

Betrayed Luna's Second Chance Alphas

Read – Chapter 41-50

– Chapter 41

-Riley-

“Oh, welcome Hiran Waites, to your hell,” Dee said as she kicked him down; He growled again.

“No growling, puppy, puppy,” I said with a dark look in his direction before I turned to Deidre. “How are you here, Dee? I am glad you are here, though.”

“I read your message about Reid not here in the pack, and I knew... There wasn't a reason in this whole world that would stop him from being here for you. So I just assumed this asshole must have done something to him.” She waved the gun at Hiran.

“And you walked in empty handed?”

“Well, not exactly,” she said as she kicked the door open and I laughed when I saw her bow and arrows sitting against the wall. “I had already prepared them in advance, dipping each one in Wolfsbane and keeping them ready in my trunk, just in case I ever needed them. And I had lost four shooting a few of his men. I came here, prepared to shoot him with the arrow, and then, when I saw your gun, and damn, I really, really wanted to shoot him.”

He gripped his bleeding arm. He looked pathetic. Weak. So unlike the arrogant man who preyed on me for years, who used me and my love and took advantage of me. This was who he was, who he had been. This sad excuse for an Alpha.

He couldn't heal properly until the bullet was removed, and he couldn't shift until the wolfsbane was in his system. It left him vulnerable and stripped of his inherent strength. Right now, he was truly helpless.

At that moment, we held his fate in our hands, and that was such a powerful feeling.

“What should we do with him?”

“First we need the antidote, and then we have hours and hours to play. Look at all these vials full of drugs he had brought just for me?!” I pointed to the small vials filled with nasty red liquid. “We will give him everything.”

"No, no," Hiran whimpered.

"GET UP," I said and he shook his head. "I said get up."

He shook his head. "No," he said. A piercing howl of agony escaped his lips, reverberating through the stillness of the night. I smiled, feeling a quiet sense of peacefulness.

It was a sound that carried the weight of his suffering, echoing the depths of his torment. Each note of anguish, laced with desperation, made me happier.

"You are bloodthirsty," Gem said with a shudder. "Even I am afraid of you right now."

"Well, sometimes, you have to be bloodthirsty," I said as I licked my lips before I turned to Hiran.

"You still didn't get up? How about another dose of this? Or how about an arrow through your eye? It won't kill you, I promise. You are not dying yet. You will die after we get all the answers."

"You won't get anything from—"

Deidre shot again, making him flinch back.

"Get up, or the next one goes to your — umm, how about that useless d.ick? Can I do that?" Deidre looked at me and I laughed.

"Of course. He wanted to give me a pup. His pup." I shuddered. "We really have to do it, Dee so that he will never even think of doing anything like that to me again."

"Positive?"

"No, Riley. You are not allowed to do this," he said as he stood up. "No. I will destroy you," he said in a voice that sounded broken from his painful scream.

"Well, not before we destroy you first," Deidre said as she ran her fingers through her blonde hair.

"Okay, let's not do that yet. It will come in handy if he is uncooperative," I said before I looked at him. "Grab that chair and sit, Hiran. Until you do everything I say, your c.ock is safe." He didn't try to resist this time. "Now give me that antidote, and don't play games with me, or I will end your family line."

"The drawer in my study."

"Where is the key?" I growled at him, my eyes flashing and he pulled away as if I truly scared him. Maybe I did.

"In my pant pocket," he said and flinched and bit his lips hard until his lips were bleeding.

"Well, what? You want me to reach into your pocket and grab the key? Take it out and hand it to Dee."

He growled, but again did as he was told.

"Good fu.cking dog."

"And how does the antidote work? Do I have to give it to everyone? Even the kids? How cruel are you?"

"A drop of it on the tongues. And the kids are locked in that orphan house."

"How many hours do they have?" I asked, my heart twisting painfully. I- I couldn't even imagine losing any of them. At least, he hadn't done anything to the kids.

"An hour and a few minutes." The drug was really, really effective. For a second, my body shuddered when I thought of what he could have done to me if Dee hadn't come.

-Riley-

"Oh, welcome Hiran Waites, to your hell," Dee said as she kicked him down; He growled again.

"Go. Wake up Reid and Miller and they will help you," I said to Dee. Our pack was quite small and we only had around sixty-four members, so it wouldn't take too much time.

She ran out, leaving me alone with Hiran. I just realized I was still in my bra. I grabbed a t-shirt and wore it before I turned towards him. "We have a lot of things to talk about, don't we? Let's start from this," I said as I looked at him straight in the eyes. "You know the Lycans sent by the Alpha king... they were the ones who f.ucked me." Technically, it was only one, but he didn't need to know that. "And they were good. Now that I am done gloating, let's get to business."

He growled out in anger as he lunged at me, his eyes flashing. Warring. I knew he felt the same need to resist as I did, but the pain was just too much.

"Stop and sit back on the chair," I said, and he sat down. I walked closer to him and traced the bullet wound on his arm with the empty syringe in my hand.

"Are you my mate?"

“Of course, I am.” His voice came out confident.

“Not the question I asked. Are you really my fated mate, as you have made me believe?”

“I-” he gritted his teeth and g*****d. He pressed his lips, and then finally answered. I gripped his hair.

“Answer me.”

“N-no. No, you are not. “

As his words pierced the air, my anger transformed into a chilling mixture of disbelief and horror. The grip on his hair slackened slightly, my fingers loosening their hold as my mind struggled to process the depth of his betrayal.

I did expect something, but it still made me stumble back.

I felt as if I had been hit by a truck and resuscitated back from death at the same time. It was a feeling that I couldn't explain. It was unimaginable.

“You...what? How did you?” I managed to stammer, my voice barely audible, but laced with a rawness that reflected the disbelief within me.

The world around us blurred, and the weight of his confession pressed upon my chest, threatening to suffocate me.

He wore a smug expression, as if reveling in the power he believed he possessed over me.

He wasn't my fated mate. He had lied, once again. But how did he? I felt the tingle, I felt my wolf stir deep within me. I thought that was how one would sense their mate.

The realization struck me like a bolt of lightning—I had been manipulated, played like a pawn in his cruel game. The bond he claimed was founded upon his own selfish desires, reducing me to nothing more than a possession.

I had never really talked with another mated wolf to ask how they knew when they found their mate. I always assumed it was the tingles, the undeniable sparks that came with every touch, the connection. But was I wrong?

“What did you do to me?” I shouted.

He gritted his teeth. I stabbed the syringe into his bullet wound and he screamed and then pursed his lips, shaking his head.

“Well, let’s try the second dose.” I grabbed the vial and he shook his head. “Tell me then.”

“The club I go to-“

“Ramsay’s club.”

He nodded. “There is a necromancer in that club who does b***d magic.”

“B***d magic?” My eyes widened as I looked at him and he nodded.

“You did some kind of magic to make me believe I am your mate? What kind of twisted, manipulative- Yeah, your kind,” I said as I rubbed my eyes with a wince. My head was pounding. This was too much to take.

It wasn’t just cheating. It was everything. Every moment we shared, every word he said, everything was a lie.

“But how did you get my b***d?” I was burning inside.

“I want to kill him,” Gem hissed, clawing from the inside. She wanted to shift and then maul him until he was unrecognizable.

“I want to do the same. But we still have to find all the answers he has.”

“You donate b***d at Mercy memorial hospital.”

“You stalked me, you found out about me. How long it took you?”

“Two weeks.”

He had stopped even trying to defy me.

“And? What did you mean when you said I wasn’t some weak werewolf?”

“You are- you aren’t just an ordinary werewolf,” he said with a wince. He looked like he wanted to take his words back.

“What do you mean?” I was once again shocked. How much had he hidden from me? So many lies, so many wasted years of twisted manipulation... he wasted my life.

“You had- you are- you have the Alpha b***d.”

I stumbled back from him as my eyes narrowed.

“You are lying,” I hissed. “Why would you lie about that?”

“Only someone from the Alpha bloodline can identify the scent of Alpha b***d, and sense the power. I did. That is why-“

“You made me your Luna. You wanted someone strong to carry on your bloodline, and yet someone who was clueless and naive and stupid. I was the perfect puppet, am I not?”

My voice quivered. He didn’t even hesitate when he nodded to my question.

“But- my old pack... no one ever told me-“

I was an orphan, and I lived never knowing who my parents were. Who were my parents, really? What did I not know about myself? My wolf?

“I don’t know why they didn’t tell you, because your Alpha would have recognized it as soon as you shifted.”

I took a deep breath, overwhelmed by what he had just told me. I ran away the same day I shifted. I didn’t even wait. My Alpha never met me.

“But why would he lie about us?”

“Why didn’t Reid say anything about that to me? Did you do something?”

“I -“

“You used magic, again, didn’t you?”

I didn’t know how the magic worked, but if he could fake a bond, he could do anything. Hiran nodded and I slumped on the bed as I looked at him.

“You are good,” I whispered as I grabbed my head in my hand. “So good.”

He pushed the chair back and stood up, trying to use my moment of weakness. I shot him in his as.s and he bellowed as he whirled around, and snarled. His eyes were fierce. But he could growl all he wanted, and he wasn’t going anywhere.

“Sit back down.”

“You will regret this, Riley.”

“Yeah, I will do it later.”

He was starting to resist more and more and I couldn’t afford to let him go yet. Or ever. I took another dose and stuck the needle to the side of his neck. He whimpered as the medication found its way inside his body, searing him.

"Now, these names-" I grabbed my phone and he paled a little and shook his head.
"Who are they?"

"No, I don't-"

"Do you want the third dose? You might die!"

"They were the members of our pack."

"What did you do to them?"

"They- they -" I narrowed my eyes.

"You sent them to be experimented on, didn't you, you fuc.king, useless excuse for a person. You sold your own pack members for money?" I grabbed his hair in mine and pulled his as I dug my claws into his neck. Gem was done... and I didn't mind it. Everything in me burned in anger.

He growled and shook his head. "Power. Money comes and goes. Power stays."

"And now you are weak, and you are helpless. What happened to your power? Now, I am the one who has the power over you."

"Everything is an illusion, Luna. You will learn it soon enough."

-Unknown creature-

Deep in the woods, the creature prowled. Long, owlsh eyes looked around. It only saw red. It long, bent central incisors were like a small, sharp tusk.

He had a scent.

And now he would go for the hunt.

His senses became alert. His mouth watered, thinking of the b***d. Warm. Sweet.

The air was warm on its mottled skin, filled with dots.

"Find them, or Lord Ramsay will kill us. You don't want to die, do you?"

"It was an abomination. What was Ramsay trying to make?" Another voice said.

"Whatever it was, it wasn't what came out of that experiment. He would have been happier if they had just died."

A voice said. The creature shook his bald head.

No. He would not let his master find him. He was done living in the cages. He had tasted b***d once, and he would not stop again. He need b***d. More b***d. He licked his curved, jagged incisors with his tongue. B***D.

He turned to the other creature standing next to him.

A loud, guttural roar left his lips as he ran... the other creature followed him.

His long bent claw sank in to the chest of one of the two men, and his companion followed his move.

They ripped the hearts out in sync.

The creature roared as he dug his incisors into the man's neck and bit and suck.

The warm taste of b***d made his head spin. For a few minutes, as he drank, everything looked and felt- not so hazy anymore.

Ethan. ETHAN. ETHAN.

The creature blinked as he stopped drinking b***d.

"Ethan. She is crying again. It is your turn to look after her."

The creature roared again as he stood up and hurled the dead body. His companion stood up. And then they both ran deeper into the woods until they were swallowed by darkness.

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– Chapter 42

-Riley-

"Everything is an illusion, Luna. Power is an illusion. You will learn it soon enough." His eyes had transformed into a chilling void, and his voice was devoid of any trace of emotion. It sent shivers down my spine.

Even though I knew he was not in control this time, he still scared me on a deeper, primal level. He was not the easy enemy I had thought he would be. No, after hearing everything he did, I now knew. He was smart, manipulative and he succeeded in hiding it from me for two and half years.

I had always prided myself for being intelligent, but I was just a dumb, lovestruck woman. I was not smart. He was.

"Enough philosophy," I said as I mind-linked Reid, to check whether he was awake or not. He answered after a few seconds.

"I am alright, Riley," he sounded groggy and tired, but he was alright. "And I am going to kill that a*s.hole."

"Get in the line. And Reid, please, bring me ropes infused in Aconitum and silve shackles," I said to him and he agreed. I turned to Hiran.

Hiran shook his head.

"You won't get away with this, Luna. I will make sure of that."

"Hmm, is the drug wearing off?" I said as I took another dose and he winced.

Reid walked in with the rope and shackles I asked for. He lunged at Hiran and wrapped his hand around Hiran's neck. "I told you I would kill you if you ever touched a hair on her head."

"Let him go," I said, and Reid blinked. "I need him. He knows a lot of things. Like how he did b***d magic to make me believe I was truly his mate."

"You did what? Are you insane, you fucker? How are you even my brother? Mom and dad would be ashamed if they were alive now."

"That is what I want to know, too. You are pathetic, you mangy piece of shit."

"Just shackle this a*s.hole to the chair," I said and Reid nodded and did as I asked him. He turned towards me and pulled me into a hug.

"I am sorry, Riley. If I had known about any of this, I wouldn't have- I should have told you about the cheating, too, as soon as I knew."

"I know," I said as I pulled away from him and handed the phone to Reid. "Do you remember any of these names?"

"Wha-"

"I think your brother sold our pack members for experiments. The vampire, Ramsay, the one Roman and Adrian investigating on... your brother is associated with them," I mind-linked Reid and he growled again.

"I- I do remember."

“Carlisle- he is Eddie’s uncle.”

“Eddie’s?” Eddie was eight and he was one of the pups Hiran threatened.

