifter or person nearby and I couldn't detect anyone else. It's just me and the moon, and my thoughts right now.

I take a moment to think about what we have left behind. For me, other than the other pack members, who I loved like family. I only really miss Caleb and Kali. I pray that they have made it safe to the Crimson Moon pack. I can no longer mindlink them as we are so far away from each other. I hope I hear from them soon. Assuming Caleb took down the number of the phone he gave us, perhaps they might call us when they arrive at their new pack.

Surprisingly, I can't feel anything through the mate bond. Not even the pain I have been subjected to for the past few years. I'm not sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing. Even though I rejected Lachlan, he didn't accept it, so unfortunately our bond remains. I should have renounced the pack when we crossed the border but we were in such a hurry. It was a fight or flight situation, and well, I took the flight option. I just wanted to get my pups to safety.

Hopefully, when we find a pack to align ourselves with and when we bind ourselves with the new pack, our ties to Evergreen will break, and I'm hoping that will help sever the mate bond between Lachlan and I more.

Mason has been researching packs in our immediate area and there is only one pack nearby. It's the largest pack on this side of the country. It's called the

Rocky Mountain pack. It appears that the Alpha has just stepped down and his son has taken over as the current Alpha. Not much is known about this pack as they appear to keep to themselves. Although we do know that they have such a large land territory and are a wealthy pack, and are well respected and feared nationwide.

Mason is trying to get in touch with some shifter acquaintances he has here in Denver. I'm not sure how he knows shifters here, but I feel that he would tell us when he was ready to share, if he ever was.

We decided tonight before we went to bed that Kaia and I would stay home tomorrow with the twins and set the place up as well as put some security measures in place, and Mason would go for a drive and see if he could link up with some other shifters. Technically, we no longer belonged to a pack when we left our territories, so we are all now considered rogues.

We are unsure what this pack's feelings were in regards to rogues, but we knew that generally rogues were frowned upon. More often than not, they were hunted, imprisoned and killed. So, for now, we will stay in human territory.

I rub my eyes and pull the cozy blanket next to me over my body. I will just close my eyes for a minute, I think to myself. Before I know it, I am drifting off into darkness.

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I woke up to the sun shining brightly, causing me to grimace and pull the blanket further over my face.

"Oh my goddess!" I yelled out loud. "I slept here!" I must have been so tired that I just fell asleep here. "Liam and Layla!" I yelled as I slapped myself on one cheek. I turned to stand and the door opened before me.

"Mommy!" Liam and Layla both squealed in excitement. They ran up to me and hugged my legs. I looked at Kaia who is smiling with a coffee in her hands.

"Good morning Aleksa, someone was tired last night, huh?" she grins, handing me a coffee.

“Here, take this. We have a big day ahead of us. Oh and don’t worry, the twins have had breakfast.” Kaia tells me. Pointing to Mason standing by the stove in an apron, flipping pancakes.

“We found ingredients for pancakes in the cupboards, so I made some. There’s plenty, dig in!”, Mason tells me.

“Oh my goddess, Mason, Kaia, I don’t know what we would do without you. Thank you so much – for everything! We are so blessed to have you in our lives!” I said, fighting back the tears of joy and gratefulness.

“I don’t know how I fell asleep outside. I just went out to get some fresh air last night and, well, that’s the most sleep I’ve had in months!” I said in a state of astonishment.

“No problem, Aleksa, it was my pleasure” Mason said with a smile on his face.

At that moment, we heard a knock on the door. Our faces drop in shock. We all looked at each other in fear. There are no houses for miles. Who on earth could be knocking at our door? Kaia and I quickly and quietly grab the twins and silence them with our hands. Slowly creeping down the hallway. Mason takes off his apron and walks slowly towards the door.

\*Aleksa POV\*

Kaia and I creep down the hallway with the twins, not knowing what to expect, and wondering who could be knocking on the door. Have they found us? We hadn’t noticed anyone following us. We had been so careful to cover up our tracks. We had taken the scent hiding potion from Aunt Meadow. We look at each other knowingly and slowly pat the twins on their backs, trying to quietly shush them. Thank goodness they had been up for a while and had full tummies so they were starting to look sleepy.

We listened quietly as we heard voices from down the hallway. Luckily, being werewolves, we had heightened hearing.

“Hello?” Mason said as he opened the door.

“Good Morning, My name is Asher, I’m the head ranger for this side of the Rocky Mountain National Park. I was in the area and I noticed your car. We don’t usually get guests out this way, so I thought I would pop in and say hi,

see who was here, give you a friendly welcome". Asher said in a cherry disposition.

"Oh, hey, yeah we are new to the area, we were planning on staying here for a bit while we found a place to settle", Mason says.

"We? Your family is with you, I presume", Asher says inquisitively.

"Ah yes, well, my two sisters and their children, that is," Mason shifts uncomfortably.

Kaia and I look at each other and decide to go out and say hello, as Mason seemed to be faltering a bit.

As we move down the hallway, we can't see the mystery visitor, all we can see is Mason's back.

As I was walking towards the door I was taken aback by the rugged good looks of the man known as Asher at the front door.

He has very short shaved hair, and is wearing a cream coloured cowboy hat, he is wearing a tight white singlet, with worn-looking blue denim jeans, his muscular arms stand out as they are practically bulging out, and he has the cutest smile. I looked at Kaia, who clearly approves, and I give her a look as if to say mind the drool.

"Well, good morning ladies," Asher said, as he tipped his hat towards us.

"Good morning" we both said at the exact same time, smiling at our guest.

"Asher here is the local park ranger, and says they don't usually get guests here, so he was just wanting to pop in and introduce himself and make sure we were settling in", Mason said to us.

"That's very kind of you Asher," I said. "We just got here. So we are still trying to settle in. We appreciate you coming in to say hello". I say, meaning every word.

Asher's aura radiates kindness, and I don't perceive him to be a threat at this stage. He is most definitely a werewolf though. Luckily he can't scent us. I realize then that we must be near pack lands. We will have to look into this further, I thought to myself.

“Where are y’all from?” Asher says.

We looked at each other and froze. We weren’t prepared for this question. And none of us can mindlink, so I quickly blurt out “the east coast”. “We’re from the east coast”.

“Oh, nice. And these two are...?” He questions, pointing to the twins.

“This here is Liam, and that is Layla”. I said with a smile on my face. “They are my babies”. I say before Asher has a chance to ask.

“They’re so cute!” Asher says. “Where is their father?” He asks.

I looked at Asher. It’s only natural to ask this question, I thought to myself, but this man, as polite as he is, asked too many questions.

“He passed away” I said. Looking down at the floor. I felt bad about lying, but what was I supposed to tell him? Oh, his dad is the werewolf and alpha of the pack that we escaped from. I took his children from him, and now they are probably chasing us right now as we speak. No, for now I had to lie to protect my babies and to protect myself and my friends.

Asher looked at me and his brows furrowed for a moment. Then he raised his eyebrows and smiled, “Well, If you need anything at all, don’t hesitate to contact me, here’s my card”. He says and he passes Mason his business card.

Then he tipped his hat toward us and says “it sure was a pleasure meeting you all” and walked off into the forest.

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After that unexpected visit from Asher, we decided to start settling in and get a better idea of our surroundings. Mason jumped into the car and took a drive into town to talk to some locals and get a feel for the area. I put Liam and Layla down to sleep in the double bed in the back room, as we didn’t have cots and they couldn’t sleep in their carseats.

Kaia and I started writing down any weak points, or things we needed to address, and we started formulating a potential escape plan. We hoped we would never have to initiate it, but we needed to be prepared.

Once we were happy with what we had come up with, we sat down for a coffee.

“How about Asher? He’s all sort of scrumptious, isn’t he!” Kaia giggled.

“Yes, well, he was definitely easy on the eyes, that’s for sure!” I agreed.

“I wonder how Mason is getting on,” Kaia said, looking at the clock.

He had been gone quite a few hours now. I went up the hallway to check on the twins. They were still fast asleep. They had been through so much over the past few days, so I wasn’t surprised they were sleeping a little longer.

When I walked down the hallway, I heard a knock at the door, and Mason called out. Kaia got up to let him in.

“So how did it go?” I asked, and we both looked at him apprehensively.

“Well, the good news is that I managed to get some work, which should help us with food and rent,” Mason said with a half smile on his face.

“Why do I get the feeling there is bad news?” I asked with great trepidation.

“Well, I haven’t decided if it is bad news or not. Basically, the general population here consists of werewolves. There are some humans, but not many.” Mason drops the bombshell.

“What? Are you serious? I thought this would be a human town. How do I get it so wrong? Could anyone tell? Did they know you too were a werewolf?” I asked, still trying to pick my jaw up off the ground.

“I don’t think so. They couldn’t scent me. Thanks to Aunt Meadow’s potion. They will figure it out soon enough though, if they don’t already suspect it.” Mason reminds us.

“Okay, well we have a few more days up our sleeves, all going well. What we need to find out is if this pack will give us a chance, especially with us being rogues,” Kaia says.

“We still haven’t heard from Caleb and Kali. I’m starting to worry about them. I hope they are safe” I said, looking at Mason and Kaia.

“Maybe we could try calling them?” Mason remarks.



“Okay, let’s do it!” I added excitedly.

Mason passed the phone to me. Caleb had saved his name on speed dial. I pushed the button and the phone started ringing. Some time went by and then I heard a voice at the other end.

\*Aleksa POV\*

“Caleb? Is that you?” I ask, almost holding a breath in anticipation to hear his voice.

“Yes, Luna, it’s me. Are you okay? Are you safe?” Caleb asks.

“Yes, we are all safe and well thank you. How are you and Kali? Are you safe?” I ask in a panicked tone.

“We are now. We have encountered a bit of trouble, but nothing we couldn’t handle.” Caleb says in a reassuring tone.

Although I am now wondering what trouble they encountered, and if they aren’t trying to keep me calm.

“What kind of trouble Caleb? Did you make it to Crimson Moon?” I start firing questions away at Caleb.

“Not quite Luna. We have to keep moving. But don’t worry about us, we will be fine. You need to keep hidden. Lachlan has most of the warriors looking for you, as well as others from nearby packs.” Caleb says to me in an almost pleading tone.

“Luna, Lachlan has told everyone that Mason and Kaia have kidnapped you and the twins. None of you are safe. So please lay low. I’ll call you when we are in a better place. Kali sends her love. Talk soon” Caleb says, and with that the line goes dead.

I look up at Mason and Kaia who are shaking their heads inquisitively, wondering what was said.

“Well, are they okay? What just happened?” Mason asks.

“Something is wrong, he couldn’t talk. They haven’t made it to Crimson Moon yet, it seems they are still on the run, and there’s more...” I say pausing.

“Caleb said that Lachlan has a lot of people out searching for us, and he has told everyone that you both kidnapped the twins and I.” I say biting down on my lips and furrowing my brows.

“Oh, well that makes things a bit more complicated then doesn’t it.” Mason says.

“Not to worry, we just won’t let them find us. And, if they do, we just tell them otherwise.” Kaia adds.

“I didn’t think he would just stop, I knew he would keep coming. Maybe I should continue on with the twins? I don’t want you two putting yourself in further danger for me and the twins” I say adamantly to Mason and Kaia.

“Don’t even think about it, You and Liam and Layla are like family to us, and family sticks together”. Kaia says.

“Absolutely! We will face this together. I’m not letting that prick anywhere near you, or the twins.” Mason adds.

“You guys are amazing! What would I do without you?” I say to them, as I turn to walk down the hallway. I can hear the twins giggling in the back room.

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\*Asher POV\*

I was running through the woods as I usually do, every morning. But something felt different this morning. As I reached the end of the forest edge, nearing the old cabin, that has been in our families for generations now, I noticed there was a large jeep parked outside.

As far as I knew no one should be there. We never used that cabin, it was a bit rundown, sure it had rustic charm but we really had no use for it. One of our pack members had suggested we put it on the book a bach app, then at least it would be in use and maintained. But no one had actually tried to book it as of yet, not when there was five star accommodation further down the road.

We didn’t need the money by any means but Grandpa would have been happy knowing that someone would be using it. It signified our once humble

beginnings. Everything started here from this small log cabin, on the edge of the Falls River in the national park territory.

My name is Asher. I am twenty eight years old, I am a decent height at 6"2, with short shaved sandy blonde hair, and blue eyes. I spend most of my time outdoors, and work out a lot so I have a solid tan and fairly decent physique. I am the Beta of the Rocky Mountain Pack. I serve the pack alongside my best friend Kingston, who is the Alpha of our pack.

Running in a southbound direction, in my wolf form, I took a whiff of the air nearby, I couldn't pick up any new scents. Although, I could still sense there were people inside, not to mention that the Jeep was a giveaway. I ran back to the pack house and took a quick shower.

I had decided that I would take a shower, get changed, and then investigate further. If someone was staying there, I needed to check them out. Then once I have more information I would inform the Alpha.

After my shower I was just starting to head down stairs when I saw Kai, "Hey Kai, are you aware of anyone staying at the old log cabin on Falls River?" I asked. If anyone would know it would be him. Nothing goes past him in this pack. Kai is the Gamma of this pack, he is also in charge of all of our real estate, land and holdings.

"Yeah, come to think of it, I do recall seeing a booking for the old log cabin near Falls River in my emails, to be honest I haven't checked it out yet though." Kai replies.

"No worries man, I might pass by and check the place out, see who's staying there and why" I inform him.

"Yeah man, sounds like a plan, I'll catch ya later" he says as he jogs off, probably to training, as most of the wolves of this pack will be about to start training at this time of the morning.

About twenty minutes later I'm walking up to the old log cabin, I knock on the door. I am greeted by a pretty impressively sized male. I can't detect any scents so I would say he was human, but there's something about him that isn't quite right.

We start talking when two of the most beautiful women I have seen in a long time walk towards me. One of them stands out to me more than the other,

there's just something about her. She has the most beautiful face and the most piercing eyes I have ever seen. She looks so sexy, and she's just wearing a short black leather skirt, a black low scoop tight fitting top, with a patent leather fitted bomber type jacket, topped off with mustard yellow combat boots. She gives off this vibe that looks like it is effortless for her to look like such a beauty.

I am snapped back to the current conversation when I notice they are standing directly in front of me, staring at me, waiting for me to say something.

They are each carrying an infant, one a boy and one a girl.

We all start talking, and they are polite but I get the feeling they are hiding something. I can't scent any of them, but something is telling me that they are not human.

As we chat I ask them where the babies' father is, that's when the conversation seems to sour. Looks like I hit a sore spot I think to myself.

There is more to them than meets the eye, and I feel as though they are hiding something, but they are starting to get a bit guarded, so I stop my subtle interrogation.

I say my goodbyes and leave the old log cabin. For some reason my wolf and I are happy that they will be staying for a while, but we are concerned and wondering what it is that they are hiding.

I walk into the woods and when I am sure that I am out of sight I shift into my wolf and take off towards the pack house.

I shift as I approach the steps leading into the pack house. I head up the internal staircase and make my way to the alpha's office.

I knock on the door, there is no answer. That's strange I think to myself. The alpha is usually in his office this time of day. I push the door open. He is on the phone and he does not look impressed.

"Like I said before, we have not encountered any wolves or otherwise matching those descriptions. And yes, feel free to send me through the details. Yes. Okay. Alright. No problems. Okay goodbye."

And with that Kingston slammed the receiver down on the desk.

“That looked a bit heated, everything alright Kingston?” I asked my friend.

“That was a pack on the East Coast, their Luna and her pups have been kidnapped by two rogues, and they have no leads, so they are reaching out to all the packs in the country.” Kingston tells me.

“Oh really, did he give out any names?” I ask curiously.

“No, I didn’t ask, but they are gonna email some photos and information shortly” Kingston said.

“That’s heavy,” I said to my friend.

“So did you want something Asher? I’m kinda under the pump this morning. I’m trying to get everything in order for the Royal Pack Summit later this year.

“Oh it’s nothing important. We just have some guests at the old log cabin by Falls River. I went in and introduced myself to them early today. Just wanted to see who was there. They seem friendly enough, although I think I will keep an eye on them for now” I say to Kingston.

“Fair enough, I trust your judgment, send me a report later when you have the time, I would like to know who is staying there also.” Kingston says as he stares at his computer.

“Okay, I will send one through later, see you at lunch” I say to Kingston. I need to get on with my day, my workload is pretty heavy too.

I start to walk to my office and my mind drifts to the girl that I met earlier this morning. That’s when I realized I got so distracted I didn’t even ask their names. Nice one Asher. I think to myself. And I call myself a Beta. Oh well I will just have to go back and visit again real soon.

\*Aleksa POV\*

We have been here at the old log cabin in Falls River for about three weeks now. Mason has recently started working at a local club as a security guard. He works from Wednesday to Sunday, so that’s keeping him busy for now, and it means that we have some money coming in. Kaia had managed to get a job there also, which she seems to be enjoying. She works as a hostess, at the front entrance of the club. As luck would have it, they work the same

shifts, so they are carpooling. They told the club they were siblings and everyone seems to have bought it so far.

I enrolled Liam and Layla at one of the local daycares and they seem to be enjoying themselves. I am planning to look for some work, so that I can contribute and pay for mine and the twins' share of the bills and food. I was hoping to find some realtor work but I am starting to wonder if I should try something completely different, given that this is a fresh start for us. As much as I enjoyed my career in property, I am not the same person that I was a few months ago. So much has changed in my life since then.

I now feel so much stronger and more independent since leaving Evergreen and Lachlan. I want to leave as much of my old life behind as possible. I was always so serious and I put everyone before me, which was expected, as Luna and I didn't mind, but things have changed now. I am not a Luna, and there are only two little people that are reliant on me now, so there is less pressure on me. As much as I didn't realize back then, Lachlan controlled me and everything that I did. He knew my every step, and I was always wary of disappointing him or the pack. It took us leaving for me to realise the level of control he had over me.

I just want to do something a bit more carefree, something that doesn't hold a lot of responsibility, because that was my life for the past few years and I need a break from it.

That's it! I am going to do something well outside my comfort zone and apply at an inn or bar in town.

I didn't have a CV but I wasn't worried. I would just walk in, introduce myself and tell them I wanted to work there, and hopefully that would be enough.

I walked into the room that I shared with the twins and looked at my choices. Hmmn, not much to choose from, I thought to myself. Last week Kaia and I went to some thrift stores. We didn't have much money to spend so we needed to stretch it as far as possible. We wanted to get some clothes since we had left everything behind in our packs. I had a few new outfits that I had yet to wear. I looked at them and considered my options.

I had decided I would wear a cute little black dress with spaghetti straps, with a small slimming denim jacket, and some tan knee-high boots I managed to find for \$50. I looked at myself in the bathroom mirror, not bad, I said to

myself. I would wear my hair down, it looked tidy enough. I suddenly felt a surge of confidence. I can do this! I repeated to myself.

I jumped into the jeep and started to drive towards the town. We were about a forty-five minute drive from the township. I still had a few hours before I had to pick up the twins, so I had decided that I would use this time to look for a job. I felt bad that we had been relying on Mason and Kaia. I had hoped that I would have been able to take some money that I had saved from the packhouse, but I didn't anticipate being locked in the dungeon and having to escape, so I was very unprepared. We were just so grateful that our new friends, or more like family, had been there to help us.

There were actually a lot of bars in the local township, I thought as I drove down the main street. The nightlife must be popular here, I thought to myself.

I lived in a human town growing up. I was actually raised by humans. I was adopted by the people I knew as my parents. They have raised me since I was a baby. I had no idea who my actual birth parents were. According to my adopted parents, I was dropped off in a basket outside their church. They had told me this when I was in elementary school. They had wanted to be honest with me from the start, and I appreciated that.

I know this all sounds unbelievable, but it's true. There was a note attached to me that said "I'm sorry we couldn't protect you, we hope the person that finds you can do what we couldn't and a small locket was placed on it.

I still wear the locket now. It's an antique looking rose gold locket with what looks like rose vines decorating it front facing. There is no photo inside. There is a gem of some sort in the place where you will usually find a photo. It's actually a velvety blue colour, almost like a sapphire, it actually reminds me of my eye colour strangely enough.

I don't know why it means so much to me. But I guess I cling to it because it's the only piece of my birth parents that I have.

I have never tried to look for them. I would not even know where to start. Apparently, my adoptive parents tried. They tried so that I could have some closure as I got older. But they had no luck. They hired a private investigator and everything, but he had no leads.

I'm okay with it though. I'm not even mad at them. I imagine that they had no choice, judging by the note they wrote. Plus, my adoptive parents were so

loving and treated me like I was their own biological child. I have no regrets. I hope they (my birth parents) are okay wherever they are out there.

I felt comfortable living around humans, I guess because I was brought up to believe I was one for the majority of my life.

Most werewolves live in their packs and prefer to live away from humans. I get it. It's to protect our secrets and to be able to live our best lives without having to worry about prying eyes.

I didn't mind though. I was happy wherever I was.

When I met Lachlan and we mated, I moved straight away to the packhouse with him. It took a lot to get used to, learning the culture, the practices, the rules, their way of living. I had never even been to a pack house before, so I felt very intimidated by it initially.

I knew I was different growing up. I was always faster than most, I had heightened senses of smell, hearing and vision. I also had super fast healing abilities which both my parents and I both found strange, but they never questioned it. They just said I was blessed.

It wasn't until I turned eighteen that I shifted for the first time under the full moon. It was very drawn out and painful. I thought I was dying at the time. I had no idea that I was a werewolf.

I was alone that night. I was on my way home from a friend's house and I had cut through a forested area when my transition started.

After what felt like forever, I had shifted and I went for a run. I ended up stopping by a lake, the moonlight was reflecting on the water and it was then I saw my wolf form for the first time. I must have stared at myself for hours.

I almost had a full blown panic attack. After crying myself to sleep on the grass edge by the lake, I fell asleep. I had the strangest dream that night and I was visited by the most beautiful woman.

She had long golden blonde hair which flowed down past her hips, crystal blue eyes, and she was absolutely gorgeous. She wore a long white satin dress. She explained to me that I was a werewolf and that my parents had to make the ultimate sacrifice to save me. She said that I would meet my mate, after explaining what a mate was, and she told me to have faith, even if things



didn't turn out as I had hoped. She didn't elaborate on anything she was telling me, it all seemed very cryptic.

She told me her name was Selene. She had told me that when the time came, she would reveal herself to me again, and explain my purpose in life to me. She said I had so much more to learn. And to have faith that things will work out in the end. Then she just disappeared and I was blinded by a bright light.

I have always had strange dreams, but that one seemed to stick with me. I sometimes wonder if it was a dream or a premonition.

I snapped myself out of my thoughts and walked towards a bar that seemed to appeal to me. I took a deep breath as I walked to the door.

The security guard was very tall, tanned and very muscular. He was dressed in a smart black suit and wore an earpiece. He pulled the red rope across for me, smiled at me and let me pass.

I scanned my eyes across the room. Wow. I thought to myself. This place is a lot bigger and a lot fancier than I had imagined, based on how it looked from the outside.

From the outside, it almost resembles a ski cabin that you would find at a ski resort. Large timber logs notched at the ends and laid upon one another with the ends filled with plaster or mortar.

From the inside there was a deep rich red coloured carpet which almost resembled velvet. It had booths on the sides of the tavern, with circular tables forming the majority of the room. There were candlestick type chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. Directly facing me as I walked in was the bar. It was a very long wooden bartop. It was littered with beer taps and glasses of all varieties, as well as jugs of lemon water and crates of ice. It had a warm and welcoming vibe about it. It looked immaculate, no beer stains on the carpet or markings on the tables like in other bars.

I walked straight up to the bar and asked to speak with the manager.

"You're looking at her darling, what can I do for you?" the beautiful tall and lean girl with the long dark black hair and emerald green eyes said to me with a smirk on her face.

“Hi, my name is Aleksa, I am looking for a job, and wondered if you have any vacancies?” I said with a hopeful smile on my face.

“Hi Aleksa, I’m Sierra, well girl, you are in luck, one of my fulltime workers just resigned yesterday and I haven’t placed an ad yet. Can you start tonight, we are super short-staffed?” She asks, emphasising the super part.

“Ah, yes, that should be OK, but I just need to organize a sitter for my pu.. babies. Can I make a quick call? I asked hopefully.

“Sure hun, you can use the phone over there” Sierra says as she points to a phone on the wall near the cash register.

I called Kaia, who picked up straight away. “Is everything okay?” she asked worriedly.

“Hey Kaia, everything is fine, I think I have a job!” I said excitedly.

“That’s brilliant! Where?” Kaia asks.

“At a tavern, in town,” I said.

“That’s great Aleksa! We all have jobs now! I’m so excited for us!” Kaia says loudly.

“The thing is Kaia, they want me to start tonight, as someone has just left and they are super short-staffed” I say, not yet finished explaining myself before Kaia interrupts. “Of course, you don’t even have to ask. I will watch Liam and Layla. No problem! Hey, can you still pick us up from our day shift? Kaia asks.

“Of Course. I will be there shortly.” I said to Kaia.

I hung up the phone and made my way over to Sierra. “That’s fine. I’ve got a sitter sorted. I can start tonight. Ah, what time did you want me here? I ask Sierra.

“Seven o’clock hun. You will be working late with Accalia tonight. It will only be the two of you at the bar. The chef, Steve, will be out back making bar snacks, and Tony will be at the door. Unfortunately, tonight is one of our busier nights, and you girls will get slammed. Hey, I forgot to ask, have you ever worked at a bar before?” Sierra eyed me.

“Ah not technically, but how hard can it be right?” I said, flashing a big smile on my face. Hoping that Sierra doesn’t take her job offer back.

Sierra looks at me with a questionable look on her face, as if she is pondering her options. “Tell ya what. I’ll give you a trial run. I’ll stay on a bit later tonight to show you the basics. That should be enough to get you going. Most of it is talking to the punters and keeping them happy. A pretty thing like you should be able to manage that.” She says as she walks off.

“See you at seven -and Aleksa, don’t be late!” Sierra yells as she walks out to what I imagine is the kitchen.

I turned on my heels and exited the tavern. A surge of excitement goes through me. Oh my goddess. I did it. I got a job! I’m so optimistic as to what the future might hold.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I put on some cherry red lip gloss and rubbed my lips together, plumping my lips to give them that glossy full lip look. I took one last look in the mirror, said my little mantra to myself “you’ve got this girl” and walked into the lounge. I grabbed the keys off the table and said goodbye to Mason and Kaia, who were watching the late news on television.

I was feeling pumped and ready to start my first shift at the tavern. This would be the first day of the rest of my life, of our lives. This was for the twins as much as it was for me. Financial independence was part of our journey. I needed to be able to provide for them, to give them the life they deserved, I thought to myself.

I walked out the door and made my way towards the stairs. It was at that moment that I had the strangest feeling as I walked in complete darkness towards the car. It felt like I wasn’t alone. I don’t know if I was on guard because Lachlan was probably still looking for us, or if it was my heightened senses warning me that someone was close by.

I shrugged it off and sat in the driver’s seat. Here goes nothing, I thought to myself. I pulled out of the driveway and made my way down the gravel road. I had left extra early as I wanted to make a good impression.

I put the radio on and listened to some music; Cold Heart by Elton John and Dua Lipa. I love this song, I think to myself. I turn the volume up high. Dancing from my car seat while driving through the darkness.

In no time I arrived at work. Gosh, time goes fast when you are having fun. I miss cranking the music up and dancing around the house. I hadn't done that since before I met Lachlan. Life had gotten serious so fast. Anyway, no time to dwell on the past. I was walking into my future.

I walked up to the entrance, and looked at the security guard. "Hi, you must be Tony", I said in a loud voice, because the music was pumping in the tavern.

"I am, and who would you be?" He looked at me suspiciously.

"I am Aleksa, tonight is my first night. I'll be working at a bar. Sierra hired me today" I said enthusiastically.

"Welcome to the tavern Aleksa, please go inside." Tony said to me, pulling the red velvet rope across for me to pass.

I walked past Tony and stopped just before I entered. I take a moment to center myself. I hear that mantra in my mind once again. Then I pulled the door open and stepped into the tavern.

I am taken aback by how many people are currently here. The place is packed. The lights are dimmed. The music is cranking. There is even a dance floor in the far corner on the left-hand side of the bar.

Sierra wasn't joking when she said we would get slammed tonight. I feel fear overtake me. Can I do this? What was I thinking? I have no experience. As I start to delve into self-doubt, I am snapped out of my thoughts when a familiar voice speaks to me.

"Well hello again, uh I didn't catch your name last time we met?" the unknown voice says. I moved to stand in the light and then I recognized the person standing right in front of me. It's Asher, the park ranger we met the other day.

"Oh hi, it's nice to see you again, I'm Aleksa." I said politely.

"Nice to see you again Aleksa, hey uh, what was your friend's name? I forgot to ask the other day", He asks with a shy smile on his face.

“Oh, Kaia, her name is Kaia.” I said back to him.

“Kaia – nice,” he says deep in thought.

“Well, I better get moving, it’s my first shift and I don’t want to be late” I said to him.

“Yeah, sure,uh, good luck” Asher says, still preoccupied with his thoughts.

I pushed past him and walked up to the bar. I couldn’t see Sierra anywhere and the girl at the bar looked super busy, so I walked around to the back of the bar, thinking there would be an office somewhere out back where I might find Sierra.

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What a night. I thought to myself. I found Sierra in her office earlier and she gave me a crash course on the most popular drinks that are ordered at the tavern. Fortunately, it appears that most people prefer beer.

I managed to make it through the night without making any major mistakes and even started to learn a regular’s name or two.

The other girl working at the bar, Accalia, didn’t talk much, or even look at me most of the night, but I’m thinking that might possibly be her personality type.

She has that whole alternative vibe going with purple highlights on her black hair, she has pale white skin as if it were kissed by the moon. She has thick glossy lips. And her eyes, her eyes are so dark but captivating at the same time. I can’t actually make out their color. She was wearing black leather pants and a skin-tight leather vest, with chunky leather and studded bracelets on her wrists.

