

Betrayed Luna's Second Chance Alphas

Read – Chapter 61-70

– Chapter 61

-Riley-

“Mirabel.”

My body twitched in response. How did he know about my pup? How could he-

“Ethan?” I whispered. A tinny sound echoed through my head. My eyes widened as I looked at the creature in front of me. It didn’t even resemble a human. Was he Mirabel’s father?

The creature stilled and looked at me, his eyes becoming a small slit.

“HIRAN...” I roared as I whirled around, staring at Roman, Adrian and Finn. Adrian had a broken look in his eyes as he kept looking at Ethan. Adrian and Mirabel had become so close when he saved her. He was her hero, and I could see how much he cared about her, too. It was not anger in his eyes. It was sorrow.

“You are Mirabel’s father?” Adrian whispered. “Your daughter is one hell of a little girl. I am sorry this happened to you.”

Ethan’s body shook violently. Ethan. This creature had a name. Who was the second one? How did she know that I was Rene? Was she someone I knew?

I turned to look at Doctor Tim. “Can we try that with the other one? I had a feeling that she knew me.”

Doctor Tim nodded as Finn’s phone rang. He picked it up.

“It is Captain Matthew. I am sure he is calling about the addresses we sent him.” He answered his phone and his face twisted before he said something and hung up. “They went to all the properties under doctor Kaspar’s name, and even one under your mother’s. Every place on our list is empty.”

I hissed as I shook my head. Here we were, and how could we not...

“Riley...”

“Rene? Can we talk later please?” I said before I turned to Finn and Roman.

“But...” She hesitated and stopped.

“I think you guys should just arrest Ramsay, and find a way to get the details out of him. You know he is in cohorts with the doctor and my f*****g mother. Why couldn’t we just-“

“Because he is a vampire and not a wolf. We can’t accuse him or arrest him.”

“But Hiran agreed to testify against him. I don’t understand why that is not enough.”

“Because Hiran is guilty and the supernatural council will not just believe in his words. We need at least one solid piece of evidence against Ramsay to move forward,” Roman said, and I wanted to growl in his face. I understood what he meant, but I just wanted to hurt all of them. “I understand you are angry.”

“I am more than just angry,” I said. “He is the part of what made Ethan into- into this. Hiran sold Ethan to him. Not the doctor, not my mother. To Ramsay. He isn’t just a part of this. He is as important as doctor Kaspar and Nadia,” I said with a frown. I didn’t like that we couldn’t even touch Ramsay. He had to be punished.

“Master,” Ethan hissed, and his eyes changed again. The blue had become red again and he started to roar. There was fear in his eyes even as he started to bang against the iron bar again. Now that he wasn’t so calm anymore, the second one was roaring, too.

“Ramsay?” Roman took a step forward and Ethan snarled and shook his head and a deep, guttural grunt left his lips.

“MASTER.”

“F**k me,” Finn hissed. “Did he just call Ramsay master? Goddess, this is... this is messed up.”

“We have all this evidence and we still can’t do anything?” Adrian said, and Roman sighed.

“You know the supernatural council is not going to take the word of- this... if they see him, the first thing they would want to do is kill him. Because he is something who shouldn’t exist at all.”

“But it is not his fault,” I said with a frown. “None of it is his.”

“I know that. I do. I am just saying what they would think and say.”

“Your dad is a part of the supernatural council, isn’t he? Couldn’t he talk with-“

"My dad is only a small part. The council have so many species and Vampires have always been... at the top of all of this, because they were practically fuc.king immortal," Roman hissed and I could see his body shuddering from the power of his hatred. "I wish I could kill those assh.oles in their sleep. They are greedy and they f**k.ing think their law is the law for everyone."

No other supernaturals are immortal. Even tough vampires could be killed, they never died naturally, and their leaders lived while ours died and changed, and somehow that made them even more powerful. Some of them had lived over a hundred centuries, and when you had that kind of time, you became powerful and undefeated, and had money to buy everything and everyone.

"Who is the leader of the vampires? Who is in control of the vampires here in US?"

"Lord Ebenezer. The one who is the owner of that illegal club with Ramsay. The one who uses wolves for his little illegal fight club. He is vile and he has no morals. And Ramsay's brother Armond is another sick bastard."

"So we need Feyona to pick up her pace. We can't wait anymore," Adrian said. "I am afraid that if we don't find Dean soon... he will become like-" Adrian's body shuddered and he looked pale. "This."

"No, I won't let that happen to him. I would not," Finn hissed. "He is my best friend and no bastard is taking him away from me." Finn sounded desperate. His eyes were wide, and I knew. Even though Dean was Adrian's and Roman's friend... Finn and Dean are what Adrian and Roman are.

Without Adrian, I was sure Roman could never be who he was right now, and the same.

"We will find him," Adrian said with a fierce look.

"I am losing my patience. The proper legal way... this s**t is... taking so much time. Dean can't become this." Finn tugged at his hair and growled and I saw his body glowing with the same white light Roman's did whenever he got angry or used his power to heal.

Roman put a hand on Finn's shoulder, and Finn calmed down a bit.

"Sorry," he looked at me and I shook my head.

"I understand how you feel. I will feel the exact same way if something happens to Dee," I said. I missed her so much. I wanted to see her.

As if Adrian and Roman could sense what I was thinking, they touched my back.

"I have the dose ready for the second one," Doctor Tim said, before he shot it on the second one. She stopped roaring and hissing after a while, and her eyes cleared, just as Ethan's did.

"How do you know me? Who are you."

She looked confused. Her eyes widened as she looked at me and shook her head.

"You don't know me?"

"NO," she rumbled out. "YOU- DOCTOR TALK."

She was more coherent than Ethan was. Did she know me from doctor Kaspar? Did he talk about me?

"Doctor Tim, could a second dose of this drug help her?"

He shook his head. "It might work, or it would change something else entirely. I need more time."

I looked at her.

"You know who did this to you."

"DOCTOR. MASTER."

"Of course. You- who are you? Do you remember anything more?" She scratched her scalp and I winced when I saw b***d.

"HIRAN," she snarled, her body shaking in anger. I looked her in the eye. How the hell did she- "MATE."

"Is she-" My eyes widened as I stared at the guys.

"She is his mate. His f*****g mate," Roman growled.

She blinked and soon her eyes went back to what they were before. Red. And the calm was gone, and the animal was back.

-Deidre-

"I miss her," I said as I curled next to Reid, naked, completely satiated after I f*cked Liam first and Reid next. They both knew what they were doing. I just couldn't get enough of them.

The pack almost fell apart once everyone heard about Hiran and what he did to Riley and the pups. But Reid was amazing. Reid did everything with the utmost care, and after the Alpha bite, he is now officially the Alpha, and everyone accepted him as the Alpha without a question.

Hiran had been an Alpha only because he was older than Reid. Reid was the one who deserved to be the Alpha. He was the true Alpha. Miller was his Beta, now.

"You just want to show off your ring to Riley," Reid said with a smirk. I shook my head as I looked at the ring. It glowed in the light. It was perfect.

"Yes, that, too, but I haven't talked with her properly, and there seems to be a lot of new changes around her. You know she- she just found out her mother was an evil b***h who was behind all of it. Talking with her on the phone about these things, it just doesn't feel enough."

"I know. That is why I brought three tickets to NY. We are leaving tomorrow. Now get up, and pack the back," he said and smacked me in my a*s. I glared at him and he shrugged as I stood up from the bed. He licked his lips. "Damn woman, I want to do it all over again."

"You are always horny as hell, Reid," I said, but I wasn't complaining. His eyes darkened before he stood up and hugged me.

"Because I have wasted two years not touching you, not kissing you," he whispered as he softly bit my shoulder. "I love you, Dee, and I want to mark you."

"How does that work? I can't mark you," I said with a wince.

"You can. You know, just bite me hard with your teeth. Everyday, if you want." He smiled. "Marking ceremony isn't just the bite mark. It is sharing of b***d and bond and it is magic, and you are my magic. We can ask the King, and the king's council to conduct our ceremony when we are in New York. What do you think? That way, you will have Riley with you."

My stomach twisted as I looked at him. Could I do that? I was sure he loved me more than anything, but would he ever regret this?

"I would never regret this," he said as if he could somehow read my mind. "I promise."

"I know, but I can't help but worry. I- I see all the differences."

"I don't. I don't see a thing. You are the perfect woman for me."

"I love you, Reid Waites. I love you with everything I have."

The next morning, we entered the massive Nightshade pack house. Keller looked at the hotel, his mouth hanging open.

"Damn, this is something else," he said as we walked in. Reid smiled as he walked towards the receptionist.

"We are here to meet Riley. She is Prince Roman's guest."

"Of course. Wait just a second. I will check with-"

"I want to surprise her. So don't call her. You can call Roman." She gave me a weird look. She could see I was not a wolf, and here I was, calling her prince by his name.

"Okay. Give me your name, and I will call Prince Roman." She talked on the phone and she nodded to us. "You can go right up. Miss. Riley is on the fourth floor. Room 346. You can use that elevator."

I was buzzing the whole ride in the elevator. I couldn't wait to catch up with her. God. I missed her.

"You are practically vibrating," Reid said with a chuckle. The ding of the elevator was music. I rushed to room 346 and rang the bell.

"Coming," Riley said and opened the door. She stood still for a second before she hurled herself at me. I staggered back. Damn, for someone so small, she was so heavy. I laughed as she squealed.

"You are here. Wait, I am not dreaming, right?"

"Will Keller be here in your dreams?" I said to her and she shook her head.

"Probably not."

"Thanks," Keller grunted.

"I have to tell you so many things. Goddess, Dee... I can't- this is madness. I had no idea how my life was going to change when I walked towards the two strangers at the bar. Now they are both my mates, and-"

"BOTH?" I gasped. I only knew about Adrian. "What changed? You were sad about Roman not being your mate."

"And then yesterday happened. I have a panther."

"A what now?" Reid asked, his eyes wide.

"But let's talk about that later. I want to see that ring now," she said and laughed when I showed it to her. Her eyes turned blurry and she blinked. "So beautiful and I can't tell you how happy this makes me. You deserve the best and Reid is... well, closer."

Reid huffed as she pulled him into a hug. "You hurt one hair in her head and you have to answer to me. I have a wolf, a panther, and a f*****g nameless creature inside me." She threatened him and I laughed. She gave me a look that made me shut up. She looked fierce as hell. "I am NOT joking. Come inside."

We all walked inside and I gasped. The room was thrice the size of Reid's room, and Reid's was the biggest room in the pack house.

"Damn, bestie, this is..."

"I know," she said as I sat down on the bed. "Now go on. I want to hear every single detail of this."

"This can wait. I want to hear how he proposed?" she said as she sat next to me.

"He proposed without a ring."

"YOU WHAT?" Riley rolled her eyes at Reid and he gave her a sheepish smile.

"I rectified the mistake. I was lost in the moment and I just couldn't wait to ask her."

I laughed and she joined. Keller sat next to us and we looked at each other. Oh, how I missed this. The three of us together!

"Now, your turn," Keller said to her and she sighed.

"It is a circus. I say you prepare yourself for this madness."

When she was finished, we were all stunned. Keller was gasping. Reid was stuttering. And I was speechless.

"My God, Riley..."

"And I met Hiran's mate," Riley said with a wince.

"You met – WHAT?"

"Hiran admitted, you know, that he had a mate and he sold her to Ramsay, because he wanted me, and not her. I met her. She is- she is like what I felt like when I attacked Hiran. Some kind of experiment went wrong. The poor woman... she is like an animal, and when she said Hiran's name, the anger in her eyes... if she met him now, I am sure she would kill him."

“That bloody fu,cker,” Reid hissed. “He did that to his own mate?”

“The drug last for only a few minutes, and then they just go back to grunting, roaring animals. It is so, so sad to see that. It just breaks my heart.”

– Chapter 62

-Riley-

I spent the day with Dee and Keller and Reid.

I was happy to hear that Reid and Dee wanted to do their marking ceremony here. Dee was worried that they would be interfering, or whatever, but I didn't care about that. Bad things seemed to happen all the time in my life now, and I knew we needed something good and happy to balance that. Life shouldn't stop just because of bad things.

The Queen agreed, too, when we went to talk about it with her and the king about getting a legal certificate from the King's council. It was all set that Dee and Reid would do their marking ceremony tomorrow evening, right here in Nightshade. I couldn't wait for my best friend to get her happy ending.

“We have a ballroom, and we can do your ceremony there,” the Queen said with an excited grin as she walked us towards a big room on the sixth floor. Of course, they had a ballroom. Why was I not surprised? It was spacious and perfect. Beautiful chandeliers hung from the ceilings and the walls were painted a soft pink. Tall glass windows filtered golden sunlight in.

Now, we needed to make it beautiful for the ceremony. We only had a few hours.

“We have to decorate this place and then get you ready for tomorrow,” I said with an exhilarated grin, and the Queen nodded.

I was already planning a lot of things in my head when Dee told me she was getting married to Reid. Dee and I had always been practical, but she always wanted a beautiful wedding, and she would have that for the marking ceremony, too.

“But you have things to do, a case to solve,” Dee said with a frown and I shook my head. “And I don't think we have time to go all out.” She looked nervous and conflicted.