“And this... Mark- Mark was a Delta,” Reid’s face twisted as he turned around to Hiran. “How could you even think about doing this, Hiran? This is-” Reid looked truly heartbroken as he looked at his brother. “You are worst than I thought. I should have fought you for the Alpha position. I thought you would learn to be a good Alpha... It was all my fault.”

“It wasn’t your fault, Reid,” Dee said as she walked in. “Everyone’s up, and Miller is letting them and the kids know what happened. They looked scared and agitated. It is going to be hard and they need both of you. And Reid, no, you are not responsible for his actions. Stop beating up yourself for it.”

Reid looked at her with grateful eyes as she took a step towards him and kissed him on his chin.

“A human? You are not suitable to be an Alpha,” Hiran said with a mocking look.

“Anyone else?” I looked at Reid and his body went rigid as he read further.

“Ethan-“

“Ethan?”

“Ethan Browning.”

My eyes widened as I took a step back. Dee grabbed my shoulder as she looked at Reid.

“Browning?”

“That is- is that Mirabel’s father?” I blinked as I looked at Hiran. “You- you are the reason Mirabel didn’t have a father and a mother?” A tear rolled down my cheek. My heart broke for Mirabel and Eddie and everyone who lost their loved ones because Hiran was just a greedy a*s.hole.

He made them orphans and then he threatened their safety, as well. Gem roared inside me and I wanted to rip him apart, until he was nothing but bones and tattered flesh. My body quivered. “You are- you are a monster. There is a special kind of hell for people like you, and you will burn and then come back to life and then burn again.”

“Riley, we should call Roman or Adrian,” Dee said and I nodded as I swiped the tears away.

"I will make you pay for all of this."

I grabbed my phone and walked out of the room, my body still shaking. I called Roman's number.

"You should come back."

"Riley? Are you okay? What- did he do something to you? Oh, f**k, I shouldn't have left."

"I am fine. Just come. We need to take him in front of the Alpha King council. He- he supplied Ramsay with wolves to do experiments on, and some of them- oh, Rome... one of them was Mirabel's father."

Roman roared and then I heard him telling someone to turn the flight around. I heard Ashelene's voice asking him what happened and Adrian's worried voice, too.

"There is so much to tell you. Just come back."

-Dean-

My body felt heavy. My skin were burning. I was in and out of consciousness, but whenever I came to consciousness, I felt only one thing... the intense, searing heat.

My Lycan... he wasn't there. It was quiet in my head, except the constant beeping around me.

A voice spoke.

I tried to move myself, but I didn't know why I couldn't even move. What the hell were they really doing?

"Have you injected the drug and the vampire b***d into him?" It was Ramsay. I recognized his voice immediately. How the hell did he find out about me? I was very, very cautious.

"No, we are still preparing him. We don't want another failure. We only ever had one success, but I have a good feeling about this one," the second voice said. I hadn't heard this voice before.

"If we succeed... imagine how much we can earn from this."

The second voice sounded excited. "Yes, and that is why this Lycan is our chance to better our experiment. Forget the dead wolves. We will remember only the living ones."

“Yes, and if you give me this, we will go to places. You know how many humans in higher places are already lining up for this... to live for centuries... humans have always been greedy and we have to feed off of that. Even though they are the weaker creatures, they still somehow control the world, too.”

“Yeah, changing the humans directly into a vampire doesn’t work... they don’t have the strength to withstand the vampire bites. It could have been easier, though.”

My eyes narrowed. Experiments. Changing. Bites. Were they trying to create vampires? According to the treaty the supernatural creatures signed, one should not turn a human into anything. No one was allowed to create vampires.

“Yes, but they just turn into a rabid vampire with bloodlust that can’t be satiated,” Ramsay said, his voice a long, frustrated sigh. “You know the ones who are funding us, these are big, big men, with power to sway a million people, the economy, and they don’t want the messy way. They didn’t want to turn into a bunch of bloodthirsty fledgelings that must be trained, then, for a long time, not at all. They want something that allows them to stay human, and still... live longer. This will be a groundbreaking invention, doctor. This will change the future. And anyone who stands before me and this achievement will die. Including Roman Night.”

“You are going to kill-“

I gritted my teeth. No one was going to hurt Roman. I would make sure of that. I had to get the hell out of this place. Even though my head was spinning and my ears were ringing, I knew I could find a way to seek my wolf.

“No, no, not yet. He will be even better incubator, wouldn’t he, for our b***d?”

“Yes, if this Lycan woks, Prince Night would work so much better. But it won’t be easy to catch him.”

“Oh, don’t worry about that, doctor. Okay, I have wasted all your time, go and start what you are going to do.”

I heard shoe steps coming towards me. The doctor, as Ramsay called him, was a tall man, with angular face and gray hair. He was human, too.

“You are awake. Good. You are responding to this more than I hoped you would. The Lycans are the perfect vessels, it seems. It makes sense too. You are stronger, primal and you have immense power.”

The doctor put on his gloves as I growled at him and moved. The shackles dug into my skin. I knew there was no use, but I wanted to get out of it and kill him. My body g*****d in pain. Every bone and muscle hurts.

In the outside world, this fucker would be no match for me, but now... I was the one in chains, and he was looking at me like I was the weaker species. As.shole.

"Now, let's start the experiment." He grabbed a plastic IV bag filled with what looked like b***d. Thick and lumpy and brownish, with a slight green tint. Vampire b***d. A poison to wolves. It wouldn't kill us, but it would hurt our wolves, and quieten them.

Even a little bit would hurt. But this... this would completely bury the wolf, and I would be alive, but... I had a feeling there would be no use being alive after this.

"Let's begin the first phase, Dean, and hope you don't change into... those accidental monsters."

"Monsters?" I whispered. Even though I was scared and angry, I wanted to know. I remember the photographs Roman showed me...and how he told me they would have been Ramsay's mistakes.

Roman was right.

"Yes, a few of the wolves we used as a vessel... they turned into these weird creatures. We have killed them all."

"You are lying. You haven't killed them all. A few escaped, didn't they."

The doctor took a deep breath and he looked frustrated.

"I know things, too. I have been working for a while."

"We will find them soon enough. Now, let's do this."

He connected the IV needle to my vein and started the bag. When the first drop of b***d entered my system, a shrilly, agonized scream left my lips, shaking the whole place.

"NO."

"The pain will stop soon. You heard Ramsay. We are making history. We are going to be the best part of the future."

"I WILL F*****g MURDER YOU." I roared as my body burned from the effect of the b***d.
"I WILL."

!!!

– Chapter 43

-Roman-

“Brother, sit down. You heard her. She is alright,” Ashelene said as she put a hand on my shoulder. My body trembled as I shook my head. I wanted to run back to her and-

I couldn’t imagine a life without her. No, I was already fully in and I did not want to live without Riley, never. My heart pounded as I thought of her soft green eyes that were full of magic, her fiery hair... oh Goddess, I was... I would be truly lost without her.

“Adrian was right. I should have stayed,” I grunted in anger. Karl was agitated and angry, too, and he wanted to run back to her and take her in his arms. I wanted the same. “I was an i***t. I knew Hiran was a psychopath. I shouldn’t have left her alone.”

Adrian sighed and motioned me to sit down. “Rome, stop pacing, and take a deep breath. She is strong, and she said everything was alright. Let’s trust that. Also, it is not wrong for you to want to be there for Dean. He is our friend.”

I nodded as I looked at Adrian. He looked concerned, too, but here he was, comforting me. He always did that for me. He was the anchor to my boat stuck in a storm. Sometimes I did wonder what it would have been if Adrian wasn’t my friend. It was too strange to even think of a life where Adrian wasn’t a part of my life. He had always just been there. Sometimes I took it for granted, though.

“I wish I could teleport to her,” I grumbled as I sat next to Adrian. “And I am sorry for – this.”

“What?” Adrian asked with a confused look in his eyes. “What are you talking about, Rome?”

“I know you are worried about Riley, too, and angry, and yet, here you are, comforting me. You always do things like that for me.”

Adrian laughed as he punched me in my shoulder. “That is half my life, isn’t it?” he said as he shook his head with a smile. “You should probably pay me for it. Being your best friend is a hard job.”

“I did.”

“When did you-“

“Do you remember you are kissing Riley?” I said with a roll of my eyes and he huffed with a grunt. This was the first time I had actually mentioned it and it did feel awkward,

but if there was someone I could share someone as amazing as Riley, it would be Adrian.

“I would love to do more,” he mumbled under his breath, but of course, I heard it. I bared my teeth at him and he shrugged. “Stop growling. We both know you are her first choice, and you will always be.”

My face twisted. Even though I was the one who asked Riley to choose me over Adrian, I still felt guilty for even asking that. I didn’t want to hurt Adrian. He had always had my back... and that was why this was harder for me.

“And do you want that, Ad? No, this is not me trying to be possessive or jealous.” I shook my head, and Adrian ran his fingers through his hair before he looked at me with a nod, and his eyes were understanding.

“This is you trying to be my friend,” he said with a soft sigh. I nodded. “Don’t worry, Rome, I am a big boy and I can take care of myself.”

“But you are my best friend, and I want to take care of you, too.”

He nodded as we sat there in the silence. Ash kept looking at me and then looking away. I had a feeling she wanted to say something, but she didn’t. I was too in my own thoughts to ask her about it.

We finally landed. I told Ashelene, Keller and Feyona to stay right there, and do whatever they wanted. Keller wanted to come, too, but I told him to stay put.

“Roman, I really have to go back,” Feyona said. “Ramsay will start to suspect me and I couldn’t-” She looked worried.

“I can still take them back?” Ash said as she looked at me. “You two go deal with-”

“No, I will go and check to see what was happening there, and then we will go back for Dean. I am going to arrest Hiran, and take him to Red Watchers’ headquarters. He has stopped being useful. Now he is just a fu.cking threat to the woman I-” I stopped and shook my head.

“Woman you love?” Karl said and I almost wanted to asphyxiate, but I didn’t have time for that now. I needed to go to Riley. To be there for her. “Oh, and you know that drunk call... I told her I loved her.” He was as cool as a f.ucking cucumber. Like he hadn’t just dropped a bomb in my head.

“You did what? You f****g, mangy animal with furry a*s-”

“This is why I didn’t tell you. I knew you would freak out.”

“And you are telling me now? When I absolutely have no time to freak out?” I growled at my fu.cking wolf before I turned to Ashelene.

“Just find a hotel and check in. I will be back soon, okay.”

Adrian looked at her. “Stay safe, okay?”

“I know,” she said with a frosty look before she turned to Feyona. “Hell yeah, it is you, my brother’s ex-mate, and you, my brother’s woman’s friend, who used to sleep with her husband. This is going to be one hell of a hotel stay. Come on, then,” she said with a laugh, and walked out with them.

Adrian and I stripped, and then shifted and started running. When we reached the pack, we quickly shifted back and dressed and we ran towards Riley’s room. We both reached Riley’s room.

I saw that she was glaring at Hiran, while Reid was hissing something to Dee.

I ran to Hiran and gripped his neck. “I should have broken more than just your fu.cking nuts,” I growled and Hiran’s eyes widened as he looked at me.

“You- it was you. I will pay you back for that. I will pay all of you back. You will never forget that in your lifetime.” He moved against his shackles and growled at us.

I squeezed him tighter, making him choke. His face went bloodless as he thrashed under my hold. Riley placed a hand on my shoulder. “We still need him.”

I roared as I glared at Hiran. “You are a fool, a fool who doesn’t know the value of this amazing woman. The Moon Goddess made a mistake when she-“

“No, she didn’t,” Riley whispered, and I turned to look at her, confused. Bewildered. What did she mean? Her eyes were clear as she looked into mine and my heart rioted when I realized my stupid wolf had drunkenly confessed to her. “He is not my fated mate. He made me believe that because he wanted someone strong and powerful to be his Luna. And he told me I have Alpha b***d. He, once again, used magic to conceal it.”

Hiran laughed, the sound loud and boisterous.

“And you will always be my Luna, Riley. Kings and queens and knights and princes can’t stop me. They won’t stop me.” He looked straight into my eyes and I shook my head. No way in hell he knew I was a Prince. “Yes, I knew, Prince Roman. I had my doubts, but I confirmed it and Ramsay told me who you are.”

I snarled. Here I was, thinking I was playing him, and he played me in my own game. The fucker was –

My thought was interrupted by a call.

I saw it was my mother. My eyes narrowed as I answered. Hiran's lips pulled up in a knowing smirk.

"Mom? What is it?"

"One of the kids..."

My body went rigid as I let out a soft growl and glared at Hiran. The asshole looked smug.

"Tell me. What happened?"

"Oh, Rome, one of the kids was missing. Roza and Linda put everyone in their bed for the night, but one was missing. They were worried and they came to me. We searched the whole hotel and around Nightshade, too. Your dad is checking the security feeds now. I just called to tell you this. It is chaos here, Rome. I am scared for the little one."

"Mom, what the hell... that place was the safest in New York. How could anyone come in there?"

"What happened?" Riley took a step towards me and I knew she knew. "What happened to my pups?"

Hiran laughed as he looked at Riley, his eyes gloating. "It was going to help me control you if the drugs didn't work properly, but I think we have to negotiate our terms now... Release me and your pup will get back to Nightshade safely... or..."

Riley growled as her fingers trembled. I turned to the phone, as Adrian wrapped his arms around her waist, pulling her against his back.

"You are dead. Dead, Hiran." Riley shook in Adrian's hold as Dee and Reid took a step towards Hiran. Reid shook his head, as Dee punched Hiran in his nose. He simply laughed.

"If I die, the pup will die too," Hiran said in a voice that didn't have a hint of humanity. He was lost. He was mad. "What did I tell you about power, my Luna? It is an illusion. You will forever be trapped. No one can save you."

