Chapter 13

"So, you and that woman, Elena Whitewood, are..."

"Cousins. She is the daughter of Queen Diane's other child, my mother's twin brother, Gabriel."

They look at me in awe, perplexed, but I went as far as I could with my explanation. I had no choice but to explain our relationship to them since Elena gave me the information about the Opal Moon Clan. I didn't want to hide it from Damian anymore, that would have been unfair. So, I told them everything.

"So, she's also part of this Blue Moon Clan?" Asks Neal.

"Right. And William Blue's second cousin, just like me."

"Nora, why did you never tell me?"

Damian looks lost, and I understand.

I sigh. "Elena asked me not to because of her relationship with Nathaniel. Their relationship is quite complicated, and I didn't want to mess things up."

He stares at me a few seconds and holds his hand out for me to take it. I walk around the desk to join him, and Damian makes me sit on his lap, giving me a kiss on the forehead.

"I understand," he whispers.

I didn't tell him about the baby, as Elena asked when I told her I had to talk to Damian. She probably has her reasons for keeping this pregnancy to herself. Moreover, that would be a big secret for Damian to keep from his brother. When will she tell Nathaniel, though? Elena avoids the question whenever I try to know where their relationship is at. Aside from Bobo, Daniel, and me, I think no one else knows yet.

"I won't tell Nathaniel; you can tell him directly later. He doesn't like talking about his relationships, anyway," says Damian.

I can only agree on that point, but still, I don't really like that he is mentioning Nathaniel's relationships. It sounds like Elena is only one of many, and that's not what I wish for my cousin... However, I'm not supposed to intrude in this, we have a lot to handle already.

I turn to Neal. "What do you think? From what Elena said, do we have to fear that the White Moon will betray the Sapphire Moon Clan?"

Neal scratches his beard with a complicated expression. "That's very unlikely, in my opinion. No, from what miss Whitewood said, I would believe the Opal Moon is acting on its own. The White Moon has a long history with the Sapphire Moon— they were the only ones willing to finance them back when the White Group was struggling."

"They are scientists, right?" I ask, trying to remember what Bobo taught me.

"That's right. They are an old Clan in Silver City, but their former businesses were not doing well. A few years ago, they decided to aim toward the sciences. It was a difficult start, but they made use of their proximity to the University and constructed new facilities. The Sapphire Moon was the only pack willing to finance them, while the Gold Moon Clan didn't see any use of investing in science."

"How could they not? It's essential for people's health, medicine, biology, environment..."

"Yes, miss Nora, but back in the '60s and '70s, it didn't sound so promising. The Sapphire Moon made the right bet, though. The White

Moon Clan took off thirty years ago with several medical breakthroughs and enough success to become a much wealthier pack."

"It explains why they don't get along with the Gold Moon Clan..."

It probably came as a bitter surprise to the Gold Moon Clan, realizing they lost such an opportunity to a smaller Clan. I can see how different they actually are from the Sapphire Moon, as Neal said.

"That, and their constant fighting at the border. Anyway, those two hate each other, and I really don't see the White Moon Alpha betraying the Sapphire Moon," says Damian.

"The Opal Moon would be acting on its own, then?"

"Xavier Whitewood is known to be quite hot-headed. It is more likely than Clark Hamilton allying the Gold Moon Clan."

Elena actually said the exact same thing as Neal. That her Alpha was sometimes rash in his decisions, but the White Moon Alpha would never agree to him meeting with the Gold Moon. The problem is, this means the packs have already started shifting alliances.

"Taaron King and Alessandra trying to conceal the broken engagement is really working against our interests, right?"

Neal nods.

"Even if we work with the media, they still hold a great deal of power, enough to stop us. I'm afraid we won't be able to hold them back long enough to be able to stabilize things between the packs."

"So basically, their idea is to put as much pressure on the other Clans as they can until they start pestering Damian to marry that... woman, right?"

"Exactly."

"They won't agree to anything else?" I ask, desperate.

"Probably not, miss Nora."

A long silence follows. The situation does seem impossible... To think my relationship with Damian would make such a mess between all the packs! I try to think of something, but all I can gather are the cards already in my hands. The Jade Moon Clan, and my relationships with Elena and William Blue.

Maybe I already have the answers... I turn to Damian, but before I can say a thing, I see him frown and make his angry face. "No, Nora."

"You don't know what I'm about to say yet!"

"You want to meet with William Blue again."

Gosh... He is right. I sigh and get up to face him, arms crossed. I feel Neal watching with deep interest, but I try to ignore that detail.

"An alliance with the Sapphire Moon, Damian, think about it! The Pearl Moon isn't big enough to go through that financial crisis, but William's Clan can. I can negotiate with them, and Elena can help us talk with the White Moon Clan, too."