“We will always have things to do, but this is important. This is your special day, Dee, and you are going to get everything you desire.”

“She is right,” the Queen agreed as I admired the ballroom. It was perfect.

"First, we are getting you a dress and then a cake and then a stop at the spa," I said with a decisive look in my eyes as I stood up. "Come on, hurry up."

"What am I doing?" Reid asked as he followed us. "Should I come dress shopping with you?"

"Nope. You can't see the dress. You and Keller will get flowers and food, and do not get just pizza," I said to him as Roman and Adrian walked inside. The Queen must have mind-linked Roman and asked them to come.

"We will help," Adrian said as he looked around the ballroom. "Congratulations, Deidre."

"Thanks Adrian."

"You don't have to," I said to the guys. "We can do it. You guys-"

"We want to, Riley. Dee is important to you and so she is important to us," Roman said with a smile as he motioned to Keller and Reid.

"Come on, guys, I know the best place to buy flowers and decor, and then we can go meet Antoni," Adrian said with a big smile. He did really look excited about this.

"Antoni is the best. He works in Adrian's dad's restaurant."

"You have a restaurant, too? I thought you were wine guys."

"When you make wine, you need a place to push it to the customers. It is only common sense," Adrian winked as the guys walked out, talking about flowers. It was strange to see four grown men talking about flowers, but it made me incredibly happy. My two men were perfect. They were everything I had ever wanted.

I turned to the Queen. "Do you know any place we could get an amazing wedding dress?"

"Yes. I already called," the Queen said as she tapped her forehead. "And I am not saying this just because Eve is my friend's daughter, and my pack member... she is talented and her designs are gorgeous."

We took the elevator, and walked towards a limo.

"A limo?" Dee gasped as she looked at the Queen and the Queen laughed. My heart filled. She was an amazing, amazing woman, and I could see how Roman could be the way he was.

"You are the bride, and it is your day."

I looked at Queen Alexia and my heart filled as I saw her giving me a nod.

"Thank you," I mouthed.

"Thank you, I am beyond grateful, but you don't have to do all this, your Majesty, I mean-" Dee looked nervous as heck. It was fun to watch her like that.

"Oh, call me Alex, and any friend of Riley's deserves only the royal treatment. Come on, girls, let's have some fun."

"Are you leaving without me?" I heard a voice and whirled around to see Ashelene walking towards the limo with Bella by her side. Bella looked kind of reluctant, but Ashelene dragged her to where we were standing.

I looked at Ash, and I truly felt bad for her. I understood how it would be to lose the person you loved. I once did love Hiran, truly. Even though he was a monster, it did break my heart to realize that he had used me, cheated on me.

Adrian was amazing and losing him would hurt someone more.

She gave me a smile, and I wished I could do something to make it hurt less, but I couldn't. Sometimes, we had to go through heartbreak to find the good things in life. I found Roman and Adrian, and I knew she would find her own happiness. It just couldn't be with him.

"My mate," Gem said with a possessive glint in her eyes.

"Yes. Not with our mate. No one can have them," I said as I looked at Ashelene.

"You know," she said in a whisper as the Queen and Dee got inside the car. I nodded.

"I- I didn't know you liked Adrian. I am-"

I didn't want to ask sorry, because it wasn't my mistake, but I was sorry for what happened to her, too.

"Don't worry. I am alright. It was a crush and now that I know he belongs to you, I know what I should do. Kill Adrian."

"What?" I gasped.

"I meant... from my mind." She smiled. "Don't look so shocked. I wouldn't hurt your mate, and Riley, I am happy that you have them. They are amazing. My brother and Adrian. And they will make you so happy. You deserve all the happiness."

"They already do, Ash. I was hurt, heartbroken and then I met them. They were my oasis at the dessert. I promise that it might look bleak at this moment for you, as it should be, but you will find someone who will give you the world," I said, and she nodded.

"Thanks Riley. The only thing that stings less is that Adrian is with you. You are amazing and you deserve him," she said. Bella was silent, but she had a smile on her face when I met her eyes.

We piled inside the car. First we went to the quaint boutique. It looked high-end and luxurious, and Eva really was talented. The dresses were all to die for. I made a mental note that I would be coming here to get my dress.

"Yes," Rene and Gem said together, looking besotted.

"Will you be my maid of honor?" Dee asked me.

"Of course, I already am. Why do you think I am doing all of this?" I smiled as she tried another dress and I gasped. It was perfect. It was really simple, but it looked like it was made for Dee. She twirled around with a smile, her eyes twinkling with mirth.

"This is it. I never thought about the dress or that I would get to do it with a wolf, but the moment I looked at this, I knew this was mine, like the moment I looked at Reid," Dee said as she ran her finger along the embroidered bodice and I nodded. "I had wasted a long time, but this moment was perfect."

Everyone agreed about the dress. We bought dresses for me and the girls, who agreed to be her bridesmaids.

"I can't believe that the Lycan Queen is going to be at my marking ceremony," Dee said, and the Queen smiled. We then went to cake-tasting. The Queen had, once again, brought us to the perfect place. After we got the cake, we went to the spa and relaxed for two hours, getting pampered.

I realized how much we all needed it after the days we had. I was relaxed and pliant when we walked out of the spa, and I felt like half of the weight on my shoulder was reduced. I felt like I was floating.

"Come on, let's go back and see what the guys have done," Bella said as we drove back to Nightshade.

We walked inside the looming building and soon we were in the ballroom and I gasped. They had outdone themselves. The room was covered in laces and beautiful calla lilies and roses and tulips. Calla lilies were Dee's favorite and tulips were both hers and my favorite.

Adrian was missing though. Roman walked towards me once he saw all of us.

"What do you think? I worked hard," he said with a sigh,

"It is perfect. It is beyond perfection. I was slightly hesitant when I handed you guys this job, but this is so good."

"We had some help, but I am glad you like that."

Reid pulled Dee inside as they continued to look around, laughing and smiling. They were both glowing, and my heart felt full.

I kept looking around as Rome walked towards Ashelene and hugged her. They talked for a few minutes before Roman came to me. "Now that it is done, come with me," Roman said.

"Where are we going and where is Adrian?"

"Adrian is still in the restaurant. He is helping Antoni," Roman said with a smile as he motioned me to follow him. "And Riley... I think it is about time I took you on a proper date. Will you go on a date with me, my Kitten?" Roman asked. My heart danced in my chest.

"Of course, I will," I whispered as we walked into the elevator. Roman gave me a single tulip and a k**s on my forehead. It was a bright orange. "It reminded me of your hair in the early morning sunlight. Like burning flames," Roman whispered as he ran his fingers through my hair and tugged. I g*****d.

He looked dangerously addictive and I still couldn't believe he was all mine.

"Ours?" Rene said with a hesitant look and I had to smile at that. She was slowly getting out of her shell and I couldn't have been happier for her.

"Yes. Ours."

"And mine, too," Gem said with a huff. "He is mine, too."

"That is what I meant. OURS."

We walked to the rooftop of the building and I gasped when Roman pushed the door open. The rooftop had a beautiful garden and it was peaceful and serene. The sound of birds and water tinkling filled the air. The evening air was crisp and carried the scent of flowers.

"Why did I not know this was here?"

The whole place was surrounded by flowering plants and vines blooming with colorful flowers. There was a small white arch and benches and a white, marble water fountain. A statue of a mermaid sat on top of the fountain.

“Because I was keeping it a secret for this moment,” Roman said as he walked me through plants and vines and flower bushes until we reached the back where a small cozy table was set up.

The table had a small crystal vase with a red rose. Roman pulled my chair for me and motioned me to sit. He pulled my hair to the side and placed a k**s on my shoulder. I trembled from the touch as tingles danced along my skin, proving once again that he was mine.

Everything felt and looked perfect. I wished this moment would last. I wished that there was nothing outside this perfect pocket of time. Soft music filled the air as Roman sat opposite to me.

He handed me a bottle of beer as he grabbed a glass of whiskey. “This was what we were drinking when we first met,” he said as his smoldering eyes met mine and I couldn’t believe I was this lucky.

“It is. It was a green alien goo, though. That was what I was drinking.”

“Goddess, you were perfect even when you were drunk out of your mind.”

“And you were grumpy,” I whispered as I took a sip of my drink. “And I wanted you. I wanted to taste you, I wanted to break your composure.”

“And you did with just your look, but I was good at pretending. I had never wanted a woman like I wanted you that night. I had never even looked at a woman before you came along.”

“Because of Feyona...” I whispered and he nodded.

“Now I realize why that couldn’t work out. It was nothing, Riley, what I felt for her, compared to the magnitude of what I felt for you. One night, and you- you just destroyed any sense of rational thoughts in me. I wanted you, I needed you, even before I knew you were mine, but you are mine, now.”

“I am. And you are mine,” I said as he took my palm in his and softly kissed my hand.

“And Riley... I- I love you. I fell in love with you that night when you propositioned my best friend and then me,” he said, his voice low and hoarse as he looked at me with eyes that had turned so dark. My body wanted him, right here, right now. “And Karl wants me to tell you that he loves you, too.”

"I already know that. He was the one who confessed to me, right, when you drunk dialed me?" I smirked and Roman gave me an abashed smile and looked down into his whiskey. His honey brown eyes met me over the glass rim and I felt like I would explode from the feelings rushing inside me.

He pulled out a small box and handed it to me. "For you, my sweet Kitten. I love you and you are the one I have been waiting for all my life. You are the one for me, even before I have met you. Just no one could have worked."

I pulled the chair closer so that I could feel him against my body, my burning skin. He ran his fingers along my arm, sending electric shocks. I leaned against him and kissed him on his shoulder and bit him softly. He g*****d.

"We have to eat food."

"I am not hungry for food, Rome. When you are with me, I am always hungry for only one thing. YOU."

"You will kill me, Kitten, and I will still die a happy man."

"I love you, Roman Eros Night. I loved you even when I told myself that this was just a one-night-stand. It wasn't. You weren't. You are my smile and my happiness. You are half of my world."

Roman turned me to the side and crashed his lips against mine.

– Chapter 63

-Nadia-

"I know where she is. I had to wait, and not do anything drastic. But I didn't want to wait. I just wanted to go to her and tell her who I am."

"Did you see her?" Ramsay asked as he sat down next to me in the bar. I took a sip of my drink and shook my head.

"I did. She was buying a wedding dress. Is she getting marked and married? I don't know, I could only see her from a distance, but she was with a human and three Lycans. I knew I would lose if there was a fight. I had to hide and follow her."

"Lycans? How?"

"I have no idea. I know nothing about her life anymore. But I knew where the car stopped." I gritted my teeth. Ramsay looked at me curiously.

“Where?”

“NIGHTSHADE.”

“f**k. Roman? This is going to be hard than you think.”

“No one is stopping me from getting my daughter back,” I said with a growl. Ramsay didn’t say anything as he took a sip of his drink.

“Did you find out anything more about Marcus? Is he dead or still in hiding?”

“I have no news about Marcus. If he was hiding, he was doing an awesome job about it,” I said with a derisive smile. “If he isn’t dead already, I have high hopes that he will come out of hiding for Riley.”

“And?”

I still hadn’t forgiven him for betraying me and our bond, and years of work we had put on this. I understood that he loved our daughter, but we were going to just study her and recreate something like her. Hurting her was never my intention, and he should have known that.

“And I will punish him for betraying my trust.”

Ramsay laughed.

“Why would I hurt my own daughter? I loved her,” I said with a grunt. “He should have trusted me.”

Riley was mine. My perfect specimen. Someone who could make use of the vampire gene, without completely losing her essence like the creatures we had to kill because their wolf genes couldn’t play well with the vampire genes.

The rich humans who were funding our research were happy for the first time. It was a massive step in the right direction.

My daughter’s genes played well... very well with the vampire genes.

In fact, we hadn’t done any experiment directly on her. We did the experiment on Marcus, and he was a perfect incubator, too. We were looking for incubators who wouldn’t shift into the ugly, soulless Feral creatures that had happened one too many times.

If they didn’t die, they became those creatures, whose b***d couldn’t be extracted to do further experiment on human and we had to kill a lot of them. One of them suggested we should try in with Marcus’s b***d, but I didn’t want anything to happen to him. So I

said No. All I wanted was to find someone who could take the vampire b***d, the binding drug, and the other drugs to alter the genetic makeup, until their b***d became the kind of immortal ambrosia we had been looking for, so that human could live a long time without any diseases.

But then I became pregnant and Riley was born. We never thought the experiments we did on Marcus would somehow affect Riley. But when she was only three, she was crying for something and then that happened.

Her eyes changed color. To red. Like those creatures' eyes.

My whole body froze in fear. I didn't want anything to happen to my daughter.

I expected her to shift into the grotesque animal we had seen before when the experiment had gone completely wrong, but she didn't. Once Marcus comforted her, her eyes went back to the beautiful green, and that was when I realized that she was our path to glory, and fame.

After that, I had to keep her safe. Test on her. But never once I wanted to hurt her, or harm her. I only wanted to study her, because she was unique, different, and my scientific mind was curious.

Ramsay touched my hand. "I know you missed her, but she is here."

