

His Blue Moon Princess Chapter 101 - Tips

“How have you been feeling, dear?”

Granny Ariadna is still the same, sweet and gentle. I smile back at her and nod. She takes notes as she examines me, but I feel fine.

“I’ve been fine. I do feel a bit tired when I exercise for too long, but otherwise, my legs don’t feel so heavy anymore, I can stand for a long time with getting dizzy or anymore.”

After all, it’s been more than three months already since I woke up. As the doctors predicted, my recovery was fast and well. Though I do have to comply with regular check-ups, nothing’s been wrong with me so far. I had to use the wheelchair for a few weeks, but it was really inconvenient, and I was glad my reeducation took me off it soon enough. Tonia and Granny Ariadna have been of great help with all the process.

“Everything looks fine, Nora. We will keep the next appointment for two weeks from now, but with your medication working well, it should be the last one.”

Good! Those trips to the hospital once every two weeks are becoming a bit too much now, and with this, I will probably be able to resume work soon also.

Of course, I still had to take my responsibilities as a Luna as soon as I woke up, but with Damian, Bobo and about all of the Pack watching over me, I’ve been taking it easy. Granny Ariadna signs a few papers with me, and I finally leave the hospital with Bobo.

While he’s driving, his smartphone rings. It’s Daniel’s ringtone, so I take it.

“Hi Danny, it’s Nora. Bobo’s driving, I’ll put you on speaker.”

“Oh, Hi, honey. How are you, sleeping beauty?” He asks.

“Still awake! I’m fine, thanks. What about you? Anything new?”

“Nothing much. Work, studies, begging my girl to come home...”

I sigh. Elena’s matter is still a mess... She left while I was in a coma, and is not willing to come back no matter how many times Daniel and I ask. I know she had many reasons to leave Silver City, and I can understand why she did,

but I miss my cousin, a lot. And I want to meet my little baby cousin, too... I exchange a look with Bobo, he's frowning.

"How's she?" I ask Daniel.

"Fine, fine, the little one too. Anyway, I was actually about to call you, Nora. Elena has all those business study books she left at our place, she said you could borrow it. Are you going to study at University?"

"What? No, no, I'm not, I'm just studying on my own for now. I'm too busy being a Luna, and I haven't gone back to work yet, I don't have any time to take classes now. But yes, I asked Elena if I could borrow some of her books, I wanted to see about business management for the restaurant."

It's some sort of personal challenge I set myself, as well as a good way to keep myself busy. Moreover, aside from my position as a Luna, I'm still considering a career in the catering industry, and also I want to be able to understand Damian's job better. Last time I was clueless while confronting King, and I never want this to happen ever again...

"Oh, I get it. Well, I packed it up, so you can come whenever you want!" Replies Danny over the phone.

I give a glimpse to Bobo, but he already took the direction to his boyfriend's flat. I smile.

"Looks like we're coming now, Danny."

"Awesome! Sylviana just got there too, we can have tea!"

He looks only too happy to have us over, so I chat a bit more before hanging up. Daniel and I got a lot closer these past few weeks since he sees Bobo often and we both miss Elena a lot...

When we arrive, he opens the door right away with a big welcoming smile.

"Hello, honey! I'm glad to see you! Come in, come in."

I step inside his apartment, and a sweet smell of chamomille reaches me. A familiar scent too, Sylviana's. I don't know if it's a witch thing or just her, but she smells awfully anytime I see her. That day, her hair is put up in a bun, wearing an Asian-style dress, and she is pouring tea in cups. The witch of

Silver City looks like she came right out of a painting, a mysterious beauty as always. She smiles when I come in.

“Hi, Nora. How was your check-up?”

“It went fine, as usual.”

“Good. I knew you were doing great. Your Moon power is...”

She suddenly stops, and her eyes become light green while still looking at me. I frown. Isn't that when she's using her magic? While we stare at each other in an odd moment, Daniel and Bobo walk in, hand in hand. Daniel spots Sylviana's undecipherable expression, my confusion, and turns to her.

“Syl? What's wrong?”

But she doesn't answer and instead, suddenly smiles brightly. She puts the teapot down and walks to me, suddenly grabbing my wrist gently. Her fingers do some strange movements on my hand while I'm still stuck there with no idea how to react.

“Sylviana?” I call her again.

She keeps doing whatever she is doing until she slowly answers me with her eyes still light green, looking mesmerized.

“Nora... Your Moon Power is channeling.”

What does that even mean? By reflex, I turn my head a bit look at my hair running down my shoulders, but it's still black, and it will remain so until night time, as usual. Daniel and Bobo look just as confused as I am.

“Syl, you have to talk to us in human language. Is Nora ok?” Asks Danny.

“More than ok. Nora, you're expecting.”

I'm... What? I stare at her in awe. Sylviana smiles and lets go of my wrist, giving me a second. Behind me, I hear Daniel gasp, but my own heart just skipped a beat. Expecting? I'm pregnant? It takes me a minute to process, but Sylviana is gently waiting.

“Syl, I... Are you...”

“I’m sure,” she answers very calmly. “You’re about... Four weeks along. Do you want to know the gender?”

What gender, I’m still barely realizing what she just said! By mere reflex, I put a hand on my stomach. Is it possible? I mean, I’ve been with Damian a lot since I woke up, and we definitely had sex as soon as the doctor said it was ok, we missed each other’s warmth so much... But for me to be pregnant so fast? Four weeks...!

Daniel suddenly screeches behind me, totally excited.

“Oh, my holy Moon Goddess! A baby! Nora’s having a baby! The King’s Baby!”

I ignore him and turn to Sylviana.

“Is it... Really?”

Bobo walks up to me and makes me sit, probably worried I would pass out from the shock. And honestly, I could. The news is so sudden, it’s like my brain suddenly stops functioning, and this one sentence keeps echoing on my mind. But Sylviana, patient as ever, gently nods again.

Gosh, a baby... A real baby, I’m carrying a baby. Damian’s baby! Wait, only four weeks, it must be so small! Not even a proper baby yet, just a little, tiny seed... I suddenly feel tears coming, and I don’t stop them. I’m pregnant... I’m thinking about Damian, probably working in his office or in a meeting right now. We’re going to be parents...

“It seems healthy, too.”

“You can tell all that just by looking at me?” I ask Sylviana.

“The most ancient witches were midwives, it’s like our specialty to help pregnant women and care for infants. Most of our knowledge was aimed at protecting newborns and their mothers. I’ll definitely help you all I can,” promises Sylviana with a smile.

“Sylviana helped a lot for Elena’s pregnancy too,” Adds Daniel.

I nod. I... How am I supposed to react next? Oh, gosh, I need to tell Damian! What time is it? I decide to mind-link him, too eager to say to him to look for my phone.

Damian?

Nora, what is it? Everything ok Love?

I...

No, wait, I can't just tell him like this. I should probably wait until he's available and all. How do I even tell him, I still can't believe the news myself!

When are you finishing work tonight?

Not sure...

Can you come home early? ...Please?

Ok, I will. Are you sure you're ok?

