

Luna Aleksa's Escape Chapter 41

Jackson POV

As I stepped out of the car and turned around, I was pleasantly surprised to see Aleksa, the Luna that I had met at Evergreen in the dungeons. She looked to be in a much better place than the last time I saw her. Although I must say I am rather curious to know what she is doing here at Rocky Mountain of all places.

Flashback -Jackson POV- From his time in Evergreen Pack Dungeons

I am the Alpha of the Blue Moon Pack. I am 25 years old and I have yet to find my fated mate, my Luna. I was never really too worried about finding a mate, but over time my wolf has become restless and I feel a sense of urgency within myself. I was hoping I might meet her at my sister Jade's Luna Ceremony, but that wasn't the case.

I was on my way back from Jade's Luna Ceremony, as she had just met her mate a month ago, and it turned out he was Alpha Hawke, of the Crescent Moon Pack, which is a rather large pack in a territory in a nearby state. I was not far from home when I was attacked by rogues. I had done my best to avoid packlands and generally had good knowledge of the nearby packs, but I was in such a hurry to get back I decided to deviate from my planned route.

I was not far from Evergreen Pack territory when the attack occurred. It was a completely opportunistic attack by the looks of things. To be honest, they never really stood a chance. Even though I was outnumbered, they were really quite puny, feral-looking rogues, who were barely surviving by the looks of things.

Everything was going fine until I was blindsided by two of Evergreen's pack warriors, and before I knew it, I was being dragged into Evergreen's pack ground and tossed into the dungeon. I wasn't worried. I knew I wouldn't be here long. I knew the Alpha of this pack, and it wouldn't be long until he came down to the cells to interrogate me. In which he would let me out straight away.

I must have dozed off because when I woke up next I heard the most intoxicating voice. From what I could tell, it was a young she-wolf, and she didn't sound happy at all. Not that you would feel happy being locked in this filthy place. I could hear her talking to two of the other prisoners, who I

assume were also rogues. I wasn't getting that vibe from the girl in the cell directly opposite mine though. She sounded defiant, her voice had an air of importance to it. Now I am curious. I continued to listen to her sweet voice.

She spoke of how her mate had betrayed her and she pleaded with one of the warriors to help her get out of here. Although he was clearly not interested in helping her. Not surprisingly though, as he would be most loyal to his alpha and no doubt working within an alpha command.

I listen as he tells her he can't help her and makes some excuse about doing rounds. I can hear the frustration and realization in her voice that he is loyal to his alpha, as she tries to backtrack to no doubt keep him from suspecting her intentions.

I take this as my chance to engage her in conversation. "Gutless! He could help you but he has his own agenda! So you are the Luna of Evergreen pack? What kind of an Alpha imprisons his own Luna? He doesn't deserve you" I said as I huffed in annoyance.

"That is kind of you to say". She says in return.

"You are brave to refuse and challenge your fated mate. Not many she-wolves could do that, they would be too enthralled by the mate bond. You must be very strong," I said with respect.

"Lachlan imprisoned me because I tried to reject him. He is my fated mate, but he is unkind and cruel and he has betrayed our bond constantly. I don't want any part of it". She says, "Why are you in the dungeons? Can I ask what you did to end up here?" She asks me.

"I was attacked near the borders of your territory, by many rogues. I managed just fine in defending myself against the rogues until your warriors intervened and got in a cheap shot and blindsided me". I said with venom in my tone.

"I wasn't actually on your packlands. And I am waiting to speak with your Alpha". I said defiantly.

"I am sure it's just a misunderstanding, I have no doubt you will be on your way soon enough," She says optimistically to me.

There's something about her that I can't put my finger on. I feel bad for her too. What kind of an alpha throws their luna into a dungeon?

I have this urge to get her out of this dungeon immediately, I want to take her away from here, and allow her to live her life on her terms. She is beautiful and she hasn't done anything wrong.

I have the feeling that she will no longer live freely in this pack. From what I've heard this morning, her mate intends to keep her here against her will. That is no way to live.

I want to help her but I am greatly outnumbered here. I need to get out of this cell first so I will be civil with the prick. Then I will come back. I will gather several of my strongest warriors and we will come back for her.

At that moment, I heard a familiar voice. Lachlan. I can hear him taunting her, and threatening to keep her in the cells. And I can't help but snicker at how pathetic he sounds.

"Who are you to laugh at me? Show yourself now before I rip you to shreds with my bare hands", he yelled furiously.

"Lachlan Fang. It sure has been a while. You need to release me from this cell immediately." I demanded.

"Apologies old friend, it seems there has been a misunderstanding. My warriors obviously did not know who you were. Otherwise, they never would have locked you up here." He says nervously as he unlocks my cell door.

I pushed past the cell door and walked right up to his face. "I expect someone will be held accountable for this. I was barely near your territory when the attack started with the rogues," I declared angrily.

"Yes Jackson, I will get to the bottom of this. We don't generally interfere if an attack is happening outside of the pack territory, so I'm not sure what has happened in this instance". He nervously insisted.

I look towards his Luna and I feel anger that she's in this position. I feel angry that I can't do anything about it right now. But I have to play along for now. I will get justice for her. Just not today.

"Tell me Lachlan, why is your Luna sitting on the floor in this god-forsaken dungeon?" I asked.

“My Luna and I are having a little disagreement on something. I am teaching her a lesson. Don’t worry about her. Let’s get you upstairs, I think we need to have a whiskey.” Lachlan said while motioning for me to proceed forwards.

“I can’t imagine what one would do to warrant being thrown in the dungeon and treated like a criminal, Lachlan. ” I looked at him questionably.

Now Lachlan is the one who is snickering. “That’s not your concern Jackson. Come now, let’s get you on your way”. And with that, he motions me toward the exit.

I don’t look back because I feel too guilty. But I made a promise to myself that I would be back tomorrow and I would get her out of this pack. Whatever it takes.

When upstairs, I declined Lachlan’s offer of a whiskey. I say I need to get back to my pack, perhaps another time. With that, I shifted into my wolf and ran off in the direction of my pack as quickly as my legs could move me.

I got back to the Blue Moon pack in no time at all. I mind-linked several of my elite warriors and asked them to meet me at the training grounds. This is where I proceed to tell them what is happening in the Evergreen pack. I tell them what I know about Lachlan imprisoning his Luna in the dungeons and I explain that she is important and must be rescued.

No one questions my motives, my elites are unconditionally loyal to me, we are a tight pack and we would all gladly die for one another. We end the meeting and prepare for our mission. Just before dusk today we will rescue Aleksa and bring her back here. She doesn’t have to stay here, but perhaps she may want to until she figures out what she will do next. Although part of me hopes that she may want to stay.

Flashback Over

Jackson POV

“Aleksa? What a pleasant surprise.” I said to her. And then my eyes moved to the large mark on her neck. It was practically glowing, which had me wonder if she had recently been marked. She looked shocked to see me, and another emotion, fear or anxiety perhaps, not the reaction I was hoping to invoke in her.

“Jackson, we met at Evergreen,” I said, stretching my arm out to shake her hand.

Aleksa looked at my face and then at my outstretched hand, eyes flickering back and forth. As she reluctantly reaches to shake my hand. A loud growl rips through the air.

“MINE!” Growled an alpha with an enraged aura about him, as he stalked towards us and pulled Aleksa aggressively into his arms.

“Jackson,” I say redirecting my outstretched arm towards the threatened alpha in front of me. In an effort to show him that I’m not intimidated by him and that I’m not a threat.

“Blue Moon Pack,” I said, moving my hand towards him in a bid to shake his hand as a peace offering.

“Kingston.” He says, shaking my hand firmly. You can tell a lot about a wolf by his handshake.

“I could sense my Luna’s distress. Am I right to assume you know each other?” Kingston asked, raising a brow.

“We do, but not in the way you might think. You are newly mated I take it?” I reply to Kingston. He looks at me with a hard expression on his face. Clearly waiting for a proper answer to his question.

“We both spent some time in the dungeons in Evergreen,” I told Kingston. Who has a look of confusion on his face.

“Jackson of Blue Moon Pack. I recall communicating with you via email, welcome to Rocky Mountain.” He says, still not convinced whether or not I am a threat.

“I think you should come and join us in my office, we should have a chat. Just to make sure we are all on the same page. What do you think?” Kingston asks me.

“Sure. Lead the way.” I replied. I was curious to see where this was going.

Aleska seemed to have calmed down a bit. I noticed that she seemed very comfortable in Kingston's arms. Luna again – So Kingston is her second chance mate. Strangely, I don't feel disappointed, I feel happy for her.

Kingston starts by asking me how I ended up in the dungeons at Evergreen, being that I was an alpha myself. So I begin recounting the events that led me to Evergreen, as well as what happened in the dungeons.

"After leaving Evergreen, I made my way back to my pack and I assembled a few of my warriors with the intention of freeing Aleksa." I tell them both.

"I'd never liked Lachlan, how he even ended up in control of the pack is beyond me. His father had been a great leader, it's a pity none of his traits had been passed on to Lachlan."

"Although Evergreen is currently part of an Alliance that was formed by our fathers, the general consensus was that no one in the Alliance could stand Lachlan, he was arrogant and reckless, and dishonest."

"Wolves talk and it was a known fact that Evergreen had gone downhill drastically since Aleksa had left. Lachlan had taken out a lot of debt and owed the wrong people money, it was no secret that he was struggling to pay them back. It was only a matter of time before he lost control of Evergreen."

"Lachlan and I had been forced to work together and be in each other's presence since we were pups, but even then I couldn't stand him. I had worked with him out of respect for my father and the other founders of the Alliance. Not that it mattered now, as Blue Moon and Evergreen were no longer allied together. That ended the day I came back to free Aleksa. But it had been on the cards for some time."

"I was curious as to what had become of Aleksa and wanted to make sure she was far away from Lachlan."

I then look over to Aleksa and tell her "I knew you had your pups with you so I sent a Private Investigator as well as some of my own trackers out to ensure you were all safe and with the intention of offering you and your pups, as well as the wolves you escaped with, safe haven in my pack, although we were unable to trace your movements past Iowa."

"Aleksa, for some reason, I felt an overwhelming need to protect you and your pups. I won't lie, I was instantly drawn to you. Initially, I had wondered if I

might be your second chance mate, as my wolf seemed adamant that we needed to protect you, although he wouldn't tell me why. But then I realized that I couldn't scent you. So I knew you weren't my mate." I told Aleksa and Kingston, seeing no reason to hide anything.

A growl came from Kingston, who appeared to be gripping Aleksa even harder.

"I mean no disrespect, Kingston, you have to understand this is all retrospective," I say matter of factly.

"Aleksa was in a bad situation at the time and I felt compelled to help her and her pups." I replied.

"I can see you are safe and happy, and that you are newly mated and marked. Honestly, I am happy for you both." I say meeting Kingston's eyes to show my truth.

"I am here not only as a guest at the Alpha Summit but as an ally if you will accept me," I tell them both respectfully.

They looked at one another, and I could see that they were mind-linking. I patiently awaited their reply, looking around the room. Until I remember something that I feel they might want to know.

"Earlier I mentioned that Evergreen was in trouble," I stated. They stop mind-linking, looking at me with their full attention.

"It's nearing bankruptcy, the pack is doing poorly, food is scarce, sources report that wolves are going hungry, and the pack leadership is weak." I pause momentarily then continue.

"Currently, it is easy pickings for any Alpha who may intend to expand his territory."

"There will be a meeting at the end of the month and it will likely be voted out of the Alliance, it is also likely that another alpha will challenge Lachlan for the pack."

Aleska POV

Jackson. That's right. He was an alpha too, of course, he would be here. It is an Alpha Summit after all. But then I thought about how he also knows Lachlan and how they seemed to be on friendly terms. So my thoughts were – was he an enemy or ally, friend or foe? I didn't know what to make of this. I could feel anxiety surfacing, yet I tried to remain stoic. I don't want to be that panic-stricken girl that can't speak for herself. I am strong. I am fierce. I am Luna.

I've got this, I think to myself, as he stretches out his hand as a gesture. It appeared to be a friendly gesture. As I look at his hand, I move my hand outwards to shake his when I hear a loud growl and I am pulled into Kingston's chest. The smell of fresh pine invades my senses giving me a sense of calm. I take a breath of his scent and I feel so much calmer already. But I can feel the anger radiating from Kingston.

I listen to Kingston and Jackson talk. Jackson is trying to diffuse this tense situation, he seems to be genuine in his words. Kingston suggests we all sit down to ensure we are on the page and I think that is a good idea. So we made our way to Kingston's office.

Kingston directs Jackson to the seat in front of his desk and he sits on his chair, directly facing him. He pulls me onto his lap in a show of dominance, making it clear that I am his. It's not necessary, but if it calms him, then I will oblige.

Jackson tells us of his relationship with Lachlan and it is clear that they are not friends. It seems that Jackson has put up with him for many years out of respect for the alliance the packs have together, and nothing more.

Jackson then goes on to tell us something that shocks me to my core. He went back to Evergreen to help free me from the dungeons. I am gobsmacked. I can't imagine why he would risk so much for someone he didn't know. Come to think of it I do remember that look he gave me as he left the dungeons that day, it seemed like a look of regret or pity I thought at the time.

Kingston seems weary of this new information also. Jackson tells us that my imprisonment went against council law and that after hearing my story in the dungeons he couldn't leave me there. He also tells us that Lachlan has made too many enemies and that Evergreen is about to be voted out of the alliance, and possibly be taken over by another pack.

This makes my heart feel heavy. While I don't care what happens to Lachlan, I still care for the pack that I was previously Luna of. It just doesn't sit right with me. I look to Kingston, who I can tell knows what I am thinking. And he nods to me, knowingly.

Jackson explains how he felt he needed to help me and felt protective of me and my pups, he comments that he sees that Kingston and I are mated and seem happy for me, telling us that he respects the mate bond. He assures Kingston that he is no threat and means no harm, which Kingston seems to believe, as I do too.

Kingston apologizes for his outburst earlier, and Jackson tells him there's no need that he would be the same had the situation been reversed.

Asher arrives and offers to direct Jackson to the cottage he will be staying at for the Summit. While our conversation is not finished, we decided that Jackson should unpack and settle in, and we could meet again later tonight for a whiskey, and to discuss the Evergreen situation further.

Once Jackson and Asher leave the office, I nestle my head into Kingston's chest. I take in his scent of pine again, and he also takes my scent in. We just sit there snuggled together for a while, in silence.

Then Kingston picked up his phone. He calls one of his Private Investigators and asks him to look into Alpha Jackson of the Blue Moon Pack. He wants all the intel they can find on him. After he finishes his call, he looks at me.

"Was that necessary?" I ask him.

"Yes, Aleksa, you are my Mate, my Luna. I take your safety very seriously. We need to make sure Jackson's story checks out. I need to know if he is someone to worry about. If he checks out, we will welcome him as an ally. If not, he will be held to account for his dishonesty and intentions." Kingston tells me sternly.

Kingston POV

As I skim read the emails in my inbox, I am mind-linked by Aleksa, apparently, there are more guests arriving early and there is no one there to greet them. I

ask Aleksa to hold down the fort while I make my way downstairs to attend to the arriving Alpha.

As I am making my way there I feel panic race through our bond. Aleksa seems nervous or worried about something, so I pick up my pace, and as I am descending the stairs I see an Alpha reaching his arm out towards Aleksa, she seems reluctant. I am instantly on alert and I start stalking toward the Alpha wondering what his problem is. I know it isn't Lachlan because I don't think Aleksa would be standing that close to him, and while she's nervous she doesn't seem threatened.

"MINE!" I growl. Unable to control myself. The wolf in front of me doesn't even flinch. He is an alpha also it appears.

"Jackson," He says, extending his arm for a handshake. It appears he isn't an immediate threat, so I lower my guard a little.

"Blue Moon Pack," He tells me which pack he is from and now I know exactly who he is. I've heard many things about him. A fierce fighter, he was first in his class at Wentworth, which is an elite alpha training facility on the East Coast. He was a natural-born alpha, although rumor had it that he was never really interested in taking the position of Alpha for his pack. Though he was the only heir, he was forced into it out of obligation to his pack and his parents.

I'm not sure what his intentions are with Aleksa or how they know each other but I am determined to find out, and now.

"Jackson, I'm Kingston, I could sense my Luna's distress, Am I right to assume you know each other?" I ask, raising a brow.

"We do, but not in the way you might think. You are newly mated I take it?" He states rhetorically.

I continue to stare at him, waiting for him to answer my question. I am not in the mood for his condescension.

"We both spent some time in the dungeons at Evergreen." He tells me and with that I am confused, what is an Alpha, especially one as capable as him, doing in a dungeon at another pack.

“Jackson of Blue Moon Pack, I recall communicating with you via email. Welcome to Rocky Mountain.” I say in a forced and reluctant tone.

“I think you should come in and join us in my office, we should have a chat. Just to make sure we are all on the same page. What do you think?” I say, more of a demand, rather than a question.

“Sure. Lead the way.” Jackson says casually, which irks me a little.

We arrive at my office and gesture to him where I want him to sit. I pull Aleksa onto my lap, my wolf needs calming right now. He is angry and feels that this alpha may be a threat to our mate. He is feeling impatient. I can tell she wants to stand strong and show her independence but she can feel my frustration right now so she caters to my needs.

First thing is first, I need to know what their connection is. So I ask him what he was doing in the dungeons, and he starts his story, telling me the events leading to his time at Evergreen as well as the exchanges with Aleksa in the dungeons, he even goes on to shock us with the confession that he went back to Evergreen to free Aleksa. Sabre growls fiercely he is enraged that Jackson felt attracted to our mate, and he wants to claw his eyes and rip his throat out instantly, but I force him to the back of my mind, and keep our composure, and rightly so as Jackson goes on to announce that he knows Aleksa isn't his mate, although perplexed at the need to want to protect her and her pups, stressing that he respects the mate bond.

He further adds that Aleksa's previous pack Evergreen is in trouble and that it is about to be taken over. Personally, I could care less about the pack that was complicit in hurting my mate. But I can feel that she still has loyalty towards them, even though they hurt her. I can feel that she is conflicted. I will have to talk to Aleksa more about this, if she wishes to intervene somehow I will stand by her. I know she is worried about her friend Sam, and she has voiced wanting to contact him. But that is a whole other conversation for another time.

Although I sense that Jackson appears to be genuine, I am not willing to just take his word for it, so I suggest he gets settled and we continue this conversation at a later date. That will give me time to do a more thorough background check on him.

Aleska POV

It's still dark when I wake up, I look at the clock on the wall, and I see that it's 3.30 am. Although I feel wide awake, as though I am ready to start the day. I look over at Kingston, he appears to be fast asleep.

I guess it just feels strange not having Liam and Layla here. I feel empty. Usually, I would wake briefly at this time, make a trip to the bathroom and check on my pups. But they aren't here and I know there's no chance of me going back to sleep, so I decide it's coffee o'clock. I may as well pop downstairs and make myself a coffee, maybe I could do some baking. I used to bake all the time at Evergreen, but I haven't had a chance to here, there is always so much going on, plus Rose is always chasing me out of her kitchen.

I tiptoe down the staircase and make my way to the kitchen, it's empty so I'm in luck. I switch on the lights and make my way to the Nespresso machine. We have a large espresso machine, and there is the old-fashioned coffee brew in the pot, but I just love Nespresso. It only takes a minute and I'm in my happy place. I walk over to the window, it's quite light outside, the moon is in full force. I pull open the french doors and take a seat on the outdoor swing sofa on the patio. Luckily there is a small throw on the sofa, so I can get all snug and just stare into the night.

I start thinking about Xanthe and I wonder why we haven't heard from her. I start to wonder if maybe something has happened to her. She did mention that she was running from something in her past, I hope it hasn't caught up with her. I must discuss this further with Kingston today, there must be some way that we can get hold of her, at least to check that she is okay. I would never forgive myself if something happened to her while she was trying to find information for me. I hate putting people out. I have gone this long without knowing I can go a little longer.

And then my mind drifts to Jackson, I am still quite taken aback that he was willing to risk everything to free me. I suppose he wouldn't have done so if he didn't think I was possibly his mate. I hope he finds his mate, perhaps at the Summit, he might find someone.

It's the strangest feeling, but there is still something about him. It feels familiar or safe. I can't decide which one it is. I wonder if he could be connected to my past somehow? I know Kingston is still unconvinced about his intentions, and I love that he is so protective of me, but I really hope everything works out, and that we can all be friends.

Today is the first official day of the Annual Royal Alpha Summit. A lot of packs from around the country will be arriving over the next two days. It will be interesting to meet everyone. I hope we can make some new allies/friends along the way. I am nervous about meeting the Alpha King. I've never met royalty before. Kingston has a close relationship with Callum (the Alpha King) he says we will get along well. I hope he is right. I hope I don't do anything to offend, I am still learning about my heritage and werewolf culture. Kai has been teaching me about royal etiquette. I just hope I remember it all.

I feel so wired. My caffeine hit coupled with my anxiety has given me next-level energy. My mind is all over the place right now.

"Let's go for a run in the forest! We need to burn some of this energy off!" Amber suggests, she's feeling all pent up, it's been a while since I went for a run in wolf form.

"I guess as long as we don't go far we should be fine. As long as we are back before Kingston wakes." I say to Amber.

"I want full control!" Amber declares.

"Yeah ok, but behave!" I pleaded with her.

And with that, I run towards the end of the patio, and Amber jumps off it, shifting mid-air into our wolf form.

Amber (Aleksa's Wolf) POV

After running for a good while I find a nice spot to lay down and bask in the serenity of the forest. Aleksa doesn't let me out to prance and strut enough. Although I have to admit she has been a little better recently. I get that growing up thinking she was human and not being aware of her true identity has set us both back greatly. But now we are free from the constraints of Lachlan and Cyrus we will be free to connect more and explore. I thought I loved Cyrus but what we had wasn't love, and if I had the chance to see him again I would be sure to give him a piece of my mind and the back of my paw. Cryus was a good lay and initially, I fell for his charm and overconfidence, but eventually, I knew there was something sinister behind the facade of them both – Lachlan and Cyrus.

It's different with Sabre, he's honest and unfiltered. Not to mention he sure knows how to treat a she-wolf.

I gently growl thinking of our time together, my tail wagging and my tongue hanging out. Thinking of the risqué things that Sabre and I had done to each other. This makes me want to run back to our room and wake our mate up to play.

Kingston is a hundred times a better human than Lachlan ever was. He treats Aleksa like a Queen and so he should. Despite our stunted start, we are capable of great things. There is still so much for Aleksa to learn. I can't tell her some of these things as she needs to find out for herself. I am guided by the moon goddess herself and I know my place. I am here as her guide.

I'm enjoying having free range of the forest while the rest of the pack is still sleeping. That is until I realize we are not alone.

I don't even need to look behind me to know who is there. I can feel it in my soul. I know he is familiar. I know he is safe. I know this because he is one of us. He too is a Crescent Moon Wolf. He is unmated so there is no identifying mark. And this is not our first rodeo, as children of the Moon Goddess, we have lived many lives.

Legend tells of the Crescent Moon Wolf being passed down by shewolves, but the Legend was wrong. There are male Crescent Moon Wolves too, just most do not know of their existence. And because no one is looking for them, they tend to live longer lives in their human hosts than we she-wolves do. The biggest giveaway of the Crescent Moon wolf happens when they are marked by their true mate. It's our mark that gives us away.

Aleksa didn't have to worry about her mark with Lachlan, because he wasn't her true mate, he was a process that we had to go through in order to get to Kingston and this point in time. Or so the Goddess tells me.

I couldn't pick it while in our human form, and nor could Jackson. But in wolf form, we are connected. Not in a romantic way, although I know we were both initially confused. In a bonded together by the Moon Goddess kind of way. We are kin. And together we are a force to be reckoned with.

We can mind-link, not only in wolf form but in our human counterparts can also. They just don't know it yet.

“Gray,” I mind-link casually, as he continues to walk towards me.

“It’s been a while,” I add.

“Amber,” Gray says back to me, nodding his head towards me warmly.

“Looks like the Goddess has put us together again in this life,” I said to him via mind-link.

“It does. I wonder what the Goddess has planned for us this time.” He replies.

“I’m sure we will find out soon enough. How’s your human this time around?” I ask him.

“Jackson’s strong. Restless. And a little reckless. But we have that in common.” Gray chuckled.

“Aleksa is strong too. A little naive. But kind. Unfortunately, her first mate was a total fuckwad, but I like Kingston for her. Not to mention Sabre makes me all kinds of crazy.” I say, a growl slipping out.

I manage to contain myself and on a serious note, I question Gray.

“No mate yet?” I remark to Gray.

“In good time.” He remarks confidently and unbothered.

Gray turns around.

“We have company.”

Amber (Aleksa’s Wolf) POV

As I get up on all fours from my lay position, I can scent my mate, nothing calls to me more than his pine scent. I can feel the tension through our bond, and I walk to stand in front of Gray so that I can calm my mate before he gets the wrong idea and attacks Gray.

“It’s not what it looks like,” I say to Sabre. Thinking that finding Gray and me here in the middle of the forest, at 4.30 am looks highly suspicious.

“Explain. Now.” Sabre demands. Looking like it is taking everything to calm his jealousy and agitation right now.

“We couldn’t figure out what it was in our human forms, something was drawing us to one another, initially we thought it was an attraction, but it wasn’t like the mate bond it was different,” I say. As Sabre rips out a warning growl.

“We are kin!” I blurt out.

“What?” Sabre mind-links me, followed by a growl.

“Gray (Jackson) is also a Crescent Moon Wolf,” I say to Sabre, although he doesn’t seem convinced yet.

“Gray and I have met before, over many lifetimes, we are both children of the Goddess. We couldn’t detect it in human form, only in wolf form could we truly sense and recognise each other.” I say to Sabre, walking towards him so that he can take in my scent and trying to soothe his anger.

Gray is still holding his ground. He can’t communicate with Sabre, as Sabre isn’t a Crescent Moon wolf, and they are not from the same pack. But Gray patiently waits for me to explain this all to Sabre.

“Why the secrecy?” Sabre questions, eyes flickering from Gray to Myself.

“We (Aleksa and I) couldn’t sleep, she said I could go for a run, and we did, then Gray turned up, he couldn’t sleep either, that’s when we realized who each other was, then you arrived,” I said looking my mate in the eyes, with absolute honesty and adoration.

The tension lessens, and I can feel that Sabre believes me.

“Wait, you are both in wolf form. How are you both communicating? Sabre asks me.

“Oh, it’s a Crescent Moon Wolf thing, cool huh, we can mind-link each other. Even in human form.” I tell Sabre matter of factly.

He growled lightly.

“Tell him to shift. I want to speak with him.” Sabre demands. Nodding his head toward Gray.

“Gray, Sabre wants you to shift so he can speak with you if that’s ok,” I ask, rather than tell, as Gray is an Alpha wolf too, and he will not take kindly to being ordered around.

“Very well,” Gray replied, shifting right in front of us, as a display of dominance.

I avert my eyes momentarily, as although I am no prude, I do not wish to see Jackson naked.

Sabre shifts too, at first they were both standing there stark naked, but Sabre must have mind-linked Asher because he quickly arrived with some changes of clothes. He hands me a dress and I walked over to the nearest tree to get dressed.

Once I was dressed I walked back over to Kingston and Jackson who now both have shorts and t-shirts on. I take my place next to Kingston and kissed him on the cheek, rubbing my scent onto him to calm him down.

Kingston POV

I woke up from my sleep to pull Aleksa close to me. I couldn’t smell her peony and peach nectar, so I opened my eyes to find her side of the bed is empty. I walk into the bathroom to see it was also empty and saw that her clothes were in the laundry hamper. Perhaps she had gone downstairs to make coffee, that’s often what she did when she couldn’t sleep.

I made my way downstairs to find the kitchen empty although I could tell that she had been down here as her scent was all over the stool. I followed her scent outside onto the porch and saw that she was initially on the outdoor sofa swing, her coffee cup was empty and the throw rug was on the ground. I followed her scent to the end of the patio, where I saw her shredded clothes on the ground, so I know that she had shifted into her wolf, Amber.

I’m not impressed that she had shifted in the middle of the night to go for a run without any security, especially in the current situation, so I decided to follow her scent and check on her. I tried to mind-link her but there seems to be a block. This makes me nervous and agitated at the same time. I shifted into Sabre and we took off into the treeline to find our mate. I also mind-linked Asher to let him know that I couldn’t find his Luna.

Sabre (Kingston’s Wolf) POV (As Kingston has shifted)

It doesn't take long to find her, deep in the forest, in a small clearing. She is laying down on her side, it looks like she is in a mind-link with what I can see is Jackson's wolf. His eyes are also hazed over, he also appears to be in a mind-link. They are a few metres apart and appear to be comfortable in each other's presence, which agitates me.

I am furious, all sorts of thoughts are going through my head right now. I begin to stalk in a predatory fashion towards the wolf that is deep in the woods with my mate in the middle of the night, wanting to rip his throat out and ask questions later, but I hear Kingston in my head pleading with me to calm down and listen to what they have to say.

"It's not what it looks like," Amber tells me through mind-link.

"Explain. Now." I demand. It is taking every fibre of my being to contain my rage right now. I can't imagine why my mate is in the woods with another wolf right now. I can't think straight. I can hear Kingston fighting for control. Demanding I shift and listen to what our mate has to say.

"We couldn't figure out what it was in our human forms, something was drawing us to one another, initially we thought it was an attraction, but it wasn't like the mate bond, it was different," Amber tells me. A warning growl rips through me, I am barely holding myself back.

"We are kin," she blurts out.

"What?" I growl again. Not quite sure I've heard her right.

"Jackson (Gray) is a Crescent Moon Wolf." She tells me, although I'm still in a state of disbelief. I had thought that only she-wolves could be Crescent Moon Wolves. I'm gonna need a little more to go on than that.

"Gray and I have met before, over many lifetimes, we are both children of the Goddess. We couldn't detect it in our human form, only in wolf form could we truly sense and recognise each other." Amber tells me, walking towards me, I am hit with her sweet scent which has an immediate calming effect on me.

Gray's chest is puffed up and he looks like he is ready to defend himself and possibly Amber at any time. I should be offended but I am a little impressed that he would defend my mate. Although that isn't necessary as I love her with all my heart. And I am definitely not a threat to her.

“Why the secrecy?” I ask Amber specifically, looking at them both. Although I realize I can’t communicate with Gray, as we are not from the same pack, and are both still in wolf form.

“We (Aleksa and I) couldn’t sleep, she said we could go for a run, we needed to burn some energy, and we did, then Gray turned up, he couldn’t sleep either, that’s when we realized who each other was, and then you arrived, and here we are.” Amber declares looking at me with only love in her eyes, and I can tell she is being completely honest with me. I would be able to tell through our bond if she was lying.

“Wait, you are both in wolf form. How are you communicating?” I ask, suddenly confused.

“Oh, it’s a Crescent Moon Wolf thing. Cool huh! We can mind-link. Even in our human forms.” She tells me as if it’s no big deal.

I let out another growl, feeling maybe just a little jealous.

“Tell him to shift. I want to speak with him.” I instruct Amber. And with that, I mind-linked Asher to bring us two changes of clothes for Jackson and me, and one for Aleksa.

I see her eyes cloud over and I could see they were mind-linking. I stare at them both feeling quite impressed.

About thirty seconds later Gray shifts in front of me. Nudity is no big deal for us werewolves. But I know it still is an issue for Amber/Aleksa as she wasn’t brought up in a pack like we all were.

I looked at my mate who blushed nervously and looked away.

I shifted on the spot also and stand there in all my glory. Asher arrived in record time. Asher looked at us all with a puzzled expression on his face, handing me the bags of clothes he has brought with him.

(Kingston POV)

(As he has just shifted from his wolf form)

“I’ll explain later” I mind-link Asher.

“Ok, Boss,” Asher replied via mind-link.

I pulled a dress out of the bag and handed it to Amber. She walked over to a nearby tree to shift and change.

It's not unusual for us to have bags stashed throughout the woods, we have them as often wolves shift spontaneously and forget a change of clothes. Asher was able to grab a few random bags on his way here.

I mind-linked Asher, thanking him for bringing the change of clothes and telling him I will explain everything later, and dismissing him, telling him I'll see him in my office at 9 am.

When Aleksa had changed she walked up to me and kissed me on the cheek and stood next to me, facing Jackson.

"You will have to forgive me for my aggressive behaviour earlier but I woke in the middle of the night to find my mate wasn't next to me, nor was she in the packhouse, and then I found her in the middle of the woods with another wolf. And not just any wolf, one that seems to have some strange connection to her, I'm sure you can understand why I reacted the way I did." I said to Jackson.

"You're right Kingston, I understand completely. And if I were in your position I would have been just as agitated. Actually, I wouldn't have been able to hold back the way you did." Jackson replied.

"You should know that I have no untoward or malicious intentions with Aleska. We are kin. I couldn't spot it until we were in wolf form. But it all makes sense now." He declares to me.

"I assume Amber told you this is not our first rodeo? That we have been through many life cycles together. Obviously with different human hosts but with similar objectives." Jackson added further.

"What objectives exactly are you referring to?" I was beginning to wonder what exactly the Moon Goddesses' agenda might be.

"To ensure the next generation of Crescent Moon Wolves is protected from harm." Jackson declares.

"Oh my goodness!" Aleksa blurts out.

I looked at her worried, as I could feel her panic through our bond.

“Liam!” Aleksa yelled.

I looked at her with a perplexed expression on my face.

“We knew Layla was a Crescent Moon Wolf, but does this mean Liam is also? They are twins! I was so worried when I found out that Layla’s safety was at risk, and now I’m thinking Liam could be too!” Aleksa said speaking quickly and in a panic-stricken tone.

“Jackson?” I question him, moving my head to the side, glancing at him to see if he can answer Aleksa’s question.

“I would be surprised if he wasn’t,” Jackson said to us both. His forehead creased with concern.

“Is there any way to know right now, perhaps a marking, or something, anything that would identify him as a Crescent Moon Wolf?” I asked Jackson.

“Unlikely. The most obvious sign is the marking that appears when we find our true mates. That and any powers or special abilities we might have.” Jackson told us.

“Then we treat him as if he is. We treat both Liam and Layla the same. Protect them. Train them. Prepare them for their destiny.” I declared to Aleksa and Jackson.

“Ah, question, where exactly are your twins?” Jackson asked.

“They are somewhere safe. For now.” I told him. That’s all he needed to know for now. While I mostly believe what he is saying to be true, I still need to do some more background checks. That and we need to speak with Xanthe now more than ever.

“How about we go get some breakfast and talk about this while we eat?” I suggest to Jackson and Aleksa.

“I could eat,” Jackson says.

“Lead the way, my love,” Aleksa says, interlocking her hands with mine.

(Kingston POV)

The sun is up now, and we have a big day ahead of us. It's the first official day of the Annual Royal Alpha Summit. Alpha's from all over the country will be arriving, and we will need to be ready to greet them all and welcome them in as Alpha and Luna of Rocky Mountain Pack.

We still have an ongoing rogue situation to deal with, as well as finding out more about Aleska's grandfather's whereabouts. We are yet to get ahold of Xanthe, who hopefully will have some more information regarding Crescent Moon Wolves. Also, I wouldn't mind introducing her to Jackson, to get her opinion on everything.

Myself, Asher and some of our elite warriors are still preparing for Lachlan's arrival, and how we can minimise any drama or retaliation, especially while we are hosting the Summit.

This morning we will make a call to Mason, Quinn and my parents, to brief them on our new information. So they are aware of some of the dangers they are facing. Plus I think Aleksa might benefit from hearing from her pups, to see that they are safe and well.

I just hope we get everything in order before the Alpha King arrives later this week. He has entrusted the responsibility of hosting the Summit to me, and I don't want to let him down.

It's going to be a long week.

Aleksa POV

Breakfast was a little awkward. Kingston seems a little unsettled about the news of Jackson being a Crescent Moon Wolf. Jackson also seems a little guarded. I got the feeling he wasn't happy with his identity being shared. After breakfast, Jackson asked to speak privately with Kingston, so, naturally, I accompanied them. Jackson asked for Kingston's word that he wouldn't mention his wolf status to anyone. Kingston was a little offended and didn't take too kindly to being "told what to do" as he put it. I had to intervene, and eventually, we were able to come to a compromise. Jackson agreed that Kingston could tell Asher and Kai, but that he had to alpha command them to keep the secret, which was a reasonable request.

It's mid-morning now and there are several Alphas with their entourages making their way towards the pack-house. I hope these Alpha's and their entourage are as nice as the first few have been.

First up is Alpha Theo and his Luna Stella. They run a large midwestern pack, comprising several states. They have their Gamma Matt and his mate Mia with them, as well as four Elite Warriors. They seem nice, but not big on conversation. Which suits us as the next group is already pulling up. We have them staying in a larger cottage near the training grounds. We have some pack members ready to escort them to their cottage.

Next to arrive is the Alpha of what we refer to as the Floridian Pack. He is unmated, rumor has it that he rejected his fated mate, and he has a reputation for being a bit of a womanizer according to the notes that Quinn left me. He appears to be traveling lightly, with only two Elite Warriors with him. He seems a little gruff and is paying a little too much attention to my chest, his eyes roaming slowly up and down my body, which is making me feel uncomfortable. I could see that Kingston was getting agitated, so we quickly directed him to Kai, who would show him to the small cottage we had prepared for him. Before he walks off, he asks us to send an Omega to his quarters. I am a little shocked at his request, so I refer to Kingston, who is also looking unimpressed.

“We are not that sort of pack. If you are looking for the company of a female or a she-wolf, you might like to take a trip to the nearest human town.” Kingston politely redirects our guest. He has an astounded expression on his face but doesn’t push the issue. I assume that he doesn’t hear no that often.

Before we can even address one another, another two SUVs arrive next to us. I watch as the first person steps out of the car, and my heart jumps out of my chest.

“Caleb! Oh, my goddess! What? How? I’m soo happy to see you!” I said as I ran up to him and wrapped my arms around my previous Gamma, giving him the biggest hug of his life. I am so ecstatically happy right now. I moved my head back and took in his face. I am about to say something when I hear someone clear their throat. I know it’s Kingston. I could feel Sabre getting agitated, so I turned around.

“Kingston, meet Caleb! Caleb was my Gamma at Evergreen.” I said, and then I saw Kali getting out of the SUV with a big smile on her face.

“Oh my! Kali!” I yelled, as I again ran up to her like a child at Christmas. Kali moves to walk towards me and we pull into each other and hug, with tears sweeping down our faces. Kali is one of my best friends. I love her with all my heart and I am so unbelievably happy to see them both here right now.

“Kali, I take it?” Kingston says to Kali, smiling. And he moves toward Caleb to shake his hands, and then to Kali. Who I finally free from my grip.

“How are you here?” I asked, suddenly curious as to what I owe the honor of seeing my best friends here at Rocky Mountain.

“Wait. What’s this? Are you?” I said excitedly at the small bump that is protruding from Kali’s dress.

“Are you pregnant?” I asked her, already knowing the answer, but wanting to hear it from her first.

Caleb walks up to us both and places his arm around his mate lovingly, then places his hand on her belly. “We are!” He exclaims proudly.

“Oh my! I am so happy for you both. You are gonna make the best parents. Isn’t this just the best news, Kingston?” I asked my mate, in an effort to include him more in the conversation.

Kingston walks up to me, wraps his arm around my side, and says “That is great news, congratulations to you both!” He tells them, and he gives Caleb a man hug and pats him on the back, and then Kali a gentle hug, taking great care to avoid her bump.

Kali then pulls away from us all and starts to walk over to the first SUV.

“Allow me to introduce my cousin, Alpha Callum of Crimson Moon,” Kali says, opening the door of the first SUV. Out steps a very tall, very large, heavily tattooed man, with long curly untamed hair and a lot of facial hair. He has dark eyes and tanned skin. His presence is quite intimidating. I am adjusting my neck as far as I can as I look up to him to address him.

“Welcome to the Rocky Mountain Pack, and to the Summit Alpha Callum. I am Kingston, and this is my Luna Aleksa. We are glad you could join us.” Kingston says as he reaches out to shake Callum’s hand.

Callum then extended his hand out towards Kingston, shaking his hand. He then began to shake my hand also. I smiled and nodded at him.

“Thank you. Nice to meet you both. Aleksa, I have heard a lot about you.” He says with a deep husky voice.

I smiled shyly, “Thank you, Alpha Callum. It’s nice to meet you,” I said. “And thank you for all you have done for my friends Caleb and Kali. I am so glad they made it safely to Crimson Moon. I am in debt to you all. Without all of your help, I wouldn’t be here right now.” I said with gratitude to Callum, Caleb, Kali, and Kingston.

“I don’t believe that is the case. You are strong. You would have figured it out. We are happy to have helped, however.” Callum replied to me.

At that moment, another two SUVs drove up and we realized we needed to show our guests their accommodation. I can’t go with my friends although I really want to. I have to continue my Luna duties by welcoming our guests. So I mind-link Asher and Kaia to see if they can escort our special guests.

I had no idea Caleb and Kali were coming. I am not sure if we have accommodation ready for them. I mind-linked Kingston and he assured me that Callum had RSVP with the correct number of guests, so their accommodation is ready now.

Asher and Kaia arrive at the packhouse entrance and Kaia looks surprised to see Caleb and Kali. She walks up to them as if they are old friends, and in a way they kind of are. They are also happy to see Kaia and after they all hug and get acquainted with Asher, he begins to show them the way to their accommodation.

The next two cars approach and I hear a commotion coming from the cars, a high-pitched female voice and a gravelly male voice, a door is thrust open and an angry-looking alpha in his mid-twenties, I would say, steps out, he takes in the surroundings, then starts walking towards us.

“Good morning, welcome to the Rocky Mountain Pack,” I said to him. As I go to shake his hand, he completely dismisses me. Kingston c***s his head and growls. He is not impressed at the disrespect I am shown.

I decide to ignore it and as I am about to say something to break the tension, a shrieking woman exits the SUV, yelling at the Alpha in front of us “You could have waited!” She yelled.

She’s hastily repositioning her bra, her lipstick is a little smudged and her hair is disheveled. I tried to mask the amused expression on my face with a smile. She appeared to be unimpressed that she was left in the car, and that her mate didn’t wait for her. She walks up to Kingston, bats her eyelids and

introduces herself, getting very close and personal, merely inches from Kingston's face. He does not look happy as he steps back to get some space between himself and our guest.

"Luna Roxy, and you are?" She says while extending her hand for Kingston to kiss, I'm assuming. Her mate smacks her hand away from Kingston.

I release a growl at her actions. Amber doesn't appreciate her flirtatious nature and the gall of this she-wolf throwing herself at our mate.

"Oh hell no, she did not just do that!" Amber says angrily in my head.

"She needs to know her place!" Amber protests to me.

"Let it go, Amber, please, let's just get through today." I pleaded with my wolf. She's so fierce and protective and I love her, but she can be a bit aggressive at times.

"Roxy darling, don't embarrass yourself." Her mate says, shaking his head dismissively.

"I am Alpha Tyler. I run the largest pack in California. You are Kingston, I assume?" He says to Kingston.

"I am. Welcome, Alpha Tyler and Luna Roxy." Kingston says plainly.

"Please meet my Luna Aleksa." Kingston declares as he pulls me into his chest proudly.

Roxy looks me up and down and has a look on her face that I can't quite decipher.

"Pleasure," Tyler replies, nodding at me. I get the impression he doesn't like me much. Although I can't imagine why that might be, considering we met only just a few minutes ago. Roxy just flashes me an insincere smile. I get the feeling she likes to be the center of attention. Amber is fuming at her obvious disrespect, but it is only day one of a week-long summit, so I will keep her at bay for now.

"We hope you enjoy your stay with us. I will have someone escort you to your accommodation. Lunch will be in the pack-house dining room. If you need anything else in the meantime, please feel free to call reception, the numbers

are on the phone,” Kingston says abruptly. I can tell he wants to end this interaction as quickly as possible.

And with that, Kai arrives and takes over, freeing Kingston and me for a few moments before the next group arrives.

We watch as Tyler and Roxy make their way back to their vehicle, bickering at each other. Roxy turns her head back and gives Kingston a seductive wink.

Again, I let out a warning growl. Both Tyler and Roxy don't look back. I am starting to tire of Roxy's shameless attitude. Kingston mind-links me, telling me to let it go, it's not worth it, and hopefully, we won't have much to do with them throughout the summit. I somehow doubt we will be that lucky, but I will try to remain optimistic. I have bigger things to worry about than a flirtatious and attention-starved Luna.

It's late afternoon now and there are only a few remaining packs left to check-in, Evergreen being one of them. They may arrive this evening. They could also arrive early in the morning. As far as we know, Lachlan doesn't know that I am here, so I am not sure how this will go down. Kingston assures me that Asher, Kai, and our Elite Warriors are ready for every scenario, and Jackson has been briefed on the situation and he has pledged his support also.

I've been having those nightmares more and more frequently recently, and they all end the same way. I am adamant they are a premonition, a glimpse of things to come, and if that is the case, then we are in trouble.

Aleska POV

I had the worst sleep last night. Back-to-back nightmares. Except that this time, certain aspects of the nightmares had changed. For example, this time Eva and Sam were with Lachlan. Things seemed to be going on in the background of my nightmares, but I couldn't quite make them out. I woke up covered in sweat and my anxiety was at an all-time high. I tried to go back to sleep again to figure out what else was happening in my dream. I had maintained that these dreams seemed like premonitions, and they had changed, and that concerned me.

Eventually, I gave up and decided I would make a start to my day. It was then that I noticed that the other half of my bed was empty. Perhaps Kingston couldn't sleep either. I jumped into the shower and then quickly got dressed. I made my way downstairs, heading towards the kitchen.

I decided to make a nice hot coffee in the kitchen while Rose and some of our kitchen staff put the finishing touches on breakfast as our guests would be joining us this morning. I felt a little relieved as I recalled the video call we had last night after dinner with Liam and Layla. Our pups were beaming with energy, they were so excited about telling Kingston and me all about their adventures in Idaho.

Chase and Cordelia had met up with some close friends of theirs and they had brought their grand-pups along with them to play with Liam and Layla. It sounded like they were having the time of their lives. I realized that we had told Chase and Cordelia to keep them isolated in the cabin, but we trusted their judgment. Plus, we were confident in Mason and Quinn's ability to protect our pups had the occasion arose.

After speaking with Liam and Layla for a while, Cordelia and Chase came to tell them it was bedtime, so we were able to speak with Mason and Quinn for a bit. They reassured us that our pups were safe and that they hadn't encountered anything out of the ordinary and were covering their tracks whenever they needed to travel.

Mason went on to tell us how close Chase was to the former alpha of the local pack and how that alpha was indebted to Chase, so he had no concerns as of yet. Although he did maintain that he was keeping a close eye on things.

Chase was a great judge of character and was well respected by other alphas. I also knew that he loved Liam and Layla as if they were his own biological pups, so we knew our pups were in safe hands.

Kingston had to leave early as he had a phone call to his office that he had to attend to. He said it was urgent. I continued the call with Mason and Quinn.

Something seemed different about them. They seemed closer than usual and Quinn seemed to be having a glow about her. She was giggling a lot and they seemed even more affectionate than usual. They said there was something they wanted to tell us together, both Kingston and I.

Once they had reassured me it didn't concern Liam and Layla and that they were all safe, I agreed to end the call with them, as I wasn't sure when Kingston would return. We agreed to continue the call tomorrow morning before breakfast.

I was pulled from my thoughts of last night's call by a high-pitched shriek. Unfortunately, I could identify that voice anywhere – it was Luna Roxy. I left my coffee on the bench and walked hastily out of the kitchen to see what the problem was.

As I entered the hallway I could see Lily, one of our young omega pack members holding the side of her face which was reddened, trying to stifle her cry.

Luna Roxy was standing next to her yelling "Don't you dare make eye contact with me, Omega! Hear me?" She yelled, pointing her long curly witch-like nails at the young omega's face.

"Yes, Luna, I'm so sorry Luna," Lily said in a scared and shocked tone, facing the floor.

"What the hell is going on?" I angrily asked Roxy. Already knowing who the guilty party was. Lily was possibly the kindest person I had ever met. There was no way she instigated this incident.

"Your stupid omega here doesn't know her place. She had the nerve to look me in the eyes!" Roxy spat out.

"Did you hit her?" I questioned Roxy in a loud accusatory tone.

"I sure did. She's lucky I didn't do worse!" Roxy yelled back.

"You, ever, touch any of my pack members again, and I will hit you myself!" I declared to Roxy. Who looked at me offended.

"I take crimes against my pack members very seriously," I declared. Then I went on to add, "You need to apologize!"

"Nuh-uh, not happening," Roxy tells me with a defiant look on her face.

I am fuming with anger at the nerve of Roxy. Amber is growling too. She wants me to let her out.

At that very moment, Kingston walked into the hallway.

"What's going on?" Kingston asked, flabbergasted at the scene unfolding in front of him.

“She hit poor Lily in the face for looking at her!” I yelled, getting more worked up by the minute.

“Is this true, Luna Roxy?” Kingston asked in disbelief.

“Damn straight it is! b***h needs to know her place!” Roxy spat out venomously.

Kingston mind-linked me and told me we need to de-escalate this situation as we have bigger problems to deal with today. So I agreed to let her go with a warning.

“Luna Roxy,” I said in my calmest voice.

“We do things differently in our pack, everyone is treated the same regardless of their rank. I suggest that if you wish to stay for the duration of the summit you will need to abide by our rules. You are not to hit or abuse another of my pack members again, is that clear?” I told her with a hardened expression on my face.

Luna Roxy screws up her face and bits down hard on her lip. “Whatever,” She blurts out, and she begins to walk toward the dining room.

I looked at Kingston in disbelief. He could no doubt feel the frustration and anger emanating from me.

I then turned to poor Lily, who was still holding her reddened cheek.

“I’m so sorry Lily, come with me. I’ll get you an ice pack for your cheek, then you can take the rest of the day off,” I said to her as I led her into the kitchen.

Breakfast went better than I had expected after the Roxy fiasco. Naturally, she acted as if nothing had happened at breakfast. I wouldn’t want to tell anyone what happened if I were her either. She’s such a vile person to abuse someone so young and vulnerable as that.

Kingston worked hard to ensure that this Summit was a success, so we didn’t need any drama unfolding at breakfast. Thankfully, it all went smoothly. The packs were enjoying mingling with one another, some were a little standoffish,

but that is to be expected. There were plenty of compliments to the kitchen staff, the breakfast buffet was spectacular, and everyone ate plenty.

Today there are all sorts of activities planned for packs that have already arrived, as well as some basic orientation and check-ins. Tomorrow there would be a business conference where the alphas would be spending most of the day in meetings, where they would be networking. Also known as drinking copious amounts and comparing their packs and their acquisitions all day.

A Spa day had been organized for the Luna's and their female entourage, starting off with a brunch first, then on to massages, relaxing by the pool, and some cocktails in the afternoon.

The day was to finish with a large BBQ-style gathering under a large marquee near the training grounds. There was even a live band organized. Kingston tells me that this is usually quite a popular event where the entire pack and the visiting packs and their members get together to celebrate. Occasionally, wolves meet their mates at the gathering. I hoped this would be the case this time. I love watching people meet their other halves.

Kingston and I had stationed ourselves at the main entrance of the packhouse, there were only a handful of packs left to arrive now, and then the summit could really get underway, depending on what would happen when Lachlan arrived.

An SUV drove up and out there was a tall, athletic built man with sandy blonde hair. He walked to the opposite car door and opened it, out walked a stunning petite brunette with greenish-colored eyes. They walked towards us smiling. I can already feel good vibes radiating from them.

“Good Morning, I am Alpha Alaric and this is my beautiful Luna Abbey, we are from the Lunar Eclipse Pack,” he says proudly to both Kingston and myself.

“Good Morning Alaric and Abbey, I am Kingston and this is my Luna Aleksa, it's a pleasure to meet you both,” Kingston replied back to them.

“Wow, your pack lands are so breathtaking,” Abbey tells us.

“Thank you, we love it here. We hope you enjoy your time here at Rocky Mountain,” I said to Abbey.

As I went to shake Abbey's hand, I felt something strange, like a flashback of her and what looked like significant moments in her life. Like memories. I could feel that she was getting the same from me. I looked at her astounded. She just smiled at me, then let out a giggle, and then looked at Alaric knowingly.

Aleksa POV

"What was that?" I asked, with a shocked expression on my face. Kingston looks at me worriedly. He can sense something isn't right.

"It's ok. I felt it too," Abbey said, smiling at me.

I was confused. What was that? So many questions consumed me. I went to say something when Abbey cut me off.

"You have powers! You are special too! I'm a hybrid, in case you are wondering. I'm half-werewolf, half-witch!" Abbey told me excitedly. Although she wasn't moving her lips, was she mind-linking me?

"Wow, Aleksa! It appears you have the ability to mind-link anyone, you have allowed me to share your link, how cool is this!" Abbey replied.

She sure is bubbly. I wish I shared her enthusiasm, but I haven't decided whether this is a good thing or a bad thing just yet.

I looked at Alaric and Kingston, who were looking at us with confused expressions evident on their faces.

"Our mates look concerned. Maybe we should include them in this conversation?" Abbey suggested.

"There are others around, so perhaps you should tell Alaric and I'll tell Kingston via mind-link. We should talk a little later this afternoon. What do you say?"

"Deal!" Abbey quips.

And with that, I break our mind-link. Turning to Kingston, I linked him and told him what was going on. He was surprised as he hadn't met a hybrid before and agreed we all needed to sit down and talk later this afternoon.

The next SUV pulls up to the main entrance. Asher had arrived to escort Alaric and Abbey to their cabin. Kingston must have mind-linked him, I assume.

I hear Amber stir in my head. "Don't worry Aleksa, it's OK. She's friendly. She will be a great ally." Amber reassured me.

Before I could prod her further, she blocked me out, in true Amber fashion.

I shake my head, sometimes my wolf drives me crazy, always deciding what I can and can't know and making me wait so much. She can be so frustrating. But I have to trust her. She always has our best interests at heart.

As Asher escorts Alaric and Abbey off to their accommodation, Abbey turns and waves back at me with a great smile on her face. Amber's right, she seemed really nice.

Kingston and I walked to the next SUV to meet and greet our new arrivals. A young alpha walks out, he doesn't look like he's a day over eighteen, his driver opens the other car door, and out steps what I assume is his Luna.

They walked up to us and introduced themselves. They are from Wisconsin, they are hard to gauge in conversation, and are eager to get to their accommodation. Once their escort had arrived, we made our way to the kitchen to make a quick coffee.

While we drank our coffee, I told Kingston about my interaction with Abbey, as well as the visions I saw of her. Just quick glimpses of her at various stages of her life, good and bad memories by the looks of things. She has been through a lot in her life by the looks of things. He was a little uneasy about our interaction, probably more concerned than anything. I told him what Amber had said about Abbey and he felt a bit better about things after that.

Kingston then went on to have a discussion with Sabre. Kingston tells me that Sabre agrees with Amber.

I am making a note to follow Abbey up later today, although I have a feeling Abbey will seek me out before I get to her. I am not too worried though, all I get from her are positive vibes.

The next entourage had arrived, as Kingston and I made our way back outside. A large and intimidating-looking alpha with a dark aura walked out of

his SUV. His face was void of emotion, something about him gave me the creeps.

“Watch them, Aleksa. They are trouble. Our friend is in danger!” Amber tells me alarmingly.

As I was about to ask Amber what she meant by that, when another male got out of the second SUV. He was large and menacing. He had a huge jagged scar down the right side of his face. In fact, he had scars all over his neck and arms. I didn't want to offend him by staring, but I couldn't help but notice them.

He started sniffing the air around him and let out a huge growl.

“Where is she!” he yelled at us both. His head switched frantically from side to side. Kingston stood in front of me with his arms out in a defensive stance. I could feel the anger rolling off him.

I had a bad feeling about this. A feeling of dread was consuming me.

Kingston let out a warning growl at them both. In what seemed like only moments, several of our warriors descended upon the main entrance of the packhouse.

“Get your pack member under control, now!” Kingston demanded of the visiting alpha.

The alpha in front of us looked agitated that Kingston had yelled at him.

“Ezra, control yourself!” he growled.

Ezra! Oh, my goddess! It hits me like a ton of bricks. Kaia! I thought to myself.

I felt a tightening in my chest and it felt hard to breathe for a moment when I realized that this was Kaia's mate, the one she rejected, the one that tried to lock her up. I was instantly concerned for my friend.

I immediately mind-linked Kaia. “Wherever you are, stop right now! Ezra is here! At the packhouse!” I yelled at her through our mind-link. But I accidentally mind-linked the entire pack at the same time in my panic. I quickly block out all voices except Kaia, Asher, and Kingston's.

“What the f**k!” She replied to me. I can't respond as the alpha in front of me is looking at me angrily, as is Ezra.

“Alpha Finn of the Midnight Pack,” the alpha says, trying to deescalate things, reaching out to shake Kingston’s hand.

Kingston shook his hand firmly “Kingston, and this is my Luna Aleksa,” Kingston said to him.

“This is my Beta, Ezra,” Finn says to us both.

I try to mask my confusion. Kaia had told me that her mate had been an elite warrior. Kaia was the Beta female of the Midnight pack, and her brother was to take over the beta role. How could Ezra be the Beta? What does that mean for Kaia’s brother, I wondered.

“I can smell that my mate is here! Her scent is everywhere!” Ezra declared to us all.

We looked at him feigning confusion.

Kingston questioned him, “And who might your mate be?”.

“Kaia! My mate’s name is Kaia,” Ezra replied gruffly.

“Can’t say we know anyone by that name. We have had a lot of packs through her. Perhaps you have confused a scent?” I suggest to Ezra.

“Bullshit!” I saw you mind-link when you heard my name. Where is she?” He yelled, stalking aggressively towards me.

“Watch your f*****g tone with my mate! And take one step further and I will end you!” Kingston growled at Ezra.

The three of them stood aggressively staring each other down, the warriors were on edge, ready to pounce at any moment, for a few moments until Kingston spoke again.

“You are not getting off to a good start here gentleman, remember who’s pack it is that you are in!” he added further.

“Apologies Kingston, my Beta lost his mate some time ago, he’s a little on edge.” Alpha Finn says, trying to deescalate the situation.

Ezra is pulled aside by his Alpha.

“Excuse us for a minute, please,” he said to us, nodding respectfully, although it was lacking in sincerity. I got the feeling they were up to something.

They mind-linked each other for a minute, facing away from us.

I took this opportunity to mind-link Asher, including Kingston and Kaia also “You need to get Kaia out of here now, Ezra, her ex-mate is here! Take the back entrance. We will distract them for now,” I told him.

“Go, Asher. We will talk later.” Kingston added.

“Yes Luna, Alpha, we are leaving now.” Asher linked us back.

“Thank you!” Kaia says to Kingston and me. And we end our mind-link.

“Gentleman, why don’t we escort you to your accommodation?” I suggested to them. Kingston took my lead also.

“Let us get you settled and then we can talk about this further, in my office perhaps?” Kingston suggested to them.

Knowing that they can’t deny this offer, as to do so would be too obvious, they reluctantly oblige.

“Thank you Kingston and Aleksa, that sounds like a good idea,” Alpha Finn replied.

Ezra didn’t say anything, he just screwed up his face and looked away. Clearly, it was taking everything he had to remain calm.

Kingston has mind-linked Kai, to ask him to take over the meet and greets for now. We will need to buy some time to figure out what to do with Ezra and Finn, and how we can protect Kaia from him.

It looks like things just got a whole lot more complicated for us all. As if one psycho ex-mate wasn’t enough to deal with. Now there are two of them.

As we reached their allocated accommodation, we both received a mind-link from border patrol. They told us that Evergreen had arrived. I turned to Kingston, “He’s here!”

Aleksa POV

We left Finn and Ezra to get settled at the cottage. Hopefully, they will stay put for a while. Kingston had mind-linked me that he would organize someone to run interference with them for now.

We started making our way towards the packhouse. Kingston wanted me to go and stay with Caleb and Kali while he assessed the situation at the pack house to see who had arrived, and how many of them, and gauge how much of a problem we were gonna have.

A small part of me was happy with that idea. But the rest of me knew it was time to face my fears. So I declined Kingston's request. I knew that Kingston wanted to protect me, but there are some things we have to do for ourselves and I felt this was one of them.

I heard a branch snap in the bushes we were approaching. I wasn't worried when I saw the wolf moving quickly through the bush, as I could sense that it was Caleb. I looked at Kingston and shook my head. "Really?" I said to him, rolling my eyes.

"I need to know you are safe while we sort this out, and I know that Caleb would want to be here with you right now. So I may have mind-linked Kai to ask Caleb to join us, this involves him too," Kingston tells me.

"But, Kali, he needs to protect her!" I told Kingston, feeling worried about my pregnant friend. She too would be on Lachlan's hit list.

"Kali is fine, there will be two of our elite warriors with her at all times," Kingston tells me.

"Luna," Caleb said, walking out from the tree he had shifted behind. He had a pair of shorts on, but no top.

"Apologies, this is all I could grab at such short notice," Caleb says to us both.

"Caleb, it's Aleksa, for the millionth time," I told him with an unimpressed look on my face. He knows I hate being called by my title.

"Guys, we don't have time for pleasantries. We need to keep going." Kingston pulls us back on task.

“I will shift and go on ahead. You two pick up your pace and meet us there, approach slowly. I will mind-link you once I’ve assessed the situation.” Kingston says, looking gravely at Caleb.

“I will guard her with my life, Kingston, you have my word,” Caleb said solemnly.

“I know, thank you, Caleb,” Kingston nodded to Caleb and then he shifted and ripped towards the treeline.

“Ahem.” I loudly cleared my throat.

“I’m not the same girl that couldn’t defend herself, a lot has changed since Evergreen. I can do this! I won’t let him intimidate me. I feel stronger!” I told my ex-gamma, with absolute certainty in my voice.

Caleb looked into my eyes, “I understand all that, Aleksa, but we don’t know what he is capable of, and I’m not taking any chances. I took an oath to protect you,” he reminds me.

We don’t have time for this right now, so I let it go. For now. And with that, we continued on our way to the packhouse.

Amber stirred. “It’s OK. I can’t sense Cyrus. I don’t think he is here, Aleksa. But someone is.” She tells me.

I mind-link Kingston and Caleb with what Amber tells me about not sensing Lachlan’s wolf Cryus. But they both still seem to be on edge.

As we approached the packhouse, I could see two SUVs upfront. Amber confirms that she cannot sense Lachlan’s presence.

I see the car door open and out steps Sam. He looked worn out, pale, almost like life had been sucked out of him. My heart felt like it was breaking at the sight of him. I was hit with a wave of guilt. Although I was also excited about seeing my friend.

He turned around, as everyone was watching us approach the front entrance. He looked at me with a shocked expression on his face. “Aleksa?” he called out.

“Sam!” I called back excitedly, pushing past Kingston and Caleb.

He walked toward me with a confused look on his face.

I pulled him towards me and wrapped my arms around him in a warm embrace. I could hear Sabre growl, so I mind-linked him.

“Settle Sabre, Sam’s my friend!”

I pulled back and looked at Sam with a big smile on my face, trying to hide my shock at his appearance.

“Are you OK, what’s going on? How are you here?” He says, looking around at everyone quizzically.

“Caleb?” He asks, furrowing his brow towards Caleb.

“You’ve been marked? Can someone tell me what’s going on?” Sam asked, looking at the large purple mark on my neck, looking back and forth from Kingston to Caleb.

Kingston walks up behind me and pulls me into him. I smile and we interlock hands, to show Sam that we are together.

“Sam, it’s OK, I’m safe here. This is Kingston, he’s my second chance mate!” I told him reassuringly.

“I’ve heard a lot about you, Sam,” Kingston said, extending his hand out to shake his hand.

Sam just stares at Kingston in disbelief. He reluctantly shakes his hand. He still appears as if he is very confused and unsure of exactly what is unfolding here.

Caleb also walks toward his old friend.

“You are a traitor! I trusted you! You helped the Rogues! You kidnapped our Luna,” Sam yelled, pointing his finger towards Caleb in a fury.

Caleb looked at Sam, a little hurt.

“Sam, my friend, all is not as you think. Lachlan is not who you think he is. We are all friends, Aleksa is safe, there is nothing sinister happening here, we are all friends,” He tries to reassure Sam.

“It’s true Sam, Caleb and Kali protected me, as did Mason and Kaia, they protected me from Lachlan!” I told him, with a sad yet adamant look on my face.

“There’s so much you don’t know, so much I have wanted to tell you, we were planning to...” I began, as we were brought to the attention of the SUV door slam.

“Well, isn’t this interesting?” Eva says with an amused look on her face, strutting towards us, wearing the skimpiest and shortest red dress I have ever seen, leaving nothing to the imagination.

“Don’t believe anything they say, they are traitors. Why are you even here, Aleksa?” She asks, looking me up and down and rolling her eyes, until she locks her eyes with Kingston and changes her demeanor, batting her eyelids and pouting.

“How dare you speak to my Luna like that, apologize now, or leave my packlands,” Kingston declared to Eva.

Eva seemed shocked with her mouth wide open and her jaw almost dropping to the ground. I wonder if she has ever been spoken to like this before.

So priceless, I thought to myself.

“Luna? Aleksa, how is this true? You are our Luna?” Sam asked me.

“Pfft. Is this some sick joke? Luna again?” Eva questioned us, screwing her face up.

“Don’t make me tell you again, “ Kingston said in a deadly serious tone to Eva.

Realizing that she couldn’t flirt her way out of this, Eva reluctantly apologizes.

“Sorry Aleksa,” She says begrudgingly to me. Completely lacking in sincerity.

“Wait, where is Lachlan?” I asked Sam, my curiosity and dread getting the better of me.

“He’s in Iowa, he got a lead, so he stayed back, he’s looking for you. He should be here tonight though,” he tells me.

“I think we need to talk – all of us,” Kingston interjects.

“I think that’s a good idea, I would love to know what on earth is going on here,” Sam says, watching Kingston and I lean into each other lovingly.

“Sam, there are some things I really need to talk to you about,” I said to him, furrowing my brow, then looking towards Eva with contempt. Just looking at her makes me mad. The nerve she had just stood there as if nothing had happened. She is about to come undone and although it will break my heart to tell Sam this, I also have a feeling this could be incredibly healing for him.

“Aleksa, I really think you and I should have a chat first, don’t you think? I think there was a misunderstanding back at Evergreen, and I’d like to clear it up,” Eva says, not looking so confident and sure of herself right now.

I looked at her and bluntly said, “No, I don’t think there were any misunderstandings at all. I got the message loud and clear, but come along Eva, I’m sure Sam will have some questions for you,” I said, with an amused look on my face. There was no way she was getting out of this. It was time for her to confess, and hopefully, now Sam could find some peace. It was very clear the toll of her infidelity had taken on his physical and mental health, I would assume.

“We can continue this conversation in my office. Caleb, perhaps you could bring Kali along if she feels up to it?”

“Kai, I will need you to stay here and greet any incoming packs,” Kingston says to his Gamma.

“Yes, of course, Alpha, I’ve got it under control,” Kai replies to Kingston.

“Sam, will your men be OK out here for now?” Kingston asked.

“Yes, I’ll link them to stay here until we return,” Sam replied to Kingston.

“Please follow me, right this way,” Kingston says, leading the way to his office. I looked back at Eva, who shot me an evil glare. I just looked away. She doesn’t intimidate me. I can’t believe I thought she was once my friend. She will never be anyone’s friend, she’s too much of a narcissist.

Kingston walks towards his chair and looks at me, then pulls a chair aside for me. Directly opposite us sits Eva and Sam on one side and then two empty seats for Caleb and Kali, if she decides to come along.

The tension is thick, you could cut it with a knife. Sam looked utterly confused and had his guard up a little, but I caught him looking from Kingston to myself from time to time, so hopefully, he can see we are happy and in love, and that Kingston is no threat.

Eva appeared agitated, I could feel her contempt towards me, I could feel that she was holding herself back right now. Part of me hopes she does lose control. I wouldn't mind putting her in her place. Amber is begging for a moment or two alone with her.

Kingston looked relaxed, he wasn't threatened in the least, but I could feel his empathy for Sam.

There was a knock at the door, and I could sense Caleb and Kali's presence. "Come in," I called out to them warmly.

"Sam!" Kali calls out, making a beeline for him.

Sam looked happy to see his friend. He gets up out of his seat and she walks up to him and gives him a hug, as any old friend would do.

Eva growled at Kali. Which I find interesting. She has a problem with Sam hugging a friend, but she can do goddess knows what with Lachlan and that's acceptable. Unbelievable!

Caleb lets out a growl too. And stood close to both Kali and Sam. Although they were all close friends, Kali is pregnant now, and it has been some time since we last saw Sam, we don't know what lies Lachlan has fed him. It is only natural for Caleb to be in protective mode.

"It's so good to see you, Sam!" Kali announces, her smile dropping and turning to one of disgust when she sees her former friend Eva.

Sam doesn't miss this interaction, and questions us all, 'What is going on, why is there so much contempt for my mate?' Sam says in an agitated, almost defensive tone.

“That is why we are all here, Sam. It’s time you knew the truth. The real reason we had to leave Evergreen,” I told Sam with a serious and determined look on my face.

Aleksa POV

“I’m gonna tell you something and I need you to hear me out. First I want to say I love you. We have always been close friends, and I would never lie to you. The things I am about to tell you, I have wanted to do for so long but wasn’t in the position to. I will answer all your questions but I just want you to know everything I am about to tell you is the whole truth,” I told my dear friend, hoping that he would still be my friend after I told him all that I had to say.

Sam looked at me with his creased forehead, waiting for me to explain further.

“Remember back at Evergreen, how I would suffer from pain, and I would see the pack doctor, who would always give me some explanation or another for my pain, but over time I was made to feel that it was all in my head?” Sam looked at me, waiting for me to continue.

“Turns out it wasn’t all in my head, my mate was cheating on me, Lachlan was bedding over she-wolves. I know your first thought will be to defend Lachlan, you are his loyal Beta, but you need to listen to all I have to say before you make up your mind,” I pleaded with my old friend.

“When I came to Evergreen I was still new to the supernatural world. As you will remember, I didn’t learn all the specifics of mates and so on. I was raised by humans with no knowledge of this world. I didn’t know that if your goddess’ given mate was unfaithful that it would manifest in the form of pain, and I might never have known, had I not seen it with my own eyes.” I told him. I took a quick pause, to let that digest with Sam, then I continued with my story.

“Do you remember that day you helped me organize that surprise romantic evening for Lachlan?” I asked Sam. I heard Kingston growl. And I placed my hand on his to calm his wolf.

“I do,” Sam replied. Listening carefully to what I had to say.

“On my way home from dropping Liam and Layla off at daycare that day, the pain hit me again. This time I made my way home, and as I headed to my bedroom I saw it. I saw Lachlan with...” I was cut off mid-sentence when Eva stood up and started protesting.

“This is ridiculous, completely fictional! Can’t you see what she’s trying to do? She’s trying to turn you against us! Eva shrieked.

Sam looked at Eva questionably.

“Us?” Sam asked Eva.

“Uh, I meant, Evergreen, she’s a traitor that’s trying to turn you against your pack, they all are!” Eva yells accusatorily.

“Silence! I command you to be silent and wait to be spoken to,” Kingston roared at Eva. Who shuddered and trembled in fear at Kingston’s alpha command.

“Was that necessary?” Sam asked Kingston.

“I understand she is your mate, Sam, and you don’t know what is going on here, but please trust me on this, you need to hear what Aleksa has to say,” Kingston tells Sam.

Sam didn’t look happy but remained in his seat and directed his attention back to me.

“I’m so sorry Sam. I hate to be the one to tell you this, but I saw Lachlan in bed with Eva.” I said slowly, waiting for the words to sink in for Sam.

“Lachlan and Eva?” Sam says to me, very much in denial, looking confused as to why his best friend and mate could do such a thing. He looks around the room, first at Kingston, who looks at him with a pitiful look on his face, then to Caleb and Kali, who have soft and somber looks on their faces.

Sam then looks at Eva, who is shaking in her seat, looking like she is fighting with all her might to protest against what has been said.

“It’s true, Sam. I witnessed it on many occasions myself. As I said to Aleksa, I was under an alpha command, I couldn’t speak a word of it.” Caleb says in agreement to Sam.

“I’m so sorry man,” Caleb added.

Sam looked back at Eva, observing her carefully. He didn’t say a word. He just took a moment. Then look back at me.

“When I caught them in the act, I quietly backtracked and ran into the forest. I cried my eyes out. It felt like my world was crashing down before me. I wanted to confront them but I was scared. So I decided that I would take the twins and leave Evergreen. I knew I had to be careful as I was realizing I didn’t know the man I had my babies with and was sharing my bed with.” I told Sam.

“A few days later, I was at work, the pain had hit me again, and this time it was unbearable. I walked to my bedroom to find them at it again, and this time I was so mad with fury I couldn’t hold myself back. I confronted them both.” I took a breath and took a moment to center myself.

“When I confronted them, Lachlan was nonchalant about it all, he rambled on about it being his right as alpha to take what and who he wanted. When I confronted Eva she couldn’t have looked more proud of herself. I’ll never forget the sight of her standing there in front of me naked, smirking the way she did, I never knew another woman could be so vile.” I said, talking about her, but making a point not to acknowledge her.

Sam looked like he was trying to hold his emotions back. He was no longer fighting my words. He looked like he was resigning himself to my truth.

“I’m sorry Sam, I was planning to tell you once everything had settled down, I promise. I just needed to make sure Liam and Layla were safe first,” I told Sam, worried that he wouldn’t forgive me for not telling him.

“If I may, I know this is a lot to take in Sam. You need to know what really happened. We are not the traitors that Lachlan led you to believe we were.” Caleb interjected.

“We, Kali and I, helped Aleksa and the twins escape, that is correct, and we did so with the help of two other wolves. Mason and Kaia, who were rogues at the time for legitimate reasons, and were in the dungeons at the same time as Aleksa,” Caleb continued.

“The dungeons? What was Aleksa doing in the dungeons?” Sam asked with a stunned look on his face.

“When Lachlan confronted Aleksa, the day she walked in on them, I was sent to take her back to the pack house, she had run off and I found her at the hidden lake at the far end of Evergreen territory,” Caleb said.

“I left her with Lachlan, not realizing his intentions until it was too late. When Aleksa told him she was leaving him, he locked her in the dungeons. That’s why we decided to help her escape. He had lost it.” Caleb declared.

“I had no knowledge of any of this. Is this true, Aleksa?” Sam asked, clearly outraged that all this had occurred and he was oblivious to it all.

“I swear it is all true. Lachlan was planning to lock me up and keep me against my will, he wanted me as his Luna, and for me to accept that he would have as many mistresses as he wished.” I told Sam, with absolute truth on my face. Kingston let out a loud growl. I knew this was not easy for him to hear, he was very protective of me, which I loved.

Sam leaned his hand on his forehead, his wrinkled expression, full of concern, shaking his head, “Aleksa, Luna, I am so sorry you went through this, I’m sorry I couldn’t protect you,” Sam declared.

“I don’t think you were at Evergreen when this all transpired. If I remember correctly, you took some of the elites to do some training at a neighboring pack and you wouldn’t have returned until after we had already left,” Caleb added.

“That sounds vaguely familiar,” Sam replied.

“It’s fine Sam, you didn’t know, these things happen, it all worked out in the end,” I told him, smiling lovingly at Kingston.

“Is it I who am sorry that I didn’t tell you straight away when I found out about Lachlan and Eva. I could have spared you so much pain and agony,” I told Sam sadly.

“It’s ok Aleksa. This isn’t on you.” Sam replied.

“I’ve known something was going on for some time. I had faith in the moon goddess and I had hoped that things would work out. I have always believed that it is unnatural to go against the mate bond.” Sam says glumly, shaking his head disappointedly while maintaining eye contact with Eva.

“So I knew I had to try my hardest to make things work. I knew that Eva was being unfaithful. I could feel it. I didn’t know who it was with though.” said Sam, looking at his mate, now with a look of disgust on his face. I could tell he was going through the motions. I knew these feelings all too well.

“I’m going to k**l that bastard,” Sam says angrily, slamming his fist down on the desk. No one says anything, we just let Sam get it all out.

“Wait, you knew?” I asked Sam, shocked at that revelation. Why would he subject himself to such pain?

“I did. But I didn’t question the Moon Goddess’s judgment. I figured she put us together for a reason. I didn’t realize that my best friend was the wolf she was cheating with. I’m sorry Aleksa, I failed you. I had no idea.” Sam said to me, looking at me ashamedly.

“Goddess no Sam, never say that, you are innocent in this. It’s them who should be sorry, not us!” I said, feeling gutted that my friend is taking this on as his own failure when that couldn’t be further from the truth.

“Kingston, can you take the alpha command off? I want to hear what Eva has to say?” Sam asked Kingston.

“Eva, you are no longer under my alpha command, you are free to speak”, Kingston declared to her.

“Finally! You can’t seriously believe this crap, Sammie?” Eva asked Sam, feigning disbelief and horror that he would entertain such a notion.

“Cut the crap, Eva. I’ve known for a while now. I just never knew who it was with. I had planned to reject you back at Evergreen, but then Aleksa disappeared and all my energy went towards trying to find her and holding down the pack while Lachlan ran it into the ground,” Sam said in a raised voice.

Eva looked astonished. She also appeared to be speechless.

“She’s lying! She’s always been jealous of me!” Eva yelled, pointing her finger towards me, and trying to fake cry.

“Aleksa is one of the kindest people I’ve ever met. Don’t bother with the theatrics. I really can’t be bothered keeping this pretense up.” Sam said to his mate, looking like he was beginning to tire of the conversation.

“Aleksa, thank you for your honesty, I do have some more questions for you if you don’t mind, but first there’s something I need to do,” Sam says, turning his body facing towards his mate.

“I, Sam Nicholson, Beta of the Evergreen Pack, hereby reject you, Eva Lockwood, as my mate!” Sam declared.

And with that Eva dropped her head forwards and shrieked in agony. Sam held his chest, and grimaced slightly, but didn't seem to be in a lot of pain. When I think back to when I was in this position, the bond between Lachlan and I had weakened so much that when I finally rejected him, it didn't hurt as much as I thought it would.

“You have to accept it, Eva, for both of our sakes,” Sam managed to get the words out.

“I accept! I accept!” Eva screamed, looking eager for the pain to stop.

I'm not surprised that Eva gave in so easily. She was never one for pain. I was grateful that she wasn't fighting the rejection, for Sam's sake. It meant he would be able to get on with his life again, once he recovered from the loss of the mate bond.

“You need to formally accept it, name, rank, pack,” I told Eva, to save Sam having to expend more energy talking.

“I, Eva Lockwood, Beta female, of the Evergreen Pack, accept your rejection!” Eva blurted out, heaving in between words. And with one loud gasp, it was done.

They both looked to be in a world of pain.

We all sat there in shock at what we had just witnessed. We were all glad that Sam had broken his bond with Eva, because she never deserved him in the first place, but at the same time very worried about what this would mean for Sam in his current state of health.

“Sam, are you OK?” I asked, feeling very concerned for my friend.

“I'll be ok. I think I just need a few moments.” He said, clearly trying to protect his dignity and keep a brave face.

“If it's OK with you Sam, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you, Eva, that you are no longer welcome as a guest in our pack, due to your crimes against the mate bond, and your blatant disregard and disrespect for our

Luna. You have twenty minutes to leave pack territory as of now!" Kingston declared.

Eva looked at us all in shock, but it appeared she was in too much pain to speak, although none of us felt sorry for her, she had brought this all on herself.

"You better get moving Eva, time is ticking," Kali said with a smirk on her face. Although we all hung out together back at Evergreen, Kali had never really liked Eva, she always felt she was conceited and insincere. It turned out she was right.

Eva looked at Caleb. He had no emotion on his face. He just looked away from her, as if she didn't even exist.

"I have called for one of our pack doctors to come and attend to you, Sam. They will be here any minute. There is not a lot we can do for you right now, but we will send for a Healer to attend to you as soon as possible," Kingston tells Sam empathetically.

"Thank you, all of you," Sam says, still remaining strong. However, I could feel that he was breaking inside.

"You should go, now," Sam said, turning to Eva, void of emotion on his face.

Eva picked herself up, and as she walked out the door she managed to cry out, "You'll regret this!"

Aleksa POV

It's been a few hours since Eva left our pack lands. Sam is at the pack hospital, currently hooked up to two intravenous bags. One is for fluid replacement, and the other is essentially a vitamin replacement infusion. The Doctor tells us that he is not in a good way after suffering the ill effects of the mate bond betrayal for so long, but that he will be back to normal in no time.

We were about to leave the hospital, as we were aware that Lachlan would probably be here anytime now, and then there would be more drama to deal with. As we were about to leave the reception area, Lily walked past. Lily often volunteered at the pack hospital. She was training to be a nurse, so she appreciated the experience. Some packs didn't let omegas train to be nurses.

In fact, some packs didn't let omegas train – period, but this wasn't that type of pack, thankfully.

I asked Lily if she could take a jug of fresh water to Sam so that if he woke up soon he would have something cool to drink. Lily obliged. She was such a kind and caring person, and we would be lucky to have her as a Nurse in our pack.

We had a quick word with Sam's doctor, asking him to contact us immediately if there were any concerns, and also when Sam woke up. As we were about to walk out, we heard a commotion.

Kingston and I hastily made our way to Sam's room. We stopped at the sight before us. Lily appeared to have dropped the glass jug that she had in her hands, she stood there shocked, with her hands clasped over her mouth. "Mate!" She whispered.

Our eyes flickered from Lily to Sam in disbelief. Oh, my goddess! That was amazing. Truly a gift from the goddess. Sam had been blessed with a second chance mate.

Poor Lily. She didn't appear to know quite what to do with herself.

"It's ok. Walk up to him. Touch him. Be with him. He's your mate." I gently encouraged Lily.

"I've never seen him before," Lily said.

"Luna, who is he? Why is he in the hospital?" Lily asked with concern evident on her face.

"He's our guest. He has been unwell, but that is for him to tell you, it's not my place. Lily, Sam is the Beta at Evergreen Pack Lily," I told her.

"Sam?" Lily says in a loving tone, a small smile coming across her face as she says his name.

"A Beta? There must be some mistake, I'm only an omega," Lily tells me, shaking her head, and looking down at the floor.

"There's nothing wrong with being an Omega! Lily, I have a good feeling about you. You are destined for great things! Never sell yourself short Lily! Hold your

head up high. And go be with your mate!” I told her with an encouraging smile on my face.

Lily stepped towards Sam, looking him up and down with delicate eyes. She moves close to him and touches his hand. She pulls back quickly. I know this all too well, she’s experiencing that tingling sensation for the first time.

Lily takes his whole hand and looks at him lovingly.

“Alpha, Luna, I am on volunteer duty, I have to go,” Lily said, looking conflicted.

“We will sort that out, Lily, you focus on your mate,” Kingston said kindly.

“Don’t worry about it, I will tell the Coordinator you have met your mate and will be spending the rest of the day with him. You just spend some time with Sam, having you close will help Sam,” I said to Lily.

I looked at Kingston, who had a grin on his face. I could see that he was happy for Sam also.

“Lily, if you need anything or want to talk, just mind-link one of us, and keep us up to date with Sam’s progress. We will check on him as soon as we can.” I told Lily, and we made our way out of the packed hospital.

I have the sudden urge to tell Kali about this new development, but I have to rein myself in, as this is not my happy news to tell people. I would leave that to Sam and Lily when they were ready.

After this rather eventful day, I just wanted to curl up in bed with my love. Alas, this was not to be the case. As we were making our way back to the packhouse, we bumped into Alastair and Abbey.

“Hello again!” Abbey squealed with excitement.

“Hello Abbey, Hello Alistair, How are you settling in?” I asked, trying to rustle up what little energy I had left.

“Hello again Luna Aleksa. We have settled in just fine. Thank you! We thought we would take a walk around the pack grounds before dinner.” Alastair tells me.

“That sounds like a great idea. I hate to be rude, but we’ve had something come up, and as it turns out, we won’t have time for that chat today. I am really sorry, could we try tomorrow morning perhaps?” I asked Abbey.

“Oh, it’s fine Aleksa. It’s not urgent. Just let me know when you are ready. Can we help in any way? I hope it’s nothing serious?” Abbey asked.

“Everything is fine, it’s just a small issue, nothing to worry about,” I told Abbey and Alastair. Alastair seemed unphased but Abbey was giving me a contemplative look.

“Well, if you say so. Will we see you at dinner?” Abbey asked.

“Yes, of course,” I replied. Wishing that we could skip dinner altogether, but knowing full well that would not be possible as we were hosting packs from all over the country, so we had host responsibilities.

“ OK, well, see ya then!” Abbey said excitedly with a huge toothy smile and she pulled Alastair away with her waving from behind.

Kingston and I continue walking up the packhouse stairs.

“Care for a rest upstairs before dinner?” He asked me.

“You read my mind! What a day. And to think it’s not over yet!” I said, shaking my head.

We head towards our suite and I fall onto our bed, Kingston stalks towards me with that look in his eyes. Like a predator stalking its prey. As tired as I feel, I’m sure I can muster up a little energy...

A bit of quality time with my love was just what I needed. With so much going on, we had been lacking a bit in the intimacy department. We didn’t have long but we sure made the most of the time we did have, then we had a nice long shower. I felt much better, but I was still tired. I think we both were.

Dinner had gone well. It was nice to mingle with the other packs. Everyone seemed to be in a jovial mood. The alphas are looking forward to their conference tomorrow, and the Luna’s and their entourages are looking forward to their spa pamper day.

I am trying to keep a positive front, although I have a feeling that tomorrow will not go as we have planned. Thankfully, we have a backup plan so that if everything goes pear-shaped, then at least, hopefully, the activities can still continue without our presence.

We have just had a quick video call with Asher and Kaia. They are staying in one of the human towns nearby. Kaia wants to come back and face Ezra. We are just asking her to wait a day or so while we sort the Lachlan situation out, so far she seems to agree with that. Although we could really do with Asher's presence here right now, Kaia's safety is more important to Kingston and me. We can go another day without him, I'm sure.

We didn't get a chance to speak with Ezra, much to his dismay. It didn't go unmissed how he was watching me all through the dinner service. I made an effort to keep myself busy in conversation with others. However, I am sure I will run into Ezra again soon enough. I have been told that he has been asking a lot of questions, so I am under no illusion that he doesn't know Kaia has been here.

However, for now, we will just have to keep eluding him. We have bigger problems to worry about with Lachlan arriving.

What a day! I thought to myself. I've never been so welcoming of sleep before. Kingston fell asleep a few hours ago. I've been awake with my thoughts. But I'm ready to get some sleep now. We don't know what tomorrow will bring, but my intuition is telling me it won't be good.

I am woken from my sleep by an alarming mind-link from the border patrol. "Breach at the pack borders, a large tawny brown alpha wolf, has just ripped past us at speed. Heading towards the pack house, we're following closely, but he is faster than us," they declare.

I feel goosebumps and shivers all over my body. I am immediately on edge. "Cyrus!" Amber tells me.

"It's them this time, Aleksa! I can feel their presence!" Amber adds.

"Kingston?" I ask, but he's already shifted and out the door.

I got up, I was wearing checkered PJ pants and a singlet, but I ran out the bedroom door because I didn't have time to get dressed.

I ran down the packhouse stairs as fast as my legs could carry me. I pushed the front door open and ran into a wall, there was a warrior standing in my path, and he was not budging.

"Ugh!" I yelled as my body slammed into him.

"Move, now!" I yelled. Frustrated that they are not moving from my path.

"Alpha's orders, Luna, Sorry!" He says, looking highly uncomfortable.

I felt enraged that I was being locked in my own packhouse, and even more enraged that I was being treated like some damsel in distress. I thought I had made my feelings clear already. Kingston and I will be having words about this, later.

"I am your Luna, and I command you to MOVE ASIDE NOW!" I demanded. I could feel my eyes glowing. I could see the surprised look on the warrior's face.

He moved aside, looking shocked, trying to comprehend what he had just experienced.

Neat trick. I thought to myself. And I continued towards the field in front of the pack house. I saw Sabre and Cyrus fighting on the field in front of the packhouse. The metallic smell of blood was already invading my senses.

"It's OK Aleksa, it's not Sabre's blood!" Amber told me.

As I approached them both, they both shot their faces towards me momentarily, Cyrus growled, "MINE!" followed by Sabre, "MINE!"

Then they continued tussling back and forth. Unsure of what to do and panicked that my mate might get injured defending me, I did the only thing I could think of right now.

"SHIFT! Both of you NOW!" I screamed at them, once again feeling my eyes glow brightly. I was completely astounded when they both stopped what they were doing and shifted back to human form.

They both looked at me puzzled. I'm sure they are wondering how I managed to command them both, and I am wondering the same thing. How did I just command two alpha wolves? I need to ask Xanthe about this. However, for now, I needed to focus on dealing with Lachlan.

I mind-linked one of the warriors to get them both a pair of shorts as they are both standing here naked.

"Aleksa!" Lachlan yelled, standing in front of me naked. Once upon a time, this would have made me weak at the knees, but the sight of him naked now repulsed me.

"You're coming with me!" Lachlan said angrily, stalking toward me.

Kingston let out a long loud growl. And ran towards Lachlan, tackling him to the ground. They started punching one another and I could see they were both starting to shift again, claws were coming out, and fur was sprouting on their legs and arms.

"STOP! THAT'S ENOUGH! GET UP! STOP SHIFTING. BOTH OF YOU! NOW!" I commanded. Forcing them to halt their shift.

"I am home! In my pack! With my mate, Kingston!" I declared, walking towards Kingston, interlocking my hands with his to show a united front.

"You are mine!" Lachlan yelled, followed by a loud growl.

Matched again with Kingston's warning growl. They started inching closer toward each other.

"No, you were my mate until you betrayed our bond. I loved you and you ripped my heart out. I rejected you Lachlan! And the moon goddess blessed me with a second chance mate! My true mate!" I declared proudly.

Lachlan growled again.

"YOU BELONG TO ME!" He shouted fiercely.

"I'll give you one last chance to leave my pack lands, or you won't be leaving at all!" Kingston hollered.

“This is what you left me for?!” Lachlan said, followed by a sinister laugh. Grimacing in pain as he laughed and held the deep laceration that was hemorrhaging out of his chest.

Kingston got in a defensive stance, ready to fight again, and growled fiercely at Lachlan.

“I can smell you all over her! Not to worry. I’ll soon fix that!” Lachlan retorted wildly.

“You will never touch me again!” I told him firmly, with a look of disgust on my face.

“I’m gonna enjoy every moment of this,” Lachlan declared to Kingston.

Kingston snickered. “You are a fool, you had the most perfect mate, and you threw it all away!”

Lachlan growled and started to circle Kingston, but Kingston didn’t seem bothered. He looked smug instead.

“I should thank you really, if you hadn’t stuffed up so epically, I wouldn’t have met my mate and Luna!” Kingston said mockingly.

Lachlan looked enraged. He then looked to his left side, and then to his right side, and noticed that the pack warriors had surrounded him, and were slowly advancing. He was grossly outnumbered.

“THIS ISN’T OVER!” He screamed at Kingston. He quickly shifted, then he glanced at me and growled. He then turned and forced his way through the warriors that had formed a wall behind him, taking them out, and galloped frantically towards the treeline.

Aleska POV

Kingston chased Lachlan beyond the pack border, but he had just disappeared. Our best trackers were out there looking for his scent but had so far come up empty-handed. We had decided that we needed to tell the Alpha and their entourage as well as our own pack what was happening so that everyone was aware of the threat that we all faced. Lachlan would be back and, knowing what he is capable of, he wouldn’t return alone.

Most of the attending packs were shocked to hear what had occurred at Evergreen and pledged their support to us, although there were a few packs that were sceptical and said very little. If I'm totally honest, I'm not surprised, as even though we had all just met, the few that said nothing gave me the impression that our way of life and values did not align.

We had collectively agreed to continue with the summit. Everyone looked forward to this annual meeting, so we would proceed cautiously. We had quadrupled our border patrol courtesy of our visiting Alpha's, and we had spoken without neighbouring packs to ensure we had their support if things got out of hand.

Both Kingston and I were rattled by the early morning attack. I left Kingston to continue his meetings with Kai, Caleb, and Jackson. The Alpha's conference will be starting a little later this morning due to earlier events.

I wanted to go check on Sam before Luna's brunch started. I also wanted to check on Lily and see how she was processing everything. She will become a Beta Female when she and Sam accept each other, and while I know she will have some initial anxiety, I have a feeling she is going to be just fine.

As I walked out of the packhouse I bumped into Roxy. "Watch it b***h! Oh, it's you! I hear you had a little trouble this morning," Roxy smirks at me, waiting for my response. I can see that she wants to provoke me, but I won't give her the pleasure. I have too much to do today already. I don't have the time for this.

"Nothing I can't handle Roxy, see you at the spa," I said to her, smiling sweetly. Roxy screws up her face and snickers at me.

I walked off towards the pack hospital. I am hoping my dear friend might finally be awake. I really hope he and Lily accept each other.

I walked into Sam's room to find him and Lily in an embrace. Sam is sitting up in his hospital bed and Lily is straddling him. I can't hide my broad smile. I didn't want to interrupt them, so I turned to walk back out of the room when I smacked into a wall. Except it was not a wall, it was Caleb's chest.

This is enough to get Sam and Lily's attention. Lily jumps up off Sam and has a bright red blush on her face. Sam looked very happy, and even Sam was grinning like a Cheshire cat.

"Sorry Luna," Caleb teased.

"Seriously Caleb," I said, looking at him with an unimpressed expression on my face.

"Just kidding, Aleksa," Caleb says, trying to suppress his laugh.

"Aleksa!" Sam called out to me.

"Hi Sam, I am so glad you are awake. How do you feel?" I blurt out quickly.

"Honestly, I've never felt better," Sam tells me, his eyes moving in Lily's direction. Lily had a shy smile on her face.

"I'm so glad you are OK Sam. I see you have met Lily." I said to Sam.

"Yes, I have met my second chance mate, but I feel she is more my true mate. I've never felt this feeling before," Sam tells me.

"I know exactly how you feel, Sam, it is the same with me and Kingston. I am so happy for you both," I told him happily.

Caleb placed two coffees down on top of the bedside drawer next to Sam and Lily.

"Well, I hate to be rude guys, but I've got a meeting that I am about to be late for. I'll see you all later," Caleb tells us, with that he bows his head towards me, and I just shake my head at him, trying to hide my amusement. He loves teasing me.

"See ya, Caleb, thanks for stopping by," Sam called out.

"Thank you, Caleb," Lily called out politely.

"I won't stay long, I know what it's like when you first meet your mate or true mate in this case," I told them both.

"Sam, I don't want to worry you, but, Lachlan turned up a few hours ago," I told him calmly.

“What, are you OK, did he?” Sam started before I cut him off.

“Kingston and Lachlan fought, and then they stopped, and then the warriors circled him, but he ran off into the woods. We have the trackers out there, but he seems to have vanished,” I told him feeling confused, trying to explain it all, and leaving out the part where I have the power to command alphas. I will tell Sam but now is not the time.

“Sam, he will be back. Kingston is meeting with Caleb, Kai (his Gamma) and Jackson. I am not sure if you know Alpha Jackson, he’s,” I started. Before I was cut off by Sam.

“Yes, I have met Alpha Jackson on a few occasions, he’s a good guy,” Sam replied.

“Anyway, they are meeting to discuss what we will do about Lachlan,” I told Sam, unsure about where he stands on this matter.

“Aleksa, I have no loyalty towards the bastard. I would gladly end him.” Sam tells me as if he could read my mind. He looks mad at the mention of his name and I don’t blame him.

“I am, however, loyal to Evergreen. Our pack has suffered for too long under his control, he needs to go.” Sam tells me.

“What are you saying, Sam?” I asked, suddenly feeling nervous as to where this was going.

“I am going to challenge him, for the pack,” Sam continued.

“But Sam, with all due respect, you are still recovering,” I told him, feeling concerned that my friend might get hurt.

Lily walks over to Sam and cuddles up beside him, as a show of loyalty and support.

“Aleksa, I have never felt better. After feeling weak and empty for the past few years, I feel as though I have just woken up from a bad dream. I feel energised and reborn. I can’t explain this feeling,” Sam tells me.

“Maybe it’s the will of the Moon Goddess? Oh, maybe it’s finding Lily? Sam, I am so glad you have found happiness, and I am so sorry about ...”

“It’s OK, Aleksa, you were a victim too, but we need to put that all behind us now, like you said the Moon Goddess has blessed us, although we do have to sort Lachlan out. He will keep coming for you and the twins, he won’t let you go without a fight,” Sam declared.

“Evergreen deserves better than what they have been getting, we need to rebuild, the pack is in financial ruin and Lachlan has destroyed our alliance, we need to try to get back in the good graces of our allies, and we can’t do that with Lachlan as Alpha,” Sam tells me with an air of confidence I haven’t seen from him before.

“I agree with you completely, Sam, and I think you would make a great Alpha. You have my full support,” I told him proudly.

Although we hadn’t talked much before I left Evergreen, I had always respected Sam and had always considered him a close friend. I had no doubt he could bring Evergreen back up to the standard it once held.

The pack doctor walked in at that moment with Sam’s discharge papers, Sam disconnected himself from the monitor and I took that as my cue to leave.

“I’ll see you a little later today, Sam. Lily will take good care of you. Lily, please link me if you need anything,” Lily nodded.

“Thank you, Luna,” Lily said happily.

“Please Lily, just call me Aleksa,” I told her.

“Sorry Luna, I mean Aleksa,” Lily replied.

“Thanks, Aleksa, I’ll see you at the packhouse most likely. Kingston has asked me to report there once I am discharged,” Sam said.

“Great, see you then,” I called out to them, with a small wave.

And I started to make my way back to the pack house to freshen up for our spa date with the rest of the Lunas and their entourage.

What a day it has been. The Luna brunch and spa went well. Most of the Lunas seemed unaware of what had happened earlier today, or they just didn’t deem it of importance. The chat was relatively superficial, they spoke of

their favourite places to holiday, about how well their pups were doing and how happy they all were with their respective mates.

Roxy was her usual snide self, dropping little remarks and insults here and there. In all honesty, I wasn't in the mood to fight her right now. My mind was elsewhere. Surprisingly, Abbey wasn't present today. I did wonder where she was. Maybe a spa wasn't her idea of fun, although I would have thought that one might attend out of respect.

Thankfully, my dearest friend Kali was there. If anyone needed pampering, it was her. She must be knackered. I remembered how it was to be pregnant, it could be very fatiguing. We briefly spoke of what happened this morning with Lachlan turning up. Kali reassured me the guys would sort Lachlan out. I wanted Kali to be safe. I didn't want her to put her pup at risk, so I made her promise to stay at the packhouse for extra protection. I will ask Kai to help me move her and Caleb's belongings into the packhouse today. It was clear Lachlan had lost his mind completely, and I would not put my friend and her unborn pup at risk.

Thinking of pups, I missed Liam and Layla desperately. I missed talking with my pups, but we had decided it was best if we didn't communicate while Lachlan was nearby. We couldn't risk him finding out their location. I knew they were safe though. In the short time I had known Mason, I knew I could trust him with my life.

I hadn't spoken much to Kingston since this morning's events. I realised he had been busy organising extra warriors, extra patrols, solidifying our allies and so on, not to mention the alpha conference, but I had the feeling he was avoiding me. It didn't take much to send out a quick mind-link even just to say hello. Something wasn't right.

I walked towards his office. I could hear muffled voices. Then, the office door opened before me. Kai had opened it. He stood there with a big goofy smile on his face, dimples and all.

"Good Afternoon Luna," Kai greeted me, knowingly, almost as if he had known it was my intention to stand by the door and listen a little longer.

"It's Aleksa, Kai, please only use my title in official settings, we are friends," I told him, for what seemed like the millionth time.

"Sorry Luna," he said with a cheesy grin on his face.

“Aleksa, is it important? We are kind of in the middle of something,” Kingston tells me gruffly.

I haven’t heard him speak to me like this before. He must be stressed, I thought to myself.

“I wanted to have a word with you in private, if I may, and no, it cannot wait,” I told him abruptly before he could answer.

“Very well,” he sighed in defeat.

And with that, Jackson, Caleb and Kai all exited the office quickly.

“So, what’s going on? I feel like there is something you aren’t telling me.” I stated firmly, watching his face closely.

“Aleksa, everything’s fine, I’m just a little under the pump,” Kingston declared.

“I am your mate, I can feel that something is wrong, and it’s more than what happened this morning,” I tell Kingston, letting him know I won’t leave until I get my answer.

“Do you remember the other day, when I had to take an urgent phone call?” Kingston started reluctantly.

“Yeah,” I replied.

“It was Xanthe. She had run into a little trouble along the way. She hadn’t managed to contact one of her Elders, but she had discovered something that she said could change everything. She said it was too important to mention it over the phone and that she needed to tell us in person. Xanthe felt that she was being followed, so she was going to try to shake whoever was following her. I made her promise to call me the next morning to let me know that she was safe but she never checked in.” Kingston said with a grave expression on his face.

Aleska POV

After Kingston had dropped that bombshell on me, I was feeling a little on edge. I felt overcome with guilt. If it wasn’t for me, Xanthe wouldn’t have even left on the mission. I shouldn’t have pushed her for more information.

“Xanthe will be ok. She wants to help us.” Amber said in my head.

"You don't know that. What if something happens to her!" I replied to Amber.

"Aleksa, I know Xanthe will be fine, trust me, it's all part of a greater plan," Amber declares.

"Amber, I'm not in the mood for your cryptic messages. Could you just this one time, elaborate a bit for me." I pleaded with my wolf.

"Xanthe's story isn't over. Trust the Goddess's plans." Amber says, and then she retreats and puts a block up on me.

"Grrr. That wolf!" I said out loud in frustration.

Kingston just looked at me quizzically.

"Amber?" Kingston asks.

"Amber's gone. She blocked me!" I told Kingston angrily.

"What did she say? Sabre can't reach her either," Kingston replied.

"She said Xanthe would be alright, said to trust the goddess's plan and that her story isn't over yet," I told Kingston a matter of factly.

"Well, that's good then. Why are you so stressed?" Kingston asks me.

"Do you have any idea of how frustrating it is when your wolf is privy to all this information that concerns you and the ones you love the most, and yet she picks and chooses what she thinks I have a right to know!" I blurt out.

Then I look at the expression on Kingston's face and realize something.

"I'm being a brat aren't I?" I said, laughing at myself.

"You are just stressed, and rightly so, a lot has happened recently, Aleksa, my love, you are doing great!" Kingston tells me as he sniffs my neck where he marked me.

He starts to lick my mark and it sends shivers of excitement and arousal all over me. Kingston is sitting in his oversized executive chair, so I climb onto his legs and started to straddle him. I could feel my arousal seeping through my panties, I know it must be overwhelming his senses right now.

I can feel his c**k harden in his pants, straining tightly against the fabric of his pants. His c**k is throbbing against my panties.

“I want you in me now!” I demand, looking into Kingston’s eyes with the utmost determination and desire.

Kingston unzips his pants and his large hardened c**k springs to attention, he then rips off my sheer wet panties, and I lower myself onto his c**k riding him as if my life depends on it. He pushes me further down onto his c**k. Using his arms to push me up and down into him, harder and faster, I’m grinding into him, until I’m riding him to a gallop. I can feel his c**k twitch and pulsate inside me. We both reach our highs in no time. I feel Kingston find his release emptying into me. My walls are still throbbing post c****x as his c*m drips down my inner thighs.

I looked into Kingston’s eyes with a smirk on my face. I don’t know what just came over me. I’ve never been so spontaneous like that before. I looked at Kingston’s face and he looked a lot more relaxed than he did when I first entered the room. I knew that I was definitely feeling more relaxed.

Then it hit me like a ton of bricks. Oh, my goddess. The others were just outside the room! I was beyond mortified.

Kingston looked at me as if he could read my mind, he reassured me, “They left before we got physical. I told them to take a quick break and report back in thirty minutes,” he chuckled.

I didn’t find it as funny as Kingston. I felt my heart rate starting to normalize. I picked myself back up and discarded my ripped panties in the bin. Kingston walked into the ensuite in his office and washed himself off. I walked in and cleaned myself up also. Although, I would need to go straight to my room and shower properly. I can’t walk around smelling like s*x, not in a pack of werewolves with a heightened sense of smell.

Kingston then came over to me and pulled me in for a loving embrace. We kissed, and then I told him my plans with Caleb and Kali. Kingston agreed with me that they should move to the packhouse. He said that he would ask Kai to help me organize it all. Kingston received a mind-link. Sam is here to speak with him. So I took this as my cue to leave. I was shower-bound. Then, I wanted to go and find Abbey, check that she is OK, and have that chat with her that we had spoken of when she had first arrived.

I started to make my way into my room. I grabbed a fresh new outfit out of the walk-in wardrobe and grabbed my cosmetic bag with all my hygiene needs in it, and as I made my way to the bathroom, I saw a note and a long-stemmed red rose on my bed.

My heart immediately swelled, and I wonder how Kingston organized this so quickly. I took a sniff of the rose, as I held it I felt a thorn pierce my finger. Ouch. I thought to myself, as I watched a few drops of blood fall on my bed linen.

The rose smelled sweet and spicy at the same time. Then I dropped it as quickly as I picked it up. It smelt familiar, but not in a good way. It smelt like Lachlan.

I picked up the letter and began to read it, "YOU BELONG TO ME!" "Lachlan."

I screwed the note up and chucked it hard against the wall. I then mind-linked Kingston and told him I needed him urgently.

In a matter of moments, my door was kicked open and came off its hinges, flying against the wall. In stormed Kingston, Sam, Caleb, and Jackson. I stood there shocked. That was quick. Not quite what I had expected.

"Aleska, I could feel your fear and panic through our bond. What happened?" Kingston yelled. The others were all looking around the wall with fierce facial expressions. I almost felt the urge to laugh. But I didn't. This was not a laughing matter.

"Lachlan happened," I said sternly.

The men started walking around my room inspecting it for signs of intruders. They didn't appear to be picking up any scents.

Jackson picked up the crumpled note and opened it. He looked enraged.

"Kingston, I think you should read this," he told Kingston, passing the note to him. The others watched Kingston and waited for his response.

Kingston's growl ripped through the room, everyone except Jackson and myself was affected by his alpha aura.

"What is it, Kingston?" Sam asked.

Kingston passed the note to Sam. He and Caleb read it.

“It came with the rose. The rose has Lachlan’s scent on it, but nothing else seemed to.” I spoke of my own observations.

“How the hell did he get past our border patrols and security measures!” Kingston demanded. He looked like he wanted to break something.

“He’s masking his scent, Alpha,” Caleb declared.

“I agree,” I said in support of Caleb’s observation.

“He must have a witch working with him,” Jackson added.

“We need Xanthe!” I said to the group.

Jackson appeared to stiffen at the mention of her name.

“Who is Xanthe?” Jackson asked with furrowed brows.

“Xanthe is a Healer. She knew my parents, and she has been really supportive of – everything, she would know what to do right now,” I said to Jackson and the others.

Jackson seemed to be deep in thought right now, he was rubbing the side of his neck with a very serious expression on his face. I was about to ask him if everything was alright when I got a mind-link.

“There’s been a breach on the eastern perimeter, I’ve got to go, Sam/ Caleb - could you keep an eye on Aleska for now please?” Kingston called out.

“I don’t need minders, Kingston! We have discussed this already. I can take care of myself,” I protested.

“Look, can you just work with me, Sabre is losing his mind right now, he doesn’t want to leave you, but I need to attend to this breach,” Kingston tried to reason with me.

“Yeah, OK, go, I’ll play along just this once,” I told Kingston.

“Permission to tag along, Kingston,” Jackson asked.

“Gray could do with a run,” Jackson added.

“Yeah, thanks man, I’d appreciate that,” Kingston replied, and with that, they both shift into their wolf forms and they bolt through the packhouse.

I looked at Sam and Caleb. “Alright guys – Sam, I’m sure you would rather be with Lily right now, and Caleb – I’m sure you would much rather be with your pregnant mate, so how about we all go our separate ways?” I said slyly.

“No can do Aleska, you heard Kingston,” Sam replied to me.

“Looks like you’re stuck with us,” Caleb added.

I sighed. “OK, well, I’m gonna take a shower so I’m sure you don’t wanna hang out here, come back in ten minutes. OK?” I said to them.

“We will wait outside in the hallway, Aleksa, please don’t make this hard for us,” Caleb pleaded.

“I’ll behave. After that, I need to see my friend Abbey though,” I told them.

“No problem, we shall escort you there,” Caleb replied.

“Alright, see you soon,” I said to them both, and with that, I headed into the shower.

As we made our way to Abbey and Alaric’s cottage, I realized it was starting to get late. The sun looks like it’s getting ready to set, and it’s a beautiful sight. I made my way up the cobblestone pathway to the front door of the cottage. I am still taken aback by how cute these cottages are, littered with wildflowers, and fragrant undertones of jasmine, stock, and gardenia.

As I go to knock on the door, it opens before me.

“Come in Aleksa, I’ve been expecting you,” Abbey said with a welcoming smile on her face, as she stood in the doorway.

Aleksa POV

“Abbey, Hi, you were expecting me?” I questioned her, raising a brow.

“Yeah, I had a feeling you would be popping by today, come in, we have much to discuss,” Abbey says, as she gestures with her hands inviting me into her cottage.

I walked in and took a look around. In very little time Abbey has made this cottage seem warm and cosy. I see that she has herbs hanging upside down in the kitchen and a large mortar and pestle sitting on the kitchen bench.

“Alaric isn’t here, he’s meeting with another Alpha, trying to arrange an alliance between our packs,” Abbey tells me.

“Your cute friends can wait outside though if you don’t mind, I am happy to chat with you, there are some things I’d like to keep private if you know what I mean,” Abbey says winking at me.

She sure is quirky and upbeat I think to myself, Amber and I both like this girl.

“You heard her guys, take a break, I’ll be fine,” I tell them enthusiastically. They both look reluctant to leave me at the door. But we make it easier for them by slamming the door shut.

“So let’s just get right into it, shall we? You are a crescent moon wolf are you not?” Abbey blurted out.

I stood there with my poker face intact, trying to mask my surprise, feigning confusion.

“It’s ok Aleksa, your secret is safe with me, I haven’t even told Alaric,” Abbey insisted.

“What’s a crescent Moon wolf Abbey?” I ask her, trying to keep up my pretense.

“Aww, come on Aleksa, for starters I can see your mark, it’s unlike normal markings, not to mention there is literally a crescent moon, with two wolves, and a crown on it! It’s ok, you can trust me!” Abbey protested.

“What do you know of crescent moon wolves?” I asked Abbey. I was curious, as even Xanthe seemed to know very little about them.

“Please take a seat Aleksa, and I will tell you all you need to know.” Abbey began.

“I was born into a lineage of witches that serve the Royal Werewolf Kingdom, my family for generations has worked for the royal family, also known as the Volkov Family, we worked alongside other supernaturals, to help maintain order and balance,” Abbey told me.

“A long time ago, when my parents were just pups, there was an attack on the Volkov Kingdom, it was orchestrated by a greedy, power-mad Elder hellbent on taking the throne for himself. He enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch.” Abbey paused momentarily, giving me a chance to take it all in.

“The King and Queen were distraught, they fought with all their might to protect their pups, the Queen even died protecting her daughter, however, fortunately, their son Callum survived.”

“As you will know, Callum is our current Alpha King,” Abbey clarified.

“The battle was short-lived, as reinforcements arrived fairly quickly to defend the kingdom, so the rogues had to abandon their mission, but not before they grabbed some of the royal pups,” Abbey continued.

“The elderly, vulnerable, and pups were hidden in the safe house which was under the main pack house. All but two, the Alpha kings sisters’ pups, twins, a boy, and a girl. Unfortunately, they didn’t make it to the safe house in time.”

“The pups were said to have been taken by one of the Elders. No one had seen it coming.” Abbey shook her head as she retold the story.

“The Elder in question was eventually hunted down, but by that stage, the pups were no longer in his possession.”

