

Betrayed by My Beta Mate #Chapter 71 - Read Betrayed by My Beta Mate Chapter 71

Chapter 71

Chapter 71

5 Respect

Larisa POV

I head to the room that Eli gave to Clara. I knock and after a few seconds the door slowly opens. She smiles when she sees me. "Good morning Clara" I say. She opens the door completely and I head inside with the clothes I have for her. We are about the same size, so I went through my closet. I set the clothes down on the dresser. "How did you sleep, Clara?" "Better than I have ever in my life." My heart breaks at her words, but I keep my face even. I don't want her to see sympathy on my face. I don't want her to think that I see her as a victim. If anything, she is a survivor even though I have no idea exactly what she has survived. "I thought after breakfast I could give you a tour of the pack. I know Eli has a meeting this morning." The smile leaves her face as quickly as it came. I walk over until I'm standing in front of her. "What's wrong Clara?" "I still can't believe the goddess would choose me for your brother." "I think she was right for choosing you for Eli." She looks at me confused. "It would be easy for an Alpha to accept a girl that was raised to be a Luna. Only a really special Alpha would see the value in a mate that is going to learn to be a Luna by his side." The smile that returns to her face is brilliant. She wraps me in a hug. "Besides, I wouldn't want a stuck-up witch for my sister." She starts to laugh and I'm glad that I could make her feel better.

She grabs a pair of jeans and a t-shirt off the dresser before she heads into the bathroom. A knock sounds on the door and when I swing it open Eli looks confused. "I thought you had a meeting this morning with father and Alpha Gabriel." "I asked to be excused because I want to spend time with Clara." "No way", I hear from over my shoulder. I turn and Clara has her hand over her mouth. She slides it down and her cheeks are red. "I'm sorry, I just meant you need to go to your meeting. I will be here when you're done. Besides, Larisa is going to give me a tour of the pack." I look back at Eli and he is smiling from ear to ear. "Alright, it's a date. As soon as the meeting is over I'll come to find you." He

nods at me before he turns to leave. "Eli" she says before she walks over and goes up on her tippy toes. She kisses Eli's cheek before she comes to stand next to me. Eli leaves and we head downstairs to the dining room. When we walk in, I notice Susan is sitting at a table with a few other girls.

I know she is disappointed, but I hope she accepts that she isn't destined to be with my brother. She has a mate and he is her other half, not Eli. Clara thankfully doesn't notice her. I lead her over and we grab our trays. I notice she doesn't take much. "You can take as much as you like." "Thank you, honestly, I'm not used to eating a lot." I don't push the issue and we take a seat at one of the tables. "So what color is your wolf?" "She is chocolate brown and beautiful." "I can't wait till I get my wolf. I only have a few months to wait." I look up and Susan, Jade, and Tanya are walking toward our table. I stand walking toward them without saying a word to Clara. I stop in front of Susan. "What are you doing?" "I'm going to meet our future Luna, Larisa" she says with all the sarcasm she can muster. "No, you're not. I am your friend but I am only going to warn you once. If you say or do anything to hurt Clara, I am going to be your worst nightmare. She is Eli's mate, not you." I see the hurt flash across her face but it's gone as quickly as it came. "You are no friend to pick that rogue over me. She isn't worthy of being the Luna of this pack or your brother's mate." "It's a good thing it's the goddess's choice and not yours. Now walk away before I let my father know exactly how his pack member is talking about the future Luna." "You wouldn't dare." I laugh "try me and find out."

She steps closer to me. "You're going to be very sorry. I'll make sure of it, Larisa." A growl comes from behind me and I turn to see Clara's eyes are black. I hear a laugh and I turn back to Susan. "Do you really think we are afraid of a you little rogue b**ch?" I've had enough but before I can deal with Susan, a growl that shakes the room draws everyone's attention. My father walks in our direction. Everyone bares their neck to him. He comes to stand in front of all of us. "I want the five of you in the kitchen now." I take Clara's hand, leading her into the kitchen. We stand on one side of the room while the other girls stand on the other. "Now I heard that you girls have a problem with the future Luna of this pack", he says to them. Susan shoots daggers at me before she drops her gaze. "For your information, Susan, it wasn't Larisa who linked me about your behavior." "I did", we hear from the doorway. Evan

who is an omega in our pack, steps inside and bares his neck to my father. "Thank you Evan", my father says, and he heads back into the dining room.

Lincoln POV

We are in my office meeting with Alpha Gabriel of the Moon Stone Pack. "I'm glad we have this opportunity to form an alliance. I know my pack is nowhere near as big as yours, but I promise that my men and women are fierce warriors." "I'm sure they are Gabriel. Eli and I would love to come and tour your pack." He smiles "absolutely, maybe Eli's mate is one of my unmated females." "I appreciate you thinking of my son but he has found his mate and our future Luna." "I apologize, I didn't see the mark." "No apology is necessary Gabriel, I just found her" Eli says. "Congratulations on finding your mate, Eli. I just turned twenty-five and I still haven't found her." He is nothing like that a**hat Mateo, so I have no problem introducing him to the unmated females in my pack. "Would you like to meet with our unmated females, Gabriel?" He smiles "absolutely, thank you Lincoln." We all stand and head for the door. Once we start down the hallway, I get a link from Evan. "Alpha, I am so sorry to interrupt you but there is a situation in the dining room with Larisa." I don't even let him finish telling me exactly what's happening.

"Eli, can you take Gabriel down to the pack yard and I will join you in a moment." I can see concern on his face but he does as I ask. As soon as I reach the dining room, I hear Larisa's friend Susan talking about Clara. When I hear her threaten my daughter, Talon is ready to lose his sh*t. We growl and the whole room goes quiet. Once we are in the kitchen, I take a deep breath to calm us both. "I am only going to give you girls a warning once. If I ever hear you disrespect Larisa or your future Luna again, you will not like the punishment I hand down. I could banish you today for such behavior." Their eyes fly to mine and drop immediately. "We are sorry Alpha" they all start to plead. "It is not me you should be apologizing to." The three of them start to say how sorry they are, but I don't think Susan is sincere. I know she is hurt but I will not stand for her mistreating anyone in this pack. "Are we clear about what the consequences will be if anything like this happens again?" "Yes Alpha" they say in unison. "You are

all dismissed." They rush from the room and I turn to Larisa and Clara smiling. "We can talk more about this later but I just want to say I'm proud of you both." I leave to join Eli and Gabriel in the pack yard.

Eli POV

I wonder what the hell could be so important that my father would leave a visiting Alpha. We reach the pack yard and the girls are waiting with smiles on their faces. He walks up to each one and greets them. I'm glad my father has formed an alliance with his pack. He seems like a genuine man. A few minutes later, my father joins us but he says nothing about where he has

been. "It was lovely to meet you all", Gabriel says to the women before he joins us. "Thank you for allowing me to meet more of your pack." "Your welcome" my father says. "Eli I'm going to escort Gabriel to the gate. Will you wait for me in my office?" "Of course", I say and head to my father's office. Ten minutes later, he comes inside and takes a seat. "What happened" I ask. My father tells me everything that Susan and her friends said and did. I can't help the growls that escape me. "She had better stay away from our mate", Silas says. "Hopefully, she listens to my father, or I will not be so forgiving." "I know your angry, Eli, because I would be furious if anyone ever spoke like that about your mother." "I am but as long as Clara is alright I will let that anger go. I hope for Susan's sake she listens to your orders." He nods "go find your mate and spend some time with her." He doesn't have to say it twice. I am out the door and off to find Clara.

Calliope POV

I don't know what I expected the collective to be like. Pack wolves speak about rogues like they are unsophisticated animals that wreak of rotting meat. They act like they are beneath us. That couldn't be farther from the truth. When we arrived at the collective, Abigale showed us to a cottage. It may not be a pack house but it's beautiful and quaint. It has two bedrooms and has been decorated with warm colors. It's perfect and I feel more comfortable here than I ever did in the pack house. Everyone we have met has been very kind and welcoming. I just pray that us coming here doesn't put the collective in danger. I head downstairs after I'm showered and dressed. My mother is in the kitchen cooking

breakfast. "Good morning, Calliope, how did you sleep?" "Well, how about you mother?" She smiles "let's just say I slept all the night for the first time in a long time." As we eat breakfast, a knock sounds on the door. I get up to answer it and Abigale is waiting on the porch. "Good morning" she says. Sarah steps off from behind her and wraps me in a hug. "Good morning little one." "Good morning Calliope" she says. "Do you think I can see your wolf" she says with a toothy smile. "Sarah" Abigale starts to say, but I'm more than ok with letting Aurora out for a run.

"If it's alright with your mom, Aurora would love to meet you." Abigale smiles and nods at me. We head outside and around to the back of the cottage. I step back from my mother, Abigale, and Sarah. I shift and Aurora stretches. Sarah is smiling from ear to ear. When Aurora gets close she lays down and Sarah climbs on her back. I can feel her snuggle into Aurora's fur. Aurora stands and walks slowly in a circle before she lays down again. Sarah slides

off and goes to stand next to Abigale and my mother. I shift and Abigale and Sarah are staring at me with wonder on their faces. "How," Abigale says. I look down and realize she is asking how my clothes are still intact. "My wolf is special." She smiles "I think that you are just as special as Aurora, Calliope. The goddess has made you strong and brought you and your mother here to live a better life." She walks over to me and wraps me in a hug. We head back toward the cottage and Sarah takes my hand. We pass a few trees and I feel like we are being watched. I scent the air but I don't smell anyone. "Are you alright" Abigale asks, getting my attention. "Yes, I'm fine. Let's go inside and you can tell us what we can do to contribute to the collective."

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6 Tell Me the Pas

Franklin POV

"Explain to me how the f**k she escaped." "Sir, I have no idea what happened. They were both in the cell. No one came in or out of that cell." I laugh "you expect me to believe that she had magically disappeared from the cell. She is a f**king wolf, not a witch. They are both wolves, nothing more. I should kill you for your incompetence." "I'm sorry sir, please." "Get out of my sight before I change my mind and snap your f**king neck." He rushes from my office. The door to my office opens a few minutes later and Eric walks in. He is my second in command. "Have you found her?" "No sir, we haven't. We can't even scent her. We ran all the way to the Nightfire Pack border." "She isn't stupid enough to run to pack wolves. She knows what they think of rogues. I have made sure that they both think it would be ten times worse if a pack found them." "What do you want us to do sir?" "Keep looking, I have phone calls to make." He leaves the room and I sit at my desk. I take the book out of my desk as this is not a number I call regularly. I place the phone to my ear.