"Mom, send everyone in the pack to track the kid. Who is it, mom?"

"It is Claire. Oh, she is the sweetest, sassiest little thing. Oh, Rome, I feel so guilty. I-I feel like I have failed Riley."

"No, mom, you didn't fail her. We will find Claire."

“Is it Claire?” Riley looked at me, her big green eyes swimming in tears. I wanted to protect her against every harm in the world, but here I was, once again, failing her.

“Ssh, we will find Claire, Riley. Ssh,” Adrian whispered as her body shook.

I simply stared at her, anger and frustration filling my entire body. I felt useless. I was the most powerful Lycan in this room. I had powers not many had, and I was officially useless here. I couldn’t even hurt this asshole who looked smug as hell, when, in reality, I wanted nothing but to destroy him until he was unrecognizable.

“You will not have me. You will lose this.”

“I have never lost, not even once. I claimed you for life, Riley. I sold my own mate to Ramsay, because she was weak, unlike you. You were my- you are my perfect Luna, and no matter who you fuck, how many of them you fuck, you will always belong to me. Only to me.” Hiran laughed. His eyes were sadistic, satiated. “You will always carry my mark on you.”

Riley ripped out of Adrian’s arms and lunged at Hiran. The chair fell to the ground with a thud. I saw her eyes gleaming. Bright, bright green, mixed with red. It wasn’t her wolf’s eyes. Her wolf’s eyes were only green.

She was still in her human form, but the dark power surrounding her... it wasn’t her wolf’s aura. She was something more. Her canines lengthened as she snarled at him, her voice loud and angry and chilling.

“When my Claire is back, safe and sound– and she will be back... I will come for you, and you will beg for death. I won’t kill you, though.” Her voice was low, dark, dangerous. “I won’t. You will regret ever crossing paths with me.”

Dee gasped as she took a step back, as if she was afraid of her best friend. Reid looked confused, as well. I turned to Adrian and he was looking at me, his mouth half open.

“What is this? This isn’t-” he said through mind-link. I had never seen a wolf have that much power against an Alpha, without even shifting.

“I don’t think she is just an Alpha...” I stared at her as her eyes gleamed. “But what the hell is she?”

!!!

– Chapter 44

-Riley-

Everything in me burned, but it was not painful. It was... like an immense power was unleashed within me. Something wild and uncontrollable. My wolf was strangely quiet, though. It was never empty in my head with Gem there, but now it felt empty.

Just looking at Hiran made me seethe with rage. Adrian's arms were like bands around me, and even though his closeness calmed me down, I knew he couldn't keep me contained.

Something inside me stirred, clawed to be let out. I felt a shudder, as the burning sensation was soon replaced with intense cold. There was a loud ringing in my ears as my vision blurred.

"Gemmy?" I wanted her consolation, I wanted her support, but she was blurry. It felt like she was... far away. She had always been so close to me. I was scared. I was scared of what was happening on the inside as well as on the outside.

He was the reason. And when he looked at me, his eyes were gloating. My rage bubbled. It wanted to come out and destroy, consequences be damned.

"I claimed you for life, Riley. I sold my own mate to Ramsay, because she was weak, unlike you. You were my- you are my perfect Luna, and no matter who you fu.ck, how many of them you fu.ck, you will always belong to me. Only me."

His voice cut through the ringing in my ears.

The audacity of his claim was sickening, his selfishness on full display. My mind raced, trying to comprehend the enormity of his actions, the cruelty he had inflicted not only on me, but also on his fated mate! How could one person be... be this cruel, this heartless?

"I didn't waste two and half years for you to go into the sunset with these Lycan as.sholes."

His words left me utterly baffled, unable to comprehend the depth of his depravity and the twisted reasoning behind his actions.

My mind spun in circles, desperately trying to make sense of the incomprehensible, but it was hard. Everything was fuzzy.

A woman suffered because of me. If Hiran hadn't seen me... but what did he see in me? A woman with Alpha b***d, but who didn't know her own strength. A woman that could be molded into whatever the fu.ck he wanted?

A wave of revulsion washed over me, accompanied by a surge of defiance.

How could he view such manipulation and betrayal as an act of strength? The bond that should have been built on love and trust had been torn apart, replaced by a twisted desire for control and dominance. The rage I felt began to intertwine with a newfound determination, fueling a fire within me and the fire refused to die.

His smug expression only intensified the fury brewing inside me.

He was winning. This was something that went deeper, deeper than I thought it was.

My little Claire... sassy, sweet Claire. How could he do that to her, to me? To all of us, including Mirabel's father and his own mate?

A roar came out from inside me. A roar, unlike Gem's growl. What the hell was happening to me? There was no sound, only the guttural grunts and roars.

Hiran laughed. The thin control left in me snapped.

At that moment, time stood still, encapsulating the intensity of my fury. Everything around me slowed down, everything faded, until I felt the red haze burning through my b***d as I ripped out of Adrian's hold. He stumbled. I lunged down at Hiran, my growl different, even to my ears. Hiran looked like a blur of red and black. His outline was the only thing I saw. And I could smell his b***d pumping through his body.

I blinked and snarled at him. I could feel my teeth growing over my lips, but it felt different. I glared down at Hiran as I punched him in his face.

"You claimed me for life?" I repeated his words, my voice strained with a mixture of incredulity and rage. "You sold your own mate to Ramsay?" The words felt surreal, like a nightmare I couldn't wake up from. I heard the sickening crunch of his jaw breaking.

"Because she was weak, unlike me?" I seethed, my voice trembling with anger as I punched him again and again. My knuckles felt sore. I hoped someone would stop me, because I couldn't stop myself. The darkness wanted to feed... the anger wanted to consume.

My eyes locked with his, burning with an intensity that matched the fiery storm raging within my soul.

And then, just as intensely as the power washed over me, it went away, leaving me weak and trembling. The red and black outline of Hiran became human again.

"I am not yours to claim, or to own," I whispered as I pulled back and looked down at him. He looked mangled. "I will not be reduced to a possession, a prize for your ego, your greed. I am my own person, and I will decide my own fate."

No longer would I allow myself to be manipulated, to be shackled by his distorted ideas and claims.

I stood up, and my fingers trembled.

"I-I am sorry," I whispered, but I didn't know who I was apologizing to.

"I will call doctor Abel," Reid said as he walked out. Dee gave me a look that made me want to bury myself under the ground and never come back. Was she scared of me? I was scared of myself.

I looked at my knuckles. They were bloodied and scraped.

"Gem? Come back? I am scared," I whispered as I took a step back from Dee. I didn't look at the guys. I didn't want to see the look in their eyes.

A small g***n came in response. "Riley..."

"Oh, you are here." I almost sobbed out loud.

"Wha-what happened, Riley? Why did I feel like I was pushed into a vacuum? It was darkness, utter darkness. And you were not there."

"I don't know. I don't know anything."

I blinked as I looked at Dee, my body trembling.

"I didn't know what- why I-" I looked at Hiran and I winced. "I am sorry, I didn't mean- are you scared of m-"

Before I could finish my words, she pulled me into a hug, tightening her arms around me.

"I didn't know what happened. I- everything was red and black and-"

"It is alright, babe, it is alright. You are alright, and that is the only thing that matters. I am not scared of you. I will never be, because I know you will never hurt me, or anyone who doesn't deserve to be hurt."

"Bu-but I did that," I whispered as I pulled away from Dee.

"If you hadn't, I would have," Dee said, her face completely collected now, but I had seen that flash of fear in her eyes. I was glad that she didn't let it get to her.

"Thank you."

“Guys? Stop staring at her and move, maybe? Reassure her? She is scared and you two are like a freaking kid in a circus, watching a double-headed monkey doing tricks,” Dee said with a scoff. “Hello? I am talking to you two dumbheads?”

I smiled a little. She really knew how to comfort me. That was why no one could ever be Dee. There was only one Dee.

“I am the double-headed monkey,” I said under my breath as I finally braved myself to turn around and look at the two Lycans. They still looked baffled and still frozen. They were scared of me. These two powerful Lycans were scared of their little Luna?!

“Riley, it is-” Roman finally broke the silence. The look in his eyes was indecipherable. I wanted to know what he was thinking.

“Guys, get the hell out of your own heads.” Dee clapped her hands together and they both jumped before Roman walked to me and hugged me.

“Finally!” Dee hissed.

“You are alright, Kitten.”

“Rome, what – what happened? Why was I- what was I?”

He pulled back from me as Adrian and Dee joined me.

“We don’t know, but maybe a hybrid, but it is impossible for a hybrid to have both the sides?” Adrian whispered as he rubbed my chilled arm. I was so cold.

“A hybrid between what? I had never seen anything like that,” Roman said, his eyes perplexed.

“You were- you were-“

“Uncontrollable? Rabid?” I said with a wince.

“No, powerful, wild, primal,” he said in a hoarse voice, and my eyes widened as I looked into his eyes. My pulse jumped. The dark look in his eyes... not fear or repulsion. It was I**t. Pure and fierce.

“And he was aroused,” Adrian said without a flicker of emotion in his eyes. “Because we are sick.”

“Were you aroused too, then? I didn’t miss that you said we are sick,” Dee said with an amused chuckle. “I will never understand this dynamic, but as long as you make Riley happy, I will be happy.”

"For a second. I mean, you saw her. Her eyes were glowing and her hair felt like it was caught on fire. She looked-" Adrian paused as he sighed. "Like a fierce goddess." Adrian licked his lips as he pierced me with his eyes filled with I**t, and Roman punched him on his shoulder.

"So you were not scared? You didn't think I was a freak?" I mumbled, still worried.

"Well, if you are a freak, then you are a cool one," Adrian said with a light chuckle. "Isn't she, Rome?" he said as he nudged Roman, who was simply staring at me with those dark brown eyes that made me want to strip naked and submit.

"Hmm..." he mumbled as he bit his lips and I flushed. What the hell was wrong with this Lycan?

"Whatever it is, I like it. I like that he is absolutely wrong for us, yet also right."

Gem looked clear and not so hazy and blurred.

Reid came in with doctor Abel. Nobody talked. Doctor Abel moved towards Hiran, who was still moaning, half conscious.

He started to remove the bullets first, because when the bullets were gone, he would get some of his strength back and with it, the wounds would heal.

"Go. You can go. I will be here," Reid said to me.

"I am sorry, Reid," I said with a guilty look. No matter what, Hiran was his brother and I-I did that to his brother.

"You don't have to be. You have been pulling your punches and you exploded. It happens."

He was wrong. We all knew. It didn't happen, not like this.

I didn't respond.

"I have to sedate him," Doctor Abel looked at me. "Should I, Luna?"

I almost wanted to tell him to let Hiran feel more pain, but I nodded.

"Do whatever you have to, doctor Abel. He has Claire and I get her back only if..." I sighed. Doctor Abel's eyes narrowed in disgust, but he was a doctor, first and foremost. His hands didn't stop what they were doing, even as his eyes turned cold and dark.

"I will do my best, Luna."

"Thank you, Doctor Abel."

We walked out of the room, leaving Reid alone. Dee came out and then stopped.

"Riley... I- I should be with him," she whispered. "I know he hated Hiran, but..."

I shook my head. "Go. He needs you in there."

Dee nodded before she walked back inside. I turned to the two Lycans. "Can you call and ask-ask about Claire?" I said and Roman nodded.

"Come on, you need to rest for a while," Adrian said as he opened the room they were staying in.

"I don't need to rest. I need to know-"

Roman nodded. "I told you, Kitten, we would find her. It was a long day, wasn't it? Go and lie down for a minute or two."

I shook my head. "I don't want to-"

"Kitten, stop being so stubborn. You- you look terrible."

I bared my teeth at him.

"He means... he meant to say you are tired. You still look sexy as hell, Red, and not terrible at all. He just means..." Adrian stumbled over his words, trying to help Roman. I rolled my eyes.

"Yes, Kitten, you know... you always look gorgeous. Now, off to bed, please," Roman whispered as he caressed a finger down my cheek. And I shuddered when I saw his fingers glowing white with his power. It was warm wherever he touched me. Soothing. My eyes grew heavy.

"This will help you sleep."

"Wha-what did you do, you stupid Lycan? Did you just put me to-"

"Magic," he whispered as he pulled me up in his arms. "You need sleep. Go to sleep."

"I am going to murder you when I wa-wa-" I yawned and my eyes grew heavy.

"Sleep tight, Kitten." I felt his lips pressed on my forehead. "And always wake up, Kitten."

"Dream only sweet dreams, Red."

– Chapter 45

-Deidre-

I walked inside to see Reid just standing there, his eyes staring vacantly at his brother. I winced as I looked at Hiran before I turned to Reid. I leaned my head against his shoulder and he looked down at me with a soft smile.

“You alright, Reid?” I said and he shook his head while his arms went around me.

“I am alright, since you are here,” he said with a deep sigh. “Don’t go anywhere, Dee,” he said again, his eyes boring into mine. My heart hitched. I had asked myself a million times if this was... a mistake. But I didn’t know why I couldn’t stop myself from making the same mistake over and over again.

I was usually a decisive person, except when it came to Reid. I had wasted two and half years being indecisive, but even though I am with him now, I have this constant niggling feeling.

“Not going anywhere...” Until you tell me to, I thought and even the thought of it was painful. I just hoped the Goddess — yes, after spending years with wolves, the Goddess had kind of become a part of my life too — wouldn’t choose to hurt me for one of her own children.

“So how are you feeling?” I asked as I rubbed his arms up and down.

“I don’t know how I am supposed to feel. I had threatened to kill him a thousand times, but when I see him like this, something feels... off.”