Oh, Moon Goddess, I'm more than okay! I'm over the moon right now! We're having a baby! I try to contain myself and breathe in before answering, in the calmest voice I can.

I'm fine. See you tonight?

Yeah, I promise I'll come home as early as I can.

Alright. I love you.

I love you.

I cut the mind-link and catch some air again. Around me, Daniel and Sylviana are waiting for my reaction, and Bobo's put is big hand on my shoulder.

"Did you tell him?" Asks Daniel.

"I will tell him tonight at home."

"Good idea! Let's prepare a surprise!" He answers, all excited.

“I think this announcement alone is enough of a surprise, Daniel,” laughs Sylviana.

I ignore him and turn to Sylviana. Where do I even begin? There are a million questions I want to ask her!

“You said he or she is healthy, right?”

“Yes, Nora, this baby is well. It will be a strong one, do not worry. Probably an Alpha, too.”

Well, anything else would have been surprising, giving Damian and my heritage... I suddenly remember she asked if I wanted to know the gender. Do I? I would be fine with either a boy or a girl... But maybe it would be better to know, just so we can plan things? We already have a couple of rooms at home we could easily turn into a nursery... I can already picture the little room beside our bedroom, with a crib and pastel colors on the wall... Moon Goddess, this is real. Damian and I had talked about having children, we wanted to have some, maybe two or three, but I didn't think it would happen so fast!

The rest of the day is unbelievably slow. I decided not to ask Sylviana yet about the gender, and ask Damian first if he wanted to know. I know I would, but I want to hear his choice too. Daniel is excited about my pregnancy, as he loves children. Sylviana was unbelievably gentle and explained a lot of things to me, like how I will need to adapt my diet, and how my body might change. As she said, she truly knows a lot.

When I'm waiting for Damian at home that night, I feel a lot calmer. Bobo is waiting with me, in his wolf form. My feet are resting on his enormous back, while I'm sitting on the couch, one of Elena's study books in my hands. It's seven o'clock already. Damian should be there anytime now.

Suddenly, the entrance door opens, and my fiancé walks in, smiling only when he sees me. I smile back, and we meet for a kiss. He hugs me for a long time like he always does when we've been apart for more than a few hours. Bobo leaves silently for us to be alone.

When Damian lets go of me, I'm already smiling uncontrollably. He notices and smiles too, a bit intrigued.

“What is it, Love? You look happy.”

“Come sit with me.”

I take him to our couch, where we sit facing each other. Damian frowns, he hates when he doesn't know what's going on. My future husband hates surprises, so I wanted to keep this as intimate and simple as possible.

“Damian, I went to see Daniel and Sylviana today.”

He nods. This is nothing unusual for me, he knows there's something else. I take a deep breathe in and look him in the eye.

“Sylviana, she... She said I'm pregnant.”

For a couple of seconds, he doesn't react at all, looking at me blankly. Then, I see him take a deep breath in, and he repeats slowly.

“...Pregnant?”

I nod, with a smile.

“She said I'm four weeks along.”

“You're... Pregnant...”

He doesn't seem to react, and for a second I'm worried he's in shock or something. But then, he suddenly gets up and turns his back to me. I'm a bit surprised. What's wrong with him? I get up too, and when I go to his side, I'm suddenly the one in shock.

Oh, Moon Goddess. He's crying. He turns his head away, but I already saw it. Damian, the strongest, bravest man I know, my mate, my love is crying, but for some reason, my heart feels so happy. I gently caress his neck with my fingers.

“Are you happy, my Love?” I ask.

“Oh, Nora...”

He suddenly takes me in his arms, his head against my neck. I suddenly feel like crying too as I hug him back. We stay like this for a very long time, as Damian's tears slowly disappear against my skin. Moon Goddess, I love this man... I give him all the time he needs, gently caressing his back. He whispers in my ear, like a silent prayer.

“Thank you... Thank you...”

I ignore the tears on my cheeks and kiss him. When we separate, his tears are all dried up. Damian kisses my forehead and puts a gentle hand on my tummy.

“She’s sure?” He asks.

“Yes. 4 weeks, she said.”

“4 weeks... Did she tell what it was?”

“I didn’t ask yet. I wanted to know if you wanted to.”

“I don’t care, as long as he or she is healthy, and you too.”

I nod. I know we are going to be ok. How could it be otherwise? We have so many people supporting us. Moon Goddess, the Clan will be overjoyed when we will announce it. We are having a baby!

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Early December, 11 months into Nora’s coma.

“She’s turning 19 today.”

Sylviana raises her head to look at me, a bit surprised.

“Are you talking about Nora?”

I nod. I just thought about it, too. We had her Birthday celebrated with present and all last year, but those last few months have gone by so fast I almost forgot. From behind her kitchen counter, Sylviana resumes her cutting. She has been at it since this morning. I don’t really know what she’s been doing, I see her bring lots of flowers and seeds from her garden, mixing and cutting it, boiling stuff and crushing it in one of her mortar. As usual, she won’t explain anything. It’s like watching someone cooking, but I don’t recognize any ingredient or have the slightest idea of what she’s preparing.

Though, as a werewolf, I love being at her place. Sylvia’s house is like a greenhouse. There are plants about everywhere, on tables, shelves, even on the walls and ceiling. When she doesn’t grow plants, she dries them or cooks

them into some stuff. She even stocks some roots and b.ranches. I don't get it, but she knows what she's doing.

"I see..." She says. "Let's visit her then!"

She smiles at me, and I get up from the bed, grabbing my pants to put on.

"You think I should get her some present?" I ask.

Is it ok to bring a present to someone in the coma? She's been in that state for almost a year already...

"I know I'm bringing one!"

Sylviana's melodious voice is as cheerful as usual. Sometimes, I'm surprised by how my girlfriend is optimistic despite the situation. Especially when it comes to Nora. But it's contagious too. I feel a bit cheered up after hearing her.

"Alright, I'll do some shopping on the way then."

Sylviana smiles and keeps doing whatever she was doing. By the time I'm off the shower and dressed up with a clean t-shirt, she is done, and only carries an intriguing vase full of dried plants, and a little bottle with a yellowish liquid.

"You're giving her dead flowers and some magic water?" I ask, laughing a bit.

"Don't underestimate an earth witch Liam! They are not dead, and this is not magic water either. Now let's go."

We leave her place and head towards my brother's territory by walking. Sylviana doesn't like cars or bikes (way too polluting for her), and only walks or take her bike when she needs to go somewhere. I don't mind, I'm an outdoor guy too. Moreover, her place is located so I have to cross the Purple Moon territory to see her. I used to be fun, escaping Lissandra's guard dogs to get to my girlfriend. But nowadays, her little cousin took the Purple Clan over, while she is now too busy with her Violet Moon Alpha responsibilities to bother. And after the War, since my brother got his official King position, most of the Packs get along so well nobody really cares about the borders anymore.

Thus, we arrive a while later at the General Hospital of Silver City without a problem. Of course, Nora's got the best room. Top floor, with too much space and a view she doesn't give a sh!t about. It's even regularly full of new flower bouquets, presents from other Alphas to the City Luna, wishing her to get well and so on.

