

## Chapter 8

I refuse to shift back to my human form while still on the fighting ground and win some extra time to think about an explanation to give to the Brothers. Of course, Liam kept mind-linking me all the way to the apartment, though we both acted like nothing happened. Damian seemed too busy to notice anyway. He stayed silent, but I could tell from his frowning that he was busy mind-linking other people as well. Maybe Nathaniel, since he didn't come with us.

Aside from all of Liam's restless questioning, I'm more worried about what to tell his eldest brother. I know Elena asked me to keep what she had found about us a secret for now, and honestly, until it was confirmed, I didn't want to talk about it either. But now, everyone heard me call for help, even all the way to the White Moon's Clan Northern territory. How do I explain this...?

Once we reach the building, Liam and Damian first go to the apartment downstairs to take a shower and change. Bobo, Tonia, and I aim to do the same in mine. We ruined the cars with all that vampire blood, and truthfully, it's one of the worst smells I ever experienced. I use lots of shampoos to take it off my hair and cleanse my wound, too. Once in my

human form, I realize it's not that bad. Just a clean, about five centimeters long cut, and not too deep either, the bleeding already stopped. Silver does sting...

Since it's late already, I change into my pajamas and go back to the main room. Tonia is already there, in a bathrobe, inspecting her wounds. She has a black eye, a cut on her lower lip, several ecchymoses, a sprained ankle, and I would guess a couple of broken ribs. I quickly fetch the first aid kit from my bathroom and come back to help her take care of it.

"This is pathetic," she growls as I put some cream around her eye.

"It would have been better if you hadn't insisted on stepping between them and me," I scold her.

"For the reminder, protecting you is my job, baby girl."

I roll my eyes, but don't argue back. I don't feel like getting into this endless discussion now. Bobo comes back from his sister's room, too, wearing jeans. I'm glad he's back to his human form. Aside from a few bruises, he seems fine. He joins us and looks at Tonia, frowning.

"It's been a while since you've been in such a bad—"

"Don't say it," growls Tonia. "It's embarrassing enough as it is."

Bobo sighs and goes to sit on one of the kitchen stools. He looks exhausted, with his dreadlocks in a mess. He rests his arms on the bar and closes his eyes. Right, it's past midnight now. I hear something vibrating, and he raises his head to take out his phone. He reads a text and smiles. Tonia sees it, too.

"I really want to smash you right now. Stop smiling. You do know the boss is going to kill you, right?"

"Apparently, it was worth it," he whispers with an enigmatic smile.

"You left Nora alone, you selfish brat!"

"It's okay, Tonia, I really don't mind. I did okay by myself, and Bobo did protect me afterward."

"No, he was supposed to protect you, not that blonde!"

Bobo ignores her, and so do I. This can go on for a while with Tonia. So, I just take care of her wounds while Bobo closes his eyes and pretends to rest next to us. I honestly don't mind, though I am a bit curious to know what happened back there. Then again, I trust him. He probably had his own reasons.

A few minutes later, I'm done treating Tonia as much as I can, though I think she should go to the hospital. A couple of X-rays may be useful, but she refuses, saying she will be healed in a few hours. So instead, I decide to cook some late dinner, since the fight basically left everyone tired and famished. I grab whatever I find in the fridge to make up a pile of sandwiches. Liam warns me through the mind-link that he and Damian are coming up.

"What about Nathaniel?"

"He's still there, taking care of the aftermath. I think it's more about his girl, though. Who knows?"

"...Elena?"

"Yeah."

The door to the apartment opens, and they walk in. The two of them picked black t-shirts and jeans, and, as Liam predicted, they both look unharmed and fine. Liam runs to the table to grab some sandwiches and starts eating before he even sits up. I can't blame him; I'm starving, too, and I'm not sure the twenty sandwiches I made are going to be enough to feed all the wolves in the room. Even Damian picks one before coming to sit next to me.

I was a bit afraid of getting into another argument with him, but he gives me a quick kiss on the forehead and sighs. “Sorry for earlier. I was a bit on edge... You did great, Nora.”