She looks like the kinda girl you don’t want to mess with. She’s great with the customers though. They all love her. I would imagine she has been here for quite some time.

I finished wiping the last table and looked up at the clock. It’s three am. Time went by so fast. My feet are aching, it’s been a while since I spent so long on my feet and I didn’t wear the most comfortable shoes, so I will be paying for that later today.

I said goodbye to everyone and walked towards the car. I rubbed my eyes as I turned on the engine and started to make my way back home.

It's so quiet at this time of the morning and there is no one else on the road. As I pulled into the gravel road that would lead me back to the old log cabin, I saw a black shadow go past the side window.

I rubbed my eyes again and slowed down a bit and glanced to my right side. I can't see anything or anyone so I guess my eyes are playing tricks on me since I am so tired. I am feeling a little weary though, so I push my foot down on the accelerator and drive home a bit faster.

When I got home, I saw that Mason and Kaia had left the porch light on for me, thankfully. As my mind is taking me to a strange place today. I feel anxious for some reason. As I turned off the engine, I started to walk at pace to the front door. As I pulled out my keys, I turned back and looked at the lake and then again at the forested area. Nope Aleksa, there's no one there. It's just your overactive imagination.

I opened the door and walked into the house and kicked off my boots that I wish I hadn't worn tonight. I locked the door and headed towards my bed with a smile on my face. I did it. I survived my first night at work.

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I woke up to the warm sun streaming in through the windows. I must have fallen straight into a deep sleep because I felt well rested. I looked up at the old alarm clock next to me. Uh oh. It's 10am. No wonder I feel well rested – I've overslept. I was supposed to have Liam and Layla at daycare already. I looked at the twins. They looked so peaceful. I didn't want to wake them just yet.

I bit down on my lip and sighed. Oh well. I might just make a sneaky coffee and enjoy a bit of peace and quiet before the twins wake up. I started to look for the phone so that I could call the daycare and let them know that the twins would be staying home today.

Once that was done, I put some water in the jug and waited for the water to boil. Coffee is what I need right now. I thought back to when I bumped into Asher last night. He seemed quite interested in Kaia. I must remember to tell her about that. He's very sweet and I think they would look so cute together. With what she has been through, she deserves a little fun.

The house was so quiet right now, with the twins still asleep and with Mason and Kaia at work already. It was nice of them to let me sleep in, I thought to myself. I'm glad they didn't wake me this morning, it will be nice to have a day to just enjoy Liam and Layla's company.

The jug had boiled and I was making my coffee when I heard a noise at the door. My heart started to race and my breathing quickened. A feeling of terror took over me. I heard a loud knock at the door. I just stood in the kitchen not moving, hoping the knocking would stop and whoever it was would think no one was home and go away.

I had nowhere to run. I would never be able to get out of here in time. The twins were still sleeping. I had to face up to this. Whoever it was. Whatever it was. I had to be brave. I could face whatever life threw at me. I wasn't the same Aleksa I was a couple of months ago, I told myself.

I took a deep breath and I slowly opened the door. And I was utterly shocked by the man who stood in front of me. What is it with this log cabin and gorgeous strangers appearing at our door? I just hoped this gorgeous specimen of a man had good intentions and wasn't one of Lachlan's lacheys.

"Good Morning, you must be Aleksa?" the handsome stranger said to me with a breathtaking smile.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I stood there in shock, wondering how this handsome stranger knew my name. I took a deep breath and I was immediately alarmed. He is a werewolf and, judging by the aura and scent he is exuding, one of power, I assume, probably an alpha. I take a moment to compose myself although I am overcome with fear.

So many questions are swirling around in my head at this moment. Has he been sent by Lachlan? Is he here to hurt me? Does he know we are rogues? Are we encroaching on his territory? What does he want from me? Is he here for my pups?

At that moment, the stranger in front of me starts to clear his throat, pulling me out of my own thoughts. He stands there with a questionable look on his face as if he is trying to figure me out. He must sense my fear, I thought to myself.

“I believe you have met my Beta Asher”, he says with a smirk on his face. I looked at him, with utter realization, smashing into me. He is the alpha. We must be on his territory.

“Uh, yes, uh, we don’t mean any harm. We didn’t come into your territory intentionally. We didn’t know. We can leave right away! Please, we don’t want any trouble.” I said, panicked in a pleading tone.

The penalty for rogues entering pack lands is generally death or imprisonment. I started to panic and hyperventilate, looking at the wolf in front of me with sheer desperation and fear. I must protect my pups, I think to myself.

Clearly sensing my fear and panic, the alpha in front of me raises his hand towards me. “It’s OK. Don’t panic. I’m not here to hurt you, I just want to have a chat with you. Would you invite me in?” he politely asks me.

I took a deep breath and tried to calm myself down. I opened the door further to allow him to walk past. He slowly walks past me and sits on the couch, placing his arms on the top and side of the couch, sitting with his back against the corner of the couch, and placing his right leg over his left, looking relaxed. I just stood there dumbfounded, wondering what was to come next.

“Please, Aleksa, take a seat. This is just a friendly chat. I just want to know why you are here, on my pack lands. You don’t smell like rogues, but here you are out here on your own. Please explain yourself.” He says to me with a serious look on his gorgeous face.

I slowly sit on a chair next to the couch, sitting towards the edge of the chair. And I think to myself, and wonder how much I should tell him. I decide to go with the light version of events, skimming past the fact that I am Luna of a pack, and that my fated mate is currently hunting me and my rogue friends down.

“Start at the beginning, Aleksa, tell me. Is that even your real name?” He asks suspiciously.

I cleared my throat. “Yes, Aleksa is my real name. I guess I will start at the beginning then. I met my mate about two years ago. Everything seemed perfect. We had pups pretty much as soon as we met, twins actually.

“How old are you?” He asks me, interrupting my story.



“I’m twenty years old” I said to him. Wondering why he would ask that question. But I continue on telling my story to him.

“Pretty much as soon as I got pregnant I started experiencing intense pain, daily. I would see the pack doctor often, and she would put it down to growing pregnancy pains, and even when they continued after the twins had arrived she put it down to a traumatic delivery and said they would eventually disappear.”

“Well they didn’t, it wasn’t until one day when I had to leave work early because I couldn’t bear the pain that I walked in on my beta- uh- best friend and my mate in our bed together.”

“Long story short, although I planned to escape with my babies, my plan was cut short and I was thrown in the dungeons, until I escaped with the help of some friends, and we made it here.”

“Please, we have no intention of causing any trouble, we didn’t even realize we were on pack land. We can leave today, please don’t harm us” I pleaded, tears falling down the sides of my face.

I can’t read his face. I don’t know what his plans are. I am praying for mercy from the moon goddess, if just this once, things could go our way.

He took a breath. “I am sorry you had to go through all that. I can’t imagine why a mate would betray their bond given to them from the moon goddess. That is sacrilege.”

“Where are your pups and your friends now?” He asks.

“My friends Mason and Kaia are at work at the moment. They got jobs at a club in town. Uh Headquarters.” I told him.

“And the twins, well, they’re safe, they’re sleeping right now” I said.

“How old are your pups, and what are their names?” He asked me.

“Liam and Layla, they are two years old.” I said, biting down on my bottom lip, wondering what he would do with this information.

“You aren’t technically on park land, you are on the outskirts. I will allow this for now. But we will be keeping an eye on you. We will need to verify that you are who you say you are.” He warned me.

“Which pack are you from?” He asked me. His eyes rested on my face.

I don’t know what to say. If I tell him which pack we are from, he might contact Lachlan. He would tell him something different to what I have, and we would be imprisoned again for Lachlan to find us. I can’t tell him.

“It’s okay. We will leave today. Please, we don’t want any trouble. We just want to be left to ourselves,” I said defiantly.

“You will tell me which pack you are from now!” He says in a loud alpha command.

I cannot refuse a command, so I proceeded to tell him “Evergreen Pack”, “We are from the Evergreen Pack on the East Coast”. I say sadly.

“Evergreen, you say. You are missing Luna, are you not?” He questions me with amber flecks sparkling in his eye.

I looked at him with a tear-stained face. I say nothing but my face deceives me.

“Alpha Lachlan said you were kidnapped by rogues. Tell me Aleksa, have you been kidnapped?” He asks me with a curious look on his face.

“No! No I haven’t. Mason and Kaia are my friends. They helped us escape. Please, Mason and Kaia have nothing to do with this. Please don’t punish them. This is all my fault!!” I pleaded with him to spare my friends.

“I believe you, but I think you had better explain things to me more truthfully this time, Aleksa, and don’t lie to me. I am not here to harm you. I want to help you.” He says in a soft tone, and for some reason I find that comfortable and I believe him.

We talk for some time. I fill him in on how I came to meet Mason and Kaia, as well as explaining how they came to be in the dungeons. I explained how we escaped and the events leading up to us arriving here. I explained how Lachlan treated me, and about his plans to make Eva his Luna, and me his

mistress. As well as his plans for our pups. He sat there and listened intently to my words.

Although I couldn't read him and had no idea what his train of thought might be, I also felt safe around him. I finished my story and sat there in silence waiting for him to respond.

Some time passed, as well as an awkward silence, and it felt like time was moving ever so slowly, then he spoke.

"I am sorry Aleksa. I am sorry that the moon goddess fated you with such a mate. Mates are supposed to be sacred, and if what you say is true then Lachlan has made a mockery of the sanctity of the mate bond. I will look into your account of events. If what you are saying is true then we will grant you the ability to live here on the pack border for now" He said to me.

"I will need to meet Mason and Kaia, as well as verifying their version of events". He proclaims.

"I understand. Do you want me to call them for you?" I ask him.

"There's no need for that. I will go into Headquarters and speak with them there." He says.

"But, they are working, and there are humans around, are you sure you want to do that?" I ask.

"I think it will be fine. Especially considering I own that bar. In fact I own almost the entire town." He says with a smirk on his face.

I look at him in shock. That means he probably owns the Tavern, where I work. That means that this isn't a human town afterall. We had really messed up here. Of all the places.

"It was nice meeting you Aleksa. I will be in touch." He says standing up from the couch.

"Uh, it was nice to meet you too, uh, I just realized that I don't actually know your name?" I say to him realizing that he never introduced himself.

"Kingston, it's Kingston." He says with a cheeky grin on his face.

Kingston, I think to myself, for some reason hearing his name makes my heart happy. I feel warm all over. It's at this point I realize I have been staring at his face a little longer than I should have. He just grins at me.

"Thank you Kingston, I appreciate you considering this. I promise we won't be a nuisance." I say to him gratefully.

He turns and walks off. I shut the door. Then not a minute later I hear little feet running down the hallway.

"Mommy! Mommy!" Liam and Layla yell at me happily. "Pancakes Mommy!" They yell in unison with great big smiles on their faces, as I pick them up for cuddles. I then place them on the bench top in front of the kitchen window so that they can help me make the pancake batter.

They position themselves front facing towards the window. "Wolf mama, wolf!" They yell, and we watch a huge black wolf run into the forest.

Kingston. I think to myself. His wolf is magnificent. His human seems to be quite alluring to. I scold myself for thinking of him that way in a time like this. I need to be practical and think clearly. I can't allow myself these thoughts. "But he's so gorgeous Aleksa!" I hear Amber say and giggle in my head.

I haven't heard anything from Amber since we were thrown in the dungeons. I wondered if she would ever speak to me again. "Ofcourse Aleksa, I am always here I just needed some time to heal. We can trust him Aleksa." Amber says. "How do you know that?" I ask Amber. "Trust me, Aleksa. All will be revealed in due time". She says to me cryptically.

\*Kingston POV\*

I am twenty eight years of age and I am the Alpha of the Rocky Mountain National Park Pack. We are the second largest pack in the country. I took over as Alpha from my father when I turned twenty two. I met my mate not long after becoming Alpha and we were happy for a while. Until she got sick. After a short battle with a terminal illness, she passed away. We didn't get the chance to have pups, we had planned to enjoy our time together for a while before settling down to have pups, unfortunately fate had other plans for us.

For the past few years I have managed to dodge the council's plans for me. There has been huge pressure from the werewolf council for me to take a chosen mate as the pack's Luna, but I have no inclination to.

My sister Quinn takes care of most of the luna duties for our pack, and my mother supports her with this for now. I realize she can't do this forever, as she is yet to meet her mate too. Although, I have a bit of time before I need to figure out what happens next. Quinn is a bit younger than me, she's only twenty two.

Usually, you meet your mate when you gain your wolf at around eighteen years of age. So Quinn is feeling the pressure of not having met her mate. She has faith that he is still out there though, so she's just biding her time until she finds him.

With no heir to take over as Alpha, I will most likely have to pass it down to my Beta or his offspring. Although, I have no plans of relinquishing my role as Alpha any time soon.

Being that we are such a large pack and that we have a well respected and feared reputation, we are for the most part a warrior pack. So we almost never have any trouble here, other than the occasional rogue.

But that doesn't mean we are complacent. Everyone in our pack is required to train from three years of age, regardless of gender. We pride ourselves in knowing that everyone can fight to defend themselves, especially our most vulnerable wolves.

Right now I am busy organizing the Annual Royal Pack Summit which is taking place here at Rocky Mountain in the summertime. It's a big deal, alpha's from all around the country come to pay their respects and allegiance to the Royal Werewolf family, as well as network, and party. Since we have been tasked with hosting this year, there is a lot to do to ensure it all goes smoothly.

I have a committee of volunteers that are organizing most of it, but there are a number of packs that aren't on good terms and it is my duty to ensure that no hostility presents itself. So I am ringing each and every pack in the country to personally welcome them and get an idea of what we are dealing with when the time comes. We need to be able to separate rival packs to avoid any disturbances, and ensure it all goes smoothly.

I am on the phone in my office making calls to packs on the East Coast, when my Beta Asher comes into my office. I rub my forehead and look up at him sighing. I put my hand up and point a finger at him to gesture that I will just be a minute, and I continue on with the phone call I'm on.

I'm currently speaking with the alpha of the Evergreen Pack. He's a real piece of work, this guy, he's giving me some convoluted story about his Luna and pups were kidnapped by rogues. Apparently he sent an email, but I've yet to receive it.

I tell him I haven't seen or heard anything that would be helpful to him, and give him my offer of assistance should he ever need it. I agree to put up some fliers, and keep an eye out for anything suspicious. After some small talk I ended my call with him.

For some reason that phone call irks me. I feel disdain for this man. He sounded ingenuine and I believe there is more to this story than he is letting on. I have no idea why I feel this way but it's just a feeling I have.

Asher starts rattling on about some humans staying at the old log cabin, well he assumes they are human, but isn't overly convinced, so he's going to dig a little deeper and keep a close eye on them. I'm too busy to deal with this right now, so I agree with him and fob him off for now. I feel like a little guilty, but I'm under so much pressure right now, and I'm sure it's nothing he can't handle.

While he was telling me about them I felt my wolf stirring inside me. Maybe he's been stuck indoors too long and he wants to get out of this office and go for a run. I look up at the clock. I've put in a few good hours so far, so I decide that I'll take an early lunch break and get back to this a bit later.

I walk out of the pack house and jog down the stairs. I look around from one side of the pack grounds to another. It's pretty quiet this morning, most wolves are at school or work or training at this time of day. I rip my clothes off and start shifting and run into the woods.

My bones start to c\*\*\*k out of place and extend then slowly fall back into place, fur sprouts out all over my hands and arms and body. I start to pound into the forest floor feeling the crisp air hit my snout. This release is exactly what I needed right now. A break from the mundane office work and never ending pack calls. Just me and Sabre and the great outdoors.

Sabre takes over and he runs in a specific direction. He runs to the far right side of the woods, and he starts running alongside the Falls River. Before long we are approaching the area that Asher was talking about this morning. If only I could remember what he was saying earlier, my curiosity has piqued.

We have reached the old log cabin and there aren't any cars outside, perhaps no one is home we ponder. We take a few deep sniffs and we are intrigued by one of the scents we pick up. So we start moving towards the front window. A few yards in we stop in our tracks. From where we are standing we can see the most beautiful woman.

She's gorgeous with long thick darkest brown hair, crystal blue eyes, perfectly plump pink lips and snow white skin. She looks like she is deep in thought. We wonder if this is one of the humans Asher was telling us about. We will have to find him and ask him for more information when I get back. For now I just watch her for a while discretely from behind a great old oak tree.

We watch for a while, then we turn back into the forest determined to find out more about the mysterious woman at the old log cabin.

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I feel restless tonight. I can't stop thinking about the beauty I saw at the old log cabin. I decided to take Sabre for a late night run in the dark. We are running for hours when we decide that we've had enough and start making our way back to the woods. We are weaving in and out of the trees when we catch the faintest whiff of the scent we picked up at the old log cabin.

Sabre decides that we need to investigate. We are in the middle of nowhere running alongside a dusty old gravel road when we hear a car. We can hear music playing, it sounds like cold heart. I know that song everywhere it's been played over and over again on almost every radio throughout the country.

We pick up our pace to match the car, glancing to our right side, we can make out that long dark hair flowing in the wind. It's her! At that moment she catches us with her eyes and turns to look at us, so we pick up the pace even further and boost past the car.

We make it back to the Falls River just before she does, and we watch her exit the car, from the shelter of the old oak tree. We watch as she makes her way to the front door, watching her slowly look back at the river and then amongst the trees we are standing in. She then turns and walks into the house. Once we are happy that she has made it safely inside, we turn back towards the woods and make our way back to the packhouse.

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Sabre and myself are both pent up full of energy this morning. We have woken up at the c\*\*\*k of dawn and we plan to meet the mysterious beauty that is currently dominating our thoughts.

We managed to find out from Asher that the woman in question was Aleksa, Correct me if i'm wrong but Aleksa translated means "defender", that's a pretty impressive name. According to Asher, she has two children.

Mason and Kaia I was able to identify from their security swipe card photos, as they are working at one of my clubs in town. Asher says they are already settling in, and making friends, and although he can't scent anything specific, he still feels all is not as it seems with them.

After jumping in the shower, I head to the packhouse kitchen for a light breakfast. Then I shift into my wolf form and dash off into the woods. I take a change of clothes with me to change into once I reach the edge of the forest where the old log cabin is.

In no time, I am outside the cabin, walking up the porch stairs and knocking on the door. After a few moments the door opens and I am face to face with Aleksa.

The first thing I notice is that her scent is even stronger, she's a werewolf! She smells delicious – like peony blossom and peach nectar. My senses are overwhelmed.

I wonder how Asher could have missed this. Her scent is doing all sorts of things to me right now. For some reason I find myself wildly attracted to her, and it is taking all my willpower to not act on these feelings right now.

I can sense her fear radiating from her, it's practically palpable. I can smell the perspiration building on her forehead. At this moment she appears to be lost in her thoughts, so I clear my throat to get her attention back. I start by making small talk, but I won't beat around the bush. I need some answers and I need them now.

She starts to plead with me. It was not my intention to scare her, I try to relax her and tell her that I mean her no harm. I just have a few questions to ask her.

I ask her to explain herself, and she starts to tell me about what happened in her pack with her fated mate, and how she had to flee the pack to get away



from his cruel ways, as well as protecting her children. I am repressing my growls, as I don't want to scare her any further. But I am beyond pissed off, how someone could treat their goddess given mate that way was beyond me.

She explains how Mason and Kaia were rogues but through no fault of their own, it would appear they found themselves in positions similar to that of Aleksa and they formed a bond together. I would need to do some investigation to make sure their stories checked out, although I can't imagine they would have much to gain by lying to me, they seem genuine.

I ask her which pack she is from and she starts to panic. She is reluctant to give me this information, and I am struggling to keep my cool. I don't mean to but before I realize what I have done I have alpha commanded her to tell me. So she does.

I am not surprised when she tells me she is from the Evergreen pack. As she was telling me her story I started to link it to what I had heard from Alpha Lachlan on our phone call the other day.

I am not surprised she is Luna. She is beautiful and strong and she has a kind and caring aura about her. But I need to verify this story. People have a tendency to lie when they are scared or desperate. And she is clearly very scared. I don't think she is lying though. I sense she is being truthful.

We talk some more, I advise her that I will be having a conversation with both Mason and Kaia separately, she doesn't seem concerned, she even offers to help organize the meeting, although I explain it is not necessary as I will be seeing them at the club.

Before I leave she asks for my name. I was so wrapped up in asking her questions, I didn't even introduce myself. She stares at me for a few moments and I can't quite figure out what she's thinking as she stares at me with a sweet smile on her face. Then as if she realizes that she is staring at me she thanks me for my visit and farewells me closing the door.

As I am walking down the stairs I hear two little voices calling out to their mommy, with my werewolf hearing. The twins must be awake I think to myself. I really want to meet them for some reason, as does Sabre. But we resist the urge. Once I get to the tree line, I shift into my wolf, seeing that the twins are watching from the window. Sabre and I leap off following the forest path, feeling quite happy with myself and thinking about that sweet scent of peony blossom and peach nectar.

\*Aleksa POV\*

It's been a week since Kingston appeared at my doorstep, and I haven't seen him since that day. We are all settled into life in Denver, having been here a couple of weeks now. Liam and Layla are loving the daycare that they attend. The ladies who run it, and work there, are so kind and nurturing, the twins are really thriving there. They've even managed to make a few friends and have a few playdates. I've even made a few mom friends myself. We go for coffee on the weekend while the children play at the park. It's a far cry from our life at Evergreen, which was so much more isolated. I didn't have any mom friends. I mean I only had Eva and Kali, and look how Eva turned out. Kali is a keeper though, I sure miss her. I think of her often.

Mason and Kaia are enjoying working at the club, naturally they have already been promoted since starting there. Their natural leadership skills are obviously hard to ignore. Mason is now running the security team there, and has been asked to manage security for another two clubs in town. Kaia is no longer working as hostess, she is working within management. They both seem happy. We didn't talk much about our lives before we came here, we all decided we wanted to move forward and focus on our new lives. We didn't want the negativity of our pasts constantly hanging over us.

Recently we heard from Caleb and Kali, they had finally safely reached Crimson Moon and were greeted with open arms by Alpha Callum and his Luna Cadence. They had to lay low for a while in a human town initially as they were surrounded by the Evergreen pack warriors, but they managed to escape a week later. It sounded like things were pretty tough for them for a while. I am so happy that they are safe now. I still feel guilty that their lives were uprooted the way they were. However, they assure me that they would do it again in a heartbeat. I'm grateful for such loyal and courageous friends.

Every day I count myself lucky that Lachlan hasn't found me or the twins, or my friends yet. We have no way of knowing where he is looking for us, although I imagine he would be looking high and low for Liam, being that he is the rightful heir to Evergreen Pack. I know the day will come when he finds us and we will have to fight for our freedom once again. All I can do right now is make sure we are ready when that time comes. Mason, Kaia and I have been working on multiple escape plans for the twins and I, and we are almost ready for when the time comes.

Today I have the day off work. I have dropped the twins off at daycare, and Mason and Kaia are both at work, so I don't know what to do with myself. I've

been working a lot recently. Since we left Evergreen in such a hurry, we were unprepared. We had no savings or back up plans, so I've been working extra shifts so that I can put some money inside for when we have to move on again.

I look around at the cabin, it's pretty immaculate so that rules cleaning out. I look in the pantry and it's looking a little empty so I guess I can go grocery shopping. Although I am feeling restless at the moment, so, I try to channel Amber to see if she would like to go for a run.

After a few attempts I hear no reply from her in my head, so I guess shifting is out of the question right now. I almost can't remember the last time we shifted. Amber has been so distant since everything that went down with Lachlan, I think she misses Cyrus, Lachlan's wolf. She has only spoken to me once since we escaped from Evergreen, and that was when we met Kingston.

A cheeky smile erupts on my face when I think of Kingston. Gosh he is divine. He's tall, he's tanned, he's muscular, he has a smile that just makes me want to melt. He has a commanding no nonsense type of aura about him. But then he's understanding and seems sincere. I feel so attracted to him. It's so unlike me. I'm not that girl that falls all over a guy. It's so bizarre, I should be mourning the death of my relationship with Lachlan, not getting all turned on but the hot alpha of the Rocky Mountain Pack. Get a grip Aleksa – I think to myself.

I figured that because I had rejected my fated mate I would be sick. I had always been told that rejecting or being rejected by your fated mate would make you weak and potentially k\*\*l you, but I wasn't feeling any of that. In all honesty, I had never felt better. Maybe a little weak physically, but mentally I feel freer than I ever have.

I can't even feel Lachlan being intimate with someone anymore. Perhaps my rejecting our bond was enough? I thought that he needed to accept my rejection though. It's so confusing. Perhaps I needed to see someone, a witch or a healer or perhaps a shaman. I wouldn't even know where to start come to think of it. Perhaps I would discuss this with Kaia later on tonight and see what she thinks about it all.

Thinking about Kingston had gotten me all wound up. So I decided I would go for a run, and since Amber isn't talking to me I will just go in my human form. I look around my room to find something acceptable to run in.

I picked up some black leggings and a black sports bra and put them on. I grab the only pair of shoes I have that would be suitable, my black converse shoes, and pull my hair into a high ponytail.

I walk through the house, shut the door, run down the stairs and start stretching. I take a deep breath in of fresh air, and decide that this is exactly what I need. So I started jogging off into the woods to relieve myself of some s\*\*\*\*I frustration.

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I've been running for about forty five minutes now and I realize I am completely lost. I thought I was following a trail but clearly I went off track at some point. I'm not worried because I am a wolf and I love the woods. So I try to communicate with Amber but she's still not reachable. I slow down to walk a bit and take a look at my surroundings. If I could just find some sort of landmark, or listen for some sort of sound like running water or traffic or something.

I didn't bring anything with me so I can't keep track of the time. Although I don't have to pick up Liam and Layla until much later today so that doesn't concern me.

I start to backtrack hoping that I am going back in the right direction. After a few hours I stop. Great one Aleksa. Lost in the middle of nowhere, with no wolf to rely on. My stomach starts to growl and I wish that I had some breakfast before I left, or even a drink of water.

I decide that I will keep walking straight until I find the river or the road, or something resembling the right direction.

After some time passes, I get the feeling I am not alone. I can't hear anything but I can sense company is near.

I start regretting this bright idea I had to go for a run in the woods without my wolf. I hear a twig snap and I look behind me. I can smell them before I see them. Rogues. There appears to be two of them. They start to snarl at me. They both look pretty mangey, and they smell terrible like rotten meat. I would imagine it has been a while since they last showered. I am fighting the urge to vomit right now. My gag reflex is going strong. They slowly start to stalk towards me, both coming towards me, one from the right and one from the left.

I start to panic and try to wake Amber up, “Come on girl I could really use your help right now, we need to shift. Amber!!! Please! Rogues! I need to shift.” I yell at her desperately in my head.

“What’s a pretty she wolf doing out here all on her lonesome?” The brown one with white stripes all around its torso says to me.

“Looking for some fun, shewolf?” The other rogue says licking it’s licks and smirking at me, it is also brown, with red stripes over it’s back and belly.

“Uh, no thank you. I was just on my way back to.. My pack.” I say.

“Liar. You have no pack. You don’t smell like a rogue.” he sniffs the air near me. “You smell so sweet, and I can sense that you are ranked, but you don’t smell like a pack wolf”. The brown and white coloured rogue says matter of factly.

“That’s right so you better back off – NOW!” I say. Hoping that will make them think twice, but deep down inside knowing that it won’t. I am well aware that I am outnumbered and out wolfed.

“Hahaha. Nice try, she wolf. You are weak. Your wolf is not with you right now!” the brown and white rogue says with a sinister smile on it’s face.

I take a defensive stance, as I am well aware that these rogues want more than a chat from me, and I am resigned to the fact that I will have to defend myself in human form.

I only wish I was trained to defend myself. I never got a chance to train at Evergreen because I had gotten pregnant straight away and then I was constantly weak from the pain of Lachlan cheating. I had done a few self defense classes back in the human town I grew up in before meeting Lachlan but that was about it. Moon goddess please protect me! I prayed silently.

The brown and white coloured rogue lunged towards me, and I was able to move out of his way just in time, only to be pounced on by the brown and red striped rogue. He furiously bit into the side of my waist, taking a chunk of skin out of my side. I could feel the excruciating, stabbing pain take over my body. “Aahhhhh!” I screamed in pain and shock. I could smell the overwhelming metallic odor of my blood oozing out of me.

At that moment, the brown and white striped rogue got back up on its feet, and plunged towards me as I stood up. He knocked me hard onto the ground. I tried to push him off me but he had me pinned to the ground, and I was feeling weak from the bite on my waist. He started to snap at my neck, going for my jugular. I felt an unimaginable fear inside me at that moment. Was this it? Is this how I would die? No f#\$%ing way! I will fight to my last breath for my pups, I tell myself.

I punched the rogue in the throat as hard as I could, and used all my strength to push the rogue to the side, it started to choke, and took a moment to get its breath back then got ready to charge me again. The other rogue was circling me with a feral and satisfied look on its face.

I clutched at my side trying to place pressure on my wound. I could feel that I was losing too much blood. I started to feel dizzy. I could see the rogues smirking and mumbling something. I saw the red and white one lunge towards me, and just as it was opening its mouth to snap its teeth at my neck, I started to fall to the ground, and all I saw was darkness.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I woke up to the sound of machines beeping. I took a few deep breaths and I could smell bleach mixed with antiseptic. Where am I, I asked myself. I tried to open my eyes and everything felt so bright. And I felt so tired, so I gave up and faded back into sleep.

I could hear a faint voice calling out my name, multiple times. Then I smelt the faint scent of fresh pine, it was my favourite scent, as the forest was my favourite place. I started to open my eyes again and this time even though it was overwhelmingly bright, I succeeded in fully opening them.