"I bet he's here..." I sigh as the elevator goes up.

Sylviana doesn't answer, but she's got her gentle smile on. I shake my head. Damian, Damian... My brother is never giving up on Nora. Sometimes I'm a bit jealous of their fated mates' relationship. If only I could be Sylviana's...

We enter the room, and as I suspected, my brother is in his usual spot, working on his laptop, in a chair next to Nora's bed. I don't know how much time he usually stays there. I've seen him spend the whole day there, but sometimes he's also out, making visits on other territories or attending meetings at the office.

Turns out he's not the only one here. On Nora's bed, a huge brown furry ball is snoring softly. Her best friend and bodyguard Bobo comes to visit her almost as often as my brother, from what I've seen.

Hi, Bobo.

He only opens an eye, but goes back to sleep right away. That's Bobo for you. Sylviana walks past me to go see Nora, gently putting a hand on her forehead. Damian watches her like a hawk. Anything or anyone who gets close to his beloved Luna, he'll know. He's always been protective of her, but since she's in the coma, it's even more obvious. He probably has some super trained and carefully selected medical team taking care of her, and anyone else who enters this room shall be facing some serious problems...

But my girlfriend wants nothing but to help. She doesn't say anything, but when she takes her hand away from Nora, she's smiling. She actually puts the dried plants she brought in a glass vase, and a delicate perfume spreads in the room. Something fresh, delicate and enchanting. I'm used to it, but my brother raises an eyebrow once it reaches him.

"What's this?"

"A potpourri," explains Sylviana. "It helps calm the mind and refreshes the room. Plus, this one will last long."

“Thank you for her...”

She smiles at my brother.

“I made it with some of Luna’s favorite smells, but it’s also for you,” she answers with her usual gentle smile.

Damian looks a bit surprised. Of course, he spends a lot of time in this room too after all and mostly doing work. Honestly, I thought my brother would be in a much worse state, given his mate’s condition. I still vividly remember the horrid days when he was still looking for her, trying to repair their bond and find his mate who was in constant danger. Nowadays, things are certainly different. Even if she’s not really here with us, Nora is certainly safer and much cared for. She even looks peaceful like that, lost in her very deep sleep. The only signs of her being alive are the heart rate monitor, her slow breathing, and her hair. Funny enough, her hair keeps changing color at night, her dark brown shifting to a pure white as soon as the sunsets. It’s a phenomenon I’ve witnessed a lot of times, but I still can’t get used to it. It started happening a few weeks after she fell into a coma, when, according to Sylviana, her health and Moon Power had been replenished enough.

At that time, we all had thought that would also mean she was about to wake up, but we were eventually disappointed. The only who didn’t was Damian. No matter one, he strongly believes she will wake up, but never mentions how long he’s willing to wait. The answer would probably be Forever...

I walk to stand beside my brother, putting my hand on his shoulder.

“Come run with me later.”

“I don’t have time for a run, Liam...”

“Shut up, you’re spending you full days here, you’ll end up as stiff as the furniture at this rate. You gotta move your b.utt Damian, Nora’s not gonna like it if you don’t take care of yourself just because she’s not there.”

My words seem to reach him, especially since I mentioned Nora. And I’m sure she would agree. She’d want Damian to live his life even without her, and me to help him with that. He’s not been depressed at all, but he hasn’t been the most cheerful guy either. He doesn’t go out much and just keeps himself busy like a robot. He finally nods.

“...Fine, I’ll come with you.”

I’m satisfied. I take a look around the room. It’s pretty much the same as always, except that there is a whole batch of presents gathered in one corner. That’s a big pile of gifts... There are even a couple of pastel balloons and a fruit basket. Seriously, do they expect her to have them through IV? I walk over and take an apple from it, as I’m a bit hungry.

I check the cards. The most expensive-looking present is a huge diamond necklace, certainly old-fashioned. The card says it came from her cousin, William Blue. I frown.

“What shitty taste...”

And obviously, he has no clue about Nora likes. No way she would put on something so ostentatious, ever. That guy is too weird for me to understand. He still resents me for escaping their surveillance, from what I’ve seen. That was a fun escape anyway. I should have asked Sylviana to fill the room with butterfly poop!

I check her presents. The Jade Moon sent her quite a few, too. Guess they still don’t have any Alpha... Damian has assigned them to watch the border for now, but everyone knows their loyalty goes to Nora only. Of course, Tonia sent lots of branded clothes. I notice a letter too, in the middle of all those colorful gifts, and take it secretly to my pocket after recognizing the writing. Sorry Nora, but I’m curious about the sender...

“How is the house?” Asks Sylviana.

My brother suddenly decided to have a house built for Nora and him, to welcome her when she would come back. He really dedicated a long time thinking about it and making the plans with architects. I think this is his way of keeping himself busy while she’s absent. That, and work, his Alpha duties and so on.

“It’s progressing well. It should be finished by Spring.”

Spring... Will Nora be awake then? Even Sylviana can’t tell how long it will take for her to come back. Sometimes, we see a reaction, like her heart getting a bit faster, or her hand moving a little. But nothing more so far. It’s a bit infuriating, honestly. I’ve never been a patient guy, but Nora, you’re not helping at all, girl.

Things have changed a lot. Fewer Clan fightings, Damian gathers all the Alphas once a month to address any issue. Our defenses are getting better too. Sylviana's become some sort of advisor to my brother and them, and she has a lot of protections all around Silver City, granting us more time before the other Witch comes back.

However, things aren't exactly peaceful either. First, new packs have been coming to Silver City after the huge fight. Rogues who were chased away by our Father, and others who responded to the call of a Royal Luna. The Steel Moon, for example, has been settling on the Gold Moon's former territory, along with a couple of smaller packs. Our werewolf population is increasing, and there are some arrangements to be made. But overall, what strikes me the most is the obvious fact that we are getting stronger for one main reason.

To protect Nora.

Since we know the Dark Witch will be after her, everyone is getting ready to act. Of course, this witch really wants is Silver City, but for that, she will want to capture Nora, the Moon Goddess's grandchild, first. It's a werewolf instinct to protect a Royal, but more than that, everyone in this City really loves the Luna. They know what she did to prevent the War, her unique heritage and story, and how she sacrificed herself for her fated mate, the King. You have ties to most of the big Clans and protected the Jade Moon despite what they had done to you. Even Damian is more respected than ever because of you. Nobody ever contests his position anymore.

You've become our local Princess and you don't even know it, girl. Everyone's looking forward to your awakening.

His Blue Moon Princess Chapter 103 - Tips

"...When?"

I raise my head, but my brother is actually asking Sylviana. She sighs but keeps taking care of the flowers surrounding Nora, very calmly.

"I already told you, I cannot predict that."

"Didn't you say you were a seer?" He asks, annoyed.

"It does not work like that. She will come back when she's ready. "

My brother is displeased with her answers, but as always, Sylviana is incredibly calm. Like Nora, my girlfriend's immune to Alpha auras. It's probably for the better, considering my brother's temper...