"Is she the reason why you missed our date yesterday?"

-Roman-

She was the most perfect thing that had happened to me. To us.

"I love you, Riley Lowe. I love you with everything in me. I crave you day and night. I want to bury myself in your skin and let you own me for the rest of our lives. I want to proudly wear your mark on my neck. I want to scream to the whole world that you belong to me and Adrian, too. And... I thank the goddess every day and night for the gift. FOR YOU."

"Oh Goddess, Roman... when you say things like this, I just want to undress and order you to take me," she whispered as she looked me in the eyes and her eyes flashed with l**t. "You are- you never said things like-"

"Because I helped him, Riley. He is the most unromantic i***t I know," Karl screamed from inside my head. "Tell he I helped you. You can't steal my ideas and take credit. She is looking at you like she is going to bring you to heaven."

“Shut up, Karl. You didn’t help me.”

“You bloody traitor. I am the only reason you are doing this now.”

“You only told me to confess to her. I did all of this on my own,” I said with a shake of my head. Karl was seething, but he could go f**k himself.

“If I k**s you now... if I do things to you now, bad, dirty things, will it be hard for Rene?” I asked. I knew Rene was just here and I didn’t want to scar my Kitten.

Riley paused and sighed. It looked like she was talking with the Panther.

“Goddess, Roman, how are you so, so considerate. For now, I just want to forget everything and everyone and f**k you hard, until your brain is scrambled.”

My c**k twitched in response. I was already hard, but I didn’t want to do anything to overwhelm Rene. She just came back, and when she was here, she was only a child.

“Rene loves you already, and she says that she will close her eyes,” Riley said with a chuckle as she leaned closer to me and kissed my stubble. “I don’t want to wait tonight, Rome. I want you.”

When she looked at me like that, how the hell could I say no?

“But also... have you ever blocked your wolf? I never tried that.”

“Sometimes when Karl was being a headache.”

“A*****e, Roman. You are an absolute a*****e,” Karl huffed, his voice indignant.

“But it never worked too long, and I kinda like having Karl in my head. He is the insane side of me, and he balance me out,” I said and she chuckled.

“Okay, you are not an a*****e.”

“He really is. He is perfect. It was the same with Gem for me, but now that I have so many voices in my head, I think I would need reprieve once in a while from that. It gets loud,” she said with a smile. “I do love Gem and Rene, but I might want to have some time to myself, and some days, I want you all to myself.”

“I understand. You can talk with Rosalia.”

“Rosalia?”

“She is my mom’s friend. She is a hybrid. She shifts only into her wolf, but she has a dormant side.”

“Which is?”

“A were coyote.”

“And she has both the animal’s voices in her head?”

“Yes.”

“But only shift into her wolf?”

“Yes.”

“Rene says it is okay, though,” she whispered as her hand crawled to my chest. “Gem is teaching all kind of bad things,” Riley chuckled softly. Her voice turned breathy as her hand crawled to my abdomen before she touched my e*****n. I m****d. “How can you think about Rene when you are... this hard?”

I sighed.

“How can I ever say no to you, Riley?”

“You said a lot of NO when we first met. I almost thought you didn’t want me, but then I felt your c**k growing in my hand, and I knew... I also caught you m*****g, hissing my name in the couch.”

I flushed.

“You were too much for me, Riley, too much. I am glad you took a chance and walked to our table, though,” I said as I took her hand in mine and nibbled on her finger. She g*****d out loud.

“Well, I almost didn’t. Dee convinced me. She was the one who told me to hurt Hiran back for what he did to me. She was right. Hurting Hiran was so amazing. I orgasmed so many times that night.”

“Remind me to thank her later, but now...” She moved to my lap and ground against me. My hands went up and down her body, exploring every inch of her.

She shuddered from my touch.

I dragged a finger down her cleavage and g*****d when she hissed in wanton need.

“More.”

She threw her head back, showing off her ivory throat to my begging eyes.

“Aah. Roman...” My name on her lips was like a passionate offering and every last piece of self-control died.

She looked wild, deranged and I felt the same compulsion in my b***d. The need was almost a physical pain.

I wanted to rip her dress off her body and then push her to down the floor, and ravish her. Take her, f**k her and mark her without any consideration she deserved, but I wouldn't give into the primal need. Because I knew she deserve to be worshipped.

“Do it,” she grunted as if she could somehow read my mind. “f**k me.”

My vision blurred. This was like a mad storm and it was pulling me in.

She unbuttoned her blouse and I hissed when she pressed her breasts to my mouth. I licked her nipple and she screamed in pleasure.

“Oh, sweet goddesss. This woman is made to torture even the strongest of us,” Karl m****d as she arched in to my mouth so that I could have more of her. And eat, I did. Every soft inch of her. She was delicious. She was all my dreams come true.

She bit her lips as she grabbed my hair in her hands and kept me right there at her breast as I suckled and tasted the sweetness of her. I bit her n**ples and she hissed and tugged my hair like a wild animal, and I growled under my breath as pain and pleasure swirled inside my body.

Her eyes flashed green and yellow, showing that Rene was feeling this, too.

“I am sorry,” I g*****d. I did want to be considerate of Rene, but we were too long time by now.

I grabbed her breast again and this time, I squeezed them harder, and she m****d again.

I could almost smell the delectable scent of her arousal. I wanted to lick the sweetness and taste her, all of her.

I licked her throat languidly. “Do you want me? Do you want me inside you? Do you want to scream my name as I lick you until your p*ssy clench around my tongue?”

She gritted her teeth as she clawed my back. I loved how desperate she was for me.

“I want you to touch me, all of me, prince Roman. Do it,” she ordered me. Even said in the softest of whisper, it was still an order.

The Alpha animal was usually proud and arrogant and dominant, but Karl was now a purring , mewling kitty cat.

“I want to feel you everywhere. I want you inside me, pounding, thrusting, and this time, Roman, I want you to know that I am not on pills as you c*m inside me,” she said, her eyes dark and alluring.

And f*ck, that did it for me. I stood up with a growl, and she followed me and pushed my pants down. “Lock the door.” I grumbled as I got rid of my pants.

I grabbed her by her h**s and then lifted her up. She wrapped her legs around me and grabbed my hair to keep herself on me. I pressed a k**s to her chin, to her throat, to her chest and then I went back to her mouth. She yanked me closer as her tongue assaulted me.

She didn't even wait for a second as she pushed herself into me. My c*ck was soon buried in her warmth and I grunted and g*****d as she moved. Hard and fast.

There was only hunger and fire.

And I burned.

Knowing that both of us weren't using any protection... it made me even more fervent. I pounded into her, as her juices covered my c*ck, making it wetter, slicker.

She felt perfect around me.

I gripped her hair and tugged. She threw her head back and I sucked her throat.

“Roman, faster.”

“Yes, Kitten.”

She impaled herself into my c*ck and she took and took until we both were screaming.

She came and I felt myself spurting hot, thick c*m inside her.

“Aah,” she m****d as she kept me inside as the last wave of pleasure washed over us. She kissed me before she got down and I became hard when I saw my c*m sliding down her thighs. I pushed her down the floor and she m****d as she looked at me.

She touched the side of her thigh and I watched with fascination as she pushed her finger between her lips.

My c*ck jerked.

She laughed as she sucked her finger and my c*ck was like a f*****g dancer, dancing to the music of the sound of her lips sucking her fingers.

She sat up and pushed me down before she sat on top of me and took me in once again, screaming my name, and I loved her even more than I did just a second ago.

“And I will love her more, always more than I loved her a second ago.”

– Chapter 64

-Nadia-

“Is she the reason why you missed our date yesterday?” A shrill voice snarled. I looked up to see a woman glaring down at Ramsay.

Ramsay stood up. She was a wolf. I didn’t understand why Ramsay looked apologetic. “Feyona.”

Now I did. This was his wife. The wolf. Everyone was so surprised when Ramsay broke up with his girlfriend of half a century and married a wolf. She was sexy, but she wasn’t sexier than Keisha, his ex-girlfriend.

“They say karma is a bit.ch. I cheated on Roman, and now you- you-”

“Fee, listen-”

“F.uck you.” She hit him in the chest. Hard. He stumbled back, but he didn’t do anything. He didn’t even try to stop her.

“I love you, Fee. You know I won’t do that to you. She is just a friend.”

“Why don’t I believe it for a second? You disappear from home at odd times. The other night, I woke up in the middle of the night and you were gone once again. And that was everything that I did... to Roman,” she said with a growl.

She was shaking as she kept glaring at Ramsay, and I wondered why Ramsay was taking it all without putting her in her place. This wasn’t the Ramsay I had known years ago.

“I hate you. Why... why would you do this to me?”

She hit and clawed, but he just kept whispering things to calm her down.

"Can we talk at home? I promise. I am not cheating on you. I would never do that to you. You know, I love you, Feyona. She is a friend and we are looking for her daughter. She lost her daughter and I am just helping her."

Feyona blinked as she looked at him. "You are not lying?"

"I am not."

"Did you report it to the police?" Feyona asked and Ramsay sighed.

"It is a long story, Fee. We will talk later, okay?"

She sighed and finally calmed down. "Yes. I am sorry," she said as she pointed to the scratch in his arms. He smiled and shook his head.

"It is alright, go." She looked at him for a second and walked away.

"You love her, don't you? You really do love her. When I heard that you broke up with Keisha, I thought you just became bored with her, but now I see why you did."

He nodded. "I do love her. She is my everything, and-"

"She is a wolf. She isn't immortal. You aren't doing this just for money," I said with an intrigued look in my eyes. "Not anymore, right?"

He took a sip of his drink.

"You are trying to make her immortal like you, but how? The experiment we do is focused solely on making humans live longer, not even immortal."

"I am working on my own formula, and if we succeed in phase one on humans-"

"You are starting your own phase one."

"Yes."

"Did the doctor know?"

"Well, not everything, but yes."

"It is strange to see you care about something other than money, or power."

"Love does strange things to even selfish men."

-Adrian-

I finished helping Chef Antoni and after that, I went to meet my parents. We talked about business for a while. I was walking out of their apartment, thinking about Riley and how I missed her already, when Bella came with Ashelene.

I hadn't seen her or Bella in a while. I avoided going to Bella's apartment, because I knew Ash was there. I wasn't ready to put her through more pain from seeing me. I knew she was hurt, and I didn't want to add to anything.

Ash stopped and then sighed. I almost wished I could vanish.

I gave them a nod, and Bella looked at me as Ashelene walked in. Bella walked towards me and hugged me.

"I am happy for you, Ad. I truly am," Bella whispered as she pulled away from me.

"I know," I said. "And we will find Dean, Bells. I promise you that."

"You know about Dean and me, don't you?" Bella asked as I wrapped my arm around her. She snuggled closer to me.

"I do."

"It was just- we were-"

"And once we get him out of that place, I am going to kill him."

"He is so going to get it. I am ready. I am already sharpening my claws," Clay said with a snarl.

"And Clay says he is already sharpening his claws."

"Adrian, Clay, you idiots. No one is touching him."

"What? How dare he go anywhere near my sister?" I said with a growl and Bella shook her head with a chuckle.

"I missed you, Ad," she said with a sad look in her eyes. Bella and I had always been so close, but for the past few days it felt like we had drifted quite apart.

"I missed you too, Bells. Just don't get mad at me for things I can't control."

"I wasn't. I just- it pained me to see Ash like that and I just didn't want her to feel like she was alone in all of this."

“Of course, she isn’t alone. She has Rome and Finn and you, too. I really feel terrible that somehow I- I hurt her.”

“Tell me something, Adrian. Have you ever felt anything for Ash?” Bella asked and I sighed. I wanted to lie and say no, but that wasn’t always the case.

“It would be a lie if I said no. I felt something for her. I mean, she is an amazing woman and she told me she liked me. How could I not react to that confession? But she was so young and I just didn’t want to hurt her in any way. I knew staying away was the right thing to do, and it was. It is. Riley is everything, Bells, and please don’t push Riley out of your life. She is amazing and I want my sister to be friends with my mate. Just give her a chance, please.”

“We were just coming from shopping. We went to buy Dee’s dress with Riley and Aunt Alex. Ash and I are bridesmaids, too.”

I smiled as I pulled her into a hug. “You are the best sister ever.”

“And Ash is the best sister ever to Roman. You don’t have to worry about her. She will be alright.”

“I know she will be. She will find her mate, or find the right man to love. Bye, Bella. Thank you for doing this for Riley. She had a rough couple of days and...”

“Is it true that she is a Pantera? I heard from Finn, who heard from the King, who heard from Roman that she shifted into-”

I bumped my head against hers. “Goddess, news travels so fast, but yes, she is. Somehow she can shift into both her wolf and her panther.”

“That makes her extremely unique. No other hybrid could do that, right?”

“Yes, her father somehow pushed her dominant side down and brought her wolf out. In yesterday’s chaos, we almost forgot about his journal. We had to read it to understand what really happened. I hope it has answers,” I said to Bella. “Okay, I am leaving now.”

“Look at you, Ad. You have changed a lot since Riley, and it is a good change. My brother might just have grown up.”