"First, your cousin can't move against her own Clan. Secondly, the Sapphire Moon Clan hates me and all of the Blood Moon Clan. And finally, there is no way I'm letting you go alone again."

"I wasn't alone!"

"Yes, and where is my brother now?"

He has a point... If only Liam could answer! Don't tell me something really happened to him?

I bite my lip. "What if... I got Liam back?"

"What do you mean?"

"If I can prove William will hand us Liam back safe and sound, will you trust I can negotiate with him?"

"Last time we talked about this idea, he mentioned an exchange. I am not giving you to them, Nora."

Here we go again with his possessive issue... This is really getting old. Not that I don't know the feeling, though. There is no way I would let him go meet with the Gold Moon Clan. However, William Blue is apparently my cousin, not my fiancé!

"I swear I will come back. With Liam."

"Nora, I said no!"

"Damian, they won't harm me! I don't see any other way to help!"

"Once again, there is no reason for you to meddle in this! You—"

"Enough!"

This is my first time growling at my mate, but this time, I am really irritated. Won't he let me take my own decisions for once? I use my Alpha voice, as he won't listen to me, otherwise, and I am done with watching from the sidelines. He doesn't want me acting behind his back, I get it, but there is no way he will keep me from acting at all.

I lean towards him and take his hand between mine. "Damian, don't tell me not to meddle. You are this city's Alpha and my mate. No matter what, I am to be the next Luna. This is my problem, too. I caused this, the moment I fell in love with you, the moment I decided I would mate with you. This is my city, and I will protect it from anyone who tries to mess with it. Werewolves, vampires, witches, I don't care. I'm an Alpha, your Luna, and no matter what, a wolf. Damian, you have to let me do this."

Once I'm done, he stares at me for some long minutes, and silence befalls on the room. I am done talking, but Moon Goddess, can't he say something? No matter what, I know I won't be able to go against him if Damian still says no!

He suddenly sighs and takes a strand of my hair to put it behind my ear.

"Moon Goddess, Nora, do you have any idea how much I love you right now?"

I can't hold back a smile. I know his voice when he is about to give up. I win, and I even get some more of his love. Damian closes his eyes to rest his head on the back of his chair. I glance sideways and catch Neal with a faint smile, too. Can the Beta forgive the Goldgate episode with this? I turn back to Damian, waiting for his answer.

"Fine, I will let you meet with Blue. But I want you to come back, and with Liam, too."

I nod and try to reach Liam with my wolf again. Why isn't he answering? This is quite worrying right now, and I have no idea how to fix this... Oh wait, maybe I do. I wake my wolf, and we try to look for William's inner wolf together. Is it easier because it is my kin? Like Elena, now that we've met, I can reach him almost instantly.

"Nora. An unexpected but pleasant surprise."

"Tell me Liam is all right. I haven't been able to—"

"Who is that?"

"Liam Black! The guy you came with me! Black hair, blue-grey eyes, my age! Don't play with me!"

"Oh, the little one... I wonder."

"What do you mean?"

"You tell me. That boy escaped our territory around midnight last night. Those Black Brothers are as annoying as ever..."

"Liam escaped? On his own?"

"Quite an achievement, and in such a spectacular manner..."

"What do you mean?"

"He literally made a door explode and fled the premises leaving twenty of my people sleeping like babies behind him. I'm still debating about being impressed or angry."

Moon Goddess, Liam, what did you do now? ...And how?

"Oh, right. He actually left the room full of butterflies. Is it supposed to be a joke?"

Wait... butterflies? I instinctively turn around to stare at the large blue butterfly, which is actually flying around me. Could it be that witch's doing? Did she help Liam escape from the Sapphire Moon Clan's

territory? Why, and how? I mean, she even knew he was locked up there. Did she know because of this butterfly? And why would she help Liam Black? Is it another proof of our alliance, perhaps? I'm so confused, I stay speechless until Damian calls my name.

"Nora, what's wrong?"

He takes my hand, bringing me back to reality at the same time. I try to organize my thoughts, figuring how to explain all of this. Neal and Bobo are waiting to hear from me, too.

"Liam. He's already gone from the Sapphire Moon territory."

Damian frowns, surprised. "Did he contact you?"

"No... William Blue just told me."

I'm still probably not allowed to talk about the Witch to the Black family... I wish she would contact me again, so I would know what to say and what not! She stays in the shadows so far, and only seem to lend me a hand from time to time, like when she led me to William Blue and that missing piece of my past that was with him. That only comforts me with the idea that I have to work with the Sapphire Moon Clan.

"William, can we meet?"

"What would that be about?"