“Hell yeah, she did. She couldn’t even shapeshift one month ago, and now she’s fighting vampires like a warrior,” adds Liam, his mouth full.

I smile. Indeed, I’m quite surprised with myself in a good way. It seems like my instincts did their job tonight...

For a few minutes, everyone enjoys the silence and my sandwiches. It’s been a crazy night, for sure. First, my birthday surprise, then an attack on the harbor, and now I’m having a tuna sandwich at 1 am. I think about the things that I left on the boat. I hope I can retrieve those later; I left my necklace and earrings there...

“There was something weird about this attack,” suddenly says Tonia.

Damian nods. “It’s like they just wanted to get inside the city no matter what. And I’ve never seen such a big group of vampires.”

“Could it be they had a commander?” Mutters Bobo.

“You’re thinking about the witch?” I ask.

“Maybe. It’s not the first time a witch would have taken control of vampires. They do partner up sometimes,” says his sister, taking a new bite of her sandwich.

“...I think they were targeting Nora.”

All eyes turn to Liam. He stopped eating, his eyes far off. He takes a new sandwich and starts talking again. “When I arrived, one of them said they needed to take her alive. Isn’t that weird? Why do they care who they kill or not? And there were a lot of them after you, too. If you were their aim, that explains why they rushed to the harbor.”

All eyes turn to me. I hesitate for a while, but I can’t hide things forever. I turn to Damian. “Liam’s right. I’m not sure about being their target, but one of them did say they wanted to capture me.”

My mate frowns. “Why would they want you...?”

“I think... It might have to do with my lineage.”

“Your lineage? I thought you didn’t know who’s your birth mother?” Asks Tonia with a confused look.

“I still don’t. But... I think she might have been a... a Royal.”

As soon as I drop that last word, they look at me with shocked expressions, except for Bobo and Damian. I wish I knew what he is thinking, but as always, his silver eyes are indecipherable.

“...A Royal?” He murmurs.

I nod, waiting for his reaction. But he stays silent, looking at me like he’s deep thinking. After a while, I shift my eyes to Bobo, silently asking for help.

He sighs. “Someone from the Opal Clan mentioned it today. A family of Royals got killed in the North about eighteen years ago. And Nora has... well, white fur and blue eyes, so...”

I hope Elena won’t resent me for this...

“You think your last name is a Clan’s name?” Asks Tonia.

“I’m just saying it could be.”

“...That would explain a lot of things...”

I turn to Liam, who is scratching his chin, thinking. He points out his fingers one by one in his free hand, the other one still holding a sandwich. “Clan-like last name. The white fur and blue eyes combination thing. Your dad taking you away from your unknown mom. Your Alpha genes and obvious good fighting instincts. Your altered abilities, like no fast-healing but large-scale mind-linking.”

“Yeah, what was that, by the way? Even I heard you!” Says Tonia.

I shake my head, just as clueless. I have no idea what I did! I just panicked and unconsciously asked for help. I didn’t think that would result in me sending out a significant distress signal to all the werewolf population of Silver City!

Damian finally turns to me, reacting to Tonia’s words. “Did you know you could do that?”

“No, not at all. I just discovered tonight I could reach out to other Alphas, too. It’s like a door opened in my mind. If my wolf has seen them eye-to-eye, she can talk to any Alpha, I think.”

“Can you talk to me?”

“I can. See? Easy.”



“That’s interesting...”

Damian smiles, but Liam catches us.

“Hey, no mind-flirting now, you two! We are still in the room.”

Damian playfully growls at his brother, but I just chuckle. He is one to talk, we spoke like that for the whole trip to here!

Tonia, too, wants to go back to the serious topic.

“Okay, so now Nora can mind-link any Alpha. That’s an Alpha ability anyway, but she mind-linked us, too, tonight. To be honest, baby girl, it was more of a big siren ringing in my head than nice talk.”

“Yeah, same for me. Felt like all I could focus on was your voice, it was loud and... mesmerizing,” says Bobo.

“It sounded normal for us, Alphas, right brother?”