“I have always been a grown up,” I said with a grunt before I walked towards the elevator. The door was going to close when I saw Ash running towards me.

I stopped, and she walked inside. “I am going to Nightshade, too. Drive me there?” It felt almost like a white flag. I nodded.

“Hey Ash...”

"I am sorry, Adrian, I am sorry for what I said to you the other day. You weren't pathetic. You felt what you felt for her, because she was your mate, and you just couldn't recognize it fully because of Hiran's mark. I am sorry. I wish I could take my words back, but..."

"It is alright, Ash. I don't blame you for anything you said."

"Because you are Adrian, but I know I was wrong. I shouldn't have- I was hurt and angry and I acted like a b***h. Forgive me?"

"There is nothing to forgive, Ash. I just want you to be happy."

"I will be alright, Ad, I will be. And I am glad you and Roman are happy."

We were silent the rest of the ride, but it wasn't filled with awkwardness. We reached Nightshade and she smiled at me and thanked me.

"I need to finish some of my assignments. I haven't been to college for a few days," she said with a wince and gave me a nod. "Bye, Adrian." She ran away and I smiled as I handed the keys to the valet and walked in. I went to Roman's old room, where Riley was staying now.

I knocked on the door, but she wasn't there.

I mind-linked Rome.

"Hey, where are you and Riley?"

"On a date," Roman said, panting, and I smiled, knowing very well what kind of date it was.

"Why are we not on a date now? I want to be there with Riley and Gem now," Clay whined in my head.

"Another time. It is going to be hard to share her with someone else, but Roman deserves time with her just as we do."

"You have always been so logical. I hate you," Clay sulked and I laughed.

"Ask Riley if it is okay for me to go through her dad's journal while I was here alone, ditched by my best friend and my mate, as they enjoy their date," I said in a fake sad voice and Roman grumbled.

"Riley said you can do whatever you want to do. You already have the key. Go and read to your heart's content," Roman said with a smirk in his voice.

"A*s.hole," I said before I opened the door and switched on the lights.

The small box was still on the bedside table, and I had seen Riley had read some pages.

I tried to read, and cursed. My future father-in-law's handwriting was like an evil curse.

The first few pages of the journal are about when Riley was born, and how she looked.

I was leafing through the pages when I realized a few pages were stuck together. I tried to pry them away, but they were glued together.

"What in the world is here?" Clay asked and I shrugged.

I carefully cut through the pages and it opened. They were pictures. It was one of Riley when she was so little. Her head was a mop of curly red hair. She was beautiful as a baby. Another was when she was around four or five. The third one was a picture of a little Panther. So little. It was barely the size of a puppy, but the yellow eyes were astute, sharp.

"Rene, is that Rene? My Goddess, she is adorable," Clay said. "I want to pinch her cheeks."

"She is, but don't try to pinch her cheeks now. She will bite your head off," I said as I touched the picture. She was magnificent. My heart hurt that she was locked inside from the outside world. I understood why Marcus had to do it. To protect Riley, but it still wasn't fair to Rene.

But if Marcus hadn't brought Gem out, I might never have found out she was my mate.

It is rare to find true mates in our world. Also, Hybrids only find a mate bond with their dominant animal. The animal they would shift to. The other side would never find their mate. So, a hybrid would have a true mate, but the true mate of the other side of the hybrid would never have the fortune to find their true mate bond.

If Rene was the only one in Riley, I would never have found that she was my true mate.

"I do feel sorry for Rene, but I am not sorry that Gem is here. Gem is ours, and I deserve to be with her."

"You are right, Clay. I am sorry that Rene had to go through all of this, but she is here now, and so is Gem, and that is all that matters."

There were a few pictures of the woman we saw on the internet the other day. Riley's mom. She had cold eyes. Empty and emotionless.

“That is our future mom-in-law, huh? She looks like a villain.”

“She is a villain,” I said with a grunt. “Wait, there are things written on the backside.”

Riley’s baby picture had a name scribbled on the back: Emorilee Vanessa Andreas-Lowe.

“Is this Riley’s name? That is a mouthful. She is cute, though.”

“It looks like that,” I said to Clay. “Yes, she is adorable.”

I quickly leafed through the journal and realized there were so many pockets made within the journal like the first one. I carefully pulled all of them open, and found a lot more pictures.

One was where Riley’s eyes were red and green, the same way they looked when Riley attacked Hiran. “She looks cute even with red eyes,” I said with a frown as I read the journal entry and made notes about important things.

He talked about the creature, about Riley’s mother, and about Rene. All his entry were addressed directly to Riley.

June 15,

Dear Riley,

I found a way to curb Rene. It hurt me to do that to Rene, but I have to do it to keep you safe. As long as Rene is there, Nadia will know where to find you, and I can’t let that happen. I also hid the ring that would connect Rene with your mother’s primal energy. If you are ever ready to find your mother, fight your mother, wear the ring and Rene will come back. Or do not ever touch the ring.

s**t. So... Nadia could sense her now?

I searched and read and re-read the entire journal for any clue about the lab where they had once conducted the experiments, but there was nothing like that. Why wouldn’t her father mention anything about that?

To keep Riley away from them? To protect Nadia?

Was Marcus really a good guy? Or was he only a good guy for his daughter?

I mind-linked Rome. “Nadia may or maynot know where Riley is... I read the journal.”

“We will be down in a few minutes.”

“It is alright. Take your time. I have a few things to take care of right now.”

!!!

– Chapter 65

-Finn-

“Doctor Tim, have you made any progress?” I asked as I stalked inside the lab, staring at the creatures. Their roars and grunts had already become a part of the lab’s everyday sound.

Doctor Tim nodded. “I don’t think this drug is designed for them, not like this. It could curb Riley’s creature, because hers is different, and not fully transformed into this...” the doctor said with a sad smile. We didn’t even know what to call these things. “From the b***d test and the test I did on the drugs, it seems like the drug in the vial was especially designed to match the genetic makeup of Riley. It was custom made for her, to contain this side inside her, and to also make her recessive gene dominant. That was how her wolf was here now. Her father must have been quite a scientist. This was so advanced for his time. He could do a lot with the technology we have right now.”

“Is there no way to help them, doctor?” I said as I looked at them. They were like rabid animals. There was no trace of humanity left in them, but when we gave them the drug in the vial, they showed us a flash of who they were, and then they went back to the grunting animals. “He has a little girl, doctor,” I said with a wince.

“I am trying, but I don’t think we can fully bring them back to what they were. They might have these moments of clarity, but it wouldn’t last. Their physical changes would stay, too.”

“It is so horrible. Okay, doctor Tim, I am going to meet Dustin. We have new information from Adrian, and we are going to check it out right now,” I said as I walked towards Dustin’s office. He was busy typing on his laptop. He stopped when he saw me, and motioned me to come in, a look of urgency in his eyes.

“Here...”

“What?”

“The name Adrian sent... there were three properties linked to that name in remote locations. It was buried in shell corporations and more names, but here it is. I think that

is it. Lizzie did an electrical sweep of that area, and this particular building consumes a lot of electricity for a supposedly empty storage space.”

My eyes sharpened as I sat down. I prayed with all my heart that this was it. We had already exhausted all our options for finding Dean. If this failed, too, I didn’t know what I would do. I might just kill Ramsay, and bring about a war that all of us were trying to avoid.

“We should leave now,” I said as I grabbed my gun and looked at Dustin. He sighed. “Why the hell are you not moving?”

“I just called Ivanna,” he said with a wince. Ivanna was one of the head of Red Watchers, USA.

“And?”

“She said not to rush into this.”

“f**k. This is becoming political, when it should be about saving a fellow Red Watcher. We were the ones who sent him there, and we were responsible for what happened to him, and it is about time we owe our mistake and stop wrenching our hands.”

Dustin shook his head. “I understand.”

“No, you don’t. Nobody does. If this isn’t Red Watcher’s business, then I am going to leave all of this here, and go on my own, because it is my business.”

“Just give me a few minutes,” Dustin said as he grabbed his phone. “I will talk with Ivanna.”

“I am going to talk with my dad. If she couldn’t, my dad could,” I said as I walked out and drove towards Nightshade.

-Riley-

“What did Adrian want?” I asked as Roman rolled next to me, pulling me closer to his body. I stared at the darkening sky with a sigh. This was perfect, but I knew it was already coming to an end.

The dream was over. The reality was coming back.

“He read the journal and he has some information. He told us to take our time, though,” Roman said as he ran his fingers through my hair. “Are you okay, Riley? I knew

everything that has happened was too much for you. You are amazing and brave, but I still want to ask... are you okay?"

I took a deep breath.

Am I okay?

"No, I am not okay, but having you and Adrian here with me, it helps. This- all of this was beyond anything I have ever thought about, and it is overwhelming. Sometimes, I feel like I can't breathe, just thinking about all of this. But... I will be alright," I said as I stood up and quickly wore my dress. Roman looked up from the floor, still half naked.

I traced his body with my eyes and smiled at him.

"If you ever need anyone to talk to, you know where to find me, right?"

"I know, Rome, I do know..." I said as I gave him my hand and he jumped up and pulled me into a hug.

"We will get through this, Riley. You, me and Adrian, we are stronger together. We will deal with this, together," Roman said as he planted a k**s on my forehead.

"You know what this new information is?"

"He said something about how your mother might know where you are," Roman said, and I looked at him with intrigue.

"But how can she know? Maybe it is the Doctor. He saw me that day in the subway and I was so sure he recognized me. Maybe he really did," I said with a growl. "But I don't care if she comes for me. I am ready, Roman, and I am not so helpless, not anymore."

"No, you are not," Roman said as he caressed my cheek, his thumb soft and comforting. "And we are ready. When the time comes, she will go down."

"She will... I will make sure of that. I am starting to remember more and more, Roman, and each memory makes me hate her even more so than before," I whispered as Rene stirred inside me.

"Riley..."

"Tell me? What is wrong?"

"I tried to tell you before..." Rene said hesitantly.

"What? What did you try to tell me?" I asked, confused.

“About mother.”

“You call her mother, too?” I said with a blink and Rene looked at me, her eyes guilty. What was she so guilty about? I understood that Rene felt a connection to Nadia, but... she shouldn't have to be ashamed about it.

“I do. I always did. And now that I have shifted, I think mother knows... where we are. It is like a beacon, our energy, and I am sure it calls to her power and our bond,” Rene said without hesitating for once. She looked afraid, and also sad. Like... she wanted to find a way to make it work with my mother?

“Do you miss her?”

“You are Marcus's daughter, but Mother has always been so kind to me, and I – I am sorry...”

“You don't have to be, Rene, but our mother was not really a good person.”

“But she was to me. She gave me chocolates, she told me that I was important, and-“

“And she is a master manipulator, Rene. I know you don't understand everything now, but just trust me on this one. MOTHER IS EVIL. BAD,” I stressed. Now that I heard her thoughts, I was worried that Rene might do something drastic.

This was the time blocking out the other sides in me could have worked. I really did need to talk with the hybrid woman Roman told me about.

We pulled the door open and walked to Roman's room. He opened the door and looked around. The room smelled like Adrian, but Adrian wasn't here at all. Where did he go?

I saw the journal on the bedside table and grabbed it.

The last thing Adrian read was still open. I grabbed it and read it. It was about Rene.

“Here, drink this,” Roman handed me a glass of something. I took a sip of it and sighed.

“Is this some kind of abomination you made me the first night?”

“Something like that. It is good for health, and it helps when you are really stressed.”

“You should have been a witch,” I said as I finished it in a single gulp and handed the glass back to him. He chuckled and grabbed it from me as I continued to leaf through the journal, wondering if my dad knew anything more about the laboratory.

I was reading another journal entry, where my father talked about how I was an accident, and that they had done the experiment on him...when the door opened. I looked up to see Adrian walking in.

He gave me a soft smile. "How are you?" he said as he walked next to me and pressed his lips on my head. I sighed.

"Reading this is... it is overwhelming."

"It is overwhelming, even for me, but I found something precious in between the pages," Adrian said to me as he handed me the bag he was carrying.

"What is it?"

"Open it," Adrian said as he gently pried the diary away from my fingers.

I pulled it out of the cover and narrowed my eyes when I saw that it was a photo Album. What was this?

I opened it and gasped loudly when I saw a little baby with red, wispy hair. Me. It was me. It was my baby picture. Under the picture, Adrian had written, Emorilee Vanessa Andreas-Lowe. Weight: 8 pounds. Chubby baby. Hair color: Red. Eye color: Green.

"That is your name. It is quite a mouthful," Adrian chuckled. I leafed through the photo album, my heart feeling quite not so empty with each picture, my mind trying to somehow find a way to fill in the gap of the moments in my head. "Just enjoy it, Emorilee. You can think about it later. Sometimes you are allowed to enjoy it without having to force yourself to think about it."

There were little snippets of my life, taken from the diary, written on the album. This was perfect. He even found a baby picture of himself and Roman, a picture of Dee and Keller and me, a few of just mine, one of my picture where I was baking and making a mess. He might have gotten the picture from Dee.

He had added them all to make a reel of my life.

For someone who had nothing, who didn't even have a last name... this was everything. What he did for me was everything.

This was my life, recorded in pictures. A life, I almost didn't know existed until a day ago, but this was still my life.