“He is still your brother,” I sighed with a dejected frown. This was a freaking mess. Hiran was the kind of a*s.hole a man like Reid shouldn’t have as a brother. Reid was the complete opposite of Hiran. He was kind and compassionate and considerate. It was a sick twist that Hiran was his brother.

“I don’t know why he is my brother,” he hissed. His eyes turned dark and I could sense his inner turmoil.

“Mind-link gamma Miller, and ask him to come here. He will stay with that Alpha a*s.hole. And we have to get the hell out.”

“Where? Where are we going? Riley is-“

“Riley has not one but two men who will look after her. And I want to look after you. Come on.”

“What are you going to do?” Reid whispered as I leaned closer to him and inhaled his warm scent. He smelled like summer

mornings. His body went rigid.

“Not here, Deidre. You know I can’t control myself when you do things like that.”

“Like this?” I said as I licked the base of his chin and he jerked away from me with a g***n. He pulled me away from himself, and made me stand at arms length before he turned to doctor Abel.

“Doctor Abel, Miller will be here in a minute. Will you be alright?”

“Yes, the Alph- he is sedated, Beta, and I am just cleaning his wounds. You don’t have to be here,” Doctor Abel said. Before we could walk out and escape from this torture, Miller came in. He looked tired, angry and vengeful. His eyes narrowed into slits as he looked at Hiran, and there was no emotion in his eyes.

“He deserves it for everything he has done to Riley. I can’t- I can’t believe that he was – how was I so blind, Reid?”

“I was just as blind. He was a monster, not just a slimy a*s.hole, and I had never realized that,” Reid said and the two men shared a moment of silence, as if they were mourning everything. Miller slapped Reid on his back and then smiled.

“But I suppose it is for the best. Now that you will be Alpha, I can finally be your Beta.”

“Who said I am going to choose you as my beta?” Reid winked and Miller laughed. They looked so at ease with each other.

“Now go before the Luna kills me.”

“Why would Riley kill you?” I blinked at Miller and he gave me a cheeky grin.

“Oh, I didn’t mean Riley,” he said with a wink, and I flushed. I had never felt... so speechless in my life. In fact, it was hard for anyone to shut me up, but here I am.

“You are an i***t,” Reid said as he grabbed my hand and we walked towards Reid’s room. Even though I knew Miller was only joking, I couldn’t stop the thoughts that filled my mind. No, that was stupid. I was human. No way in hell could I be a Luna to the werewolves. Of course, everyone in this pack already knew me and adored me, but I knew they wouldn’t want a human as their Luna.

“What? You have gone quiet?” Reid said as he looked at me. He closed the door to his room behind him and peered at me with blue eyes that made me want to forget everything. Those eyes were too distracting.

“Nothing.”

“Is it about what Miller said? He is an i***t. Forget about it and come closer and k**s me. You promised to console me, didn’t you?”

“Well, I did.” I walked to where he stood and pushed him down to the bed. He gave me a smile that made my heart thunder. “And I will.”

-Riley-

I was standing barefoot, and my heart was racing. Sweat dripped down my neck, and fear pounded in my pulse. Everything around me was dark and cold, but I wasn’t afraid for myself. I was staring at a glass room in the middle of this cold forest. There was a tiny bed inside the glass room and a little girl slept in it.

-Deidre-

I walked inside to see Reid just standing there, his eyes staring vacantly at his brother. I winced as I looked at Hiran before I turned to Reid. I leaned my head against his shoulder and he looked down at me with a soft smile.

-Daidra-

I walkad insida to saa Raid just standing thara, his ayas staring vacantly at his brothar. I wincad as I lookad at Hiran bafora I turnad to Raid. I laanad my haad against his shouladar and ha lookad down at ma with a soft smila.

“You alright, Raid?” I said and ha shook his haad whila his arms want around ma.

“I am alright, sinca you ara hara,” ha said with a daap sigh. “Don’t go anywhara, Daa,” ha said again, his ayas boring into mina. My haart hitchad. I had askad mysalf a million timas if this was... a mistaka. But I didn’t know why I couldn’t stop mysalf from making tha sama mistaka ovar and ovar again.

I was usually a dacisiva parson, axcapt whan it cama to Raid. I had wastad two and half yaars baing indacisiva, but avan though I am with him now, I hava this constant niggling faaling.

“Not going anywhara...” Until you tall ma to, I thought and avan tha thought of it was painful. I just hopad tha Goddass — yas, aftar spanding yaars with wolvas, tha Goddass

had kind of bacoma a part of my lifa too — wouldn't choosa to hurt ma for ona of har own childran.

"So how ara you faaling?" I askad as I rubbad his arms up and down.

"I don't know how I am supposad to faal. I had thraatanad to kill him a thousand timas, but whan I saa him lika this, something faals... off."

"Ha is still your brothar," I sighad with a dajactad frown. This was a fraaking mass. Hiran was tha kind of a*s.hola a man lika Raid shouldn't hava as a brothar. Raid was tha complata opposita of Hiran. Ha was kind and compassionata and considarata. It was a sick twist that Hiran was his brothar.

"I don't know why ha is my brothar," ha hissad. His ayas turnad dark and I could sansa his innar turmoil.

"Mind-link gamma Millar, and ask him to coma hara. Ha will stay with that Alpha a*s.hola. And wa hava to gat tha hall out."

"Whara? Whara ara wa going? Rilay is—"

"Rilay has not ona but two man who will look aftar har. And I want to look aftar you. Coma on."

"What ara you going to do?" Raid whisparad as I laanad closar to him and inhalad his warm scant. Ha smallad lika summar

mornings. His body want rigid.

"Not hara, Daidra. You know I can't control myself whan you do things lika that."

"Lika this?" I said as I lickad tha basa of his chin and ha jarkad away from ma with a g***n. Ha pullad ma away from himself, and mada ma stand at arms length bafora ha turnad to doctor Abal.

"Doctor Abal, Millar will ba hara in a minuta. Will you ba alright?"

"Yas, tha Alph- ha is sadatad, Bata, and I am just claaning his wounds. You don't hava to ba hara," Doctor Abal said. Bafora wa could walk out and ascapa from this tortura, Millar cama in. Ha lookad tirad, angry and vangaful. His ayas narrowad into slits as ha lookad at Hiran, and thara was no amotion in his ayas.

"Ha dasarvas it for avarything ha has dona to Rilay. I can't- I can't baliava that ha was — how was I so blind, Raid?"

"I was just as blind. Ha was a monstar, not just a slimy a*s.hola, and I had navar raalized that," Raid said and tha two man sharad a momant of silanca, as if thay wara mourning avarything. Millar slappad Raid on his back and than smilad.

"But I supposa it is for tha bast. Now that you will ba Alpha, I can finally ba your Bata."

"Who said I am going to choosa you as my bata?" Raid winkad and Millar laughad. Thay lookad so at aasa with aach othar.

"Now go bafora tha Luna kills ma."

"Why would Rilay kill you?" I blinkad at Millar and ha gava ma a chaaky grin.

"Oh, I didn't maan Rilay," ha said with a wink, and I flushad. I had navar falt... so spaachlass in my lifa. In fact, it was hard for anyona to shut ma up, but hara I am.

"You ara an i***t," Raid said as ha grabbad my hand and wa walkad towards Raid's room. Evan though I know Millar was only joking, I couldn't stop tha thoughts that fillad my mind. No, that was stupid. I was human. No way in hall could I ba a Luna to tha warawolvas. Of coursa, avaryona in this pack alraady know ma and adorad ma, but I know thay wouldn't want a human as thair Luna.

"What? You hava gona quiat?" Raid said as ha lookad at ma. Ha closad tha door to his room bahind him and paarad at ma with blua ayas that mada ma want to forgat avarything. Thosa ayas wara too distracting.

"Nothing."

"Is it about what Millar said? Ha is an i***t. Forgat about it and coma closar and k**s ma. You promisad to consola ma, didn't you?"

"Wall, I did." I walkad to whara ha stood and pushad him down to tha bad. Ha gava ma a smila that mada my haart thundar. "And I will."

-Rilay-

I was standing barafot, and my haart was racing. Swaat drippad down my nack, and faar poundad in my pulsa. Evarything around ma was dark and cold, but I wasn't afraid for myself. I was staring at a glass room in tha middla of this cold forast. Thara was a tiny bad insida tha glass room and a littla girl slapt in it.

I pounded against the glass walls, but the sound was lost. She didn't see me. She kept sobbing into her pillows, as she was counting... one, two, three.

"Come on, look up, look up," I whispered as I stared through the glass. She didn't look up. She kept counting. Five, six. It went on and on.

Someone was coming.

"You have to come. We must leave now. We can't stay here, Claire, baby, wake up. Look at me," I screamed through the glass walls and my voice echoed around me, painfully loud, but she didn't look up.

I heard voices talking to themselves.

"Inject her with-"

"The drug is too potent and she is only a child and-"

"Don't worry," a woman's voice said. "She can take it."

The voices faded as the footsteps neared. I had to get out of here. I couldn't leave Claire here.

I kicked, punched, but the wall never moved, or broke. It was solid.

"Oh Claire," I whispered and she finally looked up. Her eyes were glowing green with red and her hair looked like it was caught on fire. My eyes. My hair.

I blinked, a soft gasp stuck in my throat, and I sat up, panting as I did. It was only a dream, but it felt so vivid. The look in that girl's eyes... Desperate. Broken. That was the kind of look you shouldn't see in a little girl's eyes.

"Riley? Riley?" Adrian said as he looked down at me. "Are you alright, little Red?"

"A bad dream," I said as I gripped my blanket closer to my body, which was still shuddering.

"It is alright, take a deep breath," Gem said in a soft voice.

"Oh, Riley," Adrian said as he sat next to me and looked into my eyes. "What was it about?" His fingers softly ran along my spine. My body relaxed under his touch. "Tell me. Maybe it will help."

"I think it was Claire. She was in a room. She looked different, but... I was trying to save her."

"I am so sorry, Riley, but I promise we will save her."

"But how can you be so sure? He is a -monster, Adrian, and he- he just doesn't know when to stop. After what I did to him, he will surely want to hurt me and I don't- Claire is too little and too young for all of this. Why does he have to use them in this power struggle? It is between him and me."

"He is a cruel, cruel bastard, Riley, and men like him don't think twice about who they are hurting as long as they get what they want," Adrian said in a freezing voice. His face had turned into a dark stormy cloud, and my eyes widened. I had never seen him like that. It was proof of how much he hated Hiran.

"I really, really hate him," I said again as I blinked and looked around, my eyes searching for Roman. Adrian sighed and raked his fingers through his hair.

"Roman just left. He got a call from Finn. So I stayed," his voice was frustrated, his eyes dejected. "Should I ask him to come inside?"

I shook my head.

"Oh Adrian, I really don't want to-"

Adrian stood up and looked at me, his eyes heated. "You said it is not pity. What is it then? Who am I? Should I stop before it hurts me further? What is the point of me staying when he will be the one you always look for when you are happy or sad?"

"Oh... why does it hurt me when I look at him like that? I want to protect him, keep him safe," Gem said. "Even from you, Riley. I hate you right now, because you are the reason for his pain."

I shook my head. "No."

"What am I even doing here, Riley? I should leave," he growled out, looking agitated. He gripped his hair in his hand and I stood up with a sigh and grasped his hand.

"Please don't hurt yourself," I said as he whirled around and stared at me, his eyes piercing straight into my soul. I shuddered. The pain in them was killing me. I wanted to hurt myself for hurting him. The gray eyes had gone completely dark, reminding me of the night skies when the moon was hiding behind the curtain of clouds.

"Everyone was right. I am pathetic."

"No, you are not," I grabbed his hand in mine and stood on my tip-toes. His hot breath caressed my lips. His lips parted and his eyes widened. My body moved closer to him on its own accord. I gripped his hair in my hand as my other hand trailed down his chest. I didn't want to let him go. I couldn't. It was not rational, but I couldn't think. I only wanted to act when he looked at me with those hurt eyes.

It was primal. To never let him feel any hurt. To protect him. To hold him. To always, always make him happy.

Why?

If Roman was the one I would always choose, why did my heart feel heavy when Adrian told me he should leave? What the hell was wrong with me? I hated myself at that moment, but I didn't want Adrian to go.

Why?

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How could I want them both? Why would I?

I had always been someone who wanted ONE man all to myself. But why was this happening to me now?

"Riley..." he growled out, shaking his head. "What the f**k are you-"

"Don't go, Ad. Don't go." My fingers stopped just above his e*****n.

"You will destroy me, Luna," he g*****d as he tangled his fingers into my wild curls and tugged. I m*****d in response. "And I am willing to be destroyed. I am willing to get hurt, to be used..."

My lips parted as his other hand cupped my throat. His fingers in my hair tugged and pulled, eliciting a g***n from me.

"K**s me, Luna. K**s me. Prove to me that I am not pathetic."

"I-"

He tugged at my hair again, making me m**n. It was as if something had changed in him. He looked powerful, dominant. He looked like he wanted to possess me. It was as if a switch was turned on. He pressed against me, and I could feel how hard he was. My h**s jerked forward, meeting his e*****n.

Gem m****d.

"Why does he feel so familiar? Like I have touched him before?"

"It was nothing like what I feel for Roman."

“Yes. When Roman touches you, you feel like you are drowning in a cyclone. When Adrian touches you, you feel like you have just come out of the cyclone, safe and sound.”

“I feel like I would explode when Roman touches me. I feel like my exploded pieces have been put back together when Adrian touches me. Why?”

I kissed him. My lips were slow, reverent. He tasted like safety. Warmth. Happiness. Home. And passion. The same feeling I felt whenever Adrian was touching me increased, until all my agitation, my hesitation, my rage melted away.