Damian nods. I remember Elena did advise me not to make use of the mind-linking too lightly. What did she say again? Her pack members found it annoying. Maybe that’s what she meant if our voice sounds like what the Mura siblings described.

“I don’t think I could do it again now, anyway.”

“Well, don’t try. I already have a headache. Let’s save the testing for another time, baby girl,” grumbles Tonia.

“But it’s good to know. Now even if Nora is in trouble, she can ask for help by herself as easily as that.” Liam winks at me and grabs his fifth sandwich.

He’s right. Now not only we confirmed that I can fight for myself, but I can even warn others if I’m in trouble. Damian nods, my mate seems content about this news. Can I hope he is not going to be as overprotective as before now?

“There is still that whole Royal theory we need to confirm,” says Bobo.

We exchange a look. I know. Elena wasn’t sure of anything, but if we could somehow find a way to confirm it...

“...What about a blood test?”

All eyes turn to Tonia.

Damian frowns. “You think you could check this with a blood test?”

“Wait, you’re telling us the girl spent a month in a hospital, and you never checked her blood?” Says Liam.

“Because we didn’t think of checking her DNA! We were busy trying to keep her alive, for the record. Analyzing werewolf genes is a specific analysis. But yeah, it’s worth trying. If Nora is a Royal, we...”

“A Royal’s child,” I correct.

“Right, but even as Royal’s child, your werewolf genes should light up like a Christmas tree once we check your stats. I can ask Nana to help, I’m sure she would know.”

Damian nods, but to be honest, there is something else I would like to check. My eyes turn to Bobo, and he knows right away what I am thinking about. If we can do blood testing, I can even see how closely related Elena and I are!

When I come back with the tea, they already changed subjects back to the attack. Damian left Nathaniel behind to oversee the Northern territory’s defense issues with the White and Opal Moon Clans, and Tonia explains the situation at the harbor.

“They were so adamant about getting to the harbor... Doesn’t that mean they knew where Nora was right away? Assuming she was her target, anyway.”

“She definitely was,” says Liam.

“But why? Why would they want Nora, why her in particular?”

“...Maybe it’s because of this whole Royal thing?” Says Bobo.

I frown. What would vampires have any interest in a Royal? Royals are specials for werewolves, not for vampires... And it’s not like I’m a leader of some sort or anything.

“Or it could be to destabilize my brother? He is known to be the Alpha of Silver City, even if it’s unofficial. If they took Nora as a hostage, they could—”

Damian growls, but I put my hand on his to calm him down and shake my head.

“I doubt it, Liam, no one really knows about me. Even tonight, people from the other packs had no clue who I was or which Clans I was related to. The Jade Moon Clan concealed my existence for years, and I only went

out a few times in the last two months. Vampires should be even more clueless...”

“But what’s their point in catching a Royal’s kid?” Says Tonia, doubtful.

“Maybe not for the vampires, but for the witch...”

Once again, all eyes turn to Liam.

“What? Witches can do weird stuff. Maybe she wants to try, well, using Nora for curses...”

“You got to be pretty damn sure of how useful she is going to be if you send a hundred vampires to a city full of werewolves just to get one!”  
Grumbles Tonia,

Damian growls again. I guess hearing about how a witch could use my body is not to his liking... I need to stop all this thinking before he gets too many ideas.

“Anyway, we are not sure of anything for now. We can only test my blood and see what’s right or not about this whole Royal theory.”

“And strengthen our defenses. Neal said they didn’t find any witch among the bodies, so if there really is one, she might try to attack us again. I’ll hold a meeting with all the Alphas,” says Damian.

“I think we have some time before that Witch can attack again. It must have taken time to gather so many bloodsuckers, and we killed them all. If it was an alliance, she won’t be able to find any Clan willing to cooperate with her for a while. If she subdued them somehow, I would guess it’s going to take a while to do it all over again, too,” adds Liam.

“Those are just theories. And since when are you a witch expert, anyway?”

I must agree with Tonia. I had no idea Witches could subdue vampires, but Liam seems to know a lot more than I would have thought.

