

Chapter 25

Nicole stood in the centre of the pack's training ground, her breaths coming in rough gasps as she tried to keep up with the others. Sweat dripped down her face, and her muscles ached with every movement.

She was panting heavily as she took a break from the rigorous training. Her muscles ached, and she felt like collapsing on the ground. She had never been this tired in her life.

She began to ask herself why she wandered into the training arena in the first place. She should have stayed away like she had been doing since the training began. But she was drawn to Liam, and her wolf ached to see him, so she decided to take a look, and now she wanted to faint.

Garrett winked, and she immediately understood what it meant. The personal training she had been doing with him was nothing compared to this. She looked around and saw the other pack members still training with Alpha Liam, who seemed to be enjoying their exertions.

She wiped the sweat from her forehead and took a deep breath. "I can do this," she whispered to herself, trying to muster up the strength to continue.

"Are you okay, Nicole?" Alpha Liam's voice boomed in her ears, making her jump. She turned around and saw him standing behind her, his arms crossed over his chest.

"I'm fine," she replied, trying to sound confident even though her voice trembled a little.

Alpha Liam raised an eyebrow. "You don't look fine," he said,

Nicole's heart skipped as she heard the concern in his voice.

"I'm just a little tired," she admitted, looking down at the ground.

"Well, that's understandable," he said. "You've been lounging all this time, doing nothing. I'm sure you were primed and pampered as a fake Luna in Crimson."

The taunting in his voice granted her voice. Nicole wrinkled her nose. He didn't know that half of it. He knew only what she let him see. He didn't know of the mental scars Shane had left on her. He didn't know of the physical scars Shane had left on her body. They were almost invisible because she was a werewolf, but she remembered them and she thought about them long enough until they became visible.

She didn't want him to know, but she was far from a pampered Luna. She shook her head to clear

her thoughts. He would never know. He didn't deserve to know, not with the way he treated her. Besides, she didn't want anyone's pity.

"Get back to work," he said and walked away.

After a while, she looked over at Alpha Liam, who was now training with the rest of the pack. His muscles rippled as he moved, and she couldn't help but be distracted by the sight of him.

Nicole felt a warm feeling in her chest at his appearance, but she quickly dismissed it. She couldn't let herself be distracted by her attraction to Liam. She reminded herself that it was the mark that was pushing her wolf. She had to focus on the training.

Suddenly, Liam barked out an order. "Everyone, line up!" he said. "We're going to do some sparring drills."

Nicole groaned inwardly. She hated sparring. She was never any good at it, and she always felt embarrassed when she lost. Beta Garrett and Asha, whom she had been training with, made sure to laugh at her each time. She had yet to tell Asha about her secret job, though. Garrett decided that it was better to keep it between them.

Nicole lined up with the others, trying to push down her anxiety.

As they began throwing punches, Nicole tried to focus on her opponent. She ducked and weaved,

trying to avoid his blows. But she was slow, so he landed a hit on her shoulder.

"Come on, Nicole," Liam taunted. "You're not even trying."

Nicole gritted her teeth, angry at his taunts. She knew he didn't mean anything by it, but it still stung. She tried to block out his words and focus on the fight.

As she resumed training, Nicole couldn't help but steal glances at Alpha Liam. He was so strong and powerful, and she couldn't help that her body wanted him. Her wolf was not helping either.

Sometimes, she trained with Garrett's mate, Lola, and after those sessions, she slyly asked her when the cravings would stop. Lola laughed and told her that it never did, but it got better when mates completed their bond.

Since Nicole knew that the bond between her and Liam would never be completed, she asked her how to make it fade. Lola shrugged, saying that she didn't know.

Every time Nicole made the mistake of looking at Liam as they trained, he seemed to taunt her and make fun of her.

"You call that a punch, Faux Luna?" he said, smirking at her as she tried to hit her opponent.