"Alpha Grant" his cold voice comes through the phone. "Grant it's Franklin." There is a moment of silence before he finally speaks. "Why the f**k are you calling me after all these years?" "I just thought you should know that the b**ch escaped. My men are out looking for her but have had no luck finding her." "How is this my problem? I gave you a lot of money to make the two of them go away and you dare call me now to tell me she is still alive." "Go away

can mean many things, Grant.” “I am Alpha to you.” “No you’re not. I am not a pack wolf and you are in no way my leader. Now she has no idea about her past, so it shouldn’t be an issue for you and your Luna. I just thought you should know.” “You better pray she stays gone or your little collective is going to be my pack’s next conquest.” “I told you she has no idea where she came from and she has been a prisoner all her life.” “Good, it better stay that way for your sake.” The call disconnects and I slam the phone down.

After I compose myself, I call a number I know very well. She picks up on the second ring. “To what do I owe this call Franklin?” “I missed you.” She laughs “we both know that’s not true. So what do you need from me?” “You know me so well, Lydia. The little b**ch has escaped and I need to locate her before she causes any trouble.” There is silence and I know she is thinking about what she will demand of me for this favor. Her help is never free. “What do you want, Lydia?” “I’m not sure yet, but rest assured there will be a hefty price for this favor.” “Fine, I don’t care, just get here.” “On my way, love.” I hate when she calls me that. We decided long ago not to give into the bond because the goddess is a b**ch who has no right over our free will. That doesn’t mean we can’t enjoy each other from time to time. It’s also nice to know a witch for times like this.

One Week Later

Eli POV

A knock sounds on my bedroom door. I slide on my jeans before I head over to open it. It has to be my family or Clara because no one else is allowed on this floor. I open the door and my sister is standing there smiling. She walks in and takes a seat. “Come in Larisa” I say sarcastically. “You’re lucky I knocked.” I roll my eyes but take a seat across from her. “What’s up that you’re here so early?” “I just wanted to see how things are going with Clara.” I smile “it’s really good. I just wish she would trust me enough to tell me what happened before I found her.” She reaches out, taking my hand. “I’m sure she will in time but don’t rush her. She seems really happy here with you.” “She does, I hope in time she accepts me completely.” “I believe she will.” She stands and hands me a piece of paper before she leaves my room. I open it and warmth spreads through my body as I read.

Eli

It’s my turn to take you on a date. Meet me in the garden in an hour. Be hungry.

Clara

I place the note on my dresser and head into my bathroom to shower. “Do you think she is ready to tell us” Silas asks. “I don’t know, but I think it’s good she wants to spend more time with us. She has been smiling more and eating more.” He chuckles “yes she has.” I get out of the shower and throw on jeans and a blue t-shirt. I head down the hallway and downstairs. As I walk through the foyer, I hear my name being called. I stop and turn to see Susan standing in the living room. Silas growls but I keep my expression even. “What do you want Susan?” “I just wanted to apologize for the way I have been acting.” “Honestly Susan, if you had said something against me I could have easily forgiven you but you spoke against my mate. It will not be so easily forgiven. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I need to be somewhere.” She nods and heads to the dining room. I walk out of the pack house heading toward the garden. I smile thinking about spending the afternoon with Clara. When I reach the garden she is sitting on a blanket with a picnic basket. She is smiling but I can tell she is nervous.

I sit down on the blanket and take her hand in mine. I bring it to my lips, placing a kiss on the back. “This is amazing. Thank you for planning a date for us.” “I wanted to thank you for being the man you are. Most men in your position would not want me for a mate.” “I love that you planned this but you don’t have to thank me for loving you or choosing you.” “Love, you love me.” “Of course, you are my destined mate. I loved you the moment I found you. Our souls are bound to each other. You are my other half.” She stays quiet and I don’t want her to feel like she has to say it back to me. “Clara, I don’t expect you to say it back. I know that you are not ready to accept all this yet.” “Eli” she says, stopping me from continuing. “I have only ever said that to one man in my life.” I control the growl that wants to escape and push Silas to the back of my mind. Now is not the time to act like a jealous a** when she is finally opening up to me. “My brother, Cayden, is the only man besides you that has been kind to me.” Silas whimpers in my mind and my heart breaks that she hasn’t had the love and kindness that I have known all my life.

Clara POV

The thought of telling him all that happened is terrifying. Cora assures me that it won’t change how he feels, but that’s hard for me to believe. I hate to even think about the hell that the collective was and the fact that Cayden is still there. Franklin is probably making him suffer for my freedom. I push the thoughts that plague me away. Cayden made me promise to live for both of us and I will not let his sacrifice be for nothing. “Eli, this isn’t easy for me to talk

about, but you deserve to know everything.” His eyes are so kind and loving. I could get lost in them, which is why I look away. “Cayden and I were abandoned so we never knew our parents. We were found by wolves in the collective when we were just pups. As you can imagine, the collective leader is a ba**ard. Cayden and I have been slaves since we were children. We were forced to do Franklin’s bidding. He has made us steal and hurt others if it suited him. We have both taken our fair share of beatings when we refused to do horrible things. Sometimes I wished that the goddess would take me as I lay on the floor bleeding. I wish I could say that was the worst of what I endured.” A growl escapes him and I know Silas is angry, but it’s not at me.

I look at him and he lays his hand on my face. “I’m here, I’m not going anywhere”, he says with such love in his eyes. I press my eyes closed and take a deep breath. “The men in the collective would use me.” I can’t even bring myself to finish the sentence, but when Eli pulls me into his arms I know he knows. “I promise you that they will pay for all they have done.” “I wish that was true but I have no idea where they are or how I got to the forest outside the pack. The last thing I remember is Cayden telling me to close my eyes before he told me he loved me. He always tried to protect me.” I pull back and look into his eyes. He smiles “we will figure it out.” I take a deep breath and muster all the resolve I have. I press my lips to his and I can’t even begin to describe the feeling of being safe and loved in Eli’s arms. He pulls back with a smile on his face. “Thank you, for trusting me with your past. You are always safe with me.” I believe him with every fiber of my soul. “I love you, Eli. I promise that I will be ready to complete the bond soon.” “I love you Clara. There is no rush. I want you to be comfortable, so please take all the time you need. We have a lifetime together.”

Franklin POV

I head down to the cells. I dismiss the rogue standing guard. I walk over to the cell holding the little ba**ard. Despite the beatings he has received, he won’t tell us how his sister escaped. I knew he would be hard to break. It’s the only bond the two of them have ever known. He is lying on the floor and his eyes are swollen shut. His wolf is so weak he is taking forever to heal him. I open the cell door and bend down. “This punishment can end mutt if you just tell me where she is?” He manages to crack one eye open. He swallows a few times before he manages to speak. “You can kill me. She is free of you and this place and that is all that matters.” He closes his eyes again and it’s all I can do not to snap his neck right now. I need him alive a little longer. I stand and walk out of the cell. When I get upstairs, Lydia is waiting in my office. “You look like you haven’t gotten what you want Franklin.” I glare at her. I am in no mood for

her antics. "That is why you are here. Tell me what you need to find her."
"Bring me the boy and I'll see what I can do." I link my guard to bring him to my office. He will be useful even if he doesn't want to.

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7 Comfortable

Eli POV

It's been a week since Clara and I had our picnic date. Every day we have spent together, I see her smile and laugh more. Silas was in his glory when we went on our first run in wolf form. Cora is smaller than the average wolf but she is beautiful. Thankfully, he was a perfect gentleman. After I'm showered, I head to my father's office before breakfast. He linked me last night that he and my mother wanted to speak with me. My aunt has been trying to use her magic to locate the collective that is holding Clara's brother and I am hoping that is the reason for them wanting to see me so early. I knock and open the door. My father is sitting behind the desk and my mother is standing next to him with a huge smile on her face. "Take a seat son," my father says. "Did Aunt Lily figure anything out about the collective?" The smile leaves my mother. "No, but don't lose hope. You know how strong your aunt is." I nod "so what did you need to talk to me about?"

"We know you are taking things slowly with Clara, which we both agree with. She is a lovely girl and has been through things that no wolf should ever endure." I look at my mother confused. "I know we all had our idea about what happened to Clara but why do you sound like you actually know what she has been through, mother?" I see sympathy in her eyes. "Lily was able to see some of her past when she healed her. We needed to know if we should prepare the pack for an attack." "Why didn't you tell me what she saw? It's been driving me insane thinking about what happened to her." "That is not their place to share that with you Eli. Your mate needed to be ready to share that part of herself with you", my father says. I nod, I know he's right. "So we wanted to talk to you about your titles. When you and Clara are ready, we will plan your ceremony. There is no pressure. I laugh "except from the twins." My mother smiles "I'm sure they will be fine for a little while longer. We would like

to have a party and invite the Alphas and Lunas of the packs we have alliances with if you think that would be alright. We would

like them to meet the future Alpha and Luna of the pack.” “I will talk to Clara and, as long as she is alright with it, then absolutely. I can’t tell you how much I appreciate you both. After everything, I know how lucky I am to have the two of you and Larisa.” My mother comes around and I stand wrapping her in a hug. My father hugs me and I head to get Clara for breakfast.

I head back upstairs and knock on Clara’s door. After a few more knocks, I open the door slowly. “Clara”, I say into an empty room. She must be with Larisa. I walk back downstairs and into the dining room. My sister, Clara, the twins, and Rose are sitting at the table eating breakfast. When she sees me, her eyes light up and warmth blooms in my chest. When I reach her, she wraps her arms around me. I press a quick soft kiss on her lips. We both take our seats. I look around the dining room and see the pack members smiling in our direction. I notice that Susan is sitting at a table with four girls that are whispering. “Eli, don’t worry about those girls. I don’t care if they like me or not. Mean girls are irrelevant in our lives.” I smile at how strong she is and Larisa has a look on her face like I told you so. I chuckle before I get up and go to grab my food. As I pile eggs on my plate, I feel someone standing next to me. I look over and Susan is standing there. “What can I help with Susan?” “I was hoping I could meet Clara and apologize.” I’m just about to tell her hell no when an arm wraps in mine.

I smile knowing that she is doing that to show her claim on me. “Of course you can,” Clara says. She extends the hand that is not holding my bicep to Susan. “I’m Clara, Eli’s mate. It’s nice to meet you.” Susan takes her hand and I don’t like her touching Clara, but I don’t say anything. “Clara” she starts to say and I correct her. “Please refer to her as Luna.” “Of course my apologies. Luna, my name is Susan and I want to apologize for my behavior the last time we saw each other.” “I will not hold past behaviors against you and I hope that you will stay true to your apology in the future. Thank you for trying to make amends.” Susan nods and heads back toward the table of girls. I set down the tray and lead Clara into a hallway off the dining room. Before I can say anything Clara reaches up and pulls my face to hers. This kiss is different than the others we shared. She deepens the kiss and I feel it all over my body. Silas growls low and I know I need to stop this. Not because I’m not enjoying every minute, but I want

to respect Clara’s need for time. I pull back and I see hurt flash across her face. She drops her head and I want to kick my own a**.