He shrugs. “I have to hunt one down on our territory. I should know the basics, at least.”

“Catch her fast, Liam. We ought to know if she’s on our side. Otherwise, we have to get rid of her, too...”

“I know.”

I yawn without being able to hold back, and Bobo does the same two seconds later.

Tonia sighs. “Well, I guess kids should go to bed. You’re getting up early tomorrow.”

“Wait, I have to go to school, too?” Says Liam, pissed.

“Yes, you do! Just because you came and fought a few bloodsuckers, you think you can skip? Hell no, brat,” growls Tonia.

I forgot about work, too. It’s late, but I can still catch some decent sleep if I go to bed now. Liam argues with Tonia for a while before Damian intervenes.

“Liam, enough.”

With just those two words, the youngest brother stops complaining right away, though he is obviously pouting. Tonia smirks, and I can’t help but smile, too, at his childish behavior.

Damian throws him a key. “You’re sleeping downstairs at Nate’s place. Tonia, you’re coming with me. Bobo, you stay there.”

They all agree, but I turn to Damian, a bit disappointed. “You’re not staying?”

“I have to go back. The White and Pearl Moon Clans need help, and I can’t leave Neal and Nate to handle it on their own.”

He quickly turns his eyes to the others, and everyone gets the message; they all exit the room immediately, leaving us alone. He takes my hand and kisses it softly, making me smile.

“Sorry... I know it’s your birthday.”

“It’s okay, my birthday ended over an hour ago. And I had the best one in my life, too.”

I lean to kiss him, and he responds to it immediately. I’m getting braver and braver whenever we interact. Maybe getting to know more about his past helped, too. He puts an arm around my shoulders, and we both lean on the back pillows, my head against his shoulder.

“I’m sorry for leaving you behind, but I’m glad you weren’t in the front lines. I was worried enough about where you were.”

“I know... I’m glad I can defend myself now, but there is so much going on...”



“Don’t worry. We can handle a witch or two.”

“At least the other packs helped. I didn’t think they would.”

“Not all the packs. That’s another reason I want to talk to them, but you don’t need to concern yourself with that.”

Here we go again. Whenever it involves the other werewolves, Damian shuts me out. Am I not supposed to become his Luna someday? Shouldn’t I at least be interacting with his pack already? But Damian never lets me close to his pack’s affairs or members, except for his brothers and the Mura siblings. I don’t like being put aside.

Maybe Elena is right, and I should stay cautious...

“You look tired. I should go,” he whispers.

I nod, and he puts a quick kiss on my forehead before leaving. I stay alone for a while, lost in my thoughts without really falling asleep. I hear Bobo coming back, and he lays next to me on the couch, his head on my lap, like he always did as a wolf.

“Liam and my sis left. How are you?”

“Tired... How about you?”

“Same. But your sandwiches were delicious.”

“Thanks, Bobo.”

We stay silent for a few seconds, and for a moment, I wonder if he fell asleep after closing his eyes, but he starts talking again.

“I think it’s worth a shot. The blood testing.”

“I think so, too... I should ask Elena to do the same.”

“Don’t worry, she has someone who can do it for her.”

“...The tawny wolf?”

I just guessed randomly, but to my surprise, Bobo nods. I hope her friend is okay, though his injury didn’t seem too bad. She mentioned they lost friends from their pack... I probably shouldn’t try to contact her now. They are probably either tired or busy. I suggest to Bobo we should get to bed, and he agrees. He changes back to his wolf form and comes to sleep on my bed.

I take a while to fall asleep, though. Once again, it was a big day. I would have had an incredible birthday if it wasn't for the events that followed it... I remember my moon necklace and quickly text Damian about it. He replies right away, saying not to worry and that he'll send someone to fetch it. Reassured, I finally lose myself to slumber.

For the next two weeks, things get quite busy for everyone.