Nicole gritted her teeth in frustration. She knew she wasn't as strong as the other pack members,

but she was doing her best. She couldn't help the fact that she was an Omega.

"Maybe if you weren't so distracted, you'd be able to hit the target," he said, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

Nicole felt a flush rise to her cheeks. She knew he was right. She couldn't focus on the training because she was too busy being distracted by him. After a few more hours of training, Alpha Liam dismissed the pack members. As Nicole was about to leave, she felt a strange sensation wash over her. It was like a warning. Her wolf was in a frenzy. It clawed for authority over it. Nicole had never felt this way before. Suddenly, there was a commotion. She heard screams.

"Everybody, remember your training! Do not let it feed into you!" James, the chief warrior screamed.

"Move away from here," Liam's voice echoed in her head.

She saw a group of rogues jump out of the forest and attack them. All other pack members went stiff except for Liam, James, and Garrett with other warriors, who began attacking. It seemed that all the other people around them were frozen. They seemed to be spellbound by some sort of power.

She could even see Liam and Garrett, James, struggling to keep control of their sanity. It was strange that she felt nothing. Taking initiative, she began to drag pack members to safety. But then something strange happened.

Nicole felt a strange energy coursing through her body. It was like something was trying to take over her mind. She stumbled and fell to the ground, clutching her head. The power surging within was very unlike the one that surrounded her. It was pure magic, unlike the one that held pack members spellbound.

Nicole struggled to her feet, feeling her wolf stir inside her. She had always been able to communicate with her wolf, but this was different. Her wolf was angry, and it was making her feel more powerful than ever before.

She watched as the other pack members fought against the witch's control, but it was different for her. She didn't feel the effects of the witch's control. Instead, she felt her wolf take over.

Her wolf surged to the surface. She felt stronger, faster, and more powerful than ever before. She let out a rumbling growl as her hazel irises turned dark with red rings around them.

Unlike every other werewolf she knew, her eyes turned red and black whenever her wolf was

close to the surface, instead of gold or gold with black.

She shifted into her wolf form, surprising everyone on the field. Her fur stood on end as she let out a fierce howl, her eyes glowing with an unfamiliar light.

Alpha Liam's eyes widened in surprise as he watched Nicole transform. "What the hell?" he muttered.

Nicole's wolf form was unlike anything he had ever seen. It was larger and more powerful. It was not larger or more powerful than his, since he was from a line of very powerful wolves, but it emitted power, not dominance, and was more fierce than any other wolf in the pack.

He watched in awe as she leapt into the combat, taking down her opponents with ease.

The other wolves were stunned, unsure of how to react. Nicole didn't know that her eyes, which were normally red and black, were glowing golden. She growled at the rogues who began shifting too. Nicole didn't understand what was happening to her.

She could sense the witch's power and the urge to destroy it coursed through her. She sniffed the air and located the scent of the rogue who bore it. She growled at Liam, and he immediately understood her.

At once, he changed into his great midnight wolf and howled. His power frightened the rogues, causing enough distraction for Nicole's pure white wolf to leap at the source of dark magic. She aimed at the source of the power and attacked it with all her might. She caught the throat of the offending wolf and ripped it off.

At once, both the wolves and the dark magic dissipated. She could feel the power coursing through her, and it was exhausting. She howled out as the rogue wolves scampered to safety.

Liam quickly shifted back to his human form. His wolf was in a frenzy at the sight of Nicole's Majestic pure white wolf. It purred with excitement. Omegas were not supposed to be whitefurred. They had normal wolf color.

He had to change back because the mark and bond seemed stronger in human form. He didn't want to do something stupid. He reminded himself that he was trying to get over the pull of the mark.

He approached Nicole cautiously, his hands held out in a gesture of peace. "Nicole," he said softly. "Are you okay?"

Nicole's wolf form snarled at him, warning him to stay back. But Alpha Liam held his ground, his eyes never leaving hers.

"Nicole," he commanded softly, lacing his voice with a little dominance.