Adrian prodded my lips with his tongue before he tangled his tongue with mine. I touched his c*ck and he jerked and then pressed himself firmly against my hand. I cupped him and a long m**n left him, and I ate his m**n like a desperate b.itch that I was.

The door opened. I could already smell Roman’s scent, and I expected him to growl... but nothing like that happened. Even though I knew I should probably move, I didn’t. I gripped Adrian’s c*ck tighter as Roman walked towards us. He went to my back, pulled me against him, as Adrian continued kissing my throat, my chest.

Roman nibbled my earlobe. “Kitten, you bad, bad Kitten. You know you must be punished for this...”

“It was him,” I m****d as Adrian licked my pulse and sucked and my body trembled from the sensation of both their touches. It was too much, too good.

“I want to bite you,” Roman whispered and I g*****d. “I want to mark you.”

The three of us stilled. Adrian pulled back from me. I whirled around and stared at Roman.

Roman’s pupils were dilated as he looked at me. My lips opened in a gasp.

“You- you what?”

-The Creature-

The creature prowled the dark forest with tall, overgrown trees. He didn’t know what he was looking for or where he was going. The one next to him tilted her bald head and sniffed the air.

He growled and grunted. He was hungry. His stomach felt like someone was ripping in two.

Hungry. Hungry. B***d. B***d.

There were no other thoughts in his head, or hers, for that matter.

He looked at his white, dotted skin on his arm, his eyes a sharp slit, when he smelled it. Fresh scent of b***d. His mouth watered as his curved incisors gleamed like steel knives.

He pounced outside of the trees and his wide red eyes blinked. His pupils were only red.

He looked at the human.

The human was a blur of red and black, like a blinking, shadowy red light. The creature only saw the double focused red and black, but he smelled b***d, he smelled the human's fear.

The human turned to run.

With an ear-splitting roar, the creature leaped, and grabbed the human. He incapacitated the human with a single s***h of his long claws. B***d gushed out. Glug. Glug.

"Ethan, Ethan, Mirabel is crying again. Can you please check on her? I am too tired."

He let out a loud roar before his teeth plunged into the human's empty neck. The other creature waited for a minute and he met her eyes and nodded his head, giving her permission.

She sat down on the cold ground and grabbed the human's hand.

B***d was the sweetest. The only thing they both remembered now was b***d. Only b***d. And pain. So much pain.

!!!

Read – Chapter 46

– Chapter 46

-Adrian-

I was going crazy. She was so beautiful and she made me feel things I had never felt before. It was chaos. It was not neat or proper, but I didn't care.

My heart was thundering, my breath was coming out in a sharp gasp. I wanted to k**s her. To do things to her, things I had dreamed of doing.

“K**s me, Red.” My voice came out fierce and desperate. I felt the desperation deep inside. My co.ck was hard, and I wanted her hands around it.

One look from this maddening woman, who looked like she was hiding a world of secrets beneath those beguiling green eyes, I was losing all sense of sanity. And she finally blessed me with what I had been begging for, for so long. A k**s.

This wasn’t a k**s that was meant for hurting Hiran. This was the k**s. This was proof that she wanted me and that was all I needed for now. A part of me would always feel like a second choice, but I just couldn’t give her up. My heart was torn. Somehow, I knew... I had to be with her. I couldn’t not want this. I needed this. Her.

“It tastes like desperation, but I can’t- I feel like I can’t stop, now that we have started,” Clay whispered. “Please... please, make her love you, too.”

“I want that, too. I need that,” I said to my wolf, hoping, praying that a part, at least a small part of Riley, would belong to me. Only to me.

“Adrian...” she m****d my name and my body clenched in response.

All my b***d had gone to my c.ock. I had never been so hard in my life. I wanted her with everything I had.

She tasted like pure pleasure and poison. Clay stirred within me and g*****d darkly. He had been clawing since he saw Riley like that, eyes glowing and red. He wanted her, just as much as I wanted her. When her lips touched mine, I felt like I had finally found the missing piece of the puzzle I had been looking for.

Her lips were soft, slow... my body was melting from her touch. Everywhere she touched me, I burned. I wanted her. I wanted to bury myself inside her and take her in ways I couldn’t explain. That first night... the dreams I had of her... everything felt so vivid as she kissed and killed.

“If I die right now, I will die a happy person,” Clay said with a deep m**n. “But I won’t die. If I die, that i***t Karl will have her all to himself. I can’t let him,” Clay sounded disgusted. I smiled a little. Even though Clay was always fighting with Karl, I knew he would give his life for Karl.

The door opened. I g*****d inside, but didn’t move. I almost expected Roman to punch me in the teeth, but he didn’t. My heart swelled in love. I love him for giving this to me. I knew it was hard for him.

Roman went behind her and pulled her closer to his body. I moved further towards her and sucked Riley's lips between my teeth. "Kitten, you bad, bad Kitten. You know you must be punished for this..."

His voice was soft, breathy.

"It was him," Riley said as I moved down from her lips. Her pulse was throbbing. Her heart was racing. I had a feeling she was enjoying this more than she had thought. Her g****s and grunts were proof of it.

"I want to bite you," Roman whispered and I g*****d. "I want to mark you."

Oh f**k. Riley stilled. I pulled away from her and Roman stopped. I had a feeling that he didn't mean to blurt it out. My eyes widened as I met his. He looked down at his fingers.

"You- you what?" Riley breathed out.

"I didn't mean to-"

"You can't," I said with a sigh. "You will hurt her if you do."

The marking worked in ways that were not always clear. It was divine, lasting. When a mark was made, it would bind two people for eternity, unless it is destroyed.

A marking ceremony involved elders, witches, magic, witnesses, and b***d. It wasn't just a bite. It was a promise of a lifetime. It was just as important as a fated bond.

After a bond was made, and the b***d was shared, and the mark became permanent — it would take a day or two— no other wolf could mark a person, until the mark was removed, which would happen during the rejection ceremony.

It was a long, painful process.

Rejection was not done only with words. "I dash and dash, reject, dash and dash..." No. Rejections were soul-crushing, painful, especially when the bond was fated.

-Adrian-

I was going crazy. She was so beautiful and she made me feel things I had never felt before. It was chaos. It was not neat or proper, but I didn't care.

Rejections would leave both the mates weak and wounded and it would take so many days to heal from the pain of the rejection.

I felt terrible that Riley had to go through that awful pain for someone as useless, and horrible as Hiran. But I would be there for her. Roman would be there, as well.

I had also been doing a lot of research about how two wolves could mark the same person. I didn't know why I was, but I wanted to know.

The marking had to happen at the same time. Everything. The sharing of b***d, the bite, the magic... If Roman marked her first, I could never mark her and I didn't want that.

Roman's eyes flashed and then he nodded. "I know. I won't do that. I won't do anything to hurt her," he said before he bent down and licked the mark Hiran had made. "But I want to wipe this away from your body, and then place mine right there."

I g*****d. It was making me hot to hear him talk like that to her. Instead of making me possessive or jealous, it was making me even harder than I already was. The f.uck is wrong with me?

"You know, you can't mark her before me," I said without blinking, my eyes staring only at Roman. I wanted to see what his first reaction would be.

Riley gasped again.

Roman sighed and nodded.

"Do you want that?" he mind-linked me. I hesitated for only a second, but even before he asked me, I already knew.

"I think I do. I know you are already in love with her, Roman, but I think I am going there, too. I am falling for her."

"Maybe she needs both of us. After what we saw..." Roman shook his head. "It does feel strange, Ad, because she isn't that girl we had during college. Riley is more. But if there is someone in this whole universe I could share her with, it is you. You are amazing. To be honest, you are more suitable for her than me. But I still want her. I still need her."

I chuckled.

"I know you need her. She doesn't need us. She can take care of herself. But we both need her."

"You guys are mind-linking, aren't you? I have always wanted to ask that. But how? I have never seen two Alpha wolves mind-link."

"It is a special link. We are both Alphas, but the mind-link we share came from the bite of the Lycan king, my father," Roman said.

"It also only works because Rome and I are best friends from when we were younger. Usually, it rarely works between two Alphas."

“You guys are lucky. I want to have a mind-link, too. With you. With both of you.”

“Once we go back to NY...” Roman started.

“When will we leave? You got a phone call, right? Who called? Anything about Claire?” Riley whispered and Roman nodded.

“We will leave tomorrow,” Roman said and Riley blinked. “We will allow Hiran to heal tonight, and then take him to NY and present him in front of the Red Watchers.”

“But Claire... they wouldn’t let her go if we don’t let him go. She can’t- they can’t have her.”

“The call I got was from Finn. My father found the security feed and they got the picture of the person who took Claire. One of Ramsay’s lackeys. The NY police are tracking her. Also some of the best warriors and trackers from Nightshade, and Darkwater are already looking for Claire all over the city. The cops are pulling the traffic camera feeds to track the person and his black SUV. Finn is sure they will find her before nightfall.”

“Darkwater?”

“That is my dad’s pack, little Red,” I said.

My dad wanted me to take over the pack when I was twenty, but I loved doing what I did. So I told him that he should be the Alpha a bit longer, and then should hand the pack to Bella. She would be a better Alpha. I loved my life as it already was.

She blinked and sighed as she leaned against Roman, her eyes wide and grateful.

“I don’t know how to thank you, both of you.”

“How about...” I trailed off as I moved closer to her again. Riley g*****d as Roman bent down and kissed her on her chin. I bent to the other side of her neck and pressed my teeth against her pulse.

(Sexy times. Not full on. If you don’t like MxFxM... you can skip and read just the last part.)

(Sexy times. Not full on. If you don’t like MxFxM... you can skip and read just the last part.)

She let out a loud m**n when I sucked her right on her pulse. Her skin was soft, and it tasted like honey.

“What the hell is happening to me? This isn’t- oh...” she stopped when I softly bit on her pulse point and g*****d. Roman’s hand went to the side of her breast. She grabbed my hand in hers and pushed it against her other breast, arching into my hand.

Her nip.ples were hard, and almost poked through her t-shirt.

I cupped her soft, magnificent breast that looked teasingly exposed in her old, ratty t-shirt.

She was tempting. She was splendid. She was an addiction.

My fingers tingled as I kneaded her breast, moaning as I did. My body was reacting violently to her touch.

I pulled the side of her t-shirt down and my lips parted in a soft gasp. She was wearing a lacy bra that did nothing to hide her round breasts. Roman growled under his breath and ripped her t-shirt off.

“You are always ripping my clothes, Roman,” she m****d.

My breathing hitched. I licked my lips as my greedy, wanton eyes traced her breasts. Her n*****s were pressed against the lace and my throat went dry and my co.ck became impossibly harder.

I wondered if I might explode from the pressure building inside me.

As I watched, Roman pressed a finger against her nip.ple. I m****d as my c*ck jerked in response.

Riley threw her head back, her fiery hair falling down her back in ringlets, her eyes half closed. She was flushed.

And then Roman bent down and bit the swell of her breast over the lace, enticing a loud, wild m**n from her parted lips. My fingers went to my e*****n as I bent down and bit her h*p. She was curvy, beautiful and I loved touching her, tasting her.

“Take her pants off,” Roman ordered in a growl before going back to suckle her ni.pples.

Clay growled in my head, loud, frenzied.

She was so beautiful and he wanted her. All of her. I did, too.

I quickly pulled her pants down and breathed her arousal. My mouth watered. I wanted to drink her until I wasn't so thirsty anymore.

"Oh, damn, Goddess... She smells delicious. Let me have a bite of her," Clay said with a deep throaty g***n, and I had to agree with my wolf.

"Adrian," she g*****d my name out when my fingers played with the edge of her panties. She moved to seek my fingers. My horny little Red.

"Should I rip it or remove it, Red?"

"The f**k. Do anything. Just get rid of it," Roman grunted as his hand moved down her a*s and squeezed.

I ripped it off, and saw that she was already so wet, she was dripping from the sides of her thighs. I was hungry for her.

I leaned closer and licked her juice from the side of her thigh and she jerked and growled as her hands buried inside my hair, keeping me in place. Her pull was not soft, either, but I loved how rough she was, how uncontained.

She was delicious, she was like an addictive drug, and she made me feel high. So high.

There was something about her, something that I couldn't put my fingers on. It called to my b***d. It made my body sing.

I had my fair share of one-night-stands, and girlfriends, but Riley was different.

s*x was s*x before. s*x was never a curiosity. Never l**t and need and attraction. Never addiction, obsession, love...

I shouldn't have lost the game, because I knew the stakes were higher in this game. But I just couldn't stop. I couldn't stop falling, even if the fall might hurt me, break me, kill me.

This was everything and more. She was.

"Oh, Adrian..." She g*****d. "Rome..."

"Should I eat you, little Luna?" I whispered and blew into her p*ssy. She quivered, and a loud, erotic g***n left her lips.

"This is so wrong..." she m****d even as her hand dragged me towards her dripping p*ssy. I poked my tongue out and licked her cli.t, and both Riley and Roman growled together.

“But it feels so right to me, little Red.”

– Chapter 47

-Riley-

(You can skip. The sexy part. Just read Finn’s pov)

Breathe. I had to remind myself to breathe. My body felt like it was going to explode from all of the sensations rushing inside me. It was overwhelming.

I had never felt such intense pleasure. My body was on fire and I couldn’t get enough of them.

They were teasing me into submission with their mouths, hands, and tongues. It was so wrong, but it just felt so fu.cking right. Gem was thrashing inside me. She wanted to be me right now, poor wolf.

“You smug son of a gun,” she said with a huff.

Adrian took his time licking my p*ssy and sucking my cl.it. Goddess. I had never had such vivid feelings with Hiran. This was different. The guy really knew what he was doing.