I place two fingers under her chin so she is looking into my eyes. “Clara, that kiss was amazing.” She smiles “I thought maybe I did it wrong.” “Clara, you could never do anything wrong. I just want to make sure” I start to say and she puts her finger to my lips. “I’ll make a deal with you. I promise if I’m uncomfortable with what is happening I will tell you, but you have to promise not to treat me like glass. I don’t mean that I don’t appreciate you being patient and not pushing me, but if I do something it’s because I want to.” I smile and pull her into me. This time I initiate the kiss. I kiss her like she is the air I need to breathe because she is. We pull apart when we are both breathless. She takes my hand without a word and leads me back to grab my food. Silas is prancing in my mind and I can’t help the chuckle that escapes my lips. “What are you chuckling about” Clara asks. “Don’t you dare tell her,” Silas says. “Silas is just really happy we found you, just like I am.” We take our seats at the table and I say a prayer of thanks to the goddess for bringing me such an amazing mate.

Alpha Mateo POV

“This is f**king ridiculous. How could you not find any trace of them in the human city? The scent of two werewolves should stand out among the humans.” “Alpha, you know we have to be careful. Our presence cannot attract the attention of the Nightfire pack”, Bradford says. “My Luna and daughter have been missing for more than a week. Do you want my wolf to go feral without his mate?” My wolf could care less because he wanted to have that damn omega. Not to mate but as his own personal bed warmer. Alphas don’t mate omegas. “I suggest you get your a** back to that f**king city and find out where my mate is. I know how upset you would be if something happened to Melinda.” I see anger flash across his face but he schools his expression quickly. “We will return to the city and I will alert you if we find anything, Alpha.” “Good and I will reach out to Simone in the meantime.” I see concern on his face. He knows my father had dealings with her and that she is a black magic witch. “Alpha, do you think asking such an evil creature for help is a good idea?” “Bradford, don’t question me again. You are

the Beta and I am the Alpha for a reason. Now leave before I lose my patience with you.” “Yes, Alpha,” he says, and leaves my office.

I speak with the patrol guard before I shift and head out of the pack land. There is a neutral territory that many super naturals frequent. A seedy bar that I normally wouldn’t be caught dead in is located in the center of the territory. Right now I have to suck it up because I need help to find that b**ch. She thinks that she can reject me and not suffer for it. She is sadly mistaken. As

for my daughter, she is going to learn her place if it kills me. I shift and pull on my clothes before I head into the bar. I can feel eyes on me as I survey the patrons. My eyes settle on a woman with long jet black hair. I have only had dealings with her on a few occasions when my father needed her help to deal with an enemy. That was before I became Alpha. I know her help won't be cheap. I take a seat next to her at the bar and she turns to face me. "What is it that you want Mateo?" Her words freak me out at first, but I keep my expression even. "Simone, it's good to see you again." "I don't do pleasantries. What do you want?" I tell her about what that b**ch Jasmine did and about them both running from my pack. She laughs like I just told her the funniest joke. "So you expect me to get them back or locate them for you."

"Well, yes, I would like to get them both back as soon as possible." "First, I'm sure you know that my services aren't cheap. Second, I have to do a little research, let's say, before I agree to any job." "What the hell kind of research could you possibly do?" "That is none of your business. If I decide to take this job and that is a big, if, I will tell you my price then. Do you understand my rules?" I hate that I need anything from this arrogant witch, but they have left me with no choice. "Fine, when will you have your answer." "I don't work on your timeline. I will contact you if I decide to do this." The bartender gets my attention asking about a drink and I wave him away. When I turn back she is gone. Goddess, I hate witches and their eccentric bulls*t.

Calliope POV

I can't believe how happy my mother is here. She has been helping in the kitchen and with the pups. I know she wanted more pups of her own but it never happened. After I saw what my father was doing, I know why. I shake those thoughts away and head out to the field where training happens. When I first joined the men they were skeptical but over the last week they have accepted me as a skilled fighter. Evan leads the training and honestly he does as good a job as Bradford. We train for an hour before I start back toward the cottage. I get that feeling again of being watched. This time I shift and Aurora takes a deep breath. We catch the scent of a wolf and she starts to stalk in the direction of the scent. We reach the trees just outside the cottage and the scent is getting stronger. A man I recognize as one of the collective members steps off from behind the tree. I shift and the shock on his face would be comical if I wasn't so pissed. "What the hell are you doing spying on me?"

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8 New Pack Member

Calliope POV

I see fear flash on his face. "I'm sorry I didn't mean to scare you." "You didn't scare me. Explain what you're doing sneaking around our cottage before I scare you." "I was just curious about you. I have never seen a she-wolf like you." "You were spying the other day when I shifted weren't you?" He nods and I cross my arms over my chest. "Why are you here?" He smiles at me and for the first time I notice how handsome he is. He has shoulder-length blonde hair and I can tell that he is muscular. I focus on his answer. If he poses a threat, it won't matter how handsome he is. "My name is Oliver. Abigale is my sister. When she and Carter found each other, I was only sixteen. She asked me to come with her. She is the only family I have left." "That doesn't explain why you are sneaking around Oliver." I hate being so cold knowing who he is to Abigale, but I have to protect my mother. No one will ever hurt her again. "He is no threat in that way", Aurora says. Before I can ask what the hell she means he starts to talk again. "Abigale told me she was bringing you and your mother to the collective. I saw you when you first arrived and you were so beautiful. I just wanted to see you again. "You know that this seems creepy?" He chuckles "I'm sorry I didn't mean to act creepy."

He walks toward me and I keep my expression even. He sticks out his hand and I take it. "My name is Oliver Shifler." "It's nice to meet you. My name is Calliope and my mother is Jasmine." "No last name" he asks but I don't answer him. I don't know if any of the collective members know my father's surname. I don't want anyone to know who my father is. "It is nice to meet you. I hope now that we know each other I won't see you sneaking around our cottage." "No, you won't, but I do hope that you will allow me to get to know you better." "He is not our mate", Aurora says, and I laugh. Now I know exactly what she meant. He looks at me confused. "It's nothing, my wolf is just being her pushy self. I can always use more friends." I hope he understands what I mean. Aurora growls but she knows that I

love her. "I need to go inside and get washed up after training. I'll see you around Oliver." "Yes, you will" he says, before he starts to undress. I turn heading for the porch. I look back and a gray wolf runs into the trees.

Once I'm in the house, I head upstairs. I get into the shower, letting the water wash away the grime of training. Once I'm showered, I head over to Abigale and Carter's cottage. I promised Sarah that we could hang out today, but I want to talk to them first. As soon as Sarah sees me, she rushes over, wrapping me in a hug. The woman that helps my mother with the pups leaves when she sees me. "Have fun with Calliope" she says to Sarah as she heads out of the cottage. "Good afternoon little one." "Calliope, I was waiting for you." "I wouldn't forget about you but I do need to talk to your mom and dad before we go back to the cottage." She smiles and leads me to the office. She doesn't knock and when the door swings open, I cover her eyes and pull the door closed. "Why did you do that, Calliope?" Thank goddess she doesn't know what she saw. "Your mom and dad are busy. I can talk to them later. Let's go to my cottage." I usher her back down the hall and toward the front door. "Calliope" I hear Abigale's voice. I turn and smile. "I'll bring her back in a few hours" I say and wink at her. She mouths "thank you" and we leave.

As we walk back toward my cottage, Sarah starts to skip. She is so innocent and I hope that she gets to stay that way for a very long time. "Hey bug" I hear a voice say and Sarah squeals. Oliver comes walking toward us and scoops Sarah up. "Uncle Oliver come play with us." Aurora growls but she has nothing to worry about. I will never be with anyone but my fated mate. "Aurora calm down. You know me better than anyone." "It's not you that I'm concerned about." "Wolf talking to you again." I look back at Oliver. "Yes, she is. Are you ready Sarah?" "Yes I am" she says and takes Oliver's hand. "Bug, I think Calliope wants to hang out with you for girl time." She looks up at me with pleading eyes. I look back at him and he is smiling. "She's hard to say no to, isn't she?" I can't help the smile. "Yes she is." "Please, Calliope, he is really fun." "Yes, your uncle can hang out with us. I will make some lunch and we can watch a movie." She squeals and starts to run toward the cottage. We start to walk to catch up to her. "I

hope your not upset that I'm joining you." "Not at all but I hope you understand that friends means friends."

Eli POV

As we run through the trees, Silas keeps looking at Cora. We run until we reach the clearing. Silas sits on his haunches. I'm confused, but then Cora comes over rubbing her side against him. Silas gives a low growl of approval. I know what Clara said but I'm still nervous about this. Before I can over think it, Cora shifts and my beautiful mate stands bare before me. She heads for the trees and I shift. When she comes back, she has a t-shirt and basketball

shorts that are huge on her. She hands me a pair of shorts and I notice her eyes check me out before she turns away. I pull her into my arms just enjoying holding her. I kiss the top of her head before I step back. I sit on the ground and pull her onto my lap. "So I have a question for you. My parents were wondering if we would be alright with them having a fancy party." She looks into my eyes. "A party for us" she asks. I push a strand of hair behind her ear. "Yes, for us. If you don't want to, that's alright. There is no pressure. They are just excited about having another daughter to introduce to everyone." She smiles and it reaches her eyes.

"Of course" she says and her look changes to one of concern. "What's going on in that beautiful head of yours?" She smiles again "I know your giving me time before we take our titles but I would like to be a pack member before the party." "Clara" I start to say. "I don't want others to know that you mated a rogue if I can help it." "I'm not ashamed of where you came from, Clara. It does not make you any less than." "I'm not ashamed of things I didn't have control over, but that doesn't mean I want others making assumptions about who I am." I nod because I want her to be comfortable. I stand with her in my arms and set her on her feet. I lean down and press my lips to hers. I pull back and take her hand without a word. When we reach the pack house, I lead her right to my father's office. I knock "come in Eli", my father says. I open the door and both of my parents are having lunch. I love that they do this when my father has a busy day. I have always promised myself that I would do the same to spend time with my Luna when I become Alpha.

"Is everything alright Eli" my father asks, and I smile. "Can you perform the ritual to make Clara part of the pack?" He looks confused at first, but then he smiles. Goddess bless my mother because I'm sure she linked him. "Of course" he says and stands. "Clara come stand here." We walk toward my father together. He takes the chalice from it's place on his shelf. My mother hands him the dagger from his desk drawer. "I, Alpha Lincoln Thomas of the Nightfire pack, invite you Clara Josephine Merritt, to become a member of the pack. Please make your vow to the pack." "I, Clara Josephine Merritt, vow to be loyal to the Nightfire pack and to keep all its secrets." She takes the chalice and drinks. I see the moment she is connected to my father. After a few seconds, she chuckles and my father smiles at me. Oh goddess what the hell did he say to her? "Welcome to the Nightfire pack Clara." My mother comes around and wraps her in a hug. When she steps back, I wrap my arm around her. It feels so natural and she leans into me.

"Clara and I discussed the party and we both agree that we would love to have one." "That's great, we will plan for it to happen in a week" my mother

says. "Larissa and I will take you dress shopping." The smile on Clara's face makes my heart clench in my chest. I hope that I can put that smile on her face every day for the rest of our lives.