“After weeks of torturing, and in his final days, it is said that the Elder in question, had placed the two pups into two different packs, a great distance apart, and despite many attempts, the Elder would not give up the locations,” Abbey continued.

“Eventually, the Elder was found dead in his cell, a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane sticking out of his chest, no one knew who had ended him, although it was assumed he was silenced,” Abbey declared.

“The pups were crescent moon wolves, they were destined for great things, they were to help protect the future alpha king and his offspring, said to be sent from the moon goddess herself,” Abbey proclaimed.

“I know it’s a lot to take in, I should mention that the pups’ names were Viktor, and Kristina,” Abbey continued.

“Kristina! That was my mother’s name!” I said, realizing where this story is going now.

“Aleksa, I would hazard a guess to say that your mother was one of the kidnapped crescent moon wolves of the Volkov Kingdom,” Abbey continued.

“I, don’t know what to say, I don’t really know anything about my biological mother. I was adopted and raised by humans,” I told Abbey feeling shocked at these revelations.

“Aleska, I am certain that you are of royal blood. I could sense it from the moment I met you. I feel drawn to you. I feel the need to protect you,” Abbey told me with a proud expression on her face.

I was speechless. I just stared at her wide-mouthed. Could this really be true I ask myself?

“I can’t be! I’m not a royal! I’m just plain old me.” I said out loud, in complete denial mode. Then I remembered that wasn’t exactly true. I had powers. That was definitely not normal.

“I told you we were special Aleksa, we are of royal blood!” Amber says in my head, she’s feeling rather smug thinking that she is royalty.

“Wait! You said there were two pups?” I questioned Abbey, as the realization dawned on me.

“Yes, they were siblings, twins actually,” Abbey added.

“Interesting,” I replied.

“What is it Aleska?” Abbey asked with a curious look on her face.

“Uh, probably nothing. Abbey, would you mind if we continue this conversation a little later? I just remembered something that I have to do. But I will be back as soon as possible. Is that okay?” I asked her.

“Yes, of course, I’ll just be here, pottering around. I have a feeling you will be back very soon,” Abbey told me sweetly, not questioning my sudden exit.

As I went to open the door it opened in front of me.

“After you, your royal highness,” Caleb said with a cheeky grin on his face, bowing with one hand in front and one towards his back. Sam looked astounded. I guess he will still be taking in everything that he had overheard while eavesdropping.

“What part of the private conversation did you not understand?” Abbey called out crossly, with her hands on her hips, and a very displeased expression on her face, shaking her head towards Caleb and Sam.

“Uh, werewolf hearing!” Caleb declared. Putting his hands up in the air as if to surrender.

“Caleb, Sam, you have to promise to not breathe a word of this to anyone! PROMISE me!” I commanded them both.

“Yes, Luna,” they both say in sync, trying to fight the command, but failing miserably.

With that, I waved goodbye to Abbey, and we make our way to the pack house.

I needed to speak with Jackson. I wonder if he is back from his run to the border. I need to speak with him. I want to ask him what his father’s name is. I know I could just mind-link him but I feel this is something we need to discuss in person.

“Jackson, are you back from your run yet?” I asked him impatiently.

“Hey Aleksa, I am as a matter of fact, what’s up?” Jackson replied with his husky voice.

“Uh, I need to speak with you, as soon as possible, are you free?” I asked him.

“Yeah, Aleksa, I’m right behind you,” Jackson said. I turned around and sure enough, he was walking towards me in his basketball shorts and nothing else.

“Oh, Jackson! I think you need a shower!” I tell him, giggling. He is completely soaked in sweat.

“I’ll be back in fifteen, meet you at the training grounds?” Jackson replied.

“Ok, see you then,” I told him.

Then I walked off to the kitchen to make a quick coffee while I try to absorb all the new information I had just learned.

As I leaned over the breakfast bar, sipping on my coffee, I pondered my thoughts. What were the chances that Jackson and I ended up meeting one another? We are both crescent moon wolves, I already know that we are kin, but I thought it was because we were children of the Moon Goddess. What if we are both royal wolves, chosen to defend the kingdom?

Then I feel panic-stricken, what if it's true, and I'm expected to leave Rocky Mountain? This is my home! Now and forever. I could never leave. Would I be expected to? Calm down Aleksa, I thought to myself.

However, I would like to know more about where I came from. My whole life I have been curious about my heritage, although my adopted parents were the best I could hope for, I would love to know if I have more family out there somewhere.

I know I should speak with Kingston about this development as he is my mate, and this involves him too. But I need to make sure this is all true first and find out if Jackson is also part of this.

I head over to the training grounds and wait for Jackson to arrive. I wonder what he will make of all of this.

“Hey Jackson,” I decided that I'm just gonna get straight to the point, “What is your father's name?” I asked him. He looked at me puzzled.

“Why do you want to know my father's name?” Jackson asked me.

“Please, just humor me, I need to know,” I pleaded with him.

Jackson looked at me with a suspicious look on his face. He took a moment to consider things and then said “I will tell you my father's name on one condition, you must tell me why you want to know this information,” he added.

“Ok, deal, I will tell you everything I know,” I told him, solemnly, nodding my head towards him.

“Vicktor, his name is Vicktor,” Jackson replied.

I gasped loudly. Placing my hands over my mouth. I realized I must look like a deer caught in headlights right now.

Jackson stepped toward me and placed his hand on my shoulder.

“Aleksa, what is it?” Jackson demanded.

“I think your father is my uncle! I think he and my mother were twins,” I told him with a shocked expression on my face.

Jackson paused again, looking at me, realizing this was not a joke and I was being serious.

“My father was an only child, that’s impossible,” Jackson said in denial.

“Jackson, I met a witch, and she told me this story.” I began, only to be cut off mid-sentence.

“A witch! Aleksa, you need to be careful who you speak to. Who is this witch?” Jackson demanded.

“Abbey, she’s a nice witch. I trust her! Well, she’s actually a Hybrid. Why don’t you come with me and you can meet her for yourself.” I proposed.

“A Hybrid!” Jackson yelled.

“I will come with you. But, I am not buying any of this Aleksa, and neither should you,” Jackson declared.

With that, I took his hand and lead him towards Abbey’s cottage.

Abbey again opened the cottage door before I could even knock once.

“How do you keep doing that?” I said amazed.

“Intuition Aleksa, it’s just pure intuition,” Abbey said enthusiastically waving her hand in the air.

“Hmnn, interesting, another Crescent Moon Wolf I see. You had better come in!” Abbey said pleasantly to Jackson.

Jackson didn’t say anything. He just glared at Abbey, looking like he was barely holding himself together. Then he unleashed a loud growl.

Aleksa POV

“Jackson!” I raised my voice in shock at him, unsure of why he was growling at poor Abbey.

“MATE!” Jackson yelled again. He looked confused and agitated. He started sniffing the air. “Mate was here!” He said, followed by another growl.

“Jackson, It’s just Alaric and Abbey staying here!” I called out, wondering what on earth was going on with him.

Jackson pushed past Abbey and started stalking around the room, he walked over to the couch and picked up a white fluffy sweater, he pulled it up to his nose and sniffed it.

I looked at Abbey, she wasn’t scared, she looked more amused than anything.

“Jackson?” I asked him, trying to snap him out of the trance he appeared to be in.

“This sweater! Who does it belong to?” Jackson demanded, looking at Abbey.

“I have no idea, it was already here when we got here. I assume either a cleaner or whoever stayed here last?” Abbey confirmed.

Both Jackson and Abbey whipped their heads towards me.

“I have no idea! I could ask Kingston or Kai if they know who stayed here last. It wouldn’t belong to the cleaning staff as they wear uniforms while working to protect their clothes.” I told them both.

“I’ll hold onto this.” Jackson declared.

Abbey just smiled sweetly.

“Jackson, that’s amazing! Don’t worry we will find your mate in no time! But first, can we finish our discussion, if you don’t mind?” I asked Jackson hopefully. I know scenting his mate and not knowing who she is will be driving him crazy, so we will need to keep this short and sweet.

“Well, isn’t this an interesting development? I can see you are eager to find the owner of the sweater so I will keep this brief.” Abbey stated.

Jackson crossed his arms at his chest, looked at Abbey impatiently, and gestured for her to proceed.

“As I said to Aleska, I am a hybrid. I’m half-witch, half werewolf, and I’m from a lineage of witches that serve the Kingdom, my family for generations has worked with the King and Queen and the royal family, in particular, working to protect them alongside other supernaturals,” Abbey declared.

“Long story short, before I was born there was an attack on the kingdom when a corrupt Elder enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch. The King fought to defend the pack, while the Queen was supposed to be in the safe house with her pups. However, for some reason, they didn’t make it there in time, and the Queen and her daughter were killed, with only their son Callum to survive. As you know he is our current reigning King Callum,” Abbey said, taking a moment to catch her breath.

“Realizing that they weren’t going to win the battle, the rogues retreated, but not before a trusted Elder grabbed two of the royal pups, the King’s nephew and niece,” Abbey continued.

“The Elder was captured eventually, but the pups were no longer in his possession. He had placed them in separate packs on opposite sides of the country. Despite weeks of torturing he never gave up their locations.” Abbey declared.

“The Elder was found dead in his cell not long after that, it is thought that he was silenced, as he was found with a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane in his chest,” Abbey concluded.

“You look confused, and you are probably wondering how this is relevant to you. Let me simplify it for you,” Abbey declared.

“The royal pups that were kidnapped were crescent moon wolves, they were twins, a boy, and a girl, they were named Viktor and Kristina,” Abbey said slowly.

“I’m gonna go out on a limb here and assume that your father’s name is Viktor. Am I correct?” Abbey says cockily.

Jackson looked from Abbey then to me. I just nodded in agreement.

“My biological mother’s name was Kristina. And it would make sense to me because I could never understand why her father (my grandfather) could hate her so much. He practically ordered her death.” I said sadly as everything started to click into place for me in my head.

I felt a little relieved knowing that evil man wasn’t actually my blood relative, but then even more confused as to who my biological grandparents actually are.

“Say this is the truth, and we are of royal blood, and our parents were kidnapped, how are you such an expert on all of this? How do we know that we can trust you?” Jackson questioned Abbey.

“That’s a fair question, Jackson. I’m not sure what real evidence I can provide you with. I suppose you could try some genetic testing that might shed some light on your origins. Also, I would suggest that you would both have powers of some sort. Crescent moon wolves hold great power. I would suggest that there is little information out there, so you may not know how to harness those powers. I would like to try to help you in any way I can if you will let me.” Abbey said thoughtfully.

“While I do feel connected to Aleska, and I know that we are bound, I’m not sure that I buy your explanation. I will need to look more into this. I have matters to attend to. If you don’t mind. I will see myself out. Aleksa, are you coming?” Jackson huffed.

“I think I’ll hang out here with Abbey a little longer,” I told him, looking toward Abbey to ensure that it was alright that I stay a little longer. Abbey smiled with a pleased look on her face.

And with that Jackson hurried out the door and shifted into his wolf, Gray.

Jackson POV

When I heard there had been a breach at the perimeter I jumped at the chance to go for a run in my wolf form. These past few months it has been getting harder to control my wolf. The toll of not finding my mate is taking it out of me. I act cavalier when people mention it around me but really I feel like I am struggling to maintain control. It's not normal for an alpha wolf to go so long without their mate. I know my pack is getting nervous. I know that they worry I might go feral if I don't find her soon.

Since we arrived at Rocky Mountain Gray has been a bit off. It's not just the crescent moon wolf stuff, something here keeps setting him off, but he won't say what.

When I got back from my run Aleksa was waiting to speak with me, she seemed a bit nervous so I'm not sure what to make of it.

As I make my way to the training field I caught a whiff of her scent so I know that she's already waiting. I prefer to get straight to the point so I'm relieved when she said that she wouldn't beat around the bush. I was suspicious when she started asking about my bastard father.

Aleska then told me that there was someone that she wanted me to meet, so I humored her and we made our way to one of the pack cottages. A peppy-looking girl opened the door. I'm not sure what she is. I can smell a little werewolf but there is something else, it smelled like magic, a witch perhaps?

And then it hit me, the most intoxicating scent I've ever smelled. f**k me! I struggled to keep control. Gray is going mad. "MATE! MATE!" He screamed in my head. He followed it with a loud menacing growl, no doubt scaring the s**t out of the girls.

I struggle to reign him in, and then he pushes through, and I end up slamming past what's her name, my nose leads the way to the couch where I can smell her sweet scent all over a white sweater. I grabbed it frantically and pulled it into my face, taking in a deep sniff. "Wild jasmine," Gray said. "Our mate smells like wild jasmine with a hint of lemongrass!" Gray called out in my head.

"MATE!" I could confirm that the sweater indeed belongs to my future Luna. I looked to Aleksa and the one who opened the door. I heard Aleksa call something out. But I was too immersed in this overwhelming scent to listen.

They tell me that it must have belonged to someone that was in the cottage before they came to stay and Aleska tells me she will find out who. Damn straight!

I reluctantly listened to what the witch had to say. Switching from thinking about my mate to listening to what she was saying. It all sounded highly probable, but I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to find my mate. Gray was crashing around in my head. I needed to get out of here and shift before I lost it.

I decided that I would find Kingston later and find out who the sweater belongs to and then I will find her and make her mine. Assuming she accepts me as her mate. Although I have a feeling that won't be a problem. I can be very convincing. I have waited so long for this. I need my mate.

I cut the conversation short. I'm not really listening anyway. I tell myself that I will apologize to Aleksa later. I need to get out of here.

And with that, I run out the door and shift into my wolf, and we tear our way through the woods, releasing some of our pent-up tension.

Sam POV

My whole life I have trained for the position of Beta of Evergreen Pack. Generations of Nicholsons have taken on the Beta role. There was never a doubt in my mind that this isn't where I wanted to be.

And then I met her. Eva Lockwood. We had all grown up together. I had always thought she had a soft spot for Lachlan, that was until I started to feel the pull and realized that she was my mate. Even before my wolf came I knew that she was my mate. I was certain that she could feel the pull too, but it seemed like she would constantly try to fight it.

Our birthdays were the same day, so as fate would have it our wolves claimed one another that very day, our eighteenth birthdays.

They say there is the lover and the loved one, and in some ways, I feel they were right in our case. I had loved Eva with all my heart from the moment I had laid eyes on her, but I knew it wasn't quite the same for her. I figured it was cold feet or a fear of commitment although that was odd for a werewolf couple.

When Aleksa joined the pack as our Luna, it felt like everything had fallen into place. Aleksa and Lachlan mated and formed a solid pack leadership with myself and Eva as the Beta couple, joined by Caleb and a little later on Kali, which made our group complete.

The girls would spend time together doing girl things and we guys would lead and strengthen the pack together. It seemed like a dream until it wasn't.

The pain came not long after we had mated, and even more so after our commitment ceremony. It took me a while to realize what was happening to me. It only happened every now and then, and I was never able to find evidence of any betrayal. I would confide in Lachlan but he would tell me I was crazy that Eva loved me and it must be something else.

That is until I saw Aleksa experiencing that same pain. I went with her to her doctor's appointments and the pack doctor always had an explanation for why Aleksa was experiencing pain. I had my doubts but again I never found any evidence of any wrongdoings.

I was always kept busy with pack business, Lachlan over the years had become quite complacent and sloppy, which only added more to my workload. The more I worked the more pain I would feel through my and Eva's bond.

Despite a lack of concrete evidence and after confronting Eva on more than one occasion, she always had excuses and would never actually confess anything. I was ready to reject her when I was sent away last minute to a training mission at a nearby pack. When I came back I was told that Aleksa and the twins had been kidnapped by some rogue wolves we had locked up in our dungeons.

Eva and my shambles of a relationship had become an afterthought at that stage. I had a duty to find and rescue our Luna and the Heirs to our pack. Finding them started to consume me. I rarely stopped to eat or sleep. I could still feel Eva betraying our bond, but I needed to keep searching for them. Even though I could feel myself getting weaker, I couldn't risk feeling the full effects of rejecting my fated mate, so even though I was being weakened by betrayal I knew that a full rejection could be devastating, and right now I needed to keep going for the sake of Aleksa, Liam, and Layla.

Lachlan had all but lost it, the pack was suffering in so many ways, and we were on the brink of bankruptcy due to Lachlan's penchant for gambling, and overspending. I discovered that had been frequenting brothels day and night

and then claiming to be missing his mate as an afterthought. Aleska deserved so much more than that pitiful excuse for a mate.

Pack morale was at an all-time low, lower-ranked wolves were being mistreated, and it wasn't the same pack that it had been before Lachlan had taken over as Alpha. Slowly over time, things had changed at Evergreen, and everything seemed to escalate once Aleksa and the twins were gone.

We had a lead on Aleska and the twins in Iowa, so we traveled there but then the trail went cold. We had committed to being at the Royal Alpha Summit as Lachlan had thought it might be a good idea to distribute Aleska and the twin's photos to other packs in case someone had seen them or heard something so Lachlan ordered Eva and me to head towards Rocky Mountain. He had planned to join us within twenty-four hours.

I couldn't believe it when we arrived and I watched Aleksa walk up to me. She seemed to exude such confidence and happiness. I wasn't happy when I saw her locking hands with another alpha, but my wolf Caine had told me to calm down. He told me to read their body language. I could feel reciprocal love and safety in each other's presence. I could feel it exuding from them.

I was shocked at Eva's behavior. She didn't seem pleased to see her best friend. I had never seen her so cold and bitter before. It was at that moment I realized that I must have missed something. I was even more confused when I saw Caleb and Kali. I was overwhelmingly happy to see my friends again but then disappointed because as far as I knew Caleb and Kali had betrayed us. Lachlan had said that they had helped the rogues take Aleksa and the twins. I could never understand why, but Lachlan had told me a very convincing story. Again my wolf, Caine, was telling me that they were our friends and to hear them out.

And heard them out I did. And it all made sense. I was enraged to hear that my best friend was betraying me with my mate. But it all fit. I was even more furious and shocked beyond recognition when I heard about what Lachlan had done to Aleksa, not just betraying their bond, but locking our Luna, an innocent wolf, up in the dungeons.

Caine was Furious, he instantly demanded that we reject our poor excuse for a mate right there on the spot, and I agreed with him. I would rather be weak and sad than be so pitiful to accept such a cruel and vile mate.

Caine had loved Eva's wolf Ash at the beginning but over time he got impatient and suspicious of her. He seemed to be at the point that he would prefer no mate over the one we had been given. This was unheard of for a wolf, but Caine was a strong wolf, he gave me the strength to push through these past few years of hardship.

When I rejected Eva, it hurt. It hurt so much harder than the betrayal pain, so much so I didn't have the strength to keep my eyes open.

Although as I began to come to I smelt the most delicious smell ever. It reminded me of the spring freesias that grew all over the pack grounds when I was a child. That smell always filled me with happiness throughout my life. I opened my eyes to the most beautiful sight sitting at my bedside, holding my hand in hers.

She was gorgeous, about five foot four, with long whitish blonde curls perched up in a high ponytail. She had bright crystal blue eyes with rosy cheeks and porcelain skin.

I could feel tingles all over. "MATE!" Caine roared in my head. She looked at me with a sweet smile, and it warmed my heart.

I called MATE to her. She replied MATE back. We were mates. She was mine and I was hers.

"Tell me beautiful, what is your name?" I asked her.

"Lily. I am Lily." She tells me coyly.

"I'm Sam," I told her.

"I know. Aleksa and Kingston, they asked me to bring you a glass jug of water, and I dropped it accidentally, I'm sorry. I was just caught off guard. I did not expect to find my mate here," she recalled so quickly that she appeared to be out of breath.

"Hey, it's okay, relax, I'm just glad you are here." I tried to reassure her.

"Are you going to reject me?" She asked me hesitantly.

"What, why would I reject you?" I asked her, feeling anxious, as to why she would even suggest that.

"It's just that you are a Beta I am told. And I, I'm an Omega." She said. A pained look on her face.

"Wrong, you are now a Beta female. That is unless you wish to reject me!" I said sternly.

"Of Course not. You are my mate sent by the moon goddess, I could never," She reassured me with a serious expression on her face.

Gosh, she sure is cute.

"There is something you should know though Lily," I told her.

"You are my second chance mate." I declared.

"Second chance mate? How?" Lily asked. She looked confused.

"My first mate, Eva, betrayed our bond. I will tell you all about it, but perhaps a little later, it is a long sordid tale." I told her.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you, Lily," I stopped.

"What's your last name, Lily?" I asked her.

"Owens," Lily responded, looking nervous.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, as my mate," I declared proudly.

"I Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, accept you Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack as my mate," she replied with a great smile on her face.

With that, I pulled her face into mine and we gladly gave in to the mate bond with a passionate and earth-shattering kiss, unlike anything I've ever experienced before, sending tingles and shivers throughout my entire body. Caine growled in satisfaction. As we pulled apart sweet Lily's cheeks were even rosier than before, a deep shade of red prominent on her face.

"MINE!" I growled.

"YOURS!" Lily replied.

“We have much to discuss. But, first, I need to change, then I need to see Kingston.” I told Lily.

“My wolf Caine is demanding that I mate and mark you right away. But I respect you Lily and don’t want to rush you. So I have to ask how do you feel about making it official tonight?” I asked Lily, not wanting to force things. I wanted to let her know that I respect her as an equal. But, at the same time, I also do not want to wait any longer than necessary.

“Tonight would be perfect Sam. I’ll get you a towel and some clean clothing for you to change into while you shower if you like?” Lily asked me.

“That would be great, thank you, sweetheart,” I told her. Kissing her on the forehead as I ripped out my IV lines, and then headed to the shower.

I’m all showered and clothed, Caleb has popped in to check on me, after chatting for a while Caleb had offered to go and get some coffees while we wait for the discharge papers from the doc.

As I lifted Lily onto me and we began to kiss and touch one another our little make-out session is cut short when Aleksa walked into the room. Aleksa looked deeply embarrassed and in an attempt to leave before she thought that we would notice her she walked right into Caleb’s chest.

Lily jumped off the bed in embarrassment. She’s just so cute. But we are all adults here. It’s only natural to want to jump each other especially since we are mates and have yet to mark and mate.

After a brief chat, Aleksa told me that Lachlan had arrived this morning, but as fast as he arrived he left again. No doubt he will be back. I sensed some concern in Aleksa and I could guess what she was thinking. Naturally, she was wondering where I stood on all of this.

I hated that bastard. All these years he was the cause of my pain and suffering. Pretending to be my friend. Piling me up with never-ending workloads and out-of-pack trips. He made me feel like a bad mate for doubting Eva when he knew what was going on the whole time because he was the one she was betraying me with.

I would love nothing more than to end that poor excuse for an alpha myself. I realize I am not of alpha blood but I know for a fact I could restore Evergreen back to its former glory. I know I would make a better alpha than he ever did.

I thought I would feel weak after rejecting Eva but I have never felt so strong. I feel reborn. I can feel this energy within me. I feel like I have a pretty good chance at beating Lachlan in an alpha challenge. And even if I wasn't successful I would sure give it all I had. Someone had to stop that evil bastard, and I wanted to be the one to do it.

I relayed all of this to Aleska and Lily, who both look concerned. But they need not be. Lily walked up to me and wrapped her arms around me showing me her love and support. The doc showed up and gave me my papers, so I started to make my way over to the packhouse to speak with Kingston and Caleb to tell them of my plans.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn't want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan's arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

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How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

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Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

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After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

I looked around the room and realized I was all alone. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was midnight. My goddess, how long was I in that bath? I must have been in there for hours. No wonder I'm so cold. It was strange that Kingston still wasn't here at this time of night. I walked out to the balcony and looked out around the pack grounds. There was a chill in the air. The silence was deafening. It all felt very eerie.

I decided that I will take a walk around the packhouse and see if I can find my mate.

I make my way out of my room and I head toward the staircase. It's so quiet, usually, there are skeleton staff working, cleaning staff or maintenance or a cook or two, but tonight there didn't seem to be anyone around. Perhaps they finished the preparations for the festival and everyone decided to have an early night. Although that doesn't seem like the right answer either.

I walked in the direction of Kingston's office and it was all dark, there was no lighting on, no noise whatsoever.

Amber pushed through, "I have a bad feeling about this Aleksa, keep your guard up," Amber advised me. Maybe that's why I was feeling so cold like chilled to the bone, and what about that nightmare? I can't seem to remember it, which is unusual for me.

"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

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I made my way down the steps outside easily enough thanks to the solar lights that lined the steps, and I began to walk around the side of the packhouse making my way to the conference room, strangely enough, there was no one there.

I continued to walk through the pack grounds towards the training grounds because that's the most logical place for the guys to be at this time of night. They were probably going over strategies or having a late-night training session. As I made my way there I heard shuffling in the bush next to me.

I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

"We aren't alone are we Amber," I asked my wolf.

"Nope," Amber said shortly.

I started to pick up my pace slightly, trying not to make it obvious that I was aware that I was not alone. And then I felt my arm being yanked backward aggressively. I let out a loud gasp. I turn to sidekick whoever had grabbed my arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

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“You lied to me the other day. Do you think I’m f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?” He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn’t let him know I was scared.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said faking confusion at his question.

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He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

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I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

Ezra ripped my jumper off me in an instant. I closed my eyes again and blocked everything out. This was not happening.

The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

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I picked myself up and walked over to him. I'm still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

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“Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!” I tried to reassure him.

“I’ll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute,” Gray declared.

Aleska POV

Gray had shifted before we left for the pack lock-up facility. We began to walk to the lock-up facility. Being that Jackson was just visiting the pack he didn’t know where the facility was so I had to show them where to go.

I still couldn't get through to anyone via mind-link, nor could Jackson as he wasn't part of our pack. It didn't take much to convince Jackson to let me come with him to look for the others and find out what was going on, as he could sense that things were off also.

When we reached the lock-up, the guards didn't appear to be outside as they usually were. Jackson looked at his warriors and they made a few hand gestures and slowly advanced inside. As we walked through the corridors which were dimly lit, it appeared that the backup generators were on. When we reached the holding area we found the guards out cold on the floor. I ran up to the closest one and felt for a pulse. His heart rate was slow but it was still there.

"He's still alive! But his pulse is very slow." I called out to Jackson.

"Let's investigate further, Aleska, you stay close to me." Jackson declared.

He didn't need to say a word, I wasn't planning on going anywhere alone at this stage. I was officially creeped out.

After a sweep of the cells, we made our way back to the entrance. The cells were all empty. The cell doors appeared to be locked shut, and the guards appeared to be out cold, almost as if they were sleeping. No one had been harmed.

We all looked at each other with confused expressions on our faces.

"Magic!" Jackson said abruptly.

"I have a feeling magic is involved, and not the good kind either," Jackson replied to himself.

I start to realize the gravity of the situation. I start to think of my loved ones. My mind then goes to Kali and Caleb. They were staying in the packhouse. Perhaps we should start there.

"Where's the Hybrid!" Jackson called out angrily.

"Abbey?" I replied to him.

"Yeah, her." He said gruffly.

“She will be sleeping. Wait, you don’t think?” I start to speak before I am cut off.

“It feels like magic. She’s a witch! Let’s start there!” Jackson demanded.

“I guess that makes sense. But Jackson, let me do the talking. She’s my friend.” I tell him rather than asking. I know he is a higher rank than me, but this isn’t about ranks. Something is going on and we need to find out what.

“Yeah well let’s see what she has to say,” Jackson replied gruffly.

“Alpha, what do you want us to do with him?” One of Jackson’s warriors asks, referring to Ezra.

“You two watch him for now. See if you can get one of those cells open and shove him in. One of you can watch him, the other can come to find us. Mind-link me when you are done,” Jackson ordered them.

“Yes Alpha,” they both called out concurrently, nodding their heads and bowing before dragging Ezra off.

With that Jackson takes a jacket off one of the guards and threw it at me.

“You look cold, throw this on, he doesn’t need it right now,” Jackson declared.

“Thanks,” I said, throwing the jacket on.

Abbey’s cottage wasn’t far away so there is no need for us to shift. It wouldn’t take us long to get there.

We walked up the pathway to Abbey’s cottage, there were no lights on, which wasn’t surprising considering it was the middle of the night.

“I’ll do the talking!” I told Jackson, as I knew that he could come across as aggressive at times, and I felt bad enough waking Abbey up in the middle of the night.

As I was about to knock on the door it opened. I smiled as I expected nothing less. Abbey always seemed to know when someone was approaching.

“Aleska, are you okay?” Abbey started to fuss, taking in my appearance.

“Yeah, I’m fine,” I told her not wanting to go into detail right now.

“What’s going on around here?” Abbey asked.

“I’ve had no power all night, and Alaric hasn’t arrived back yet. I’ve had this strange feeling all night, and now you two show up at my doorstep in the middle of the night,” Abbey said with a concerned look on her face.

“You wanna come in?” Abbey offered.

“We don’t have time for this!” Jackson declared.

“Hmnn, unfortunately, he’s right, Abbey will you come with us, something is going on, the guards at the lock-up facility were out cold, the powers out, no one else seems to be around and I can’t mind-link anyone but Jackson,” I ranted off quickly to Abbey.

Abbey’s face dropped, “Oh dear,” she said as she pulls her jacket on and starts to walk out her door.

“Let’s walk and talk,” Abbey suggested.

After explaining everything that happened this evening Abbey was initially outraged at what Ezra had attempted to do, but then happy I was able to contact Jackson. She was trying to piece things together as we walked toward the training grounds.

“I agree with Jackson, the guards could be in a deep sleep, and an enchantment spell would appear that way. There could be someone messing with the pack’s ability to mind-link, that too could be the doing of a witch, but no light witch would do such a thing, this sounds like the work of a dark witch.” Abbey stated.

“When was the last time either of you saw someone familiar?” Abbey asked.

“I guess, before we came to your cottage yesterday,” I replied.

“And you Jackson?” Abbey asked him softly.

“Same as Aleksa, after our meeting in your cottage, I shifted into Gray and we ran for hours, we only stopped when I got Aleksa’s mind-link just before,” Jackson replied.

“Hmnn, interesting, I never found Alaric when we parted ways at the packhouse earlier this evening, there were others around but I didn’t interact with anyone,” Abbey recalled.

“I wonder,” Abbey started.

“What?” Jackson replied in anticipation.

“I wonder if something didn’t happen while we were in the cottage? I wonder if something didn’t happen to the rest of the pack? What if what we saw when we walked into the packhouse was just an illusion?” Abbey asked.

“But why?” I replied in denial.

“I don’t know, It’s just a thought, let’s investigate some more,” Abbey suggested.

We had just arrived outside the training grounds, and there weren’t any lights on. I went to grab my phone out of my pocket when Abbey looked at me and chuckled.

“Let me, Aleksa,” Abbey declared.

Abbey moved her hands in a circular motion and closed her eyes, and then a bright orb appeared before her, she released it in front of us and it started to guide our way into the training grounds.

“That was seriously cool!” I called out in awe.

“Not bad,” Jackson said as if he was slightly impressed.

We walked through the administration block following the orb in front of us, and as we turned to walk into the stadium we were shocked to see the warriors from our pack and other packs on the ground.

I gasped in horror. Then I ran to the nearest warrior to feel for a pulse, it was there but it was faint. I looked around to see if I could see anyone familiar, I started walking through the bodies carefully, and then I saw him, I saw Kai.

I ran up to him, yelling, “Kai! Kai! Wake up!” I started to shake him, then I felt around for a pulse. It was much like the others there, but slow, although a bit stronger than the others, probably because he was a Gamma.

“Abbey, please, is there anything you can do?” I called out to Abbey who came running towards me. Jackson circled us, looking around but standing guard at the same time.

“Hmmn, let me see,” Abbey said, getting down on her hands and knees, she then puts her hands just above his body and focuses her energy on Kai.

“I can feel that he’s still here, but in a deep sleep, definitely an enchantment spell.” Abbey declared.

“Can you counteract it?” I asked pleadingly. I looked at her wide-eyed.

“I think I can? It will probably take a lot of energy. I feel confident that I can wake Kai, but I am not sure I can do everyone at this stage,” Abbey said with a sad expression on her face.

“That’s ok, it’s a start!” I said with some optimism in my voice.

“OK, give me a few minutes and some space,” Abbey instructed me.

I watched Abbey in awe. She was truly amazing. Jackson pretended not to be bothered about what is unfolding in front of him, but even he can’t deny what Abbey is doing right now is nothing short of epic.

A short while later, Kai started groaning.

I knelt down on the ground again and touch his face. Kai opens his eyes.

“Luna?” Kai croaked out.

“Oh my goddess, Kai, are you ok?” I asked him in a panic-stricken tone.

“Luna, they took him! I’m sorry!” Kai declared.

“What, who?” I looked at him puzzled.

“The Witch. She took Kingston! Said she needed to get him out of the way,” he called out. Then he slowly started to sit up, rubbing his neck.

“Are you telling me that a dark witch took Kingston?” I asked him in shock.

“Yes Luna, I’m so sorry,” Kai replied, bowing his head, looking ashamed that he couldn’t protect his alpha and prevent him from being taken.

"It's ok Kai, we will find him, this isn't your fault!" I tried to reassure Kai, and I leaned forward to comfort him in the form of a hug.

I looked back up to Abbey who was now standing up and looking around the stadium.

"Any ideas Abbey?" I looked to her for an answer.

"Dark witches don't attack packs for no reason, someone will be paying her to do this, someone who stands to gain something from getting Kingston out of the way," Abbey questioned.

Jackson and I look at one another at the same time in realization.

"Lachlan!" We both called out simultaneously.

Aleska POV

Once it dawned on us that Lachlan was most likely behind all of this, we had to figure out what to do next. Abbey believed that the reason that Jackson and I could mind-link was due to our Crescent Moon wolf bond. Kai tested the theory by trying to mind-link and was unsuccessful. Although Jackson could mind-link his warriors which seemed strange. Although it became clearer once he had explained that the two warriors he had brought with him weren't ordinary wolves. Apparently, they had met one another at a training camp that he had been sent to by his father in his early teens and they had bonded. They had recognized Jackson as their alpha early on, and submitted to him, despite the fact that they all shared the same rank.

Abbey believed that if there was a dark witch involved then her enchantment spell would have applied to regular pack wolves, but most likely not affect special wolves, hence why we were all unaffected.

While Abbey couldn't currently reach any of her contacts due to distance and the presence of a supernatural barrier, she could call them, so we started to make our way to the nearest phone.

Unfortunately, all methods of communication seemed to be out of order. For now, we were on our own. At least we had the advantage of the witch not knowing that we were special wolves. The witch would assume we were under the spell for now. But that would mean that they would be most likely looking for us.

Abbey suggested that we all hide our scents to be on the safe side. She was able to manage this with a simple cloaking spell.

If we were right and Lachlan was behind this, then he was looking for me. Jackson wanted to get me out of Rocky Mountain and to safety, but I insisted on staying. We needed to face this Witch and Lachlan, and break the spell she had placed on my pack.

Abbey believed that the key to breaking the spell was either capturing the witch involved and convincing her to reverse the spell, or k*****g her. Abbey didn't feel that comfortable taking a life, but said if it came to it she would. She too wanted to find her mate.

Jackson advised that we would need some more backup if we were to pull this off, and suggested we find Sam and Caleb, and a few other ranked members to help us on our mission.

"Do you think you are up for some more healing Abbey?" He asked her respectfully.

I looked at him in shock, it appeared that he might be softening in his attitude toward her and realizing she is an ally, not a threat.

"Yes, as long as I have a little break in between, I should be fine," Abbey replied confidently.

With that, we made our way back to the packhouse stealthily. Caleb's room would be our first stop. I sure hoped that Kali and her unborn baby would be ok. I asked Abbey about healing Kali now, she said Kali was safer sleeping for now, and shouldn't be put at further risk. I agreed with her reasoning, at least she would be out of harm's way for now.

We made our way to Caleb's designated room. Jackson had to break down the door as it was locked. We found Kali asleep on the couch and Caleb on the ground in the kitchen. It didn't take long for Abbey to work her magic on him. When Caleb came to he demanded that Abbey wake Kali, but then she explained that by doing so Kali would be at more risk because she would want to fight, thus putting her and her unborn baby at risk. Caleb realized that she was right and dropped the subject. Once we had brought Caleb up to speed with the events of the night we were ready to find Sam.

Since Sam was the only attendee from Evergreen that was actually allowed to stay at Rocky Mountain he and Lily were sharing a cottage to themselves. They were on the far west side of the pack, so it was a bit of a hike to get there. We didn't want to run into anyone so we exited the back of the packhouse and made our way through the woods. Kai was the only one of us that actually knew this place inside out, so we were lucky we had him with us to show us a shortcut.

Cutting through the woods meant we reached the cabin pretty quickly. Kai pushed the door open, it was unlocked luckily, Sam and Lily were laying face down on the table. They must have been having a hot drink when the spell took over because their cups had tipped over and had run onto the wooden floor.

Caleb and Kai went straight to Sam and moved him from his chair to the floor. Jackson picked Lily up carefully and placed her on the couch. As he was laying her down Abbey called out to him, "Jackson could you bring Lily here and lay her beside Sam, I wanna try something," Abbey stated.

Before anyone could ask, Abbey had closed her eyes and began to focus on Sam and Lily, she did the same as before and placed her hands directly above both their bodies. After a minute or so they both started to come to.

We all looked at Abbey gobsmacked.

"You did it!" I called out happily.

"You healed them both at the same time!" I said to her with a look of astonishment on my face.

Abbey smiled and seemed to wilt a little. Caleb held her from behind, and she took a moment to steady herself.

"Thank you. I haven't done two people at a time before. It just takes a bit out of me. I'm not that long out of my witch training" Abbey clarified with a slight blush on her face.

"Sam!" Caleb called out, helping his friend up.

"What happened?" Sam said, rubbing his eyes.

"Lily!" I called out. "Are you okay?" I said helping her sit up.

“Aleksa! What are you doing here?” Lily called out confused.

“Wait, Sam?” Lily questioned, looking to the right side of her.

Lily and Sam pulled each other into an embrace and then pulled apart again.

“Ah, what’s going on?” Sam asked looking around at us all with a puzzled look on his face.

We didn’t have time to spare. There wasn’t a lot of darkness left before sunrise, and we needed to use the cover of darkness to our advantage right now.

Jackson gave Sam and Lily a rundown of the night’s events as we made our way to the old log cabin. Kai had suggested that since it was on the far side of the pack boundaries. He had a theory that it might not have had its communications systems affected. We might be able to get some help or contact someone with knowledge of this sort of thing, and then we could make our way back to the pack before sunrise.

As we were almost at the old log cabin we walked into something. We tried to advance but we couldn’t seem to move any further.

“I can feel a strong energy,” I declared to my friends.

“So can I,” Jackson responded.

“Uh oh,” Abbey commented.

“It’s a forcefield,” a voice came from behind us, it was one of Jackson’s warriors from earlier tonight.

“The witch has imposed a forcefield, we can’t leave and no one else can come in,” He replied.

“Nice of you to join us, Bryant,” Jackson replied.

“Everyone, this is my good friend Bryant,” Jackson called out.

Everyone acknowledged and greeted him. Once the pleasantries were over we had to figure out where we were going now and what our new plan would be.

“Comms!” Kai declared.

“We could try the backup equipment in the Communications room, back at the packhouse,” Kai reiterated.

“Worth a try,” Jackson replied.

“Let’s go then,” Sam said.

Just as we made it up the steps to the rear entrance of the packhouse the sun started to come up. At least we had made it back safely. Hopefully, we could find something of use in the communications room.

The communications room was located in the loft at the top of the packhouse. I had no idea it was even here, although that isn’t surprising as I was still orienting to the pack.

We made our way up to the room and started looking around. Caleb and Sam tried to get the computers and communication systems working, while Jackson took a look around for a backup generator, and Caleb checked the cupboards, while doing so he stumbled across a secret compartment in the ceiling for alternative means of communication.

After about thirty minutes we had made no progress.

“s**t!” Jackson called out.

“I can’t get through to Elijah.” Jackson declared.

“We have to assume that Ezra has escaped, we also need to assume he may be in on whatever is going on here, so be on your guard! If you see him, don’t k**l him, we need to find out what he knows first,” Jackson ordered.

Aleksa POV

Our search of the communications room was fruitless. Nothing we found was able to transmit. It looked like we were truly on our own here. We had no idea

who we were up against. We just suspected that Lachlan was behind it all and he was being helped by a dark witch.

We knew that the pack seemed to be surrounded by some massive energy-bound forcefield so we couldn't get out either. We also knew that it was only a matter of time before whoever was behind all of this realized that I wasn't where I should be.

While my heart ached for my mate, I couldn't feel anything through our bond, but I didn't feel our bond break so that gave me hope that he was still out there, maybe he was under the enchantment spell, I sure hoped that was the case.

Abbey said that assuming that this was orchestrated by Lachlan and he was he for me the best thing to do would be to elude him for as long as possible.

Meanwhile, she will focus on trying to wake some of the pack up a few at a time.

Sam suggested we keep moving because it would only be a matter of time before they tracked back to the packhouse.

Abbey asked for suggestions as to who she should wake first. Jackson implied the stronger the wolf the better right now as they were likely to be able to defend themselves rather than hold us back, everyone was in agreement with that.

I voiced that I didn't recall seeing any of the alphas at the training grounds, to which Kai replied that the night before the summit festival it was tradition for the attending alphas to have a late-night whiskey at the lake house.

"Lakehouse?" I replied with a confused look on my face,

"Uh, yeah, it belonged to the previous alpha and luna, it's in the middle of the woods on the southern boundary. Chances are they were there when the enchantment spell hit. It's worth a try anyway. I can show you the way." Kai called out.

We all followed Kai out through the woods as quietly and quickly as possible. It took about twenty minutes to get there in our human form. It was a large wooden cabin just sitting here on the outskirts of the wood overlooking a small lake.

As expected, there were bodies of the visiting alpha's lounged out on chairs, by the lake, and on the deck. They all looked so peaceful, a contrast from the intimidating alphas they usually are. But this wasn't the time to reflect, we had work to do.

"Caleb, Sam, Bryant with me, let's get them all next to each other and line them up. Lily and Aleska, you can help Abbey set up. Abbey – are you ready for this?"

Abbey looked at Jackson and smiled. "You're just a big softy aren't you?"

Jackson huffed and walked off.

Abbey looked at me smirking, "I think we are going to be great friends, Jackson and I,"

I smiled at her knowingly. Because I thought so too.

Abbey had begun healing the alphas. When they woke up they were disorientated initially but after about ten minutes or so they seemed to be back to their usual selves. While some wanted to spring into action immediately, we managed to convince them that we had to tread carefully since we didn't actually know what we were up against.

Abbey seemed to be holding up well despite using mass amounts of energy, there were about a dozen of us now, and still, another dozen alphas yet to be healed.

Jackson suggested that some of us would need to stay back with Abbey while she healed the other alpha's and the rest of us needed to continue onwards.

Caleb and Kai naturally refused to leave my side, I guess it was the gamma band at play. Sam and Lily said that they would stay back with Abbey, Bryant also offered to protect her while she helped us to gather more backup.

Jackson, myself, Caleb, and Kai, as well as some of the attending alphas, decided to move out and see if we could see any movement around the pack grounds. We hadn't seen anyone yet, but they must be somewhere.

As we were about a hundred yards away from the entrance to the packhouse, we saw movement. We halted behind Jackson and waited. My jaw dropped as I took in the huge army of wolves that were descending upon the packhouse.

The foul stench of these rogue wolves invaded my nostrils. I fought the urge to vomit. We all looked at one another. Well, this complicates things a little I thought to myself. I wasn't quite expecting that we would have that many opponents to fight.

I looked at Caleb instantly in fear. We had left Kali behind sleeping there. Caleb let out a huge growl and ran forward shifting into his wolf, he ran as fast as his legs would carry him toward the packhouse.

"f**k!" Jackson yelled. He also runs forward, shifting into Gray following Caleb's lead. If we don't follow him, both he, Kali, and their unborn baby are dead, so we all shifted and followed them through the packhouse, taking out wolves as we moved through the crowd.

Kai and a few of the other alpha's flanked my sides and front and behind and pushed through the rogues, their bodies flying all over the place, blood spurting out all over the place.

We ran down the corridor and then skidded to a sudden halt, Caleb had shifted and was holding a sleeping Kali in his arms. We formed a circle around him and I nodded my head towards the back entrance swiftly, rogues descending on us from behind, we all pushed forward some of the alpha's fending off the rogues as we made our way through the packhouse.

"Take Aleksa and Kali to safety, I'll keep the rogues busy!" Jackson yelled as he slowed down and turned to fight the rogues.

Four of the alpha's followed Caleb and Kali and me. Once we made it to the bush. I turned around.

"Get your mate and baby to safety!" I called out and I ran off.

I ran towards the packhouse to join Jackson and half a dozen alphas fight.

Jackson growled.

"What the f**k are you doing? Run! Now!" He yelled at me followed by a growl.

“No. I’m here to fight for my friends and my pack!” I yelled as I fought two small dirty brown rogues.

“Aleksa, concentrate, like before. We can use our powers. Visualize. Then focus our energy!” Amber encouraged me.

I take a breath and close my eyes. I think of the danger my friends and my pack are in. I use my anger against those who have come to destroy my pack. I feel myself heat up again. I feel like I am being surrounded by a whirlwind of heat and then I release. I feel a huge gust of energy disperse, and when I open my eyes the rogues that were surrounding us were no more.

I look further afield and I see the remaining rogues retreat. I see movement in the woods to the north of the pack grounds, and for some reason, I know that is where the witch is hiding. I could feel a pull toward her. I could feel her dark energy.

I lunge forward and run like the wind in her direction. When I get there I can sense that she is still there. I see a figure move out from behind a large tree.

“Hello, Aleksa,” she called out.

“Why are you doing this?” I asked her aggressively.

“Why do we do anything? For power, for money, for control.” She spat out shaking her head.

“My, you really are naive aren’t you?” She mocked me.

“I can see why that brute of an alpha wants you. So pretty and yet so clueless.” She laughed again.

Then she went quiet and looked at me as if she was looking into my mind.

“He doesn’t know, does he?” the witch asked me. Then she starts laughing again.

“Oh, this is brilliant!” She called out trying to suppress further laughter.

“Who? Know about what?” I asked the witch, having no actual clue as to who or what she was referring to.

“What are you talking about, Who are you...” I asked. I stopped mid-sentence as I was distracted by a shuffle in the bushes to the witch’s left.

“My sweet Aleska, did you like the rose I sent you?” Lachlan said, striding towards me with a smirk on his face.

“Lachlan,” I said shakily, trying not to show my fear but failing miserably.

“You have caused a lot of trouble my little mate,” Lachlan said, shaking his head disapprovingly at me.

“Nevermind, you have the rest of your life to make it up to me!” He added, laughing evilly.

I slowly started to back away from Lachlan and the witch, as I did I could sense movement behind me. As I turned my head I saw two of Evergreen’s warriors behind me in their wolf forms. I knew that I wouldn’t be getting out of this situation without a fight.

“Well, my job here is done! You have your she-wolf. Now I will have my payment, Wolf!” the witch demanded eagerly.

“Don’t dare disrespect me, Witch!” Lachlan declared to the witch.

However, she didn’t appear to be affected by his menacing aura. She looked more impatient than anything else.

Lachlan pulled a small hessian sack out of his pocket and dumped it in the witch’s hand. She quickly poured the gold out and looked over it, then she chucked it back in the sack happily and stowed it away in the inside of her gown.

“I’d watch this one if I were you. There’s more to her than meets the eye,” the witch said as she winked at me knowingly.

Lachlan huffed, and dismissed the witch.

“I have a feeling this isn’t the last we shall see of one another Aleksa.” the witch added and with that, she vanished in a big puff of smoke.

Aleska POV

“Where is my mate?” I yelled at Lachlan in disdain.

Seconds later I felt his large calloused hand connect with the side of my cheek. I almost lose my balance due to the sheer force of his slap.

I am done with taking slaps from men today, so I slapped Lachlan back even harder in return.

Lachlan laughed mockingly at me.

“I see my weak mate has developed a backbone. Well, I shall have fun breaking you back down.” Lachlan said laughing even harder this time.

I felt my anger start to rise. Not now Aleksa. We need more information. Don't show your hand just yet. Amber warned me.

“Please, where is Kingston?” I asked Lachlan again, this time with a lower tone,

“That mutt. He's none of your concern,” Lachlan said walking around me in a circular motion.

I hear him growl when he takes in my mark. I felt a hard punch to my stomach. I lean forward feeling gasping for breath as I am temporarily wounded. I got my breath back and managed to pull myself back up. I stood strong and tall. I tried to remain stoic.

I knew that he wanted me to submit, and to fear him. But I refused to. The next time he touches me I will not be holding back.

“First thing we will do when we get back to the pack is to get rid of that mutt's filthy mark on you. You will regret letting him mark you, I promise you that w***e!” Lachlan spat out in a rage.

“I gave you everything! You were living a lowly life in that human town before you met me. I gave you a home, a pack, a rank, a purpose. And this is how you repay me! By w*****g yourself to some alpha mutt in the middle of b**t f**k nowhere.” Lachlan screamed out. He looked like he was getting angrier by the moment.

I just stared at him blankly.

“What do you have to say for yourself w***e?” Lachlan prodded me while glaring at me.

“Where’s my mate? Where’s...” I am not finished with my sentence when I feel another slap, this time it’s on the other side of my face. Well, thank goddess for that, at least the swelling will even out.

Even though I’m in so much pain right now, and I can feel the tears welling in my eyes I start laughing.

“Is that it? Is that all you’ve got?” I call out mockingly, laughing so more. Lachlan looks at me in astonishment, probably wondering if I have a death wish.

I figure that by baiting him, I am buying more time for my friends to find me. We haven’t left the pack grounds yet. The dark witch appears to have left. Any minute now someone should arrive and then we can end this once and for all.

As if he can read my mind Lachlan grabs me and pulls me towards the pack boundaries.

“I’m no fool w***e! I know your game! Move it!” He said pulling me along even faster than before, his warriors falling closely behind us.

As we approach the pack boundary there is a black SUV waiting, the engine is running and someone is in the driver’s seat. We are approximately ten yards away, and no one has arrived yet. I guess they are busy with the rogues at the packhouse. I sure hope they are okay. Although, it looks like I’m on my own for now.

Just as we were nearing the SUV I heard footsteps coming from the trees behind us. I turned my head and was shocked to see Ezra running toward us. I gasped out loud.

“What do you want?” Lachlan said in a tone of annoyance.

It sounds like they know each other.

“That b***h isn’t going anywhere! We have unfinished business!” Ezra growled pointing at me.

Lachlan looked at us both, studying our body language in amusement.

“And what has my wretched mate done to get you all wound up?” Lachlan asked.

“She knows where my mate is!” Ezra screamed.

“Tell me now! Where is Kaia?” Ezra demanded.

He started to step toward me. As he did I saw Lachlan start to sniff.

“We had a deal Lachlan, and I am yet to see my mate!” Ezra yelled fiercely, looking like he was struggling to keep himself together.

“WHY DO YOU REEK OF MY MATE!” Lachlan called out almost in a rage. Then I see his eyes turn black.

Interesting. I thought to myself.

Ezra stopped suddenly.

“Yyyour mate?” He said almost stuttering, and stopping short.

“He tried to r**e me!” I called out.

I know that Lachlan doesn't care about anyone but himself. But I also know that he doesn't like to share his toys either. I decide that I can k**l two birds with one stone by playing them against each other.

“Whattttt!” Lachlan roared.

“She was asking for it!” Ezra boomed.

“No one touches my mate but me!” Lachlan yelled savagely.

And in seconds he had lost all control, shifted, and launched his wolf upon Ezra.

Ezra was caught off-guard, clearly not expecting such a reaction from his partner in crime. Cyrus didn't hold back.

He held Ezra's arms down, and started snapping at his neck, he was about to go in for the k**l when Ezra managed to push him off his legs.

Ezra shifted. His wolf was smaller than Lachlan's. Their wolves started circling one another slowly. They were both growling. I started to step back slowly. Unfortunately, I had forgotten about the warriors that were trailing me from behind.

The wolves lunged for each other and started rolling back and forth, each trying to get closer to the other's neck.

Cyrus managed to latch onto Ezra's wolf's neck and tore a huge chunk of skin off his neck. It was grotesque, I could see the artery rupture, and the blood rapidly spraying out all over Cryus and into the air.

Ezra started to go limp, he shifted back to human form. His skin was deathly pale, and I watched as he lost consciousness.

Cryus had delivered a fatal bite. I figured this was my time to escape now. I shifted into my wolf Amber and barged through the two warrior wolves behind me, causing them to fall to the ground.

I could sense that Cyrus was on my tail, merely seconds behind me, so I pushed myself as far as I could. I could almost see the end of the treeline ahead of me. I just had to move a little faster.

"Come on Amber, we are almost through the trees. Just a bit further!" I tried to encourage my wolf.

She was determined to outrun her ex-mate.

As we pushed past the last of the trees, I could feel the body heat of Cryus upon us, and just as I smelt him hover over us, I felt myself being pushed to the ground, my face hitting the ground suddenly.

Cyrus had launched his body on top of us, pinning us down. He was holding us face down on the ground.

Cyrus let out a menacing growl.

I could feel him shift on top of me.

"Mmmmn, just like oldtimes. Me on top riding you face down!" Lachlan declared.

"I think I'm gonna be sick!" I said out loud.

And with that Lachlan grabbed my head and pushed it hard against the ground.

I was too dizzy and in too much pain to even react.

I could feel myself being lifted up, but I felt so incoherent. I just let the darkness take me.

I felt myself being pulled along the ground. I could smell the grass and earth scratching my face as I was being dragged. A burning sensation had engulfed me, it felt like my skin was being grazed repeatedly against the ground.

I must have only lost consciousness for a few seconds, as I appeared to be on the pack grounds still. I could see I was being dragged back the way I came.

I had enough of this playing dumb business. I tried to play the passive weak female and hoped that would be enough for Lachlan to let slip where Kingston was, but now I was over it.

I focussed my energy and used my power to get myself out of the warrior's grip, burning their hands with an electrical surge. They started screaming in pain. I jumped up on my feet and got into a defensive stance.

"Playtime is over! Tell me where Kingston is now! And I might let you live!" I demanded with a cold and determined look on my face.

Lachlan looked at me in disbelief.

"What the f**k was that!" he yelled, looking at his warriors squealing in pain.

"That was me taking the power back!" I said standing there with my arms crossed looking at him smugly.

"I'm done playing games!" I yelled at him.

"Where is my mate? Tell me now and I might show you some mercy!" I demanded.

I could feel my eyes glowing. I was getting angrier by the moment. My wolf is anxious to find her mate and disgusted at the sight of her former mate.

“Your eyes!” Lachlan called out incredulity.

“Where is my mate!” I called out. My anger resonates and I felt a surge of energy, it felt electrical. I moved my hands in Lachlan’s direction and he and his warriors fall to the ground. I watch them look at me in horror and disbelief.

“What the!” Lachlan screamed out, pulling himself back up, and dusting himself off.

“Turns out you didn’t know me as well as you thought,” I told him coldly.

“What are you? Some kind of witch?” Lachlan blurted out.

He was stalling. I struggled to contain my wolf. I could feel my eyes switching color. I was about to inflict pain upon this poor excuse for a wolf in front of me.

I was getting angrier by the moment and I could feel myself heating up again. As I went to raise my hand towards Lachlan he called out.

“I can take you to him! Kingston! I will show you where he is!” Lachlan yelled out with two hands in front of me, gesturing to me that he will surrender for now.

“No games! If I think you are tricking me – I will make you suffer!” I tell him.

I feel so strong and in control. A far cry from the naive and shy Aleksa that I once was.

Aleska POV

We had been walking for a few minutes now and I could see the pack was starting to wake up. It would appear that the dark witch’s spell had been lifted. My mind-link was currently being flooded by anxious pack members. I felt a headache coming on so I blocked them all for now.

I tried to mind-link Kingston, hoping that I might finally be able to get through to him, but there was nothing. I couldn’t feel him, period. I knew that nothing sinister had happened to him so that was something at least.

“Aleksa, where are you?” I heard via mind-link. I was not surprised that Jackson could get through to me, it must be a crescent moon wolf perk.

“I’m with Lachlan and two of his warriors, we are walking towards the maintenance sheds, he’s cooperating at the moment but I don’t trust him,” I told Jackson.

“Right, we’re on our way!” Jackson called out via the mind-link.

As we were approaching the sheds I had a feeling that danger was awaiting us and that this was a trap, but I was determined to find Kingston. I had the upper hand for now, but I was still on high alert.

Lachlan told me that Kingston was just behind the sheds in the woods, and that he had him handcuffed in silver there. I look at him and I sensed that he was being truthful. I reached out to Amber but she couldn’t sense anything.

As we approached the bush I heard movement in multiple directions. In a matter of seconds, I was surrounded by wolves, snapping their teeth at me angrily.

Lachlan turned around with a smirk on his face.

“Right where I wanted you. Still so naive!” He laughed out loud, shaking his head toward me.

I crossed my arms and tilted my head at him.

I was about to make some smart-a*s comment when I heard snickering from behind the wolves, they parted ways, and out walked Eva.

“Aleska is mine!” She called out.

Lachlan looked at her in amusement.

“Have at it, just don’t k**l her, do you hear me!” Lachlan screamed out to Eva.

“I can’t make any promises!” Eva replied snarkily.

“Eva!” Lachlan called back.

“Yeah, ok, fine I won’t k**l her,” She begrudgingly agreed.

I looked at Eva and couldn’t contain my laughter. I found it hilarious that she thought that she could take me. I’m not the same girl that she remembered, but I will sure enjoy educating her.

I stood in anticipation, as I knew that she would strike first.

As predicted Eva walked up to me and attempted to slap me hard across the face, but I could see it coming a mile away and I blocked her hand with my arm, causing her to call out loudly in pain.,

“Pathetic!” I called out to her.

I saw that the wolf’s attention had moved to something coming from behind me.

I turned my head to see what it was, and I saw my friends approaching us with haste.

In doing so, I had broken the never turn your back on your opponent rule, and I had given Eva time to attack me.

I felt my body fall back on the ground hard. Eva was punching my face hard and fast, and after a few hits, I was starting to feel dizzy.

I let out a loud growl and pushed Eva from me hard. My wolf and I were now furious and I could feel my body heating up once again, but I didn’t want to use my powers on Eva, nor did I want to shift just yet. I wanted to take this b***h out on my own.

Suddenly I had flashbacks of all the times that I had suffered in pain while Eva was with Lachlan, all the times I confided in her, all the times I went out of my way for her, and then I thought about when I caught them in the act and that look of sheer smug satisfaction on her face, and that did it for me. I hit her hard, and I couldn’t stop.

I felt a wolf jump up and bite my shoulder from behind. I felt the pain surge through me. I took this moment to shift into my wolf. Amber was furious, she charged for the wolf and ripped out a chunk of skin from its flank. I then spat it out. It tasted disgusting in my mouth. It appeared to be a rogue wolf, judging by its foul odor.

I watched Eva shift and charge toward me and I knew that I needed to end the other wolf so that I could focus on Eva. As I was about to go in for the k**l, Eva’s wolf jumped on me and snapped its teeth toward my neck. I was now vastly outnumbered and there was a raging battle going on around me. I knew that my friends were here fighting and I needed to try to end this.

I focussed my energy on getting Eva off me. I felt myself heat up, and the electrical energy surge through me. I felt it connect with Eva's fur and smelt her fur burning as she begun to sizzle. She was essentially being electrified. She fell off me onto the ground, rolling until she appeared to lose consciousness.

The wolf that had just been attacking me looked scared and started to cower away, submitting to me.

"Run away, and don't come back, and I will let you live!" I mind-linked the wolf.

The wolf looked shocked, and nodded its head towards me, then ran off towards the woods.

I looked around me and saw Jackson and Lachlan circling one another. I saw Abbey had shifted and she was fighting back to back with Lily who had also shifted, there were about four wolves surrounding them.

Sam was fighting the two warriors that were accompanying Lachlan earlier.

The place was chaos. Pack wolves fighting rogue wolves, it was c****e.

I look behind me and I saw some of the alphas from other packs that were here for the summit, were arriving to help us fight the rogues. Thank the goddess for that I thought to myself.

I mind-linked Jackson, "I need to find Kingston. Ask Lachlan where he is, do whatever you have to get the information out of him," I called out.

"You got it!" Jackson replied.

I stalked hurriedly towards Sam to help him fight the warriors, he was holding his own, but the sooner we took these rogues down the better.

I mind-linked my friends "Try to incapacitate them as opposed to massacring them, they are just following orders, we want to keep the death toll down if we can,"

My mind was flooded with replies.

"Need a hand, Sam?" I mind-linked Sam.

"Sure thing Luna," He called out to me.

In no time we take them out, but as fast as we get rid of them more seemed to appear.

“Sam, go help your mate! I’ll be fine here!” I called out to him via mind-link.

“Are you sure?” He called out nervously.

“Yes, go!” I told him.

Sam moved to help Lily and Abbey who seemed to be constantly surrounded by rogues.

Everyone was defending their positions well but it was becoming tiresome.

I asked my wolf if she could sense our mate yet. She replied to me that she couldn’t pick anything up.

“Abbey, do you think you could help me find Kingston? I still can’t get hold of him even though the spell has been lifted.” I mind-link her.

“Yes, I think so, I can definitely try, I just need to be able to concentrate,” Abbey replied.

“I’m on my way!” I replied to her.

I was done with fighting the hard way. I once again focussed my energy and shocked the wolves surrounding me. I felt a little drained. It appeared that the more my powers were used, the more energy it took from me.

I charged toward Abbey, Lily, and Sam. “Abbey if you can make your way to the maintenance sheds behind us you might be able to try that locating spell?” I declared.

“Hmmn, I can try. But I will need something that belongs to Kingston. Do you have anything I could use?” Abbey asked me.

I shook my head sadly.

“Ah, it’s ok, I’ll see what I can do, be back soon!” Abbey called out.

I took over her place in the circle and continued to fight the rogues. I was feeling a bit drained, my wolf missed her mate, it felt like forever since we had seen one another.

I looked over to Jackson, while I was fighting one on one with a rogue. I saw him and Lachlan fighting, rolling over each other, snapping and biting one another, each of them seeking dominance in the fight. Neither one of them seemed to be winning, both taking hard hits, with gashes evident all over their bodies, both with blood-soaked fur.

It was at that moment it dawned on me. Jackson's powers. I had never asked him what they are specifically. Why hasn't he ended his fight with Lachlan?

I wasn't paying attention to the fight, and I felt a claw s***h the side of my neck. I felt blood drip down my collarbone and onto my chest. The pain spurred me on.

I lunged forward and ripped the rogue's throat out, spitting its disgusting skin and flesh onto the field.

I was snapped out of my bloodlust by the feeling of a mind-numbing pain ripping through me. I felt as though I had been stabbed with a knife in my chest. I clutched myself where it hurt and let out a blood-curdling growl. I knew that I was feeling someone else's pain.

I scanned my eyes around the field and I saw Jackson fall to the ground, leaning on his knees, holding his chest. Lachlan hovering over him snickering.

I saw a silver dagger sticking out of his chest and my heart hurt for him. I picked myself up off the ground and my paws pounded against the ground galloping towards him as if my life depended on it.

I leapt off the ground into the air and lunged towards Lachlan, I started ripping into him, tearing into his chest frantically, he used whatever energy he had to push me off. I got back onto my paws to attack him some more, when I was distracted by Jackson's groans.

I was torn, part of me wanted to end this wretched wolf who has my mate hidden somewhere, who has made my life a misery as well as countless other and gravely injured my cousin, and the other part of me, the bigger part, needed to tend to Jackson.

I felt Sam and Caleb flank me.

Sam shifted beside me.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, reject you Lachlan as my Alpha," Sam said holding his ground. He then quickly shifted back to his wolf form ready to fight the wolf he once pledged his allegiance to.

Lachlan laughed.

"I was gonna k**l you anyway. Enjoy your short life as a Rogue!" He called out to Sam.

"I need to help Jackson, can you stall him for now?" I mind-inked Sam and Caleb.

"Yes Luna," They replied to me in synchronisation.

I leaned down to Jackson, and tried to assess his wound. The blood was hemorrhaging out. The dagger was silver. And then it hit me -my nightmares. I've seen this all before, in my nightmares.

I shifted back to human form, so I could use my hands to help put pressure on the wound.

I tried to fight back the tears but they continued to fall furiously.

"Stay with me Jackson!" I called out pleadingly.

I shook him to try keep him awake. I saw his eyes were starting to roll back.

"Jackson, please!" I called out desperately.

"Please Moon Goddess, help him!" I yelled out to the sky.

At that very moment, we were all blinded by an overwhelming bright white light.

Aleska POV

I had to close my eyes as the light was so bright. I heard a loud screeching sound, it was piercing my ears, like some sort of sound distortion. And then a wave of energy hit us all. The force was overwhelming and I felt lightheaded. After a few moments, I felt myself come to my senses. The light started to dim down and my eyes began to adjust. The light appeared to be shrinking and in a matter of moments, it had become merely an orb. There was a figure

emerging from behind it. I had to squint to see in the darkness of the woods. It was Xanthe!

Most of the wolves that had been fighting on the battlefield were holding their heads, they looked to be in pain. Xanthe looked panicked and started running towards me. I looked back down at Jackson, "Jackson, can you hear me, please stay with me!" I yelled at him.

Xanthe approached us and pushed me aside, "Move!" She ordered me. I looked at her in confusion.

"Xanthe, what are you doing?" I asked her.

"He is my Mate!" She told me looking at him in disbelief.

I could see how concerned she looked. She touched his face with the palm of her hands, her fingers touching Jackson's face in a gentle and loving manner.

Jackson's breathing was starting to normalize already with Xanthe's mere touch. I wonder if that could be the mate bond at work, or perhaps it was because Xanthe was a healer or both.

"Are you sure?" I asked Xanthe hopefully.

"I can heal him!" Xanthe declared.

"I just need some space," Xanthe said. I could tell she was trying to suppress her true feelings, I could hear the shakiness in her voice.

Xanthe POV

After meeting with Aleksa and Kingston that day in the gazebo in the rose gardens, I was determined to find out whatever I could about her heritage. However, along the way my past had caught up with me. I had been detained against my will by someone who had untoward plans for me.

I was able to escape that hellhole with help from an unlikely ally. I then began to make my way back to Rocky Mountain. My intuition had told me to come back right away. I had thought something might be wrong with Aleska until I reached the pack border and then I felt it. I felt him.

I felt the pull deep within my heart. My true love. My mate, was here, and he was hurt. I made my way toward the training fields and I saw a raging battle

taking place. I could sense it was between pack wolves fending off a rogue attack.

I could see everyone fighting from the woods. I saw that despicable Lachlan lunging toward Aleksa and then I let out a surge of power, blinding and stopping all in its path.

I made my way to the wolf on the ground as I saw he had shifted to his human form.

He was gorgeous. Rugged with dark and handsome features, I could sense that he was of alpha blood.

He had been stabbed with a silver wolfsbane-infused dagger in his chest and he was fading fast. I couldn't believe that after all these centuries I had finally found my mate. I refused to lose him when I had only just found him.

After telling Aleksa that he was my mate, I attempted to heal him. I placed my hands over his body and channeled all of my energy. I used my strength to s**k the poison from his system. I felt it consume me but I would not stop until my mate was safe.

It seemed like an eternity but in reality, it didn't take long at all. I watched my mate wake from his state of unconsciousness.

I watched him look into my eyes with desire and growl "MATE!"

I looked at him and I smiled lovingly.

Aleksa POV

My wolf became restless, and then she growled wildly. "Mate! Mate is coming!" She howled in my head with joy.

I jerked my head to the left, and I watched as my mate approached us with Abbey in tow.

"Kingston!" I called out desperately. My heart racing and an overwhelming desire to run to my mate and never let go, right here in the middle of this fight.

I looked at Xanthe and Jackson. They were having a moment. They wouldn't notice me gone.

I leaped up onto the ground and ran into my mate's arms.

As I ran toward him I took in his bruised and swollen face, he had a split lip and a split eyebrow. Why was he in such a state I wondered. Why was his werewolf healing not kicking in? What had happened to him?

I felt him flinch in pain as my body smacked against his. I looked at him with concern on my face. I lifted up his shirt and saw burn marks, it looked like a silver knife had been slashed against him repeatedly.

I looked at his wrists which also looked to be burned. I could only assume he had been bound in silver handcuffs or chains.

My wolf whimpered internally for our mate.

"I'm ok. I'll heal soon." Kingston said to me casually.

I smacked my lips against his and passionately kissed him. My wolf was howling in my head. Then I pulled away quickly, realizing that we were still in the middle of the fight. There would be time for this later, I thought to myself.

I looked to Abbey, "How?" That was all I could ask her, still astonished that she had found my mate.

"He was bound in silver, and unconscious when I found Him. He was tied to a chair, at the back of the maintenance shed. I picked up his scent while I was trying to find some space to perform the locating spell," Abbey replied.

I looked again at Kingston. Trying my best to suppress my tears of joy, as I was pushed aggressively to the ground. My head hit the ground with a loud thud. As I looked up to see what had just hit me I saw Kingston being pinned to the ground by Lachlan's wolf Cyrus.

I ran into Cyrus with all my might. I figure it will buy Kingston a few moments to shift. As he hovers over me snapping at me, I try to fight him off with my hands.

I hear him whimper as Kingston shifts into his wolf Sabre and takes a large chunk of flesh out of his left hind leg. Cyrus is pushed to the ground and it seems that Sabre has the upper hand when a scroungy brown wolf jumps onto him trying to get access to his neck.

Furious, and recognizing that the scroungy and singed wolf is Eva, I quickly shifted into my wolf Amber and lunged forward viciously taking aim at her neck. I latched onto it and I tugged at it mercilessly, not letting go until I was satisfied that there was no life left in her.

While part of me was sad to take a life, especially when this wolf was once my friend, I told myself that she was never the friend I thought she was, and that I would stop at nothing to protect my mate.

Sabre continued to attack Cyrus, taking aim at his neck but missing and taking a chunk out of his shoulder instead, he then went for Cyrus's jugular and ripped into his neck, blood squirting out all over Sabre, soaking his fur. Cyrus began to lose strength, whimpering, his motions stalling.

Sabre moves away from Cyrus nudging against my snout, we both shift and fall into each other's arms. Usually, I would be embarrassed to be naked in front of so many other wolves but right now I'm just feeling blessed to have my mate in my arms. I'm so besotted that I don't even notice Cyrus has shifted into his human form and he is getting back on his feet.

It's almost too late when I see he has somehow picked up the silver dagger and is about to stab Kingston in the neck when Sam comes from behind and grips the dagger forcing it into Lachlan's heart he then pulls it out and slices Lachlan's neck open decapitating him.

I gasped in horror as I watch my former mate's head fall to the ground. I wished that things could have been different, but he was a lost soul, so consumed in evil and darkness. There was no redemption for him.

I mouthed thank you to Sam for saving my mate from harm. Kingston had turned around just in time to see Lachlan meet his demise. We all stood there in silence for a moment.

As I looked around us, I noticed that the rogues had started to retreat. I watched my friends start to pick themselves up off the battlefield. I saw wolves tending to the injured. We all just stared at one another looking grateful that we were still all here, and it is finally over.

Aleksa POV

Four hours later.

Once Lachlan was no longer a threat and we were sure the rogues had retreated, we began the task of picking ourselves back up.

We rounded the entire pack together and all the visiting packs, and had a quick debrief.

After the debriefing we encouraged the visiting packs not to feel obliged to stay, and to feel free to make their way home, as the summit was effectively over, due to these unexpected events.

We had just finished rounding up the last of the deceased rogues when the royal pack entourage arrived. This isn't the way we were planning to greet the Alpha King, and it definitely wasn't what we had planned for this day of the summit.

Originally we had a huge festival planned with performers, stalls, music, and food. Until we were attacked by a dark witch and rogues led by my deranged ex-mate.

As the Alpha King himself, also known as my cousin Callum, stepped out of his Range Rover he took in the grim sight that awaited him.

The pack ground was a mess. Blood stained the once lush green field in front of us. It was clear a battle had taken place here.

Before he had a chance to ask what had happened we moved forward to introduce ourselves. We were quite a sight, I was still bleeding from the wounds I had sustained during the fight, Kingston looks like a bruised and battered mess, and we both still needed medical attention.

We had declined it initially, as we wanted the most vulnerable and injured wolves to be tended to first. Kingston tried to insist that I go straight to the pack doctor but I wanted to make sure my friends were seen first. Plus I could already feel my wounds were being healed.

We welcomed Callum to the pack and led him to the pack house dining room where some of our kitchen staff organized some pastries and hot drinks for Callum and his men.

We explained the events of the past twenty-four hours briefly, as well as explained that we had ramped up security as well as had Xanthe and Abbey placing some protective spells in place to secure the perimeter for now, in case of any further retaliation.

Callum suggested that we get cleaned up, get our wounds tended to, and then meet him and his men again in an hour or two on the pack house patio.

After showering and dressing and attending to our wounds, we met Callum at the pack house patio. The sun was beginning to set and it was quite a sight to behold. It was daunting to think that there was still so much to do before we retired for the day.

Callum had examined my crescent moon wolf marking with awe. Jackson didn't have a marking yet as he hadn't mated and marked his true mate yet, although it was only a matter of time now that he and Xanthe had found one another.

I begun to relay my story of how I had been raised as a human, to finding my wolf Amber and shifting for the first time, to meeting Lachlan and my time at Evergreen, up until the events that had just occurred here at Rocky Mountain. Callum had praised my strength and integrity, as well as Jackson's ability to lead a pack and still manage to keep his wolfs secret identity.

Callum then went on to explain his understanding of the events that had occurred at the royal pack all those years ago, as well as his condolences regarding our parents.

Jackson had also joined us, he was completely healed. It was as if nothing had happened earlier today. There was not a scratch on him.

He was reluctant to join us at first as he refused to be away from Xanthe, especially since they had just found one another. So Xanthe was present at the meeting also. Callum thanked her for her efforts to protect me and keep me safe, as well as her services to the royal pack.

Callum had even offered Jackson and me the opportunity to join the royal pack as senior members, which we were very honored to receive. However, we had to politely decline as neither of us wished to leave our current packs due to finding our true mates and our obligations.

While Callum was disappointed that we didn't take him up on his offer he did understand. So instead he came up with the idea of a Royal Pack Alliance which was extended not only to our closest allies but to the packs that had fought in the attack earlier today.

Though the packs had already started to make their way home immediately after the attack, we had all agreed to reconvene again in a month's time to discuss alliances and a peace treaty.

Callum was curious about the Hybrid who had such great knowledge of the royal pack, so he requested a meeting with Abbey, to which she gladly obliged, to which Alaric accompanied her too.

It appeared that Callum had known Abbey's mother well and they shared a few stories with one another. Abbey and Alaric were also invited to visit the royal pack, which they are intending to do after returning back to their packs.

Jackson and I have both been invited to stay at the Volkov Kingdom to meet some of our distant relatives and to learn more about our heritage. We have both agreed to come along, and we intend to bring our mates with us but have asked that it be postponed until everything is back to normal again following the recent attacks.

Jackson declared that he needed to speak with his father first and check back in with his pack, as he had been absent for some time now.

Further to that, he wished to introduce Xanthe to his pack as his Luna.

Xanthe was a bit reluctant. Although she had accepted Jackson as her mate, she was unsure about becoming Luna and is worried that there may be resistance to her being accepted as Luna due to the fact that she is a witch by birth.

I have a feeling it will all work out eventually though.

After Lachlan had met his demise, the rogues instantly began to retreat. However, we had managed to capture a few of them for interrogation purposes. They aren't saying anything at the moment, but Kingston believes that in a few days' time they will probably start talking.

Kingston was organizing a tracking team right now to see if they could follow the rogue's scents in an effort to find out where they came from, and determine if they will be a future threat.

Xanthe was planning to contact a coven that she has a working relationship in a bid to try to find out who the dark witch was and to see if she will become a further threat to us in the future.

The dark witch did say she would "see me soon," and I'm pretty sure she knew that I was a crescent moon wolf, so that could become problematic.

Kingston and I were heading off to the pack hospital now to check on our friends and injured pack members. After that I planned on calling Mason and Quinn and sharing a video call with my pups if they were still awake.

Now that Lachlan was no longer a threat, there is no reason why they cant all come home.

I simply cannot wait to have my pups safely in my arms again. It feels like it has been an eternity since I last saw them.

Kingston had managed to contact Asher, and he and Kaia are on their way back to Rocky Mountain. Asher said that when he went to tell them about Ezra's death, they already knew. They told him that they have something exciting to tell us when they get back. We have an inkling as to what it might be, but we are excited to hear what they have to say.

It's going to take some time to get things back to what they once were. We have a lot to do as far as pack security goes. The fact that the dark witch managed to create all that chaos is pretty scary. To think such an attack was able to occur, means we have much work ahead of us to ensure it doesn't happen again.

We will have lots of work to do with the creation of this new alliance with the royal pack, but everyone seems open to the idea so far.

With so many finding their fated and second chances mates, there is still much celebrating to be done. There are also Luna ceremonies to take place, including my own ceremony. But there is plenty of time for that.

What matters now is that everyone is safe and well, that all the injured recover, and that we get things back to a state of normality – whatever that might look like.

As I descended the stairs of the pack house I looked around at the lush greenery that surrounds me, the sky is now starting to darken, and night is falling.

I am so blessed to call this place home. I am safe. I am free at last.

I looked to the bottom of the stairs and see my perfect mate waiting for me.

Kingston had a grin on his face, and I raised my brows as I look at him, and then I saw why he was grinning.

As I looked to the side entrance of the main packhouse reception I saw my precious pups, my Liam and Layla, standing next to Mason and Quinn.

“How?” I asked Kingston via mind-link, in a state of astonishment.

“I rang Mason after the attack, and said it was safe to bring Liam and Layla back,” Kingston replied.

I was already making my way toward my pups.

“Mommy!” They called out in unison, running as fast as their little legs would carry them. I too started to run towards them and we met in the middle. They landed in my arms and I kissed them both on their foreheads as they push their heads into my chest and we take in one another’s scents. I felt the tears of joy falling from my cheeks. Then I felt Kingston join our hug and we all embraced each other. Our family unit was finally back together. Everything was just as it should be. I felt at peace at last. I never dreamed that I could feel so complete and so loved.

Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 42

Jackson POV

“Aleksa? What a pleasant surprise.” I said to her. And then my eyes moved to the large mark on her neck. It was practically glowing, which had me wonder if she had recently been marked. She looked shocked to see me, and another

emotion, fear or anxiety perhaps, not the reaction I was hoping to invoke in her.

“Jackson, we met at Evergreen,” I said, stretching my arm out to shake her hand.

Aleksa looked at my face and then at my outstretched hand, eyes flickering back and forth. As she reluctantly reaches to shake my hand. A loud growl rips through the air.

“MINE!” Growled an alpha with an enraged aura about him, as he stalked towards us and pulled Aleksa aggressively into his arms.

“Jackson,” I say redirecting my outstretched arm towards the threatened alpha in front of me. In an effort to show him that I’m not intimidated by him and that I’m not a threat.

“Blue Moon Pack,” I said, moving my hand towards him in a bid to shake his hand as a peace offering.

“Kingston.” He says, shaking my hand firmly. You can tell a lot about a wolf by his handshake.

“I could sense my Luna’s distress. Am I right to assume you know each other?” Kingston asked, raising a brow.

“We do, but not in the way you might think. You are newly mated I take it?” I reply to Kingston. He looks at me with a hard expression on his face. Clearly waiting for a proper answer to his question.

“We both spent some time in the dungeons in Evergreen,” I told Kingston. Who has a look of confusion on his face.

“Jackson of Blue Moon Pack. I recall communicating with you via email, welcome to Rocky Mountain.” He says, still not convinced whether or not I am a threat.

“I think you should come and join us in my office, we should have a chat. Just to make sure we are all on the same page. What do you think?” Kingston asks me.

“Sure. Lead the way.” I replied. I was curious to see where this was going.

Aleska seemed to have calmed down a bit. I noticed that she seemed very comfortable in Kingston's arms. Luna again – So Kingston is her second chance mate. Strangely, I don't feel disappointed, I feel happy for her.

Kingston starts by asking me how I ended up in the dungeons at Evergreen, being that I was an alpha myself. So I begin recounting the events that led me to Evergreen, as well as what happened in the dungeons.

"After leaving Evergreen, I made my way back to my pack and I assembled a few of my warriors with the intention of freeing Aleksa." I tell them both.

"I'd never liked Lachlan, how he even ended up in control of the pack is beyond me. His father had been a great leader, it's a pity none of his traits had been passed on to Lachlan."

"Although Evergreen is currently part of an Alliance that was formed by our fathers, the general consensus was that no one in the Alliance could stand Lachlan, he was arrogant and reckless, and dishonest."

"Wolves talk and it was a known fact that Evergreen had gone downhill drastically since Aleksa had left. Lachlan had taken out a lot of debt and owed the wrong people money, it was no secret that he was struggling to pay them back. It was only a matter of time before he lost control of Evergreen."

"Lachlan and I had been forced to work together and be in each other's presence since we were pups, but even then I couldn't stand him. I had worked with him out of respect for my father and the other founders of the Alliance. Not that it mattered now, as Blue Moon and Evergreen were no longer allied together. That ended the day I came back to free Aleksa. But it had been on the cards for some time."

"I was curious as to what had become of Aleksa and wanted to make sure she was far away from Lachlan."

I then look over to Aleksa and tell her "I knew you had your pups with you so I sent a Private Investigator as well as some of my own trackers out to ensure you were all safe and with the intention of offering you and your pups, as well as the wolves you escaped with, safe haven in my pack, although we were unable to trace your movements past Iowa."

"Aleksa, for some reason, I felt an overwhelming need to protect you and your pups. I won't lie, I was instantly drawn to you. Initially, I had wondered if I

might be your second chance mate, as my wolf seemed adamant that we needed to protect you, although he wouldn't tell me why. But then I realized that I couldn't scent you. So I knew you weren't my mate." I told Aleksa and Kingston, seeing no reason to hide anything.

A growl came from Kingston, who appeared to be gripping Aleksa even harder.

"I mean no disrespect, Kingston, you have to understand this is all retrospective," I say matter of factly.

"Aleksa was in a bad situation at the time and I felt compelled to help her and her pups." I replied.

"I can see you are safe and happy, and that you are newly mated and marked. Honestly, I am happy for you both." I say meeting Kingston's eyes to show my truth.

"I am here not only as a guest at the Alpha Summit but as an ally if you will accept me," I tell them both respectfully.

They looked at one another, and I could see that they were mind-linking. I patiently awaited their reply, looking around the room. Until I remember something that I feel they might want to know.

"Earlier I mentioned that Evergreen was in trouble," I stated. They stop mind-linking, looking at me with their full attention.

"It's nearing bankruptcy, the pack is doing poorly, food is scarce, sources report that wolves are going hungry, and the pack leadership is weak." I pause momentarily then continue.

"Currently, it is easy pickings for any Alpha who may intend to expand his territory."

"There will be a meeting at the end of the month and it will likely be voted out of the Alliance, it is also likely that another alpha will challenge Lachlan for the pack."

Aleska POV

Jackson. That's right. He was an alpha too, of course, he would be here. It is an Alpha Summit after all. But then I thought about how he also knows Lachlan and how they seemed to be on friendly terms. So my thoughts were – was he an enemy or ally, friend or foe? I didn't know what to make of this. I could feel anxiety surfacing, yet I tried to remain stoic. I don't want to be that panic-stricken girl that can't speak for herself. I am strong. I am fierce. I am Luna.

I've got this, I think to myself, as he stretches out his hand as a gesture. It appeared to be a friendly gesture. As I look at his hand, I move my hand outwards to shake his when I hear a loud growl and I am pulled into Kingston's chest. The smell of fresh pine invades my senses giving me a sense of calm. I take a breath of his scent and I feel so much calmer already. But I can feel the anger radiating from Kingston.

I listen to Kingston and Jackson talk. Jackson is trying to diffuse this tense situation, he seems to be genuine in his words. Kingston suggests we all sit down to ensure we are on the page and I think that is a good idea. So we made our way to Kingston's office.

Kingston directs Jackson to the seat in front of his desk and he sits on his chair, directly facing him. He pulls me onto his lap in a show of dominance, making it clear that I am his. It's not necessary, but if it calms him, then I will oblige.

Jackson tells us of his relationship with Lachlan and it is clear that they are not friends. It seems that Jackson has put up with him for many years out of respect for the alliance the packs have together, and nothing more.

Jackson then goes on to tell us something that shocks me to my core. He went back to Evergreen to help free me from the dungeons. I am gobsmacked. I can't imagine why he would risk so much for someone he didn't know. Come to think of it I do remember that look he gave me as he left the dungeons that day, it seemed like a look of regret or pity I thought at the time.

Kingston seems weary of this new information also. Jackson tells us that my imprisonment went against council law and that after hearing my story in the dungeons he couldn't leave me there. He also tells us that Lachlan has made too many enemies and that Evergreen is about to be voted out of the alliance, and possibly be taken over by another pack.

This makes my heart feel heavy. While I don't care what happens to Lachlan, I still care for the pack that I was previously Luna of. It just doesn't sit right with me. I look to Kingston, who I can tell knows what I am thinking. And he nods to me, knowingly.

Jackson explains how he felt he needed to help me and felt protective of me and my pups, he comments that he sees that Kingston and I are mated and seem happy for me, telling us that he respects the mate bond. He assures Kingston that he is no threat and means no harm, which Kingston seems to believe, as I do too.

Kingston apologizes for his outburst earlier, and Jackson tells him there's no need that he would be the same had the situation been reversed.

Asher arrives and offers to direct Jackson to the cottage he will be staying at for the Summit. While our conversation is not finished, we decided that Jackson should unpack and settle in, and we could meet again later tonight for a whiskey, and to discuss the Evergreen situation further.

Once Jackson and Asher leave the office, I nestle my head into Kingston's chest. I take in his scent of pine again, and he also takes my scent in. We just sit there snuggled together for a while, in silence.

Then Kingston picked up his phone. He calls one of his Private Investigators and asks him to look into Alpha Jackson of the Blue Moon Pack. He wants all the intel they can find on him. After he finishes his call, he looks at me.

"Was that necessary?" I ask him.

"Yes, Aleksa, you are my Mate, my Luna. I take your safety very seriously. We need to make sure Jackson's story checks out. I need to know if he is someone to worry about. If he checks out, we will welcome him as an ally. If not, he will be held to account for his dishonesty and intentions." Kingston tells me sternly.

Kingston POV

As I skim read the emails in my inbox, I am mind-linked by Aleksa, apparently, there are more guests arriving early and there is no one there to greet them. I

ask Aleksa to hold down the fort while I make my way downstairs to attend to the arriving Alpha.

As I am making my way there I feel panic race through our bond. Aleksa seems nervous or worried about something, so I pick up my pace, and as I am descending the stairs I see an Alpha reaching his arm out towards Aleksa, she seems reluctant. I am instantly on alert and I start stalking toward the Alpha wondering what his problem is. I know it isn't Lachlan because I don't think Aleksa would be standing that close to him, and while she's nervous she doesn't seem threatened.

"MINE!" I growl. Unable to control myself. The wolf in front of me doesn't even flinch. He is an alpha also it appears.

"Jackson," He says, extending his arm for a handshake. It appears he isn't an immediate threat, so I lower my guard a little.

"Blue Moon Pack," He tells me which pack he is from and now I know exactly who he is. I've heard many things about him. A fierce fighter, he was first in his class at Wentworth, which is an elite alpha training facility on the East Coast. He was a natural-born alpha, although rumor had it that he was never really interested in taking the position of Alpha for his pack. Though he was the only heir, he was forced into it out of obligation to his pack and his parents.

I'm not sure what his intentions are with Aleksa or how they know each other but I am determined to find out, and now.

"Jackson, I'm Kingston, I could sense my Luna's distress, Am I right to assume you know each other?" I ask, raising a brow.

"We do, but not in the way you might think. You are newly mated I take it?" He states rhetorically.

I continue to stare at him, waiting for him to answer my question. I am not in the mood for his condescension.

"We both spent some time in the dungeons at Evergreen." He tells me and with that I am confused, what is an Alpha, especially one as capable as him, doing in a dungeon at another pack.

“Jackson of Blue Moon Pack, I recall communicating with you via email. Welcome to Rocky Mountain.” I say in a forced and reluctant tone.

“I think you should come in and join us in my office, we should have a chat. Just to make sure we are all on the same page. What do you think?” I say, more of a demand, rather than a question.

“Sure. Lead the way.” Jackson says casually, which irks me a little.

We arrive at my office and gesture to him where I want him to sit. I pull Aleksa onto my lap, my wolf needs calming right now. He is angry and feels that this alpha may be a threat to our mate. He is feeling impatient. I can tell she wants to stand strong and show her independence but she can feel my frustration right now so she caters to my needs.

First thing is first, I need to know what their connection is. So I ask him what he was doing in the dungeons, and he starts his story, telling me the events leading to his time at Evergreen as well as the exchanges with Aleksa in the dungeons, he even goes on to shock us with the confession that he went back to Evergreen to free Aleksa. Sabre growls fiercely he is enraged that Jackson felt attracted to our mate, and he wants to claw his eyes and rip his throat out instantly, but I force him to the back of my mind, and keep our composure, and rightly so as Jackson goes on to announce that he knows Aleksa isn't his mate, although perplexed at the need to want to protect her and her pups, stressing that he respects the mate bond.

He further adds that Aleksa's previous pack Evergreen is in trouble and that it is about to be taken over. Personally, I could care less about the pack that was complicit in hurting my mate. But I can feel that she still has loyalty towards them, even though they hurt her. I can feel that she is conflicted. I will have to talk to Aleksa more about this, if she wishes to intervene somehow I will stand by her. I know she is worried about her friend Sam, and she has voiced wanting to contact him. But that is a whole other conversation for another time.

Although I sense that Jackson appears to be genuine, I am not willing to just take his word for it, so I suggest he gets settled and we continue this conversation at a later date. That will give me time to do a more thorough background check on him.

Aleska POV

It's still dark when I wake up, I look at the clock on the wall, and I see that it's 3.30 am. Although I feel wide awake, as though I am ready to start the day. I look over at Kingston, he appears to be fast asleep.

I guess it just feels strange not having Liam and Layla here. I feel empty. Usually, I would wake briefly at this time, make a trip to the bathroom and check on my pups. But they aren't here and I know there's no chance of me going back to sleep, so I decide it's coffee o'clock. I may as well pop downstairs and make myself a coffee, maybe I could do some baking. I used to bake all the time at Evergreen, but I haven't had a chance to here, there is always so much going on, plus Rose is always chasing me out of her kitchen.

I tiptoe down the staircase and make my way to the kitchen, it's empty so I'm in luck. I switch on the lights and make my way to the Nespresso machine. We have a large espresso machine, and there is the old-fashioned coffee brew in the pot, but I just love Nespresso. It only takes a minute and I'm in my happy place. I walk over to the window, it's quite light outside, the moon is in full force. I pull open the french doors and take a seat on the outdoor swing sofa on the patio. Luckily there is a small throw on the sofa, so I can get all snug and just stare into the night.

I start thinking about Xanthe and I wonder why we haven't heard from her. I start to wonder if maybe something has happened to her. She did mention that she was running from something in her past, I hope it hasn't caught up with her. I must discuss this further with Kingston today, there must be some way that we can get hold of her, at least to check that she is okay. I would never forgive myself if something happened to her while she was trying to find information for me. I hate putting people out. I have gone this long without knowing I can go a little longer.

And then my mind drifts to Jackson, I am still quite taken aback that he was willing to risk everything to free me. I suppose he wouldn't have done so if he didn't think I was possibly his mate. I hope he finds his mate, perhaps at the Summit, he might find someone.

It's the strangest feeling, but there is still something about him. It feels familiar or safe. I can't decide which one it is. I wonder if he could be connected to my past somehow? I know Kingston is still unconvinced about his intentions, and I love that he is so protective of me, but I really hope everything works out, and that we can all be friends.

Today is the first official day of the Annual Royal Alpha Summit. A lot of packs from around the country will be arriving over the next two days. It will be interesting to meet everyone. I hope we can make some new allies/friends along the way. I am nervous about meeting the Alpha King. I've never met royalty before. Kingston has a close relationship with Callum (the Alpha King) he says we will get along well. I hope he is right. I hope I don't do anything to offend, I am still learning about my heritage and werewolf culture. Kai has been teaching me about royal etiquette. I just hope I remember it all.

I feel so wired. My caffeine hit coupled with my anxiety has given me next-level energy. My mind is all over the place right now.

"Let's go for a run in the forest! We need to burn some of this energy off!" Amber suggests, she's feeling all pent up, it's been a while since I went for a run in wolf form.

"I guess as long as we don't go far we should be fine. As long as we are back before Kingston wakes." I say to Amber.

"I want full control!" Amber declares.

"Yeah ok, but behave!" I pleaded with her.

And with that, I run towards the end of the patio, and Amber jumps off it, shifting mid-air into our wolf form.

Amber (Aleksa's Wolf) POV

After running for a good while I find a nice spot to lay down and bask in the serenity of the forest. Aleksa doesn't let me out to prance and strut enough. Although I have to admit she has been a little better recently. I get that growing up thinking she was human and not being aware of her true identity has set us both back greatly. But now we are free from the constraints of Lachlan and Cyrus we will be free to connect more and explore. I thought I loved Cyrus but what we had wasn't love, and if I had the chance to see him again I would be sure to give him a piece of my mind and the back of my paw. Cryus was a good lay and initially, I fell for his charm and overconfidence, but eventually, I knew there was something sinister behind the facade of them both – Lachlan and Cyrus.

It's different with Sabre, he's honest and unfiltered. Not to mention he sure knows how to treat a she-wolf.

I gently growl thinking of our time together, my tail wagging and my tongue hanging out. Thinking of the risqué things that Sabre and I had done to each other. This makes me want to run back to our room and wake our mate up to play.

Kingston is a hundred times a better human than Lachlan ever was. He treats Aleksa like a Queen and so he should. Despite our stunted start, we are capable of great things. There is still so much for Aleksa to learn. I can't tell her some of these things as she needs to find out for herself. I am guided by the moon goddess herself and I know my place. I am here as her guide.

I'm enjoying having free range of the forest while the rest of the pack is still sleeping. That is until I realize we are not alone.

I don't even need to look behind me to know who is there. I can feel it in my soul. I know he is familiar. I know he is safe. I know this because he is one of us. He too is a Crescent Moon Wolf. He is unmated so there is no identifying mark. And this is not our first rodeo, as children of the Moon Goddess, we have lived many lives.

Legend tells of the Crescent Moon Wolf being passed down by shewolves, but the Legend was wrong. There are male Crescent Moon Wolves too, just most do not know of their existence. And because no one is looking for them, they tend to live longer lives in their human hosts than we she-wolves do. The biggest giveaway of the Crescent Moon wolf happens when they are marked by their true mate. It's our mark that gives us away.

Aleksa didn't have to worry about her mark with Lachlan, because he wasn't her true mate, he was a process that we had to go through in order to get to Kingston and this point in time. Or so the Goddess tells me.

I couldn't pick it while in our human form, and nor could Jackson. But in wolf form, we are connected. Not in a romantic way, although I know we were both initially confused. In a bonded together by the Moon Goddess kind of way. We are kin. And together we are a force to be reckoned with.

We can mind-link, not only in wolf form but in our human counterparts can also. They just don't know it yet.

“Gray,” I mind-link casually, as he continues to walk towards me.

“It’s been a while,” I add.

“Amber,” Gray says back to me, nodding his head towards me warmly.

“Looks like the Goddess has put us together again in this life,” I said to him via mind-link.

“It does. I wonder what the Goddess has planned for us this time.” He replies.

“I’m sure we will find out soon enough. How’s your human this time around?” I ask him.

“Jackson’s strong. Restless. And a little reckless. But we have that in common.” Gray chuckled.

“Aleksa is strong too. A little naive. But kind. Unfortunately, her first mate was a total fuckwad, but I like Kingston for her. Not to mention Sabre makes me all kinds of crazy.” I say, a growl slipping out.

I manage to contain myself and on a serious note, I question Gray.

“No mate yet?” I remark to Gray.

“In good time.” He remarks confidently and unbothered.

Gray turns around.

“We have company.”

Amber (Aleksa’s Wolf) POV

As I get up on all fours from my lay position, I can scent my mate, nothing calls to me more than his pine scent. I can feel the tension through our bond, and I walk to stand in front of Gray so that I can calm my mate before he gets the wrong idea and attacks Gray.

“It’s not what it looks like,” I say to Sabre. Thinking that finding Gray and me here in the middle of the forest, at 4.30 am looks highly suspicious.

“Explain. Now.” Sabre demands. Looking like it is taking everything to calm his jealousy and agitation right now.

“We couldn’t figure out what it was in our human forms, something was drawing us to one another, initially we thought it was an attraction, but it wasn’t like the mate bond it was different,” I say. As Sabre rips out a warning growl.

“We are kin!” I blurt out.

“What?” Sabre mind-links me, followed by a growl.

“Gray (Jackson) is also a Crescent Moon Wolf,” I say to Sabre, although he doesn’t seem convinced yet.

“Gray and I have met before, over many lifetimes, we are both children of the Goddess. We couldn’t detect it in human form, only in wolf form could we truly sense and recognise each other.” I say to Sabre, walking towards him so that he can take in my scent and trying to soothe his anger.

Gray is still holding his ground. He can’t communicate with Sabre, as Sabre isn’t a Crescent Moon wolf, and they are not from the same pack. But Gray patiently waits for me to explain this all to Sabre.

“Why the secrecy?” Sabre questions, eyes flickering from Gray to Myself.

“We (Aleksa and I) couldn’t sleep, she said I could go for a run, and we did, then Gray turned up, he couldn’t sleep either, that’s when we realized who each other was, then you arrived,” I said looking my mate in the eyes, with absolute honesty and adoration.

The tension lessens, and I can feel that Sabre believes me.

“Wait, you are both in wolf form. How are you both communicating? Sabre asks me.

“Oh, it’s a Crescent Moon Wolf thing, cool huh, we can mind-link each other. Even in human form.” I tell Sabre matter of factly.

He growled lightly.

“Tell him to shift. I want to speak with him.” Sabre demands. Nodding his head toward Gray.

“Gray, Sabre wants you to shift so he can speak with you if that’s ok,” I ask, rather than tell, as Gray is an Alpha wolf too, and he will not take kindly to being ordered around.

“Very well,” Gray replied, shifting right in front of us, as a display of dominance.

I avert my eyes momentarily, as although I am no prude, I do not wish to see Jackson naked.

Sabre shifts too, at first they were both standing there stark naked, but Sabre must have mind-linked Asher because he quickly arrived with some changes of clothes. He hands me a dress and I walked over to the nearest tree to get dressed.

Once I was dressed I walked back over to Kingston and Jackson who now both have shorts and t-shirts on. I take my place next to Kingston and kissed him on the cheek, rubbing my scent onto him to calm him down.

Kingston POV

I woke up from my sleep to pull Aleksa close to me. I couldn’t smell her peony and peach nectar, so I opened my eyes to find her side of the bed is empty. I walk into the bathroom to see it was also empty and saw that her clothes were in the laundry hamper. Perhaps she had gone downstairs to make coffee, that’s often what she did when she couldn’t sleep.

I made my way downstairs to find the kitchen empty although I could tell that she had been down here as her scent was all over the stool. I followed her scent outside onto the porch and saw that she was initially on the outdoor sofa swing, her coffee cup was empty and the throw rug was on the ground. I followed her scent to the end of the patio, where I saw her shredded clothes on the ground, so I know that she had shifted into her wolf, Amber.

I’m not impressed that she had shifted in the middle of the night to go for a run without any security, especially in the current situation, so I decided to follow her scent and check on her. I tried to mind-link her but there seems to be a block. This makes me nervous and agitated at the same time. I shifted into Sabre and we took off into the treeline to find our mate. I also mind-linked Asher to let him know that I couldn’t find his Luna.

Sabre (Kingston’s Wolf) POV (As Kingston has shifted)

It doesn't take long to find her, deep in the forest, in a small clearing. She is laying down on her side, it looks like she is in a mind-link with what I can see is Jackson's wolf. His eyes are also hazed over, he also appears to be in a mind-link. They are a few metres apart and appear to be comfortable in each other's presence, which agitates me.

I am furious, all sorts of thoughts are going through my head right now. I begin to stalk in a predatory fashion towards the wolf that is deep in the woods with my mate in the middle of the night, wanting to rip his throat out and ask questions later, but I hear Kingston in my head pleading with me to calm down and listen to what they have to say.

"It's not what it looks like," Amber tells me through mind-link.

"Explain. Now." I demand. It is taking every fibre of my being to contain my rage right now. I can't imagine why my mate is in the woods with another wolf right now. I can't think straight. I can hear Kingston fighting for control. Demanding I shift and listen to what our mate has to say.

"We couldn't figure out what it was in our human forms, something was drawing us to one another, initially we thought it was an attraction, but it wasn't like the mate bond, it was different," Amber tells me. A warning growl rips through me, I am barely holding myself back.

"We are kin," she blurts out.

"What?" I growl again. Not quite sure I've heard her right.

"Jackson (Gray) is a Crescent Moon Wolf." She tells me, although I'm still in a state of disbelief. I had thought that only she-wolves could be Crescent Moon Wolves. I'm gonna need a little more to go on than that.

"Gray and I have met before, over many lifetimes, we are both children of the Goddess. We couldn't detect it in our human form, only in wolf form could we truly sense and recognise each other." Amber tells me, walking towards me, I am hit with her sweet scent which has an immediate calming effect on me.

Gray's chest is puffed up and he looks like he is ready to defend himself and possibly Amber at any time. I should be offended but I am a little impressed that he would defend my mate. Although that isn't necessary as I love her with all my heart. And I am definitely not a threat to her.

“Why the secrecy?” I ask Amber specifically, looking at them both. Although I realize I can’t communicate with Gray, as we are not from the same pack, and are both still in wolf form.

“We (Aleksa and I) couldn’t sleep, she said we could go for a run, we needed to burn some energy, and we did, then Gray turned up, he couldn’t sleep either, that’s when we realized who each other was, and then you arrived, and here we are.” Amber declares looking at me with only love in her eyes, and I can tell she is being completely honest with me. I would be able to tell through our bond if she was lying.

“Wait, you are both in wolf form. How are you communicating?” I ask, suddenly confused.

“Oh, it’s a Crescent Moon Wolf thing. Cool huh! We can mind-link. Even in our human forms.” She tells me as if it’s no big deal.

I let out another growl, feeling maybe just a little jealous.

“Tell him to shift. I want to speak with him.” I instruct Amber. And with that, I mind-linked Asher to bring us two changes of clothes for Jackson and me, and one for Aleksa.

I see her eyes cloud over and I could see they were mind-linking. I stare at them both feeling quite impressed.

About thirty seconds later Gray shifts in front of me. Nudity is no big deal for us werewolves. But I know it still is an issue for Amber/Aleksa as she wasn’t brought up in a pack like we all were.

I looked at my mate who blushed nervously and looked away.

I shifted on the spot also and stand there in all my glory. Asher arrived in record time. Asher looked at us all with a puzzled expression on his face, handing me the bags of clothes he has brought with him.

(Kingston POV)

(As he has just shifted from his wolf form)

“I’ll explain later” I mind-link Asher.

“Ok, Boss,” Asher replied via mind-link.

I pulled a dress out of the bag and handed it to Amber. She walked over to a nearby tree to shift and change.

It's not unusual for us to have bags stashed throughout the woods, we have them as often wolves shift spontaneously and forget a change of clothes. Asher was able to grab a few random bags on his way here.

I mind-linked Asher, thanking him for bringing the change of clothes and telling him I will explain everything later, and dismissing him, telling him I'll see him in my office at 9 am.

When Aleksa had changed she walked up to me and kissed me on the cheek and stood next to me, facing Jackson.

"You will have to forgive me for my aggressive behaviour earlier but I woke in the middle of the night to find my mate wasn't next to me, nor was she in the packhouse, and then I found her in the middle of the woods with another wolf. And not just any wolf, one that seems to have some strange connection to her, I'm sure you can understand why I reacted the way I did." I said to Jackson.

"You're right Kingston, I understand completely. And if I were in your position I would have been just as agitated. Actually, I wouldn't have been able to hold back the way you did." Jackson replied.

"You should know that I have no untoward or malicious intentions with Aleska. We are kin. I couldn't spot it until we were in wolf form. But it all makes sense now." He declares to me.

"I assume Amber told you this is not our first rodeo? That we have been through many life cycles together. Obviously with different human hosts but with similar objectives." Jackson added further.

"What objectives exactly are you referring to?" I was beginning to wonder what exactly the Moon Goddesses' agenda might be.

"To ensure the next generation of Crescent Moon Wolves is protected from harm." Jackson declares.

"Oh my goodness!" Aleksa blurts out.

I looked at her worried, as I could feel her panic through our bond.

“Liam!” Aleksa yelled.

I looked at her with a perplexed expression on my face.

“We knew Layla was a Crescent Moon Wolf, but does this mean Liam is also? They are twins! I was so worried when I found out that Layla’s safety was at risk, and now I’m thinking Liam could be too!” Aleksa said speaking quickly and in a panic-stricken tone.

“Jackson?” I question him, moving my head to the side, glancing at him to see if he can answer Aleksa’s question.

“I would be surprised if he wasn’t,” Jackson said to us both. His forehead creased with concern.

“Is there any way to know right now, perhaps a marking, or something, anything that would identify him as a Crescent Moon Wolf?” I asked Jackson.

“Unlikely. The most obvious sign is the marking that appears when we find our true mates. That and any powers or special abilities we might have.” Jackson told us.

“Then we treat him as if he is. We treat both Liam and Layla the same. Protect them. Train them. Prepare them for their destiny.” I declared to Aleksa and Jackson.

“Ah, question, where exactly are your twins?” Jackson asked.

“They are somewhere safe. For now.” I told him. That’s all he needed to know for now. While I mostly believe what he is saying to be true, I still need to do some more background checks. That and we need to speak with Xanthe now more than ever.

“How about we go get some breakfast and talk about this while we eat?” I suggest to Jackson and Aleksa.

“I could eat,” Jackson says.

“Lead the way, my love,” Aleksa says, interlocking her hands with mine.

(Kingston POV)

The sun is up now, and we have a big day ahead of us. It's the first official day of the Annual Royal Alpha Summit. Alpha's from all over the country will be arriving, and we will need to be ready to greet them all and welcome them in as Alpha and Luna of Rocky Mountain Pack.

We still have an ongoing rogue situation to deal with, as well as finding out more about Aleska's grandfather's whereabouts. We are yet to get ahold of Xanthe, who hopefully will have some more information regarding Crescent Moon Wolves. Also, I wouldn't mind introducing her to Jackson, to get her opinion on everything.

Myself, Asher and some of our elite warriors are still preparing for Lachlan's arrival, and how we can minimise any drama or retaliation, especially while we are hosting the Summit.

This morning we will make a call to Mason, Quinn and my parents, to brief them on our new information. So they are aware of some of the dangers they are facing. Plus I think Aleksa might benefit from hearing from her pups, to see that they are safe and well.

I just hope we get everything in order before the Alpha King arrives later this week. He has entrusted the responsibility of hosting the Summit to me, and I don't want to let him down.

It's going to be a long week.

Aleksa POV

Breakfast was a little awkward. Kingston seems a little unsettled about the news of Jackson being a Crescent Moon Wolf. Jackson also seems a little guarded. I got the feeling he wasn't happy with his identity being shared. After breakfast, Jackson asked to speak privately with Kingston, so, naturally, I accompanied them. Jackson asked for Kingston's word that he wouldn't mention his wolf status to anyone. Kingston was a little offended and didn't take too kindly to being "told what to do" as he put it. I had to intervene, and eventually, we were able to come to a compromise. Jackson agreed that Kingston could tell Asher and Kai, but that he had to alpha command them to keep the secret, which was a reasonable request.

It's mid-morning now and there are several Alphas with their entourages making their way towards the pack-house. I hope these Alpha's and their entourage are as nice as the first few have been.

First up is Alpha Theo and his Luna Stella. They run a large midwestern pack, comprising several states. They have their Gamma Matt and his mate Mia with them, as well as four Elite Warriors. They seem nice, but not big on conversation. Which suits us as the next group is already pulling up. We have them staying in a larger cottage near the training grounds. We have some pack members ready to escort them to their cottage.

Next to arrive is the Alpha of what we refer to as the Floridian Pack. He is unmated, rumor has it that he rejected his fated mate, and he has a reputation for being a bit of a womanizer according to the notes that Quinn left me. He appears to be traveling lightly, with only two Elite Warriors with him. He seems a little gruff and is paying a little too much attention to my chest, his eyes roaming slowly up and down my body, which is making me feel uncomfortable. I could see that Kingston was getting agitated, so we quickly directed him to Kai, who would show him to the small cottage we had prepared for him. Before he walks off, he asks us to send an Omega to his quarters. I am a little shocked at his request, so I refer to Kingston, who is also looking unimpressed.

“We are not that sort of pack. If you are looking for the company of a female or a she-wolf, you might like to take a trip to the nearest human town.” Kingston politely redirects our guest. He has an astounded expression on his face but doesn’t push the issue. I assume that he doesn’t hear no that often.

Before we can even address one another, another two SUVs arrive next to us. I watch as the first person steps out of the car, and my heart jumps out of my chest.

“Caleb! Oh, my goddess! What? How? I’m soo happy to see you!” I said as I ran up to him and wrapped my arms around my previous Gamma, giving him the biggest hug of his life. I am so ecstatically happy right now. I moved my head back and took in his face. I am about to say something when I hear someone clear their throat. I know it’s Kingston. I could feel Sabre getting agitated, so I turned around.

“Kingston, meet Caleb! Caleb was my Gamma at Evergreen.” I said, and then I saw Kali getting out of the SUV with a big smile on her face.

“Oh my! Kali!” I yelled, as I again ran up to her like a child at Christmas. Kali moves to walk towards me and we pull into each other and hug, with tears sweeping down our faces. Kali is one of my best friends. I love her with all my heart and I am so unbelievably happy to see them both here right now.

“Kali, I take it?” Kingston says to Kali, smiling. And he moves toward Caleb to shake his hands, and then to Kali. Who I finally free from my grip.

“How are you here?” I asked, suddenly curious as to what I owe the honor of seeing my best friends here at Rocky Mountain.

“Wait. What’s this? Are you?” I said excitedly at the small bump that is protruding from Kali’s dress.

“Are you pregnant?” I asked her, already knowing the answer, but wanting to hear it from her first.

Caleb walks up to us both and places his arm around his mate lovingly, then places his hand on her belly. “We are!” He exclaims proudly.

“Oh my! I am so happy for you both. You are gonna make the best parents. Isn’t this just the best news, Kingston?” I asked my mate, in an effort to include him more in the conversation.

Kingston walks up to me, wraps his arm around my side, and says “That is great news, congratulations to you both!” He tells them, and he gives Caleb a man hug and pats him on the back, and then Kali a gentle hug, taking great care to avoid her bump.

Kali then pulls away from us all and starts to walk over to the first SUV.

“Allow me to introduce my cousin, Alpha Callum of Crimson Moon,” Kali says, opening the door of the first SUV. Out steps a very tall, very large, heavily tattooed man, with long curly untamed hair and a lot of facial hair. He has dark eyes and tanned skin. His presence is quite intimidating. I am adjusting my neck as far as I can as I look up to him to address him.

“Welcome to the Rocky Mountain Pack, and to the Summit Alpha Callum. I am Kingston, and this is my Luna Aleksa. We are glad you could join us.” Kingston says as he reaches out to shake Callum’s hand.

Callum then extended his hand out towards Kingston, shaking his hand. He then began to shake my hand also. I smiled and nodded at him.

“Thank you. Nice to meet you both. Aleksa, I have heard a lot about you.” He says with a deep husky voice.

I smiled shyly, "Thank you, Alpha Callum. It's nice to meet you," I said. "And thank you for all you have done for my friends Caleb and Kali. I am so glad they made it safely to Crimson Moon. I am in debt to you all. Without all of your help, I wouldn't be here right now." I said with gratitude to Callum, Caleb, Kali, and Kingston.