"The Gold Moon Clan. I'll help you settle your issues with them."

"That sounds promising... But on what basis? I have to remind you, I may acknowledge it myself, but we need proof you are indeed our Blue Moon Clan's Princess. Until then, you are only Black's woman."

"That I can prove. But we need to talk, in person, and on neutral ground."

"Alone?"

I take a breath in. This idea has been at the back of my mind for a while, and until recently, I didn't think this would be realistic, but... maybe now is the time to do something really unexpected.

"No, with a lot of people."

"Interesting..."

I turn to Damian and choose my words carefully. He probably guessed I was busy mind-linking William because he was waiting for me with his

eyes going colder and colder. Now that my attention is back to him, that icy stare of his melts immediately.

"You don't want me meeting William alone, right?"

"Right…"

"Let's say I would invite a lot of people?"

Damian seems to catch on my attempt to bring my idea on the table right away, because he suddenly stands up to face me, looking wary.

"Who are you thinking about?" He asks.

I don't avoid his gaze, and answer looking at him eye-to-eye. I borrow some of my wolf's confidence for support because it's like I'm facing a wall right now. I take a deep breath.

"All our allies. The neutrals, too. I mean the Alphas, the packs. We can gather all of them, Damian, and let them know we won't go by the Gold Moon's rules."

He shakes his head. "Nora, you are too optimistic. Most of the Clans fear us or hate us. They—"

"Damian, you are the Werewolf King of this city! Even if you are ruling by fear right now, is it enough to keep the peace? Soon, that won't be enough anymore! So, use it before this war really breaks out. Call them, summon them. I can't take this whole game of alliances anymore. Street fighting and bickering is fine, but an all-out war between packs? This financial pressure or whatever it is, it has to stop! No matter what, there is only one Silver City!"

He stares at me, looking impressed, surprised, and undecided. I know this is totally unprecedented and risky, but we have to. No matter what, all those schemes between the packs can't go on anymore. He turns to Neal, still holding my hand.

"What do you say?"

His Beta takes his time to answer, looking just as surprised as my mate by my idea. After a while, he nods slowly.

"It would certainly be worth trying... It's never been done before, though. Also, we are headed toward a conflict with either the Gold Moon or the Sapphire Moon. In any case, the Blood Moon will be seen as the source of the problem unless we go... very public."

Damian stays silent for a while, and I'm really nervous. This would be a crazy, unprecedented, and perilous idea, but right now, I'm sure this is our

best way of solving things. Or at least, to try to show our goodwill. I still remember Vince's anxiousness when Liam and Nate visited the pack, even if it was a dinner. He knew one step wrong, one word could end his Clan.

Maybe this is what a lot of packs will think. Damian is the Alpha King, and saying he is feared is quite an understatement. I am immune to his Alpha aura, but I am the only one, and Moon Goddess, I see it all too clearly whenever someone else is in the room. Even other Alphas respect him instantly. He is way too strong, which also explains why most of the other packs never meet him personally. His reputation is plenty enough. However, things are changing, and there is no way he can remain isolated anymore.

"All right... Let's try Nora's idea."

"Yes!"

I can't hide my joy and jump at Damian's neck, kissing him. He chuckles a bit and kisses my neck, pulling me to sit on his lap. Behind us, Neal clicks his tongue.

"Before engaging in your happy couple activities, can we talk about the details?"

I blush a little. That wasn't really serious of me, but oh well. Damian growls at his Beta a bit, annoyed, but Neal is right. I try to regain my composure and think about this seriously.

"We'll have the meeting on neutral ground, somewhere no one will feel threatened."

"We could use the Silver Stadium. It's one of the most neutral spots, easy to access, and at the heart of the city," suggests Damian.

Neal and I nod. Good idea. Werewolves love sports, so everyone is used to going to the stadium to watch matches, and as he said, it doesn't belong to any turf. Every wolf can go there within an hour and exit it quickly if we leave all doors wide open. No one will feel trapped if they are outdoor, either.

"We can send invitations to everyone, even the smaller packs," I say. "I'll tell Vince will come, and he can convince the Pearl Moon Alpha, too. William already promised he would come, and Elena can talk the White Moon Alpha into it, too."

"Actually... There might be a more efficient way, miss Nora."

What is Neal thinking about? The Beta gives me a smile, which is kind of scary in his case.

"Miss Nora, how good have you gotten at using your Alpha voice?" He asks.

"Pretty fine, I guess? My wolf always responds, and I can use it whenever I want to mind-link any Alpha I know or Elena."

"Do you remember when you reached out to everyone?"

The battle against the vampires. Of course, I do. It wasn't on purpose at all, I was just totally panicking. Moreover, Elena told me I should not use it, it's... annoying for other werewolves. Bobo described it as having my voice buzzing into his head, like some forceful echo.