I felt slight tingles on my hand, It must be static electricity from the bed and the machines I thought. Then I looked down. It was Kingston. He was holding my hand, sitting beside me, looking at me with what looked like relief on his face. I tried to speak but my mouth was so dry, I managed to croak out "water".

Kingston obliged and helped me with some water in a cup and a straw. I took a few sips initially, then I greedily took more. The thirst within me was intense. I felt like I hadn't had any water in days.

I tried again to speak, this time I was successful, although I had to cough in between words.

“Where am I?” I manage to say in between coughs, looking around confused. As I tried to sit up a bit, I was engulfed with pain, a stabbing pain at my waist. I grabbed it with my hand and I could feel a large dressing. I looked back up at Kingston.

“The rogues? But how did I get here?” I asked.

“I can explain, don’t panic, you are safe Aleksa”. Kingston reassures me. He then proceeds to tell me how I got here.

“I was out for a run in the woods, when I smelt rogues, I could sense danger, so I kept running until I saw you.” Kingston tells me.

“You were bleeding profusely, and the rogues appeared to be going in for the k\*\*l, so I took them both out, and then I rushed you here.” He tells me, with anger starting to radiate from his aura.

I look at him, I’m overcome with emotion, I feel so grateful to him, if he hadn’t been out there, I would be dead. “Thank you, I don’t know how I can ever repay you for this.” I say to him with a sincere look upon my face.

Then I realize I am here, but my pups are not, “Oh my goddess, Liam and Layla! Daycare! I was supposed to pick them up. I’ve got to go!” I say as I try to pull myself up in a hurry leading to my stitches bursting. I feel the blood start to rush out of my wound, the metallic smell overwhelming my senses. What on earth? I think to myself. I am a werewolf. Why have I not healed?

Kingston panics and calls the doctors in to tend to my wound, he holds pressure on it, until they arrive, then they start stitching my wound up again.

“You need to be more careful Aleksa, your wolf is not with you right now, your healing will be that of a human’s healing right now”. He tells me.

He then goes on to tell me a healer came in earlier and said that my wolf was away, but would be back, that she just needed some time to heal.

“Liam and Layla, are here, at Rocky Mountain. So are Mason and Kaia, you have all been granted an exemption, you are here as my guests. They will be

in shortly. I have mindlinked my Beta Asher to inform them that you are awake.” He says.

I sigh in relief. I am glad that my pups are close by and that I will get to see them. But I have so many questions. I look up at Kingston and I start to ask him “How long have I been out?”.

To which he replied, “Three days. You have been in a coma for the past three days.” He says with a sadness exuding from him.

I am shocked “Three days? How can that be? Why did I sleep so long?” I ask, starting to panic that I have worried my pups and friends for the past three days.

“Your wolf wasn’t with you to speed up the healing process, and your injuries were critical. But you’re awake now and your body is slowly repairing itself” Kingston exclaims.

Kingston looks at me as though there is something on his mind. “Tell me, Aleksa, what were you doing in that part of the forest alone at that time of day?”.

I look at him perplexed. “I was going for a run, I got lost, then I came across the rogues”. Remembering my encounter with them.

“You really shouldn’t be so careless in future, that part of the territory isn’t often utilized by our pack, although it is our territory we generally keep away from it. It borders on the forsaken territory.” He warns me.

“When you are recovered, we can show you the territorial boundaries, and explain it all a bit more. For now, I would advise you to keep to the main track or even the main road, if you are running in human form” he then pauses, looks at me and continues, “There is something I need to discuss with you but it can wait until you are out of hospital.” Kingston says.

At that moment, the door bursts open and Mason and Kaia walk in with two very energetic and happy children “Mommy!” They call to me in sync.

“Mommy, we missed you! They tell me. They are about to jump on me when they are pulled back by Mason and Kaia.

“Slow down there pups, we don’t want to hurt mommy now do we?” Kaia says to Liam and Layla.



They just look at me wide eyed. “Mommy is so happy to see you both. I have missed you so much while I was sleeping.” I tell them with tears ready to fall from my eyes.

We all chat for a while, and Kingston stays sitting next to me the whole time. I find it strange that he seems so protective of me, but at the same time, I really don't want him to leave. Something about his scent keeps me calm and makes me feel safe. Two things I haven't felt in a long time.

After about half an hour I am struggling to keep my eyes open. Mason and Kingston start to notice, and suggest it might be time for everyone to leave so that I can get some sleep. We all say goodbyes and I am able to hug my pups goodbye gently. I thank Mason and Kaia for looking after them and promise I will be out tomorrow, to which Kingston looks at me doubtfully.

They all leave, but Kingston doesn't. “Are you not going to leave as well?” I ask him, struggling to fight against my heavy eyes. “I will wait for you to fall asleep, then I will leave to attend to some pack matters, close your eyes Aleksa, get some sleep” he says.

Then I lose my fight to stay awake and drift off to sleep.

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I had been in hospital for a total of five days now, and the medical team were satisfied that I was medically stable, and I was able to leave this morning. To say I was excited was an understatement. I couldn't wait to get out of here, don't get me wrong it was a state of the art hospital, everything was so bright and white and clean, it was a simple room with a bed in the middle of the room connected with monitors and equipment, and a panel above the bed with oxygen and suction and various other switches and medical supplies. Beside me was a small bedside table with a jug of water and cup on it. To the left of me there was a door leading to an ensuite bathroom with a walk in shower and a gorgeous sink and vanity with a large mirror. It was well stocked with environmentally friendly sustainable products.

Everyone here was so professional, from the Nurses and Doctors to the healthcare assistants and kitchen staff that brought me my meals.

The food was first class. I don't think I have ever eaten so well. I mean I have always cooked healthy and tasty meals, it's just you notice it more when someone else is cooking for you and you are on the receiving end.

However, that all said. I missed my pups greatly, I had never been separated from them like this before, with the exception being when Lachlan threw me into the dungeon at Evergreen.

I was also worried that I had missed too many shifts at work, but being that Kingston owned the Tavern, he said he had told Sierra that I would be off for a week or so, so there was no pressure there, but I still felt guilty letting my new team down, especially since I had just recently started.

I just wanted to get back to my new life, which had barely just started. I had told myself that this was just a temporary setback and I wouldn't let it hold me back.

One thing I would definitely miss about being here was the daily visits from Kingston. I could look at his face all day. I felt butterflies just thinking about him. Drool.

I walked to the bathroom to have a quick shower. Mason would be in shortly as he was picking me up to take me back to the old log cabin.

When I walked out of the shower Kingston was waiting at my bedside for me. I was standing at the ensuite door with nothing but a towel on. I stood there shocked. I was not expecting anyone else to be in the room, or I would have changed in the bathroom.

I stood there with my mouth wide open, looking at Kingston, feeling uber anxious that he was seeing me this way.

He was sitting there with a smirk on his face, something flashing in his eyes, amber flecks, his wolf surfacing perhaps.

"I'm sorry I didn't realize anyone else was in here, I'll just grab my clothes and change, I won't be long" I say picking the outfit that had been left for me the other day up off my bed and darting for the bathroom.

Nice one Aleksa, I scold myself. My heart racing and my body responding to the gorgeous wolf sitting only meters away from where I was getting changed.

I quickly throw my black halter neck dress on and my black crossover sandals on and brush my hair in front of the mirror.

Once I feel I look acceptable I walk out of the bathroom to greet Kingston.

“Aleksa, you look beautiful, please sit, there is something I would like to discuss with you” Kingston says sitting on the chair next to my hospital bed, with what looks like lust in his eyes, trailing my every move.

## **Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 13**

\*Aleksa POV\*

Kaia and I creep down the hallway with the twins, not knowing what to expect, and wondering who could be knocking on the door. Have they found us? We hadn’t noticed anyone following us. We had been so careful to cover up our tracks. We had taken the scent hiding potion from Aunt Meadow. We look at each other knowingly and slowly pat the twins on their backs, trying to quietly shush them. Thank goodness they had been up for a while and had full tummies so they were starting to look sleepy.

We listened quietly as we heard voices from down the hallway. Luckily, being werewolves, we had heightened hearing.

“Hello?” Mason said as he opened the door.

“Good Morning, My name is Asher, I’m the head ranger for this side of the Rocky Mountain National Park. I was in the area and I noticed your car. We don’t usually get guests out this way, so I thought I would pop in and say hi, see who was here, give you a friendly welcome”. Asher said in a cherry disposition.

“Oh, hey, yeah we are new to the area, we were planning on staying here for a bit while we found a place to settle”, Mason says.

“We? Your family is with you, I presume”, Asher says inquisitively.

“Ah yes, well, my two sisters and their children, that is,” Mason shifts uncomfortably.

Kaia and I look at each other and decide to go out and say hello, as Mason seemed to be faltering a bit.

As we move down the hallway, we can’t see the mystery visitor, all we can see is Mason’s back.

As I was walking towards the door I was taken aback by the rugged good looks of the man known as Asher at the front door.

He has very short shaved hair, and is wearing a cream coloured cowboy hat, he is wearing a tight white singlet, with worn-looking blue denim jeans, his muscular arms stand out as they are practically bulging out, and he has the cutest smile. I looked at Kaia, who clearly approves, and I give her a look as if to say mind the drool.

“Well, good morning ladies,” Asher said, as he tipped his hat towards us.

“Good morning” we both said at the exact same time, smiling at our guest.

“Asher here is the local park ranger, and says they don’t usually get guests here, so he was just wanting to pop in and introduce himself and make sure we were settling in”, Mason said to us.

“That’s very kind of you Asher,” I said. “We just got here. So we are still trying to settle in. We appreciate you coming in to say hello”. I say, meaning every word.

Asher’s aura radiates kindness, and I don’t perceive him to be a threat at this stage. He is most definitely a werewolf though. Luckily he can’t scent us. I realize then that we must be near pack lands. We will have to look into this further, I thought to myself.

“Where are y’all from?” Asher says.

We looked at each other and froze. We weren’t prepared for this question. And none of us can mindlink, so I quickly blurt out “the east coast”. “We’re from the east coast”.

“Oh, nice. And these two are...?” He questions, pointing to the twins.

“This here is Liam, and that is Layla”. I said with a smile on my face. “They are my babies”. I say before Asher has a chance to ask.

“They’re so cute!” Asher says. “Where is their father?” He asks.

I looked at Asher. It’s only natural to ask this question, I thought to myself, but this man, as polite as he is, asked too many questions.

“He passed away” I said. Looking down at the floor. I felt bad about lying, but what was I supposed to tell him? Oh, his dad is the werewolf and alpha of the pack that we escaped from. I took his children from him, and now they are probably chasing us right now as we speak. No, for now I had to lie to protect my babies and to protect myself and my friends.

Asher looked at me and his brows furrowed for a moment. Then he raised his eyebrows and smiled, “Well, If you need anything at all, don’t hesitate to contact me, here’s my card”. He says and he passes Mason his business card.

Then he tipped his hat toward us and says “it sure was a pleasure meeting you all” and walked off into the forest.

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After that unexpected visit from Asher, we decided to start settling in and get a better idea of our surroundings. Mason jumped into the car and took a drive into town to talk to some locals and get a feel for the area. I put Liam and Layla down to sleep in the double bed in the back room, as we didn’t have cots and they couldn’t sleep in their carseats.

Kaia and I started writing down any weak points, or things we needed to address, and we started formulating a potential escape plan. We hoped we would never have to initiate it, but we needed to be prepared.

Once we were happy with what we had come up with, we sat down for a coffee.

“How about Asher? He’s all sort of scrumptious, isn’t he!” Kaia giggled.

“Yes, well, he was definitely easy on the eyes, that’s for sure!” I agreed.

“I wonder how Mason is getting on,” Kaia said, looking at the clock.

He had been gone quite a few hours now. I went up the hallway to check on the twins. They were still fast asleep. They had been through so much over the past few days, so I wasn’t surprised they were sleeping a little longer.

When I walked down the hallway, I heard a knock at the door, and Mason called out. Kaia got up to let him in.

“So how did it go?” I asked, and we both looked at him apprehensively.

“Well, the good news is that I managed to get some work, which should help us with food and rent,” Mason said with a half smile on his face.

“Why do I get the feeling there is bad news?” I asked with great trepidation.

“Well, I haven’t decided if it is bad news or not. Basically, the general population here consists of werewolves. There are some humans, but not many.” Mason drops the bombshell.

“What? Are you serious? I thought this would be a human town. How do I get it so wrong? Could anyone tell? Did they know you too were a werewolf?” I asked, still trying to pick my jaw up off the ground.

“I don’t think so. They couldn’t scent me. Thanks to Aunt Meadow’s potion. They will figure it out soon enough though, if they don’t already suspect it.” Mason reminds us.

“Okay, well we have a few more days up our sleeves, all going well. What we need to find out is if this pack will give us a chance, especially with us being rogues,” Kaia says.

“We still haven’t heard from Caleb and Kali. I’m starting to worry about them. I hope they are safe” I said, looking at Mason and Kaia.

“Maybe we could try calling them?” Mason remarks.

“Okay, let’s do it!” I added excitedly.

Mason passed the phone to me. Caleb had saved his name on speed dial. I pushed the button and the phone started ringing. Some time went by and then I heard a voice at the other end.

\*Aleksa POV\*

“Caleb? Is that you?” I ask, almost holding a breath in anticipation to hear his voice.

“Yes, Luna, it’s me. Are you okay? Are you safe?” Caleb asks.

“Yes, we are all safe and well thank you. How are you and Kali? Are you safe?” I ask in a panicked tone.

“We are now. We have encountered a bit of trouble, but nothing we couldn’t handle.” Caleb says in a reassuring tone.

Although I am now wondering what trouble they encountered, and if they aren’t trying to keep me calm.

“What kind of trouble Caleb? Did you make it to Crimson Moon?” I start firing questions away at Caleb.

“Not quite Luna. We have to keep moving. But don’t worry about us, we will be fine. You need to keep hidden. Lachlan has most of the warriors looking for you, as well as others from nearby packs.” Caleb says to me in an almost pleading tone.

“Luna, Lachlan has told everyone that Mason and Kaia have kidnapped you and the twins. None of you are safe. So please lay low. I’ll call you when we are in a better place. Kali sends her love. Talk soon” Caleb says, and with that the line goes dead.

I look up at Mason and Kaia who are shaking their heads inquisitively, wondering what was said.

“Well, are they okay? What just happened?” Mason asks.

“Something is wrong, he couldn’t talk. They haven’t made it to Crimson Moon yet, it seems they are still on the run, and there’s more...” I say pausing.

“Caleb said that Lachlan has a lot of people out searching for us, and he has told everyone that you both kidnapped the twins and I.” I say biting down on my lips and furrowing my brows.

“Oh, well that makes things a bit more complicated then doesn’t it.” Mason says.

“Not to worry, we just won’t let them find us. And, if they do, we just tell them otherwise.” Kaia adds.

“I didn’t think he would just stop, I knew he would keep coming. Maybe I should continue on with the twins? I don’t want you two putting yourself in further danger for me and the twins” I say adamantly to Mason and Kaia.

“Don’t even think about it, You and Liam and Layla are like family to us, and family sticks together”. Kaia says.

“Absolutely! We will face this together. I’m not letting that prick anywhere near you, or the twins.” Mason adds.

“You guys are amazing! What would I do without you?” I say to them, as I turn to walk down the hallway. I can hear the twins giggling in the back room.

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\*Asher POV\*

I was running through the woods as I usually do, every morning. But something felt different this morning. As I reached the end of the forest edge, nearing the old cabin, that has been in our families for generations now, I noticed there was a large jeep parked outside.

As far as I knew no one should be there. We never used that cabin, it was a bit rundown, sure it had rustic charm but we really had no use for it. One of our pack members had suggested we put it on the book a bach app, then at least it would be in use and maintained. But no one had actually tried to book it as of yet, not when there was five star accommodation further down the road.

We didn’t need the money by any means but Grandpa would have been happy knowing that someone would be using it. It signified our once humble beginnings. Everything started here from this small log cabin, on the edge of the Falls River in the national park territory.

My name is Asher. I am twenty eight years old, I am a decent height at 6”2, with short shaved sandy blonde hair, and blue eyes. I spend most of my time outdoors, and work out a lot so I have a solid tan and fairly decent physique. I am the Beta of the Rocky Mountain Pack. I serve the pack alongside my best friend Kingston, who is the Alpha of our pack.

Running in a southbound direction, in my wolf form, I took a whiff of the air nearby, I couldn’t pick up any new scents. Although, I could still sense there were people inside, not to mention that the Jeep was a giveaway. I ran back to the pack house and took a quick shower.



I had decided that I would take a shower, get changed, and then investigate further. If someone was staying there, I needed to check them out. Then once I have more information I would inform the Alpha.

After my shower I was just starting to head down stairs when I saw Kai, “Hey Kai, are you aware of anyone staying at the old log cabin on Falls River?” I asked. If anyone would know it would be him. Nothing goes past him in this pack. Kai is the Gamma of this pack, he is also in charge of all of our real estate, land and holdings.

“Yeah, come to think of it, I do recall seeing a booking for the old log cabin near Falls River in my emails, to be honest I haven’t checked it out yet though.” Kai replies.

“No worries man, I might pass by and check the place out, see who’s staying there and why” I inform him.

“Yeah man, sounds like a plan, I’ll catch ya later” he says as he jogs off, probably to training, as most of the wolves of this pack will be about to start training at this time of the morning.

About twenty minutes later I’m walking up to the old log cabin, I knock on the door. I am greeted by a pretty impressively sized male. I can’t detect any scents so I would say he was human, but there’s something about him that isn’t quite right.

We start talking when two of the most beautiful women I have seen in a long time walk towards me. One of them stands out to me more than the other, there’s just something about her. She has the most beautiful face and the most piercing eyes I have ever seen. She looks so sexy, and she’s just wearing a short black leather skirt, a black low scoop tight fitting top, with a patent leather fitted bomber type jacket, topped off with mustard yellow combat boots. She gives off this vibe that looks like it is effortless for her to look like such a beauty.

I am snapped back to the current conversation when I notice they are standing directly in front of me, staring at me, waiting for me to say something.

They are each carrying an infant, one a boy and one a girl.

We all start talking, and they are polite but I get the feeling they are hiding something. I can't scent any of them, but something is telling me that they are not human.

As we chat I ask them where the babies' father is, that's when the conversation seems to sour. Looks like I hit a sore spot I think to myself.

There is more to them than meets the eye, and I feel as though they are hiding something, but they are starting to get a bit guarded, so I stop my subtle interrogation.

I say my goodbyes and leave the old log cabin. For some reason my wolf and I are happy that they will be staying for a while, but we are concerned and wondering what it is that they are hiding.

I walk into the woods and when I am sure that I am out of sight I shift into my wolf and take off towards the pack house.

I shift as I approach the steps leading into the pack house. I head up the internal staircase and make my way to the alpha's office.

I knock on the door, there is no answer. That's strange I think to myself. The alpha is usually in his office this time of day. I push the door open. He is on the phone and he does not look impressed.

"Like I said before, we have not encountered any wolves or otherwise matching those descriptions. And yes, feel free to send me through the details. Yes. Okay. Alright. No problems. Okay goodbye."

And with that Kingston slammed the receiver down on the desk.

"That looked a bit heated, everything alright Kingston?" I asked my friend.

"That was a pack on the East Coast, their Luna and her pups have been kidnapped by two rogues, and they have no leads, so they are reaching out to all the packs in the country." Kingston tells me.

"Oh really, did he give out any names?" I ask curiously.

"No, I didn't ask, but they are gonna email some photos and information shortly" Kingston said.

"That's heavy," I said to my friend.

“So did you want something Asher? I’m kinda under the pump this morning. I’m trying to get everything in order for the Royal Pack Summit later this year.

“Oh it’s nothing important. We just have some guests at the old log cabin by Falls River. I went in and introduced myself to them early today. Just wanted to see who was there. They seem friendly enough, although I think I will keep an eye on them for now” I say to Kingston.

“Fair enough, I trust your judgment, send me a report later when you have the time, I would like to know who is staying there also.” Kingston says as he stares at his computer.

“Okay, I will send one through later, see you at lunch” I say to Kingston. I need to get on with my day, my workload is pretty heavy too.

I start to walk to my office and my mind drifts to the girl that I met earlier this morning. That’s when I realized I got so distracted I didn’t even ask their names. Nice one Asher. I think to myself. And I call myself a Beta. Oh well I will just have to go back and visit again real soon.

\*Aleksa POV\*

We have been here at the old log cabin in Falls River for about three weeks now. Mason has recently started working at a local club as a security guard. He works from Wednesday to Sunday, so that’s keeping him busy for now, and it means that we have some money coming in. Kaia had managed to get a job there also, which she seems to be enjoying. She works as a hostess, at the front entrance of the club. As luck would have it, they work the same shifts, so they are carpooling. They told the club they were siblings and everyone seems to have bought it so far.

I enrolled Liam and Layla at one of the local daycares and they seem to be enjoying themselves. I am planning to look for some work, so that I can contribute and pay for mine and the twins’ share of the bills and food. I was hoping to find some realtor work but I am starting to wonder if I should try something completely different, given that this is a fresh start for us. As much as I enjoyed my career in property, I am not the same person that I was a few months ago. So much has changed in my life since then.

I now feel so much stronger and more independent since leaving Evergreen and Lachlan. I want to leave as much of my old life behind as possible. I was always so serious and I put everyone before me, which was expected, as

Luna and I didn't mind, but things have changed now. I am not a Luna, and there are only two little people that are reliant on me now, so there is less pressure on me. As much as I didn't realize back then, Lachlan controlled me and everything that I did. He knew my every step, and I was always wary of disappointing him or the pack. It took us leaving for me to realise the level of control he had over me.

I just want to do something a bit more carefree, something that doesn't hold a lot of responsibility, because that was my life for the past few years and I need a break from it.

That's it! I am going to do something well outside my comfort zone and apply at an inn or bar in town.

I didn't have a CV but I wasn't worried. I would just walk in, introduce myself and tell them I wanted to work there, and hopefully that would be enough.

I walked into the room that I shared with the twins and looked at my choices. Hmmn, not much to choose from, I thought to myself. Last week Kaia and I went to some thrift stores. We didn't have much money to spend so we needed to stretch it as far as possible. We wanted to get some clothes since we had left everything behind in our packs. I had a few new outfits that I had yet to wear. I looked at them and considered my options.

I had decided I would wear a cute little black dress with spaghetti straps, with a small slimming denim jacket, and some tan knee-high boots I managed to find for \$50. I looked at myself in the bathroom mirror, not bad, I said to myself. I would wear my hair down, it looked tidy enough. I suddenly felt a surge of confidence. I can do this! I repeated to myself.

I jumped into the jeep and started to drive towards the town. We were about a forty-five minute drive from the township. I still had a few hours before I had to pick up the twins, so I had decided that I would use this time to look for a job. I felt bad that we had been relying on Mason and Kaia. I had hoped that I would have been able to take some money that I had saved from the packhouse, but I didn't anticipate being locked in the dungeon and having to escape, so I was very unprepared. We were just so grateful that our new friends, or more like family, had been there to help us.

There were actually a lot of bars in the local township, I thought as I drove down the main street. The nightlife must be popular here, I thought to myself.

I lived in a human town growing up. I was actually raised by humans. I was adopted by the people I knew as my parents. They have raised me since I was a baby. I had no idea who my actual birth parents were. According to my adopted parents, I was dropped off in a basket outside their church. They had told me this when I was in elementary school. They had wanted to be honest with me from the start, and I appreciated that.

I know this all sounds unbelievable, but it's true. There was a note attached to me that said "I'm sorry we couldn't protect you, we hope the person that finds you can do what we couldn't and a small locket was placed on it.

I still wear the locket now. It's an antique looking rose gold locket with what looks like rose vines decorating it front facing. There is no photo inside. There is a gem of some sort in the place where you will usually find a photo. It's actually a velvety blue colour, almost like a sapphire, it actually reminds me of my eye colour strangely enough.

I don't know why it means so much to me. But I guess I cling to it because it's the only piece of my birth parents that I have.

I have never tried to look for them. I would not even know where to start. Apparently, my adoptive parents tried. They tried so that I could have some closure as I got older. But they had no luck. They hired a private investigator and everything, but he had no leads.

I'm okay with it though. I'm not even mad at them. I imagine that they had no choice, judging by the note they wrote. Plus, my adoptive parents were so loving and treated me like I was their own biological child. I have no regrets. I hope they (my birth parents) are okay wherever they are out there.

I felt comfortable living around humans, I guess because I was brought up to believe I was one for the majority of my life.

Most werewolves live in their packs and prefer to live away from humans. I get it. It's to protect our secrets and to be able to live our best lives without having to worry about prying eyes.

I didn't mind though. I was happy wherever I was.

When I met Lachlan and we mated, I moved straight away to the packhouse with him. It took a lot to get used to, learning the culture, the practices, the

rules, their way of living. I had never even been to a pack house before, so I felt very intimidated by it initially.

I knew I was different growing up. I was always faster than most, I had heightened senses of smell, hearing and vision. I also had super fast healing abilities which both my parents and I both found strange, but they never questioned it. They just said I was blessed.

It wasn't until I turned eighteen that I shifted for the first time under the full moon. It was very drawn out and painful. I thought I was dying at the time. I had no idea that I was a werewolf.

I was alone that night. I was on my way home from a friend's house and I had cut through a forested area when my transition started.

After what felt like forever, I had shifted and I went for a run. I ended up stopping by a lake, the moonlight was reflecting on the water and it was then I saw my wolf form for the first time. I must have stared at myself for hours.

I almost had a full blown panic attack. After crying myself to sleep on the grass edge by the lake, I fell asleep. I had the strangest dream that night and I was visited by the most beautiful woman.

She had long golden blonde hair which flowed down past her hips, crystal blue eyes, and she was absolutely gorgeous. She wore a long white satin dress. She explained to me that I was a werewolf and that my parents had to make the ultimate sacrifice to save me. She said that I would meet my mate, after explaining what a mate was, and she told me to have faith, even if things didn't turn out as I had hoped. She didn't elaborate on anything she was telling me, it all seemed very cryptic.

She told me her name was Selene. She had told me that when the time came, she would reveal herself to me again, and explain my purpose in life to me. She said I had so much more to learn. And to have faith that things will work out in the end. Then she just disappeared and I was blinded by a bright light.

I have always had strange dreams, but that one seemed to stick with me. I sometimes wonder if it was a dream or a premonition.

I snapped myself out of my thoughts and walked towards a bar that seemed to appeal to me. I took a deep breath as I walked to the door.

The security guard was very tall, tanned and very muscular. He was dressed in a smart black suit and wore an earpiece. He pulled the red rope across for me, smiled at me and let me pass.

I scanned my eyes across the room. Wow. I thought to myself. This place is a lot bigger and a lot fancier than I had imagined, based on how it looked from the outside.

From the outside, it almost resembles a ski cabin that you would find at a ski resort. Large timber logs notched at the ends and laid upon one another with the ends filled with plaster or mortar.

From the inside there was a deep rich red coloured carpet which almost resembled velvet. It had booths on the sides of the tavern, with circular tables forming the majority of the room. There were candlestick type chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. Directly facing me as I walked in was the bar. It was a very long wooden bartop. It was littered with beer taps and glasses of all varieties, as well as jugs of lemon water and crates of ice. It had a warm and welcoming vibe about it. It looked immaculate, no beer stains on the carpet or markings on the tables like in other bars.

I walked straight up to the bar and asked to speak with the manager.

“You’re looking at her darling, what can I do for you?” the beautiful tall and lean girl with the long dark black hair and emerald green eyes said to me with a smirk on her face.

“Hi, my name is Aleksa, I am looking for a job, and wondered if you have any vacancies?” I said with a hopeful smile on my face.

“Hi Aleksa, I’m Sierra, well girl, you are in luck, one of my fulltime workers just resigned yesterday and I haven’t placed an ad yet. Can you start tonight, we are super short-staffed?” She asks, emphasising the super part.

“Ah, yes, that should be OK, but I just need to organize a sitter for my pu.. babies. Can I make a quick call? I asked hopefully.

“Sure hun, you can use the phone over there” Sierra says as she points to a phone on the wall near the cash register.

I called Kaia, who picked up straight away. “Is everything okay?” she asked worriedly.

“Hey Kaia, everything is fine, I think I have a job!” I said excitedly.

“That’s brilliant! Where?” Kaia asks.

“At a tavern, in town,” I said.

“That’s great Aleksa! We all have jobs now! I’m so excited for us!” Kaia says loudly.

“The thing is Kaia, they want me to start tonight, as someone has just left and they are super short-staffed” I say, not yet finished explaining myself before Kaia interrupts. “Of course, you don’t even have to ask. I will watch Liam and Layla. No problem! Hey, can you still pick us up from our day shift? Kaia asks.

“Of Course. I will be there shortly.” I said to Kaia.

I hung up the phone and made my way over to Sierra. “That’s fine. I’ve got a sitter sorted. I can start tonight. Ah, what time did you want me here? I ask Sierra.

“Seven o’clock hun. You will be working late with Accalia tonight. It will only be the two of you at the bar. The chef, Steve, will be out back making bar snacks, and Tony will be at the door. Unfortunately, tonight is one of our busier nights, and you girls will get slammed. Hey, I forgot to ask, have you ever worked at a bar before?” Sierra eyed me.

“Ah not technically, but how hard can it be right?” I said, flashing a big smile on my face. Hoping that Sierra doesn’t take her job offer back.

Sierra looks at me with a questionable look on her face, as if she is pondering her options. “Tell ya what. I’ll give you a trial run. I’ll stay on a bit later tonight to show you the basics. That should be enough to get you going. Most of it is talking to the punters and keeping them happy. A pretty thing like you should be able to manage that.” She says as she walks off.

“See you at seven -and Aleksa, don’t be late!” Sierra yells as she walks out to what I imagine is the kitchen.

I turned on my heels and exited the tavern. A surge of excitement goes through me. Oh my goddess. I did it. I got a job! I’m so optimistic as to what the future might hold.