Roman kept rubbing me and sucking my skin, marking me in different ways, his eyes wild, and just looking at him like that, like a warrior... it was enough to make anyone lose control and c*m.

I felt like I was in heaven.

“Adrian... Oh...”

My p***y clenched tight around his tongue, but he didn’t stop. His strong hands grabbed my h**s and pulled me back against him. Every thrust of his tongue made me m**n with pleasure.

“I’m going to c*m,” I said between heavy breaths.

“Not yet, Little Red,” Adrian mumbled.

Roman kneaded my breast as Adrian kept eating me like I was the most delicious thing on Earth. I m****d again as I felt my o****m build within me. I squirmed away. I couldn’t take this. This was too much.

His mouth moved from my p***y to my clit, lapping at it as he tongue-f****d me with long, powerful strokes.

“Come for us, baby,” Roman whispered in my ear. “We want you to c*m. I want to see your face as you cum.” His voice was dark, addicting and how could I... say no? I whimpered.

“Rome.. I-I feel like....”

“Don’t you want to let go?” Roman nibbled my ear before he grabbed my hand and pushed it against his c*ck. “Can you feel how hard you are making me, Kitten?”

I nodded and a soft mewl left my lips. I began to pump him, but he pushed my hand away with a g***n. “Not now, Kitten. Tonight is your night. Also, I don’t want my c*ck out anywhere near this idi.ot. No way in hell.”

I chuckled. Adrian grunted, but he barely moved.

“Now, scream for me, Kitten. Come on.”

Adrian gripped my a*s and pulled me closer to his face.

I screamed as I reached my first o****m of the night, clenching tight around Adrian’s tongue.

I arched my back as I gasped for breath. I had never experienced anything like this before. My mind and body were suddenly soaring beyond what they knew. It was an experience of a lifetime... and after feeling this, I knew I could never go back to normal, or below average, which was what I had known with Hiran.

Adrian stood up, looking pleased. He stroked my hair, and kissed my cheek. “That’s it, little Luna. You are a good girl, aren’t you?”

“Mmmm...” I m****d as I closed my eyes. I felt like I had just run a marathon, but the desire inside me was still burning. It was so weird.

Roman pushed Adrian away before taking me in his arms. I leaned back against him as he wrapped his muscular arm around me and held me close. He nuzzled my neck, kissing it gently while his fingers went to my wet p***y. . I closed my eyes to enjoy the sensation.

“Gem is calling me a greedy b***h. I think I really am,” I whispered as Roman started to pump his fingers inside me.

Adrian buried his head between my breasts, sucking each nipple slowly. As he did, he caressed my neck and shoulders with his other hand. I dug my fingernails into his biceps and enjoyed Roman's finger inside me.

"Don't stop," I whispered.

Roman chuckled from behind me. "I have no intention of stopping, little Kitten." He sounded amused as he rubbed a thumb across my clit and then brushed his finger tip across his lips. I whimpered as I felt my body tingle with pleasure once again.

To see him tasting me like that... it was just too much.

A low growl escaped his throat. "You taste so fu.cking sexy, Kitten. You drive me crazy."

"Me too," Adrian whispered as he tugged at my hair, making me tilt my head, before he kissed my throat.

I grabbed his a*s and pulled him closer. I ground myself against him, as Roman rubbed himself against my a*s.

"Oh God, yes. Please. More." The sounds from my lips were strange even to me. Gem huffed, resigned. She knew I wasn't ready to stop, yet.

Adrian pinched my nipples harder. I felt the burn of pain and the warmth of pleasure. I m****d loudly. "Please."

"Let me take you to bed," Roman whispered as he reached down, gripped my h**s, and picked me up. I wrapped my legs around his waist as he carried me to the bed. He laid me on my back, and then he pulled out his handcuffs. I m****d and Adrian's eyes twinkled with amusement.

"That looks like fun." Adrian's eyes caressed my body.

Both their eyes were dark like moonless nights. "You are helpless, my Kitten," Roman said and I smiled.

"I don't know. I feel so powerful."

Adrian laughed softly. "You are powerful, little Luna."

Roman kissed my stomach before he reached my abdomen. My h**s jerked upward, trying to find his tongue.

I heard Adrian laughing at my desperation, as he walked behind me.

I grunted. "Stop laughing."

He reached around and cupped my breasts, squeezing them. I m****d as he rolled my n*****s between his fingers.

“Stop teasing me,” I begged as a soft, pathetic whimper left my lips. I thrashed against the handcuffs. The metal was cold on my heated body.

Roman flicked his tongue over my wet core, causing me to cry out in pleasure. Adrian thrust his tongue between my parted lips. We kissed, tongues dancing together as Roman continued to lick me.

“Oh God, yes,” I breathed. “More.”

He slid two fingers inside me and curled them upward. I bit my l*p to stifle a scream as the o****m began to build. I felt the familiar tightening in my stomach and knew I was seconds away from exploding. I wanted my hand on them, but even the desperation was addicting.

“Faster,” I demanded.

I felt Adrian’s fingers pressing against my lips. I opened my mouth and he pushed his finger inside. I tasted myself on his fingers as he began pumping them in and out of my mouth. I sucked them greedily, wanting more.

“Come for me, Kitten, again and again,” Roman whispered against my cheek. “We want to see you come again.”

My o****m hit me hard. My body tensed tightly as I rode out the wave. I felt like I had died and gone to heaven. Or maybe this was hell.

When it passed, I felt weak. It was like I was floating in space. I looked up into my Lycans’s faces, seeing them watching me intently. They seemed to have come alive. My heart pounded in my chest.

MY LYCANS. It still sounded so strange, but... I like the sound and smell and taste of it.

-Finn-

My phone rang. “Captain Matthews, did you find anything?”

“Yes, my detectives found the SUV. I have set up a roadblock around the area, and they will find the girl. I am sending you the GPS coordinates.”

“Thank you, Captain. We will never forget all your help in this case.”

"Of course. She is still a little girl, and no cop would stand on the sidelines and watch when something bad happens. We know this is between the supernaturals and you have your own laws, but we are cops, and we will always be there when someone is suffering. And we are still looking for Dean Turner. I will call you if I have more information on him."

"Thank you, Captain Matthews. I will go to the location and wait with the cops," I said as my phone pinged again with the GPS coordinates. I turned the car around and gunned the car through the long streets.

"Wait for me, little girl," I muttered to myself.

I wished I could just abandon my car and shift and run. That would be faster. But unfortunately, even though most humans knew about Lycans and vampires and other supernatural creatures, they were still not ready to see a furry man running through the streets on two legs, with claws and canines. Nope. That would cause more chaos.

"And that vampire a*s.hole, what are we going to do to him?" My Lycan growled.

"Calm down, Axel. Do not do anything impulsive. We have to arrest him and bring him in front of the Red watchers."

"Boring. I would rather skin him alive."

I chuckled as I finally reached the place. A few of the cops standing by the checkpoint walked towards me.

"Captain Matthews informed us you are coming."

"Any sign of the SUV?" I said at the exact same time I saw a car swiveling around. The bastard was trying to run. I jumped on top of the long line of cars that was behind the checkpoint.

f**k. I really wanted to shift now.

The cops started to run towards the fleeing car, as a few of them went to their transceiver.

"The perpetrator is attempting to get away from the blockade. SUV. License plate number BLU-6364. The driver has a little girl with him inside the car. Be careful while chasing."

I growled as I ran up the line of cars. People shouted at me. I didn't care. I had no time to ask for forgiveness. The girl needed me right now. I stopped by the last car, jumped and motioned the driver to come outside.

"I need your vehicle."

"But-but-"

"I am with the police. The man who ran away just kidnapped a little girl. Do you have a daughter?"

He nodded and quickly stepped out of the car.

"Tell your name to one of the cops. I will return your vehicle, okay?" I said to him before I jumped into the driver's seat, my focus only on the car that was bustling through the busy traffic.

One of the cops joined me in the passenger seat, and he placed a siren on top of the car. That would be helpful. I nodded and revved the engine, feeling the power surge beneath me.

The girl will be safe in her bed tonight. And that fuc.ker will rot in prison.

"I am Mark," the cop said, clutching to his radio, as the car screeched onto the road, tires burning rubber as it accelerated. The sirens blared as I maneuvered the car through the heavy traffic, my eyes fixed on the road ahead, following the SUV's movement. More sirens joined our car. Backup. Yes.

"He's heading towards the highway! We need to catch up!" Mark said and I nodded.

"I wish I could just shift," I muttered under my breath as I pushed the accelerator. The car was, thankfully, not an old piece of crap.

The cop next to me twitched nervously in his seat.

Adrenaline coursed through my veins. I couldn't lose him.

The black SUV swerved through traffic, leaving chaos in its wake. Sounds of metal colliding and screams filled the scene. I knew Mark was right. If he reached the highway it would be hard to catch him. And he would put lives at risk.

My eyes were fixed on the SUV as I pushed harder and I breathed a sigh of relief when a patrol car joined on the other side.

"The vampire is going down," Mark said as he talked into his radio.

"Hang in there, kid," I whispered. My heart pounded in my chest as I accelerated, and the wind rushed through the open windows.

Soon, I was closer as the other cop cars joined us. The fucker had no way to escape.

I bumped the SUV with my car.

"Do you see the girl?" I asked Mark.

"Yes."

"Good," I said as I braked the car and jumped out of it, motioning Mark to grab the steering wheel.

I jumped on top of the SUV, landing with a loud thud.

"Do your thing, Axel," I said, and I could soon see claws forming.

I punched through the top of the SUV and I heard metal ripping. I winced from pain as metal cut through my skin. I gripped the driver by his neck. "Stop the f*****g car, or you will die a very, very cruel death." I pushed my claws into his neck.

He screamed in pain.

"I SAID STOP."

The girl looked at me from her seat, and her lips trembled.

"Don't worry, pup. You will be home soon."

"I want- I want Riley. This bad man is a jerk," the girl said as she slammed the toy truck into the vampire's head. I laughed a little as the car swerved and slowed down as she slammed the truck once again into his nose. He screamed as b***d oozed from his broken nose.

I jumped down and ripped the car door before pulling Claire out of the passenger seat. She clung to me and I sighed.

"You are safe."

The cops surrounded the SUV and they pulled the vampire out. He growled and roared and flashed his fangs.

"Mark, here, inject him with this." I handed Mark the syringe full of drugs to knock-out the b***d-sucker. Soon he was unconscious.

"Throw him in the backseat of my car, please. I am taking him to hell," I said to Mark. Two cops pushed him into the backseat of the car.

"Do you want me to join you?" Mark asked me.

“No, we are fine. Thank you for all your help. Tell Captain Matthews I will come to the precinct later to file the report and pick up my car and return this one.”

Mark and the other cops nodded as I started the car.

“Let’s get you home.”

“I want ice cream,” she huffed and crossed her arms.

“You get to eat all the ice cream.”

!!!

– Chapter 48

-Riley-

The phone rang in the quietness of our room. Adrian and Roman looked at me and then at each other before Roman stood up. I pulled my blanket up, suddenly awkward, but fully, fully satiated. I had never felt so good after s*x, and this wasn’t really s*x, either.

“Yeah? You are shy now after everything you did?” Gem said with a roll of her eyes. “Why find an umbrella after you are completely soaked to your fu.cking bones?”

“You talk too much, Gemmy, too much. I think you are just jealous.”

“Who is it?” Adrian asked as he rolled out of the bed, following Roman.

“Finn,” Roman said. He answered the call and he smiled. “Thank Goddess, Finn. That is great. Is she alright?”

He hung up before turning to me. “Claire is alright. She is currently being pampered by my mother, father and Finn. I am going to call Ashelene. We will leave tomorrow, early in the morning, okay?”

I nodded. I couldn’t wait to finally get Hiran out of my life. I already felt so good about this. It would be the end of my trouble or I hoped so.

“I will go and check with doctor Abel,” Adrian said as he walked out.

“Sleep tight, Kitten.”

“Roman... is this bad?” I whispered as I bit my lips.

Roman stopped and gave me a soft look.

"I thought it would be, Kitten, to share you with anyone, but..." He shrugged and didn't say anything but his eyes spoke volume. He crossed to where I was sitting and took my hand in his. "We are going to be alright, Kitten. You are going to be alright. We will figure this all out together, okay?"

I nodded. "About what happened with Hiran, Roman... I- I felt-" I didn't know how to exactly explain it to him. "My wolf was completely gone when that happened. I saw red, like... literally red. It wasn't just the anger. Hiran was a red, blurry mess. Gem said she didn't know what happened when she came back. She told me she felt like she was locked in a dark cage. When I did that to Hiran, my wolf was gone..."

I tried as much as I could to explain it to Roman. Roman nodded as he ran his finger through his hair.

"It is strange. I have seen things, but never anything like that. I don't know what you are, Riley, but I promise we will find the answers, okay?"

I nodded as he motioned me to lie down. I did and closed my eyes.

"I can't wait for tomorrow."

"I can't, too, Kitten. It is going to be so good," he said as he looked at me for a second. "Riley..."

"Yes, Roman?" I looked at him and he hesitated. He looked like he wanted to say something more, but he didn't.

"Nothing. Good night."

(Next day)

Hiran grunted and growled, thrashing against his shackles as Roman drove through the narrow roads.

I leaned my head against Adrian's shoulder as I looked at Hiran with a smirk.

"You have to answer for this, Riley. You are not going to succeed."

"I think I already succeeded," I said without taking my head off from Adrian's shoulder. I looked up at him and he gave me a smile.

He looked content and I felt content.

We soon arrived at the front of the tiny airport where we parked and walked inside. Ashelene, Keller and Feyona were already waiting there.

"Now that he is going with you to NY, I think it is safe for me to stay here?" Keller looked at Roman and Roman nodded.