I kept working steadily at Nathaniel's restaurant, even if the man barely had any time to come and visit it himself. Since I demonstrated my fighting skills during our battle against the vampires, Damian finally agreed to lighten the surveillance around me. For example, Bobo didn't have any obligation to watch me while I was working at the restaurant anymore. He was now only showing up at the end of my shift. Also, Tonia didn't come to the apartment as often as before. We kept our training sessions in the morning, and she would still sleep over a couple of times a week to have more time to help her brother with his Beta functions.

As planned, she sent my blood samples to Granny Adriana, and now we are just waiting for the results. Liam also took some, though he never said who he would give it to, no matter how I insisted. He did promise he would let me know later, though.

Finally, Elena said her friend Daniel, the tawny wolf, was to run some tests on both our blood samples to see if he could find out about our kinship. Apparently, Daniel is a medical student, though his specialty is

psychiatry. But Elena and I barely interacted since the fight. She seems busy, probably still the aftermath of the attack.

Damian, too, hardly has any time to meet with me. It looks like his Alpha duties keep him running from one place to another after this mess. He never shares with me whatever it is that he was busy with, though. As time passes, I ask less and less but got more suspicious. Not only is he obviously keeping me in the dark, but because of this, I can't trust him, and our relationship wasn't making any progress either.

One evening after work, Liam, like often, comes to the apartment to eat with Bobo and me after his classes. I was starting to doubt that he really is looking for the Witch in Silver City. He just goes to school or skips it from time to time to drop by unannounced, like tonight. However, I'm set on making him spill the beans about Damian. I know he and Nathaniel know more than they want me to think.

"Why do you think my brother lets me meddle in his adult stuff? They both treat me like a kid!" Says Liam, sitting on my kitchen counter and eating cherry tomatoes.

"Don't act innocent when it suits you, Liam. I'm sure you know something and won't tell me."

"If I do, and I don't say I do, I'm not going to snitch. Sorry to disappoint you, Nora, but you are not nearly as scary as my brother."

So, I'm just not intimidating enough now? I roll my eyes while fetching the basil herbs, and take the bowl of cherry tomatoes from him, only to annoy him. "I thought I could trust you!"

"Oh, you can! But still, not going to talk."

He is really annoying sometimes... I turn to Bobo for help, but he is busy texting again. He is glued to his phone these days! I stir up the sauce, trying to think of how I can convince him.

"Liam, I know something is going on, and no one will tell me. All I do is go to work and come home."

"What are you talking about, you do go out sometimes."

"I'm talking about wolf stuff! I'm still without a pack, remember? It's been weeks! I can't just act human, I need to have a pack, hunt with other wolves, mind-link other people."

This is the biggest issue for me these days. I don't get why Damian still hasn't let me join his pack yet. He won't even let me meet them!

“Welcome to my life! My brothers only cared about having me go to school and not get into fights.”

“But you do get into fights,” says Bobo.

“Yup, I’m a rebel. But that’s not the point.”

His finger heads to try my sauce, but I slap his hand and glare at him. No answers, no treats.

He pouts. “Gosh, you’re starting to learn from my brother. You’re almost as good as him at glaring now...”

“I’m going to do a lot more than glaring if you don’t start talking, Liam.

He gasps. “Seriously? You’re down to threats now?”

“Told you, my patience has its limits.”

He frowns, and stays silent for a while, thinking. I leave him to his thinking and set up the table for three. Bobo finally puts his phone aside and helps me bring the food as we take a seat. Finally, Liam comes to sit too and looks at me in the eyes.

“Okay... I can’t talk, because I want to die a painless death, but I can give you a hint, as long as you promise not to tell my brothers.”

“I promise.”

He breathes in and finally says it. “You should go the Black Corp’s Christmas Party. There you go. ...Can I eat this plate of pasta now?”

He starts eating right away, but I’m still dumbfounded. “Wait, what Christmas party?”

Liam ignores me and keeps eating, so Bobo is the one to explain.

“It’s the Black Corporation annual Christmas Party. They hold one every year for all the employees, including big clients, so a lot of people attend. Most of the Blood Moon Clan will be there, but they also invite people from other Clans.”