Slowly, Nicole's wolf form began to calm down. Her fur flattened, and she shifted back into her human form. She stood before Alpha Liam, her eyes still glowing with an unfamiliar light. And then she crumbled to the ground.

Liam dashed at her and grabbed her before she hit the ground.

When she came back to consciousness, Nicole's head hurt, and she felt a buzz of power within her.

"What happened?" she asked, confused.

"I think I know what happened," Alpha Liam said slowly. "You're a Witch Bane, aren't you?"

His eyes were wide with disbelief.

Nicole's eyes widened in shock. "A Witch Bane?" she repeated.

Alpha Liam nodded. "You're immune to the powers of witches and warlocks," he said. "That's why you didn't feel the effects of the attack."

Nicole shook her head, still trying to wrap her mind around what had happened. "I don't understand," she said. "I'm just an Omega. How can I be a witch bane?"

Alpha Liam shrugged. "I don't know," he said, his voice heavy with emotion. "But it's clear that

you have some kind of power. We need to train you to control it. You're just what Dark Moon needs."

Nicole was dumbfounded. It was too much information.

"What?" She croaked, feeling a little dizzy.

"Don't worry," Liam murmured, holding her close.

"Warriors, scouts go after those rogues, find their entry point, and kill them all. Let none of them live. No one apart from the Dark Moon should know what we witnessed here today. It is a command. Let no rogue who attacked us now survive." Liam growled,

That was the last thing Nicole heard before she fell into oblivion.

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Chapter 26

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Nicole woke up to find herself in an unfamiliar room. Her head was throbbing, and she felt disoriented. She tried to remember what had happened, but her memory was hazy.

It took a few moments for her to remember that she was in the pack's infirmary. All she could

recall was changing into her wolf form and saving the pack. She also remembered Alpha Liam giving orders to his warriors to go after the rogues, but that was all.

She blinked several times, trying to make sense of her surroundings. She groaned and tried to sit up, but she still felt too weak.

"Take it easy," a voice said from beside her. "You've been through a lot."

Nicole turned her head and saw a young woman with curly hair sitting next to her. "Who are you?" she asked, her voice hoarse.

"I'm Maya," the woman said with a small smile. "I'm a pack nurse. You saved our lives, you know..."

Nicole frowned, trying to remember what had happened. "I-I changed to my wolf form, didn't I?" she asked, her memory still foggy.

Maya nodded. "Yes, you did. You fought off the rogues and saved us all. We're very grateful to you."

Nicole winced as she tried to sit up again. "I don't remember much after that," she admitted.

Maya looked at her curiously. "Do you remember anything about yourself? Your family, maybe?"

Just then, Asha and Garrett hurried into the room. Asha rushed toward her, "Thank goodness you're awake," she said, relief evident in her voice. "I

was sick and worried about you."

Nicole tried to speak, but her throat was dry, and her voice came out like a croak. Asha handed her a glass of water, and she took a sip. The cool liquid felt soothing against her parched throat.

"How long have I been out?" Nicole asked, her voice still raspy.

"About a day," Asha replied. "You weren't injured, but you seemed to lose all your energy. You're going to be okay; Alpha Liam is taking care of everything."

Nicole nodded, but her mind was racing. She couldn't remember how she got hurt or what happened to the rogues. All she could recall was changing into her wolf form and saving the pack. Asha noticed the confusion on Nicole's face and leaned in. "You know, there's something you should know," she said hesitantly.

"What is it?" Nicole asked, her interest piqued.

"You're a witch-bane werewolf," Asha said, her voice low and conspiratorial. "That means you can withstand the power of witches."

Nicole's eyes widened in surprise. "What?" She hadn't heard of it before. It was quite surprising.

"It's a legend," Garrett said. "A myth about a powerful sect of wolves who were able to withstand magic. They were said to have been extinct even before packs existed. No one has seen them

since then. It is said that they possess incredible power."