\*Aleksa POV\*

I put on some cherry red lip gloss and rubbed my lips together, plumping my lips to give them that glossy full lip look. I took one last look in the mirror, said my little mantra to myself “you’ve got this girl” and walked into the lounge. I grabbed the keys off the table and said goodbye to Mason and Kaia, who were watching the late news on television.

I was feeling pumped and ready to start my first shift at the tavern. This would be the first day of the rest of my life, of our lives. This was for the twins as much as it was for me. Financial independence was part of our journey. I needed to be able to provide for them, to give them the life they deserved, I thought to myself.

I walked out the door and made my way towards the stairs. It was at that moment that I had the strangest feeling as I walked in complete darkness towards the car. It felt like I wasn’t alone. I don’t know if I was on guard because Lachlan was probably still looking for us, or if it was my heightened senses warning me that someone was close by.

I shrugged it off and sat in the driver’s seat. Here goes nothing, I thought to myself. I pulled out of the driveway and made my way down the gravel road. I had left extra early as I wanted to make a good impression.

I put the radio on and listened to some music; Cold Heart by Elton John and Dua Lipa. I love this song, I think to myself. I turn the volume up high. Dancing from my car seat while driving through the darkness.

In no time I arrived at work. Gosh, time goes fast when you are having fun. I miss cranking the music up and dancing around the house. I hadn’t done that since before I met Lachlan. Life had gotten serious so fast. Anyway, no time to dwell on the past. I was walking into my future.

I walked up to the entrance, and looked at the security guard. “Hi, you must be Tony”, I said in a loud voice, because the music was pumping in the tavern.

“I am, and who would you be?” He looked at me suspiciously.

“I am Aleksa, tonight is my first night. I’ll be working at a bar. Sierra hired me today” I said enthusiastically.

“Welcome to the tavern Aleksa, please go inside.” Tony said to me, pulling the red velvet rope across for me to pass.

I walked past Tony and stopped just before I entered. I take a moment to center myself. I hear that mantra in my mind once again. Then I pulled the door open and stepped into the tavern.

I am taken aback by how many people are currently here. The place is packed. The lights are dimmed. The music is cranking. There is even a dance floor in the far corner on the left-hand side of the bar.

Sierra wasn't joking when she said we would get slammed tonight. I feel fear overtake me. Can I do this? What was I thinking? I have no experience. As I start to delve into self-doubt, I am snapped out of my thoughts when a familiar voice speaks to me.

“Well hello again, uh I didn't catch your name last time we met?” the unknown voice says. I moved to stand in the light and then I recognized the person standing right in front of me. It's Asher, the park ranger we met the other day.

“Oh hi, it's nice to see you again, I'm Aleksa.” I said politely.

“Nice to see you again Aleksa, hey uh, what was your friend's name? I forgot to ask the other day”, He asks with a shy smile on his face.

“Oh, Kaia, her name is Kaia.” I said back to him.

“Kaia – nice,” he says deep in thought.

“Well, I better get moving, it's my first shift and I don't want to be late” I said to him.

“Yeah, sure,uh, good luck” Asher says, still preoccupied with his thoughts.

I pushed past him and walked up to the bar. I couldn't see Sierra anywhere and the girl at the bar looked super busy, so I walked around to the back of the bar, thinking there would be an office somewhere out back where I might find Sierra.

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What a night. I thought to myself. I found Sierra in her office earlier and she gave me a crash course on the most popular drinks that are ordered at the tavern. Fortunately, it appears that most people prefer beer.

I managed to make it through the night without making any major mistakes and even started to learn a regular's name or two.

The other girl working at the bar, Accalia, didn't talk much, or even look at me most of the night, but I'm thinking that might possibly be her personality type.

She has that whole alternative vibe going with purple highlights on her black hair, she has pale white skin as if it were kissed by the moon. She has thick glossy lips. And her eyes, her eyes are so dark but captivating at the same time. I can't actually make out their color. She was wearing black leather pants and a skin-tight leather vest, with chunky leather and studded bracelets on her wrists.

She looks like the kinda girl you don't want to mess with. She's great with the customers though. They all love her. I would imagine she has been here for quite some time.

I finished wiping the last table and looked up at the clock. It's three am. Time went by so fast. My feet are aching, it's been a while since I spent so long on my feet and I didn't wear the most comfortable shoes, so I will be paying for that later today.

I said goodbye to everyone and walked towards the car. I rubbed my eyes as I turned on the engine and started to make my way back home.

It's so quiet at this time of the morning and there is no one else on the road. As I pulled into the gravel road that would lead me back to the old log cabin, I saw a black shadow go past the side window.

I rubbed my eyes again and slowed down a bit and glanced to my right side. I can't see anything or anyone so I guess my eyes are playing tricks on me since I am so tired. I am feeling a little weary though, so I push my foot down on the accelerator and drive home a bit faster.

When I got home, I saw that Mason and Kaia had left the porch light on for me, thankfully. As my mind is taking me to a strange place today. I feel anxious for some reason. As I turned off the engine, I started to walk at pace to the front door. As I pulled out my keys, I turned back and looked at the lake

and then again at the forested area. Nope Aleksa, there's no one there. It's just your overactive imagination.

I opened the door and walked into the house and kicked off my boots that I wish I hadn't worn tonight. I locked the door and headed towards my bed with a smile on my face. I did it. I survived my first night at work.

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I woke up to the warm sun streaming in through the windows. I must have fallen straight into a deep sleep because I felt well rested. I looked up at the old alarm clock next to me. Uh oh. It's 10am. No wonder I feel well rested – I've overslept. I was supposed to have Liam and Layla at daycare already. I looked at the twins. They looked so peaceful. I didn't want to wake them just yet.

I bit down on my lip and sighed. Oh well. I might just make a sneaky coffee and enjoy a bit of peace and quiet before the twins wake up. I started to look for the phone so that I could call the daycare and let them know that the twins would be staying home today.

Once that was done, I put some water in the jug and waited for the water to boil. Coffee is what I need right now. I thought back to when I bumped into Asher last night. He seemed quite interested in Kaia. I must remember to tell her about that. He's very sweet and I think they would look so cute together. With what she has been through, she deserves a little fun.

The house was so quiet right now, with the twins still asleep and with Mason and Kaia at work already. It was nice of them to let me sleep in, I thought to myself. I'm glad they didn't wake me this morning, it will be nice to have a day to just enjoy Liam and Layla's company.

The jug had boiled and I was making my coffee when I heard a noise at the door. My heart started to race and my breathing quickened. A feeling of terror took over me. I heard a loud knock at the door. I just stood in the kitchen not moving, hoping the knocking would stop and whoever it was would think no one was home and go away.

I had nowhere to run. I would never be able to get out of here in time. The twins were still sleeping. I had to face up to this. Whoever it was. Whatever it was. I had to be brave. I could face whatever life threw at me. I wasn't the same Aleksa I was a couple of months ago, I told myself.

I took a deep breath and I slowly opened the door. And I was utterly shocked by the man who stood in front of me. What is it with this log cabin and gorgeous strangers appearing at our door? I just hoped this gorgeous specimen of a man had good intentions and wasn't one of Lachlan's lacheys.

"Good Morning, you must be Aleksa?" the handsome stranger said to me with a breathtaking smile.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I stood there in shock, wondering how this handsome stranger knew my name. I took a deep breath and I was immediately alarmed. He is a werewolf and, judging by the aura and scent he is exuding, one of power, I assume, probably an alpha. I take a moment to compose myself although I am overcome with fear.

So many questions are swirling around in my head at this moment. Has he been sent by Lachlan? Is he here to hurt me? Does he know we are rogues? Are we encroaching on his territory? What does he want from me? Is he here for my pups?

At that moment, the stranger in front of me starts to clear his throat, pulling me out of my own thoughts. He stands there with a questionable look on his face as if he is trying to figure me out. He must sense my fear, I thought to myself.

"I believe you have met my Beta Asher", he says with a smirk on his face. I looked at him, with utter realization, smashing into me. He is the alpha. We must be on his territory.

"Uh, yes, uh, we don't mean any harm. We didn't come into your territory intentionally. We didn't know. We can leave right away! Please, we don't want any trouble." I said, panicked in a pleading tone.

The penalty for rogues entering pack lands is generally death or imprisonment. I started to panic and hyperventilate, looking at the wolf in front of me with sheer desperation and fear. I must protect my pups, I think to myself.

Clearly sensing my fear and panic, the alpha in front of me raises his hand towards me. "It's OK. Don't panic. I'm not here to hurt you, I just want to have a chat with you. Would you invite me in?" he politely asks me.

I took a deep breath and tried to calm myself down. I opened the door further to allow him to walk past. He slowly walks past me and sits on the couch, placing his arms on the top and side of the couch, sitting with his back against the corner of the couch, and placing his right leg over his left, looking relaxed. I just stood there dumbfounded, wondering what was to come next.

“Please, Aleksa, take a seat. This is just a friendly chat. I just want to know why you are here, on my pack lands. You don’t smell like rogues, but here you are out here on your own. Please explain yourself.” He says to me with a serious look on his gorgeous face.

I slowly sit on a chair next to the couch, sitting towards the edge of the chair. And I think to myself, and wonder how much I should tell him. I decide to go with the light version of events, skimming past the fact that I am Luna of a pack, and that my fated mate is currently hunting me and my rogue friends down.

“Start at the beginning, Aleksa, tell me. Is that even your real name?” He asks suspiciously.

I cleared my throat. “Yes, Aleksa is my real name. I guess I will start at the beginning then. I met my mate about two years ago. Everything seemed perfect. We had pups pretty much as soon as we met, twins actually.

“How old are you?” He asks me, interrupting my story.

“I’m twenty years old” I said to him. Wondering why he would ask that question. But I continue on telling my story to him.

“Pretty much as soon as I got pregnant I started experiencing intense pain, daily. I would see the pack doctor often, and she would put it down to growing pregnancy pains, and even when they continued after the twins had arrived she put it down to a traumatic delivery and said they would eventually disappear.”

“Well they didn’t, it wasn’t until one day when I had to leave work early because I couldn’t bear the pain that I walked in on my beta- uh- best friend and my mate in our bed together.”

“Long story short, although I planned to escape with my babies, my plan was cut short and I was thrown in the dungeons, until I escaped with the help of some friends, and we made it here.”

“Please, we have no intention of causing any trouble, we didn’t even realize we were on pack land. We can leave today, please don’t harm us” I pleaded, tears falling down the sides of my face.

I can’t read his face. I don’t know what his plans are. I am praying for mercy from the moon goddess, if just this once, things could go our way.

He took a breath. “I am sorry you had to go through all that. I can’t imagine why a mate would betray their bond given to them from the moon goddess. That is sacrilege.”

“Where are your pups and your friends now?” He asks.

“My friends Mason and Kaia are at work at the moment. They got jobs at a club in town. Uh Headquarters.” I told him.

“And the twins, well, they’re safe, they’re sleeping right now” I said.

“How old are your pups, and what are their names?” He asked me.

“Liam and Layla, they are two years old.” I said, biting down on my bottom lip, wondering what he would do with this information.

“You aren’t technically on park land, you are on the outskirts. I will allow this for now. But we will be keeping an eye on you. We will need to verify that you are who you say you are.” He warned me.

“Which pack are you from?” He asked me. His eyes rested on my face.

I don’t know what to say. If I tell him which pack we are from, he might contact Lachlan. He would tell him something different to what I have, and we would be imprisoned again for Lachlan to find us. I can’t tell him.

“It’s okay. We will leave today. Please, we don’t want any trouble. We just want to be left to ourselves,” I said defiantly.

“You will tell me which pack you are from now!” He says in a loud alpha command.

I cannot refuse a command, so I proceeded to tell him “Evergreen Pack”, “We are from the Evergreen Pack on the East Coast”. I say sadly.

“Evergreen, you say. You are missing Luna, are you not?” He questions me with amber flecks sparkling in his eye.

I looked at him with a tear-stained face. I say nothing but my face deceives me.

“Alpha Lachlan said you were kidnapped by rogues. Tell me Aleksa, have you been kidnapped?” He asks me with a curious look on his face.

“No! No I haven’t. Mason and Kaia are my friends. They helped us escape. Please, Mason and Kaia have nothing to do with this. Please don’t punish them. This is all my fault!!” I pleaded with him to spare my friends.

“I believe you, but I think you had better explain things to me more truthfully this time, Aleksa, and don’t lie to me. I am not here to harm you. I want to help you.” He says in a soft tone, and for some reason I find that comfortable and I believe him.

We talk for some time. I fill him in on how I came to meet Mason and Kaia, as well as explaining how they came to be in the dungeons. I explained how we escaped and the events leading up to us arriving here. I explained how Lachlan treated me, and about his plans to make Eva his Luna, and me his mistress. As well as his plans for our pups. He sat there and listened intently to my words.

Although I couldn’t read him and had no idea what his train of thought might be, I also felt safe around him. I finished my story and sat there in silence waiting for him to respond.

Some time passed, as well as an awkward silence, and it felt like time was moving ever so slowly, then he spoke.

“I am sorry Aleksa. I am sorry that the moon goddess fated you with such a mate. Mates are supposed to be sacred, and if what you say is true then Lachlan has made a mockery of the sanctity of the mate bond. I will look into your account of events. If what you are saying is true then we will grant you the ability to live here on the pack border for now” He said to me.

“I will need to meet Mason and Kaia, as well as verifying their version of events”. He proclaims.

“I understand. Do you want me to call them for you?” I ask him.



“There’s no need for that. I will go into Headquarters and speak with them there.” He says.

“But, they are working, and there are humans around, are you sure you want to do that?” I ask.

“I think it will be fine. Especially considering I own that bar. In fact I own almost the entire town.” He says with a smirk on his face.

I look at him in shock. That means he probably owns the Tavern, where I work. That means that this isn’t a human town after all. We had really messed up here. Of all the places.

“It was nice meeting you Aleksa. I will be in touch.” He says standing up from the couch.

“Uh, it was nice to meet you too, uh, I just realized that I don’t actually know your name?” I say to him realizing that he never introduced himself.

“Kingston, it’s Kingston.” He says with a cheeky grin on his face.

Kingston, I think to myself, for some reason hearing his name makes my heart happy. I feel warm all over. It’s at this point I realize I have been staring at his face a little longer than I should have. He just grins at me.

“Thank you Kingston, I appreciate you considering this. I promise we won’t be a nuisance.” I say to him gratefully.

He turns and walks off. I shut the door. Then not a minute later I hear little feet running down the hallway.

“Mommy! Mommy!” Liam and Layla yell at me happily. “Pancakes Mommy!” They yell in unison with great big smiles on their faces, as I pick them up for cuddles. I then place them on the bench top in front of the kitchen window so that they can help me make the pancake batter.

They position themselves front facing towards the window. “Wolf mama, wolf!” They yell, and we watch a huge black wolf run into the forest.

Kingston. I think to myself. His wolf is magnificent. His human seems to be quite alluring to. I scold myself for thinking of him that way in a time like this. I

need to be practical and think clearly. I can't allow myself these thoughts. "But he's so gorgeous Aleksa!" I hear Amber say and giggle in my head.

I haven't heard anything from Amber since we were thrown in the dungeons. I wondered if she would ever speak to me again. "Ofcourse Aleksa, I am always here I just needed some time to heal. We can trust him Aleksa." Amber says. "How do you know that?" I ask Amber. "Trust me, Aleksa. All will be revealed in due time". She says to me cryptically.

\*Kingston POV\*

I am twenty eight years of age and I am the Alpha of the Rocky Mountain National Park Pack. We are the second largest pack in the country. I took over as Alpha from my father when I turned twenty two. I met my mate not long after becoming Alpha and we were happy for a while. Until she got sick. After a short battle with a terminal illness, she passed away. We didn't get the chance to have pups, we had planned to enjoy our time together for a while before settling down to have pups, unfortunately fate had other plans for us.

For the past few years I have managed to dodge the council's plans for me. There has been huge pressure from the werewolf council for me to take a chosen mate as the pack's Luna, but I have no inclination to.

My sister Quinn takes care of most of the luna duties for our pack, and my mother supports her with this for now. I realize she can't do this forever, as she is yet to meet her mate too. Although, I have a bit of time before I need to figure out what happens next. Quinn is a bit younger than me, she's only twenty two.

Usually, you meet your mate when you gain your wolf at around eighteen years of age. So Quinn is feeling the pressure of not having met her mate. She has faith that he is still out there though, so she's just biding her time until she finds him.

With no heir to take over as Alpha, I will most likely have to pass it down to my Beta or his offspring. Although, I have no plans of relinquishing my role as Alpha any time soon.

Being that we are such a large pack and that we have a well respected and feared reputation, we are for the most part a warrior pack. So we almost never have any trouble here, other than the occasional rogue.

But that doesn't mean we are complacent. Everyone in our pack is required to train from three years of age, regardless of gender. We pride ourselves in knowing that everyone can fight to defend themselves, especially our most vulnerable wolves.

Right now I am busy organizing the Annual Royal Pack Summit which is taking place here at Rocky Mountain in the summertime. It's a big deal, alpha's from all around the country come to pay their respects and allegiance to the Royal Werewolf family, as well as network, and party. Since we have been tasked with hosting this year, there is a lot to do to ensure it all goes smoothly.

I have a committee of volunteers that are organizing most of it, but there are a number of packs that aren't on good terms and it is my duty to ensure that no hostility presents itself. So I am ringing each and every pack in the country to personally welcome them and get an idea of what we are dealing with when the time comes. We need to be able to separate rival packs to avoid any disturbances, and ensure it all goes smoothly.

I am on the phone in my office making calls to packs on the East Coast, when my Beta Asher comes into my office. I rub my forehead and look up at him sighing. I put my hand up and point a finger at him to gesture that I will just be a minute, and I continue on with the phone call I'm on.

I'm currently speaking with the alpha of the Evergreen Pack. He's a real piece of work, this guy, he's giving me some convoluted story about his Luna and pups were kidnapped by rogues. Apparently he sent an email, but I've yet to receive it.

I tell him I haven't seen or heard anything that would be helpful to him, and give him my offer of assistance should he ever need it. I agree to put up some fliers, and keep an eye out for anything suspicious. After some small talk I ended my call with him.

For some reason that phone call irks me. I feel disdain for this man. He sounded ingenuine and I believe there is more to this story then he is letting on. I have no idea why I feel this way but it's just a feeling I have.

Asher starts rattling on about some humans staying at the old log cabin, well he assumes they are human, but isn't overly convinced, so he's going to dig a little deeper and keep a close eye on them. I'm too busy to deal with this right now, so I agree with him and fob him off for now. I feel like a little guilty, but

I'm under so much pressure right now, and I'm sure it's nothing he can't handle.

While he was telling me about them I felt my wolf stirring inside me. Maybe he's been stuck indoors too long and he wants to get out of this office and go for a run. I look up at the clock. I've put in a few good hours so far, so I decide that I'll take an early lunch break and get back to this a bit later.

I walk out of the pack house and jog down the stairs. I look around from one side of the pack grounds to another. It's pretty quiet this morning, most wolves are at school or work or training at this time of day. I rip my clothes off and start shifting and run into the woods.

My bones start to c\*\*\*k out of place and extend then slowly fall back into place, fur sprouts out all over my hands and arms and body. I start to pound into the forest floor feeling the crisp air hit my snout. This release is exactly what I needed right now. A break from the mundane office work and never ending pack calls. Just me and Sabre and the great outdoors.

Sabre takes over and he runs in a specific direction. He runs to the far right side of the woods, and he starts running alongside the Falls River. Before long we are approaching the area that Asher was talking about this morning. If only I could remember what he was saying earlier, my curiosity has piqued.

We have reached the old log cabin and there aren't any cars outside, perhaps no one is home we ponder. We take a few deep sniffs and we are intrigued by one of the scents we pick up. So we start moving towards the front window. A few yards in we stop in our tracks. From where we are standing we can see the most beautiful woman.

She's gorgeous with long thick darkest brown hair, crystal blue eyes, perfectly plump pink lips and snow white skin. She looks like she is deep in thought. We wonder if this is one of the humans Asher was telling us about. We will have to find him and ask him for more information when I get back. For now I just watch her for a while discretely from behind a great old oak tree.

We watch for a while, then we turn back into the forest determined to find out more about the mysterious woman at the old log cabin.

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I feel restless tonight. I can't stop thinking about the beauty I saw at the old log cabin. I decided to take Sabre for a late night run in the dark. We are running for hours when we decide that we've had enough and start making our way back to the woods. We are weaving in and out of the trees when we catch the faintest whiff of the scent we picked up at the old log cabin.

Sabre decides that we need to investigate. We are in the middle of nowhere running alongside a dusty old gravel road when we hear a car. We can hear music playing, it sounds like cold heart. I know that song everywhere it's been played over and over again on almost every radio throughout the country.

We pick up our pace to match the car, glancing to our right side, we can make out that long dark hair flowing in the wind. It's her! At that moment she catches us with her eyes and turns to look at us, so we pick up the pace even further and boost past the car.

We make it back to the Falls River just before she does, and we watch her exit the car, from the shelter of the old oak tree. We watch as she makes her way to the front door, watching her slowly look back at the river and then amongst the trees we are standing in. She then turns and walks into the house. Once we are happy that she has made it safely inside, we turn back towards the woods and make our way back to the packhouse.

\*\*\*

Sabre and myself are both pent up full of energy this morning. We have woken up at the c\*\*\*k of dawn and we plan to meet the mysterious beauty that is currently dominating our thoughts.

We managed to find out from Asher that the woman in question was Aleksa, Correct me if i'm wrong but Aleksa translated means "defender", that's a pretty impressive name. According to Asher, she has two children.

Mason and Kaia I was able to identify from their security swipe card photos, as they are working at one of my clubs in town. Asher says they are already settling in, and making friends, and although he can't scent anything specific, he still feels all is not as it seems with them.

After jumping in the shower, I head to the packhouse kitchen for a light breakfast. Then I shift into my wolf form and dash off into the woods. I take a change of clothes with me to change into once I reach the edge of the forest where the old log cabin is.

In no time, I am outside the cabin, walking up the porch stairs and knocking on the door. After a few moments the door opens and I am face to face with Aleksa.

The first thing I notice is that her scent is even stronger, she's a werewolf! She smells delicious – like peony blossom and peach nectar. My senses are overwhelmed.

I wonder how Asher could have missed this. Her scent is doing all sorts of things to me right now. For some reason I find myself wildly attracted to her, and it is taking all my willpower to not act on these feelings right now.

I can sense her fear radiating from her, it's practically palpable. I can smell the perspiration building on her forehead. At this moment she appears to be lost in her thoughts, so I clear my throat to get her attention back. I start by making small talk, but I won't beat around the bush. I need some answers and I need them now.

She starts to plead with me. It was not my intention to scare her, I try to relax her and tell her that I mean her no harm. I just have a few questions to ask her.

I ask her to explain herself, and she starts to tell me about what happened in her pack with her fated mate, and how she had to flee the pack to get away from his cruel ways, as well as protecting her children. I am repressing my growls, as I don't want to scare her any further. But I am beyond pissed off, how someone could treat their goddess given mate that way was beyond me.

She explains how Mason and Kaia were rogues but through no fault of their own, it would appear they found themselves in positions similar to that of Aleksa and they formed a bond together. I would need to do some investigation to make sure their stories checked out, although I can't imagine they would have much to gain by lying to me, they seem genuine.

I ask her which pack she is from and she starts to panic. She is reluctant to give me this information, and I am struggling to keep my cool. I don't mean to but before I realize what I have done I have alpha commanded her to tell me. So she does.

I am not surprised when she tells me she is from the Evergreen pack. As she was telling me her story I started to link it to what I had heard from Alpha Lachlan on our phone call the other day.

I am not surprised she is Luna. She is beautiful and strong and she has a kind and caring aura about her. But I need to verify this story. People have a tendency to lie when they are scared or desperate. And she is clearly very scared. I don't think she is lying though. I sense she is being truthful.

We talk some more, I advise her that I will be having a conversation with both Mason and Kaia separately, she doesn't seem concerned, she even offers to help organize the meeting, although I explain it is not necessary as I will be seeing them at the club.

Before I leave she asks for my name. I was so wrapped up in asking her questions, I didn't even introduce myself. She stares at me for a few moments and I can't quite figure out what she's thinking as she stares at me with a sweet smile on her face. Then as if she realizes that she is staring at me she thanks me for my visit and farewells me closing the door.

As I am walking down the stairs I hear two little voices calling out to their mommy, with my werewolf hearing. The twins must be awake I think to myself. I really want to meet them for some reason, as does Sabre. But we resist the urge. Once I get to the tree line, I shift into my wolf, seeing that the twins are watching from the window. Sabre and I leap off following the forest path, feeling quite happy with myself and thinking about that sweet scent of peony blossom and peach nectar.

\*Aleksa POV\*

It's been a week since Kingston appeared at my doorstep, and I haven't seen him since that day. We are all settled into life in Denver, having been here a couple of weeks now. Liam and Layla are loving the daycare that they attend. The ladies who run it, and work there, are so kind and nurturing, the twins are really thriving there. They've even managed to make a few friends and have a few playdates. I've even made a few mom friends myself. We go for coffee on the weekend while the children play at the park. It's a far cry from our life at Evergreen, which was so much more isolated. I didn't have any mom friends. I mean I only had Eva and Kali, and look how Eva turned out. Kali is a keeper though, I sure miss her. I think of her often.

Mason and Kaia are enjoying working at the club, naturally they have already been promoted since starting there. Their natural leadership skills are obviously hard to ignore. Mason is now running the security team there, and has been asked to manage security for another two clubs in town. Kaia is no longer working as hostess, she is working within management. They both

seem happy. We didn't talk much about our lives before we came here, we all decided we wanted to move forward and focus on our new lives. We didn't want the negativity of our pasts constantly hanging over us.

Recently we heard from Caleb and Kali, they had finally safely reached Crimson Moon and were greeted with open arms by Alpha Callum and his Luna Cadence. They had to lay low for a while in a human town initially as they were surrounded by the Evergreen pack warriors, but they managed to escape a week later. It sounded like things were pretty tough for them for a while. I am so happy that they are safe now. I still feel guilty that their lives were uprooted the way they were. However, they assure me that they would do it again in a heartbeat. I'm grateful for such loyal and courageous friends.

Every day I count myself lucky that Lachlan hasn't found me or the twins, or my friends yet. We have no way of knowing where he is looking for us, although I imagine he would be looking high and low for Liam, being that he is the rightful heir to Evergreen Pack. I know the day will come when he finds us and we will have to fight for our freedom once again. All I can do right now is make sure we are ready when that time comes. Mason, Kaia and I have been working on multiple escape plans for the twins and I, and we are almost ready for when the time comes.

Today I have the day off work. I have dropped the twins off at daycare, and Mason and Kaia are both at work, so I don't know what to do with myself. I've been working a lot recently. Since we left Evergreen in such a hurry, we were unprepared. We had no savings or back up plans, so I've been working extra shifts so that I can put some money inside for when we have to move on again.

I look around at the cabin, it's pretty immaculate so that rules cleaning out. I look in the pantry and it's looking a little empty so I guess I can go grocery shopping. Although I am feeling restless at the moment, so, I try to channel Amber to see if she would like to go for a run.

After a few attempts I hear no reply from her in my head, so I guess shifting is out of the question right now. I almost can't remember the last time we shifted. Amber has been so distant since everything that went down with Lachlan, I think she misses Cyrus, Lachlan's wolf. She has only spoken to me once since we escaped from Evergreen, and that was when we met Kingston.

A cheeky smile erupts on my face when I think of Kingston. Gosh he is divine. He's tall, he's tanned, he's muscular, he has a smile that just makes me want



to melt. He has a commanding no nonsense type of aura about him. But then he's understanding and seems sincere. I feel so attracted to him. It's so unlike me. I'm not that girl that falls all over a guy. It's so bizarre, I should be mourning the death of my relationship with Lachlan, not getting all turned on but the hot alpha of the Rocky Mountain Pack. Get a grip Aleksa – I think to myself.

I figured that because I had rejected my fated mate I would be sick. I had always been told that rejecting or being rejected by your fated mate would make you weak and potentially k\*\*l you, but I wasn't feeling any of that. In all honesty, I had never felt better. Maybe a little weak physically, but mentally I feel freer than I ever have.

I can't even feel Lachlan being intimate with someone anymore. Perhaps my rejecting our bond was enough? I thought that he needed to accept my rejection though. It's so confusing. Perhaps I needed to see someone, a witch or a healer or perhaps a shaman. I wouldn't even know where to start come to think of it. Perhaps I would discuss this with Kaia later on tonight and see what she thinks about it all.

Thinking about Kingston had gotten me all wound up. So I decided I would go for a run, and since Amber isn't talking to me I will just go in my human form. I look around my room to find something acceptable to run in.

I picked up some black leggings and a black sports bra and put them on. I grab the only pair of shoes I have that would be suitable, my black converse shoes, and pull my hair into a high ponytail.

I walk through the house, shut the door, run down the stairs and start stretching. I take a deep breath in of fresh air, and decide that this is exactly what I need. So I started jogging off into the woods to relieve myself of some s\*\*\*\*l frustration.

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I've been running for about forty five minutes now and I realize I am completely lost. I thought I was following a trail but clearly I went off track at some point. I'm not worried because I am a wolf and I love the woods. So I try to communicate with Amber but she's still not reachable. I slow down to walk a bit and take a look at my surroundings. If I could just find some sort of landmark, or listen for some sort of sound like running water or traffic or something.

I didn't bring anything with me so I can't keep track of the time. Although I don't have to pick up Liam and Layla until much later today so that doesn't concern me.

I start to backtrack hoping that I am going back in the right direction. After a few hours I stop. Great one Aleksa. Lost in the middle of nowhere, with no wolf to rely on. My stomach starts to growl and I wish that I had some breakfast before I left, or even a drink of water.

I decide that I will keep walking straight until I find the river or the road, or something resembling the right direction.