I had no idea this kind of event happened. I don’t think the Jade Moon Clan ever was into any sort of big business like this. I know close to nothing about Damian’s company, either.

“So, why would I go to this Christmas Party?” I ask Liam.

“Just go, and you will see what this is all about. I should warn you though, you are probably not going to like it.”

Why wouldn't I? What is this mystery that I could solve by attending this party? Is Damian going to make an announcement of some sort? I don't think Liam chose this randomly or is warning me without reason. I should probably go... And not tell Damian about it, though I really don't like the idea of doing such things.

“When is it then?”

“In a few days. December 14th.”

“Oh, I got time then.”

But Liam chokes and spits out a bit of spaghetti. I hand him a glass of water to help, but he gulps it down before turning to me. “Nora, It's not just a next-door party. You can't go in like that. You are going to need an invitation, an escort, a dress.”

Now he is scaring me. I have never been to a party before, but I didn't imagine it would be such a big fuss! For a minute, I'm wondering if he is not exaggerating, but that doesn't seem the case. I turn to Bobo, and he just nods. “Those parties are a pretty big deal. All the rich people of Silver City are going to try sneaking in.”



Great... Which means I will be totally out of place there. I sigh. Why must I go through all this? Just because Liam said so doesn't mean I will find what I'm looking for! What if I go there for nothing or worse, just go ridicule myself in front of a bunch of strangers? Liam sees me panicking and rolls his eyes. "Don't start panicking now, Nora. I can be your escort, for starters. They always send me an invite, but I don't usually go. This way, my brothers won't suspect a thing."

"For the dress, you surely have all you need in your wardrobe," says Bobo. "If not, you can just ask my sister to go shopping. She probably won't think it's for the party."

I nod to their suggestions, not happy about it, though. I'm too scared and busy thinking now. Can I really go to that party behind Damian's back? Gosh, I hope it will be worth it...

After dinner, Liam leaves, and I head straight to my room to talk to Elena. Bobo gave me her number earlier since it will probably be less intrusive than mind-linking. I'm on my own since Bobo decided to go to the gym upstairs. Turns out, despite being usually on the lazy side, he does have a thing for training, like his big sister.

I lay on my bed and take out my smartphone to call Elena, who answers after a few seconds.

“Hi, Nora.”

“Hi, Elena. Are you free to talk right now?”

“Sure, it’s just Danny and me. Is everything okay?”

“Yes, yes, everything is... fine. How is Daniel?”

“He’s recovering fast, like a werewolf. Lucky him.”

I chuckle. I suppose Elena is thinking about our inability to fast-heal... I hear someone talking to her in the background, but she just answers that she’s on the phone with me.

“Sorry, Nora.”

“No, it’s okay. I just wanted your opinion on something.”

“What is it?”

I explain everything to her; How my relationship with Damian is confusing me, his attitude, what Liam told me. It takes a while, but I am finally pouring out everything I held in so far. For some reason, I feel a

lot better confiding in Elena. Maybe it's because she is a girl and not part of the Blood Moon Clan. Also, it might be because I hope we are related, but I really feel some connection with her... I'm more interested in confirming that before knowing whether I am a Royal's child or not. If Elena and I really turn out to be related, she would be my only family left, other than Alec...

Once I'm done talking, she stays silent for a long while, then starts slowly laughing.

"What is so funny?" I ask, smiling, too.

"Sorry, it's just... Really, nothing is ever simple with those Black Brothers, don't you think?"

I can't help but agree.

"Are you and Nathaniel...?"

I'm not sure how to finish this sentence. I'm probably not supposed to know, let alone supposed to ask! I blush, realizing a bit late I'm totally intruding on Elena's privacy. To my surprise, she just sighs.

"No... And yes... I guess it's complicated. For now, I need time to think, so I've been keeping Nate out of my life these days."

“...Are you okay?”

“I am. I just didn’t think things would get so complicated. That’s what relationships do to you, I guess? But don’t worry, I’m okay. And I’ve got Danny supporting me.”

I hear him answering her in the background, though I don’t know what he says.