Nicole couldn't believe what she was hearing. She was taken aback by this revelation. She had no idea that she had any special abilities. She tried to remember if her parents had ever mentioned anything about it, but her memory was still foggy. She had always felt different, but she never imagined she was a legendary Witch Bane. She had just thought that she was cursed or unfortunate. All the information being dished out to her was overwhelming.

Asha continued, "Your ancestry is very important. We need to know more about your parents and your family."

Nicole felt sick to her stomach at the mention of family. Thinking about them always left a bitter taste in her mouth. They were selfish people who sold her off to clear a debt that they incurred. They had never come to check up on her, even after giving her to Alpha Shane at such a young age. Anger burned her throat. She never wanted to talk about them. She had no idea where they were or if they were even alive.

"I don't know anything about my family," she growled and looked away.

Asha looked sympathetically. "I'm sorry, Nicole. I didn't mean to upset you. But this is important.

We need to find out more about your ancestry so we can understand your powers better."

Nicole shook her head. "I'm not even sure that they know. They aren't good people. They incurred a large debt and sold me off to pay it up. The only thing I can tell you is that we were lone wolves.

That's about it."

They all looked at her in amazement. "Really? That's interesting. Do you know why they did that?" Garrett asked.

Nicole shrugged. "I don't know. Maybe they couldn't take care of me. Or maybe they didn't want me."

Maya shook her head. "That doesn't make sense. Wolves don't just sell their children like that. There has to be a reason."

Nicole sighed. "I don't know what the reason is. And honestly, I don't really care. My parents gave me away, and I've been on my own ever since until now."

Asha nodded, feeling sympathetic. "I understand. But there is more to it than you realize. You see, there's something special about you. You're like the freaking savior," she gushed.

Nicole raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean?" She was still feeling overwhelmed by what happened. She had yet to process it all.

"You're a witch bane, babe. Alpha Liam has been searching for one. You can train the rest of the pack to fight the witch like you did today.

Nicole's eyes widened in shock. "You're kidding me, right? I'm just one person. How can I help you defeat a whole coven of witches?"

Asha shook her head. "You don't understand. You're not just any werewolf. You're a witch-bane werewolf. Right now, you're the only one who can withstand their power. With you on our side, we finally have a chance."

Nicole sat back, feeling overwhelmed. She had never considered herself special in any way. But now, it seemed that her very existence was significant to anyone. She wasn't sure how to handle it.

Just then, the door to the infirmary swung open, and Alpha Liam strode in. He looked tired and stressed, and his usual air of authority slightly diminished.

"How is she?" he asked Maya, his gaze flicking over to Nicole.

Maya stood up and stepped aside to give the Alpha room to approach. "She's awake and talking," she said. "But she's still dazed."

"Garrett," Liam greeted with a nod.

"Alpha," Garrett and Asha said simultaneously.

Alpha Liam nodded, his gaze fixed on Nicole. "Good. I'm glad to see you're awake," he said in a gruff manner.

Nicole nodded, feeling a little intimidated by his presence, shy even. Her wolf buzzed with excitement as always. Their gaze locked for a moment, but he quickly looked away. Nicole's heart dropped.

"Your body?"

"I'm okay, I guess," she replied. "What happened? Did we get the rogues?"

Alpha Liam's expression darkened. "Yes," he said. "We managed to get all of them. But we believe that someone might have been watching. The witch may have had someone noting everything down."

Nicole felt a surge of anger. The sound of the witch annoyed her. She clenched her fists, feeling frustrated and helpless.

"I need to talk to you," Alpha Liam said, his voice serious. "It's about the witch attacks."

His voice caused her body to tremble deliciously. It didn't matter what situation they were in. He always made her want him. As she watched him pace about the room, Nicole wished he would touch her. It was a distraction, but it was very much welcome.

Nicole tried sitting up straighter, suddenly alert.