Alpha Grant POV

I'm in my office going through paperwork. An omega knocks and comes in with her head down. "Alpha, a messenger brought this for you." "Thank you", I say, and she leaves my office. I open the card and inside is an invitation to a ball at the Nightfire pack. I read through the invitation, wondering why Lincoln and Amelia would be having a ball. The door to my office opens and I look up ready to reprimand whoever it is that came in without knocking until I see it's my Luna. "Evelyn, is everything alright?" "Yes, Grant, I just wanted to see what you wanted for dinner tonight." I smile "you know that the omegas can cook for us." She shoots me a glare "you know I enjoy making you dinner." I stand and pull her into my arms. I peck her lips. "What is this" she says, picking up the invitation off my desk. "Some social event at the Nightfire pack." "Oh I love Amelia and Lincoln. Will we be going?" I can see she wants to and I

would do anything to make her happy. "You can't lie to yourself, Grant, no matter how much time passes", Thiago says in my mind. I push him down because I'm in no mood to hear his bulls*t about the past. I did what I had to do for us to have our mate.

Chapter 75

Chapter 75

9 Secrets

Larissa POV

I have on the purple dress I picked out when Clara and I went shopping with my mom. I head down the hallway and knock on Clara's door. She opens it and ushers me inside. "You're not dressed yet. Do you need help putting the dress on?" She smiles "no I just didn't want to wrinkle it." I chuckle "it will be fine and you will look beautiful. My brother is going to lose his mind when he sees you in that dress." I help Clara into the sapphire ball gown she chose. She looks like a princess. I pull her hair into a French braid and put light make-up on her face. She really doesn't need any, she is naturally pretty. I

turn her so she is facing the full-length mirror. She gasps and I smile. "That can't be me in the mirror" she says in disbelief. "Yes it most certainly is." She takes a finger, running it down a scar she has on her neck and arm. I gently grab her hand. "Don't do that. Those scars do not change how beautiful you are. They are about your past, not your future." She turns wrapping me in a hug. "I can't tell you how much you all mean to me." "Well you're stuck with us, so that's a good thing." She pulls back and a knock sounds on the door. "Come in," she says. The door opens and my brother steps inside and stops moving. He is just staring at his mate. "Alright, I'll meet the two of you downstairs." Neither of them answer me but I didn't really expect them to.

As I reach the top of the stairs, I see Susan and the other girls all whispering at the bottom. I pray they don't do anything stupid tonight because Eli meant what he said. When I reach the bottom of the stairs, Susan walks over to me. "You look very pretty Larisa." "Thank you, so do you." I start to walk toward the ballroom but she stops me. "I hope we can be friends again, Larisa. I was angry and I let jealousy get the best of me. I'm happy for your brother and the Luna." "As long as you don't hurt my sister, then everything will be fine between us." She nods and I head into the ballroom. My parents are already there greeting the guests as they arrive. Micah, Mason, Rose, Penny, and Jennifer are all sitting at a

table. I rush over and Penny wraps me in a hug. "I didn't know you were going to make it back so soon." "My training with the Fae is not complete, but when mom told me that Eli found his mate, I had to come back to meet her. You and Eli are like our sister and brother" she says, pointing at Jennifer. "When will you leave again," I ask with sadness in my voice. Even though Penny is four years older than us, we are all best friends. I was glad when her grandparents found her, but sad that she had to go away to train to use her Fae gifts.

"Hey, it's not forever. This is my home and I'll be back to stay before you know it. Maybe you and Rose will have your wolves when I get back." Jennifer crosses her arms over her chest. She still has another year before she gets her wolf. I go over and hug her before we take our seat at the table. Penny bends down and whispers something in her sister's ear before she takes a seat next to her. "So what is Eli's mate like", Penny asks. "She is kind and beautiful. She is perfect for Eli. She doesn't have a mean bone in her body. You're going to love her."

Eli POV

When I open the door, Clara is standing there in a beautiful blue dress. I feel like I can't even move. The door closing brings me out of my trance. "Eli, say something." "There are no words that will do justice to how beautiful you are." Her cheeks turn pink and I walk forward, taking her hand in mine. I pull her hand to my lips, pressing a kiss to the back. "Are you ready to go to the party?" She nods and I keep her hand in mine, leading her down the hallway. When we reach the stairs, my Aunt Lily is waiting at the bottom. "Hello lovebirds" she says before she hugs us both. "Clara, you look lovely. I have something very special for you." She opens her hand, showing Clara a necklace with a heart-shaped pendant. She hands it to me so I can put it on her. "This necklace is not only beautiful but enchanted by two powerful witches. It will protect you from evil." "Thank you, Aunt Lily," I say. Clara wraps her in a hug again. "Thank you Lily."

We head inside and my parents are greeting our guests. The room is filled with pack members who all bare their necks at us. My mother waves us over and we join her and my father. "Clara, that dress is

perfect for you" my mother says. "I agree you look lovely", my father says. I lead her over to the table where the rest of my family are seated. Penny hops up and rushes over, wrapping me in a hug. I hear a low growl and I smile. Penny pulls back and wraps Clara in a hug. "Sorry about that. I should have told you who I was first. Believe me, you have nothing to worry about" she says to Clara. "Clara, this is Penny. She is like a sister to me." I point to everyone at the table. "That is Jennifer, Penny's sister. That is Rose, Lily's daughter. You remember Micah and Mason." They nod and she smiles. I pull out her chair and she takes a seat. We all talk and I love how comfortable she is with everyone. I introduce her to Pheobe, Michael, John, and Maureen. As everyone talks she leans in so only I can hear her. "You have a wonderful family." I kiss her cheek before I respond. "We have a wonderful family." I thread my fingers in hers just enjoying being close to her.

Grant POV

"Grant, if you don't hurry up we are going to be late." "I'm coming although I don't think it will be a big deal if we arrive late." She rolls her eyes and I pull her into my arms, pressing a kiss to her lips. She pulls back "we definitely don't have time for that." I chuckle and lead her out to the car. We drive for a half an hour before we arrive at the Nightfire pack. I park and come around to open Evelyn's door. I lead her toward the pack house and a guard stops us to check our invitation. We are led to a large room and the party is in full swing. "Evelyn, it's so good to see you again", I hear a familiar female voice. Evelyn

pulls free of my hand and rushes toward Amelia. “Alpha Grant, how have you been”, Lincoln says as he steps toward me with his hand outstretched. I take it “good how about yourself.” “Very good. I’m glad you and Evelyn could make it tonight. We have a rather big announcement to make.” “I figured as much with you having this ball.” We talk about pack business for a few minutes before he says his goodbyes and walks past me to welcome other guests. I scan the room looking for Evelyn. When I finally find her, she is walking toward a table with Amelia.

I start toward her and something doesn’t feel right. I can feel her agitation through our bond. I increase my speed and wrap Evelyn in my arms. She looks up into my eyes and hers are as black as night.

“Excuse us”, I say, looking around the table and my heart sinks. “Evelyn come with me”, I say as I pull her out of the room. I walk until we are outside the pack house. Evelyn manages to break free and is breathing heavily. “Sadie, give control back to Evelyn now” I say. She takes some deep breaths and her beautiful green eyes are back. “Evelyn, what’s going on”, I ask, praying that I am wrong.

Evelyn POV

“So something big must have happened for you guys to have a ball” I say to Amelia. She smiles and her happiness is contagious. “Eli found his mate.” “Oh my goddess, that’s wonderful. I’m shocked you’re not having the Alpha and Luna ceremony.” “We will soon” she says, but she doesn’t elaborate and I don’t pry. “Come on, I’ll introduce you to her.” I walk side by side with Amelia toward a table full of people. As we get closer, Sadie seems agitated. “Sadie, what’s wrong with you?” “I can feel our pup” she starts to say, and I try to push her down. It doesn’t matter how long ago we lost our pups, we still hurt every day. Grant has been a wonderful mate but we weren’t able to have pups with him.” “Sadie our pups are”, I start to say, and she pushes forward. This time I can’t stop her. She starts to look around the room and I’m just an observer. Our eyes land on a young woman sitting next to Eli. “Pup” she growls before strong arms wrap around us and Grant is able to get her attention.

Once we are outside, thankfully, she gives me back control. When he asks me what’s wrong, my heart squeezes in my chest. The tears start to flow down my cheeks and the hurt is as fresh today as it was the day Grant told me that the twins died. He is the only reason I survived losing them. He wasn’t happy that I was pregnant when we found each other, but he accepted me as his fated mate and my pups as his own. “Grant, Sadie feels connected to that girl like

she is our pup.” He walks over and pulls me into his arms. “Evelyn you and Sadie both know that isn’t possible. We buried the pups. Sadie is just confused.” Sadie growls and I step back. “I understand she may not be the daughter that I lost, but Sadie isn’t confused. I don’t know why we feel this way, but we do. So, please don’t act like we are crazy.” “Evelyn, you know I don’t think you’re crazy. I just want you to think logically. She is not your pup.” “Fine, she is not our pup.” Sadie whimpers in my mind. I start to walk past him toward the pack

house. “Where the hell are you going?” “I’m going back inside to celebrate with our friends.” “I don’t know if that’s a good idea, Evelyn.” I turn shooting daggers at him. “I will be fine, now let’s go and take our seats.” I stick out my hand and he takes it. When we reach the ballroom, he leads me to a table with our names on it. He never lets go of my hand. I watch as Amelia and Lincoln stand in the front of the room. They wave to Eli and the young lady from earlier to join them. Why do I feel like she is mine? “You feel that way because she is our pup. I don’t know how, but I’m telling you Evelyn, she is ours.”

Chapter 76

Chapter 76

10 Unexpected Visit

Cayden POV

I open my eyes and I’m in a room like I’ve never seen before. The walls are clean and white. The bed I’m lying on feels amazing. I sit up and notice that all the pain I had earlier is gone. I must be dead and honestly it’s a relief. I pray that Clara found a safe place and will be happy. I don’t even know how I helped Clara escape. It was like it wasn’t even me that helped Clara. The door opens to the room and I stand expecting to see the goddess. I’m confused when a man I’ve never seen walks in. For the first time in a long time, I feel my wolf. “Cayden, don’t be afraid. Everything will be clear soon” Riggs says. Before I can respond to him, the man speaks. “Cayden, it is so good to see you.” “I don’t mean to sound rude but who are you?” “It will be easier to show you than to tell you.” He sticks out his hand and I take it. Images begin to flash through my mind.