Even I don't know the extent of Sylviana's powers. She doesn't talk about her witch side often, and never explains much either. Most of the time, I can only be amazed by her powers... She helped me numerous times escape territories, and she can hide me effortlessly. She is good at figuring links between people too. She knew William, Elena, and Nora were related as soon as she saw each of them. I was against Nora meeting that crazy guy, but Sylviana still insisted that it was necessary... Hell, no way I would've been there if she didn't have my back! And also because it was to protect Nora, too.

I still don't get why she made sure William knew about Nora's existence, but not Elena's... Is it because of the baby?

"The dark witch... Where is she?" Suddenly asks my brother.

I see Bobo raise his head to look at Sylviana, waiting for the answer too. I'm the same. Even if things are going alright right now, none of us has forgotten about the threat over Silver City... And things were tense for the recent few months Sylviana left Silver City, too. She was only gone from early May to the end of the Summer, but it was the worst period. We were lucky the other witch did realize she had left and consequently attacked.

"She's still nearby, waiting... A few miles away to the east, probably."

"Why don't we go and attack her?" Asks Damian.

I know why my brother is so impatient. He would want that Witch gone before Nora's awakening. Because if she comes back now, she will still be in danger... But Sylviana shakes her head.

"I already said we can't. There will be a battle, but not now. It is too soon, I told you."

"What are we waiting for, then?"

This time, Sylviana frowns, looking angry. Her eyes get much darker when she's like that... Tonia suddenly enters the room, and Bobo gets up at the same time. The big wolf jumps down from Nora's bed, probably uncomfortable from the tension between the two. He walks next to his sister, who stopped at

the entrance, unsure about the situation, sensing the pressure. I'm not feeling great either, I may be an Alpha, but my brother is still way stronger... And it's not pleasant to be in the same room as an angry Witch either. She may be a good Witch, but Sylviana is still damn powerful.

"I already told you. I will not go after her first, and she won't attack until she's sure she can win the fight. And she wants the Moon Power. She will make sure Nora is there, and she can win."

"What do you mean, she would make sure she can win? How can we wait if that's the case? You have something to ruin her plans, right?" Asks Tonia, worried.

Sylviana looks down, her anger melting like ice under the sun.

"I do have a plan."

"And it would be too much to ask of you to share it I suppose?" Says Tonia with a sigh.

"I cannot reveal it to you. That's the thing with the future. Say too much, and the balance shifts the wrong way... We are already walking on a fragile thread. The next few years will be decisive."

With her words, a long silence befalls in the room. I look at Nora. Moon Goddess, I hope she comes back soon. Sylviana's words really make me doubt about this future she was talking about. What's worse is that my girlfriend won't say a word about it. And sometimes, I'm just scared about what she knows.

*Hours later. *

I don't even know why I'm doing this. I'm pulling a whole oak tree behind me. It's very heavy, too, and leaving a significant trail behind us... Sylviana is walking in front of me, enlightening the way with a torch lamp. It must be midnight or so. I have no idea what she has in mind, or why I'm doing this. Why did she ask me? Her biggest butterfly is happily flying around us. I like her butterflies. They are of various colors, always following her like a little cloud of flapping wings.

"We're almost there."

I don't answer, I'm too tired and out of breath. This is weird, even for Sylviana. Venturing in a desert area, some wild empty land in the outskirts of Silver City, in the middle of the night, like we're hiding something. She didn't even tell Liam...

Suddenly, she stops.

"Can you put it there?" She asks.

Her finger indicates a big desert area. Alright... I just hope we aren't doing all this for nothing. I push the massive tree in the spot she wanted and take a few steps back. What now?

She suddenly takes something small and shiny from her pocket. Isn't that one of the Boss' lighters? Before I can understand a thing, she suddenly puts the big tree on fire. What is that for? I watch that big chunk of wood burning for a few minutes, by Sylviana's side. Her eyes closed, she's reciting something like a prayer, though I don't understand it. Witchcraft mystery...

"Bobo? I need you to dig there. Please?"

I sigh. More manual labor. Do I get to nap after this? I listen to hear once again and start digging. Well, it's a dog thing anyway, so it's kind of fun for me. The soil is easy to dig, too, because it's night time and everything is more or less humid. After half an hour, I'm in a big hole, my fur covered in soil. It's about three meters deep and just as big. Sylviana jumps in to join me, visibly satisfied with it.

"Alright, thanks. You should get out now."

I nod and jump out. A bit tired after all that, I just sit at the edge to look what she's doing now. She's on all fours, drawing and scribbling some stuff with a little wooden stick. I don't get all that witchy thing she's doing. It seems really secret too... Is it about the Dark Witch? That future she mentioned earlier?

What's this, Sylviana?

"I'm making a bet, Bobo."

A bet? Odd. To me, it just seems like a burning tree and a hole. I stare at both. Mh, too complicated...

After a while, Sylviana jumps out of the hole and asks me to help her push all of the tree's ashes into it. It takes us almost an hour to finish pouring in into that hole, and after that, covering it with the soil again.

So, we just buried some ashes. I give her a stare. She sighs, and gets down on her knees, caressing the little area we messed around with.

"Don't worry, Bobo. This is... For the better."

You don't sound so confident.

She smiles sadly.

"...Let's just say, I hope we never need to get to plan B."

What is the plan B? But she doesn't add anything else and gets up, turning around. I follow her, though I'm curious about whatever it is we just did.

"Bobo, go home and don't ever tell anyone what we just did."

Are you afraid I'll talk? To Liam, or the Boss?

"I know you won't, you good wolf."

Why? Because you trust me?

"No."

She gives me a kiss on top of my head, and I suddenly feel hella dizzy. What did she just... I feel my strength leaving me, and I fall slowly on my side. I only hear a whisper before closing my eyes...

"...Because you will have forgotten everything before the sun rises, good Bobo."

His Blue Moon Princess Chapter 104 - Tips

"Mamaaaa..."

"Give me five minutes, James, baby, I need to finish this."

"But Mama..."

The little boy's pout and teary eyes are no use; his mom is too used to him acting a bit whiny like this. His father's at work, so he can't go and ask him either. How is he supposed to get those cookies!

Nora is busy at something he can't see, so James keeps pulling on his mother's skirt, acting up a bit. For a two old toddler, this wait is impossible! His little stomach is too empty! Suddenly, he pulls once more, abruptly, and Nora suddenly cries out.

"Aoutch... Damn..."

Panicked, James lets go of the fabric. Did he pull too hard? Did he hurt his mom? Nora holds her arm, frowning, and two seconds later, Bobo barges in the kitchen.

"Nora, are you ok?" He asks, visibly worried.

"I burnt myself..."

"Water, put it under the cold water."

The huge man helps Nora to the sink, running water on her injury. Next to them, James is so confused and shocked that he starts crying for good. Because of him, his mom is hurt! It's red, it must be very painful!

"James, it's okay baby, it's okay. Mommy is fine."

He keeps crying, unable to hear his mother talking. His tears flowing, he runs out of the kitchen to his bedroom. How could he injure his mom! Dad is going to be super mad at him! Dad hates when mom is in pain! And what if his little sibling in mommy's tummy is injured too? James keeps crying loudly in his room.