After some time passes, I get the feeling I am not alone. I can't hear anything but I can sense company is near.

I start regretting this bright idea I had to go for a run in the woods without my wolf. I hear a twig snap and I look behind me. I can smell them before I see them. Rogues. There appears to be two of them. They start to snarl at me. They both look pretty mangey, and they smell terrible like rotten meat. I would imagine it has been a while since they last showered. I am fighting the urge to vomit right now. My gag reflex is going strong. They slowly start to stalk towards me, both coming towards me, one from the right and one from the left.

I start to panic and try to wake Amber up, "Come on girl I could really use your help right now, we need to shift. Amber!!! Please! Rogues! I need to shift." I yell at her desperately in my head.

"What's a pretty she wolf doing out here all on her lonesome?" The brown one with white stripes all around its torso says to me.

"Looking for some fun, shewolf?" The other rogue says licking it's licks and smirking at me, it is also brown, with red stripes over it's back and belly.

"Uh, no thank you. I was just on my way back to.. My pack." I say.

"Liar. You have no pack. You don't smell like a rogue." he sniffs the air near me. "You smell so sweet, and I can sense that you are ranked, but you don't smell like a pack wolf". The brown and white coloured rogue says matter of factly.

“That’s right so you better back off – NOW!” I say. Hoping that will make them think twice, but deep down inside knowing that it won’t. I am well aware that I am outnumbered and out wolfed.

“Hahaha. Nice try, she wolf. You are weak. Your wolf is not with you right now!” the brown and white rogue says with a sinister smile on it’s face.

I take a defensive stance, as I am well aware that these rogues want more than a chat from me, and I am resigned to the fact that I will have to defend myself in human form.

I only wish I was trained to defend myself. I never got a chance to train at Evergreen because I had gotten pregnant straight away and then I was constantly weak from the pain of Lachlan cheating. I had done a few self defense classes back in the human town I grew up in before meeting Lachlan but that was about it. Moon goddess please protect me! I prayed silently.

The brown and white coloured rogue lunged towards me, and I was able to move out of his way just in time, only to be pounced on by the brown and red striped rogue. He furiously bit into the side of my waist, taking a chunk of skin out of my side. I could feel the excruciating, stabbing pain take over my body. “Aahhhhh!” I screamed in pain and shock. I could smell the overwhelming metallic odor of my blood oozing out of me.

At that moment, the brown and white striped rogue got back up on it’s feet, and plunged towards me as I stood up. He knocked me hard onto the ground. I tried to push him off me but he had me pinned to the ground, and I was feeling weak from the bite on my waist. He started to snap at my neck, going for my jugular. I felt an unimaginable fear inside me at that moment. Was this it? Is this how I would die? No f#\$%ing way! I will fight to my last breath for my pups, I tell myself.

I punched the rogue in the throat as hard as I could, and used all my strength to push the rogue to the side, it started to choke, and took a moment to get it’s breath back then got ready to charge me again. The other rogue was circling me with a feral and satisfied look on it’s face.

I clutched at my side trying to place pressure on my wound. I could feel that I was losing too much blood. I started to feel dizzy. I could see the rogues smirking and mumbling something. I saw the red and white one lunge towards me, and just as it was opening its mouth to snap its teeth at my neck, I started to fall to the ground, and all I saw was darkness.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I woke up to the sound of machines beeping. I took a few deep breaths and I could smell bleach mixed with antiseptic. Where am I, I asked myself. I tried to open my eyes and everything felt so bright. And I felt so tired, so I gave up and faded back into sleep.

I could hear a faint voice calling out my name, multiple times. Then I smelt the faint scent of fresh pine, it was my favourite scent, as the forest was my favourite place. I started to open my eyes again and this time even though it was overwhelmingly bright, I succeeded in fully opening them.

I felt slight tingles on my hand, It must be static electricity from the bed and the machines I thought. Then I looked down. It was Kingston. He was holding my hand, sitting beside me, looking at me with what looked like relief on his face. I tried to speak but my mouth was so dry, I managed to croak out "water".

Kingston obliged and helped me with some water in a cup and a straw. I took a few sips initially, then I greedily took more. The thirst within me was intense. I felt like I hadn't had any water in days.

I tried again to speak, this time I was successful, although I had to cough in between words.

"Where am I?" I manage to say in between coughs, looking around confused. As I tried to sit up a bit, I was engulfed with pain, a stabbing pain at my waist. I grabbed it with my hand and I could feel a large dressing. I looked back up at Kingston.

"The rogues? But how did I get here?" I asked.

"I can explain, don't panic, you are safe Aleksa". Kingston reassures me. He then proceeds to tell me how I got here.

"I was out for a run in the woods, when I smelt rogues, I could sense danger, so I kept running until I saw you." Kingston tells me.

"You were bleeding profusely, and the rogues appeared to be going in for the k\*\*l, so I took them both out, and then I rushed you here." He tells me, with anger starting to radiate from his aura.

I look at him, I'm overcome with emotion, I feel so grateful to him, if he hadn't been out there, I would be dead. "Thank you, I don't know how I can ever repay you for this." I say to him with a sincere look upon my face.

Then I realize I am here, but my pups are not, "Oh my goddess, Liam and Layla! Daycare! I was supposed to pick them up. I've got to go!" I say as I try to pull myself up in a hurry leading to my stitches bursting. I feel the blood start to rush out of my wound, the metallic smell overwhelming my senses. What on earth? I think to myself. I am a werewolf. Why have I not healed?

Kingston panics and calls the doctors in to tend to my wound, he holds pressure on it, until they arrive, then they start stitching my wound up again.

"You need to be more careful Aleksa, your wolf is not with you right now, your healing will be that of a human's healing right now". He tells me.

He then goes on to tell me a healer came in earlier and said that my wolf was away, but would be back, that she just needed some time to heal.

"Liam and Layla, are here, at Rocky Mountain. So are Mason and Kaia, you have all been granted an exemption, you are here as my guests. They will be in shortly. I have mindlinked my Beta Asher to inform them that you are awake." He says.

I sigh in relief. I am glad that my pups are close by and that I will get to see them. But I have so many questions. I look up at Kingston and I start to ask him "How long have I been out?".

To which he replied, "Three days. You have been in a coma for the past three days." He says with a sadness exuding from him.

I am shocked "Three days? How can that be? Why did I sleep so long?" I ask, starting to panic that I have worried my pups and friends for the past three days.

"Your wolf wasn't with you to speed up the healing process, and your injuries were critical. But you're awake now and your body is slowly repairing itself" Kingston exclaims.

Kingston looks at me as though there is something on his mind. "Tell me, Aleksa, what were you doing in that part of the forest alone at that time of day?".

I look at him perplexed. “I was going for a run, I got lost, then I came across the rogues”. Remembering my encounter with them.

“You really shouldn’t be so careless in future, that part of the territory isn’t often utilized by our pack, although it is our territory we generally keep away from it. It borders on the forsaken territory.” He warns me.

“When you are recovered, we can show you the territorial boundaries, and explain it all a bit more. For now, I would advise you to keep to the main track or even the main road, if you are running in human form” he then pauses, looks at me and continues, “There is something I need to discuss with you but it can wait until you are out of hospital.” Kingston says.

At that moment, the door bursts open and Mason and Kaia walk in with two very energetic and happy children “Mommy!” They call to me in sync.

“Mommy, we missed you! They tell me. They are about to jump on me when they are pulled back by Mason and Kaia.

“Slow down there pups, we don’t want to hurt mommy now do we?” Kaia says to Liam and Layla.

They just look at me wide eyed. “Mommy is so happy to see you both. I have missed you so much while I was sleeping.” I tell them with tears ready to fall from my eyes.

We all chat for a while, and Kingston stays sitting next to me the whole time. I find it strange that he seems so protective of me, but at the same time, I really don’t want him to leave. Something about his scent keeps me calm and makes me feel safe. Two things I haven’t felt in a long time.

After about half an hour I am struggling to keep my eyes open. Mason and Kingston start to notice, and suggest it might be time for everyone to leave so that I can get some sleep. We all say goodbyes and I am able to hug my pups goodbye gently. I thank Mason and Kaia for looking after them and promise I will be out tomorrow, to which Kingston looks at me doubtfully.

They all leave, but Kingston doesn’t. “Are you not going to leave as well?” I ask him, struggling to fight against my heavy eyes. “I will wait for you to fall asleep, then I will leave to attend to some pack matters, close your eyes Aleksa, get some sleep” he says.

Then I lose my fight to stay awake and drift off to sleep.

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I had been in hospital for a total of five days now, and the medical team were satisfied that I was medically stable, and I was able to leave this morning. To say I was excited was an understatement. I couldn't wait to get out of here, don't get me wrong it was a state of the art hospital, everything was so bright and white and clean, it was a simple room with a bed in the middle of the room connected with monitors and equipment, and a panel above the bed with oxygen and suction and various other switches and medical supplies. Beside me was a small bedside table with a jug of water and cup on it. To the left of me there was a door leading to an ensuite bathroom with a walk in shower and a gorgeous sink and vanity with a large mirror. It was well stocked with environmentally friendly sustainable products.

Everyone here was so professional, from the Nurses and Doctors to the healthcare assistants and kitchen staff that brought me my meals.

The food was first class. I don't think I have ever eaten so well. I mean I have always cooked healthy and tasty meals, it's just you notice it more when someone else is cooking for you and you are on the receiving end.

However, that all said. I missed my pups greatly, I had never been separated from them like this before, with the exception being when Lachlan threw me into the dungeon at Evergreen.

I was also worried that I had missed too many shifts at work, but being that Kingston owned the Tavern, he said he had told Sierra that I would be off for a week or so, so there was no pressure there, but I still felt guilty letting my new team down, especially since I had just recently started.

I just wanted to get back to my new life, which had barely just started. I had told myself that this was just a temporary setback and I wouldn't let it hold me back.

One thing I would definitely miss about being here was the daily visits from Kingston. I could look at his face all day. I felt butterflies just thinking about him. Drool.

I walked to the bathroom to have a quick shower. Mason would be in shortly as he was picking me up to take me back to the old log cabin.

When I walked out of the shower Kingston was waiting at my bedside for me. I was standing at the ensuite door with nothing but a towel on. I stood there shocked. I was not expecting anyone else to be in the room, or I would have changed in the bathroom.

I stood there with my mouth wide open, looking at Kingston, feeling uber anxious that he was seeing me this way.

He was sitting there with a smirk on his face, something flashing in his eyes, amber flecks, his wolf surfacing perhaps.

“I’m sorry I didn’t realize anyone else was in here, I’ll just grab my clothes and change, I won’t be long” I say picking the outfit that had been left for me the other day up off my bed and darting for the bathroom.

Nice one Aleksa, I scold myself. My heart racing and my body responding to the gorgeous wolf sitting only meters away from where I was getting changed.

I quickly throw my black halter neck dress on and my black crossover sandals on and brush my hair in front of the mirror.

Once I feel I look acceptable I walk out of the bathroom to greet Kingston.

“Aleksa, you look beautiful, please sit, there is something I would like to discuss with you” Kingston says sitting on the chair next to my hospital bed, with what looks like l\*\*t in his eyes, trailing my every move.

## **Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 14**

\*Aleksa POV\*

“Caleb? Is that you?” I ask, almost holding a breath in anticipation to hear his voice.

“Yes, Luna, it’s me. Are you okay? Are you safe?” Caleb asks.

“Yes, we are all safe and well thank you. How are you and Kali? Are you safe?” I ask in a panicked tone.

“We are now. We have encountered a bit of trouble, but nothing we couldn’t handle.” Caleb says in a reassuring tone.



Although I am now wondering what trouble they encountered, and if they aren't trying to keep me calm.

"What kind of trouble Caleb? Did you make it to Crimson Moon?" I start firing questions away at Caleb.

"Not quite Luna. We have to keep moving. But don't worry about us, we will be fine. You need to keep hidden. Lachlan has most of the warriors looking for you, as well as others from nearby packs." Caleb says to me in an almost pleading tone.

"Luna, Lachlan has told everyone that Mason and Kaia have kidnapped you and the twins. None of you are safe. So please lay low. I'll call you when we are in a better place. Kali sends her love. Talk soon" Caleb says, and with that the line goes dead.

I look up at Mason and Kaia who are shaking their heads inquisitively, wondering what was said.

"Well, are they okay? What just happened?" Mason asks.

"Something is wrong, he couldn't talk. They haven't made it to Crimson Moon yet, it seems they are still on the run, and there's more..." I say pausing.

"Caleb said that Lachlan has a lot of people out searching for us, and he has told everyone that you both kidnapped the twins and I." I say biting down on my lips and furrowing my brows.

"Oh, well that makes things a bit more complicated then doesn't it." Mason says.

"Not to worry, we just won't let them find us. And, if they do, we just tell them otherwise." Kaia adds.

"I didn't think he would just stop, I knew he would keep coming. Maybe I should continue on with the twins? I don't want you two putting yourself in further danger for me and the twins" I say adamantly to Mason and Kaia.

"Don't even think about it, You and Liam and Layla are like family to us, and family sticks together". Kaia says.

“Absolutely! We will face this together. I’m not letting that prick anywhere near you, or the twins.” Mason adds.

“You guys are amazing! What would I do without you?” I say to them, as I turn to walk down the hallway. I can hear the twins giggling in the back room.

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\*Asher POV\*

I was running through the woods as I usually do, every morning. But something felt different this morning. As I reached the end of the forest edge, nearing the old cabin, that has been in our families for generations now, I noticed there was a large jeep parked outside.

As far as I knew no one should be there. We never used that cabin, it was a bit rundown, sure it had rustic charm but we really had no use for it. One of our pack members had suggested we put it on the book a bach app, then at least it would be in use and maintained. But no one had actually tried to book it as of yet, not when there was five star accommodation further down the road.

We didn’t need the money by any means but Grandpa would have been happy knowing that someone would be using it. It signified our once humble beginnings. Everything started here from this small log cabin, on the edge of the Falls River in the national park territory.

My name is Asher. I am twenty eight years old, I am a decent height at 6”2, with short shaved sandy blonde hair, and blue eyes. I spend most of my time outdoors, and work out a lot so I have a solid tan and fairly decent physique. I am the Beta of the Rocky Mountain Pack. I serve the pack alongside my best friend Kingston, who is the Alpha of our pack.

Running in a southbound direction, in my wolf form, I took a whiff of the air nearby, I couldn’t pick up any new scents. Although, I could still sense there were people inside, not to mention that the Jeep was a giveaway. I ran back to the pack house and took a quick shower.

I had decided that I would take a shower, get changed, and then investigate further. If someone was staying there, I needed to check them out. Then once I have more information I would inform the Alpha.

After my shower I was just starting to head down stairs when I saw Kai, “Hey Kai, are you aware of anyone staying at the old log cabin on Falls River?” I asked. If anyone would know it would be him. Nothing goes past him in this pack. Kai is the Gamma of this pack, he is also in charge of all of our real estate, land and holdings.

“Yeah, come to think of it, I do recall seeing a booking for the old log cabin near Falls River in my emails, to be honest I haven’t checked it out yet though.” Kai replies.

“No worries man, I might pass by and check the place out, see who’s staying there and why” I inform him.

“Yeah man, sounds like a plan, I’ll catch ya later” he says as he jogs off, probably to training, as most of the wolves of this pack will be about to start training at this time of the morning.

About twenty minutes later I’m walking up to the old log cabin, I knock on the door. I am greeted by a pretty impressively sized male. I can’t detect any scents so I would say he was human, but there’s something about him that isn’t quite right.

We start talking when two of the most beautiful women I have seen in a long time walk towards me. One of them stands out to me more than the other, there’s just something about her. She has the most beautiful face and the most piercing eyes I have ever seen. She looks so sexy, and she’s just wearing a short black leather skirt, a black low scoop tight fitting top, with a patent leather fitted bomber type jacket, topped off with mustard yellow combat boots. She gives off this vibe that looks like it is effortless for her to look like such a beauty.

I am snapped back to the current conversation when I notice they are standing directly in front of me, staring at me, waiting for me to say something.

They are each carrying an infant, one a boy and one a girl.

We all start talking, and they are polite but I get the feeling they are hiding something. I can’t scent any of them, but something is telling me that they are not human.

As we chat I ask them where the babies’ father is, that’s when the conversation seems to sour. Looks like I hit a sore spot I think to myself.

There is more to them than meets the eye, and I feel as though they are hiding something, but they are starting to get a bit guarded, so I stop my subtle interrogation.

I say my goodbyes and leave the old log cabin. For some reason my wolf and I are happy that they will be staying for a while, but we are concerned and wondering what it is that they are hiding.

I walk into the woods and when I am sure that I am out of sight I shift into my wolf and take off towards the pack house.

I shift as I approach the steps leading into the pack house. I head up the internal staircase and make my way to the alpha's office.

I knock on the door, there is no answer. That's strange I think to myself. The alpha is usually in his office this time of day. I push the door open. He is on the phone and he does not look impressed.

"Like I said before, we have not encountered any wolves or otherwise matching those descriptions. And yes, feel free to send me through the details. Yes. Okay. Alright. No problems. Okay goodbye."

And with that Kingston slammed the receiver down on the desk.

"That looked a bit heated, everything alright Kingston?" I asked my friend.

"That was a pack on the East Coast, their Luna and her pups have been kidnapped by two rogues, and they have no leads, so they are reaching out to all the packs in the country." Kingston tells me.

"Oh really, did he give out any names?" I ask curiously.

"No, I didn't ask, but they are gonna email some photos and information shortly" Kingston said.

"That's heavy," I said to my friend.

"So did you want something Asher? I'm kinda under the pump this morning. I'm trying to get everything in order for the Royal Pack Summit later this year.

"Oh it's nothing important. We just have some guests at the old log cabin by Falls River. I went in and introduced myself to them early today. Just wanted

to see who was there. They seem friendly enough, although I think I will keep an eye on them for now” I say to Kingston.

“Fair enough, I trust your judgment, send me a report later when you have the time, I would like to know who is staying there also.” Kingston says as he stares at his computer.

“Okay, I will send one through later, see you at lunch” I say to Kingston. I need to get on with my day, my workload is pretty heavy too.

I start to walk to my office and my mind drifts to the girl that I met earlier this morning. That’s when I realized I got so distracted I didn’t even ask their names. Nice one Asher. I think to myself. And I call myself a Beta. Oh well I will just have to go back and visit again real soon.

\*Aleksa POV\*

We have been here at the old log cabin in Falls River for about three weeks now. Mason has recently started working at a local club as a security guard. He works from Wednesday to Sunday, so that’s keeping him busy for now, and it means that we have some money coming in. Kaia had managed to get a job there also, which she seems to be enjoying. She works as a hostess, at the front entrance of the club. As luck would have it, they work the same shifts, so they are carpooling. They told the club they were siblings and everyone seems to have bought it so far.

I enrolled Liam and Layla at one of the local daycares and they seem to be enjoying themselves. I am planning to look for some work, so that I can contribute and pay for mine and the twins’ share of the bills and food. I was hoping to find some realtor work but I am starting to wonder if I should try something completely different, given that this is a fresh start for us. As much as I enjoyed my career in property, I am not the same person that I was a few months ago. So much has changed in my life since then.

I now feel so much stronger and more independent since leaving Evergreen and Lachlan. I want to leave as much of my old life behind as possible. I was always so serious and I put everyone before me, which was expected, as Luna and I didn’t mind, but things have changed now. I am not a Luna, and there are only two little people that are reliant on me now, so there is less pressure on me. As much as I didn’t realize back then, Lachlan controlled me and everything that I did. He knew my every step, and I was always wary of

disappointing him or the pack. It took us leaving for me to realise the level of control he had over me.

I just want to do something a bit more carefree, something that doesn't hold a lot of responsibility, because that was my life for the past few years and I need a break from it.

That's it! I am going to do something well outside my comfort zone and apply at an inn or bar in town.

I didn't have a CV but I wasn't worried. I would just walk in, introduce myself and tell them I wanted to work there, and hopefully that would be enough.

I walked into the room that I shared with the twins and looked at my choices. Hmmn, not much to choose from, I thought to myself. Last week Kaia and I went to some thrift stores. We didn't have much money to spend so we needed to stretch it as far as possible. We wanted to get some clothes since we had left everything behind in our packs. I had a few new outfits that I had yet to wear. I looked at them and considered my options.

I had decided I would wear a cute little black dress with spaghetti straps, with a small slimming denim jacket, and some tan knee-high boots I managed to find for \$50. I looked at myself in the bathroom mirror, not bad, I said to myself. I would wear my hair down, it looked tidy enough. I suddenly felt a surge of confidence. I can do this! I repeated to myself.

I jumped into the jeep and started to drive towards the town. We were about a forty-five minute drive from the township. I still had a few hours before I had to pick up the twins, so I had decided that I would use this time to look for a job. I felt bad that we had been relying on Mason and Kaia. I had hoped that I would have been able to take some money that I had saved from the packhouse, but I didn't anticipate being locked in the dungeon and having to escape, so I was very unprepared. We were just so grateful that our new friends, or more like family, had been there to help us.

There were actually a lot of bars in the local township, I thought as I drove down the main street. The nightlife must be popular here, I thought to myself.

I lived in a human town growing up. I was actually raised by humans. I was adopted by the people I knew as my parents. They have raised me since I was a baby. I had no idea who my actual birth parents were. According to my adopted parents, I was dropped off in a basket outside their church. They had

told me this when I was in elementary school. They had wanted to be honest with me from the start, and I appreciated that.

I know this all sounds unbelievable, but it's true. There was a note attached to me that said "I'm sorry we couldn't protect you, we hope the person that finds you can do what we couldn't and a small locket was placed on it.

I still wear the locket now. It's an antique looking rose gold locket with what looks like rose vines decorating it front facing. There is no photo inside. There is a gem of some sort in the place where you will usually find a photo. It's actually a velvety blue colour, almost like a sapphire, it actually reminds me of my eye colour strangely enough.

I don't know why it means so much to me. But I guess I cling to it because it's the only piece of my birth parents that I have.

I have never tried to look for them. I would not even know where to start. Apparently, my adoptive parents tried. They tried so that I could have some closure as I got older. But they had no luck. They hired a private investigator and everything, but he had no leads.

I'm okay with it though. I'm not even mad at them. I imagine that they had no choice, judging by the note they wrote. Plus, my adoptive parents were so loving and treated me like I was their own biological child. I have no regrets. I hope they (my birth parents) are okay wherever they are out there.

I felt comfortable living around humans, I guess because I was brought up to believe I was one for the majority of my life.

Most werewolves live in their packs and prefer to live away from humans. I get it. It's to protect our secrets and to be able to live our best lives without having to worry about prying eyes.

I didn't mind though. I was happy wherever I was.

When I met Lachlan and we mated, I moved straight away to the packhouse with him. It took a lot to get used to, learning the culture, the practices, the rules, their way of living. I had never even been to a pack house before, so I felt very intimidated by it initially.

I knew I was different growing up. I was always faster than most, I had heightened senses of smell, hearing and vision. I also had super fast healing

abilities which both my parents and I both found strange, but they never questioned it. They just said I was blessed.

It wasn't until I turned eighteen that I shifted for the first time under the full moon. It was very drawn out and painful. I thought I was dying at the time. I had no idea that I was a werewolf.

I was alone that night. I was on my way home from a friend's house and I had cut through a forested area when my transition started.

After what felt like forever, I had shifted and I went for a run. I ended up stopping by a lake, the moonlight was reflecting on the water and it was then I saw my wolf form for the first time. I must have stared at myself for hours.

I almost had a full blown panic attack. After crying myself to sleep on the grass edge by the lake, I fell asleep. I had the strangest dream that night and I was visited by the most beautiful woman.

She had long golden blonde hair which flowed down past her hips, crystal blue eyes, and she was absolutely gorgeous. She wore a long white satin dress. She explained to me that I was a werewolf and that my parents had to make the ultimate sacrifice to save me. She said that I would meet my mate, after explaining what a mate was, and she told me to have faith, even if things didn't turn out as I had hoped. She didn't elaborate on anything she was telling me, it all seemed very cryptic.

She told me her name was Selene. She had told me that when the time came, she would reveal herself to me again, and explain my purpose in life to me. She said I had so much more to learn. And to have faith that things will work out in the end. Then she just disappeared and I was blinded by a bright light.

I have always had strange dreams, but that one seemed to stick with me. I sometimes wonder if it was a dream or a premonition.

I snapped myself out of my thoughts and walked towards a bar that seemed to appeal to me. I took a deep breath as I walked to the door.

The security guard was very tall, tanned and very muscular. He was dressed in a smart black suit and wore an earpiece. He pulled the red rope across for me, smiled at me and let me pass.



I scanned my eyes across the room. Wow. I thought to myself. This place is a lot bigger and a lot fancier than I had imagined, based on how it looked from the outside.

From the outside, it almost resembles a ski cabin that you would find at a ski resort. Large timber logs notched at the ends and laid upon one another with the ends filled with plaster or mortar.

From the inside there was a deep rich red coloured carpet which almost resembled velvet. It had booths on the sides of the tavern, with circular tables forming the majority of the room. There were candlestick type chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. Directly facing me as I walked in was the bar. It was a very long wooden bartop. It was littered with beer taps and glasses of all varieties, as well as jugs of lemon water and crates of ice. It had a warm and welcoming vibe about it. It looked immaculate, no beer stains on the carpet or markings on the tables like in other bars.

I walked straight up to the bar and asked to speak with the manager.

“You’re looking at her darling, what can I do for you?” the beautiful tall and lean girl with the long dark black hair and emerald green eyes said to me with a smirk on her face.

“Hi, my name is Aleksa, I am looking for a job, and wondered if you have any vacancies?” I said with a hopeful smile on my face.

“Hi Aleksa, I’m Sierra, well girl, you are in luck, one of my fulltime workers just resigned yesterday and I haven’t placed an ad yet. Can you start tonight, we are super short-staffed?” She asks, emphasising the super part.

“Ah, yes, that should be OK, but I just need to organize a sitter for my pu.. babies. Can I make a quick call? I asked hopefully.

“Sure hun, you can use the phone over there” Sierra says as she points to a phone on the wall near the cash register.

I called Kaia, who picked up straight away. “Is everything okay?” she asked worriedly.

“Hey Kaia, everything is fine, I think I have a job!” I said excitedly.

“That’s brilliant! Where?” Kaia asks.

“At a tavern, in town,” I said.

“That’s great Aleksa! We all have jobs now! I’m so excited for us!” Kaia says loudly.

“The thing is Kaia, they want me to start tonight, as someone has just left and they are super short-staffed” I say, not yet finished explaining myself before Kaia interrupts. “Of course, you don’t even have to ask. I will watch Liam and Layla. No problem! Hey, can you still pick us up from our day shift? Kaia asks.

“Of Course. I will be there shortly.” I said to Kaia.

I hung up the phone and made my way over to Sierra. “That’s fine. I’ve got a sitter sorted. I can start tonight. Ah, what time did you want me here? I ask Sierra.

“Seven o’clock hun. You will be working late with Accalia tonight. It will only be the two of you at the bar. The chef, Steve, will be out back making bar snacks, and Tony will be at the door. Unfortunately, tonight is one of our busier nights, and you girls will get slammed. Hey, I forgot to ask, have you ever worked at a bar before?” Sierra eyed me.

“Ah not technically, but how hard can it be right?” I said, flashing a big smile on my face. Hoping that Sierra doesn’t take her job offer back.

Sierra looks at me with a questionable look on her face, as if she is pondering her options. “Tell ya what. I’ll give you a trial run. I’ll stay on a bit later tonight to show you the basics. That should be enough to get you going. Most of it is talking to the punters and keeping them happy. A pretty thing like you should be able to manage that.” She says as she walks off.

“See you at seven -and Aleksa, don’t be late!” Sierra yells as she walks out to what I imagine is the kitchen.

I turned on my heels and exited the tavern. A surge of excitement goes through me. Oh my goddess. I did it. I got a job! I’m so optimistic as to what the future might hold.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I put on some cherry red lip gloss and rubbed my lips together, plumping my lips to give them that glossy full lip look. I took one last look in the mirror, said

my little mantra to myself “you’ve got this girl” and walked into the lounge. I grabbed the keys off the table and said goodbye to Mason and Kaia, who were watching the late news on television.

I was feeling pumped and ready to start my first shift at the tavern. This would be the first day of the rest of my life, of our lives. This was for the twins as much as it was for me. Financial independence was part of our journey. I needed to be able to provide for them, to give them the life they deserved, I thought to myself.

I walked out the door and made my way towards the stairs. It was at that moment that I had the strangest feeling as I walked in complete darkness towards the car. It felt like I wasn’t alone. I don’t know if I was on guard because Lachlan was probably still looking for us, or if it was my heightened senses warning me that someone was close by.

I shrugged it off and sat in the driver’s seat. Here goes nothing, I thought to myself. I pulled out of the driveway and made my way down the gravel road. I had left extra early as I wanted to make a good impression.

I put the radio on and listened to some music; Cold Heart by Elton John and Dua Lipa. I love this song, I think to myself. I turn the volume up high. Dancing from my car seat while driving through the darkness.

In no time I arrived at work. Gosh, time goes fast when you are having fun. I miss cranking the music up and dancing around the house. I hadn’t done that since before I met Lachlan. Life had gotten serious so fast. Anyway, no time to dwell on the past. I was walking into my future.

I walked up to the entrance, and looked at the security guard. “Hi, you must be Tony”, I said in a loud voice, because the music was pumping in the tavern.

“I am, and who would you be?” He looked at me suspiciously.

“I am Aleksa, tonight is my first night. I’ll be working at a bar. Sierra hired me today” I said enthusiastically.

“Welcome to the tavern Aleksa, please go inside.” Tony said to me, pulling the red velvet rope across for me to pass.

I walked past Tony and stopped just before I entered. I take a moment to center myself. I hear that mantra in my mind once again. Then I pulled the door open and stepped into the tavern.