Vision

The man in front of me and a beautiful woman are sitting at a table. A few minutes later, he goes over and helps her to stand. Her belly is very swollen and he places his hand over it. "I can't wait to meet our pups, love. It's hard to believe it will be happening in just two months." He kisses her before they head for the door. The image fades and a new one replaces it. The same man is sitting in an office with an older man that has his features. "This is not right Theo. She is not a witch. You are polluting the magical bloodline by mating with a mutt" the older man says. "Uncle, do you believe that you know better than the goddess herself? I would suggest you never speak of Evelyn that way again." "Don't challenge my authority, Theodore. I am the leader of this coven and you will follow my orders without question." "She is carrying my children and she is mine. I will gladly leave the coven for her. You can find someone else to follow your orders." The anger on the older man's face is unmistakable. He

stands "the only way you will leave this coven, Theodore, is to meet the goddess, so make your choice." The younger man attempts to stand to defend himself but the older man shoots something from his hand. The image fades again but I'm sure he didn't survive.

The new image is of the same woman sitting at a table with a man that is definitely an Alpha. I see pain on her face and then they appear in the hospital. She is in labor and her screams fill the room. A few moments later, the pups are rushed from the room. Instead of screams of pain, the woman is screaming for her pups. The Alpha appears and two familiar people are with him. That ba**ard Franklin is standing with the witch, Lydia. The Alpha hands them the pups and they disappear. The next image is of the woman and Alpha as she sobs uncontrollably. "I'm so sorry love, the pups didn't make it." "How could this happen?" "I love you Evelyn and we will have other pups together." Her sobs get louder and the image fades away.

Vision End

I pull my hand back. "What does this all mean? Is that my mother?" He smiles "yes that beautiful woman is you and Clara's mother." Realization of who this man is to me finally sinks in. "You're our father. So I am dead." He smiles "no my son. You are very much alive. The goddess has granted me this moment to meet you and give you the information you will need to make things right." "Have you visited Clara?" I see sadness cross his features. "Did something happen to Clara? Please tell me that all I did was not in vain." "What you did

was amazing. Your sister is alive and, despite what the future may hold, she is happy.” “What does that mean? Is something going to happen Clara?” “Cayden, the only thing that I can tell you is that whatever happens was meant to be and you will need to be there for the gift she brings that is born of that happiness.” “You’re saying a lot but making no sense.” He steps forward and wraps me in his arms. “I love you and I’m proud of the man that you have become.” I feel the tears running down my cheeks. I never thought I would have a moment with this man.

He whispers my mother’s name before he begins to chant. My body is engulfed in warmth and my eyes close on their own. I feel like I’m floating for a moment before everything stills. I manage to force my

eyes open again and I’m in a dirty room. It’s not the cell, but it’s nothing like the room I was just in. I hear the key turn in the lock and the door opens. “How do you feel boy,” the witch says. I don’t answer her. “You could act a little grateful. I’m the only reason you’re still alive.” “Let me out to kill that b**ch” Riggs growls. This is the strongest we have felt in a very long time. “We will, we just need to pick our time. After what father said, I need to get to Clara.”

Eli POV

As we stand with my parents, Clara seems anxious. I’m sure being around all these people isn’t easy for her, but this seems different. She seems distracted and both Silas and I are concerned. “We want to thank you all for coming to the Nightfire pack for this celebration. I’m sure you’re all wondering what we invited you here to celebrate.” Everyone laughs and nods at my father. “We decided to have this ball to announce that our son Eli has found his mate.” He holds out his hand to Clara and I lead her to him. I stand on the other side of her. “This is the future Luna of the Nightfire pack, Clara.” Applause fills the room and I squeeze her hand. She smiles but I can see she is nervous. I lean in “I’m here with you. You are doing amazing.” She kisses my cheek and we look back at the crowd. “We want you all to enjoy tonight and we will be sending invitations when it is time to appoint the new Alpha and Luna of the pack.” Again the crowd breaks into applause. Everyone starts to talk and dance again. I take Clara’s hand, leading her out into the hallway.

I pull her into my arms. “What’s wrong Clara?” She acts like she has no idea what I’m talking about. “Just because we aren’t bonded doesn’t mean I don’t know when something is wrong.” “That woman that was with your mom, who is she?” “That is Luna Evelyn of the Red Moon Pack. Why do you ask?” “I don’t know exactly but Cora and I feel anxious around her.” “She has always

been very kind when I have been around her. Do you want me to ask her and Alpha Grant to leave?" "Of course not, she has done nothing wrong. I'm sure she is a lovely woman." She smiles and I lean down kissing her lips softly. I pull back and take her hand, leading her back into the ballroom. I lead her to the dance floor and hold her in my arms. It's amazing to share this moment with her.

The ball lasts for a few hours and I love the smile that Clara wears for most of the evening. She dances with Larisa and Rose while I sit with Micah and Mason just watching her. I look at the table where Evelyn and Grant are sitting. Evelyn doesn't take her eyes off of Clara while she dances. What could Clara and Cora possibly be feeling about her? As the ball winds down, the Alpha and Lunas start to come to say goodnight to all of us. We stand with my parents by the door as everyone leaves the ballroom. Evelyn and Grant are the last ones to approach us. He has his arm looped in hers. She comes to stand in front of me first. "It was good to see you again Eli. Congratulations on finding your beautiful Luna." "Thank you Evelyn." She moves till she is standing in front of Clara. "It was a pleasure to meet you Clara. I hope we can spend time getting to know each other in the future." She reaches her hand and Clara takes it. I see Evelyn's eyes flash black but it is gone as quickly as it came. Grant ushers toward my parents as he shakes my hand. "Congratulations to the two of you" he says as he walks past Clara.

Evelyn POV

Grant leads me to the car and helps me inside. He starts the drive back to the Red Moon and the silence that fills the car is uncomfortable for the first time since we mated all those years ago. We're halfway home when Grant finally breaks the silence. "Evelyn, are you alright?" I turn "I'm fine Grant." He takes my hand in his and squeezes it. Everything in me right now wants to pull away, but he doesn't deserve that. He didn't do anything wrong and I have no right to be upset with him. Once we reach the pack I head inside and right upstairs to our wing. He follows me and once we reach our room he pulls me to him. "Evelyn, you are worrying me. I hate when you are upset and I know you are not fine." "I'm sorry, I don't know why I feel drawn to that girl but you did nothing wrong." I lean up and press my lips to his. He tries to deepen the kiss but there is no way I can do that the way I feel. I pull away and head over to grab my pajamas. "I think I'll feel better after a shower." He nods and I head into the bathroom. Once I am in the shower I let my mind wander to the day I lost my pups.

Grant POV

This cannot be f**king happening. Once I know she is in the shower, I grab my phone out of my jacket. He picks up on the second ring. I don't even give him a chance to answer. "Do you know who I f**king met tonight?" "Hello to you, too, Grant." "Franklin, I'm ready to come to that f**king collective and snap your neck with my bare hands." "What are you going on about?" "The pup you should have taken care of years ago met my Luna tonight." There is silence for a minute before he asks for an explanation. I tell him about the ball and meeting the new Luna of the Nightfire pack. "How the hell could she be mated to an Alpha?" "She isn't really a rogue you a**hole. You and that f**king witch had better figure out how to fix this before my Luna finds out who she really is or you will both be sorry." I cut the call and the bathroom door opens. Evelyn comes out with a look of concern on her face. "Who were you talking to, Grant?"

Chapter 77

Chapter 77

11 Suspicions

Evelyn POV

As I dry off, I can hear Grant on the phone. Even though he is trying to whisper, I can hear the anger in his voice. I throw on my pajamas and split the door slowly. I hear him say before my Luna finds out who she is to whoever he is talking to. A pit forms in my stomach at his words. What is this man that promised to love me hiding? He has never given me any reason to doubt him until now. "Who were you talking to Grant?" He turns smiling at me like he has done a thousand times since we mated, but I feel nothing this time. He is keeping something from me. He walks over and wraps me in a hug. The tingles that normally make butterflies in my stomach make me feel nothing but sick. "Do you feel better now that you've showered?" "I do but I'm exhausted." "Well, I'll take a shower and hold you till you fall asleep." I step back from him and despite my best efforts to wait to call him out until I do some investigating on what he is hiding I can't. "You're keeping something from me. Something about that girl from the Nightfire pack." His eyes darken "Eve, I have never kept things from you and I'm hurt you would even think that about me. I have always been good to you. Unlike other Alphas, I was willing to take on another man's pups when I found you. I could have rejected you but I didn't because you were my fated mate. I would have raised those pups because they were a

part of you.” “Not those pups, our pups. Do you know that not once in our lives have you ever referred to the pups as yours?”

He places his hand on his head. “They weren’t my pups Eve. They were pups that you made with another man. Pups I was willing to raise with you because you are my Luna. My Luna Eve, the woman I have loved since the moment I found you. I have been a good mate to you and I have treated you well because I love you.” I walk over and grab the pillow off of the bed and head for the door. “Where the hell are you going, Evelyn?” “I will be sleeping in one of the guest rooms until you tell me the truth about what your hiding from me.” I walk toward the door and he growls. I don’t stop, I know that he

would never hurt me physically. He has been the perfect mate all these years. He has never even raised his voice at me until now. Sadie whimpers in my mind. Grant and Thiago are our second chance after Theo was killed. The thought of not sleeping next to him hurts me as much as it does her but I need to know the truth. I pick a room three doors down from our bedroom. Once I’m inside, I pull the door closed and lock it. I slide under the covers alone for the first time in a very long time. Sleep does not come easily as my mind races with ideas of what he is keeping from me. I think about Clara and why she is important to me and Sadie. Exhaustion finally takes me under and I promise myself that I will find the truth.

When I wake up the next morning, I head toward our room. I take a deep breath and Grant’s scent is very faint. I open the door knowing that Grant won’t be there. I head to my closet and pull on jeans and a blue t-shirt. I’m in no mood to wear a dress today. I feel the link from Grant but I keep my block up. I’m not ready to talk to him yet. I manage to make it out of the pack house without seeing Grant or his ranked wolves. When I reach the pack hospital I go inside and head straight down a hallway to an office. I take a deep breath before I knock on the door. “Come in,” the man says. I open the door and he stands to his feet, baring his neck to me. “Luna, to what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?” “I have questions and I want honest answers.” I see his smile falter for just a moment. “I’m not sure what you’re referring to Luna.” “Dr. Jones, don’t make me repeat myself. I want to know what happened to my pups all those years ago and I want the truth.” “Luna the Alpha” he starts to say and I step closer. Sadie is at the surface. “It’s not the Alpha you need to fear right now.”

Cayden POV

The door to the room opens and that ba**ard Franklin walks in. I sit up and he smiles but his eyes are cold as usual. "I see you have regained some of your strength. I only allowed Lydia to help you because I needed you alive. I wouldn't get any ideas, boy, because I don't need you anymore." He takes a seat across the room from me. "It seems your b**ch of a sister made it to the Nightfire pack. Do you know what packs do to b**ch rogues, boy?" I keep my expression even and the smile is gone from

his face. He wanted to see pain in my expression that he has caused many times before. He has no idea that I know exactly where my sister is and how she is being treated. I stand and he does the same. Riggs growls and his eyes widen. He reaches for a necklace and, before I can move forward, Lydia is standing in front of him with a smirk on her face. She waves her hand and I put my arms up hoping to, lessen the attack, but I feel nothing. When I look back at them, she looks pissed and I realize that a blue shield is between us. "How" she screams. "We will have our time with them Cayden. Now is the time to be free of this awful place", Riggs says to me. "What the hell do I do Riggs?" "The same thing you told Clara. Think of any place but here." I close my eyes and pray to the goddess this works.