"I don't believe that is the case. You are strong. You would have figured it out. We are happy to have helped, however." Callum replied to me.

At that moment, another two SUVs drove up and we realized we needed to show our guests their accommodation. I can't go with my friends although I really want to. I have to continue my Luna duties by welcoming our guests. So I mind-link Asher and Kaia to see if they can escort our special guests.

I had no idea Caleb and Kali were coming. I am not sure if we have accommodation ready for them. I mind-linked Kingston and he assured me that Callum had RSVP with the correct number of guests, so their accommodation is ready now.

Asher and Kaia arrive at the packhouse entrance and Kaia looks surprised to see Caleb and Kali. She walks up to them as if they are old friends, and in a way they kind of are. They are also happy to see Kaia and after they all hug and get acquainted with Asher, he begins to show them the way to their accommodation.

The next two cars approach and I hear a commotion coming from the cars, a high-pitched female voice and a gravelly male voice, a door is thrust open and an angry-looking alpha in his mid-twenties, I would say, steps out, he takes in the surroundings, then starts walking towards us.

"Good morning, welcome to the Rocky Mountain Pack," I said to him. As I go to shake his hand, he completely dismisses me. Kingston c***s his head and growls. He is not impressed at the disrespect I am shown.

I decide to ignore it and as I am about to say something to break the tension, a shrieking woman exits the SUV, yelling at the Alpha in front of us "You could have waited!" She yelled.

She's hastily repositioning her bra, her lipstick is a little smudged and her hair is disheveled. I tried to mask the amused expression on my face with a smile. She appeared to be unimpressed that she was left in the car, and that her mate didn't wait for her. She walks up to Kingston, bats her eyelids and

introduces herself, getting very close and personal, merely inches from Kingston's face. He does not look happy as he steps back to get some space between himself and our guest.

"Luna Roxy, and you are?" She says while extending her hand for Kingston to kiss, I'm assuming. Her mate smacks her hand away from Kingston.

I release a growl at her actions. Amber doesn't appreciate her flirtatious nature and the gall of this she-wolf throwing herself at our mate.

"Oh hell no, she did not just do that!" Amber says angrily in my head.

"She needs to know her place!" Amber protests to me.

"Let it go, Amber, please, let's just get through today." I pleaded with my wolf. She's so fierce and protective and I love her, but she can be a bit aggressive at times.

"Roxy darling, don't embarrass yourself." Her mate says, shaking his head dismissively.

"I am Alpha Tyler. I run the largest pack in California. You are Kingston, I assume?" He says to Kingston.

"I am. Welcome, Alpha Tyler and Luna Roxy." Kingston says plainly.

"Please meet my Luna Aleksa." Kingston declares as he pulls me into his chest proudly.

Roxy looks me up and down and has a look on her face that I can't quite decipher.

"Pleasure," Tyler replies, nodding at me. I get the impression he doesn't like me much. Although I can't imagine why that might be, considering we met only just a few minutes ago. Roxy just flashes me an insincere smile. I get the feeling she likes to be the center of attention. Amber is fuming at her obvious disrespect, but it is only day one of a week-long summit, so I will keep her at bay for now.

"We hope you enjoy your stay with us. I will have someone escort you to your accommodation. Lunch will be in the pack-house dining room. If you need anything else in the meantime, please feel free to call reception, the numbers

are on the phone,” Kingston says abruptly. I can tell he wants to end this interaction as quickly as possible.

And with that, Kai arrives and takes over, freeing Kingston and me for a few moments before the next group arrives.

We watch as Tyler and Roxy make their way back to their vehicle, bickering at each other. Roxy turns her head back and gives Kingston a seductive wink.

Again, I let out a warning growl. Both Tyler and Roxy don't look back. I am starting to tire of Roxy's shameless attitude. Kingston mind-links me, telling me to let it go, it's not worth it, and hopefully, we won't have much to do with them throughout the summit. I somehow doubt we will be that lucky, but I will try to remain optimistic. I have bigger things to worry about than a flirtatious and attention-starved Luna.

It's late afternoon now and there are only a few remaining packs left to check-in, Evergreen being one of them. They may arrive this evening. They could also arrive early in the morning. As far as we know, Lachlan doesn't know that I am here, so I am not sure how this will go down. Kingston assures me that Asher, Kai, and our Elite Warriors are ready for every scenario, and Jackson has been briefed on the situation and he has pledged his support also.

I've been having those nightmares more and more frequently recently, and they all end the same way. I am adamant they are a premonition, a glimpse of things to come, and if that is the case, then we are in trouble.

Aleska POV

I had the worst sleep last night. Back-to-back nightmares. Except that this time, certain aspects of the nightmares had changed. For example, this time Eva and Sam were with Lachlan. Things seemed to be going on in the background of my nightmares, but I couldn't quite make them out. I woke up covered in sweat and my anxiety was at an all-time high. I tried to go back to sleep again to figure out what else was happening in my dream. I had maintained that these dreams seemed like premonitions, and they had changed, and that concerned me.

Eventually, I gave up and decided I would make a start to my day. It was then that I noticed that the other half of my bed was empty. Perhaps Kingston couldn't sleep either. I jumped into the shower and then quickly got dressed. I made my way downstairs, heading towards the kitchen.

I decided to make a nice hot coffee in the kitchen while Rose and some of our kitchen staff put the finishing touches on breakfast as our guests would be joining us this morning. I felt a little relieved as I recalled the video call we had last night after dinner with Liam and Layla. Our pups were beaming with energy, they were so excited about telling Kingston and me all about their adventures in Idaho.

Chase and Cordelia had met up with some close friends of theirs and they had brought their grand-pups along with them to play with Liam and Layla. It sounded like they were having the time of their lives. I realized that we had told Chase and Cordelia to keep them isolated in the cabin, but we trusted their judgment. Plus, we were confident in Mason and Quinn's ability to protect our pups had the occasion arose.

After speaking with Liam and Layla for a while, Cordelia and Chase came to tell them it was bedtime, so we were able to speak with Mason and Quinn for a bit. They reassured us that our pups were safe and that they hadn't encountered anything out of the ordinary and were covering their tracks whenever they needed to travel.

Mason went on to tell us how close Chase was to the former alpha of the local pack and how that alpha was indebted to Chase, so he had no concerns as of yet. Although he did maintain that he was keeping a close eye on things.

Chase was a great judge of character and was well respected by other alphas. I also knew that he loved Liam and Layla as if they were his own biological pups, so we knew our pups were in safe hands.

Kingston had to leave early as he had a phone call to his office that he had to attend to. He said it was urgent. I continued the call with Mason and Quinn.

Something seemed different about them. They seemed closer than usual and Quinn seemed to be having a glow about her. She was giggling a lot and they seemed even more affectionate than usual. They said there was something they wanted to tell us together, both Kingston and I.

Once they had reassured me it didn't concern Liam and Layla and that they were all safe, I agreed to end the call with them, as I wasn't sure when Kingston would return. We agreed to continue the call tomorrow morning before breakfast.

I was pulled from my thoughts of last night's call by a high-pitched shriek. Unfortunately, I could identify that voice anywhere – it was Luna Roxy. I left my coffee on the bench and walked hastily out of the kitchen to see what the problem was.

As I entered the hallway I could see Lily, one of our young omega pack members holding the side of her face which was reddened, trying to stifle her cry.

Luna Roxy was standing next to her yelling "Don't you dare make eye contact with me, Omega! Hear me?" She yelled, pointing her long curly witch-like nails at the young omega's face.

"Yes, Luna, I'm so sorry Luna," Lily said in a scared and shocked tone, facing the floor.

"What the hell is going on?" I angrily asked Roxy. Already knowing who the guilty party was. Lily was possibly the kindest person I had ever met. There was no way she instigated this incident.

"Your stupid omega here doesn't know her place. She had the nerve to look me in the eyes!" Roxy spat out.

"Did you hit her?" I questioned Roxy in a loud accusatory tone.

"I sure did. She's lucky I didn't do worse!" Roxy yelled back.

"You, ever, touch any of my pack members again, and I will hit you myself!" I declared to Roxy. Who looked at me offended.

"I take crimes against my pack members very seriously," I declared. Then I went on to add, "You need to apologize!"

"Nuh-uh, not happening," Roxy tells me with a defiant look on her face.

I am fuming with anger at the nerve of Roxy. Amber is growling too. She wants me to let her out.

At that very moment, Kingston walked into the hallway.

"What's going on?" Kingston asked, flabbergasted at the scene unfolding in front of him.

“She hit poor Lily in the face for looking at her!” I yelled, getting more worked up by the minute.

“Is this true, Luna Roxy?” Kingston asked in disbelief.

“Damn straight it is! b***h needs to know her place!” Roxy spat out venomously.

Kingston mind-linked me and told me we need to de-escalate this situation as we have bigger problems to deal with today. So I agreed to let her go with a warning.

“Luna Roxy,” I said in my calmest voice.

“We do things differently in our pack, everyone is treated the same regardless of their rank. I suggest that if you wish to stay for the duration of the summit you will need to abide by our rules. You are not to hit or abuse another of my pack members again, is that clear?” I told her with a hardened expression on my face.

Luna Roxy screws up her face and bits down hard on her lip. “Whatever,” She blurts out, and she begins to walk toward the dining room.

I looked at Kingston in disbelief. He could no doubt feel the frustration and anger emanating from me.

I then turned to poor Lily, who was still holding her reddened cheek.

“I’m so sorry Lily, come with me. I’ll get you an ice pack for your cheek, then you can take the rest of the day off,” I said to her as I led her into the kitchen.

Breakfast went better than I had expected after the Roxy fiasco. Naturally, she acted as if nothing had happened at breakfast. I wouldn’t want to tell anyone what happened if I were her either. She’s such a vile person to abuse someone so young and vulnerable as that.

Kingston worked hard to ensure that this Summit was a success, so we didn’t need any drama unfolding at breakfast. Thankfully, it all went smoothly. The packs were enjoying mingling with one another, some were a little standoffish,

but that is to be expected. There were plenty of compliments to the kitchen staff, the breakfast buffet was spectacular, and everyone ate plenty.

Today there are all sorts of activities planned for packs that have already arrived, as well as some basic orientation and check-ins. Tomorrow there would be a business conference where the alphas would be spending most of the day in meetings, where they would be networking. Also known as drinking copious amounts and comparing their packs and their acquisitions all day.

A Spa day had been organized for the Luna's and their female entourage, starting off with a brunch first, then on to massages, relaxing by the pool, and some cocktails in the afternoon.

The day was to finish with a large BBQ-style gathering under a large marquee near the training grounds. There was even a live band organized. Kingston tells me that this is usually quite a popular event where the entire pack and the visiting packs and their members get together to celebrate. Occasionally, wolves meet their mates at the gathering. I hoped this would be the case this time. I love watching people meet their other halves.

Kingston and I had stationed ourselves at the main entrance of the packhouse, there were only a handful of packs left to arrive now, and then the summit could really get underway, depending on what would happen when Lachlan arrived.

An SUV drove up and out there was a tall, athletic built man with sandy blonde hair. He walked to the opposite car door and opened it, out walked a stunning petite brunette with greenish-colored eyes. They walked towards us smiling. I can already feel good vibes radiating from them.

“Good Morning, I am Alpha Alaric and this is my beautiful Luna Abbey, we are from the Lunar Eclipse Pack,” he says proudly to both Kingston and myself.

“Good Morning Alaric and Abbey, I am Kingston and this is my Luna Aleksa, it's a pleasure to meet you both,” Kingston replied back to them.

“Wow, your pack lands are so breathtaking,” Abbey tells us.

“Thank you, we love it here. We hope you enjoy your time here at Rocky Mountain,” I said to Abbey.

As I went to shake Abbey's hand, I felt something strange, like a flashback of her and what looked like significant moments in her life. Like memories. I could feel that she was getting the same from me. I looked at her astounded. She just smiled at me, then let out a giggle, and then looked at Alaric knowingly.

Aleksa POV

"What was that?" I asked, with a shocked expression on my face. Kingston looks at me worriedly. He can sense something isn't right.

"It's ok. I felt it too," Abbey said, smiling at me.

I was confused. What was that? So many questions consumed me. I went to say something when Abbey cut me off.

"You have powers! You are special too! I'm a hybrid, in case you are wondering. I'm half-werewolf, half-witch!" Abbey told me excitedly. Although she wasn't moving her lips, was she mind-linking me?

"Wow, Aleksa! It appears you have the ability to mind-link anyone, you have allowed me to share your link, how cool is this!" Abbey replied.

She sure is bubbly. I wish I shared her enthusiasm, but I haven't decided whether this is a good thing or a bad thing just yet.

I looked at Alaric and Kingston, who were looking at us with confused expressions evident on their faces.

"Our mates look concerned. Maybe we should include them in this conversation?" Abbey suggested.

"There are others around, so perhaps you should tell Alaric and I'll tell Kingston via mind-link. We should talk a little later this afternoon. What do you say?"

"Deal!" Abbey quips.

And with that, I break our mind-link. Turning to Kingston, I linked him and told him what was going on. He was surprised as he hadn't met a hybrid before and agreed we all needed to sit down and talk later this afternoon.

The next SUV pulls up to the main entrance. Asher had arrived to escort Alaric and Abbey to their cabin. Kingston must have mind-linked him, I assume.

I hear Amber stir in my head. "Don't worry Aleksa, it's OK. She's friendly. She will be a great ally." Amber reassured me.

Before I could prod her further, she blocked me out, in true Amber fashion.

I shake my head, sometimes my wolf drives me crazy, always deciding what I can and can't know and making me wait so much. She can be so frustrating. But I have to trust her. She always has our best interests at heart.

As Asher escorts Alaric and Abbey off to their accommodation, Abbey turns and waves back at me with a great smile on her face. Amber's right, she seemed really nice.

Kingston and I walked to the next SUV to meet and greet our new arrivals. A young alpha walks out, he doesn't look like he's a day over eighteen, his driver opens the other car door, and out steps what I assume is his Luna.

They walked up to us and introduced themselves. They are from Wisconsin, they are hard to gauge in conversation, and are eager to get to their accommodation. Once their escort had arrived, we made our way to the kitchen to make a quick coffee.

While we drank our coffee, I told Kingston about my interaction with Abbey, as well as the visions I saw of her. Just quick glimpses of her at various stages of her life, good and bad memories by the looks of things. She has been through a lot in her life by the looks of things. He was a little uneasy about our interaction, probably more concerned than anything. I told him what Amber had said about Abbey and he felt a bit better about things after that.

Kingston then went on to have a discussion with Sabre. Kingston tells me that Sabre agrees with Amber.

I am making a note to follow Abbey up later today, although I have a feeling Abbey will seek me out before I get to her. I am not too worried though, all I get from her are positive vibes.

The next entourage had arrived, as Kingston and I made our way back outside. A large and intimidating-looking alpha with a dark aura walked out of

his SUV. His face was void of emotion, something about him gave me the creeps.

“Watch them, Aleksa. They are trouble. Our friend is in danger!” Amber tells me alarmingly.

As I was about to ask Amber what she meant by that, when another male got out of the second SUV. He was large and menacing. He had a huge jagged scar down the right side of his face. In fact, he had scars all over his neck and arms. I didn't want to offend him by staring, but I couldn't help but notice them.

He started sniffing the air around him and let out a huge growl.

“Where is she!” he yelled at us both. His head switched frantically from side to side. Kingston stood in front of me with his arms out in a defensive stance. I could feel the anger rolling off him.

I had a bad feeling about this. A feeling of dread was consuming me.

Kingston let out a warning growl at them both. In what seemed like only moments, several of our warriors descended upon the main entrance of the packhouse.

“Get your pack member under control, now!” Kingston demanded of the visiting alpha.

The alpha in front of us looked agitated that Kingston had yelled at him.

“Ezra, control yourself!” he growled.

Ezra! Oh, my goddess! It hits me like a ton of bricks. Kaia! I thought to myself.

I felt a tightening in my chest and it felt hard to breathe for a moment when I realized that this was Kaia's mate, the one she rejected, the one that tried to lock her up. I was instantly concerned for my friend.

I immediately mind-linked Kaia. “Wherever you are, stop right now! Ezra is here! At the packhouse!” I yelled at her through our mind-link. But I accidentally mind-linked the entire pack at the same time in my panic. I quickly block out all voices except Kaia, Asher, and Kingston's.

“What the f**k!” She replied to me. I can't respond as the alpha in front of me is looking at me angrily, as is Ezra.

“Alpha Finn of the Midnight Pack,” the alpha says, trying to deescalate things, reaching out to shake Kingston’s hand.

Kingston shook his hand firmly “Kingston, and this is my Luna Aleksa,” Kingston said to him.

“This is my Beta, Ezra,” Finn says to us both.

I try to mask my confusion. Kaia had told me that her mate had been an elite warrior. Kaia was the Beta female of the Midnight pack, and her brother was to take over the beta role. How could Ezra be the Beta? What does that mean for Kaia’s brother, I wondered.

“I can smell that my mate is here! Her scent is everywhere!” Ezra declared to us all.

We looked at him feigning confusion.

Kingston questioned him, “And who might your mate be?”.

“Kaia! My mate’s name is Kaia,” Ezra replied gruffly.

“Can’t say we know anyone by that name. We have had a lot of packs through her. Perhaps you have confused a scent?” I suggest to Ezra.

“Bullshit!” I saw you mind-link when you heard my name. Where is she?” He yelled, stalking aggressively towards me.

“Watch your f*****g tone with my mate! And take one step further and I will end you!” Kingston growled at Ezra.

The three of them stood aggressively staring each other down, the warriors were on edge, ready to pounce at any moment, for a few moments until Kingston spoke again.

“You are not getting off to a good start here gentleman, remember who’s pack it is that you are in!” he added further.

“Apologies Kingston, my Beta lost his mate some time ago, he’s a little on edge.” Alpha Finn says, trying to deescalate the situation.

Ezra is pulled aside by his Alpha.

“Excuse us for a minute, please,” he said to us, nodding respectfully, although it was lacking in sincerity. I got the feeling they were up to something.

They mind-linked each other for a minute, facing away from us.

I took this opportunity to mind-link Asher, including Kingston and Kaia also “You need to get Kaia out of here now, Ezra, her ex-mate is here! Take the back entrance. We will distract them for now,” I told him.

“Go, Asher. We will talk later.” Kingston added.

“Yes Luna, Alpha, we are leaving now.” Asher linked us back.

“Thank you!” Kaia says to Kingston and me. And we end our mind-link.

“Gentleman, why don’t we escort you to your accommodation?” I suggested to them. Kingston took my lead also.

“Let us get you settled and then we can talk about this further, in my office perhaps?” Kingston suggested to them.

Knowing that they can’t deny this offer, as to do so would be too obvious, they reluctantly oblige.

“Thank you Kingston and Aleksa, that sounds like a good idea,” Alpha Finn replied.

Ezra didn’t say anything, he just screwed up his face and looked away. Clearly, it was taking everything he had to remain calm.

Kingston has mind-linked Kai, to ask him to take over the meet and greets for now. We will need to buy some time to figure out what to do with Ezra and Finn, and how we can protect Kaia from him.

It looks like things just got a whole lot more complicated for us all. As if one psycho ex-mate wasn’t enough to deal with. Now there are two of them.

As we reached their allocated accommodation, we both received a mind-link from border patrol. They told us that Evergreen had arrived. I turned to Kingston, “He’s here!”

Aleksa POV

We left Finn and Ezra to get settled at the cottage. Hopefully, they will stay put for a while. Kingston had mind-linked me that he would organize someone to run interference with them for now.

We started making our way towards the packhouse. Kingston wanted me to go and stay with Caleb and Kali while he assessed the situation at the pack house to see who had arrived, and how many of them, and gauge how much of a problem we were gonna have.

A small part of me was happy with that idea. But the rest of me knew it was time to face my fears. So I declined Kingston's request. I knew that Kingston wanted to protect me, but there are some things we have to do for ourselves and I felt this was one of them.

I heard a branch snap in the bushes we were approaching. I wasn't worried when I saw the wolf moving quickly through the bush, as I could sense that it was Caleb. I looked at Kingston and shook my head. "Really?" I said to him, rolling my eyes.

"I need to know you are safe while we sort this out, and I know that Caleb would want to be here with you right now. So I may have mind-linked Kai to ask Caleb to join us, this involves him too," Kingston tells me.

"But, Kali, he needs to protect her!" I told Kingston, feeling worried about my pregnant friend. She too would be on Lachlan's hit list.

"Kali is fine, there will be two of our elite warriors with her at all times," Kingston tells me.

"Luna," Caleb said, walking out from the tree he had shifted behind. He had a pair of shorts on, but no top.

"Apologies, this is all I could grab at such short notice," Caleb says to us both.

"Caleb, it's Aleksa, for the millionth time," I told him with an unimpressed look on my face. He knows I hate being called by my title.

"Guys, we don't have time for pleasantries. We need to keep going." Kingston pulls us back on task.

“I will shift and go on ahead. You two pick up your pace and meet us there, approach slowly. I will mind-link you once I’ve assessed the situation.” Kingston says, looking gravely at Caleb.

“I will guard her with my life, Kingston, you have my word,” Caleb said solemnly.

“I know, thank you, Caleb,” Kingston nodded to Caleb and then he shifted and ripped towards the treeline.

“Ahem.” I loudly cleared my throat.

“I’m not the same girl that couldn’t defend herself, a lot has changed since Evergreen. I can do this! I won’t let him intimidate me. I feel stronger!” I told my ex-gamma, with absolute certainty in my voice.

Caleb looked into my eyes, “I understand all that, Aleksa, but we don’t know what he is capable of, and I’m not taking any chances. I took an oath to protect you,” he reminds me.

We don’t have time for this right now, so I let it go. For now. And with that, we continued on our way to the packhouse.

Amber stirred. “It’s OK. I can’t sense Cyrus. I don’t think he is here, Aleksa. But someone is.” She tells me.

I mind-link Kingston and Caleb with what Amber tells me about not sensing Lachlan’s wolf Cryus. But they both still seem to be on edge.

As we approached the packhouse, I could see two SUVs upfront. Amber confirms that she cannot sense Lachlan’s presence.

I see the car door open and out steps Sam. He looked worn out, pale, almost like life had been sucked out of him. My heart felt like it was breaking at the sight of him. I was hit with a wave of guilt. Although I was also excited about seeing my friend.

He turned around, as everyone was watching us approach the front entrance. He looked at me with a shocked expression on his face. “Aleksa?” he called out.

“Sam!” I called back excitedly, pushing past Kingston and Caleb.

He walked toward me with a confused look on his face.

I pulled him towards me and wrapped my arms around him in a warm embrace. I could hear Sabre growl, so I mind-linked him.

“Settle Sabre, Sam’s my friend!”

I pulled back and looked at Sam with a big smile on my face, trying to hide my shock at his appearance.

“Are you OK, what’s going on? How are you here?” He says, looking around at everyone quizzically.

“Caleb?” He asks, furrowing his brow towards Caleb.

“You’ve been marked? Can someone tell me what’s going on?” Sam asked, looking at the large purple mark on my neck, looking back and forth from Kingston to Caleb.

Kingston walks up behind me and pulls me into him. I smile and we interlock hands, to show Sam that we are together.

“Sam, it’s OK, I’m safe here. This is Kingston, he’s my second chance mate!” I told him reassuringly.

“I’ve heard a lot about you, Sam,” Kingston said, extending his hand out to shake his hand.

Sam just stares at Kingston in disbelief. He reluctantly shakes his hand. He still appears as if he is very confused and unsure of exactly what is unfolding here.

Caleb also walks toward his old friend.

“You are a traitor! I trusted you! You helped the Rogues! You kidnapped our Luna,” Sam yelled, pointing his finger towards Caleb in a fury.

Caleb looked at Sam, a little hurt.

“Sam, my friend, all is not as you think. Lachlan is not who you think he is. We are all friends, Aleksa is safe, there is nothing sinister happening here, we are all friends,” He tries to reassure Sam.

“It’s true Sam, Caleb and Kali protected me, as did Mason and Kaia, they protected me from Lachlan!” I told him, with a sad yet adamant look on my face.

“There’s so much you don’t know, so much I have wanted to tell you, we were planning to...” I began, as we were brought to the attention of the SUV door slam.

“Well, isn’t this interesting?” Eva says with an amused look on her face, strutting towards us, wearing the skimpiest and shortest red dress I have ever seen, leaving nothing to the imagination.

“Don’t believe anything they say, they are traitors. Why are you even here, Aleksa?” She asks, looking me up and down and rolling her eyes, until she locks her eyes with Kingston and changes her demeanor, batting her eyelids and pouting.

“How dare you speak to my Luna like that, apologize now, or leave my packlands,” Kingston declared to Eva.

Eva seemed shocked with her mouth wide open and her jaw almost dropping to the ground. I wonder if she has ever been spoken to like this before.

So priceless, I thought to myself.

“Luna? Aleksa, how is this true? You are our Luna?” Sam asked me.

“Pfft. Is this some sick joke? Luna again?” Eva questioned us, screwing her face up.

“Don’t make me tell you again, “ Kingston said in a deadly serious tone to Eva.

Realizing that she couldn’t flirt her way out of this, Eva reluctantly apologizes.

“Sorry Aleksa,” She says begrudgingly to me. Completely lacking in sincerity.

“Wait, where is Lachlan?” I asked Sam, my curiosity and dread getting the better of me.

“He’s in Iowa, he got a lead, so he stayed back, he’s looking for you. He should be here tonight though,” he tells me.

“I think we need to talk – all of us,” Kingston interjects.

“I think that’s a good idea, I would love to know what on earth is going on here,” Sam says, watching Kingston and I lean into each other lovingly.

“Sam, there are some things I really need to talk to you about,” I said to him, furrowing my brow, then looking towards Eva with contempt. Just looking at her makes me mad. The nerve she had just stood there as if nothing had happened. She is about to come undone and although it will break my heart to tell Sam this, I also have a feeling this could be incredibly healing for him.

“Aleksa, I really think you and I should have a chat first, don’t you think? I think there was a misunderstanding back at Evergreen, and I’d like to clear it up,” Eva says, not looking so confident and sure of herself right now.

I looked at her and bluntly said, “No, I don’t think there were any misunderstandings at all. I got the message loud and clear, but come along Eva, I’m sure Sam will have some questions for you,” I said, with an amused look on my face. There was no way she was getting out of this. It was time for her to confess, and hopefully, now Sam could find some peace. It was very clear the toll of her infidelity had taken on his physical and mental health, I would assume.

“We can continue this conversation in my office. Caleb, perhaps you could bring Kali along if she feels up to it?”

“Kai, I will need you to stay here and greet any incoming packs,” Kingston says to his Gamma.

“Yes, of course, Alpha, I’ve got it under control,” Kai replies to Kingston.

“Sam, will your men be OK out here for now?” Kingston asked.

“Yes, I’ll link them to stay here until we return,” Sam replied to Kingston.

“Please follow me, right this way,” Kingston says, leading the way to his office. I looked back at Eva, who shot me an evil glare. I just looked away. She doesn’t intimidate me. I can’t believe I thought she was once my friend. She will never be anyone’s friend, she’s too much of a narcissist.

Kingston walks towards his chair and looks at me, then pulls a chair aside for me. Directly opposite us sits Eva and Sam on one side and then two empty seats for Caleb and Kali, if she decides to come along.

The tension is thick, you could cut it with a knife. Sam looked utterly confused and had his guard up a little, but I caught him looking from Kingston to myself from time to time, so hopefully, he can see we are happy and in love, and that Kingston is no threat.

Eva appeared agitated, I could feel her contempt towards me, I could feel that she was holding herself back right now. Part of me hopes she does lose control. I wouldn't mind putting her in her place. Amber is begging for a moment or two alone with her.

Kingston looked relaxed, he wasn't threatened in the least, but I could feel his empathy for Sam.

There was a knock at the door, and I could sense Caleb and Kali's presence. "Come in," I called out to them warmly.

"Sam!" Kali calls out, making a beeline for him.

Sam looked happy to see his friend. He gets up out of his seat and she walks up to him and gives him a hug, as any old friend would do.

Eva growled at Kali. Which I find interesting. She has a problem with Sam hugging a friend, but she can do goddess knows what with Lachlan and that's acceptable. Unbelievable!

Caleb lets out a growl too. And stood close to both Kali and Sam. Although they were all close friends, Kali is pregnant now, and it has been some time since we last saw Sam, we don't know what lies Lachlan has fed him. It is only natural for Caleb to be in protective mode.

"It's so good to see you, Sam!" Kali announces, her smile dropping and turning to one of disgust when she sees her former friend Eva.

Sam doesn't miss this interaction, and questions us all, "What is going on, why is there so much contempt for my mate?" Sam says in an agitated, almost defensive tone.

“That is why we are all here, Sam. It’s time you knew the truth. The real reason we had to leave Evergreen,” I told Sam with a serious and determined look on my face.

Aleksa POV

“I’m gonna tell you something and I need you to hear me out. First I want to say I love you. We have always been close friends, and I would never lie to you. The things I am about to tell you, I have wanted to do for so long but wasn’t in the position to. I will answer all your questions but I just want you to know everything I am about to tell you is the whole truth,” I told my dear friend, hoping that he would still be my friend after I told him all that I had to say.

Sam looked at me with his creased forehead, waiting for me to explain further.

“Remember back at Evergreen, how I would suffer from pain, and I would see the pack doctor, who would always give me some explanation or another for my pain, but over time I was made to feel that it was all in my head?” Sam looked at me, waiting for me to continue.

“Turns out it wasn’t all in my head, my mate was cheating on me, Lachlan was bedding over she-wolves. I know your first thought will be to defend Lachlan, you are his loyal Beta, but you need to listen to all I have to say before you make up your mind,” I pleaded with my old friend.

“When I came to Evergreen I was still new to the supernatural world. As you will remember, I didn’t learn all the specifics of mates and so on. I was raised by humans with no knowledge of this world. I didn’t know that if your goddess’ given mate was unfaithful that it would manifest in the form of pain, and I might never have known, had I not seen it with my own eyes.” I told him. I took a quick pause, to let that digest with Sam, then I continued with my story.

“Do you remember that day you helped me organize that surprise romantic evening for Lachlan?” I asked Sam. I heard Kingston growl. And I placed my hand on his to calm his wolf.

“I do,” Sam replied. Listening carefully to what I had to say.

“On my way home from dropping Liam and Layla off at daycare that day, the pain hit me again. This time I made my way home, and as I headed to my bedroom I saw it. I saw Lachlan with...” I was cut off mid-sentence when Eva stood up and started protesting.

“This is ridiculous, completely fictional! Can’t you see what she’s trying to do? She’s trying to turn you against us! Eva shrieked.

Sam looked at Eva questionably.

“Us?” Sam asked Eva.

“Uh, I meant, Evergreen, she’s a traitor that’s trying to turn you against your pack, they all are!” Eva yells accusatorily.

“Silence! I command you to be silent and wait to be spoken to,” Kingston roared at Eva. Who shuddered and trembled in fear at Kingston’s alpha command.

“Was that necessary?” Sam asked Kingston.

“I understand she is your mate, Sam, and you don’t know what is going on here, but please trust me on this, you need to hear what Aleksa has to say,” Kingston tells Sam.

Sam didn’t look happy but remained in his seat and directed his attention back to me.

“I’m so sorry Sam. I hate to be the one to tell you this, but I saw Lachlan in bed with Eva.” I said slowly, waiting for the words to sink in for Sam.

“Lachlan and Eva?” Sam says to me, very much in denial, looking confused as to why his best friend and mate could do such a thing. He looks around the room, first at Kingston, who looks at him with a pitiful look on his face, then to Caleb and Kali, who have soft and somber looks on their faces.

Sam then looks at Eva, who is shaking in her seat, looking like she is fighting with all her might to protest against what has been said.

“It’s true, Sam. I witnessed it on many occasions myself. As I said to Aleksa, I was under an alpha command, I couldn’t speak a word of it.” Caleb says in agreement to Sam.

“I’m so sorry man,” Caleb added.

Sam looked back at Eva, observing her carefully. He didn’t say a word. He just took a moment. Then look back at me.

“When I caught them in the act, I quietly backtracked and ran into the forest. I cried my eyes out. It felt like my world was crashing down before me. I wanted to confront them but I was scared. So I decided that I would take the twins and leave Evergreen. I knew I had to be careful as I was realizing I didn’t know the man I had my babies with and was sharing my bed with.” I told Sam.

“A few days later, I was at work, the pain had hit me again, and this time it was unbearable. I walked to my bedroom to find them at it again, and this time I was so mad with fury I couldn’t hold myself back. I confronted them both.” I took a breath and took a moment to center myself.

“When I confronted them, Lachlan was nonchalant about it all, he rambled on about it being his right as alpha to take what and who he wanted. When I confronted Eva she couldn’t have looked more proud of herself. I’ll never forget the sight of her standing there in front of me naked, smirking the way she did, I never knew another woman could be so vile.” I said, talking about her, but making a point not to acknowledge her.

Sam looked like he was trying to hold his emotions back. He was no longer fighting my words. He looked like he was resigning himself to my truth.

“I’m sorry Sam, I was planning to tell you once everything had settled down, I promise. I just needed to make sure Liam and Layla were safe first,” I told Sam, worried that he wouldn’t forgive me for not telling him.

“If I may, I know this is a lot to take in Sam. You need to know what really happened. We are not the traitors that Lachlan led you to believe we were.” Caleb interjected.

“We, Kali and I, helped Aleksa and the twins escape, that is correct, and we did so with the help of two other wolves. Mason and Kaia, who were rogues at the time for legitimate reasons, and were in the dungeons at the same time as Aleksa,” Caleb continued.

“The dungeons? What was Aleksa doing in the dungeons?” Sam asked with a stunned look on his face.

“When Lachlan confronted Aleksa, the day she walked in on them, I was sent to take her back to the pack house, she had run off and I found her at the hidden lake at the far end of Evergreen territory,” Caleb said.

“I left her with Lachlan, not realizing his intentions until it was too late. When Aleksa told him she was leaving him, he locked her in the dungeons. That’s why we decided to help her escape. He had lost it.” Caleb declared.

“I had no knowledge of any of this. Is this true, Aleksa?” Sam asked, clearly outraged that all this had occurred and he was oblivious to it all.

“I swear it is all true. Lachlan was planning to lock me up and keep me against my will, he wanted me as his Luna, and for me to accept that he would have as many mistresses as he wished.” I told Sam, with absolute truth on my face. Kingston let out a loud growl. I knew this was not easy for him to hear, he was very protective of me, which I loved.

Sam leaned his hand on his forehead, his wrinkled expression, full of concern, shaking his head, “Aleksa, Luna, I am so sorry you went through this, I’m sorry I couldn’t protect you,” Sam declared.

“I don’t think you were at Evergreen when this all transpired. If I remember correctly, you took some of the elites to do some training at a neighboring pack and you wouldn’t have returned until after we had already left,” Caleb added.

“That sounds vaguely familiar,” Sam replied.

“It’s fine Sam, you didn’t know, these things happen, it all worked out in the end,” I told him, smiling lovingly at Kingston.

“Is it I who am sorry that I didn’t tell you straight away when I found out about Lachlan and Eva. I could have spared you so much pain and agony,” I told Sam sadly.

“It’s ok Aleksa. This isn’t on you.” Sam replied.

“I’ve known something was going on for some time. I had faith in the moon goddess and I had hoped that things would work out. I have always believed that it is unnatural to go against the mate bond.” Sam says glumly, shaking his head disappointedly while maintaining eye contact with Eva.

“So I knew I had to try my hardest to make things work. I knew that Eva was being unfaithful. I could feel it. I didn’t know who it was with though.” said Sam, looking at his mate, now with a look of disgust on his face. I could tell he was going through the motions. I knew these feelings all too well.

"I'm going to k**l that bastard," Sam says angrily, slamming his fist down on the desk. No one says anything, we just let Sam get it all out.

"Wait, you knew?" I asked Sam, shocked at that revelation. Why would he subject himself to such pain?

"I did. But I didn't question the Moon Goddess's judgment. I figured she put us together for a reason. I didn't realize that my best friend was the wolf she was cheating with. I'm sorry Aleksa, I failed you. I had no idea." Sam said to me, looking at me ashamedly.

"Goddess no Sam, never say that, you are innocent in this. It's them who should be sorry, not us!" I said, feeling gutted that my friend is taking this on as his own failure when that couldn't be further from the truth.

"Kingston, can you take the alpha command off? I want to hear what Eva has to say?" Sam asked Kingston.

"Eva, you are no longer under my alpha command, you are free to speak", Kingston declared to her.

"Finally! You can't seriously believe this crap, Sammie?" Eva asked Sam, feigning disbelief and horror that he would entertain such a notion.

"Cut the crap, Eva. I've known for a while now. I just never knew who it was with. I had planned to reject you back at Evergreen, but then Aleksa disappeared and all my energy went towards trying to find her and holding down the pack while Lachlan ran it into the ground," Sam said in a raised voice.

Eva looked astonished. She also appeared to be speechless.

"She's lying! She's always been jealous of me!" Eva yelled, pointing her finger towards me, and trying to fake cry.

"Aleksa is one of the kindest people I've ever met. Don't bother with the theatrics. I really can't be bothered keeping this pretense up." Sam said to his mate, looking like he was beginning to tire of the conversation.

"Aleksa, thank you for your honesty, I do have some more questions for you if you don't mind, but first there's something I need to do," Sam says, turning his body facing towards his mate.

“I, Sam Nicholson, Beta of the Evergreen Pack, hereby reject you, Eva Lockwood, as my mate!” Sam declared.

And with that Eva dropped her head forwards and shrieked in agony. Sam held his chest, and grimaced slightly, but didn't seem to be in a lot of pain. When I think back to when I was in this position, the bond between Lachlan and I had weakened so much that when I finally rejected him, it didn't hurt as much as I thought it would.

“You have to accept it, Eva, for both of our sakes,” Sam managed to get the words out.

“I accept! I accept!” Eva screamed, looking eager for the pain to stop.

I'm not surprised that Eva gave in so easily. She was never one for pain. I was grateful that she wasn't fighting the rejection, for Sam's sake. It meant he would be able to get on with his life again, once he recovered from the loss of the mate bond.

“You need to formally accept it, name, rank, pack,” I told Eva, to save Sam having to expend more energy talking.

“I, Eva Lockwood, Beta female, of the Evergreen Pack, accept your rejection!” Eva blurted out, heaving in between words. And with one loud gasp, it was done.

They both looked to be in a world of pain.

We all sat there in shock at what we had just witnessed. We were all glad that Sam had broken his bond with Eva, because she never deserved him in the first place, but at the same time very worried about what this would mean for Sam in his current state of health.

“Sam, are you OK?” I asked, feeling very concerned for my friend.

“I'll be ok. I think I just need a few moments.” He said, clearly trying to protect his dignity and keep a brave face.

“If it's OK with you Sam, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you, Eva, that you are no longer welcome as a guest in our pack, due to your crimes against the mate bond, and your blatant disregard and disrespect for our

Luna. You have twenty minutes to leave pack territory as of now!” Kingston declared.

Eva looked at us all in shock, but it appeared she was in too much pain to speak, although none of us felt sorry for her, she had brought this all on herself.

“You better get moving Eva, time is ticking,” Kali said with a smirk on her face. Although we all hung out together back at Evergreen, Kali had never really liked Eva, she always felt she was conceited and insincere. It turned out she was right.

Eva looked at Caleb. He had no emotion on his face. He just looked away from her, as if she didn’t even exist.

“I have called for one of our pack doctors to come and attend to you, Sam. They will be here any minute. There is not a lot we can do for you right now, but we will send for a Healer to attend to you as soon as possible,” Kingston tells Sam empathetically.

“Thank you, all of you,” Sam says, still remaining strong. However, I could feel that he was breaking inside.

“You should go, now,” Sam said, turning to Eva, void of emotion on his face.

Eva picked herself up, and as she walked out the door she managed to cry out, “You’ll regret this!”

Aleksa POV

It’s been a few hours since Eva left our pack lands. Sam is at the pack hospital, currently hooked up to two intravenous bags. One is for fluid replacement, and the other is essentially a vitamin replacement infusion. The Doctor tells us that he is not in a good way after suffering the ill effects of the mate bond betrayal for so long, but that he will be back to normal in no time.

We were about to leave the hospital, as we were aware that Lachlan would probably be here anytime now, and then there would be more drama to deal with. As we were about to leave the reception area, Lily walked past. Lily often volunteered at the pack hospital. She was training to be a nurse, so she appreciated the experience. Some packs didn’t let omegas train to be nurses.

In fact, some packs didn't let omegas train – period, but this wasn't that type of pack, thankfully.

I asked Lily if she could take a jug of fresh water to Sam so that if he woke up soon he would have something cool to drink. Lily obliged. She was such a kind and caring person, and we would be lucky to have her as a Nurse in our pack.

We had a quick word with Sam's doctor, asking him to contact us immediately if there were any concerns, and also when Sam woke up. As we were about to walk out, we heard a commotion.

Kingston and I hastily made our way to Sam's room. We stopped at the sight before us. Lily appeared to have dropped the glass jug that she had in her hands, she stood there shocked, with her hands clasped over her mouth. "Mate!" She whispered.

Our eyes flickered from Lily to Sam in disbelief. Oh, my goddess! That was amazing. Truly a gift from the goddess. Sam had been blessed with a second chance mate.

Poor Lily. She didn't appear to know quite what to do with herself.

"It's ok. Walk up to him. Touch him. Be with him. He's your mate." I gently encouraged Lily.

"I've never seen him before," Lily said.

"Luna, who is he? Why is he in the hospital?" Lily asked with concern evident on her face.

"He's our guest. He has been unwell, but that is for him to tell you, it's not my place. Lily, Sam is the Beta at Evergreen Pack Lily," I told her.

"Sam?" Lily says in a loving tone, a small smile coming across her face as she says his name.

"A Beta? There must be some mistake, I'm only an omega," Lily tells me, shaking her head, and looking down at the floor.

"There's nothing wrong with being an Omega! Lily, I have a good feeling about you. You are destined for great things! Never sell yourself short Lily! Hold your

head up high. And go be with your mate!" I told her with an encouraging smile on my face.

Lily stepped towards Sam, looking him up and down with delicate eyes. She moves close to him and touches his hand. She pulls back quickly. I know this all too well, she's experiencing that tingling sensation for the first time.

Lily takes his whole hand and looks at him lovingly.

"Alpha, Luna, I am on volunteer duty, I have to go," Lily said, looking conflicted.

"We will sort that out, Lily, you focus on your mate," Kingston said kindly.

"Don't worry about it, I will tell the Coordinator you have met your mate and will be spending the rest of the day with him. You just spend some time with Sam, having you close will help Sam," I said to Lily.

I looked at Kingston, who had a grin on his face. I could see that he was happy for Sam also.

"Lily, if you need anything or want to talk, just mind-link one of us, and keep us up to date with Sam's progress. We will check on him as soon as we can." I told Lily, and we made our way out of the packed hospital.

I have the sudden urge to tell Kali about this new development, but I have to rein myself in, as this is not my happy news to tell people. I would leave that to Sam and Lily when they were ready.

After this rather eventful day, I just wanted to curl up in bed with my love. Alas, this was not to be the case. As we were making our way back to the packhouse, we bumped into Alastair and Abbey.

"Hello again!" Abbey squealed with excitement.

"Hello Abbey, Hello Alistair, How are you settling in?" I asked, trying to rustle up what little energy I had left.

"Hello again Luna Aleksa. We have settled in just fine. Thank you! We thought we would take a walk around the pack grounds before dinner." Alastair tells me.

“That sounds like a great idea. I hate to be rude, but we’ve had something come up, and as it turns out, we won’t have time for that chat today. I am really sorry, could we try tomorrow morning perhaps?” I asked Abbey.

“Oh, it’s fine Aleksa. It’s not urgent. Just let me know when you are ready. Can we help in any way? I hope it’s nothing serious?” Abbey asked.

“Everything is fine, it’s just a small issue, nothing to worry about,” I told Abbey and Alastair. Alastair seemed unphased but Abbey was giving me a contemplative look.

“Well, if you say so. Will we see you at dinner?” Abbey asked.

“Yes, of course,” I replied. Wishing that we could skip dinner altogether, but knowing full well that would not be possible as we were hosting packs from all over the country, so we had host responsibilities.

“ OK, well, see ya then!” Abbey said excitedly with a huge toothy smile and she pulled Alastair away with her waving from behind.

Kingston and I continue walking up the packhouse stairs.

“Care for a rest upstairs before dinner?” He asked me.

“You read my mind! What a day. And to think it’s not over yet!” I said, shaking my head.

We head towards our suite and I fall onto our bed, Kingston stalks towards me with that look in his eyes. Like a predator stalking its prey. As tired as I feel, I’m sure I can muster up a little energy...

A bit of quality time with my love was just what I needed. With so much going on, we had been lacking a bit in the intimacy department. We didn’t have long but we sure made the most of the time we did have, then we had a nice long shower. I felt much better, but I was still tired. I think we both were.

Dinner had gone well. It was nice to mingle with the other packs. Everyone seemed to be in a jovial mood. The alphas are looking forward to their conference tomorrow, and the Luna’s and their entourages are looking forward to their spa pamper day.

I am trying to keep a positive front, although I have a feeling that tomorrow will not go as we have planned. Thankfully, we have a backup plan so that if everything goes pear-shaped, then at least, hopefully, the activities can still continue without our presence.

We have just had a quick video call with Asher and Kaia. They are staying in one of the human towns nearby. Kaia wants to come back and face Ezra. We are just asking her to wait a day or so while we sort the Lachlan situation out, so far she seems to agree with that. Although we could really do with Asher's presence here right now, Kaia's safety is more important to Kingston and me. We can go another day without him, I'm sure.

We didn't get a chance to speak with Ezra, much to his dismay. It didn't go unmissed how he was watching me all through the dinner service. I made an effort to keep myself busy in conversation with others. However, I am sure I will run into Ezra again soon enough. I have been told that he has been asking a lot of questions, so I am under no illusion that he doesn't know Kaia has been here.

However, for now, we will just have to keep eluding him. We have bigger problems to worry about with Lachlan arriving.

What a day! I thought to myself. I've never been so welcoming of sleep before. Kingston fell asleep a few hours ago. I've been awake with my thoughts. But I'm ready to get some sleep now. We don't know what tomorrow will bring, but my intuition is telling me it won't be good.

I am woken from my sleep by an alarming mind-link from the border patrol. "Breach at the pack borders, a large tawny brown alpha wolf, has just ripped past us at speed. Heading towards the pack house, we're following closely, but he is faster than us," they declare.

I feel goosebumps and shivers all over my body. I am immediately on edge. "Cyrus!" Amber tells me.

"It's them this time, Aleksa! I can feel their presence!" Amber adds.

"Kingston?" I ask, but he's already shifted and out the door.

I got up, I was wearing checkered PJ pants and a singlet, but I ran out the bedroom door because I didn't have time to get dressed.

I ran down the packhouse stairs as fast as my legs could carry me. I pushed the front door open and ran into a wall, there was a warrior standing in my path, and he was not budging.

"Ugh!" I yelled as my body slammed into him.

"Move, now!" I yelled. Frustrated that they are not moving from my path.

"Alpha's orders, Luna, Sorry!" He says, looking highly uncomfortable.

I felt enraged that I was being locked in my own packhouse, and even more enraged that I was being treated like some damsel in distress. I thought I had made my feelings clear already. Kingston and I will be having words about this, later.

"I am your Luna, and I command you to MOVE ASIDE NOW!" I demanded. I could feel my eyes glowing. I could see the surprised look on the warrior's face.

He moved aside, looking shocked, trying to comprehend what he had just experienced.

Neat trick. I thought to myself. And I continued towards the field in front of the pack house. I saw Sabre and Cyrus fighting on the field in front of the packhouse. The metallic smell of blood was already invading my senses.

"It's OK Aleksa, it's not Sabre's blood!" Amber told me.

As I approached them both, they both shot their faces towards me momentarily, Cyrus growled, "MINE!" followed by Sabre, "MINE!"

Then they continued tussling back and forth. Unsure of what to do and panicked that my mate might get injured defending me, I did the only thing I could think of right now.

"SHIFT! Both of you NOW!" I screamed at them, once again feeling my eyes glow brightly. I was completely astounded when they both stopped what they were doing and shifted back to human form.

They both looked at me puzzled. I'm sure they are wondering how I managed to command them both, and I am wondering the same thing. How did I just command two alpha wolves? I need to ask Xanthe about this. However, for now, I needed to focus on dealing with Lachlan.

I mind-linked one of the warriors to get them both a pair of shorts as they are both standing here naked.

"Aleksa!" Lachlan yelled, standing in front of me naked. Once upon a time, this would have made me weak at the knees, but the sight of him naked now repulsed me.

"You're coming with me!" Lachlan said angrily, stalking toward me.

Kingston let out a long loud growl. And ran towards Lachlan, tackling him to the ground. They started punching one another and I could see they were both starting to shift again, claws were coming out, and fur was sprouting on their legs and arms.

"STOP! THAT'S ENOUGH! GET UP! STOP SHIFTING. BOTH OF YOU! NOW!" I commanded. Forcing them to halt their shift.

"I am home! In my pack! With my mate, Kingston!" I declared, walking towards Kingston, interlocking my hands with his to show a united front.

"You are mine!" Lachlan yelled, followed by a loud growl.

Matched again with Kingston's warning growl. They started inching closer toward each other.

"No, you were my mate until you betrayed our bond. I loved you and you ripped my heart out. I rejected you Lachlan! And the moon goddess blessed me with a second chance mate! My true mate!" I declared proudly.

Lachlan growled again.

"YOU BELONG TO ME!" He shouted fiercely.

"I'll give you one last chance to leave my pack lands, or you won't be leaving at all!" Kingston hollered.

“This is what you left me for?!” Lachlan said, followed by a sinister laugh. Grimacing in pain as he laughed and held the deep laceration that was hemorrhaging out of his chest.

Kingston got in a defensive stance, ready to fight again, and growled fiercely at Lachlan.

“I can smell you all over her! Not to worry. I’ll soon fix that!” Lachlan retorted wildly.

“You will never touch me again!” I told him firmly, with a look of disgust on my face.

“I’m gonna enjoy every moment of this,” Lachlan declared to Kingston.

Kingston snickered. “You are a fool, you had the most perfect mate, and you threw it all away!”

Lachlan growled and started to circle Kingston, but Kingston didn’t seem bothered. He looked smug instead.

“I should thank you really, if you hadn’t stuffed up so epically, I wouldn’t have met my mate and Luna!” Kingston said mockingly.

Lachlan looked enraged. He then looked to his left side, and then to his right side, and noticed that the pack warriors had surrounded him, and were slowly advancing. He was grossly outnumbered.

“THIS ISN’T OVER!” He screamed at Kingston. He quickly shifted, then he glanced at me and growled. He then turned and forced his way through the warriors that had formed a wall behind him, taking them out, and galloped frantically towards the treeline.

Aleska POV

Kingston chased Lachlan beyond the pack border, but he had just disappeared. Our best trackers were out there looking for his scent but had so far come up empty-handed. We had decided that we needed to tell the Alpha and their entourage as well as our own pack what was happening so that everyone was aware of the threat that we all faced. Lachlan would be back and, knowing what he is capable of, he wouldn’t return alone.

Most of the attending packs were shocked to hear what had occurred at Evergreen and pledged their support to us, although there were a few packs that were sceptical and said very little. If I'm totally honest, I'm not surprised, as even though we had all just met, the few that said nothing gave me the impression that our way of life and values did not align.

We had collectively agreed to continue with the summit. Everyone looked forward to this annual meeting, so we would proceed cautiously. We had quadrupled our border patrol courtesy of our visiting Alpha's, and we had spoken without neighbouring packs to ensure we had their support if things got out of hand.

Both Kingston and I were rattled by the early morning attack. I left Kingston to continue his meetings with Kai, Caleb, and Jackson. The Alpha's conference will be starting a little later this morning due to earlier events.

I wanted to go check on Sam before Luna's brunch started. I also wanted to check on Lily and see how she was processing everything. She will become a Beta Female when she and Sam accept each other, and while I know she will have some initial anxiety, I have a feeling she is going to be just fine.

As I walked out of the packhouse I bumped into Roxy. "Watch it b***h! Oh, it's you! I hear you had a little trouble this morning," Roxy smirks at me, waiting for my response. I can see that she wants to provoke me, but I won't give her the pleasure. I have too much to do today already. I don't have the time for this.

"Nothing I can't handle Roxy, see you at the spa," I said to her, smiling sweetly. Roxy screws up her face and snickers at me.

I walked off towards the pack hospital. I am hoping my dear friend might finally be awake. I really hope he and Lily accept each other.

I walked into Sam's room to find him and Lily in an embrace. Sam is sitting up in his hospital bed and Lily is straddling him. I can't hide my broad smile. I didn't want to interrupt them, so I turned to walk back out of the room when I smacked into a wall. Except it was not a wall, it was Caleb's chest.

This is enough to get Sam and Lily's attention. Lily jumps up off Sam and has a bright red blush on her face. Sam looked very happy, and even Sam was grinning like a Cheshire cat.

"Sorry Luna," Caleb teased.

"Seriously Caleb," I said, looking at him with an unimpressed expression on my face.

"Just kidding, Aleksa," Caleb says, trying to suppress his laugh.

"Aleksa!" Sam called out to me.

"Hi Sam, I am so glad you are awake. How do you feel?" I blurt out quickly.

"Honestly, I've never felt better," Sam tells me, his eyes moving in Lily's direction. Lily had a shy smile on her face.

"I'm so glad you are OK Sam. I see you have met Lily." I said to Sam.

"Yes, I have met my second chance mate, but I feel she is more my true mate. I've never felt this feeling before," Sam tells me.

"I know exactly how you feel, Sam, it is the same with me and Kingston. I am so happy for you both," I told him happily.

Caleb placed two coffees down on top of the bedside drawer next to Sam and Lily.

"Well, I hate to be rude guys, but I've got a meeting that I am about to be late for. I'll see you all later," Caleb tells us, with that he bows his head towards me, and I just shake my head at him, trying to hide my amusement. He loves teasing me.

"See ya, Caleb, thanks for stopping by," Sam called out.

"Thank you, Caleb," Lily called out politely.

"I won't stay long, I know what it's like when you first meet your mate or true mate in this case," I told them both.

"Sam, I don't want to worry you, but, Lachlan turned up a few hours ago," I told him calmly.

“What, are you OK, did he?” Sam started before I cut him off.

“Kingston and Lachlan fought, and then they stopped, and then the warriors circled him, but he ran off into the woods. We have the trackers out there, but he seems to have vanished,” I told him feeling confused, trying to explain it all, and leaving out the part where I have the power to command alphas. I will tell Sam but now is not the time.

“Sam, he will be back. Kingston is meeting with Caleb, Kai (his Gamma) and Jackson. I am not sure if you know Alpha Jackson, he’s,” I started. Before I was cut off by Sam.

“Yes, I have met Alpha Jackson on a few occasions, he’s a good guy,” Sam replied.

“Anyway, they are meeting to discuss what we will do about Lachlan,” I told Sam, unsure about where he stands on this matter.

“Aleksa, I have no loyalty towards the bastard. I would gladly end him.” Sam tells me as if he could read my mind. He looks mad at the mention of his name and I don’t blame him.

“I am, however, loyal to Evergreen. Our pack has suffered for too long under his control, he needs to go.” Sam tells me.

“What are you saying, Sam?” I asked, suddenly feeling nervous as to where this was going.

“I am going to challenge him, for the pack,” Sam continued.

“But Sam, with all due respect, you are still recovering,” I told him, feeling concerned that my friend might get hurt.

Lily walks over to Sam and cuddles up beside him, as a show of loyalty and support.

“Aleksa, I have never felt better. After feeling weak and empty for the past few years, I feel as though I have just woken up from a bad dream. I feel energised and reborn. I can’t explain this feeling,” Sam tells me.

“Maybe it’s the will of the Moon Goddess? Oh, maybe it’s finding Lily? Sam, I am so glad you have found happiness, and I am so sorry about ...”

“It’s OK, Aleksa, you were a victim too, but we need to put that all behind us now, like you said the Moon Goddess has blessed us, although we do have to sort Lachlan out. He will keep coming for you and the twins, he won’t let you go without a fight,” Sam declared.

“Evergreen deserves better than what they have been getting, we need to rebuild, the pack is in financial ruin and Lachlan has destroyed our alliance, we need to try to get back in the good graces of our allies, and we can’t do that with Lachlan as Alpha,” Sam tells me with an air of confidence I haven’t seen from him before.

“I agree with you completely, Sam, and I think you would make a great Alpha. You have my full support,” I told him proudly.

Although we hadn’t talked much before I left Evergreen, I had always respected Sam and had always considered him a close friend. I had no doubt he could bring Evergreen back up to the standard it once held.

The pack doctor walked in at that moment with Sam’s discharge papers, Sam disconnected himself from the monitor and I took that as my cue to leave.

“I’ll see you a little later today, Sam. Lily will take good care of you. Lily, please link me if you need anything,” Lily nodded.

“Thank you, Luna,” Lily said happily.

“Please Lily, just call me Aleksa,” I told her.

“Sorry Luna, I mean Aleksa,” Lily replied.

“Thanks, Aleksa, I’ll see you at the packhouse most likely. Kingston has asked me to report there once I am discharged,” Sam said.

“Great, see you then,” I called out to them, with a small wave.

And I started to make my way back to the pack house to freshen up for our spa date with the rest of the Lunas and their entourage.

What a day it has been. The Luna brunch and spa went well. Most of the Lunas seemed unaware of what had happened earlier today, or they just didn’t deem it of importance. The chat was relatively superficial, they spoke of

their favourite places to holiday, about how well their pups were doing and how happy they all were with their respective mates.

Roxy was her usual snide self, dropping little remarks and insults here and there. In all honesty, I wasn't in the mood to fight her right now. My mind was elsewhere. Surprisingly, Abbey wasn't present today. I did wonder where she was. Maybe a spa wasn't her idea of fun, although I would have thought that one might attend out of respect.

Thankfully, my dearest friend Kali was there. If anyone needed pampering, it was her. She must be knackered. I remembered how it was to be pregnant, it could be very fatiguing. We briefly spoke of what happened this morning with Lachlan turning up. Kali reassured me the guys would sort Lachlan out. I wanted Kali to be safe. I didn't want her to put her pup at risk, so I made her promise to stay at the packhouse for extra protection. I will ask Kai to help me move her and Caleb's belongings into the packhouse today. It was clear Lachlan had lost his mind completely, and I would not put my friend and her unborn pup at risk.

Thinking of pups, I missed Liam and Layla desperately. I missed talking with my pups, but we had decided it was best if we didn't communicate while Lachlan was nearby. We couldn't risk him finding out their location. I knew they were safe though. In the short time I had known Mason, I knew I could trust him with my life.

I hadn't spoken much to Kingston since this morning's events. I realised he had been busy organising extra warriors, extra patrols, solidifying our allies and so on, not to mention the alpha conference, but I had the feeling he was avoiding me. It didn't take much to send out a quick mind-link even just to say hello. Something wasn't right.

I walked towards his office. I could hear muffled voices. Then, the office door opened before me. Kai had opened it. He stood there with a big goofy smile on his face, dimples and all.

"Good Afternoon Luna," Kai greeted me, knowingly, almost as if he had known it was my intention to stand by the door and listen a little longer.

"It's Aleksa, Kai, please only use my title in official settings, we are friends," I told him, for what seemed like the millionth time.

"Sorry Luna," he said with a cheesy grin on his face.

“Aleksa, is it important? We are kind of in the middle of something,” Kingston tells me gruffly.

I haven’t heard him speak to me like this before. He must be stressed, I thought to myself.

“I wanted to have a word with you in private, if I may, and no, it cannot wait,” I told him abruptly before he could answer.

“Very well,” he sighed in defeat.

And with that, Jackson, Caleb and Kai all exited the office quickly.

“So, what’s going on? I feel like there is something you aren’t telling me.” I stated firmly, watching his face closely.

“Aleksa, everything’s fine, I’m just a little under the pump,” Kingston declared.

“I am your mate, I can feel that something is wrong, and it’s more than what happened this morning,” I tell Kingston, letting him know I won’t leave until I get my answer.

“Do you remember the other day, when I had to take an urgent phone call?” Kingston started reluctantly.

“Yeah,” I replied.

“It was Xanthe. She had run into a little trouble along the way. She hadn’t managed to contact one of her Elders, but she had discovered something that she said could change everything. She said it was too important to mention it over the phone and that she needed to tell us in person. Xanthe felt that she was being followed, so she was going to try to shake whoever was following her. I made her promise to call me the next morning to let me know that she was safe but she never checked in.” Kingston said with a grave expression on his face.

Aleska POV

After Kingston had dropped that bombshell on me, I was feeling a little on edge. I felt overcome with guilt. If it wasn’t for me, Xanthe wouldn’t have even left on the mission. I shouldn’t have pushed her for more information.

“Xanthe will be ok. She wants to help us.” Amber said in my head.

“You don’t know that. What if something happens to her!” I replied to Amber.

“Aleksa, I know Xanthe will be fine, trust me, it’s all part of a greater plan,” Amber declares.

“Amber, I’m not in the mood for your cryptic messages. Could you just this one time, elaborate a bit for me.” I pleaded with my wolf.

“Xanthe’s story isn’t over. Trust the Goddess’s plans.” Amber says, and then she retreats and puts a block up on me.

“Grrr. That wolf!” I said out loud in frustration.

Kingston just looked at me quizzically.

“Amber?” Kingston asks.

“Amber’s gone. She blocked me!” I told Kingston angrily.

“What did she say? Sabre can’t reach her either,” Kingston replied.

“She said Xanthe would be alright, said to trust the goddess’s plan and that her story isn’t over yet,” I told Kingston a matter of factly.

“Well, that’s good then. Why are you so stressed?” Kingston asks me.

“Do you have any idea of how frustrating it is when your wolf is privy to all this information that concerns you and the ones you love the most, and yet she picks and chooses what she thinks I have a right to know!” I blurt out.

Then I look at the expression on Kingston’s face and realize something.

“I’m being a brat aren’t I?” I said, laughing at myself.

“You are just stressed, and rightly so, a lot has happened recently, Aleksa, my love, you are doing great!” Kingston tells me as he sniffs my neck where he marked me.

He starts to lick my mark and it sends shivers of excitement and arousal all over me. Kingston is sitting in his oversized executive chair, so I climb onto his legs and started to straddle him. I could feel my arousal seeping through my panties, I know it must be overwhelming his senses right now.

I can feel his c**k harden in his pants, straining tightly against the fabric of his pants. His c**k is throbbing against my panties.

“I want you in me now!” I demand, looking into Kingston’s eyes with the utmost determination and desire.

Kingston unzips his pants and his large hardened c**k springs to attention, he then rips off my sheer wet panties, and I lower myself onto his c**k riding him as if my life depends on it. He pushes me further down onto his c**k. Using his arms to push me up and down into him, harder and faster, I’m grinding into him, until I’m riding him to a gallop. I can feel his c**k twitch and pulsate inside me. We both reach our highs in no time. I feel Kingston find his release emptying into me. My walls are still throbbing post c****x as his c*m drips down my inner thighs.

I looked into Kingston’s eyes with a smirk on my face. I don’t know what just came over me. I’ve never been so spontaneous like that before. I looked at Kingston’s face and he looked a lot more relaxed than he did when I first entered the room. I knew that I was definitely feeling more relaxed.

Then it hit me like a ton of bricks. Oh, my goddess. The others were just outside the room! I was beyond mortified.

Kingston looked at me as if he could read my mind, he reassured me, “They left before we got physical. I told them to take a quick break and report back in thirty minutes,” he chuckled.

I didn’t find it as funny as Kingston. I felt my heart rate starting to normalize. I picked myself back up and discarded my ripped panties in the bin. Kingston walked into the ensuite in his office and washed himself off. I walked in and cleaned myself up also. Although, I would need to go straight to my room and shower properly. I can’t walk around smelling like s*x, not in a pack of werewolves with a heightened sense of smell.

Kingston then came over to me and pulled me in for a loving embrace. We kissed, and then I told him my plans with Caleb and Kali. Kingston agreed with me that they should move to the packhouse. He said that he would ask Kai to help me organize it all. Kingston received a mind-link. Sam is here to speak with him. So I took this as my cue to leave. I was shower-bound. Then, I wanted to go and find Abbey, check that she is OK, and have that chat with her that we had spoken of when she had first arrived.

I started to make my way into my room. I grabbed a fresh new outfit out of the walk-in wardrobe and grabbed my cosmetic bag with all my hygiene needs in it, and as I made my way to the bathroom, I saw a note and a long-stemmed red rose on my bed.

My heart immediately swelled, and I wonder how Kingston organized this so quickly. I took a sniff of the rose, as I held it I felt a thorn pierce my finger. Ouch. I thought to myself, as I watched a few drops of blood fall on my bed linen.

The rose smelled sweet and spicy at the same time. Then I dropped it as quickly as I picked it up. It smelt familiar, but not in a good way. It smelt like Lachlan.

I picked up the letter and began to read it, "YOU BELONG TO ME!" "Lachlan."

I screwed the note up and chucked it hard against the wall. I then mind-linked Kingston and told him I needed him urgently.

In a matter of moments, my door was kicked open and came off its hinges, flying against the wall. In stormed Kingston, Sam, Caleb, and Jackson. I stood there shocked. That was quick. Not quite what I had expected.

"Aleska, I could feel your fear and panic through our bond. What happened?" Kingston yelled. The others were all looking around the wall with fierce facial expressions. I almost felt the urge to laugh. But I didn't. This was not a laughing matter.

"Lachlan happened," I said sternly.

The men started walking around my room inspecting it for signs of intruders. They didn't appear to be picking up any scents.

Jackson picked up the crumpled note and opened it. He looked enraged.

"Kingston, I think you should read this," he told Kingston, passing the note to him. The others watched Kingston and waited for his response.

Kingston's growl ripped through the room, everyone except Jackson and myself was affected by his alpha aura.

"What is it, Kingston?" Sam asked.

Kingston passed the note to Sam. He and Caleb read it.

“It came with the rose. The rose has Lachlan’s scent on it, but nothing else seemed to.” I spoke of my own observations.

“How the hell did he get past our border patrols and security measures!” Kingston demanded. He looked like he wanted to break something.

“He’s masking his scent, Alpha,” Caleb declared.

“I agree,” I said in support of Caleb’s observation.

“He must have a witch working with him,” Jackson added.

“We need Xanthe!” I said to the group.

Jackson appeared to stiffen at the mention of her name.

“Who is Xanthe?” Jackson asked with furrowed brows.

“Xanthe is a Healer. She knew my parents, and she has been really supportive of – everything, she would know what to do right now,” I said to Jackson and the others.

Jackson seemed to be deep in thought right now, he was rubbing the side of his neck with a very serious expression on his face. I was about to ask him if everything was alright when I got a mind-link.

“There’s been a breach on the eastern perimeter, I’ve got to go, Sam/ Caleb - could you keep an eye on Aleska for now please?” Kingston called out.

“I don’t need minders, Kingston! We have discussed this already. I can take care of myself,” I protested.

“Look, can you just work with me, Sabre is losing his mind right now, he doesn’t want to leave you, but I need to attend to this breach,” Kingston tried to reason with me.

“Yeah, OK, go, I’ll play along just this once,” I told Kingston.

“Permission to tag along, Kingston,” Jackson asked.

“Gray could do with a run,” Jackson added.

“Yeah, thanks man, I’d appreciate that,” Kingston replied, and with that, they both shift into their wolf forms and they bolt through the packhouse.

I looked at Sam and Caleb. “Alright guys – Sam, I’m sure you would rather be with Lily right now, and Caleb – I’m sure you would much rather be with your pregnant mate, so how about we all go our separate ways?” I said slyly.

“No can do Aleska, you heard Kingston,” Sam replied to me.

“Looks like you’re stuck with us,” Caleb added.

I sighed. “OK, well, I’m gonna take a shower so I’m sure you don’t wanna hang out here, come back in ten minutes. OK?” I said to them.

“We will wait outside in the hallway, Aleksa, please don’t make this hard for us,” Caleb pleaded.

“I’ll behave. After that, I need to see my friend Abbey though,” I told them.

“No problem, we shall escort you there,” Caleb replied.

“Alright, see you soon,” I said to them both, and with that, I headed into the shower.

As we made our way to Abbey and Alaric’s cottage, I realized it was starting to get late. The sun looks like it’s getting ready to set, and it’s a beautiful sight. I made my way up the cobblestone pathway to the front door of the cottage. I am still taken aback by how cute these cottages are, littered with wildflowers, and fragrant undertones of jasmine, stock, and gardenia.

As I go to knock on the door, it opens before me.

“Come in Aleksa, I’ve been expecting you,” Abbey said with a welcoming smile on her face, as she stood in the doorway.

Aleksa POV

“Abbey, Hi, you were expecting me?” I questioned her, raising a brow.

“Yeah, I had a feeling you would be popping by today, come in, we have much to discuss,” Abbey says, as she gestures with her hands inviting me into her cottage.

I walked in and took a look around. In very little time Abbey has made this cottage seem warm and cosy. I see that she has herbs hanging upside down in the kitchen and a large mortar and pestle sitting on the kitchen bench.

“Alaric isn’t here, he’s meeting with another Alpha, trying to arrange an alliance between our packs,” Abbey tells me.

“Your cute friends can wait outside though if you don’t mind, I am happy to chat with you, there are some things I’d like to keep private if you know what I mean,” Abbey says winking at me.

She sure is quirky and upbeat I think to myself, Amber and I both like this girl.

“You heard her guys, take a break, I’ll be fine,” I tell them enthusiastically. They both look reluctant to leave me at the door. But we make it easier for them by slamming the door shut.

“So let’s just get right into it, shall we? You are a crescent moon wolf are you not?” Abbey blurted out.

I stood there with my poker face intact, trying to mask my surprise, feigning confusion.

“It’s ok Aleksa, your secret is safe with me, I haven’t even told Alaric,” Abbey insisted.

“What’s a crescent Moon wolf Abbey?” I ask her, trying to keep up my pretense.

“Aww, come on Aleksa, for starters I can see your mark, it’s unlike normal markings, not to mention there is literally a crescent moon, with two wolves, and a crown on it! It’s ok, you can trust me!” Abbey protested.

“What do you know of crescent moon wolves?” I asked Abbey. I was curious, as even Xanthe seemed to know very little about them.

“Please take a seat Aleksa, and I will tell you all you need to know.” Abbey began.

"I was born into a lineage of witches that serve the Royal Werewolf Kingdom, my family for generations has worked for the royal family, also known as the Volkov Family, we worked alongside other supernaturals, to help maintain order and balance," Abbey told me.

"A long time ago, when my parents were just pups, there was an attack on the Volkov Kingdom, it was orchestrated by a greedy, power-mad Elder hellbent on taking the throne for himself. He enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch." Abbey paused momentarily, giving me a chance to take it all in.

"The King and Queen were distraught, they fought with all their might to protect their pups, the Queen even died protecting her daughter, however, fortunately, their son Callum survived."

"As you will know, Callum is our current Alpha King," Abbey clarified.

"The battle was short-lived, as reinforcements arrived fairly quickly to defend the kingdom, so the rogues had to abandon their mission, but not before they grabbed some of the royal pups," Abbey continued.

"The elderly, vulnerable, and pups were hidden in the safe house which was under the main pack house. All but two, the Alpha kings sisters' pups, twins, a boy, and a girl. Unfortunately, they didn't make it to the safe house in time."

"The pups were said to have been taken by one of the Elders. No one had seen it coming." Abbey shook her head as she retold the story.

"The Elder in question was eventually hunted down, but by that stage, the pups were no longer in his possession."

"After weeks of torturing, and in his final days, it is said that the Elder in question, had placed the two pups into two different packs, a great distance apart, and despite many attempts, the Elder would not give up the locations," Abbey continued.

"Eventually, the Elder was found dead in his cell, a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane sticking out of his chest, no one knew who had ended him, although it was assumed he was silenced," Abbey declared.

"The pups were crescent moon wolves, they were destined for great things, they were to help protect the future alpha king and his offspring, said to be sent from the moon goddess herself," Abbey proclaimed.

"I know it's a lot to take in, I should mention that the pups' names were Viktor, and Kristina," Abbey continued.

"Kristina! That was my mother's name!" I said, realizing where this story is going now.

"Aleksa, I would hazard a guess to say that your mother was one of the kidnapped crescent moon wolves of the Volkov Kingdom," Abbey continued.

"I, don't know what to say, I don't really know anything about my biological mother. I was adopted and raised by humans," I told Abbey feeling shocked at these revelations.

"Aleska, I am certain that you are of royal blood. I could sense it from the moment I met you. I feel drawn to you. I feel the need to protect you," Abbey told me with a proud expression on her face.

I was speechless. I just stared at her wide-mouthed. Could this really be true I ask myself?

"I can't be! I'm not a royal! I'm just plain old me." I said out loud, in complete denial mode. Then I remembered that wasn't exactly true. I had powers. That was definitely not normal.

"I told you we were special Aleksa, we are of royal blood!" Amber says in my head, she's feeling rather smug thinking that she is royalty.

"Wait! You said there were two pups?" I questioned Abbey, as the realization dawned on me.

"Yes, they were siblings, twins actually," Abbey added.

"Interesting," I replied.

"What is it Aleska?" Abbey asked with a curious look on her face.

"Uh, probably nothing. Abbey, would you mind if we continue this conversation a little later? I just remembered something that I have to do. But I will be back as soon as possible. Is that okay?" I asked her.

"Yes, of course, I'll just be here, pottering around. I have a feeling you will be back very soon," Abbey told me sweetly, not questioning my sudden exit.

As I went to open the door it opened in front of me.

“After you, your royal highness,” Caleb said with a cheeky grin on his face, bowing with one hand in front and one towards his back. Sam looked astounded. I guess he will still be taking in everything that he had overheard while eavesdropping.

“What part of the private conversation did you not understand?” Abbey called out crossly, with her hands on her hips, and a very displeased expression on her face, shaking her head towards Caleb and Sam.

“Uh, werewolf hearing!” Caleb declared. Putting his hands up in the air as if to surrender.

“Caleb, Sam, you have to promise to not breathe a word of this to anyone! PROMISE me!” I commanded them both.

“Yes, Luna,” they both say in sync, trying to fight the command, but failing miserably.

With that, I waved goodbye to Abbey, and we make our way to the pack house.

I needed to speak with Jackson. I wonder if he is back from his run to the border. I need to speak with him. I want to ask him what his father's name is. I know I could just mind-link him but I feel this is something we need to discuss in person.

“Jackson, are you back from your run yet?” I asked him impatiently.

“Hey Aleksa, I am as a matter of fact, what's up?” Jackson replied with his husky voice.

“Uh, I need to speak with you, as soon as possible, are you free?” I asked him.

“Yeah, Aleksa, I'm right behind you,” Jackson said. I turned around and sure enough, he was walking towards me in his basketball shorts and nothing else.

“Oh, Jackson! I think you need a shower!” I tell him, giggling. He is completely soaked in sweat.

“I'll be back in fifteen, meet you at the training grounds?” Jackson replied.

“Ok, see you then,” I told him.

Then I walked off to the kitchen to make a quick coffee while I try to absorb all the new information I had just learned.

As I leaned over the breakfast bar, sipping on my coffee, I pondered my thoughts. What were the chances that Jackson and I ended up meeting one another? We are both crescent moon wolves, I already know that we are kin, but I thought it was because we were children of the Moon Goddess. What if we are both royal wolves, chosen to defend the kingdom?

Then I feel panic-stricken, what if it's true, and I'm expected to leave Rocky Mountain? This is my home! Now and forever. I could never leave. Would I be expected to? Calm down Aleksa, I thought to myself.

However, I would like to know more about where I came from. My whole life I have been curious about my heritage, although my adopted parents were the best I could hope for, I would love to know if I have more family out there somewhere.

I know I should speak with Kingston about this development as he is my mate, and this involves him too. But I need to make sure this is all true first and find out if Jackson is also part of this.

I head over to the training grounds and wait for Jackson to arrive. I wonder what he will make of all of this.

“Hey Jackson,” I decided that I'm just gonna get straight to the point, “What is your father's name?” I asked him. He looked at me puzzled.

“Why do you want to know my father's name?” Jackson asked me.

“Please, just humor me, I need to know,” I pleaded with him.

Jackson looked at me with a suspicious look on his face. He took a moment to consider things and then said “I will tell you my father's name on one condition, you must tell me why you want to know this information,” he added.

“Ok, deal, I will tell you everything I know,” I told him, solemnly, nodding my head towards him.

“Vicktor, his name is Vicktor,” Jackson replied.

I gasped loudly. Placing my hands over my mouth. I realized I must look like a deer caught in headlights right now.

Jackson stepped toward me and placed his hand on my shoulder.

“Aleksa, what is it?” Jackson demanded.

“I think your father is my uncle! I think he and my mother were twins,” I told him with a shocked expression on my face.

Jackson paused again, looking at me, realizing this was not a joke and I was being serious.

“My father was an only child, that’s impossible,” Jackson said in denial.

“Jackson, I met a witch, and she told me this story.” I began, only to be cut off mid-sentence.

“A witch! Aleksa, you need to be careful who you speak to. Who is this witch?” Jackson demanded.

“Abbey, she’s a nice witch. I trust her! Well, she’s actually a Hybrid. Why don’t you come with me and you can meet her for yourself.” I proposed.

“A Hybrid!” Jackson yelled.

“I will come with you. But, I am not buying any of this Aleksa, and neither should you,” Jackson declared.

With that, I took his hand and lead him towards Abbey’s cottage.

Abbey again opened the cottage door before I could even knock once.

“How do you keep doing that?” I said amazed.

“Intuition Aleksa, it’s just pure intuition,” Abbey said enthusiastically waving her hand in the air.

“Hmnn, interesting, another Crescent Moon Wolf I see. You had better come in!” Abbey said pleasantly to Jackson.

Jackson didn’t say anything. He just glared at Abbey, looking like he was barely holding himself together. Then he unleashed a loud growl.

Aleksa POV

“Jackson!” I raised my voice in shock at him, unsure of why he was growling at poor Abbey.

“MATE!” Jackson yelled again. He looked confused and agitated. He started sniffing the air. “Mate was here!” He said, followed by another growl.

“Jackson, It’s just Alaric and Abbey staying here!” I called out, wondering what on earth was going on with him.

Jackson pushed past Abbey and started stalking around the room, he walked over to the couch and picked up a white fluffy sweater, he pulled it up to his nose and sniffed it.

I looked at Abbey, she wasn’t scared, she looked more amused than anything.

“Jackson?” I asked him, trying to snap him out of the trance he appeared to be in.

“This sweater! Who does it belong to?” Jackson demanded, looking at Abbey.

“I have no idea, it was already here when we got here. I assume either a cleaner or whoever stayed here last?” Abbey confirmed.

Both Jackson and Abbey whipped their heads towards me.

“I have no idea! I could ask Kingston or Kai if they know who stayed here last. It wouldn’t belong to the cleaning staff as they wear uniforms while working to protect their clothes.” I told them both.

“I’ll hold onto this.” Jackson declared.

Abbey just smiled sweetly.

“Jackson, that’s amazing! Don’t worry we will find your mate in no time! But first, can we finish our discussion, if you don’t mind?” I asked Jackson hopefully. I know scenting his mate and not knowing who she is will be driving him crazy, so we will need to keep this short and sweet.

“Well, isn’t this an interesting development? I can see you are eager to find the owner of the sweater so I will keep this brief.” Abbey stated.

Jackson crossed his arms at his chest, looked at Abbey impatiently, and gestured for her to proceed.

“As I said to Aleska, I am a hybrid. I’m half-witch, half werewolf, and I’m from a lineage of witches that serve the Kingdom, my family for generations has worked with the King and Queen and the royal family, in particular, working to protect them alongside other supernaturals,” Abbey declared.

“Long story short, before I was born there was an attack on the kingdom when a corrupt Elder enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch. The King fought to defend the pack, while the Queen was supposed to be in the safe house with her pups. However, for some reason, they didn’t make it there in time, and the Queen and her daughter were killed, with only their son Callum to survive. As you know he is our current reigning King Callum,” Abbey said, taking a moment to catch her breath.

“Realizing that they weren’t going to win the battle, the rogues retreated, but not before a trusted Elder grabbed two of the royal pups, the King’s nephew and niece,” Abbey continued.

“The Elder was captured eventually, but the pups were no longer in his possession. He had placed them in separate packs on opposite sides of the country. Despite weeks of torturing he never gave up their locations.” Abbey declared.

“The Elder was found dead in his cell not long after that, it is thought that he was silenced, as he was found with a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane in his chest,” Abbey concluded.

“You look confused, and you are probably wondering how this is relevant to you. Let me simplify it for you,” Abbey declared.

“The royal pups that were kidnapped were crescent moon wolves, they were twins, a boy, and a girl, they were named Viktor and Kristina,” Abbey said slowly.

“I’m gonna go out on a limb here and assume that your father’s name is Viktor. Am I correct?” Abbey says cockily.

Jackson looked from Abbey then to me. I just nodded in agreement.

“My biological mother’s name was Kristina. And it would make sense to me because I could never understand why her father (my grandfather) could hate her so much. He practically ordered her death.” I said sadly as everything started to click into place for me in my head.

I felt a little relieved knowing that evil man wasn’t actually my blood relative, but then even more confused as to who my biological grandparents actually are.

“Say this is the truth, and we are of royal blood, and our parents were kidnapped, how are you such an expert on all of this? How do we know that we can trust you?” Jackson questioned Abbey.

“That’s a fair question, Jackson. I’m not sure what real evidence I can provide you with. I suppose you could try some genetic testing that might shed some light on your origins. Also, I would suggest that you would both have powers of some sort. Crescent moon wolves hold great power. I would suggest that there is little information out there, so you may not know how to harness those powers. I would like to try to help you in any way I can if you will let me.” Abbey said thoughtfully.

“While I do feel connected to Aleska, and I know that we are bound, I’m not sure that I buy your explanation. I will need to look more into this. I have matters to attend to. If you don’t mind. I will see myself out. Aleksa, are you coming?” Jackson huffed.

“I think I’ll hang out here with Abbey a little longer,” I told him, looking toward Abbey to ensure that it was alright that I stay a little longer. Abbey smiled with a pleased look on her face.

And with that Jackson hurried out the door and shifted into his wolf, Gray.

Jackson POV

When I heard there had been a breach at the perimeter I jumped at the chance to go for a run in my wolf form. These past few months it has been getting harder to control my wolf. The toll of not finding my mate is taking it out of me. I act cavalier when people mention it around me but really I feel like I am struggling to maintain control. It's not normal for an alpha wolf to go so long without their mate. I know my pack is getting nervous. I know that they worry I might go feral if I don't find her soon.

Since we arrived at Rocky Mountain Gray has been a bit off. It's not just the crescent moon wolf stuff, something here keeps setting him off, but he won't say what.

When I got back from my run Aleksa was waiting to speak with me, she seemed a bit nervous so I'm not sure what to make of it.

As I make my way to the training field I caught a whiff of her scent so I know that she's already waiting. I prefer to get straight to the point so I'm relieved when she said that she wouldn't beat around the bush. I was suspicious when she started asking about my bastard father.

Aleska then told me that there was someone that she wanted me to meet, so I humored her and we made our way to one of the pack cottages. A peppy-looking girl opened the door. I'm not sure what she is. I can smell a little werewolf but there is something else, it smelled like magic, a witch perhaps?

And then it hit me, the most intoxicating scent I've ever smelled. f**k me! I struggled to keep control. Gray is going mad. "MATE! MATE!" He screamed in my head. He followed it with a loud menacing growl, no doubt scaring the s**t out of the girls.

I struggle to reign him in, and then he pushes through, and I end up slamming past what's her name, my nose leads the way to the couch where I can smell her sweet scent all over a white sweater. I grabbed it frantically and pulled it into my face, taking in a deep sniff. "Wild jasmine," Gray said. "Our mate smells like wild jasmine with a hint of lemongrass!" Gray called out in my head.

"MATE!" I could confirm that the sweater indeed belongs to my future Luna. I looked to Aleksa and the one who opened the door. I heard Aleksa call something out. But I was too immersed in this overwhelming scent to listen.

They tell me that it must have belonged to someone that was in the cottage before they came to stay and Aleska tells me she will find out who. Damn straight!

I reluctantly listened to what the witch had to say. Switching from thinking about my mate to listening to what she was saying. It all sounded highly probable, but I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to find my mate. Gray was crashing around in my head. I needed to get out of here and shift before I lost it.

I decided that I would find Kingston later and find out who the sweater belongs to and then I will find her and make her mine. Assuming she accepts me as her mate. Although I have a feeling that won't be a problem. I can be very convincing. I have waited so long for this. I need my mate.

I cut the conversation short. I'm not really listening anyway. I tell myself that I will apologize to Aleksa later. I need to get out of here.

And with that, I run out the door and shift into my wolf, and we tear our way through the woods, releasing some of our pent-up tension.

Sam POV

My whole life I have trained for the position of Beta of Evergreen Pack. Generations of Nicholsons have taken on the Beta role. There was never a doubt in my mind that this isn't where I wanted to be.

And then I met her. Eva Lockwood. We had all grown up together. I had always thought she had a soft spot for Lachlan, that was until I started to feel the pull and realized that she was my mate. Even before my wolf came I knew that she was my mate. I was certain that she could feel the pull too, but it seemed like she would constantly try to fight it.

Our birthdays were the same day, so as fate would have it our wolves claimed one another that very day, our eighteenth birthdays.

They say there is the lover and the loved one, and in some ways, I feel they were right in our case. I had loved Eva with all my heart from the moment I had laid eyes on her, but I knew it wasn't quite the same for her. I figured it was cold feet or a fear of commitment although that was odd for a werewolf couple.

When Aleksa joined the pack as our Luna, it felt like everything had fallen into place. Aleksa and Lachlan mated and formed a solid pack leadership with myself and Eva as the Beta couple, joined by Caleb and a little later on Kali, which made our group complete.

The girls would spend time together doing girl things and we guys would lead and strengthen the pack together. It seemed like a dream until it wasn't.

The pain came not long after we had mated, and even more so after our commitment ceremony. It took me a while to realize what was happening to me. It only happened every now and then, and I was never able to find evidence of any betrayal. I would confide in Lachlan but he would tell me I was crazy that Eva loved me and it must be something else.

That is until I saw Aleksa experiencing that same pain. I went with her to her doctor's appointments and the pack doctor always had an explanation for why Aleksa was experiencing pain. I had my doubts but again I never found any evidence of any wrongdoings.

I was always kept busy with pack business, Lachlan over the years had become quite complacent and sloppy, which only added more to my workload. The more I worked the more pain I would feel through my and Eva's bond.

Despite a lack of concrete evidence and after confronting Eva on more than one occasion, she always had excuses and would never actually confess anything. I was ready to reject her when I was sent away last minute to a training mission at a nearby pack. When I came back I was told that Aleksa and the twins had been kidnapped by some rogue wolves we had locked up in our dungeons.

Eva and my shambles of a relationship had become an afterthought at that stage. I had a duty to find and rescue our Luna and the Heirs to our pack. Finding them started to consume me. I rarely stopped to eat or sleep. I could still feel Eva betraying our bond, but I needed to keep searching for them. Even though I could feel myself getting weaker, I couldn't risk feeling the full effects of rejecting my fated mate, so even though I was being weakened by betrayal I knew that a full rejection could be devastating, and right now I needed to keep going for the sake of Aleksa, Liam, and Layla.

Lachlan had all but lost it, the pack was suffering in so many ways, and we were on the brink of bankruptcy due to Lachlan's penchant for gambling, and overspending. I discovered that had been frequenting brothels day and night

and then claiming to be missing his mate as an afterthought. Aleska deserved so much more than that pitiful excuse for a mate.

Pack morale was at an all-time low, lower-ranked wolves were being mistreated, and it wasn't the same pack that it had been before Lachlan had taken over as Alpha. Slowly over time, things had changed at Evergreen, and everything seemed to escalate once Aleksa and the twins were gone.

We had a lead on Aleska and the twins in Iowa, so we traveled there but then the trail went cold. We had committed to being at the Royal Alpha Summit as Lachlan had thought it might be a good idea to distribute Aleska and the twin's photos to other packs in case someone had seen them or heard something so Lachlan ordered Eva and me to head towards Rocky Mountain. He had planned to join us within twenty-four hours.

I couldn't believe it when we arrived and I watched Aleksa walk up to me. She seemed to exude such confidence and happiness. I wasn't happy when I saw her locking hands with another alpha, but my wolf Caine had told me to calm down. He told me to read their body language. I could feel reciprocal love and safety in each other's presence. I could feel it exuding from them.

I was shocked at Eva's behavior. She didn't seem pleased to see her best friend. I had never seen her so cold and bitter before. It was at that moment I realized that I must have missed something. I was even more confused when I saw Caleb and Kali. I was overwhelmingly happy to see my friends again but then disappointed because as far as I knew Caleb and Kali had betrayed us. Lachlan had said that they had helped the rogues take Aleksa and the twins. I could never understand why, but Lachlan had told me a very convincing story. Again my wolf, Caine, was telling me that they were our friends and to hear them out.

And heard them out I did. And it all made sense. I was enraged to hear that my best friend was betraying me with my mate. But it all fit. I was even more furious and shocked beyond recognition when I heard about what Lachlan had done to Aleksa, not just betraying their bond, but locking our Luna, an innocent wolf, up in the dungeons.

Caine was Furious, he instantly demanded that we reject our poor excuse for a mate right there on the spot, and I agreed with him. I would rather be weak and sad than be so pitiful to accept such a cruel and vile mate.

Caine had loved Eva's wolf Ash at the beginning but over time he got impatient and suspicious of her. He seemed to be at the point that he would prefer no mate over the one we had been given. This was unheard of for a wolf, but Caine was a strong wolf, he gave me the strength to push through these past few years of hardship.

When I rejected Eva, it hurt. It hurt so much harder than the betrayal pain, so much so I didn't have the strength to keep my eyes open.

Although as I began to come to I smelt the most delicious smell ever. It reminded me of the spring freesias that grew all over the pack grounds when I was a child. That smell always filled me with happiness throughout my life. I opened my eyes to the most beautiful sight sitting at my bedside, holding my hand in hers.

She was gorgeous, about five foot four, with long whitish blonde curls perched up in a high ponytail. She had bright crystal blue eyes with rosy cheeks and porcelain skin.

I could feel tingles all over. "MATE!" Caine roared in my head. She looked at me with a sweet smile, and it warmed my heart.

I called MATE to her. She replied MATE back. We were mates. She was mine and I was hers.

"Tell me beautiful, what is your name?" I asked her.

"Lily. I am Lily." She tells me coyly.

"I'm Sam," I told her.

"I know. Aleksa and Kingston, they asked me to bring you a glass jug of water, and I dropped it accidentally, I'm sorry. I was just caught off guard. I did not expect to find my mate here," she recalled so quickly that she appeared to be out of breath.

"Hey, it's okay, relax, I'm just glad you are here." I tried to reassure her.

"Are you going to reject me?" She asked me hesitantly.

"What, why would I reject you?" I asked her, feeling anxious, as to why she would even suggest that.

"It's just that you are a Beta I am told. And I, I'm an Omega." She said. A pained look on her face.

"Wrong, you are now a Beta female. That is unless you wish to reject me!" I said sternly.

"Of Course not. You are my mate sent by the moon goddess, I could never," She reassured me with a serious expression on her face.

Gosh, she sure is cute.

"There is something you should know though Lily," I told her.

"You are my second chance mate." I declared.

"Second chance mate? How?" Lily asked. She looked confused.

"My first mate, Eva, betrayed our bond. I will tell you all about it, but perhaps a little later, it is a long sordid tale." I told her.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you, Lily," I stopped.

"What's your last name, Lily?" I asked her.

"Owens," Lily responded, looking nervous.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, as my mate," I declared proudly.

"I Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, accept you Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack as my mate," she replied with a great smile on her face.

With that, I pulled her face into mine and we gladly gave in to the mate bond with a passionate and earth-shattering kiss, unlike anything I've ever experienced before, sending tingles and shivers throughout my entire body. Caine growled in satisfaction. As we pulled apart sweet Lily's cheeks were even rosier than before, a deep shade of red prominent on her face.

"MINE!" I growled.

"YOURS!" Lily replied.

“We have much to discuss. But, first, I need to change, then I need to see Kingston.” I told Lily.

“My wolf Caine is demanding that I mate and mark you right away. But I respect you Lily and don’t want to rush you. So I have to ask how do you feel about making it official tonight?” I asked Lily, not wanting to force things. I wanted to let her know that I respect her as an equal. But, at the same time, I also do not want to wait any longer than necessary.

“Tonight would be perfect Sam. I’ll get you a towel and some clean clothing for you to change into while you shower if you like?” Lily asked me.

“That would be great, thank you, sweetheart,” I told her. Kissing her on the forehead as I ripped out my IV lines, and then headed to the shower.

I’m all showered and clothed, Caleb has popped in to check on me, after chatting for a while Caleb had offered to go and get some coffees while we wait for the discharge papers from the doc.

As I lifted Lily onto me and we began to kiss and touch one another our little make-out session is cut short when Aleksa walked into the room. Aleksa looked deeply embarrassed and in an attempt to leave before she thought that we would notice her she walked right into Caleb’s chest.

Lily jumped off the bed in embarrassment. She’s just so cute. But we are all adults here. It’s only natural to want to jump each other especially since we are mates and have yet to mark and mate.

After a brief chat, Aleksa told me that Lachlan had arrived this morning, but as fast as he arrived he left again. No doubt he will be back. I sensed some concern in Aleksa and I could guess what she was thinking. Naturally, she was wondering where I stood on all of this.

I hated that bastard. All these years he was the cause of my pain and suffering. Pretending to be my friend. Piling me up with never-ending workloads and out-of-pack trips. He made me feel like a bad mate for doubting Eva when he knew what was going on the whole time because he was the one she was betraying me with.

I would love nothing more than to end that poor excuse for an alpha myself. I realize I am not of alpha blood but I know for a fact I could restore Evergreen back to its former glory. I know I would make a better alpha than he ever did.

I thought I would feel weak after rejecting Eva but I have never felt so strong. I feel reborn. I can feel this energy within me. I feel like I have a pretty good chance at beating Lachlan in an alpha challenge. And even if I wasn't successful I would sure give it all I had. Someone had to stop that evil bastard, and I wanted to be the one to do it.

I relayed all of this to Aleska and Lily, who both look concerned. But they need not be. Lily walked up to me and wrapped her arms around me showing me her love and support. The doc showed up and gave me my papers, so I started to make my way over to the packhouse to speak with Kingston and Caleb to tell them of my plans.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn't want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan's arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn't mean to be nonchalant at Abbey's, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it's totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston's office. I wanted to find out who

the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn't seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

I was starting to feel a little lonely here with Liam and Layla away with Mason, Quinn and her parents, Kaia goddess knows where with Asher, Kingston, and Kai unreachable, Sam and Lily occupied, and Jackson running off somewhere in the woods. So I tried to reach out to Kali but she must be busy with Caleb. So I gave up and decided to head up to my room for a while.

After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

I looked around the room and realized I was all alone. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was midnight. My goddess, how long was I in that bath? I must have been in there for hours. No wonder I'm so cold. It was strange that Kingston still wasn't here at this time of night. I walked out to the balcony and looked out around the pack grounds. There was a chill in the air. The silence was deafening. It all felt very eerie.

I decided that I will take a walk around the packhouse and see if I can find my mate.

I make my way out of my room and I head toward the staircase. It's so quiet, usually, there are skeleton staff working, cleaning staff or maintenance or a cook or two, but tonight there didn't seem to be anyone around. Perhaps they finished the preparations for the festival and everyone decided to have an early night. Although that doesn't seem like the right answer either.

I walked in the direction of Kingston's office and it was all dark, there was no lighting on, no noise whatsoever.

Amber pushed through, "I have a bad feeling about this Aleksa, keep your guard up," Amber advised me. Maybe that's why I was feeling so cold like chilled to the bone, and what about that nightmare? I can't seem to remember it, which is unusual for me.

"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

After about forty-five minutes of wandering around the pack house, I was feeling even more determined than ever to find my mate or anyone at this point. I decided to expand my search outside of the packhouse. I know I wasn't supposed to be walking around by myself but I was starting to wonder if there was anyone else around.

I made my way down the steps outside easily enough thanks to the solar lights that lined the steps, and I began to walk around the side of the packhouse making my way to the conference room, strangely enough, there was no one there.

I continued to walk through the pack grounds towards the training grounds because that's the most logical place for the guys to be at this time of night. They were probably going over strategies or having a late-night training session. As I made my way there I heard shuffling in the bush next to me.

I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

"We aren't alone are we Amber," I asked my wolf.

"Nope," Amber said shortly.

I started to pick up my pace slightly, trying not to make it obvious that I was aware that I was not alone. And then I felt my arm being yanked backward aggressively. I let out a loud gasp. I turn to sidekick whoever had grabbed my arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

"Ahh!" I screamed in pain. I could feel the pain searing through me. Well, that's gonna bruise I thought to myself.

"Just the person I wanted to see," a snarky voice called back at me.

I recognized the voice. It made my skin crawl.

“Ezra!” I called back to him.

“You lied to me the other day. Do you think I’m f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?” He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn’t let him know I was scared.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said faking confusion at his question.

“Look b***h, I want my mate and I’m not leaving until I get her,” He threatened.

He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

“If you don’t want to tell me now, that’s ok. I can think of another way of getting it out of you,” Ezra said snickering.

“Don’t you f*****g touch me!” I yelled at him, changing my stance to one that appeared more threatening.

“I’m gonna show you what it’s like to be with a real man. Then you can tell me where that b***h is,” He said advancing towards me.

“Come any closer and you will regret it!” I yelled at Ezra.

He laughed mockingly and continued to advance toward me. I closed my eyes to concentrate on my energy and visualise what I wanted to do to him, to stop him from hurting me.

At that very moment, I felt a hard slap across my face, so hard that I lost my footing, and fell to the ground again. It hurt so much. I wondered if I might have just lost a tooth or two then. But I managed to hold my pain in.

I tried to get up but Ezra was already forcing his bodyweight onto me.

“Focus Aleksa!” Amber called out to me. I could feel her giving me strength. I tried to channel all of my energy and focus.

I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

Ezra ripped my jumper off me in an instant. I closed my eyes again and blocked everything out. This was not happening.

The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

My body starts to regulate and I don't feel so hot anymore.

I picked myself up and walked over to him. I'm still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

I heard Ezra groan. He was making incomprehensible sounds. He didn't seem to be responding. I watched him lose consciousness.

I guess he was more of a threat than Kingston and I had thought. He needed to be held somewhere. I knew that I couldn't lift him. I was feeling drained from using my power.

I tried to mind-link Kingston again, but there was still no reply. What on earth is going on around here, I thought to myself. There were no guards patrolling the grounds. I couldn't seem to mind-link anyone. It was almost like a ghost town.

Then I thought of Jackson. Perhaps since we are both Crescent Moon wolves we could mind-link one another. It was worth a try at this point.

"Jackson, I need your help," I mind-linked.

"Aleksa, what's wrong?" Jackson responded immediately.

"Ezra. He attacked me." I replied, trying to sound strong and unaffected.

Jackson growled. "Where are you?"

"Near the training grounds, between the bush and a huge oak tree," I told him calmly.

"I'm on my way," Jackson responded.

A minute or so later Jackson arrived in his wolf form.

“Hello Gray,” I said to him, with a small smile, trying to remain strong while holding my arms against my chest. I was still shivering and that bastard had ripped my sweater, so I was standing there in my singlet.

Gray growled loudly and stalked toward Ezra.

Amber pushed through to talk to him.

“Gray!” Amber called out.

Gray stopped, and turned his head back toward me, he took a sniff, then started to walk toward me.

“You’re hurt!” Gray replied to us, looking enraged.

I pushed Amber back. I wanted to retain control. Luckily we could communicate in both wolf and human forms.

“A little, I’ll be ok,” I reassured him.

Gray looked at me, then he looked down at my ripped sweatshirt and Ezra’s top on the ground next to it.

“I’m gonna rip him to shreds!” Gray roared.

“It’s ok, he can’t hurt me now. I called you because I need help getting him locked up,” I told Gray.

“Of course, but, where’s your mate?” Gray asked confused, and then mad.

“I don’t know. I haven’t seen him since lunchtime yesterday, and he has blocked me. I can’t get hold of Kingston or Kai. Something weird is going on,” I told Gray.

Then I think about how Gray arrived almost immediately after I had mind-linked him.

“Hey, how did you get here so fast?” I asked Gray.

“We’ve been out searching, for our mate,” Gray responded.

“Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!” I tried to reassure him.

“I’ll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute,” Gray declared.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn’t want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan’s arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I’m sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson’s mate was. I couldn’t wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn’t mean to be nonchalant at Abbey’s, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it’s totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston’s office. I wanted to find out who the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn’t be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn’t seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra

again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

I was starting to feel a little lonely here with Liam and Layla away with Mason, Quinn and her parents, Kaia goddess knows where with Asher, Kingston, and Kai unreachable, Sam and Lily occupied, and Jackson running off somewhere in the woods. So I tried to reach out to Kali but she must be busy with Caleb. So I gave up and decided to head up to my room for a while.

After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

I looked around the room and realized I was all alone. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was midnight. My goddess, how long was I in that bath? I must have been in there for hours. No wonder I'm so cold. It was strange that Kingston still wasn't here at this time of night. I walked out to the balcony and looked out around the pack grounds. There was a chill in the air. The silence was deafening. It all felt very eerie.

I decided that I will take a walk around the packhouse and see if I can find my mate.

I make my way out of my room and I head toward the staircase. It's so quiet, usually, there are skeleton staff working, cleaning staff or maintenance or a cook or two, but tonight there didn't seem to be anyone around. Perhaps they finished the preparations for the festival and everyone decided to have an early night. Although that doesn't seem like the right answer either.

I walked in the direction of Kingston's office and it was all dark, there was no lighting on, no noise whatsoever.

Amber pushed through, "I have a bad feeling about this Aleksa, keep your guard up," Amber advised me. Maybe that's why I was feeling so cold like chilled to the bone, and what about that nightmare? I can't seem to remember it, which is unusual for me.

"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

After about forty-five minutes of wandering around the pack house, I was feeling even more determined than ever to find my mate or anyone at this point. I decided to expand my search outside of the packhouse. I know I

wasn't supposed to be walking around by myself but I was starting to wonder if there was anyone else around.

I made my way down the steps outside easily enough thanks to the solar lights that lined the steps, and I began to walk around the side of the packhouse making my way to the conference room, strangely enough, there was no one there.

I continued to walk through the pack grounds towards the training grounds because that's the most logical place for the guys to be at this time of night. They were probably going over strategies or having a late-night training session. As I made my way there I heard shuffling in the bush next to me.

I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

"We aren't alone are we Amber," I asked my wolf.

"Nope," Amber said shortly.

I started to pick up my pace slightly, trying not to make it obvious that I was aware that I was not alone. And then I felt my arm being yanked backward aggressively. I let out a loud gasp. I turn to sidekick whoever had grabbed my arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

"Ahh!" I screamed in pain. I could feel the pain searing through me. Well, that's gonna bruise I thought to myself.

"Just the person I wanted to see," a snarky voice called back at me.

I recognized the voice. It made my skin crawl.

"Ezra!" I called back to him.

"You lied to me the other day. Do you think I'm f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?" He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn't let him know I was scared.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said faking confusion at his question.

“Look b***h, I want my mate and I’m not leaving until I get her,” He threatened.

He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

“If you don’t want to tell me now, that’s ok. I can think of another way of getting it out of you,” Ezra said snickering.

“Don’t you f*****g touch me!” I yelled at him, changing my stance to one that appeared more threatening.

“I’m gonna show you what it’s like to be with a real man. Then you can tell me where that b***h is,” He said advancing towards me.

“Come any closer and you will regret it!” I yelled at Ezra.

He laughed mockingly and continued to advance toward me. I closed my eyes to concentrate on my energy and visualise what I wanted to do to him, to stop him from hurting me.

At that very moment, I felt a hard slap across my face, so hard that I lost my footing, and fell to the ground again. It hurt so much. I wondered if I might have just lost a tooth or two then. But I managed to hold my pain in.

I tried to get up but Ezra was already forcing his bodyweight onto me.

“Focus Aleksa!” Amber called out to me. I could feel her giving me strength. I tried to channel all of my energy and focus.

I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

Ezra ripped my jumper off me in an instant. I closed my eyes again and blocked everything out. This was not happening.

The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

My body starts to regulate and I don’t feel so hot anymore.

I picked myself up and walked over to him. I'm still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

I heard Ezra groan. He was making incomprehensible sounds. He didn't seem to be responding. I watched him lose consciousness.

I guess he was more of a threat than Kingston and I had thought. He needed to be held somewhere. I knew that I couldn't lift him. I was feeling drained from using my power.

I tried to mind-link Kingston again, but there was still no reply. What on earth is going on around here, I thought to myself. There were no guards patrolling the grounds. I couldn't seem to mind-link anyone. It was almost like a ghost town.

Then I thought of Jackson. Perhaps since we are both Crescent Moon wolves we could mind-link one another. It was worth a try at this point.

"Jackson, I need your help," I mind-linked.

"Aleksa, what's wrong?" Jackson responded immediately.

"Ezra. He attacked me." I replied, trying to sound strong and unaffected.

Jackson growled. "Where are you?"

"Near the training grounds, between the bush and a huge oak tree," I told him calmly.

"I'm on my way," Jackson responded.

A minute or so later Jackson arrived in his wolf form.

"Hello Gray," I said to him, with a small smile, trying to remain strong while holding my arms against my chest. I was still shivering and that bastard had ripped my sweater, so I was standing there in my singlet.

Gray growled loudly and stalked toward Ezra.

Amber pushed through to talk to him.

"Gray!" Amber called out.

Gray stopped, and turned his head back toward me, he took a sniff, then started to walk toward me.

“You’re hurt!” Gray replied to us, looking enraged.

I pushed Amber back. I wanted to retain control. Luckily we could communicate in both wolf and human forms.

“A little, I’ll be ok,” I reassured him.

Gray looked at me, then he looked down at my ripped sweatshirt and Ezra’s top on the ground next to it.

“I’m gonna rip him to shreds!” Gray roared.

“It’s ok, he can’t hurt me now. I called you because I need help getting him locked up,” I told Gray.

“Of course, but, where’s your mate?” Gray asked confused, and then mad.

“I don’t know. I haven’t seen him since lunchtime yesterday, and he has blocked me. I can’t get hold of Kingston or Kai. Something weird is going on,” I told Gray.

Then I think about how Gray arrived almost immediately after I had mind-linked him.

“Hey, how did you get here so fast?” I asked Gray.

“We’ve been out searching, for our mate,” Gray responded.

“Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!” I tried to reassure him.

“I’ll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute,” Gray declared.

Aleska POV

Gray had shifted before we left for the pack lock-up facility. We began to walk to the lock-up facility. Being that Jackson was just visiting the pack he didn’t know where the facility was so I had to show them where to go.

I still couldn't get through to anyone via mind-link, nor could Jackson as he wasn't part of our pack. It didn't take much to convince Jackson to let me come with him to look for the others and find out what was going on, as he could sense that things were off also.

When we reached the lock-up, the guards didn't appear to be outside as they usually were. Jackson looked at his warriors and they made a few hand gestures and slowly advanced inside. As we walked through the corridors which were dimly lit, it appeared that the backup generators were on. When we reached the holding area we found the guards out cold on the floor. I ran up to the closest one and felt for a pulse. His heart rate was slow but it was still there.

"He's still alive! But his pulse is very slow." I called out to Jackson.

"Let's investigate further, Aleska, you stay close to me." Jackson declared.

He didn't need to say a word, I wasn't planning on going anywhere alone at this stage. I was officially creeped out.

After a sweep of the cells, we made our way back to the entrance. The cells were all empty. The cell doors appeared to be locked shut, and the guards appeared to be out cold, almost as if they were sleeping. No one had been harmed.

We all looked at each other with confused expressions on our faces.

"Magic!" Jackson said abruptly.

"I have a feeling magic is involved, and not the good kind either," Jackson replied to himself.

I start to realize the gravity of the situation. I start to think of my loved ones. My mind then goes to Kali and Caleb. They were staying in the packhouse. Perhaps we should start there.

"Where's the Hybrid!" Jackson called out angrily.

"Abbey?" I replied to him.

"Yeah, her." He said gruffly.

“She will be sleeping. Wait, you don’t think?” I start to speak before I am cut off.

“It feels like magic. She’s a witch! Let’s start there!” Jackson demanded.

“I guess that makes sense. But Jackson, let me do the talking. She’s my friend.” I tell him rather than asking. I know he is a higher rank than me, but this isn’t about ranks. Something is going on and we need to find out what.

“Yeah well let’s see what she has to say,” Jackson replied gruffly.

“Alpha, what do you want us to do with him?” One of Jackson’s warriors asks, referring to Ezra.

“You two watch him for now. See if you can get one of those cells open and shove him in. One of you can watch him, the other can come to find us. Mind-link me when you are done,” Jackson ordered them.

“Yes Alpha,” they both called out concurrently, nodding their heads and bowing before dragging Ezra off.

With that Jackson takes a jacket off one of the guards and threw it at me.

“You look cold, throw this on, he doesn’t need it right now,” Jackson declared.

“Thanks,” I said, throwing the jacket on.

Abbey’s cottage wasn’t far away so there is no need for us to shift. It wouldn’t take us long to get there.

We walked up the pathway to Abbey’s cottage, there were no lights on, which wasn’t surprising considering it was the middle of the night.

“I’ll do the talking!” I told Jackson, as I knew that he could come across as aggressive at times, and I felt bad enough waking Abbey up in the middle of the night.

As I was about to knock on the door it opened. I smiled as I expected nothing less. Abbey always seemed to know when someone was approaching.

“Aleska, are you okay?” Abbey started to fuss, taking in my appearance.

"Yeah, I'm fine," I told her not wanting to go into detail right now.

"What's going on around here?" Abbey asked.

"I've had no power all night, and Alaric hasn't arrived back yet. I've had this strange feeling all night, and now you two show up at my doorstep in the middle of the night," Abbey said with a concerned look on her face.

"You wanna come in?" Abbey offered.

"We don't have time for this!" Jackson declared.

"Hmnn, unfortunately, he's right, Abbey will you come with us, something is going on, the guards at the lock-up facility were out cold, the powers out, no one else seems to be around and I can't mind-link anyone but Jackson," I ranted off quickly to Abbey.

Abbey's face dropped, "Oh dear," she said as she pulls her jacket on and starts to walk out her door.

"Let's walk and talk," Abbey suggested.

After explaining everything that happened this evening Abbey was initially outraged at what Ezra had attempted to do, but then happy I was able to contact Jackson. She was trying to piece things together as we walked toward the training grounds.

"I agree with Jackson, the guards could be in a deep sleep, and an enchantment spell would appear that way. There could be someone messing with the pack's ability to mind-link, that too could be the doing of a witch, but no light witch would do such a thing, this sounds like the work of a dark witch." Abbey stated.

"When was the last time either of you saw someone familiar?" Abbey asked.

"I guess, before we came to your cottage yesterday," I replied.

"And you Jackson?" Abbey asked him softly.

"Same as Aleksa, after our meeting in your cottage, I shifted into Gray and we ran for hours, we only stopped when I got Aleksa's mind-link just before," Jackson replied.

“Hmmn, interesting, I never found Alaric when we parted ways at the packhouse earlier this evening, there were others around but I didn’t interact with anyone,” Abbey recalled.

“I wonder,” Abbey started.

“What?” Jackson replied in anticipation.

“I wonder if something didn’t happen while we were in the cottage? I wonder if something didn’t happen to the rest of the pack? What if what we saw when we walked into the packhouse was just an illusion?” Abbey asked.

“But why?” I replied in denial.

“I don’t know, It’s just a thought, let’s investigate some more,” Abbey suggested.