"What about them?" she asked.

Alpha Liam sighed, running a hand through his hair.

"We need your help," Alpha Liam said, interrupting her thoughts. "We can't defeat the witch. You're the only one who can take them on and win."

Nicole shook her head. "I don't know if I can do that," she said. "I'm not a fighter. I'm a faux Luna and an Omega, remember?"

Liam winced. She could see him struggling to speak. His expression softened slightly. "I'm sorry, Nicole, but you must realize that you're no longer a slave. You may be indebted to me, but a slave is not what you are.

You're more than an Omega. You're a witch-bane werewolf. You have a power that no one else in this pack has, plus you have a duty to me because I own you, and that duty is also to the Dark Moon.

Nicole felt a surge of anger at his words. She didn't owe anyone anything. He was still treating her like she was some sort of commodity. Although she had been the fake Luna of Crimson for so long, she had forgotten what it felt like to have people depend on her after she arrived at the Dark Moon.

Yet, at the same time, she couldn't deny that she felt a strange sense of loyalty to the pack. It was probably because of the way they had treated her. They had taken her in and shown her kindness and acceptance. She didn't want to let them down. "I'll help," she said finally, her voice barely above a whisper. It hurt that Liam, like Shane, could not see her as anything more than a means to an end. What would have happened if he had waited until she had gotten to her feet to respond? Liam nodded, and a hint of relief flashed in his eyes. "Good. We need to start planning our next move. The witch won't wait for us to come to them. We need to be prepared for anything." He sounded very angry about something, and she couldn't place her finger on it. Asha stepped forward, her expression determined. "We'll do whatever it takes to protect the Dark Moon," she said. "We won't let the witch win." "Yes," Garrett and Maya agreed. Nicole looked around at the determined faces of the wolves in the infirmary. She knew she had a lot to learn about pack dynamics and wolf politics, but for now, she was willing to do whatever it took to keep them safe. She was a witch-bane werewolf, and that meant something. "Let's get to work," she said, feeling the sense of purpose she hadn't felt in a long time.

"Not now," Liam hissed, Nicole's heart jumped as she saw a flicker of concern in his eyes. "Today has been a lot. You went through a lot of stress today. We shouldn't even be here now."

Warmth flooded her body as he spoke. She liked what he said. She just wished that he would touch her.

As if he read her mind, Liam stepped forward and held her hand.

"You did wonderfully out there," he said.

Nicole felt her body melt, arousal pooled within her legs. It was as if his strength was ebbing into her body.

Liam's eyes flashed gold as he seemingly noticed her arousal.

"Out," he growled to their unwanted audience, his voice brimming with power and urgency.

They piled out with immediate alacrity, leaving them alone. The moment the door swung close, he sat beside her and pulled her into an embrace.

"You were fucking amazing today," he whispered into her ears, causing her to shake in his arms.

"I don't know about that," Nicole said, feeling overwhelmed by all the attention. Her body was of no help to her, she couldn't even put her thoughts together.

"Don't be modest," Liam whispered,

"You've done something incredible today. You've saved our pack from the witch's control."

He pulled away and stared intently at her with his piercing deep blue eyes. Nicole's body was buzzing

"I-" she started to say, but was cut short when his lips crashed into hers.

They ravaged each other's lips like they had been starved. When they pulled away for air, Liam rested his head against hers.

"I know that you're a myth and a distinct werewolf, but don't fucking put yourself in danger like that again. I don't know what this shit mark is doing, but I don't know what I'll do if anything happens to you."

Nicole's heart skipped a thousand beats. These were not the words she expected to hear from Liam.

"You are never putting yourself in danger ever again. I will protect you," he swore.

Nicole was short of words and out of breath. She opened her mouth to speak again but he cut her short with another kiss.

She felt that it might be the best thing to have happened to her in a long time.

They pulled away again, this time their arousal saturated the room.