When I open my eyes, the walls of the room are gone. I'm in the woods outside the collective. I smile that it worked, I'm no longer a prisoner in that f**king awful place. "Your freedom isn't going to last long if you don't get the hell out of here" Riggs growls. "Do you feel up to shifting?" "Now is as good a time as any to find out." As the shift starts to happen saying it hurts is an understatement. We have only shifted once and it's been months. I don't fight the process and once the pain subsides, Riggs takes off. I can hear paws hitting the ground behind us and I don't look back to see if they are close. We run for what feels like an hour before Riggs finally slows down. I can no longer hear the echo of paws hitting the ground. Riggs maneuvers through trees until we are near a stream. He bends drinking for minutes before he finally lays down. I can't believe all that just happened. I have powers. I knew I was different, I just didn't know how different I was until now. "I'm glad you're strong enough to use the gifts your father gave you." I smile and say a prayer of thanks to the goddess and my father. Exhaustion creeps in after all that running and we have no choice but to give in.

I have no idea how much time passes when we finally wake up. Riggs stands and stretches. A growl deep and low comes from behind us. Riggs turns and there is a wolf that is red like fire standing in front of us. I'm just about to tell Riggs to shift so I can tell the wolf we are not a threat when he bears his neck. "What the hell are you doing", I ask him and the wolf in front of us shifts. A

beautiful woman who is fully dressed stands before us. She walks up, laying her hand on Rigg's head and he growls. Not a growl of warning, but one of contentment. "What the hell is going on, Riggs?" "She is a special wolf and she will not hurt us." She steps back and Riggs shifts without warning. I try to cover myself and she laughs. "We are wolves. I've seen naked men before" she says as she throws me a pair of shorts and I slide them on. "I'm sure you realize by now that I'm not a threat to your pack." "I do, because if you were you would be dead already. That still doesn't tell me why you're near our territory." I can see she is looking at the scars that cover my chest. "I escaped the collective I have been held prisoner in since I was a pup." Her eyes darken and a growl escapes her.

Calliope POV

Aurora stays hidden as we watch the silver wolf sleep. "He is no threat to us or the wolves, Calliope. He is more than a wolf and has a good soul." Once he is on his feet, we make ourselves known to him. I appreciate his wolf showing us respect. I'm shocked that he would as a rogue, but as Aurora said, he isn't an ordinary wolf either. Once he shifts, I can see all the scars on his chest. We don't usually scar unless our wolves can't heal us. The anger I feel when he says he has been a prisoner since he was a child scares even me. I can't imagine what he has been through. Aurora growls and I realize again that my father isn't the only monster out there. "My name is Calliope and I'm not a pack wolf anymore." He looks at me confused but I don't explain. "I'm going to need you to stay here. I will be back with the leaders of the collective so they can speak with you." I see a glint of what I suspect is fear in his eyes when I say the word collective. "I promise you that this collective is nothing like the one you just ran from." He nods and I take off passing the patrolling wolves. A few minutes later, Carter follows me back to the man who hasn't moved.

"My name is Carter and I'm the leader of the Silver Paw Collective. Calliope tells me that you come from a collective that has held you prisoner", Carter says. "I have, my name is Cayden. I have been a prisoner of the Black Mountain Collective since I was a pup. As I explained to Calliope, I am no threat to you or your wolves. I was just resting here outside your borders." "I'm well aware of Franklin's collective and how it is run. Our former leader did business with him often, but I will not. Calliope has assured me that you and your wolf are not a threat to our collective. I trust her and Aurora's judgment.

We can offer you a place to stay where you will be safe." "I'm very grateful for your offer but I need to find the Nightfire pack." I see Carter stiffen but Cayden

doesn't seem to notice. "What is your business with the Nighfire pack?" "I need to find my sister and I believe she is there." "We have a relationship with the pack. I can't make promises on their behalf, but I'm sure that Alpha Lincoln will meet with you." He looks between Carter and myself. "I will be forever grateful for your kindness." "Come on, let's get you something to eat and a place to sleep. I'll make some calls and see what I can set up."

We reach the border and as we walk toward the cottages the men are staring at Cayden. "Go back to your posts now", Carter yells, and they scatter. Abigale is waiting with Sarah on the porch. I told Carter that Cayden is a hybrid and I'm sure that is why the wolves are leery. They scent that he is part warlock. You would think the way people judge rogues, they wouldn't be so quick to judge others. Abigale smiles "welcome to the collective Cayden. Dinner is ready in the dining hall if you're hungry." He smiles and they lead the way as I walk by Cayden's side. We walk into the dining hall and Oliver is sitting at the usual table. He and I have become good friends. Cayden and I grab the trays and take our seats at the table. I expect Cayden, for lack of better terms, to eat like a ravenous wolf, but he doesn't. He eats slowly and not nearly as much as the others. Oliver breaks the silence and I kick him under the table. "So you're a warlock." Cayden smiles, realizing what I did. Abigale shoots Oliver a look and he raises his eyebrow in question. "It's alright, honestly it was news to me until a few days ago." I'm just about to question him when Carter stands. He turns to Abigale. "We have unfriendly visitors on the eastern border." Oliver and I stand following Carter. I turn as Cayden stands "stay here and protect them." I point to Abigale and Sarah. He smiles knowing that I know he isn't strong enough to fight with us. We run and meet with ten of the patrol wolves that are facing five rogues and a woman I can scent is a witch. She is staring at Aurora. Carter shifts "why are you here Franklin?"

Chapter 78

Chapter 78

12 New Clues

Evelyn POV

"Luna, I don't know what you expect me to say. I was with you when the pups were taken to the nursery. I was given the report just as you were that neither

pup had survived.” “So who examined the pups if it wasn’t you?” “Dr. Martin was in the nursery when the pups were brought in.” My heart sinks knowing that I can’t speak to Dr. Martin as she was killed during an attack on the pack not long after I gave birth.” I see sympathy on his face but I don’t want his sympathy. “I want the records of my pups’ birth.” “Luna” he starts to say again and my eyes flash black as Sadie pushes to the surface. “I do not need your sympathy or to be patronized. All I want to know is what happened to my pups and don’t tell me they died because you weren’t there to confirm that’s true.” He sighs and reaches for a pen off his desk. I watch as he writes something on a piece of paper. He comes around and hands it to me. I look at him with confusion once I read the address he has written down.

“Patricia’s mate left the pack after she was killed. This is his address in the human city.” “Why would he choose to become a rogue? He would need the pack even more after losing his mate.” “Those are questions you will have to ask him, Luna. Honestly, I don’t know the truth about what happened that day, but I do hope you find it, Luna.” He stops talking and I watch his eyes shift as he gets a link. A few seconds later he looks back at me with a mix of fear and sadness. “He’s coming isn’t he”, I ask and he nods. “Did you tell him why I came to see you?” “No Luna, I simply said you were feeling fatigued and wanted to be checked out.” All the contempt I had for this man when I arrived is washed away and replaced with appreciation. “Thank you, I’m truly grateful for your help.” “Of course, Luna. Now we need to get you to an exam room before he arrives.” He leads me down the hall to an exam room and gives me a gown to put on. The doctor rushes from the room and I wait to come face to face with a man that I

can no longer trust. I scent him before the door flies open. He growls before he comes to stand in front of me.

He takes some deep breaths, calming himself before he speaks. I stay quiet knowing I need him to believe that I am only here because I don’t feel well. I don’t trust myself not to say anything “Evelyn, what the hell were you thinking? Do you want me to go feral? I have been trying to reach you for an hour and then I find out that you are here at the hospital.” Though the thought of touching him right now makes me sick, I reach my hand up and place it on his cheek. “Grant, I was feeling fatigued. I just wanted to get checked out and not have my mate worry for no reason.” He steps closer, pulling me to his chest and wrapping his arms around me. Even Sadie growls low, but I stay quiet. After a few minutes, he pulls back and looks into my eyes. I give him my best smile. “I’m fine, I promise.” “Please just tell me next time so I don’t lose my mind. You are my world Evelyn, you know that. I would do anything for you.” “I

promise, I will tell you next time.” “I think he would do anything for himself, not us”, Sadie says and I know in my heart that she is right.

Carter POV

I shift and that ba**ard Franklin is standing with five rogues and that f**king pathetic witch. “Why are you here Franklin?” “Is that anyway to talk to a fellow rogue leader. I have done business with this collective many times. I don’t understand your hostility, Carter.” “No, you did business with the snake that used to run this collective. Now I’ll ask again why are you here?” “I believe that a prisoner of mine has escaped and maybe hiding in your territory. As an act of goodwill, I would like him returned to me.” A growl escapes me and I cross my arms over my chest. “Franklin, you and I both know that will not be happening. I would suggest you and yours return to your territory before I take this visit as a threat to my people. I would hate to have to leave your collective without a leader.” I see black energy passing between the witches’ fingertips. Aurora comes to stand next to me. He raises his hand and for the first time he stares at the red wolf standing next to me. I don’t like the way he is looking at Aurora.

“No need for all that, Lydia, I’m sure that we will find what we came for without having to teach Carter and his men a lesson about who they shouldn’t cross in our world,” Franklin says to the witch. She steps next to him and wraps her arms around him. Despite what he says, she throws a black energy ball and I brace myself for the impact, but it never comes. I realize that Aurora is standing in front of me. She took the hit and didn’t move an inch. I step off behind her and if I wasn’t so pissed that b**ch just attacked us I would have enjoyed the look of horror on both of their faces. I shift heading toward them but they disappear before we reach them. The other men are already breaching the trees. I turn and head right for Aurora. “Thank you for protecting me.” She nods her head and before I can say more I get a link from Abigale. I waste no time shifting and running as fast as Aaron’s legs can run.

Cayden POV

“Cayden, I have a bad feeling about this”, Riggs says as we sit at the table. I feel uneasy and I know Riggs is right. I pray that my presence has not brought suffering to these people that have welcomed me into their home. “My mate and the others are strong. They will handle them, Cayden” Abigale says, I’m sure she is reading my expression. I smile and nod but I can’t help the nagging feeling of dread in my gut. “What color is your wolf” Sarah asks, bringing me out of my thoughts. “He is silver and his name is Riggs.” “Can I

see him” she asks, but Abigale speaks before I can. “Eat your dinner and then we can talk about you meeting Cayden’s wolf. She pouts a little but starts to eat. A few minutes pass and the feeling of dread gets stronger. A growl sounds and I hear my name being yelled outside. I stand walking toward the door. “Cayden wait” Abigale says my name as she shields Sarah from whatever is outside. “Stay here no matter what happens”, I say and I can see she wants to protest, but I don’t give her a chance to. I open the door and step out onto the porch.