"Of course. He won't bother you again."

"Keller, you sh.it, how could you do this to me? How could you-"

Keller waved his hand and cut him off. "I don't have time to talk with you. I don't want to waste my breath talking to you," he said to Hiran before he turned towards me. "And Riley, I know I still don't deserve your forgiveness or your friendship, but I promise I will do whatever it takes to help you."

"Thanks, Keller, bye. You can stay in the pack house with Reid and Dee. Everything is changing in the pack and I am sure Reid could use your help."

"Is Reid the new Alpha?"

"Yes, he is, now that Hiran is done for," I said and Hiran growled and bared his teeth at me.

"Reid will never be the Alpha. I will come back for what is rightfully mine. You and the pack. You both belong to me."

"Well, you can't come back from death," I shrugged as Roman dragged Hiran towards the plane and pushed him inside. Adrian and I followed. "And neither the pack nor I belong to you."

"You will be free by evening, Little Red," Adrian said, and I smiled a little.

"I can't wait to get rid of the mark," I said as I scratched it with my finger. It felt ugly on my skin, like an unwanted burden.

"Soon," Roman said as Ashelene stood up.

"I have a headache. I am going to sleep. Wake me when we reach NY," she said before she walked away.

"You alright, Ash?" Roman asked and she nodded and gave him a smile with a shrug.

"Why wouldn't I be? I am perfectly alright," she said, but I had a feeling she was lying. She walked into the small cabin and I followed her.

"Ash?"

“Riley?” she said. This whole trip was weird. Ashelene had always been so fun, and she was someone who had intense energy. But she looked drained, as if someone had sucked the energy out of her. “Come in.”

“Hey, Ash, really? Are you okay?”

She looked at me for a second, and her eyes narrowed into slits. She rubbed her temples and sighed, looking frustrated.

“I am okay. Don’t worry about it.”

“You don’t look like yourself.”

“How long have you known me? A day? You know nothing about me, Riley,” she said and I blinked as I winced. I looked at her with a sigh. Of course, I hadn’t known her for a long time, but... I still knew this wasn’t the Ash who sent me a skimpy outfit to thank her brother.

“Is it me? Did I do something wrong? Did I offend you in some way?” I said as I looked at her. I didn’t know why it hurt me to see her like this, but it did.

She sighed.

“I am sorry, Riley. s**t, I shouldn’t have said that. I am sorry for being a b***h. It is just that... Everything is too much and I feel like I am standing on top of a land mine that is going to explode any moment now. I hate feeling like this,” she said as she buried her face into her palms.

“I am sorry, Ash, if I did do something wrong.”

“It is not you. It is me, and-” She sighed and shook her head. “And I am worried about Dean. It is all stressing me out.”

“I will leave you alone.”

I walked out, but I had a feeling something had shifted, and this tension I was feeling right now wasn’t imagined. It felt real.

“I have to find out what is wrong with Ashelene.”

“You are just a glutton for punishment, aren’t you? Leave her the f**k alone. You are not responsible for everyone’s trouble.”

“But she is Roman’s sister and that makes her... my sister.”

-Dean-

I felt like I was cloaked in mist. Everything was indistinct. Thoughts. Sounds. Feelings.

Memories came and went, days stretched. I didn't know whether I was here for a day or years. I didn't know anything except this searing agony that just wouldn't stop, and the sounds of the beeps and the drip of the b***d that went into my system. Vampire b***d.

I knew that much. Pain was constant. Even though the doctor said the pain would go away, it never did.

There were hundreds of tiny pin pricks from needles along my arms and the back of my hands. Every part of my skin hurts. Death would have been easier.

I kept praying for death.

I was moved from the first place to some other location. They knocked me out before they transported me. I vaguely remember the horns, but nothing else.

Life had never been so quiet. My Lycan Wolf had completely left me. Without his voice in my head, I felt even more lost. Alone. And my hope was completely destroyed when they brought me to this secret location.

"How is he doing, doctor?"

Everyone called him doctor. He was human, and he was the one in charge of this hospital. No, it wasn't a hospital. It was a prison laboratory and the animals locked in glass cages were guinea pigs. I was one of the guinea pigs.

The smell of antiseptic and b***d was the most potent smell in this place.

Outside the glass walls, I could see equipment, what looked like human-shaped chambers –I had no idea what they were going to do with those– vials of chemicals, a big lab set up, and refrigerators that reached the ceiling. The whole place was high-end, with cutting-edge technology and equipment.

I licked my dry, peeled lips as Ramsay, the doctor and a woman appeared in front of my glass cage. I moved against the shackle, thrashing. But of course, nothing happened.

"He is doing so much better than I had anticipated. I can almost taste our victory. The other wolves were doing good, Ramsay," the doctor said.

The woman nodded with a chuckle. This was the first time I had seen her. I tried to see through the blurriness in my eyes. If I escaped this prison, I needed to remember the faces.

She looked older than Ramsay. I couldn't sense whether she was a human or more, now that my Lycan had completely disappeared. I had lost all my wolf senses.

She looked like she was in her early forties. Tall. Her red hair was pulled up in a tight bun. And she looked rich. There was something about the way she stood. She looked like she was born into wealth and power.

"Miss Andreas, I am so glad you could finally come back."

"It is Nadia, doctor. And I am glad to be back here, too, even though the last time I was here didn't have a happy ending." The woman's voice turned hard. "No, it was a bad ending. Very bad."

"We are still sorry that happened. Nobody even thought-" the doctor said, his voice filled with shame.

"I still couldn't wrap my mind around how... how he could have escaped from something so secure. He took her with him. That shouldn't have happened. I spilled my own sweat and b***d for that experiment and they lost it. They lost her."

"But Nadia, we never anticipated any of that. It was unfortunate."

"And because of that, it took us another sixteen years. Nothing came closer to the perfect specimen. We have wasted Sixteen years."

The woman sounded angry. "She was perfect. She was everything I had ever wanted. I sacrificed a lot for that, for her," the woman said with a growl. "It was all for nothing."

"Yes, but we are closer to our dreams now. This time, there won't be any mistakes. This time, no one is escaping, and we are winning. We need you here now, Nadia."

"Yes, Ramsay. I am here. I am not going anywhere until I see the result of this. And I need to see this soon." The woman walked away, her heels making soft clicks on the white floor.

"Nadia will lose it if we fail again," Ramsay said with a hiss. "Failing is not an option this time)

"I know. And I won't fail. Dean Turner is our turning point."

"If you succeed, I will bring you better incubators, doctor." Ramsay's voice was sinister.

"Like Roman Night?" the doctor said with a chuckle.

“Yes. Him. I will leave you to your work, doctor,” Ramsay left after a second of staring at me and enjoying my pathetic state. The doctor waited for a few minutes, tapping at the glass walls, humming a strange song under his breath.

The woods eats the woman and dumps her honey-body in the mud

Her dress floats down the well

His voice was low, dark, creepy. I heard the door sliding open and he walked in still singing under his breath.

And it assumes the shape of the body of a Little girl

He gave me a smile as he stopped in front of me. “Hello, Dean, how are you doing today? Do you want to become more?”

I wanted to scream, growl, but my voice came out weak, frail. “You will not succeed.”

!!!

– Chapter 49

-Riley-

The car ride was silent. Feyona had hired her own ride because she wanted to be discreet.

I stared out the windows, watching the bustling traffic. Everything looked vibrant here. I had never been to a city in my life. When Hiran had to go for business trips, which I was now sure were nothing but f*cking trips, I was stuck at my pack taking care of everything.

Of course, I loved being there for them, being a part of the pack, because before Crystal Park, my old pack had not been much of a home to me. It was like a guest house where all the guests were cold and aloof.

“I need to call Maria. I forgot to tell her that I wouldn’t be coming in today. First day of work, too!” I said with a frown as I grabbed my phone. “This ba.stard is always spoiling my dreams.” I slapped Hiran against his back and he whirled around and glared. “Yeah, you can’t touch a single strand of my hair now.”

“Little Red.” Adrian smirked. “You are getting audacious,” he said with a shake of his head.

“Well, I was getting tired of all the shi.t he had done to me. I can’t wait to get rid of this a*s.hole.”

I dialed Maria’s number and she picked up. “Is everything alright? I tried calling you when you were a no show.”

“I am alright, but it is a long story. Dee will tell you the details, but I am now in NY, and going straight to the King’s council to reject the bas.tard.”

Maria sighed. “Oh, Riley. I hope you will be alright. Will it hurt?”

“I have heard that it hurts so damn much, like someone is ripping your soul in two, like someone is tearing your skin apart. But I am ready to take the pain, to take whatever. Bearing his mark on my body feels disgusting.”

“Take care, Riley, and you know, it is what I have always said, but my door is always open to you.”

“I know, Maria, and I am grateful for that. I do want to learn more from you. I loved it when I first started training with you. Baking relaxes me. It made me feel like I had a purpose.”

“And you were a natural. It was such a waste that you had to quit.”

“Because I thought I was being a good mate, a dutiful Luna. I sacrificed myself, my passion for Hiran, and that is something I would never do, not for anyone, ever again.” I closed my eyes with a deep sigh.

“You don’t have to, Kitten,” Roman said as he turned to look at me. “After today, the sky is your only limit. Do whatever you want to do, go wherever you want to go.”

I blinked. Tears threatened to come, but I had cried a lot. This was my time to be happy.

“Thank you,” I whispered to him, before I said goodbye to Maria and hung up.

“And we will take you there, little Red,” Adrian whispered closer. I loved it when he called me little. I really was when compared to both of them. But I wasn’t petite or anything. I was tall, I was big when compared to Feyona.

I nodded and closed my eyes until Roman said: “We are here.”

“Where are we?” I blinked as I looked at the majestic, gleaming building in front of me. It looked like it was twenty stories high.

“Our pack. Nightshade.”

“A pack? This is a freaking five-star hotel,” I said, and Ashelene chuckled as we walked out. She put an arm around me and I gave her a look. She flashed me an apologetic smile.

“It is. When you are in the city, you do wolfing the city way. Welcome to our pack house, Riley.”

“Thank you,” I said as I breathed in the scent of high-class perfume. The place was luxurious. I thought our pack was rich, but compared to this, we were nothing.

Roman and Adrian dragged Hiran inside. I just stood there and stared, as Ashelene bumped against me.

“Are you going to stand there and keep staring?”

I shook my head and snapped my mouth shut as I walked into the open lobby, with high ceilings, polished marble floors, and opulent chandeliers hanging overhead.

The reception area had plush sofas and armchairs arranged around low coffee tables. There was a small lounge behind a glass door, and a bar ran along one wall, its shelves stocked with every imaginable alcoholic drink, while a team of impeccably dressed bartenders stood ready to serve.

“Damn, this is...”

“I know,” Ashelene said. “Come on, I will take you to my parents’ floor. My mom will want to see you.”

“Where did Roman and Adrian go?” I asked as we walked towards the elevator.

“They would have taken Hiran to the floor where the council court is located. There are specially made prisons there, just for as.sholes like Hiran,” she said as we entered the elevator, and soon we were standing in front of a penthouse.

She rang the bell, and I heard voices mumbling and whispering. My pups.

“Are they all here?”

The door opened and a woman who looked like the older version of Ashelene opened the door. I didn’t know what the heck I should do now. Should I curtsy?

“Oh, Riley! Oh, no wonder my son is besotted. You are beautiful. Wait, what are you doing?”

“Bowing?” I mumbled incoherently under my breath, flushing as I did, and she gave me a sharp look.

“Well, your bow isn’t proper. You have to bend until your h**s are fully curved and then you have to take my hand in yours and say: Your Majesty, before kissing the back of my hand, and then you have to stand up.”

“OH.” My mouth fell open as I looked at her. She was still looking at me as if she was waiting for me to bow again. I tried to do as she asked and she laughed. “Wait, did you just-“

Ashelene nodded and I shook my head, flustered. The Queen gave me a wink. I huffed.

“Come on in, your little pups have made you a welcome banner.”

“How is Roman so grumpy?” I said to Ashelene, and she shrugged.

“That is just Roman.”

“And he is amazing.”

I walked inside and saw ten bright faces looking at me. My eyes searched first for the two little girls. Mirabel and Claire.

“Thank you so much for doing this, Your Majesty.”

“I told you to call me Alex,” she said as she looked at the pups. “Show her the second surprise.”

“More?” I widened my eyes and they laughed. They all looked bright and healthy, even Claire.

“I have to thank your son for saving Claire.”

“Finn is busy looking for his friend.” Her face fell and she looked worried. “I pray to the goddess that Dean is safe.”

The pups came back with a plate of cookies. Claire handed them to me. “Finn helped me buy them.”

“You okay, little pup?” I asked and she nodded with a smile.

“I hit the bad man with my toy truck.”

“That is my little warrior,” I said as Mirabel walked towards me with her stubby little legs. She pushed her hands up and I lifted her and she hugged my neck. My heart broke when I thought of Ethan. Hiran was the reason Mirabel didn’t have a dad now.

I hugged her tighter as she smiled. “Drian...” she said and my eyes widened.

“Did you just ask for Adrian, little traitor?”

She nodded, her blue eyes twinkling.

“Oh, I see... he is your favorite now?” She nodded her head without missing a beat and when I glared at her, she giggled. “He is here.”

“He here!”

(KING’S COURT)

I spent the rest of the day with the pups and then sleeping. Later that evening, the Queen came to see me.

“It is time, Riley. Here, drink this.” She handed me a vial filled with dark brown liquid.

“What is it for?”

“I have a witch friend. She made this especially for you. This will reduce the pain, and allow you to heal faster.”

“I heard nothing could make the rejection less painful.”