"We have to tell the rest of the pack," Alpha Liam said, with a hint of excitement in his voice.

"They need to know that we have you. I have to go and you need to rest,"

Nicole could feel his reluctance but nodded and let him go.

The news spread quickly throughout the pack, and soon everyone was talking about the Witch Bane. Nicole was suddenly the centre of attention, but she wasn't sure if she was ready for it.

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Chapter 27

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As soon as Nicole was better and discharged, she was swarmed with congratulatory messages from pack members. It was exhilarating because they celebrated her like she was one of them.

The kinship in Dark Moon wasn't something she experienced in any other place. Crimson didn't have it, and neither did her parents.

"Congratulations, Nicole," one of the pack members said, giving her a gentle tap on the back.

"You've made history."

"I couldn't have done it without the training and your acceptance," Nicole said, looking at Alpha

Liam, who was too busy grinning at his pack members to notice her. "You accepted me without questions. You gave me the opportunity, pushed me harder than any place I've lived in and it made me stronger."

"You're like a superhero," one of them said, looking at her with awe.

Nicole blushed at the compliment, but she knew that she couldn't let it go to her head. She had a responsibility to the pack now, and she had to make sure they were all prepared for whatever might come their way.

There was one thing she kept away though. It was her fear. She was afraid. The mental scars had made her very fragile on the inside and she hid it very well.

Nicole spent the next few hours after her discharge strategizing and planning with Asha, Garrett, and Liam. She was amazed at how organized and efficient the pack was.

They had a clear chain of command and a deep loyalty to each other. She couldn't help but feel a little envious of their close-knit community.

Even when she was at the centre of things at Crimson, she had always been a lone wolf. She was still psychologically damaged from what she went through in Shane's hands and she wasn't sure if she was ready to trust anyone just yet.

It was an internal struggle that she had promised to keep to herself. What she went through in Shane's pack, unconsciously made her shy away from belonging to anyone. She still relived the trauma in her head at night.

However, she was impressed by Dark Moon, and it made her yearn to be accepted. She also knew that she couldn't do it alone. She needed the pack, she needed Liam. But there was this fear eating her up from inside, yet she chose to hide it.

As they continued to plan, Nicole realized that her ancestry was a topic of interest among the wolves. She had mentioned before that her parents were lone wolves prior to when they sold her off, but she had never really thought much about it until now.

"Can you tell us more about your family history?"

Alpha Liam asked, his eyes fixed on Nicole.

Nicole hesitated for a moment before deciding to share the little she knew. "My parents were both lone wolves. They didn't have any pack affiliations and they never talked about their families. I don't even know if I have any siblings."

James frowned, looking concerned. "That's strange," she said. "Most wolves are deeply connected to their family and pack history. It's unusual for your parents to be so isolated."

Nicole shrugged. "I don't know. They never talked about it. They just sold me off. I never saw them again."

She didn't want to see them again either. The ordinary thought of them made her angry, she partly blamed them for everything she went through at the hands of Shane.

Alpha Liam leaned forward, his expression thoughtful. "Do you know if your parents were witchbane werewolves too?"

Nicole shook her head. "I don't know. I didn't even know that was a thing until I met you guys."

The Alpha frowned, looking troubled. "It's possible that your parents were trying to protect you by keeping you isolated. Witchbane werewolves are rare and valuable and many would try to use them for their gain. It's possible that your parents knew the danger and chose to keep you hidden. They were also hunted by werewolves and were almost extinct. Most of them cut off pack affiliations and became lone wolves to protect themselves. They also bred with normal wolves to hide their traits. It's why you're so powerful, yet you're an Omega."

Nicole felt a chill run down her spine at the thought. She had always assumed that they simply

didn't want her. She couldn't believe that they sought to protect her. If they wanted to, they wouldn't have sold her.

"What do I do now?" she asked, feeling overwhelmed.