I am taken aback by how many people are currently here. The place is packed. The lights are dimmed. The music is cranking. There is even a dance floor in the far corner on the left-hand side of the bar.

Sierra wasn't joking when she said we would get slammed tonight. I feel fear overtake me. Can I do this? What was I thinking? I have no experience. As I start to delve into self-doubt, I am snapped out of my thoughts when a familiar voice speaks to me.

"Well hello again, uh I didn't catch your name last time we met?" the unknown voice says. I moved to stand in the light and then I recognized the person standing right in front of me. It's Asher, the park ranger we met the other day.

"Oh hi, it's nice to see you again, I'm Aleksa." I said politely.

"Nice to see you again Aleksa, hey uh, what was your friend's name? I forgot to ask the other day", He asks with a shy smile on his face.

"Oh, Kaia, her name is Kaia." I said back to him.

"Kaia – nice," he says deep in thought.

"Well, I better get moving, it's my first shift and I don't want to be late" I said to him.

"Yeah, sure,uh, good luck" Asher says, still preoccupied with his thoughts.

I pushed past him and walked up to the bar. I couldn't see Sierra anywhere and the girl at the bar looked super busy, so I walked around to the back of the bar, thinking there would be an office somewhere out back where I might find Sierra.

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What a night. I thought to myself. I found Sierra in her office earlier and she gave me a crash course on the most popular drinks that are ordered at the tavern. Fortunately, it appears that most people prefer beer.

I managed to make it through the night without making any major mistakes and even started to learn a regular's name or two.

The other girl working at the bar, Accalia, didn't talk much, or even look at me most of the night, but I'm thinking that might possibly be her personality type.

She has that whole alternative vibe going with purple highlights on her black hair, she has pale white skin as if it were kissed by the moon. She has thick glossy lips. And her eyes, her eyes are so dark but captivating at the same time. I can't actually make out their color. She was wearing black leather pants and a skin-tight leather vest, with chunky leather and studded bracelets on her wrists.

She looks like the kinda girl you don't want to mess with. She's great with the customers though. They all love her. I would imagine she has been here for quite some time.

I finished wiping the last table and looked up at the clock. It's three am. Time went by so fast. My feet are aching, it's been a while since I spent so long on my feet and I didn't wear the most comfortable shoes, so I will be paying for that later today.

I said goodbye to everyone and walked towards the car. I rubbed my eyes as I turned on the engine and started to make my way back home.

It's so quiet at this time of the morning and there is no one else on the road. As I pulled into the gravel road that would lead me back to the old log cabin, I saw a black shadow go past the side window.

I rubbed my eyes again and slowed down a bit and glanced to my right side. I can't see anything or anyone so I guess my eyes are playing tricks on me since I am so tired. I am feeling a little weary though, so I push my foot down on the accelerator and drive home a bit faster.

When I got home, I saw that Mason and Kaia had left the porch light on for me, thankfully. As my mind is taking me to a strange place today. I feel anxious for some reason. As I turned off the engine, I started to walk at pace to the front door. As I pulled out my keys, I turned back and looked at the lake and then again at the forested area. Nope Aleksa, there's no one there. It's just your overactive imagination.

I opened the door and walked into the house and kicked off my boots that I wish I hadn't worn tonight. I locked the door and headed towards my bed with a smile on my face. I did it. I survived my first night at work.

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I woke up to the warm sun streaming in through the windows. I must have fallen straight into a deep sleep because I felt well rested. I looked up at the old alarm clock next to me. Uh oh. It's 10am. No wonder I feel well rested – I've overslept. I was supposed to have Liam and Layla at daycare already. I looked at the twins. They looked so peaceful. I didn't want to wake them just yet.

I bit down on my lip and sighed. Oh well. I might just make a sneaky coffee and enjoy a bit of peace and quiet before the twins wake up. I started to look for the phone so that I could call the daycare and let them know that the twins would be staying home today.

Once that was done, I put some water in the jug and waited for the water to boil. Coffee is what I need right now. I thought back to when I bumped into Asher last night. He seemed quite interested in Kaia. I must remember to tell her about that. He's very sweet and I think they would look so cute together. With what she has been through, she deserves a little fun.

The house was so quiet right now, with the twins still asleep and with Mason and Kaia at work already. It was nice of them to let me sleep in, I thought to myself. I'm glad they didn't wake me this morning, it will be nice to have a day to just enjoy Liam and Layla's company.

The jug had boiled and I was making my coffee when I heard a noise at the door. My heart started to race and my breathing quickened. A feeling of terror took over me. I heard a loud knock at the door. I just stood in the kitchen not moving, hoping the knocking would stop and whoever it was would think no one was home and go away.

I had nowhere to run. I would never be able to get out of here in time. The twins were still sleeping. I had to face up to this. Whoever it was. Whatever it was. I had to be brave. I could face whatever life threw at me. I wasn't the same Aleksa I was a couple of months ago, I told myself.

I took a deep breath and I slowly opened the door. And I was utterly shocked by the man who stood in front of me. What is it with this log cabin and

gorgeous strangers appearing at our door? I just hoped this gorgeous specimen of a man had good intentions and wasn't one of Lachlan's lacheys.

"Good Morning, you must be Aleksa?" the handsome stranger said to me with a breathtaking smile.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I stood there in shock, wondering how this handsome stranger knew my name. I took a deep breath and I was immediately alarmed. He is a werewolf and, judging by the aura and scent he is exuding, one of power, I assume, probably an alpha. I take a moment to compose myself although I am overcome with fear.

So many questions are swirling around in my head at this moment. Has he been sent by Lachlan? Is he here to hurt me? Does he know we are rogues? Are we encroaching on his territory? What does he want from me? Is he here for my pups?

At that moment, the stranger in front of me starts to clear his throat, pulling me out of my own thoughts. He stands there with a questionable look on his face as if he is trying to figure me out. He must sense my fear, I thought to myself.

"I believe you have met my Beta Asher", he says with a smirk on his face. I looked at him, with utter realization, smashing into me. He is the alpha. We must be on his territory.

"Uh, yes, uh, we don't mean any harm. We didn't come into your territory intentionally. We didn't know. We can leave right away! Please, we don't want any trouble." I said, panicked in a pleading tone.

The penalty for rogues entering pack lands is generally death or imprisonment. I started to panic and hyperventilate, looking at the wolf in front of me with sheer desperation and fear. I must protect my pups, I think to myself.

Clearly sensing my fear and panic, the alpha in front of me raises his hand towards me. "It's OK. Don't panic. I'm not here to hurt you, I just want to have a chat with you. Would you invite me in?" he politely asks me.

I took a deep breath and tried to calm myself down. I opened the door further to allow him to walk past. He slowly walks past me and sits on the couch,

placing his arms on the top and side of the couch, sitting with his back against the corner of the couch, and placing his right leg over his left, looking relaxed. I just stood there dumbfounded, wondering what was to come next.

“Please, Aleksa, take a seat. This is just a friendly chat. I just want to know why you are here, on my pack lands. You don’t smell like rogues, but here you are out here on your own. Please explain yourself.” He says to me with a serious look on his gorgeous face.

I slowly sit on a chair next to the couch, sitting towards the edge of the chair. And I think to myself, and wonder how much I should tell him. I decide to go with the light version of events, skimming past the fact that I am Luna of a pack, and that my fated mate is currently hunting me and my rogue friends down.

“Start at the beginning, Aleksa, tell me. Is that even your real name?” He asks suspiciously.

I cleared my throat. “Yes, Aleksa is my real name. I guess I will start at the beginning then. I met my mate about two years ago. Everything seemed perfect. We had pups pretty much as soon as we met, twins actually.

“How old are you?” He asks me, interrupting my story.

“I’m twenty years old” I said to him. Wondering why he would ask that question. But I continue on telling my story to him.

“Pretty much as soon as I got pregnant I started experiencing intense pain, daily. I would see the pack doctor often, and she would put it down to growing pregnancy pains, and even when they continued after the twins had arrived she put it down to a traumatic delivery and said they would eventually disappear.”

“Well they didn’t, it wasn’t until one day when I had to leave work early because I couldn’t bear the pain that I walked in on my beta- uh- best friend and my mate in our bed together.”

“Long story short, although I planned to escape with my babies, my plan was cut short and I was thrown in the dungeons, until I escaped with the help of some friends, and we made it here.”



“Please, we have no intention of causing any trouble, we didn’t even realize we were on pack land. We can leave today, please don’t harm us” I pleaded, tears falling down the sides of my face.

I can’t read his face. I don’t know what his plans are. I am praying for mercy from the moon goddess, if just this once, things could go our way.

He took a breath. “I am sorry you had to go through all that. I can’t imagine why a mate would betray their bond given to them from the moon goddess. That is sacrilege.”

“Where are your pups and your friends now?” He asks.

“My friends Mason and Kaia are at work at the moment. They got jobs at a club in town. Uh Headquarters.” I told him.

“And the twins, well, they’re safe, they’re sleeping right now” I said.

“How old are your pups, and what are their names?” He asked me.

“Liam and Layla, they are two years old.” I said, biting down on my bottom lip, wondering what he would do with this information.

“You aren’t technically on park land, you are on the outskirts. I will allow this for now. But we will be keeping an eye on you. We will need to verify that you are who you say you are.” He warned me.

“Which pack are you from?” He asked me. His eyes rested on my face.

I don’t know what to say. If I tell him which pack we are from, he might contact Lachlan. He would tell him something different to what I have, and we would be imprisoned again for Lachlan to find us. I can’t tell him.

“It’s okay. We will leave today. Please, we don’t want any trouble. We just want to be left to ourselves,” I said defiantly.

“You will tell me which pack you are from now!” He says in a loud alpha command.

I cannot refuse a command, so I proceeded to tell him “Evergreen Pack”, “We are from the Evergreen Pack on the East Coast”. I say sadly.

“Evergreen, you say. You are missing Luna, are you not?” He questions me with amber flecks sparkling in his eye.

I looked at him with a tear-stained face. I say nothing but my face deceives me.

“Alpha Lachlan said you were kidnapped by rogues. Tell me Aleksa, have you been kidnapped?” He asks me with a curious look on his face.

“No! No I haven’t. Mason and Kaia are my friends. They helped us escape. Please, Mason and Kaia have nothing to do with this. Please don’t punish them. This is all my fault!!” I pleaded with him to spare my friends.

“I believe you, but I think you had better explain things to me more truthfully this time, Aleksa, and don’t lie to me. I am not here to harm you. I want to help you.” He says in a soft tone, and for some reason I find that comfortable and I believe him.

We talk for some time. I fill him in on how I came to meet Mason and Kaia, as well as explaining how they came to be in the dungeons. I explained how we escaped and the events leading up to us arriving here. I explained how Lachlan treated me, and about his plans to make Eva his Luna, and me his mistress. As well as his plans for our pups. He sat there and listened intently to my words.

Although I couldn’t read him and had no idea what his train of thought might be, I also felt safe around him. I finished my story and sat there in silence waiting for him to respond.

Some time passed, as well as an awkward silence, and it felt like time was moving ever so slowly, then he spoke.

“I am sorry Aleksa. I am sorry that the moon goddess fated you with such a mate. Mates are supposed to be sacred, and if what you say is true then Lachlan has made a mockery of the sanctity of the mate bond. I will look into your account of events. If what you are saying is true then we will grant you the ability to live here on the pack border for now” He said to me.

“I will need to meet Mason and Kaia, as well as verifying their version of events”. He proclaims.

“I understand. Do you want me to call them for you?” I ask him.

“There’s no need for that. I will go into Headquarters and speak with them there.” He says.

“But, they are working, and there are humans around, are you sure you want to do that?” I ask.

“I think it will be fine. Especially considering I own that bar. In fact I own almost the entire town.” He says with a smirk on his face.

I look at him in shock. That means he probably owns the Tavern, where I work. That means that this isn’t a human town afterall. We had really messed up here. Of all the places.

“It was nice meeting you Aleksa. I will be in touch.” He says standing up from the couch.

“Uh, it was nice to meet you too, uh, I just realized that I don’t actually know your name?” I say to him realizing that he never introduced himself.

“Kingston, it’s Kingston.” He says with a cheeky grin on his face.

Kingston, I think to myself, for some reason hearing his name makes my heart happy. I feel warm all over. It’s at this point I realize I have been staring at his face a little longer than I should have. He just grins at me.

“Thank you Kingston, I appreciate you considering this. I promise we won’t be a nuisance.” I say to him gratefully.

He turns and walks off. I shut the door. Then not a minute later I hear little feet running down the hallway.

“Mommy! Mommy!” Liam and Layla yell at me happily. “Pancakes Mommy!” They yell in unison with great big smiles on their faces, as I pick them up for cuddles. I then place them on the bench top in front of the kitchen window so that they can help me make the pancake batter.

They position themselves front facing towards the window. “Wolf mama, wolf!” They yell, and we watch a huge black wolf run into the forest.

Kingston. I think to myself. His wolf is magnificent. His human seems to be quite alluring to. I scold myself for thinking of him that way in a time like this. I

need to be practical and think clearly. I can't allow myself these thoughts. "But he's so gorgeous Aleksa!" I hear Amber say and giggle in my head.

I haven't heard anything from Amber since we were thrown in the dungeons. I wondered if she would ever speak to me again. "Ofcourse Aleksa, I am always here I just needed some time to heal. We can trust him Aleksa." Amber says. "How do you know that?" I ask Amber. "Trust me, Aleksa. All will be revealed in due time". She says to me cryptically.

\*Kingston POV\*

I am twenty eight years of age and I am the Alpha of the Rocky Mountain National Park Pack. We are the second largest pack in the country. I took over as Alpha from my father when I turned twenty two. I met my mate not long after becoming Alpha and we were happy for a while. Until she got sick. After a short battle with a terminal illness, she passed away. We didn't get the chance to have pups, we had planned to enjoy our time together for a while before settling down to have pups, unfortunately fate had other plans for us.

For the past few years I have managed to dodge the council's plans for me. There has been huge pressure from the werewolf council for me to take a chosen mate as the pack's Luna, but I have no inclination to.

My sister Quinn takes care of most of the luna duties for our pack, and my mother supports her with this for now. I realize she can't do this forever, as she is yet to meet her mate too. Although, I have a bit of time before I need to figure out what happens next. Quinn is a bit younger than me, she's only twenty two.

Usually, you meet your mate when you gain your wolf at around eighteen years of age. So Quinn is feeling the pressure of not having met her mate. She has faith that he is still out there though, so she's just biding her time until she finds him.

With no heir to take over as Alpha, I will most likely have to pass it down to my Beta or his offspring. Although, I have no plans of relinquishing my role as Alpha any time soon.

Being that we are such a large pack and that we have a well respected and feared reputation, we are for the most part a warrior pack. So we almost never have any trouble here, other than the occasional rogue.

But that doesn't mean we are complacent. Everyone in our pack is required to train from three years of age, regardless of gender. We pride ourselves in knowing that everyone can fight to defend themselves, especially our most vulnerable wolves.

Right now I am busy organizing the Annual Royal Pack Summit which is taking place here at Rocky Mountain in the summertime. It's a big deal, alpha's from all around the country come to pay their respects and allegiance to the Royal Werewolf family, as well as network, and party. Since we have been tasked with hosting this year, there is a lot to do to ensure it all goes smoothly.

I have a committee of volunteers that are organizing most of it, but there are a number of packs that aren't on good terms and it is my duty to ensure that no hostility presents itself. So I am ringing each and every pack in the country to personally welcome them and get an idea of what we are dealing with when the time comes. We need to be able to separate rival packs to avoid any disturbances, and ensure it all goes smoothly.

I am on the phone in my office making calls to packs on the East Coast, when my Beta Asher comes into my office. I rub my forehead and look up at him sighing. I put my hand up and point a finger at him to gesture that I will just be a minute, and I continue on with the phone call I'm on.

I'm currently speaking with the alpha of the Evergreen Pack. He's a real piece of work, this guy, he's giving me some convoluted story about his Luna and pups were kidnapped by rogues. Apparently he sent an email, but I've yet to receive it.

I tell him I haven't seen or heard anything that would be helpful to him, and give him my offer of assistance should he ever need it. I agree to put up some fliers, and keep an eye out for anything suspicious. After some small talk I ended my call with him.

For some reason that phone call irks me. I feel disdain for this man. He sounded ingenuine and I believe there is more to this story than he is letting on. I have no idea why I feel this way but it's just a feeling I have.

Asher starts rattling on about some humans staying at the old log cabin, well he assumes they are human, but isn't overly convinced, so he's going to dig a little deeper and keep a close eye on them. I'm too busy to deal with this right now, so I agree with him and fob him off for now. I feel like a little guilty, but

I'm under so much pressure right now, and I'm sure it's nothing he can't handle.

While he was telling me about them I felt my wolf stirring inside me. Maybe he's been stuck indoors too long and he wants to get out of this office and go for a run. I look up at the clock. I've put in a few good hours so far, so I decide that I'll take an early lunch break and get back to this a bit later.

I walk out of the pack house and jog down the stairs. I look around from one side of the pack grounds to another. It's pretty quiet this morning, most wolves are at school or work or training at this time of day. I rip my clothes off and start shifting and run into the woods.

My bones start to c\*\*\*k out of place and extend then slowly fall back into place, fur sprouts out all over my hands and arms and body. I start to pound into the forest floor feeling the crisp air hit my snout. This release is exactly what I needed right now. A break from the mundane office work and never ending pack calls. Just me and Sabre and the great outdoors.

Sabre takes over and he runs in a specific direction. He runs to the far right side of the woods, and he starts running alongside the Falls River. Before long we are approaching the area that Asher was talking about this morning. If only I could remember what he was saying earlier, my curiosity has piqued.

We have reached the old log cabin and there aren't any cars outside, perhaps no one is home we ponder. We take a few deep sniffs and we are intrigued by one of the scents we pick up. So we start moving towards the front window. A few yards in we stop in our tracks. From where we are standing we can see the most beautiful woman.

She's gorgeous with long thick darkest brown hair, crystal blue eyes, perfectly plump pink lips and snow white skin. She looks like she is deep in thought. We wonder if this is one of the humans Asher was telling us about. We will have to find him and ask him for more information when I get back. For now I just watch her for a while discretely from behind a great old oak tree.

We watch for a while, then we turn back into the forest determined to find out more about the mysterious woman at the old log cabin.

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I feel restless tonight. I can't stop thinking about the beauty I saw at the old log cabin. I decided to take Sabre for a late night run in the dark. We are running for hours when we decide that we've had enough and start making our way back to the woods. We are weaving in and out of the trees when we catch the faintest whiff of the scent we picked up at the old log cabin.

Sabre decides that we need to investigate. We are in the middle of nowhere running alongside a dusty old gravel road when we hear a car. We can hear music playing, it sounds like cold heart. I know that song everywhere it's been played over and over again on almost every radio throughout the country.

We pick up our pace to match the car, glancing to our right side, we can make out that long dark hair flowing in the wind. It's her! At that moment she catches us with her eyes and turns to look at us, so we pick up the pace even further and boost past the car.

We make it back to the Falls River just before she does, and we watch her exit the car, from the shelter of the old oak tree. We watch as she makes her way to the front door, watching her slowly look back at the river and then amongst the trees we are standing in. She then turns and walks into the house. Once we are happy that she has made it safely inside, we turn back towards the woods and make our way back to the packhouse.

\*\*\*

Sabre and myself are both pent up full of energy this morning. We have woken up at the c\*\*\*k of dawn and we plan to meet the mysterious beauty that is currently dominating our thoughts.

We managed to find out from Asher that the woman in question was Aleksa, Correct me if i'm wrong but Aleksa translated means "defender", that's a pretty impressive name. According to Asher, she has two children.

Mason and Kaia I was able to identify from their security swipe card photos, as they are working at one of my clubs in town. Asher says they are already settling in, and making friends, and although he can't scent anything specific, he still feels all is not as it seems with them.

After jumping in the shower, I head to the packhouse kitchen for a light breakfast. Then I shift into my wolf form and dash off into the woods. I take a change of clothes with me to change into once I reach the edge of the forest where the old log cabin is.

In no time, I am outside the cabin, walking up the porch stairs and knocking on the door. After a few moments the door opens and I am face to face with Aleksa.

The first thing I notice is that her scent is even stronger, she's a werewolf! She smells delicious – like peony blossom and peach nectar. My senses are overwhelmed.

I wonder how Asher could have missed this. Her scent is doing all sorts of things to me right now. For some reason I find myself wildly attracted to her, and it is taking all my willpower to not act on these feelings right now.

I can sense her fear radiating from her, it's practically palpable. I can smell the perspiration building on her forehead. At this moment she appears to be lost in her thoughts, so I clear my throat to get her attention back. I start by making small talk, but I won't beat around the bush. I need some answers and I need them now.

She starts to plead with me. It was not my intention to scare her, I try to relax her and tell her that I mean her no harm. I just have a few questions to ask her.

I ask her to explain herself, and she starts to tell me about what happened in her pack with her fated mate, and how she had to flee the pack to get away from his cruel ways, as well as protecting her children. I am repressing my growls, as I don't want to scare her any further. But I am beyond pissed off, how someone could treat their goddess given mate that way was beyond me.

She explains how Mason and Kaia were rogues but through no fault of their own, it would appear they found themselves in positions similar to that of Aleksa and they formed a bond together. I would need to do some investigation to make sure their stories checked out, although I can't imagine they would have much to gain by lying to me, they seem genuine.

I ask her which pack she is from and she starts to panic. She is reluctant to give me this information, and I am struggling to keep my cool. I don't mean to but before I realize what I have done I have alpha commanded her to tell me. So she does.

I am not surprised when she tells me she is from the Evergreen pack. As she was telling me her story I started to link it to what I had heard from Alpha Lachlan on our phone call the other day.



I am not surprised she is Luna. She is beautiful and strong and she has a kind and caring aura about her. But I need to verify this story. People have a tendency to lie when they are scared or desperate. And she is clearly very scared. I don't think she is lying though. I sense she is being truthful.

We talk some more, I advise her that I will be having a conversation with both Mason and Kaia separately, she doesn't seem concerned, she even offers to help organize the meeting, although I explain it is not necessary as I will be seeing them at the club.

Before I leave she asks for my name. I was so wrapped up in asking her questions, I didn't even introduce myself. She stares at me for a few moments and I can't quite figure out what she's thinking as she stares at me with a sweet smile on her face. Then as if she realizes that she is staring at me she thanks me for my visit and farewells me closing the door.

As I am walking down the stairs I hear two little voices calling out to their mommy, with my werewolf hearing. The twins must be awake I think to myself. I really want to meet them for some reason, as does Sabre. But we resist the urge. Once I get to the tree line, I shift into my wolf, seeing that the twins are watching from the window. Sabre and I leap off following the forest path, feeling quite happy with myself and thinking about that sweet scent of peony blossom and peach nectar.

\*Aleksa POV\*

It's been a week since Kingston appeared at my doorstep, and I haven't seen him since that day. We are all settled into life in Denver, having been here a couple of weeks now. Liam and Layla are loving the daycare that they attend. The ladies who run it, and work there, are so kind and nurturing, the twins are really thriving there. They've even managed to make a few friends and have a few playdates. I've even made a few mom friends myself. We go for coffee on the weekend while the children play at the park. It's a far cry from our life at Evergreen, which was so much more isolated. I didn't have any mom friends. I mean I only had Eva and Kali, and look how Eva turned out. Kali is a keeper though, I sure miss her. I think of her often.

Mason and Kaia are enjoying working at the club, naturally they have already been promoted since starting there. Their natural leadership skills are obviously hard to ignore. Mason is now running the security team there, and has been asked to manage security for another two clubs in town. Kaia is no longer working as hostess, she is working within management. They both

seem happy. We didn't talk much about our lives before we came here, we all decided we wanted to move forward and focus on our new lives. We didn't want the negativity of our pasts constantly hanging over us.

Recently we heard from Caleb and Kali, they had finally safely reached Crimson Moon and were greeted with open arms by Alpha Callum and his Luna Cadence. They had to lay low for a while in a human town initially as they were surrounded by the Evergreen pack warriors, but they managed to escape a week later. It sounded like things were pretty tough for them for a while. I am so happy that they are safe now. I still feel guilty that their lives were uprooted the way they were. However, they assure me that they would do it again in a heartbeat. I'm grateful for such loyal and courageous friends.

Every day I count myself lucky that Lachlan hasn't found me or the twins, or my friends yet. We have no way of knowing where he is looking for us, although I imagine he would be looking high and low for Liam, being that he is the rightful heir to Evergreen Pack. I know the day will come when he finds us and we will have to fight for our freedom once again. All I can do right now is make sure we are ready when that time comes. Mason, Kaia and I have been working on multiple escape plans for the twins and I, and we are almost ready for when the time comes.

Today I have the day off work. I have dropped the twins off at daycare, and Mason and Kaia are both at work, so I don't know what to do with myself. I've been working a lot recently. Since we left Evergreen in such a hurry, we were unprepared. We had no savings or back up plans, so I've been working extra shifts so that I can put some money inside for when we have to move on again.

I look around at the cabin, it's pretty immaculate so that rules cleaning out. I look in the pantry and it's looking a little empty so I guess I can go grocery shopping. Although I am feeling restless at the moment, so, I try to channel Amber to see if she would like to go for a run.

After a few attempts I hear no reply from her in my head, so I guess shifting is out of the question right now. I almost can't remember the last time we shifted. Amber has been so distant since everything that went down with Lachlan, I think she misses Cyrus, Lachlan's wolf. She has only spoken to me once since we escaped from Evergreen, and that was when we met Kingston.

A cheeky smile erupts on my face when I think of Kingston. Gosh he is divine. He's tall, he's tanned, he's muscular, he has a smile that just makes me want

to melt. He has a commanding no nonsense type of aura about him. But then he's understanding and seems sincere. I feel so attracted to him. It's so unlike me. I'm not that girl that falls all over a guy. It's so bizarre, I should be mourning the death of my relationship with Lachlan, not getting all turned on but the hot alpha of the Rocky Mountain Pack. Get a grip Aleksa – I think to myself.

I figured that because I had rejected my fated mate I would be sick. I had always been told that rejecting or being rejected by your fated mate would make you weak and potentially k\*\*l you, but I wasn't feeling any of that. In all honesty, I had never felt better. Maybe a little weak physically, but mentally I feel freer than I ever have.

I can't even feel Lachlan being intimate with someone anymore. Perhaps my rejecting our bond was enough? I thought that he needed to accept my rejection though. It's so confusing. Perhaps I needed to see someone, a witch or a healer or perhaps a shaman. I wouldn't even know where to start come to think of it. Perhaps I would discuss this with Kaia later on tonight and see what she thinks about it all.

Thinking about Kingston had gotten me all wound up. So I decided I would go for a run, and since Amber isn't talking to me I will just go in my human form. I look around my room to find something acceptable to run in.

I picked up some black leggings and a black sports bra and put them on. I grab the only pair of shoes I have that would be suitable, my black converse shoes, and pull my hair into a high ponytail.

I walk through the house, shut the door, run down the stairs and start stretching. I take a deep breath in of fresh air, and decide that this is exactly what I need. So I started jogging off into the woods to relieve myself of some s\*\*\*\*l frustration.

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I've been running for about forty five minutes now and I realize I am completely lost. I thought I was following a trail but clearly I went off track at some point. I'm not worried because I am a wolf and I love the woods. So I try to communicate with Amber but she's still not reachable. I slow down to walk a bit and take a look at my surroundings. If I could just find some sort of landmark, or listen for some sort of sound like running water or traffic or something.

I didn't bring anything with me so I can't keep track of the time. Although I don't have to pick up Liam and Layla until much later today so that doesn't concern me.

I start to backtrack hoping that I am going back in the right direction. After a few hours I stop. Great one Aleksa. Lost in the middle of nowhere, with no wolf to rely on. My stomach starts to growl and I wish that I had some breakfast before I left, or even a drink of water.

I decide that I will keep walking straight until I find the river or the road, or something resembling the right direction.

After some time passes, I get the feeling I am not alone. I can't hear anything but I can sense company is near.

I start regretting this bright idea I had to go for a run in the woods without my wolf. I hear a twig snap and I look behind me. I can smell them before I see them. Rogues. There appears to be two of them. They start to snarl at me. They both look pretty mangey, and they smell terrible like rotten meat. I would imagine it has been a while since they last showered. I am fighting the urge to vomit right now. My gag reflex is going strong. They slowly start to stalk towards me, both coming towards me, one from the right and one from the left.

I start to panic and try to wake Amber up, "Come on girl I could really use your help right now, we need to shift. Amber!!! Please! Rogues! I need to shift." I yell at her desperately in my head.

"What's a pretty she wolf doing out here all on her lonesome?" The brown one with white stripes all around its torso says to me.

"Looking for some fun, shewolf?" The other rogue says licking it's licks and smirking at me, it is also brown, with red stripes over it's back and belly.

"Uh, no thank you. I was just on my way back to.. My pack." I say.

"Liar. You have no pack. You don't smell like a rogue." he sniffs the air near me. "You smell so sweet, and I can sense that you are ranked, but you don't smell like a pack wolf". The brown and white coloured rogue says matter of factly.

“That’s right so you better back off – NOW!” I say. Hoping that will make them think twice, but deep down inside knowing that it won’t. I am well aware that I am outnumbered and out wolfed.

“Hahaha. Nice try, she wolf. You are weak. Your wolf is not with you right now!” the brown and white rogue says with a sinister smile on it’s face.

I take a defensive stance, as I am well aware that these rogues want more than a chat from me, and I am resigned to the fact that I will have to defend myself in human form.

I only wish I was trained to defend myself. I never got a chance to train at Evergreen because I had gotten pregnant straight away and then I was constantly weak from the pain of Lachlan cheating. I had done a few self defense classes back in the human town I grew up in before meeting Lachlan but that was about it. Moon goddess please protect me! I prayed silently.