"Neal, I'm not sure if... "

"I think this would be a very efficient way to call out to everyone and introduce yourself at the same time."

"I am not going to mind-link all the werewolves of Silver City again just to tell them who I am!"

He remains silent. …Really? No, I won't! I turn to Damian, but instead of being against it, my mate seems to consider Neal's idea.

"Damian, no!"

"Nora, that might be a good way to—"

"Startle or scare everyone! Damian, I may have this power, but it is annoying to others and forceful!"

"Didn't you say to use fear to convince them? What if they don't want to, or are too scared? A Luna's voice might be more convincing…"

I bite my lip. Damian has a point, but... I'm scared of people's reactions. I don't like the idea of being feared because I am a Royal, nor forcing people with my power. On the other hand, I do know this is important, we can't compromise at this point. If I reveal my lineage, it might really help Damian gather all the Clans together. William might even support this once I prove it. He did say he wanted me to join the Sapphire Moon if I really prove to be Queen Diane's granddaughter.

"All right... But I won't threaten anyone. Just use my Aura to reach out to everyone, okay?"

"You do it the way you want, my Love."

"Okay, so... The stadium?"

"The stadium, in three days. Each Alpha can bring fifty wolves at most. No weapons, but any form is okay," says Neal. "They have to come on foot; we will close all roads surrounding the stadium."

His professional attitude is back again, but it only makes me worry more. This is serious. It was my idea, but now I am kind of freaking out... Damian glances at Neal, and the Mura brothers leave us alone.

Once they're gone, Damian grabs me by the waist and makes me sit in front of him on his desk. His arms around me, he leans to put a kiss on my forehead. He looks at me in the eye with a solemn expression.

"Nora, once you do this, there is no coming back. Everyone will know who you are. You won't be hidden anymore— your identity will be out in the open."

I nod. I know. Isn't it ironic? Three months ago, I was no one. A girl hid in a basement, unaware of her own background. I had no idea I had a mate waiting for me, looking for me.

Look at me now.

I have friends, a mate, a job, and a future as a Luna waiting for me. I smile. This seems so unreal, and yet, I love it.

Damian frowns, confused by my happy expression. "What is it?"

"I'm just... I'm fine. Despite all this mess with the packs, the whole Witch issue, even Marcus... When I think about it, I'm happy, Damian, because you're here. All of you. You, Bobo, Elena, Liam, Nathaniel, Tonia... Months ago, I was always scared, I thought no one would save me. If I disappeared, it seemed like no one would care about it. Now, I know you're here with me, and I'm not scared of the future anymore; even if Hell breaks loose, I will fight it with you. I want to fight. That's something I never thought of before. I never thought of fighting back. There was no reason for it."

I put my hands around his neck, looking into his mesmerizing silver eyes I love so much. I give him a quick peck on the lips, before continuing.

"Now I got tons of reasons. I want to find the truth about my mom, protect you and my friends. I want to know more about my cousin and get closer to her. I want to be a Luna for the Blood Moon wolves, one they can acknowledge. I want to be with you, have a future with you."

He slowly lets out a smile and kisses me too.

"I want this future, Nora. I waited for this future with you for ten years. I want it now."

I bite my lip. The word "future" seems to mean a whole lot of things now, in Damian's mouth. I smile and caress his hair. I want to know more about this.

"What kind of future do you want?" I ask.

He leans on my shoulder and starts kissing my neck.

"A future with you in it every day. Waking up by my girl's side, seeing your smile."

He gives me a kiss between each sentence, making me blush uncontrollably. Will I ever get immune to Damian being romantic like this? But the merciless Alpha Black keeps kissing me.

"I want to live with you. Find a nice place you'll like. I want to have a life together. I even want to fight with you sometimes, so we can reconcile. I want to see you love your job and cooking. I want to see you with our friends and be a Luna for others. I want to see you grow up, and I want to see you pregnant with our child."

Oh, my Goddess. I'm red as a cherry and push Damian back from my neck before I die from combustion. A baby! Why would he mention having kids now? Is he doing this on purpose? We barely started having sex together! He laughs at my confused and embarrassed expression.

"Damian, you want children?"

He nods. "Only yours. And not now. You're too young, and I'm not ready to be a father. But someday, yes. When we're ready."

Oh gosh... I get red again and hide my face in his shoulder. How can this man make me feel so... Moon Goddess, when did I ever gain the right to be this happy?

I take a deep breath, one, two, three times. When I open my eyes, I see my inner wolf, shining with confidence. Her snow-white fur, our sapphire-blue eyes. We can do this. We have to.