“It is still painful but a few things can reduce the pain of rejection. This is one such thing. This is a potion made from devil’s claw, white willow, and boswellia mixed with some other things you should rather not hear. Close your eyes. Do not breathe. Just gulp it down.”

I did as she asked and winced as the vile taste coated my tongue. “What else can reduce the pain of rejection?”

“Your fated mate, if you are rejecting your chosen one. Roman and his father’s magic would help, too.”

“I have to keep Roman closer then,” I said as we walked towards the elevator and she pressed the seventh floor. My stomach twisted nervously, but I was fully ready. It was time.

I walked inside a big room, fitted with brown tiles and painted dark brown. Roman and Adrian were standing there with Hiran. I winced when I realized Hiran wasn’t wearing any shackles.

“Don’t worry. He can’t walk out of the room. It is surrounded by magic,” Roman said, as if he understood my worry. Of course, he did.

"She cheated on me with your prince and this a*s.hole right here," Hiran snarled. I flinched as I looked around. No one reacted, though.

"Quiet. Talk only when you are asked," one of the men said. The man in the middle of the chair looked up and I instantly knew he was the king.

"Tell me, Ms. Riley Waites, why do you want to reject your mate?" A man in a red robe asked. He looked important.

"He cheated on me with my best friend. When I asked for rejection, he threatened the omega pups. He also sold our pack members for some kind of experiment. He is a monster. It is not just because he cheated. Not anymore. It is everything he has done since then, and I want to reject him and then he should be punished for his crimes."

"She is lying. She wants to be with these two Lycans here and she is blaming me for—"

"Hush," the man in the red robe said. "We have all the evidence pointing to how you cheated on her first. Also, the accusations against you have all been verified. You and Miss Riley will do the rejection ceremony, here, now."

A witch, I suppose, the same one who made me the potion, stepped forward with a dagger in her hand. "Show me your mark."

My stomach was in knots. I pulled my shirt down as I looked up and met the Lycans's eyes. They looked concerned.

The Queen walked towards me and grabbed my hand in hers. The witch started to chant something under her breath and soft green light moved from her dagger. She placed it on my mark and a scream left my lips.

"It is going to hurt," she whispered. I shook my head. It was already hurting. I felt like she was cutting my skin off my bones, but she had barely touched my mark.

"Don't do this, Riley, Riley, please. Baby, look at me. You are my Luna and I need you. I am sorry," Hiran begged. The anger was gone. The vengeance was gone. He looked just desperate.

Tears streamed down my cheeks as everyone stood up and the witch pressed the dagger against the mark, cutting it into two. A loud whimper left both our lips as I sobbed out.

It was more than I imagined. I felt like I was being flayed.

"Stop, Riley," Gem howled in pain. "We don't have to do this."

I knew how much it must have hurt for her to say this.

"It is okay, baby, it is okay," I said to my wolf. Roman and Adrian looked at me, helpless. They were only a blurry mess through my tears.

"Say after me. I, Riley Waites, reject you, Hiran Waites, for today and all eternity."

It reminded me of our marking oaths. It was the same, except the word rejection.

I repeated it through broken sobs.

She went to Hiran. He thrashed. But he wasn't given the choice. She did everything she did to me.

"Accept. You can do nothing but accept her rejection. Only when you accept the rejection does this pain go away."

He howled as he doubled over. "I accept."

And I felt it. Both the relief and the pain. It was excruciating. Every part in my body felt harrowing pain.

A loud scream left me as my eyes went dark.

In the darkness... I felt something. Something warm and soft. Serene. Calming. It felt like a breath of fresh air.

And the pain wasn't as much as it was before. I remembered what the Queen said. So... My fated mate... he was here.

"MATE," Gem whispered.

My eyes snapped open and I looked into the gray eyes staring straight at me without blinking.

He is my mate?

He didn't say a word.

He placed a hand on Roman's back.

"Help her. Your magic will help her."

!!!

– Chapter 50

-Riley-

WHY? Why did Adrian not say anything to Roman? Even through the pain, that was the only thing I could think of. Gem whimpered.

“Did he not want us anymore?” Gem was concerned about Adrian.

My heart was already breaking. How could Roman not be- MINE? Why would the goddess do this to me, to us? I knew Roman. And Roman wouldn't stay.

I remembered that nightmare I had a few days ago, and my heart raced just thinking about that as I curled my legs towards my chest and rocked myself.

In that nightmare, Roman walked away from me. Roman left. I begged him to stop, but he didn't. Adrian was next to me in my dreams, without saying anything. It haunted me at first, the nightmare, but I ignored it, thinking it was only a stupid dream, but what if it wasn't?

My tears wouldn't stop. My sob had become a soft snuffle, but I wasn't alright. This was not alright.

I couldn't hurt Roman. I couldn't hurt Adrian. My heart broke for all of us.

Roman sat next to me. He didn't know. I had a feeling that he wouldn't be here if he knew. Was that why Adrian didn't tell him or anyone? What was he thinking right now? I wanted to know what he was thinking in his head when he asked Roman to help me.

I wondered how Adrian controlled his wolf. My eyes met his for a fleeting second, and I begged to find something. He looked away. His body was clenched, as if he was trying so hard not to let his wolf come out and claim me.

I thought the pain and suffering would stop once Hiran was out of my life. I thought my life would go the way I wanted it to, after Hiran was completely cut off from me, but here I was...

I hated the Goddess. How could she do this to me?

“Oh Kitten, it is alright.”

How could I tell him it was not? Why would I tell him when I knew it might push him away from my life permanently?

At that moment, I wanted nothing but to just disappear into thin air. I instinctively reached to him for support. With trembling hands, I clung to him, as if he were my anchor in this storm.

“But... Adrian...”

Suddenly, she only cared about Adrian? What about Roman? What would I do now? What should I do now? I didn't know. I wanted Dee. She would know what I should do.

“Don't be mad at me. I didn't do anything.”

“You told me Roman was good for me. Why did you say that, when you- you-” I sounded hysterical even to myself. And crazy. I knew nothing would come out of me screaming at my wolf.

“He was never ours. I didn't do anything to you, Riley. I just- I wanted us to get over Hiran and Roman was... Roman was amazing. Roman is amazing. I didn't hurt you. Lashing out at me is not going to solve this or our problem.” She sighed.

My grip around Roman tightened, as if I were clinging to the fragments of my shattered world, desperately holding on to something familiar amidst the overwhelming pain. The room seemed to blur around me, the colors fading into a haze. The pain of the broken bond was nothing compared to this.

It was as if my whole world was rocking.

“Oh my Kitten, come on, let me take you to your room,” Roman said as he stood up and took me in his arms. His body was already glowing with his magic. I felt dizzy. The pain intensified as he walked out, away from Adrian. I wailed in pain.

I held onto Roman, finding a fragile sense of comfort in his embrace, while my body convulsed with silent sobs.

I turned around and saw Adrian. His eyes were red. He turned away from me without saying or doing anything. What did he want me to do? I didn't know. I couldn't even think beyond this pain.

“Roman, promise me you will stay.”

“Of course, Kitten,” he said as he pressed his warm lips to my forehead. “The pain will go away soon. And I am not going anywhere until it does.”

We went to the elevator as his white light intensified, and I knew he was using his magic to ease my pain. Soon the elevator stopped and he ran to a room and opened the door. It smelled like Roman.

"I stay here when I visit Nightshade. I have an apartment away from this place, too," Roman said as he put me down on the bed and pulled the blanket up to my chin before he sat next to me. "You and Hiran are... over, Kitten. You are going to be alright. You are strong and you will get through this."

My lips trembled. He pressed his thumb to the underside of my eyes and wiped my tears.

"I am sorry you are in so much pain."

I nodded. I wanted to tell him, but the words simply wouldn't come. Gem was moaning at the back of my head for Adrian. I wanted to rip myself into two and hand the two pieces to Adrian and Roman. I would, if that was possible.

He cupped my face as his power floated around him.

"Close your eyes, Kitten. Just close your eyes."

I felt as I had felt when he put me to sleep the other day.

"Are you making me fall asleep?" I whispered, still sniffing. My body had finally stopped wracking, but the pain was still there. In every bone.

"Yes. You have to sleep."

I offered him my hand and he grabbed it. I gripped it tighter.

"Roman, I lov-love you. Don't-"

I fell asleep.

-Adrian-

Time stood still when I felt her warm scent of vanilla wafting in the air. Clay clawed from inside.

"My mate."

I wanted to growl the words out. MATE. MINE. I wanted the whole world to know that she was mine. The words were at the tip of my tongue, but I waited. I waited for Roman to say the same words. I was looking at him, my heart racing, but nothing came. In the overwhelming silence, Riley's eyes, soft green eyes, filled with brokenness and tears, met mine. Her lips parted, but no sound came.

Roman would help her. I had to get the hell out of here.

I felt my heart shattering into a million pieces, each shard cutting deep into my soul. I could hardly breathe, and my chest constricted with an agonizing ache. As soon as Roman left the King's council with Riley, I ran out. Nobody came after me.

I just ran. I didn't shift. I knew what shifting would mean. Clay would take over and he didn't have patience to wait. He hated that

Roman was the one with her and not us.

But how could I hurt Roman or her?

She was mine. She was my mate. But I knew her heart belonged to Roman. She loved him more than me. I was the second choice.

Maybe it was the bond that made her choose me, despite knowing the consequences. If it wasn't for the bond, the one that connected us, even when we didn't fully feel it, she wouldn't have kissed me, or chosen me.

The feelings I had felt for her, the connection, it wasn't pathetic. It wasn't just desperation. It was the bond. I couldn't recognize it fully because she had Hiran's mark, which was stopping both of us from feeling it.

"But why did you run? Why did you not stay, you fu.cking as.shole?" Clay growled. "You could have taken her pain away. We deserve to be there, Adrian. We deserve to be with her."

Clay shook his head, looking agitated. He shook his head, his frustration and need palpable. I could feel his turmoil, and it hurt me, it hurt my soul to see him like this, but I knew I had to do that.

Desperation flickered in his eyes. Every fiber of Clay's being seemed to vibrate with a restless energy, as if he were on the brink of a breaking point. I couldn't let him break.

"I beg of you, Clay."

"I love Roman and Karl just as much as you do, but..." Clay howled. The weight of his emotions pressed upon me like an oppressive force. He paced back and forth in my head, his steps quick and erratic, his movements mirroring the chaos that filled both our thoughts.

I ran my hand through my hair, tugging at it. Beads of sweat formed on my brow.

Clay's voice cracked, betraying the depth of his emotions, as he pleaded with me.

“Go back to her.”

I ignored him. I didn't know what I was doing. I just wanted to leave. I ran further away from Nightshade, away from her magnetic scent. If I stayed, I knew I would give in. I would give in to Clay's begging.

“MATE. She is my mate. And if Roman knew it, he wouldn't stay, he wouldn't come between us,” I murmured to myself. “How could I do that to Roman?”

“You are always thinking about Roman, but what about me? What about you? Did you not want to be with her?” Clay sounded hurt.

“I want to be with her more than anything. But not when it is going to destroy Roman. No. Never.”

“What the fu.ck are you going to do then, Adrian? Are you a fu.cking idi.ot? Not being with her would destroy you, too.”

“I don't care. I don't. I won't hurt both of them. Roman gave me a chance with her. I knew he didn't want to share, but he did only because I asked him. Now, what would I tell him? He wouldn't stay even if I begged him.”

“He would stay for Riley. He loves her.”

“But...”

Clay sighed.

“Do whatever you want, Adrian.” His voice felt low.

“No, don't leave me now. I am already-“

“I am not leaving you,” Clay sighed. “Despite the fact that you are an absolute idi.ot.”

I ran further, weaving through the park and into the woods. B***d pounded. Heart raced. Distance. More distance.

My phone rang.

Mind-link only worked within a certain distance. I was now farther away than I wanted. I stopped and took a deep breath. It was Roman.

“Ash said she saw you running. Where the hell are you? Why aren't you here, Adrian. She needs us, and you think this is the time to have a run?”

My fingers shook.

"How is Riley?"

"She is sleeping. Come back, Ad. You know you have to be here. Why did you leave now of all times?"

"I- I can't come back yet."

"What the fu.ck are you saying, Adrian? F**k.ing come back or I will find you and kill you."

"I am sorry, Roman, I can't."

"Why are you sorry? What the hell happened, Ad?"

-The creature-

The creature slinked closer. The man's back was a haze of blurry red and black, but he heard the pounding of b***d. Sweet, sweet b***d. There was a shrill sound. The man moved. His b***d smelled different to the creature. Something was affecting this man and the creature smelled it in his b***d.

Pain? PAIN. The creature understood pain and b***d.

He licked his sharp incisors. Drool dripped down his chin as he continued to stalk his prey.

His ghastly and grotesque face twisted in what looked like pleasure. A soft roar left his lips as he turned to look at the creature standing next to him. He didn't know who she was. He barely had any memories, but she was the one like him. They both escaped their master.

His pale and deathly skin glowed in the moonlight as his sunken eyes continued to look. B***d. B***d.

He rarely remembered words. There were only roars and grunts in his head when he was hungry. But b***d was the only word he didn't forget, he couldn't forget.

The more he drank, the more he felt like he was in control. B***d made some fragments of his memories come back. When he drank b***d, he remembered things. Without b***d, everything was like a tangled piece of wire, and nothing made sense to him.

His predatory eyes gleamed red.

B***d. More b***d.

He jumped out and pushed his claws deep into the man's back. The man howled in pain, but whirled around, pulling himself out of the creature's claws. B***d gushed out. The thing he had in his hand hit the ground.

There were sounds coming from the other end of the thing.

The creature stalked towards the man. The man stumbled. He had lost b***d, but he was still standing, unlike his previous prey. The creature roared and pounced.

"f**k my luck."

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