I catch their scent before I even see them step out from behind the trees. Franklin’s men smile when they see me. “Look, Franklin was right, the pathetic mutt is hiding here like the coward he is.” I ball my fists at my side as the five men come to stand in front of me. “You can make this easier on yourself and these wolves mutt by coming with us without a fight. We aren’t leaving here without you and if we have

to kill every wolf that gets in our way, we will.” The thought of that innocent pup flashes through my mind. She reminds me of Clara when we were children. I will not go back to that hell, but I also won’t let them hurt these wolves. “Riggs help me use my powers.” “All I can tell you is to focus on what you want to do and pray it happens. I’m just a wolf, you are the warlock.” I open my hands, palms up and picture energy flowing down my arm and settling in my hand. I look at the wolves and for the first time I see fear on their faces. They begin to back up like the cowards they are. My hands are both glowing with white light.

“It seems this mutt isn’t the weak boy that you all took turns abusing. You are all cowards.” I raise my hand and pitch the first energy ball, striking the wolf standing in the middle. He is engulfed in light before his screams fill the air. Once the light is gone, there is nothing left but dirt where he stood. The other four take off and I throw energy ball after energy ball until they are all ash on the ground. I hear a door open and I turn to see Abigale smiling at me. “It seems Calliope didn’t need to worry about you needing to gain your strength.” I smile and for the first time in my life, I feel like the wolf I was meant to be. “You’re more than a wolf and we will never be someones punching bag again” Riggs says.

A few minutes later, wolves break through the trees and stop in front of me. They shift and Carter walks up to me, extending his hand. He pulls me into a hug. “Thank you for protecting my family.” “I wish I wasn’t the reason they needed protecting. I’m just glad it worked. I’ve only teleported using magic.” I step back and Calliope nods at me. “Don’t blame yourself for the actions of

that a**hole. He has always been an evil pr**k and I wish I knew what he was doing to you and your sister because I would have stopped it back then”, Carter says. “Thank you Carter for your kindness. I appreciate all you are doing to help me. I promise you this, I’m not the child I once was and I am going to take great pleasure in making him pay for all he has done to me and my sister.” “We will help you anyway we can to make that happen and I’m sure the Nightfire pack will help too.” Hearing him talk about the Nightfire pack gives me hope that I will soon see Clara.

Evelyn POV

I gather my purse and head to Grant’s office. I knock as I usually do and push the door open. He looks up with his normal smile until he sees my purse. “Why do you have your purse, Evelyn?” I walk over and sit in his lap. I keep repeating in my head you need to do this as he buries his head in my neck. “I feel like getting out and going shopping. After everything the other night and not feeling well, I think I just need to do something for myself.” “Well, I’ll go with you.” “No, you have work to do. I will take one of the patrol guards so you don’t have to worry. I want to just focus on myself for the afternoon.” He smiles “thank you, I would worry if you were out of the pack lands without protection. I think that is an excellent idea.” He pulls my lips to his and attempts to deepen the kiss, but I hop off his lap. “No way, if you start that I’ll never get any shopping done.” He chuckles “then you owe me later tonight, Eve.” I turn making my way out the door and down to the SUV. The guard I summoned is already sitting behind the wheel. I slide into the back seat and he drives to the gate. After he speaks with the guard for several minutes, we pull through. When he makes the right toward the human city, I let go of the breath I didn’t even know I was holding. “Calm down Evelyn, you are doing fine” Sadie says. “Where are we off to first Luna?” I reach into my purse and pull out the piece of paper with the address on it. I hand it to the guard and he looks in the rearview mirror at me. “I want to visit an old friend before we go shopping.” I can see he is hesitant to follow my orders. “Does the Alpha know about this Luna?” “I believe I am the Luna and I gave you an order, now drive.” “Yes Luna, my apologies.”

Chapter 79

Chapter 79

13 The Past and Future

Evelyn POV

The guard pulls the SUV in front of a modest home. Sadie is pacing in my mind, which is doing nothing to calm my nerves. "Sadie calm down please." She whimpers but stops pacing. I take a deep breath before I get the guard's attention. "You will not speak about where I went today to anyone. That includes the Alpha", I say using my ranked command. "Do I make myself clear?" "Yes Luna" he says. "Stay here until I return." I open the door and walk up the paved path. When I reach the door, I ring the bell. The door opens. I expect to be greeted by Troy, Patricia's mate. Instead, a woman I can scent is a human, smiles at me. "Can I help you" she asks sweetly. "I'm sorry I must have been given the wrong address. I was looking for Troy Martin." "You're in the right place. Troy is around the back of the house." Before I can even speak, I hear a male voice from behind her, "Luna." I look at the woman when he uses my title. "It's alright Luna, she knows what we are." "Please come inside" the woman says and I follow them to a room with a large table.

"Please Luna, have a seat", Troy says. "Troy, you can just call me Evelyn." "No, I can't. You will always be my Luna." I smile and take a seat. "Luna, this is Michelle, my wife." She bows and I chuckle. "That isn't necessary Michelle. Please both of you sit down." They both join me at the table. I'm just about to speak when the door bursts open and two teenage boys rush in. Troy immediately stands "boys we have an important guest." They come to stand next to Troy and they have his features. "Dominick and Donald, this is Luna Evelyn." They both bare their necks to me and I nod. "It's a pleasure to meet you both." They both head for the stairs and Troy sits back down. "How old are they" I ask curiosity getting the better of me. "They just turned thirteen" Michelle says. "They look like fine boys, I'm happy for you both." "Thank you" they both say.

"Luna, what can we do for you" Troy asks. "I was hoping I could ask you some questions about Patricia?" I see a flash of sadness and pain in his eyes before Michelle takes his hand. "I'm sorry" I start to say, but he stops me. "There is no need for you to be sorry. You can ask me anything you want." "Did Patricia ever talk about the day my pups died?" This time the look in his eyes is one of pure anger. I even see a flash of his wolf. He takes a deep breath before he answers me. "Yes she did." "Can you please tell me what she said?" He looks at Michelle who nods before he looks back at me. "She said that your pups didn't die that day." The room feels like it's closing in on me. I feel like there is no air in my lungs. I knew the truth in my heart, but it's still hard to actually hear it said out loud. I see panic on both Michelle and Troy's faces before the darkness takes me under.

Troy POV

When the Luna first arrives, I think about all the times I thought this would happen when I first left the pack. I wish I would have stayed in the pack for a while. At least until I told her all the things Patricia had told me before she was killed. I knew in my heart the Alpha had something to do with my mate's death, but I couldn't prove it. I didn't think twice when the choice was becoming a rogue or remaining in a pack that was being led by a monster. How could he watch his mate suffer for what he had done? How could he kill my innocent mate for not keeping his secret? In my heart I know why she is here, but when she finally asks, a part of me wonders what good it is to tell her after all this time. What if her pups are truly dead? The goddess only knows what the rogue and witch did with them. I look at my beautiful human mate and she nods "she has the right to know." She says through our link. I felt guilty for a long time about falling in love with Michelle, but I know now that Patricia sent her to me.

As soon as the words leave my mouth, the Luna's eyes flash black. She starts to breathe fast and I can tell she isn't well. I rush over to catch her before she falls to the ground. "Michelle, get me a cold rag please." I pick her up, laying her on the couch. "Should I call 911" she asks. I smile "no love, she can't go to a human hospital. If her wolf ever took over, it could expose our kind." She hands me the rag and I place it on the Luna's forehead. I say a prayer to the goddess that she wakes up soon. After about

fifteen minutes, her eyes start to flutter open. She looks at me and I can see the tears she is holding back. She starts to sit up and I help her. "I need you to tell me everything, please." I nod and take a deep breath. I look down before I tell the story Patricia told me all those years ago.

Flashback

I return from training and head into the cottage I share with Patricia. She is in the kitchen sitting at the table when I walk in. I had rushed back because I could feel her anguish through our bond. I bend down so we are eye to eye. That's when I notice her cheeks are stained with tears. "What happened" I growl. She looks in my eyes and I can feel my wolf is at the surface thinking someone hurt our mate. "Patricia tell me what the hell happened." "The Luna had her pups this morning." I look at her confused about why she would be distraught when that is amazing news. "Did something happen to the pups?" She throws her arms around my neck and I pick her up, setting her in my lap. I cradle her as she sobs. "Patricia, please tell me what happened?" She pulls

back and before I can ask again, she opens our link. “The Alpha did something with the pups. He used his Alpha command on me to tell the Luna that the pups had died.” “What do you mean he did something with the pups?”

“When the pups were brought to the nursery I checked them and they were perfect. One boy and one girl who were perfectly healthy. A few minutes later, he came into the nursery and two people appeared next to him. A rogue and a witch. He told me to move and picked up each baby, handing them to those ba**ards. He turned to me, “these pups died. Do you understand me Patricia?” I asked him what was happening but he just growled. “You will never speak of what you saw today and you will tell everyone that the pups died” he said to me using his Alpha command. I can’t live with this and you know that I can’t tell. What should I do, Troy” she asks me. I rub my hand through her hair. “I promise you that we will make this right.”

Flashback Ends

I can’t even look into her eyes, knowing that I could have stopped her suffering. I can feel tears running down my own cheeks. “I’m so sorry Luna. I was a coward. After Patricia died I just wanted to be as far away from that place as I could get. I should have found a way to tell you what Grant had done.” I feel a hand on mine. When I look up into the eyes of this woman who has been through so much, all I see is strength and compassion. “Did Grant kill Patricia?” Her question takes me off guard at first, but then I answer. “I believe so. She had gone to his office the day she was killed. She linked me right before she saw him. I went to find her but they weren’t in the office. I don’t believe it was a rogue attack.” “I am sorry for all he took from you.” “Luna, you owe me no apology. I should have been stronger.” “No, you did absolutely nothing wrong. I’m glad that you found happiness and I’m hopeful that one day when your children are older you will find your place in a pack again. They will need to know that side of who they are.” I doubt that will happen but I nod. “Thank you, Luna.” “What will you do now?” I can’t help but ask. She is quiet for a moment. “I will find my pups and make that ba**ard pay for every moment I have lost with them.” “Please be careful, Luna.” She stands and wraps me in a hug. She hugs Michelle before she heads for the door. I pray that the goddess keeps her safe.

Evelyn POV

I compose myself before I reach the SUV. I slide into the seat and buckle my seat belt. “Is everything alright, Luna” the guard asks. “Yes, take me to the Nightfire pack, now.” This time he doesn’t question me. A million thoughts run

through my mind as we drive toward the pack. “We will get through this together”, Sadie says, and I know she is right.