We had just arrived outside the training grounds, and there weren’t any lights on. I went to grab my phone out of my pocket when Abbey looked at me and chuckled.

“Let me, Aleksa,” Abbey declared.

Abbey moved her hands in a circular motion and closed her eyes, and then a bright orb appeared before her, she released it in front of us and it started to guide our way into the training grounds.

“That was seriously cool!” I called out in awe.

“Not bad,” Jackson said as if he was slightly impressed.

We walked through the administration block following the orb in front of us, and as we turned to walk into the stadium we were shocked to see the warriors from our pack and other packs on the ground.

I gasped in horror. Then I ran to the nearest warrior to feel for a pulse, it was there but it was faint. I looked around to see if I could see anyone familiar, I started walking through the bodies carefully, and then I saw him, I saw Kai.

I ran up to him, yelling, “Kai! Kai! Wake up!” I started to shake him, then I felt around for a pulse. It was much like the others there, but slow, although a bit stronger than the others, probably because he was a Gamma.

“Abbey, please, is there anything you can do?” I called out to Abbey who came running towards me. Jackson circled us, looking around but standing guard at the same time.

“Hmmn, let me see,” Abbey said, getting down on her hands and knees, she then puts her hands just above his body and focuses her energy on Kai.

“I can feel that he’s still here, but in a deep sleep, definitely an enchantment spell.” Abbey declared.

“Can you counteract it?” I asked pleadingly. I looked at her wide-eyed.

“I think I can? It will probably take a lot of energy. I feel confident that I can wake Kai, but I am not sure I can do everyone at this stage,” Abbey said with a sad expression on her face.

“That’s ok, it’s a start!” I said with some optimism in my voice.

“OK, give me a few minutes and some space,” Abbey instructed me.

I watched Abbey in awe. She was truly amazing. Jackson pretended not to be bothered about what is unfolding in front of him, but even he can’t deny what Abbey is doing right now is nothing short of epic.

A short while later, Kai started groaning.

I knelt down on the ground again and touch his face. Kai opens his eyes.

“Luna?” Kai croaked out.

“Oh my goddess, Kai, are you ok?” I asked him in a panic-stricken tone.

“Luna, they took him! I’m sorry!” Kai declared.

“What, who?” I looked at him puzzled.

“The Witch. She took Kingston! Said she needed to get him out of the way,” he called out. Then he slowly started to sit up, rubbing his neck.

“Are you telling me that a dark witch took Kingston?” I asked him in shock.

“Yes Luna, I’m so sorry,” Kai replied, bowing his head, looking ashamed that he couldn’t protect his alpha and prevent him from being taken.

“It’s ok Kai, we will find him, this isn’t your fault!” I tried to reassure Kai, and I leaned forward to comfort him in the form of a hug.

I looked back up to Abbey who was now standing up and looking around the stadium.

“Any ideas Abbey?” I looked to her for an answer.

“Dark witches don’t attack packs for no reason, someone will be paying her to do this, someone who stands to gain something from getting Kingston out of the way,” Abbey questioned.

Jackson and I look at one another at the same time in realization.

“Lachlan!” We both called out simultaneously.

Aleska POV

Once it dawned on us that Lachlan was most likely behind all of this, we had to figure out what to do next. Abbey believed that the reason that Jackson and I could mind-link was due to our Crescent Moon wolf bond. Kai tested the theory by trying to mind-link and was unsuccessful. Although Jackson could mind-link his warriors which seemed strange. Although it became clearer once he had explained that the two warriors he had brought with him weren’t ordinary wolves. Apparently, they had met one another at a training camp that he had been sent to by his father in his early teens and they had bonded. They had recognized Jackson as their alpha early on, and submitted to him, despite the fact that they all shared the same rank.

Abbey believed that if there was a dark witch involved then her enchantment spell would have applied to regular pack wolves, but most likely not affect special wolves, hence why we were all unaffected.

While Abbey couldn’t currently reach any of her contacts due to distance and the presence of a supernatural barrier, she could call them, so we started to make our way to the nearest phone.

Unfortunately, all methods of communication seemed to be out of order. For now, we were on our own. At least we had the advantage of the witch not knowing that we were special wolves. The witch would assume we were under the spell for now. But that would mean that they would be most likely looking for us.

Abbey suggested that we all hide our scents to be on the safe side. She was able to manage this with a simple cloaking spell.

If we were right and Lachlan was behind this, then he was looking for me. Jackson wanted to get me out of Rocky Mountain and to safety, but I insisted on staying. We needed to face this Witch and Lachlan, and break the spell she had placed on my pack.

Abbey believed that the key to breaking the spell was either capturing the witch involved and convincing her to reverse the spell, or k*****g her. Abbey didn't feel that comfortable taking a life, but said if it came to it she would. She too wanted to find her mate.

Jackson advised that we would need some more backup if we were to pull this off, and suggested we find Sam and Caleb, and a few other ranked members to help us on our mission.

"Do you think you are up for some more healing Abbey?" He asked her respectfully.

I looked at him in shock, it appeared that he might be softening in his attitude toward her and realizing she is an ally, not a threat.

"Yes, as long as I have a little break in between, I should be fine," Abbey replied confidently.

With that, we made our way back to the packhouse stealthily. Caleb's room would be our first stop. I sure hoped that Kali and her unborn baby would be ok. I asked Abbey about healing Kali now, she said Kali was safer sleeping for now, and shouldn't be put at further risk. I agreed with her reasoning, at least she would be out of harm's way for now.

We made our way to Caleb's designated room. Jackson had to break down the door as it was locked. We found Kali asleep on the couch and Caleb on the ground in the kitchen. It didn't take long for Abbey to work her magic on him. When Caleb came to he demanded that Abbey wake Kali, but then she explained that by doing so Kali would be at more risk because she would want to fight, thus putting her and her unborn baby at risk. Caleb realized that she was right and dropped the subject. Once we had brought Caleb up to speed with the events of the night we were ready to find Sam.

Since Sam was the only attendee from Evergreen that was actually allowed to stay at Rocky Mountain he and Lily were sharing a cottage to themselves. They were on the far west side of the pack, so it was a bit of a hike to get there. We didn't want to run into anyone so we exited the back of the packhouse and made our way through the woods. Kai was the only one of us that actually knew this place inside out, so we were lucky we had him with us to show us a shortcut.

Cutting through the woods meant we reached the cabin pretty quickly. Kai pushed the door open, it was unlocked luckily, Sam and Lily were laying face down on the table. They must have been having a hot drink when the spell took over because their cups had tipped over and had run onto the wooden floor.

Caleb and Kai went straight to Sam and moved him from his chair to the floor. Jackson picked Lily up carefully and placed her on the couch. As he was laying her down Abbey called out to him, "Jackson could you bring Lily here and lay her beside Sam, I wanna try something," Abbey stated.

Before anyone could ask, Abbey had closed her eyes and began to focus on Sam and Lily, she did the same as before and placed her hands directly above both their bodies. After a minute or so they both started to come to.

We all looked at Abbey gobsmacked.

"You did it!" I called out happily.

"You healed them both at the same time!" I said to her with a look of astonishment on my face.

Abbey smiled and seemed to wilt a little. Caleb held her from behind, and she took a moment to steady herself.

"Thank you. I haven't done two people at a time before. It just takes a bit out of me. I'm not that long out of my witch training" Abbey clarified with a slight blush on her face.

"Sam!" Caleb called out, helping his friend up.

"What happened?" Sam said, rubbing his eyes.

"Lily!" I called out. "Are you okay?" I said helping her sit up.

“Aleksa! What are you doing here?” Lily called out confused.

“Wait, Sam?” Lily questioned, looking to the right side of her.

Lily and Sam pulled each other into an embrace and then pulled apart again.

“Ah, what’s going on?” Sam asked looking around at us all with a puzzled look on his face.

We didn’t have time to spare. There wasn’t a lot of darkness left before sunrise, and we needed to use the cover of darkness to our advantage right now.

Jackson gave Sam and Lily a rundown of the night’s events as we made our way to the old log cabin. Kai had suggested that since it was on the far side of the pack boundaries. He had a theory that it might not have had its communications systems affected. We might be able to get some help or contact someone with knowledge of this sort of thing, and then we could make our way back to the pack before sunrise.

As we were almost at the old log cabin we walked into something. We tried to advance but we couldn’t seem to move any further.

“I can feel a strong energy,” I declared to my friends.

“So can I,” Jackson responded.

“Uh oh,” Abbey commented.

“It’s a forcefield,” a voice came from behind us, it was one of Jackson’s warriors from earlier tonight.

“The witch has imposed a forcefield, we can’t leave and no one else can come in,” He replied.

“Nice of you to join us, Bryant,” Jackson replied.

“Everyone, this is my good friend Bryant,” Jackson called out.

Everyone acknowledged and greeted him. Once the pleasantries were over we had to figure out where we were going now and what our new plan would be.

“Comms!” Kai declared.

“We could try the backup equipment in the Communications room, back at the packhouse,” Kai reiterated.

“Worth a try,” Jackson replied.

“Let’s go then,” Sam said.

Just as we made it up the steps to the rear entrance of the packhouse the sun started to come up. At least we had made it back safely. Hopefully, we could find something of use in the communications room.

The communications room was located in the loft at the top of the packhouse. I had no idea it was even here, although that isn’t surprising as I was still orienting to the pack.

We made our way up to the room and started looking around. Caleb and Sam tried to get the computers and communication systems working, while Jackson took a look around for a backup generator, and Caleb checked the cupboards, while doing so he stumbled across a secret compartment in the ceiling for alternative means of communication.

After about thirty minutes we had made no progress.

“s**t!” Jackson called out.

“I can’t get through to Elijah.” Jackson declared.

“We have to assume that Ezra has escaped, we also need to assume he may be in on whatever is going on here, so be on your guard! If you see him, don’t k**l him, we need to find out what he knows first,” Jackson ordered.

Aleksa POV

Our search of the communications room was fruitless. Nothing we found was able to transmit. It looked like we were truly on our own here. We had no idea

who we were up against. We just suspected that Lachlan was behind it all and he was being helped by a dark witch.

We knew that the pack seemed to be surrounded by some massive energy-bound forcefield so we couldn't get out either. We also knew that it was only a matter of time before whoever was behind all of this realized that I wasn't where I should be.

While my heart ached for my mate, I couldn't feel anything through our bond, but I didn't feel our bond break so that gave me hope that he was still out there, maybe he was under the enchantment spell, I sure hoped that was the case.

Abbey said that assuming that this was orchestrated by Lachlan and he was he for me the best thing to do would be to elude him for as long as possible.

Meanwhile, she will focus on trying to wake some of the pack up a few at a time.

Sam suggested we keep moving because it would only be a matter of time before they tracked back to the packhouse.

Abbey asked for suggestions as to who she should wake first. Jackson implied the stronger the wolf the better right now as they were likely to be able to defend themselves rather than hold us back, everyone was in agreement with that.

I voiced that I didn't recall seeing any of the alphas at the training grounds, to which Kai replied that the night before the summit festival it was tradition for the attending alphas to have a late-night whiskey at the lake house.

"Lakehouse?" I replied with a confused look on my face,

"Uh, yeah, it belonged to the previous alpha and luna, it's in the middle of the woods on the southern boundary. Chances are they were there when the enchantment spell hit. It's worth a try anyway. I can show you the way." Kai called out.

We all followed Kai out through the woods as quietly and quickly as possible. It took about twenty minutes to get there in our human form. It was a large wooden cabin just sitting here on the outskirts of the wood overlooking a small lake.

As expected, there were bodies of the visiting alpha's lounged out on chairs, by the lake, and on the deck. They all looked so peaceful, a contrast from the intimidating alphas they usually are. But this wasn't the time to reflect, we had work to do.

"Caleb, Sam, Bryant with me, let's get them all next to each other and line them up. Lily and Aleska, you can help Abbey set up. Abbey – are you ready for this?"

Abbey looked at Jackson and smiled. "You're just a big softy aren't you?"

Jackson huffed and walked off.

Abbey looked at me smirking, "I think we are going to be great friends, Jackson and I,"

I smiled at her knowingly. Because I thought so too.

Abbey had begun healing the alphas. When they woke up they were disorientated initially but after about ten minutes or so they seemed to be back to their usual selves. While some wanted to spring into action immediately, we managed to convince them that we had to tread carefully since we didn't actually know what we were up against.

Abbey seemed to be holding up well despite using mass amounts of energy, there were about a dozen of us now, and still, another dozen alphas yet to be healed.

Jackson suggested that some of us would need to stay back with Abbey while she healed the other alpha's and the rest of us needed to continue onwards.

Caleb and Kai naturally refused to leave my side, I guess it was the gamma band at play. Sam and Lily said that they would stay back with Abbey, Bryant also offered to protect her while she helped us to gather more backup.

Jackson, myself, Caleb, and Kai, as well as some of the attending alphas, decided to move out and see if we could see any movement around the pack grounds. We hadn't seen anyone yet, but they must be somewhere.

As we were about a hundred yards away from the entrance to the packhouse, we saw movement. We halted behind Jackson and waited. My jaw dropped as I took in the huge army of wolves that were descending upon the packhouse.

The foul stench of these rogue wolves invaded my nostrils. I fought the urge to vomit. We all looked at one another. Well, this complicates things a little I thought to myself. I wasn't quite expecting that we would have that many opponents to fight.

I looked at Caleb instantly in fear. We had left Kali behind sleeping there. Caleb let out a huge growl and ran forward shifting into his wolf, he ran as fast as his legs would carry him toward the packhouse.

"f**k!" Jackson yelled. He also runs forward, shifting into Gray following Caleb's lead. If we don't follow him, both he, Kali, and their unborn baby are dead, so we all shifted and followed them through the packhouse, taking out wolves as we moved through the crowd.

Kai and a few of the other alpha's flanked my sides and front and behind and pushed through the rogues, their bodies flying all over the place, blood spurting out all over the place.

We ran down the corridor and then skidded to a sudden halt, Caleb had shifted and was holding a sleeping Kali in his arms. We formed a circle around him and I nodded my head towards the back entrance swiftly, rogues descending on us from behind, we all pushed forward some of the alpha's fending off the rogues as we made our way through the packhouse.

"Take Aleksa and Kali to safety, I'll keep the rogues busy!" Jackson yelled as he slowed down and turned to fight the rogues.

Four of the alpha's followed Caleb and Kali and me. Once we made it to the bush. I turned around.

"Get your mate and baby to safety!" I called out and I ran off.

I ran towards the packhouse to join Jackson and half a dozen alphas fight.

Jackson growled.

"What the f**k are you doing? Run! Now!" He yelled at me followed by a growl.

“No. I’m here to fight for my friends and my pack!” I yelled as I fought two small dirty brown rogues.

“Aleksa, concentrate, like before. We can use our powers. Visualize. Then focus our energy!” Amber encouraged me.

I take a breath and close my eyes. I think of the danger my friends and my pack are in. I use my anger against those who have come to destroy my pack. I feel myself heat up again. I feel like I am being surrounded by a whirlwind of heat and then I release. I feel a huge gust of energy disperse, and when I open my eyes the rogues that were surrounding us were no more.

I look further afield and I see the remaining rogues retreat. I see movement in the woods to the north of the pack grounds, and for some reason, I know that is where the witch is hiding. I could feel a pull toward her. I could feel her dark energy.

I lunge forward and run like the wind in her direction. When I get there I can sense that she is still there. I see a figure move out from behind a large tree.

“Hello, Aleksa,” she called out.

“Why are you doing this?” I asked her aggressively.

“Why do we do anything? For power, for money, for control.” She spat out shaking her head.

“My, you really are naive aren’t you?” She mocked me.

“I can see why that brute of an alpha wants you. So pretty and yet so clueless.” She laughed again.

Then she went quiet and looked at me as if she was looking into my mind.

“He doesn’t know, does he?” the witch asked me. Then she starts laughing again.

“Oh, this is brilliant!” She called out trying to suppress further laughter.

“Who? Know about what?” I asked the witch, having no actual clue as to who or what she was referring to.

“What are you talking about, Who are you...” I asked. I stopped mid-sentence as I was distracted by a shuffle in the bushes to the witch’s left.

“My sweet Aleska, did you like the rose I sent you?” Lachlan said, striding towards me with a smirk on his face.

“Lachlan,” I said shakily, trying not to show my fear but failing miserably.

“You have caused a lot of trouble my little mate,” Lachlan said, shaking his head disapprovingly at me.

“Nevermind, you have the rest of your life to make it up to me!” He added, laughing evilly.

I slowly started to back away from Lachlan and the witch, as I did I could sense movement behind me. As I turned my head I saw two of Evergreen’s warriors behind me in their wolf forms. I knew that I wouldn’t be getting out of this situation without a fight.

“Well, my job here is done! You have your she-wolf. Now I will have my payment, Wolf!” the witch demanded eagerly.

“Don’t dare disrespect me, Witch!” Lachlan declared to the witch.

However, she didn’t appear to be affected by his menacing aura. She looked more impatient than anything else.

Lachlan pulled a small hessian sack out of his pocket and dumped it in the witch’s hand. She quickly poured the gold out and looked over it, then she chucked it back in the sack happily and stowed it away in the inside of her gown.

“I’d watch this one if I were you. There’s more to her than meets the eye,” the witch said as she winked at me knowingly.

Lachlan huffed, and dismissed the witch.

“I have a feeling this isn’t the last we shall see of one another Aleksa.” the witch added and with that, she vanished in a big puff of smoke.

Aleska POV

“Where is my mate?” I yelled at Lachlan in disdain.

Seconds later I felt his large calloused hand connect with the side of my cheek. I almost lose my balance due to the sheer force of his slap.

I am done with taking slaps from men today, so I slapped Lachlan back even harder in return.

Lachlan laughed mockingly at me.

“I see my weak mate has developed a backbone. Well, I shall have fun breaking you back down.” Lachlan said laughing even harder this time.

I felt my anger start to rise. Not now Aleksa. We need more information. Don't show your hand just yet. Amber warned me.

“Please, where is Kingston?” I asked Lachlan again, this time with a lower tone,

“That mutt. He's none of your concern,” Lachlan said walking around me in a circular motion.

I hear him growl when he takes in my mark. I felt a hard punch to my stomach. I lean forward feeling gasping for breath as I am temporarily wounded. I got my breath back and managed to pull myself back up. I stood strong and tall. I tried to remain stoic.

I knew that he wanted me to submit, and to fear him. But I refused to. The next time he touches me I will not be holding back.

“First thing we will do when we get back to the pack is to get rid of that mutt's filthy mark on you. You will regret letting him mark you, I promise you that w***e!” Lachlan spat out in a rage.

“I gave you everything! You were living a lowly life in that human town before you met me. I gave you a home, a pack, a rank, a purpose. And this is how you repay me! By w*****g yourself to some alpha mutt in the middle of b**t f**k nowhere.” Lachlan screamed out. He looked like he was getting angrier by the moment.

I just stared at him blankly.

“What do you have to say for yourself w***e?” Lachlan prodded me while glaring at me.

“Where’s my mate? Where’s...” I am not finished with my sentence when I feel another slap, this time it’s on the other side of my face. Well, thank goddess for that, at least the swelling will even out.

Even though I’m in so much pain right now, and I can feel the tears welling in my eyes I start laughing.

“Is that it? Is that all you’ve got?” I call out mockingly, laughing so more. Lachlan looks at me in astonishment, probably wondering if I have a death wish.

I figure that by baiting him, I am buying more time for my friends to find me. We haven’t left the pack grounds yet. The dark witch appears to have left. Any minute now someone should arrive and then we can end this once and for all.

As if he can read my mind Lachlan grabs me and pulls me towards the pack boundaries.

“I’m no fool w***e! I know your game! Move it!” He said pulling me along even faster than before, his warriors falling closely behind us.

As we approach the pack boundary there is a black SUV waiting, the engine is running and someone is in the driver’s seat. We are approximately ten yards away, and no one has arrived yet. I guess they are busy with the rogues at the packhouse. I sure hope they are okay. Although, it looks like I’m on my own for now.

Just as we were nearing the SUV I heard footsteps coming from the trees behind us. I turned my head and was shocked to see Ezra running toward us. I gasped out loud.

“What do you want?” Lachlan said in a tone of annoyance.

It sounds like they know each other.

“That b***h isn’t going anywhere! We have unfinished business!” Ezra growled pointing at me.

Lachlan looked at us both, studying our body language in amusement.

“And what has my wretched mate done to get you all wound up?” Lachlan asked.

“She knows where my mate is!” Ezra screamed.

“Tell me now! Where is Kaia?” Ezra demanded.

He started to step toward me. As he did I saw Lachlan start to sniff.

“We had a deal Lachlan, and I am yet to see my mate!” Ezra yelled fiercely, looking like he was struggling to keep himself together.

“WHY DO YOU REEK OF MY MATE!” Lachlan called out almost in a rage. Then I see his eyes turn black.

Interesting. I thought to myself.

Ezra stopped suddenly.

“Yyyour mate?” He said almost stuttering, and stopping short.

“He tried to r**e me!” I called out.

I know that Lachlan doesn't care about anyone but himself. But I also know that he doesn't like to share his toys either. I decide that I can k**l two birds with one stone by playing them against each other.

“Whattttt!” Lachlan roared.

“She was asking for it!” Ezra boomed.

“No one touches my mate but me!” Lachlan yelled savagely.

And in seconds he had lost all control, shifted, and launched his wolf upon Ezra.

Ezra was caught off-guard, clearly not expecting such a reaction from his partner in crime. Cyrus didn't hold back.

He held Ezra's arms down, and started snapping at his neck, he was about to go in for the k**l when Ezra managed to push him off his legs.

Ezra shifted. His wolf was smaller than Lachlan's. Their wolves started circling one another slowly. They were both growling. I started to step back slowly. Unfortunately, I had forgotten about the warriors that were trailing me from behind.

The wolves lunged for each other and started rolling back and forth, each trying to get closer to the other's neck.

Cyrus managed to latch onto Ezra's wolf's neck and tore a huge chunk of skin off his neck. It was grotesque, I could see the artery rupture, and the blood rapidly spraying out all over Cryus and into the air.

Ezra started to go limp, he shifted back to human form. His skin was deathly pale, and I watched as he lost consciousness.

Cryus had delivered a fatal bite. I figured this was my time to escape now. I shifted into my wolf Amber and barged through the two warrior wolves behind me, causing them to fall to the ground.

I could sense that Cyrus was on my tail, merely seconds behind me, so I pushed myself as far as I could. I could almost see the end of the treeline ahead of me. I just had to move a little faster.

"Come on Amber, we are almost through the trees. Just a bit further!" I tried to encourage my wolf.

She was determined to outrun her ex-mate.

As we pushed past the last of the trees, I could feel the body heat of Cryus upon us, and just as I smelt him hover over us, I felt myself being pushed to the ground, my face hitting the ground suddenly.

Cyrus had launched his body on top of us, pinning us down. He was holding us face down on the ground.

Cyrus let out a menacing growl.

I could feel him shift on top of me.

"Mmmmn, just like oldtimes. Me on top riding you face down!" Lachlan declared.

"I think I'm gonna be sick!" I said out loud.

And with that Lachlan grabbed my head and pushed it hard against the ground.

I was too dizzy and in too much pain to even react.

I could feel myself being lifted up, but I felt so incoherent. I just let the darkness take me.

I felt myself being pulled along the ground. I could smell the grass and earth scratching my face as I was being dragged. A burning sensation had engulfed me, it felt like my skin was being grazed repeatedly against the ground.

I must have only lost consciousness for a few seconds, as I appeared to be on the pack grounds still. I could see I was being dragged back the way I came.

I had enough of this playing dumb business. I tried to play the passive weak female and hoped that would be enough for Lachlan to let slip where Kingston was, but now I was over it.

I focussed my energy and used my power to get myself out of the warrior's grip, burning their hands with an electrical surge. They started screaming in pain. I jumped up on my feet and got into a defensive stance.

"Playtime is over! Tell me where Kingston is now! And I might let you live!" I demanded with a cold and determined look on my face.

Lachlan looked at me in disbelief.

"What the f**k was that!" he yelled, looking at his warriors squealing in pain.

"That was me taking the power back!" I said standing there with my arms crossed looking at him smugly.

"I'm done playing games!" I yelled at him.

"Where is my mate? Tell me now and I might show you some mercy!" I demanded.

I could feel my eyes glowing. I was getting angrier by the moment. My wolf is anxious to find her mate and disgusted at the sight of her former mate.

“Your eyes!” Lachlan called out incredulity.

“Where is my mate!” I called out. My anger resonates and I felt a surge of energy, it felt electrical. I moved my hands in Lachlan’s direction and he and his warriors fall to the ground. I watch them look at me in horror and disbelief.

“What the!” Lachlan screamed out, pulling himself back up, and dusting himself off.

“Turns out you didn’t know me as well as you thought,” I told him coldly.

“What are you? Some kind of witch?” Lachlan blurted out.

He was stalling. I struggled to contain my wolf. I could feel my eyes switching color. I was about to inflict pain upon this poor excuse for a wolf in front of me.

I was getting angrier by the moment and I could feel myself heating up again. As I went to raise my hand towards Lachlan he called out.

“I can take you to him! Kingston! I will show you where he is!” Lachlan yelled out with two hands in front of me, gesturing to me that he will surrender for now.

“No games! If I think you are tricking me – I will make you suffer!” I tell him.

I feel so strong and in control. A far cry from the naive and shy Aleksa that I once was.

Aleska POV

We had been walking for a few minutes now and I could see the pack was starting to wake up. It would appear that the dark witch’s spell had been lifted. My mind-link was currently being flooded by anxious pack members. I felt a headache coming on so I blocked them all for now.

I tried to mind-link Kingston, hoping that I might finally be able to get through to him, but there was nothing. I couldn’t feel him, period. I knew that nothing sinister had happened to him so that was something at least.

“Aleksa, where are you?” I heard via mind-link. I was not surprised that Jackson could get through to me, it must be a crescent moon wolf perk.

“I’m with Lachlan and two of his warriors, we are walking towards the maintenance sheds, he’s cooperating at the moment but I don’t trust him,” I told Jackson.

“Right, we’re on our way!” Jackson called out via the mind-link.

As we were approaching the sheds I had a feeling that danger was awaiting us and that this was a trap, but I was determined to find Kingston. I had the upper hand for now, but I was still on high alert.

Lachlan told me that Kingston was just behind the sheds in the woods, and that he had him handcuffed in silver there. I look at him and I sensed that he was being truthful. I reached out to Amber but she couldn’t sense anything.

As we approached the bush I heard movement in multiple directions. In a matter of seconds, I was surrounded by wolves, snapping their teeth at me angrily.

Lachlan turned around with a smirk on his face.

“Right where I wanted you. Still so naive!” He laughed out loud, shaking his head toward me.

I crossed my arms and tilted my head at him.

I was about to make some smart-a*s comment when I heard snickering from behind the wolves, they parted ways, and out walked Eva.

“Aleska is mine!” She called out.

Lachlan looked at her in amusement.

“Have at it, just don’t k**l her, do you hear me!” Lachlan screamed out to Eva.

“I can’t make any promises!” Eva replied snarkily.

“Eva!” Lachlan called back.

“Yeah, ok, fine I won’t k**l her,” She begrudgingly agreed.

I looked at Eva and couldn’t contain my laughter. I found it hilarious that she thought that she could take me. I’m not the same girl that she remembered, but I will sure enjoy educating her.

I stood in anticipation, as I knew that she would strike first.

As predicted Eva walked up to me and attempted to slap me hard across the face, but I could see it coming a mile away and I blocked her hand with my arm, causing her to call out loudly in pain.,

“Pathetic!” I called out to her.

I saw that the wolf’s attention had moved to something coming from behind me.

I turned my head to see what it was, and I saw my friends approaching us with haste.

In doing so, I had broken the never turn your back on your opponent rule, and I had given Eva time to attack me.

I felt my body fall back on the ground hard. Eva was punching my face hard and fast, and after a few hits, I was starting to feel dizzy.

I let out a loud growl and pushed Eva from me hard. My wolf and I were now furious and I could feel my body heating up once again, but I didn’t want to use my powers on Eva, nor did I want to shift just yet. I wanted to take this b***h out on my own.

Suddenly I had flashbacks of all the times that I had suffered in pain while Eva was with Lachlan, all the times I confided in her, all the times I went out of my way for her, and then I thought about when I caught them in the act and that look of sheer smug satisfaction on her face, and that did it for me. I hit her hard, and I couldn’t stop.

I felt a wolf jump up and bite my shoulder from behind. I felt the pain surge through me. I took this moment to shift into my wolf. Amber was furious, she charged for the wolf and ripped out a chunk of skin from its flank. I then spat it out. It tasted disgusting in my mouth. It appeared to be a rogue wolf, judging by its foul odor.

I watched Eva shift and charge toward me and I knew that I needed to end the other wolf so that I could focus on Eva. As I was about to go in for the k**l, Eva’s wolf jumped on me and snapped its teeth toward my neck. I was now vastly outnumbered and there was a raging battle going on around me. I knew that my friends were here fighting and I needed to try to end this.

I focussed my energy on getting Eva off me. I felt myself heat up, and the electrical energy surge through me. I felt it connect with Eva's fur and smelt her fur burning as she begun to sizzle. She was essentially being electrified. She fell off me onto the ground, rolling until she appeared to lose consciousness.

The wolf that had just been attacking me looked scared and started to cower away, submitting to me.

"Run away, and don't come back, and I will let you live!" I mind-linked the wolf.

The wolf looked shocked, and nodded its head towards me, then ran off towards the woods.

I looked around me and saw Jackson and Lachlan circling one another. I saw Abbey had shifted and she was fighting back to back with Lily who had also shifted, there were about four wolves surrounding them.

Sam was fighting the two warriors that were accompanying Lachlan earlier.

The place was chaos. Pack wolves fighting rogue wolves, it was c****e.

I look behind me and I saw some of the alphas from other packs that were here for the summit, were arriving to help us fight the rogues. Thank the goddess for that I thought to myself.

I mind-linked Jackson, "I need to find Kingston. Ask Lachlan where he is, do whatever you have to get the information out of him," I called out.

"You got it!" Jackson replied.

I stalked hurriedly towards Sam to help him fight the warriors, he was holding his own, but the sooner we took these rogues down the better.

I mind-linked my friends "Try to incapacitate them as opposed to massacring them, they are just following orders, we want to keep the death toll down if we can,"

My mind was flooded with replies.

"Need a hand, Sam?" I mind-linked Sam.

"Sure thing Luna," He called out to me.

In no time we take them out, but as fast as we get rid of them more seemed to appear.

“Sam, go help your mate! I’ll be fine here!” I called out to him via mind-link.

“Are you sure?” He called out nervously.

“Yes, go!” I told him.

Sam moved to help Lily and Abbey who seemed to be constantly surrounded by rogues.

Everyone was defending their positions well but it was becoming tiresome.

I asked my wolf if she could sense our mate yet. She replied to me that she couldn’t pick anything up.

“Abbey, do you think you could help me find Kingston? I still can’t get hold of him even though the spell has been lifted.” I mind-link her.

“Yes, I think so, I can definitely try, I just need to be able to concentrate,” Abbey replied.

“I’m on my way!” I replied to her.

I was done with fighting the hard way. I once again focussed my energy and shocked the wolves surrounding me. I felt a little drained. It appeared that the more my powers were used, the more energy it took from me.

I charged toward Abbey, Lily, and Sam. “Abbey if you can make your way to the maintenance sheds behind us you might be able to try that locating spell?” I declared.

“Hmmn, I can try. But I will need something that belongs to Kingston. Do you have anything I could use?” Abbey asked me.

I shook my head sadly.

“Ah, it’s ok, I’ll see what I can do, be back soon!” Abbey called out.

I took over her place in the circle and continued to fight the rogues. I was feeling a bit drained, my wolf missed her mate, it felt like forever since we had seen one another.

I looked over to Jackson, while I was fighting one on one with a rogue. I saw him and Lachlan fighting, rolling over each other, snapping and biting one another, each of them seeking dominance in the fight. Neither one of them seemed to be winning, both taking hard hits, with gashes evident all over their bodies, both with blood-soaked fur.

It was at that moment it dawned on me. Jackson's powers. I had never asked him what they are specifically. Why hasn't he ended his fight with Lachlan?

I wasn't paying attention to the fight, and I felt a claw s***h the side of my neck. I felt blood drip down my collarbone and onto my chest. The pain spurred me on.

I lunged forward and ripped the rogue's throat out, spitting its disgusting skin and flesh onto the field.

I was snapped out of my bloodlust by the feeling of a mind-numbing pain ripping through me. I felt as though I had been stabbed with a knife in my chest. I clutched myself where it hurt and let out a blood-curdling growl. I knew that I was feeling someone else's pain.

I scanned my eyes around the field and I saw Jackson fall to the ground, leaning on his knees, holding his chest. Lachlan hovering over him snickering.

I saw a silver dagger sticking out of his chest and my heart hurt for him. I picked myself up off the ground and my paws pounded against the ground galloping towards him as if my life depended on it.

I leapt off the ground into the air and lunged towards Lachlan, I started ripping into him, tearing into his chest frantically, he used whatever energy he had to push me off. I got back onto my paws to attack him some more, when I was distracted by Jackson's groans.

I was torn, part of me wanted to end this wretched wolf who has my mate hidden somewhere, who has made my life a misery as well as countless other and gravely injured my cousin, and the other part of me, the bigger part, needed to tend to Jackson.

I felt Sam and Caleb flank me.

Sam shifted beside me.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, reject you Lachlan as my Alpha," Sam said holding his ground. He then quickly shifted back to his wolf form ready to fight the wolf he once pledged his allegiance to.

Lachlan laughed.

"I was gonna k**l you anyway. Enjoy your short life as a Rogue!" He called out to Sam.

"I need to help Jackson, can you stall him for now?" I mind-inked Sam and Caleb.

"Yes Luna," They replied to me in synchronisation.

I leaned down to Jackson, and tried to assess his wound. The blood was hemorrhaging out. The dagger was silver. And then it hit me -my nightmares. I've seen this all before, in my nightmares.

I shifted back to human form, so I could use my hands to help put pressure on the wound.

I tried to fight back the tears but they continued to fall furiously.

"Stay with me Jackson!" I called out pleadingly.

I shook him to try keep him awake. I saw his eyes were starting to roll back.

"Jackson, please!" I called out desperately.

"Please Moon Goddess, help him!" I yelled out to the sky.

At that very moment, we were all blinded by an overwhelming bright white light.

Aleska POV

I had to close my eyes as the light was so bright. I heard a loud screeching sound, it was piercing my ears, like some sort of sound distortion. And then a wave of energy hit us all. The force was overwhelming and I felt lightheaded. After a few moments, I felt myself come to my senses. The light started to dim down and my eyes began to adjust. The light appeared to be shrinking and in a matter of moments, it had become merely an orb. There was a figure

emerging from behind it. I had to squint to see in the darkness of the woods. It was Xanthe!

Most of the wolves that had been fighting on the battlefield were holding their heads, they looked to be in pain. Xanthe looked panicked and started running towards me. I looked back down at Jackson, "Jackson, can you hear me, please stay with me!" I yelled at him.

Xanthe approached us and pushed me aside, "Move!" She ordered me. I looked at her in confusion.

"Xanthe, what are you doing?" I asked her.

"He is my Mate!" She told me looking at him in disbelief.

I could see how concerned she looked. She touched his face with the palm of her hands, her fingers touching Jackson's face in a gentle and loving manner.

Jackson's breathing was starting to normalize already with Xanthe's mere touch. I wonder if that could be the mate bond at work, or perhaps it was because Xanthe was a healer or both.

"Are you sure?" I asked Xanthe hopefully.

"I can heal him!" Xanthe declared.

"I just need some space," Xanthe said. I could tell she was trying to suppress her true feelings, I could hear the shakiness in her voice.

Xanthe POV

After meeting with Aleksa and Kingston that day in the gazebo in the rose gardens, I was determined to find out whatever I could about her heritage. However, along the way my past had caught up with me. I had been detained against my will by someone who had untoward plans for me.

I was able to escape that hellhole with help from an unlikely ally. I then began to make my way back to Rocky Mountain. My intuition had told me to come back right away. I had thought something might be wrong with Aleska until I reached the pack border and then I felt it. I felt him.

I felt the pull deep within my heart. My true love. My mate, was here, and he was hurt. I made my way toward the training fields and I saw a raging battle

taking place. I could sense it was between pack wolves fending off a rogue attack.

I could see everyone fighting from the woods. I saw that despicable Lachlan lunging toward Aleksa and then I let out a surge of power, blinding and stopping all in its path.

I made my way to the wolf on the ground as I saw he had shifted to his human form.

He was gorgeous. Rugged with dark and handsome features, I could sense that he was of alpha blood.

He had been stabbed with a silver wolfsbane-infused dagger in his chest and he was fading fast. I couldn't believe that after all these centuries I had finally found my mate. I refused to lose him when I had only just found him.

After telling Aleksa that he was my mate, I attempted to heal him. I placed my hands over his body and channeled all of my energy. I used my strength to s**k the poison from his system. I felt it consume me but I would not stop until my mate was safe.

It seemed like an eternity but in reality, it didn't take long at all. I watched my mate wake from his state of unconsciousness.

I watched him look into my eyes with desire and growl "MATE!"

I looked at him and I smiled lovingly.

Aleksa POV

My wolf became restless, and then she growled wildly. "Mate! Mate is coming!" She howled in my head with joy.

I jerked my head to the left, and I watched as my mate approached us with Abbey in tow.

"Kingston!" I called out desperately. My heart racing and an overwhelming desire to run to my mate and never let go, right here in the middle of this fight.

I looked at Xanthe and Jackson. They were having a moment. They wouldn't notice me gone.

I leaped up onto the ground and ran into my mate's arms.

As I ran toward him I took in his bruised and swollen face, he had a split lip and a split eyebrow. Why was he in such a state I wondered. Why was his werewolf healing not kicking in? What had happened to him?

I felt him flinch in pain as my body smacked against his. I looked at him with concern on my face. I lifted up his shirt and saw burn marks, it looked like a silver knife had been slashed against him repeatedly.

I looked at his wrists which also looked to be burned. I could only assume he had been bound in silver handcuffs or chains.

My wolf whimpered internally for our mate.

"I'm ok. I'll heal soon." Kingston said to me casually.

I smacked my lips against his and passionately kissed him. My wolf was howling in my head. Then I pulled away quickly, realizing that we were still in the middle of the fight. There would be time for this later, I thought to myself.

I looked to Abbey, "How?" That was all I could ask her, still astonished that she had found my mate.

"He was bound in silver, and unconscious when I found Him. He was tied to a chair, at the back of the maintenance shed. I picked up his scent while I was trying to find some space to perform the locating spell," Abbey replied.

I looked again at Kingston. Trying my best to suppress my tears of joy, as I was pushed aggressively to the ground. My head hit the ground with a loud thud. As I looked up to see what had just hit me I saw Kingston being pinned to the ground by Lachlan's wolf Cyrus.

I ran into Cyrus with all my might. I figure it will buy Kingston a few moments to shift. As he hovers over me snapping at me, I try to fight him off with my hands.

I hear him whimper as Kingston shifts into his wolf Sabre and takes a large chunk of flesh out of his left hind leg. Cyrus is pushed to the ground and it seems that Sabre has the upper hand when a scroungy brown wolf jumps onto him trying to get access to his neck.

Furious, and recognizing that the scroungy and singed wolf is Eva, I quickly shifted into my wolf Amber and lunged forward viciously taking aim at her neck. I latched onto it and I tugged at it mercilessly, not letting go until I was satisfied that there was no life left in her.

While part of me was sad to take a life, especially when this wolf was once my friend, I told myself that she was never the friend I thought she was, and that I would stop at nothing to protect my mate.

Sabre continued to attack Cyrus, taking aim at his neck but missing and taking a chunk out of his shoulder instead, he then went for Cyrus's jugular and ripped into his neck, blood squirting out all over Sabre, soaking his fur. Cyrus began to lose strength, whimpering, his motions stalling.

Sabre moves away from Cyrus nudging against my snout, we both shift and fall into each other's arms. Usually, I would be embarrassed to be naked in front of so many other wolves but right now I'm just feeling blessed to have my mate in my arms. I'm so besotted that I don't even notice Cyrus has shifted into his human form and he is getting back on his feet.

It's almost too late when I see he has somehow picked up the silver dagger and is about to stab Kingston in the neck when Sam comes from behind and grips the dagger forcing it into Lachlan's heart he then pulls it out and slices Lachlan's neck open decapitating him.

I gasped in horror as I watch my former mate's head fall to the ground. I wished that things could have been different, but he was a lost soul, so consumed in evil and darkness. There was no redemption for him.

I mouthed thank you to Sam for saving my mate from harm. Kingston had turned around just in time to see Lachlan meet his demise. We all stood there in silence for a moment.

As I looked around us, I noticed that the rogues had started to retreat. I watched my friends start to pick themselves up off the battlefield. I saw wolves tending to the injured. We all just stared at one another looking grateful that we were still all here, and it is finally over.

Aleksa POV

Four hours later.

Once Lachlan was no longer a threat and we were sure the rogues had retreated, we began the task of picking ourselves back up.

We rounded the entire pack together and all the visiting packs, and had a quick debrief.

After the debriefing we encouraged the visiting packs not to feel obliged to stay, and to feel free to make their way home, as the summit was effectively over, due to these unexpected events.

We had just finished rounding up the last of the deceased rogues when the royal pack entourage arrived. This isn't the way we were planning to greet the Alpha King, and it definitely wasn't what we had planned for this day of the summit.

Originally we had a huge festival planned with performers, stalls, music, and food. Until we were attacked by a dark witch and rogues led by my deranged ex-mate.

As the Alpha King himself, also known as my cousin Callum, stepped out of his Range Rover he took in the grim sight that awaited him.

The pack ground was a mess. Blood stained the once lush green field in front of us. It was clear a battle had taken place here.

Before he had a chance to ask what had happened we moved forward to introduce ourselves. We were quite a sight, I was still bleeding from the wounds I had sustained during the fight, Kingston looks like a bruised and battered mess, and we both still needed medical attention.

We had declined it initially, as we wanted the most vulnerable and injured wolves to be tended to first. Kingston tried to insist that I go straight to the pack doctor but I wanted to make sure my friends were seen first. Plus I could already feel my wounds were being healed.

We welcomed Callum to the pack and led him to the pack house dining room where some of our kitchen staff organized some pastries and hot drinks for Callum and his men.

We explained the events of the past twenty-four hours briefly, as well as explained that we had ramped up security as well as had Xanthe and Abbey placing some protective spells in place to secure the perimeter for now, in case of any further retaliation.

Callum suggested that we get cleaned up, get our wounds tended to, and then meet him and his men again in an hour or two on the pack house patio.

After showering and dressing and attending to our wounds, we met Callum at the pack house patio. The sun was beginning to set and it was quite a sight to behold. It was daunting to think that there was still so much to do before we retired for the day.

Callum had examined my crescent moon wolf marking with awe. Jackson didn't have a marking yet as he hadn't mated and marked his true mate yet, although it was only a matter of time now that he and Xanthe had found one another.

I begun to relay my story of how I had been raised as a human, to finding my wolf Amber and shifting for the first time, to meeting Lachlan and my time at Evergreen, up until the events that had just occurred here at Rocky Mountain. Callum had praised my strength and integrity, as well as Jackson's ability to lead a pack and still manage to keep his wolfs secret identity.

Callum then went on to explain his understanding of the events that had occurred at the royal pack all those years ago, as well as his condolences regarding our parents.

Jackson had also joined us, he was completely healed. It was as if nothing had happened earlier today. There was not a scratch on him.

He was reluctant to join us at first as he refused to be away from Xanthe, especially since they had just found one another. So Xanthe was present at the meeting also. Callum thanked her for her efforts to protect me and keep me safe, as well as her services to the royal pack.

Callum had even offered Jackson and me the opportunity to join the royal pack as senior members, which we were very honored to receive. However, we had to politely decline as neither of us wished to leave our current packs due to finding our true mates and our obligations.

While Callum was disappointed that we didn't take him up on his offer he did understand. So instead he came up with the idea of a Royal Pack Alliance which was extended not only to our closest allies but to the packs that had fought in the attack earlier today.

Though the packs had already started to make their way home immediately after the attack, we had all agreed to reconvene again in a month's time to discuss alliances and a peace treaty.

Callum was curious about the Hybrid who had such great knowledge of the royal pack, so he requested a meeting with Abbey, to which she gladly obliged, to which Alaric accompanied her too.

It appeared that Callum had known Abbey's mother well and they shared a few stories with one another. Abbey and Alaric were also invited to visit the royal pack, which they are intending to do after returning back to their packs.

Jackson and I have both been invited to stay at the Volkov Kingdom to meet some of our distant relatives and to learn more about our heritage. We have both agreed to come along, and we intend to bring our mates with us but have asked that it be postponed until everything is back to normal again following the recent attacks.

Jackson declared that he needed to speak with his father first and check back in with his pack, as he had been absent for some time now.

Further to that, he wished to introduce Xanthe to his pack as his Luna.

Xanthe was a bit reluctant. Although she had accepted Jackson as her mate, she was unsure about becoming Luna and is worried that there may be resistance to her being accepted as Luna due to the fact that she is a witch by birth.

I have a feeling it will all work out eventually though.

After Lachlan had met his demise, the rogues instantly began to retreat. However, we had managed to capture a few of them for interrogation purposes. They aren't saying anything at the moment, but Kingston believes that in a few days' time they will probably start talking.

Kingston was organizing a tracking team right now to see if they could follow the rogue's scents in an effort to find out where they came from, and determine if they will be a future threat.

Xanthe was planning to contact a coven that she has a working relationship in a bid to try to find out who the dark witch was and to see if she will become a further threat to us in the future.

The dark witch did say she would "see me soon," and I'm pretty sure she knew that I was a crescent moon wolf, so that could become problematic.

Kingston and I were heading off to the pack hospital now to check on our friends and injured pack members. After that I planned on calling Mason and Quinn and sharing a video call with my pups if they were still awake.

Now that Lachlan was no longer a threat, there is no reason why they cant all come home.

I simply cannot wait to have my pups safely in my arms again. It feels like it has been an eternity since I last saw them.

Kingston had managed to contact Asher, and he and Kaia are on their way back to Rocky Mountain. Asher said that when he went to tell them about Ezra's death, they already knew. They told him that they have something exciting to tell us when they get back. We have an inkling as to what it might be, but we are excited to hear what they have to say.

It's going to take some time to get things back to what they once were. We have a lot to do as far as pack security goes. The fact that the dark witch managed to create all that chaos is pretty scary. To think such an attack was able to occur, means we have much work ahead of us to ensure it doesn't happen again.

We will have lots of work to do with the creation of this new alliance with the royal pack, but everyone seems open to the idea so far.

With so many finding their fated and second chances mates, there is still much celebrating to be done. There are also Luna ceremonies to take place, including my own ceremony. But there is plenty of time for that.

What matters now is that everyone is safe and well, that all the injured recover, and that we get things back to a state of normality – whatever that might look like.

As I descended the stairs of the pack house I looked around at the lush greenery that surrounds me, the sky is now starting to darken, and night is falling.

I am so blessed to call this place home. I am safe. I am free at last.

I looked to the bottom of the stairs and see my perfect mate waiting for me.

Kingston had a grin on his face, and I raised my brows as I look at him, and then I saw why he was grinning.

As I looked to the side entrance of the main packhouse reception I saw my precious pups, my Liam and Layla, standing next to Mason and Quinn.

“How?” I asked Kingston via mind-link, in a state of astonishment.

“I rang Mason after the attack, and said it was safe to bring Liam and Layla back,” Kingston replied.

I was already making my way toward my pups.

“Mommy!” They called out in unison, running as fast as their little legs would carry them. I too started to run towards them and we met in the middle. They landed in my arms and I kissed them both on their foreheads as they push their heads into my chest and we take in one another’s scents. I felt the tears of joy falling from my cheeks. Then I felt Kingston join our hug and we all embraced each other. Our family unit was finally back together. Everything was just as it should be. I felt at peace at last. I never dreamed that I could feel so complete and so loved.

Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 43

Kingston POV

As I skim read the emails in my inbox, I am mind-linked by Aleksa, apparently, there are more guests arriving early and there is no one there to greet them. I ask Aleksa to hold down the fort while I make my way downstairs to attend to the arriving Alpha.

As I am making my way there I feel panic race through our bond. Aleksa seems nervous or worried about something, so I pick up my pace, and as I am descending the stairs I see an Alpha reaching his arm out towards Aleksa, she seems reluctant. I am instantly on alert and I start stalking toward the Alpha wondering what his problem is. I know it isn't Lachlan because I don't think Aleksa would be standing that close to him, and while she's nervous she doesn't seem threatened.

"MINE!" I growl. Unable to control myself. The wolf in front of me doesn't even flinch. He is an alpha also it appears.

"Jackson," He says, extending his arm for a handshake. It appears he isn't an immediate threat, so I lower my guard a little.

"Blue Moon Pack," He tells me which pack he is from and now I know exactly who he is. I've heard many things about him. A fierce fighter, he was first in his class at Wentworth, which is an elite alpha training facility on the East Coast. He was a natural-born alpha, although rumor had it that he was never really interested in taking the position of Alpha for his pack. Though he was the only heir, he was forced into it out of obligation to his pack and his parents.

I'm not sure what his intentions are with Aleksa or how they know each other but I am determined to find out, and now.

"Jackson, I'm Kingston, I could sense my Luna's distress, Am I right to assume you know each other?" I ask, raising a brow.

"We do, but not in the way you might think. You are newly mated I take it?" He states rhetorically.

I continue to stare at him, waiting for him to answer my question. I am not in the mood for his condescension.

"We both spent some time in the dungeons at Evergreen." He tells me and with that I am confused, what is an Alpha, especially one as capable as him, doing in a dungeon at another pack.

"Jackson of Blue Moon Pack, I recall communicating with you via email. Welcome to Rocky Mountain." I say in a forced and reluctant tone.

“I think you should come in and join us in my office, we should have a chat. Just to make sure we are all on the same page. What do you think?” I say, more of a demand, rather than a question.

“Sure. Lead the way.” Jackson says casually, which irks me a little.

We arrive at my office and gesture to him where I want him to sit. I pull Aleksa onto my lap, my wolf needs calming right now. He is angry and feels that this alpha may be a threat to our mate. He is feeling impatient. I can tell she wants to stand strong and show her independence but she can feel my frustration right now so she caters to my needs.

First thing is first, I need to know what their connection is. So I ask him what he was doing in the dungeons, and he starts his story, telling me the events leading to his time at Evergreen as well as the exchanges with Aleksa in the dungeons, he even goes on to shock us with the confession that he went back to Evergreen to free Aleksa. Sabre growls fiercely he is enraged that Jackson felt attracted to our mate, and he wants to claw his eyes and rip his throat out instantly, but I force him to the back of my mind, and keep our composure, and rightly so as Jackson goes on to announce that he knows Aleksa isn't his mate, although perplexed at the need to want to protect her and her pups, stressing that he respects the mate bond.

He further adds that Aleksa's previous pack Evergreen is in trouble and that it is about to be taken over. Personally, I could care less about the pack that was complicit in hurting my mate. But I can feel that she still has loyalty towards them, even though they hurt her. I can feel that she is conflicted. I will have to talk to Aleksa more about this, if she wishes to intervene somehow I will stand by her. I know she is worried about her friend Sam, and she has voiced wanting to contact him. But that is a whole other conversation for another time.

Although I sense that Jackson appears to be genuine, I am not willing to just take his word for it, so I suggest he gets settled and we continue this conversation at a later date. That will give me time to do a more thorough background check on him.

Aleska POV

It's still dark when I wake up, I look at the clock on the wall, and I see that it's 3.30 am. Although I feel wide awake, as though I am ready to start the day. I look over at Kingston, he appears to be fast asleep.

I guess it just feels strange not having Liam and Layla here. I feel empty. Usually, I would wake briefly at this time, make a trip to the bathroom and check on my pups. But they aren't here and I know there's no chance of me going back to sleep, so I decide it's coffee o'clock. I may as well pop downstairs and make myself a coffee, maybe I could do some baking. I used to bake all the time at Evergreen, but I haven't had a chance to here, there is always so much going on, plus Rose is always chasing me out of her kitchen.

I tiptoe down the staircase and make my way to the kitchen, it's empty so I'm in luck. I switch on the lights and make my way to the Nespresso machine. We have a large espresso machine, and there is the old-fashioned coffee brew in the pot, but I just love Nespresso. It only takes a minute and I'm in my happy place. I walk over to the window, it's quite light outside, the moon is in full force. I pull open the french doors and take a seat on the outdoor swing sofa on the patio. Luckily there is a small throw on the sofa, so I can get all snug and just stare into the night.

I start thinking about Xanthe and I wonder why we haven't heard from her. I start to wonder if maybe something has happened to her. She did mention that she was running from something in her past, I hope it hasn't caught up with her. I must discuss this further with Kingston today, there must be some way that we can get hold of her, at least to check that she is okay. I would never forgive myself if something happened to her while she was trying to find information for me. I hate putting people out. I have gone this long without knowing I can go a little longer.

And then my mind drifts to Jackson, I am still quite taken aback that he was willing to risk everything to free me. I suppose he wouldn't have done so if he didn't think I was possibly his mate. I hope he finds his mate, perhaps at the Summit, he might find someone.

It's the strangest feeling, but there is still something about him. It feels familiar or safe. I can't decide which one it is. I wonder if he could be connected to my past somehow? I know Kingston is still unconvinced about his intentions, and I love that he is so protective of me, but I really hope everything works out, and that we can all be friends.

Today is the first official day of the Annual Royal Alpha Summit. A lot of packs from around the country will be arriving over the next two days. It will be interesting to meet everyone. I hope we can make some new allies/friends along the way. I am nervous about meeting the Alpha King. I've never met royalty before. Kingston has a close relationship with Callum (the Alpha King) he says we will get along well. I hope he is right. I hope I don't do anything to offend, I am still learning about my heritage and werewolf culture. Kai has been teaching me about royal etiquette. I just hope I remember it all.

I feel so wired. My caffeine hit coupled with my anxiety has given me next-level energy. My mind is all over the place right now.

"Let's go for a run in the forest! We need to burn some of this energy off!" Amber suggests, she's feeling all pent up, it's been a while since I went for a run in wolf form.

"I guess as long as we don't go far we should be fine. As long as we are back before Kingston wakes." I say to Amber.

"I want full control!" Amber declares.

"Yeah ok, but behave!" I pleaded with her.

And with that, I run towards the end of the patio, and Amber jumps off it, shifting mid-air into our wolf form.

Amber (Aleksa's Wolf) POV

After running for a good while I find a nice spot to lay down and bask in the serenity of the forest. Aleksa doesn't let me out to prance and strut enough. Although I have to admit she has been a little better recently. I get that growing up thinking she was human and not being aware of her true identity has set us both back greatly. But now we are free from the constraints of Lachlan and Cyrus we will be free to connect more and explore. I thought I loved Cyrus but what we had wasn't love, and if I had the chance to see him again I would be sure to give him a piece of my mind and the back of my paw. Cryus was a good lay and initially, I fell for his charm and overconfidence, but eventually, I knew there was something sinister behind the facade of them both – Lachlan and Cyrus.

It's different with Sabre, he's honest and unfiltered. Not to mention he sure knows how to treat a she-wolf.

I gently growl thinking of our time together, my tail wagging and my tongue hanging out. Thinking of the risqué things that Sabre and I had done to each other. This makes me want to run back to our room and wake our mate up to play.

Kingston is a hundred times a better human than Lachlan ever was. He treats Aleksa like a Queen and so he should. Despite our stunted start, we are capable of great things. There is still so much for Aleksa to learn. I can't tell her some of these things as she needs to find out for herself. I am guided by the moon goddess herself and I know my place. I am here as her guide.

I'm enjoying having free range of the forest while the rest of the pack is still sleeping. That is until I realize we are not alone.

I don't even need to look behind me to know who is there. I can feel it in my soul. I know he is familiar. I know he is safe. I know this because he is one of us. He too is a Crescent Moon Wolf. He is unmated so there is no identifying mark. And this is not our first rodeo, as children of the Moon Goddess, we have lived many lives.

Legend tells of the Crescent Moon Wolf being passed down by shewolves, but the Legend was wrong. There are male Crescent Moon Wolves too, just most do not know of their existence. And because no one is looking for them, they tend to live longer lives in their human hosts than we she-wolves do. The biggest giveaway of the Crescent Moon wolf happens when they are marked by their true mate. It's our mark that gives us away.

Aleksa didn't have to worry about her mark with Lachlan, because he wasn't her true mate, he was a process that we had to go through in order to get to Kingston and this point in time. Or so the Goddess tells me.

I couldn't pick it while in our human form, and nor could Jackson. But in wolf form, we are connected. Not in a romantic way, although I know we were both initially confused. In a bonded together by the Moon Goddess kind of way. We are kin. And together we are a force to be reckoned with.

We can mind-link, not only in wolf form but in our human counterparts can also. They just don't know it yet.

“Gray,” I mind-link casually, as he continues to walk towards me.

“It’s been a while,” I add.

“Amber,” Gray says back to me, nodding his head towards me warmly.

“Looks like the Goddess has put us together again in this life,” I said to him via mind-link.

“It does. I wonder what the Goddess has planned for us this time.” He replies.

“I’m sure we will find out soon enough. How’s your human this time around?” I ask him.

“Jackson’s strong. Restless. And a little reckless. But we have that in common.” Gray chuckled.

“Aleksa is strong too. A little naive. But kind. Unfortunately, her first mate was a total fuckwad, but I like Kingston for her. Not to mention Sabre makes me all kinds of crazy.” I say, a growl slipping out.

I manage to contain myself and on a serious note, I question Gray.

“No mate yet?” I remark to Gray.

“In good time.” He remarks confidently and unbothered.

Gray turns around.

“We have company.”

Amber (Aleksa’s Wolf) POV

As I get up on all fours from my lay position, I can scent my mate, nothing calls to me more than his pine scent. I can feel the tension through our bond, and I walk to stand in front of Gray so that I can calm my mate before he gets the wrong idea and attacks Gray.

“It’s not what it looks like,” I say to Sabre. Thinking that finding Gray and me here in the middle of the forest, at 4.30 am looks highly suspicious.

“Explain. Now.” Sabre demands. Looking like it is taking everything to calm his jealousy and agitation right now.

“We couldn’t figure out what it was in our human forms, something was drawing us to one another, initially we thought it was an attraction, but it wasn’t like the mate bond it was different,” I say. As Sabre rips out a warning growl.

“We are kin!” I blurt out.

“What?” Sabre mind-links me, followed by a growl.

“Gray (Jackson) is also a Crescent Moon Wolf,” I say to Sabre, although he doesn’t seem convinced yet.

“Gray and I have met before, over many lifetimes, we are both children of the Goddess. We couldn’t detect it in human form, only in wolf form could we truly sense and recognise each other.” I say to Sabre, walking towards him so that he can take in my scent and trying to soothe his anger.

Gray is still holding his ground. He can’t communicate with Sabre, as Sabre isn’t a Crescent Moon wolf, and they are not from the same pack. But Gray patiently waits for me to explain this all to Sabre.

“Why the secrecy?” Sabre questions, eyes flickering from Gray to Myself.

“We (Aleksa and I) couldn’t sleep, she said I could go for a run, and we did, then Gray turned up, he couldn’t sleep either, that’s when we realized who each other was, then you arrived,” I said looking my mate in the eyes, with absolute honesty and adoration.

The tension lessens, and I can feel that Sabre believes me.

“Wait, you are both in wolf form. How are you both communicating? Sabre asks me.

“Oh, it’s a Crescent Moon Wolf thing, cool huh, we can mind-link each other. Even in human form.” I tell Sabre matter of factly.

He growled lightly.

“Tell him to shift. I want to speak with him.” Sabre demands. Nodding his head toward Gray.

“Gray, Sabre wants you to shift so he can speak with you if that’s ok,” I ask, rather than tell, as Gray is an Alpha wolf too, and he will not take kindly to being ordered around.

“Very well,” Gray replied, shifting right in front of us, as a display of dominance.

I avert my eyes momentarily, as although I am no prude, I do not wish to see Jackson naked.

Sabre shifts too, at first they were both standing there stark naked, but Sabre must have mind-linked Asher because he quickly arrived with some changes of clothes. He hands me a dress and I walked over to the nearest tree to get dressed.

Once I was dressed I walked back over to Kingston and Jackson who now both have shorts and t-shirts on. I take my place next to Kingston and kissed him on the cheek, rubbing my scent onto him to calm him down.

Kingston POV

I woke up from my sleep to pull Aleksa close to me. I couldn’t smell her peony and peach nectar, so I opened my eyes to find her side of the bed is empty. I walk into the bathroom to see it was also empty and saw that her clothes were in the laundry hamper. Perhaps she had gone downstairs to make coffee, that’s often what she did when she couldn’t sleep.

I made my way downstairs to find the kitchen empty although I could tell that she had been down here as her scent was all over the stool. I followed her scent outside onto the porch and saw that she was initially on the outdoor sofa swing, her coffee cup was empty and the throw rug was on the ground. I followed her scent to the end of the patio, where I saw her shredded clothes on the ground, so I know that she had shifted into her wolf, Amber.

I’m not impressed that she had shifted in the middle of the night to go for a run without any security, especially in the current situation, so I decided to follow her scent and check on her. I tried to mind-link her but there seems to be a block. This makes me nervous and agitated at the same time. I shifted into Sabre and we took off into the treeline to find our mate. I also mind-linked Asher to let him know that I couldn’t find his Luna.

Sabre (Kingston’s Wolf) POV (As Kingston has shifted)

It doesn't take long to find her, deep in the forest, in a small clearing. She is laying down on her side, it looks like she is in a mind-link with what I can see is Jackson's wolf. His eyes are also hazed over, he also appears to be in a mind-link. They are a few metres apart and appear to be comfortable in each other's presence, which agitates me.

I am furious, all sorts of thoughts are going through my head right now. I begin to stalk in a predatory fashion towards the wolf that is deep in the woods with my mate in the middle of the night, wanting to rip his throat out and ask questions later, but I hear Kingston in my head pleading with me to calm down and listen to what they have to say.

"It's not what it looks like," Amber tells me through mind-link.

"Explain. Now." I demand. It is taking every fibre of my being to contain my rage right now. I can't imagine why my mate is in the woods with another wolf right now. I can't think straight. I can hear Kingston fighting for control. Demanding I shift and listen to what our mate has to say.

"We couldn't figure out what it was in our human forms, something was drawing us to one another, initially we thought it was an attraction, but it wasn't like the mate bond, it was different," Amber tells me. A warning growl rips through me, I am barely holding myself back.

"We are kin," she blurts out.

"What?" I growl again. Not quite sure I've heard her right.

"Jackson (Gray) is a Crescent Moon Wolf." She tells me, although I'm still in a state of disbelief. I had thought that only she-wolves could be Crescent Moon Wolves. I'm gonna need a little more to go on than that.

"Gray and I have met before, over many lifetimes, we are both children of the Goddess. We couldn't detect it in our human form, only in wolf form could we truly sense and recognise each other." Amber tells me, walking towards me, I am hit with her sweet scent which has an immediate calming effect on me.

Gray's chest is puffed up and he looks like he is ready to defend himself and possibly Amber at any time. I should be offended but I am a little impressed that he would defend my mate. Although that isn't necessary as I love her with all my heart. And I am definitely not a threat to her.

“Why the secrecy?” I ask Amber specifically, looking at them both. Although I realize I can’t communicate with Gray, as we are not from the same pack, and are both still in wolf form.

“We (Aleksa and I) couldn’t sleep, she said we could go for a run, we needed to burn some energy, and we did, then Gray turned up, he couldn’t sleep either, that’s when we realized who each other was, and then you arrived, and here we are.” Amber declares looking at me with only love in her eyes, and I can tell she is being completely honest with me. I would be able to tell through our bond if she was lying.

“Wait, you are both in wolf form. How are you communicating?” I ask, suddenly confused.

“Oh, it’s a Crescent Moon Wolf thing. Cool huh! We can mind-link. Even in our human forms.” She tells me as if it’s no big deal.

I let out another growl, feeling maybe just a little jealous.

“Tell him to shift. I want to speak with him.” I instruct Amber. And with that, I mind-linked Asher to bring us two changes of clothes for Jackson and me, and one for Aleksa.

I see her eyes cloud over and I could see they were mind-linking. I stare at them both feeling quite impressed.

About thirty seconds later Gray shifts in front of me. Nudity is no big deal for us werewolves. But I know it still is an issue for Amber/Aleksa as she wasn’t brought up in a pack like we all were.

I looked at my mate who blushed nervously and looked away.

I shifted on the spot also and stand there in all my glory. Asher arrived in record time. Asher looked at us all with a puzzled expression on his face, handing me the bags of clothes he has brought with him.

(Kingston POV)

(As he has just shifted from his wolf form)

“I’ll explain later” I mind-link Asher.

“Ok, Boss,” Asher replied via mind-link.

I pulled a dress out of the bag and handed it to Amber. She walked over to a nearby tree to shift and change.

It's not unusual for us to have bags stashed throughout the woods, we have them as often wolves shift spontaneously and forget a change of clothes. Asher was able to grab a few random bags on his way here.

I mind-linked Asher, thanking him for bringing the change of clothes and telling him I will explain everything later, and dismissing him, telling him I'll see him in my office at 9 am.

When Aleksa had changed she walked up to me and kissed me on the cheek and stood next to me, facing Jackson.

"You will have to forgive me for my aggressive behaviour earlier but I woke in the middle of the night to find my mate wasn't next to me, nor was she in the packhouse, and then I found her in the middle of the woods with another wolf. And not just any wolf, one that seems to have some strange connection to her, I'm sure you can understand why I reacted the way I did." I said to Jackson.

"You're right Kingston, I understand completely. And if I were in your position I would have been just as agitated. Actually, I wouldn't have been able to hold back the way you did." Jackson replied.

"You should know that I have no untoward or malicious intentions with Aleska. We are kin. I couldn't spot it until we were in wolf form. But it all makes sense now." He declares to me.

"I assume Amber told you this is not our first rodeo? That we have been through many life cycles together. Obviously with different human hosts but with similar objectives." Jackson added further.

"What objectives exactly are you referring to?" I was beginning to wonder what exactly the Moon Goddesses' agenda might be.

"To ensure the next generation of Crescent Moon Wolves is protected from harm." Jackson declares.

"Oh my goodness!" Aleksa blurts out.

I looked at her worried, as I could feel her panic through our bond.

“Liam!” Aleksa yelled.

I looked at her with a perplexed expression on my face.

“We knew Layla was a Crescent Moon Wolf, but does this mean Liam is also? They are twins! I was so worried when I found out that Layla’s safety was at risk, and now I’m thinking Liam could be too!” Aleksa said speaking quickly and in a panic-stricken tone.

“Jackson?” I question him, moving my head to the side, glancing at him to see if he can answer Aleksa’s question.

“I would be surprised if he wasn’t,” Jackson said to us both. His forehead creased with concern.

“Is there any way to know right now, perhaps a marking, or something, anything that would identify him as a Crescent Moon Wolf?” I asked Jackson.

“Unlikely. The most obvious sign is the marking that appears when we find our true mates. That and any powers or special abilities we might have.” Jackson told us.

“Then we treat him as if he is. We treat both Liam and Layla the same. Protect them. Train them. Prepare them for their destiny.” I declared to Aleksa and Jackson.

“Ah, question, where exactly are your twins?” Jackson asked.

“They are somewhere safe. For now.” I told him. That’s all he needed to know for now. While I mostly believe what he is saying to be true, I still need to do some more background checks. That and we need to speak with Xanthe now more than ever.

“How about we go get some breakfast and talk about this while we eat?” I suggest to Jackson and Aleksa.

“I could eat,” Jackson says.

“Lead the way, my love,” Aleksa says, interlocking her hands with mine.

(Kingston POV)

The sun is up now, and we have a big day ahead of us. It's the first official day of the Annual Royal Alpha Summit. Alpha's from all over the country will be arriving, and we will need to be ready to greet them all and welcome them in as Alpha and Luna of Rocky Mountain Pack.

We still have an ongoing rogue situation to deal with, as well as finding out more about Aleska's grandfather's whereabouts. We are yet to get ahold of Xanthe, who hopefully will have some more information regarding Crescent Moon Wolves. Also, I wouldn't mind introducing her to Jackson, to get her opinion on everything.

Myself, Asher and some of our elite warriors are still preparing for Lachlan's arrival, and how we can minimise any drama or retaliation, especially while we are hosting the Summit.

This morning we will make a call to Mason, Quinn and my parents, to brief them on our new information. So they are aware of some of the dangers they are facing. Plus I think Aleksa might benefit from hearing from her pups, to see that they are safe and well.

I just hope we get everything in order before the Alpha King arrives later this week. He has entrusted the responsibility of hosting the Summit to me, and I don't want to let him down.

It's going to be a long week.

Aleksa POV

Breakfast was a little awkward. Kingston seems a little unsettled about the news of Jackson being a Crescent Moon Wolf. Jackson also seems a little guarded. I got the feeling he wasn't happy with his identity being shared. After breakfast, Jackson asked to speak privately with Kingston, so, naturally, I accompanied them. Jackson asked for Kingston's word that he wouldn't mention his wolf status to anyone. Kingston was a little offended and didn't take too kindly to being "told what to do" as he put it. I had to intervene, and eventually, we were able to come to a compromise. Jackson agreed that Kingston could tell Asher and Kai, but that he had to alpha command them to keep the secret, which was a reasonable request.

It's mid-morning now and there are several Alphas with their entourages making their way towards the pack-house. I hope these Alpha's and their entourage are as nice as the first few have been.

First up is Alpha Theo and his Luna Stella. They run a large midwestern pack, comprising several states. They have their Gamma Matt and his mate Mia with them, as well as four Elite Warriors. They seem nice, but not big on conversation. Which suits us as the next group is already pulling up. We have them staying in a larger cottage near the training grounds. We have some pack members ready to escort them to their cottage.

Next to arrive is the Alpha of what we refer to as the Floridian Pack. He is unmated, rumor has it that he rejected his fated mate, and he has a reputation for being a bit of a womanizer according to the notes that Quinn left me. He appears to be traveling lightly, with only two Elite Warriors with him. He seems a little gruff and is paying a little too much attention to my chest, his eyes roaming slowly up and down my body, which is making me feel uncomfortable. I could see that Kingston was getting agitated, so we quickly directed him to Kai, who would show him to the small cottage we had prepared for him. Before he walks off, he asks us to send an Omega to his quarters. I am a little shocked at his request, so I refer to Kingston, who is also looking unimpressed.

“We are not that sort of pack. If you are looking for the company of a female or a she-wolf, you might like to take a trip to the nearest human town.” Kingston politely redirects our guest. He has an astounded expression on his face but doesn’t push the issue. I assume that he doesn’t hear no that often.

Before we can even address one another, another two SUVs arrive next to us. I watch as the first person steps out of the car, and my heart jumps out of my chest.

“Caleb! Oh, my goddess! What? How? I’m soo happy to see you!” I said as I ran up to him and wrapped my arms around my previous Gamma, giving him the biggest hug of his life. I am so ecstatically happy right now. I moved my head back and took in his face. I am about to say something when I hear someone clear their throat. I know it’s Kingston. I could feel Sabre getting agitated, so I turned around.

“Kingston, meet Caleb! Caleb was my Gamma at Evergreen.” I said, and then I saw Kali getting out of the SUV with a big smile on her face.

“Oh my! Kali!” I yelled, as I again ran up to her like a child at Christmas. Kali moves to walk towards me and we pull into each other and hug, with tears sweeping down our faces. Kali is one of my best friends. I love her with all my heart and I am so unbelievably happy to see them both here right now.

“Kali, I take it?” Kingston says to Kali, smiling. And he moves toward Caleb to shake his hands, and then to Kali. Who I finally free from my grip.

“How are you here?” I asked, suddenly curious as to what I owe the honor of seeing my best friends here at Rocky Mountain.

“Wait. What’s this? Are you?” I said excitedly at the small bump that is protruding from Kali’s dress.

“Are you pregnant?” I asked her, already knowing the answer, but wanting to hear it from her first.

Caleb walks up to us both and places his arm around his mate lovingly, then places his hand on her belly. “We are!” He exclaims proudly.

“Oh my! I am so happy for you both. You are gonna make the best parents. Isn’t this just the best news, Kingston?” I asked my mate, in an effort to include him more in the conversation.

Kingston walks up to me, wraps his arm around my side, and says “That is great news, congratulations to you both!” He tells them, and he gives Caleb a man hug and pats him on the back, and then Kali a gentle hug, taking great care to avoid her bump.

Kali then pulls away from us all and starts to walk over to the first SUV.

“Allow me to introduce my cousin, Alpha Callum of Crimson Moon,” Kali says, opening the door of the first SUV. Out steps a very tall, very large, heavily tattooed man, with long curly untamed hair and a lot of facial hair. He has dark eyes and tanned skin. His presence is quite intimidating. I am adjusting my neck as far as I can as I look up to him to address him.

“Welcome to the Rocky Mountain Pack, and to the Summit Alpha Callum. I am Kingston, and this is my Luna Aleksa. We are glad you could join us.” Kingston says as he reaches out to shake Callum’s hand.

Callum then extended his hand out towards Kingston, shaking his hand. He then began to shake my hand also. I smiled and nodded at him.

“Thank you. Nice to meet you both. Aleksa, I have heard a lot about you.” He says with a deep husky voice.

I smiled shyly, “Thank you, Alpha Callum. It’s nice to meet you,” I said. “And thank you for all you have done for my friends Caleb and Kali. I am so glad they made it safely to Crimson Moon. I am in debt to you all. Without all of your help, I wouldn’t be here right now.” I said with gratitude to Callum, Caleb, Kali, and Kingston.

“I don’t believe that is the case. You are strong. You would have figured it out. We are happy to have helped, however.” Callum replied to me.

At that moment, another two SUVs drove up and we realized we needed to show our guests their accommodation. I can’t go with my friends although I really want to. I have to continue my Luna duties by welcoming our guests. So I mind-link Asher and Kaia to see if they can escort our special guests.

I had no idea Caleb and Kali were coming. I am not sure if we have accommodation ready for them. I mind-linked Kingston and he assured me that Callum had RSVP with the correct number of guests, so their accommodation is ready now.

Asher and Kaia arrive at the packhouse entrance and Kaia looks surprised to see Caleb and Kali. She walks up to them as if they are old friends, and in a way they kind of are. They are also happy to see Kaia and after they all hug and get acquainted with Asher, he begins to show them the way to their accommodation.

The next two cars approach and I hear a commotion coming from the cars, a high-pitched female voice and a gravelly male voice, a door is thrust open and an angry-looking alpha in his mid-twenties, I would say, steps out, he takes in the surroundings, then starts walking towards us.

“Good morning, welcome to the Rocky Mountain Pack,” I said to him. As I go to shake his hand, he completely dismisses me. Kingston c***s his head and growls. He is not impressed at the disrespect I am shown.

I decide to ignore it and as I am about to say something to break the tension, a shrieking woman exits the SUV, yelling at the Alpha in front of us “You could have waited!” She yelled.

She’s hastily repositioning her bra, her lipstick is a little smudged and her hair is disheveled. I tried to mask the amused expression on my face with a smile. She appeared to be unimpressed that she was left in the car, and that her mate didn’t wait for her. She walks up to Kingston, bats her eyelids and

introduces herself, getting very close and personal, merely inches from Kingston's face. He does not look happy as he steps back to get some space between himself and our guest.

"Luna Roxy, and you are?" She says while extending her hand for Kingston to kiss, I'm assuming. Her mate smacks her hand away from Kingston.

I release a growl at her actions. Amber doesn't appreciate her flirtatious nature and the gall of this she-wolf throwing herself at our mate.

"Oh hell no, she did not just do that!" Amber says angrily in my head.

"She needs to know her place!" Amber protests to me.

"Let it go, Amber, please, let's just get through today." I pleaded with my wolf. She's so fierce and protective and I love her, but she can be a bit aggressive at times.

"Roxy darling, don't embarrass yourself." Her mate says, shaking his head dismissively.

"I am Alpha Tyler. I run the largest pack in California. You are Kingston, I assume?" He says to Kingston.

"I am. Welcome, Alpha Tyler and Luna Roxy." Kingston says plainly.

"Please meet my Luna Aleksa." Kingston declares as he pulls me into his chest proudly.

Roxy looks me up and down and has a look on her face that I can't quite decipher.

"Pleasure," Tyler replies, nodding at me. I get the impression he doesn't like me much. Although I can't imagine why that might be, considering we met only just a few minutes ago. Roxy just flashes me an insincere smile. I get the feeling she likes to be the center of attention. Amber is fuming at her obvious disrespect, but it is only day one of a week-long summit, so I will keep her at bay for now.

"We hope you enjoy your stay with us. I will have someone escort you to your accommodation. Lunch will be in the pack-house dining room. If you need anything else in the meantime, please feel free to call reception, the numbers

are on the phone,” Kingston says abruptly. I can tell he wants to end this interaction as quickly as possible.

And with that, Kai arrives and takes over, freeing Kingston and me for a few moments before the next group arrives.

We watch as Tyler and Roxy make their way back to their vehicle, bickering at each other. Roxy turns her head back and gives Kingston a seductive wink.

Again, I let out a warning growl. Both Tyler and Roxy don't look back. I am starting to tire of Roxy's shameless attitude. Kingston mind-links me, telling me to let it go, it's not worth it, and hopefully, we won't have much to do with them throughout the summit. I somehow doubt we will be that lucky, but I will try to remain optimistic. I have bigger things to worry about than a flirtatious and attention-starved Luna.

It's late afternoon now and there are only a few remaining packs left to check-in, Evergreen being one of them. They may arrive this evening. They could also arrive early in the morning. As far as we know, Lachlan doesn't know that I am here, so I am not sure how this will go down. Kingston assures me that Asher, Kai, and our Elite Warriors are ready for every scenario, and Jackson has been briefed on the situation and he has pledged his support also.

I've been having those nightmares more and more frequently recently, and they all end the same way. I am adamant they are a premonition, a glimpse of things to come, and if that is the case, then we are in trouble.

Aleska POV

I had the worst sleep last night. Back-to-back nightmares. Except that this time, certain aspects of the nightmares had changed. For example, this time Eva and Sam were with Lachlan. Things seemed to be going on in the background of my nightmares, but I couldn't quite make them out. I woke up covered in sweat and my anxiety was at an all-time high. I tried to go back to sleep again to figure out what else was happening in my dream. I had maintained that these dreams seemed like premonitions, and they had changed, and that concerned me.

Eventually, I gave up and decided I would make a start to my day. It was then that I noticed that the other half of my bed was empty. Perhaps Kingston couldn't sleep either. I jumped into the shower and then quickly got dressed. I made my way downstairs, heading towards the kitchen.

I decided to make a nice hot coffee in the kitchen while Rose and some of our kitchen staff put the finishing touches on breakfast as our guests would be joining us this morning. I felt a little relieved as I recalled the video call we had last night after dinner with Liam and Layla. Our pups were beaming with energy, they were so excited about telling Kingston and me all about their adventures in Idaho.

Chase and Cordelia had met up with some close friends of theirs and they had brought their grand-pups along with them to play with Liam and Layla. It sounded like they were having the time of their lives. I realized that we had told Chase and Cordelia to keep them isolated in the cabin, but we trusted their judgment. Plus, we were confident in Mason and Quinn's ability to protect our pups had the occasion arose.

After speaking with Liam and Layla for a while, Cordelia and Chase came to tell them it was bedtime, so we were able to speak with Mason and Quinn for a bit. They reassured us that our pups were safe and that they hadn't encountered anything out of the ordinary and were covering their tracks whenever they needed to travel.

Mason went on to tell us how close Chase was to the former alpha of the local pack and how that alpha was indebted to Chase, so he had no concerns as of yet. Although he did maintain that he was keeping a close eye on things.

Chase was a great judge of character and was well respected by other alphas. I also knew that he loved Liam and Layla as if they were his own biological pups, so we knew our pups were in safe hands.

Kingston had to leave early as he had a phone call to his office that he had to attend to. He said it was urgent. I continued the call with Mason and Quinn.

Something seemed different about them. They seemed closer than usual and Quinn seemed to be having a glow about her. She was giggling a lot and they seemed even more affectionate than usual. They said there was something they wanted to tell us together, both Kingston and I.

Once they had reassured me it didn't concern Liam and Layla and that they were all safe, I agreed to end the call with them, as I wasn't sure when Kingston would return. We agreed to continue the call tomorrow morning before breakfast.

I was pulled from my thoughts of last night's call by a high-pitched shriek. Unfortunately, I could identify that voice anywhere – it was Luna Roxy. I left my coffee on the bench and walked hastily out of the kitchen to see what the problem was.

As I entered the hallway I could see Lily, one of our young omega pack members holding the side of her face which was reddened, trying to stifle her cry.

Luna Roxy was standing next to her yelling "Don't you dare make eye contact with me, Omega! Hear me?" She yelled, pointing her long curly witch-like nails at the young omega's face.

"Yes, Luna, I'm so sorry Luna," Lily said in a scared and shocked tone, facing the floor.

"What the hell is going on?" I angrily asked Roxy. Already knowing who the guilty party was. Lily was possibly the kindest person I had ever met. There was no way she instigated this incident.

"Your stupid omega here doesn't know her place. She had the nerve to look me in the eyes!" Roxy spat out.

"Did you hit her?" I questioned Roxy in a loud accusatory tone.

"I sure did. She's lucky I didn't do worse!" Roxy yelled back.

"You, ever, touch any of my pack members again, and I will hit you myself!" I declared to Roxy. Who looked at me offended.

"I take crimes against my pack members very seriously," I declared. Then I went on to add, "You need to apologize!"

"Nuh-uh, not happening," Roxy tells me with a defiant look on her face.

I am fuming with anger at the nerve of Roxy. Amber is growling too. She wants me to let her out.

At that very moment, Kingston walked into the hallway.

"What's going on?" Kingston asked, flabbergasted at the scene unfolding in front of him.

“She hit poor Lily in the face for looking at her!” I yelled, getting more worked up by the minute.

“Is this true, Luna Roxy?” Kingston asked in disbelief.

“Damn straight it is! b***h needs to know her place!” Roxy spat out venomously.

Kingston mind-linked me and told me we need to de-escalate this situation as we have bigger problems to deal with today. So I agreed to let her go with a warning.

“Luna Roxy,” I said in my calmest voice.

“We do things differently in our pack, everyone is treated the same regardless of their rank. I suggest that if you wish to stay for the duration of the summit you will need to abide by our rules. You are not to hit or abuse another of my pack members again, is that clear?” I told her with a hardened expression on my face.

Luna Roxy screws up her face and bits down hard on her lip. “Whatever,” She blurts out, and she begins to walk toward the dining room.

I looked at Kingston in disbelief. He could no doubt feel the frustration and anger emanating from me.

I then turned to poor Lily, who was still holding her reddened cheek.

“I’m so sorry Lily, come with me. I’ll get you an ice pack for your cheek, then you can take the rest of the day off,” I said to her as I led her into the kitchen.

Breakfast went better than I had expected after the Roxy fiasco. Naturally, she acted as if nothing had happened at breakfast. I wouldn’t want to tell anyone what happened if I were her either. She’s such a vile person to abuse someone so young and vulnerable as that.

Kingston worked hard to ensure that this Summit was a success, so we didn’t need any drama unfolding at breakfast. Thankfully, it all went smoothly. The packs were enjoying mingling with one another, some were a little standoffish,

but that is to be expected. There were plenty of compliments to the kitchen staff, the breakfast buffet was spectacular, and everyone ate plenty.

Today there are all sorts of activities planned for packs that have already arrived, as well as some basic orientation and check-ins. Tomorrow there would be a business conference where the alphas would be spending most of the day in meetings, where they would be networking. Also known as drinking copious amounts and comparing their packs and their acquisitions all day.

A Spa day had been organized for the Luna's and their female entourage, starting off with a brunch first, then on to massages, relaxing by the pool, and some cocktails in the afternoon.

The day was to finish with a large BBQ-style gathering under a large marquee near the training grounds. There was even a live band organized. Kingston tells me that this is usually quite a popular event where the entire pack and the visiting packs and their members get together to celebrate. Occasionally, wolves meet their mates at the gathering. I hoped this would be the case this time. I love watching people meet their other halves.

Kingston and I had stationed ourselves at the main entrance of the packhouse, there were only a handful of packs left to arrive now, and then the summit could really get underway, depending on what would happen when Lachlan arrived.

An SUV drove up and out there was a tall, athletic built man with sandy blonde hair. He walked to the opposite car door and opened it, out walked a stunning petite brunette with greenish-colored eyes. They walked towards us smiling. I can already feel good vibes radiating from them.

“Good Morning, I am Alpha Alaric and this is my beautiful Luna Abbey, we are from the Lunar Eclipse Pack,” he says proudly to both Kingston and myself.

“Good Morning Alaric and Abbey, I am Kingston and this is my Luna Aleksa, it's a pleasure to meet you both,” Kingston replied back to them.

“Wow, your pack lands are so breathtaking,” Abbey tells us.

“Thank you, we love it here. We hope you enjoy your time here at Rocky Mountain,” I said to Abbey.

As I went to shake Abbey's hand, I felt something strange, like a flashback of her and what looked like significant moments in her life. Like memories. I could feel that she was getting the same from me. I looked at her astounded. She just smiled at me, then let out a giggle, and then looked at Alaric knowingly.

Aleksa POV

"What was that?" I asked, with a shocked expression on my face. Kingston looks at me worriedly. He can sense something isn't right.

"It's ok. I felt it too," Abbey said, smiling at me.

I was confused. What was that? So many questions consumed me. I went to say something when Abbey cut me off.

"You have powers! You are special too! I'm a hybrid, in case you are wondering. I'm half-werewolf, half-witch!" Abbey told me excitedly. Although she wasn't moving her lips, was she mind-linking me?

"Wow, Aleksa! It appears you have the ability to mind-link anyone, you have allowed me to share your link, how cool is this!" Abbey replied.

She sure is bubbly. I wish I shared her enthusiasm, but I haven't decided whether this is a good thing or a bad thing just yet.

I looked at Alaric and Kingston, who were looking at us with confused expressions evident on their faces.

"Our mates look concerned. Maybe we should include them in this conversation?" Abbey suggested.

"There are others around, so perhaps you should tell Alaric and I'll tell Kingston via mind-link. We should talk a little later this afternoon. What do you say?"

"Deal!" Abbey quips.

And with that, I break our mind-link. Turning to Kingston, I linked him and told him what was going on. He was surprised as he hadn't met a hybrid before and agreed we all needed to sit down and talk later this afternoon.

The next SUV pulls up to the main entrance. Asher had arrived to escort Alaric and Abbey to their cabin. Kingston must have mind-linked him, I assume.

I hear Amber stir in my head. "Don't worry Aleksa, it's OK. She's friendly. She will be a great ally." Amber reassured me.

Before I could prod her further, she blocked me out, in true Amber fashion.

I shake my head, sometimes my wolf drives me crazy, always deciding what I can and can't know and making me wait so much. She can be so frustrating. But I have to trust her. She always has our best interests at heart.

As Asher escorts Alaric and Abbey off to their accommodation, Abbey turns and waves back at me with a great smile on her face. Amber's right, she seemed really nice.

Kingston and I walked to the next SUV to meet and greet our new arrivals. A young alpha walks out, he doesn't look like he's a day over eighteen, his driver opens the other car door, and out steps what I assume is his Luna.

They walked up to us and introduced themselves. They are from Wisconsin, they are hard to gauge in conversation, and are eager to get to their accommodation. Once their escort had arrived, we made our way to the kitchen to make a quick coffee.

While we drank our coffee, I told Kingston about my interaction with Abbey, as well as the visions I saw of her. Just quick glimpses of her at various stages of her life, good and bad memories by the looks of things. She has been through a lot in her life by the looks of things. He was a little uneasy about our interaction, probably more concerned than anything. I told him what Amber had said about Abbey and he felt a bit better about things after that.

Kingston then went on to have a discussion with Sabre. Kingston tells me that Sabre agrees with Amber.

I am making a note to follow Abbey up later today, although I have a feeling Abbey will seek me out before I get to her. I am not too worried though, all I get from her are positive vibes.

The next entourage had arrived, as Kingston and I made our way back outside. A large and intimidating-looking alpha with a dark aura walked out of

his SUV. His face was void of emotion, something about him gave me the creeps.

“Watch them, Aleksa. They are trouble. Our friend is in danger!” Amber tells me alarmingly.

As I was about to ask Amber what she meant by that, when another male got out of the second SUV. He was large and menacing. He had a huge jagged scar down the right side of his face. In fact, he had scars all over his neck and arms. I didn't want to offend him by staring, but I couldn't help but notice them.

He started sniffing the air around him and let out a huge growl.

“Where is she!” he yelled at us both. His head switched frantically from side to side. Kingston stood in front of me with his arms out in a defensive stance. I could feel the anger rolling off him.

I had a bad feeling about this. A feeling of dread was consuming me.

Kingston let out a warning growl at them both. In what seemed like only moments, several of our warriors descended upon the main entrance of the packhouse.

“Get your pack member under control, now!” Kingston demanded of the visiting alpha.

The alpha in front of us looked agitated that Kingston had yelled at him.

“Ezra, control yourself!” he growled.

Ezra! Oh, my goddess! It hits me like a ton of bricks. Kaia! I thought to myself.

I felt a tightening in my chest and it felt hard to breathe for a moment when I realized that this was Kaia's mate, the one she rejected, the one that tried to lock her up. I was instantly concerned for my friend.

I immediately mind-linked Kaia. “Wherever you are, stop right now! Ezra is here! At the packhouse!” I yelled at her through our mind-link. But I accidentally mind-linked the entire pack at the same time in my panic. I quickly block out all voices except Kaia, Asher, and Kingston's.

“What the f**k!” She replied to me. I can't respond as the alpha in front of me is looking at me angrily, as is Ezra.

“Alpha Finn of the Midnight Pack,” the alpha says, trying to deescalate things, reaching out to shake Kingston’s hand.

Kingston shook his hand firmly “Kingston, and this is my Luna Aleksa,” Kingston said to him.

“This is my Beta, Ezra,” Finn says to us both.

I try to mask my confusion. Kaia had told me that her mate had been an elite warrior. Kaia was the Beta female of the Midnight pack, and her brother was to take over the beta role. How could Ezra be the Beta? What does that mean for Kaia’s brother, I wondered.

“I can smell that my mate is here! Her scent is everywhere!” Ezra declared to us all.

We looked at him feigning confusion.

Kingston questioned him, “And who might your mate be?”.

“Kaia! My mate’s name is Kaia,” Ezra replied gruffly.

“Can’t say we know anyone by that name. We have had a lot of packs through her. Perhaps you have confused a scent?” I suggest to Ezra.

“Bullshit!” I saw you mind-link when you heard my name. Where is she?” He yelled, stalking aggressively towards me.

“Watch your f*****g tone with my mate! And take one step further and I will end you!” Kingston growled at Ezra.

The three of them stood aggressively staring each other down, the warriors were on edge, ready to pounce at any moment, for a few moments until Kingston spoke again.

“You are not getting off to a good start here gentleman, remember who’s pack it is that you are in!” he added further.

“Apologies Kingston, my Beta lost his mate some time ago, he’s a little on edge.” Alpha Finn says, trying to deescalate the situation.

Ezra is pulled aside by his Alpha.

“Excuse us for a minute, please,” he said to us, nodding respectfully, although it was lacking in sincerity. I got the feeling they were up to something.

They mind-linked each other for a minute, facing away from us.

I took this opportunity to mind-link Asher, including Kingston and Kaia also “You need to get Kaia out of here now, Ezra, her ex-mate is here! Take the back entrance. We will distract them for now,” I told him.

“Go, Asher. We will talk later.” Kingston added.

“Yes Luna, Alpha, we are leaving now.” Asher linked us back.

“Thank you!” Kaia says to Kingston and me. And we end our mind-link.

“Gentleman, why don’t we escort you to your accommodation?” I suggested to them. Kingston took my lead also.

“Let us get you settled and then we can talk about this further, in my office perhaps?” Kingston suggested to them.

Knowing that they can’t deny this offer, as to do so would be too obvious, they reluctantly oblige.

“Thank you Kingston and Aleksa, that sounds like a good idea,” Alpha Finn replied.

Ezra didn’t say anything, he just screwed up his face and looked away. Clearly, it was taking everything he had to remain calm.

Kingston has mind-linked Kai, to ask him to take over the meet and greets for now. We will need to buy some time to figure out what to do with Ezra and Finn, and how we can protect Kaia from him.

It looks like things just got a whole lot more complicated for us all. As if one psycho ex-mate wasn’t enough to deal with. Now there are two of them.

As we reached their allocated accommodation, we both received a mind-link from border patrol. They told us that Evergreen had arrived. I turned to Kingston, “He’s here!”

Aleksa POV

We left Finn and Ezra to get settled at the cottage. Hopefully, they will stay put for a while. Kingston had mind-linked me that he would organize someone to run interference with them for now.

We started making our way towards the packhouse. Kingston wanted me to go and stay with Caleb and Kali while he assessed the situation at the pack house to see who had arrived, and how many of them, and gauge how much of a problem we were gonna have.

A small part of me was happy with that idea. But the rest of me knew it was time to face my fears. So I declined Kingston's request. I knew that Kingston wanted to protect me, but there are some things we have to do for ourselves and I felt this was one of them.

I heard a branch snap in the bushes we were approaching. I wasn't worried when I saw the wolf moving quickly through the bush, as I could sense that it was Caleb. I looked at Kingston and shook my head. "Really?" I said to him, rolling my eyes.

"I need to know you are safe while we sort this out, and I know that Caleb would want to be here with you right now. So I may have mind-linked Kai to ask Caleb to join us, this involves him too," Kingston tells me.

"But, Kali, he needs to protect her!" I told Kingston, feeling worried about my pregnant friend. She too would be on Lachlan's hit list.

"Kali is fine, there will be two of our elite warriors with her at all times," Kingston tells me.

"Luna," Caleb said, walking out from the tree he had shifted behind. He had a pair of shorts on, but no top.

"Apologies, this is all I could grab at such short notice," Caleb says to us both.

"Caleb, it's Aleksa, for the millionth time," I told him with an unimpressed look on my face. He knows I hate being called by my title.

"Guys, we don't have time for pleasantries. We need to keep going." Kingston pulls us back on task.

“I will shift and go on ahead. You two pick up your pace and meet us there, approach slowly. I will mind-link you once I’ve assessed the situation.” Kingston says, looking gravely at Caleb.

“I will guard her with my life, Kingston, you have my word,” Caleb said solemnly.

“I know, thank you, Caleb,” Kingston nodded to Caleb and then he shifted and ripped towards the treeline.

“Ahem.” I loudly cleared my throat.

“I’m not the same girl that couldn’t defend herself, a lot has changed since Evergreen. I can do this! I won’t let him intimidate me. I feel stronger!” I told my ex-gamma, with absolute certainty in my voice.

Caleb looked into my eyes, “I understand all that, Aleksa, but we don’t know what he is capable of, and I’m not taking any chances. I took an oath to protect you,” he reminds me.

We don’t have time for this right now, so I let it go. For now. And with that, we continued on our way to the packhouse.

Amber stirred. “It’s OK. I can’t sense Cyrus. I don’t think he is here, Aleksa. But someone is.” She tells me.

I mind-link Kingston and Caleb with what Amber tells me about not sensing Lachlan’s wolf Cryus. But they both still seem to be on edge.

As we approached the packhouse, I could see two SUVs upfront. Amber confirms that she cannot sense Lachlan’s presence.

I see the car door open and out steps Sam. He looked worn out, pale, almost like life had been sucked out of him. My heart felt like it was breaking at the sight of him. I was hit with a wave of guilt. Although I was also excited about seeing my friend.

He turned around, as everyone was watching us approach the front entrance. He looked at me with a shocked expression on his face. “Aleksa?” he called out.

“Sam!” I called back excitedly, pushing past Kingston and Caleb.

He walked toward me with a confused look on his face.

I pulled him towards me and wrapped my arms around him in a warm embrace. I could hear Sabre growl, so I mind-linked him.

“Settle Sabre, Sam’s my friend!”

I pulled back and looked at Sam with a big smile on my face, trying to hide my shock at his appearance.

“Are you OK, what’s going on? How are you here?” He says, looking around at everyone quizzically.

“Caleb?” He asks, furrowing his brow towards Caleb.

“You’ve been marked? Can someone tell me what’s going on?” Sam asked, looking at the large purple mark on my neck, looking back and forth from Kingston to Caleb.

Kingston walks up behind me and pulls me into him. I smile and we interlock hands, to show Sam that we are together.

“Sam, it’s OK, I’m safe here. This is Kingston, he’s my second chance mate!” I told him reassuringly.

“I’ve heard a lot about you, Sam,” Kingston said, extending his hand out to shake his hand.

Sam just stares at Kingston in disbelief. He reluctantly shakes his hand. He still appears as if he is very confused and unsure of exactly what is unfolding here.

Caleb also walks toward his old friend.

“You are a traitor! I trusted you! You helped the Rogues! You kidnapped our Luna,” Sam yelled, pointing his finger towards Caleb in a fury.

Caleb looked at Sam, a little hurt.

“Sam, my friend, all is not as you think. Lachlan is not who you think he is. We are all friends, Aleksa is safe, there is nothing sinister happening here, we are all friends,” He tries to reassure Sam.

“It’s true Sam, Caleb and Kali protected me, as did Mason and Kaia, they protected me from Lachlan!” I told him, with a sad yet adamant look on my face.

“There’s so much you don’t know, so much I have wanted to tell you, we were planning to...” I began, as we were brought to the attention of the SUV door slam.

“Well, isn’t this interesting?” Eva says with an amused look on her face, strutting towards us, wearing the skimpiest and shortest red dress I have ever seen, leaving nothing to the imagination.

“Don’t believe anything they say, they are traitors. Why are you even here, Aleksa?” She asks, looking me up and down and rolling her eyes, until she locks her eyes with Kingston and changes her demeanor, batting her eyelids and pouting.

“How dare you speak to my Luna like that, apologize now, or leave my packlands,” Kingston declared to Eva.

Eva seemed shocked with her mouth wide open and her jaw almost dropping to the ground. I wonder if she has ever been spoken to like this before.

So priceless, I thought to myself.

“Luna? Aleksa, how is this true? You are our Luna?” Sam asked me.

“Pfft. Is this some sick joke? Luna again?” Eva questioned us, screwing her face up.

“Don’t make me tell you again, “ Kingston said in a deadly serious tone to Eva.

Realizing that she couldn’t flirt her way out of this, Eva reluctantly apologizes.

“Sorry Aleksa,” She says begrudgingly to me. Completely lacking in sincerity.

“Wait, where is Lachlan?” I asked Sam, my curiosity and dread getting the better of me.

“He’s in Iowa, he got a lead, so he stayed back, he’s looking for you. He should be here tonight though,” he tells me.

“I think we need to talk – all of us,” Kingston interjects.

“I think that’s a good idea, I would love to know what on earth is going on here,” Sam says, watching Kingston and I lean into each other lovingly.

“Sam, there are some things I really need to talk to you about,” I said to him, furrowing my brow, then looking towards Eva with contempt. Just looking at her makes me mad. The nerve she had just stood there as if nothing had happened. She is about to come undone and although it will break my heart to tell Sam this, I also have a feeling this could be incredibly healing for him.

“Aleksa, I really think you and I should have a chat first, don’t you think? I think there was a misunderstanding back at Evergreen, and I’d like to clear it up,” Eva says, not looking so confident and sure of herself right now.

I looked at her and bluntly said, “No, I don’t think there were any misunderstandings at all. I got the message loud and clear, but come along Eva, I’m sure Sam will have some questions for you,” I said, with an amused look on my face. There was no way she was getting out of this. It was time for her to confess, and hopefully, now Sam could find some peace. It was very clear the toll of her infidelity had taken on his physical and mental health, I would assume.

“We can continue this conversation in my office. Caleb, perhaps you could bring Kali along if she feels up to it?”

“Kai, I will need you to stay here and greet any incoming packs,” Kingston says to his Gamma.

“Yes, of course, Alpha, I’ve got it under control,” Kai replies to Kingston.

“Sam, will your men be OK out here for now?” Kingston asked.

“Yes, I’ll link them to stay here until we return,” Sam replied to Kingston.

“Please follow me, right this way,” Kingston says, leading the way to his office. I looked back at Eva, who shot me an evil glare. I just looked away. She doesn’t intimidate me. I can’t believe I thought she was once my friend. She will never be anyone’s friend, she’s too much of a narcissist.

Kingston walks towards his chair and looks at me, then pulls a chair aside for me. Directly opposite us sits Eva and Sam on one side and then two empty seats for Caleb and Kali, if she decides to come along.

The tension is thick, you could cut it with a knife. Sam looked utterly confused and had his guard up a little, but I caught him looking from Kingston to myself from time to time, so hopefully, he can see we are happy and in love, and that Kingston is no threat.

Eva appeared agitated, I could feel her contempt towards me, I could feel that she was holding herself back right now. Part of me hopes she does lose control. I wouldn't mind putting her in her place. Amber is begging for a moment or two alone with her.

Kingston looked relaxed, he wasn't threatened in the least, but I could feel his empathy for Sam.

There was a knock at the door, and I could sense Caleb and Kali's presence. "Come in," I called out to them warmly.

"Sam!" Kali calls out, making a beeline for him.

Sam looked happy to see his friend. He gets up out of his seat and she walks up to him and gives him a hug, as any old friend would do.

Eva growled at Kali. Which I find interesting. She has a problem with Sam hugging a friend, but she can do goddess knows what with Lachlan and that's acceptable. Unbelievable!

Caleb lets out a growl too. And stood close to both Kali and Sam. Although they were all close friends, Kali is pregnant now, and it has been some time since we last saw Sam, we don't know what lies Lachlan has fed him. It is only natural for Caleb to be in protective mode.

"It's so good to see you, Sam!" Kali announces, her smile dropping and turning to one of disgust when she sees her former friend Eva.

Sam doesn't miss this interaction, and questions us all, 'What is going on, why is there so much contempt for my mate?' Sam says in an agitated, almost defensive tone.

“That is why we are all here, Sam. It’s time you knew the truth. The real reason we had to leave Evergreen,” I told Sam with a serious and determined look on my face.

Aleksa POV

“I’m gonna tell you something and I need you to hear me out. First I want to say I love you. We have always been close friends, and I would never lie to you. The things I am about to tell you, I have wanted to do for so long but wasn’t in the position to. I will answer all your questions but I just want you to know everything I am about to tell you is the whole truth,” I told my dear friend, hoping that he would still be my friend after I told him all that I had to say.

Sam looked at me with his creased forehead, waiting for me to explain further.

“Remember back at Evergreen, how I would suffer from pain, and I would see the pack doctor, who would always give me some explanation or another for my pain, but over time I was made to feel that it was all in my head?” Sam looked at me, waiting for me to continue.

“Turns out it wasn’t all in my head, my mate was cheating on me, Lachlan was bedding over she-wolves. I know your first thought will be to defend Lachlan, you are his loyal Beta, but you need to listen to all I have to say before you make up your mind,” I pleaded with my old friend.

“When I came to Evergreen I was still new to the supernatural world. As you will remember, I didn’t learn all the specifics of mates and so on. I was raised by humans with no knowledge of this world. I didn’t know that if your goddess’ given mate was unfaithful that it would manifest in the form of pain, and I might never have known, had I not seen it with my own eyes.” I told him. I took a quick pause, to let that digest with Sam, then I continued with my story.

“Do you remember that day you helped me organize that surprise romantic evening for Lachlan?” I asked Sam. I heard Kingston growl. And I placed my hand on his to calm his wolf.

“I do,” Sam replied. Listening carefully to what I had to say.

“On my way home from dropping Liam and Layla off at daycare that day, the pain hit me again. This time I made my way home, and as I headed to my bedroom I saw it. I saw Lachlan with...” I was cut off mid-sentence when Eva stood up and started protesting.

“This is ridiculous, completely fictional! Can’t you see what she’s trying to do? She’s trying to turn you against us! Eva shrieked.

Sam looked at Eva questionably.

“Us?” Sam asked Eva.

“Uh, I meant, Evergreen, she’s a traitor that’s trying to turn you against your pack, they all are!” Eva yells accusatorily.

“Silence! I command you to be silent and wait to be spoken to,” Kingston roared at Eva. Who shuddered and trembled in fear at Kingston’s alpha command.

“Was that necessary?” Sam asked Kingston.

“I understand she is your mate, Sam, and you don’t know what is going on here, but please trust me on this, you need to hear what Aleksa has to say,” Kingston tells Sam.

Sam didn’t look happy but remained in his seat and directed his attention back to me.

“I’m so sorry Sam. I hate to be the one to tell you this, but I saw Lachlan in bed with Eva.” I said slowly, waiting for the words to sink in for Sam.

“Lachlan and Eva?” Sam says to me, very much in denial, looking confused as to why his best friend and mate could do such a thing. He looks around the room, first at Kingston, who looks at him with a pitiful look on his face, then to Caleb and Kali, who have soft and somber looks on their faces.

Sam then looks at Eva, who is shaking in her seat, looking like she is fighting with all her might to protest against what has been said.

“It’s true, Sam. I witnessed it on many occasions myself. As I said to Aleksa, I was under an alpha command, I couldn’t speak a word of it.” Caleb says in agreement to Sam.

“I’m so sorry man,” Caleb added.

Sam looked back at Eva, observing her carefully. He didn’t say a word. He just took a moment. Then look back at me.

“When I caught them in the act, I quietly backtracked and ran into the forest. I cried my eyes out. It felt like my world was crashing down before me. I wanted to confront them but I was scared. So I decided that I would take the twins and leave Evergreen. I knew I had to be careful as I was realizing I didn’t know the man I had my babies with and was sharing my bed with.” I told Sam.

“A few days later, I was at work, the pain had hit me again, and this time it was unbearable. I walked to my bedroom to find them at it again, and this time I was so mad with fury I couldn’t hold myself back. I confronted them both.” I took a breath and took a moment to center myself.

“When I confronted them, Lachlan was nonchalant about it all, he rambled on about it being his right as alpha to take what and who he wanted. When I confronted Eva she couldn’t have looked more proud of herself. I’ll never forget the sight of her standing there in front of me naked, smirking the way she did, I never knew another woman could be so vile.” I said, talking about her, but making a point not to acknowledge her.

Sam looked like he was trying to hold his emotions back. He was no longer fighting my words. He looked like he was resigning himself to my truth.

“I’m sorry Sam, I was planning to tell you once everything had settled down, I promise. I just needed to make sure Liam and Layla were safe first,” I told Sam, worried that he wouldn’t forgive me for not telling him.

“If I may, I know this is a lot to take in Sam. You need to know what really happened. We are not the traitors that Lachlan led you to believe we were.” Caleb interjected.

“We, Kali and I, helped Aleksa and the twins escape, that is correct, and we did so with the help of two other wolves. Mason and Kaia, who were rogues at the time for legitimate reasons, and were in the dungeons at the same time as Aleksa,” Caleb continued.

“The dungeons? What was Aleksa doing in the dungeons?” Sam asked with a stunned look on his face.

“When Lachlan confronted Aleksa, the day she walked in on them, I was sent to take her back to the pack house, she had run off and I found her at the hidden lake at the far end of Evergreen territory,” Caleb said.

“I left her with Lachlan, not realizing his intentions until it was too late. When Aleksa told him she was leaving him, he locked her in the dungeons. That’s why we decided to help her escape. He had lost it.” Caleb declared.

“I had no knowledge of any of this. Is this true, Aleksa?” Sam asked, clearly outraged that all this had occurred and he was oblivious to it all.

“I swear it is all true. Lachlan was planning to lock me up and keep me against my will, he wanted me as his Luna, and for me to accept that he would have as many mistresses as he wished.” I told Sam, with absolute truth on my face. Kingston let out a loud growl. I knew this was not easy for him to hear, he was very protective of me, which I loved.

Sam leaned his hand on his forehead, his wrinkled expression, full of concern, shaking his head, “Aleksa, Luna, I am so sorry you went through this, I’m sorry I couldn’t protect you,” Sam declared.

“I don’t think you were at Evergreen when this all transpired. If I remember correctly, you took some of the elites to do some training at a neighboring pack and you wouldn’t have returned until after we had already left,” Caleb added.

“That sounds vaguely familiar,” Sam replied.

“It’s fine Sam, you didn’t know, these things happen, it all worked out in the end,” I told him, smiling lovingly at Kingston.

“Is it I who am sorry that I didn’t tell you straight away when I found out about Lachlan and Eva. I could have spared you so much pain and agony,” I told Sam sadly.

“It’s ok Aleksa. This isn’t on you.” Sam replied.

“I’ve known something was going on for some time. I had faith in the moon goddess and I had hoped that things would work out. I have always believed that it is unnatural to go against the mate bond.” Sam says glumly, shaking his head disappointedly while maintaining eye contact with Eva.

“So I knew I had to try my hardest to make things work. I knew that Eva was being unfaithful. I could feel it. I didn’t know who it was with though.” said Sam, looking at his mate, now with a look of disgust on his face. I could tell he was going through the motions. I knew these feelings all too well.

"I'm going to k**l that bastard," Sam says angrily, slamming his fist down on the desk. No one says anything, we just let Sam get it all out.

"Wait, you knew?" I asked Sam, shocked at that revelation. Why would he subject himself to such pain?

"I did. But I didn't question the Moon Goddess's judgment. I figured she put us together for a reason. I didn't realize that my best friend was the wolf she was cheating with. I'm sorry Aleksa, I failed you. I had no idea." Sam said to me, looking at me ashamedly.

"Goddess no Sam, never say that, you are innocent in this. It's them who should be sorry, not us!" I said, feeling gutted that my friend is taking this on as his own failure when that couldn't be further from the truth.

"Kingston, can you take the alpha command off? I want to hear what Eva has to say?" Sam asked Kingston.

"Eva, you are no longer under my alpha command, you are free to speak", Kingston declared to her.

"Finally! You can't seriously believe this crap, Sammie?" Eva asked Sam, feigning disbelief and horror that he would entertain such a notion.

"Cut the crap, Eva. I've known for a while now. I just never knew who it was with. I had planned to reject you back at Evergreen, but then Aleksa disappeared and all my energy went towards trying to find her and holding down the pack while Lachlan ran it into the ground," Sam said in a raised voice.

Eva looked astonished. She also appeared to be speechless.

"She's lying! She's always been jealous of me!" Eva yelled, pointing her finger towards me, and trying to fake cry.

"Aleksa is one of the kindest people I've ever met. Don't bother with the theatrics. I really can't be bothered keeping this pretense up." Sam said to his mate, looking like he was beginning to tire of the conversation.

"Aleksa, thank you for your honesty, I do have some more questions for you if you don't mind, but first there's something I need to do," Sam says, turning his body facing towards his mate.

“I, Sam Nicholson, Beta of the Evergreen Pack, hereby reject you, Eva Lockwood, as my mate!” Sam declared.

And with that Eva dropped her head forwards and shrieked in agony. Sam held his chest, and grimaced slightly, but didn't seem to be in a lot of pain. When I think back to when I was in this position, the bond between Lachlan and I had weakened so much that when I finally rejected him, it didn't hurt as much as I thought it would.

“You have to accept it, Eva, for both of our sakes,” Sam managed to get the words out.

“I accept! I accept!” Eva screamed, looking eager for the pain to stop.

I'm not surprised that Eva gave in so easily. She was never one for pain. I was grateful that she wasn't fighting the rejection, for Sam's sake. It meant he would be able to get on with his life again, once he recovered from the loss of the mate bond.

“You need to formally accept it, name, rank, pack,” I told Eva, to save Sam having to expend more energy talking.

“I, Eva Lockwood, Beta female, of the Evergreen Pack, accept your rejection!” Eva blurted out, heaving in between words. And with one loud gasp, it was done.

They both looked to be in a world of pain.

We all sat there in shock at what we had just witnessed. We were all glad that Sam had broken his bond with Eva, because she never deserved him in the first place, but at the same time very worried about what this would mean for Sam in his current state of health.