Alpha Liam's expression softened. "You're here to stay," he said firmly. "We'll protect you. And we'll help you learn to harness your power. You're Dark Moon until this is over. After that, you can decide if you want to stay or not. You are under my protection, you are mine until then."

Nicole nodded, feeling a sense of relief wash over her. Her wolf was excited that he claimed her as his, even for a little while.

"The only reason why I've not given you the Mark of the Dark Moon is that you're already marked as my mate. If I dare to mark you again, the mate bond will be complete and a catastrophe will ensue, so, keep this in mind. You're mine," Liam commanded.

For the first time in her life, Nicole felt like she had a place to belong. She wouldn't delude herself into thinking that it was permanent. She knew that when the witch was defeated and when the potency of the mark faded, she would have to leave. Yet, she was a witch-bane werewolf and she had a new purpose, so she would train as much as

she could, fight with her last strength, and still do the odd jobs for Garrett because her new life meant everything.

Nicole nodded, understanding the gravity of the situation. "What can I do to help?" she asked, Her voice trembled slightly, but she hoped no one noticed it.

Alpha Liam narrowed his eyes at her. His territorial nature shot out. "You're a witch-bane werewolf," he said. "That makes you very valuable to our pack. We need to make sure that you're protected at all times."

Nicole felt a surge of indignation. She didn't want to be coddled or treated differently because of her abilities. She wanted to be a part of the pack, to fight alongside her fellow wolves.

"I can handle myself," she said firmly. "I don't want to be treated like some fragile thing that needs to be protected."

"Yes Liam, I agree with her," James chipped in. "If you go around protecting her, how would she learn?"

Liam grunted and rubbed his face. Nicole looked at him admiringly. She ached to know more about him.

After a long while, Liam nodded. He had a glimmer of respect in his eyes as he spoke.

"I understand," he said, "But we need to be careful. The witch may know about your abilities and start looking for ways to use them against us." Nicole nodded, understanding the danger. She knew that the witch might be ruthless and wouldn't hesitate to use any means necessary to defeat their enemies, including using her powers against her.

"What does she want?" She asked, Liam shrugged, their fingers brushed and she felt another shot of pleasure.

"We don't know what she wants. She talked about Liam's ancestry and how she's going to end him," Garrett added.

"I've heard about old witches. They're powerful." Asha muttered, Nicole felt quite chilly.

"What can I do to help?" she repeated.

Alpha Liam looks at her thoughtfully. His blue eyes blazing with arousal and admiration, "We need to find out more about your ancestry," he said, "There might be clues in your family history that can help us understand your powers better."

Nicole's heart fell, the last thing she needed was to meet her parents.

"No, you're not going to meet them," Liam promised.

"Your ancestors are the original witch banes. We'll start from there."

Nicole nodded, feeling a sense of usefulness. She wanted to know more about her ancestry. She wanted to understand her powers and how she could use them.

She worked with Asha and other members of the pack to research her family history. They dug through old records and talked to other packs, trying to piece together the puzzle of her past. It was difficult because most of the records of her kind were burnt and destroyed.

Slowly, they began to uncover the truth about her ancestry. It was like the myths said; The witch banes were a sect who were known for their ability to resist the power of witches. They had been hunted down and wiped out by fellow werewolves who feared their abilities.

They had the capability of learning magic and were indifferent to the dominance, but as they procreated with normal werewolves, their ability to resist dominance was watered down.

As Nicole learned more about her powers, she began to experiment with them. She discovered that she could reflect magic back to its source. She could also sense the presence of magic and detect the use of spells.

The pack prepared for the inevitable battle with the witch. Nicole trained with the warriors,

learning how to harness her power and fight in her wolf form. She was amazed at how quickly she picked up the skills, her body seeming to instinctively know what to do.

Nicole worked closely with Liam to train the other pack members. She showed them the techniques she had used to fight the witch's control, and they all marveled at her power.