I looked up at Adrian, my heart running in my throat. I felt like my throat was closed... "Thank you, Adrian. This is perfect," I whispered as I ran my finger along the embossed name at the front. He touched my finger with his, and used his finger to push it along my name.

“Adrian?”

“Yes, Red, do not cry. I know I am amazing, and I have to one-up Roman,” Adrian said with a teasing chuckle, but I knew he was only joking.

“You are. You are amazing, Adrian, and I love you.”

His eyes widened as he took a step back and almost fell down on the ground.

“That is one hell of a reaction,” Gem said with a snort. He almost looked afraid.

“Adrian? Ad? You alright?”

“Was I hallucinating? Did you really just tell me-“

“I LOVE YOU, Adrian. I love Roman. I love Karl and Clay. That is four already, and I feel like such a greedy h*e, but that is who I am and I am not choosing between you when I don’t have to.”

“Of course, you don’t have to,” Adrian said finally. “I love you, too, Riley. Something pulled me to you that first night. It was an invisible thread of fate, and I was glad I followed it.”

“Well, I followed it. You fell asleep after drinking a few bottles,” I chuckled as he wrapped an arm around my neck. Roman joined us as I opened the album once again and leafed through all of the pictures. They were perfect.

“This is my life,” I said as I closed the book.

“It is only starting now, Kitten. Don’t worry. You will have everything you desire... right here on these empty pages.”

“Hey Rome,” Adrian called.

“Yes?” Roman looked at his friend with a frown, as if he already knew what was going on inside Adrian’s head.

“Are you the one writing this poetry, or is it Karl?”

“Go f**k yourself, you idiot.”

“I would rather f**k her,” Adrian said as he poked his tongue out, making Roman growl.

They were bantering back and forth, when someone knocked on the door. Roman and Adrian stopped fighting and stood up.

Adrian opened the door and Finn barged in. "You are right. The property is under Emorilee Vanessa Andreas-Lowe, and I am leaving in a few minutes. I am done waiting. I couldn't wait, not after I saw the result of their experiments," Finn shuddered.

"Yes, I do think it is time to act," Adrian said. "We have wasted a long time."

"You are right, Finn. And take me with you. I could be the... bait."

!!!!

– Chapter 66

-Roman-

"You are right, Finn. And take me with you. I could be the... bait." Riley's voice was without any feeling as she looked at Finn. I could feel the anger roiling under the surface, but she looked calm and collected, completely opposite to what Karl and I felt when we heard her say that.

"I would rather kill myself than let her go anywhere near that woman," Karl said, looking furious as hell, and I agreed with him.

"No way in hell," Adrian and I said in unison, and then met each other's eyes in understanding. No way in hell was I ready to do that, any of that? She had already gone through a lot, and to put her through this just didn't feel right to me. If something went wrong, I knew I would never forgive myself.

"Come on, you know I am strong enough to take care of mommy dearest," she said. I could see she was getting braver, and I knew she was strong enough to protect herself, but I simply didn't want to take the chance that there might be one percent chance that it wouldn't go as we planned.

"It is okay to be confident, but not okay to be over-confident," Adrian said, once again being the voice of reason. "Just barging in is not going to help any of us, and if something happens to you, we will be a f*****g mess. You don't want that, do you?"

He was so f*****g smart.

Riley tilted her head as she stared at him, as if she was trying to work out who he was, but well... I had tried, and even though I knew him like the back of my palm, I still didn't know him.

"It feels like a carefully constructed reverse psychological tactic," Riley said. "But I know I am not being over-confident or cocky. I just want to take her out and help you guys find your friend."

Finn looked at me and sighed. "I understand why you don't want to do this, but... we will all be there."

"Why did she even need to be there? We already know the place, don't we? We can just do it ourselves without having to involve Riley in any way," Adrian said as he shook his head.

"You think I am going to sit here and wait?" She sounded indignant.

"No. Just stay right there with us, and don't do anything that put your precious ass in danger," I said as I pulled her into a hug and she struggled before she sighed.

"I understand," she said, but she didn't look too convinced. I let her go before I turned to Finn.

"So, are we doing this by ourselves, or are the Red Watchers helping?"

Finn shook his head. "Ivanna wants to wait. Dad says we can do it, but we have to be subtle about it."

"We can't go in, guns blazing. f**k, that is bad," I said with a frown. "Soph and Saph are missing action these days."

Riley rolled her eyes. "I still can't believe- you... Roman Eros Night, the most stoic, the most grumpy man I have ever met has named two of your guns."

I shrugged. "We all have our vices. So, are we taking my car or yours?"

Adrian shook his head. "Onyx is not going anywhere near that level of destruction that might follow. But I can grab that old bastard," he said, mentioning his old car, which almost resembled a pile of crap.

"Old bastard belongs in the junkyard. We will take mine," Finn said. "I also called Bella and Ash. Your friend- the human one and her mate heard me talking, and the mate wants to help."

"Reid," Riley said with a small smile. "He is Hiran's brother."

"That asshole ex of yours?" Finn looked surprised. Riley nodded her head.

"Yes, him..."

"I want to punch him in his nose and break a few bones. He is such an a*****e," Finn said, and Riley nodded, as she walked next to him.

"Stand in the line, Finn," she said, and he sighed. "He is such a selfish bastard."

"He f*****g threatened the pups and there is no forgiveness for that," Finn hissed. He looked pretty pissed off. I had seen him with Claire, and they both shared a bond formed out of that desperate day when he had to save Claire. The four-year-old sassy little one also loved my brother. He was her hero.

Riley's lips pulled up in a snarl. "Absolutely. I hate him. Just thinking about him made me want to punch something."

"Soon," Finn said.

I looked at my brother and my mate, and realized they were bonding over their bloodthirsty feelings towards Hiran. Whatever. I just liked that she looked comfortable with him, and he looked the same.

Adrian and I shared another look and Adrian smirked. We walked out of the room and closed the door.

"Oh, we were making an attack plan in dad's study," Finn said. "And then we will go directly to the lab."

"Was it really under my name?"

"Yes, buried under several other names, but yes."

We went to the penthouse, and my mom and dad were already there, along with Bella and Ashelene, and Dustin was there, too, and Reid and Deidre. Dee was busy talking with my dad. She looked animated. She stopped when we walked in.

"First order of business," my mother said when we walked in. "Do not get caught. Second, concentrate on saving the hostages. Dean and whoever else was there, then fighting with Ramsay and the others. I know you will want to have your revenge, but remember that this is a rescue mission, first and foremost."

"What your mother said," Dee said with a nod. "Listen to the Queen. She is right. I know you are all burning for a fight and that you all want to be a hero, but... Dean is the priority now. Dean, and people like him who are trapped in that lab."

"I can't kick some b***d-suckers' asses?" I hissed out and my dad shook his head with a sigh.

"That is why your mom said what she said."

"I am ready to kick some a*s, though," Ash said with a smile and a shrug as she wrapped her arm around Bella. "Don't worry, Bells. We are getting Dean back."

Bella huffed. "I am not worrying anymore than all of you."

"Really?" Adrian quirked his brows. All of this might have gone over my head if Adrian had already filled in on Bella's relationship with Dean. He was right. I was love-blind.

Bella growled at him.

"Okay. We just asked you not to fight the vampires, and now you are fighting among yourselves?"

"Okay. What is the actual plan?" Adrian asked as he leaned forward. I saw Ash looking at him before she looked away, shaking her head.

"You okay?" I mind-linked her and she gave me a quick smile and a nod.

"I think I REALLY am," she linked back and I sighed and smiled.

"You can talk with me, if you want. You know that, right?"

She sighed in my head. "I know, Rome. I know. I talked with Adrian, I talked with my wolf, who was giving me sass, and I realized... I had built all of this up in my head for so long, and it kinda made me blind. I am okay, now, or I think I will be. I promise."

"That is good. Adrian is good, but he isn't good enough for my little sister."

She chuckled out loud as I gave her a wink.

Adrian looked at me and then at her before shaking his head.

"Listen. You will be going as two teams." my dad said as he started to map out the plan of our attack. "You will be entering from this part, and Dustin, Bella, Ash and Reid will be on standby. When Team A starts their attack, the one inside the building has to come out to defend their precious lab and everything in it, and they will deal with them, but let's assume not everyone will be coming out. Now team B will find a back entrance and march in. Save as many people as you can while Team A distracts. We also hope that having Riley there will pull out the important people behind all of this." My father's face scrunched as he rubbed his forehead. I could see how it was affecting him, too. Doctor Kaspar was a friend of my father back in the day, back before he supposedly died.

"Makes sense," Adrian said as my father handed us some weapons. "Yes, but use them when it is absolutely necessary. We are still trying not to start a war, remember. There are also some tranquilizer darts with concentrated aconitum, which will work on the

panther, too. Silver bullets will work on the vampire. You can just make the doctor's fake death real," my dad said with a snarky smile.

"Dad..." Ash said with a chuckle. We filed out and took Finn's car and Bella's car and drove towards the address.

-Ramsay-

"What are you doing, Ramsay? What is all this secrecy and sneaking in and out?" Feyon stared at me. I knew I couldn't run from this conversation, not anymore. I tried to make it work, but now that she knew something was wrong, she would forever suspect me if I didn't tell her the truth, and I didn't want that.

"Promise me you won't- you won't freak out?" I looked at her and her eyes narrowed.

"What did you do?" She tugged at her beautiful hair and winced.

"Stop. I- I am trying to create something that will make humans live longer and free from illness."

"Immortal humans?"

"No, just live longer. Maybe another hundred years, before their bodies give in?"

She winced. "But why? Why do you care whether they live or die?" Feyona's lips pulled up in irritation and disdain. I could see that she wasn't comfortable with this.

"I don't care whether they live or die, but I care whether you live or die," I said as I took her hand in mine and she flinched back as if I had hit her in the face.

Werewolves were impossibly stronger, powerful, but their life span was only a bit longer than the human lifespan, or almost the same.

"What do you mean?"

"I don't want to live the rest of my lifetime without you, Fee, and I have to do what I have to."

"You are doing this for me?" she asked, her eyes wide. I nodded. I would destroy the whole world for her, if I had to.

"But Ramsay... I-"

"I know. You sometimes wish you hadn't made a mess and broken up with Roman." I gritted my teeth. That was the first reason why he had to go. I would find a way to get rid of him once and for all.

"I am sorry, I didn't mean to... but are you really doing this for me?"

"I love you, and that is not a lie, Feyona. I have no doubts about my feelings.."

Her eyes widened as she looked at me. "You can stop, Ramsay. We can live without all of this burden and guilt... until I live, and then you will find someone else. There were a million amazing women in this world who would give anything to be with a vampire."

It was stranger still, to think how this werewolf became a part of my life, but she had become an indispensable part of my life.

"None of them will be you, Fee."

My phone rang. I motioned her to wait. "Just give me a few minutes."

I answered the call.

"They know."

"What the f**k are you saying?"

"They are already on their way to the laboratory and if you don't move now, you will lose your years of hard work."

!!!

– Chapter 67

-Riley-

Even though I was pretty sure that I wanted nothing but to hurt my mom, a part of me felt nervous. A small part. I felt like it was coming from Rene.

She was still... almost a kid in many ways, and whenever she thought about my mother, I felt a pang of longing that was from her. No anger. Just the longing.

She had been telling me things about how life was when we were in the cage made of glasses, and it made me angrier, but somehow she was still transfixed on chocolates. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Gem sighed as she looked at me with wide green eyes. “Do you know how you are going to shift now that you have two animals inside? How does that work?”

“I am assuming that it works the same way whenever I want to shift into you. My thoughts shape you into existence and I think it works the same way now, too. If I want to shift into Rene, I think I will...” It was all trial and error anyway. There was no real guidebook for this.

“You are deep in thought,” Adrian said as he caressed the side of my arm, and a wave of calmness washed over me. His touch made me feel like everything was going to be alright. Roman turned to look at me and smiled.

“Look at the damn road,” Adrian grumbled as he pulled me closer to his body and wrapped an arm around me. Roman g*****d, but did as he was asked.

“It is okay. You can hug her later, Roman. Now, concentrate on the road. We are already driving towards a death sentence as it is,” Finn said with a shake of his head, trying to ease the tension that lingered.

Bella drove the second car, with Reid and Ash and Dustin. I turned to see they were following us. After a few turns and bends, we were finally outside the city, where the laboratory was.

My senses became alert as I felt images passing through my head. Flashes of memories from Rene. She was curled into a small ball. She felt nervous.

“It is alright, Rene,” I said, feeling it was immensely inadequate, but I had nothing else to offer to her. She looked confused, and her thoughts were running a million miles per second. It felt like how she was when she first came out after being dormant for so long. “I know it is hard for you, but just trust me. You have to trust me,” I stressed the point.

Rene nodded as her yellow eyes, quite blurry, met mine.

“I am not quite sure about this bit.ch,” Gem said with a roll of her eyes. She was totally considerate when it came to Rene, but I could feel her mistrust now, and it was like a tug-o-war I just couldn’t win.