“Sam, are you OK?” I asked, feeling very concerned for my friend.

“I'll be ok. I think I just need a few moments.” He said, clearly trying to protect his dignity and keep a brave face.

“If it's OK with you Sam, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you, Eva, that you are no longer welcome as a guest in our pack, due to your crimes against the mate bond, and your blatant disregard and disrespect for our

Luna. You have twenty minutes to leave pack territory as of now!" Kingston declared.

Eva looked at us all in shock, but it appeared she was in too much pain to speak, although none of us felt sorry for her, she had brought this all on herself.

"You better get moving Eva, time is ticking," Kali said with a smirk on her face. Although we all hung out together back at Evergreen, Kali had never really liked Eva, she always felt she was conceited and insincere. It turned out she was right.

Eva looked at Caleb. He had no emotion on his face. He just looked away from her, as if she didn't even exist.

"I have called for one of our pack doctors to come and attend to you, Sam. They will be here any minute. There is not a lot we can do for you right now, but we will send for a Healer to attend to you as soon as possible," Kingston tells Sam empathetically.

"Thank you, all of you," Sam says, still remaining strong. However, I could feel that he was breaking inside.

"You should go, now," Sam said, turning to Eva, void of emotion on his face.

Eva picked herself up, and as she walked out the door she managed to cry out, "You'll regret this!"

Aleksa POV

It's been a few hours since Eva left our pack lands. Sam is at the pack hospital, currently hooked up to two intravenous bags. One is for fluid replacement, and the other is essentially a vitamin replacement infusion. The Doctor tells us that he is not in a good way after suffering the ill effects of the mate bond betrayal for so long, but that he will be back to normal in no time.

We were about to leave the hospital, as we were aware that Lachlan would probably be here anytime now, and then there would be more drama to deal with. As we were about to leave the reception area, Lily walked past. Lily often volunteered at the pack hospital. She was training to be a nurse, so she appreciated the experience. Some packs didn't let omegas train to be nurses.

In fact, some packs didn't let omegas train – period, but this wasn't that type of pack, thankfully.

I asked Lily if she could take a jug of fresh water to Sam so that if he woke up soon he would have something cool to drink. Lily obliged. She was such a kind and caring person, and we would be lucky to have her as a Nurse in our pack.

We had a quick word with Sam's doctor, asking him to contact us immediately if there were any concerns, and also when Sam woke up. As we were about to walk out, we heard a commotion.

Kingston and I hastily made our way to Sam's room. We stopped at the sight before us. Lily appeared to have dropped the glass jug that she had in her hands, she stood there shocked, with her hands clasped over her mouth. "Mate!" She whispered.

Our eyes flickered from Lily to Sam in disbelief. Oh, my goddess! That was amazing. Truly a gift from the goddess. Sam had been blessed with a second chance mate.

Poor Lily. She didn't appear to know quite what to do with herself.

"It's ok. Walk up to him. Touch him. Be with him. He's your mate." I gently encouraged Lily.

"I've never seen him before," Lily said.

"Luna, who is he? Why is he in the hospital?" Lily asked with concern evident on her face.

"He's our guest. He has been unwell, but that is for him to tell you, it's not my place. Lily, Sam is the Beta at Evergreen Pack Lily," I told her.

"Sam?" Lily says in a loving tone, a small smile coming across her face as she says his name.

"A Beta? There must be some mistake, I'm only an omega," Lily tells me, shaking her head, and looking down at the floor.

"There's nothing wrong with being an Omega! Lily, I have a good feeling about you. You are destined for great things! Never sell yourself short Lily! Hold your

head up high. And go be with your mate!” I told her with an encouraging smile on my face.

Lily stepped towards Sam, looking him up and down with delicate eyes. She moves close to him and touches his hand. She pulls back quickly. I know this all too well, she’s experiencing that tingling sensation for the first time.

Lily takes his whole hand and looks at him lovingly.

“Alpha, Luna, I am on volunteer duty, I have to go,” Lily said, looking conflicted.

“We will sort that out, Lily, you focus on your mate,” Kingston said kindly.

“Don’t worry about it, I will tell the Coordinator you have met your mate and will be spending the rest of the day with him. You just spend some time with Sam, having you close will help Sam,” I said to Lily.

I looked at Kingston, who had a grin on his face. I could see that he was happy for Sam also.

“Lily, if you need anything or want to talk, just mind-link one of us, and keep us up to date with Sam’s progress. We will check on him as soon as we can.” I told Lily, and we made our way out of the packed hospital.

I have the sudden urge to tell Kali about this new development, but I have to rein myself in, as this is not my happy news to tell people. I would leave that to Sam and Lily when they were ready.

After this rather eventful day, I just wanted to curl up in bed with my love. Alas, this was not to be the case. As we were making our way back to the packhouse, we bumped into Alastair and Abbey.

“Hello again!” Abbey squealed with excitement.

“Hello Abbey, Hello Alistair, How are you settling in?” I asked, trying to rustle up what little energy I had left.

“Hello again Luna Aleksa. We have settled in just fine. Thank you! We thought we would take a walk around the pack grounds before dinner.” Alastair tells me.

“That sounds like a great idea. I hate to be rude, but we’ve had something come up, and as it turns out, we won’t have time for that chat today. I am really sorry, could we try tomorrow morning perhaps?” I asked Abbey.

“Oh, it’s fine Aleksa. It’s not urgent. Just let me know when you are ready. Can we help in any way? I hope it’s nothing serious?” Abbey asked.

“Everything is fine, it’s just a small issue, nothing to worry about,” I told Abbey and Alastair. Alastair seemed unphased but Abbey was giving me a contemplative look.

“Well, if you say so. Will we see you at dinner?” Abbey asked.

“Yes, of course,” I replied. Wishing that we could skip dinner altogether, but knowing full well that would not be possible as we were hosting packs from all over the country, so we had host responsibilities.

“ OK, well, see ya then!” Abbey said excitedly with a huge toothy smile and she pulled Alastair away with her waving from behind.

Kingston and I continue walking up the packhouse stairs.

“Care for a rest upstairs before dinner?” He asked me.

“You read my mind! What a day. And to think it’s not over yet!” I said, shaking my head.

We head towards our suite and I fall onto our bed, Kingston stalks towards me with that look in his eyes. Like a predator stalking its prey. As tired as I feel, I’m sure I can muster up a little energy...

A bit of quality time with my love was just what I needed. With so much going on, we had been lacking a bit in the intimacy department. We didn’t have long but we sure made the most of the time we did have, then we had a nice long shower. I felt much better, but I was still tired. I think we both were.

Dinner had gone well. It was nice to mingle with the other packs. Everyone seemed to be in a jovial mood. The alphas are looking forward to their conference tomorrow, and the Luna’s and their entourages are looking forward to their spa pamper day.

I am trying to keep a positive front, although I have a feeling that tomorrow will not go as we have planned. Thankfully, we have a backup plan so that if everything goes pear-shaped, then at least, hopefully, the activities can still continue without our presence.

We have just had a quick video call with Asher and Kaia. They are staying in one of the human towns nearby. Kaia wants to come back and face Ezra. We are just asking her to wait a day or so while we sort the Lachlan situation out, so far she seems to agree with that. Although we could really do with Asher's presence here right now, Kaia's safety is more important to Kingston and me. We can go another day without him, I'm sure.

We didn't get a chance to speak with Ezra, much to his dismay. It didn't go unmissed how he was watching me all through the dinner service. I made an effort to keep myself busy in conversation with others. However, I am sure I will run into Ezra again soon enough. I have been told that he has been asking a lot of questions, so I am under no illusion that he doesn't know Kaia has been here.

However, for now, we will just have to keep eluding him. We have bigger problems to worry about with Lachlan arriving.

What a day! I thought to myself. I've never been so welcoming of sleep before. Kingston fell asleep a few hours ago. I've been awake with my thoughts. But I'm ready to get some sleep now. We don't know what tomorrow will bring, but my intuition is telling me it won't be good.

I am woken from my sleep by an alarming mind-link from the border patrol. "Breach at the pack borders, a large tawny brown alpha wolf, has just ripped past us at speed. Heading towards the pack house, we're following closely, but he is faster than us," they declare.

I feel goosebumps and shivers all over my body. I am immediately on edge. "Cyrus!" Amber tells me.

"It's them this time, Aleksa! I can feel their presence!" Amber adds.

"Kingston?" I ask, but he's already shifted and out the door.

I got up, I was wearing checkered PJ pants and a singlet, but I ran out the bedroom door because I didn't have time to get dressed.

I ran down the packhouse stairs as fast as my legs could carry me. I pushed the front door open and ran into a wall, there was a warrior standing in my path, and he was not budging.

"Ugh!" I yelled as my body slammed into him.

"Move, now!" I yelled. Frustrated that they are not moving from my path.

"Alpha's orders, Luna, Sorry!" He says, looking highly uncomfortable.

I felt enraged that I was being locked in my own packhouse, and even more enraged that I was being treated like some damsel in distress. I thought I had made my feelings clear already. Kingston and I will be having words about this, later.

"I am your Luna, and I command you to MOVE ASIDE NOW!" I demanded. I could feel my eyes glowing. I could see the surprised look on the warrior's face.

He moved aside, looking shocked, trying to comprehend what he had just experienced.

Neat trick. I thought to myself. And I continued towards the field in front of the pack house. I saw Sabre and Cyrus fighting on the field in front of the packhouse. The metallic smell of blood was already invading my senses.

"It's OK Aleksa, it's not Sabre's blood!" Amber told me.

As I approached them both, they both shot their faces towards me momentarily, Cyrus growled, "MINE!" followed by Sabre, "MINE!"

Then they continued tussling back and forth. Unsure of what to do and panicked that my mate might get injured defending me, I did the only thing I could think of right now.

"SHIFT! Both of you NOW!" I screamed at them, once again feeling my eyes glow brightly. I was completely astounded when they both stopped what they were doing and shifted back to human form.

They both looked at me puzzled. I'm sure they are wondering how I managed to command them both, and I am wondering the same thing. How did I just command two alpha wolves? I need to ask Xanthe about this. However, for now, I needed to focus on dealing with Lachlan.

I mind-linked one of the warriors to get them both a pair of shorts as they are both standing here naked.

"Aleksa!" Lachlan yelled, standing in front of me naked. Once upon a time, this would have made me weak at the knees, but the sight of him naked now repulsed me.

"You're coming with me!" Lachlan said angrily, stalking toward me.

Kingston let out a long loud growl. And ran towards Lachlan, tackling him to the ground. They started punching one another and I could see they were both starting to shift again, claws were coming out, and fur was sprouting on their legs and arms.

"STOP! THAT'S ENOUGH! GET UP! STOP SHIFTING. BOTH OF YOU! NOW!" I commanded. Forcing them to halt their shift.

"I am home! In my pack! With my mate, Kingston!" I declared, walking towards Kingston, interlocking my hands with his to show a united front.

"You are mine!" Lachlan yelled, followed by a loud growl.

Matched again with Kingston's warning growl. They started inching closer toward each other.

"No, you were my mate until you betrayed our bond. I loved you and you ripped my heart out. I rejected you Lachlan! And the moon goddess blessed me with a second chance mate! My true mate!" I declared proudly.

Lachlan growled again.

"YOU BELONG TO ME!" He shouted fiercely.

"I'll give you one last chance to leave my pack lands, or you won't be leaving at all!" Kingston hollered.

“This is what you left me for?!” Lachlan said, followed by a sinister laugh. Grimacing in pain as he laughed and held the deep laceration that was hemorrhaging out of his chest.

Kingston got in a defensive stance, ready to fight again, and growled fiercely at Lachlan.

“I can smell you all over her! Not to worry. I’ll soon fix that!” Lachlan retorted wildly.

“You will never touch me again!” I told him firmly, with a look of disgust on my face.

“I’m gonna enjoy every moment of this,” Lachlan declared to Kingston.

Kingston snickered. “You are a fool, you had the most perfect mate, and you threw it all away!”

Lachlan growled and started to circle Kingston, but Kingston didn’t seem bothered. He looked smug instead.

“I should thank you really, if you hadn’t stuffed up so epically, I wouldn’t have met my mate and Luna!” Kingston said mockingly.

Lachlan looked enraged. He then looked to his left side, and then to his right side, and noticed that the pack warriors had surrounded him, and were slowly advancing. He was grossly outnumbered.

“THIS ISN’T OVER!” He screamed at Kingston. He quickly shifted, then he glanced at me and growled. He then turned and forced his way through the warriors that had formed a wall behind him, taking them out, and galloped frantically towards the treeline.

Aleska POV

Kingston chased Lachlan beyond the pack border, but he had just disappeared. Our best trackers were out there looking for his scent but had so far come up empty-handed. We had decided that we needed to tell the Alpha and their entourage as well as our own pack what was happening so that everyone was aware of the threat that we all faced. Lachlan would be back and, knowing what he is capable of, he wouldn’t return alone.

Most of the attending packs were shocked to hear what had occurred at Evergreen and pledged their support to us, although there were a few packs that were sceptical and said very little. If I'm totally honest, I'm not surprised, as even though we had all just met, the few that said nothing gave me the impression that our way of life and values did not align.

We had collectively agreed to continue with the summit. Everyone looked forward to this annual meeting, so we would proceed cautiously. We had quadrupled our border patrol courtesy of our visiting Alpha's, and we had spoken without neighbouring packs to ensure we had their support if things got out of hand.

Both Kingston and I were rattled by the early morning attack. I left Kingston to continue his meetings with Kai, Caleb, and Jackson. The Alpha's conference will be starting a little later this morning due to earlier events.

I wanted to go check on Sam before Luna's brunch started. I also wanted to check on Lily and see how she was processing everything. She will become a Beta Female when she and Sam accept each other, and while I know she will have some initial anxiety, I have a feeling she is going to be just fine.

As I walked out of the packhouse I bumped into Roxy. "Watch it b***h! Oh, it's you! I hear you had a little trouble this morning," Roxy smirks at me, waiting for my response. I can see that she wants to provoke me, but I won't give her the pleasure. I have too much to do today already. I don't have the time for this.

"Nothing I can't handle Roxy, see you at the spa," I said to her, smiling sweetly. Roxy screws up her face and snickers at me.

I walked off towards the pack hospital. I am hoping my dear friend might finally be awake. I really hope he and Lily accept each other.

I walked into Sam's room to find him and Lily in an embrace. Sam is sitting up in his hospital bed and Lily is straddling him. I can't hide my broad smile. I didn't want to interrupt them, so I turned to walk back out of the room when I smacked into a wall. Except it was not a wall, it was Caleb's chest.

This is enough to get Sam and Lily's attention. Lily jumps up off Sam and has a bright red blush on her face. Sam looked very happy, and even Sam was grinning like a Cheshire cat.

"Sorry Luna," Caleb teased.

"Seriously Caleb," I said, looking at him with an unimpressed expression on my face.

"Just kidding, Aleksa," Caleb says, trying to suppress his laugh.

"Aleksa!" Sam called out to me.

"Hi Sam, I am so glad you are awake. How do you feel?" I blurt out quickly.

"Honestly, I've never felt better," Sam tells me, his eyes moving in Lily's direction. Lily had a shy smile on her face.

"I'm so glad you are OK Sam. I see you have met Lily." I said to Sam.

"Yes, I have met my second chance mate, but I feel she is more my true mate. I've never felt this feeling before," Sam tells me.

"I know exactly how you feel, Sam, it is the same with me and Kingston. I am so happy for you both," I told him happily.

Caleb placed two coffees down on top of the bedside drawer next to Sam and Lily.

"Well, I hate to be rude guys, but I've got a meeting that I am about to be late for. I'll see you all later," Caleb tells us, with that he bows his head towards me, and I just shake my head at him, trying to hide my amusement. He loves teasing me.

"See ya, Caleb, thanks for stopping by," Sam called out.

"Thank you, Caleb," Lily called out politely.

"I won't stay long, I know what it's like when you first meet your mate or true mate in this case," I told them both.

"Sam, I don't want to worry you, but, Lachlan turned up a few hours ago," I told him calmly.

“What, are you OK, did he?” Sam started before I cut him off.

“Kingston and Lachlan fought, and then they stopped, and then the warriors circled him, but he ran off into the woods. We have the trackers out there, but he seems to have vanished,” I told him feeling confused, trying to explain it all, and leaving out the part where I have the power to command alphas. I will tell Sam but now is not the time.

“Sam, he will be back. Kingston is meeting with Caleb, Kai (his Gamma) and Jackson. I am not sure if you know Alpha Jackson, he’s,” I started. Before I was cut off by Sam.

“Yes, I have met Alpha Jackson on a few occasions, he’s a good guy,” Sam replied.

“Anyway, they are meeting to discuss what we will do about Lachlan,” I told Sam, unsure about where he stands on this matter.

“Aleksa, I have no loyalty towards the bastard. I would gladly end him.” Sam tells me as if he could read my mind. He looks mad at the mention of his name and I don’t blame him.

“I am, however, loyal to Evergreen. Our pack has suffered for too long under his control, he needs to go.” Sam tells me.

“What are you saying, Sam?” I asked, suddenly feeling nervous as to where this was going.

“I am going to challenge him, for the pack,” Sam continued.

“But Sam, with all due respect, you are still recovering,” I told him, feeling concerned that my friend might get hurt.

Lily walks over to Sam and cuddles up beside him, as a show of loyalty and support.

“Aleksa, I have never felt better. After feeling weak and empty for the past few years, I feel as though I have just woken up from a bad dream. I feel energised and reborn. I can’t explain this feeling,” Sam tells me.

“Maybe it’s the will of the Moon Goddess? Oh, maybe it’s finding Lily? Sam, I am so glad you have found happiness, and I am so sorry about ...”

“It’s OK, Aleksa, you were a victim too, but we need to put that all behind us now, like you said the Moon Goddess has blessed us, although we do have to sort Lachlan out. He will keep coming for you and the twins, he won’t let you go without a fight,” Sam declared.

“Evergreen deserves better than what they have been getting, we need to rebuild, the pack is in financial ruin and Lachlan has destroyed our alliance, we need to try to get back in the good graces of our allies, and we can’t do that with Lachlan as Alpha,” Sam tells me with an air of confidence I haven’t seen from him before.

“I agree with you completely, Sam, and I think you would make a great Alpha. You have my full support,” I told him proudly.

Although we hadn’t talked much before I left Evergreen, I had always respected Sam and had always considered him a close friend. I had no doubt he could bring Evergreen back up to the standard it once held.

The pack doctor walked in at that moment with Sam’s discharge papers, Sam disconnected himself from the monitor and I took that as my cue to leave.

“I’ll see you a little later today, Sam. Lily will take good care of you. Lily, please link me if you need anything,” Lily nodded.

“Thank you, Luna,” Lily said happily.

“Please Lily, just call me Aleksa,” I told her.

“Sorry Luna, I mean Aleksa,” Lily replied.

“Thanks, Aleksa, I’ll see you at the packhouse most likely. Kingston has asked me to report there once I am discharged,” Sam said.

“Great, see you then,” I called out to them, with a small wave.

And I started to make my way back to the pack house to freshen up for our spa date with the rest of the Lunas and their entourage.

What a day it has been. The Luna brunch and spa went well. Most of the Lunas seemed unaware of what had happened earlier today, or they just didn’t deem it of importance. The chat was relatively superficial, they spoke of

their favourite places to holiday, about how well their pups were doing and how happy they all were with their respective mates.

Roxy was her usual snide self, dropping little remarks and insults here and there. In all honesty, I wasn't in the mood to fight her right now. My mind was elsewhere. Surprisingly, Abbey wasn't present today. I did wonder where she was. Maybe a spa wasn't her idea of fun, although I would have thought that one might attend out of respect.

Thankfully, my dearest friend Kali was there. If anyone needed pampering, it was her. She must be knackered. I remembered how it was to be pregnant, it could be very fatiguing. We briefly spoke of what happened this morning with Lachlan turning up. Kali reassured me the guys would sort Lachlan out. I wanted Kali to be safe. I didn't want her to put her pup at risk, so I made her promise to stay at the packhouse for extra protection. I will ask Kai to help me move her and Caleb's belongings into the packhouse today. It was clear Lachlan had lost his mind completely, and I would not put my friend and her unborn pup at risk.

Thinking of pups, I missed Liam and Layla desperately. I missed talking with my pups, but we had decided it was best if we didn't communicate while Lachlan was nearby. We couldn't risk him finding out their location. I knew they were safe though. In the short time I had known Mason, I knew I could trust him with my life.

I hadn't spoken much to Kingston since this morning's events. I realised he had been busy organising extra warriors, extra patrols, solidifying our allies and so on, not to mention the alpha conference, but I had the feeling he was avoiding me. It didn't take much to send out a quick mind-link even just to say hello. Something wasn't right.

I walked towards his office. I could hear muffled voices. Then, the office door opened before me. Kai had opened it. He stood there with a big goofy smile on his face, dimples and all.

"Good Afternoon Luna," Kai greeted me, knowingly, almost as if he had known it was my intention to stand by the door and listen a little longer.

"It's Aleksa, Kai, please only use my title in official settings, we are friends," I told him, for what seemed like the millionth time.

"Sorry Luna," he said with a cheesy grin on his face.

“Aleksa, is it important? We are kind of in the middle of something,” Kingston tells me gruffly.

I haven’t heard him speak to me like this before. He must be stressed, I thought to myself.

“I wanted to have a word with you in private, if I may, and no, it cannot wait,” I told him abruptly before he could answer.

“Very well,” he sighed in defeat.

And with that, Jackson, Caleb and Kai all exited the office quickly.

“So, what’s going on? I feel like there is something you aren’t telling me.” I stated firmly, watching his face closely.

“Aleksa, everything’s fine, I’m just a little under the pump,” Kingston declared.

“I am your mate, I can feel that something is wrong, and it’s more than what happened this morning,” I tell Kingston, letting him know I won’t leave until I get my answer.

“Do you remember the other day, when I had to take an urgent phone call?” Kingston started reluctantly.

“Yeah,” I replied.

“It was Xanthe. She had run into a little trouble along the way. She hadn’t managed to contact one of her Elders, but she had discovered something that she said could change everything. She said it was too important to mention it over the phone and that she needed to tell us in person. Xanthe felt that she was being followed, so she was going to try to shake whoever was following her. I made her promise to call me the next morning to let me know that she was safe but she never checked in.” Kingston said with a grave expression on his face.

Aleska POV

After Kingston had dropped that bombshell on me, I was feeling a little on edge. I felt overcome with guilt. If it wasn’t for me, Xanthe wouldn’t have even left on the mission. I shouldn’t have pushed her for more information.

“Xanthe will be ok. She wants to help us.” Amber said in my head.

“You don’t know that. What if something happens to her!” I replied to Amber.

“Aleksa, I know Xanthe will be fine, trust me, it’s all part of a greater plan,” Amber declares.

“Amber, I’m not in the mood for your cryptic messages. Could you just this one time, elaborate a bit for me.” I pleaded with my wolf.

“Xanthe’s story isn’t over. Trust the Goddess’s plans.” Amber says, and then she retreats and puts a block up on me.

“Grrr. That wolf!” I said out loud in frustration.

Kingston just looked at me quizzically.

“Amber?” Kingston asks.

“Amber’s gone. She blocked me!” I told Kingston angrily.

“What did she say? Sabre can’t reach her either,” Kingston replied.

“She said Xanthe would be alright, said to trust the goddess’s plan and that her story isn’t over yet,” I told Kingston a matter of factly.

“Well, that’s good then. Why are you so stressed?” Kingston asks me.

“Do you have any idea of how frustrating it is when your wolf is privy to all this information that concerns you and the ones you love the most, and yet she picks and chooses what she thinks I have a right to know!” I blurt out.

Then I look at the expression on Kingston’s face and realize something.

“I’m being a brat aren’t I?” I said, laughing at myself.

“You are just stressed, and rightly so, a lot has happened recently, Aleksa, my love, you are doing great!” Kingston tells me as he sniffs my neck where he marked me.

He starts to lick my mark and it sends shivers of excitement and arousal all over me. Kingston is sitting in his oversized executive chair, so I climb onto his legs and started to straddle him. I could feel my arousal seeping through my panties, I know it must be overwhelming his senses right now.

I can feel his c**k harden in his pants, straining tightly against the fabric of his pants. His c**k is throbbing against my panties.

“I want you in me now!” I demand, looking into Kingston’s eyes with the utmost determination and desire.

Kingston unzips his pants and his large hardened c**k springs to attention, he then rips off my sheer wet panties, and I lower myself onto his c**k riding him as if my life depends on it. He pushes me further down onto his c**k. Using his arms to push me up and down into him, harder and faster, I’m grinding into him, until I’m riding him to a gallop. I can feel his c**k twitch and pulsate inside me. We both reach our highs in no time. I feel Kingston find his release emptying into me. My walls are still throbbing post c****x as his c*m drips down my inner thighs.

I looked into Kingston’s eyes with a smirk on my face. I don’t know what just came over me. I’ve never been so spontaneous like that before. I looked at Kingston’s face and he looked a lot more relaxed than he did when I first entered the room. I knew that I was definitely feeling more relaxed.

Then it hit me like a ton of bricks. Oh, my goddess. The others were just outside the room! I was beyond mortified.

Kingston looked at me as if he could read my mind, he reassured me, “They left before we got physical. I told them to take a quick break and report back in thirty minutes,” he chuckled.

I didn’t find it as funny as Kingston. I felt my heart rate starting to normalize. I picked myself back up and discarded my ripped panties in the bin. Kingston walked into the ensuite in his office and washed himself off. I walked in and cleaned myself up also. Although, I would need to go straight to my room and shower properly. I can’t walk around smelling like s*x, not in a pack of werewolves with a heightened sense of smell.

Kingston then came over to me and pulled me in for a loving embrace. We kissed, and then I told him my plans with Caleb and Kali. Kingston agreed with me that they should move to the packhouse. He said that he would ask Kai to help me organize it all. Kingston received a mind-link. Sam is here to speak with him. So I took this as my cue to leave. I was shower-bound. Then, I wanted to go and find Abbey, check that she is OK, and have that chat with her that we had spoken of when she had first arrived.

I started to make my way into my room. I grabbed a fresh new outfit out of the walk-in wardrobe and grabbed my cosmetic bag with all my hygiene needs in it, and as I made my way to the bathroom, I saw a note and a long-stemmed red rose on my bed.

My heart immediately swelled, and I wonder how Kingston organized this so quickly. I took a sniff of the rose, as I held it I felt a thorn pierce my finger. Ouch. I thought to myself, as I watched a few drops of blood fall on my bed linen.

The rose smelled sweet and spicy at the same time. Then I dropped it as quickly as I picked it up. It smelt familiar, but not in a good way. It smelt like Lachlan.

I picked up the letter and began to read it, "YOU BELONG TO ME!" "Lachlan."

I screwed the note up and chucked it hard against the wall. I then mind-linked Kingston and told him I needed him urgently.

In a matter of moments, my door was kicked open and came off its hinges, flying against the wall. In stormed Kingston, Sam, Caleb, and Jackson. I stood there shocked. That was quick. Not quite what I had expected.

"Aleska, I could feel your fear and panic through our bond. What happened?" Kingston yelled. The others were all looking around the wall with fierce facial expressions. I almost felt the urge to laugh. But I didn't. This was not a laughing matter.

"Lachlan happened," I said sternly.

The men started walking around my room inspecting it for signs of intruders. They didn't appear to be picking up any scents.

Jackson picked up the crumpled note and opened it. He looked enraged.

"Kingston, I think you should read this," he told Kingston, passing the note to him. The others watched Kingston and waited for his response.

Kingston's growl ripped through the room, everyone except Jackson and myself was affected by his alpha aura.

"What is it, Kingston?" Sam asked.

Kingston passed the note to Sam. He and Caleb read it.

“It came with the rose. The rose has Lachlan’s scent on it, but nothing else seemed to.” I spoke of my own observations.

“How the hell did he get past our border patrols and security measures!” Kingston demanded. He looked like he wanted to break something.

“He’s masking his scent, Alpha,” Caleb declared.

“I agree,” I said in support of Caleb’s observation.

“He must have a witch working with him,” Jackson added.

“We need Xanthe!” I said to the group.

Jackson appeared to stiffen at the mention of her name.

“Who is Xanthe?” Jackson asked with furrowed brows.

“Xanthe is a Healer. She knew my parents, and she has been really supportive of – everything, she would know what to do right now,” I said to Jackson and the others.

Jackson seemed to be deep in thought right now, he was rubbing the side of his neck with a very serious expression on his face. I was about to ask him if everything was alright when I got a mind-link.

“There’s been a breach on the eastern perimeter, I’ve got to go, Sam/ Caleb - could you keep an eye on Aleska for now please?” Kingston called out.

“I don’t need minders, Kingston! We have discussed this already. I can take care of myself,” I protested.

“Look, can you just work with me, Sabre is losing his mind right now, he doesn’t want to leave you, but I need to attend to this breach,” Kingston tried to reason with me.

“Yeah, OK, go, I’ll play along just this once,” I told Kingston.

“Permission to tag along, Kingston,” Jackson asked.

“Gray could do with a run,” Jackson added.

“Yeah, thanks man, I’d appreciate that,” Kingston replied, and with that, they both shift into their wolf forms and they bolt through the packhouse.

I looked at Sam and Caleb. “Alright guys – Sam, I’m sure you would rather be with Lily right now, and Caleb – I’m sure you would much rather be with your pregnant mate, so how about we all go our separate ways?” I said slyly.

“No can do Aleska, you heard Kingston,” Sam replied to me.

“Looks like you’re stuck with us,” Caleb added.

I sighed. “OK, well, I’m gonna take a shower so I’m sure you don’t wanna hang out here, come back in ten minutes. OK?” I said to them.

“We will wait outside in the hallway, Aleksa, please don’t make this hard for us,” Caleb pleaded.

“I’ll behave. After that, I need to see my friend Abbey though,” I told them.

“No problem, we shall escort you there,” Caleb replied.

“Alright, see you soon,” I said to them both, and with that, I headed into the shower.

As we made our way to Abbey and Alaric’s cottage, I realized it was starting to get late. The sun looks like it’s getting ready to set, and it’s a beautiful sight. I made my way up the cobblestone pathway to the front door of the cottage. I am still taken aback by how cute these cottages are, littered with wildflowers, and fragrant undertones of jasmine, stock, and gardenia.

As I go to knock on the door, it opens before me.

“Come in Aleksa, I’ve been expecting you,” Abbey said with a welcoming smile on her face, as she stood in the doorway.

Aleksa POV

“Abbey, Hi, you were expecting me?” I questioned her, raising a brow.

“Yeah, I had a feeling you would be popping by today, come in, we have much to discuss,” Abbey says, as she gestures with her hands inviting me into her cottage.

I walked in and took a look around. In very little time Abbey has made this cottage seem warm and cosy. I see that she has herbs hanging upside down in the kitchen and a large mortar and pestle sitting on the kitchen bench.

“Alaric isn’t here, he’s meeting with another Alpha, trying to arrange an alliance between our packs,” Abbey tells me.

“Your cute friends can wait outside though if you don’t mind, I am happy to chat with you, there are some things I’d like to keep private if you know what I mean,” Abbey says winking at me.

She sure is quirky and upbeat I think to myself, Amber and I both like this girl.

“You heard her guys, take a break, I’ll be fine,” I tell them enthusiastically. They both look reluctant to leave me at the door. But we make it easier for them by slamming the door shut.

“So let’s just get right into it, shall we? You are a crescent moon wolf are you not?” Abbey blurted out.

I stood there with my poker face intact, trying to mask my surprise, feigning confusion.

“It’s ok Aleksa, your secret is safe with me, I haven’t even told Alaric,” Abbey insisted.

“What’s a crescent Moon wolf Abbey?” I ask her, trying to keep up my pretense.

“Aww, come on Aleksa, for starters I can see your mark, it’s unlike normal markings, not to mention there is literally a crescent moon, with two wolves, and a crown on it! It’s ok, you can trust me!” Abbey protested.

“What do you know of crescent moon wolves?” I asked Abbey. I was curious, as even Xanthe seemed to know very little about them.

“Please take a seat Aleksa, and I will tell you all you need to know.” Abbey began.

“I was born into a lineage of witches that serve the Royal Werewolf Kingdom, my family for generations has worked for the royal family, also known as the Volkov Family, we worked alongside other supernaturals, to help maintain order and balance,” Abbey told me.

“A long time ago, when my parents were just pups, there was an attack on the Volkov Kingdom, it was orchestrated by a greedy, power-mad Elder hellbent on taking the throne for himself. He enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch.” Abbey paused momentarily, giving me a chance to take it all in.

“The King and Queen were distraught, they fought with all their might to protect their pups, the Queen even died protecting her daughter, however, fortunately, their son Callum survived.”

“As you will know, Callum is our current Alpha King,” Abbey clarified.

“The battle was short-lived, as reinforcements arrived fairly quickly to defend the kingdom, so the rogues had to abandon their mission, but not before they grabbed some of the royal pups,” Abbey continued.

“The elderly, vulnerable, and pups were hidden in the safe house which was under the main pack house. All but two, the Alpha kings sisters’ pups, twins, a boy, and a girl. Unfortunately, they didn’t make it to the safe house in time.”

“The pups were said to have been taken by one of the Elders. No one had seen it coming.” Abbey shook her head as she retold the story.

“The Elder in question was eventually hunted down, but by that stage, the pups were no longer in his possession.”

“After weeks of torturing, and in his final days, it is said that the Elder in question, had placed the two pups into two different packs, a great distance apart, and despite many attempts, the Elder would not give up the locations,” Abbey continued.

“Eventually, the Elder was found dead in his cell, a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane sticking out of his chest, no one knew who had ended him, although it was assumed he was silenced,” Abbey declared.

“The pups were crescent moon wolves, they were destined for great things, they were to help protect the future alpha king and his offspring, said to be sent from the moon goddess herself,” Abbey proclaimed.

“I know it’s a lot to take in, I should mention that the pups’ names were Viktor, and Kristina,” Abbey continued.

“Kristina! That was my mother’s name!” I said, realizing where this story is going now.

“Aleksa, I would hazard a guess to say that your mother was one of the kidnapped crescent moon wolves of the Volkov Kingdom,” Abbey continued.

“I, don’t know what to say, I don’t really know anything about my biological mother. I was adopted and raised by humans,” I told Abbey feeling shocked at these revelations.

“Aleska, I am certain that you are of royal blood. I could sense it from the moment I met you. I feel drawn to you. I feel the need to protect you,” Abbey told me with a proud expression on her face.

I was speechless. I just stared at her wide-mouthed. Could this really be true I ask myself?

“I can’t be! I’m not a royal! I’m just plain old me.” I said out loud, in complete denial mode. Then I remembered that wasn’t exactly true. I had powers. That was definitely not normal.

“I told you we were special Aleksa, we are of royal blood!” Amber says in my head, she’s feeling rather smug thinking that she is royalty.

“Wait! You said there were two pups?” I questioned Abbey, as the realization dawned on me.

“Yes, they were siblings, twins actually,” Abbey added.

“Interesting,” I replied.

“What is it Aleska?” Abbey asked with a curious look on her face.

“Uh, probably nothing. Abbey, would you mind if we continue this conversation a little later? I just remembered something that I have to do. But I will be back as soon as possible. Is that okay?” I asked her.

“Yes, of course, I’ll just be here, pottering around. I have a feeling you will be back very soon,” Abbey told me sweetly, not questioning my sudden exit.

As I went to open the door it opened in front of me.

“After you, your royal highness,” Caleb said with a cheeky grin on his face, bowing with one hand in front and one towards his back. Sam looked astounded. I guess he will still be taking in everything that he had overheard while eavesdropping.

“What part of the private conversation did you not understand?” Abbey called out crossly, with her hands on her hips, and a very displeased expression on her face, shaking her head towards Caleb and Sam.

“Uh, werewolf hearing!” Caleb declared. Putting his hands up in the air as if to surrender.

“Caleb, Sam, you have to promise to not breathe a word of this to anyone! PROMISE me!” I commanded them both.

“Yes, Luna,” they both say in sync, trying to fight the command, but failing miserably.

With that, I waved goodbye to Abbey, and we make our way to the pack house.

I needed to speak with Jackson. I wonder if he is back from his run to the border. I need to speak with him. I want to ask him what his father’s name is. I know I could just mind-link him but I feel this is something we need to discuss in person.

“Jackson, are you back from your run yet?” I asked him impatiently.

“Hey Aleksa, I am as a matter of fact, what’s up?” Jackson replied with his husky voice.

“Uh, I need to speak with you, as soon as possible, are you free?” I asked him.

“Yeah, Aleksa, I’m right behind you,” Jackson said. I turned around and sure enough, he was walking towards me in his basketball shorts and nothing else.

“Oh, Jackson! I think you need a shower!” I tell him, giggling. He is completely soaked in sweat.

“I’ll be back in fifteen, meet you at the training grounds?” Jackson replied.

“Ok, see you then,” I told him.

Then I walked off to the kitchen to make a quick coffee while I try to absorb all the new information I had just learned.

As I leaned over the breakfast bar, sipping on my coffee, I pondered my thoughts. What were the chances that Jackson and I ended up meeting one another? We are both crescent moon wolves, I already know that we are kin, but I thought it was because we were children of the Moon Goddess. What if we are both royal wolves, chosen to defend the kingdom?

Then I feel panic-stricken, what if it's true, and I'm expected to leave Rocky Mountain? This is my home! Now and forever. I could never leave. Would I be expected to? Calm down Aleksa, I thought to myself.

However, I would like to know more about where I came from. My whole life I have been curious about my heritage, although my adopted parents were the best I could hope for, I would love to know if I have more family out there somewhere.

I know I should speak with Kingston about this development as he is my mate, and this involves him too. But I need to make sure this is all true first and find out if Jackson is also part of this.

I head over to the training grounds and wait for Jackson to arrive. I wonder what he will make of all of this.

“Hey Jackson,” I decided that I'm just gonna get straight to the point, “What is your father's name?” I asked him. He looked at me puzzled.

“Why do you want to know my father's name?” Jackson asked me.

“Please, just humor me, I need to know,” I pleaded with him.

Jackson looked at me with a suspicious look on his face. He took a moment to consider things and then said “I will tell you my father's name on one condition, you must tell me why you want to know this information,” he added.

“Ok, deal, I will tell you everything I know,” I told him, solemnly, nodding my head towards him.

“Vicktor, his name is Vicktor,” Jackson replied.

I gasped loudly. Placing my hands over my mouth. I realized I must look like a deer caught in headlights right now.

Jackson stepped toward me and placed his hand on my shoulder.

“Aleksa, what is it?” Jackson demanded.

“I think your father is my uncle! I think he and my mother were twins,” I told him with a shocked expression on my face.

Jackson paused again, looking at me, realizing this was not a joke and I was being serious.

“My father was an only child, that’s impossible,” Jackson said in denial.

“Jackson, I met a witch, and she told me this story.” I began, only to be cut off mid-sentence.

“A witch! Aleksa, you need to be careful who you speak to. Who is this witch?” Jackson demanded.

“Abbey, she’s a nice witch. I trust her! Well, she’s actually a Hybrid. Why don’t you come with me and you can meet her for yourself.” I proposed.

“A Hybrid!” Jackson yelled.

“I will come with you. But, I am not buying any of this Aleksa, and neither should you,” Jackson declared.

With that, I took his hand and lead him towards Abbey’s cottage.

Abbey again opened the cottage door before I could even knock once.

“How do you keep doing that?” I said amazed.

“Intuition Aleksa, it’s just pure intuition,” Abbey said enthusiastically waving her hand in the air.

“Hmnn, interesting, another Crescent Moon Wolf I see. You had better come in!” Abbey said pleasantly to Jackson.

Jackson didn’t say anything. He just glared at Abbey, looking like he was barely holding himself together. Then he unleashed a loud growl.

Aleksa POV

“Jackson!” I raised my voice in shock at him, unsure of why he was growling at poor Abbey.

“MATE!” Jackson yelled again. He looked confused and agitated. He started sniffing the air. “Mate was here!” He said, followed by another growl.

“Jackson, It’s just Alaric and Abbey staying here!” I called out, wondering what on earth was going on with him.

Jackson pushed past Abbey and started stalking around the room, he walked over to the couch and picked up a white fluffy sweater, he pulled it up to his nose and sniffed it.

I looked at Abbey, she wasn’t scared, she looked more amused than anything.

“Jackson?” I asked him, trying to snap him out of the trance he appeared to be in.

“This sweater! Who does it belong to?” Jackson demanded, looking at Abbey.

“I have no idea, it was already here when we got here. I assume either a cleaner or whoever stayed here last?” Abbey confirmed.

Both Jackson and Abbey whipped their heads towards me.

“I have no idea! I could ask Kingston or Kai if they know who stayed here last. It wouldn’t belong to the cleaning staff as they wear uniforms while working to protect their clothes.” I told them both.

“I’ll hold onto this.” Jackson declared.

Abbey just smiled sweetly.

“Jackson, that’s amazing! Don’t worry we will find your mate in no time! But first, can we finish our discussion, if you don’t mind?” I asked Jackson hopefully. I know scenting his mate and not knowing who she is will be driving him crazy, so we will need to keep this short and sweet.

“Well, isn’t this an interesting development? I can see you are eager to find the owner of the sweater so I will keep this brief.” Abbey stated.

Jackson crossed his arms at his chest, looked at Abbey impatiently, and gestured for her to proceed.

“As I said to Aleska, I am a hybrid. I’m half-witch, half werewolf, and I’m from a lineage of witches that serve the Kingdom, my family for generations has worked with the King and Queen and the royal family, in particular, working to protect them alongside other supernaturals,” Abbey declared.

“Long story short, before I was born there was an attack on the kingdom when a corrupt Elder enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch. The King fought to defend the pack, while the Queen was supposed to be in the safe house with her pups. However, for some reason, they didn’t make it there in time, and the Queen and her daughter were killed, with only their son Callum to survive. As you know he is our current reigning King Callum,” Abbey said, taking a moment to catch her breath.

“Realizing that they weren’t going to win the battle, the rogues retreated, but not before a trusted Elder grabbed two of the royal pups, the King’s nephew and niece,” Abbey continued.

“The Elder was captured eventually, but the pups were no longer in his possession. He had placed them in separate packs on opposite sides of the country. Despite weeks of torturing he never gave up their locations.” Abbey declared.

“The Elder was found dead in his cell not long after that, it is thought that he was silenced, as he was found with a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane in his chest,” Abbey concluded.

“You look confused, and you are probably wondering how this is relevant to you. Let me simplify it for you,” Abbey declared.

“The royal pups that were kidnapped were crescent moon wolves, they were twins, a boy, and a girl, they were named Viktor and Kristina,” Abbey said slowly.

“I’m gonna go out on a limb here and assume that your father’s name is Viktor. Am I correct?” Abbey says cockily.

Jackson looked from Abbey then to me. I just nodded in agreement.

“My biological mother’s name was Kristina. And it would make sense to me because I could never understand why her father (my grandfather) could hate her so much. He practically ordered her death.” I said sadly as everything started to click into place for me in my head.

I felt a little relieved knowing that evil man wasn’t actually my blood relative, but then even more confused as to who my biological grandparents actually are.

“Say this is the truth, and we are of royal blood, and our parents were kidnapped, how are you such an expert on all of this? How do we know that we can trust you?” Jackson questioned Abbey.

“That’s a fair question, Jackson. I’m not sure what real evidence I can provide you with. I suppose you could try some genetic testing that might shed some light on your origins. Also, I would suggest that you would both have powers of some sort. Crescent moon wolves hold great power. I would suggest that there is little information out there, so you may not know how to harness those powers. I would like to try to help you in any way I can if you will let me.” Abbey said thoughtfully.

“While I do feel connected to Aleska, and I know that we are bound, I’m not sure that I buy your explanation. I will need to look more into this. I have matters to attend to. If you don’t mind. I will see myself out. Aleksa, are you coming?” Jackson huffed.

“I think I’ll hang out here with Abbey a little longer,” I told him, looking toward Abbey to ensure that it was alright that I stay a little longer. Abbey smiled with a pleased look on her face.

And with that Jackson hurried out the door and shifted into his wolf, Gray.

Jackson POV

When I heard there had been a breach at the perimeter I jumped at the chance to go for a run in my wolf form. These past few months it has been getting harder to control my wolf. The toll of not finding my mate is taking it out of me. I act cavalier when people mention it around me but really I feel like I am struggling to maintain control. It's not normal for an alpha wolf to go so long without their mate. I know my pack is getting nervous. I know that they worry I might go feral if I don't find her soon.

Since we arrived at Rocky Mountain Gray has been a bit off. It's not just the crescent moon wolf stuff, something here keeps setting him off, but he won't say what.

When I got back from my run Aleksa was waiting to speak with me, she seemed a bit nervous so I'm not sure what to make of it.

As I make my way to the training field I caught a whiff of her scent so I know that she's already waiting. I prefer to get straight to the point so I'm relieved when she said that she wouldn't beat around the bush. I was suspicious when she started asking about my bastard father.

Aleska then told me that there was someone that she wanted me to meet, so I humored her and we made our way to one of the pack cottages. A peppy-looking girl opened the door. I'm not sure what she is. I can smell a little werewolf but there is something else, it smelled like magic, a witch perhaps?

And then it hit me, the most intoxicating scent I've ever smelled. f**k me! I struggled to keep control. Gray is going mad. "MATE! MATE!" He screamed in my head. He followed it with a loud menacing growl, no doubt scaring the s**t out of the girls.

I struggle to reign him in, and then he pushes through, and I end up slamming past what's her name, my nose leads the way to the couch where I can smell her sweet scent all over a white sweater. I grabbed it frantically and pulled it into my face, taking in a deep sniff. "Wild jasmine," Gray said. "Our mate smells like wild jasmine with a hint of lemongrass!" Gray called out in my head.

"MATE!" I could confirm that the sweater indeed belongs to my future Luna. I looked to Aleksa and the one who opened the door. I heard Aleksa call something out. But I was too immersed in this overwhelming scent to listen.

They tell me that it must have belonged to someone that was in the cottage before they came to stay and Aleska tells me she will find out who. Damn straight!

I reluctantly listened to what the witch had to say. Switching from thinking about my mate to listening to what she was saying. It all sounded highly probable, but I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to find my mate. Gray was crashing around in my head. I needed to get out of here and shift before I lost it.

I decided that I would find Kingston later and find out who the sweater belongs to and then I will find her and make her mine. Assuming she accepts me as her mate. Although I have a feeling that won't be a problem. I can be very convincing. I have waited so long for this. I need my mate.

I cut the conversation short. I'm not really listening anyway. I tell myself that I will apologize to Aleksa later. I need to get out of here.

And with that, I run out the door and shift into my wolf, and we tear our way through the woods, releasing some of our pent-up tension.

Sam POV

My whole life I have trained for the position of Beta of Evergreen Pack. Generations of Nicholsons have taken on the Beta role. There was never a doubt in my mind that this isn't where I wanted to be.

And then I met her. Eva Lockwood. We had all grown up together. I had always thought she had a soft spot for Lachlan, that was until I started to feel the pull and realized that she was my mate. Even before my wolf came I knew that she was my mate. I was certain that she could feel the pull too, but it seemed like she would constantly try to fight it.

Our birthdays were the same day, so as fate would have it our wolves claimed one another that very day, our eighteenth birthdays.

They say there is the lover and the loved one, and in some ways, I feel they were right in our case. I had loved Eva with all my heart from the moment I had laid eyes on her, but I knew it wasn't quite the same for her. I figured it was cold feet or a fear of commitment although that was odd for a werewolf couple.

When Aleksa joined the pack as our Luna, it felt like everything had fallen into place. Aleksa and Lachlan mated and formed a solid pack leadership with myself and Eva as the Beta couple, joined by Caleb and a little later on Kali, which made our group complete.

The girls would spend time together doing girl things and we guys would lead and strengthen the pack together. It seemed like a dream until it wasn't.

The pain came not long after we had mated, and even more so after our commitment ceremony. It took me a while to realize what was happening to me. It only happened every now and then, and I was never able to find evidence of any betrayal. I would confide in Lachlan but he would tell me I was crazy that Eva loved me and it must be something else.

That is until I saw Aleksa experiencing that same pain. I went with her to her doctor's appointments and the pack doctor always had an explanation for why Aleksa was experiencing pain. I had my doubts but again I never found any evidence of any wrongdoings.

I was always kept busy with pack business, Lachlan over the years had become quite complacent and sloppy, which only added more to my workload. The more I worked the more pain I would feel through my and Eva's bond.

Despite a lack of concrete evidence and after confronting Eva on more than one occasion, she always had excuses and would never actually confess anything. I was ready to reject her when I was sent away last minute to a training mission at a nearby pack. When I came back I was told that Aleksa and the twins had been kidnapped by some rogue wolves we had locked up in our dungeons.

Eva and my shambles of a relationship had become an afterthought at that stage. I had a duty to find and rescue our Luna and the Heirs to our pack. Finding them started to consume me. I rarely stopped to eat or sleep. I could still feel Eva betraying our bond, but I needed to keep searching for them. Even though I could feel myself getting weaker, I couldn't risk feeling the full effects of rejecting my fated mate, so even though I was being weakened by betrayal I knew that a full rejection could be devastating, and right now I needed to keep going for the sake of Aleksa, Liam, and Layla.

Lachlan had all but lost it, the pack was suffering in so many ways, and we were on the brink of bankruptcy due to Lachlan's penchant for gambling, and overspending. I discovered that had been frequenting brothels day and night

and then claiming to be missing his mate as an afterthought. Aleska deserved so much more than that pitiful excuse for a mate.

Pack morale was at an all-time low, lower-ranked wolves were being mistreated, and it wasn't the same pack that it had been before Lachlan had taken over as Alpha. Slowly over time, things had changed at Evergreen, and everything seemed to escalate once Aleksa and the twins were gone.

We had a lead on Aleska and the twins in Iowa, so we traveled there but then the trail went cold. We had committed to being at the Royal Alpha Summit as Lachlan had thought it might be a good idea to distribute Aleska and the twin's photos to other packs in case someone had seen them or heard something so Lachlan ordered Eva and me to head towards Rocky Mountain. He had planned to join us within twenty-four hours.

I couldn't believe it when we arrived and I watched Aleksa walk up to me. She seemed to exude such confidence and happiness. I wasn't happy when I saw her locking hands with another alpha, but my wolf Caine had told me to calm down. He told me to read their body language. I could feel reciprocal love and safety in each other's presence. I could feel it exuding from them.

I was shocked at Eva's behavior. She didn't seem pleased to see her best friend. I had never seen her so cold and bitter before. It was at that moment I realized that I must have missed something. I was even more confused when I saw Caleb and Kali. I was overwhelmingly happy to see my friends again but then disappointed because as far as I knew Caleb and Kali had betrayed us. Lachlan had said that they had helped the rogues take Aleksa and the twins. I could never understand why, but Lachlan had told me a very convincing story. Again my wolf, Caine, was telling me that they were our friends and to hear them out.

And heard them out I did. And it all made sense. I was enraged to hear that my best friend was betraying me with my mate. But it all fit. I was even more furious and shocked beyond recognition when I heard about what Lachlan had done to Aleksa, not just betraying their bond, but locking our Luna, an innocent wolf, up in the dungeons.

Caine was Furious, he instantly demanded that we reject our poor excuse for a mate right there on the spot, and I agreed with him. I would rather be weak and sad than be so pitiful to accept such a cruel and vile mate.

Caine had loved Eva's wolf Ash at the beginning but over time he got impatient and suspicious of her. He seemed to be at the point that he would prefer no mate over the one we had been given. This was unheard of for a wolf, but Caine was a strong wolf, he gave me the strength to push through these past few years of hardship.

When I rejected Eva, it hurt. It hurt so much harder than the betrayal pain, so much so I didn't have the strength to keep my eyes open.

Although as I began to come to I smelt the most delicious smell ever. It reminded me of the spring freesias that grew all over the pack grounds when I was a child. That smell always filled me with happiness throughout my life. I opened my eyes to the most beautiful sight sitting at my bedside, holding my hand in hers.

She was gorgeous, about five foot four, with long whitish blonde curls perched up in a high ponytail. She had bright crystal blue eyes with rosy cheeks and porcelain skin.

I could feel tingles all over. "MATE!" Caine roared in my head. She looked at me with a sweet smile, and it warmed my heart.

I called MATE to her. She replied MATE back. We were mates. She was mine and I was hers.

"Tell me beautiful, what is your name?" I asked her.

"Lily. I am Lily." She tells me coyly.

"I'm Sam," I told her.

"I know. Aleksa and Kingston, they asked me to bring you a glass jug of water, and I dropped it accidentally, I'm sorry. I was just caught off guard. I did not expect to find my mate here," she recalled so quickly that she appeared to be out of breath.

"Hey, it's okay, relax, I'm just glad you are here." I tried to reassure her.

"Are you going to reject me?" She asked me hesitantly.

"What, why would I reject you?" I asked her, feeling anxious, as to why she would even suggest that.

"It's just that you are a Beta I am told. And I, I'm an Omega." She said. A pained look on her face.

"Wrong, you are now a Beta female. That is unless you wish to reject me!" I said sternly.

"Of Course not. You are my mate sent by the moon goddess, I could never," She reassured me with a serious expression on her face.

Gosh, she sure is cute.

"There is something you should know though Lily," I told her.

"You are my second chance mate." I declared.

"Second chance mate? How?" Lily asked. She looked confused.

"My first mate, Eva, betrayed our bond. I will tell you all about it, but perhaps a little later, it is a long sordid tale." I told her.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you, Lily," I stopped.

"What's your last name, Lily?" I asked her.

"Owens," Lily responded, looking nervous.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, as my mate," I declared proudly.

"I Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, accept you Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack as my mate," she replied with a great smile on her face.

With that, I pulled her face into mine and we gladly gave in to the mate bond with a passionate and earth-shattering kiss, unlike anything I've ever experienced before, sending tingles and shivers throughout my entire body. Caine growled in satisfaction. As we pulled apart sweet Lily's cheeks were even rosier than before, a deep shade of red prominent on her face.

"MINE!" I growled.

"YOURS!" Lily replied.

“We have much to discuss. But, first, I need to change, then I need to see Kingston.” I told Lily.

“My wolf Caine is demanding that I mate and mark you right away. But I respect you Lily and don’t want to rush you. So I have to ask how do you feel about making it official tonight?” I asked Lily, not wanting to force things. I wanted to let her know that I respect her as an equal. But, at the same time, I also do not want to wait any longer than necessary.

“Tonight would be perfect Sam. I’ll get you a towel and some clean clothing for you to change into while you shower if you like?” Lily asked me.

“That would be great, thank you, sweetheart,” I told her. Kissing her on the forehead as I ripped out my IV lines, and then headed to the shower.

I’m all showered and clothed, Caleb has popped in to check on me, after chatting for a while Caleb had offered to go and get some coffees while we wait for the discharge papers from the doc.

As I lifted Lily onto me and we began to kiss and touch one another our little make-out session is cut short when Aleksa walked into the room. Aleksa looked deeply embarrassed and in an attempt to leave before she thought that we would notice her she walked right into Caleb’s chest.

Lily jumped off the bed in embarrassment. She’s just so cute. But we are all adults here. It’s only natural to want to jump each other especially since we are mates and have yet to mark and mate.

After a brief chat, Aleksa told me that Lachlan had arrived this morning, but as fast as he arrived he left again. No doubt he will be back. I sensed some concern in Aleksa and I could guess what she was thinking. Naturally, she was wondering where I stood on all of this.

I hated that bastard. All these years he was the cause of my pain and suffering. Pretending to be my friend. Piling me up with never-ending workloads and out-of-pack trips. He made me feel like a bad mate for doubting Eva when he knew what was going on the whole time because he was the one she was betraying me with.

I would love nothing more than to end that poor excuse for an alpha myself. I realize I am not of alpha blood but I know for a fact I could restore Evergreen back to its former glory. I know I would make a better alpha than he ever did.

I thought I would feel weak after rejecting Eva but I have never felt so strong. I feel reborn. I can feel this energy within me. I feel like I have a pretty good chance at beating Lachlan in an alpha challenge. And even if I wasn't successful I would sure give it all I had. Someone had to stop that evil bastard, and I wanted to be the one to do it.

I relayed all of this to Aleska and Lily, who both look concerned. But they need not be. Lily walked up to me and wrapped her arms around me showing me her love and support. The doc showed up and gave me my papers, so I started to make my way over to the packhouse to speak with Kingston and Caleb to tell them of my plans.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn't want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan's arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn't mean to be nonchalant at Abbey's, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it's totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston's office. I wanted to find out who

the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn't seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

I was starting to feel a little lonely here with Liam and Layla away with Mason, Quinn and her parents, Kaia goddess knows where with Asher, Kingston, and Kai unreachable, Sam and Lily occupied, and Jackson running off somewhere in the woods. So I tried to reach out to Kali but she must be busy with Caleb. So I gave up and decided to head up to my room for a while.

After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

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"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

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I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

"We aren't alone are we Amber," I asked my wolf.

"Nope," Amber said shortly.

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I recognized the voice. It made my skin crawl.

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“You lied to me the other day. Do you think I’m f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?” He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn’t let him know I was scared.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said faking confusion at his question.

“Look b***h, I want my mate and I’m not leaving until I get her,” He threatened.

He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

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He laughed mockingly and continued to advance toward me. I closed my eyes to concentrate on my energy and visualise what I wanted to do to him, to stop him from hurting me.

At that very moment, I felt a hard slap across my face, so hard that I lost my footing, and fell to the ground again. It hurt so much. I wondered if I might have just lost a tooth or two then. But I managed to hold my pain in.

I tried to get up but Ezra was already forcing his bodyweight onto me.

“Focus Aleksa!” Amber called out to me. I could feel her giving me strength. I tried to channel all of my energy and focus.

I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

Ezra ripped my jumper off me in an instant. I closed my eyes again and blocked everything out. This was not happening.

The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

My body starts to regulate and I don't feel so hot anymore.

I picked myself up and walked over to him. I'm still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

I heard Ezra groan. He was making incomprehensible sounds. He didn't seem to be responding. I watched him lose consciousness.

I guess he was more of a threat than Kingston and I had thought. He needed to be held somewhere. I knew that I couldn't lift him. I was feeling drained from using my power.

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Then I thought of Jackson. Perhaps since we are both Crescent Moon wolves we could mind-link one another. It was worth a try at this point.

"Jackson, I need your help," I mind-linked.

"Aleksa, what's wrong?" Jackson responded immediately.

"Ezra. He attacked me." I replied, trying to sound strong and unaffected.

Jackson growled. "Where are you?"

"Near the training grounds, between the bush and a huge oak tree," I told him calmly.

"I'm on my way," Jackson responded.

A minute or so later Jackson arrived in his wolf form.

“Hello Gray,” I said to him, with a small smile, trying to remain strong while holding my arms against my chest. I was still shivering and that bastard had ripped my sweater, so I was standing there in my singlet.

Gray growled loudly and stalked toward Ezra.

Amber pushed through to talk to him.

“Gray!” Amber called out.

Gray stopped, and turned his head back toward me, he took a sniff, then started to walk toward me.

“You’re hurt!” Gray replied to us, looking enraged.

I pushed Amber back. I wanted to retain control. Luckily we could communicate in both wolf and human forms.

“A little, I’ll be ok,” I reassured him.

Gray looked at me, then he looked down at my ripped sweatshirt and Ezra’s top on the ground next to it.

“I’m gonna rip him to shreds!” Gray roared.

“It’s ok, he can’t hurt me now. I called you because I need help getting him locked up,” I told Gray.

“Of course, but, where’s your mate?” Gray asked confused, and then mad.

“I don’t know. I haven’t seen him since lunchtime yesterday, and he has blocked me. I can’t get hold of Kingston or Kai. Something weird is going on,” I told Gray.

Then I think about how Gray arrived almost immediately after I had mind-linked him.

“Hey, how did you get here so fast?” I asked Gray.

“We’ve been out searching, for our mate,” Gray responded.

“Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!” I tried to reassure him.

“I’ll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute,” Gray declared.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn’t want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan’s arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I’m sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson’s mate was. I couldn’t wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn’t mean to be nonchalant at Abbey’s, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it’s totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston’s office. I wanted to find out who the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn’t be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn’t seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra

again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

I was starting to feel a little lonely here with Liam and Layla away with Mason, Quinn and her parents, Kaia goddess knows where with Asher, Kingston, and Kai unreachable, Sam and Lily occupied, and Jackson running off somewhere in the woods. So I tried to reach out to Kali but she must be busy with Caleb. So I gave up and decided to head up to my room for a while.

After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

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Aleska POV

Gray had shifted before we left for the pack lock-up facility. We began to walk to the lock-up facility. Being that Jackson was just visiting the pack he didn’t know where the facility was so I had to show them where to go.

I still couldn't get through to anyone via mind-link, nor could Jackson as he wasn't part of our pack. It didn't take much to convince Jackson to let me come with him to look for the others and find out what was going on, as he could sense that things were off also.

When we reached the lock-up, the guards didn't appear to be outside as they usually were. Jackson looked at his warriors and they made a few hand gestures and slowly advanced inside. As we walked through the corridors which were dimly lit, it appeared that the backup generators were on. When we reached the holding area we found the guards out cold on the floor. I ran up to the closest one and felt for a pulse. His heart rate was slow but it was still there.

"He's still alive! But his pulse is very slow." I called out to Jackson.

"Let's investigate further, Aleska, you stay close to me." Jackson declared.

He didn't need to say a word, I wasn't planning on going anywhere alone at this stage. I was officially creeped out.

After a sweep of the cells, we made our way back to the entrance. The cells were all empty. The cell doors appeared to be locked shut, and the guards appeared to be out cold, almost as if they were sleeping. No one had been harmed.

We all looked at each other with confused expressions on our faces.

"Magic!" Jackson said abruptly.

"I have a feeling magic is involved, and not the good kind either," Jackson replied to himself.

I start to realize the gravity of the situation. I start to think of my loved ones. My mind then goes to Kali and Caleb. They were staying in the packhouse. Perhaps we should start there.

"Where's the Hybrid!" Jackson called out angrily.

"Abbey?" I replied to him.

"Yeah, her." He said gruffly.

“She will be sleeping. Wait, you don’t think?” I start to speak before I am cut off.

“It feels like magic. She’s a witch! Let’s start there!” Jackson demanded.

“I guess that makes sense. But Jackson, let me do the talking. She’s my friend.” I tell him rather than asking. I know he is a higher rank than me, but this isn’t about ranks. Something is going on and we need to find out what.

“Yeah well let’s see what she has to say,” Jackson replied gruffly.

“Alpha, what do you want us to do with him?” One of Jackson’s warriors asks, referring to Ezra.

“You two watch him for now. See if you can get one of those cells open and shove him in. One of you can watch him, the other can come to find us. Mind-link me when you are done,” Jackson ordered them.

“Yes Alpha,” they both called out concurrently, nodding their heads and bowing before dragging Ezra off.

With that Jackson takes a jacket off one of the guards and threw it at me.

“You look cold, throw this on, he doesn’t need it right now,” Jackson declared.

“Thanks,” I said, throwing the jacket on.

Abbey’s cottage wasn’t far away so there is no need for us to shift. It wouldn’t take us long to get there.

We walked up the pathway to Abbey’s cottage, there were no lights on, which wasn’t surprising considering it was the middle of the night.

“I’ll do the talking!” I told Jackson, as I knew that he could come across as aggressive at times, and I felt bad enough waking Abbey up in the middle of the night.

As I was about to knock on the door it opened. I smiled as I expected nothing less. Abbey always seemed to know when someone was approaching.

“Aleska, are you okay?” Abbey started to fuss, taking in my appearance.

“Yeah, I’m fine,” I told her not wanting to go into detail right now.

“What’s going on around here?” Abbey asked.

“I’ve had no power all night, and Alaric hasn’t arrived back yet. I’ve had this strange feeling all night, and now you two show up at my doorstep in the middle of the night,” Abbey said with a concerned look on her face.

“You wanna come in?” Abbey offered.

“We don’t have time for this!” Jackson declared.

“Hmnn, unfortunately, he’s right, Abbey will you come with us, something is going on, the guards at the lock-up facility were out cold, the powers out, no one else seems to be around and I can’t mind-link anyone but Jackson,” I ranted off quickly to Abbey.

Abbey’s face dropped, “Oh dear,” she said as she pulls her jacket on and starts to walk out her door.

“Let’s walk and talk,” Abbey suggested.

After explaining everything that happened this evening Abbey was initially outraged at what Ezra had attempted to do, but then happy I was able to contact Jackson. She was trying to piece things together as we walked toward the training grounds.

“I agree with Jackson, the guards could be in a deep sleep, and an enchantment spell would appear that way. There could be someone messing with the pack’s ability to mind-link, that too could be the doing of a witch, but no light witch would do such a thing, this sounds like the work of a dark witch.” Abbey stated.

“When was the last time either of you saw someone familiar?” Abbey asked.

“I guess, before we came to your cottage yesterday,” I replied.

“And you Jackson?” Abbey asked him softly.

“Same as Aleksa, after our meeting in your cottage, I shifted into Gray and we ran for hours, we only stopped when I got Aleksa’s mind-link just before,” Jackson replied.

“Hmnn, interesting, I never found Alaric when we parted ways at the packhouse earlier this evening, there were others around but I didn’t interact with anyone,” Abbey recalled.

“I wonder,” Abbey started.

“What?” Jackson replied in anticipation.

“I wonder if something didn’t happen while we were in the cottage? I wonder if something didn’t happen to the rest of the pack? What if what we saw when we walked into the packhouse was just an illusion?” Abbey asked.

“But why?” I replied in denial.

“I don’t know, It’s just a thought, let’s investigate some more,” Abbey suggested.

We had just arrived outside the training grounds, and there weren’t any lights on. I went to grab my phone out of my pocket when Abbey looked at me and chuckled.

“Let me, Aleksa,” Abbey declared.

Abbey moved her hands in a circular motion and closed her eyes, and then a bright orb appeared before her, she released it in front of us and it started to guide our way into the training grounds.

“That was seriously cool!” I called out in awe.

“Not bad,” Jackson said as if he was slightly impressed.

We walked through the administration block following the orb in front of us, and as we turned to walk into the stadium we were shocked to see the warriors from our pack and other packs on the ground.

I gasped in horror. Then I ran to the nearest warrior to feel for a pulse, it was there but it was faint. I looked around to see if I could see anyone familiar, I started walking through the bodies carefully, and then I saw him, I saw Kai.

I ran up to him, yelling, “Kai! Kai! Wake up!” I started to shake him, then I felt around for a pulse. It was much like the others there, but slow, although a bit stronger than the others, probably because he was a Gamma.

“Abbey, please, is there anything you can do?” I called out to Abbey who came running towards me. Jackson circled us, looking around but standing guard at the same time.

“Hmmn, let me see,” Abbey said, getting down on her hands and knees, she then puts her hands just above his body and focuses her energy on Kai.

“I can feel that he’s still here, but in a deep sleep, definitely an enchantment spell.” Abbey declared.

“Can you counteract it?” I asked pleadingly. I looked at her wide-eyed.

“I think I can? It will probably take a lot of energy. I feel confident that I can wake Kai, but I am not sure I can do everyone at this stage,” Abbey said with a sad expression on her face.

“That’s ok, it’s a start!” I said with some optimism in my voice.

“OK, give me a few minutes and some space,” Abbey instructed me.

I watched Abbey in awe. She was truly amazing. Jackson pretended not to be bothered about what is unfolding in front of him, but even he can’t deny what Abbey is doing right now is nothing short of epic.

A short while later, Kai started groaning.

I knelt down on the ground again and touch his face. Kai opens his eyes.

“Luna?” Kai croaked out.

“Oh my goddess, Kai, are you ok?” I asked him in a panic-stricken tone.

“Luna, they took him! I’m sorry!” Kai declared.

“What, who?” I looked at him puzzled.

“The Witch. She took Kingston! Said she needed to get him out of the way,” he called out. Then he slowly started to sit up, rubbing his neck.

“Are you telling me that a dark witch took Kingston?” I asked him in shock.

“Yes Luna, I’m so sorry,” Kai replied, bowing his head, looking ashamed that he couldn’t protect his alpha and prevent him from being taken.

“It’s ok Kai, we will find him, this isn’t your fault!” I tried to reassure Kai, and I leaned forward to comfort him in the form of a hug.

I looked back up to Abbey who was now standing up and looking around the stadium.

“Any ideas Abbey?” I looked to her for an answer.

“Dark witches don’t attack packs for no reason, someone will be paying her to do this, someone who stands to gain something from getting Kingston out of the way,” Abbey questioned.

Jackson and I look at one another at the same time in realization.

“Lachlan!” We both called out simultaneously.

Aleska POV

Once it dawned on us that Lachlan was most likely behind all of this, we had to figure out what to do next. Abbey believed that the reason that Jackson and I could mind-link was due to our Crescent Moon wolf bond. Kai tested the theory by trying to mind-link and was unsuccessful. Although Jackson could mind-link his warriors which seemed strange. Although it became clearer once he had explained that the two warriors he had brought with him weren’t ordinary wolves. Apparently, they had met one another at a training camp that he had been sent to by his father in his early teens and they had bonded. They had recognized Jackson as their alpha early on, and submitted to him, despite the fact that they all shared the same rank.

Abbey believed that if there was a dark witch involved then her enchantment spell would have applied to regular pack wolves, but most likely not affect special wolves, hence why we were all unaffected.

While Abbey couldn’t currently reach any of her contacts due to distance and the presence of a supernatural barrier, she could call them, so we started to make our way to the nearest phone.

Unfortunately, all methods of communication seemed to be out of order. For now, we were on our own. At least we had the advantage of the witch not knowing that we were special wolves. The witch would assume we were under the spell for now. But that would mean that they would be most likely looking for us.

Abbey suggested that we all hide our scents to be on the safe side. She was able to manage this with a simple cloaking spell.

If we were right and Lachlan was behind this, then he was looking for me. Jackson wanted to get me out of Rocky Mountain and to safety, but I insisted on staying. We needed to face this Witch and Lachlan, and break the spell she had placed on my pack.

Abbey believed that the key to breaking the spell was either capturing the witch involved and convincing her to reverse the spell, or k*****g her. Abbey didn't feel that comfortable taking a life, but said if it came to it she would. She too wanted to find her mate.

Jackson advised that we would need some more backup if we were to pull this off, and suggested we find Sam and Caleb, and a few other ranked members to help us on our mission.

"Do you think you are up for some more healing Abbey?" He asked her respectfully.

I looked at him in shock, it appeared that he might be softening in his attitude toward her and realizing she is an ally, not a threat.

"Yes, as long as I have a little break in between, I should be fine," Abbey replied confidently.

With that, we made our way back to the packhouse stealthily. Caleb's room would be our first stop. I sure hoped that Kali and her unborn baby would be ok. I asked Abbey about healing Kali now, she said Kali was safer sleeping for now, and shouldn't be put at further risk. I agreed with her reasoning, at least she would be out of harm's way for now.

We made our way to Caleb's designated room. Jackson had to break down the door as it was locked. We found Kali asleep on the couch and Caleb on the ground in the kitchen. It didn't take long for Abbey to work her magic on him. When Caleb came to he demanded that Abbey wake Kali, but then she explained that by doing so Kali would be at more risk because she would want to fight, thus putting her and her unborn baby at risk. Caleb realized that she was right and dropped the subject. Once we had brought Caleb up to speed with the events of the night we were ready to find Sam.

Since Sam was the only attendee from Evergreen that was actually allowed to stay at Rocky Mountain he and Lily were sharing a cottage to themselves. They were on the far west side of the pack, so it was a bit of a hike to get there. We didn't want to run into anyone so we exited the back of the packhouse and made our way through the woods. Kai was the only one of us that actually knew this place inside out, so we were lucky we had him with us to show us a shortcut.

Cutting through the woods meant we reached the cabin pretty quickly. Kai pushed the door open, it was unlocked luckily, Sam and Lily were laying face down on the table. They must have been having a hot drink when the spell took over because their cups had tipped over and had run onto the wooden floor.

Caleb and Kai went straight to Sam and moved him from his chair to the floor. Jackson picked Lily up carefully and placed her on the couch. As he was laying her down Abbey called out to him, "Jackson could you bring Lily here and lay her beside Sam, I wanna try something," Abbey stated.

Before anyone could ask, Abbey had closed her eyes and began to focus on Sam and Lily, she did the same as before and placed her hands directly above both their bodies. After a minute or so they both started to come to.

We all looked at Abbey gobsmacked.

"You did it!" I called out happily.

"You healed them both at the same time!" I said to her with a look of astonishment on my face.

Abbey smiled and seemed to wilt a little. Caleb held her from behind, and she took a moment to steady herself.

"Thank you. I haven't done two people at a time before. It just takes a bit out of me. I'm not that long out of my witch training" Abbey clarified with a slight blush on her face.

"Sam!" Caleb called out, helping his friend up.

"What happened?" Sam said, rubbing his eyes.

"Lily!" I called out. "Are you okay?" I said helping her sit up.

“Aleksa! What are you doing here?” Lily called out confused.

“Wait, Sam?” Lily questioned, looking to the right side of her.

Lily and Sam pulled each other into an embrace and then pulled apart again.

“Ah, what’s going on?” Sam asked looking around at us all with a puzzled look on his face.

We didn’t have time to spare. There wasn’t a lot of darkness left before sunrise, and we needed to use the cover of darkness to our advantage right now.

Jackson gave Sam and Lily a rundown of the night’s events as we made our way to the old log cabin. Kai had suggested that since it was on the far side of the pack boundaries. He had a theory that it might not have had its communications systems affected. We might be able to get some help or contact someone with knowledge of this sort of thing, and then we could make our way back to the pack before sunrise.

As we were almost at the old log cabin we walked into something. We tried to advance but we couldn’t seem to move any further.

“I can feel a strong energy,” I declared to my friends.

“So can I,” Jackson responded.

“Uh oh,” Abbey commented.

“It’s a forcefield,” a voice came from behind us, it was one of Jackson’s warriors from earlier tonight.

“The witch has imposed a forcefield, we can’t leave and no one else can come in,” He replied.

“Nice of you to join us, Bryant,” Jackson replied.

“Everyone, this is my good friend Bryant,” Jackson called out.

Everyone acknowledged and greeted him. Once the pleasantries were over we had to figure out where we were going now and what our new plan would be.

“Comms!” Kai declared.

“We could try the backup equipment in the Communications room, back at the packhouse,” Kai reiterated.

“Worth a try,” Jackson replied.

“Let’s go then,” Sam said.

Just as we made it up the steps to the rear entrance of the packhouse the sun started to come up. At least we had made it back safely. Hopefully, we could find something of use in the communications room.

The communications room was located in the loft at the top of the packhouse. I had no idea it was even here, although that isn’t surprising as I was still orienting to the pack.

We made our way up to the room and started looking around. Caleb and Sam tried to get the computers and communication systems working, while Jackson took a look around for a backup generator, and Caleb checked the cupboards, while doing so he stumbled across a secret compartment in the ceiling for alternative means of communication.

After about thirty minutes we had made no progress.

“s**t!” Jackson called out.

“I can’t get through to Elijah.” Jackson declared.

“We have to assume that Ezra has escaped, we also need to assume he may be in on whatever is going on here, so be on your guard! If you see him, don’t k**l him, we need to find out what he knows first,” Jackson ordered.

Aleksa POV

Our search of the communications room was fruitless. Nothing we found was able to transmit. It looked like we were truly on our own here. We had no idea

who we were up against. We just suspected that Lachlan was behind it all and he was being helped by a dark witch.

We knew that the pack seemed to be surrounded by some massive energy-bound forcefield so we couldn't get out either. We also knew that it was only a matter of time before whoever was behind all of this realized that I wasn't where I should be.

While my heart ached for my mate, I couldn't feel anything through our bond, but I didn't feel our bond break so that gave me hope that he was still out there, maybe he was under the enchantment spell, I sure hoped that was the case.

Abbey said that assuming that this was orchestrated by Lachlan and he was he for me the best thing to do would be to elude him for as long as possible.

Meanwhile, she will focus on trying to wake some of the pack up a few at a time.

Sam suggested we keep moving because it would only be a matter of time before they tracked back to the packhouse.

Abbey asked for suggestions as to who she should wake first. Jackson implied the stronger the wolf the better right now as they were likely to be able to defend themselves rather than hold us back, everyone was in agreement with that.

I voiced that I didn't recall seeing any of the alphas at the training grounds, to which Kai replied that the night before the summit festival it was tradition for the attending alphas to have a late-night whiskey at the lake house.

"Lakehouse?" I replied with a confused look on my face,

"Uh, yeah, it belonged to the previous alpha and luna, it's in the middle of the woods on the southern boundary. Chances are they were there when the enchantment spell hit. It's worth a try anyway. I can show you the way." Kai called out.

We all followed Kai out through the woods as quietly and quickly as possible. It took about twenty minutes to get there in our human form. It was a large wooden cabin just sitting here on the outskirts of the wood overlooking a small lake.

As expected, there were bodies of the visiting alpha's lounged out on chairs, by the lake, and on the deck. They all looked so peaceful, a contrast from the intimidating alphas they usually are. But this wasn't the time to reflect, we had work to do.

"Caleb, Sam, Bryant with me, let's get them all next to each other and line them up. Lily and Aleska, you can help Abbey set up. Abbey – are you ready for this?"

Abbey looked at Jackson and smiled. "You're just a big softy aren't you?"

Jackson huffed and walked off.

Abbey looked at me smirking, "I think we are going to be great friends, Jackson and I,"

I smiled at her knowingly. Because I thought so too.

Abbey had begun healing the alphas. When they woke up they were disorientated initially but after about ten minutes or so they seemed to be back to their usual selves. While some wanted to spring into action immediately, we managed to convince them that we had to tread carefully since we didn't actually know what we were up against.

Abbey seemed to be holding up well despite using mass amounts of energy, there were about a dozen of us now, and still, another dozen alphas yet to be healed.

Jackson suggested that some of us would need to stay back with Abbey while she healed the other alpha's and the rest of us needed to continue onwards.

Caleb and Kai naturally refused to leave my side, I guess it was the gamma band at play. Sam and Lily said that they would stay back with Abbey, Bryant also offered to protect her while she helped us to gather more backup.

Jackson, myself, Caleb, and Kai, as well as some of the attending alphas, decided to move out and see if we could see any movement around the pack grounds. We hadn't seen anyone yet, but they must be somewhere.

As we were about a hundred yards away from the entrance to the packhouse, we saw movement. We halted behind Jackson and waited. My jaw dropped as I took in the huge army of wolves that were descending upon the packhouse.

The foul stench of these rogue wolves invaded my nostrils. I fought the urge to vomit. We all looked at one another. Well, this complicates things a little I thought to myself. I wasn't quite expecting that we would have that many opponents to fight.

I looked at Caleb instantly in fear. We had left Kali behind sleeping there. Caleb let out a huge growl and ran forward shifting into his wolf, he ran as fast as his legs would carry him toward the packhouse.

"f**k!" Jackson yelled. He also runs forward, shifting into Gray following Caleb's lead. If we don't follow him, both he, Kali, and their unborn baby are dead, so we all shifted and followed them through the packhouse, taking out wolves as we moved through the crowd.

Kai and a few of the other alpha's flanked my sides and front and behind and pushed through the rogues, their bodies flying all over the place, blood spurting out all over the place.

We ran down the corridor and then skidded to a sudden halt, Caleb had shifted and was holding a sleeping Kali in his arms. We formed a circle around him and I nodded my head towards the back entrance swiftly, rogues descending on us from behind, we all pushed forward some of the alpha's fending off the rogues as we made our way through the packhouse.

"Take Aleksa and Kali to safety, I'll keep the rogues busy!" Jackson yelled as he slowed down and turned to fight the rogues.

Four of the alpha's followed Caleb and Kali and me. Once we made it to the bush. I turned around.

"Get your mate and baby to safety!" I called out and I ran off.

I ran towards the packhouse to join Jackson and half a dozen alphas fight.

Jackson growled.

"What the f**k are you doing? Run! Now!" He yelled at me followed by a growl.

“No. I’m here to fight for my friends and my pack!” I yelled as I fought two small dirty brown rogues.

“Aleksa, concentrate, like before. We can use our powers. Visualize. Then focus our energy!” Amber encouraged me.

I take a breath and close my eyes. I think of the danger my friends and my pack are in. I use my anger against those who have come to destroy my pack. I feel myself heat up again. I feel like I am being surrounded by a whirlwind of heat and then I release. I feel a huge gust of energy disperse, and when I open my eyes the rogues that were surrounding us were no more.

I look further afield and I see the remaining rogues retreat. I see movement in the woods to the north of the pack grounds, and for some reason, I know that is where the witch is hiding. I could feel a pull toward her. I could feel her dark energy.

I lunge forward and run like the wind in her direction. When I get there I can sense that she is still there. I see a figure move out from behind a large tree.

“Hello, Aleksa,” she called out.

“Why are you doing this?” I asked her aggressively.

“Why do we do anything? For power, for money, for control.” She spat out shaking her head.

“My, you really are naive aren’t you?” She mocked me.

“I can see why that brute of an alpha wants you. So pretty and yet so clueless.” She laughed again.

Then she went quiet and looked at me as if she was looking into my mind.

“He doesn’t know, does he?” the witch asked me. Then she starts laughing again.

“Oh, this is brilliant!” She called out trying to suppress further laughter.

“Who? Know about what?” I asked the witch, having no actual clue as to who or what she was referring to.

“What are you talking about, Who are you...” I asked. I stopped mid-sentence as I was distracted by a shuffle in the bushes to the witch’s left.

“My sweet Aleska, did you like the rose I sent you?” Lachlan said, striding towards me with a smirk on his face.

“Lachlan,” I said shakily, trying not to show my fear but failing miserably.

“You have caused a lot of trouble my little mate,” Lachlan said, shaking his head disapprovingly at me.

“Nevermind, you have the rest of your life to make it up to me!” He added, laughing evilly.

I slowly started to back away from Lachlan and the witch, as I did I could sense movement behind me. As I turned my head I saw two of Evergreen’s warriors behind me in their wolf forms. I knew that I wouldn’t be getting out of this situation without a fight.

“Well, my job here is done! You have your she-wolf. Now I will have my payment, Wolf!” the witch demanded eagerly.

“Don’t dare disrespect me, Witch!” Lachlan declared to the witch.

However, she didn’t appear to be affected by his menacing aura. She looked more impatient than anything else.

Lachlan pulled a small hessian sack out of his pocket and dumped it in the witch’s hand. She quickly poured the gold out and looked over it, then she chucked it back in the sack happily and stowed it away in the inside of her gown.

“I’d watch this one if I were you. There’s more to her than meets the eye,” the witch said as she winked at me knowingly.

Lachlan huffed, and dismissed the witch.

“I have a feeling this isn’t the last we shall see of one another Aleksa.” the witch added and with that, she vanished in a big puff of smoke.

Aleska POV

“Where is my mate?” I yelled at Lachlan in disdain.

Seconds later I felt his large calloused hand connect with the side of my cheek. I almost lose my balance due to the sheer force of his slap.

I am done with taking slaps from men today, so I slapped Lachlan back even harder in return.

Lachlan laughed mockingly at me.

“I see my weak mate has developed a backbone. Well, I shall have fun breaking you back down.” Lachlan said laughing even harder this time.

I felt my anger start to rise. Not now Aleksa. We need more information. Don't show your hand just yet. Amber warned me.

“Please, where is Kingston?” I asked Lachlan again, this time with a lower tone,

“That mutt. He's none of your concern,” Lachlan said walking around me in a circular motion.

I hear him growl when he takes in my mark. I felt a hard punch to my stomach. I lean forward feeling gasping for breath as I am temporarily wounded. I got my breath back and managed to pull myself back up. I stood strong and tall. I tried to remain stoic.

I knew that he wanted me to submit, and to fear him. But I refused to. The next time he touches me I will not be holding back.

“First thing we will do when we get back to the pack is to get rid of that mutt's filthy mark on you. You will regret letting him mark you, I promise you that w***e!” Lachlan spat out in a rage.

“I gave you everything! You were living a lowly life in that human town before you met me. I gave you a home, a pack, a rank, a purpose. And this is how you repay me! By w*****g yourself to some alpha mutt in the middle of b**t f**k nowhere.” Lachlan screamed out. He looked like he was getting angrier by the moment.

I just stared at him blankly.

“What do you have to say for yourself w***e?” Lachlan prodded me while glaring at me.

“Where’s my mate? Where’s...” I am not finished with my sentence when I feel another slap, this time it’s on the other side of my face. Well, thank goddess for that, at least the swelling will even out.

Even though I’m in so much pain right now, and I can feel the tears welling in my eyes I start laughing.

“Is that it? Is that all you’ve got?” I call out mockingly, laughing so more. Lachlan looks at me in astonishment, probably wondering if I have a death wish.

I figure that by baiting him, I am buying more time for my friends to find me. We haven’t left the pack grounds yet. The dark witch appears to have left. Any minute now someone should arrive and then we can end this once and for all.

As if he can read my mind Lachlan grabs me and pulls me towards the pack boundaries.

“I’m no fool w***e! I know your game! Move it!” He said pulling me along even faster than before, his warriors falling closely behind us.

As we approach the pack boundary there is a black SUV waiting, the engine is running and someone is in the driver’s seat. We are approximately ten yards away, and no one has arrived yet. I guess they are busy with the rogues at the packhouse. I sure hope they are okay. Although, it looks like I’m on my own for now.

Just as we were nearing the SUV I heard footsteps coming from the trees behind us. I turned my head and was shocked to see Ezra running toward us. I gasped out loud.

“What do you want?” Lachlan said in a tone of annoyance.

It sounds like they know each other.

“That b***h isn’t going anywhere! We have unfinished business!” Ezra growled pointing at me.

Lachlan looked at us both, studying our body language in amusement.

“And what has my wretched mate done to get you all wound up?” Lachlan asked.

“She knows where my mate is!” Ezra screamed.

“Tell me now! Where is Kaia?” Ezra demanded.

He started to step toward me. As he did I saw Lachlan start to sniff.

“We had a deal Lachlan, and I am yet to see my mate!” Ezra yelled fiercely, looking like he was struggling to keep himself together.

“WHY DO YOU REEK OF MY MATE!” Lachlan called out almost in a rage. Then I see his eyes turn black.

Interesting. I thought to myself.

Ezra stopped suddenly.

“Yyyour mate?” He said almost stuttering, and stopping short.

“He tried to r**e me!” I called out.

I know that Lachlan doesn't care about anyone but himself. But I also know that he doesn't like to share his toys either. I decide that I can k**l two birds with one stone by playing them against each other.

“Whattttt!” Lachlan roared.

“She was asking for it!” Ezra boomed.

“No one touches my mate but me!” Lachlan yelled savagely.

And in seconds he had lost all control, shifted, and launched his wolf upon Ezra.

Ezra was caught off-guard, clearly not expecting such a reaction from his partner in crime. Cyrus didn't hold back.

He held Ezra's arms down, and started snapping at his neck, he was about to go in for the k**l when Ezra managed to push him off his legs.

Ezra shifted. His wolf was smaller than Lachlan's. Their wolves started circling one another slowly. They were both growling. I started to step back slowly. Unfortunately, I had forgotten about the warriors that were trailing me from behind.

The wolves lunged for each other and started rolling back and forth, each trying to get closer to the other's neck.

Cyrus managed to latch onto Ezra's wolf's neck and tore a huge chunk of skin off his neck. It was grotesque, I could see the artery rupture, and the blood rapidly spraying out all over Cryus and into the air.

Ezra started to go limp, he shifted back to human form. His skin was deathly pale, and I watched as he lost consciousness.

Cryus had delivered a fatal bite. I figured this was my time to escape now. I shifted into my wolf Amber and barged through the two warrior wolves behind me, causing them to fall to the ground.

I could sense that Cyrus was on my tail, merely seconds behind me, so I pushed myself as far as I could. I could almost see the end of the treeline ahead of me. I just had to move a little faster.

"Come on Amber, we are almost through the trees. Just a bit further!" I tried to encourage my wolf.

She was determined to outrun her ex-mate.

As we pushed past the last of the trees, I could feel the body heat of Cryus upon us, and just as I smelt him hover over us, I felt myself being pushed to the ground, my face hitting the ground suddenly.

Cyrus had launched his body on top of us, pinning us down. He was holding us face down on the ground.

Cyrus let out a menacing growl.

I could feel him shift on top of me.

"Mmmmn, just like oldtimes. Me on top riding you face down!" Lachlan declared.

"I think I'm gonna be sick!" I said out loud.

And with that Lachlan grabbed my head and pushed it hard against the ground.

I was too dizzy and in too much pain to even react.

I could feel myself being lifted up, but I felt so incoherent. I just let the darkness take me.

I felt myself being pulled along the ground. I could smell the grass and earth scratching my face as I was being dragged. A burning sensation had engulfed me, it felt like my skin was being grazed repeatedly against the ground.

I must have only lost consciousness for a few seconds, as I appeared to be on the pack grounds still. I could see I was being dragged back the way I came.

I had enough of this playing dumb business. I tried to play the passive weak female and hoped that would be enough for Lachlan to let slip where Kingston was, but now I was over it.

I focussed my energy and used my power to get myself out of the warrior's grip, burning their hands with an electrical surge. They started screaming in pain. I jumped up on my feet and got into a defensive stance.

"Playtime is over! Tell me where Kingston is now! And I might let you live!" I demanded with a cold and determined look on my face.

Lachlan looked at me in disbelief.

"What the f**k was that!" he yelled, looking at his warriors squealing in pain.

"That was me taking the power back!" I said standing there with my arms crossed looking at him smugly.

"I'm done playing games!" I yelled at him.

"Where is my mate? Tell me now and I might show you some mercy!" I demanded.

I could feel my eyes glowing. I was getting angrier by the moment. My wolf is anxious to find her mate and disgusted at the sight of her former mate.

“Your eyes!” Lachlan called out incredulity.

“Where is my mate!” I called out. My anger resonates and I felt a surge of energy, it felt electrical. I moved my hands in Lachlan’s direction and he and his warriors fall to the ground. I watch them look at me in horror and disbelief.

“What the!” Lachlan screamed out, pulling himself back up, and dusting himself off.

“Turns out you didn’t know me as well as you thought,” I told him coldly.

“What are you? Some kind of witch?” Lachlan blurted out.

He was stalling. I struggled to contain my wolf. I could feel my eyes switching color. I was about to inflict pain upon this poor excuse for a wolf in front of me.

I was getting angrier by the moment and I could feel myself heating up again. As I went to raise my hand towards Lachlan he called out.

“I can take you to him! Kingston! I will show you where he is!” Lachlan yelled out with two hands in front of me, gesturing to me that he will surrender for now.

“No games! If I think you are tricking me – I will make you suffer!” I tell him.

I feel so strong and in control. A far cry from the naive and shy Aleksa that I once was.

Aleska POV

We had been walking for a few minutes now and I could see the pack was starting to wake up. It would appear that the dark witch’s spell had been lifted. My mind-link was currently being flooded by anxious pack members. I felt a headache coming on so I blocked them all for now.

I tried to mind-link Kingston, hoping that I might finally be able to get through to him, but there was nothing. I couldn’t feel him, period. I knew that nothing sinister had happened to him so that was something at least.

“Aleksa, where are you?” I heard via mind-link. I was not surprised that Jackson could get through to me, it must be a crescent moon wolf perk.

"I'm with Lachlan and two of his warriors, we are walking towards the maintenance sheds, he's cooperating at the moment but I don't trust him," I told Jackson.

"Right, we're on our way!" Jackson called out via the mind-link.

As we were approaching the sheds I had a feeling that danger was awaiting us and that this was a trap, but I was determined to find Kingston. I had the upper hand for now, but I was still on high alert.

Lachlan told me that Kingston was just behind the sheds in the woods, and that he had him handcuffed in silver there. I look at him and I sensed that he was being truthful. I reached out to Amber but she couldn't sense anything.

As we approached the bush I heard movement in multiple directions. In a matter of seconds, I was surrounded by wolves, snapping their teeth at me angrily.

Lachlan turned around with a smirk on his face.

"Right where I wanted you. Still so naive!" He laughed out loud, shaking his head toward me.

I crossed my arms and tilted my head at him.

I was about to make some smart-a*s comment when I heard snickering from behind the wolves, they parted ways, and out walked Eva.

"Aleska is mine!" She called out.

Lachlan looked at her in amusement.

"Have at it, just don't k**l her, do you hear me!" Lachlan screamed out to Eva.

"I can't make any promises!" Eva replied snarkily.

"Eva!" Lachlan called back.

"Yeah, ok, fine I won't k**l her," She begrudgingly agreed.

I looked at Eva and couldn't contain my laughter. I found it hilarious that she thought that she could take me. I'm not the same girl that she remembered, but I will sure enjoy educating her.

I stood in anticipation, as I knew that she would strike first.

As predicted Eva walked up to me and attempted to slap me hard across the face, but I could see it coming a mile away and I blocked her hand with my arm, causing her to call out loudly in pain.,

“Pathetic!” I called out to her.

I saw that the wolf’s attention had moved to something coming from behind me.

I turned my head to see what it was, and I saw my friends approaching us with haste.

In doing so, I had broken the never turn your back on your opponent rule, and I had given Eva time to attack me.

I felt my body fall back on the ground hard. Eva was punching my face hard and fast, and after a few hits, I was starting to feel dizzy.

I let out a loud growl and pushed Eva from me hard. My wolf and I were now furious and I could feel my body heating up once again, but I didn’t want to use my powers on Eva, nor did I want to shift just yet. I wanted to take this b***h out on my own.

Suddenly I had flashbacks of all the times that I had suffered in pain while Eva was with Lachlan, all the times I confided in her, all the times I went out of my way for her, and then I thought about when I caught them in the act and that look of sheer smug satisfaction on her face, and that did it for me. I hit her hard, and I couldn’t stop.

I felt a wolf jump up and bite my shoulder from behind. I felt the pain surge through me. I took this moment to shift into my wolf. Amber was furious, she charged for the wolf and ripped out a chunk of skin from its flank. I then spat it out. It tasted disgusting in my mouth. It appeared to be a rogue wolf, judging by its foul odor.

I watched Eva shift and charge toward me and I knew that I needed to end the other wolf so that I could focus on Eva. As I was about to go in for the k**l, Eva’s wolf jumped on me and snapped its teeth toward my neck. I was now vastly outnumbered and there was a raging battle going on around me. I knew that my friends were here fighting and I needed to try to end this.

I focussed my energy on getting Eva off me. I felt myself heat up, and the electrical energy surge through me. I felt it connect with Eva's fur and smelt her fur burning as she begun to sizzle. She was essentially being electrified. She fell off me onto the ground, rolling until she appeared to lose consciousness.

The wolf that had just been attacking me looked scared and started to cower away, submitting to me.

"Run away, and don't come back, and I will let you live!" I mind-linked the wolf.

The wolf looked shocked, and nodded its head towards me, then ran off towards the woods.

I looked around me and saw Jackson and Lachlan circling one another. I saw Abbey had shifted and she was fighting back to back with Lily who had also shifted, there were about four wolves surrounding them.

Sam was fighting the two warriors that were accompanying Lachlan earlier.

The place was chaos. Pack wolves fighting rogue wolves, it was c****e.

I look behind me and I saw some of the alphas from other packs that were here for the summit, were arriving to help us fight the rogues. Thank the goddess for that I thought to myself.

I mind-linked Jackson, "I need to find Kingston. Ask Lachlan where he is, do whatever you have to get the information out of him," I called out.

"You got it!" Jackson replied.

I stalked hurriedly towards Sam to help him fight the warriors, he was holding his own, but the sooner we took these rogues down the better.

I mind-linked my friends "Try to incapacitate them as opposed to massacring them, they are just following orders, we want to keep the death toll down if we can,"

My mind was flooded with replies.

"Need a hand, Sam?" I mind-linked Sam.

"Sure thing Luna," He called out to me.

In no time we take them out, but as fast as we get rid of them more seemed to appear.

“Sam, go help your mate! I’ll be fine here!” I called out to him via mind-link.

“Are you sure?” He called out nervously.

“Yes, go!” I told him.

Sam moved to help Lily and Abbey who seemed to be constantly surrounded by rogues.

Everyone was defending their positions well but it was becoming tiresome.

I asked my wolf if she could sense our mate yet. She replied to me that she couldn’t pick anything up.

“Abbey, do you think you could help me find Kingston? I still can’t get hold of him even though the spell has been lifted.” I mind-link her.

“Yes, I think so, I can definitely try, I just need to be able to concentrate,” Abbey replied.

“I’m on my way!” I replied to her.

I was done with fighting the hard way. I once again focussed my energy and shocked the wolves surrounding me. I felt a little drained. It appeared that the more my powers were used, the more energy it took from me.

I charged toward Abbey, Lily, and Sam. “Abbey if you can make your way to the maintenance sheds behind us you might be able to try that locating spell?” I declared.

“Hmmn, I can try. But I will need something that belongs to Kingston. Do you have anything I could use?” Abbey asked me.

I shook my head sadly.

“Ah, it’s ok, I’ll see what I can do, be back soon!” Abbey called out.

I took over her place in the circle and continued to fight the rogues. I was feeling a bit drained, my wolf missed her mate, it felt like forever since we had seen one another.

I looked over to Jackson, while I was fighting one on one with a rogue. I saw him and Lachlan fighting, rolling over each other, snapping and biting one another, each of them seeking dominance in the fight. Neither one of them seemed to be winning, both taking hard hits, with gashes evident all over their bodies, both with blood-soaked fur.

It was at that moment it dawned on me. Jackson's powers. I had never asked him what they are specifically. Why hasn't he ended his fight with Lachlan?

I wasn't paying attention to the fight, and I felt a claw s***h the side of my neck. I felt blood drip down my collarbone and onto my chest. The pain spurred me on.

I lunged forward and ripped the rogue's throat out, spitting its disgusting skin and flesh onto the field.

I was snapped out of my bloodlust by the feeling of a mind-numbing pain ripping through me. I felt as though I had been stabbed with a knife in my chest. I clutched myself where it hurt and let out a blood-curdling growl. I knew that I was feeling someone else's pain.

I scanned my eyes around the field and I saw Jackson fall to the ground, leaning on his knees, holding his chest. Lachlan hovering over him snickering.

I saw a silver dagger sticking out of his chest and my heart hurt for him. I picked myself up off the ground and my paws pounded against the ground galloping towards him as if my life depended on it.

I leapt off the ground into the air and lunged towards Lachlan, I started ripping into him, tearing into his chest frantically, he used whatever energy he had to push me off. I got back onto my paws to attack him some more, when I was distracted by Jackson's groans.

I was torn, part of me wanted to end this wretched wolf who has my mate hidden somewhere, who has made my life a misery as well as countless other and gravely injured my cousin, and the other part of me, the bigger part, needed to tend to Jackson.

I felt Sam and Caleb flank me.

Sam shifted beside me.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, reject you Lachlan as my Alpha," Sam said holding his ground. He then quickly shifted back to his wolf form ready to fight the wolf he once pledged his allegiance to.

Lachlan laughed.

"I was gonna k**l you anyway. Enjoy your short life as a Rogue!" He called out to Sam.

"I need to help Jackson, can you stall him for now?" I mind-inked Sam and Caleb.

"Yes Luna," They replied to me in synchronisation.

I leaned down to Jackson, and tried to assess his wound. The blood was hemorrhaging out. The dagger was silver. And then it hit me -my nightmares. I've seen this all before, in my nightmares.

I shifted back to human form, so I could use my hands to help put pressure on the wound.

I tried to fight back the tears but they continued to fall furiously.

"Stay with me Jackson!" I called out pleadingly.

I shook him to try keep him awake. I saw his eyes were starting to roll back.

"Jackson, please!" I called out desperately.

"Please Moon Goddess, help him!" I yelled out to the sky.

At that very moment, we were all blinded by an overwhelming bright white light.

Aleska POV

I had to close my eyes as the light was so bright. I heard a loud screeching sound, it was piercing my ears, like some sort of sound distortion. And then a wave of energy hit us all. The force was overwhelming and I felt lightheaded. After a few moments, I felt myself come to my senses. The light started to dim down and my eyes began to adjust. The light appeared to be shrinking and in a matter of moments, it had become merely an orb. There was a figure

emerging from behind it. I had to squint to see in the darkness of the woods. It was Xanthe!

Most of the wolves that had been fighting on the battlefield were holding their heads, they looked to be in pain. Xanthe looked panicked and started running towards me. I looked back down at Jackson, "Jackson, can you hear me, please stay with me!" I yelled at him.

Xanthe approached us and pushed me aside, "Move!" She ordered me. I looked at her in confusion.

"Xanthe, what are you doing?" I asked her.

"He is my Mate!" She told me looking at him in disbelief.

I could see how concerned she looked. She touched his face with the palm of her hands, her fingers touching Jackson's face in a gentle and loving manner.

Jackson's breathing was starting to normalize already with Xanthe's mere touch. I wonder if that could be the mate bond at work, or perhaps it was because Xanthe was a healer or both.

"Are you sure?" I asked Xanthe hopefully.

"I can heal him!" Xanthe declared.

"I just need some space," Xanthe said. I could tell she was trying to suppress her true feelings, I could hear the shakiness in her voice.

Xanthe POV

After meeting with Aleksa and Kingston that day in the gazebo in the rose gardens, I was determined to find out whatever I could about her heritage. However, along the way my past had caught up with me. I had been detained against my will by someone who had untoward plans for me.

I was able to escape that hellhole with help from an unlikely ally. I then began to make my way back to Rocky Mountain. My intuition had told me to come back right away. I had thought something might be wrong with Aleska until I reached the pack border and then I felt it. I felt him.

I felt the pull deep within my heart. My true love. My mate, was here, and he was hurt. I made my way toward the training fields and I saw a raging battle

taking place. I could sense it was between pack wolves fending off a rogue attack.

I could see everyone fighting from the woods. I saw that despicable Lachlan lunging toward Aleksa and then I let out a surge of power, blinding and stopping all in its path.

I made my way to the wolf on the ground as I saw he had shifted to his human form.

He was gorgeous. Rugged with dark and handsome features, I could sense that he was of alpha blood.

He had been stabbed with a silver wolfsbane-infused dagger in his chest and he was fading fast. I couldn't believe that after all these centuries I had finally found my mate. I refused to lose him when I had only just found him.

After telling Aleksa that he was my mate, I attempted to heal him. I placed my hands over his body and channeled all of my energy. I used my strength to s**k the poison from his system. I felt it consume me but I would not stop until my mate was safe.

It seemed like an eternity but in reality, it didn't take long at all. I watched my mate wake from his state of unconsciousness.

I watched him look into my eyes with desire and growl "MATE!"

I looked at him and I smiled lovingly.

Aleksa POV

My wolf became restless, and then she growled wildly. "Mate! Mate is coming!" She howled in my head with joy.

I jerked my head to the left, and I watched as my mate approached us with Abbey in tow.

"Kingston!" I called out desperately. My heart racing and an overwhelming desire to run to my mate and never let go, right here in the middle of this fight.

I looked at Xanthe and Jackson. They were having a moment. They wouldn't notice me gone.

I leaped up onto the ground and ran into my mate's arms.

As I ran toward him I took in his bruised and swollen face, he had a split lip and a split eyebrow. Why was he in such a state I wondered. Why was his werewolf healing not kicking in? What had happened to him?

I felt him flinch in pain as my body smacked against his. I looked at him with concern on my face. I lifted up his shirt and saw burn marks, it looked like a silver knife had been slashed against him repeatedly.

I looked at his wrists which also looked to be burned. I could only assume he had been bound in silver handcuffs or chains.

My wolf whimpered internally for our mate.

"I'm ok. I'll heal soon." Kingston said to me casually.

I smacked my lips against his and passionately kissed him. My wolf was howling in my head. Then I pulled away quickly, realizing that we were still in the middle of the fight. There would be time for this later, I thought to myself.

I looked to Abbey, "How?" That was all I could ask her, still astonished that she had found my mate.

"He was bound in silver, and unconscious when I found Him. He was tied to a chair, at the back of the maintenance shed. I picked up his scent while I was trying to find some space to perform the locating spell," Abbey replied.

I looked again at Kingston. Trying my best to suppress my tears of joy, as I was pushed aggressively to the ground. My head hit the ground with a loud thud. As I looked up to see what had just hit me I saw Kingston being pinned to the ground by Lachlan's wolf Cyrus.

I ran into Cyrus with all my might. I figure it will buy Kingston a few moments to shift. As he hovers over me snapping at me, I try to fight him off with my hands.

I hear him whimper as Kingston shifts into his wolf Sabre and takes a large chunk of flesh out of his left hind leg. Cyrus is pushed to the ground and it seems that Sabre has the upper hand when a scroungy brown wolf jumps onto him trying to get access to his neck.

Furious, and recognizing that the scroungy and singed wolf is Eva, I quickly shifted into my wolf Amber and lunged forward viciously taking aim at her neck. I latched onto it and I tugged at it mercilessly, not letting go until I was satisfied that there was no life left in her.

While part of me was sad to take a life, especially when this wolf was once my friend, I told myself that she was never the friend I thought she was, and that I would stop at nothing to protect my mate.

Sabre continued to attack Cyrus, taking aim at his neck but missing and taking a chunk out of his shoulder instead, he then went for Cyrus's jugular and ripped into his neck, blood squirting out all over Sabre, soaking his fur. Cyrus began to lose strength, whimpering, his motions stalling.

Sabre moves away from Cyrus nudging against my snout, we both shift and fall into each other's arms. Usually, I would be embarrassed to be naked in front of so many other wolves but right now I'm just feeling blessed to have my mate in my arms. I'm so besotted that I don't even notice Cyrus has shifted into his human form and he is getting back on his feet.

It's almost too late when I see he has somehow picked up the silver dagger and is about to stab Kingston in the neck when Sam comes from behind and grips the dagger forcing it into Lachlan's heart he then pulls it out and slices Lachlan's neck open decapitating him.

I gasped in horror as I watch my former mate's head fall to the ground. I wished that things could have been different, but he was a lost soul, so consumed in evil and darkness. There was no redemption for him.

I mouthed thank you to Sam for saving my mate from harm. Kingston had turned around just in time to see Lachlan meet his demise. We all stood there in silence for a moment.

As I looked around us, I noticed that the rogues had started to retreat. I watched my friends start to pick themselves up off the battlefield. I saw wolves tending to the injured. We all just stared at one another looking grateful that we were still all here, and it is finally over.

Aleksa POV

Four hours later.

Once Lachlan was no longer a threat and we were sure the rogues had retreated, we began the task of picking ourselves back up.

We rounded the entire pack together and all the visiting packs, and had a quick debrief.

After the debriefing we encouraged the visiting packs not to feel obliged to stay, and to feel free to make their way home, as the summit was effectively over, due to these unexpected events.

We had just finished rounding up the last of the deceased rogues when the royal pack entourage arrived. This isn't the way we were planning to greet the Alpha King, and it definitely wasn't what we had planned for this day of the summit.

Originally we had a huge festival planned with performers, stalls, music, and food. Until we were attacked by a dark witch and rogues led by my deranged ex-mate.

As the Alpha King himself, also known as my cousin Callum, stepped out of his Range Rover he took in the grim sight that awaited him.

The pack ground was a mess. Blood stained the once lush green field in front of us. It was clear a battle had taken place here.

Before he had a chance to ask what had happened we moved forward to introduce ourselves. We were quite a sight, I was still bleeding from the wounds I had sustained during the fight, Kingston looks like a bruised and battered mess, and we both still needed medical attention.

We had declined it initially, as we wanted the most vulnerable and injured wolves to be tended to first. Kingston tried to insist that I go straight to the pack doctor but I wanted to make sure my friends were seen first. Plus I could already feel my wounds were being healed.

We welcomed Callum to the pack and led him to the pack house dining room where some of our kitchen staff organized some pastries and hot drinks for Callum and his men.

We explained the events of the past twenty-four hours briefly, as well as explained that we had ramped up security as well as had Xanthe and Abbey placing some protective spells in place to secure the perimeter for now, in case of any further retaliation.

Callum suggested that we get cleaned up, get our wounds tended to, and then meet him and his men again in an hour or two on the pack house patio.

After showering and dressing and attending to our wounds, we met Callum at the pack house patio. The sun was beginning to set and it was quite a sight to behold. It was daunting to think that there was still so much to do before we retired for the day.

Callum had examined my crescent moon wolf marking with awe. Jackson didn't have a marking yet as he hadn't mated and marked his true mate yet, although it was only a matter of time now that he and Xanthe had found one another.

I begun to relay my story of how I had been raised as a human, to finding my wolf Amber and shifting for the first time, to meeting Lachlan and my time at Evergreen, up until the events that had just occurred here at Rocky Mountain. Callum had praised my strength and integrity, as well as Jackson's ability to lead a pack and still manage to keep his wolfs secret identity.

Callum then went on to explain his understanding of the events that had occurred at the royal pack all those years ago, as well as his condolences regarding our parents.

Jackson had also joined us, he was completely healed. It was as if nothing had happened earlier today. There was not a scratch on him.

He was reluctant to join us at first as he refused to be away from Xanthe, especially since they had just found one another. So Xanthe was present at the meeting also. Callum thanked her for her efforts to protect me and keep me safe, as well as her services to the royal pack.

Callum had even offered Jackson and me the opportunity to join the royal pack as senior members, which we were very honored to receive. However, we had to politely decline as neither of us wished to leave our current packs due to finding our true mates and our obligations.

While Callum was disappointed that we didn't take him up on his offer he did understand. So instead he came up with the idea of a Royal Pack Alliance which was extended not only to our closest allies but to the packs that had fought in the attack earlier today.

Though the packs had already started to make their way home immediately after the attack, we had all agreed to reconvene again in a month's time to discuss alliances and a peace treaty.

Callum was curious about the Hybrid who had such great knowledge of the royal pack, so he requested a meeting with Abbey, to which she gladly obliged, to which Alaric accompanied her too.

It appeared that Callum had known Abbey's mother well and they shared a few stories with one another. Abbey and Alaric were also invited to visit the royal pack, which they are intending to do after returning back to their packs.

Jackson and I have both been invited to stay at the Volkov Kingdom to meet some of our distant relatives and to learn more about our heritage. We have both agreed to come along, and we intend to bring our mates with us but have asked that it be postponed until everything is back to normal again following the recent attacks.

Jackson declared that he needed to speak with his father first and check back in with his pack, as he had been absent for some time now.

Further to that, he wished to introduce Xanthe to his pack as his Luna.

Xanthe was a bit reluctant. Although she had accepted Jackson as her mate, she was unsure about becoming Luna and is worried that there may be resistance to her being accepted as Luna due to the fact that she is a witch by birth.

I have a feeling it will all work out eventually though.

After Lachlan had met his demise, the rogues instantly began to retreat. However, we had managed to capture a few of them for interrogation purposes. They aren't saying anything at the moment, but Kingston believes that in a few days' time they will probably start talking.

Kingston was organizing a tracking team right now to see if they could follow the rogue's scents in an effort to find out where they came from, and determine if they will be a future threat.

Xanthe was planning to contact a coven that she has a working relationship in a bid to try to find out who the dark witch was and to see if she will become a further threat to us in the future.

The dark witch did say she would "see me soon," and I'm pretty sure she knew that I was a crescent moon wolf, so that could become problematic.

Kingston and I were heading off to the pack hospital now to check on our friends and injured pack members. After that I planned on calling Mason and Quinn and sharing a video call with my pups if they were still awake.

Now that Lachlan was no longer a threat, there is no reason why they cant all come home.

I simply cannot wait to have my pups safely in my arms again. It feels like it has been an eternity since I last saw them.

Kingston had managed to contact Asher, and he and Kaia are on their way back to Rocky Mountain. Asher said that when he went to tell them about Ezra's death, they already knew. They told him that they have something exciting to tell us when they get back. We have an inkling as to what it might be, but we are excited to hear what they have to say.

It's going to take some time to get things back to what they once were. We have a lot to do as far as pack security goes. The fact that the dark witch managed to create all that chaos is pretty scary. To think such an attack was able to occur, means we have much work ahead of us to ensure it doesn't happen again.