Clara POV

“Are you sure you’re ready for this, Clara” Cora asks. “I have thought about it over the past week and honestly, I’m not sure but I’m tired of letting the past hold me back, Cora.” “I understand but this is a big step and after all that you went through.” “No, I am not going to continue to let what those men did to me stop me from loving Eli the way he deserves. The way that I deserve. He loves me and I know deep

in my heart he will never hurt me.” “I’m so proud of how strong you are and I’m honored that the goddess chose me to be your wolf.” I smile and I stand up from my bed. I give myself a little pep talk before I head down the hallway toward Eli’s room. Once I’m standing in front of the door, I think about turning back, but I don’t. I reach for the handle, opening it slowly. Once I’m inside, I close the door, trying not to make any noise. I hear a chuckle and I turn to see a smiling Eli. “What on earth are you doing, love” he asks me.

I don’t answer him but I maintain our eye contact. I start to walk toward the bed. The smirk he was wearing is gone and I’m not sure what he is thinking. As I get closer, I notice his eyes darken. Once I reach the side of the bed, I reach down and grip the sides of my t-shirt intending to pull it over my head. I feel two strong hands on mine stopping me. “Clara” his voice is deep and raspy like is holding onto his control by a thread. I know he is afraid of me being ready or hurting me. “Eli, I want this. I want you to make me yours.” He groans and before I can ask him what’s wrong, I’m lifted off my feet. I find myself underneath my mate and he is looking into my eyes. I’m sure he is looking for any fear or indecision. “If you really mean that Clara, then I will absolutely make you mine.” I smile “but not tonight. I want this to be special for both of us.” I can’t help the disappointment I feel. “Clara, will you go on a date with me tomorrow?” The butterflies that are fluttering around my stomach feel amazing. “Yes, I will.” I press a kiss on his lips and he deepens it. I feel it in my core and I wish at this moment that he wasn’t such a gentleman. Cora giggles and when he pulls back I’m breathless. He rolls to his side and I expect him to move his arm so I can get up, but he doesn’t. I look back and he smiles. “Sleep love, tomorrow we will complete the bond and you will forever be mine.” He pulls me close and I have never felt so loved and safe. I might be nervous about tomorrow, but I meant what I said to Eli. I’m ready for the bond to be complete.

Chapter 80

Chapter 80

14 Important Meeting

Evelyn POV

The guard pulls to the gate and I feel nerves like I've never known. What if we're wrong about Clara? What if we're right but she won't believe the truth? What if she thinks we didn't want them? What has happened to her all these years in the hands of that ba**ard? "Stop it Eve. Now isn't the time to let questions stop us from moving forward. You are strong and you can do this" Sadie says. "Luna the guard is asking you a question." I turn to the smiling guard from the Nightfire pack. "My apologies, I was deep in thought." "No worries Luna Evelyn. What can we help you with today?" "Can you let Alpha Lincoln and Luna Amelia know that I would like to speak with them." "Of course" he says and begins to link. He smiles back at me. "They will be waiting for you outside the pack house", the guard says, and I nod. We drive up the winding path to the parking area. "Do you want me to go with you Luna?" "No, I want you to return to the pack." He looks at me confused. "Luna, I don't think the Alpha would want me to return without you." "I'm not really concerned about what Grant wants. Return to the pack now." I see fear on his face and I can't have him punished because of my actions.

"If Grant wants to know why I'm not coming back he can call me. You can tell him that you had no choice because I used my command on you." I see the fear fade and it's replaced by sympathy. "Yes, Luna," he says. I step out of the vehicle and close the door. I watch as he pulls out and turns back down the paved path. There is no turning back now, not that I would. I head toward the pack house and Amelia steps out smiling. "Eve it's so good to see you. Is everything alright" she asks. "I'm sorry to interrupt your day but I really need to talk to you and Lincoln." The smile leaves her face "of course you can." She takes my hand and leads me through the pack house. When we reach the office she doesn't knock and heads inside. Lincoln and two other men are deep in discussion. "Amelia" I start to say but the men get up and leave without a word.

Lincoln walks over and wraps her in a hug before he turns to me. "I'm sorry Alpha for interrupting your meeting" I say before he can speak. He smiles "first

of all, you and my beautiful mate are never an interruption. Second, please call me Lincoln, Evelyn. We have known each other for years the formality is not necessary.” I nod and we all take a seat. “Eve what’s going on? You seem upset” Amelia asks. “This is a long story so I apologize in advance. Grant was not my first mate. I was mated to a warlock named Theodore. He was wonderful and we accepted each other the day we met. I expected to spend the rest of my life with him. We kept our mating a secret for a month because Theo worried how the coven would treat me as a wolf. We found out that I was pregnant and Theo decided he couldn’t wait any longer to tell his uncle who was the leader of the coven. He kissed me that day and told me he wouldn’t be gone long. A few hours later I felt the bond break and if it wasn’t for my pups I would have given in to death.”

I take a deep breath shaking away the pain of the memory. “Eve” Amelia says my name like a question. “I’m alright, it’s the past and I survived it. Theo is with the goddess and in my heart.” I stare off for a moment before I continue. “I was three months pregnant when Grant visited my pack. He had come to see if his mate was in our pack but I never gathered with the unmated females. I never expected to be given another mate. I was in the dining room when Grant walked in and Sadie said mate in my head. I stood and the minute Grant saw my belly he was pissed. After a long discussion, he assured me that he would accept me and raise my pups. I was so grateful that the goddess gave me a second chance. A man who could love me and my pups after I lost Theo.” Amelia gives me a look of sympathy but I keep going.

“I became Luna and everything was wonderful. Grant was the perfect mate. I went into labor and had two pups. A boy and a girl. They were taken out of the room and I waited for them to be brought back to me but when the door opened, Grant was alone. He looked awful and when the words that the pups had died left his mouth my world crumbled. How could I survive losing Theo and then my pups? I wanted to be dead, but how could I do that to Grant? After all he had done for me. He had loved me and accepted my pups. I couldn’t just let what happened break me. Sadie and I survived in the

knowledge that Grant loved and needed us.” “I’m so sorry for all that you lost” Amelia says and Lincoln nods. I nod and continue. “I believed that was the truth until the night I met Clara.” “What does Clara have to do with any of this” Lincoln asks. “I believe she is one of my pups that Grant gave to a rogue.” Lincoln growls and Amelia comes around the desk wrapping me in her arms.

Lincoln POV

I can't believe what I'm hearing. I have known Grant for years. How could he do such an evil vile thing to his mate and innocent pups? "Evelyn, can you tell us how you know that your pups are still alive and that Clara might be one." I'm not doubting her but I have to protect Clara from any more heartache that this could bring her if it's not true. I have to know that Evelyn is right. "The night we came for the ball, Sadie and I knew she was ours. There is no mistaking the bond that a mother feels with her pup. My visit to an old pack member today gave me the details I didn't know. Grant gave both my pups to a rogue and a witch. He killed the doctor that wouldn't keep his secrets." "Where is this pack member now?" "He left the pack after his mate's death and is now living in the human city. He has a human wife and pups." "How did you get to the city to speak with him Evelyn?" "I told Grant I was going shopping and I had one of the guards take me." I link Michael to come to my office. He arrives a few minutes later.

"Evelyn, what is the address of the pack member?" She looks at me concerned. "The minute that guard returns Grant will use his command to find out details and when that happens the pack member and his family will be in danger." I see remorse on her face. I stand walking around the desk and bend so we are eye to eye. "You did nothing wrong. You needed those answers. We will protect that family and you." Tears roll down her cheeks. "Thank you, Lincoln. Thank you, Amelia" she says. I turn to Michael and hand him the paper with the address on it. "Bring them to the pack and don't take no for an answer. They will be in danger. Assure them that we will keep them and their pups safe." "Yes, Alpha" he says and leaves my office. "Can I see Clara?" I turn and Evelyn is looking at me with hope in her eyes. I walk back and take her hand. "As soon as she returns with Eli we will all sit down and talk." "Come on Eve,

I'll show you to your room" Amelia says. Goddess, I love this woman and I can't imagine doing anything to hurt her or Eli. What kind of monster does that? Once they are gone I link Neal to come to my office. Neal reaches my office and we head downstairs. Once we are outside we shift and head toward the Silver Paw collective. Carter made it sound very important that I come today. After my last meeting I can't even begin to wonder what could be so important.

Eli POV

We reach the city and head to my favorite restaurant inside the hotel my mother and aunt used to work in. My parents have taken Larisa and I here a hundred times. I want to share that with Clara. When I help her out of the car I

can't help but stare for a minute. "You look so beautiful." Her cheeks blush "thank you." The hostess takes us to a table in the back and I pull out her chair. I want this date to be perfect. She deserves everything to be perfect. The waitress takes our drink order and we are alone. "Eli this is wonderful. I can't tell you how much this means to me. I love you." My heart squeezes in my chest. She hasn't said those words to me before. I'm rendered speechless. "Hey tell her you love her back" Silas growls in my head. I smile and look into her beautiful eyes. "I love you so much Clara." The waitress brings our drinks back, interrupting the moment but Clara continues to smile. I love to see her happy. After we finish dinner I take Clara for a walk. We talk about everything and nothing. She is so relaxed and I'm grateful that she finally feels comfortable with me. She will never know another moment like her past as long as I live.

When we're done with our walk we head back toward the hotel. We reach the parking lot and I open the car door. A smile that I've never seen spreads across Clara's face. Her eyes are darker than normal. "What else did you have planned for today Eli?" I'm not sure if it's Cora speaking or Clara but I answer. "There's a sweet shop and a museum that I thought you would enjoy." She steps into my space and her scent is making it very hard for me to focus on the conversation. "Eli I love that you did all this but I swear to you I am ready. I'm not afraid of giving myself to you. I'm not afraid to make you mine." I look into her eyes and this time I'm sure it's Clara speaking. She slides into the seat and I close

the door. I smile at how confident she has become. I still worry about our mating after all she has been through but she isn't the same woman I found in the woods. It's time to listen to my mate and do what she asked. I won't treat her like she is broken or like glass. I slide into the driver seat and take her hand in mine. I pull out and head back toward the pack. "You still owe me another date to the sweet shop." I laugh and pull her hand to my lips. "It's a date."

Carter POV

I get a link from one of the wolves that Lincoln has arrived. I head out onto the porch to meet him. Lincoln and Neal shift after they make it through the trees. I throw them shorts before they join me on the porch. I shake both their hands before we head inside. "Thank you, for coming so quickly Lincoln." "You know that you never have to thank me for coming to meet with you." "I actually called you to come so that you could meet someone." My office door opens and Calliope and Cayden step inside. "Lincoln, this is Calliope, a new member

of my collective and Cayden. Cayden is the one that requested this meeting.” Lincoln turns and comes to stand in front of Cayden. He sticks out his hand and Cayden takes it. “Thank you for coming to meet with me Alpha. I’m sure you’re very busy but I need to find my sister.” “How can I help you with that?” “I believe she is in your pack. Her name is Clara.” A low growl escapes Lincoln and I pray this wasn’t a mistake on my part.