He can't hear his mom or Bobo from there, but he's too afraid to go out and see if his mom is really hurt! What if mom has to go to the hospital because of him! He doesn't deserve mommy, he's such a bad boy!

He looks at the window outside, all blurry because he's been crying a lot. Should he get a present for mommy to forgive him? Dad always gets presents for mommy, will she be happy if James gets her one too?

He walks to the salon, trying to be quiet. He can hear mommy and Bobo talking about going to the hospital! Mommy doesn't want to, but Bobo insists. So mommy is really really hurt! James runs out to the entrance of the house, but remember he can't get out this way by himself... The veranda! Bobo leaves the veranda door open when he sleeps, and Bobo naps all the time. Turning away, James sneaks out to the terrace and only has to push the door a little to get to the garden.

He walks down the little path, wiping his face messily with his shirt. What should he get mommy? There are a lot of flowers here, but Mommy has a lot in the house already, and auntie Sylviana doesn't like when he picks out flowers...

A shop! Mommy always buys him stuff in the shops on the street. And he knows the way to the market too! Confident and not too crying anymore, James speeds up, remembering how he walked there on the last Sunday with his mom. He recognizes this blue house and that little white porch with the birdhouse on it... But once he gets there, something is wrong. There are no stalls! Confused, he looks around, but it's the right place, just no stalls! He wanted to get mom a pretty necklace...

"Are you looking for something, boy?" Asks a nearby lady.

"The... The market..."

"There is no market today, honey. Is your mom nearby? Or your daddy? Are you on an errand? You seem a bit young to be alone!"

Is he going to be in trouble because he went out alone, without Mommy or Bobo? James just nods, a bit unsure. He just doesn't want the lady to call his dad!

"Where is the market?" He asks.

"There isn't one today. What are you looking for?"

"Mh... Nothing. Thank you!"

He turns around and runs away, the nice lady behind him yelling at him to go home. But he is not going back, he should find a present for mommy first! Maybe he could ask uncle Liam to help him? Or auntie Sylviana! She always has pretty and nice-smelly things... But where is her house?

He walks around, thinking he might find it soon. Last time, they went there by car, but it was really fast! So her house should be close. But as he keeps walking for a long time, he can't find the white house with lots of trees... He stops in a small, narrow street, a bit worried now. He doesn't recognize his surroundings. Mom always said, if he's lost, he should ask around because people know Daddy. That's right! Everyone knows his daddy...

"Mister?"

He finally found someone, a big man with small eyes. The mister looks funny, but James doesn't laugh and asks.

"Mister, do you know where is Daddy?"

"Your daddy? Who is your father, kiddo?"

"Mh, Alpha. He's very strong!"

"The Alpha? Which Alpha?"

"Hm... Damian?"

James tries to think, but usually, people don't ask so many questions! The man frowns, looking confused.

"Alright, stay here, I'll ask my Alpha if he knows of a guy named Damian."

"You don't know my daddy?" Asks James, confused.

"Huh, no, sorry. I'm new in town, you know. But don't worry, I'll ask!"

James nods, and the man walks away. It's weird, every werewolf knows his dad! When he asks, there is always someone who knows! Maybe this man is not a werewolf? So disappointing! He waits for a couple of minutes, but he's been gone from home for a long time now, mom is going to get worried! So James walks away, trying to get back to where he came from. But after a while, it doesn't look like the street he knows at all...

"Hi!"

He turns around, surprised. A little girl, a bit older than him, is smiling at him. She's cute, with her big green eyes, brown curls split into two ponytails,

freckles, and an orange dress. A bit shy, James looks at her, confused. But the older girl walks to him, looking around.

“Are you alone? Are you lost?”

This time, James nods, because yes, he is lost! He can't find his way back or his Dad. The older girl sighs.

“Oh, I see. Your mommy or daddy is not with you?”

“No...”

“Okay. Then you can come to see the teacher with me!”

She takes his hand and takes him away. James, a bit confused, doesn't protest. This big sister looks beautiful, and a teacher is friendly too! They know a lot of things, so maybe he will know his dad! They only walk for a few minutes, James already feeling better. The older girl's name is Mary, and she is seven years old. James tells her his name, but not his age, because he's a bit embarrassed to only be almost three years old...

Mary takes him to a big bricks house, where a lot of other children are busy playing. From toddlers to teens, all kinds of kids are playing together what looks like a game of tag. James even sees a few werewolf pups, making him feel reassured.

“Mary! Who is that?”

The groups suddenly focus their attention on James, asking him a lot of questions at the same time. About twenty other children are all trying to talk to him until Mary protests.

“Stop it! You guys are all talking at the same time you know? And his name is James! He is my friend!”

“Mary, is James like us?” Asks a little girl.

“No, he has a mommy and a daddy, you know. But I think he's lost.”

“You should take him to Teacher, then,” says an older boy.

“I know! I wanted to take there, but all you guys came at the same time!”

“You don’t want to play with us?” Asks another toddler to James, pulling his hand.

“Okay!” Says James.

After all, they seem nice, and he wanted to play that game with them! Pulled by two or three children, James joins them despite Mary’s protests.

“But he has to see the Teacher, you know! He can’t stay, you know!”

“Come on, Mary. Let him stay here, you can come with me, and we can go talk to the Teacher.”

And with that, Mary and the older boy walk inside the house while James joins the other kids to play. A few minutes pass and James forgets entirely about finding his way back. He’s having so much fun! Everyone’s nice, but there are so many kids and pups that he can’t remember all their names.

However, the children all brutally stop playing. James, a bit surprised, realizes some of the older children, the teenagers, are arguing loudly with some men who entered the garden a bit further.

James frowns. Those men are not werewolves, but they are holding one of his friends by his neck! Only mummies can carry the puppies like that!

“Let her go, you stupid human!” Growls one of the teenage boys.

Next to him, another teenager, in her wolf form, is growling. But the adult men ignore them, and instead, are observing the little pup female.

“So young and already a shapeshifter! Look at her fur! She would be worth a few hundred on the market...”

The older children start growling and try to push the men to take their friend back, but the adults are still stronger than young werewolves.

“Let her go! Let her go!”

“Stop yelling! You’re just orphans, who do you think is paying for your food, huh? You should be thankful to even be alive!”

The kids keep protesting, and James, angry, comes forward to growl all his might at the men.

“Let her go! Let my friend go, or I’ll bite you! I’ll bite you very, very hard!”

The men laugh at him, and James goes red with anger. A older girl holds his arm, but James fights her off until she lets go. Those men are bullies! But just when he’s about to attack, someone suddenly stops him.

“Children, stop this! What are you doing!”

A skinny man just appeared, one with a werewolf smell this time. Behind him are Mary and the older boy. The adult in simple clothes takes James hands to pull him away from the intruders, but when he finally looks at the toddler, his eyes grow big in surprise.

“J...James? What are you doing here...”

Who is this man? James doesn’t know him! The thin man looks shocked to see him, but before he or James can say anything else, the teenagers run to him.

“Teacher, those men want to take Cilia away! Please, teacher! Let us attack them!”

“No, no, let me deal with this... Stand back, children.”