We will have lots of work to do with the creation of this new alliance with the royal pack, but everyone seems open to the idea so far.

With so many finding their fated and second chances mates, there is still much celebrating to be done. There are also Luna ceremonies to take place, including my own ceremony. But there is plenty of time for that.

What matters now is that everyone is safe and well, that all the injured recover, and that we get things back to a state of normality – whatever that might look like.

As I descended the stairs of the pack house I looked around at the lush greenery that surrounds me, the sky is now starting to darken, and night is falling.

I am so blessed to call this place home. I am safe. I am free at last.

I looked to the bottom of the stairs and see my perfect mate waiting for me.

Kingston had a grin on his face, and I raised my brows as I look at him, and then I saw why he was grinning.

As I looked to the side entrance of the main packhouse reception I saw my precious pups, my Liam and Layla, standing next to Mason and Quinn.

“How?” I asked Kingston via mind-link, in a state of astonishment.

“I rang Mason after the attack, and said it was safe to bring Liam and Layla back,” Kingston replied.

I was already making my way toward my pups.

“Mommy!” They called out in unison, running as fast as their little legs would carry them. I too started to run towards them and we met in the middle. They landed in my arms and I kissed them both on their foreheads as they push their heads into my chest and we take in one another’s scents. I felt the tears of joy falling from my cheeks. Then I felt Kingston join our hug and we all embraced each other. Our family unit was finally back together. Everything was just as it should be. I felt at peace at last. I never dreamed that I could feel so complete and so loved.

Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 44

Amber (Aleksa’s Wolf) POV

As I get up on all fours from my lay position, I can scent my mate, nothing calls to me more than his pine scent. I can feel the tension through our bond, and I walk to stand in front of Gray so that I can calm my mate before he gets the wrong idea and attacks Gray.

“It’s not what it looks like,” I say to Sabre. Thinking that finding Gray and me here in the middle of the forest, at 4.30 am looks highly suspicious.

“Explain. Now.” Sabre demands. Looking like it is taking everything to calm his jealousy and agitation right now.

“We couldn’t figure out what it was in our human forms, something was drawing us to one another, initially we thought it was an attraction, but it wasn’t like the mate bond it was different,” I say. As Sabre rips out a warning growl.

“We are kin!” I blurt out.

“What?” Sabre mind-links me, followed by a growl.

“Gray (Jackson) is also a Crescent Moon Wolf,” I say to Sabre, although he doesn’t seem convinced yet.

“Gray and I have met before, over many lifetimes, we are both children of the Goddess. We couldn’t detect it in human form, only in wolf form could we truly sense and recognise each other.” I say to Sabre, walking towards him so that he can take in my scent and trying to soothe his anger.

Gray is still holding his ground. He can’t communicate with Sabre, as Sabre isn’t a Crescent Moon wolf, and they are not from the same pack. But Gray patiently waits for me to explain this all to Sabre.

“Why the secrecy?” Sabre questions, eyes flickering from Gray to Myself.

“We (Aleksa and I) couldn’t sleep, she said I could go for a run, and we did, then Gray turned up, he couldn’t sleep either, that’s when we realized who each other was, then you arrived,” I said looking my mate in the eyes, with absolute honesty and adoration.

The tension lessens, and I can feel that Sabre believes me.

“Wait, you are both in wolf form. How are you both communicating? Sabre asks me.

“Oh, it’s a Crescent Moon Wolf thing, cool huh, we can mind-link each other. Even in human form.” I tell Sabre matter of factly.

He growled lightly.

"Tell him to shift. I want to speak with him." Sabre demands. Nodding his head toward Gray.

"Gray, Sabre wants you to shift so he can speak with you if that's ok," I ask, rather than tell, as Gray is an Alpha wolf too, and he will not take kindly to being ordered around.

"Very well," Gray replied, shifting right in front of us, as a display of dominance.

I avert my eyes momentarily, as although I am no prude, I do not wish to see Jackson naked.

Sabre shifts too, at first they were both standing there stark naked, but Sabre must have mind-linked Asher because he quickly arrived with some changes of clothes. He hands me a dress and I walked over to the nearest tree to get dressed.

Once I was dressed I walked back over to Kingston and Jackson who now both have shorts and t-shirts on. I take my place next to Kingston and kissed him on the cheek, rubbing my scent onto him to calm him down.

Kingston POV

I woke up from my sleep to pull Aleksa close to me. I couldn't smell her peony and peach nectar, so I opened my eyes to find her side of the bed is empty. I walk into the bathroom to see it was also empty and saw that her clothes were in the laundry hamper. Perhaps she had gone downstairs to make coffee, that's often what she did when she couldn't sleep.

I made my way downstairs to find the kitchen empty although I could tell that she had been down here as her scent was all over the stool. I followed her scent outside onto the porch and saw that she was initially on the outdoor sofa swing, her coffee cup was empty and the throw rug was on the ground. I followed her scent to the end of the patio, where I saw her shredded clothes on the ground, so I know that she had shifted into her wolf, Amber.

I'm not impressed that she had shifted in the middle of the night to go for a run without any security, especially in the current situation, so I decided to follow her scent and check on her. I tried to mind-link her but there seems to be a block. This makes me nervous and agitated at the same time. I shifted into

Sabre and we took off into the treeline to find our mate. I also mind-linked Asher to let him know that I couldn't find his Luna.

Sabre (Kingston's Wolf) POV (As Kingston has shifted)

It doesn't take long to find her, deep in the forest, in a small clearing. She is laying down on her side, it looks like she is in a mind-link with what I can see is Jackson's wolf. His eyes are also hazed over, he also appears to be in a mind-link. They are a few metres apart and appear to be comfortable in each other's presence, which agitates me.

I am furious, all sorts of thoughts are going through my head right now. I begin to stalk in a predatory fashion towards the wolf that is deep in the woods with my mate in the middle of the night, wanting to rip his throat out and ask questions later, but I hear Kingston in my head pleading with me to calm down and listen to what they have to say.

"It's not what it looks like," Amber tells me through mind-link.

"Explain. Now." I demand. It is taking every fibre of my being to contain my rage right now. I can't imagine why my mate is in the woods with another wolf right now. I can't think straight. I can hear Kingston fighting for control. Demanding I shift and listen to what our mate has to say.

"We couldn't figure out what it was in our human forms, something was drawing us to one another, initially we thought it was an attraction, but it wasn't like the mate bond, it was different," Amber tells me. A warning growl rips through me, I am barely holding myself back.

"We are kin," she blurts out.

"What?" I growl again. Not quite sure I've heard her right.

"Jackson (Gray) is a Crescent Moon Wolf." She tells me, although I'm still in a state of disbelief. I had thought that only she-wolves could be Crescent Moon Wolves. I'm gonna need a little more to go on than that.

"Gray and I have met before, over many lifetimes, we are both children of the Goddess. We couldn't detect it in our human form, only in wolf form could we truly sense and recognise each other." Amber tells me, walking towards me, I am hit with her sweet scent which has an immediate calming effect on me.

Gray's chest is puffed up and he looks like he is ready to defend himself and possibly Amber at any time. I should be offended but I am a little impressed that he would defend my mate. Although that isn't necessary as I love her with all my heart. And I am definitely not a threat to her.

"Why the secrecy?" I ask Amber specifically, looking at them both. Although I realize I can't communicate with Gray, as we are not from the same pack, and are both still in wolf form.

"We (Aleksa and I) couldn't sleep, she said we could go for a run, we needed to burn some energy, and we did, then Gray turned up, he couldn't sleep either, that's when we realized who each other was, and then you arrived, and here we are." Amber declares looking at me with only love in her eyes, and I can tell she is being completely honest with me. I would be able to tell through our bond if she was lying.

"Wait, you are both in wolf form. How are you communicating?" I ask, suddenly confused.

"Oh, it's a Crescent Moon Wolf thing. Cool huh! We can mind-link. Even in our human forms." She tells me as if it's no big deal.

I let out another growl, feeling maybe just a little jealous.

"Tell him to shift. I want to speak with him." I instruct Amber. And with that, I mind-linked Asher to bring us two changes of clothes for Jackson and me, and one for Aleksa.

I see her eyes cloud over and I could see they were mind-linking. I stare at them both feeling quite impressed.

About thirty seconds later Gray shifts in front of me. Nudity is no big deal for us werewolves. But I know it still is an issue for Amber/Aleksa as she wasn't brought up in a pack like we all were.

I looked at my mate who blushed nervously and looked away.

I shifted on the spot also and stand there in all my glory. Asher arrived in record time. Asher looked at us all with a puzzled expression on his face, handing me the bags of clothes he has brought with him.

(Kingston POV)

(As he has just shifted from his wolf form)

“I’ll explain later” I mind-link Asher.

“Ok, Boss,” Asher replied via mind-link.

I pulled a dress out of the bag and handed it to Amber. She walked over to a nearby tree to shift and change.

It’s not unusual for us to have bags stashed throughout the woods, we have them as often wolves shift spontaneously and forget a change of clothes. Asher was able to grab a few random bags on his way here.

I mind-linked Asher, thanking him for bringing the change of clothes and telling him I will explain everything later, and dismissing him, telling him I’ll see him in my office at 9 am.

When Aleksa had changed she walked up to me and kissed me on the cheek and stood next to me, facing Jackson.

“You will have to forgive me for my aggressive behaviour earlier but I woke in the middle of the night to find my mate wasn’t next to me, nor was she in the packhouse, and then I found her in the middle of the woods with another wolf. And not just any wolf, one that seems to have some strange connection to her, I’m sure you can understand why I reacted the way I did.” I said to Jackson.

“You’re right Kingston, I understand completely. And if I were in your position I would have been just as agitated. Actually, I wouldn’t have been able to hold back the way you did.” Jackson replied.

“You should know that I have no untoward or malicious intentions with Aleska. We are kin. I couldn’t spot it until we were in wolf form. But it all makes sense now.” He declares to me.

“I assume Amber told you this is not our first rodeo? That we have been through many life cycles together. Obviously with different human hosts but with similar objectives.” Jackson added further.

“What objectives exactly are you referring to?” I was beginning to wonder what exactly the Moon Goddesses’ agenda might be.

“To ensure the next generation of Crescent Moon Wolves is protected from harm.” Jackson declares.

“Oh my goodness!” Aleksa blurts out.

I looked at her worried, as I could feel her panic through our bond.

“Liam!” Aleksa yelled.

I looked at her with a perplexed expression on my face.

“We knew Layla was a Crescent Moon Wolf, but does this mean Liam is also? They are twins! I was so worried when I found out that Layla’s safety was at risk, and now I’m thinking Liam could be too!” Aleksa said speaking quickly and in a panic-stricken tone.

“Jackson?” I question him, moving my head to the side, glancing at him to see if he can answer Aleksa’s question.

“I would be surprised if he wasn’t,” Jackson said to us both. His forehead creased with concern.

“Is there any way to know right now, perhaps a marking, or something, anything that would identify him as a Crescent Moon Wolf?” I asked Jackson.

“Unlikely. The most obvious sign is the marking that appears when we find our true mates. That and any powers or special abilities we might have.” Jackson told us.

“Then we treat him as if he is. We treat both Liam and Layla the same. Protect them. Train them. Prepare them for their destiny.” I declared to Aleksa and Jackson.

“Ah, question, where exactly are your twins?” Jackson asked.

“They are somewhere safe. For now.” I told him. That’s all he needed to know for now. While I mostly believe what he is saying to be true, I still need to do some more background checks. That and we need to speak with Xanthe now more than ever.

“How about we go get some breakfast and talk about this while we eat?” I suggest to Jackson and Aleksa.

“I could eat,” Jackson says.

“Lead the way, my love,” Aleksa says, interlocking her hands with mine.

(Kingston POV)

The sun is up now, and we have a big day ahead of us. It's the first official day of the Annual Royal Alpha Summit. Alpha's from all over the country will be arriving, and we will need to be ready to greet them all and welcome them in as Alpha and Luna of Rocky Mountain Pack.

We still have an ongoing rogue situation to deal with, as well as finding out more about Aleska's grandfather's whereabouts. We are yet to get ahold of Xanthe, who hopefully will have some more information regarding Crescent Moon Wolves. Also, I wouldn't mind introducing her to Jackson, to get her opinion on everything.

Myself, Asher and some of our elite warriors are still preparing for Lachlan's arrival, and how we can minimise any drama or retaliation, especially while we are hosting the Summit.

This morning we will make a call to Mason, Quinn and my parents, to brief them on our new information. So they are aware of some of the dangers they are facing. Plus I think Aleksa might benefit from hearing from her pups, to see that they are safe and well.

I just hope we get everything in order before the Alpha King arrives later this week. He has entrusted the responsibility of hosting the Summit to me, and I don't want to let him down.

It's going to be a long week.

Aleksa POV

Breakfast was a little awkward. Kingston seems a little unsettled about the news of Jackson being a Crescent Moon Wolf. Jackson also seems a little guarded. I got the feeling he wasn't happy with his identity being shared. After breakfast, Jackson asked to speak privately with Kingston, so, naturally, I accompanied them. Jackson asked for Kingston's word that he wouldn't mention his wolf status to anyone. Kingston was a little offended and didn't

take too kindly to being “told what to do” as he put it. I had to intervene, and eventually, we were able to come to a compromise. Jackson agreed that Kingston could tell Asher and Kai, but that he had to alpha command them to keep the secret, which was a reasonable request.

It’s mid-morning now and there are several Alphas with their entourages making their way towards the pack-house. I hope these Alpha’s and their entourage are as nice as the first few have been.

First up is Alpha Theo and his Luna Stella. They run a large midwestern pack, comprising several states. They have their Gamma Matt and his mate Mia with them, as well as four Elite Warriors. They seem nice, but not big on conversation. Which suits us as the next group is already pulling up. We have them staying in a larger cottage near the training grounds. We have some pack members ready to escort them to their cottage.

Next to arrive is the Alpha of what we refer to as the Floridian Pack. He is unmated, rumor has it that he rejected his fated mate, and he has a reputation for being a bit of a womanizer according to the notes that Quinn left me. He appears to be traveling lightly, with only two Elite Warriors with him. He seems a little gruff and is paying a little too much attention to my chest, his eyes roaming slowly up and down my body, which is making me feel uncomfortable. I could see that Kingston was getting agitated, so we quickly directed him to Kai, who would show him to the small cottage we had prepared for him. Before he walks off, he asks us to send an Omega to his quarters. I am a little shocked at his request, so I refer to Kingston, who is also looking unimpressed.

“We are not that sort of pack. If you are looking for the company of a female or a she-wolf, you might like to take a trip to the nearest human town.” Kingston politely redirects our guest. He has an astounded expression on his face but doesn’t push the issue. I assume that he doesn’t hear no that often.

Before we can even address one another, another two SUVs arrive next to us. I watch as the first person steps out of the car, and my heart jumps out of my chest.

“Caleb! Oh, my goddess! What? How? I’m soo happy to see you!” I said as I ran up to him and wrapped my arms around my previous Gamma, giving him the biggest hug of his life. I am so ecstatically happy right now. I moved my head back and took in his face. I am about to say something when I hear

someone clear their throat. I know it's Kingston. I could feel Sabre getting agitated, so I turned around.

"Kingston, meet Caleb! Caleb was my Gamma at Evergreen." I said, and then I saw Kali getting out of the SUV with a big smile on her face.

"Oh my! Kali!" I yelled, as I again ran up to her like a child at Christmas. Kali moves to walk towards me and we pull into each other and hug, with tears sweeping down our faces. Kali is one of my best friends. I love her with all my heart and I am so unbelievably happy to see them both here right now.

"Kali, I take it?" Kingston says to Kali, smiling. And he moves toward Caleb to shake his hands, and then to Kali. Who I finally free from my grip.

"How are you here?" I asked, suddenly curious as to what I owe the honor of seeing my best friends here at Rocky Mountain.

"Wait. What's this? Are you?" I said excitedly at the small bump that is protruding from Kali's dress.

"Are you pregnant?" I asked her, already knowing the answer, but wanting to hear it from her first.

Caleb walks up to us both and places his arm around his mate lovingly, then places his hand on her belly. "We are!" He exclaims proudly.

"Oh my! I am so happy for you both. You are gonna make the best parents. Isn't this just the best news, Kingston?" I asked my mate, in an effort to include him more in the conversation.

Kingston walks up to me, wraps his arm around my side, and says "That is great news, congratulations to you both!" He tells them, and he gives Caleb a man hug and pats him on the back, and then Kali a gentle hug, taking great care to avoid her bump.

Kali then pulls away from us all and starts to walk over to the first SUV.

"Allow me to introduce my cousin, Alpha Callum of Crimson Moon," Kali says, opening the door of the first SUV. Out steps a very tall, very large, heavily tattooed man, with long curly untamed hair and a lot of facial hair. He has dark eyes and tanned skin. His presence is quite intimidating. I am adjusting my neck as far as I can as I look up to him to address him.

“Welcome to the Rocky Mountain Pack, and to the Summit Alpha Callum. I am Kingston, and this is my Luna Aleksa. We are glad you could join us.” Kingston says as he reaches out to shake Callum’s hand.

Callum then extended his hand out towards Kingston, shaking his hand. He then began to shake my hand also. I smiled and nodded at him.

“Thank you. Nice to meet you both. Aleksa, I have heard a lot about you.” He says with a deep husky voice.

I smiled shyly, “Thank you, Alpha Callum. It’s nice to meet you,” I said. “And thank you for all you have done for my friends Caleb and Kali. I am so glad they made it safely to Crimson Moon. I am in debt to you all. Without all of your help, I wouldn’t be here right now.” I said with gratitude to Callum, Caleb, Kali, and Kingston.

“I don’t believe that is the case. You are strong. You would have figured it out. We are happy to have helped, however.” Callum replied to me.

At that moment, another two SUVs drove up and we realized we needed to show our guests their accommodation. I can’t go with my friends although I really want to. I have to continue my Luna duties by welcoming our guests. So I mind-link Asher and Kaia to see if they can escort our special guests.

I had no idea Caleb and Kali were coming. I am not sure if we have accommodation ready for them. I mind-linked Kingston and he assured me that Callum had RSVP with the correct number of guests, so their accommodation is ready now.

Asher and Kaia arrive at the packhouse entrance and Kaia looks surprised to see Caleb and Kali. She walks up to them as if they are old friends, and in a way they kind of are. They are also happy to see Kaia and after they all hug and get acquainted with Asher, he begins to show them the way to their accommodation.

The next two cars approach and I hear a commotion coming from the cars, a high-pitched female voice and a gravelly male voice, a door is thrust open and an angry-looking alpha in his mid-twenties, I would say, steps out, he takes in the surroundings, then starts walking towards us.

“Good morning, welcome to the Rocky Mountain Pack,” I said to him. As I go to shake his hand, he completely dismisses me. Kingston c***s his head and growls. He is not impressed at the disrespect I am shown.

I decide to ignore it and as I am about to say something to break the tension, a shrieking woman exits the SUV, yelling at the Alpha in front of us “You could have waited!” She yelled.

She’s hastily repositioning her bra, her lipstick is a little smudged and her hair is disheveled. I tried to mask the amused expression on my face with a smile. She appeared to be unimpressed that she was left in the car, and that her mate didn’t wait for her. She walks up to Kingston, bats her eyelids and introduces herself, getting very close and personal, merely inches from Kingston’s face. He does not look happy as he steps back to get some space between himself and our guest.

“Luna Roxy, and you are?” She says while extending her hand for Kingston to kiss, I’m assuming. Her mate smacks her hand away from Kingston.

I release a growl at her actions. Amber doesn’t appreciate her flirtatious nature and the gall of this she-wolf throwing herself at our mate.

“Oh hell no, she did not just do that!” Amber says angrily in my head.

“She needs to know her place!” Amber protests to me.

“Let it go, Amber, please, let’s just get through today.” I pleaded with my wolf. She’s so fierce and protective and I love her, but she can be a bit aggressive at times.

“Roxy darling, don’t embarrass yourself.” Her mate says, shaking his head dismissively.

” I am Alpha Tyler. I run the largest pack in California. You are Kingston, I assume?” He says to Kingston.

“I am. Welcome, Alpha Tyler and Luna Roxy.” Kingston says plainly.

“Please meet my Luna Aleksa.” Kingston declares as he pulls me into his chest proudly.

Roxy looks me up and down and has a look on her face that I can't quite decipher.

"Pleasure," Tyler replies, nodding at me. I get the impression he doesn't like me much. Although I can't imagine why that might be, considering we met only just a few minutes ago. Roxy just flashes me an insincere smile. I get the feeling she likes to be the center of attention. Amber is fuming at her obvious disrespect, but it is only day one of a week-long summit, so I will keep her at bay for now.

"We hope you enjoy your stay with us. I will have someone escort you to your accommodation. Lunch will be in the pack-house dining room. If you need anything else in the meantime, please feel free to call reception, the numbers are on the phone," Kingston says abruptly. I can tell he wants to end this interaction as quickly as possible.

And with that, Kai arrives and takes over, freeing Kingston and me for a few moments before the next group arrives.

We watch as Tyler and Roxy make their way back to their vehicle, bickering at each other. Roxy turns her head back and gives Kingston a seductive wink.

Again, I let out a warning growl. Both Tyler and Roxy don't look back. I am starting to tire of Roxy's shameless attitude. Kingston mind-links me, telling me to let it go, it's not worth it, and hopefully, we won't have much to do with them throughout the summit. I somehow doubt we will be that lucky, but I will try to remain optimistic. I have bigger things to worry about than a flirtatious and attention-starved Luna.

It's late afternoon now and there are only a few remaining packs left to check-in, Evergreen being one of them. They may arrive this evening. They could also arrive early in the morning. As far as we know, Lachlan doesn't know that I am here, so I am not sure how this will go down. Kingston assures me that Asher, Kai, and our Elite Warriors are ready for every scenario, and Jackson has been briefed on the situation and he has pledged his support also.

I've been having those nightmares more and more frequently recently, and they all end the same way. I am adamant they are a premonition, a glimpse of things to come, and if that is the case, then we are in trouble.

Aleska POV

I had the worst sleep last night. Back-to-back nightmares. Except that this time, certain aspects of the nightmares had changed. For example, this time Eva and Sam were with Lachlan. Things seemed to be going on in the background of my nightmares, but I couldn't quite make them out. I woke up covered in sweat and my anxiety was at an all-time high. I tried to go back to sleep again to figure out what else was happening in my dream. I had maintained that these dreams seemed like premonitions, and they had changed, and that concerned me.

Eventually, I gave up and decided I would make a start to my day. It was then that I noticed that the other half of my bed was empty. Perhaps Kingston couldn't sleep either. I jumped into the shower and then quickly got dressed. I made my way downstairs, heading towards the kitchen.

I decided to make a nice hot coffee in the kitchen while Rose and some of our kitchen staff put the finishing touches on breakfast as our guests would be joining us this morning. I felt a little relieved as I recalled the video call we had last night after dinner with Liam and Layla. Our pups were beaming with energy, they were so excited about telling Kingston and me all about their adventures in Idaho.

Chase and Cordelia had met up with some close friends of theirs and they had brought their grand-pups along with them to play with Liam and Layla. It sounded like they were having the time of their lives. I realized that we had told Chase and Cordelia to keep them isolated in the cabin, but we trusted their judgment. Plus, we were confident in Mason and Quinn's ability to protect our pups had the occasion arose.

After speaking with Liam and Layla for a while, Cordelia and Chase came to tell them it was bedtime, so we were able to speak with Mason and Quinn for a bit. They reassured us that our pups were safe and that they hadn't encountered anything out of the ordinary and were covering their tracks whenever they needed to travel.

Mason went on to tell us how close Chase was to the former alpha of the local pack and how that alpha was indebted to Chase, so he had no concerns as of yet. Although he did maintain that he was keeping a close eye on things.

Chase was a great judge of character and was well respected by other alphas. I also knew that he loved Liam and Layla as if they were his own biological pups, so we knew our pups were in safe hands.

Kingston had to leave early as he had a phone call to his office that he had to attend to. He said it was urgent. I continued the call with Mason and Quinn.

Something seemed different about them. They seemed closer than usual and Quinn seemed to be having a glow about her. She was giggling a lot and they seemed even more affectionate than usual. They said there was something they wanted to tell us together, both Kingston and I.

Once they had reassured me it didn't concern Liam and Layla and that they were all safe, I agreed to end the call with them, as I wasn't sure when Kingston would return. We agreed to continue the call tomorrow morning before breakfast.

I was pulled from my thoughts of last night's call by a high-pitched shriek. Unfortunately, I could identify that voice anywhere – it was Luna Roxy. I left my coffee on the bench and walked hastily out of the kitchen to see what the problem was.

As I entered the hallway I could see Lily, one of our young omega pack members holding the side of her face which was reddened, trying to stifle her cry.

Luna Roxy was standing next to her yelling "Don't you dare make eye contact with me, Omega! Hear me?" She yelled, pointing her long curly witch-like nails at the young omega's face.

"Yes, Luna, I'm so sorry Luna," Lily said in a scared and shocked tone, facing the floor.

"What the hell is going on?" I angrily asked Roxy. Already knowing who the guilty party was. Lily was possibly the kindest person I had ever met. There was no way she instigated this incident.

"Your stupid omega here doesn't know her place. She had the nerve to look me in the eyes!" Roxy spat out.

"Did you hit her?" I questioned Roxy in a loud accusatory tone.

"I sure did. She's lucky I didn't do worse!" Roxy yelled back.

"You, ever, touch any of my pack members again, and I will hit you myself!" I declared to Roxy. Who looked at me offended.

"I take crimes against my pack members very seriously," I declared. Then I went on to add, "You need to apologize!"

"Nuh-uh, not happening," Roxy tells me with a defiant look on her face.

I am fuming with anger at the nerve of Roxy. Amber is growling too. She wants me to let her out.

At that very moment, Kingston walked into the hallway.

"What's going on?" Kingston asked, flabbergasted at the scene unfolding in front of him.

"She hit poor Lily in the face for looking at her!" I yelled, getting more worked up by the minute.

"Is this true, Luna Roxy?" Kingston asked in disbelief.

"Damn straight it is! b***h needs to know her place!" Roxy spat out venomously.

Kingston mind-linked me and told me we need to de-escalate this situation as we have bigger problems to deal with today. So I agreed to let her go with a warning.

"Luna Roxy," I said in my calmest voice.

"We do things differently in our pack, everyone is treated the same regardless of their rank. I suggest that if you wish to stay for the duration of the summit you will need to abide by our rules. You are not to hit or abuse another of my pack members again, is that clear?" I told her with a hardened expression on my face.

Luna Roxy screws up her face and bits down hard on her lip. "Whatever," She blurts out, and she begins to walk toward the dining room.

I looked at Kingston in disbelief. He could no doubt feel the frustration and anger emanating from me.

I then turned to poor Lily, who was still holding her reddened cheek.

"I'm so sorry Lily, come with me. I'll get you an ice pack for your cheek, then you can take the rest of the day off," I said to her as I led her into the kitchen.

Breakfast went better than I had expected after the Roxy fiasco. Naturally, she acted as if nothing had happened at breakfast. I wouldn't want to tell anyone what happened if I were her either. She's such a vile person to abuse someone so young and vulnerable as that.

Kingston worked hard to ensure that this Summit was a success, so we didn't need any drama unfolding at breakfast. Thankfully, it all went smoothly. The packs were enjoying mingling with one another, some were a little standoffish, but that is to be expected. There were plenty of compliments to the kitchen staff, the breakfast buffet was spectacular, and everyone ate plenty.

Today there are all sorts of activities planned for packs that have already arrived, as well as some basic orientation and check-ins. Tomorrow there would be a business conference where the alphas would be spending most of the day in meetings, where they would be networking. Also known as drinking copious amounts and comparing their packs and their acquisitions all day.

A Spa day had been organized for the Luna's and their female entourage, starting off with a brunch first, then on to massages, relaxing by the pool, and some cocktails in the afternoon.

The day was to finish with a large BBQ-style gathering under a large marquee near the training grounds. There was even a live band organized. Kingston tells me that this is usually quite a popular event where the entire pack and the visiting packs and their members get together to celebrate. Occasionally, wolves meet their mates at the gathering. I hoped this would be the case this time. I love watching people meet their other halves.

Kingston and I had stationed ourselves at the main entrance of the packhouse, there were only a handful of packs left to arrive now, and then the summit could really get underway, depending on what would happen when Lachlan arrived.

An SUV drove up and out there was a tall, athletic built man with sandy blonde hair. He walked to the opposite car door and opened it, out walked a stunning petite brunette with greenish-colored eyes. They walked towards us smiling. I can already feel good vibes radiating from them.

"Good Morning, I am Alpha Alaric and this is my beautiful Luna Abbey, we are from the Lunar Eclipse Pack," he says proudly to both Kingston and myself.

“Good Morning Alaric and Abbey, I am Kingston and this is my Luna Aleksa, it’s a pleasure to meet you both,” Kingston replied back to them.

“Wow, your pack lands are so breathtaking,” Abbey tells us.

“Thank you, we love it here. We hope you enjoy your time here at Rocky Mountain,” I said to Abbey.

As I went to shake Abbey’s hand, I felt something strange, like a flashback of her and what looked like significant moments in her life. Like memories. I could feel that she was getting the same from me. I looked at her astounded. She just smiled at me, then let out a giggle, and then looked at Alaric knowingly.

Aleksa POV

“What was that?” I asked, with a shocked expression on my face. Kingston looks at me worriedly. He can sense something isn’t right.

“It’s ok. I felt it too,” Abbey said, smiling at me.

I was confused. What was that? So many questions consumed me. I went to say something when Abbey cut me off.

“You have powers! You are special too! I’m a hybrid, in case you are wondering. I’m half-werewolf, half-witch!” Abbey told me excitedly. Although she wasn’t moving her lips, was she mind-linking me?

“Wow, Aleksa! It appears you have the ability to mind-link anyone, you have allowed me to share your link, how cool is this!” Abbey replied.

She sure is bubbly. I wish I shared her enthusiasm, but I haven’t decided whether this is a good thing or a bad thing just yet.

I looked at Alaric and Kingston, who were looking at us with confused expressions evident on their faces.

“Our mates look concerned. Maybe we should include them in this conversation?” Abbey suggested.

“There are others around, so perhaps you should tell Alaric and I’ll tell Kingston via mind-link. We should talk a little later this afternoon. What do you say?”

“Deal!” Abbey quips.

And with that, I break our mind-link. Turning to Kingston, I linked him and told him what was going on. He was surprised as he hadn't met a hybrid before and agreed we all needed to sit down and talk later this afternoon.

The next SUV pulls up to the main entrance. Asher had arrived to escort Alaric and Abbey to their cabin. Kingston must have mind-linked him, I assume.

I hear Amber stir in my head. “Don't worry Aleksa, it's OK. She's friendly. She will be a great ally.” Amber reassured me.

Before I could prod her further, she blocked me out, in true Amber fashion.

I shake my head, sometimes my wolf drives me crazy, always deciding what I can and can't know and making me wait so much. She can be so frustrating. But I have to trust her. She always has our best interests at heart.

As Asher escorts Alaric and Abbey off to their accommodation, Abbey turns and waves back at me with a great smile on her face. Amber's right, she seemed really nice.

Kingston and I walked to the next SUV to meet and greet our new arrivals. A young alpha walks out, he doesn't look like he's a day over eighteen, his driver opens the other car door, and out steps what I assume is his Luna.

They walked up to us and introduced themselves. They are from Wisconsin, they are hard to gauge in conversation, and are eager to get to their accommodation. Once their escort had arrived, we made our way to the kitchen to make a quick coffee.

While we drank our coffee, I told Kingston about my interaction with Abbey, as well as the visions I saw of her. Just quick glimpses of her at various stages of her life, good and bad memories by the looks of things. She has been through a lot in her life by the looks of things. He was a little uneasy about our interaction, probably more concerned than anything. I told him what Amber had said about Abbey and he felt a bit better about things after that.

Kingston then went on to have a discussion with Sabre. Kingston tells me that Sabre agrees with Amber.

I am making a note to follow Abbey up later today, although I have a feeling Abbey will seek me out before I get to her. I am not too worried though, all I get from her are positive vibes.

The next entourage had arrived, as Kingston and I made our way back outside. A large and intimidating-looking alpha with a dark aura walked out of his SUV. His face was void of emotion, something about him gave me the creeps.

“Watch them, Aleksa. They are trouble. Our friend is in danger!” Amber tells me alarmingly.

As I was about to ask Amber what she meant by that, when another male got out of the second SUV. He was large and menacing. He had a huge jagged scar down the right side of his face. In fact, he had scars all over his neck and arms. I didn’t want to offend him by staring, but I couldn’t help but notice them.

He started sniffing the air around him and let out a huge growl.

“Where is she!” he yelled at us both. His head switched frantically from side to side. Kingston stood in front of me with his arms out in a defensive stance. I could feel the anger rolling off him.

I had a bad feeling about this. A feeling of dread was consuming me.

Kingston let out a warning growl at them both. In what seemed like only moments, several of our warriors descended upon the main entrance of the packhouse.

“Get your pack member under control, now!” Kingston demanded of the visiting alpha.

The alpha in front of us looked agitated that Kingston had yelled at him.

“Ezra, control yourself!” he growled.

Ezra! Oh, my goddess! It hits me like a ton of bricks. Kaia! I thought to myself.

I felt a tightening in my chest and it felt hard to breathe for a moment when I realized that this was Kaia’s mate, the one she rejected, the one that tried to lock her up. I was instantly concerned for my friend.

I immediately mind-linked Kaia. “Wherever you are, stop right now! Ezra is here! At the packhouse!” I yelled at her through our mind-link. But I accidentally mind-linked the entire pack at the same time in my panic. I quickly block out all voices except Kaia, Asher, and Kingston’s.

“What the f**k!” She replied to me. I can’t respond as the alpha in front of me is looking at me angrily, as is Ezra.

“Alpha Finn of the Midnight Pack,” the alpha says, trying to deescalate things, reaching out to shake Kingston’s hand.

Kingston shook his hand firmly “Kingston, and this is my Luna Aleksa,” Kingston said to him.

“This is my Beta, Ezra,” Finn says to us both.

I try to mask my confusion. Kaia had told me that her mate had been an elite warrior. Kaia was the Beta female of the Midnight pack, and her brother was to take over the beta role. How could Ezra be the Beta? What does that mean for Kaia’s brother, I wondered.

“I can smell that my mate is here! Her scent is everywhere!” Ezra declared to us all.

We looked at him feigning confusion.

Kingston questioned him, “And who might your mate be?”.

“Kaia! My mate’s name is Kaia,” Ezra replied gruffly.

“Can’t say we know anyone by that name. We have had a lot of packs through her. Perhaps you have confused a scent?” I suggest to Ezra.

“Bullshit!” I saw you mind-link when you heard my name. Where is she?” He yelled, stalking aggressively towards me.

“Watch your f*****g tone with my mate! And take one step further and I will end you!” Kingston growled at Ezra.

The three of them stood aggressively staring each other down, the warriors were on edge, ready to pounce at any moment, for a few moments until Kingston spoke again.

“You are not getting off to a good start here gentleman, remember who’s pack it is that you are in!” he added further.

“Apologies Kingston, my Beta lost his mate some time ago, he’s a little on edge.” Alpha Finn says, trying to deescalate the situation.

Ezra is pulled aside by his Alpha.

“Excuse us for a minute, please,” he said to us, nodding respectfully, although it was lacking in sincerity. I got the feeling they were up to something.

They mind-linked each other for a minute, facing away from us.

I took this opportunity to mind-link Asher, including Kingston and Kaia also “You need to get Kaia out of here now, Ezra, her ex-mate is here! Take the back entrance. We will distract them for now,” I told him.

“Go, Asher. We will talk later.” Kingston added.

“Yes Luna, Alpha, we are leaving now.” Asher linked us back.

“Thank you!” Kaia says to Kingston and me. And we end our mind-link.

“Gentleman, why don’t we escort you to your accommodation?” I suggested to them. Kingston took my lead also.

“Let us get you settled and then we can talk about this further, in my office perhaps?” Kingston suggested to them.

Knowing that they can’t deny this offer, as to do so would be too obvious, they reluctantly oblige.

“Thank you Kingston and Aleksa, that sounds like a good idea,” Alpha Finn replied.

Ezra didn’t say anything, he just screwed up his face and looked away. Clearly, it was taking everything he had to remain calm.

Kingston has mind-linked Kai, to ask him to take over the meet and greets for now. We will need to buy some time to figure out what to do with Ezra and Finn, and how we can protect Kaia from him.

It looks like things just got a whole lot more complicated for us all. As if one psycho ex-mate wasn't enough to deal with. Now there are two of them.

As we reached their allocated accommodation, we both received a mind-link from border patrol. They told us that Evergreen had arrived. I turned to Kingston, "He's here!"

Aleksa POV

We left Finn and Ezra to get settled at the cottage. Hopefully, they will stay put for a while. Kingston had mind-linked me that he would organize someone to run interference with them for now.

We started making our way towards the packhouse. Kingston wanted me to go and stay with Caleb and Kali while he assessed the situation at the pack house to see who had arrived, and how many of them, and gauge how much of a problem we were gonna have.

A small part of me was happy with that idea. But the rest of me knew it was time to face my fears. So I declined Kingston's request. I knew that Kingston wanted to protect me, but there are some things we have to do for ourselves and I felt this was one of them.

I heard a branch snap in the bushes we were approaching. I wasn't worried when I saw the wolf moving quickly through the bush, as I could sense that it was Caleb. I looked at Kingston and shook my head. "Really?" I said to him, rolling my eyes.

"I need to know you are safe while we sort this out, and I know that Caleb would want to be here with you right now. So I may have mind-linked Kai to ask Caleb to join us, this involves him too," Kingston tells me.

"But, Kali, he needs to protect her!" I told Kingston, feeling worried about my pregnant friend. She too would be on Lachlan's hit list.

"Kali is fine, there will be two of our elite warriors with her at all times," Kingston tells me.

"Luna," Caleb said, walking out from the tree he had shifted behind. He had a pair of shorts on, but no top.

"Apologies, this is all I could grab at such short notice," Caleb says to us both.

“Caleb, it’s Aleksa, for the millionth time,” I told him with an unimpressed look on my face. He knows I hate being called by my title.

“Guys, we don’t have time for pleasantries. We need to keep going.” Kingston pulls us back on task.

“I will shift and go on ahead. You two pick up your pace and meet us there, approach slowly. I will mind-link you once I’ve assessed the situation.” Kingston says, looking gravely at Caleb.

“I will guard her with my life, Kingston, you have my word,” Caleb said solemnly.

“I know, thank you, Caleb,” Kingston nodded to Caleb and then he shifted and ripped towards the treeline.

“Ahem.” I loudly cleared my throat.

“I’m not the same girl that couldn’t defend herself, a lot has changed since Evergreen. I can do this! I won’t let him intimidate me. I feel stronger!” I told my ex-gamma, with absolute certainty in my voice.

Caleb looked into my eyes, “I understand all that, Aleksa, but we don’t know what he is capable of, and I’m not taking any chances. I took an oath to protect you,” he reminds me.

We don’t have time for this right now, so I let it go. For now. And with that, we continued on our way to the packhouse.

Amber stirred. “It’s OK. I can’t sense Cyrus. I don’t think he is here, Aleksa. But someone is.” She tells me.

I mind-link Kingston and Caleb with what Amber tells me about not sensing Lachlan’s wolf Cryus. But they both still seem to be on edge.

As we approached the packhouse, I could see two SUVs upfront. Amber confirms that she cannot sense Lachlan’s presence.

I see the car door open and out steps Sam. He looked worn out, pale, almost like life had been sucked out of him. My heart felt like it was breaking at the

sight of him. I was hit with a wave of guilt. Although I was also excited about seeing my friend.

He turned around, as everyone was watching us approach the front entrance. He looked at me with a shocked expression on his face. "Aleksa?" he called out.

"Sam!" I called back excitedly, pushing past Kingston and Caleb.

He walked toward me with a confused look on his face.

I pulled him towards me and wrapped my arms around him in a warm embrace. I could hear Sabre growl, so I mind-linked him.

"Settle Sabre, Sam's my friend!"

I pulled back and looked at Sam with a big smile on my face, trying to hide my shock at his appearance.

"Are you OK, what's going on? How are you here?" He says, looking around at everyone quizzically.

"Caleb?" He asks, furrowing his brow towards Caleb.

"You've been marked? Can someone tell me what's going on?" Sam asked, looking at the large purple mark on my neck, looking back and forth from Kingston to Caleb.

Kingston walks up behind me and pulls me into him. I smile and we interlock hands, to show Sam that we are together.

"Sam, it's OK, I'm safe here. This is Kingston, he's my second chance mate!" I told him reassuringly.

"I've heard a lot about you, Sam," Kingston said, extending his hand out to shake his hand.

Sam just stares at Kingston in disbelief. He reluctantly shakes his hand. He still appears as if he is very confused and unsure of exactly what is unfolding here.

Caleb also walks toward his old friend.

“You are a traitor! I trusted you! You helped the Rogues! You kidnapped our Luna,” Sam yelled, pointing his finger towards Caleb in a fury.

Caleb looked at Sam, a little hurt.

“Sam, my friend, all is not as you think. Lachlan is not who you think he is. We are all friends, Aleksa is safe, there is nothing sinister happening here, we are all friends,” He tries to reassure Sam.

“It’s true Sam, Caleb and Kali protected me, as did Mason and Kaia, they protected me from Lachlan!” I told him, with a sad yet adamant look on my face.

“There’s so much you don’t know, so much I have wanted to tell you, we were planning to…” I began, as we were brought to the attention of the SUV door slam.

“Well, isn’t this interesting?” Eva says with an amused look on her face, strutting towards us, wearing the skimpiest and shortest red dress I have ever seen, leaving nothing to the imagination.

“Don’t believe anything they say, they are traitors. Why are you even here, Aleksa?” She asks, looking me up and down and rolling her eyes, until she locks her eyes with Kingston and changes her demeanor, batting her eyelids and pouting.

“How dare you speak to my Luna like that, apologize now, or leave my packlands,” Kingston declared to Eva.

Eva seemed shocked with her mouth wide open and her jaw almost dropping to the ground. I wonder if she has ever been spoken to like this before.

So priceless, I thought to myself.

“Luna? Aleksa, how is this true? You are our Luna?” Sam asked me.

“Pfft. Is this some sick joke? Luna again?” Eva questioned us, screwing her face up.

“Don’t make me tell you again, “ Kingston said in a deadly serious tone to Eva.

Realizing that she couldn’t flirt her way out of this, Eva reluctantly apologizes.

“Sorry Aleksa,” She says begrudgingly to me. Completely lacking in sincerity.

“Wait, where is Lachlan?” I asked Sam, my curiosity and dread getting the better of me.

“He’s in Iowa, he got a lead, so he stayed back, he’s looking for you. He should be here tonight though,” he tells me.

“I think we need to talk – all of us,” Kingston interjects.

“I think that’s a good idea, I would love to know what on earth is going on here,” Sam says, watching Kingston and I lean into each other lovingly.

“Sam, there are some things I really need to talk to you about,” I said to him, furrowing my brow, then looking towards Eva with contempt. Just looking at her makes me mad. The nerve she had just stood there as if nothing had happened. She is about to come undone and although it will break my heart to tell Sam this, I also have a feeling this could be incredibly healing for him.

“Aleksa, I really think you and I should have a chat first, don’t you think? I think there was a misunderstanding back at Evergreen, and I’d like to clear it up,” Eva says, not looking so confident and sure of herself right now.

I looked at her and bluntly said, “No, I don’t think there were any misunderstandings at all. I got the message loud and clear, but come along Eva, I’m sure Sam will have some questions for you,” I said, with an amused look on my face. There was no way she was getting out of this. It was time for her to confess, and hopefully, now Sam could find some peace. It was very clear the toll of her infidelity had taken on his physical and mental health, I would assume.

“We can continue this conversation in my office. Caleb, perhaps you could bring Kali along if she feels up to it?”

“Kai, I will need you to stay here and greet any incoming packs,” Kingston says to his Gamma.

“Yes, of course, Alpha, I’ve got it under control,” Kai replies to Kingston.

“Sam, will your men be OK out here for now?” Kingston asked.

“Yes, I’ll link them to stay here until we return,” Sam replied to Kingston.

“Please follow me, right this way,” Kingston says, leading the way to his office. I looked back at Eva, who shot me an evil glare. I just looked away. She doesn’t intimidate me. I can’t believe I thought she was once my friend. She will never be anyone’s friend, she’s too much of a narcissist.

Kingston walks towards his chair and looks at me, then pulls a chair aside for me. Directly opposite us sits Eva and Sam on one side and then two empty seats for Caleb and Kali, if she decides to come along.

The tension is thick, you could cut it with a knife. Sam looked utterly confused and had his guard up a little, but I caught him looking from Kingston to myself from time to time, so hopefully, he can see we are happy and in love, and that Kingston is no threat.

Eva appeared agitated, I could feel her contempt towards me, I could feel that she was holding herself back right now. Part of me hopes she does lose control. I wouldn’t mind putting her in her place. Amber is begging for a moment or two alone with her.

Kingston looked relaxed, he wasn’t threatened in the least, but I could feel his empathy for Sam.

There was a knock at the door, and I could sense Caleb and Kali’s presence. “Come in,” I called out to them warmly.

“Sam!” Kali calls out, making a beeline for him.

Sam looked happy to see his friend. He gets up out of his seat and she walks up to him and gives him a hug, as any old friend would do.

Eva growled at Kali. Which I find interesting. She has a problem with Sam hugging a friend, but she can do goddess knows what with Lachlan and that’s acceptable. Unbelievable!

Caleb lets out a growl too. And stood close to both Kali and Sam. Although they were all close friends, Kali is pregnant now, and it has been some time since we last saw Sam, we don’t know what lies Lachlan has fed him. It is only natural for Caleb to be in protective mode.

“It’s so good to see you, Sam!” Kali announces, her smile dropping and turning to one of disgust when she sees her former friend Eva.

Sam doesn't miss this interaction, and questions us all, 'What is going on, why is there so much contempt for my mate?' Sam says in an agitated, almost defensive tone.

"That is why we are all here, Sam. It's time you knew the truth. The real reason we had to leave Evergreen," I told Sam with a serious and determined look on my face.

Aleksa POV

"I'm gonna tell you something and I need you to hear me out. First I want to say I love you. We have always been close friends, and I would never lie to you. The things I am about to tell you, I have wanted to do for so long but wasn't in the position to. I will answer all your questions but I just want you to know everything I am about to tell you is the whole truth," I told my dear friend, hoping that he would still be my friend after I told him all that I had to say.

Sam looked at me with his creased forehead, waiting for me to explain further.

"Remember back at Evergreen, how I would suffer from pain, and I would see the pack doctor, who would always give me some explanation or another for my pain, but over time I was made to feel that it was all in my head?" Sam looked at me, waiting for me to continue.

"Turns out it wasn't all in my head, my mate was cheating on me, Lachlan was bedding over she-wolves. I know your first thought will be to defend Lachlan, you are his loyal Beta, but you need to listen to all I have to say before you make up your mind," I pleaded with my old friend.

"When I came to Evergreen I was still new to the supernatural world. As you will remember, I didn't learn all the specifics of mates and so on. I was raised by humans with no knowledge of this world. I didn't know that if your goddess' given mate was unfaithful that it would manifest in the form of pain, and I might never have known, had I not seen it with my own eyes." I told him. I took a quick pause, to let that digest with Sam, then I continued with my story.

"Do you remember that day you helped me organize that surprise romantic evening for Lachlan?" I asked Sam. I heard Kingston growl. And I placed my hand on his to calm his wolf.

"I do," Sam replied. Listening carefully to what I had to say.

“On my way home from dropping Liam and Layla off at daycare that day, the pain hit me again. This time I made my way home, and as I headed to my bedroom I saw it. I saw Lachlan with...” I was cut off mid-sentence when Eva stood up and started protesting.

“This is ridiculous, completely fictional! Can’t you see what she’s trying to do? She’s trying to turn you against us! Eva shrieked.

Sam looked at Eva questionably.

“Us?” Sam asked Eva.

“Uh, I meant, Evergreen, she’s a traitor that’s trying to turn you against your pack, they all are!” Eva yells accusatorily.

“Silence! I command you to be silent and wait to be spoken to,” Kingston roared at Eva. Who shuddered and trembled in fear at Kingston’s alpha command.

“Was that necessary?” Sam asked Kingston.

“I understand she is your mate, Sam, and you don’t know what is going on here, but please trust me on this, you need to hear what Aleksa has to say,” Kingston tells Sam.

Sam didn’t look happy but remained in his seat and directed his attention back to me.

“I’m so sorry Sam. I hate to be the one to tell you this, but I saw Lachlan in bed with Eva.” I said slowly, waiting for the words to sink in for Sam.

“Lachlan and Eva?” Sam says to me, very much in denial, looking confused as to why his best friend and mate could do such a thing. He looks around the room, first at Kingston, who looks at him with a pitiful look on his face, then to Caleb and Kali, who have soft and somber looks on their faces.

Sam then looks at Eva, who is shaking in her seat, looking like she is fighting with all her might to protest against what has been said.

“It’s true, Sam. I witnessed it on many occasions myself. As I said to Aleksa, I was under an alpha command, I couldn’t speak a word of it.” Caleb says in agreement to Sam.

“I’m so sorry man,” Caleb added.

Sam looked back at Eva, observing her carefully. He didn’t say a word. He just took a moment. Then look back at me.

“When I caught them in the act, I quietly backtracked and ran into the forest. I cried my eyes out. It felt like my world was crashing down before me. I wanted to confront them but I was scared. So I decided that I would take the twins and leave Evergreen. I knew I had to be careful as I was realizing I didn’t know the man I had my babies with and was sharing my bed with.” I told Sam.

“A few days later, I was at work, the pain had hit me again, and this time it was unbearable. I walked to my bedroom to find them at it again, and this time I was so mad with fury I couldn’t hold myself back. I confronted them both.” I took a breath and took a moment to center myself.

“When I confronted them, Lachlan was nonchalant about it all, he rambled on about it being his right as alpha to take what and who he wanted. When I confronted Eva she couldn’t have looked more proud of herself. I’ll never forget the sight of her standing there in front of me naked, smirking the way she did, I never knew another woman could be so vile.” I said, talking about her, but making a point not to acknowledge her.

Sam looked like he was trying to hold his emotions back. He was no longer fighting my words. He looked like he was resigning himself to my truth.

“I’m sorry Sam, I was planning to tell you once everything had settled down, I promise. I just needed to make sure Liam and Layla were safe first,” I told Sam, worried that he wouldn’t forgive me for not telling him.

“If I may, I know this is a lot to take in Sam. You need to know what really happened. We are not the traitors that Lachlan led you to believe we were.” Caleb interjected.

“We, Kali and I, helped Aleksa and the twins escape, that is correct, and we did so with the help of two other wolves. Mason and Kaia, who were rogues at the time for legitimate reasons, and were in the dungeons at the same time as Aleksa,” Caleb continued.

“The dungeons? What was Aleksa doing in the dungeons?” Sam asked with a stunned look on his face.

“When Lachlan confronted Aleksa, the day she walked in on them, I was sent to take her back to the pack house, she had run off and I found her at the hidden lake at the far end of Evergreen territory,” Caleb said.

“I left her with Lachlan, not realizing his intentions until it was too late. When Aleksa told him she was leaving him, he locked her in the dungeons. That’s why we decided to help her escape. He had lost it.” Caleb declared.

“I had no knowledge of any of this. Is this true, Aleksa?” Sam asked, clearly outraged that all this had occurred and he was oblivious to it all.

“I swear it is all true. Lachlan was planning to lock me up and keep me against my will, he wanted me as his Luna, and for me to accept that he would have as many mistresses as he wished.” I told Sam, with absolute truth on my face. Kingston let out a loud growl. I knew this was not easy for him to hear, he was very protective of me, which I loved.

Sam leaned his hand on his forehead, his wrinkled expression, full of concern, shaking his head, “Aleksa, Luna, I am so sorry you went through this, I’m sorry I couldn’t protect you,” Sam declared.

“I don’t think you were at Evergreen when this all transpired. If I remember correctly, you took some of the elites to do some training at a neighboring pack and you wouldn’t have returned until after we had already left,” Caleb added.

“That sounds vaguely familiar,” Sam replied.

“It’s fine Sam, you didn’t know, these things happen, it all worked out in the end,” I told him, smiling lovingly at Kingston.

“Is it I who am sorry that I didn’t tell you straight away when I found out about Lachlan and Eva. I could have spared you so much pain and agony,” I told Sam sadly.

“It’s ok Aleksa. This isn’t on you.” Sam replied.

“I’ve known something was going on for some time. I had faith in the moon goddess and I had hoped that things would work out. I have always believed that it is unnatural to go against the mate bond.” Sam says glumly, shaking his head disappointedly while maintaining eye contact with Eva.

“So I knew I had to try my hardest to make things work. I knew that Eva was being unfaithful. I could feel it. I didn’t know who it was with though.” said Sam, looking at his mate, now with a look of disgust on his face. I could tell he was going through the motions. I knew these feelings all too well.

“I’m going to k**l that bastard,” Sam says angrily, slamming his fist down on the desk. No one says anything, we just let Sam get it all out.

“Wait, you knew?” I asked Sam, shocked at that revelation. Why would he subject himself to such pain?

“I did. But I didn’t question the Moon Goddess’s judgment. I figured she put us together for a reason. I didn’t realize that my best friend was the wolf she was cheating with. I’m sorry Aleksa, I failed you. I had no idea.” Sam said to me, looking at me ashamedly.

“Goddess no Sam, never say that, you are innocent in this. It’s them who should be sorry, not us!” I said, feeling gutted that my friend is taking this on as his own failure when that couldn’t be further from the truth.

“Kingston, can you take the alpha command off? I want to hear what Eva has to say?” Sam asked Kingston.

“Eva, you are no longer under my alpha command, you are free to speak”, Kingston declared to her.

“Finally! You can’t seriously believe this crap, Sammie?” Eva asked Sam, feigning disbelief and horror that he would entertain such a notion.

“Cut the crap, Eva. I’ve known for a while now. I just never knew who it was with. I had planned to reject you back at Evergreen, but then Aleksa disappeared and all my energy went towards trying to find her and holding down the pack while Lachlan ran it into the ground,” Sam said in a raised voice.

Eva looked astonished. She also appeared to be speechless.

“She’s lying! She’s always been jealous of me!” Eva yelled, pointing her finger towards me, and trying to fake cry.

“Aleksa is one of the kindest people I’ve ever met. Don’t bother with the theatrics. I really can’t be bothered keeping this pretense up.” Sam said to his mate, looking like he was beginning to tire of the conversation.

“Aleksa, thank you for your honesty, I do have some more questions for you if you don’t mind, but first there’s something I need to do,” Sam says, turning his body facing towards his mate.

“I, Sam Nicholson, Beta of the Evergreen Pack, hereby reject you, Eva Lockwood, as my mate!” Sam declared.

And with that Eva dropped her head forwards and shrieked in agony. Sam held his chest, and grimaced slightly, but didn’t seem to be in a lot of pain. When I think back to when I was in this position, the bond between Lachlan and I had weakened so much that when I finally rejected him, it didn’t hurt as much as I thought it would.

“You have to accept it, Eva, for both of our sakes,” Sam managed to get the words out.

“I accept! I accept!” Eva screamed, looking eager for the pain to stop.

I’m not surprised that Eva gave in so easily. She was never one for pain. I was grateful that she wasn’t fighting the rejection, for Sam’s sake. It meant he would be able to get on with his life again, once he recovered from the loss of the mate bond.

“You need to formally accept it, name, rank, pack,” I told Eva, to save Sam having to expend more energy talking.

“I, Eva Lockwood, Beta female, of the Evergreen Pack, accept your rejection!” Eva blurted out, heaving in between words. And with one loud gasp, it was done.

They both looked to be in a world of pain.

We all sat there in shock at what we had just witnessed. We were all glad that Sam had broken his bond with Eva, because she never deserved him in the first place, but at the same time very worried about what this would mean for Sam in his current state of health.

“Sam, are you OK?” I asked, feeling very concerned for my friend.

"I'll be ok. I think I just need a few moments." He said, clearly trying to protect his dignity and keep a brave face.

"If it's OK with you Sam, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you, Eva, that you are no longer welcome as a guest in our pack, due to your crimes against the mate bond, and your blatant disregard and disrespect for our Luna. You have twenty minutes to leave pack territory as of now!" Kingston declared.

Eva looked at us all in shock, but it appeared she was in too much pain to speak, although none of us felt sorry for her, she had brought this all on herself.

"You better get moving Eva, time is ticking," Kali said with a smirk on her face. Although we all hung out together back at Evergreen, Kali had never really liked Eva, she always felt she was conceited and insincere. It turned out she was right.

Eva looked at Caleb. He had no emotion on his face. He just looked away from her, as if she didn't even exist.

"I have called for one of our pack doctors to come and attend to you, Sam. They will be here any minute. There is not a lot we can do for you right now, but we will send for a Healer to attend to you as soon as possible," Kingston tells Sam empathetically.

"Thank you, all of you," Sam says, still remaining strong. However, I could feel that he was breaking inside.

"You should go, now," Sam said, turning to Eva, void of emotion on his face.

Eva picked herself up, and as she walked out the door she managed to cry out, "You'll regret this!"

Aleksa POV

It's been a few hours since Eva left our pack lands. Sam is at the pack hospital, currently hooked up to two intravenous bags. One is for fluid replacement, and the other is essentially a vitamin replacement infusion. The Doctor tells us that he is not in a good way after suffering the ill effects of the mate bond betrayal for so long, but that he will be back to normal in no time.

We were about to leave the hospital, as we were aware that Lachlan would probably be here anytime now, and then there would be more drama to deal with. As we were about to leave the reception area, Lily walked past. Lily often volunteered at the pack hospital. She was training to be a nurse, so she appreciated the experience. Some packs didn't let omegas train to be nurses. In fact, some packs didn't let omegas train – period, but this wasn't that type of pack, thankfully.

I asked Lily if she could take a jug of fresh water to Sam so that if he woke up soon he would have something cool to drink. Lily obliged. She was such a kind and caring person, and we would be lucky to have her as a Nurse in our pack.

We had a quick word with Sam's doctor, asking him to contact us immediately if there were any concerns, and also when Sam woke up. As we were about to walk out, we heard a commotion.

Kingston and I hastily made our way to Sam's room. We stopped at the sight before us. Lily appeared to have dropped the glass jug that she had in her hands, she stood there shocked, with her hands clasped over her mouth. "Mate!" She whispered.

Our eyes flickered from Lily to Sam in disbelief. Oh, my goddess! That was amazing. Truly a gift from the goddess. Sam had been blessed with a second chance mate.

Poor Lily. She didn't appear to know quite what to do with herself.

"It's ok. Walk up to him. Touch him. Be with him. He's your mate." I gently encouraged Lily.

"I've never seen him before," Lily said.

"Luna, who is he? Why is he in the hospital?" Lily asked with concern evident on her face.

"He's our guest. He has been unwell, but that is for him to tell you, it's not my place. Lily, Sam is the Beta at Evergreen Pack Lily," I told her.

"Sam?" Lily says in a loving tone, a small smile coming across her face as she says his name.

“A Beta? There must be some mistake, I’m only an omega,” Lily tells me, shaking her head, and looking down at the floor.

“There’s nothing wrong with being an Omega! Lily, I have a good feeling about you. You are destined for great things! Never sell yourself short Lily! Hold your head up high. And go be with your mate!” I told her with an encouraging smile on my face.

Lily stepped towards Sam, looking him up and down with delicate eyes. She moves close to him and touches his hand. She pulls back quickly. I know this all too well, she’s experiencing that tingling sensation for the first time.

Lily takes his whole hand and looks at him lovingly.

“Alpha, Luna, I am on volunteer duty, I have to go,” Lily said, looking conflicted.

“We will sort that out, Lily, you focus on your mate,” Kingston said kindly.

“Don’t worry about it, I will tell the Coordinator you have met your mate and will be spending the rest of the day with him. You just spend some time with Sam, having you close will help Sam,” I said to Lily.

I looked at Kingston, who had a grin on his face. I could see that he was happy for Sam also.

“Lily, if you need anything or want to talk, just mind-link one of us, and keep us up to date with Sam’s progress. We will check on him as soon as we can.” I told Lily, and we made our way out of the packed hospital.

I have the sudden urge to tell Kali about this new development, but I have to rein myself in, as this is not my happy news to tell people. I would leave that to Sam and Lily when they were ready.

After this rather eventful day, I just wanted to curl up in bed with my love. Alas, this was not to be the case. As we were making our way back to the packhouse, we bumped into Alastair and Abbey.

“Hello again!” Abbey squealed with excitement.

“Hello Abbey, Hello Alistair, How are you settling in?” I asked, trying to rustle up what little energy I had left.

“Hello again Luna Aleksa. We have settled in just fine. Thank you! We thought we would take a walk around the pack grounds before dinner.” Alastair tells me.

“That sounds like a great idea. I hate to be rude, but we’ve had something come up, and as it turns out, we won’t have time for that chat today. I am really sorry, could we try tomorrow morning perhaps?” I asked Abbey.

“Oh, it’s fine Aleksa. It’s not urgent. Just let me know when you are ready. Can we help in any way? I hope it’s nothing serious?” Abbey asked.

“Everything is fine, it’s just a small issue, nothing to worry about,” I told Abbey and Alastair. Alastair seemed unphased but Abbey was giving me a contemplative look.

“Well, if you say so. Will we see you at dinner?” Abbey asked.

“Yes, of course,” I replied. Wishing that we could skip dinner altogether, but knowing full well that would not be possible as we were hosting packs from all over the country, so we had host responsibilities.

“ OK, well, see ya then!” Abbey said excitedly with a huge toothy smile and she pulled Alastair away with her waving from behind.

Kingston and I continue walking up the packhouse stairs.

“Care for a rest upstairs before dinner?” He asked me.

“You read my mind! What a day. And to think it’s not over yet!” I said, shaking my head.

We head towards our suite and I fall onto our bed, Kingston stalks towards me with that look in his eyes. Like a predator stalking its prey. As tired as I feel, I’m sure I can muster up a little energy...

A bit of quality time with my love was just what I needed. With so much going on, we had been lacking a bit in the intimacy department. We didn’t have long but we sure made the most of the time we did have, then we had a nice long shower. I felt much better, but I was still tired. I think we both were.

Dinner had gone well. It was nice to mingle with the other packs. Everyone seemed to be in a jovial mood. The alphas are looking forward to their conference tomorrow, and the Luna's and their entourages are looking forward to their spa pamper day.

I am trying to keep a positive front, although I have a feeling that tomorrow will not go as we have planned. Thankfully, we have a backup plan so that if everything goes pear-shaped, then at least, hopefully, the activities can still continue without our presence.

We have just had a quick video call with Asher and Kaia. They are staying in one of the human towns nearby. Kaia wants to come back and face Ezra. We are just asking her to wait a day or so while we sort the Lachlan situation out, so far she seems to agree with that. Although we could really do with Asher's presence here right now, Kaia's safety is more important to Kingston and me. We can go another day without him, I'm sure.

We didn't get a chance to speak with Ezra, much to his dismay. It didn't go unmissed how he was watching me all through the dinner service. I made an effort to keep myself busy in conversation with others. However, I am sure I will run into Ezra again soon enough. I have been told that he has been asking a lot of questions, so I am under no illusion that he doesn't know Kaia has been here.

However, for now, we will just have to keep eluding him. We have bigger problems to worry about with Lachlan arriving.

What a day! I thought to myself. I've never been so welcoming of sleep before. Kingston fell asleep a few hours ago. I've been awake with my thoughts. But I'm ready to get some sleep now. We don't know what tomorrow will bring, but my intuition is telling me it won't be good.

I am woken from my sleep by an alarming mind-link from the border patrol. "Breach at the pack borders, a large tawny brown alpha wolf, has just ripped past us at speed. Heading towards the pack house, we're following closely, but he is faster than us," they declare.

I feel goosebumps and shivers all over my body. I am immediately on edge. "Cyrus!" Amber tells me.

“It’s them this time, Aleksa! I can feel their presence!” Amber adds.

“Kingston?” I ask, but he’s already shifted and out the door.

I got up, I was wearing checkered PJ pants and a singlet, but I ran out the bedroom door because I didn’t have time to get dressed.

I ran down the packhouse stairs as fast as my legs could carry me. I pushed the front door open and ran into a wall, there was a warrior standing in my path, and he was not budging.

“Ugh!” I yelled as my body slammed into him.

“Move, now!” I yelled. Frustrated that they are not moving from my path.

“Alpha’s orders, Luna, Sorry!” He says, looking highly uncomfortable.

I felt enraged that I was being locked in my own packhouse, and even more enraged that I was being treated like some damsel in distress. I thought I had made my feelings clear already. Kingston and I will be having words about this, later.

“I am your Luna, and I command you to MOVE ASIDE NOW!” I demanded. I could feel my eyes glowing. I could see the surprised look on the warrior’s face.

He moved aside, looking shocked, trying to comprehend what he had just experienced.

Neat trick. I thought to myself. And I continued towards the field in front of the pack house. I saw Sabre and Cyrus fighting on the field in front of the packhouse. The metallic smell of blood was already invading my senses.

“It’s OK Aleksa, it’s not Sabre’s blood!” Amber told me.

As I approached them both, they both shot their faces towards me momentarily, Cyrus growled, “MINE!” followed by Sabre, “MINE!”

Then they continued tussling back and forth. Unsure of what to do and panicked that my mate might get injured defending me, I did the only thing I could think of right now.

“SHIFT! Both of you NOW!” I screamed at them, once again feeling my eyes glow brightly. I was completely astounded when they both stopped what they were doing and shifted back to human form.

They both looked at me puzzled. I’m sure they are wondering how I managed to command them both, and I am wondering the same thing. How did I just command two alpha wolves? I need to ask Xanthe about this. However, for now, I needed to focus on dealing with Lachlan.

I mind-linked one of the warriors to get them both a pair of shorts as they are both standing here naked.

“Aleksa!” Lachlan yelled, standing in front of me naked. Once upon a time, this would have made me weak at the knees, but the sight of him naked now repulsed me.

“You’re coming with me!” Lachlan said angrily, stalking toward me.

Kingston let out a long loud growl. And ran towards Lachlan, tackling him to the ground. They started punching one another and I could see they were both starting to shift again, claws were coming out, and fur was sprouting on their legs and arms.

“STOP! THAT’S ENOUGH! GET UP! STOP SHIFTING. BOTH OF YOU! NOW!” I commanded. Forcing them to halt their shift.

“I am home! In my pack! With my mate, Kingston!” I declared, walking towards Kingston, interlocking my hands with his to show a united front.

“You are mine!” Lachlan yelled, followed by a loud growl.

Matched again with Kingston’s warning growl. They started inching closer toward each other.

“No, you were my mate until you betrayed our bond. I loved you and you ripped my heart out. I rejected you Lachlan! And the moon goddess blessed me with a second chance mate! My true mate!” I declared proudly.

Lachlan growled again.

“YOU BELONG TO ME!” He shouted fiercely.

“I’ll give you one last chance to leave my pack lands, or you won’t be leaving at all!” Kingston hollered.

“This is what you left me for?!” Lachlan said, followed by a sinister laugh. Grimacing in pain as he laughed and held the deep laceration that was hemorrhaging out of his chest.

Kingston got in a defensive stance, ready to fight again, and growled fiercely at Lachlan.

“I can smell you all over her! Not to worry. I’ll soon fix that!” Lachlan retorted wildly.

“You will never touch me again!” I told him firmly, with a look of disgust on my face.

“I’m gonna enjoy every moment of this,” Lachlan declared to Kingston.

Kingston snickered. “You are a fool, you had the most perfect mate, and you threw it all away!”

Lachlan growled and started to circle Kingston, but Kingston didn’t seem bothered. He looked smug instead.

“I should thank you really, if you hadn’t stuffed up so epically, I wouldn’t have met my mate and Luna!” Kingston said mockingly.

Lachlan looked enraged. He then looked to his left side, and then to his right side, and noticed that the pack warriors had surrounded him, and were slowly advancing. He was grossly outnumbered.

“THIS ISN’T OVER!” He screamed at Kingston. He quickly shifted, then he glanced at me and growled. He then turned and forced his way through the warriors that had formed a wall behind him, taking them out, and galloped frantically towards the treeline.

Aleska POV

Kingston chased Lachlan beyond the pack border, but he had just disappeared. Our best trackers were out there looking for his scent but had so far come up empty-handed. We had decided that we needed to tell the Alpha and their entourage as well as our own pack what was happening so that

everyone was aware of the threat that we all faced. Lachlan would be back and, knowing what he is capable of, he wouldn't return alone.

Most of the attending packs were shocked to hear what had occurred at Evergreen and pledged their support to us, although there were a few packs that were sceptical and said very little. If I'm totally honest, I'm not surprised, as even though we had all just met, the few that said nothing gave me the impression that our way of life and values did not align.

We had collectively agreed to continue with the summit. Everyone looked forward to this annual meeting, so we would proceed cautiously. We had quadrupled our border patrol courtesy of our visiting Alpha's, and we had spoken without neighbouring packs to ensure we had their support if things got out of hand.

Both Kingston and I were rattled by the early morning attack. I left Kingston to continue his meetings with Kai, Caleb, and Jackson. The Alpha's conference will be starting a little later this morning due to earlier events.

I wanted to go check on Sam before Luna's brunch started. I also wanted to check on Lily and see how she was processing everything. She will become a Beta Female when she and Sam accept each other, and while I know she will have some initial anxiety, I have a feeling she is going to be just fine.

As I walked out of the packhouse I bumped into Roxy. "Watch it b***h! Oh, it's you! I hear you had a little trouble this morning," Roxy smirks at me, waiting for my response. I can see that she wants to provoke me, but I won't give her the pleasure. I have too much to do today already. I don't have the time for this.

"Nothing I can't handle Roxy, see you at the spa," I said to her, smiling sweetly. Roxy screws up her face and snickers at me.

I walked off towards the pack hospital. I am hoping my dear friend might finally be awake. I really hope he and Lily accept each other.

I walked into Sam's room to find him and Lily in an embrace. Sam is sitting up in his hospital bed and Lily is straddling him. I can't hide my broad smile. I didn't want to interrupt them, so I turned to walk back out of the room when I smacked into a wall. Except it was not a wall, it was Caleb's chest.

This is enough to get Sam and Lily's attention. Lily jumps up off Sam and has a bright red blush on her face. Sam looked very happy, and even Sam was grinning like a Cheshire cat.

"Sorry Luna," Caleb teased.

"Seriously Caleb," I said, looking at him with an unimpressed expression on my face.

"Just kidding, Aleksa," Caleb says, trying to suppress his laugh.

"Aleksa!" Sam called out to me.

"Hi Sam, I am so glad you are awake. How do you feel?" I blurt out quickly.

"Honestly, I've never felt better," Sam tells me, his eyes moving in Lily's direction. Lily had a shy smile on her face.

"I'm so glad you are OK Sam. I see you have met Lily." I said to Sam.

"Yes, I have met my second chance mate, but I feel she is more my true mate. I've never felt this feeling before," Sam tells me.

"I know exactly how you feel, Sam, it is the same with me and Kingston. I am so happy for you both," I told him happily.

Caleb placed two coffees down on top of the bedside drawer next to Sam and Lily.

"Well, I hate to be rude guys, but I've got a meeting that I am about to be late for. I'll see you all later," Caleb tells us, with that he bows his head towards me, and I just shake my head at him, trying to hide my amusement. He loves teasing me.

"See ya, Caleb, thanks for stopping by," Sam called out.

"Thank you, Caleb," Lily called out politely.

"I won't stay long, I know what it's like when you first meet your mate or true mate in this case," I told them both.

"Sam, I don't want to worry you, but, Lachlan turned up a few hours ago," I told him calmly.

“What, are you OK, did he?” Sam started before I cut him off.

“Kingston and Lachlan fought, and then they stopped, and then the warriors circled him, but he ran off into the woods. We have the trackers out there, but he seems to have vanished,” I told him feeling confused, trying to explain it all, and leaving out the part where I have the power to command alphas. I will tell Sam but now is not the time.

“Sam, he will be back. Kingston is meeting with Caleb, Kai (his Gamma) and Jackson. I am not sure if you know Alpha Jackson, he’s,” I started. Before I was cut off by Sam.

“Yes, I have met Alpha Jackson on a few occasions, he’s a good guy,” Sam replied.

“Anyway, they are meeting to discuss what we will do about Lachlan,” I told Sam, unsure about where he stands on this matter.

“Aleksa, I have no loyalty towards the bastard. I would gladly end him.” Sam tells me as if he could read my mind. He looks mad at the mention of his name and I don’t blame him.

“I am, however, loyal to Evergreen. Our pack has suffered for too long under his control, he needs to go.” Sam tells me.

“What are you saying, Sam?” I asked, suddenly feeling nervous as to where this was going.

“I am going to challenge him, for the pack,” Sam continued.

“But Sam, with all due respect, you are still recovering,” I told him, feeling concerned that my friend might get hurt.

Lily walks over to Sam and cuddles up beside him, as a show of loyalty and support.

“Aleksa, I have never felt better. After feeling weak and empty for the past few years, I feel as though I have just woken up from a bad dream. I feel energised and reborn. I can’t explain this feeling,” Sam tells me.

“Maybe it’s the will of the Moon Goddess? Oh, maybe it’s finding Lily? Sam, I am so glad you have found happiness, and I am so sorry about ...”

“It’s OK, Aleksa, you were a victim too, but we need to put that all behind us now, like you said the Moon Goddess has blessed us, although we do have to sort Lachlan out. He will keep coming for you and the twins, he won’t let you go without a fight,” Sam declared.

“Evergreen deserves better than what they have been getting, we need to rebuild, the pack is in financial ruin and Lachlan has destroyed our alliance, we need to try to get back in the good graces of our allies, and we can’t do that with Lachlan as Alpha,” Sam tells me with an air of confidence I haven’t seen from him before.

“I agree with you completely, Sam, and I think you would make a great Alpha. You have my full support,” I told him proudly.

Although we hadn’t talked much before I left Evergreen, I had always respected Sam and had always considered him a close friend. I had no doubt he could bring Evergreen back up to the standard it once held.

The pack doctor walked in at that moment with Sam’s discharge papers, Sam disconnected himself from the monitor and I took that as my cue to leave.

“I’ll see you a little later today, Sam. Lily will take good care of you. Lily, please link me if you need anything,” Lily nodded.

“Thank you, Luna,” Lily said happily.

“Please Lily, just call me Aleksa,” I told her.

“Sorry Luna, I mean Aleksa,” Lily replied.

“Thanks, Aleksa, I’ll see you at the packhouse most likely. Kingston has asked me to report there once I am discharged,” Sam said.

“Great, see you then,” I called out to them, with a small wave.

And I started to make my way back to the pack house to freshen up for our spa date with the rest of the Lunas and their entourage.

What a day it has been. The Luna brunch and spa went well. Most of the Lunas seemed unaware of what had happened earlier today, or they just didn’t deem it of importance. The chat was relatively superficial, they spoke of

their favourite places to holiday, about how well their pups were doing and how happy they all were with their respective mates.

Roxy was her usual snide self, dropping little remarks and insults here and there. In all honesty, I wasn't in the mood to fight her right now. My mind was elsewhere. Surprisingly, Abbey wasn't present today. I did wonder where she was. Maybe a spa wasn't her idea of fun, although I would have thought that one might attend out of respect.

Thankfully, my dearest friend Kali was there. If anyone needed pampering, it was her. She must be knackered. I remembered how it was to be pregnant, it could be very fatiguing. We briefly spoke of what happened this morning with Lachlan turning up. Kali reassured me the guys would sort Lachlan out. I wanted Kali to be safe. I didn't want her to put her pup at risk, so I made her promise to stay at the packhouse for extra protection. I will ask Kai to help me move her and Caleb's belongings into the packhouse today. It was clear Lachlan had lost his mind completely, and I would not put my friend and her unborn pup at risk.

Thinking of pups, I missed Liam and Layla desperately. I missed talking with my pups, but we had decided it was best if we didn't communicate while Lachlan was nearby. We couldn't risk him finding out their location. I knew they were safe though. In the short time I had known Mason, I knew I could trust him with my life.

I hadn't spoken much to Kingston since this morning's events. I realised he had been busy organising extra warriors, extra patrols, solidifying our allies and so on, not to mention the alpha conference, but I had the feeling he was avoiding me. It didn't take much to send out a quick mind-link even just to say hello. Something wasn't right.

I walked towards his office. I could hear muffled voices. Then, the office door opened before me. Kai had opened it. He stood there with a big goofy smile on his face, dimples and all.

"Good Afternoon Luna," Kai greeted me, knowingly, almost as if he had known it was my intention to stand by the door and listen a little longer.

"It's Aleksa, Kai, please only use my title in official settings, we are friends," I told him, for what seemed like the millionth time.

"Sorry Luna," he said with a cheesy grin on his face.

“Aleksa, is it important? We are kind of in the middle of something,” Kingston tells me gruffly.

I haven’t heard him speak to me like this before. He must be stressed, I thought to myself.

“I wanted to have a word with you in private, if I may, and no, it cannot wait,” I told him abruptly before he could answer.

“Very well,” he sighed in defeat.

And with that, Jackson, Caleb and Kai all exited the office quickly.

“So, what’s going on? I feel like there is something you aren’t telling me.” I stated firmly, watching his face closely.

“Aleksa, everything’s fine, I’m just a little under the pump,” Kingston declared.

“I am your mate, I can feel that something is wrong, and it’s more than what happened this morning,” I tell Kingston, letting him know I won’t leave until I get my answer.

“Do you remember the other day, when I had to take an urgent phone call?” Kingston started reluctantly.

“Yeah,” I replied.

“It was Xanthe. She had run into a little trouble along the way. She hadn’t managed to contact one of her Elders, but she had discovered something that she said could change everything. She said it was too important to mention it over the phone and that she needed to tell us in person. Xanthe felt that she was being followed, so she was going to try to shake whoever was following her. I made her promise to call me the next morning to let me know that she was safe but she never checked in.” Kingston said with a grave expression on his face.

Aleska POV

After Kingston had dropped that bombshell on me, I was feeling a little on edge. I felt overcome with guilt. If it wasn’t for me, Xanthe wouldn’t have even left on the mission. I shouldn’t have pushed her for more information.

“Xanthe will be ok. She wants to help us.” Amber said in my head.

“You don’t know that. What if something happens to her!” I replied to Amber.

“Aleksa, I know Xanthe will be fine, trust me, it’s all part of a greater plan,” Amber declares.

“Amber, I’m not in the mood for your cryptic messages. Could you just this one time, elaborate a bit for me.” I pleaded with my wolf.

“Xanthe’s story isn’t over. Trust the Goddess’s plans.” Amber says, and then she retreats and puts a block up on me.

“Grrr. That wolf!” I said out loud in frustration.

Kingston just looked at me quizzically.

“Amber?” Kingston asks.

“Amber’s gone. She blocked me!” I told Kingston angrily.

“What did she say? Sabre can’t reach her either,” Kingston replied.

“She said Xanthe would be alright, said to trust the goddess’s plan and that her story isn’t over yet,” I told Kingston a matter of factly.

“Well, that’s good then. Why are you so stressed?” Kingston asks me.

“Do you have any idea of how frustrating it is when your wolf is privy to all this information that concerns you and the ones you love the most, and yet she picks and chooses what she thinks I have a right to know!” I blurt out.

Then I look at the expression on Kingston’s face and realize something.

“I’m being a brat aren’t I?” I said, laughing at myself.

“You are just stressed, and rightly so, a lot has happened recently, Aleksa, my love, you are doing great!” Kingston tells me as he sniffs my neck where he marked me.

He starts to lick my mark and it sends shivers of excitement and arousal all over me. Kingston is sitting in his oversized executive chair, so I climb onto his legs and started to straddle him. I could feel my arousal seeping through my panties, I know it must be overwhelming his senses right now.

I can feel his c**k harden in his pants, straining tightly against the fabric of his pants. His c**k is throbbing against my panties.

“I want you in me now!” I demand, looking into Kingston’s eyes with the utmost determination and desire.

Kingston unzips his pants and his large hardened c**k springs to attention, he then rips off my sheer wet panties, and I lower myself onto his c**k riding him as if my life depends on it. He pushes me further down onto his c**k. Using his arms to push me up and down into him, harder and faster, I’m grinding into him, until I’m riding him to a gallop. I can feel his c**k twitch and pulsate inside me. We both reach our highs in no time. I feel Kingston find his release emptying into me. My walls are still throbbing post c****x as his c*m drips down my inner thighs.

I looked into Kingston’s eyes with a smirk on my face. I don’t know what just came over me. I’ve never been so spontaneous like that before. I looked at Kingston’s face and he looked a lot more relaxed than he did when I first entered the room. I knew that I was definitely feeling more relaxed.

Then it hit me like a ton of bricks. Oh, my goddess. The others were just outside the room! I was beyond mortified.

Kingston looked at me as if he could read my mind, he reassured me, “They left before we got physical. I told them to take a quick break and report back in thirty minutes,” he chuckled.

I didn’t find it as funny as Kingston. I felt my heart rate starting to normalize. I picked myself back up and discarded my ripped panties in the bin. Kingston walked into the ensuite in his office and washed himself off. I walked in and cleaned myself up also. Although, I would need to go straight to my room and shower properly. I can’t walk around smelling like s*x, not in a pack of werewolves with a heightened sense of smell.

Kingston then came over to me and pulled me in for a loving embrace. We kissed, and then I told him my plans with Caleb and Kali. Kingston agreed with me that they should move to the packhouse. He said that he would ask Kai to help me organize it all. Kingston received a mind-link. Sam is here to speak with him. So I took this as my cue to leave. I was shower-bound. Then, I wanted to go and find Abbey, check that she is OK, and have that chat with her that we had spoken of when she had first arrived.

I started to make my way into my room. I grabbed a fresh new outfit out of the walk-in wardrobe and grabbed my cosmetic bag with all my hygiene needs in it, and as I made my way to the bathroom, I saw a note and a long-stemmed red rose on my bed.

My heart immediately swelled, and I wonder how Kingston organized this so quickly. I took a sniff of the rose, as I held it I felt a thorn pierce my finger. Ouch. I thought to myself, as I watched a few drops of blood fall on my bed linen.

The rose smelled sweet and spicy at the same time. Then I dropped it as quickly as I picked it up. It smelt familiar, but not in a good way. It smelt like Lachlan.

I picked up the letter and began to read it, "YOU BELONG TO ME!" "Lachlan."

I screwed the note up and chucked it hard against the wall. I then mind-linked Kingston and told him I needed him urgently.

In a matter of moments, my door was kicked open and came off its hinges, flying against the wall. In stormed Kingston, Sam, Caleb, and Jackson. I stood there shocked. That was quick. Not quite what I had expected.

"Aleska, I could feel your fear and panic through our bond. What happened?" Kingston yelled. The others were all looking around the wall with fierce facial expressions. I almost felt the urge to laugh. But I didn't. This was not a laughing matter.

"Lachlan happened," I said sternly.

The men started walking around my room inspecting it for signs of intruders. They didn't appear to be picking up any scents.

Jackson picked up the crumpled note and opened it. He looked enraged.

"Kingston, I think you should read this," he told Kingston, passing the note to him. The others watched Kingston and waited for his response.

Kingston's growl ripped through the room, everyone except Jackson and myself was affected by his alpha aura.

"What is it, Kingston?" Sam asked.

Kingston passed the note to Sam. He and Caleb read it.

“It came with the rose. The rose has Lachlan’s scent on it, but nothing else seemed to.” I spoke of my own observations.

“How the hell did he get past our border patrols and security measures!” Kingston demanded. He looked like he wanted to break something.

“He’s masking his scent, Alpha,” Caleb declared.

“I agree,” I said in support of Caleb’s observation.

“He must have a witch working with him,” Jackson added.

“We need Xanthe!” I said to the group.

Jackson appeared to stiffen at the mention of her name.

“Who is Xanthe?” Jackson asked with furrowed brows.

“Xanthe is a Healer. She knew my parents, and she has been really supportive of – everything, she would know what to do right now,” I said to Jackson and the others.

Jackson seemed to be deep in thought right now, he was rubbing the side of his neck with a very serious expression on his face. I was about to ask him if everything was alright when I got a mind-link.

“There’s been a breach on the eastern perimeter, I’ve got to go, Sam/ Caleb - could you keep an eye on Aleska for now please?” Kingston called out.

“I don’t need minders, Kingston! We have discussed this already. I can take care of myself,” I protested.

“Look, can you just work with me, Sabre is losing his mind right now, he doesn’t want to leave you, but I need to attend to this breach,” Kingston tried to reason with me.

“Yeah, OK, go, I’ll play along just this once,” I told Kingston.

“Permission to tag along, Kingston,” Jackson asked.

“Gray could do with a run,” Jackson added.

“Yeah, thanks man, I’d appreciate that,” Kingston replied, and with that, they both shift into their wolf forms and they bolt through the packhouse.

I looked at Sam and Caleb. “Alright guys – Sam, I’m sure you would rather be with Lily right now, and Caleb – I’m sure you would much rather be with your pregnant mate, so how about we all go our separate ways?” I said slyly.

“No can do Aleska, you heard Kingston,” Sam replied to me.

“Looks like you’re stuck with us,” Caleb added.

I sighed. “OK, well, I’m gonna take a shower so I’m sure you don’t wanna hang out here, come back in ten minutes. OK?” I said to them.

“We will wait outside in the hallway, Aleksa, please don’t make this hard for us,” Caleb pleaded.

“I’ll behave. After that, I need to see my friend Abbey though,” I told them.

“No problem, we shall escort you there,” Caleb replied.

“Alright, see you soon,” I said to them both, and with that, I headed into the shower.

As we made our way to Abbey and Alaric’s cottage, I realized it was starting to get late. The sun looks like it’s getting ready to set, and it’s a beautiful sight. I made my way up the cobblestone pathway to the front door of the cottage. I am still taken aback by how cute these cottages are, littered with wildflowers, and fragrant undertones of jasmine, stock, and gardenia.

As I go to knock on the door, it opens before me.

“Come in Aleksa, I’ve been expecting you,” Abbey said with a welcoming smile on her face, as she stood in the doorway.

Aleksa POV

“Abbey, Hi, you were expecting me?” I questioned her, raising a brow.

“Yeah, I had a feeling you would be popping by today, come in, we have much to discuss,” Abbey says, as she gestures with her hands inviting me into her cottage.

I walked in and took a look around. In very little time Abbey has made this cottage seem warm and cosy. I see that she has herbs hanging upside down in the kitchen and a large mortar and pestle sitting on the kitchen bench.

“Alaric isn’t here, he’s meeting with another Alpha, trying to arrange an alliance between our packs,” Abbey tells me.

“Your cute friends can wait outside though if you don’t mind, I am happy to chat with you, there are some things I’d like to keep private if you know what I mean,” Abbey says winking at me.

She sure is quirky and upbeat I think to myself, Amber and I both like this girl.

“You heard her guys, take a break, I’ll be fine,” I tell them enthusiastically. They both look reluctant to leave me at the door. But we make it easier for them by slamming the door shut.

“So let’s just get right into it, shall we? You are a crescent moon wolf are you not?” Abbey blurted out.

I stood there with my poker face intact, trying to mask my surprise, feigning confusion.

“It’s ok Aleksa, your secret is safe with me, I haven’t even told Alaric,” Abbey insisted.

“What’s a crescent Moon wolf Abbey?” I ask her, trying to keep up my pretense.

“Aww, come on Aleksa, for starters I can see your mark, it’s unlike normal markings, not to mention there is literally a crescent moon, with two wolves, and a crown on it! It’s ok, you can trust me!” Abbey protested.

“What do you know of crescent moon wolves?” I asked Abbey. I was curious, as even Xanthe seemed to know very little about them.

“Please take a seat Aleksa, and I will tell you all you need to know.” Abbey began.

"I was born into a lineage of witches that serve the Royal Werewolf Kingdom, my family for generations has worked for the royal family, also known as the Volkov Family, we worked alongside other supernaturals, to help maintain order and balance," Abbey told me.

"A long time ago, when my parents were just pups, there was an attack on the Volkov Kingdom, it was orchestrated by a greedy, power-mad Elder hellbent on taking the throne for himself. He enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch." Abbey paused momentarily, giving me a chance to take it all in.

"The King and Queen were distraught, they fought with all their might to protect their pups, the Queen even died protecting her daughter, however, fortunately, their son Callum survived."

"As you will know, Callum is our current Alpha King," Abbey clarified.

"The battle was short-lived, as reinforcements arrived fairly quickly to defend the kingdom, so the rogues had to abandon their mission, but not before they grabbed some of the royal pups," Abbey continued.

"The elderly, vulnerable, and pups were hidden in the safe house which was under the main pack house. All but two, the Alpha kings sisters' pups, twins, a boy, and a girl. Unfortunately, they didn't make it to the safe house in time."

"The pups were said to have been taken by one of the Elders. No one had seen it coming." Abbey shook her head as she retold the story.

"The Elder in question was eventually hunted down, but by that stage, the pups were no longer in his possession."

"After weeks of torturing, and in his final days, it is said that the Elder in question, had placed the two pups into two different packs, a great distance apart, and despite many attempts, the Elder would not give up the locations," Abbey continued.

"Eventually, the Elder was found dead in his cell, a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane sticking out of his chest, no one knew who had ended him, although it was assumed he was silenced," Abbey declared.

"The pups were crescent moon wolves, they were destined for great things, they were to help protect the future alpha king and his offspring, said to be sent from the moon goddess herself," Abbey proclaimed.

“I know it’s a lot to take in, I should mention that the pups’ names were Viktor, and Kristina,” Abbey continued.

“Kristina! That was my mother’s name!” I said, realizing where this story is going now.

“Aleksa, I would hazard a guess to say that your mother was one of the kidnapped crescent moon wolves of the Volkov Kingdom,” Abbey continued.

“I, don’t know what to say, I don’t really know anything about my biological mother. I was adopted and raised by humans,” I told Abbey feeling shocked at these revelations.

“Aleska, I am certain that you are of royal blood. I could sense it from the moment I met you. I feel drawn to you. I feel the need to protect you,” Abbey told me with a proud expression on her face.

I was speechless. I just stared at her wide-mouthed. Could this really be true I ask myself?

“I can’t be! I’m not a royal! I’m just plain old me.” I said out loud, in complete denial mode. Then I remembered that wasn’t exactly true. I had powers. That was definitely not normal.

“I told you we were special Aleksa, we are of royal blood!” Amber says in my head, she’s feeling rather smug thinking that she is royalty.

“Wait! You said there were two pups?” I questioned Abbey, as the realization dawned on me.

“Yes, they were siblings, twins actually,” Abbey added.

“Interesting,” I replied.

“What is it Aleska?” Abbey asked with a curious look on her face.

“Uh, probably nothing. Abbey, would you mind if we continue this conversation a little later? I just remembered something that I have to do. But I will be back as soon as possible. Is that okay?” I asked her.

“Yes, of course, I’ll just be here, pottering around. I have a feeling you will be back very soon,” Abbey told me sweetly, not questioning my sudden exit.

As I went to open the door it opened in front of me.

“After you, your royal highness,” Caleb said with a cheeky grin on his face, bowing with one hand in front and one towards his back. Sam looked astounded. I guess he will still be taking in everything that he had overheard while eavesdropping.

“What part of the private conversation did you not understand?” Abbey called out crossly, with her hands on her hips, and a very displeased expression on her face, shaking her head towards Caleb and Sam.

“Uh, werewolf hearing!” Caleb declared. Putting his hands up in the air as if to surrender.

“Caleb, Sam, you have to promise to not breathe a word of this to anyone! PROMISE me!” I commanded them both.

“Yes, Luna,” they both say in sync, trying to fight the command, but failing miserably.

With that, I waved goodbye to Abbey, and we make our way to the pack house.

I needed to speak with Jackson. I wonder if he is back from his run to the border. I need to speak with him. I want to ask him what his father’s name is. I know I could just mind-link him but I feel this is something we need to discuss in person.

“Jackson, are you back from your run yet?” I asked him impatiently.

“Hey Aleksa, I am as a matter of fact, what’s up?” Jackson replied with his husky voice.

“Uh, I need to speak with you, as soon as possible, are you free?” I asked him.

“Yeah, Aleksa, I’m right behind you,” Jackson said. I turned around and sure enough, he was walking towards me in his basketball shorts and nothing else.

“Oh, Jackson! I think you need a shower!” I tell him, giggling. He is completely soaked in sweat.

“I’ll be back in fifteen, meet you at the training grounds?” Jackson replied.

“Ok, see you then,” I told him.

Then I walked off to the kitchen to make a quick coffee while I try to absorb all the new information I had just learned.

As I leaned over the breakfast bar, sipping on my coffee, I pondered my thoughts. What were the chances that Jackson and I ended up meeting one another? We are both crescent moon wolves, I already know that we are kin, but I thought it was because we were children of the Moon Goddess. What if we are both royal wolves, chosen to defend the kingdom?

Then I feel panic-stricken, what if it's true, and I'm expected to leave Rocky Mountain? This is my home! Now and forever. I could never leave. Would I be expected to? Calm down Aleksa, I thought to myself.

However, I would like to know more about where I came from. My whole life I have been curious about my heritage, although my adopted parents were the best I could hope for, I would love to know if I have more family out there somewhere.

I know I should speak with Kingston about this development as he is my mate, and this involves him too. But I need to make sure this is all true first and find out if Jackson is also part of this.

I head over to the training grounds and wait for Jackson to arrive. I wonder what he will make of all of this.

“Hey Jackson,” I decided that I'm just gonna get straight to the point, “What is your father's name?” I asked him. He looked at me puzzled.

“Why do you want to know my father's name?” Jackson asked me.

“Please, just humor me, I need to know,” I pleaded with him.

Jackson looked at me with a suspicious look on his face. He took a moment to consider things and then said “I will tell you my father's name on one condition, you must tell me why you want to know this information,” he added.

“Ok, deal, I will tell you everything I know,” I told him, solemnly, nodding my head towards him.

“Vicktor, his name is Vicktor,” Jackson replied.

I gasped loudly. Placing my hands over my mouth. I realized I must look like a deer caught in headlights right now.

Jackson stepped toward me and placed his hand on my shoulder.

“Aleksa, what is it?” Jackson demanded.

“I think your father is my uncle! I think he and my mother were twins,” I told him with a shocked expression on my face.

Jackson paused again, looking at me, realizing this was not a joke and I was being serious.

“My father was an only child, that’s impossible,” Jackson said in denial.

“Jackson, I met a witch, and she told me this story.” I began, only to be cut off mid-sentence.

“A witch! Aleksa, you need to be careful who you speak to. Who is this witch?” Jackson demanded.

“Abbey, she’s a nice witch. I trust her! Well, she’s actually a Hybrid. Why don’t you come with me and you can meet her for yourself.” I proposed.

“A Hybrid!” Jackson yelled.

“I will come with you. But, I am not buying any of this Aleksa, and neither should you,” Jackson declared.

With that, I took his hand and lead him towards Abbey’s cottage.

Abbey again opened the cottage door before I could even knock once.

“How do you keep doing that?” I said amazed.

“Intuition Aleksa, it’s just pure intuition,” Abbey said enthusiastically waving her hand in the air.

“Hmnn, interesting, another Crescent Moon Wolf I see. You had better come in!” Abbey said pleasantly to Jackson.

Jackson didn’t say anything. He just glared at Abbey, looking like he was barely holding himself together. Then he unleashed a loud growl.

Aleksa POV

“Jackson!” I raised my voice in shock at him, unsure of why he was growling at poor Abbey.

“MATE!” Jackson yelled again. He looked confused and agitated. He started sniffing the air. “Mate was here!” He said, followed by another growl.

“Jackson, It’s just Alaric and Abbey staying here!” I called out, wondering what on earth was going on with him.

Jackson pushed past Abbey and started stalking around the room, he walked over to the couch and picked up a white fluffy sweater, he pulled it up to his nose and sniffed it.

I looked at Abbey, she wasn’t scared, she looked more amused than anything.

“Jackson?” I asked him, trying to snap him out of the trance he appeared to be in.

“This sweater! Who does it belong to?” Jackson demanded, looking at Abbey.

“I have no idea, it was already here when we got here. I assume either a cleaner or whoever stayed here last?” Abbey confirmed.

Both Jackson and Abbey whipped their heads towards me.

“I have no idea! I could ask Kingston or Kai if they know who stayed here last. It wouldn’t belong to the cleaning staff as they wear uniforms while working to protect their clothes.” I told them both.

“I’ll hold onto this.” Jackson declared.

Abbey just smiled sweetly.

“Jackson, that’s amazing! Don’t worry we will find your mate in no time! But first, can we finish our discussion, if you don’t mind?” I asked Jackson hopefully. I know scenting his mate and not knowing who she is will be driving him crazy, so we will need to keep this short and sweet.

“Well, isn’t this an interesting development? I can see you are eager to find the owner of the sweater so I will keep this brief.” Abbey stated.

Jackson crossed his arms at his chest, looked at Abbey impatiently, and gestured for her to proceed.

“As I said to Aleska, I am a hybrid. I’m half-witch, half werewolf, and I’m from a lineage of witches that serve the Kingdom, my family for generations has worked with the King and Queen and the royal family, in particular, working to protect them alongside other supernaturals,” Abbey declared.

“Long story short, before I was born there was an attack on the kingdom when a corrupt Elder enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch. The King fought to defend the pack, while the Queen was supposed to be in the safe house with her pups. However, for some reason, they didn’t make it there in time, and the Queen and her daughter were killed, with only their son Callum to survive. As you know he is our current reigning King Callum,” Abbey said, taking a moment to catch her breath.

“Realizing that they weren’t going to win the battle, the rogues retreated, but not before a trusted Elder grabbed two of the royal pups, the King’s nephew and niece,” Abbey continued.

“The Elder was captured eventually, but the pups were no longer in his possession. He had placed them in separate packs on opposite sides of the country. Despite weeks of torturing he never gave up their locations.” Abbey declared.

“The Elder was found dead in his cell not long after that, it is thought that he was silenced, as he was found with a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane in his chest,” Abbey concluded.

“You look confused, and you are probably wondering how this is relevant to you. Let me simplify it for you,” Abbey declared.

“The royal pups that were kidnapped were crescent moon wolves, they were twins, a boy, and a girl, they were named Viktor and Kristina,” Abbey said slowly.

“I’m gonna go out on a limb here and assume that your father’s name is Viktor. Am I correct?” Abbey says cockily.

Jackson looked from Abbey then to me. I just nodded in agreement.

“My biological mother’s name was Kristina. And it would make sense to me because I could never understand why her father (my grandfather) could hate her so much. He practically ordered her death.” I said sadly as everything started to click into place for me in my head.

I felt a little relieved knowing that evil man wasn’t actually my blood relative, but then even more confused as to who my biological grandparents actually are.

“Say this is the truth, and we are of royal blood, and our parents were kidnapped, how are you such an expert on all of this? How do we know that we can trust you?” Jackson questioned Abbey.

“That’s a fair question, Jackson. I’m not sure what real evidence I can provide you with. I suppose you could try some genetic testing that might shed some light on your origins. Also, I would suggest that you would both have powers of some sort. Crescent moon wolves hold great power. I would suggest that there is little information out there, so you may not know how to harness those powers. I would like to try to help you in any way I can if you will let me.” Abbey said thoughtfully.

“While I do feel connected to Aleska, and I know that we are bound, I’m not sure that I buy your explanation. I will need to look more into this. I have matters to attend to. If you don’t mind. I will see myself out. Aleksa, are you coming?” Jackson huffed.

“I think I’ll hang out here with Abbey a little longer,” I told him, looking toward Abbey to ensure that it was alright that I stay a little longer. Abbey smiled with a pleased look on her face.

And with that Jackson hurried out the door and shifted into his wolf, Gray.

Jackson POV

When I heard there had been a breach at the perimeter I jumped at the chance to go for a run in my wolf form. These past few months it has been getting harder to control my wolf. The toll of not finding my mate is taking it out of me. I act cavalier when people mention it around me but really I feel like I am struggling to maintain control. It's not normal for an alpha wolf to go so long without their mate. I know my pack is getting nervous. I know that they worry I might go feral if I don't find her soon.

Since we arrived at Rocky Mountain Gray has been a bit off. It's not just the crescent moon wolf stuff, something here keeps setting him off, but he won't say what.

When I got back from my run Aleksa was waiting to speak with me, she seemed a bit nervous so I'm not sure what to make of it.

As I make my way to the training field I caught a whiff of her scent so I know that she's already waiting. I prefer to get straight to the point so I'm relieved when she said that she wouldn't beat around the bush. I was suspicious when she started asking about my bastard father.

Aleska then told me that there was someone that she wanted me to meet, so I humored her and we made our way to one of the pack cottages. A peppy-looking girl opened the door. I'm not sure what she is. I can smell a little werewolf but there is something else, it smelled like magic, a witch perhaps?

And then it hit me, the most intoxicating scent I've ever smelled. f**k me! I struggled to keep control. Gray is going mad. "MATE! MATE!" He screamed in my head. He followed it with a loud menacing growl, no doubt scaring the s**t out of the girls.

I struggle to reign him in, and then he pushes through, and I end up slamming past what's her name, my nose leads the way to the couch where I can smell her sweet scent all over a white sweater. I grabbed it frantically and pulled it into my face, taking in a deep sniff. "Wild jasmine," Gray said. "Our mate smells like wild jasmine with a hint of lemongrass!" Gray called out in my head.

"MATE!" I could confirm that the sweater indeed belongs to my future Luna. I looked to Aleksa and the one who opened the door. I heard Aleksa call something out. But I was too immersed in this overwhelming scent to listen.

They tell me that it must have belonged to someone that was in the cottage before they came to stay and Aleska tells me she will find out who. Damn straight!

I reluctantly listened to what the witch had to say. Switching from thinking about my mate to listening to what she was saying. It all sounded highly probable, but I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to find my mate. Gray was crashing around in my head. I needed to get out of here and shift before I lost it.

I decided that I would find Kingston later and find out who the sweater belongs to and then I will find her and make her mine. Assuming she accepts me as her mate. Although I have a feeling that won't be a problem. I can be very convincing. I have waited so long for this. I need my mate.

I cut the conversation short. I'm not really listening anyway. I tell myself that I will apologize to Aleksa later. I need to get out of here.

And with that, I run out the door and shift into my wolf, and we tear our way through the woods, releasing some of our pent-up tension.

Sam POV

My whole life I have trained for the position of Beta of Evergreen Pack. Generations of Nicholsons have taken on the Beta role. There was never a doubt in my mind that this isn't where I wanted to be.

And then I met her. Eva Lockwood. We had all grown up together. I had always thought she had a soft spot for Lachlan, that was until I started to feel the pull and realized that she was my mate. Even before my wolf came I knew that she was my mate. I was certain that she could feel the pull too, but it seemed like she would constantly try to fight it.

Our birthdays were the same day, so as fate would have it our wolves claimed one another that very day, our eighteenth birthdays.

They say there is the lover and the loved one, and in some ways, I feel they were right in our case. I had loved Eva with all my heart from the moment I had laid eyes on her, but I knew it wasn't quite the same for her. I figured it was cold feet or a fear of commitment although that was odd for a werewolf couple.

When Aleksa joined the pack as our Luna, it felt like everything had fallen into place. Aleksa and Lachlan mated and formed a solid pack leadership with myself and Eva as the Beta couple, joined by Caleb and a little later on Kali, which made our group complete.

The girls would spend time together doing girl things and we guys would lead and strengthen the pack together. It seemed like a dream until it wasn't.

The pain came not long after we had mated, and even more so after our commitment ceremony. It took me a while to realize what was happening to me. It only happened every now and then, and I was never able to find evidence of any betrayal. I would confide in Lachlan but he would tell me I was crazy that Eva loved me and it must be something else.

That is until I saw Aleksa experiencing that same pain. I went with her to her doctor's appointments and the pack doctor always had an explanation for why Aleksa was experiencing pain. I had my doubts but again I never found any evidence of any wrongdoings.

I was always kept busy with pack business, Lachlan over the years had become quite complacent and sloppy, which only added more to my workload. The more I worked the more pain I would feel through my and Eva's bond.

Despite a lack of concrete evidence and after confronting Eva on more than one occasion, she always had excuses and would never actually confess anything. I was ready to reject her when I was sent away last minute to a training mission at a nearby pack. When I came back I was told that Aleksa and the twins had been kidnapped by some rogue wolves we had locked up in our dungeons.

Eva and my shambles of a relationship had become an afterthought at that stage. I had a duty to find and rescue our Luna and the Heirs to our pack. Finding them started to consume me. I rarely stopped to eat or sleep. I could still feel Eva betraying our bond, but I needed to keep searching for them. Even though I could feel myself getting weaker, I couldn't risk feeling the full effects of rejecting my fated mate, so even though I was being weakened by betrayal I knew that a full rejection could be devastating, and right now I needed to keep going for the sake of Aleksa, Liam, and Layla.

Lachlan had all but lost it, the pack was suffering in so many ways, and we were on the brink of bankruptcy due to Lachlan's penchant for gambling, and overspending. I discovered that had been frequenting brothels day and night

and then claiming to be missing his mate as an afterthought. Aleska deserved so much more than that pitiful excuse for a mate.

Pack morale was at an all-time low, lower-ranked wolves were being mistreated, and it wasn't the same pack that it had been before Lachlan had taken over as Alpha. Slowly over time, things had changed at Evergreen, and everything seemed to escalate once Aleksa and the twins were gone.

We had a lead on Aleska and the twins in Iowa, so we traveled there but then the trail went cold. We had committed to being at the Royal Alpha Summit as Lachlan had thought it might be a good idea to distribute Aleska and the twin's photos to other packs in case someone had seen them or heard something so Lachlan ordered Eva and me to head towards Rocky Mountain. He had planned to join us within twenty-four hours.

I couldn't believe it when we arrived and I watched Aleksa walk up to me. She seemed to exude such confidence and happiness. I wasn't happy when I saw her locking hands with another alpha, but my wolf Caine had told me to calm down. He told me to read their body language. I could feel reciprocal love and safety in each other's presence. I could feel it exuding from them.

I was shocked at Eva's behavior. She didn't seem pleased to see her best friend. I had never seen her so cold and bitter before. It was at that moment I realized that I must have missed something. I was even more confused when I saw Caleb and Kali. I was overwhelmingly happy to see my friends again but then disappointed because as far as I knew Caleb and Kali had betrayed us. Lachlan had said that they had helped the rogues take Aleksa and the twins. I could never understand why, but Lachlan had told me a very convincing story. Again my wolf, Caine, was telling me that they were our friends and to hear them out.

And heard them out I did. And it all made sense. I was enraged to hear that my best friend was betraying me with my mate. But it all fit. I was even more furious and shocked beyond recognition when I heard about what Lachlan had done to Aleksa, not just betraying their bond, but locking our Luna, an innocent wolf, up in the dungeons.

Caine was Furious, he instantly demanded that we reject our poor excuse for a mate right there on the spot, and I agreed with him. I would rather be weak and sad than be so pitiful to accept such a cruel and vile mate.

Caine had loved Eva's wolf Ash at the beginning but over time he got impatient and suspicious of her. He seemed to be at the point that he would prefer no mate over the one we had been given. This was unheard of for a wolf, but Caine was a strong wolf, he gave me the strength to push through these past few years of hardship.

When I rejected Eva, it hurt. It hurt so much harder than the betrayal pain, so much so I didn't have the strength to keep my eyes open.

Although as I began to come to I smelt the most delicious smell ever. It reminded me of the spring freesias that grew all over the pack grounds when I was a child. That smell always filled me with happiness throughout my life. I opened my eyes to the most beautiful sight sitting at my bedside, holding my hand in hers.

She was gorgeous, about five foot four, with long whitish blonde curls perched up in a high ponytail. She had bright crystal blue eyes with rosy cheeks and porcelain skin.

I could feel tingles all over. "MATE!" Caine roared in my head. She looked at me with a sweet smile, and it warmed my heart.

I called MATE to her. She replied MATE back. We were mates. She was mine and I was hers.

"Tell me beautiful, what is your name?" I asked her.

"Lily. I am Lily." She tells me coyly.

"I'm Sam," I told her.

"I know. Aleksa and Kingston, they asked me to bring you a glass jug of water, and I dropped it accidentally, I'm sorry. I was just caught off guard. I did not expect to find my mate here," she recalled so quickly that she appeared to be out of breath.

"Hey, it's okay, relax, I'm just glad you are here." I tried to reassure her.

"Are you going to reject me?" She asked me hesitantly.

"What, why would I reject you?" I asked her, feeling anxious, as to why she would even suggest that.

"It's just that you are a Beta I am told. And I, I'm an Omega." She said. A pained look on her face.

"Wrong, you are now a Beta female. That is unless you wish to reject me!" I said sternly.

"Of Course not. You are my mate sent by the moon goddess, I could never," She reassured me with a serious expression on her face.

Gosh, she sure is cute.

"There is something you should know though Lily," I told her.

"You are my second chance mate." I declared.

"Second chance mate? How?" Lily asked. She looked confused.

"My first mate, Eva, betrayed our bond. I will tell you all about it, but perhaps a little later, it is a long sordid tale." I told her.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you, Lily," I stopped.

"What's your last name, Lily?" I asked her.

"Owens," Lily responded, looking nervous.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, as my mate," I declared proudly.

"I Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, accept you Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack as my mate," she replied with a great smile on her face.

With that, I pulled her face into mine and we gladly gave in to the mate bond with a passionate and earth-shattering kiss, unlike anything I've ever experienced before, sending tingles and shivers throughout my entire body. Caine growled in satisfaction. As we pulled apart sweet Lily's cheeks were even rosier than before, a deep shade of red prominent on her face.

"MINE!" I growled.

"YOURS!" Lily replied.

“We have much to discuss. But, first, I need to change, then I need to see Kingston.” I told Lily.

“My wolf Caine is demanding that I mate and mark you right away. But I respect you Lily and don’t want to rush you. So I have to ask how do you feel about making it official tonight?” I asked Lily, not wanting to force things. I wanted to let her know that I respect her as an equal. But, at the same time, I also do not want to wait any longer than necessary.

“Tonight would be perfect Sam. I’ll get you a towel and some clean clothing for you to change into while you shower if you like?” Lily asked me.

“That would be great, thank you, sweetheart,” I told her. Kissing her on the forehead as I ripped out my IV lines, and then headed to the shower.

I’m all showered and clothed, Caleb has popped in to check on me, after chatting for a while Caleb had offered to go and get some coffees while we wait for the discharge papers from the doc.

As I lifted Lily onto me and we began to kiss and touch one another our little make-out session is cut short when Aleksa walked into the room. Aleksa looked deeply embarrassed and in an attempt to leave before she thought that we would notice her she walked right into Caleb’s chest.

Lily jumped off the bed in embarrassment. She’s just so cute. But we are all adults here. It’s only natural to want to jump each other especially since we are mates and have yet to mark and mate.

After a brief chat, Aleksa told me that Lachlan had arrived this morning, but as fast as he arrived he left again. No doubt he will be back. I sensed some concern in Aleksa and I could guess what she was thinking. Naturally, she was wondering where I stood on all of this.

I hated that bastard. All these years he was the cause of my pain and suffering. Pretending to be my friend. Piling me up with never-ending workloads and out-of-pack trips. He made me feel like a bad mate for doubting Eva when he knew what was going on the whole time because he was the one she was betraying me with.

I would love nothing more than to end that poor excuse for an alpha myself. I realize I am not of alpha blood but I know for a fact I could restore Evergreen back to its former glory. I know I would make a better alpha than he ever did.

I thought I would feel weak after rejecting Eva but I have never felt so strong. I feel reborn. I can feel this energy within me. I feel like I have a pretty good chance at beating Lachlan in an alpha challenge. And even if I wasn't successful I would sure give it all I had. Someone had to stop that evil bastard, and I wanted to be the one to do it.