“We are here,” Adrian said, and I looked around. The place was totally inconspicuous. There was no trace that this wasn’t a high-tech facility. It looked like a junk yard. The walls had vulgar graffiti, and there were tall trash cans filled to the brim. It was all done perfectly to distract anyone who came close enough.

I pushed the door open and looked around. I didn’t remember the place. But I remembered the sound. It was a faint humming sound, and you would only hear it if you listened closer, and somehow, I knew how to listen to that sound. It vibrated along my

skin and my skin hurt. I knew it was from some year-old fear, but it still felt physical, and the pain manifested along with the memories randomly pinging inside my head.

"Please... I don't want to do this, mother," Little Emorilee said.

"It is only a tiny little skin sample, darling. Come on, Riley, you are my brave girl. Mommy will give you a full KitKat if you stay still."

The blade was sharp. It was only a small cut, but the girl felt the pain of it everywhere. A scream filled my ears. Mine. Hers. The little girl cried and then fell asleep, tears staining her skin. And the next day, another little cut. No matter how much the girl begged, the sharp blade never stopped, and the needles kept coming.

"Perfect little Pantera. I love you." Mother's voice was unusually kind. The yellow eyes glowed. It was Rene. And I realized why Rene felt a connection to my mother. The way she looked at Rene was kinder, more affectionate than the way she looked at the girl.

This was the place.

"We are here. If you listen closer... you will hear the various machines humming in the air," I said and shuddered as Roman pulled me into a hug. His body was strong and warm. I felt so cold, though, despite the warmth.

Some of the memories were not Rene's. She didn't remember them. That was why she was so fond of our mother. She didn't remember the scalpel, or the needles. She only remembered the chocolates.

We ran towards the front, and it was once again made to look like it was an old, abandoned warehouse.

Roman kicked the door in and we walked inside. I somehow knew where exactly I had to go.

"Does this look empty to you?"

"They are trying to leave by the back door. They knew," Finn said. "Ash just mind-linked me." Finn shifted and ran around the building.

Roman gave me a quick look and I nodded. "Go." He ran to the backside as I surveyed the building. The walls had voices...

I looked at Adrian. "Let's do this?" He cupped my face and motioned me to look at him, only him.

"How do they know? It is impossible unless someone told them," I said as my body shuddered. Adrian ran his fingers along my arm, sending calming energy.

“Nothing matters. We will save Dean and others, okay?”

Adrian looked like he was mind-linking Roman.

“Rome said Dean was in the car, so was the doctor and a few other vampires. There was no sign of Ramsay, and your moth-“

“Mother is here,” Rene said, her hackles raised. She looked alert as her yellow eyes glowed.

“She is here, Adrian,” I said as I heard a soft snarl, and then she jumped out. She was still in his human form, but her eyes were already glowing.

My body trembled. I thought I was ready for this.

But I wasn’t.

Adrian growled in warning. She smirked.

“Stay back, wolf,” she said in a voice that was strong, regal. Her hair, like fire red, glowed and then slowly turned black, the same way mine did when I first shifted into Rene.

Adrian’s eyes widened.

I didn’t know why her command worked on him. He was a fuc.king Alpha. Even Roman’s Alpha voice didn’t affect him like this.

So how could she control him?

She laughed, her voice blissful and arrogant as she looked at me. I couldn’t move. My body felt like it was made of stone. Everything in me burned. I felt like I was going up in flames.

“I have been waiting to meet you for a long time, Emorilee. Let’s go home.”

Just like that?

I felt Rene’s conflict, but she knew nothing about this woman. Even though my memories were random, none of them proved that she was a good person. No, every single memory proved she was evil, cold... vile.

Adrian finally found a way to move. He growled and barrelled towards Nadia, his eyes flaming, his anger roaring. I had never seen him like that.

“Like a hot warrior.”

This fuc.king wolf had no sense of time or place. This wasn't the time to admire how hot Adrian looked.

She jumped and moved away as he shifted into his primordial Lycan. Clay stood taller. His brown and white fur gleamed in the sunlight. She twisted around and I saw the glint of a needle before it hit Clay in his back. I couldn't even warn Adrian.

"No," I hissed as Clay stumbled. It was some kind of syringe. Of course. I couldn't even mind-link. F**k me. But she was wrong if she thought I was going down without a fight.

Adrian stumbled and fell to the cold floor with a thud as the drug slowly worked into his system. I hoped with all my heart that it was only a sedative.

"No one touches my MATE," I growled out as I glared at her and grabbed the gun I was carrying in my waist band.

"He is your mate? This weak Lycan?" She sniggered. Her smile was pure mockery.

"What did you give him?" I hissed as I looked at him.

"Shoot her," Reid said as he appeared behind her. "Roman asked me to come."

"Go away..." I said to Reid. "Please. She is powerful." My mother didn't even care Reid was here. I knew he was nothing to her.

"Come on now, Riley. I don't want to fight with you."

"You are evil," Reid hissed as he shifted into his wolf, but I knew it was no use. She took Adrian out. It was only a matter of-

Her claws grew as she grabbed Liam — Reid's wolf— by the scruff of his neck and hurled him at one of the dumpsters. "Stay, or I will kill you," Nadia hissed, her eyes glowing.

"Let me take you home. It has been a long day..."

"Home? Where is home, Nadia? I only remember the glass cage in this place, and no one would call that home!" I hissed as I pointed the gun at her. She didn't even blink. She stared straight at the gun as if she was sure that I wouldn't shoot.

My fingers trembled.

Gem roared in my head. She was angry to see that Adrian was hurt.

My heart was racing. Sweat dripped down my brows, between my breasts. Everything felt so bright.

Memories flashed in and out. My body shuddered from the resonant echoes of the voices that wouldn't leave. Despite my efforts to push the voices aside, they seemed to claw their way back into my consciousness, a relentless force that refused to be silenced.

As I wrestled with these unsettling memories, I couldn't help but wonder... did she hold a power over me, as well, just as she did over Rene? Why couldn't my fingers fuc.king move? Everything in me wanted to hurt her for hurting my mate, but... I-

"You won't shoot me, darling girl."

"I hate you," my voice came out broken. "I hate you."

My lips quivered. My eyes felt blurry and my chest felt tight. I couldn't breathe properly. My lungs felt like they had shrunk.

"You don't hate me."

And somehow... I believed her.

And I hated myself for that.

-Roman-

The van screeched to life, its engine roaring with a jarring sound that set my senses on edge. Tires scraped along the road as one of the vampires with the doctor started to sh*ot. Instinctively, I let out a primal roar, fueled by a surge of adrenaline and anger, as Finn and I sprinted towards the vehicle.

Amidst the cacophony of the revving engine, Ash's voice pierced through the clamor, her words barely audible above the noise. "I see him!" she shouted, urgency lacing her voice. "Dean... he is inside that f**king van."

She started to run along with Bella, as more cars came out from inside the building, and they came with guns blazing. And here my mom said I couldn't use my guns their mom teach them anything?

Finn's eyes gleamed with a fierce determination as he looked at me.

"They are not taking him anywhere," he hissed as he jumped at the top of one of the cars hurtling towards us. I was surprised that he hadn't fallen yet. There were so many cars, and so many vampires shooting at us. We were outnumbered, but we were on a mission.

Ash blasted the tire of the car Finn was currently standing on. The car swerved, the tires spinning around before it came to a halt. Finn punched through the metal... as if it was made of paper and his claws cut into the skin of one of the vampires.

Bella tore off the second vampire before she started to run towards the van that had gained some distance while we were distracted by the guns and the oncoming cars.

Ash followed Bella.

I saw Ash shifting into her Lycan midway, and my eyes widened when I saw the white energy pulsing around her. She still hadn't turned twenty, but she already got her power. She roared and the place vibrated.

Bella shot at the van's wheel, trying to stop the vehicle, but the one behind the wheel was good. I could see the doctor's worried look as he stared at the Lycans following him. He was not leaving this place, not alive.

Dustin was fighting two vampires who came from inside the laboratory, while Finn was trying to stop the cars from reaching my sister and Bella.

I shot the wheel of another car, and jumped up on the roof. I shifted and Karl snarled and punched the roof in, before pulling the pale bloodsucker out from the driver's side and jumping down. He slammed him down the road before kicking him into the next car that was speeding towards us.

"As.shole," Karl snarled inside as he closed his eyes, and I felt the power surround me. It was like a powerful shield.

The car collided against me, and I kicked it with a roar that shook the building, and I looked up when I heard a second roar matching mine. Ashelene.

She glowed.

Her Lycan, Mei, suddenly looked bigger as she tore a piece of metal from the side of the van. I saw the pale face of the doctor.

"Please..." He looked scared.

I wondered how many please Riley had said to him, how many Dean had said to him...

"You don't deserve to even say that word," Bella growled as the van came to a halt. Bella dragged the doctor out of the car by the collar of his lab coat, hissing at his face. He looked so f.ucking frail. A pathetic creature.

Bella's canines grew.

“Let me go. I was forced to do-“

“Lies,” Bella hissed. “Do I look like an i****t?” She looked inside the car and her face morphed into one of anger and rage.

The doctor shuddered.

“I – only I can save him,” the doctor said.

Bella’s eyes flashed. “You don’t have to save him. I will find a way to save him,” she growled and, as I watched, her claws cut into his heart and she ripped his heart clean out of his chest before she threw his body down.

I ran to the van and saw that Ash was trying to use her power to wake Dean up. He looked thin... small... barely there.

“He is not... I don’t think he is alive.”

!!!

– Chapter 68

-Roman-

I looked at Dean’s body. He looked still. There was no movement.

I moved Ashelene’s Lycan away and touched Dean’s skin, letting my power warm him. He felt so cold under my palm. Bella stood there, covered in b***d as she stared at me and Dean. Her eyes were frightened as she looked at Dean and then at the dead body below.

A small growl left her lips as she walked towards the van, her steps hesitant.

“Dean,” she growled out as she stared down at me.

“I am trying. He is not gone. We will find a way to bring him back.”

She looked at the doctor, her eyes weary and regretful. “I shouldn’t have-“

“For all we knew, he was lying. If he could have helped Dean, he would already have. There is no one else in the van though,” I said as I looked at Finn and Dustin. “Sweep the entire building. If you find even one wolf alive, bring them out.”

Dustin nodded as he ran inside. Finn hesitated as he stared at Dean.

“He looks so f*****g cold, cold...” Finn hissed as his eyes blurred. I understood how he felt. It would destroy me if something happened to Adrian. We shared a different kind of bond. Friendship. It was just as strong as anything else in the world.

“I will help him. Go,” I said as Ashelene walked Bella to the side.

When they came back, they were already in their human form and wearing a long shirt.

“Rome?” Ash mumbled and I sighed. He was still unresponsive, but I could feel a faint pulse. He was alive, but he wasn’t really there. My heart constricted to see him like this. He had always been the life of the party, along with Adrian. Finn and I were a bit on the reserved side, but when the four of us were together, everything was better.

I hated to see him like this. He looked nothing like the man he once was.

Bella’s eyes watered, and Ash hugged her.

“Would he ever-” She bit her lips as she looked at Dean. “I wanted to say to him that it wasn’t a fling. He always asked me to – he said he wanted to be my guy, my boyfriend. He wanted to tell Adrian, and you. I would laugh at him and say... he was delusional. I would say... it was just fun. But Rome...” Bella sniffed as she wiped her hand across her cheeks, but the tears didn’t stop. Her body trembled uncontrollably. “But Rome... it is not fun for me now.”

Even Karl was affected. His eyes were wet, too.

“Oh my baby, oh... I am so so sorry, but Dean is strong and he will come back if he knows you finally agreed to accept his as your guy,” Ashelene sniffled as she rocked Bella back and forth.

“Please Dean, if you come back.... I will be your girlfriend, and you can be my guy. Please.” A loud sob tore through her chest as she shook her head, over and over.

“Ash, just take her back to her place. She doesn’t look so good,” I mind-linked my sister. Ashelene looked at me and sighed.

“You think she will come with me? She won’t move an inch from Dean,” Ash said as she looked at her best friend.

“Bella? Bella?” She didn’t even respond to my voice. She kept looking at Dean, and muttering something under her breath.

“I am sorry I was a bad, bad b***h, Dean. I took all of that, I took you for granted, but...”

“BELLA!”

“Rome?”

“Go home.”

She shook her head as she gripped Dean’s hand. “No, I am not going anywhere without him.”

“Then go with him. Yes, go with him. Take him to doctor Tim, and Ash, use your power all the way back to the Red building,” I said as I looked at my sister and she nodded. And then I looked at Bella.

She didn’t look like she is in any state to drive.

I mind-linked Adrian, hoping I could ask him to send Reid back. There was no response.

“Ad?” There was only a big, black veil.

f**k. I was lost in this chaos I didn’t even check in with Adrian and Riley. My body shuddered as I jumped down.

“Ash, call Dee. She said she will be waiting close by. She will bring you back to Red watchers.”

Ash nodded as she grabbed her phone.

“I can’t get in touch with Adrian. Bella, can you please try now?” I said to her. Her glassy eyes met mine and for a second, she looked confused and then she nodded, finally grasping what I was asking her.

She tried and shook her head.

“No. Something is wrong,” she whispered as I started to run.