The brown and white coloured rogue lunged towards me, and I was able to move out of his way just in time, only to be pounced on by the brown and red striped rogue. He furiously bit into the side of my waist, taking a chunk of skin out of my side. I could feel the excruciating, stabbing pain take over my body. “Aahhhhh!” I screamed in pain and shock. I could smell the overwhelming metallic odor of my blood oozing out of me.

At that moment, the brown and white striped rogue got back up on it’s feet, and plunged towards me as I stood up. He knocked me hard onto the ground. I tried to push him off me but he had me pinned to the ground, and I was feeling weak from the bite on my waist. He started to snap at my neck, going for my jugular. I felt an unimaginable fear inside me at that moment. Was this it? Is this how I would die? No f#\$%ing way! I will fight to my last breath for my pups, I tell myself.

I punched the rogue in the throat as hard as I could, and used all my strength to push the rogue to the side, it started to choke, and took a moment to get it’s breath back then got ready to charge me again. The other rogue was circling me with a feral and satisfied look on it’s face.

I clutched at my side trying to place pressure on my wound. I could feel that I was losing too much blood. I started to feel dizzy. I could see the rogues smirking and mumbling something. I saw the red and white one lunge towards me, and just as it was opening its mouth to snap its teeth at my neck, I started to fall to the ground, and all I saw was darkness.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I woke up to the sound of machines beeping. I took a few deep breaths and I could smell bleach mixed with antiseptic. Where am I, I asked myself. I tried to open my eyes and everything felt so bright. And I felt so tired, so I gave up and faded back into sleep.

I could hear a faint voice calling out my name, multiple times. Then I smelt the faint scent of fresh pine, it was my favourite scent, as the forest was my favourite place. I started to open my eyes again and this time even though it was overwhelmingly bright, I succeeded in fully opening them.

I felt slight tingles on my hand, It must be static electricity from the bed and the machines I thought. Then I looked down. It was Kingston. He was holding my hand, sitting beside me, looking at me with what looked like relief on his face. I tried to speak but my mouth was so dry, I managed to croak out "water".

Kingston obliged and helped me with some water in a cup and a straw. I took a few sips initially, then I greedily took more. The thirst within me was intense. I felt like I hadn't had any water in days.

I tried again to speak, this time I was successful, although I had to cough in between words.

"Where am I?" I manage to say in between coughs, looking around confused. As I tried to sit up a bit, I was engulfed with pain, a stabbing pain at my waist. I grabbed it with my hand and I could feel a large dressing. I looked back up at Kingston.

"The rogues? But how did I get here?" I asked.

"I can explain, don't panic, you are safe Aleksa". Kingston reassures me. He then proceeds to tell me how I got here.

"I was out for a run in the woods, when I smelt rogues, I could sense danger, so I kept running until I saw you." Kingston tells me.

"You were bleeding profusely, and the rogues appeared to be going in for the k\*\*l, so I took them both out, and then I rushed you here." He tells me, with anger starting to radiate from his aura.

I look at him, I'm overcome with emotion, I feel so grateful to him, if he hadn't been out there, I would be dead. "Thank you, I don't know how I can ever repay you for this." I say to him with a sincere look upon my face.

Then I realize I am here, but my pups are not, "Oh my goddess, Liam and Layla! Daycare! I was supposed to pick them up. I've got to go!" I say as I try to pull myself up in a hurry leading to my stitches bursting. I feel the blood start to rush out of my wound, the metallic smell overwhelming my senses. What on earth? I think to myself. I am a werewolf. Why have I not healed?

Kingston panics and calls the doctors in to tend to my wound, he holds pressure on it, until they arrive, then they start stitching my wound up again.

"You need to be more careful Aleksa, your wolf is not with you right now, your healing will be that of a human's healing right now". He tells me.

He then goes on to tell me a healer came in earlier and said that my wolf was away, but would be back, that she just needed some time to heal.

"Liam and Layla, are here, at Rocky Mountain. So are Mason and Kaia, you have all been granted an exemption, you are here as my guests. They will be in shortly. I have mindlinked my Beta Asher to inform them that you are awake." He says.

I sigh in relief. I am glad that my pups are close by and that I will get to see them. But I have so many questions. I look up at Kingston and I start to ask him "How long have I been out?".

To which he replied, "Three days. You have been in a coma for the past three days." He says with a sadness exuding from him.

I am shocked "Three days? How can that be? Why did I sleep so long?" I ask, starting to panic that I have worried my pups and friends for the past three days.

"Your wolf wasn't with you to speed up the healing process, and your injuries were critical. But you're awake now and your body is slowly repairing itself" Kingston exclaims.

Kingston looks at me as though there is something on his mind. "Tell me, Aleksa, what were you doing in that part of the forest alone at that time of day?".

I look at him perplexed. “I was going for a run, I got lost, then I came across the rogues”. Remembering my encounter with them.

“You really shouldn’t be so careless in future, that part of the territory isn’t often utilized by our pack, although it is our territory we generally keep away from it. It borders on the forsaken territory.” He warns me.

“When you are recovered, we can show you the territorial boundaries, and explain it all a bit more. For now, I would advise you to keep to the main track or even the main road, if you are running in human form” he then pauses, looks at me and continues, “There is something I need to discuss with you but it can wait until you are out of hospital.” Kingston says.

At that moment, the door bursts open and Mason and Kaia walk in with two very energetic and happy children “Mommy!” They call to me in sync. “Mommy, we missed you! They tell me. They are about to jump on me when they are pulled back by Mason and Kaia.

“Slow down there pups, we don’t want to hurt mommy now do we?” Kaia says to Liam and Layla.

They just look at me wide eyed. “Mommy is so happy to see you both. I have missed you so much while I was sleeping.” I tell them with tears ready to fall from my eyes.

We all chat for a while, and Kingston stays sitting next to me the whole time. I find it strange that he seems so protective of me, but at the same time, I really don’t want him to leave. Something about his scent keeps me calm and makes me feel safe. Two things I haven’t felt in a long time.

After about half an hour I am struggling to keep my eyes open. Mason and Kingston start to notice, and suggest it might be time for everyone to leave so that I can get some sleep. We all say goodbyes and I am able to hug my pups goodbye gently. I thank Mason and Kaia for looking after them and promise I will be out tomorrow, to which Kingston looks at me doubtfully.

They all leave, but Kingston doesn’t. “Are you not going to leave as well?” I ask him, struggling to fight against my heavy eyes. “I will wait for you to fall asleep, then I will leave to attend to some pack matters, close your eyes Aleksa, get some sleep” he says.

Then I lose my fight to stay awake and drift off to sleep.



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I had been in hospital for a total of five days now, and the medical team were satisfied that I was medically stable, and I was able to leave this morning. To say I was excited was an understatement. I couldn't wait to get out of here, don't get me wrong it was a state of the art hospital, everything was so bright and white and clean, it was a simple room with a bed in the middle of the room connected with monitors and equipment, and a panel above the bed with oxygen and suction and various other switches and medical supplies. Beside me was a small bedside table with a jug of water and cup on it. To the left of me there was a door leading to an ensuite bathroom with a walk in shower and a gorgeous sink and vanity with a large mirror. It was well stocked with environmentally friendly sustainable products.

Everyone here was so professional, from the Nurses and Doctors to the healthcare assistants and kitchen staff that brought me my meals.

The food was first class. I don't think I have ever eaten so well. I mean I have always cooked healthy and tasty meals, it's just you notice it more when someone else is cooking for you and you are on the receiving end.

However, that all said. I missed my pups greatly, I had never been separated from them like this before, with the exception being when Lachlan threw me into the dungeon at Evergreen.

I was also worried that I had missed too many shifts at work, but being that Kingston owned the Tavern, he said he had told Sierra that I would be off for a week or so, so there was no pressure there, but I still felt guilty letting my new team down, especially since I had just recently started.

I just wanted to get back to my new life, which had barely just started. I had told myself that this was just a temporary setback and I wouldn't let it hold me back.

One thing I would definitely miss about being here was the daily visits from Kingston. I could look at his face all day. I felt butterflies just thinking about him. Drool.

I walked to the bathroom to have a quick shower. Mason would be in shortly as he was picking me up to take me back to the old log cabin.

When I walked out of the shower Kingston was waiting at my bedside for me. I was standing at the ensuite door with nothing but a towel on. I stood there shocked. I was not expecting anyone else to be in the room, or I would have changed in the bathroom.

I stood there with my mouth wide open, looking at Kingston, feeling uber anxious that he was seeing me this way.

He was sitting there with a smirk on his face, something flashing in his eyes, amber flecks, his wolf surfacing perhaps.

“I’m sorry I didn’t realize anyone else was in here, I’ll just grab my clothes and change, I won’t be long” I say picking the outfit that had been left for me the other day up off my bed and darting for the bathroom.

Nice one Aleksa, I scold myself. My heart racing and my body responding to the gorgeous wolf sitting only meters away from where I was getting changed.

I quickly throw my black halter neck dress on and my black crossover sandals on and brush my hair in front of the mirror.

Once I feel I look acceptable I walk out of the bathroom to greet Kingston.

“Aleksa, you look beautiful, please sit, there is something I would like to discuss with you” Kingston says sitting on the chair next to my hospital bed, with what looks like l\*\*t in his eyes, trailing my every move.

## **Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 15**

\*Aleksa POV\*

We have been here at the old log cabin in Falls River for about three weeks now. Mason has recently started working at a local club as a security guard. He works from Wednesday to Sunday, so that’s keeping him busy for now, and it means that we have some money coming in. Kaia had managed to get a job there also, which she seems to be enjoying. She works as a hostess, at the front entrance of the club. As luck would have it, they work the same shifts, so they are carpooling. They told the club they were siblings and everyone seems to have bought it so far.

I enrolled Liam and Layla at one of the local daycares and they seem to be enjoying themselves. I am planning to look for some work, so that I can

contribute and pay for mine and the twins' share of the bills and food. I was hoping to find some realtor work but I am starting to wonder if I should try something completely different, given that this is a fresh start for us. As much as I enjoyed my career in property, I am not the same person that I was a few months ago. So much has changed in my life since then.

I now feel so much stronger and more independent since leaving Evergreen and Lachlan. I want to leave as much of my old life behind as possible. I was always so serious and I put everyone before me, which was expected, as Luna and I didn't mind, but things have changed now. I am not a Luna, and there are only two little people that are reliant on me now, so there is less pressure on me. As much as I didn't realize back then, Lachlan controlled me and everything that I did. He knew my every step, and I was always wary of disappointing him or the pack. It took us leaving for me to realise the level of control he had over me.

I just want to do something a bit more carefree, something that doesn't hold a lot of responsibility, because that was my life for the past few years and I need a break from it.

That's it! I am going to do something well outside my comfort zone and apply at an inn or bar in town.

I didn't have a CV but I wasn't worried. I would just walk in, introduce myself and tell them I wanted to work there, and hopefully that would be enough.

I walked into the room that I shared with the twins and looked at my choices. Hmmn, not much to choose from, I thought to myself. Last week Kaia and I went to some thrift stores. We didn't have much money to spend so we needed to stretch it as far as possible. We wanted to get some clothes since we had left everything behind in our packs. I had a few new outfits that I had yet to wear. I looked at them and considered my options.

I had decided I would wear a cute little black dress with spaghetti straps, with a small slimming denim jacket, and some tan knee-high boots I managed to find for \$50. I looked at myself in the bathroom mirror, not bad, I said to myself. I would wear my hair down, it looked tidy enough. I suddenly felt a surge of confidence. I can do this! I repeated to myself.

I jumped into the jeep and started to drive towards the town. We were about a forty-five minute drive from the township. I still had a few hours before I had to pick up the twins, so I had decided that I would use this time to look for a job. I

felt bad that we had been relying on Mason and Kaia. I had hoped that I would have been able to take some money that I had saved from the packhouse, but I didn't anticipate being locked in the dungeon and having to escape, so I was very unprepared. We were just so grateful that our new friends, or more like family, had been there to help us.

There were actually a lot of bars in the local township, I thought as I drove down the main street. The nightlife must be popular here, I thought to myself.

I lived in a human town growing up. I was actually raised by humans. I was adopted by the people I knew as my parents. They have raised me since I was a baby. I had no idea who my actual birth parents were. According to my adopted parents, I was dropped off in a basket outside their church. They had told me this when I was in elementary school. They had wanted to be honest with me from the start, and I appreciated that.

I know this all sounds unbelievable, but it's true. There was a note attached to me that said "I'm sorry we couldn't protect you, we hope the person that finds you can do what we couldn't and a small locket was placed on it.

I still wear the locket now. It's an antique looking rose gold locket with what looks like rose vines decorating it front facing. There is no photo inside. There is a gem of some sort in the place where you will usually find a photo. It's actually a velvety blue colour, almost like a sapphire, it actually reminds me of my eye colour strangely enough.

I don't know why it means so much to me. But I guess I cling to it because it's the only piece of my birth parents that I have.

I have never tried to look for them. I would not even know where to start. Apparently, my adoptive parents tried. They tried so that I could have some closure as I got older. But they had no luck. They hired a private investigator and everything, but he had no leads.

I'm okay with it though. I'm not even mad at them. I imagine that they had no choice, judging by the note they wrote. Plus, my adoptive parents were so loving and treated me like I was their own biological child. I have no regrets. I hope they (my birth parents) are okay wherever they are out there.

I felt comfortable living around humans, I guess because I was brought up to believe I was one for the majority of my life.

Most werewolves live in their packs and prefer to live away from humans. I get it. It's to protect our secrets and to be able to live our best lives without having to worry about prying eyes.

I didn't mind though. I was happy wherever I was.

When I met Lachlan and we mated, I moved straight away to the packhouse with him. It took a lot to get used to, learning the culture, the practices, the rules, their way of living. I had never even been to a pack house before, so I felt very intimidated by it initially.

I knew I was different growing up. I was always faster than most, I had heightened senses of smell, hearing and vision. I also had super fast healing abilities which both my parents and I both found strange, but they never questioned it. They just said I was blessed.

It wasn't until I turned eighteen that I shifted for the first time under the full moon. It was very drawn out and painful. I thought I was dying at the time. I had no idea that I was a werewolf.

I was alone that night. I was on my way home from a friend's house and I had cut through a forested area when my transition started.

After what felt like forever, I had shifted and I went for a run. I ended up stopping by a lake, the moonlight was reflecting on the water and it was then I saw my wolf form for the first time. I must have stared at myself for hours.

I almost had a full blown panic attack. After crying myself to sleep on the grass edge by the lake, I fell asleep. I had the strangest dream that night and I was visited by the most beautiful woman.

She had long golden blonde hair which flowed down past her hips, crystal blue eyes, and she was absolutely gorgeous. She wore a long white satin dress. She explained to me that I was a werewolf and that my parents had to make the ultimate sacrifice to save me. She said that I would meet my mate, after explaining what a mate was, and she told me to have faith, even if things didn't turn out as I had hoped. She didn't elaborate on anything she was telling me, it all seemed very cryptic.

She told me her name was Selene. She had told me that when the time came, she would reveal herself to me again, and explain my purpose in life to me.

She said I had so much more to learn. And to have faith that things will work out in the end. Then she just disappeared and I was blinded by a bright light.

I have always had strange dreams, but that one seemed to stick with me. I sometimes wonder if it was a dream or a premonition.

I snapped myself out of my thoughts and walked towards a bar that seemed to appeal to me. I took a deep breath as I walked to the door.

The security guard was very tall, tanned and very muscular. He was dressed in a smart black suit and wore an earpiece. He pulled the red rope across for me, smiled at me and let me pass.

I scanned my eyes across the room. Wow. I thought to myself. This place is a lot bigger and a lot fancier than I had imagined, based on how it looked from the outside.

From the outside, it almost resembles a ski cabin that you would find at a ski resort. Large timber logs notched at the ends and laid upon one another with the ends filled with plaster or mortar.

From the inside there was a deep rich red coloured carpet which almost resembled velvet. It had booths on the sides of the tavern, with circular tables forming the majority of the room. There were candlestick type chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. Directly facing me as I walked in was the bar. It was a very long wooden bartop. It was littered with beer taps and glasses of all varieties, as well as jugs of lemon water and crates of ice. It had a warm and welcoming vibe about it. It looked immaculate, no beer stains on the carpet or markings on the tables like in other bars.

I walked straight up to the bar and asked to speak with the manager.

“You’re looking at her darling, what can I do for you?” the beautiful tall and lean girl with the long dark black hair and emerald green eyes said to me with a smirk on her face.

“Hi, my name is Aleksa, I am looking for a job, and wondered if you have any vacancies?” I said with a hopeful smile on my face.

“Hi Aleksa, I’m Sierra, well girl, you are in luck, one of my fulltime workers just resigned yesterday and I haven’t placed an ad yet. Can you start tonight, we are super short-staffed?” She asks, emphasising the super part.

“Ah, yes, that should be OK, but I just need to organize a sitter for my pu.. babies. Can I make a quick call? I asked hopefully.

“Sure hun, you can use the phone over there” Sierra says as she points to a phone on the wall near the cash register.

I called Kaia, who picked up straight away. “Is everything okay?” she asked worriedly.

“Hey Kaia, everything is fine, I think I have a job!” I said excitedly.

“That’s brilliant! Where?” Kaia asks.

“At a tavern, in town,” I said.

“That’s great Aleksa! We all have jobs now! I’m so excited for us!” Kaia says loudly.

“The thing is Kaia, they want me to start tonight, as someone has just left and they are super short-staffed” I say, not yet finished explaining myself before Kaia interrupts. “Of course, you don’t even have to ask. I will watch Liam and Layla. No problem! Hey, can you still pick us up from our day shift? Kaia asks.

“Of Course. I will be there shortly.” I said to Kaia.

I hung up the phone and made my way over to Sierra. “That’s fine. I’ve got a sitter sorted. I can start tonight. Ah, what time did you want me here? I ask Sierra.

“Seven o’clock hun. You will be working late with Accalia tonight. It will only be the two of you at the bar. The chef, Steve, will be out back making bar snacks, and Tony will be at the door. Unfortunately, tonight is one of our busier nights, and you girls will get slammed. Hey, I forgot to ask, have you ever worked at a bar before?” Sierra eyed me.

“Ah not technically, but how hard can it be right?” I said, flashing a big smile on my face. Hoping that Sierra doesn’t take her job offer back.

Sierra looks at me with a questionable look on her face, as if she is pondering her options. “Tell ya what. I’ll give you a trial run. I’ll stay on a bit later tonight to show you the basics. That should be enough to get you going. Most of it is

talking to the punters and keeping them happy. A pretty thing like you should be able to manage that.” She says as she walks off.

“See you at seven -and Aleksa, don’t be late!” Sierra yells as she walks out to what I imagine is the kitchen.

I turned on my heels and exited the tavern. A surge of excitement goes through me. Oh my goddess. I did it. I got a job! I’m so optimistic as to what the future might hold.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I put on some cherry red lip gloss and rubbed my lips together, plumping my lips to give them that glossy full lip look. I took one last look in the mirror, said my little mantra to myself “you’ve got this girl” and walked into the lounge. I grabbed the keys off the table and said goodbye to Mason and Kaia, who were watching the late news on television.

I was feeling pumped and ready to start my first shift at the tavern. This would be the first day of the rest of my life, of our lives. This was for the twins as much as it was for me. Financial independence was part of our journey. I needed to be able to provide for them, to give them the life they deserved, I thought to myself.

I walked out the door and made my way towards the stairs. It was at that moment that I had the strangest feeling as I walked in complete darkness towards the car. It felt like I wasn’t alone. I don’t know if I was on guard because Lachlan was probably still looking for us, or if it was my heightened senses warning me that someone was close by.

I shrugged it off and sat in the driver’s seat. Here goes nothing, I thought to myself. I pulled out of the driveway and made my way down the gravel road. I had left extra early as I wanted to make a good impression.

I put the radio on and listened to some music; Cold Heart by Elton John and Dua Lipa. I love this song, I think to myself. I turn the volume up high. Dancing from my car seat while driving through the darkness.

In no time I arrived at work. Gosh, time goes fast when you are having fun. I miss cranking the music up and dancing around the house. I hadn’t done that since before I met Lachlan. Life had gotten serious so fast. Anyway, no time to dwell on the past. I was walking into my future.



I walked up to the entrance, and looked at the security guard. “Hi, you must be Tony”, I said in a loud voice, because the music was pumping in the tavern.

“I am, and who would you be?” He looked at me suspiciously.

“I am Aleksa, tonight is my first night. I’ll be working at a bar. Sierra hired me today” I said enthusiastically.

“Welcome to the tavern Aleksa, please go inside.” Tony said to me, pulling the red velvet rope across for me to pass.

I walked past Tony and stopped just before I entered. I take a moment to center myself. I hear that mantra in my mind once again. Then I pulled the door open and stepped into the tavern.

I am taken aback by how many people are currently here. The place is packed. The lights are dimmed. The music is cranking. There is even a dance floor in the far corner on the left-hand side of the bar.

Sierra wasn’t joking when she said we would get slammed tonight. I feel fear overtake me. Can I do this? What was I thinking? I have no experience. As I start to delve into self-doubt, I am snapped out of my thoughts when a familiar voice speaks to me.

“Well hello again, uh I didn’t catch your name last time we met?” the unknown voice says. I moved to stand in the light and then I recognized the person standing right in front of me. It’s Asher, the park ranger we met the other day.

“Oh hi, it’s nice to see you again, I’m Aleksa.” I said politely.

“Nice to see you again Aleksa, hey uh, what was your friend’s name? I forgot to ask the other day”, He asks with a shy smile on his face.

“Oh, Kaia, her name is Kaia.” I said back to him.

“Kaia – nice,” he says deep in thought.

“Well, I better get moving, it’s my first shift and I don’t want to be late” I said to him.

“Yeah, sure,uh, good luck” Asher says, still preoccupied with his thoughts.

I pushed past him and walked up to the bar. I couldn't see Sierra anywhere and the girl at the bar looked super busy, so I walked around to the back of the bar, thinking there would be an office somewhere out back where I might find Sierra.

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What a night. I thought to myself. I found Sierra in her office earlier and she gave me a crash course on the most popular drinks that are ordered at the tavern. Fortunately, it appears that most people prefer beer.

I managed to make it through the night without making any major mistakes and even started to learn a regular's name or two.

The other girl working at the bar, Accalia, didn't talk much, or even look at me most of the night, but I'm thinking that might possibly be her personality type.

She has that whole alternative vibe going with purple highlights on her black hair, she has pale white skin as if it were kissed by the moon. She has thick glossy lips. And her eyes, her eyes are so dark but captivating at the same time. I can't actually make out their color. She was wearing black leather pants and a skin-tight leather vest, with chunky leather and studded bracelets on her wrists.

She looks like the kinda girl you don't want to mess with. She's great with the customers though. They all love her. I would imagine she has been here for quite some time.

I finished wiping the last table and looked up at the clock. It's three am. Time went by so fast. My feet are aching, it's been a while since I spent so long on my feet and I didn't wear the most comfortable shoes, so I will be paying for that later today.

I said goodbye to everyone and walked towards the car. I rubbed my eyes as I turned on the engine and started to make my way back home.

It's so quiet at this time of the morning and there is no one else on the road. As I pulled into the gravel road that would lead me back to the old log cabin, I saw a black shadow go past the side window.

I rubbed my eyes again and slowed down a bit and glanced to my right side. I can't see anything or anyone so I guess my eyes are playing tricks on me

since I am so tired. I am feeling a little weary though, so I push my foot down on the accelerator and drive home a bit faster.

When I got home, I saw that Mason and Kaia had left the porch light on for me, thankfully. As my mind is taking me to a strange place today. I feel anxious for some reason. As I turned off the engine, I started to walk at pace to the front door. As I pulled out my keys, I turned back and looked at the lake and then again at the forested area. Nope Aleksa, there's no one there. It's just your overactive imagination.

I opened the door and walked into the house and kicked off my boots that I wish I hadn't worn tonight. I locked the door and headed towards my bed with a smile on my face. I did it. I survived my first night at work.

\*\*\*

I woke up to the warm sun streaming in through the windows. I must have fallen straight into a deep sleep because I felt well rested. I looked up at the old alarm clock next to me. Uh oh. It's 10am. No wonder I feel well rested – I've overslept. I was supposed to have Liam and Layla at daycare already. I looked at the twins. They looked so peaceful. I didn't want to wake them just yet.

I bit down on my lip and sighed. Oh well. I might just make a sneaky coffee and enjoy a bit of peace and quiet before the twins wake up. I started to look for the phone so that I could call the daycare and let them know that the twins would be staying home today.

Once that was done, I put some water in the jug and waited for the water to boil. Coffee is what I need right now. I thought back to when I bumped into Asher last night. He seemed quite interested in Kaia. I must remember to tell her about that. He's very sweet and I think they would look so cute together. With what she has been through, she deserves a little fun.

The house was so quiet right now, with the twins still asleep and with Mason and Kaia at work already. It was nice of them to let me sleep in, I thought to myself. I'm glad they didn't wake me this morning, it will be nice to have a day to just enjoy Liam and Layla's company.

The jug had boiled and I was making my coffee when I heard a noise at the door. My heart started to race and my breathing quickened. A feeling of terror took over me. I heard a loud knock at the door. I just stood in the kitchen not

moving, hoping the knocking would stop and whoever it was would think no one was home and go away.

I had nowhere to run. I would never be able to get out of here in time. The twins were still sleeping. I had to face up to this. Whoever it was. Whatever it was. I had to be brave. I could face whatever life threw at me. I wasn't the same Aleksa I was a couple of months ago, I told myself.

I took a deep breath and I slowly opened the door. And I was utterly shocked by the man who stood in front of me. What is it with this log cabin and gorgeous strangers appearing at our door? I just hoped this gorgeous specimen of a man had good intentions and wasn't one of Lachlan's lacheys.

"Good Morning, you must be Aleksa?" the handsome stranger said to me with a breathtaking smile.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I stood there in shock, wondering how this handsome stranger knew my name. I took a deep breath and I was immediately alarmed. He is a werewolf and, judging by the aura and scent he is exuding, one of power, I assume, probably an alpha. I take a moment to compose myself although I am overcome with fear.

So many questions are swirling around in my head at this moment. Has he been sent by Lachlan? Is he here to hurt me? Does he know we are rogues? Are we encroaching on his territory? What does he want from me? Is he here for my pups?

At that moment, the stranger in front of me starts to clear his throat, pulling me out of my own thoughts. He stands there with a questionable look on his face as if he is trying to figure me out. He must sense my fear, I thought to myself.

"I believe you have met my Beta Asher", he says with a smirk on his face. I looked at him, with utter realization, smashing into me. He is the alpha. We must be on his territory.

"Uh, yes, uh, we don't mean any harm. We didn't come into your territory intentionally. We didn't know. We can leave right away! Please, we don't want any trouble." I said, panicked in a pleading tone.

The penalty for rogues entering pack lands is generally death or imprisonment. I started to panic and hyperventilate, looking at the wolf in front of me with sheer desperation and fear. I must protect my pups, I think to myself.

Clearly sensing my fear and panic, the alpha in front of me raises his hand towards me. "It's OK. Don't panic. I'm not here to hurt you, I just want to have a chat with you. Would you invite me in?" he politely asks me.

I took a deep breath and tried to calm myself down. I opened the door further to allow him to walk past. He slowly walks past me and sits on the couch, placing his arms on the top and side of the couch, sitting with his back against the corner of the couch, and placing his right leg over his left, looking relaxed. I just stood there dumbfounded, wondering what was to come next.

"Please, Aleksa, take a seat. This is just a friendly chat. I just want to know why you are here, on my pack lands. You don't smell like rogues, but here you are out here on your own. Please explain yourself." He says to me with a serious look on his gorgeous face.

I slowly sit on a chair next to the couch, sitting towards the edge of the chair. And I think to myself, and wonder how much I should tell him. I decide to go with the light version of events, skimming past the fact that I am Luna of a pack, and that my fated mate is currently hunting me and my rogue friends down.

"Start at the beginning, Aleksa, tell me. Is that even your real name?" He asks suspiciously.

I cleared my throat. "Yes, Aleksa is my real name. I guess I will start at the beginning then. I met my mate about two years ago. Everything seemed perfect. We had pups pretty much as soon as we met, twins actually.

"How old are you?" He asks me, interrupting my story.

"I'm twenty years old" I said to him. Wondering why he would ask that question. But I continue on telling my story to him.

"Pretty much as soon as I got pregnant I started experiencing intense pain, daily. I would see the pack doctor often, and she would put it down to growing pregnancy pains, and even when they continued after the twins had arrived

she put it down to a traumatic delivery and said they would eventually disappear.”

“Well they didn’t, it wasn’t until one day when I had to leave work early because I couldn’t bear the pain that I walked in on my beta- uh- best friend and my mate in our bed together.”

“Long story short, although I planned to escape with my babies, my plan was cut short and I was thrown in the dungeons, until I escaped with the help of some friends, and we made it here.”

“Please, we have no intention of causing any trouble, we didn’t even realize we were on pack land. We can leave today, please don’t harm us” I pleaded, tears falling down the sides of my face.

I can’t read his face. I don’t know what his plans are. I am praying for mercy from the moon goddess, if just this once, things could go our way.

He took a breath. “I am sorry you had to go through all that. I can’t imagine why a mate would betray their bond given to them from the moon goddess. That is sacrilege.”

“Where are your pups and your friends now?” He asks.

“My friends Mason and Kaia are at work at the moment. They got jobs at a club in town. Uh Headquarters.” I told him.

“And the twins, well, they’re safe, they’re sleeping right now” I said.

“How old are your pups, and what are their names?” He asked me.

“Liam and Layla, they are two years old.” I said, biting down on my bottom lip, wondering what he would do with this information.

“You aren’t technically on park land, you are on the outskirts. I will allow this for now. But we will be keeping an eye on you. We will need to verify that you are who you say you are.” He warned me.