The teacher gets up and faces the men, holding back the older boys and James with his thin arms. The men look at him with an annoyed face.

“There he is. The coward. Are you going to have a problem with this?”

“Yes. Please let this child alone. Hand her to me and...”

“Those kids bit us last week! We had to pay hospital bills! And our taxes pay their food! Shouldn’t they give back to us a little!”

But the man, very calm, shakes his head and answers in a peaceful but wary tone.

“Growing werewolves have many difficulties in adapting. This incident wouldn’t have happened if you hadn’t trespassed in the first place. That is precisely why this orphanage has fences,” says the teacher, frowning.

“We don’t give a damn about your werewolf problems! You take away our jobs, you control the city, now we even have to tolerate those little mutts growing up with our money!”

“Don’t insult my friends!” Suddenly growls James, escaping the teacher’s hand to run to the man.

“James, don’t!”

But before he can bite the man, James is suddenly grabbed by his shirt, pulled in the air and yelling all his might.

“Let me go! Let me go, you mean ugly i***t!”

“Another one for the collection!”

“Enough! You are not selling those children!” Growls the teacher.

But the men laugh at him.

“How are you going to stop us? You? Look at you! We know you can’t even shapeshift, you’re just a pathetic Omega!”

“Trust me, I may not shapeshift, but I won’t let you harm any of those children!”

With their teacher growling, the other kids all growl at the men, and suddenly, one of them takes out a knife, the silver blade shining scarily. Some of the younger kids start crying or run away inside the house in fear, but James keeps yelling.

“I’m not scared! You bully! I’ll bite your ugly b.utt! And my dad too!”

The man laughs at him.

“What dad, you are a...”

But before he finishes his sentence, a huge black shadow suddenly jumps at him out of nowhere. In a total moment of confusion, James is suddenly dropped, and sturdy arms catch him. The men are terrified, as a dozen wolves suddenly jumped at them to attack. The one that was holding James is on the ground, crying out with his arm bleeding. The kids, excited by the arrival of bigger wolves, are either scared or cheering for the adult werewolves. The

fight only lasts a couple of minutes, the difference in strength clearly showing. The children are still a bit confused, but James is the only one to recognize the big Black wolf who took the man down.

“Uncle Liam! Daddy!”

Damian, who grabbed James, is visibly furious and scaring everyone but his son with his Alpha aura. While Liam, in his wolf form, pinned the man to the ground. Damian growls at the same man, the one that was holding James a second earlier, his eyes as cold as steel.

“If you ever, ever lay a finger on my son ever again, I swear I’ll k!!! you!”

The men, either frozen by fear or held down by the adult wolves, are all staring at him in pure fright. All of them were severely injured in the brief attack, yet they are way too terrified by his aura to even consider running away.

“You... You’re the werewolf... The werewolf King...”

“I told you my Daddy would bite you!” Says James, now totally fearless in his father’s arms.

Liam growls furiously, his large canines open wide only a few centimeters away from the men’s throat. Another wolf grabbed the little female pup that had been taken and is now standing above her while growling at the men.

Damian puts down James next to the big brown wolf, Bobo, and walks towards the leader of the human men. Grabbing his throat, he is way scarier than any of the other werewolves present, and the man is shaking in terror.

“If you come around here again, I’ll k!!! you. If you take a single step on one of the werewolves territories, I’ll k!!! you. If I hear of any child trafficking, I’ll k!!! you. And keep in mind that the only reason I’m not k!!!ing you right here and right now is because those children are present. Are. We. Clear?”

The men nod very slowly, all of them petrified. Damian releases his grip, and so do the other werewolves, retreating to stand in front of the children. The men stumble to get up before finally running away, terrified but alive.

As soon as they are gone, the children cheer loudly, all of them either running to the werewolves to say thanks or to their scared friends. Meanwhile, James runs to his uncle and grabs his black fur.

“Uncle Liam!”

But the black wolf pushes him with his snout towards his father. Uh-Oh, he looks angry...

Indeed, Damian puts a knee down, and growls at James, as any very pissed werewolf father would scold his son.

“James! Where were you! Your mom was worried sick! And half of the pack went looking for you!”

“Sorry....”

Thinking about his worried mother, James suddenly starts crying, very sorry. He tries to explain himself, but his bawling out barely make any of his sentences understandable.

“Buuuut... Mommy was... And I... I wanted to... A present, but, but, but... I got lost... And...”

His explanation gets lost under a flow of tears, erratic breathing, and in the end, he just cries very loudly until his father gives up and sighs.

“Alright... Come here.”

With Damian opening his arms to him, James runs right into his embrace, weeping in his father’s shirt. With a warm hand on his back comforting him and his dad calming him down, he eventually reduces to a quiet crying, exhausted. Meanwhile, Damian gets up and turns to the teacher.

James, turning his head, finds the teacher looking down.

“Sorry about... All this. One of them found James alone in the streets and just... Brought him here.”

“I’ll take care of the humans. And I told you to tell us if this kind of things happened.”

His father's ice-cold tone surprises James. Is he angry at him? Why? Does he know the teacher?

"...But I don't want you anywhere near James. Or his mother."

"I know, I know. I'm sorry, Alpha. This will not happen again."

James feels Damian sighing, and his father looks around at the large house, the garden, and the children gathered around them.

"I guess you are doing something decent here. How many are they?"

"Currently, thirty-two. But that's ok, we have plenty enough with what the Black Foundation sends us."

"I see."

James can't hold a yawn, and his father caresses his head.

"And now you are sleepy, of course. You little... I know, I know, Liam. We're going."

They turn around, and the full group starts to leave, the children looking a bit disappointed to see the older wolves go. But James, over his dad's shoulder, sees the teacher hesitating. After a while, he sees him running towards them. Damian turns around, and before he can say a word, the teacher is handing him what looks like an old and wrinkled letter. His hands are trembling.

"I'm sorry. I know I'm selfish, but please... Please, can you give this to Nora for me? Please."

Damian growls, annoyed, but James takes the letter.

"It's for mama?"

The teacher smiles.

"Yes, James, it's for your mother. Can you give her this for me? Please?"

"Okay!" Says James, feeling all happy to be asked a little mission.

"Thank you, James," says the teacher with a sad smile.

Damian, still hesitating, decides to let James keep the letter, but growls at the teacher.

“This doesn’t change anything, Alec.”

“...I know.”

And with this, they are off. James, a bit sleepy now that his dad is carrying him, dozes off while the scenery changes quickly. The wolves run on two or four feet, but he only sleeps until they are actually home.

His mother’s voice suddenly wakes him up.

“James! Oh, Moon Goddess, James!”

“Mama!”

He switches arms from his dad to his mom, waiting for his mother’s embrace, but Nora is between anger and worry. She puts him down and starts checking him all sides while still scolding him.

“James Black! Where have you been! Do you know how worried I was! How could you go out alone! Without me, or dad, or Bobo! Or your uncle! You shouldn’t have left!”

Once again, James starts tearing up under his mom’s scolding.

“But... But mommy was hurt because... because of me?”