“What a bunch of dumb heads. How can we just leave them there?” Karl hissed.

“I sent Reid. I- I should have checked with Adrian, though,” I said as I cursed myself for this. When I reached the back, I first saw Reid. He was unconscious and there was a long s***h along his cheek.

And then I saw Clay sprawled on the floor next to Riley, unconscious.

I looked at my mate. Her hand trembled as she held the gun to her mother. She looked pale, and sweaty. My heart felt weird when I looked at her like that. She looked vulnerable, sad, and torn.

They were busy staring at each other that they hadn't noticed me. I crept behind the dumpster and grabbed the tranquilizer from my backpack. I almost wanted to kill Nadia, but I knew Riley wouldn't get her closure if I did that.

"Oh, I don't know. I think we should just end this b***h right here for what she did to our mate," Karl said with a snarl. "She doesn't deserve to live."

"I know. I want to, but looking at Riley now... I think it is better if we take her alive," I said as I walked out, hiding my Wolf's scent and my Alpha Aura. It was one of my many powers that came in handy at times like these.

I made sure not to make a sound, before I aimed the tranq gun at the woman's back and send it flying. She whirled around at the last second and caught it, almost dramatically. Nadia's lips pulled up in a derisive smirk as she threw it down.

"You want me to hurt all your friends, Riley?" Nadia asked Riley and Riley shook her head as she looked at me and then down at Adrian's Lycan. He looked like a block of ice. Why was he not moving? What happened? Fear gripped my throat, but I knew it wasn't the time to let fear overtake me. Or anger.

There was not even a single show of fear in her eyes. Somehow she looked like she had the upperhand, even though she was outnumbered her. Did she know something we didn't?

For now, I had to channel Adrian, and think.

"And wolf, do not try to even get closer to me," Nadia said as her black hair shone. Her yellow eyes were so empty, emotionless.

"What did you do to Adrian? Why is he not waking up?"

"Oh, don't worry, Riley, he will only wake up if he has the antidote," she said, her eyes freezing cold and I shuddered. No. No. Nothing could happen to Adrian.

Riley shook her head and shot at the woman. She jumped and smiled again.

"

"You have a very good aim. If you have intended to kill me, you would have killed me."

-Riley-

My whole body shook.

“KILL HER,” Gem roared in my head. I felt Rene’s denial in waves, when Gem said that. The two animals looked at each other with a wave of distrust and I hated it. And her.

But, I couldn’t bring myself to take that shot.

Looking at Roman gave me some strength, but I felt like I had failed Adrian, failed him, everyone. I was a f*****g weakling when it mattered.

“He will only wake up if he has the antidote,” Nadia’s voice was smug, and Gem growled again.

“If you don’t do something now, Riley, I will...” She sounded angry. And I almost felt her pushing... She wanted to shift. It felt different.

Usually, when I shifted, we would think about it together, and the shift would be as easy as breathing. But now... it felt like my skin was breaking into pieces.

“Please, I will take care of this.”

“How? You can’t even shoot, and my mate looks like... this,” Gem said as she let out a roar.

“Stop! I asked Rene to trust me. But now... you are the one who is not trusting me?”

“Have I ever not trusted you? But I can’t this time... not when Adrian’s life is on danger.”

“He is my MATE too, and I love him. I love him more than I hate this woman. Let me deal with her,” I said as I looked at Nadia and shoot at her. The woman moved away and laughed at me.

She was so, so smug.

“You have a very good aim. If you have intended to kill me, you would have killed me.”

What the hell was she talking about? I had only ever shot Hiran when he was being an a*****e.

“Your father trained you when you were little, and you never missed a target,” she said, her voice laced with- was that pride? What was this woman? I couldn’t understand her, but maybe I shouldn’t try to.

She was NOT my mother. She was a scientist who used me to study and improve her project. She used me as a pawn to get whatever she wanted. What kind of love was that?

Her narcissism was just as stark and bright as Hiran’s.

“Yes. If I wanted, I would have killed. Give me the freaking antidote. If something happens to him, I will hunt you down.”

“I never said I won’t give you the antidote, Riley, but... I have always loved bartering. I will give you the antidote, and you will come with me. See, it was a fair trade. A life for a life.”

I growled as Roman pounced at her. He took a swipe at her side, and she did stumble back this time. Maybe because Roman was stronger, and blue b***d.

“You did a big mistake, you beast,” she said as she closed her eyes and let out a loud roar. Roman’s body was covered with his power, the one that came with being the blue blooded Lycan.

Nadia seemed unimpressed and I watched with fascination and fear as black fur begin to form on her hands and long claws protruded. Her eyes were brighter than before as she looked at Roman and I saw the yellow light twisting around her. It looked like... how Roman’s power looked, and felt. The buzz of the power was intense.

He looked stunned for a second before he let out an ear-splitting roar and stormed at her. They both stumbled back from the force of their power and I felt the air crackling as their powers slammed against each other and then broke open the silence.

I had heard that only blue blooded shifters and wolves. Was she- Royal?

“Mother is an Alpha just like us, and she is also... of an old royal line,” Rene said. I blinked.

She looked straight at me. But she wasn’t looking at me, she was looking at Rene, the Panther inside me. I didn’t know her much, but I hoped Rene would understand how bad mother was.

“Rene... don’t you miss your mother? Your father is the reason you were buried. He had always wished Riley was a wolf.”

“Do not- she isn’t going to come with you, you f*****g-“

I bent down and grabbed my stomach. Pain shot through my nerve ends.

This time it wasn’t Gem who was trying to shift. It was Rene.

!!!

– Chapter 69

-Roman-

I could feel Nadia's power even before the yellow light twisted around her. It was the same as mine. She was a blue b***d, too. There might not be any more Panthers left to rule over, but she was still from a long line of original Panteras.

The collision ffor our powers stunned me. It momentarily disoriented her, too, but she was more interested in talking with Rene than fighting me.

I hoped Rene wouldn't do anything drastic. I saw Riley's face morphing into one of pain and anger. She shook her head as a growl left her lips.

"STOP."

"You can do it, Rene," Nadia said in a voice that chilled me. What the f**k was she talking about?

"Riley? Kitten? What is happening?" I asked her and she shook her head.

Riley gritted her teeth as she shook her head. "It is Rene. She is trying to shift."

My heart clenched. When the animal shifted when Riley didn't want to shift, it would hurt Riley.

Nadia chuckled, her voice low and sinister. I didn't know what I was supposed to do.

My best friend was on the floor, unconscious. Reid was slowly coming to his senses, but even with an army, how could I defeat her when the animal in my mate trusted her mother, and the said mother also had an antidote for whatever the heck it was in Adrian's bloodsream.

"This is a flaming pile of s**t," Karl said.

"Can you find a way to connect with Rene?"

Even without the mark, Karl could connect with Rene because they were mates. It was different than the mind-link, but it worked.

"I don't – I only feel the block, and the confusion. And pain. So much pain. Something is wrong," Karl said.

"Of course something is wrong. Rene is trying to shift..."

"No, I mean, something is wrong with Rene. She is hurting too... I can sense her pain. I think Nadia is doing something..."

My eyes widened as I looked at Riley and saw as her hair slowly turned red and her eyes glowed yellow, and soon the black panther stood on four legs, looking up at Nadia. There was no hostility in Rene's eyes, though. She only looked bewildered.

"Oh my little Pantera. I know you will always choose mine."

"No," I hissed. "Rene... look at me."

She tilted her head up and stared. "Do not go anywhere with her. You know what she did. I know you would have sensed Riley's fear, knew Riley's memory."

Rene's eyes turned dull for a second before she looked away quickly and I saw her looking at Nadia again.

"She wishes to come with me. You can't stop her. You don't want her hurt, do you?" Nadia's voice was cold. There was no emotion in this woman's voice, no love left. Why the hell did she want my mate then? Why would she take her away? For more experiment? To use her for her own gain, once again?

"I would never let you take her away from me and Adrian. You are not going to hurt her or use her again. Not when I am here," I growled and my body burned as my power became stronger, stronger than I had ever felt. It was fear that pushed me now. Fear and desperation.

"Oh, I am going to take her away, because if I am not, Adrian will be dead."

Rene shook her head and let out a growl. Nadia looked down at Rene and her lips twisted. I felt so damn helpless right now. I could kill her, but if she died, Adrian would probably die, too. If she lived, Riley might get hurt.

"Here," Nadia turned to look at me and threw a vial towards me. "I have no intention of killing him, anyway. None of you are important, now that my daughter is coming with me. Come on, Pantera, let's go," Nadia said. "Oh and don't try to stop us. You really need to take care of your friend first, because the more time you take to inject the first antidote, and the second, the more he will be slipping away from the land of living."

Second? I only had one vial. I looked at Adrian. He was whimpering, even when he was unconscious. His body was twisting and turning. My stomach twisted as the pit it became bigger. Dean and now Adrian...

I growled at her. Everything in me burned to just rip her into pieces. I would have too. Karl was clawing at me to let him too. But I couldn't. Not yet.

She was winning. If this was a game of chess... she had my queen.

"The second antidote is inside. You can find it in the first refrigerator. There will be a big ONE plastered across it."

"How the hell would I know which one is it in the refrigerator."

"Oh, you will know only when you inject all of them into your friend. You should start now with the first dose before it is too late. It has more than hundred vials, and only one is the actual drug. The others are just placebos."

"I want to kill this b***h. If she wasn't our enemy, I would have appreciated how smart this was. We won't let anyone die... the problem of being a good guy," Karl said. "And she knows that."

I walked towards Adrian and bent down. I looked at Rene and she was looking at me, too. I thrust the antidote inside him. He growled, still not waking up. Sweat dripped down his brows, and he looked bloodless.

"Ad? Ad?"

He twitched and g*****d and screamed, his voice laced with agony. His eyes blinked open and I saw they were red. I wished he had stayed unconscious, because...

He let out a loud screame as tears rolled down his cheeks.

-Adrian-

Pain. I had never felt so much pain in my life. Every organ inside felt like it was slowly catching fire. As darkness slowly faded away, I saw Roman's worried eyes looking down at me, but my mind instinctively tried to sense Riley's presence.

Something was wrong. I felt cold.

"Ri-"

"Ssh," Roman said as he stood up and took me in his arms. "Hold on, Ad, please hold on."

I looked around and I saw Rene walking away with Nadia. As if she could sense my eyes on her back, she turned around and gave me that yellow eyed gaze, that somehow made my heart ache more.

She looked sad.

“Rene...” My voice came out broken, despite the effort. The pain was just too staggering, but why was Roman here with me instead of Rene? What the hell was he doing? “Go,” I hissed out.

He shook his head. “If I go now, you will die.”

“Find someone else to help me, or let me die. Go save her.” I could hold on, too, if I just knew Riley was safe.

“What the f**k are you saying?” Roman growled as his eyes flashed, and he started to run inside the building, away from Rene. f**k it. No way in hell. I could already feel his pain and the conflict. He was my f*****g best friend.

“Where are the others?”

“Reid is still half unconscious. Ash and Bella took Dean. Dustin was looking for the wolves.”

“Take me there, leave me and go. Now stop dilly-dallying and run.”

He started to run, and soon he put me in front of a mini refrigerator. “Only one is the correct dose,” he said with a wince and opened the refrigerator and we both gasped.

The refrigerator was stacked with hundreds of the same bottles.

I winced. The burning was getting worse.

“Our mother-in-law is a smart b***h,” Clay said with a growl and a shake of his head. Whatever it was in my b***d, it was stopping my usual healing power to kick in.

“Wish me luck and run...” I said as I grabbed a syringe and leaned against the wall, ready for more pain. This was going to be so horrible, but... losing Riley would just kill me. Kill both of us.

Roman gave me one last look before he shifted and ran.

I injected the first dose, the second... My fingers trembled. The burn was becoming an inferno. It wouldn't stop. I screamed as a fresh shot of pain shot through my heart. It felt like someone was hammering nails into my heart muscles.

I grabbed the third one. My hands were shaking now, and the pain was growing. I couldn't- My eyes burned, and my heart froze when I saw b***d dotting my skin.

It didn't look too good. I injected another dose and then another.

I don't want to die. I blinked my eyes and tears dripped down my cheeks. I touched my tears with a wince and my finger was red. My tears were red.

I had only had a short time with my Riley. I wanted a lifetime and some. I wanted forever with her. But I knew Roman would save her from that evil, horrendous b***h. It was wrong, I knew, but that woman really was a f*****g b***h. She hurt Riley when she was just a kid and she hurt Dean... and now... I prayed with everything that he would save her.

It would hurt him to lose both of us.

And he would help Riley and Gem, too, to get over the pain of losing me.

"What the hell are you blathering about? You are not dying. We are not dying. I AM NOT DYING. I still haven't properly kissed Gem, you fucker. I can't die," Clay sounded desperate. I understood how he felt. "I want to live."

If there was no Riley, I probably wouldn't have minded dying. It happens. You can't live forever. But now that I had Riley, I was becoming greedy.

Another. Another.

My eyes were starting to feel like someone was poking an iron rod inside.

I just wanted to lie down on the cold floor and die right now. There was still so many vials. I couldn't count. I couldn't... too much.