I relayed all of this to Aleska and Lily, who both look concerned. But they need not be. Lily walked up to me and wrapped her arms around me showing me her love and support. The doc showed up and gave me my papers, so I started to make my way over to the packhouse to speak with Kingston and Caleb to tell them of my plans.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn't want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan's arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn't mean to be nonchalant at Abbey's, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it's totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston's office. I wanted to find out who

the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn't seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

I was starting to feel a little lonely here with Liam and Layla away with Mason, Quinn and her parents, Kaia goddess knows where with Asher, Kingston, and Kai unreachable, Sam and Lily occupied, and Jackson running off somewhere in the woods. So I tried to reach out to Kali but she must be busy with Caleb. So I gave up and decided to head up to my room for a while.

After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

I looked around the room and realized I was all alone. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was midnight. My goddess, how long was I in that bath? I must have been in there for hours. No wonder I'm so cold. It was strange that Kingston still wasn't here at this time of night. I walked out to the balcony and looked out around the pack grounds. There was a chill in the air. The silence was deafening. It all felt very eerie.

I decided that I will take a walk around the packhouse and see if I can find my mate.

I make my way out of my room and I head toward the staircase. It's so quiet, usually, there are skeleton staff working, cleaning staff or maintenance or a cook or two, but tonight there didn't seem to be anyone around. Perhaps they finished the preparations for the festival and everyone decided to have an early night. Although that doesn't seem like the right answer either.

I walked in the direction of Kingston's office and it was all dark, there was no lighting on, no noise whatsoever.

Amber pushed through, "I have a bad feeling about this Aleksa, keep your guard up," Amber advised me. Maybe that's why I was feeling so cold like chilled to the bone, and what about that nightmare? I can't seem to remember it, which is unusual for me.

"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

After about forty-five minutes of wandering around the pack house, I was feeling even more determined than ever to find my mate or anyone at this point. I decided to expand my search outside of the packhouse. I know I wasn't supposed to be walking around by myself but I was starting to wonder if there was anyone else around.

I made my way down the steps outside easily enough thanks to the solar lights that lined the steps, and I began to walk around the side of the packhouse making my way to the conference room, strangely enough, there was no one there.

I continued to walk through the pack grounds towards the training grounds because that's the most logical place for the guys to be at this time of night. They were probably going over strategies or having a late-night training session. As I made my way there I heard shuffling in the bush next to me.

I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

"We aren't alone are we Amber," I asked my wolf.

"Nope," Amber said shortly.

I started to pick up my pace slightly, trying not to make it obvious that I was aware that I was not alone. And then I felt my arm being yanked backward aggressively. I let out a loud gasp. I turn to sidekick whoever had grabbed my arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

"Ahh!" I screamed in pain. I could feel the pain searing through me. Well, that's gonna bruise I thought to myself.

"Just the person I wanted to see," a snarky voice called back at me.

I recognized the voice. It made my skin crawl.

“Ezra!” I called back to him.

“You lied to me the other day. Do you think I’m f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?” He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn’t let him know I was scared.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said faking confusion at his question.

“Look b***h, I want my mate and I’m not leaving until I get her,” He threatened.

He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

“If you don’t want to tell me now, that’s ok. I can think of another way of getting it out of you,” Ezra said snickering.

“Don’t you f*****g touch me!” I yelled at him, changing my stance to one that appeared more threatening.

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“Come any closer and you will regret it!” I yelled at Ezra.

He laughed mockingly and continued to advance toward me. I closed my eyes to concentrate on my energy and visualise what I wanted to do to him, to stop him from hurting me.

At that very moment, I felt a hard slap across my face, so hard that I lost my footing, and fell to the ground again. It hurt so much. I wondered if I might have just lost a tooth or two then. But I managed to hold my pain in.

I tried to get up but Ezra was already forcing his bodyweight onto me.

“Focus Aleksa!” Amber called out to me. I could feel her giving me strength. I tried to channel all of my energy and focus.

I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

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The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

My body starts to regulate and I don't feel so hot anymore.

I picked myself up and walked over to him. I'm still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

I heard Ezra groan. He was making incomprehensible sounds. He didn't seem to be responding. I watched him lose consciousness.

I guess he was more of a threat than Kingston and I had thought. He needed to be held somewhere. I knew that I couldn't lift him. I was feeling drained from using my power.

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Then I thought of Jackson. Perhaps since we are both Crescent Moon wolves we could mind-link one another. It was worth a try at this point.

"Jackson, I need your help," I mind-linked.

"Aleksa, what's wrong?" Jackson responded immediately.

"Ezra. He attacked me." I replied, trying to sound strong and unaffected.

Jackson growled. "Where are you?"

"Near the training grounds, between the bush and a huge oak tree," I told him calmly.

"I'm on my way," Jackson responded.

A minute or so later Jackson arrived in his wolf form.

“Hello Gray,” I said to him, with a small smile, trying to remain strong while holding my arms against my chest. I was still shivering and that bastard had ripped my sweater, so I was standing there in my singlet.

Gray growled loudly and stalked toward Ezra.

Amber pushed through to talk to him.

“Gray!” Amber called out.

Gray stopped, and turned his head back toward me, he took a sniff, then started to walk toward me.

“You’re hurt!” Gray replied to us, looking enraged.

I pushed Amber back. I wanted to retain control. Luckily we could communicate in both wolf and human forms.

“A little, I’ll be ok,” I reassured him.

Gray looked at me, then he looked down at my ripped sweatshirt and Ezra’s top on the ground next to it.

“I’m gonna rip him to shreds!” Gray roared.

“It’s ok, he can’t hurt me now. I called you because I need help getting him locked up,” I told Gray.

“Of course, but, where’s your mate?” Gray asked confused, and then mad.

“I don’t know. I haven’t seen him since lunchtime yesterday, and he has blocked me. I can’t get hold of Kingston or Kai. Something weird is going on,” I told Gray.

Then I think about how Gray arrived almost immediately after I had mind-linked him.

“Hey, how did you get here so fast?” I asked Gray.

“We’ve been out searching, for our mate,” Gray responded.

“Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!” I tried to reassure him.

“I’ll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute,” Gray declared.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn’t want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan’s arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I’m sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson’s mate was. I couldn’t wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn’t mean to be nonchalant at Abbey’s, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it’s totally understandable.

We made it to the packhouse, said goodbye to one another, then went our separate ways. I made my way to Kingston’s office. I wanted to find out who the mystery sweater belonged to for Jackson. Unfortunately, the office was empty. I tried to mind-link Kingston to ask him where he was, but I appeared to be blocked.

How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn’t be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn’t seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra

again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

Kai. That's it, I'll mind-link Kai. He will know where Kingston is. I tried to mind-link Kai but he must be busy with Kingston because he appeared to have his block up too.

I was starting to feel a little lonely here with Liam and Layla away with Mason, Quinn and her parents, Kaia goddess knows where with Asher, Kingston, and Kai unreachable, Sam and Lily occupied, and Jackson running off somewhere in the woods. So I tried to reach out to Kali but she must be busy with Caleb. So I gave up and decided to head up to my room for a while.

After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

I looked around the room and realized I was all alone. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was midnight. My goddess, how long was I in that bath? I must have been in there for hours. No wonder I'm so cold. It was strange that Kingston still wasn't here at this time of night. I walked out to the balcony and looked out around the pack grounds. There was a chill in the air. The silence was deafening. It all felt very eerie.

I decided that I will take a walk around the packhouse and see if I can find my mate.

I make my way out of my room and I head toward the staircase. It's so quiet, usually, there are skeleton staff working, cleaning staff or maintenance or a cook or two, but tonight there didn't seem to be anyone around. Perhaps they finished the preparations for the festival and everyone decided to have an early night. Although that doesn't seem like the right answer either.

I walked in the direction of Kingston's office and it was all dark, there was no lighting on, no noise whatsoever.

Amber pushed through, "I have a bad feeling about this Aleksa, keep your guard up," Amber advised me. Maybe that's why I was feeling so cold like chilled to the bone, and what about that nightmare? I can't seem to remember it, which is unusual for me.

"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

After about forty-five minutes of wandering around the pack house, I was feeling even more determined than ever to find my mate or anyone at this point. I decided to expand my search outside of the packhouse. I know I

wasn't supposed to be walking around by myself but I was starting to wonder if there was anyone else around.

I made my way down the steps outside easily enough thanks to the solar lights that lined the steps, and I began to walk around the side of the packhouse making my way to the conference room, strangely enough, there was no one there.

I continued to walk through the pack grounds towards the training grounds because that's the most logical place for the guys to be at this time of night. They were probably going over strategies or having a late-night training session. As I made my way there I heard shuffling in the bush next to me.

I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

"We aren't alone are we Amber," I asked my wolf.

"Nope," Amber said shortly.

I started to pick up my pace slightly, trying not to make it obvious that I was aware that I was not alone. And then I felt my arm being yanked backward aggressively. I let out a loud gasp. I turn to sidekick whoever had grabbed my arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

"Ahh!" I screamed in pain. I could feel the pain searing through me. Well, that's gonna bruise I thought to myself.

"Just the person I wanted to see," a snarky voice called back at me.

I recognized the voice. It made my skin crawl.

"Ezra!" I called back to him.

"You lied to me the other day. Do you think I'm f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?" He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn't let him know I was scared.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said faking confusion at his question.

“Look b***h, I want my mate and I’m not leaving until I get her,” He threatened.

He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

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“Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!” I tried to reassure him.

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Aleska POV

Gray had shifted before we left for the pack lock-up facility. We began to walk to the lock-up facility. Being that Jackson was just visiting the pack he didn’t know where the facility was so I had to show them where to go.

I still couldn't get through to anyone via mind-link, nor could Jackson as he wasn't part of our pack. It didn't take much to convince Jackson to let me come with him to look for the others and find out what was going on, as he could sense that things were off also.

When we reached the lock-up, the guards didn't appear to be outside as they usually were. Jackson looked at his warriors and they made a few hand gestures and slowly advanced inside. As we walked through the corridors which were dimly lit, it appeared that the backup generators were on. When we reached the holding area we found the guards out cold on the floor. I ran up to the closest one and felt for a pulse. His heart rate was slow but it was still there.

"He's still alive! But his pulse is very slow." I called out to Jackson.

"Let's investigate further, Aleska, you stay close to me." Jackson declared.

He didn't need to say a word, I wasn't planning on going anywhere alone at this stage. I was officially creeped out.

After a sweep of the cells, we made our way back to the entrance. The cells were all empty. The cell doors appeared to be locked shut, and the guards appeared to be out cold, almost as if they were sleeping. No one had been harmed.

We all looked at each other with confused expressions on our faces.

"Magic!" Jackson said abruptly.

"I have a feeling magic is involved, and not the good kind either," Jackson replied to himself.

I start to realize the gravity of the situation. I start to think of my loved ones. My mind then goes to Kali and Caleb. They were staying in the packhouse. Perhaps we should start there.

"Where's the Hybrid!" Jackson called out angrily.

"Abbey?" I replied to him.

"Yeah, her." He said gruffly.

“She will be sleeping. Wait, you don’t think?” I start to speak before I am cut off.

“It feels like magic. She’s a witch! Let’s start there!” Jackson demanded.

“I guess that makes sense. But Jackson, let me do the talking. She’s my friend.” I tell him rather than asking. I know he is a higher rank than me, but this isn’t about ranks. Something is going on and we need to find out what.

“Yeah well let’s see what she has to say,” Jackson replied gruffly.

“Alpha, what do you want us to do with him?” One of Jackson’s warriors asks, referring to Ezra.

“You two watch him for now. See if you can get one of those cells open and shove him in. One of you can watch him, the other can come to find us. Mind-link me when you are done,” Jackson ordered them.

“Yes Alpha,” they both called out concurrently, nodding their heads and bowing before dragging Ezra off.

With that Jackson takes a jacket off one of the guards and threw it at me.

“You look cold, throw this on, he doesn’t need it right now,” Jackson declared.

“Thanks,” I said, throwing the jacket on.

Abbey’s cottage wasn’t far away so there is no need for us to shift. It wouldn’t take us long to get there.

We walked up the pathway to Abbey’s cottage, there were no lights on, which wasn’t surprising considering it was the middle of the night.

“I’ll do the talking!” I told Jackson, as I knew that he could come across as aggressive at times, and I felt bad enough waking Abbey up in the middle of the night.

As I was about to knock on the door it opened. I smiled as I expected nothing less. Abbey always seemed to know when someone was approaching.

“Aleska, are you okay?” Abbey started to fuss, taking in my appearance.

“Yeah, I’m fine,” I told her not wanting to go into detail right now.

“What’s going on around here?” Abbey asked.

“I’ve had no power all night, and Alaric hasn’t arrived back yet. I’ve had this strange feeling all night, and now you two show up at my doorstep in the middle of the night,” Abbey said with a concerned look on her face.

“You wanna come in?” Abbey offered.

“We don’t have time for this!” Jackson declared.

“Hmnn, unfortunately, he’s right, Abbey will you come with us, something is going on, the guards at the lock-up facility were out cold, the powers out, no one else seems to be around and I can’t mind-link anyone but Jackson,” I ranted off quickly to Abbey.

Abbey’s face dropped, “Oh dear,” she said as she pulls her jacket on and starts to walk out her door.

“Let’s walk and talk,” Abbey suggested.

After explaining everything that happened this evening Abbey was initially outraged at what Ezra had attempted to do, but then happy I was able to contact Jackson. She was trying to piece things together as we walked toward the training grounds.

“I agree with Jackson, the guards could be in a deep sleep, and an enchantment spell would appear that way. There could be someone messing with the pack’s ability to mind-link, that too could be the doing of a witch, but no light witch would do such a thing, this sounds like the work of a dark witch.” Abbey stated.

“When was the last time either of you saw someone familiar?” Abbey asked.

“I guess, before we came to your cottage yesterday,” I replied.

“And you Jackson?” Abbey asked him softly.

“Same as Aleksa, after our meeting in your cottage, I shifted into Gray and we ran for hours, we only stopped when I got Aleksa’s mind-link just before,” Jackson replied.

“Hmnn, interesting, I never found Alaric when we parted ways at the packhouse earlier this evening, there were others around but I didn’t interact with anyone,” Abbey recalled.

“I wonder,” Abbey started.

“What?” Jackson replied in anticipation.

“I wonder if something didn’t happen while we were in the cottage? I wonder if something didn’t happen to the rest of the pack? What if what we saw when we walked into the packhouse was just an illusion?” Abbey asked.

“But why?” I replied in denial.

“I don’t know, It’s just a thought, let’s investigate some more,” Abbey suggested.

We had just arrived outside the training grounds, and there weren’t any lights on. I went to grab my phone out of my pocket when Abbey looked at me and chuckled.

“Let me, Aleksa,” Abbey declared.

Abbey moved her hands in a circular motion and closed her eyes, and then a bright orb appeared before her, she released it in front of us and it started to guide our way into the training grounds.

“That was seriously cool!” I called out in awe.

“Not bad,” Jackson said as if he was slightly impressed.

We walked through the administration block following the orb in front of us, and as we turned to walk into the stadium we were shocked to see the warriors from our pack and other packs on the ground.

I gasped in horror. Then I ran to the nearest warrior to feel for a pulse, it was there but it was faint. I looked around to see if I could see anyone familiar, I started walking through the bodies carefully, and then I saw him, I saw Kai.

I ran up to him, yelling, “Kai! Kai! Wake up!” I started to shake him, then I felt around for a pulse. It was much like the others there, but slow, although a bit stronger than the others, probably because he was a Gamma.

“Abbey, please, is there anything you can do?” I called out to Abbey who came running towards me. Jackson circled us, looking around but standing guard at the same time.

“Hmmn, let me see,” Abbey said, getting down on her hands and knees, she then puts her hands just above his body and focuses her energy on Kai.

“I can feel that he’s still here, but in a deep sleep, definitely an enchantment spell.” Abbey declared.

“Can you counteract it?” I asked pleadingly. I looked at her wide-eyed.

“I think I can? It will probably take a lot of energy. I feel confident that I can wake Kai, but I am not sure I can do everyone at this stage,” Abbey said with a sad expression on her face.

“That’s ok, it’s a start!” I said with some optimism in my voice.

“OK, give me a few minutes and some space,” Abbey instructed me.

I watched Abbey in awe. She was truly amazing. Jackson pretended not to be bothered about what is unfolding in front of him, but even he can’t deny what Abbey is doing right now is nothing short of epic.

A short while later, Kai started groaning.

I knelt down on the ground again and touch his face. Kai opens his eyes.

“Luna?” Kai croaked out.

“Oh my goddess, Kai, are you ok?” I asked him in a panic-stricken tone.

“Luna, they took him! I’m sorry!” Kai declared.

“What, who?” I looked at him puzzled.

“The Witch. She took Kingston! Said she needed to get him out of the way,” he called out. Then he slowly started to sit up, rubbing his neck.

“Are you telling me that a dark witch took Kingston?” I asked him in shock.

“Yes Luna, I’m so sorry,” Kai replied, bowing his head, looking ashamed that he couldn’t protect his alpha and prevent him from being taken.

“It’s ok Kai, we will find him, this isn’t your fault!” I tried to reassure Kai, and I leaned forward to comfort him in the form of a hug.

I looked back up to Abbey who was now standing up and looking around the stadium.

“Any ideas Abbey?” I looked to her for an answer.

“Dark witches don’t attack packs for no reason, someone will be paying her to do this, someone who stands to gain something from getting Kingston out of the way,” Abbey questioned.

Jackson and I look at one another at the same time in realization.

“Lachlan!” We both called out simultaneously.

Aleska POV

Once it dawned on us that Lachlan was most likely behind all of this, we had to figure out what to do next. Abbey believed that the reason that Jackson and I could mind-link was due to our Crescent Moon wolf bond. Kai tested the theory by trying to mind-link and was unsuccessful. Although Jackson could mind-link his warriors which seemed strange. Although it became clearer once he had explained that the two warriors he had brought with him weren’t ordinary wolves. Apparently, they had met one another at a training camp that he had been sent to by his father in his early teens and they had bonded. They had recognized Jackson as their alpha early on, and submitted to him, despite the fact that they all shared the same rank.

Abbey believed that if there was a dark witch involved then her enchantment spell would have applied to regular pack wolves, but most likely not affect special wolves, hence why we were all unaffected.

While Abbey couldn’t currently reach any of her contacts due to distance and the presence of a supernatural barrier, she could call them, so we started to make our way to the nearest phone.

Unfortunately, all methods of communication seemed to be out of order. For now, we were on our own. At least we had the advantage of the witch not knowing that we were special wolves. The witch would assume we were under the spell for now. But that would mean that they would be most likely looking for us.

Abbey suggested that we all hide our scents to be on the safe side. She was able to manage this with a simple cloaking spell.

If we were right and Lachlan was behind this, then he was looking for me. Jackson wanted to get me out of Rocky Mountain and to safety, but I insisted on staying. We needed to face this Witch and Lachlan, and break the spell she had placed on my pack.

Abbey believed that the key to breaking the spell was either capturing the witch involved and convincing her to reverse the spell, or k*****g her. Abbey didn't feel that comfortable taking a life, but said if it came to it she would. She too wanted to find her mate.

Jackson advised that we would need some more backup if we were to pull this off, and suggested we find Sam and Caleb, and a few other ranked members to help us on our mission.

"Do you think you are up for some more healing Abbey?" He asked her respectfully.

I looked at him in shock, it appeared that he might be softening in his attitude toward her and realizing she is an ally, not a threat.

"Yes, as long as I have a little break in between, I should be fine," Abbey replied confidently.

With that, we made our way back to the packhouse stealthily. Caleb's room would be our first stop. I sure hoped that Kali and her unborn baby would be ok. I asked Abbey about healing Kali now, she said Kali was safer sleeping for now, and shouldn't be put at further risk. I agreed with her reasoning, at least she would be out of harm's way for now.

We made our way to Caleb's designated room. Jackson had to break down the door as it was locked. We found Kali asleep on the couch and Caleb on the ground in the kitchen. It didn't take long for Abbey to work her magic on him. When Caleb came to he demanded that Abbey wake Kali, but then she explained that by doing so Kali would be at more risk because she would want to fight, thus putting her and her unborn baby at risk. Caleb realized that she was right and dropped the subject. Once we had brought Caleb up to speed with the events of the night we were ready to find Sam.

Since Sam was the only attendee from Evergreen that was actually allowed to stay at Rocky Mountain he and Lily were sharing a cottage to themselves. They were on the far west side of the pack, so it was a bit of a hike to get there. We didn't want to run into anyone so we exited the back of the packhouse and made our way through the woods. Kai was the only one of us that actually knew this place inside out, so we were lucky we had him with us to show us a shortcut.

Cutting through the woods meant we reached the cabin pretty quickly. Kai pushed the door open, it was unlocked luckily, Sam and Lily were laying face down on the table. They must have been having a hot drink when the spell took over because their cups had tipped over and had run onto the wooden floor.

Caleb and Kai went straight to Sam and moved him from his chair to the floor. Jackson picked Lily up carefully and placed her on the couch. As he was laying her down Abbey called out to him, "Jackson could you bring Lily here and lay her beside Sam, I wanna try something," Abbey stated.

Before anyone could ask, Abbey had closed her eyes and began to focus on Sam and Lily, she did the same as before and placed her hands directly above both their bodies. After a minute or so they both started to come to.

We all looked at Abbey gobsmacked.

"You did it!" I called out happily.

"You healed them both at the same time!" I said to her with a look of astonishment on my face.

Abbey smiled and seemed to wilt a little. Caleb held her from behind, and she took a moment to steady herself.

"Thank you. I haven't done two people at a time before. It just takes a bit out of me. I'm not that long out of my witch training" Abbey clarified with a slight blush on her face.

"Sam!" Caleb called out, helping his friend up.

"What happened?" Sam said, rubbing his eyes.

"Lily!" I called out. "Are you okay?" I said helping her sit up.

“Aleksa! What are you doing here?” Lily called out confused.

“Wait, Sam?” Lily questioned, looking to the right side of her.

Lily and Sam pulled each other into an embrace and then pulled apart again.

“Ah, what’s going on?” Sam asked looking around at us all with a puzzled look on his face.

We didn’t have time to spare. There wasn’t a lot of darkness left before sunrise, and we needed to use the cover of darkness to our advantage right now.

Jackson gave Sam and Lily a rundown of the night’s events as we made our way to the old log cabin. Kai had suggested that since it was on the far side of the pack boundaries. He had a theory that it might not have had its communications systems affected. We might be able to get some help or contact someone with knowledge of this sort of thing, and then we could make our way back to the pack before sunrise.

As we were almost at the old log cabin we walked into something. We tried to advance but we couldn’t seem to move any further.

“I can feel a strong energy,” I declared to my friends.

“So can I,” Jackson responded.

“Uh oh,” Abbey commented.

“It’s a forcefield,” a voice came from behind us, it was one of Jackson’s warriors from earlier tonight.

“The witch has imposed a forcefield, we can’t leave and no one else can come in,” He replied.

“Nice of you to join us, Bryant,” Jackson replied.

“Everyone, this is my good friend Bryant,” Jackson called out.

Everyone acknowledged and greeted him. Once the pleasantries were over we had to figure out where we were going now and what our new plan would be.

“Comms!” Kai declared.

“We could try the backup equipment in the Communications room, back at the packhouse,” Kai reiterated.

“Worth a try,” Jackson replied.

“Let’s go then,” Sam said.

Just as we made it up the steps to the rear entrance of the packhouse the sun started to come up. At least we had made it back safely. Hopefully, we could find something of use in the communications room.

The communications room was located in the loft at the top of the packhouse. I had no idea it was even here, although that isn’t surprising as I was still orienting to the pack.

We made our way up to the room and started looking around. Caleb and Sam tried to get the computers and communication systems working, while Jackson took a look around for a backup generator, and Caleb checked the cupboards, while doing so he stumbled across a secret compartment in the ceiling for alternative means of communication.

After about thirty minutes we had made no progress.

“s**t!” Jackson called out.

“I can’t get through to Elijah.” Jackson declared.

“We have to assume that Ezra has escaped, we also need to assume he may be in on whatever is going on here, so be on your guard! If you see him, don’t k**l him, we need to find out what he knows first,” Jackson ordered.

Aleksa POV

Our search of the communications room was fruitless. Nothing we found was able to transmit. It looked like we were truly on our own here. We had no idea

who we were up against. We just suspected that Lachlan was behind it all and he was being helped by a dark witch.

We knew that the pack seemed to be surrounded by some massive energy-bound forcefield so we couldn't get out either. We also knew that it was only a matter of time before whoever was behind all of this realized that I wasn't where I should be.

While my heart ached for my mate, I couldn't feel anything through our bond, but I didn't feel our bond break so that gave me hope that he was still out there, maybe he was under the enchantment spell, I sure hoped that was the case.

Abbey said that assuming that this was orchestrated by Lachlan and he was he for me the best thing to do would be to elude him for as long as possible.

Meanwhile, she will focus on trying to wake some of the pack up a few at a time.

Sam suggested we keep moving because it would only be a matter of time before they tracked back to the packhouse.

Abbey asked for suggestions as to who she should wake first. Jackson implied the stronger the wolf the better right now as they were likely to be able to defend themselves rather than hold us back, everyone was in agreement with that.

I voiced that I didn't recall seeing any of the alphas at the training grounds, to which Kai replied that the night before the summit festival it was tradition for the attending alphas to have a late-night whiskey at the lake house.

"Lakehouse?" I replied with a confused look on my face,

"Uh, yeah, it belonged to the previous alpha and luna, it's in the middle of the woods on the southern boundary. Chances are they were there when the enchantment spell hit. It's worth a try anyway. I can show you the way." Kai called out.

We all followed Kai out through the woods as quietly and quickly as possible. It took about twenty minutes to get there in our human form. It was a large wooden cabin just sitting here on the outskirts of the wood overlooking a small lake.

As expected, there were bodies of the visiting alpha's lounged out on chairs, by the lake, and on the deck. They all looked so peaceful, a contrast from the intimidating alphas they usually are. But this wasn't the time to reflect, we had work to do.

"Caleb, Sam, Bryant with me, let's get them all next to each other and line them up. Lily and Aleska, you can help Abbey set up. Abbey – are you ready for this?"

Abbey looked at Jackson and smiled. "You're just a big softy aren't you?"

Jackson huffed and walked off.

Abbey looked at me smirking, "I think we are going to be great friends, Jackson and I,"

I smiled at her knowingly. Because I thought so too.

Abbey had begun healing the alphas. When they woke up they were disorientated initially but after about ten minutes or so they seemed to be back to their usual selves. While some wanted to spring into action immediately, we managed to convince them that we had to tread carefully since we didn't actually know what we were up against.

Abbey seemed to be holding up well despite using mass amounts of energy, there were about a dozen of us now, and still, another dozen alphas yet to be healed.

Jackson suggested that some of us would need to stay back with Abbey while she healed the other alpha's and the rest of us needed to continue onwards.

Caleb and Kai naturally refused to leave my side, I guess it was the gamma band at play. Sam and Lily said that they would stay back with Abbey, Bryant also offered to protect her while she helped us to gather more backup.

Jackson, myself, Caleb, and Kai, as well as some of the attending alphas, decided to move out and see if we could see any movement around the pack grounds. We hadn't seen anyone yet, but they must be somewhere.

As we were about a hundred yards away from the entrance to the packhouse, we saw movement. We halted behind Jackson and waited. My jaw dropped as I took in the huge army of wolves that were descending upon the packhouse.

The foul stench of these rogue wolves invaded my nostrils. I fought the urge to vomit. We all looked at one another. Well, this complicates things a little I thought to myself. I wasn't quite expecting that we would have that many opponents to fight.

I looked at Caleb instantly in fear. We had left Kali behind sleeping there. Caleb let out a huge growl and ran forward shifting into his wolf, he ran as fast as his legs would carry him toward the packhouse.

"f**k!" Jackson yelled. He also runs forward, shifting into Gray following Caleb's lead. If we don't follow him, both he, Kali, and their unborn baby are dead, so we all shifted and followed them through the packhouse, taking out wolves as we moved through the crowd.

Kai and a few of the other alpha's flanked my sides and front and behind and pushed through the rogues, their bodies flying all over the place, blood spurting out all over the place.

We ran down the corridor and then skidded to a sudden halt, Caleb had shifted and was holding a sleeping Kali in his arms. We formed a circle around him and I nodded my head towards the back entrance swiftly, rogues descending on us from behind, we all pushed forward some of the alpha's fending off the rogues as we made our way through the packhouse.

"Take Aleksa and Kali to safety, I'll keep the rogues busy!" Jackson yelled as he slowed down and turned to fight the rogues.

Four of the alpha's followed Caleb and Kali and me. Once we made it to the bush. I turned around.

"Get your mate and baby to safety!" I called out and I ran off.

I ran towards the packhouse to join Jackson and half a dozen alphas fight.

Jackson growled.

"What the f**k are you doing? Run! Now!" He yelled at me followed by a growl.

“No. I’m here to fight for my friends and my pack!” I yelled as I fought two small dirty brown rogues.

“Aleksa, concentrate, like before. We can use our powers. Visualize. Then focus our energy!” Amber encouraged me.

I take a breath and close my eyes. I think of the danger my friends and my pack are in. I use my anger against those who have come to destroy my pack. I feel myself heat up again. I feel like I am being surrounded by a whirlwind of heat and then I release. I feel a huge gust of energy disperse, and when I open my eyes the rogues that were surrounding us were no more.

I look further afield and I see the remaining rogues retreat. I see movement in the woods to the north of the pack grounds, and for some reason, I know that is where the witch is hiding. I could feel a pull toward her. I could feel her dark energy.

I lunge forward and run like the wind in her direction. When I get there I can sense that she is still there. I see a figure move out from behind a large tree.

“Hello, Aleksa,” she called out.

“Why are you doing this?” I asked her aggressively.

“Why do we do anything? For power, for money, for control.” She spat out shaking her head.

“My, you really are naive aren’t you?” She mocked me.

“I can see why that brute of an alpha wants you. So pretty and yet so clueless.” She laughed again.

Then she went quiet and looked at me as if she was looking into my mind.

“He doesn’t know, does he?” the witch asked me. Then she starts laughing again.

“Oh, this is brilliant!” She called out trying to suppress further laughter.

“Who? Know about what?” I asked the witch, having no actual clue as to who or what she was referring to.

“What are you talking about, Who are you...” I asked. I stopped mid-sentence as I was distracted by a shuffle in the bushes to the witch’s left.

“My sweet Aleska, did you like the rose I sent you?” Lachlan said, striding towards me with a smirk on his face.

“Lachlan,” I said shakily, trying not to show my fear but failing miserably.

“You have caused a lot of trouble my little mate,” Lachlan said, shaking his head disapprovingly at me.

“Nevermind, you have the rest of your life to make it up to me!” He added, laughing evilly.

I slowly started to back away from Lachlan and the witch, as I did I could sense movement behind me. As I turned my head I saw two of Evergreen’s warriors behind me in their wolf forms. I knew that I wouldn’t be getting out of this situation without a fight.

“Well, my job here is done! You have your she-wolf. Now I will have my payment, Wolf!” the witch demanded eagerly.

“Don’t dare disrespect me, Witch!” Lachlan declared to the witch.

However, she didn’t appear to be affected by his menacing aura. She looked more impatient than anything else.

Lachlan pulled a small hessian sack out of his pocket and dumped it in the witch’s hand. She quickly poured the gold out and looked over it, then she chucked it back in the sack happily and stowed it away in the inside of her gown.

“I’d watch this one if I were you. There’s more to her than meets the eye,” the witch said as she winked at me knowingly.

Lachlan huffed, and dismissed the witch.

“I have a feeling this isn’t the last we shall see of one another Aleksa.” the witch added and with that, she vanished in a big puff of smoke.

Aleska POV

“Where is my mate?” I yelled at Lachlan in disdain.

Seconds later I felt his large calloused hand connect with the side of my cheek. I almost lose my balance due to the sheer force of his slap.

I am done with taking slaps from men today, so I slapped Lachlan back even harder in return.

Lachlan laughed mockingly at me.

“I see my weak mate has developed a backbone. Well, I shall have fun breaking you back down.” Lachlan said laughing even harder this time.

I felt my anger start to rise. Not now Aleksa. We need more information. Don't show your hand just yet. Amber warned me.

“Please, where is Kingston?” I asked Lachlan again, this time with a lower tone,

“That mutt. He's none of your concern,” Lachlan said walking around me in a circular motion.

I hear him growl when he takes in my mark. I felt a hard punch to my stomach. I lean forward feeling gasping for breath as I am temporarily wounded. I got my breath back and managed to pull myself back up. I stood strong and tall. I tried to remain stoic.

I knew that he wanted me to submit, and to fear him. But I refused to. The next time he touches me I will not be holding back.

“First thing we will do when we get back to the pack is to get rid of that mutt's filthy mark on you. You will regret letting him mark you, I promise you that w***e!” Lachlan spat out in a rage.

“I gave you everything! You were living a lowly life in that human town before you met me. I gave you a home, a pack, a rank, a purpose. And this is how you repay me! By w*****g yourself to some alpha mutt in the middle of b**t f**k nowhere.” Lachlan screamed out. He looked like he was getting angrier by the moment.

I just stared at him blankly.

“What do you have to say for yourself w***e?” Lachlan prodded me while glaring at me.

“Where’s my mate? Where’s...” I am not finished with my sentence when I feel another slap, this time it’s on the other side of my face. Well, thank goddess for that, at least the swelling will even out.

Even though I’m in so much pain right now, and I can feel the tears welling in my eyes I start laughing.

“Is that it? Is that all you’ve got?” I call out mockingly, laughing so more. Lachlan looks at me in astonishment, probably wondering if I have a death wish.

I figure that by baiting him, I am buying more time for my friends to find me. We haven’t left the pack grounds yet. The dark witch appears to have left. Any minute now someone should arrive and then we can end this once and for all.

As if he can read my mind Lachlan grabs me and pulls me towards the pack boundaries.

“I’m no fool w***e! I know your game! Move it!” He said pulling me along even faster than before, his warriors falling closely behind us.

As we approach the pack boundary there is a black SUV waiting, the engine is running and someone is in the driver’s seat. We are approximately ten yards away, and no one has arrived yet. I guess they are busy with the rogues at the packhouse. I sure hope they are okay. Although, it looks like I’m on my own for now.

Just as we were nearing the SUV I heard footsteps coming from the trees behind us. I turned my head and was shocked to see Ezra running toward us. I gasped out loud.

“What do you want?” Lachlan said in a tone of annoyance.

It sounds like they know each other.

“That b***h isn’t going anywhere! We have unfinished business!” Ezra growled pointing at me.

Lachlan looked at us both, studying our body language in amusement.

“And what has my wretched mate done to get you all wound up?” Lachlan asked.

“She knows where my mate is!” Ezra screamed.

“Tell me now! Where is Kaia?” Ezra demanded.

He started to step toward me. As he did I saw Lachlan start to sniff.

“We had a deal Lachlan, and I am yet to see my mate!” Ezra yelled fiercely, looking like he was struggling to keep himself together.

“WHY DO YOU REEK OF MY MATE!” Lachlan called out almost in a rage. Then I see his eyes turn black.

Interesting. I thought to myself.

Ezra stopped suddenly.

“Yyyour mate?” He said almost stuttering, and stopping short.

“He tried to r**e me!” I called out.

I know that Lachlan doesn't care about anyone but himself. But I also know that he doesn't like to share his toys either. I decide that I can k**l two birds with one stone by playing them against each other.

“Whattttt!” Lachlan roared.

“She was asking for it!” Ezra boomed.

“No one touches my mate but me!” Lachlan yelled savagely.

And in seconds he had lost all control, shifted, and launched his wolf upon Ezra.

Ezra was caught off-guard, clearly not expecting such a reaction from his partner in crime. Cyrus didn't hold back.

He held Ezra's arms down, and started snapping at his neck, he was about to go in for the k**l when Ezra managed to push him off his legs.

Ezra shifted. His wolf was smaller than Lachlan's. Their wolves started circling one another slowly. They were both growling. I started to step back slowly. Unfortunately, I had forgotten about the warriors that were trailing me from behind.

The wolves lunged for each other and started rolling back and forth, each trying to get closer to the other's neck.

Cyrus managed to latch onto Ezra's wolf's neck and tore a huge chunk of skin off his neck. It was grotesque, I could see the artery rupture, and the blood rapidly spraying out all over Cryus and into the air.

Ezra started to go limp, he shifted back to human form. His skin was deathly pale, and I watched as he lost consciousness.

Cryus had delivered a fatal bite. I figured this was my time to escape now. I shifted into my wolf Amber and barged through the two warrior wolves behind me, causing them to fall to the ground.

I could sense that Cyrus was on my tail, merely seconds behind me, so I pushed myself as far as I could. I could almost see the end of the treeline ahead of me. I just had to move a little faster.

"Come on Amber, we are almost through the trees. Just a bit further!" I tried to encourage my wolf.

She was determined to outrun her ex-mate.

As we pushed past the last of the trees, I could feel the body heat of Cryus upon us, and just as I smelt him hover over us, I felt myself being pushed to the ground, my face hitting the ground suddenly.

Cyrus had launched his body on top of us, pinning us down. He was holding us face down on the ground.

Cyrus let out a menacing growl.

I could feel him shift on top of me.

"Mmmmn, just like oldtimes. Me on top riding you face down!" Lachlan declared.

"I think I'm gonna be sick!" I said out loud.

And with that Lachlan grabbed my head and pushed it hard against the ground.

I was too dizzy and in too much pain to even react.

I could feel myself being lifted up, but I felt so incoherent. I just let the darkness take me.

I felt myself being pulled along the ground. I could smell the grass and earth scratching my face as I was being dragged. A burning sensation had engulfed me, it felt like my skin was being grazed repeatedly against the ground.

I must have only lost consciousness for a few seconds, as I appeared to be on the pack grounds still. I could see I was being dragged back the way I came.

I had enough of this playing dumb business. I tried to play the passive weak female and hoped that would be enough for Lachlan to let slip where Kingston was, but now I was over it.

I focussed my energy and used my power to get myself out of the warrior's grip, burning their hands with an electrical surge. They started screaming in pain. I jumped up on my feet and got into a defensive stance.

"Playtime is over! Tell me where Kingston is now! And I might let you live!" I demanded with a cold and determined look on my face.

Lachlan looked at me in disbelief.

"What the f**k was that!" he yelled, looking at his warriors squealing in pain.

"That was me taking the power back!" I said standing there with my arms crossed looking at him smugly.

"I'm done playing games!" I yelled at him.

"Where is my mate? Tell me now and I might show you some mercy!" I demanded.

I could feel my eyes glowing. I was getting angrier by the moment. My wolf is anxious to find her mate and disgusted at the sight of her former mate.

“Your eyes!” Lachlan called out incredulity.

“Where is my mate!” I called out. My anger resonates and I felt a surge of energy, it felt electrical. I moved my hands in Lachlan’s direction and he and his warriors fall to the ground. I watch them look at me in horror and disbelief.

“What the!” Lachlan screamed out, pulling himself back up, and dusting himself off.

“Turns out you didn’t know me as well as you thought,” I told him coldly.

“What are you? Some kind of witch?” Lachlan blurted out.

He was stalling. I struggled to contain my wolf. I could feel my eyes switching color. I was about to inflict pain upon this poor excuse for a wolf in front of me.

I was getting angrier by the moment and I could feel myself heating up again. As I went to raise my hand towards Lachlan he called out.

“I can take you to him! Kingston! I will show you where he is!” Lachlan yelled out with two hands in front of me, gesturing to me that he will surrender for now.

“No games! If I think you are tricking me – I will make you suffer!” I tell him.

I feel so strong and in control. A far cry from the naive and shy Aleksa that I once was.

Aleska POV

We had been walking for a few minutes now and I could see the pack was starting to wake up. It would appear that the dark witch’s spell had been lifted. My mind-link was currently being flooded by anxious pack members. I felt a headache coming on so I blocked them all for now.

I tried to mind-link Kingston, hoping that I might finally be able to get through to him, but there was nothing. I couldn’t feel him, period. I knew that nothing sinister had happened to him so that was something at least.

“Aleksa, where are you?” I heard via mind-link. I was not surprised that Jackson could get through to me, it must be a crescent moon wolf perk.

“I’m with Lachlan and two of his warriors, we are walking towards the maintenance sheds, he’s cooperating at the moment but I don’t trust him,” I told Jackson.

“Right, we’re on our way!” Jackson called out via the mind-link.

As we were approaching the sheds I had a feeling that danger was awaiting us and that this was a trap, but I was determined to find Kingston. I had the upper hand for now, but I was still on high alert.

Lachlan told me that Kingston was just behind the sheds in the woods, and that he had him handcuffed in silver there. I look at him and I sensed that he was being truthful. I reached out to Amber but she couldn’t sense anything.

As we approached the bush I heard movement in multiple directions. In a matter of seconds, I was surrounded by wolves, snapping their teeth at me angrily.

Lachlan turned around with a smirk on his face.

“Right where I wanted you. Still so naive!” He laughed out loud, shaking his head toward me.

I crossed my arms and tilted my head at him.

I was about to make some smart-a*s comment when I heard snickering from behind the wolves, they parted ways, and out walked Eva.

“Aleska is mine!” She called out.

Lachlan looked at her in amusement.

“Have at it, just don’t k**l her, do you hear me!” Lachlan screamed out to Eva.

“I can’t make any promises!” Eva replied snarkily.

“Eva!” Lachlan called back.

“Yeah, ok, fine I won’t k**l her,” She begrudgingly agreed.

I looked at Eva and couldn’t contain my laughter. I found it hilarious that she thought that she could take me. I’m not the same girl that she remembered, but I will sure enjoy educating her.

I stood in anticipation, as I knew that she would strike first.

As predicted Eva walked up to me and attempted to slap me hard across the face, but I could see it coming a mile away and I blocked her hand with my arm, causing her to call out loudly in pain.,

“Pathetic!” I called out to her.

I saw that the wolf’s attention had moved to something coming from behind me.

I turned my head to see what it was, and I saw my friends approaching us with haste.

In doing so, I had broken the never turn your back on your opponent rule, and I had given Eva time to attack me.

I felt my body fall back on the ground hard. Eva was punching my face hard and fast, and after a few hits, I was starting to feel dizzy.

I let out a loud growl and pushed Eva from me hard. My wolf and I were now furious and I could feel my body heating up once again, but I didn’t want to use my powers on Eva, nor did I want to shift just yet. I wanted to take this b***h out on my own.

Suddenly I had flashbacks of all the times that I had suffered in pain while Eva was with Lachlan, all the times I confided in her, all the times I went out of my way for her, and then I thought about when I caught them in the act and that look of sheer smug satisfaction on her face, and that did it for me. I hit her hard, and I couldn’t stop.

I felt a wolf jump up and bite my shoulder from behind. I felt the pain surge through me. I took this moment to shift into my wolf. Amber was furious, she charged for the wolf and ripped out a chunk of skin from its flank. I then spat it out. It tasted disgusting in my mouth. It appeared to be a rogue wolf, judging by its foul odor.

I watched Eva shift and charge toward me and I knew that I needed to end the other wolf so that I could focus on Eva. As I was about to go in for the k**l, Eva’s wolf jumped on me and snapped its teeth toward my neck. I was now vastly outnumbered and there was a raging battle going on around me. I knew that my friends were here fighting and I needed to try to end this.

I focussed my energy on getting Eva off me. I felt myself heat up, and the electrical energy surge through me. I felt it connect with Eva's fur and smelt her fur burning as she begun to sizzle. She was essentially being electrified. She fell off me onto the ground, rolling until she appeared to lose consciousness.

The wolf that had just been attacking me looked scared and started to cower away, submitting to me.

"Run away, and don't come back, and I will let you live!" I mind-linked the wolf.

The wolf looked shocked, and nodded its head towards me, then ran off towards the woods.

I looked around me and saw Jackson and Lachlan circling one another. I saw Abbey had shifted and she was fighting back to back with Lily who had also shifted, there were about four wolves surrounding them.

Sam was fighting the two warriors that were accompanying Lachlan earlier.

The place was chaos. Pack wolves fighting rogue wolves, it was c*****e.

I look behind me and I saw some of the alphas from other packs that were here for the summit, were arriving to help us fight the rogues. Thank the goddess for that I thought to myself.

I mind-linked Jackson, "I need to find Kingston. Ask Lachlan where he is, do whatever you have to get the information out of him," I called out.

"You got it!" Jackson replied.

I stalked hurriedly towards Sam to help him fight the warriors, he was holding his own, but the sooner we took these rogues down the better.

I mind-linked my friends "Try to incapacitate them as opposed to massacring them, they are just following orders, we want to keep the death toll down if we can,"

My mind was flooded with replies.

"Need a hand, Sam?" I mind-linked Sam.

"Sure thing Luna," He called out to me.

In no time we take them out, but as fast as we get rid of them more seemed to appear.

“Sam, go help your mate! I’ll be fine here!” I called out to him via mind-link.

“Are you sure?” He called out nervously.

“Yes, go!” I told him.

Sam moved to help Lily and Abbey who seemed to be constantly surrounded by rogues.

Everyone was defending their positions well but it was becoming tiresome.

I asked my wolf if she could sense our mate yet. She replied to me that she couldn’t pick anything up.

“Abbey, do you think you could help me find Kingston? I still can’t get hold of him even though the spell has been lifted.” I mind-link her.

“Yes, I think so, I can definitely try, I just need to be able to concentrate,” Abbey replied.

“I’m on my way!” I replied to her.

I was done with fighting the hard way. I once again focussed my energy and shocked the wolves surrounding me. I felt a little drained. It appeared that the more my powers were used, the more energy it took from me.

I charged toward Abbey, Lily, and Sam. “Abbey if you can make your way to the maintenance sheds behind us you might be able to try that locating spell?” I declared.

“Hmmn, I can try. But I will need something that belongs to Kingston. Do you have anything I could use?” Abbey asked me.

I shook my head sadly.

“Ah, it’s ok, I’ll see what I can do, be back soon!” Abbey called out.

I took over her place in the circle and continued to fight the rogues. I was feeling a bit drained, my wolf missed her mate, it felt like forever since we had seen one another.

I looked over to Jackson, while I was fighting one on one with a rogue. I saw him and Lachlan fighting, rolling over each other, snapping and biting one another, each of them seeking dominance in the fight. Neither one of them seemed to be winning, both taking hard hits, with gashes evident all over their bodies, both with blood-soaked fur.

It was at that moment it dawned on me. Jackson's powers. I had never asked him what they are specifically. Why hasn't he ended his fight with Lachlan?

I wasn't paying attention to the fight, and I felt a claw s***h the side of my neck. I felt blood drip down my collarbone and onto my chest. The pain spurred me on.

I lunged forward and ripped the rogue's throat out, spitting its disgusting skin and flesh onto the field.

I was snapped out of my bloodlust by the feeling of a mind-numbing pain ripping through me. I felt as though I had been stabbed with a knife in my chest. I clutched myself where it hurt and let out a blood-curdling growl. I knew that I was feeling someone else's pain.

I scanned my eyes around the field and I saw Jackson fall to the ground, leaning on his knees, holding his chest. Lachlan hovering over him snickering.

I saw a silver dagger sticking out of his chest and my heart hurt for him. I picked myself up off the ground and my paws pounded against the ground galloping towards him as if my life depended on it.

I leapt off the ground into the air and lunged towards Lachlan, I started ripping into him, tearing into his chest frantically, he used whatever energy he had to push me off. I got back onto my paws to attack him some more, when I was distracted by Jackson's groans.

I was torn, part of me wanted to end this wretched wolf who has my mate hidden somewhere, who has made my life a misery as well as countless other and gravely injured my cousin, and the other part of me, the bigger part, needed to tend to Jackson.

I felt Sam and Caleb flank me.

Sam shifted beside me.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, reject you Lachlan as my Alpha," Sam said holding his ground. He then quickly shifted back to his wolf form ready to fight the wolf he once pledged his allegiance to.

Lachlan laughed.

"I was gonna k**l you anyway. Enjoy your short life as a Rogue!" He called out to Sam.

"I need to help Jackson, can you stall him for now?" I mind-inked Sam and Caleb.

"Yes Luna," They replied to me in synchronisation.

I leaned down to Jackson, and tried to assess his wound. The blood was hemorrhaging out. The dagger was silver. And then it hit me -my nightmares. I've seen this all before, in my nightmares.

I shifted back to human form, so I could use my hands to help put pressure on the wound.

I tried to fight back the tears but they continued to fall furiously.

"Stay with me Jackson!" I called out pleadingly.

I shook him to try keep him awake. I saw his eyes were starting to roll back.

"Jackson, please!" I called out desperately.

"Please Moon Goddess, help him!" I yelled out to the sky.

At that very moment, we were all blinded by an overwhelming bright white light.

Aleska POV

I had to close my eyes as the light was so bright. I heard a loud screeching sound, it was piercing my ears, like some sort of sound distortion. And then a wave of energy hit us all. The force was overwhelming and I felt lightheaded. After a few moments, I felt myself come to my senses. The light started to dim down and my eyes began to adjust. The light appeared to be shrinking and in a matter of moments, it had become merely an orb. There was a figure

emerging from behind it. I had to squint to see in the darkness of the woods. It was Xanthe!

Most of the wolves that had been fighting on the battlefield were holding their heads, they looked to be in pain. Xanthe looked panicked and started running towards me. I looked back down at Jackson, "Jackson, can you hear me, please stay with me!" I yelled at him.

Xanthe approached us and pushed me aside, "Move!" She ordered me. I looked at her in confusion.

"Xanthe, what are you doing?" I asked her.

"He is my Mate!" She told me looking at him in disbelief.

I could see how concerned she looked. She touched his face with the palm of her hands, her fingers touching Jackson's face in a gentle and loving manner.

Jackson's breathing was starting to normalize already with Xanthe's mere touch. I wonder if that could be the mate bond at work, or perhaps it was because Xanthe was a healer or both.

"Are you sure?" I asked Xanthe hopefully.

"I can heal him!" Xanthe declared.

"I just need some space," Xanthe said. I could tell she was trying to suppress her true feelings, I could hear the shakiness in her voice.

Xanthe POV

After meeting with Aleksa and Kingston that day in the gazebo in the rose gardens, I was determined to find out whatever I could about her heritage. However, along the way my past had caught up with me. I had been detained against my will by someone who had untoward plans for me.

I was able to escape that hellhole with help from an unlikely ally. I then began to make my way back to Rocky Mountain. My intuition had told me to come back right away. I had thought something might be wrong with Aleska until I reached the pack border and then I felt it. I felt him.

I felt the pull deep within my heart. My true love. My mate, was here, and he was hurt. I made my way toward the training fields and I saw a raging battle

taking place. I could sense it was between pack wolves fending off a rogue attack.

I could see everyone fighting from the woods. I saw that despicable Lachlan lunging toward Aleksa and then I let out a surge of power, blinding and stopping all in its path.

I made my way to the wolf on the ground as I saw he had shifted to his human form.

He was gorgeous. Rugged with dark and handsome features, I could sense that he was of alpha blood.

He had been stabbed with a silver wolfsbane-infused dagger in his chest and he was fading fast. I couldn't believe that after all these centuries I had finally found my mate. I refused to lose him when I had only just found him.

After telling Aleksa that he was my mate, I attempted to heal him. I placed my hands over his body and channeled all of my energy. I used my strength to s**k the poison from his system. I felt it consume me but I would not stop until my mate was safe.

It seemed like an eternity but in reality, it didn't take long at all. I watched my mate wake from his state of unconsciousness.

I watched him look into my eyes with desire and growl "MATE!"

I looked at him and I smiled lovingly.

Aleksa POV

My wolf became restless, and then she growled wildly. "Mate! Mate is coming!" She howled in my head with joy.

I jerked my head to the left, and I watched as my mate approached us with Abbey in tow.

"Kingston!" I called out desperately. My heart racing and an overwhelming desire to run to my mate and never let go, right here in the middle of this fight.

I looked at Xanthe and Jackson. They were having a moment. They wouldn't notice me gone.

I leaped up onto the ground and ran into my mate's arms.

As I ran toward him I took in his bruised and swollen face, he had a split lip and a split eyebrow. Why was he in such a state I wondered. Why was his werewolf healing not kicking in? What had happened to him?

I felt him flinch in pain as my body smacked against his. I looked at him with concern on my face. I lifted up his shirt and saw burn marks, it looked like a silver knife had been slashed against him repeatedly.

I looked at his wrists which also looked to be burned. I could only assume he had been bound in silver handcuffs or chains.

My wolf whimpered internally for our mate.

"I'm ok. I'll heal soon." Kingston said to me casually.

I smacked my lips against his and passionately kissed him. My wolf was howling in my head. Then I pulled away quickly, realizing that we were still in the middle of the fight. There would be time for this later, I thought to myself.

I looked to Abbey, "How?" That was all I could ask her, still astonished that she had found my mate.

"He was bound in silver, and unconscious when I found Him. He was tied to a chair, at the back of the maintenance shed. I picked up his scent while I was trying to find some space to perform the locating spell," Abbey replied.

I looked again at Kingston. Trying my best to suppress my tears of joy, as I was pushed aggressively to the ground. My head hit the ground with a loud thud. As I looked up to see what had just hit me I saw Kingston being pinned to the ground by Lachlan's wolf Cyrus.

I ran into Cyrus with all my might. I figure it will buy Kingston a few moments to shift. As he hovers over me snapping at me, I try to fight him off with my hands.

I hear him whimper as Kingston shifts into his wolf Sabre and takes a large chunk of flesh out of his left hind leg. Cyrus is pushed to the ground and it seems that Sabre has the upper hand when a scroungy brown wolf jumps onto him trying to get access to his neck.

Furious, and recognizing that the scroungy and singed wolf is Eva, I quickly shifted into my wolf Amber and lunged forward viciously taking aim at her neck. I latched onto it and I tugged at it mercilessly, not letting go until I was satisfied that there was no life left in her.

While part of me was sad to take a life, especially when this wolf was once my friend, I told myself that she was never the friend I thought she was, and that I would stop at nothing to protect my mate.

Sabre continued to attack Cyrus, taking aim at his neck but missing and taking a chunk out of his shoulder instead, he then went for Cyrus's jugular and ripped into his neck, blood squirting out all over Sabre, soaking his fur. Cyrus began to lose strength, whimpering, his motions stalling.

Sabre moves away from Cyrus nudging against my snout, we both shift and fall into each other's arms. Usually, I would be embarrassed to be naked in front of so many other wolves but right now I'm just feeling blessed to have my mate in my arms. I'm so besotted that I don't even notice Cyrus has shifted into his human form and he is getting back on his feet.

It's almost too late when I see he has somehow picked up the silver dagger and is about to stab Kingston in the neck when Sam comes from behind and grips the dagger forcing it into Lachlan's heart he then pulls it out and slices Lachlan's neck open decapitating him.

I gasped in horror as I watch my former mate's head fall to the ground. I wished that things could have been different, but he was a lost soul, so consumed in evil and darkness. There was no redemption for him.

I mouthed thank you to Sam for saving my mate from harm. Kingston had turned around just in time to see Lachlan meet his demise. We all stood there in silence for a moment.

As I looked around us, I noticed that the rogues had started to retreat. I watched my friends start to pick themselves up off the battlefield. I saw wolves tending to the injured. We all just stared at one another looking grateful that we were still all here, and it is finally over.

Aleksa POV

Four hours later.

Once Lachlan was no longer a threat and we were sure the rogues had retreated, we began the task of picking ourselves back up.

We rounded the entire pack together and all the visiting packs, and had a quick debrief.

After the debriefing we encouraged the visiting packs not to feel obliged to stay, and to feel free to make their way home, as the summit was effectively over, due to these unexpected events.

We had just finished rounding up the last of the deceased rogues when the royal pack entourage arrived. This isn't the way we were planning to greet the Alpha King, and it definitely wasn't what we had planned for this day of the summit.

Originally we had a huge festival planned with performers, stalls, music, and food. Until we were attacked by a dark witch and rogues led by my deranged ex-mate.

As the Alpha King himself, also known as my cousin Callum, stepped out of his Range Rover he took in the grim sight that awaited him.

The pack ground was a mess. Blood stained the once lush green field in front of us. It was clear a battle had taken place here.

Before he had a chance to ask what had happened we moved forward to introduce ourselves. We were quite a sight, I was still bleeding from the wounds I had sustained during the fight, Kingston looks like a bruised and battered mess, and we both still needed medical attention.

We had declined it initially, as we wanted the most vulnerable and injured wolves to be tended to first. Kingston tried to insist that I go straight to the pack doctor but I wanted to make sure my friends were seen first. Plus I could already feel my wounds were being healed.

We welcomed Callum to the pack and led him to the pack house dining room where some of our kitchen staff organized some pastries and hot drinks for Callum and his men.

We explained the events of the past twenty-four hours briefly, as well as explained that we had ramped up security as well as had Xanthe and Abbey placing some protective spells in place to secure the perimeter for now, in case of any further retaliation.

Callum suggested that we get cleaned up, get our wounds tended to, and then meet him and his men again in an hour or two on the pack house patio.

After showering and dressing and attending to our wounds, we met Callum at the pack house patio. The sun was beginning to set and it was quite a sight to behold. It was daunting to think that there was still so much to do before we retired for the day.

Callum had examined my crescent moon wolf marking with awe. Jackson didn't have a marking yet as he hadn't mated and marked his true mate yet, although it was only a matter of time now that he and Xanthe had found one another.

I begun to relay my story of how I had been raised as a human, to finding my wolf Amber and shifting for the first time, to meeting Lachlan and my time at Evergreen, up until the events that had just occurred here at Rocky Mountain. Callum had praised my strength and integrity, as well as Jackson's ability to lead a pack and still manage to keep his wolfs secret identity.

Callum then went on to explain his understanding of the events that had occurred at the royal pack all those years ago, as well as his condolences regarding our parents.

Jackson had also joined us, he was completely healed. It was as if nothing had happened earlier today. There was not a scratch on him.

He was reluctant to join us at first as he refused to be away from Xanthe, especially since they had just found one another. So Xanthe was present at the meeting also. Callum thanked her for her efforts to protect me and keep me safe, as well as her services to the royal pack.

Callum had even offered Jackson and me the opportunity to join the royal pack as senior members, which we were very honored to receive. However, we had to politely decline as neither of us wished to leave our current packs due to finding our true mates and our obligations.

While Callum was disappointed that we didn't take him up on his offer he did understand. So instead he came up with the idea of a Royal Pack Alliance which was extended not only to our closest allies but to the packs that had fought in the attack earlier today.

Though the packs had already started to make their way home immediately after the attack, we had all agreed to reconvene again in a month's time to discuss alliances and a peace treaty.

Callum was curious about the Hybrid who had such great knowledge of the royal pack, so he requested a meeting with Abbey, to which she gladly obliged, to which Alaric accompanied her too.

It appeared that Callum had known Abbey's mother well and they shared a few stories with one another. Abbey and Alaric were also invited to visit the royal pack, which they are intending to do after returning back to their packs.

Jackson and I have both been invited to stay at the Volkov Kingdom to meet some of our distant relatives and to learn more about our heritage. We have both agreed to come along, and we intend to bring our mates with us but have asked that it be postponed until everything is back to normal again following the recent attacks.

Jackson declared that he needed to speak with his father first and check back in with his pack, as he had been absent for some time now.

Further to that, he wished to introduce Xanthe to his pack as his Luna.

Xanthe was a bit reluctant. Although she had accepted Jackson as her mate, she was unsure about becoming Luna and is worried that there may be resistance to her being accepted as Luna due to the fact that she is a witch by birth.

I have a feeling it will all work out eventually though.

After Lachlan had met his demise, the rogues instantly began to retreat. However, we had managed to capture a few of them for interrogation purposes. They aren't saying anything at the moment, but Kingston believes that in a few days' time they will probably start talking.

Kingston was organizing a tracking team right now to see if they could follow the rogue's scents in an effort to find out where they came from, and determine if they will be a future threat.

Xanthe was planning to contact a coven that she has a working relationship in a bid to try to find out who the dark witch was and to see if she will become a further threat to us in the future.

The dark witch did say she would "see me soon," and I'm pretty sure she knew that I was a crescent moon wolf, so that could become problematic.

Kingston and I were heading off to the pack hospital now to check on our friends and injured pack members. After that I planned on calling Mason and Quinn and sharing a video call with my pups if they were still awake.

Now that Lachlan was no longer a threat, there is no reason why they cant all come home.

I simply cannot wait to have my pups safely in my arms again. It feels like it has been an eternity since I last saw them.

Kingston had managed to contact Asher, and he and Kaia are on their way back to Rocky Mountain. Asher said that when he went to tell them about Ezra's death, they already knew. They told him that they have something exciting to tell us when they get back. We have an inkling as to what it might be, but we are excited to hear what they have to say.

It's going to take some time to get things back to what they once were. We have a lot to do as far as pack security goes. The fact that the dark witch managed to create all that chaos is pretty scary. To think such an attack was able to occur, means we have much work ahead of us to ensure it doesn't happen again.

We will have lots of work to do with the creation of this new alliance with the royal pack, but everyone seems open to the idea so far.

With so many finding their fated and second chances mates, there is still much celebrating to be done. There are also Luna ceremonies to take place, including my own ceremony. But there is plenty of time for that.

What matters now is that everyone is safe and well, that all the injured recover, and that we get things back to a state of normality – whatever that might look like.

As I descended the stairs of the pack house I looked around at the lush greenery that surrounds me, the sky is now starting to darken, and night is falling.

I am so blessed to call this place home. I am safe. I am free at last.

I looked to the bottom of the stairs and see my perfect mate waiting for me.

Kingston had a grin on his face, and I raised my brows as I look at him, and then I saw why he was grinning.

As I looked to the side entrance of the main packhouse reception I saw my precious pups, my Liam and Layla, standing next to Mason and Quinn.

“How?” I asked Kingston via mind-link, in a state of astonishment.

“I rang Mason after the attack, and said it was safe to bring Liam and Layla back,” Kingston replied.

I was already making my way toward my pups.

“Mommy!” They called out in unison, running as fast as their little legs would carry them. I too started to run towards them and we met in the middle. They landed in my arms and I kissed them both on their foreheads as they push their heads into my chest and we take in one another’s scents. I felt the tears of joy falling from my cheeks. Then I felt Kingston join our hug and we all embraced each other. Our family unit was finally back together. Everything was just as it should be. I felt at peace at last. I never dreamed that I could feel so complete and so loved.

Luna Aleksa’s Escape Chapter 45

Aleksa POV

Breakfast was a little awkward. Kingston seems a little unsettled about the news of Jackson being a Crescent Moon Wolf. Jackson also seems a little guarded. I got the feeling he wasn’t happy with his identity being shared. After breakfast, Jackson asked to speak privately with Kingston, so, naturally, I

accompanied them. Jackson asked for Kingston's word that he wouldn't mention his wolf status to anyone. Kingston was a little offended and didn't take too kindly to being "told what to do" as he put it. I had to intervene, and eventually, we were able to come to a compromise. Jackson agreed that Kingston could tell Asher and Kai, but that he had to alpha command them to keep the secret, which was a reasonable request.

It's mid-morning now and there are several Alphas with their entourages making their way towards the pack-house. I hope these Alpha's and their entourage are as nice as the first few have been.

First up is Alpha Theo and his Luna Stella. They run a large midwestern pack, comprising several states. They have their Gamma Matt and his mate Mia with them, as well as four Elite Warriors. They seem nice, but not big on conversation. Which suits us as the next group is already pulling up. We have them staying in a larger cottage near the training grounds. We have some pack members ready to escort them to their cottage.

Next to arrive is the Alpha of what we refer to as the Floridian Pack. He is unmated, rumor has it that he rejected his fated mate, and he has a reputation for being a bit of a womanizer according to the notes that Quinn left me. He appears to be traveling lightly, with only two Elite Warriors with him. He seems a little gruff and is paying a little too much attention to my chest, his eyes roaming slowly up and down my body, which is making me feel uncomfortable. I could see that Kingston was getting agitated, so we quickly directed him to Kai, who would show him to the small cottage we had prepared for him. Before he walks off, he asks us to send an Omega to his quarters. I am a little shocked at his request, so I refer to Kingston, who is also looking unimpressed.

"We are not that sort of pack. If you are looking for the company of a female or a she-wolf, you might like to take a trip to the nearest human town." Kingston politely redirects our guest. He has an astounded expression on his face but doesn't push the issue. I assume that he doesn't hear no that often.

Before we can even address one another, another two SUVs arrive next to us. I watch as the first person steps out of the car, and my heart jumps out of my chest.

"Caleb! Oh, my goddess! What? How? I'm soo happy to see you!" I said as I ran up to him and wrapped my arms around my previous Gamma, giving him the biggest hug of his life. I am so ecstatically happy right now. I moved my

head back and took in his face. I am about to say something when I hear someone clear their throat. I know it's Kingston. I could feel Sabre getting agitated, so I turned around.

"Kingston, meet Caleb! Caleb was my Gamma at Evergreen." I said, and then I saw Kali getting out of the SUV with a big smile on her face.

"Oh my! Kali!" I yelled, as I again ran up to her like a child at Christmas. Kali moves to walk towards me and we pull into each other and hug, with tears sweeping down our faces. Kali is one of my best friends. I love her with all my heart and I am so unbelievably happy to see them both here right now.

"Kali, I take it?" Kingston says to Kali, smiling. And he moves toward Caleb to shake his hands, and then to Kali. Who I finally free from my grip.

"How are you here?" I asked, suddenly curious as to what I owe the honor of seeing my best friends here at Rocky Mountain.

"Wait. What's this? Are you?" I said excitedly at the small bump that is protruding from Kali's dress.

"Are you pregnant?" I asked her, already knowing the answer, but wanting to hear it from her first.

Caleb walks up to us both and places his arm around his mate lovingly, then places his hand on her belly. "We are!" He exclaims proudly.

"Oh my! I am so happy for you both. You are gonna make the best parents. Isn't this just the best news, Kingston?" I asked my mate, in an effort to include him more in the conversation.

Kingston walks up to me, wraps his arm around my side, and says "That is great news, congratulations to you both!" He tells them, and he gives Caleb a man hug and pats him on the back, and then Kali a gentle hug, taking great care to avoid her bump.

Kali then pulls away from us all and starts to walk over to the first SUV.

"Allow me to introduce my cousin, Alpha Callum of Crimson Moon," Kali says, opening the door of the first SUV. Out steps a very tall, very large, heavily tattooed man, with long curly untamed hair and a lot of facial hair. He has dark

eyes and tanned skin. His presence is quite intimidating. I am adjusting my neck as far as I can as I look up to him to address him.

“Welcome to the Rocky Mountain Pack, and to the Summit Alpha Callum. I am Kingston, and this is my Luna Aleksa. We are glad you could join us.” Kingston says as he reaches out to shake Callum’s hand.

Callum then extended his hand out towards Kingston, shaking his hand. He then began to shake my hand also. I smiled and nodded at him.

“Thank you. Nice to meet you both. Aleksa, I have heard a lot about you.” He says with a deep husky voice.

I smiled shyly, “Thank you, Alpha Callum. It’s nice to meet you,” I said. “And thank you for all you have done for my friends Caleb and Kali. I am so glad they made it safely to Crimson Moon. I am in debt to you all. Without all of your help, I wouldn’t be here right now.” I said with gratitude to Callum, Caleb, Kali, and Kingston.

“I don’t believe that is the case. You are strong. You would have figured it out. We are happy to have helped, however.” Callum replied to me.

At that moment, another two SUVs drove up and we realized we needed to show our guests their accommodation. I can’t go with my friends although I really want to. I have to continue my Luna duties by welcoming our guests. So I mind-link Asher and Kaia to see if they can escort our special guests.

I had no idea Caleb and Kali were coming. I am not sure if we have accommodation ready for them. I mind-linked Kingston and he assured me that Callum had RSVP with the correct number of guests, so their accommodation is ready now.

Asher and Kaia arrive at the packhouse entrance and Kaia looks surprised to see Caleb and Kali. She walks up to them as if they are old friends, and in a way they kind of are. They are also happy to see Kaia and after they all hug and get acquainted with Asher, he begins to show them the way to their accommodation.

The next two cars approach and I hear a commotion coming from the cars, a high-pitched female voice and a gravelly male voice, a door is thrust open and an angry-looking alpha in his mid-twenties, I would say, steps out, he takes in the surroundings, then starts walking towards us.

“Good morning, welcome to the Rocky Mountain Pack,” I said to him. As I go to shake his hand, he completely dismisses me. Kingston c***s his head and growls. He is not impressed at the disrespect I am shown.

I decide to ignore it and as I am about to say something to break the tension, a shrieking woman exits the SUV, yelling at the Alpha in front of us “You could have waited!” She yelled.

She’s hastily repositioning her bra, her lipstick is a little smudged and her hair is disheveled. I tried to mask the amused expression on my face with a smile. She appeared to be unimpressed that she was left in the car, and that her mate didn’t wait for her. She walks up to Kingston, bats her eyelids and introduces herself, getting very close and personal, merely inches from Kingston’s face. He does not look happy as he steps back to get some space between himself and our guest.

“Luna Roxy, and you are?” She says while extending her hand for Kingston to kiss, I’m assuming. Her mate smacks her hand away from Kingston.

I release a growl at her actions. Amber doesn’t appreciate her flirtatious nature and the gall of this she-wolf throwing herself at our mate.

“Oh hell no, she did not just do that!” Amber says angrily in my head.

“She needs to know her place!” Amber protests to me.

“Let it go, Amber, please, let’s just get through today.” I pleaded with my wolf. She’s so fierce and protective and I love her, but she can be a bit aggressive at times.

“Roxy darling, don’t embarrass yourself.” Her mate says, shaking his head dismissively.

” I am Alpha Tyler. I run the largest pack in California. You are Kingston, I assume?” He says to Kingston.

“I am. Welcome, Alpha Tyler and Luna Roxy.” Kingston says plainly.

“Please meet my Luna Aleksa.” Kingston declares as he pulls me into his chest proudly.

Roxy looks me up and down and has a look on her face that I can't quite decipher.

"Pleasure," Tyler replies, nodding at me. I get the impression he doesn't like me much. Although I can't imagine why that might be, considering we met only just a few minutes ago. Roxy just flashes me an insincere smile. I get the feeling she likes to be the center of attention. Amber is fuming at her obvious disrespect, but it is only day one of a week-long summit, so I will keep her at bay for now.

"We hope you enjoy your stay with us. I will have someone escort you to your accommodation. Lunch will be in the pack-house dining room. If you need anything else in the meantime, please feel free to call reception, the numbers are on the phone," Kingston says abruptly. I can tell he wants to end this interaction as quickly as possible.

And with that, Kai arrives and takes over, freeing Kingston and me for a few moments before the next group arrives.

We watch as Tyler and Roxy make their way back to their vehicle, bickering at each other. Roxy turns her head back and gives Kingston a seductive wink.

Again, I let out a warning growl. Both Tyler and Roxy don't look back. I am starting to tire of Roxy's shameless attitude. Kingston mind-links me, telling me to let it go, it's not worth it, and hopefully, we won't have much to do with them throughout the summit. I somehow doubt we will be that lucky, but I will try to remain optimistic. I have bigger things to worry about than a flirtatious and attention-starved Luna.

It's late afternoon now and there are only a few remaining packs left to check-in, Evergreen being one of them. They may arrive this evening. They could also arrive early in the morning. As far as we know, Lachlan doesn't know that I am here, so I am not sure how this will go down. Kingston assures me that Asher, Kai, and our Elite Warriors are ready for every scenario, and Jackson has been briefed on the situation and he has pledged his support also.

I've been having those nightmares more and more frequently recently, and they all end the same way. I am adamant they are a premonition, a glimpse of things to come, and if that is the case, then we are in trouble.

Aleska POV

I had the worst sleep last night. Back-to-back nightmares. Except that this time, certain aspects of the nightmares had changed. For example, this time Eva and Sam were with Lachlan. Things seemed to be going on in the background of my nightmares, but I couldn't quite make them out. I woke up covered in sweat and my anxiety was at an all-time high. I tried to go back to sleep again to figure out what else was happening in my dream. I had maintained that these dreams seemed like premonitions, and they had changed, and that concerned me.

Eventually, I gave up and decided I would make a start to my day. It was then that I noticed that the other half of my bed was empty. Perhaps Kingston couldn't sleep either. I jumped into the shower and then quickly got dressed. I made my way downstairs, heading towards the kitchen.

I decided to make a nice hot coffee in the kitchen while Rose and some of our kitchen staff put the finishing touches on breakfast as our guests would be joining us this morning. I felt a little relieved as I recalled the video call we had last night after dinner with Liam and Layla. Our pups were beaming with energy, they were so excited about telling Kingston and me all about their adventures in Idaho.

Chase and Cordelia had met up with some close friends of theirs and they had brought their grand-pups along with them to play with Liam and Layla. It sounded like they were having the time of their lives. I realized that we had told Chase and Cordelia to keep them isolated in the cabin, but we trusted their judgment. Plus, we were confident in Mason and Quinn's ability to protect our pups had the occasion arose.

After speaking with Liam and Layla for a while, Cordelia and Chase came to tell them it was bedtime, so we were able to speak with Mason and Quinn for a bit. They reassured us that our pups were safe and that they hadn't encountered anything out of the ordinary and were covering their tracks whenever they needed to travel.

Mason went on to tell us how close Chase was to the former alpha of the local pack and how that alpha was indebted to Chase, so he had no concerns as of yet. Although he did maintain that he was keeping a close eye on things.

Chase was a great judge of character and was well respected by other alphas. I also knew that he loved Liam and Layla as if they were his own biological pups, so we knew our pups were in safe hands.

Kingston had to leave early as he had a phone call to his office that he had to attend to. He said it was urgent. I continued the call with Mason and Quinn.

Something seemed different about them. They seemed closer than usual and Quinn seemed to be having a glow about her. She was giggling a lot and they seemed even more affectionate than usual. They said there was something they wanted to tell us together, both Kingston and I.

Once they had reassured me it didn't concern Liam and Layla and that they were all safe, I agreed to end the call with them, as I wasn't sure when Kingston would return. We agreed to continue the call tomorrow morning before breakfast.

I was pulled from my thoughts of last night's call by a high-pitched shriek. Unfortunately, I could identify that voice anywhere – it was Luna Roxy. I left my coffee on the bench and walked hastily out of the kitchen to see what the problem was.

As I entered the hallway I could see Lily, one of our young omega pack members holding the side of her face which was reddened, trying to stifle her cry.

Luna Roxy was standing next to her yelling "Don't you dare make eye contact with me, Omega! Hear me?" She yelled, pointing her long curly witch-like nails at the young omega's face.

"Yes, Luna, I'm so sorry Luna," Lily said in a scared and shocked tone, facing the floor.

"What the hell is going on?" I angrily asked Roxy. Already knowing who the guilty party was. Lily was possibly the kindest person I had ever met. There was no way she instigated this incident.

"Your stupid omega here doesn't know her place. She had the nerve to look me in the eyes!" Roxy spat out.

"Did you hit her?" I questioned Roxy in a loud accusatory tone.

"I sure did. She's lucky I didn't do worse!" Roxy yelled back.

"You, ever, touch any of my pack members again, and I will hit you myself!" I declared to Roxy. Who looked at me offended.

"I take crimes against my pack members very seriously," I declared. Then I went on to add, "You need to apologize!"

"Nuh-uh, not happening," Roxy tells me with a defiant look on her face.

I am fuming with anger at the nerve of Roxy. Amber is growling too. She wants me to let her out.

At that very moment, Kingston walked into the hallway.

"What's going on?" Kingston asked, flabbergasted at the scene unfolding in front of him.

"She hit poor Lily in the face for looking at her!" I yelled, getting more worked up by the minute.

"Is this true, Luna Roxy?" Kingston asked in disbelief.

"Damn straight it is! b***h needs to know her place!" Roxy spat out venomously.

Kingston mind-linked me and told me we need to de-escalate this situation as we have bigger problems to deal with today. So I agreed to let her go with a warning.

"Luna Roxy," I said in my calmest voice.

"We do things differently in our pack, everyone is treated the same regardless of their rank. I suggest that if you wish to stay for the duration of the summit you will need to abide by our rules. You are not to hit or abuse another of my pack members again, is that clear?" I told her with a hardened expression on my face.

Luna Roxy screws up her face and bits down hard on her lip. "Whatever," She blurts out, and she begins to walk toward the dining room.

I looked at Kingston in disbelief. He could no doubt feel the frustration and anger emanating from me.

I then turned to poor Lily, who was still holding her reddened cheek.

"I'm so sorry Lily, come with me. I'll get you an ice pack for your cheek, then you can take the rest of the day off," I said to her as I led her into the kitchen.

Breakfast went better than I had expected after the Roxy fiasco. Naturally, she acted as if nothing had happened at breakfast. I wouldn't want to tell anyone what happened if I were her either. She's such a vile person to abuse someone so young and vulnerable as that.

Kingston worked hard to ensure that this Summit was a success, so we didn't need any drama unfolding at breakfast. Thankfully, it all went smoothly. The packs were enjoying mingling with one another, some were a little standoffish, but that is to be expected. There were plenty of compliments to the kitchen staff, the breakfast buffet was spectacular, and everyone ate plenty.

Today there are all sorts of activities planned for packs that have already arrived, as well as some basic orientation and check-ins. Tomorrow there would be a business conference where the alphas would be spending most of the day in meetings, where they would be networking. Also known as drinking copious amounts and comparing their packs and their acquisitions all day.

A Spa day had been organized for the Luna's and their female entourage, starting off with a brunch first, then on to massages, relaxing by the pool, and some cocktails in the afternoon.

The day was to finish with a large BBQ-style gathering under a large marquee near the training grounds. There was even a live band organized. Kingston tells me that this is usually quite a popular event where the entire pack and the visiting packs and their members get together to celebrate. Occasionally, wolves meet their mates at the gathering. I hoped this would be the case this time. I love watching people meet their other halves.

Kingston and I had stationed ourselves at the main entrance of the packhouse, there were only a handful of packs left to arrive now, and then the summit could really get underway, depending on what would happen when Lachlan arrived.

An SUV drove up and out there was a tall, athletic built man with sandy blonde hair. He walked to the opposite car door and opened it, out walked a stunning petite brunette with greenish-colored eyes. They walked towards us smiling. I can already feel good vibes radiating from them.

"Good Morning, I am Alpha Alaric and this is my beautiful Luna Abbey, we are from the Lunar Eclipse Pack," he says proudly to both Kingston and myself.

“Good Morning Alaric and Abbey, I am Kingston and this is my Luna Aleksa, it’s a pleasure to meet you both,” Kingston replied back to them.

“Wow, your pack lands are so breathtaking,” Abbey tells us.

“Thank you, we love it here. We hope you enjoy your time here at Rocky Mountain,” I said to Abbey.

As I went to shake Abbey’s hand, I felt something strange, like a flashback of her and what looked like significant moments in her life. Like memories. I could feel that she was getting the same from me. I looked at her astounded. She just smiled at me, then let out a giggle, and then looked at Alaric knowingly.

Aleksa POV

“What was that?” I asked, with a shocked expression on my face. Kingston looks at me worriedly. He can sense something isn’t right.

“It’s ok. I felt it too,” Abbey said, smiling at me.

I was confused. What was that? So many questions consumed me. I went to say something when Abbey cut me off.

“You have powers! You are special too! I’m a hybrid, in case you are wondering. I’m half-werewolf, half-witch!” Abbey told me excitedly. Although she wasn’t moving her lips, was she mind-linking me?

“Wow, Aleksa! It appears you have the ability to mind-link anyone, you have allowed me to share your link, how cool is this!” Abbey replied.

She sure is bubbly. I wish I shared her enthusiasm, but I haven’t decided whether this is a good thing or a bad thing just yet.

I looked at Alaric and Kingston, who were looking at us with confused expressions evident on their faces.

“Our mates look concerned. Maybe we should include them in this conversation?” Abbey suggested.

“There are others around, so perhaps you should tell Alaric and I’ll tell Kingston via mind-link. We should talk a little later this afternoon. What do you say?”

“Deal!” Abbey quips.

And with that, I break our mind-link. Turning to Kingston, I linked him and told him what was going on. He was surprised as he hadn't met a hybrid before and agreed we all needed to sit down and talk later this afternoon.

The next SUV pulls up to the main entrance. Asher had arrived to escort Alaric and Abbey to their cabin. Kingston must have mind-linked him, I assume.

I hear Amber stir in my head. “Don't worry Aleksa, it's OK. She's friendly. She will be a great ally.” Amber reassured me.

Before I could prod her further, she blocked me out, in true Amber fashion.

I shake my head, sometimes my wolf drives me crazy, always deciding what I can and can't know and making me wait so much. She can be so frustrating. But I have to trust her. She always has our best interests at heart.

As Asher escorts Alaric and Abbey off to their accommodation, Abbey turns and waves back at me with a great smile on her face. Amber's right, she seemed really nice.

Kingston and I walked to the next SUV to meet and greet our new arrivals. A young alpha walks out, he doesn't look like he's a day over eighteen, his driver opens the other car door, and out steps what I assume is his Luna.

They walked up to us and introduced themselves. They are from Wisconsin, they are hard to gauge in conversation, and are eager to get to their accommodation. Once their escort had arrived, we made our way to the kitchen to make a quick coffee.

While we drank our coffee, I told Kingston about my interaction with Abbey, as well as the visions I saw of her. Just quick glimpses of her at various stages of her life, good and bad memories by the looks of things. She has been through a lot in her life by the looks of things. He was a little uneasy about our interaction, probably more concerned than anything. I told him what Amber had said about Abbey and he felt a bit better about things after that.

Kingston then went on to have a discussion with Sabre. Kingston tells me that Sabre agrees with Amber.

I am making a note to follow Abbey up later today, although I have a feeling Abbey will seek me out before I get to her. I am not too worried though, all I get from her are positive vibes.

The next entourage had arrived, as Kingston and I made our way back outside. A large and intimidating-looking alpha with a dark aura walked out of his SUV. His face was void of emotion, something about him gave me the creeps.

“Watch them, Aleksa. They are trouble. Our friend is in danger!” Amber tells me alarmingly.

As I was about to ask Amber what she meant by that, when another male got out of the second SUV. He was large and menacing. He had a huge jagged scar down the right side of his face. In fact, he had scars all over his neck and arms. I didn’t want to offend him by staring, but I couldn’t help but notice them.

He started sniffing the air around him and let out a huge growl.

“Where is she!” he yelled at us both. His head switched frantically from side to side. Kingston stood in front of me with his arms out in a defensive stance. I could feel the anger rolling off him.

I had a bad feeling about this. A feeling of dread was consuming me.

Kingston let out a warning growl at them both. In what seemed like only moments, several of our warriors descended upon the main entrance of the packhouse.

“Get your pack member under control, now!” Kingston demanded of the visiting alpha.

The alpha in front of us looked agitated that Kingston had yelled at him.

“Ezra, control yourself!” he growled.

Ezra! Oh, my goddess! It hits me like a ton of bricks. Kaia! I thought to myself.

I felt a tightening in my chest and it felt hard to breathe for a moment when I realized that this was Kaia’s mate, the one she rejected, the one that tried to lock her up. I was instantly concerned for my friend.

I immediately mind-linked Kaia. “Wherever you are, stop right now! Ezra is here! At the packhouse!” I yelled at her through our mind-link. But I accidentally mind-linked the entire pack at the same time in my panic. I quickly block out all voices except Kaia, Asher, and Kingston’s.

“What the f**k!” She replied to me. I can’t respond as the alpha in front of me is looking at me angrily, as is Ezra.

“Alpha Finn of the Midnight Pack,” the alpha says, trying to deescalate things, reaching out to shake Kingston’s hand.

Kingston shook his hand firmly “Kingston, and this is my Luna Aleksa,” Kingston said to him.

“This is my Beta, Ezra,” Finn says to us both.

I try to mask my confusion. Kaia had told me that her mate had been an elite warrior. Kaia was the Beta female of the Midnight pack, and her brother was to take over the beta role. How could Ezra be the Beta? What does that mean for Kaia’s brother, I wondered.

“I can smell that my mate is here! Her scent is everywhere!” Ezra declared to us all.

We looked at him feigning confusion.

Kingston questioned him, “And who might your mate be?”.

“Kaia! My mate’s name is Kaia,” Ezra replied gruffly.

“Can’t say we know anyone by that name. We have had a lot of packs through her. Perhaps you have confused a scent?” I suggest to Ezra.

“Bullshit!” I saw you mind-link when you heard my name. Where is she?” He yelled, stalking aggressively towards me.

“Watch your f*****g tone with my mate! And take one step further and I will end you!” Kingston growled at Ezra.

The three of them stood aggressively staring each other down, the warriors were on edge, ready to pounce at any moment, for a few moments until Kingston spoke again.

“You are not getting off to a good start here gentleman, remember who’s pack it is that you are in!” he added further.

“Apologies Kingston, my Beta lost his mate some time ago, he’s a little on edge.” Alpha Finn says, trying to deescalate the situation.

Ezra is pulled aside by his Alpha.

“Excuse us for a minute, please,” he said to us, nodding respectfully, although it was lacking in sincerity. I got the feeling they were up to something.

They mind-linked each other for a minute, facing away from us.

I took this opportunity to mind-link Asher, including Kingston and Kaia also “You need to get Kaia out of here now, Ezra, her ex-mate is here! Take the back entrance. We will distract them for now,” I told him.

“Go, Asher. We will talk later.” Kingston added.

“Yes Luna, Alpha, we are leaving now.” Asher linked us back.

“Thank you!” Kaia says to Kingston and me. And we end our mind-link.

“Gentleman, why don’t we escort you to your accommodation?” I suggested to them. Kingston took my lead also.

“Let us get you settled and then we can talk about this further, in my office perhaps?” Kingston suggested to them.

Knowing that they can’t deny this offer, as to do so would be too obvious, they reluctantly oblige.

“Thank you Kingston and Aleksa, that sounds like a good idea,” Alpha Finn replied.

Ezra didn’t say anything, he just screwed up his face and looked away. Clearly, it was taking everything he had to remain calm.

Kingston has mind-linked Kai, to ask him to take over the meet and greets for now. We will need to buy some time to figure out what to do with Ezra and Finn, and how we can protect Kaia from him.

It looks like things just got a whole lot more complicated for us all. As if one psycho ex-mate wasn't enough to deal with. Now there are two of them.

As we reached their allocated accommodation, we both received a mind-link from border patrol. They told us that Evergreen had arrived. I turned to Kingston, "He's here!"

Aleksa POV

We left Finn and Ezra to get settled at the cottage. Hopefully, they will stay put for a while. Kingston had mind-linked me that he would organize someone to run interference with them for now.

We started making our way towards the packhouse. Kingston wanted me to go and stay with Caleb and Kali while he assessed the situation at the pack house to see who had arrived, and how many of them, and gauge how much of a problem we were gonna have.

A small part of me was happy with that idea. But the rest of me knew it was time to face my fears. So I declined Kingston's request. I knew that Kingston wanted to protect me, but there are some things we have to do for ourselves and I felt this was one of them.

I heard a branch snap in the bushes we were approaching. I wasn't worried when I saw the wolf moving quickly through the bush, as I could sense that it was Caleb. I looked at Kingston and shook my head. "Really?" I said to him, rolling my eyes.

"I need to know you are safe while we sort this out, and I know that Caleb would want to be here with you right now. So I may have mind-linked Kai to ask Caleb to join us, this involves him too," Kingston tells me.

"But, Kali, he needs to protect her!" I told Kingston, feeling worried about my pregnant friend. She too would be on Lachlan's hit list.

"Kali is fine, there will be two of our elite warriors with her at all times," Kingston tells me.

"Luna," Caleb said, walking out from the tree he had shifted behind. He had a pair of shorts on, but no top.

"Apologies, this is all I could grab at such short notice," Caleb says to us both.

“Caleb, it’s Aleksa, for the millionth time,” I told him with an unimpressed look on my face. He knows I hate being called by my title.

“Guys, we don’t have time for pleasantries. We need to keep going.” Kingston pulls us back on task.

“I will shift and go on ahead. You two pick up your pace and meet us there, approach slowly. I will mind-link you once I’ve assessed the situation.” Kingston says, looking gravely at Caleb.

“I will guard her with my life, Kingston, you have my word,” Caleb said solemnly.

“I know, thank you, Caleb,” Kingston nodded to Caleb and then he shifted and ripped towards the treeline.

“Ahem.” I loudly cleared my throat.

“I’m not the same girl that couldn’t defend herself, a lot has changed since Evergreen. I can do this! I won’t let him intimidate me. I feel stronger!” I told my ex-gamma, with absolute certainty in my voice.

Caleb looked into my eyes, “I understand all that, Aleksa, but we don’t know what he is capable of, and I’m not taking any chances. I took an oath to protect you,” he reminds me.

We don’t have time for this right now, so I let it go. For now. And with that, we continued on our way to the packhouse.

Amber stirred. “It’s OK. I can’t sense Cyrus. I don’t think he is here, Aleksa. But someone is.” She tells me.

I mind-link Kingston and Caleb with what Amber tells me about not sensing Lachlan’s wolf Cryus. But they both still seem to be on edge.

As we approached the packhouse, I could see two SUVs upfront. Amber confirms that she cannot sense Lachlan’s presence.

I see the car door open and out steps Sam. He looked worn out, pale, almost like life had been sucked out of him. My heart felt like it was breaking at the

sight of him. I was hit with a wave of guilt. Although I was also excited about seeing my friend.

He turned around, as everyone was watching us approach the front entrance. He looked at me with a shocked expression on his face. "Aleksa?" he called out.

"Sam!" I called back excitedly, pushing past Kingston and Caleb.

He walked toward me with a confused look on his face.

I pulled him towards me and wrapped my arms around him in a warm embrace. I could hear Sabre growl, so I mind-linked him.

"Settle Sabre, Sam's my friend!"

I pulled back and looked at Sam with a big smile on my face, trying to hide my shock at his appearance.

"Are you OK, what's going on? How are you here?" He says, looking around at everyone quizzically.

"Caleb?" He asks, furrowing his brow towards Caleb.

"You've been marked? Can someone tell me what's going on?" Sam asked, looking at the large purple mark on my neck, looking back and forth from Kingston to Caleb.

Kingston walks up behind me and pulls me into him. I smile and we interlock hands, to show Sam that we are together.

"Sam, it's OK, I'm safe here. This is Kingston, he's my second chance mate!" I told him reassuringly.

"I've heard a lot about you, Sam," Kingston said, extending his hand out to shake his hand.

Sam just stares at Kingston in disbelief. He reluctantly shakes his hand. He still appears as if he is very confused and unsure of exactly what is unfolding here.

Caleb also walks toward his old friend.

“You are a traitor! I trusted you! You helped the Rogues! You kidnapped our Luna,” Sam yelled, pointing his finger towards Caleb in a fury.

Caleb looked at Sam, a little hurt.

“Sam, my friend, all is not as you think. Lachlan is not who you think he is. We are all friends, Aleksa is safe, there is nothing sinister happening here, we are all friends,” He tries to reassure Sam.

“It’s true Sam, Caleb and Kali protected me, as did Mason and Kaia, they protected me from Lachlan!” I told him, with a sad yet adamant look on my face.

“There’s so much you don’t know, so much I have wanted to tell you, we were planning to…” I began, as we were brought to the attention of the SUV door slam.

“Well, isn’t this interesting?” Eva says with an amused look on her face, strutting towards us, wearing the skimpiest and shortest red dress I have ever seen, leaving nothing to the imagination.

“Don’t believe anything they say, they are traitors. Why are you even here, Aleksa?” She asks, looking me up and down and rolling her eyes, until she locks her eyes with Kingston and changes her demeanor, batting her eyelids and pouting.

“How dare you speak to my Luna like that, apologize now, or leave my packlands,” Kingston declared to Eva.

Eva seemed shocked with her mouth wide open and her jaw almost dropping to the ground. I wonder if she has ever been spoken to like this before.

So priceless, I thought to myself.

“Luna? Aleksa, how is this true? You are our Luna?” Sam asked me.

“Pfft. Is this some sick joke? Luna again?” Eva questioned us, screwing her face up.

“Don’t make me tell you again, “ Kingston said in a deadly serious tone to Eva.

Realizing that she couldn’t flirt her way out of this, Eva reluctantly apologizes.

“Sorry Aleksa,” She says begrudgingly to me. Completely lacking in sincerity.

“Wait, where is Lachlan?” I asked Sam, my curiosity and dread getting the better of me.

“He’s in Iowa, he got a lead, so he stayed back, he’s looking for you. He should be here tonight though,” he tells me.

“I think we need to talk – all of us,” Kingston interjects.

“I think that’s a good idea, I would love to know what on earth is going on here,” Sam says, watching Kingston and I lean into each other lovingly.

“Sam, there are some things I really need to talk to you about,” I said to him, furrowing my brow, then looking towards Eva with contempt. Just looking at her makes me mad. The nerve she had just stood there as if nothing had happened. She is about to come undone and although it will break my heart to tell Sam this, I also have a feeling this could be incredibly healing for him.

“Aleksa, I really think you and I should have a chat first, don’t you think? I think there was a misunderstanding back at Evergreen, and I’d like to clear it up,” Eva says, not looking so confident and sure of herself right now.

I looked at her and bluntly said, “No, I don’t think there were any misunderstandings at all. I got the message loud and clear, but come along Eva, I’m sure Sam will have some questions for you,” I said, with an amused look on my face. There was no way she was getting out of this. It was time for her to confess, and hopefully, now Sam could find some peace. It was very clear the toll of her infidelity had taken on his physical and mental health, I would assume.

“We can continue this conversation in my office. Caleb, perhaps you could bring Kali along if she feels up to it?”

“Kai, I will need you to stay here and greet any incoming packs,” Kingston says to his Gamma.

“Yes, of course, Alpha, I’ve got it under control,” Kai replies to Kingston.

“Sam, will your men be OK out here for now?” Kingston asked.

“Yes, I’ll link them to stay here until we return,” Sam replied to Kingston.

“Please follow me, right this way,” Kingston says, leading the way to his office. I looked back at Eva, who shot me an evil glare. I just looked away. She doesn’t intimidate me. I can’t believe I thought she was once my friend. She will never be anyone’s friend, she’s too much of a narcissist.

Kingston walks towards his chair and looks at me, then pulls a chair aside for me. Directly opposite us sits Eva and Sam on one side and then two empty seats for Caleb and Kali, if she decides to come along.

The tension is thick, you could cut it with a knife. Sam looked utterly confused and had his guard up a little, but I caught him looking from Kingston to myself from time to time, so hopefully, he can see we are happy and in love, and that Kingston is no threat.

Eva appeared agitated, I could feel her contempt towards me, I could feel that she was holding herself back right now. Part of me hopes she does lose control. I wouldn’t mind putting her in her place. Amber is begging for a moment or two alone with her.

Kingston looked relaxed, he wasn’t threatened in the least, but I could feel his empathy for Sam.

There was a knock at the door, and I could sense Caleb and Kali’s presence. “Come in,” I called out to them warmly.

“Sam!” Kali calls out, making a beeline for him.

Sam looked happy to see his friend. He gets up out of his seat and she walks up to him and gives him a hug, as any old friend would do.

Eva growled at Kali. Which I find interesting. She has a problem with Sam hugging a friend, but she can do goddess knows what with Lachlan and that’s acceptable. Unbelievable!

Caleb lets out a growl too. And stood close to both Kali and Sam. Although they were all close friends, Kali is pregnant now, and it has been some time since we last saw Sam, we don’t know what lies Lachlan has fed him. It is only natural for Caleb to be in protective mode.

“It’s so good to see you, Sam!” Kali announces, her smile dropping and turning to one of disgust when she sees her former friend Eva.

Sam doesn't miss this interaction, and questions us all, 'What is going on, why is there so much contempt for my mate?' Sam says in an agitated, almost defensive tone.

"That is why we are all here, Sam. It's time you knew the truth. The real reason we had to leave Evergreen," I told Sam with a serious and determined look on my face.

Aleksa POV

"I'm gonna tell you something and I need you to hear me out. First I want to say I love you. We have always been close friends, and I would never lie to you. The things I am about to tell you, I have wanted to do for so long but wasn't in the position to. I will answer all your questions but I just want you to know everything I am about to tell you is the whole truth," I told my dear friend, hoping that he would still be my friend after I told him all that I had to say.

Sam looked at me with his creased forehead, waiting for me to explain further.

"Remember back at Evergreen, how I would suffer from pain, and I would see the pack doctor, who would always give me some explanation or another for my pain, but over time I was made to feel that it was all in my head?" Sam looked at me, waiting for me to continue.

"Turns out it wasn't all in my head, my mate was cheating on me, Lachlan was bedding over she-wolves. I know your first thought will be to defend Lachlan, you are his loyal Beta, but you need to listen to all I have to say before you make up your mind," I pleaded with my old friend.

"When I came to Evergreen I was still new to the supernatural world. As you will remember, I didn't learn all the specifics of mates and so on. I was raised by humans with no knowledge of this world. I didn't know that if your goddess' given mate was unfaithful that it would manifest in the form of pain, and I might never have known, had I not seen it with my own eyes." I told him. I took a quick pause, to let that digest with Sam, then I continued with my story.

"Do you remember that day you helped me organize that surprise romantic evening for Lachlan?" I asked Sam. I heard Kingston growl. And I placed my hand on his to calm his wolf.

"I do," Sam replied. Listening carefully to what I had to say.

“On my way home from dropping Liam and Layla off at daycare that day, the pain hit me again. This time I made my way home, and as I headed to my bedroom I saw it. I saw Lachlan with...” I was cut off mid-sentence when Eva stood up and started protesting.

“This is ridiculous, completely fictional! Can’t you see what she’s trying to do? She’s trying to turn you against us! Eva shrieked.

Sam looked at Eva questionably.

“Us?” Sam asked Eva.

“Uh, I meant, Evergreen, she’s a traitor that’s trying to turn you against your pack, they all are!” Eva yells accusatorily.

“Silence! I command you to be silent and wait to be spoken to,” Kingston roared at Eva. Who shuddered and trembled in fear at Kingston’s alpha command.

“Was that necessary?” Sam asked Kingston.

“I understand she is your mate, Sam, and you don’t know what is going on here, but please trust me on this, you need to hear what Aleksa has to say,” Kingston tells Sam.

Sam didn’t look happy but remained in his seat and directed his attention back to me.

“I’m so sorry Sam. I hate to be the one to tell you this, but I saw Lachlan in bed with Eva.” I said slowly, waiting for the words to sink in for Sam.

“Lachlan and Eva?” Sam says to me, very much in denial, looking confused as to why his best friend and mate could do such a thing. He looks around the room, first at Kingston, who looks at him with a pitiful look on his face, then to Caleb and Kali, who have soft and somber looks on their faces.

Sam then looks at Eva, who is shaking in her seat, looking like she is fighting with all her might to protest against what has been said.

“It’s true, Sam. I witnessed it on many occasions myself. As I said to Aleksa, I was under an alpha command, I couldn’t speak a word of it.” Caleb says in agreement to Sam.

“I’m so sorry man,” Caleb added.

Sam looked back at Eva, observing her carefully. He didn’t say a word. He just took a moment. Then look back at me.

“When I caught them in the act, I quietly backtracked and ran into the forest. I cried my eyes out. It felt like my world was crashing down before me. I wanted to confront them but I was scared. So I decided that I would take the twins and leave Evergreen. I knew I had to be careful as I was realizing I didn’t know the man I had my babies with and was sharing my bed with.” I told Sam.

“A few days later, I was at work, the pain had hit me again, and this time it was unbearable. I walked to my bedroom to find them at it again, and this time I was so mad with fury I couldn’t hold myself back. I confronted them both.” I took a breath and took a moment to center myself.

“When I confronted them, Lachlan was nonchalant about it all, he rambled on about it being his right as alpha to take what and who he wanted. When I confronted Eva she couldn’t have looked more proud of herself. I’ll never forget the sight of her standing there in front of me naked, smirking the way she did, I never knew another woman could be so vile.” I said, talking about her, but making a point not to acknowledge her.

Sam looked like he was trying to hold his emotions back. He was no longer fighting my words. He looked like he was resigning himself to my truth.

“I’m sorry Sam, I was planning to tell you once everything had settled down, I promise. I just needed to make sure Liam and Layla were safe first,” I told Sam, worried that he wouldn’t forgive me for not telling him.

“If I may, I know this is a lot to take in Sam. You need to know what really happened. We are not the traitors that Lachlan led you to believe we were.” Caleb interjected.

“We, Kali and I, helped Aleksa and the twins escape, that is correct, and we did so with the help of two other wolves. Mason and Kaia, who were rogues at the time for legitimate reasons, and were in the dungeons at the same time as Aleksa,” Caleb continued.

“The dungeons? What was Aleksa doing in the dungeons?” Sam asked with a stunned look on his face.

“When Lachlan confronted Aleksa, the day she walked in on them, I was sent to take her back to the pack house, she had run off and I found her at the hidden lake at the far end of Evergreen territory,” Caleb said.

“I left her with Lachlan, not realizing his intentions until it was too late. When Aleksa told him she was leaving him, he locked her in the dungeons. That’s why we decided to help her escape. He had lost it.” Caleb declared.

“I had no knowledge of any of this. Is this true, Aleksa?” Sam asked, clearly outraged that all this had occurred and he was oblivious to it all.

“I swear it is all true. Lachlan was planning to lock me up and keep me against my will, he wanted me as his Luna, and for me to accept that he would have as many mistresses as he wished.” I told Sam, with absolute truth on my face. Kingston let out a loud growl. I knew this was not easy for him to hear, he was very protective of me, which I loved.

Sam leaned his hand on his forehead, his wrinkled expression, full of concern, shaking his head, “Aleksa, Luna, I am so sorry you went through this, I’m sorry I couldn’t protect you,” Sam declared.

“I don’t think you were at Evergreen when this all transpired. If I remember correctly, you took some of the elites to do some training at a neighboring pack and you wouldn’t have returned until after we had already left,” Caleb added.

“That sounds vaguely familiar,” Sam replied.

“It’s fine Sam, you didn’t know, these things happen, it all worked out in the end,” I told him, smiling lovingly at Kingston.

“Is it I who am sorry that I didn’t tell you straight away when I found out about Lachlan and Eva. I could have spared you so much pain and agony,” I told Sam sadly.

“It’s ok Aleksa. This isn’t on you.” Sam replied.

“I’ve known something was going on for some time. I had faith in the moon goddess and I had hoped that things would work out. I have always believed that it is unnatural to go against the mate bond.” Sam says glumly, shaking his head disappointedly while maintaining eye contact with Eva.

“So I knew I had to try my hardest to make things work. I knew that Eva was being unfaithful. I could feel it. I didn’t know who it was with though.” said Sam, looking at his mate, now with a look of disgust on his face. I could tell he was going through the motions. I knew these feelings all too well.

“I’m going to k**l that bastard,” Sam says angrily, slamming his fist down on the desk. No one says anything, we just let Sam get it all out.

“Wait, you knew?” I asked Sam, shocked at that revelation. Why would he subject himself to such pain?

“I did. But I didn’t question the Moon Goddess’s judgment. I figured she put us together for a reason. I didn’t realize that my best friend was the wolf she was cheating with. I’m sorry Aleksa, I failed you. I had no idea.” Sam said to me, looking at me ashamedly.

“Goddess no Sam, never say that, you are innocent in this. It’s them who should be sorry, not us!” I said, feeling gutted that my friend is taking this on as his own failure when that couldn’t be further from the truth.

“Kingston, can you take the alpha command off? I want to hear what Eva has to say?” Sam asked Kingston.

“Eva, you are no longer under my alpha command, you are free to speak”, Kingston declared to her.

“Finally! You can’t seriously believe this crap, Sammie?” Eva asked Sam, feigning disbelief and horror that he would entertain such a notion.

“Cut the crap, Eva. I’ve known for a while now. I just never knew who it was with. I had planned to reject you back at Evergreen, but then Aleksa disappeared and all my energy went towards trying to find her and holding down the pack while Lachlan ran it into the ground,” Sam said in a raised voice.

Eva looked astonished. She also appeared to be speechless.

“She’s lying! She’s always been jealous of me!” Eva yelled, pointing her finger towards me, and trying to fake cry.

“Aleksa is one of the kindest people I’ve ever met. Don’t bother with the theatrics. I really can’t be bothered keeping this pretense up.” Sam said to his mate, looking like he was beginning to tire of the conversation.

“Aleksa, thank you for your honesty, I do have some more questions for you if you don’t mind, but first there’s something I need to do,” Sam says, turning his body facing towards his mate.

“I, Sam Nicholson, Beta of the Evergreen Pack, hereby reject you, Eva Lockwood, as my mate!” Sam declared.

And with that Eva dropped her head forwards and shrieked in agony. Sam held his chest, and grimaced slightly, but didn’t seem to be in a lot of pain. When I think back to when I was in this position, the bond between Lachlan and I had weakened so much that when I finally rejected him, it didn’t hurt as much as I thought it would.

“You have to accept it, Eva, for both of our sakes,” Sam managed to get the words out.

“I accept! I accept!” Eva screamed, looking eager for the pain to stop.

I’m not surprised that Eva gave in so easily. She was never one for pain. I was grateful that she wasn’t fighting the rejection, for Sam’s sake. It meant he would be able to get on with his life again, once he recovered from the loss of the mate bond.

“You need to formally accept it, name, rank, pack,” I told Eva, to save Sam having to expend more energy talking.

“I, Eva Lockwood, Beta female, of the Evergreen Pack, accept your rejection!” Eva blurted out, heaving in between words. And with one loud gasp, it was done.

They both looked to be in a world of pain.

We all sat there in shock at what we had just witnessed. We were all glad that Sam had broken his bond with Eva, because she never deserved him in the first place, but at the same time very worried about what this would mean for Sam in his current state of health.

“Sam, are you OK?” I asked, feeling very concerned for my friend.

"I'll be ok. I think I just need a few moments." He said, clearly trying to protect his dignity and keep a brave face.

"If it's OK with you Sam, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you, Eva, that you are no longer welcome as a guest in our pack, due to your crimes against the mate bond, and your blatant disregard and disrespect for our Luna. You have twenty minutes to leave pack territory as of now!" Kingston declared.

Eva looked at us all in shock, but it appeared she was in too much pain to speak, although none of us felt sorry for her, she had brought this all on herself.

"You better get moving Eva, time is ticking," Kali said with a smirk on her face. Although we all hung out together back at Evergreen, Kali had never really liked Eva, she always felt she was conceited and insincere. It turned out she was right.

Eva looked at Caleb. He had no emotion on his face. He just looked away from her, as if she didn't even exist.

"I have called for one of our pack doctors to come and attend to you, Sam. They will be here any minute. There is not a lot we can do for you right now, but we will send for a Healer to attend to you as soon as possible," Kingston tells Sam empathetically.

"Thank you, all of you," Sam says, still remaining strong. However, I could feel that he was breaking inside.

"You should go, now," Sam said, turning to Eva, void of emotion on his face.

Eva picked herself up, and as she walked out the door she managed to cry out, "You'll regret this!"

Aleksa POV

It's been a few hours since Eva left our pack lands. Sam is at the pack hospital, currently hooked up to two intravenous bags. One is for fluid replacement, and the other is essentially a vitamin replacement infusion. The Doctor tells us that he is not in a good way after suffering the ill effects of the mate bond betrayal for so long, but that he will be back to normal in no time.

We were about to leave the hospital, as we were aware that Lachlan would probably be here anytime now, and then there would be more drama to deal with. As we were about to leave the reception area, Lily walked past. Lily often volunteered at the pack hospital. She was training to be a nurse, so she appreciated the experience. Some packs didn't let omegas train to be nurses. In fact, some packs didn't let omegas train – period, but this wasn't that type of pack, thankfully.

I asked Lily if she could take a jug of fresh water to Sam so that if he woke up soon he would have something cool to drink. Lily obliged. She was such a kind and caring person, and we would be lucky to have her as a Nurse in our pack.

We had a quick word with Sam's doctor, asking him to contact us immediately if there were any concerns, and also when Sam woke up. As we were about to walk out, we heard a commotion.

Kingston and I hastily made our way to Sam's room. We stopped at the sight before us. Lily appeared to have dropped the glass jug that she had in her hands, she stood there shocked, with her hands clasped over her mouth. "Mate!" She whispered.

Our eyes flickered from Lily to Sam in disbelief. Oh, my goddess! That was amazing. Truly a gift from the goddess. Sam had been blessed with a second chance mate.

Poor Lily. She didn't appear to know quite what to do with herself.

"It's ok. Walk up to him. Touch him. Be with him. He's your mate." I gently encouraged Lily.

"I've never seen him before," Lily said.

"Luna, who is he? Why is he in the hospital?" Lily asked with concern evident on her face.

"He's our guest. He has been unwell, but that is for him to tell you, it's not my place. Lily, Sam is the Beta at Evergreen Pack Lily," I told her.

"Sam?" Lily says in a loving tone, a small smile coming across her face as she says his name.

“A Beta? There must be some mistake, I’m only an omega,” Lily tells me, shaking her head, and looking down at the floor.

“There’s nothing wrong with being an Omega! Lily, I have a good feeling about you. You are destined for great things! Never sell yourself short Lily! Hold your head up high. And go be with your mate!” I told her with an encouraging smile on my face.

Lily stepped towards Sam, looking him up and down with delicate eyes. She moves close to him and touches his hand. She pulls back quickly. I know this all too well, she’s experiencing that tingling sensation for the first time.

Lily takes his whole hand and looks at him lovingly.

“Alpha, Luna, I am on volunteer duty, I have to go,” Lily said, looking conflicted.

“We will sort that out, Lily, you focus on your mate,” Kingston said kindly.

“Don’t worry about it, I will tell the Coordinator you have met your mate and will be spending the rest of the day with him. You just spend some time with Sam, having you close will help Sam,” I said to Lily.

I looked at Kingston, who had a grin on his face. I could see that he was happy for Sam also.

“Lily, if you need anything or want to talk, just mind-link one of us, and keep us up to date with Sam’s progress. We will check on him as soon as we can.” I told Lily, and we made our way out of the packed hospital.

I have the sudden urge to tell Kali about this new development, but I have to rein myself in, as this is not my happy news to tell people. I would leave that to Sam and Lily when they were ready.

After this rather eventful day, I just wanted to curl up in bed with my love. Alas, this was not to be the case. As we were making our way back to the packhouse, we bumped into Alastair and Abbey.

“Hello again!” Abbey squealed with excitement.

“Hello Abbey, Hello Alistair, How are you settling in?” I asked, trying to rustle up what little energy I had left.

“Hello again Luna Aleksa. We have settled in just fine. Thank you! We thought we would take a walk around the pack grounds before dinner.” Alastair tells me.

“That sounds like a great idea. I hate to be rude, but we’ve had something come up, and as it turns out, we won’t have time for that chat today. I am really sorry, could we try tomorrow morning perhaps?” I asked Abbey.

“Oh, it’s fine Aleksa. It’s not urgent. Just let me know when you are ready. Can we help in any way? I hope it’s nothing serious?” Abbey asked.

“Everything is fine, it’s just a small issue, nothing to worry about,” I told Abbey and Alastair. Alastair seemed unphased but Abbey was giving me a contemplative look.

“Well, if you say so. Will we see you at dinner?” Abbey asked.

“Yes, of course,” I replied. Wishing that we could skip dinner altogether, but knowing full well that would not be possible as we were hosting packs from all over the country, so we had host responsibilities.

“ OK, well, see ya then!” Abbey said excitedly with a huge toothy smile and she pulled Alastair away with her waving from behind.

Kingston and I continue walking up the packhouse stairs.

“Care for a rest upstairs before dinner?” He asked me.

“You read my mind! What a day. And to think it’s not over yet!” I said, shaking my head.

We head towards our suite and I fall onto our bed, Kingston stalks towards me with that look in his eyes. Like a predator stalking its prey. As tired as I feel, I’m sure I can muster up a little energy...

A bit of quality time with my love was just what I needed. With so much going on, we had been lacking a bit in the intimacy department. We didn’t have long but we sure made the most of the time we did have, then we had a nice long shower. I felt much better, but I was still tired. I think we both were.

Dinner had gone well. It was nice to mingle with the other packs. Everyone seemed to be in a jovial mood. The alphas are looking forward to their conference tomorrow, and the Luna's and their entourages are looking forward to their spa pamper day.