“...What? You silly boy! Mommy burnt herself while cooking, it wasn’t because of you! It was an accident, James, not your fault, my baby! But don’t you dare run out ever again! I sent three full packs looking for you! Even your uncle William!”

“And here I thought you were going overboard....” Whispers Liam, who shapeshifted back, to Damian.

The rest of the wolves, aside for his parents, uncle, and Bobo, leave the house at that moment, leaving them alone.

“Liam, shut up! What if the Sea Moon hadn’t seen you? Never do that again, James! You understand? I don’t want you going out alone! Especially if you haven’t told mommy or daddy! Do you understand?”

“I understand... Mommy... Sorry, mommy, sorry....”

After a while, Nora’s shoulders finally relax a bit. James tears finally put an end to her anger, and she opens up her arms. Behind her son, Liam and Damian are quietly smiling.

“Oh, James, come here... Wait, what is that you’re carrying?”

Suddenly remembering his little mission, James stops crying and hands out the wrinkled letter proudly.

“It’s for you, mommy! From the teacher!”

Nora frowns, and slowly takes the letter. She reads her name on it, but the writing, that she doesn’t recognize, just leaves her confused. She looks at Damian, but her husband just sighs.

“You decide if you want to open it. It’s from your brother...”

His Blue Moon Princess Chapter 105 - Tips

“Look, James, it’s your little cousin...”

I encourage my son to step forward, as he’s acting all shy towards the newborn. She’s wrapped up in a pink baby blanket, sleeping soundly in her father’s arms. She is so small! Only two weeks old, yet already so cute. It feels like James was the same just yesterday, children grow up so fast!

“She’s tiny...”

“It’s a baby, she is much younger than you,” I explain.

He looks hesitant, but I suspect that William is also intimidating him a little bit. I turn to my cousin, looking as serious as ever.

“How is the mom?”

“Fine. She is resting for now, but she keeps saying she wants to go back to work.”

I’m impressed, but not too surprised. Tiffany Pearl is a Clan leader and an imposing businesswoman. After the Gold Moon Clan’s fall, the Pearl Moon

and Sapphire Moon cooperated a lot on putting back everyone's financial health back on track, as well as Silver City's economy. Spending so much time together led my cousin and Tiffany to grow closer eventually until they officially started dating. I thought they would take it slowly after that, but they suddenly got married, and Tiffany got pregnant soon after that.

"I still think this is a bad idea. Though I absolutely don't mind helping you behind your husband's back, I am not approving of this meeting, Nora."

I sigh. One thing that never changed: William and Damian still get along like cat and dog. My husband and my cousin bicker like teenagers any time they meet, and it's pretty exhausting. I think William enjoys acting like a disapproving mother-in-law just to annoy Damian, considering himself as my family. Well, he technically is, since he added me to his family registry a few months ago

Thinking about my family issues saddens me a bit.

It took me a while to open Alec's letter. I even considered burning it a few times. I don't know what was scaring me so much. Maybe the perspective of re-opening old wounds that were not done healing. The idea of facing my brother still scares me. But, after a long time, I opened that letter and after reading it, decided to give him one last chance.

It wasn't just about the letter's content. Though Alec expressed deep regrets, I also took into consideration the fact that he was honestly doing some good around him. I always knew about his work at the orphanage, as well as his volunteering at the Rehab Center. Alec also accepted to be treated as an Omega, and to never shapeshift again. That's a lot, even for someone who did worse than he.

"I know, William, but... If he wants to apologize, I think I can listen. And I'm doing this for myself, not for him."

My cousin stays silent. It's the truth, though. I never really got over what had happened back when I was with the Jade Moon. Even after Marcus and Vincent's deaths, that pack remained like a thorn in my past. I never found some closure about how they abused me, especially how Alec treated me.

Though they consider me their leader, I decided to let my husband treat them as any other subaltern pack, and that was it. But Alec was banished from the pack and remained as a question.

Will growls and puts his daughter back in her cradle. James immediately runs over to observe his little cousin some more, looking more confident now that Rose isn't in her father's arms.

"Whatever. You know you can trust me. But I'm not leaving you alone with him. I can't believe you let no one else know..."

"Damian was very against it, I told you. And Liam is out of town again."

"What about that bodyguard of yours? Boyan?"

"Bobo is with his boyfriend, I'm not disturbing him now. Moreover, they know I'm with you, what could happen to me? The Sapphire territory is one of the safest isn't it?"

William clicks his tongue.

"Of course. Anyhow, I would like to see a mere omega try anything..."

"William," I sigh. "Stay calm, please?"

My cousin rolls his eyes but doesn't reply back. He became even more overprotective since my coma and Elena's departure... Another reason he and the Black Brothers still don't get along is that he blames Nathaniel for what happened.

"Whatever. It's your brother after all, not mine."

Even if he says that he probably will be on his guard all the while... Not that I really risk anything, though. I'm as powerful as most Alphas in Silver City, and Alec is only an omega. No, the biggest injury I could suffer is probably emotional.

I look at the clock. Almost three. I take a new sip of tea and wait silently. William is talking to James, answering my son's endless questions about the baby girl. I watch them exchange and realize I'm not as nervous as I thought I would be. Is it because I know I'm safe now? Or maybe because I moved on...

Suddenly, we hear a knock at the door. William gives a silent order, and a werewolf opens the door, my brother Alec following right behind him.

This is my first time seeing him in three years and I can barely recognize my half-brother. He has changed so much... He is way thinner than before and looks older than the mid-twenties he should be in now. Even if it's obvious he tried to dress up a little, his shirt is old and his pants are a bit too large for him. He walks in slowly, a bit fidgety. I stand up, and our eyes finally meet.

"Nora..." He whispers.

That's all he says, but I can see him choke up a little. He stays where he is, a bit hesitant, his eyes fixated on me. I don't even know what to say... But William steps forward, acting like the Alpha he is and taking the lead.

"Come in, take a seat."

Alec nods, but before he can say anything, James walks up to me and notices him. My son's big blue eyes suddenly grow larger.

"Oh, you're the teacher!"

"Hello, James."

My brother finally smiled while saluting my son, and James innocently waves at him, his other hand holding the toy he took with him. It's odd to see them interacting. Despite William's words, Alec hasn't moved, and his eyes are fixated on me again. I realize he's waiting for my own approval. I take a deep breath in.

"Hello, Alec."

Those simple words from me seem to give him a lot of relief. He nods and finally walks up to us, taking the seat designated for him. He's only a meter away from me, across that table. It feels a bit unreal, after all this time. William sits between us, and James decides to climb up my knees to grab one of the cupcakes I brought from the plate.

"You look great," says Alec, with a weak voice I don't recognize.

He sounds like someone who just got over a cold. I try to remind myself, this man is not the one I used to know. Two years went by. He has changed. I have changed too.

"Thanks. And... Thank you for taking care of James at that time."

He shakes his head.

“No... I was surprised to see him.”

“How... How did you know it was him?”

He should never have met James in those two years since he was born... He blushes a little and looks down, looking at his hands.

“Well, he... Looks a lot like you and the King, and I... I have... I kept a picture.”