"Ad, Ad? Wake up. Come on? What is happening here?"

"Ash?"

"Tell me what I should do."

"Tell Riley I loved her..."

"No, i***t, you aren't going anywhere. You can tell her you love her by yourself. Just tell me... what I should do?"

"Inject all of this in me, and pray that one of it is real," I slurred out and I heard Ash taking a sharp intake of breath. "I am sorry, Ash."

"Sorry? You have nothing to apologize for," her voice was a faint and distant echo.

I was fading soon. I still felt the sting of the needles though. I knew how hard it would have been for Riley when she was only a little girl.

“Dean?” I m****d out.

“Doctor Tim is taking care of him. He is alive, but...”

“Rome? Riley?”

“He was the one who asked me to come here and find you. He asked me to tell you that he will find Riley and bring her home. Dustin left with three more wolves. The rest are—

Dead.

“How many?”

“Thirteen,” she said and growled.

Darkness took me once again.

-Riley-

“I think it is time,” I said to Rene and she looked around once more. Nadia looked down at the Panther and smiled smugly.

b****h.

Rene winced when I thought that.

Now that she was far away, she couldn’t hurt Adrian again. I hoped Rome had somehow found a way to save him — I knew he was still alive, because I could feel the bond thrumming between us. It was a siren song, and there was no pain. When a mate died, the pain that would come with it would be staggering. I could feel Roman, too. He was coming for us.

No f*****g b****h could take me away from my mates. No. Even if the b****h was my mother and royal. No power was strong enough to cut me off from Rome and Ad. No, they were mine, and I would fight until I couldn’t to stay with them.

“Rome is here. I hope Adrian is okay,” Gem said, her eyes tinged with worry. “If you haven’t done what you have, Rene... he wouldn’t have been...”

“You asked me to trust you, and I do. I do trust the both of you... you are a part of me, and so is Adrian and Roman. I am glad you trusted me, too. When she used her power... it hurt me and I felt like... I would explode if I didn’t shift. My mind was only filled with the pain, and I couldn’t even understand what was going on. And I couldn’t stop the shift, but I knew what I have to do... I am sorry for hurting you, Riley.”

"It is okay, and you saved Adrian. Thank you, Rene," Gem whispered, her eyes wet.

"Of course. I don't know them like you do, but I feel your emotions. Adrian and Roman are truly amazing, and I know we can't live without them."

"You are becoming smarter, Rene," I said. "NOW teach her why she shouldn't mess with us, or our mates."

Rene roared. Nadia blinked down at the Panther, confused.

Rene's eyes glowed, and I felt her strength.

"Damn, she is strong. I feel her power," Gem said as Rene took a step back and pounced at Nadia.

This time, the b***h was really going down. I didn't care if she was my mother or whatever. Not anymore.

– Chapter 70

-Deidre-

I came back after I dropped Bella and Dean at the Red Watchers' headquarters. My heart thundered as I tried to sense Reid. My body felt cold as I looked around. I finally found him sitting up, rubbing his bloodied head.

"What happened? Where is Riley?"

"Riley is with her mother," Reid said.

"You are bleeding."

"I am not. The wound is already healed. I am just dizzy."

I clung to his hands. My heart shuddered. "Do not leave me. We have things to do tomorrow. Important things. I know this is... this is serious, but Reid, I still want our ceremony to happen tomorrow. Am I selfish?" I whispered as I rubbed his chin and he leaned in closer to my touch.

"No you are not, because I can't wait to mark you and have your mark on me. It is going to be so good. Your mouth on me..." I chuckled a little and gave him my hand when I heard a loud roar.

“Damn... what is that?”

“That is my best friend,” I said as I pulled Reid up. “come on, let’s see if she needs any help,” I said when Ashelene walked out of the building.

“Hey...”

“I have called the Red Watchers to come and clean the building. There were so many dead wolves,” Ashelene shuddered as another loud roar reverberated along the ground.

Ashelene and I shared a look.

“Who is winning?”

“Of course Riley,” we all said at the same time..

-Riley-

Nadia stumbled back as Rene whirled around towards, snarling, snapping.

“Rene? What are you-“

Rene snapped her sharp teeth as she pounced. I could feel her slight hesitation still, but I knew she would do what she had to. I trusted her.

“I saw it, I saw your memories, the bad ones and I- I am sorry. Why did I not know?” she whispered as she stalked Nadia. Nadia’s face was still morphed into one of disbelief and confusion.

“I think whenever they injected me, it brought back the red eyed thing in me, and it pushed you back.”

“Rene, you are making a mistake,” Nadia said with a growl. “You think you can take me out? You are still so young.”

“Not by herself,” Roman said. My warrior prince. He looked like an angry god ready to shower wrath upon whoever dared hurt us. I smiled a little as Rene’s eyes glowed as she met Roman’s. “Hey there Kitten, are you ready?” he said as he pounced, shifting mid-jump and I gasped. I had seen him a million times, and yet everytime, my body reacted to him the same way it reacted the first time.

Roman’s claws dug through her skin and b***d oozed out. Rene took the distraction and latched her teeth on Nadia’s leg, and pulled. Nadia growled in anger, and shifted within

a second, knowing very well Rene wasn't playing anymore. Her Panther was bigger than Rene, and the same yellow glow danced around the panther.

The morning sun glowed on her golden light, making it look ethereal.

But I was hardly impressed.

Roman's white light pulsed around him as he let out a loud growl. Everything around us trembled. He was magnificent.

"He is," Rene said shyly.

"I wish my mate is here now, too," Gem said with a sigh. I still hold on to the hope that Adrian was alive. I knew he wouldn't let me go through the pain of living without him. I knew I couldn't. I already loved the both of them. They are as different as day and night, but they completed and complimented me.

Nadia let out a loud snarl as she barrelled towards Roman. Roman was towering over her in his Lycan form, though, and he could easily avoid her advance.

A gust of wind stirred the dried leaves around, carrying whispers of impending doom. I could see it, the anticipation of something massive.

I had a feeling that this would end only in death. Either I had to die or she had to, but I didn't want to die. I had a lot to live for. For two years, I wasted my life with Hiran. Now that I had found amazing men, two wonderful, kind, caring, one slightly grumpy and other charming guy, I was ready to live my best life, and this b***h wasn't going to take it away from me.

"No, she won't take it away from us," Gem said with a howl. I smiled.

As the tension surged, Roman's and Nadia's energy crackled around us, intertwining with the very essence of nature.

I could only see and feel the flash of the claws, the sound of the roar, but no one was winning yet. I was already burning to end this and get the f**k to Adrian.

I saw Nadia's Panther ripping through Karl's skin. He let out a howl of pain as he kicked the panther away from him. She rolled to the side before jumping up and quickly pouncing on him again. Karl was quick, but she was quicker. Her lean body was more agile than his.

I realized she was concentrating on attacking Karl more than Rene.

Did she really love Rene, in her own twisted, pathetic way?

I would never know, because my closure was this. She would never talk to me, or tell me why she did what she did.

“Oh no, she is hurting Karl,” Gem said with a hiss.

“No one is allowed to hurt my mate,” Rene said.

With lightning speed, the Rene lunged forward, her claws extended, her canines bared. Her movements were a quic blur as she aimed to strike at the Nadia’s vulnerable flank. I could feel her anger. She didn’t like that Nadia hurt Karl. None of us liked that.

But Nadia’s panther was no ordinary adversary. She felt Rene before Rene’s canines tore into her skin. So f*****g close. With a swift twist of her body, Nadia’s panther evaded the attack, and swiped her massive paw across Rene’s chest.

The impact reverberated through the forest, as Rene was sent sprawling backward. She howled as her body hit the tree. Karl roared and grabbed the Panther by the scruff of its neck. His claws dug into her neck as she struggled and then I saw it. I saw her power becoming instense. It was as if she was only holding back before. The full intensity of her power was blinding. Karl hissed and threw the panther dow. She quickly regained her footing, eyes gleaming with bloodlust. She wouldn’t back down, and she had the power to defeat the both of us.

Rene jumped at the air, and somersaulted gracefully, her claws aimed at the panther’s belly. But the royal panther was quick, and it was as if she could somehow sense Rene’s every move. With a roll, she rolled around and sunk her teeth into Rene’s hide. Karl hissed in anger as he tore her away from Rene and threw her against the wall.

She didn’t stay down, though.

Claws cut through skin and fur, and roars resonated through the forest. Blow after ferocious blow. B***d gushed from tore skin and stained the floor. Everything was a blur. She was so f*****g powerful, even more powerful than Roman. They both had the same power, but maybe because she lived longer, she was more experienced than Karl.

“She is powerful...”

“And we are still thinking.”

Nadia wasn’t thinking anymore. She didn’t care who she hurt. Her movement had grown powerful, her eyes furious. She would win. I needed to focus solely on fighting her and not think about anything else.

“The hulk in you,” Gem said. “But it came only two time and we don’t know what triggers it.”

"The song," I whispered as I started to mumble the creepy song Doctor Kaspar used to sing. Memories flashed behind my head, and both Rene and Gem g*****d. I felt the pain as if it was happening right now, but I also felt the burn in my b***d.

Seizing my distraction, my royal b***h of the mother's panther pounced, her jaws aiming for Rene's throat. Rene quickly evaded the attack, but she wasn't fast enough. The claws still cut through her skin and she winced.

The girls shrilly cry. The song floating in the air. The words that a girl shouldn't hear from her mother. I didn't know... but it still affected me. It hurt me more than it angered me, but anger was the one I needed now.

I thought about Adrian, my sweet, kind Adrian. The smile... I wondered if I would ever see his smile again, the one that made my world bright. Roman's smile was like the first dawn, and Adrian's smile... it was everyday magic.

She hurt him. My eyes grew blurry and an unexpressed rage filled me. It was the same as when I attacked Hiran, but it was also different. I kept thinking about Adrian, letting the pain and anger fill me.

It felt like somehow I was controlling this transformation. I didn't know how. I saw Karl jumping in to protect me from Nadia. I felt my bones twisting and turning and then I was standing on two legs, naked, and my eyes glowed. Nadia's panther was now only the outline of red and gray dancing shadows, but I knew where she was.

A loud roar left my lips as I felt my teeth growing over my lips. Nadia turned. Her eyes fell on my naked form and her eyes widened. She was stunned to see this, see me like this.

I shook my head and snarled at her before I pounced on her. She didn't expect me to shift into this. A grunt left my lips as I glared at her. She made this. She should relish in the sight of this.

I kicked the panther down, and even her power didn't put me off. The anger ran through my veins. I gripped the throat of the panther with my sharp talons and I felt the nails poking through fur and flesh with a soft, squishy sound.

Nadia howled. I punched the panther in its face.

YOU MADE THIS.

Somehow she understood my grunt and growl. She stood up and slowly back off. But I didn't want to let her go.

She quickly shifted and looked at me. "I didn't. It was an accident."

“BUT YOU USED IT.” My body pulsed with hatred. The blur in my eyes were gone now, and I was back to myself, and my animals were inside me...

“I only did what I have to. I loved you, Riley. I love you.” She didn’t feel shame to lie to me like that. What was this woman?

I shook my head with a scoff. “You didn’t love me. You don’t love me. I am a tool. I am a means to an end as far as you are concerned. I don’t care anymore, Nadia, because you are not getting out of this.”

Karl and I flanked her from both the side and she looked cornered. She was powerful, but she was tired, too.

“I don’t want to miss all the fun,” a voice said, making me jump. I looked around to see Adrian. A quick laugh left my lips, as intense happiness filled me.

“Oh my God, he is here. My Adrian is here,” Gem almost danced in my head.

“You are alright,” I whispered as he walked towards me. He still looked weaker, and there were b***d on his shirt, but he was alive.

“I am, love. I am not going anywhere, yet, Red,” he said as he joined Roman and me.

Roman smiled. “If you had died, I would have killed you...”

“Yeah, makes so much sense. Let’s end this a*****e now,” Adrian said as Nadia shifted once again. We shifted into our wolves.

The fight was intense, and I felt every punch, every kick along with Gem. Gem ushered her down to the ground, and cut her thick black fur with her claws.

She stood up and leaped as energy pulsed around us. It glowed and gleamed before she jumped down and landed outside the circle. The panther looked at Gem one last time, and that was when we heard the engine roaring to life.

Was she trying to get away?

A car came to a halt in the distance “Get the f**k in, Nadia,” a man said and she glared at me before she slowly retreated and started running towards the car, leaping over the bushes and roots and boulders. She didn’t stop.

She was trying to get away.

NOPE.

The three of us ran. I finally reached her just before she entered the car. She was naked, vulnerable. I thrust my claws in to her back and pulled down. She wailed in agony as she fell from the car with an agonized scream.

I pushed my claws in to the side of her neck and watched with satisfaction as blood gushed out of the wounds. She shouted again, her body convulsing in pain, and there was no hesitation left in me. I was convinced what I needed to do. I had to end her. She deserved to die.

I prowled towards her, and raised my hand, ready to rip her off. Everything was quiet inside me.

"Riley? Let your mother go." I snarled.

"Who the hell are -" I turned around and gasped. My heart stopped for a second before it started to thunder.

"Father?"