I am trying to keep a positive front, although I have a feeling that tomorrow will not go as we have planned. Thankfully, we have a backup plan so that if everything goes pear-shaped, then at least, hopefully, the activities can still continue without our presence.

We have just had a quick video call with Asher and Kaia. They are staying in one of the human towns nearby. Kaia wants to come back and face Ezra. We are just asking her to wait a day or so while we sort the Lachlan situation out, so far she seems to agree with that. Although we could really do with Asher's presence here right now, Kaia's safety is more important to Kingston and me. We can go another day without him, I'm sure.

We didn't get a chance to speak with Ezra, much to his dismay. It didn't go unmissed how he was watching me all through the dinner service. I made an effort to keep myself busy in conversation with others. However, I am sure I will run into Ezra again soon enough. I have been told that he has been asking a lot of questions, so I am under no illusion that he doesn't know Kaia has been here.

However, for now, we will just have to keep eluding him. We have bigger problems to worry about with Lachlan arriving.

What a day! I thought to myself. I've never been so welcoming of sleep before. Kingston fell asleep a few hours ago. I've been awake with my thoughts. But I'm ready to get some sleep now. We don't know what tomorrow will bring, but my intuition is telling me it won't be good.

I am woken from my sleep by an alarming mind-link from the border patrol. "Breach at the pack borders, a large tawny brown alpha wolf, has just ripped past us at speed. Heading towards the pack house, we're following closely, but he is faster than us," they declare.

I feel goosebumps and shivers all over my body. I am immediately on edge. "Cyrus!" Amber tells me.

“It’s them this time, Aleksa! I can feel their presence!” Amber adds.

“Kingston?” I ask, but he’s already shifted and out the door.

I got up, I was wearing checkered PJ pants and a singlet, but I ran out the bedroom door because I didn’t have time to get dressed.

I ran down the packhouse stairs as fast as my legs could carry me. I pushed the front door open and ran into a wall, there was a warrior standing in my path, and he was not budging.

“Ugh!” I yelled as my body slammed into him.

“Move, now!” I yelled. Frustrated that they are not moving from my path.

“Alpha’s orders, Luna, Sorry!” He says, looking highly uncomfortable.

I felt enraged that I was being locked in my own packhouse, and even more enraged that I was being treated like some damsel in distress. I thought I had made my feelings clear already. Kingston and I will be having words about this, later.

“I am your Luna, and I command you to MOVE ASIDE NOW!” I demanded. I could feel my eyes glowing. I could see the surprised look on the warrior’s face.

He moved aside, looking shocked, trying to comprehend what he had just experienced.

Neat trick. I thought to myself. And I continued towards the field in front of the pack house. I saw Sabre and Cyrus fighting on the field in front of the packhouse. The metallic smell of blood was already invading my senses.

“It’s OK Aleksa, it’s not Sabre’s blood!” Amber told me.

As I approached them both, they both shot their faces towards me momentarily, Cyrus growled, “MINE!” followed by Sabre, “MINE!”

Then they continued tussling back and forth. Unsure of what to do and panicked that my mate might get injured defending me, I did the only thing I could think of right now.

“SHIFT! Both of you NOW!” I screamed at them, once again feeling my eyes glow brightly. I was completely astounded when they both stopped what they were doing and shifted back to human form.

They both looked at me puzzled. I’m sure they are wondering how I managed to command them both, and I am wondering the same thing. How did I just command two alpha wolves? I need to ask Xanthe about this. However, for now, I needed to focus on dealing with Lachlan.

I mind-linked one of the warriors to get them both a pair of shorts as they are both standing here naked.

“Aleksa!” Lachlan yelled, standing in front of me naked. Once upon a time, this would have made me weak at the knees, but the sight of him naked now repulsed me.

“You’re coming with me!” Lachlan said angrily, stalking toward me.

Kingston let out a long loud growl. And ran towards Lachlan, tackling him to the ground. They started punching one another and I could see they were both starting to shift again, claws were coming out, and fur was sprouting on their legs and arms.

“STOP! THAT’S ENOUGH! GET UP! STOP SHIFTING. BOTH OF YOU! NOW!” I commanded. Forcing them to halt their shift.

“I am home! In my pack! With my mate, Kingston!” I declared, walking towards Kingston, interlocking my hands with his to show a united front.

“You are mine!” Lachlan yelled, followed by a loud growl.

Matched again with Kingston’s warning growl. They started inching closer toward each other.

“No, you were my mate until you betrayed our bond. I loved you and you ripped my heart out. I rejected you Lachlan! And the moon goddess blessed me with a second chance mate! My true mate!” I declared proudly.

Lachlan growled again.

“YOU BELONG TO ME!” He shouted fiercely.

"I'll give you one last chance to leave my pack lands, or you won't be leaving at all!" Kingston hollered.

"This is what you left me for?!" Lachlan said, followed by a sinister laugh. Grimacing in pain as he laughed and held the deep laceration that was hemorrhaging out of his chest.

Kingston got in a defensive stance, ready to fight again, and growled fiercely at Lachlan.

"I can smell you all over her! Not to worry. I'll soon fix that!" Lachlan retorted wildly.

"You will never touch me again!" I told him firmly, with a look of disgust on my face.

"I'm gonna enjoy every moment of this," Lachlan declared to Kingston.

Kingston snickered. "You are a fool, you had the most perfect mate, and you threw it all away!"

Lachlan growled and started to circle Kingston, but Kingston didn't seem bothered. He looked smug instead.

"I should thank you really, if you hadn't stuffed up so epically, I wouldn't have met my mate and Luna!" Kingston said mockingly.

Lachlan looked enraged. He then looked to his left side, and then to his right side, and noticed that the pack warriors had surrounded him, and were slowly advancing. He was grossly outnumbered.

"THIS ISN'T OVER!" He screamed at Kingston. He quickly shifted, then he glanced at me and growled. He then turned and forced his way through the warriors that had formed a wall behind him, taking them out, and galloped frantically towards the treeline.

Aleska POV

Kingston chased Lachlan beyond the pack border, but he had just disappeared. Our best trackers were out there looking for his scent but had so far come up empty-handed. We had decided that we needed to tell the Alpha and their entourage as well as our own pack what was happening so that

everyone was aware of the threat that we all faced. Lachlan would be back and, knowing what he is capable of, he wouldn't return alone.

Most of the attending packs were shocked to hear what had occurred at Evergreen and pledged their support to us, although there were a few packs that were sceptical and said very little. If I'm totally honest, I'm not surprised, as even though we had all just met, the few that said nothing gave me the impression that our way of life and values did not align.

We had collectively agreed to continue with the summit. Everyone looked forward to this annual meeting, so we would proceed cautiously. We had quadrupled our border patrol courtesy of our visiting Alpha's, and we had spoken without neighbouring packs to ensure we had their support if things got out of hand.

Both Kingston and I were rattled by the early morning attack. I left Kingston to continue his meetings with Kai, Caleb, and Jackson. The Alpha's conference will be starting a little later this morning due to earlier events.

I wanted to go check on Sam before Luna's brunch started. I also wanted to check on Lily and see how she was processing everything. She will become a Beta Female when she and Sam accept each other, and while I know she will have some initial anxiety, I have a feeling she is going to be just fine.

As I walked out of the packhouse I bumped into Roxy. "Watch it b***h! Oh, it's you! I hear you had a little trouble this morning," Roxy smirks at me, waiting for my response. I can see that she wants to provoke me, but I won't give her the pleasure. I have too much to do today already. I don't have the time for this.

"Nothing I can't handle Roxy, see you at the spa," I said to her, smiling sweetly. Roxy screws up her face and snickers at me.

I walked off towards the pack hospital. I am hoping my dear friend might finally be awake. I really hope he and Lily accept each other.

I walked into Sam's room to find him and Lily in an embrace. Sam is sitting up in his hospital bed and Lily is straddling him. I can't hide my broad smile. I didn't want to interrupt them, so I turned to walk back out of the room when I smacked into a wall. Except it was not a wall, it was Caleb's chest.

This is enough to get Sam and Lily's attention. Lily jumps up off Sam and has a bright red blush on her face. Sam looked very happy, and even Sam was grinning like a Cheshire cat.

"Sorry Luna," Caleb teased.

"Seriously Caleb," I said, looking at him with an unimpressed expression on my face.

"Just kidding, Aleksa," Caleb says, trying to suppress his laugh.

"Aleksa!" Sam called out to me.

"Hi Sam, I am so glad you are awake. How do you feel?" I blurt out quickly.

"Honestly, I've never felt better," Sam tells me, his eyes moving in Lily's direction. Lily had a shy smile on her face.

"I'm so glad you are OK Sam. I see you have met Lily." I said to Sam.

"Yes, I have met my second chance mate, but I feel she is more my true mate. I've never felt this feeling before," Sam tells me.

"I know exactly how you feel, Sam, it is the same with me and Kingston. I am so happy for you both," I told him happily.

Caleb placed two coffees down on top of the bedside drawer next to Sam and Lily.

"Well, I hate to be rude guys, but I've got a meeting that I am about to be late for. I'll see you all later," Caleb tells us, with that he bows his head towards me, and I just shake my head at him, trying to hide my amusement. He loves teasing me.

"See ya, Caleb, thanks for stopping by," Sam called out.

"Thank you, Caleb," Lily called out politely.

"I won't stay long, I know what it's like when you first meet your mate or true mate in this case," I told them both.

"Sam, I don't want to worry you, but, Lachlan turned up a few hours ago," I told him calmly.

“What, are you OK, did he?” Sam started before I cut him off.

“Kingston and Lachlan fought, and then they stopped, and then the warriors circled him, but he ran off into the woods. We have the trackers out there, but he seems to have vanished,” I told him feeling confused, trying to explain it all, and leaving out the part where I have the power to command alphas. I will tell Sam but now is not the time.

“Sam, he will be back. Kingston is meeting with Caleb, Kai (his Gamma) and Jackson. I am not sure if you know Alpha Jackson, he’s,” I started. Before I was cut off by Sam.

“Yes, I have met Alpha Jackson on a few occasions, he’s a good guy,” Sam replied.

“Anyway, they are meeting to discuss what we will do about Lachlan,” I told Sam, unsure about where he stands on this matter.

“Aleksa, I have no loyalty towards the bastard. I would gladly end him.” Sam tells me as if he could read my mind. He looks mad at the mention of his name and I don’t blame him.

“I am, however, loyal to Evergreen. Our pack has suffered for too long under his control, he needs to go.” Sam tells me.

“What are you saying, Sam?” I asked, suddenly feeling nervous as to where this was going.

“I am going to challenge him, for the pack,” Sam continued.

“But Sam, with all due respect, you are still recovering,” I told him, feeling concerned that my friend might get hurt.

Lily walks over to Sam and cuddles up beside him, as a show of loyalty and support.

“Aleksa, I have never felt better. After feeling weak and empty for the past few years, I feel as though I have just woken up from a bad dream. I feel energised and reborn. I can’t explain this feeling,” Sam tells me.

“Maybe it’s the will of the Moon Goddess? Oh, maybe it’s finding Lily? Sam, I am so glad you have found happiness, and I am so sorry about ...”

“It’s OK, Aleksa, you were a victim too, but we need to put that all behind us now, like you said the Moon Goddess has blessed us, although we do have to sort Lachlan out. He will keep coming for you and the twins, he won’t let you go without a fight,” Sam declared.

“Evergreen deserves better than what they have been getting, we need to rebuild, the pack is in financial ruin and Lachlan has destroyed our alliance, we need to try to get back in the good graces of our allies, and we can’t do that with Lachlan as Alpha,” Sam tells me with an air of confidence I haven’t seen from him before.

“I agree with you completely, Sam, and I think you would make a great Alpha. You have my full support,” I told him proudly.

Although we hadn’t talked much before I left Evergreen, I had always respected Sam and had always considered him a close friend. I had no doubt he could bring Evergreen back up to the standard it once held.

The pack doctor walked in at that moment with Sam’s discharge papers, Sam disconnected himself from the monitor and I took that as my cue to leave.

“I’ll see you a little later today, Sam. Lily will take good care of you. Lily, please link me if you need anything,” Lily nodded.

“Thank you, Luna,” Lily said happily.

“Please Lily, just call me Aleksa,” I told her.

“Sorry Luna, I mean Aleksa,” Lily replied.

“Thanks, Aleksa, I’ll see you at the packhouse most likely. Kingston has asked me to report there once I am discharged,” Sam said.

“Great, see you then,” I called out to them, with a small wave.

And I started to make my way back to the pack house to freshen up for our spa date with the rest of the Lunas and their entourage.

What a day it has been. The Luna brunch and spa went well. Most of the Lunas seemed unaware of what had happened earlier today, or they just didn’t deem it of importance. The chat was relatively superficial, they spoke of

their favourite places to holiday, about how well their pups were doing and how happy they all were with their respective mates.

Roxy was her usual snide self, dropping little remarks and insults here and there. In all honesty, I wasn't in the mood to fight her right now. My mind was elsewhere. Surprisingly, Abbey wasn't present today. I did wonder where she was. Maybe a spa wasn't her idea of fun, although I would have thought that one might attend out of respect.

Thankfully, my dearest friend Kali was there. If anyone needed pampering, it was her. She must be knackered. I remembered how it was to be pregnant, it could be very fatiguing. We briefly spoke of what happened this morning with Lachlan turning up. Kali reassured me the guys would sort Lachlan out. I wanted Kali to be safe. I didn't want her to put her pup at risk, so I made her promise to stay at the packhouse for extra protection. I will ask Kai to help me move her and Caleb's belongings into the packhouse today. It was clear Lachlan had lost his mind completely, and I would not put my friend and her unborn pup at risk.

Thinking of pups, I missed Liam and Layla desperately. I missed talking with my pups, but we had decided it was best if we didn't communicate while Lachlan was nearby. We couldn't risk him finding out their location. I knew they were safe though. In the short time I had known Mason, I knew I could trust him with my life.

I hadn't spoken much to Kingston since this morning's events. I realised he had been busy organising extra warriors, extra patrols, solidifying our allies and so on, not to mention the alpha conference, but I had the feeling he was avoiding me. It didn't take much to send out a quick mind-link even just to say hello. Something wasn't right.

I walked towards his office. I could hear muffled voices. Then, the office door opened before me. Kai had opened it. He stood there with a big goofy smile on his face, dimples and all.

"Good Afternoon Luna," Kai greeted me, knowingly, almost as if he had known it was my intention to stand by the door and listen a little longer.

"It's Aleksa, Kai, please only use my title in official settings, we are friends," I told him, for what seemed like the millionth time.

"Sorry Luna," he said with a cheesy grin on his face.

“Aleksa, is it important? We are kind of in the middle of something,” Kingston tells me gruffly.

I haven’t heard him speak to me like this before. He must be stressed, I thought to myself.

“I wanted to have a word with you in private, if I may, and no, it cannot wait,” I told him abruptly before he could answer.

“Very well,” he sighed in defeat.

And with that, Jackson, Caleb and Kai all exited the office quickly.

“So, what’s going on? I feel like there is something you aren’t telling me.” I stated firmly, watching his face closely.

“Aleksa, everything’s fine, I’m just a little under the pump,” Kingston declared.

“I am your mate, I can feel that something is wrong, and it’s more than what happened this morning,” I tell Kingston, letting him know I won’t leave until I get my answer.

“Do you remember the other day, when I had to take an urgent phone call?” Kingston started reluctantly.

“Yeah,” I replied.

“It was Xanthe. She had run into a little trouble along the way. She hadn’t managed to contact one of her Elders, but she had discovered something that she said could change everything. She said it was too important to mention it over the phone and that she needed to tell us in person. Xanthe felt that she was being followed, so she was going to try to shake whoever was following her. I made her promise to call me the next morning to let me know that she was safe but she never checked in.” Kingston said with a grave expression on his face.

Aleska POV

After Kingston had dropped that bombshell on me, I was feeling a little on edge. I felt overcome with guilt. If it wasn’t for me, Xanthe wouldn’t have even left on the mission. I shouldn’t have pushed her for more information.

“Xanthe will be ok. She wants to help us.” Amber said in my head.

“You don’t know that. What if something happens to her!” I replied to Amber.

“Aleksa, I know Xanthe will be fine, trust me, it’s all part of a greater plan,” Amber declares.

“Amber, I’m not in the mood for your cryptic messages. Could you just this one time, elaborate a bit for me.” I pleaded with my wolf.

“Xanthe’s story isn’t over. Trust the Goddess’s plans.” Amber says, and then she retreats and puts a block up on me.

“Grrr. That wolf!” I said out loud in frustration.

Kingston just looked at me quizzically.

“Amber?” Kingston asks.

“Amber’s gone. She blocked me!” I told Kingston angrily.

“What did she say? Sabre can’t reach her either,” Kingston replied.

“She said Xanthe would be alright, said to trust the goddess’s plan and that her story isn’t over yet,” I told Kingston a matter of factly.

“Well, that’s good then. Why are you so stressed?” Kingston asks me.

“Do you have any idea of how frustrating it is when your wolf is privy to all this information that concerns you and the ones you love the most, and yet she picks and chooses what she thinks I have a right to know!” I blurt out.

Then I look at the expression on Kingston’s face and realize something.

“I’m being a brat aren’t I?” I said, laughing at myself.

“You are just stressed, and rightly so, a lot has happened recently, Aleksa, my love, you are doing great!” Kingston tells me as he sniffs my neck where he marked me.

He starts to lick my mark and it sends shivers of excitement and arousal all over me. Kingston is sitting in his oversized executive chair, so I climb onto his legs and started to straddle him. I could feel my arousal seeping through my panties, I know it must be overwhelming his senses right now.

I can feel his c**k harden in his pants, straining tightly against the fabric of his pants. His c**k is throbbing against my panties.

“I want you in me now!” I demand, looking into Kingston’s eyes with the utmost determination and desire.

Kingston unzips his pants and his large hardened c**k springs to attention, he then rips off my sheer wet panties, and I lower myself onto his c**k riding him as if my life depends on it. He pushes me further down onto his c**k. Using his arms to push me up and down into him, harder and faster, I’m grinding into him, until I’m riding him to a gallop. I can feel his c**k twitch and pulsate inside me. We both reach our highs in no time. I feel Kingston find his release emptying into me. My walls are still throbbing post c****x as his c*m drips down my inner thighs.

I looked into Kingston’s eyes with a smirk on my face. I don’t know what just came over me. I’ve never been so spontaneous like that before. I looked at Kingston’s face and he looked a lot more relaxed than he did when I first entered the room. I knew that I was definitely feeling more relaxed.

Then it hit me like a ton of bricks. Oh, my goddess. The others were just outside the room! I was beyond mortified.

Kingston looked at me as if he could read my mind, he reassured me, “They left before we got physical. I told them to take a quick break and report back in thirty minutes,” he chuckled.

I didn’t find it as funny as Kingston. I felt my heart rate starting to normalize. I picked myself back up and discarded my ripped panties in the bin. Kingston walked into the ensuite in his office and washed himself off. I walked in and cleaned myself up also. Although, I would need to go straight to my room and shower properly. I can’t walk around smelling like s*x, not in a pack of werewolves with a heightened sense of smell.

Kingston then came over to me and pulled me in for a loving embrace. We kissed, and then I told him my plans with Caleb and Kali. Kingston agreed with me that they should move to the packhouse. He said that he would ask Kai to help me organize it all. Kingston received a mind-link. Sam is here to speak with him. So I took this as my cue to leave. I was shower-bound. Then, I wanted to go and find Abbey, check that she is OK, and have that chat with her that we had spoken of when she had first arrived.

I started to make my way into my room. I grabbed a fresh new outfit out of the walk-in wardrobe and grabbed my cosmetic bag with all my hygiene needs in it, and as I made my way to the bathroom, I saw a note and a long-stemmed red rose on my bed.

My heart immediately swelled, and I wonder how Kingston organized this so quickly. I took a sniff of the rose, as I held it I felt a thorn pierce my finger. Ouch. I thought to myself, as I watched a few drops of blood fall on my bed linen.

The rose smelled sweet and spicy at the same time. Then I dropped it as quickly as I picked it up. It smelt familiar, but not in a good way. It smelt like Lachlan.

I picked up the letter and began to read it, "YOU BELONG TO ME!" "Lachlan."

I screwed the note up and chucked it hard against the wall. I then mind-linked Kingston and told him I needed him urgently.

In a matter of moments, my door was kicked open and came off its hinges, flying against the wall. In stormed Kingston, Sam, Caleb, and Jackson. I stood there shocked. That was quick. Not quite what I had expected.

"Aleska, I could feel your fear and panic through our bond. What happened?" Kingston yelled. The others were all looking around the wall with fierce facial expressions. I almost felt the urge to laugh. But I didn't. This was not a laughing matter.

"Lachlan happened," I said sternly.

The men started walking around my room inspecting it for signs of intruders. They didn't appear to be picking up any scents.

Jackson picked up the crumpled note and opened it. He looked enraged.

"Kingston, I think you should read this," he told Kingston, passing the note to him. The others watched Kingston and waited for his response.

Kingston's growl ripped through the room, everyone except Jackson and myself was affected by his alpha aura.

"What is it, Kingston?" Sam asked.

Kingston passed the note to Sam. He and Caleb read it.

“It came with the rose. The rose has Lachlan’s scent on it, but nothing else seemed to.” I spoke of my own observations.

“How the hell did he get past our border patrols and security measures!” Kingston demanded. He looked like he wanted to break something.

“He’s masking his scent, Alpha,” Caleb declared.

“I agree,” I said in support of Caleb’s observation.

“He must have a witch working with him,” Jackson added.

“We need Xanthe!” I said to the group.

Jackson appeared to stiffen at the mention of her name.

“Who is Xanthe?” Jackson asked with furrowed brows.

“Xanthe is a Healer. She knew my parents, and she has been really supportive of – everything, she would know what to do right now,” I said to Jackson and the others.

Jackson seemed to be deep in thought right now, he was rubbing the side of his neck with a very serious expression on his face. I was about to ask him if everything was alright when I got a mind-link.

“There’s been a breach on the eastern perimeter, I’ve got to go, Sam/ Caleb - could you keep an eye on Aleska for now please?” Kingston called out.

“I don’t need minders, Kingston! We have discussed this already. I can take care of myself,” I protested.

“Look, can you just work with me, Sabre is losing his mind right now, he doesn’t want to leave you, but I need to attend to this breach,” Kingston tried to reason with me.

“Yeah, OK, go, I’ll play along just this once,” I told Kingston.

“Permission to tag along, Kingston,” Jackson asked.

“Gray could do with a run,” Jackson added.

“Yeah, thanks man, I’d appreciate that,” Kingston replied, and with that, they both shift into their wolf forms and they bolt through the packhouse.

I looked at Sam and Caleb. “Alright guys – Sam, I’m sure you would rather be with Lily right now, and Caleb – I’m sure you would much rather be with your pregnant mate, so how about we all go our separate ways?” I said slyly.

“No can do Aleska, you heard Kingston,” Sam replied to me.

“Looks like you’re stuck with us,” Caleb added.

I sighed. “OK, well, I’m gonna take a shower so I’m sure you don’t wanna hang out here, come back in ten minutes. OK?” I said to them.

“We will wait outside in the hallway, Aleksa, please don’t make this hard for us,” Caleb pleaded.

“I’ll behave. After that, I need to see my friend Abbey though,” I told them.

“No problem, we shall escort you there,” Caleb replied.

“Alright, see you soon,” I said to them both, and with that, I headed into the shower.

As we made our way to Abbey and Alaric’s cottage, I realized it was starting to get late. The sun looks like it’s getting ready to set, and it’s a beautiful sight. I made my way up the cobblestone pathway to the front door of the cottage. I am still taken aback by how cute these cottages are, littered with wildflowers, and fragrant undertones of jasmine, stock, and gardenia.

As I go to knock on the door, it opens before me.

“Come in Aleksa, I’ve been expecting you,” Abbey said with a welcoming smile on her face, as she stood in the doorway.

Aleksa POV

“Abbey, Hi, you were expecting me?” I questioned her, raising a brow.

“Yeah, I had a feeling you would be popping by today, come in, we have much to discuss,” Abbey says, as she gestures with her hands inviting me into her cottage.

I walked in and took a look around. In very little time Abbey has made this cottage seem warm and cosy. I see that she has herbs hanging upside down in the kitchen and a large mortar and pestle sitting on the kitchen bench.

“Alaric isn’t here, he’s meeting with another Alpha, trying to arrange an alliance between our packs,” Abbey tells me.

“Your cute friends can wait outside though if you don’t mind, I am happy to chat with you, there are some things I’d like to keep private if you know what I mean,” Abbey says winking at me.

She sure is quirky and upbeat I think to myself, Amber and I both like this girl.

“You heard her guys, take a break, I’ll be fine,” I tell them enthusiastically. They both look reluctant to leave me at the door. But we make it easier for them by slamming the door shut.

“So let’s just get right into it, shall we? You are a crescent moon wolf are you not?” Abbey blurted out.

I stood there with my poker face intact, trying to mask my surprise, feigning confusion.

“It’s ok Aleksa, your secret is safe with me, I haven’t even told Alaric,” Abbey insisted.

“What’s a crescent Moon wolf Abbey?” I ask her, trying to keep up my pretense.

“Aww, come on Aleksa, for starters I can see your mark, it’s unlike normal markings, not to mention there is literally a crescent moon, with two wolves, and a crown on it! It’s ok, you can trust me!” Abbey protested.

“What do you know of crescent moon wolves?” I asked Abbey. I was curious, as even Xanthe seemed to know very little about them.

“Please take a seat Aleksa, and I will tell you all you need to know.” Abbey began.

“I was born into a lineage of witches that serve the Royal Werewolf Kingdom, my family for generations has worked for the royal family, also known as the Volkov Family, we worked alongside other supernaturals, to help maintain order and balance,” Abbey told me.

“A long time ago, when my parents were just pups, there was an attack on the Volkov Kingdom, it was orchestrated by a greedy, power-mad Elder hellbent on taking the throne for himself. He enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch.” Abbey paused momentarily, giving me a chance to take it all in.

“The King and Queen were distraught, they fought with all their might to protect their pups, the Queen even died protecting her daughter, however, fortunately, their son Callum survived.”

“As you will know, Callum is our current Alpha King,” Abbey clarified.

“The battle was short-lived, as reinforcements arrived fairly quickly to defend the kingdom, so the rogues had to abandon their mission, but not before they grabbed some of the royal pups,” Abbey continued.

“The elderly, vulnerable, and pups were hidden in the safe house which was under the main pack house. All but two, the Alpha kings sisters’ pups, twins, a boy, and a girl. Unfortunately, they didn’t make it to the safe house in time.”

“The pups were said to have been taken by one of the Elders. No one had seen it coming.” Abbey shook her head as she retold the story.

“The Elder in question was eventually hunted down, but by that stage, the pups were no longer in his possession.”

“After weeks of torturing, and in his final days, it is said that the Elder in question, had placed the two pups into two different packs, a great distance apart, and despite many attempts, the Elder would not give up the locations,” Abbey continued.

“Eventually, the Elder was found dead in his cell, a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane sticking out of his chest, no one knew who had ended him, although it was assumed he was silenced,” Abbey declared.

“The pups were crescent moon wolves, they were destined for great things, they were to help protect the future alpha king and his offspring, said to be sent from the moon goddess herself,” Abbey proclaimed.

"I know it's a lot to take in, I should mention that the pups' names were Viktor, and Kristina," Abbey continued.

"Kristina! That was my mother's name!" I said, realizing where this story is going now.

"Aleksa, I would hazard a guess to say that your mother was one of the kidnapped crescent moon wolves of the Volkov Kingdom," Abbey continued.

"I, don't know what to say, I don't really know anything about my biological mother. I was adopted and raised by humans," I told Abbey feeling shocked at these revelations.

"Aleska, I am certain that you are of royal blood. I could sense it from the moment I met you. I feel drawn to you. I feel the need to protect you," Abbey told me with a proud expression on her face.

I was speechless. I just stared at her wide-mouthed. Could this really be true I ask myself?

"I can't be! I'm not a royal! I'm just plain old me." I said out loud, in complete denial mode. Then I remembered that wasn't exactly true. I had powers. That was definitely not normal.

"I told you we were special Aleksa, we are of royal blood!" Amber says in my head, she's feeling rather smug thinking that she is royalty.

"Wait! You said there were two pups?" I questioned Abbey, as the realization dawned on me.

"Yes, they were siblings, twins actually," Abbey added.

"Interesting," I replied.

"What is it Aleska?" Abbey asked with a curious look on her face.

"Uh, probably nothing. Abbey, would you mind if we continue this conversation a little later? I just remembered something that I have to do. But I will be back as soon as possible. Is that okay?" I asked her.

"Yes, of course, I'll just be here, pottering around. I have a feeling you will be back very soon," Abbey told me sweetly, not questioning my sudden exit.

As I went to open the door it opened in front of me.

“After you, your royal highness,” Caleb said with a cheeky grin on his face, bowing with one hand in front and one towards his back. Sam looked astounded. I guess he will still be taking in everything that he had overheard while eavesdropping.

“What part of the private conversation did you not understand?” Abbey called out crossly, with her hands on her hips, and a very displeased expression on her face, shaking her head towards Caleb and Sam.

“Uh, werewolf hearing!” Caleb declared. Putting his hands up in the air as if to surrender.

“Caleb, Sam, you have to promise to not breathe a word of this to anyone! PROMISE me!” I commanded them both.

“Yes, Luna,” they both say in sync, trying to fight the command, but failing miserably.

With that, I waved goodbye to Abbey, and we make our way to the pack house.

I needed to speak with Jackson. I wonder if he is back from his run to the border. I need to speak with him. I want to ask him what his father’s name is. I know I could just mind-link him but I feel this is something we need to discuss in person.

“Jackson, are you back from your run yet?” I asked him impatiently.

“Hey Aleksa, I am as a matter of fact, what’s up?” Jackson replied with his husky voice.

“Uh, I need to speak with you, as soon as possible, are you free?” I asked him.

“Yeah, Aleksa, I’m right behind you,” Jackson said. I turned around and sure enough, he was walking towards me in his basketball shorts and nothing else.

“Oh, Jackson! I think you need a shower!” I tell him, giggling. He is completely soaked in sweat.

“I’ll be back in fifteen, meet you at the training grounds?” Jackson replied.

“Ok, see you then,” I told him.

Then I walked off to the kitchen to make a quick coffee while I try to absorb all the new information I had just learned.

As I leaned over the breakfast bar, sipping on my coffee, I pondered my thoughts. What were the chances that Jackson and I ended up meeting one another? We are both crescent moon wolves, I already know that we are kin, but I thought it was because we were children of the Moon Goddess. What if we are both royal wolves, chosen to defend the kingdom?

Then I feel panic-stricken, what if it's true, and I'm expected to leave Rocky Mountain? This is my home! Now and forever. I could never leave. Would I be expected to? Calm down Aleksa, I thought to myself.

However, I would like to know more about where I came from. My whole life I have been curious about my heritage, although my adopted parents were the best I could hope for, I would love to know if I have more family out there somewhere.

I know I should speak with Kingston about this development as he is my mate, and this involves him too. But I need to make sure this is all true first and find out if Jackson is also part of this.

I head over to the training grounds and wait for Jackson to arrive. I wonder what he will make of all of this.

“Hey Jackson,” I decided that I'm just gonna get straight to the point, “What is your father's name?” I asked him. He looked at me puzzled.

“Why do you want to know my father's name?” Jackson asked me.

“Please, just humor me, I need to know,” I pleaded with him.

Jackson looked at me with a suspicious look on his face. He took a moment to consider things and then said “I will tell you my father's name on one condition, you must tell me why you want to know this information,” he added.

“Ok, deal, I will tell you everything I know,” I told him, solemnly, nodding my head towards him.

“Vicktor, his name is Vicktor,” Jackson replied.

I gasped loudly. Placing my hands over my mouth. I realized I must look like a deer caught in headlights right now.

Jackson stepped toward me and placed his hand on my shoulder.

“Aleksa, what is it?” Jackson demanded.

“I think your father is my uncle! I think he and my mother were twins,” I told him with a shocked expression on my face.

Jackson paused again, looking at me, realizing this was not a joke and I was being serious.

“My father was an only child, that’s impossible,” Jackson said in denial.

“Jackson, I met a witch, and she told me this story.” I began, only to be cut off mid-sentence.

“A witch! Aleksa, you need to be careful who you speak to. Who is this witch?” Jackson demanded.

“Abbey, she’s a nice witch. I trust her! Well, she’s actually a Hybrid. Why don’t you come with me and you can meet her for yourself.” I proposed.

“A Hybrid!” Jackson yelled.

“I will come with you. But, I am not buying any of this Aleksa, and neither should you,” Jackson declared.

With that, I took his hand and lead him towards Abbey’s cottage.

Abbey again opened the cottage door before I could even knock once.

“How do you keep doing that?” I said amazed.

“Intuition Aleksa, it’s just pure intuition,” Abbey said enthusiastically waving her hand in the air.

“Hmnn, interesting, another Crescent Moon Wolf I see. You had better come in!” Abbey said pleasantly to Jackson.

Jackson didn’t say anything. He just glared at Abbey, looking like he was barely holding himself together. Then he unleashed a loud growl.

Aleksa POV

“Jackson!” I raised my voice in shock at him, unsure of why he was growling at poor Abbey.

“MATE!” Jackson yelled again. He looked confused and agitated. He started sniffing the air. “Mate was here!” He said, followed by another growl.

“Jackson, It’s just Alaric and Abbey staying here!” I called out, wondering what on earth was going on with him.

Jackson pushed past Abbey and started stalking around the room, he walked over to the couch and picked up a white fluffy sweater, he pulled it up to his nose and sniffed it.

I looked at Abbey, she wasn’t scared, she looked more amused than anything.

“Jackson?” I asked him, trying to snap him out of the trance he appeared to be in.

“This sweater! Who does it belong to?” Jackson demanded, looking at Abbey.

“I have no idea, it was already here when we got here. I assume either a cleaner or whoever stayed here last?” Abbey confirmed.

Both Jackson and Abbey whipped their heads towards me.

“I have no idea! I could ask Kingston or Kai if they know who stayed here last. It wouldn’t belong to the cleaning staff as they wear uniforms while working to protect their clothes.” I told them both.

“I’ll hold onto this.” Jackson declared.

Abbey just smiled sweetly.

“Jackson, that’s amazing! Don’t worry we will find your mate in no time! But first, can we finish our discussion, if you don’t mind?” I asked Jackson hopefully. I know scenting his mate and not knowing who she is will be driving him crazy, so we will need to keep this short and sweet.

“Well, isn’t this an interesting development? I can see you are eager to find the owner of the sweater so I will keep this brief.” Abbey stated.

Jackson crossed his arms at his chest, looked at Abbey impatiently, and gestured for her to proceed.

“As I said to Aleska, I am a hybrid. I’m half-witch, half werewolf, and I’m from a lineage of witches that serve the Kingdom, my family for generations has worked with the King and Queen and the royal family, in particular, working to protect them alongside other supernaturals,” Abbey declared.

“Long story short, before I was born there was an attack on the kingdom when a corrupt Elder enlisted the help of rogues and a dark witch. The King fought to defend the pack, while the Queen was supposed to be in the safe house with her pups. However, for some reason, they didn’t make it there in time, and the Queen and her daughter were killed, with only their son Callum to survive. As you know he is our current reigning King Callum,” Abbey said, taking a moment to catch her breath.

“Realizing that they weren’t going to win the battle, the rogues retreated, but not before a trusted Elder grabbed two of the royal pups, the King’s nephew and niece,” Abbey continued.

“The Elder was captured eventually, but the pups were no longer in his possession. He had placed them in separate packs on opposite sides of the country. Despite weeks of torturing he never gave up their locations.” Abbey declared.

“The Elder was found dead in his cell not long after that, it is thought that he was silenced, as he was found with a silver dagger laced with wolfsbane in his chest,” Abbey concluded.

“You look confused, and you are probably wondering how this is relevant to you. Let me simplify it for you,” Abbey declared.

“The royal pups that were kidnapped were crescent moon wolves, they were twins, a boy, and a girl, they were named Viktor and Kristina,” Abbey said slowly.

“I’m gonna go out on a limb here and assume that your father’s name is Viktor. Am I correct?” Abbey says cockily.

Jackson looked from Abbey then to me. I just nodded in agreement.

“My biological mother’s name was Kristina. And it would make sense to me because I could never understand why her father (my grandfather) could hate her so much. He practically ordered her death.” I said sadly as everything started to click into place for me in my head.

I felt a little relieved knowing that evil man wasn’t actually my blood relative, but then even more confused as to who my biological grandparents actually are.

“Say this is the truth, and we are of royal blood, and our parents were kidnapped, how are you such an expert on all of this? How do we know that we can trust you?” Jackson questioned Abbey.

“That’s a fair question, Jackson. I’m not sure what real evidence I can provide you with. I suppose you could try some genetic testing that might shed some light on your origins. Also, I would suggest that you would both have powers of some sort. Crescent moon wolves hold great power. I would suggest that there is little information out there, so you may not know how to harness those powers. I would like to try to help you in any way I can if you will let me.” Abbey said thoughtfully.

“While I do feel connected to Aleska, and I know that we are bound, I’m not sure that I buy your explanation. I will need to look more into this. I have matters to attend to. If you don’t mind. I will see myself out. Aleksa, are you coming?” Jackson huffed.

“I think I’ll hang out here with Abbey a little longer,” I told him, looking toward Abbey to ensure that it was alright that I stay a little longer. Abbey smiled with a pleased look on her face.

And with that Jackson hurried out the door and shifted into his wolf, Gray.

Jackson POV

When I heard there had been a breach at the perimeter I jumped at the chance to go for a run in my wolf form. These past few months it has been getting harder to control my wolf. The toll of not finding my mate is taking it out of me. I act cavalier when people mention it around me but really I feel like I am struggling to maintain control. It's not normal for an alpha wolf to go so long without their mate. I know my pack is getting nervous. I know that they worry I might go feral if I don't find her soon.

Since we arrived at Rocky Mountain Gray has been a bit off. It's not just the crescent moon wolf stuff, something here keeps setting him off, but he won't say what.

When I got back from my run Aleksa was waiting to speak with me, she seemed a bit nervous so I'm not sure what to make of it.

As I make my way to the training field I caught a whiff of her scent so I know that she's already waiting. I prefer to get straight to the point so I'm relieved when she said that she wouldn't beat around the bush. I was suspicious when she started asking about my bastard father.

Aleska then told me that there was someone that she wanted me to meet, so I humored her and we made our way to one of the pack cottages. A peppy-looking girl opened the door. I'm not sure what she is. I can smell a little werewolf but there is something else, it smelled like magic, a witch perhaps?

And then it hit me, the most intoxicating scent I've ever smelled. f**k me! I struggled to keep control. Gray is going mad. "MATE! MATE!" He screamed in my head. He followed it with a loud menacing growl, no doubt scaring the s**t out of the girls.

I struggle to reign him in, and then he pushes through, and I end up slamming past what's her name, my nose leads the way to the couch where I can smell her sweet scent all over a white sweater. I grabbed it frantically and pulled it into my face, taking in a deep sniff. "Wild jasmine," Gray said. "Our mate smells like wild jasmine with a hint of lemongrass!" Gray called out in my head.

"MATE!" I could confirm that the sweater indeed belongs to my future Luna. I looked to Aleksa and the one who opened the door. I heard Aleksa call something out. But I was too immersed in this overwhelming scent to listen.

They tell me that it must have belonged to someone that was in the cottage before they came to stay and Aleska tells me she will find out who. Damn straight!

I reluctantly listened to what the witch had to say. Switching from thinking about my mate to listening to what she was saying. It all sounded highly probable, but I only had one thing on my mind right now. I needed to find my mate. Gray was crashing around in my head. I needed to get out of here and shift before I lost it.

I decided that I would find Kingston later and find out who the sweater belongs to and then I will find her and make her mine. Assuming she accepts me as her mate. Although I have a feeling that won't be a problem. I can be very convincing. I have waited so long for this. I need my mate.

I cut the conversation short. I'm not really listening anyway. I tell myself that I will apologize to Aleksa later. I need to get out of here.

And with that, I run out the door and shift into my wolf, and we tear our way through the woods, releasing some of our pent-up tension.

Sam POV

My whole life I have trained for the position of Beta of Evergreen Pack. Generations of Nicholsons have taken on the Beta role. There was never a doubt in my mind that this isn't where I wanted to be.

And then I met her. Eva Lockwood. We had all grown up together. I had always thought she had a soft spot for Lachlan, that was until I started to feel the pull and realized that she was my mate. Even before my wolf came I knew that she was my mate. I was certain that she could feel the pull too, but it seemed like she would constantly try to fight it.

Our birthdays were the same day, so as fate would have it our wolves claimed one another that very day, our eighteenth birthdays.

They say there is the lover and the loved one, and in some ways, I feel they were right in our case. I had loved Eva with all my heart from the moment I had laid eyes on her, but I knew it wasn't quite the same for her. I figured it was cold feet or a fear of commitment although that was odd for a werewolf couple.

When Aleksa joined the pack as our Luna, it felt like everything had fallen into place. Aleksa and Lachlan mated and formed a solid pack leadership with myself and Eva as the Beta couple, joined by Caleb and a little later on Kali, which made our group complete.

The girls would spend time together doing girl things and we guys would lead and strengthen the pack together. It seemed like a dream until it wasn't.

The pain came not long after we had mated, and even more so after our commitment ceremony. It took me a while to realize what was happening to me. It only happened every now and then, and I was never able to find evidence of any betrayal. I would confide in Lachlan but he would tell me I was crazy that Eva loved me and it must be something else.

That is until I saw Aleksa experiencing that same pain. I went with her to her doctor's appointments and the pack doctor always had an explanation for why Aleksa was experiencing pain. I had my doubts but again I never found any evidence of any wrongdoings.

I was always kept busy with pack business, Lachlan over the years had become quite complacent and sloppy, which only added more to my workload. The more I worked the more pain I would feel through my and Eva's bond.

Despite a lack of concrete evidence and after confronting Eva on more than one occasion, she always had excuses and would never actually confess anything. I was ready to reject her when I was sent away last minute to a training mission at a nearby pack. When I came back I was told that Aleksa and the twins had been kidnapped by some rogue wolves we had locked up in our dungeons.

Eva and my shambles of a relationship had become an afterthought at that stage. I had a duty to find and rescue our Luna and the Heirs to our pack. Finding them started to consume me. I rarely stopped to eat or sleep. I could still feel Eva betraying our bond, but I needed to keep searching for them. Even though I could feel myself getting weaker, I couldn't risk feeling the full effects of rejecting my fated mate, so even though I was being weakened by betrayal I knew that a full rejection could be devastating, and right now I needed to keep going for the sake of Aleksa, Liam, and Layla.

Lachlan had all but lost it, the pack was suffering in so many ways, and we were on the brink of bankruptcy due to Lachlan's penchant for gambling, and overspending. I discovered that had been frequenting brothels day and night

and then claiming to be missing his mate as an afterthought. Aleska deserved so much more than that pitiful excuse for a mate.

Pack morale was at an all-time low, lower-ranked wolves were being mistreated, and it wasn't the same pack that it had been before Lachlan had taken over as Alpha. Slowly over time, things had changed at Evergreen, and everything seemed to escalate once Aleksa and the twins were gone.

We had a lead on Aleska and the twins in Iowa, so we traveled there but then the trail went cold. We had committed to being at the Royal Alpha Summit as Lachlan had thought it might be a good idea to distribute Aleska and the twin's photos to other packs in case someone had seen them or heard something so Lachlan ordered Eva and me to head towards Rocky Mountain. He had planned to join us within twenty-four hours.

I couldn't believe it when we arrived and I watched Aleksa walk up to me. She seemed to exude such confidence and happiness. I wasn't happy when I saw her locking hands with another alpha, but my wolf Caine had told me to calm down. He told me to read their body language. I could feel reciprocal love and safety in each other's presence. I could feel it exuding from them.

I was shocked at Eva's behavior. She didn't seem pleased to see her best friend. I had never seen her so cold and bitter before. It was at that moment I realized that I must have missed something. I was even more confused when I saw Caleb and Kali. I was overwhelmingly happy to see my friends again but then disappointed because as far as I knew Caleb and Kali had betrayed us. Lachlan had said that they had helped the rogues take Aleksa and the twins. I could never understand why, but Lachlan had told me a very convincing story. Again my wolf, Caine, was telling me that they were our friends and to hear them out.

And heard them out I did. And it all made sense. I was enraged to hear that my best friend was betraying me with my mate. But it all fit. I was even more furious and shocked beyond recognition when I heard about what Lachlan had done to Aleksa, not just betraying their bond, but locking our Luna, an innocent wolf, up in the dungeons.

Caine was Furious, he instantly demanded that we reject our poor excuse for a mate right there on the spot, and I agreed with him. I would rather be weak and sad than be so pitiful to accept such a cruel and vile mate.

Caine had loved Eva's wolf Ash at the beginning but over time he got impatient and suspicious of her. He seemed to be at the point that he would prefer no mate over the one we had been given. This was unheard of for a wolf, but Caine was a strong wolf, he gave me the strength to push through these past few years of hardship.

When I rejected Eva, it hurt. It hurt so much harder than the betrayal pain, so much so I didn't have the strength to keep my eyes open.

Although as I began to come to I smelt the most delicious smell ever. It reminded me of the spring freesias that grew all over the pack grounds when I was a child. That smell always filled me with happiness throughout my life. I opened my eyes to the most beautiful sight sitting at my bedside, holding my hand in hers.

She was gorgeous, about five foot four, with long whitish blonde curls perched up in a high ponytail. She had bright crystal blue eyes with rosy cheeks and porcelain skin.

I could feel tingles all over. "MATE!" Caine roared in my head. She looked at me with a sweet smile, and it warmed my heart.

I called MATE to her. She replied MATE back. We were mates. She was mine and I was hers.

"Tell me beautiful, what is your name?" I asked her.

"Lily. I am Lily." She tells me coyly.

"I'm Sam," I told her.

"I know. Aleksa and Kingston, they asked me to bring you a glass jug of water, and I dropped it accidentally, I'm sorry. I was just caught off guard. I did not expect to find my mate here," she recalled so quickly that she appeared to be out of breath.

"Hey, it's okay, relax, I'm just glad you are here." I tried to reassure her.

"Are you going to reject me?" She asked me hesitantly.

"What, why would I reject you?" I asked her, feeling anxious, as to why she would even suggest that.

"It's just that you are a Beta I am told. And I, I'm an Omega." She said. A pained look on her face.

"Wrong, you are now a Beta female. That is unless you wish to reject me!" I said sternly.

"Of Course not. You are my mate sent by the moon goddess, I could never," She reassured me with a serious expression on her face.

Gosh, she sure is cute.

"There is something you should know though Lily," I told her.

"You are my second chance mate." I declared.

"Second chance mate? How?" Lily asked. She looked confused.

"My first mate, Eva, betrayed our bond. I will tell you all about it, but perhaps a little later, it is a long sordid tale." I told her.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you, Lily," I stopped.

"What's your last name, Lily?" I asked her.

"Owens," Lily responded, looking nervous.

"I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, accept you Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, as my mate," I declared proudly.

"I Lily Owens, Omega of Rocky Mountain Pack, accept you Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack as my mate," she replied with a great smile on her face.

With that, I pulled her face into mine and we gladly gave in to the mate bond with a passionate and earth-shattering kiss, unlike anything I've ever experienced before, sending tingles and shivers throughout my entire body. Caine growled in satisfaction. As we pulled apart sweet Lily's cheeks were even rosier than before, a deep shade of red prominent on her face.

"MINE!" I growled.

"YOURS!" Lily replied.

“We have much to discuss. But, first, I need to change, then I need to see Kingston.” I told Lily.

“My wolf Caine is demanding that I mate and mark you right away. But I respect you Lily and don’t want to rush you. So I have to ask how do you feel about making it official tonight?” I asked Lily, not wanting to force things. I wanted to let her know that I respect her as an equal. But, at the same time, I also do not want to wait any longer than necessary.

“Tonight would be perfect Sam. I’ll get you a towel and some clean clothing for you to change into while you shower if you like?” Lily asked me.

“That would be great, thank you, sweetheart,” I told her. Kissing her on the forehead as I ripped out my IV lines, and then headed to the shower.

I’m all showered and clothed, Caleb has popped in to check on me, after chatting for a while Caleb had offered to go and get some coffees while we wait for the discharge papers from the doc.

As I lifted Lily onto me and we began to kiss and touch one another our little make-out session is cut short when Aleksa walked into the room. Aleksa looked deeply embarrassed and in an attempt to leave before she thought that we would notice her she walked right into Caleb’s chest.

Lily jumped off the bed in embarrassment. She’s just so cute. But we are all adults here. It’s only natural to want to jump each other especially since we are mates and have yet to mark and mate.

After a brief chat, Aleksa told me that Lachlan had arrived this morning, but as fast as he arrived he left again. No doubt he will be back. I sensed some concern in Aleksa and I could guess what she was thinking. Naturally, she was wondering where I stood on all of this.

I hated that bastard. All these years he was the cause of my pain and suffering. Pretending to be my friend. Piling me up with never-ending workloads and out-of-pack trips. He made me feel like a bad mate for doubting Eva when he knew what was going on the whole time because he was the one she was betraying me with.

I would love nothing more than to end that poor excuse for an alpha myself. I realize I am not of alpha blood but I know for a fact I could restore Evergreen back to its former glory. I know I would make a better alpha than he ever did.

I thought I would feel weak after rejecting Eva but I have never felt so strong. I feel reborn. I can feel this energy within me. I feel like I have a pretty good chance at beating Lachlan in an alpha challenge. And even if I wasn't successful I would sure give it all I had. Someone had to stop that evil bastard, and I wanted to be the one to do it.

I relayed all of this to Aleska and Lily, who both look concerned. But they need not be. Lily walked up to me and wrapped her arms around me showing me her love and support. The doc showed up and gave me my papers, so I started to make my way over to the packhouse to speak with Kingston and Caleb to tell them of my plans.

Aleksa POV

After we had finished chatting at the cottage, Abbey walked with me over to the packhouse. She was meeting Alaric there anyway, so it all worked out. Kingston didn't want me walking around unsupervised at the moment, after Lachlan's arrival the other day he had gotten his hackles up a little. So if it made him happy I would play along for now, although I was already tired of having a babysitter.

I wanted to go and find Jackson, but I knew that Kingston would lose it if he found out that I was running about in the woods alone. I'm sure Jackson would be fine for now, he just needed some time to reign Gray in a little.

I must say that I was curious as to who Jackson's mate was. I couldn't wait to ask Kingston who had that cottage last. That should let us know who his mate might be. Jackson and Gray had waited so long to find their mate. Plus, it might help mellow them out a little, because they could both be a little grumpy at times.

Abbey and I had a nice chat after Jackson had left, I will have to fill him in with the things I had learned about our origins. I know that he didn't mean to be nonchalant at Abbey's, he was just consumed with finding his mate, it's totally understandable.

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How strange. Kingston had never blocked me before. Perhaps he was just very busy. There was a lot going on around here right now, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

My mind then wandered to Kaia. I tried to mind-link her, but she must have been too far away because I couldn't seem to make a connection. I sighed when I realized that it will only be a matter of time before I encountered Ezra again. There was something intimidating about him. He had a dark and sinister presence about him. I felt a shiver run up my back just thinking about him. I tried to shake it off.

I began to wander around the packhouse. I felt as if I had so much on my mind right now. I wondered what was happening with Kaia and Asher, where were they, and were they safe? And how long would they be away?

Kaia couldn't run forever. She had to leave when Ezra first arrived to buy us all some time to figure out how we would manage the situation between me and Lachlan and then Kaia and Ezra.

If I had learned one thing, it is that we need to face our fears and relinquish the ties of our pasts. I was about to do the same with Lachlan once and for all, and then after that, I wouldn't think of him again. Kaia would need to do the same if she ever wanted to lead a normal life. Especially if she wanted a second chance mate.

The other pressing question I had was regarding the sweater at Abbey's cottage. The one that set Jackson off. I would love nothing more than to help him find his fated mate. He deserved happiness. Everyone deserved to find their fated mate. I was racking my brain trying to think of who might have stayed there but truthfully I had no clue.

I was still learning how things worked at Rocky Mountain. Cordelia and Kai had been picking up the slack for me while I was being orientated to my new pack. This pack was quite different from Evergreen but I guess it was a lot bigger too.

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After spending some time alone in my room I decide to have a bath. For some reason, I had this overwhelming desire to do so. I figured I should relish this moment as some challenging times were ahead.

I must have dozed off in the bath because the next thing I realized I was waking up screaming in the bathtub.

I got up out of the now cold water and wrapped my plush oversized towel around my body. I was so cold. How long had I been in that bath I thought to myself. I quickly walked over to the wardrobe that I shared with Kingston and chucked on some dark blue skinny jeans, a singlet, and a fluffy turtleneck sweater on top. I then grabbed my favorite tan leather boots.

I looked around the room and realized I was all alone. I looked at the clock on the wall. It was midnight. My goddess, how long was I in that bath? I must have been in there for hours. No wonder I'm so cold. It was strange that Kingston still wasn't here at this time of night. I walked out to the balcony and looked out around the pack grounds. There was a chill in the air. The silence was deafening. It all felt very eerie.

I decided that I will take a walk around the packhouse and see if I can find my mate.

I make my way out of my room and I head toward the staircase. It's so quiet, usually, there are skeleton staff working, cleaning staff or maintenance or a cook or two, but tonight there didn't seem to be anyone around. Perhaps they finished the preparations for the festival and everyone decided to have an early night. Although that doesn't seem like the right answer either.

I walked in the direction of Kingston's office and it was all dark, there was no lighting on, no noise whatsoever.

Amber pushed through, "I have a bad feeling about this Aleksa, keep your guard up," Amber advised me. Maybe that's why I was feeling so cold like chilled to the bone, and what about that nightmare? I can't seem to remember it, which is unusual for me.

"Oh, it's up" I replied to my wolf.

After about forty-five minutes of wandering around the pack house, I was feeling even more determined than ever to find my mate or anyone at this point. I decided to expand my search outside of the packhouse. I know I wasn't supposed to be walking around by myself but I was starting to wonder if there was anyone else around.

I made my way down the steps outside easily enough thanks to the solar lights that lined the steps, and I began to walk around the side of the packhouse making my way to the conference room, strangely enough, there was no one there.

I continued to walk through the pack grounds towards the training grounds because that's the most logical place for the guys to be at this time of night. They were probably going over strategies or having a late-night training session. As I made my way there I heard shuffling in the bush next to me.

I suddenly had the feeling I was being followed or watched.

"We aren't alone are we Amber," I asked my wolf.

"Nope," Amber said shortly.

I started to pick up my pace slightly, trying not to make it obvious that I was aware that I was not alone. And then I felt my arm being yanked backward aggressively. I let out a loud gasp. I turn to sidekick whoever had grabbed my arm but they pulled my leg and pushed me backward. I fell to the ground, with my back hitting a large rock hard.

"Ahh!" I screamed in pain. I could feel the pain searing through me. Well, that's gonna bruise I thought to myself.

"Just the person I wanted to see," a snarky voice called back at me.

I recognized the voice. It made my skin crawl.

“Ezra!” I called back to him.

“You lied to me the other day. Do you think I’m f*****g stupid? I could scent my mate all over your f*****g pack grounds. Where is she?” He spat out maliciously.

I stood up. Subtly rubbing my back with my left hand, as I pulled myself together. I was feeling a little cornered and at a definite disadvantage. But I couldn’t let him know I was scared.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said faking confusion at his question.

“Look b***h, I want my mate and I’m not leaving until I get her,” He threatened.

He looked me up and down and I saw a glint in his eye.

“If you don’t want to tell me now, that’s ok. I can think of another way of getting it out of you,” Ezra said snickering.

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“Come any closer and you will regret it!” I yelled at Ezra.

He laughed mockingly and continued to advance toward me. I closed my eyes to concentrate on my energy and visualise what I wanted to do to him, to stop him from hurting me.

At that very moment, I felt a hard slap across my face, so hard that I lost my footing, and fell to the ground again. It hurt so much. I wondered if I might have just lost a tooth or two then. But I managed to hold my pain in.

I tried to get up but Ezra was already forcing his bodyweight onto me.

“Focus Aleksa!” Amber called out to me. I could feel her giving me strength. I tried to channel all of my energy and focus.

I was trying not to get distracted by the overpowering stench of whatever his cologne was. I could sense his excitement and arousal.

Ezra ripped my jumper off me in an instant. I closed my eyes again and blocked everything out. This was not happening.

The fear of what this creep wanted to do to me fueled a fire inside me. I felt myself burn up. Everything was so hot, and before I knew it a huge force of energy consumed me and I felt Ezra being pulled away from me and towards a large oak tree. I heard him hit his head hard and fall to the ground.

My body starts to regulate and I don't feel so hot anymore.

I picked myself up and walked over to him. I'm still shivering in shock at what had just happened.

I heard Ezra groan. He was making incomprehensible sounds. He didn't seem to be responding. I watched him lose consciousness.

I guess he was more of a threat than Kingston and I had thought. He needed to be held somewhere. I knew that I couldn't lift him. I was feeling drained from using my power.

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"Jackson, I need your help," I mind-linked.

"Aleksa, what's wrong?" Jackson responded immediately.

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"Near the training grounds, between the bush and a huge oak tree," I told him calmly.

"I'm on my way," Jackson responded.

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“Hello Gray,” I said to him, with a small smile, trying to remain strong while holding my arms against my chest. I was still shivering and that bastard had ripped my sweater, so I was standing there in my singlet.

Gray growled loudly and stalked toward Ezra.

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Gray looked at me, then he looked down at my ripped sweatshirt and Ezra’s top on the ground next to it.

“I’m gonna rip him to shreds!” Gray roared.

“It’s ok, he can’t hurt me now. I called you because I need help getting him locked up,” I told Gray.

“Of course, but, where’s your mate?” Gray asked confused, and then mad.

“I don’t know. I haven’t seen him since lunchtime yesterday, and he has blocked me. I can’t get hold of Kingston or Kai. Something weird is going on,” I told Gray.

Then I think about how Gray arrived almost immediately after I had mind-linked him.

“Hey, how did you get here so fast?” I asked Gray.

“We’ve been out searching, for our mate,” Gray responded.

“Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!” I tried to reassure him.

“I’ll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute,” Gray declared.

Aleksa POV

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“It’s ok, he can’t hurt me now. I called you because I need help getting him locked up,” I told Gray.

“Of course, but, where’s your mate?” Gray asked confused, and then mad.

“I don’t know. I haven’t seen him since lunchtime yesterday, and he has blocked me. I can’t get hold of Kingston or Kai. Something weird is going on,” I told Gray.

Then I think about how Gray arrived almost immediately after I had mind-linked him.

“Hey, how did you get here so fast?” I asked Gray.

“We’ve been out searching, for our mate,” Gray responded.

“Aww Gray, we will find her. I promise!” I tried to reassure him.

“I’ll mind-link my warriors to help me move this trash, give me a minute,” Gray declared.

Aleska POV

Gray had shifted before we left for the pack lock-up facility. We began to walk to the lock-up facility. Being that Jackson was just visiting the pack he didn’t know where the facility was so I had to show them where to go.

I still couldn't get through to anyone via mind-link, nor could Jackson as he wasn't part of our pack. It didn't take much to convince Jackson to let me come with him to look for the others and find out what was going on, as he could sense that things were off also.

When we reached the lock-up, the guards didn't appear to be outside as they usually were. Jackson looked at his warriors and they made a few hand gestures and slowly advanced inside. As we walked through the corridors which were dimly lit, it appeared that the backup generators were on. When we reached the holding area we found the guards out cold on the floor. I ran up to the closest one and felt for a pulse. His heart rate was slow but it was still there.

"He's still alive! But his pulse is very slow." I called out to Jackson.

"Let's investigate further, Aleska, you stay close to me." Jackson declared.

He didn't need to say a word, I wasn't planning on going anywhere alone at this stage. I was officially creeped out.

After a sweep of the cells, we made our way back to the entrance. The cells were all empty. The cell doors appeared to be locked shut, and the guards appeared to be out cold, almost as if they were sleeping. No one had been harmed.

We all looked at each other with confused expressions on our faces.

"Magic!" Jackson said abruptly.

"I have a feeling magic is involved, and not the good kind either," Jackson replied to himself.

I start to realize the gravity of the situation. I start to think of my loved ones. My mind then goes to Kali and Caleb. They were staying in the packhouse. Perhaps we should start there.

"Where's the Hybrid!" Jackson called out angrily.

"Abbey?" I replied to him.

"Yeah, her." He said gruffly.

“She will be sleeping. Wait, you don’t think?” I start to speak before I am cut off.

“It feels like magic. She’s a witch! Let’s start there!” Jackson demanded.

“I guess that makes sense. But Jackson, let me do the talking. She’s my friend.” I tell him rather than asking. I know he is a higher rank than me, but this isn’t about ranks. Something is going on and we need to find out what.

“Yeah well let’s see what she has to say,” Jackson replied gruffly.

“Alpha, what do you want us to do with him?” One of Jackson’s warriors asks, referring to Ezra.

“You two watch him for now. See if you can get one of those cells open and shove him in. One of you can watch him, the other can come to find us. Mind-link me when you are done,” Jackson ordered them.

“Yes Alpha,” they both called out concurrently, nodding their heads and bowing before dragging Ezra off.

With that Jackson takes a jacket off one of the guards and threw it at me.

“You look cold, throw this on, he doesn’t need it right now,” Jackson declared.

“Thanks,” I said, throwing the jacket on.

Abbey’s cottage wasn’t far away so there is no need for us to shift. It wouldn’t take us long to get there.

We walked up the pathway to Abbey’s cottage, there were no lights on, which wasn’t surprising considering it was the middle of the night.

“I’ll do the talking!” I told Jackson, as I knew that he could come across as aggressive at times, and I felt bad enough waking Abbey up in the middle of the night.

As I was about to knock on the door it opened. I smiled as I expected nothing less. Abbey always seemed to know when someone was approaching.

“Aleska, are you okay?” Abbey started to fuss, taking in my appearance.

“Yeah, I’m fine,” I told her not wanting to go into detail right now.

“What’s going on around here?” Abbey asked.

“I’ve had no power all night, and Alaric hasn’t arrived back yet. I’ve had this strange feeling all night, and now you two show up at my doorstep in the middle of the night,” Abbey said with a concerned look on her face.

“You wanna come in?” Abbey offered.

“We don’t have time for this!” Jackson declared.

“Hmnn, unfortunately, he’s right, Abbey will you come with us, something is going on, the guards at the lock-up facility were out cold, the powers out, no one else seems to be around and I can’t mind-link anyone but Jackson,” I ranted off quickly to Abbey.

Abbey’s face dropped, “Oh dear,” she said as she pulls her jacket on and starts to walk out her door.

“Let’s walk and talk,” Abbey suggested.

After explaining everything that happened this evening Abbey was initially outraged at what Ezra had attempted to do, but then happy I was able to contact Jackson. She was trying to piece things together as we walked toward the training grounds.

“I agree with Jackson, the guards could be in a deep sleep, and an enchantment spell would appear that way. There could be someone messing with the pack’s ability to mind-link, that too could be the doing of a witch, but no light witch would do such a thing, this sounds like the work of a dark witch.” Abbey stated.

“When was the last time either of you saw someone familiar?” Abbey asked.

“I guess, before we came to your cottage yesterday,” I replied.

“And you Jackson?” Abbey asked him softly.

“Same as Aleksa, after our meeting in your cottage, I shifted into Gray and we ran for hours, we only stopped when I got Aleksa’s mind-link just before,” Jackson replied.

“Hmnn, interesting, I never found Alaric when we parted ways at the packhouse earlier this evening, there were others around but I didn’t interact with anyone,” Abbey recalled.

“I wonder,” Abbey started.

“What?” Jackson replied in anticipation.

“I wonder if something didn’t happen while we were in the cottage? I wonder if something didn’t happen to the rest of the pack? What if what we saw when we walked into the packhouse was just an illusion?” Abbey asked.

“But why?” I replied in denial.

“I don’t know, It’s just a thought, let’s investigate some more,” Abbey suggested.

We had just arrived outside the training grounds, and there weren’t any lights on. I went to grab my phone out of my pocket when Abbey looked at me and chuckled.

“Let me, Aleksa,” Abbey declared.

Abbey moved her hands in a circular motion and closed her eyes, and then a bright orb appeared before her, she released it in front of us and it started to guide our way into the training grounds.

“That was seriously cool!” I called out in awe.

“Not bad,” Jackson said as if he was slightly impressed.

We walked through the administration block following the orb in front of us, and as we turned to walk into the stadium we were shocked to see the warriors from our pack and other packs on the ground.

I gasped in horror. Then I ran to the nearest warrior to feel for a pulse, it was there but it was faint. I looked around to see if I could see anyone familiar, I started walking through the bodies carefully, and then I saw him, I saw Kai.

I ran up to him, yelling, “Kai! Kai! Wake up!” I started to shake him, then I felt around for a pulse. It was much like the others there, but slow, although a bit stronger than the others, probably because he was a Gamma.

“Abbey, please, is there anything you can do?” I called out to Abbey who came running towards me. Jackson circled us, looking around but standing guard at the same time.

“Hmmn, let me see,” Abbey said, getting down on her hands and knees, she then puts her hands just above his body and focuses her energy on Kai.

“I can feel that he’s still here, but in a deep sleep, definitely an enchantment spell.” Abbey declared.

“Can you counteract it?” I asked pleadingly. I looked at her wide-eyed.

“I think I can? It will probably take a lot of energy. I feel confident that I can wake Kai, but I am not sure I can do everyone at this stage,” Abbey said with a sad expression on her face.

“That’s ok, it’s a start!” I said with some optimism in my voice.

“OK, give me a few minutes and some space,” Abbey instructed me.

I watched Abbey in awe. She was truly amazing. Jackson pretended not to be bothered about what is unfolding in front of him, but even he can’t deny what Abbey is doing right now is nothing short of epic.

A short while later, Kai started groaning.

I knelt down on the ground again and touch his face. Kai opens his eyes.

“Luna?” Kai croaked out.

“Oh my goddess, Kai, are you ok?” I asked him in a panic-stricken tone.

“Luna, they took him! I’m sorry!” Kai declared.

“What, who?” I looked at him puzzled.

“The Witch. She took Kingston! Said she needed to get him out of the way,” he called out. Then he slowly started to sit up, rubbing his neck.

“Are you telling me that a dark witch took Kingston?” I asked him in shock.

“Yes Luna, I’m so sorry,” Kai replied, bowing his head, looking ashamed that he couldn’t protect his alpha and prevent him from being taken.

"It's ok Kai, we will find him, this isn't your fault!" I tried to reassure Kai, and I leaned forward to comfort him in the form of a hug.

I looked back up to Abbey who was now standing up and looking around the stadium.

"Any ideas Abbey?" I looked to her for an answer.

"Dark witches don't attack packs for no reason, someone will be paying her to do this, someone who stands to gain something from getting Kingston out of the way," Abbey questioned.

Jackson and I look at one another at the same time in realization.

"Lachlan!" We both called out simultaneously.

Aleska POV

Once it dawned on us that Lachlan was most likely behind all of this, we had to figure out what to do next. Abbey believed that the reason that Jackson and I could mind-link was due to our Crescent Moon wolf bond. Kai tested the theory by trying to mind-link and was unsuccessful. Although Jackson could mind-link his warriors which seemed strange. Although it became clearer once he had explained that the two warriors he had brought with him weren't ordinary wolves. Apparently, they had met one another at a training camp that he had been sent to by his father in his early teens and they had bonded. They had recognized Jackson as their alpha early on, and submitted to him, despite the fact that they all shared the same rank.

Abbey believed that if there was a dark witch involved then her enchantment spell would have applied to regular pack wolves, but most likely not affect special wolves, hence why we were all unaffected.

While Abbey couldn't currently reach any of her contacts due to distance and the presence of a supernatural barrier, she could call them, so we started to make our way to the nearest phone.

Unfortunately, all methods of communication seemed to be out of order. For now, we were on our own. At least we had the advantage of the witch not knowing that we were special wolves. The witch would assume we were under the spell for now. But that would mean that they would be most likely looking for us.

Abbey suggested that we all hide our scents to be on the safe side. She was able to manage this with a simple cloaking spell.

If we were right and Lachlan was behind this, then he was looking for me. Jackson wanted to get me out of Rocky Mountain and to safety, but I insisted on staying. We needed to face this Witch and Lachlan, and break the spell she had placed on my pack.

Abbey believed that the key to breaking the spell was either capturing the witch involved and convincing her to reverse the spell, or k*****g her. Abbey didn't feel that comfortable taking a life, but said if it came to it she would. She too wanted to find her mate.

Jackson advised that we would need some more backup if we were to pull this off, and suggested we find Sam and Caleb, and a few other ranked members to help us on our mission.

"Do you think you are up for some more healing Abbey?" He asked her respectfully.

I looked at him in shock, it appeared that he might be softening in his attitude toward her and realizing she is an ally, not a threat.

"Yes, as long as I have a little break in between, I should be fine," Abbey replied confidently.

With that, we made our way back to the packhouse stealthily. Caleb's room would be our first stop. I sure hoped that Kali and her unborn baby would be ok. I asked Abbey about healing Kali now, she said Kali was safer sleeping for now, and shouldn't be put at further risk. I agreed with her reasoning, at least she would be out of harm's way for now.

We made our way to Caleb's designated room. Jackson had to break down the door as it was locked. We found Kali asleep on the couch and Caleb on the ground in the kitchen. It didn't take long for Abbey to work her magic on him. When Caleb came to he demanded that Abbey wake Kali, but then she explained that by doing so Kali would be at more risk because she would want to fight, thus putting her and her unborn baby at risk. Caleb realized that she was right and dropped the subject. Once we had brought Caleb up to speed with the events of the night we were ready to find Sam.

Since Sam was the only attendee from Evergreen that was actually allowed to stay at Rocky Mountain he and Lily were sharing a cottage to themselves. They were on the far west side of the pack, so it was a bit of a hike to get there. We didn't want to run into anyone so we exited the back of the packhouse and made our way through the woods. Kai was the only one of us that actually knew this place inside out, so we were lucky we had him with us to show us a shortcut.

Cutting through the woods meant we reached the cabin pretty quickly. Kai pushed the door open, it was unlocked luckily, Sam and Lily were laying face down on the table. They must have been having a hot drink when the spell took over because their cups had tipped over and had run onto the wooden floor.

Caleb and Kai went straight to Sam and moved him from his chair to the floor. Jackson picked Lily up carefully and placed her on the couch. As he was laying her down Abbey called out to him, "Jackson could you bring Lily here and lay her beside Sam, I wanna try something," Abbey stated.

Before anyone could ask, Abbey had closed her eyes and began to focus on Sam and Lily, she did the same as before and placed her hands directly above both their bodies. After a minute or so they both started to come to.

We all looked at Abbey gobsmacked.

"You did it!" I called out happily.

"You healed them both at the same time!" I said to her with a look of astonishment on my face.

Abbey smiled and seemed to wilt a little. Caleb held her from behind, and she took a moment to steady herself.

"Thank you. I haven't done two people at a time before. It just takes a bit out of me. I'm not that long out of my witch training" Abbey clarified with a slight blush on her face.

"Sam!" Caleb called out, helping his friend up.

"What happened?" Sam said, rubbing his eyes.

"Lily!" I called out. "Are you okay?" I said helping her sit up.

“Aleksa! What are you doing here?” Lily called out confused.

“Wait, Sam?” Lily questioned, looking to the right side of her.

Lily and Sam pulled each other into an embrace and then pulled apart again.

“Ah, what’s going on?” Sam asked looking around at us all with a puzzled look on his face.

We didn’t have time to spare. There wasn’t a lot of darkness left before sunrise, and we needed to use the cover of darkness to our advantage right now.

Jackson gave Sam and Lily a rundown of the night’s events as we made our way to the old log cabin. Kai had suggested that since it was on the far side of the pack boundaries. He had a theory that it might not have had its communications systems affected. We might be able to get some help or contact someone with knowledge of this sort of thing, and then we could make our way back to the pack before sunrise.

As we were almost at the old log cabin we walked into something. We tried to advance but we couldn’t seem to move any further.

“I can feel a strong energy,” I declared to my friends.

“So can I,” Jackson responded.

“Uh oh,” Abbey commented.

“It’s a forcefield,” a voice came from behind us, it was one of Jackson’s warriors from earlier tonight.

“The witch has imposed a forcefield, we can’t leave and no one else can come in,” He replied.

“Nice of you to join us, Bryant,” Jackson replied.

“Everyone, this is my good friend Bryant,” Jackson called out.

Everyone acknowledged and greeted him. Once the pleasantries were over we had to figure out where we were going now and what our new plan would be.

“Comms!” Kai declared.

“We could try the backup equipment in the Communications room, back at the packhouse,” Kai reiterated.

“Worth a try,” Jackson replied.

“Let’s go then,” Sam said.

Just as we made it up the steps to the rear entrance of the packhouse the sun started to come up. At least we had made it back safely. Hopefully, we could find something of use in the communications room.

The communications room was located in the loft at the top of the packhouse. I had no idea it was even here, although that isn’t surprising as I was still orienting to the pack.

We made our way up to the room and started looking around. Caleb and Sam tried to get the computers and communication systems working, while Jackson took a look around for a backup generator, and Caleb checked the cupboards, while doing so he stumbled across a secret compartment in the ceiling for alternative means of communication.

After about thirty minutes we had made no progress.

“s**t!” Jackson called out.

“I can’t get through to Elijah.” Jackson declared.

“We have to assume that Ezra has escaped, we also need to assume he may be in on whatever is going on here, so be on your guard! If you see him, don’t k**l him, we need to find out what he knows first,” Jackson ordered.

Aleksa POV

Our search of the communications room was fruitless. Nothing we found was able to transmit. It looked like we were truly on our own here. We had no idea

who we were up against. We just suspected that Lachlan was behind it all and he was being helped by a dark witch.

We knew that the pack seemed to be surrounded by some massive energy-bound forcefield so we couldn't get out either. We also knew that it was only a matter of time before whoever was behind all of this realized that I wasn't where I should be.

While my heart ached for my mate, I couldn't feel anything through our bond, but I didn't feel our bond break so that gave me hope that he was still out there, maybe he was under the enchantment spell, I sure hoped that was the case.

Abbey said that assuming that this was orchestrated by Lachlan and he was he for me the best thing to do would be to elude him for as long as possible.

Meanwhile, she will focus on trying to wake some of the pack up a few at a time.

Sam suggested we keep moving because it would only be a matter of time before they tracked back to the packhouse.

Abbey asked for suggestions as to who she should wake first. Jackson implied the stronger the wolf the better right now as they were likely to be able to defend themselves rather than hold us back, everyone was in agreement with that.

I voiced that I didn't recall seeing any of the alphas at the training grounds, to which Kai replied that the night before the summit festival it was tradition for the attending alphas to have a late-night whiskey at the lake house.

"Lakehouse?" I replied with a confused look on my face,

"Uh, yeah, it belonged to the previous alpha and luna, it's in the middle of the woods on the southern boundary. Chances are they were there when the enchantment spell hit. It's worth a try anyway. I can show you the way." Kai called out.

We all followed Kai out through the woods as quietly and quickly as possible. It took about twenty minutes to get there in our human form. It was a large wooden cabin just sitting here on the outskirts of the wood overlooking a small lake.

As expected, there were bodies of the visiting alpha's lounged out on chairs, by the lake, and on the deck. They all looked so peaceful, a contrast from the intimidating alphas they usually are. But this wasn't the time to reflect, we had work to do.

"Caleb, Sam, Bryant with me, let's get them all next to each other and line them up. Lily and Aleska, you can help Abbey set up. Abbey – are you ready for this?"

Abbey looked at Jackson and smiled. "You're just a big softy aren't you?"

Jackson huffed and walked off.

Abbey looked at me smirking, "I think we are going to be great friends, Jackson and I,"

I smiled at her knowingly. Because I thought so too.

Abbey had begun healing the alphas. When they woke up they were disorientated initially but after about ten minutes or so they seemed to be back to their usual selves. While some wanted to spring into action immediately, we managed to convince them that we had to tread carefully since we didn't actually know what we were up against.

Abbey seemed to be holding up well despite using mass amounts of energy, there were about a dozen of us now, and still, another dozen alphas yet to be healed.

Jackson suggested that some of us would need to stay back with Abbey while she healed the other alpha's and the rest of us needed to continue onwards.

Caleb and Kai naturally refused to leave my side, I guess it was the gamma band at play. Sam and Lily said that they would stay back with Abbey, Bryant also offered to protect her while she helped us to gather more backup.

Jackson, myself, Caleb, and Kai, as well as some of the attending alphas, decided to move out and see if we could see any movement around the pack grounds. We hadn't seen anyone yet, but they must be somewhere.

As we were about a hundred yards away from the entrance to the packhouse, we saw movement. We halted behind Jackson and waited. My jaw dropped as I took in the huge army of wolves that were descending upon the packhouse.

The foul stench of these rogue wolves invaded my nostrils. I fought the urge to vomit. We all looked at one another. Well, this complicates things a little I thought to myself. I wasn't quite expecting that we would have that many opponents to fight.

I looked at Caleb instantly in fear. We had left Kali behind sleeping there. Caleb let out a huge growl and ran forward shifting into his wolf, he ran as fast as his legs would carry him toward the packhouse.

"f**k!" Jackson yelled. He also runs forward, shifting into Gray following Caleb's lead. If we don't follow him, both he, Kali, and their unborn baby are dead, so we all shifted and followed them through the packhouse, taking out wolves as we moved through the crowd.

Kai and a few of the other alpha's flanked my sides and front and behind and pushed through the rogues, their bodies flying all over the place, blood spurting out all over the place.

We ran down the corridor and then skidded to a sudden halt, Caleb had shifted and was holding a sleeping Kali in his arms. We formed a circle around him and I nodded my head towards the back entrance swiftly, rogues descending on us from behind, we all pushed forward some of the alpha's fending off the rogues as we made our way through the packhouse.

"Take Aleksa and Kali to safety, I'll keep the rogues busy!" Jackson yelled as he slowed down and turned to fight the rogues.

Four of the alpha's followed Caleb and Kali and me. Once we made it to the bush. I turned around.

"Get your mate and baby to safety!" I called out and I ran off.

I ran towards the packhouse to join Jackson and half a dozen alphas fight.

Jackson growled.

"What the f**k are you doing? Run! Now!" He yelled at me followed by a growl.

“No. I’m here to fight for my friends and my pack!” I yelled as I fought two small dirty brown rogues.

“Aleksa, concentrate, like before. We can use our powers. Visualize. Then focus our energy!” Amber encouraged me.

I take a breath and close my eyes. I think of the danger my friends and my pack are in. I use my anger against those who have come to destroy my pack. I feel myself heat up again. I feel like I am being surrounded by a whirlwind of heat and then I release. I feel a huge gust of energy disperse, and when I open my eyes the rogues that were surrounding us were no more.

I look further afield and I see the remaining rogues retreat. I see movement in the woods to the north of the pack grounds, and for some reason, I know that is where the witch is hiding. I could feel a pull toward her. I could feel her dark energy.

I lunge forward and run like the wind in her direction. When I get there I can sense that she is still there. I see a figure move out from behind a large tree.

“Hello, Aleksa,” she called out.

“Why are you doing this?” I asked her aggressively.

“Why do we do anything? For power, for money, for control.” She spat out shaking her head.

“My, you really are naive aren’t you?” She mocked me.

“I can see why that brute of an alpha wants you. So pretty and yet so clueless.” She laughed again.

Then she went quiet and looked at me as if she was looking into my mind.

“He doesn’t know, does he?” the witch asked me. Then she starts laughing again.

“Oh, this is brilliant!” She called out trying to suppress further laughter.

“Who? Know about what?” I asked the witch, having no actual clue as to who or what she was referring to.

“What are you talking about, Who are you...” I asked. I stopped mid-sentence as I was distracted by a shuffle in the bushes to the witch’s left.

“My sweet Aleska, did you like the rose I sent you?” Lachlan said, striding towards me with a smirk on his face.

“Lachlan,” I said shakily, trying not to show my fear but failing miserably.

“You have caused a lot of trouble my little mate,” Lachlan said, shaking his head disapprovingly at me.

“Nevermind, you have the rest of your life to make it up to me!” He added, laughing evilly.

I slowly started to back away from Lachlan and the witch, as I did I could sense movement behind me. As I turned my head I saw two of Evergreen’s warriors behind me in their wolf forms. I knew that I wouldn’t be getting out of this situation without a fight.

“Well, my job here is done! You have your she-wolf. Now I will have my payment, Wolf!” the witch demanded eagerly.

“Don’t dare disrespect me, Witch!” Lachlan declared to the witch.

However, she didn’t appear to be affected by his menacing aura. She looked more impatient than anything else.

Lachlan pulled a small hessian sack out of his pocket and dumped it in the witch’s hand. She quickly poured the gold out and looked over it, then she chucked it back in the sack happily and stowed it away in the inside of her gown.

“I’d watch this one if I were you. There’s more to her than meets the eye,” the witch said as she winked at me knowingly.

Lachlan huffed, and dismissed the witch.

“I have a feeling this isn’t the last we shall see of one another Aleksa.” the witch added and with that, she vanished in a big puff of smoke.

Aleska POV

“Where is my mate?” I yelled at Lachlan in disdain.

Seconds later I felt his large calloused hand connect with the side of my cheek. I almost lose my balance due to the sheer force of his slap.

I am done with taking slaps from men today, so I slapped Lachlan back even harder in return.

Lachlan laughed mockingly at me.

“I see my weak mate has developed a backbone. Well, I shall have fun breaking you back down.” Lachlan said laughing even harder this time.

I felt my anger start to rise. Not now Aleksa. We need more information. Don't show your hand just yet. Amber warned me.

“Please, where is Kingston?” I asked Lachlan again, this time with a lower tone,

“That mutt. He's none of your concern,” Lachlan said walking around me in a circular motion.

I hear him growl when he takes in my mark. I felt a hard punch to my stomach. I lean forward feeling gasping for breath as I am temporarily wounded. I got my breath back and managed to pull myself back up. I stood strong and tall. I tried to remain stoic.

I knew that he wanted me to submit, and to fear him. But I refused to. The next time he touches me I will not be holding back.

“First thing we will do when we get back to the pack is to get rid of that mutt's filthy mark on you. You will regret letting him mark you, I promise you that w***e!” Lachlan spat out in a rage.

“I gave you everything! You were living a lowly life in that human town before you met me. I gave you a home, a pack, a rank, a purpose. And this is how you repay me! By w*****g yourself to some alpha mutt in the middle of b**t f**k nowhere.” Lachlan screamed out. He looked like he was getting angrier by the moment.

I just stared at him blankly.

“What do you have to say for yourself w***e?” Lachlan prodded me while glaring at me.

“Where’s my mate? Where’s...” I am not finished with my sentence when I feel another slap, this time it’s on the other side of my face. Well, thank goddess for that, at least the swelling will even out.

Even though I’m in so much pain right now, and I can feel the tears welling in my eyes I start laughing.

“Is that it? Is that all you’ve got?” I call out mockingly, laughing so more. Lachlan looks at me in astonishment, probably wondering if I have a death wish.

I figure that by baiting him, I am buying more time for my friends to find me. We haven’t left the pack grounds yet. The dark witch appears to have left. Any minute now someone should arrive and then we can end this once and for all.

As if he can read my mind Lachlan grabs me and pulls me towards the pack boundaries.

“I’m no fool w***e! I know your game! Move it!” He said pulling me along even faster than before, his warriors falling closely behind us.

As we approach the pack boundary there is a black SUV waiting, the engine is running and someone is in the driver’s seat. We are approximately ten yards away, and no one has arrived yet. I guess they are busy with the rogues at the packhouse. I sure hope they are okay. Although, it looks like I’m on my own for now.

Just as we were nearing the SUV I heard footsteps coming from the trees behind us. I turned my head and was shocked to see Ezra running toward us. I gasped out loud.

“What do you want?” Lachlan said in a tone of annoyance.

It sounds like they know each other.

“That b***h isn’t going anywhere! We have unfinished business!” Ezra growled pointing at me.

Lachlan looked at us both, studying our body language in amusement.

“And what has my wretched mate done to get you all wound up?” Lachlan asked.

“She knows where my mate is!” Ezra screamed.

“Tell me now! Where is Kaia?” Ezra demanded.

He started to step toward me. As he did I saw Lachlan start to sniff.

“We had a deal Lachlan, and I am yet to see my mate!” Ezra yelled fiercely, looking like he was struggling to keep himself together.

“WHY DO YOU REEK OF MY MATE!” Lachlan called out almost in a rage. Then I see his eyes turn black.

Interesting. I thought to myself.

Ezra stopped suddenly.

“Yyyour mate?” He said almost stuttering, and stopping short.

“He tried to r**e me!” I called out.

I know that Lachlan doesn't care about anyone but himself. But I also know that he doesn't like to share his toys either. I decide that I can k**l two birds with one stone by playing them against each other.

“Whattttt!” Lachlan roared.

“She was asking for it!” Ezra boomed.

“No one touches my mate but me!” Lachlan yelled savagely.

And in seconds he had lost all control, shifted, and launched his wolf upon Ezra.

Ezra was caught off-guard, clearly not expecting such a reaction from his partner in crime. Cyrus didn't hold back.

He held Ezra's arms down, and started snapping at his neck, he was about to go in for the k**l when Ezra managed to push him off his legs.

Ezra shifted. His wolf was smaller than Lachlan's. Their wolves started circling one another slowly. They were both growling. I started to step back slowly. Unfortunately, I had forgotten about the warriors that were trailing me from behind.

The wolves lunged for each other and started rolling back and forth, each trying to get closer to the other's neck.

Cyrus managed to latch onto Ezra's wolf's neck and tore a huge chunk of skin off his neck. It was grotesque, I could see the artery rupture, and the blood rapidly spraying out all over Cryus and into the air.

Ezra started to go limp, he shifted back to human form. His skin was deathly pale, and I watched as he lost consciousness.

Cryus had delivered a fatal bite. I figured this was my time to escape now. I shifted into my wolf Amber and barged through the two warrior wolves behind me, causing them to fall to the ground.

I could sense that Cyrus was on my tail, merely seconds behind me, so I pushed myself as far as I could. I could almost see the end of the treeline ahead of me. I just had to move a little faster.

"Come on Amber, we are almost through the trees. Just a bit further!" I tried to encourage my wolf.

She was determined to outrun her ex-mate.

As we pushed past the last of the trees, I could feel the body heat of Cryus upon us, and just as I smelt him hover over us, I felt myself being pushed to the ground, my face hitting the ground suddenly.

Cyrus had launched his body on top of us, pinning us down. He was holding us face down on the ground.

Cyrus let out a menacing growl.

I could feel him shift on top of me.

"Mmmmn, just like oldtimes. Me on top riding you face down!" Lachlan declared.

"I think I'm gonna be sick!" I said out loud.

And with that Lachlan grabbed my head and pushed it hard against the ground.

I was too dizzy and in too much pain to even react.

I could feel myself being lifted up, but I felt so incoherent. I just let the darkness take me.

I felt myself being pulled along the ground. I could smell the grass and earth scratching my face as I was being dragged. A burning sensation had engulfed me, it felt like my skin was being grazed repeatedly against the ground.

I must have only lost consciousness for a few seconds, as I appeared to be on the pack grounds still. I could see I was being dragged back the way I came.

I had enough of this playing dumb business. I tried to play the passive weak female and hoped that would be enough for Lachlan to let slip where Kingston was, but now I was over it.

I focussed my energy and used my power to get myself out of the warrior's grip, burning their hands with an electrical surge. They started screaming in pain. I jumped up on my feet and got into a defensive stance.

"Playtime is over! Tell me where Kingston is now! And I might let you live!" I demanded with a cold and determined look on my face.

Lachlan looked at me in disbelief.

"What the f**k was that!" he yelled, looking at his warriors squealing in pain.

"That was me taking the power back!" I said standing there with my arms crossed looking at him smugly.

"I'm done playing games!" I yelled at him.

"Where is my mate? Tell me now and I might show you some mercy!" I demanded.

I could feel my eyes glowing. I was getting angrier by the moment. My wolf is anxious to find her mate and disgusted at the sight of her former mate.

“Your eyes!” Lachlan called out incredulity.

“Where is my mate!” I called out. My anger resonates and I felt a surge of energy, it felt electrical. I moved my hands in Lachlan’s direction and he and his warriors fall to the ground. I watch them look at me in horror and disbelief.

“What the!” Lachlan screamed out, pulling himself back up, and dusting himself off.

“Turns out you didn’t know me as well as you thought,” I told him coldly.

“What are you? Some kind of witch?” Lachlan blurted out.

He was stalling. I struggled to contain my wolf. I could feel my eyes switching color. I was about to inflict pain upon this poor excuse for a wolf in front of me.

I was getting angrier by the moment and I could feel myself heating up again. As I went to raise my hand towards Lachlan he called out.

“I can take you to him! Kingston! I will show you where he is!” Lachlan yelled out with two hands in front of me, gesturing to me that he will surrender for now.

“No games! If I think you are tricking me – I will make you suffer!” I tell him.

I feel so strong and in control. A far cry from the naive and shy Aleksa that I once was.

Aleska POV

We had been walking for a few minutes now and I could see the pack was starting to wake up. It would appear that the dark witch’s spell had been lifted. My mind-link was currently being flooded by anxious pack members. I felt a headache coming on so I blocked them all for now.

I tried to mind-link Kingston, hoping that I might finally be able to get through to him, but there was nothing. I couldn’t feel him, period. I knew that nothing sinister had happened to him so that was something at least.

“Aleksa, where are you?” I heard via mind-link. I was not surprised that Jackson could get through to me, it must be a crescent moon wolf perk.

“I’m with Lachlan and two of his warriors, we are walking towards the maintenance sheds, he’s cooperating at the moment but I don’t trust him,” I told Jackson.

“Right, we’re on our way!” Jackson called out via the mind-link.

As we were approaching the sheds I had a feeling that danger was awaiting us and that this was a trap, but I was determined to find Kingston. I had the upper hand for now, but I was still on high alert.

Lachlan told me that Kingston was just behind the sheds in the woods, and that he had him handcuffed in silver there. I look at him and I sensed that he was being truthful. I reached out to Amber but she couldn’t sense anything.

As we approached the bush I heard movement in multiple directions. In a matter of seconds, I was surrounded by wolves, snapping their teeth at me angrily.

Lachlan turned around with a smirk on his face.

“Right where I wanted you. Still so naive!” He laughed out loud, shaking his head toward me.

I crossed my arms and tilted my head at him.

I was about to make some smart-a*s comment when I hearde snickering from behind the wolves, they parted ways, and out walked Eva.

“Aleska is mine!” She called out.

Lachlan looked at her in amusement.

“Have at it, just don’t k**l her, do you hear me!” Lachlan screamed out to Eva.

“I can’t make any promises!” Eva replied snarkily.

“Eva!” Lachlan called back.

“Yeah, ok, fine I won’t k**l her,” She begrudgingly agreed.

I looked at Eva and couldn’t contain my laughter. I found it hilarious that she thought that she could take me. I’m not the same girl that she remembered, but I will sure enjoy educating her.

I stood in anticipation, as I knew that she would strike first.

As predicted Eva walked up to me and attempted to slap me hard across the face, but I could see it coming a mile away and I blocked her hand with my arm, causing her to call out loudly in pain.,

“Pathetic!” I called out to her.

I saw that the wolf’s attention had moved to something coming from behind me.

I turned my head to see what it was, and I saw my friends approaching us with haste.

In doing so, I had broken the never turn your back on your opponent rule, and I had given Eva time to attack me.

I felt my body fall back on the ground hard. Eva was punching my face hard and fast, and after a few hits, I was starting to feel dizzy.

I let out a loud growl and pushed Eva from me hard. My wolf and I were now furious and I could feel my body heating up once again, but I didn’t want to use my powers on Eva, nor did I want to shift just yet. I wanted to take this b***h out on my own.

Suddenly I had flashbacks of all the times that I had suffered in pain while Eva was with Lachlan, all the times I confided in her, all the times I went out of my way for her, and then I thought about when I caught them in the act and that look of sheer smug satisfaction on her face, and that did it for me. I hit her hard, and I couldn’t stop.

I felt a wolf jump up and bite my shoulder from behind. I felt the pain surge through me. I took this moment to shift into my wolf. Amber was furious, she charged for the wolf and ripped out a chunk of skin from its flank. I then spat it out. It tasted disgusting in my mouth. It appeared to be a rogue wolf, judging by its foul odor.

I watched Eva shift and charge toward me and I knew that I needed to end the other wolf so that I could focus on Eva. As I was about to go in for the k**l, Eva’s wolf jumped on me and snapped its teeth toward my neck. I was now vastly outnumbered and there was a raging battle going on around me. I knew that my friends were here fighting and I needed to try to end this.

I focussed my energy on getting Eva off me. I felt myself heat up, and the electrical energy surge through me. I felt it connect with Eva's fur and smelt her fur burning as she begun to sizzle. She was essentially being electrified. She fell off me onto the ground, rolling until she appeared to lose consciousness.

The wolf that had just been attacking me looked scared and started to cower away, submitting to me.

"Run away, and don't come back, and I will let you live!" I mind-linked the wolf.

The wolf looked shocked, and nodded its head towards me, then ran off towards the woods.

I looked around me and saw Jackson and Lachlan circling one another. I saw Abbey had shifted and she was fighting back to back with Lily who had also shifted, there were about four wolves surrounding them.

Sam was fighting the two warriors that were accompanying Lachlan earlier.

The place was chaos. Pack wolves fighting rogue wolves, it was c****e.

I look behind me and I saw some of the alphas from other packs that were here for the summit, were arriving to help us fight the rogues. Thank the goddess for that I thought to myself.

I mind-linked Jackson, "I need to find Kingston. Ask Lachlan where he is, do whatever you have to get the information out of him," I called out.

"You got it!" Jackson replied.

I stalked hurriedly towards Sam to help him fight the warriors, he was holding his own, but the sooner we took these rogues down the better.

I mind-linked my friends "Try to incapacitate them as opposed to massacring them, they are just following orders, we want to keep the death toll down if we can,"

My mind was flooded with replies.

"Need a hand, Sam?" I mind-linked Sam.

"Sure thing Luna," He called out to me.

In no time we take them out, but as fast as we get rid of them more seemed to appear.

“Sam, go help your mate! I’ll be fine here!” I called out to him via mind-link.

“Are you sure?” He called out nervously.

“Yes, go!” I told him.

Sam moved to help Lily and Abbey who seemed to be constantly surrounded by rogues.

Everyone was defending their positions well but it was becoming tiresome.

I asked my wolf if she could sense our mate yet. She replied to me that she couldn’t pick anything up.

“Abbey, do you think you could help me find Kingston? I still can’t get hold of him even though the spell has been lifted.” I mind-link her.

“Yes, I think so, I can definitely try, I just need to be able to concentrate,” Abbey replied.

“I’m on my way!” I replied to her.

I was done with fighting the hard way. I once again focussed my energy and shocked the wolves surrounding me. I felt a little drained. It appeared that the more my powers were used, the more energy it took from me.

I charged toward Abbey, Lily, and Sam. “Abbey if you can make your way to the maintenance sheds behind us you might be able to try that locating spell?” I declared.

“Hmmn, I can try. But I will need something that belongs to Kingston. Do you have anything I could use?” Abbey asked me.

I shook my head sadly.

“Ah, it’s ok, I’ll see what I can do, be back soon!” Abbey called out.

I took over her place in the circle and continued to fight the rogues. I was feeling a bit drained, my wolf missed her mate, it felt like forever since we had seen one another.

I looked over to Jackson, while I was fighting one on one with a rogue. I saw him and Lachlan fighting, rolling over each other, snapping and biting one another, each of them seeking dominance in the fight. Neither one of them seemed to be winning, both taking hard hits, with gashes evident all over their bodies, both with blood-soaked fur.

It was at that moment it dawned on me. Jackson's powers. I had never asked him what they are specifically. Why hasn't he ended his fight with Lachlan?

I wasn't paying attention to the fight, and I felt a claw s***h the side of my neck. I felt blood drip down my collarbone and onto my chest. The pain spurred me on.

I lunged forward and ripped the rogue's throat out, spitting its disgusting skin and flesh onto the field.

I was snapped out of my bloodlust by the feeling of a mind-numbing pain ripping through me. I felt as though I had been stabbed with a knife in my chest. I clutched myself where it hurt and let out a blood-curdling growl. I knew that I was feeling someone else's pain.

I scanned my eyes around the field and I saw Jackson fall to the ground, leaning on his knees, holding his chest. Lachlan hovering over him snickering.

I saw a silver dagger sticking out of his chest and my heart hurt for him. I picked myself up off the ground and my paws pounded against the ground galloping towards him as if my life depended on it.

I leapt off the ground into the air and lunged towards Lachlan, I started ripping into him, tearing into his chest frantically, he used whatever energy he had to push me off. I got back onto my paws to attack him some more, when I was distracted by Jackson's groans.

I was torn, part of me wanted to end this wretched wolf who has my mate hidden somewhere, who has made my life a misery as well as countless other and gravely injured my cousin, and the other part of me, the bigger part, needed to tend to Jackson.

I felt Sam and Caleb flank me.

Sam shifted beside me.

“I Sam Nicholson, Beta of Evergreen Pack, reject you Lachlan as my Alpha,” Sam said holding his ground. He then quickly shifted back to his wolf form ready to fight the wolf he once pledged his allegiance to.

Lachlan laughed.

“I was gonna k**l you anyway. Enjoy your short life as a Rogue!” He called out to Sam.

“I need to help Jackson, can you stall him for now?” I mind-inked Sam and Caleb.

“Yes Luna,” They replied to me in synchronisation.

I leaned down to Jackson, and tried to assess his wound. The blood was hemorrhaging out. The dagger was silver. And then it hit me -my nightmares. I've seen this all before, in my nightmares.

I shifted back to human form, so I could use my hands to help put pressure on the wound.

I tried to fight back the tears but they continued to fall furiously.

“Stay with me Jackson!” I called out pleadingly.

I shook him to try keep him awake. I saw his eyes were starting to roll back.

“Jackson, please!” I called out desperately.

“Please Moon Goddess, help him!” I yelled out to the sky.

At that very moment, we were all blinded by an overwhelming bright white light.

Aleska POV

I had to close my eyes as the light was so bright. I heard a loud screeching sound, it was piercing my ears, like some sort of sound distortion. And then a wave of energy hit us all. The force was overwhelming and I felt lightheaded. After a few moments, I felt myself come to my senses. The light started to dim down and my eyes began to adjust. The light appeared to be shrinking and in a matter of moments, it had become merely an orb. There was a figure

emerging from behind it. I had to squint to see in the darkness of the woods. It was Xanthe!

Most of the wolves that had been fighting on the battlefield were holding their heads, they looked to be in pain. Xanthe looked panicked and started running towards me. I looked back down at Jackson, "Jackson, can you hear me, please stay with me!" I yelled at him.

Xanthe approached us and pushed me aside, "Move!" She ordered me. I looked at her in confusion.

"Xanthe, what are you doing?" I asked her.

"He is my Mate!" She told me looking at him in disbelief.

I could see how concerned she looked. She touched his face with the palm of her hands, her fingers touching Jackson's face in a gentle and loving manner.

Jackson's breathing was starting to normalize already with Xanthe's mere touch. I wonder if that could be the mate bond at work, or perhaps it was because Xanthe was a healer or both.

"Are you sure?" I asked Xanthe hopefully.

"I can heal him!" Xanthe declared.

"I just need some space," Xanthe said. I could tell she was trying to suppress her true feelings, I could hear the shakiness in her voice.

Xanthe POV

After meeting with Aleksa and Kingston that day in the gazebo in the rose gardens, I was determined to find out whatever I could about her heritage. However, along the way my past had caught up with me. I had been detained against my will by someone who had untoward plans for me.

I was able to escape that hellhole with help from an unlikely ally. I then began to make my way back to Rocky Mountain. My intuition had told me to come back right away. I had thought something might be wrong with Aleska until I reached the pack border and then I felt it. I felt him.

I felt the pull deep within my heart. My true love. My mate, was here, and he was hurt. I made my way toward the training fields and I saw a raging battle

taking place. I could sense it was between pack wolves fending off a rogue attack.

I could see everyone fighting from the woods. I saw that despicable Lachlan lunging toward Aleksa and then I let out a surge of power, blinding and stopping all in its path.

I made my way to the wolf on the ground as I saw he had shifted to his human form.

He was gorgeous. Rugged with dark and handsome features, I could sense that he was of alpha blood.

He had been stabbed with a silver wolfsbane-infused dagger in his chest and he was fading fast. I couldn't believe that after all these centuries I had finally found my mate. I refused to lose him when I had only just found him.

After telling Aleksa that he was my mate, I attempted to heal him. I placed my hands over his body and channeled all of my energy. I used my strength to s**k the poison from his system. I felt it consume me but I would not stop until my mate was safe.

It seemed like an eternity but in reality, it didn't take long at all. I watched my mate wake from his state of unconsciousness.

I watched him look into my eyes with desire and growl "MATE!"

I looked at him and I smiled lovingly.

Aleksa POV

My wolf became restless, and then she growled wildly. "Mate! Mate is coming!" She howled in my head with joy.

I jerked my head to the left, and I watched as my mate approached us with Abbey in tow.

"Kingston!" I called out desperately. My heart racing and an overwhelming desire to run to my mate and never let go, right here in the middle of this fight.

I looked at Xanthe and Jackson. They were having a moment. They wouldn't notice me gone.

I leaped up onto the ground and ran into my mate's arms.

As I ran toward him I took in his bruised and swollen face, he had a split lip and a split eyebrow. Why was he in such a state I wondered. Why was his werewolf healing not kicking in? What had happened to him?

I felt him flinch in pain as my body smacked against his. I looked at him with concern on my face. I lifted up his shirt and saw burn marks, it looked like a silver knife had been slashed against him repeatedly.

I looked at his wrists which also looked to be burned. I could only assume he had been bound in silver handcuffs or chains.

My wolf whimpered internally for our mate.

"I'm ok. I'll heal soon." Kingston said to me casually.

I smacked my lips against his and passionately kissed him. My wolf was howling in my head. Then I pulled away quickly, realizing that we were still in the middle of the fight. There would be time for this later, I thought to myself.

I looked to Abbey, "How?" That was all I could ask her, still astonished that she had found my mate.

"He was bound in silver, and unconscious when I found Him. He was tied to a chair, at the back of the maintenance shed. I picked up his scent while I was trying to find some space to perform the locating spell," Abbey replied.

I looked again at Kingston. Trying my best to suppress my tears of joy, as I was pushed aggressively to the ground. My head hit the ground with a loud thud. As I looked up to see what had just hit me I saw Kingston being pinned to the ground by Lachlan's wolf Cyrus.

I ran into Cyrus with all my might. I figure it will buy Kingston a few moments to shift. As he hovers over me snapping at me, I try to fight him off with my hands.

I hear him whimper as Kingston shifts into his wolf Sabre and takes a large chunk of flesh out of his left hind leg. Cyrus is pushed to the ground and it seems that Sabre has the upper hand when a scroungy brown wolf jumps onto him trying to get access to his neck.

Furious, and recognizing that the scroungy and singed wolf is Eva, I quickly shifted into my wolf Amber and lunged forward viciously taking aim at her neck. I latched onto it and I tugged at it mercilessly, not letting go until I was satisfied that there was no life left in her.

While part of me was sad to take a life, especially when this wolf was once my friend, I told myself that she was never the friend I thought she was, and that I would stop at nothing to protect my mate.

Sabre continued to attack Cyrus, taking aim at his neck but missing and taking a chunk out of his shoulder instead, he then went for Cyrus's jugular and ripped into his neck, blood squirting out all over Sabre, soaking his fur. Cyrus began to lose strength, whimpering, his motions stalling.

Sabre moves away from Cyrus nudging against my snout, we both shift and fall into each other's arms. Usually, I would be embarrassed to be naked in front of so many other wolves but right now I'm just feeling blessed to have my mate in my arms. I'm so besotted that I don't even notice Cyrus has shifted into his human form and he is getting back on his feet.

It's almost too late when I see he has somehow picked up the silver dagger and is about to stab Kingston in the neck when Sam comes from behind and grips the dagger forcing it into Lachlan's heart he then pulls it out and slices Lachlan's neck open decapitating him.

I gasped in horror as I watch my former mate's head fall to the ground. I wished that things could have been different, but he was a lost soul, so consumed in evil and darkness. There was no redemption for him.

I mouthed thank you to Sam for saving my mate from harm. Kingston had turned around just in time to see Lachlan meet his demise. We all stood there in silence for a moment.

As I looked around us, I noticed that the rogues had started to retreat. I watched my friends start to pick themselves up off the battlefield. I saw wolves tending to the injured. We all just stared at one another looking grateful that we were still all here, and it is finally over.

Aleksa POV

Four hours later.

Once Lachlan was no longer a threat and we were sure the rogues had retreated, we began the task of picking ourselves back up.

We rounded the entire pack together and all the visiting packs, and had a quick debrief.

After the debriefing we encouraged the visiting packs not to feel obliged to stay, and to feel free to make their way home, as the summit was effectively over, due to these unexpected events.

We had just finished rounding up the last of the deceased rogues when the royal pack entourage arrived. This isn't the way we were planning to greet the Alpha King, and it definitely wasn't what we had planned for this day of the summit.

Originally we had a huge festival planned with performers, stalls, music, and food. Until we were attacked by a dark witch and rogues led by my deranged ex-mate.

As the Alpha King himself, also known as my cousin Callum, stepped out of his Range Rover he took in the grim sight that awaited him.

The pack ground was a mess. Blood stained the once lush green field in front of us. It was clear a battle had taken place here.

Before he had a chance to ask what had happened we moved forward to introduce ourselves. We were quite a sight, I was still bleeding from the wounds I had sustained during the fight, Kingston looks like a bruised and battered mess, and we both still needed medical attention.

We had declined it initially, as we wanted the most vulnerable and injured wolves to be tended to first. Kingston tried to insist that I go straight to the pack doctor but I wanted to make sure my friends were seen first. Plus I could already feel my wounds were being healed.

We welcomed Callum to the pack and led him to the pack house dining room where some of our kitchen staff organized some pastries and hot drinks for Callum and his men.

We explained the events of the past twenty-four hours briefly, as well as explained that we had ramped up security as well as had Xanthe and Abbey placing some protective spells in place to secure the perimeter for now, in case of any further retaliation.

Callum suggested that we get cleaned up, get our wounds tended to, and then meet him and his men again in an hour or two on the pack house patio.

After showering and dressing and attending to our wounds, we met Callum at the pack house patio. The sun was beginning to set and it was quite a sight to behold. It was daunting to think that there was still so much to do before we retired for the day.

Callum had examined my crescent moon wolf marking with awe. Jackson didn't have a marking yet as he hadn't mated and marked his true mate yet, although it was only a matter of time now that he and Xanthe had found one another.

I begun to relay my story of how I had been raised as a human, to finding my wolf Amber and shifting for the first time, to meeting Lachlan and my time at Evergreen, up until the events that had just occurred here at Rocky Mountain. Callum had praised my strength and integrity, as well as Jackson's ability to lead a pack and still manage to keep his wolfs secret identity.

Callum then went on to explain his understanding of the events that had occurred at the royal pack all those years ago, as well as his condolences regarding our parents.

Jackson had also joined us, he was completely healed. It was as if nothing had happened earlier today. There was not a scratch on him.

He was reluctant to join us at first as he refused to be away from Xanthe, especially since they had just found one another. So Xanthe was present at the meeting also. Callum thanked her for her efforts to protect me and keep me safe, as well as her services to the royal pack.

Callum had even offered Jackson and me the opportunity to join the royal pack as senior members, which we were very honored to receive. However, we had to politely decline as neither of us wished to leave our current packs due to finding our true mates and our obligations.

While Callum was disappointed that we didn't take him up on his offer he did understand. So instead he came up with the idea of a Royal Pack Alliance which was extended not only to our closest allies but to the packs that had fought in the attack earlier today.

Though the packs had already started to make their way home immediately after the attack, we had all agreed to reconvene again in a month's time to discuss alliances and a peace treaty.

Callum was curious about the Hybrid who had such great knowledge of the royal pack, so he requested a meeting with Abbey, to which she gladly obliged, to which Alaric accompanied her too.

It appeared that Callum had known Abbey's mother well and they shared a few stories with one another. Abbey and Alaric were also invited to visit the royal pack, which they are intending to do after returning back to their packs.

Jackson and I have both been invited to stay at the Volkov Kingdom to meet some of our distant relatives and to learn more about our heritage. We have both agreed to come along, and we intend to bring our mates with us but have asked that it be postponed until everything is back to normal again following the recent attacks.

Jackson declared that he needed to speak with his father first and check back in with his pack, as he had been absent for some time now.

Further to that, he wished to introduce Xanthe to his pack as his Luna.

Xanthe was a bit reluctant. Although she had accepted Jackson as her mate, she was unsure about becoming Luna and is worried that there may be resistance to her being accepted as Luna due to the fact that she is a witch by birth.

I have a feeling it will all work out eventually though.

After Lachlan had met his demise, the rogues instantly began to retreat. However, we had managed to capture a few of them for interrogation purposes. They aren't saying anything at the moment, but Kingston believes that in a few days' time they will probably start talking.

Kingston was organizing a tracking team right now to see if they could follow the rogue's scents in an effort to find out where they came from, and determine if they will be a future threat.

Xanthe was planning to contact a coven that she has a working relationship in a bid to try to find out who the dark witch was and to see if she will become a further threat to us in the future.

The dark witch did say she would "see me soon," and I'm pretty sure she knew that I was a crescent moon wolf, so that could become problematic.

Kingston and I were heading off to the pack hospital now to check on our friends and injured pack members. After that I planned on calling Mason and Quinn and sharing a video call with my pups if they were still awake.

Now that Lachlan was no longer a threat, there is no reason why they cant all come home.

I simply cannot wait to have my pups safely in my arms again. It feels like it has been an eternity since I last saw them.

Kingston had managed to contact Asher, and he and Kaia are on their way back to Rocky Mountain. Asher said that when he went to tell them about Ezra's death, they already knew. They told him that they have something exciting to tell us when they get back. We have an inkling as to what it might be, but we are excited to hear what they have to say.

It's going to take some time to get things back to what they once were. We have a lot to do as far as pack security goes. The fact that the dark witch managed to create all that chaos is pretty scary. To think such an attack was able to occur, means we have much work ahead of us to ensure it doesn't happen again.

We will have lots of work to do with the creation of this new alliance with the royal pack, but everyone seems open to the idea so far.

With so many finding their fated and second chances mates, there is still much celebrating to be done. There are also Luna ceremonies to take place, including my own ceremony. But there is plenty of time for that.

What matters now is that everyone is safe and well, that all the injured recover, and that we get things back to a state of normality – whatever that might look like.

As I descended the stairs of the pack house I looked around at the lush greenery that surrounds me, the sky is now starting to darken, and night is falling.

I am so blessed to call this place home. I am safe. I am free at last.

I looked to the bottom of the stairs and see my perfect mate waiting for me.

Kingston had a grin on his face, and I raised my brows as I look at him, and then I saw why he was grinning.

As I looked to the side entrance of the main packhouse reception I saw my precious pups, my Liam and Layla, standing next to Mason and Quinn.

“How?” I asked Kingston via mind-link, in a state of astonishment.

“I rang Mason after the attack, and said it was safe to bring Liam and Layla back,” Kingston replied.

I was already making my way toward my pups.

“Mommy!” They called out in unison, running as fast as their little legs would carry them. I too started to run towards them and we met in the middle. They landed in my arms and I kissed them both on their foreheads as they push their heads into my chest and we take in one another’s scents. I felt the tears of joy falling from my cheeks. Then I felt Kingston join our hug and we all embraced each other. Our family unit was finally back together. Everything was just as it should be. I felt at peace at last. I never dreamed that I could feel so complete and so loved.