“Which pack are you from?” He asked me. His eyes rested on my face.

I don’t know what to say. If I tell him which pack we are from, he might contact Lachlan. He would tell him something different to what I have, and we would be imprisoned again for Lachlan to find us. I can’t tell him.

"It's okay. We will leave today. Please, we don't want any trouble. We just want to be left to ourselves," I said defiantly.

"You will tell me which pack you are from now!" He says in a loud alpha command.

I cannot refuse a command, so I proceeded to tell him "Evergreen Pack", "We are from the Evergreen Pack on the East Coast". I say sadly.

"Evergreen, you say. You are missing Luna, are you not?" He questions me with amber flecks sparkling in his eye.

I looked at him with a tear-stained face. I say nothing but my face deceives me.

"Alpha Lachlan said you were kidnapped by rogues. Tell me Aleksa, have you been kidnapped?" He asks me with a curious look on his face.

"No! No I haven't. Mason and Kaia are my friends. They helped us escape. Please, Mason and Kaia have nothing to do with this. Please don't punish them. This is all my fault!!" I pleaded with him to spare my friends.

"I believe you, but I think you had better explain things to me more truthfully this time, Aleksa, and don't lie to me. I am not here to harm you. I want to help you." He says in a soft tone, and for some reason I find that comfortable and I believe him.

We talk for some time. I fill him in on how I came to meet Mason and Kaia, as well as explaining how they came to be in the dungeons. I explained how we escaped and the events leading up to us arriving here. I explained how Lachlan treated me, and about his plans to make Eva his Luna, and me his mistress. As well as his plans for our pups. He sat there and listened intently to my words.

Although I couldn't read him and had no idea what his train of thought might be, I also felt safe around him. I finished my story and sat there in silence waiting for him to respond.

Some time passed, as well as an awkward silence, and it felt like time was moving ever so slowly, then he spoke.

“I am sorry Aleksa. I am sorry that the moon goddess fated you with such a mate. Mates are supposed to be sacred, and if what you say is true then Lachlan has made a mockery of the sanctity of the mate bond. I will look into your account of events. If what you are saying is true then we will grant you the ability to live here on the pack border for now” He said to me.

“I will need to meet Mason and Kaia, as well as verifying their version of events”. He proclaims.

“I understand. Do you want me to call them for you?” I ask him.

“There’s no need for that. I will go into Headquarters and speak with them there.” He says.

“But, they are working, and there are humans around, are you sure you want to do that?” I ask.

“I think it will be fine. Especially considering I own that bar. In fact I own almost the entire town.” He says with a smirk on his face.

I look at him in shock. That means he probably owns the Tavern, where I work. That means that this isn’t a human town afterall. We had really messed up here. Of all the places.

“It was nice meeting you Aleksa. I will be in touch.” He says standing up from the couch.

“Uh, it was nice to meet you too, uh, I just realized that I don’t actually know your name?” I say to him realizing that he never introduced himself.

“Kingston, it’s Kingston.” He says with a cheeky grin on his face.

Kingston, I think to myself, for some reason hearing his name makes my heart happy. I feel warm all over. It’s at this point I realize I have been staring at his face a little longer than I should have. He just grins at me.

“Thank you Kingston, I appreciate you considering this. I promise we won’t be a nuisance.” I say to him gratefully.

He turns and walks off. I shut the door. Then not a minute later I hear little feet running down the hallway.



“Mommy! Mommy!” Liam and Layla yell at me happily. “Pancakes Mommy!” They yell in unison with great big smiles on their faces, as I pick them up for cuddles. I then place them on the bench top in front of the kitchen window so that they can help me make the pancake batter.

They position themselves front facing towards the window. “Wolf mama, wolf!” They yell, and we watch a huge black wolf run into the forest.

Kingston. I think to myself. His wolf is magnificent. His human seems to be quite alluring to. I scold myself for thinking of him that way in a time like this. I need to be practical and think clearly. I can’t allow myself these thoughts. “But he’s so gorgeous Aleksa!” I hear Amber say and giggle in my head.

I haven’t heard anything from Amber since we were thrown in the dungeons. I wondered if she would ever speak to me again. “Ofcourse Aleksa, I am always here I just needed some time to heal. We can trust him Aleksa.” Amber says. “How do you know that?” I ask Amber. “Trust me, Aleksa. All will be revealed in due time”. She says to me cryptically.

\*Kingston POV\*

I am twenty eight years of age and I am the Alpha of the Rocky Mountain National Park Pack. We are the second largest pack in the country. I took over as Alpha from my father when I turned twenty two. I met my mate not long after becoming Alpha and we were happy for a while. Until she got sick. After a short battle with a terminal illness, she passed away. We didn’t get the chance to have pups, we had planned to enjoy our time together for a while before settling down to have pups, unfortunately fate had other plans for us.

For the past few years I have managed to dodge the council’s plans for me. There has been huge pressure from the werewolf council for me to take a chosen mate as the pack’s Luna, but I have no inclination to.

My sister Quinn takes care of most of the luna duties for our pack, and my mother supports her with this for now. I realize she can’t do this forever, as she is yet to meet her mate too. Although, I have a bit of time before I need to figure out what happens next. Quinn is a bit younger than me, she’s only twenty two.

Usually, you meet your mate when you gain your wolf at around eighteen years of age. So Quinn is feeling the pressure of not having met her mate.

She has faith that he is still out there though, so she's just biding her time until she finds him.

With no heir to take over as Alpha, I will most likely have to pass it down to my Beta or his offspring. Although, I have no plans of relinquishing my role as Alpha any time soon.

Being that we are such a large pack and that we have a well respected and feared reputation, we are for the most part a warrior pack. So we almost never have any trouble here, other than the occasional rogue.

But that doesn't mean we are complacent. Everyone in our pack is required to train from three years of age, regardless of gender. We pride ourselves in knowing that everyone can fight to defend themselves, especially our most vulnerable wolves.

Right now I am busy organizing the Annual Royal Pack Summit which is taking place here at Rocky Mountain in the summertime. It's a big deal, alpha's from all around the country come to pay their respects and allegiance to the Royal Werewolf family, as well as network, and party. Since we have been tasked with hosting this year, there is a lot to do to ensure it all goes smoothly.

I have a committee of volunteers that are organizing most of it, but there are a number of packs that aren't on good terms and it is my duty to ensure that no hostility presents itself. So I am ringing each and every pack in the country to personally welcome them and get an idea of what we are dealing with when the time comes. We need to be able to separate rival packs to avoid any disturbances, and ensure it all goes smoothly.

I am on the phone in my office making calls to packs on the East Coast, when my Beta Asher comes into my office. I rub my forehead and look up at him sighing. I put my hand up and point a finger at him to gesture that I will just be a minute, and I continue on with the phone call I'm on.

I'm currently speaking with the alpha of the Evergreen Pack. He's a real piece of work, this guy, he's giving me some convoluted story about his Luna and pups were kidnapped by rogues. Apparently he sent an email, but I've yet to receive it.

I tell him I haven't seen or heard anything that would be helpful to him, and give him my offer of assistance should he ever need it. I agree to put up some

fliers, and keep an eye out for anything suspicious. After some small talk I ended my call with him.

For some reason that phone call irks me. I feel disdain for this man. He sounded ingenuine and I believe there is more to this story than he is letting on. I have no idea why I feel this way but it's just a feeling I have.

Asher starts rattling on about some humans staying at the old log cabin, well he assumes they are human, but isn't overly convinced, so he's going to dig a little deeper and keep a close eye on them. I'm too busy to deal with this right now, so I agree with him and fob him off for now. I feel like a little guilty, but I'm under so much pressure right now, and I'm sure it's nothing he can't handle.

While he was telling me about them I felt my wolf stirring inside me. Maybe he's been stuck indoors too long and he wants to get out of this office and go for a run. I look up at the clock. I've put in a few good hours so far, so I decide that I'll take an early lunch break and get back to this a bit later.

I walk out of the pack house and jog down the stairs. I look around from one side of the pack grounds to another. It's pretty quiet this morning, most wolves are at school or work or training at this time of day. I rip my clothes off and start shifting and run into the woods.

My bones start to c\*\*\*k out of place and extend then slowly fall back into place, fur sprouts out all over my hands and arms and body. I start to pound into the forest floor feeling the crisp air hit my snout. This release is exactly what I needed right now. A break from the mundane office work and never ending pack calls. Just me and Sabre and the great outdoors.

Sabre takes over and he runs in a specific direction. He runs to the far right side of the woods, and he starts running alongside the Falls River. Before long we are approaching the area that Asher was talking about this morning. If only I could remember what he was saying earlier, my curiosity has piqued.

We have reached the old log cabin and there aren't any cars outside, perhaps no one is home we ponder. We take a few deep sniffs and we are intrigued by one of the scents we pick up. So we start moving towards the front window. A few yards in we stop in our tracks. From where we are standing we can see the most beautiful woman.

She's gorgeous with long thick darkest brown hair, crystal blue eyes, perfectly plump pink lips and snow white skin. She looks like she is deep in thought. We wonder if this is one of the humans Asher was telling us about. We will have to find him and ask him for more information when I get back. For now I just watch her for a while discretely from behind a great old oak tree.

We watch for a while, then we turn back into the forest determined to find out more about the mysterious woman at the old log cabin.

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I feel restless tonight. I can't stop thinking about the beauty I saw at the old log cabin. I decided to take Sabre for a late night run in the dark. We are running for hours when we decide that we've had enough and start making our way back to the woods. We are weaving in and out of the trees when we catch the faintest whiff of the scent we picked up at the old log cabin.

Sabre decides that we need to investigate. We are in the middle of nowhere running alongside a dusty old gravel road when we hear a car. We can hear music playing, it sounds like cold heart. I know that song everywhere it's been played over and over again on almost every radio throughout the country.

We pick up our pace to match the car, glancing to our right side, we can make out that long dark hair flowing in the wind. It's her! At that moment she catches us with her eyes and turns to look at us, so we pick up the pace even further and boost past the car.

We make it back to the Falls River just before she does, and we watch her exit the car, from the shelter of the old oak tree. We watch as she makes her way to the front door, watching her slowly look back at the river and then amongst the trees we are standing in. She then turns and walks into the house. Once we are happy that she has made it safely inside, we turn back towards the woods and make our way back to the packhouse.

\*\*\*

Sabre and myself are both pent up full of energy this morning. We have woken up at the c\*\*\*k of dawn and we plan to meet the mysterious beauty that is currently dominating our thoughts.

We managed to find out from Asher that the woman in question was Aleksa, Correct me if i'm wrong but Aleksa translated means "defender", that's a pretty impressive name. According to Asher, she has two children.

Mason and Kaia I was able to identify from their security swipe card photos, as they are working at one of my clubs in town. Asher says they are already settling in, and making friends, and although he can't scent anything specific, he still feels all is not as it seems with them.

After jumping in the shower, I head to the packhouse kitchen for a light breakfast. Then I shift into my wolf form and dash off into the woods. I take a change of clothes with me to change into once I reach the edge of the forest where the old log cabin is.

In no time, I am outside the cabin, walking up the porch stairs and knocking on the door. After a few moments the door opens and I am face to face with Aleksa.

The first thing I notice is that her scent is even stronger, she's a werewolf! She smells delicious – like peony blossom and peach nectar. My senses are overwhelmed.

I wonder how Asher could have missed this. Her scent is doing all sorts of things to me right now. For some reason I find myself wildly attracted to her, and it is taking all my willpower to not act on these feelings right now.

I can sense her fear radiating from her, it's practically palpable. I can smell the perspiration building on her forehead. At this moment she appears to be lost in her thoughts, so I clear my throat to get her attention back. I start by making small talk, but I won't beat around the bush. I need some answers and I need them now.

She starts to plead with me. It was not my intention to scare her, I try to relax her and tell her that I mean her no harm. I just have a few questions to ask her.

I ask her to explain herself, and she starts to tell me about what happened in her pack with her fated mate, and how she had to flee the pack to get away from his cruel ways, as well as protecting her children. I am repressing my growls, as I don't want to scare her any further. But I am beyond pissed off, how someone could treat their goddess given mate that way was beyond me.

She explains how Mason and Kaia were rogues but through no fault of their own, it would appear they found themselves in positions similar to that of Aleksa and they formed a bond together. I would need to do some investigation to make sure their stories checked out, although I can't imagine they would have much to gain by lying to me, they seem genuine.

I ask her which pack she is from and she starts to panic. She is reluctant to give me this information, and I am struggling to keep my cool. I don't mean to but before I realize what I have done I have alpha commanded her to tell me. So she does.

I am not surprised when she tells me she is from the Evergreen pack. As she was telling me her story I started to link it to what I had heard from Alpha Lachlan on our phone call the other day.

I am not surprised she is Luna. She is beautiful and strong and she has a kind and caring aura about her. But I need to verify this story. People have a tendency to lie when they are scared or desperate. And she is clearly very scared. I don't think she is lying though. I sense she is being truthful.

We talk some more, I advise her that I will be having a conversation with both Mason and Kaia separately, she doesn't seem concerned, she even offers to help organize the meeting, although I explain it is not necessary as I will be seeing them at the club.

Before I leave she asks for my name. I was so wrapped up in asking her questions, I didn't even introduce myself. She stares at me for a few moments and I can't quite figure out what she's thinking as she stares at me with a sweet smile on her face. Then as if she realizes that she is staring at me she thanks me for my visit and farewells me closing the door.

As I am walking down the stairs I hear two little voices calling out to their mommy, with my werewolf hearing. The twins must be awake I think to myself. I really want to meet them for some reason, as does Sabre. But we resist the urge. Once I get to the tree line, I shift into my wolf, seeing that the twins are watching from the window. Sabre and I leap off following the forest path, feeling quite happy with myself and thinking about that sweet scent of peony blossom and peach nectar.

\*Aleksa POV\*

It's been a week since Kingston appeared at my doorstep, and I haven't seen him since that day. We are all settled into life in Denver, having been here a couple of weeks now. Liam and Layla are loving the daycare that they attend. The ladies who run it, and work there, are so kind and nurturing, the twins are really thriving there. They've even managed to make a few friends and have a few playdates. I've even made a few mom friends myself. We go for coffee on the weekend while the children play at the park. It's a far cry from our life at Evergreen, which was so much more isolated. I didn't have any mom friends. I mean I only had Eva and Kali, and look how Eva turned out. Kali is a keeper though, I sure miss her. I think of her often.

Mason and Kaia are enjoying working at the club, naturally they have already been promoted since starting there. Their natural leadership skills are obviously hard to ignore. Mason is now running the security team there, and has been asked to manage security for another two clubs in town. Kaia is no longer working as hostess, she is working within management. They both seem happy. We didn't talk much about our lives before we came here, we all decided we wanted to move forward and focus on our new lives. We didn't want the negativity of our pasts constantly hanging over us.

Recently we heard from Caleb and Kali, they had finally safely reached Crimson Moon and were greeted with open arms by Alpha Callum and his Luna Cadence. They had to lay low for a while in a human town initially as they were surrounded by the Evergreen pack warriors, but they managed to escape a week later. It sounded like things were pretty tough for them for a while. I am so happy that they are safe now. I still feel guilty that their lives were uprooted the way they were. However, they assure me that they would do it again in a heartbeat. I'm grateful for such loyal and courageous friends.

Every day I count myself lucky that Lachlan hasn't found me or the twins, or my friends yet. We have no way of knowing where he is looking for us, although I imagine he would be looking high and low for Liam, being that he is the rightful heir to Evergreen Pack. I know the day will come when he finds us and we will have to fight for our freedom once again. All I can do right now is make sure we are ready when that time comes. Mason, Kaia and I have been working on multiple escape plans for the twins and I, and we are almost ready for when the time comes.

Today I have the day off work. I have dropped the twins off at daycare, and Mason and Kaia are both at work, so I don't know what to do with myself. I've been working a lot recently. Since we left Evergreen in such a hurry, we were unprepared. We had no savings or back up plans, so I've been working extra

shifts so that I can put some money inside for when we have to move on again.

I look around at the cabin, it's pretty immaculate so that rules cleaning out. I look in the pantry and it's looking a little empty so I guess I can go grocery shopping. Although I am feeling restless at the moment, so, I try to channel Amber to see if she would like to go for a run.

After a few attempts I hear no reply from her in my head, so I guess shifting is out of the question right now. I almost can't remember the last time we shifted. Amber has been so distant since everything that went down with Lachlan, I think she misses Cyrus, Lachlan's wolf. She has only spoken to me once since we escaped from Evergreen, and that was when we met Kingston.

A cheeky smile erupts on my face when I think of Kingston. Gosh he is divine. He's tall, he's tanned, he's muscular, he has a smile that just makes me want to melt. He has a commanding no nonsense type of aura about him. But then he's understanding and seems sincere. I feel so attracted to him. It's so unlike me. I'm not that girl that falls all over a guy. It's so bizarre, I should be mourning the death of my relationship with Lachlan, not getting all turned on but the hot alpha of the Rocky Mountain Pack. Get a grip Aleksa – I think to myself.

I figured that because I had rejected my fated mate I would be sick. I had always been told that rejecting or being rejected by your fated mate would make you weak and potentially k\*\*l you, but I wasn't feeling any of that. In all honesty, I had never felt better. Maybe a little weak physically, but mentally I feel freer than I ever have.

I can't even feel Lachlan being intimate with someone anymore. Perhaps my rejecting our bond was enough? I thought that he needed to accept my rejection though. It's so confusing. Perhaps I needed to see someone, a witch or a healer or perhaps a shaman. I wouldn't even know where to start come to think of it. Perhaps I would discuss this with Kaia later on tonight and see what she thinks about it all.

Thinking about Kingston had gotten me all wound up. So I decided I would go for a run, and since Amber isn't talking to me I will just go in my human form. I look around my room to find something acceptable to run in.



I picked up some black leggings and a black sports bra and put them on. I grab the only pair of shoes I have that would be suitable, my black converse shoes, and pull my hair into a high ponytail.

I walk through the house, shut the door, run down the stairs and start stretching. I take a deep breath in of fresh air, and decide that this is exactly what I need. So I started jogging off into the woods to relieve myself of some s\*\*\*\*I frustration.

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I've been running for about forty five minutes now and I realize I am completely lost. I thought I was following a trail but clearly I went off track at some point. I'm not worried because I am a wolf and I love the woods. So I try to communicate with Amber but she's still not reachable. I slow down to walk a bit and take a look at my surroundings. If I could just find some sort of landmark, or listen for some sort of sound like running water or traffic or something.

I didn't bring anything with me so I can't keep track of the time. Although I don't have to pick up Liam and Layla until much later today so that doesn't concern me.

I start to backtrack hoping that I am going back in the right direction. After a few hours I stop. Great one Aleksa. Lost in the middle of nowhere, with no wolf to rely on. My stomach starts to growl and I wish that I had some breakfast before I left, or even a drink of water.

I decide that I will keep walking straight until I find the river or the road, or something resembling the right direction.

After some time passes, I get the feeling I am not alone. I can't hear anything but I can sense company is near.

I start regretting this bright idea I had to go for a run in the woods without my wolf. I hear a twig snap and I look behind me. I can smell them before I see them. Rogues. There appears to be two of them. They start to snarl at me. They both look pretty mangey, and they smell terrible like rotten meat. I would imagine it has been a while since they last showered. I am fighting the urge to vomit right now. My gag reflex is going strong. They slowly start to stalk towards me, both coming towards me, one from the right and one from the left.

I start to panic and try to wake Amber up, “Come on girl I could really use your help right now, we need to shift. Amber!!! Please! Rogues! I need to shift.” I yell at her desperately in my head.

“What’s a pretty she wolf doing out here all on her lonesome?” The brown one with white stripes all around its torso says to me.

“Looking for some fun, shewolf?” The other rogue says licking it’s licks and smirking at me, it is also brown, with red stripes over it’s back and belly.

“Uh, no thank you. I was just on my way back to.. My pack.” I say.

“Liar. You have no pack. You don’t smell like a rogue.” he sniffs the air near me. “You smell so sweet, and I can sense that you are ranked, but you don’t smell like a pack wolf”. The brown and white coloured rogue says matter of factly.

“That’s right so you better back off – NOW!” I say. Hoping that will make them think twice, but deep down inside knowing that it won’t. I am well aware that I am outnumbered and out wolfed.

“Hahaha. Nice try, she wolf. You are weak. Your wolf is not with you right now!” the brown and white rogue says with a sinister smile on it’s face.

I take a defensive stance, as I am well aware that these rogues want more than a chat from me, and I am resigned to the fact that I will have to defend myself in human form.

I only wish I was trained to defend myself. I never got a chance to train at Evergreen because I had gotten pregnant straight away and then I was constantly weak from the pain of Lachlan cheating. I had done a few self defense classes back in the human town I grew up in before meeting Lachlan but that was about it. Moon goddess please protect me! I prayed silently.

The brown and white coloured rogue lunged towards me, and I was able to move out of his way just in time, only to be pounced on by the brown and red striped rogue. He furiously bit into the side of my waist, taking a chunk of skin out of my side. I could feel the excruciating, stabbing pain take over my body. “Aahhhhh!” I screamed in pain and shock. I could smell the overwhelming metallic odor of my blood oozing out of me.

At that moment, the brown and white striped rogue got back up on its feet, and plunged towards me as I stood up. He knocked me hard onto the ground. I tried to push him off me but he had me pinned to the ground, and I was feeling weak from the bite on my waist. He started to snap at my neck, going for my jugular. I felt an unimaginable fear inside me at that moment. Was this it? Is this how I would die? No f#\$%ing way! I will fight to my last breath for my pups, I tell myself.

I punched the rogue in the throat as hard as I could, and used all my strength to push the rogue to the side, it started to choke, and took a moment to get its breath back then got ready to charge me again. The other rogue was circling me with a feral and satisfied look on its face.

I clutched at my side trying to place pressure on my wound. I could feel that I was losing too much blood. I started to feel dizzy. I could see the rogues smirking and mumbling something. I saw the red and white one lunge towards me, and just as it was opening its mouth to snap its teeth at my neck, I started to fall to the ground, and all I saw was darkness.

\*Aleksa POV\*

I woke up to the sound of machines beeping. I took a few deep breaths and I could smell bleach mixed with antiseptic. Where am I, I asked myself. I tried to open my eyes and everything felt so bright. And I felt so tired, so I gave up and faded back into sleep.

I could hear a faint voice calling out my name, multiple times. Then I smelt the faint scent of fresh pine, it was my favourite scent, as the forest was my favourite place. I started to open my eyes again and this time even though it was overwhelmingly bright, I succeeded in fully opening them.

I felt slight tingles on my hand, It must be static electricity from the bed and the machines I thought. Then I looked down. It was Kingston. He was holding my hand, sitting beside me, looking at me with what looked like relief on his face. I tried to speak but my mouth was so dry, I managed to croak out "water".

Kingston obliged and helped me with some water in a cup and a straw. I took a few sips initially, then I greedily took more. The thirst within me was intense. I felt like I hadn't had any water in days.

I tried again to speak, this time I was successful, although I had to cough in between words.

“Where am I?” I manage to say in between coughs, looking around confused. As I tried to sit up a bit, I was engulfed with pain, a stabbing pain at my waist. I grabbed it with my hand and I could feel a large dressing. I looked back up at Kingston.

“The rogues? But how did I get here?” I asked.

“I can explain, don’t panic, you are safe Aleksa”. Kingston reassures me. He then proceeds to tell me how I got here.

“I was out for a run in the woods, when I smelt rogues, I could sense danger, so I kept running until I saw you.” Kingston tells me.

“You were bleeding profusely, and the rogues appeared to be going in for the k\*\*l, so I took them both out, and then I rushed you here.” He tells me, with anger starting to radiate from his aura.

I look at him, I’m overcome with emotion, I feel so grateful to him, if he hadn’t been out there, I would be dead. “Thank you, I don’t know how I can ever repay you for this.” I say to him with a sincere look upon my face.

Then I realize I am here, but my pups are not, “Oh my goddess, Liam and Layla! Daycare! I was supposed to pick them up. I’ve got to go!” I say as I try to pull myself up in a hurry leading to my stitches bursting. I feel the blood start to rush out of my wound, the metallic smell overwhelming my senses. What on earth? I think to myself. I am a werewolf. Why have I not healed?

Kingston panics and calls the doctors in to tend to my wound, he holds pressure on it, until they arrive, then they start stitching my wound up again.

“You need to be more careful Aleksa, your wolf is not with you right now, your healing will be that of a human’s healing right now”. He tells me.

He then goes on to tell me a healer came in earlier and said that my wolf was away, but would be back, that she just needed some time to heal.

“Liam and Layla, are here, at Rocky Mountain. So are Mason and Kaia, you have all been granted an exemption, you are here as my guests. They will be

in shortly. I have mindlinked my Beta Asher to inform them that you are awake.” He says.

I sigh in relief. I am glad that my pups are close by and that I will get to see them. But I have so many questions. I look up at Kingston and I start to ask him “How long have I been out?”.

To which he replied, “Three days. You have been in a coma for the past three days.” He says with a sadness exuding from him.

I am shocked “Three days? How can that be? Why did I sleep so long?” I ask, starting to panic that I have worried my pups and friends for the past three days.

“Your wolf wasn’t with you to speed up the healing process, and your injuries were critical. But you’re awake now and your body is slowly repairing itself” Kingston exclaims.

Kingston looks at me as though there is something on his mind. “Tell me, Aleksa, what were you doing in that part of the forest alone at that time of day?”.

I look at him perplexed. “I was going for a run, I got lost, then I came across the rogues”. Remembering my encounter with them.

“You really shouldn’t be so careless in future, that part of the territory isn’t often utilized by our pack, although it is our territory we generally keep away from it. It borders on the forsaken territory.” He warns me.

“When you are recovered, we can show you the territorial boundaries, and explain it all a bit more. For now, I would advise you to keep to the main track or even the main road, if you are running in human form” he then pauses, looks at me and continues, “There is something I need to discuss with you but it can wait until you are out of hospital.” Kingston says.

At that moment, the door bursts open and Mason and Kaia walk in with two very energetic and happy children “Mommy!” They call to me in sync.

“Mommy, we missed you! They tell me. They are about to jump on me when they are pulled back by Mason and Kaia.

“Slow down there pups, we don’t want to hurt mommy now do we?” Kaia says to Liam and Layla.

They just look at me wide eyed. “Mommy is so happy to see you both. I have missed you so much while I was sleeping.” I tell them with tears ready to fall from my eyes.

We all chat for a while, and Kingston stays sitting next to me the whole time. I find it strange that he seems so protective of me, but at the same time, I really don't want him to leave. Something about his scent keeps me calm and makes me feel safe. Two things I haven't felt in a long time.

After about half an hour I am struggling to keep my eyes open. Mason and Kingston start to notice, and suggest it might be time for everyone to leave so that I can get some sleep. We all say goodbyes and I am able to hug my pups goodbye gently. I thank Mason and Kaia for looking after them and promise I will be out tomorrow, to which Kingston looks at me doubtfully.

They all leave, but Kingston doesn't. “Are you not going to leave as well?” I ask him, struggling to fight against my heavy eyes. “I will wait for you to fall asleep, then I will leave to attend to some pack matters, close your eyes Aleksa, get some sleep” he says.

Then I lose my fight to stay awake and drift off to sleep.

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I had been in hospital for a total of five days now, and the medical team were satisfied that I was medically stable, and I was able to leave this morning. To say I was excited was an understatement. I couldn't wait to get out of here, don't get me wrong it was a state of the art hospital, everything was so bright and white and clean, it was a simple room with a bed in the middle of the room connected with monitors and equipment, and a panel above the bed with oxygen and suction and various other switches and medical supplies. Beside me was a small bedside table with a jug of water and cup on it. To the left of me there was a door leading to an ensuite bathroom with a walk in shower and a gorgeous sink and vanity with a large mirror. It was well stocked with environmentally friendly sustainable products.

Everyone here was so professional, from the Nurses and Doctors to the healthcare assistants and kitchen staff that brought me my meals.

The food was first class. I don't think I have ever eaten so well. I mean I have always cooked healthy and tasty meals, it's just you notice it more when someone else is cooking for you and you are on the receiving end.

However, that all said. I missed my pups greatly, I had never been separated from them like this before, with the exception being when Lachlan threw me into the dungeon at Evergreen.

I was also worried that I had missed too many shifts at work, but being that Kingston owned the Tavern, he said he had told Sierra that I would be off for a week or so, so there was no pressure there, but I still felt guilty letting my new team down, especially since I had just recently started.

I just wanted to get back to my new life, which had barely just started. I had told myself that this was just a temporary setback and I wouldn't let it hold me back.

One thing I would definitely miss about being here was the daily visits from Kingston. I could look at his face all day. I felt butterflies just thinking about him. Drool.

I walked to the bathroom to have a quick shower. Mason would be in shortly as he was picking me up to take me back to the old log cabin.

When I walked out of the shower Kingston was waiting at my bedside for me. I was standing at the ensuite door with nothing but a towel on. I stood there shocked. I was not expecting anyone else to be in the room, or I would have changed in the bathroom.

I stood there with my mouth wide open, looking at Kingston, feeling uber anxious that he was seeing me this way.

He was sitting there with a smirk on his face, something flashing in his eyes, amber flecks, his wolf surfacing perhaps.

"I'm sorry I didn't realize anyone else was in here, I'll just grab my clothes and change, I won't be long" I say picking the outfit that had been left for me the other day up off my bed and darting for the bathroom.

Nice one Aleksa, I scold myself. My heart racing and my body responding to the gorgeous wolf sitting only meters away from where I was getting changed.

I quickly throw my black halter neck dress on and my black crossover sandals on and brush my hair in front of the mirror.

Once I feel I look acceptable I walk out of the bathroom to greet Kingston.

“Aleksa, you look beautiful, please sit, there is something I would like to discuss with you” Kingston says sitting on the chair next to my hospital bed, with what looks like l\*\*t in his eyes, trailing my every move.