I frown. What picture...? He never had any of me when we were young. As if to answer my silent questioning, he reaches out to an inner pocket and brings out not a photo, but an old piece of journal paper. I recognize it. It's from the Black Corporation last Christmas Party. All of the employees and their families were invited, and that was the first time Damian and I brought James to a formal event. He didn't really care and only played with other children, but there was this one journalist who took a picture of him in front of the big Christmas tree talking with Liam, and another when he was with us, in Damian's arms. In those pictures, we look like a happy family...

I have a copy of that article home as well, but Alec's piece is all torn and wrinkled as if it had been folded and unfolded a lot. Seeing this piece of paper in Alec's hands makes me choke up a little. What was he thinking, holding on to that mere picture? I don't even know what to say, but Alec, still staring at the picture, suddenly starts talking.

“You really look happy in this picture... You... Changed a lot. I mean, not only physically, but... You look... Great.”

This sentence, said by a man of my own blood who used to a***e me, suddenly gives me a shock. Because I realize how right he is.

I'm not that girl from the basement anymore. That weak, pitiful outcast who couldn't shapeshift or disobey anyone. I remember those days when I would stare at the forest and dream of running away. The dusty, cold couch I used to lay in. The whole room was like me: forgotten, full of broken things and with only a little light left. I never dared to speak out, complain, not matter how badly I hurt. This was indeed a long journey to get from there to where I am now.

“Thanks. ...How are you?”

The question flew out my lips like feather lost in the wind. Alec finally looks right at me. Maybe because I now know that we are only half-siblings, or because we both have grown and changed a lot, I only find very few similarities with him... His thin lips, maybe.

“I’m good, thank you. I... Try to make myself useful. The children are all very good kids. I’m very lucky to have them.”

I nod. How to even pursue this discussion... Alec feels like a stranger I don’t have much in common with now. I look down at James, with his little mouth full of chocolate... I wipe it out despite his protests.

“Nora...”

Once again, hearing my name in his mouth has a really strange feeling to it. I look at him again, but to my surprise, Alec’s eyes are teary, and his hands are fidgeting, playing and wrinkling his napkin with obvious nervousness.

For some reason, I suddenly feel very sad as well. Thinking about our past... Our relationship was nothing but a toxic one. When he did not ignore me, Alec would hurt me or insult me anytime we interacted. That was the only way we ever spoke to each other for about ten years... How could we ever get over this? But he starts to talk, his voice obviously choked by sorrow.

“I... I know I’ve been the most... Horrible, despicable person to you. Anytime I think about... About what happened, I feel like throwing up and hating myself to no end. I’m... I’m...”

He starts to cry, and I feel my heart breaking a little seeing this. I’ve never seen Alec cry since our parents’ death... But the man facing me seems so weak and miserable like he could fall apart any minute. I choke up a little bit, words stuck in my throat, an indescribable mix of feelings I can’t even unfold.

“I’ve been... So cruel to you, Nora, and... And worst is, I... I was just doing all that... All for making myself feel better. I... I felt like... Treating you like this was... Making me feel better, but... I was just a whole mess, Nora. I didn’t... I didn’t know how to handle any of this sh!t... Dad, Mom... I just... I just needed someone to blame... I didn’t want to... To accept what they had done, so I... I just pushed all the blame on you. I just couldn’t...”

He tries to control himself, wiping awkwardly his flow of tears, catching his erratic breath, sniffing and coughing. I've never seen anyone break down like this... And this is my former bully, someone who terrified me, now only a broken man.

"When I was on drugs, I... It made everything so much simpler. I didn't want to have to think, I never even want to mourn. I just... I couldn't accept it, so I used you. I was so, so cruel... I was unfair to you, Nora, but... I should have protected you... I only thought of myself and made you suffer... I know I should have been a better brother! But you were reminding me every day of our father's lies, our mom going crazy, and... And I took the easy way out by hating you."

This time, I'm crying for real. I feel the tears running down my cheeks, but I stay silent. I just don't even have the words for it. What do I even say to this?

"I'm sorry, Nora... I wanted... No, I've been wanting to apologize for a long time already. I... I know I've done things that can never be fixed. I'm... I'm not looking for forgiveness, but I wanted to tell you this. I... I know I've broken something and we won't go back to... To what it could have been. I just... I just wanted to let you know... Know I'm so, so sorry..."

He keeps repeating those words, over and over. I don't know.

I don't know if I should hate Alec. Maybe I should feel sorry for him, forgive him. Maybe I should ignore him. Maybe this would be the time to get mad at him. Tell him how much I've suffered, how I hate him for all that.

But... But I don't hate him. My heart right now doesn't have any space for that. It's filled with love from Damian, from my son, from my loved ones, my new family. The one I ever had with Alec got buried a long time ago. I take some time, gathering my thoughts and feelings, sorting out what I want to say.

"Mommy?"

James noticed my tears and his adorable baby face is all worried now. I wipe what tears I had left and kiss his forehead.

"Mommy is fine, James."

He pouts, a bit confused, and suddenly hugs me, his little chubby arms around my neck, holding me tight with a serious face. His little body against

mine gives me a wave of warmth, calming me down. I hug my baby back, suddenly feeling a lot more composed. Still holding him, I look at Alec.

“I know... It wasn't easy on us when they died. We ended up in the streets and... You met some bad people there. I won't say it wasn't your fault, but... I also understand you needed to escape reality. I am not ready to forgive you, Alec. I don't know if I ever will. Maybe. But, I do want to at least say thank you for apologizing.”

Despite my words, his face seems to lighten up as I speak. Like talking to him already delivered him somehow, he listens to every single thing I say like listening to a prayer. So, I keep going, working hard on my composure.

“Nothing you did was acceptable. And in my heart, I know I'm not ready to forgive you. Some memories are still like old wounds to me, and I'm trying to heal them one at a time. So, no, not yet.”

He nods, not looking surprised or particularly sad. Did he expect it?

“But... One thing I really wish for is for you to get better,” I say. “I want to see the Alec you will become, how you can change and be someone new. Someone I... Someone I might someday think of as my brother again.”

He nods frenetically, and I see him struggle to hold back his tears for a minute before giving up. He keeps crying and nodding repeatedly, trying to say some words despite the flow of tears.

“I... I promise you, Nora... I... I will become a better... Better man... I swear...”

I let him cry loudly for as long as he needs, but mostly because I have no idea how to respond to that, if I should. The funny thing is, I already feel a lot better now. I sigh, and caress James' jet black hair. My relationship with Alec is probably too damaged now. No one comes back from what I lived. But, even if it's just a mere wish on my side, I want to see him change.

This way, I could witness how not all of my family was lost. Moreover, I want to wish for him to find his own happiness. It may be odd coming from me, but it's true. I think my brother deserves the end he paved for himself, a way he can decide on now. I don't think our blood link matters much now. No matter how odd it is, I think we will be “siblings-turned-acquaintances” for a while longer.

I guess I will have to heal on my own. Seeing my former bully so sad, with that r****t dead and all, never made me feel better. It just helped me realize the one that really needed to change was myself. Because in the Jade Moon, I had never had that confidence to stand up for myself. Now I do.

And that's how I want to keep going.