“Anyway. To be honest, I would say you should trust Liam on this one.”

“...You already know what this is about, don’t you?”

“...I have suspicions.”

I figured so. After all, Elena was the first one to tell me not to trust Damian to quickly, so she probably had her reasons for that. I guess she will not be the one to tell me what all this mystery is about, anyway. I must figure it out on my own.

“Nora, anything yet on the blood results?”

“Not yet. Tonia said it would take time. Apparently, gene-testing is longer.”

“I figured so... Danny said the same thing. But I have something else. Apparently, matching our blood test results is much quicker.”

I stop breathing for a second. Is this for real? Already? I’m so not ready! I get up, fidgeting while trying to breathe again.

“Nora?”

“Sorry, I’m just so stressed suddenly! Do you really have it? You know?”

“Yes. Daniel just got the results this afternoon. I wanted to see you in person to tell you, but now that you called me first, I really don’t think I can keep quiet until then. But can you breathe first? You’re scaring me a bit, and if you collapse, I’m way too far to help.”

“No, I’m okay! Just tell me, is it a match? Is it?”

I hear her laugh at the end of the phone, and someone is agitating some paper. Probably our results! Gosh, the suspense is killing me!

“Elena!” I beg, unable to wait anymore.

“Nora, it is! We are related!”

Oh, Moon Goddess Mother.

It's for real. Elena and I are related! I can't believe it! I have another family member that close to me! Moreover, she is related to my mom, to my birth Clan! I feel tears coming up, and I smile like an idiot. While I'm trying to catch my breath, I hear Elena silently crying, too.

“Are you okay?” I ask.

“Why do you ask? You are crying like a baby, too!” She replies, half-laughing and half-crying.

We both laugh and cry for a few seconds, and Bobo suddenly comes back into the room. Seeing me in tears, he runs up to me with a worried look. I shake my head, whispering that I'm okay. I put the phone on speaker, to let him hear Elena, too.

“Nora, there's more.”

“What do you mean?”

“According to Daniel, the percentage of matching DNA can indicate how closely related we are, so he brought the full results. You and I have 13.3% of matching DNA.”

Isn't that a lot? I must calm my breathing again. I can hear Elena smiling; she is having fun with this suspense.

“Elena, speak!”

“We are cousins, Nora. First cousins! One of my birth parents was your mom’s sibling!”

“...Are you kidding?”

“No, I’m not! Daniel just told me this much matching DNA can only be a first-degree cousin! Can you imagine? Your mother is my aunt! We are cousins!”

I can’t believe it! I have a cousin! A cousin from my mother’s side! I can’t help but cry and giggle, and Elena is in the same state at the other end of the line. We don’t even look alike, how could I have guessed we were so closely related? I did hope that we would turn out to be distant relatives, but this is unreal!

Bobo is happy for me, and he hugs me as I try to calm down. When I finally do, he brings me to sit with him on my bed. Once I eventually calm down, I can see and think much clearer. So clearly, in fact, that I realize another detail.

“Elena, do you know what this means?”

“Yeah, I thought about it right away. That means if you turn out to be, I would be a Royal’s child, too.”

“Could it be?”

“Daniel said so. I may not have as much as you, but I do have some Royal characteristics, after all... Probably that my non-Royal parent was less pure or something? I don’t know...”

I feel her tense up a little bit, and her tone as changed, too. Why do I feel like something is wrong...? I thought she wasn’t really caring about the whole Royal thing? Not that I am, either, but...

“Elena? What do you mean you need to find out?”

“I know I said before it didn’t really matter for me, but...” I hear sighing, and she whispers something with Daniel for a while, I don’t know what. Bobo suddenly pulls the phone towards him.



“You can tell Nora, Elena. She won’t tell anyone.”

“Tell me what?” I ask, a bit worried now.

“Nora, I need you to promise me you won’t tell anyone what I’m about to say. Especially not the brothers. Not even Tonia, or anyone else.”

“I promise. What is it?”

“...I learned yesterday before the battle. I’m pregnant. It’s Nate’s.”

Oh, Moon Goddess...