Asha became her closest friend in the pack, teaching her about the different pack dynamics and wolf politics. They spent hours talking about everything from the history of the pack to the best way to hunt for prey. Nicole had never had a friend like Asha before, and she was grateful for her kindness and support.

Another matter was that of her relationship with Alpha Liam. Since they had to work and train together, they spent more time than ever. They worked closely together, training the pack and discussing strategy. Nicole found herself drawn to him more and more, but she couldn't let herself get too attached.

Then there was the fact that she was very afraid of him. She had started relating with other pack members well, but she still trembled in his presence. Alpha Liam was the alpha, and despite what she was or had become, she knew that there was no future with him. He had also stopped trying to

get with her since discovering that she was a witch bane. She saw him try to control his urges and it scared her the most.

One day, as they were training, Garrett pulled her aside.

"Nicole," he said, looking at her with a serious expression. "There's something I have to tell you."

"What is it?" she asked, feeling a little nervous.

"I've been doing some research about your complication with the mark from Alpha Liam," he said, his voice low. "And I've discovered something."

"What?" Nicole asked, feeling a knot form in her stomach.

"It can fade," he said, looking at her intently. "If you stop feeding into it."

"Fade?" Nicole repeated, feeling a chill run down her spine. She didn't want it to fade, she was hoping that Liam would finally acknowledge her. Yet her fear of him made her think it was a good idea.

At first, she had thought whether it was the Mark that made her tremble, or perhaps her attraction to him, but when she tried to separate what the mark made her feel and her true feelings, she realized that it was true fear.

"Yes," he said. "You mixed things up by staying close to each other. If you continue to indulge in

these things, the bond from the mark will only grow stronger."

Nicole felt her heart racing. She couldn't believe what she was hearing.

"What does this mean?" she asked, feeling a little overwhelmed.

"It means that you should stay away from him," Garrett said.

Within, Nicole's wolf snarled at Garrett. Nicole blinked in disbelief.

"That's not possible. Why are you doing this, Garrett? Why are you so keen?"

Garrett sighed and shook his head, "Because I know what it is like to be you. I'm from a horrid past too. I want to help you. Do not be deceived by your position as a witch bane. It makes you no greater before Liam. He's a ruthless beast that doesn't want to be tamed.

When all these are over, he will kick you to the side. He's not capable of love, Nicole. So, as soon as you see a chance, do both of you a favor and walk away. After all you've been through, you deserve better. Don't settle for less."

Nicole nodded slowly, tears welled in her eyes but she held herself from crying. This was the most heart-wrenching thing she had heard in forever, but she knew that Garrett was right. She realized

that she was still a slave until she bought her freedom and she deserved to be free.

"Okay," she said finally. "I'll do whatever it takes to set myself free."

Garrett smiled sadly at her. "That's what I like to hear," he said. "We'll start by working on your control. You need to control your urge for him, like you need to learn how to shift into your wolf form on command. I've also told Liam this and he has promised to keep his hands to himself."

Nicole nodded, feeling determined. She was pretending to be strong when inside her head someone was ripping things apart. All her life, she had always felt like an outsider in the pack, and now she had a purpose, she still had to protect herself. She may be a Witch Bane, but still, she was the slave Omega girl. It was up to her to make sure she saved herself.

Over the next few weeks, Nicole trained with Alpha Liam every day. She worked on her control, practicing her shifts and learning how to harness her power. Alpha Liam and James pushed her hard, but she could feel herself getting stronger with every passing day.

She was trying hard to follow Garret's advice but as they trained, Nicole began to see a different side of Alpha Liam. He was still tough and demanding, but he was also kind and patient. He

would take the time to explain things to her and he never made her feel like she was less than anyone else in the pack.

She also began to notice the way he looked at her. His gaze would linger on her a little longer than it should, and he would sometimes stand a little too close.

She tried to ignore it, knowing that she could never be with him. But it was difficult, especially when her wolf was so drawn to him, yet she was still terribly afraid of him.

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