~ Kate ~

"The Alpha calls for you," Beta Zev said, making Kate wide-eyed in the library of the packhouse.

Since that night of Sebastian's return, they have not spoken. It felt strange to Kate, especially since he came back from saving Gus. She had always wondered if the alpha still blamed her for Gus' abduction.

While following behind Beta Zev, Kate asked, "Is he mad at me?"

"Was he mad at you when he carried you to the third floor the other day?" Zev smirked, and Kate sensed a deeper meaning behind his words.

'No, he wasn't,' she kept her thoughts to herself and simply looked away.

Upon arriving at Sebastian's office, Zev announced, "Alpha, Luna Kate is here."

Kate flushed at the fact that the people around the packhouse still called her a Luna. Although she was going to be a luna for Sebastian, technically, she was still not. She proposed, "Seriously, you can just call me Kate - you and everyone else in the packhouse."



"They will eventually get used to calling you the Luna," Sebastian's deep voice came through. Although he still wore his bronze mask, Kate could feel his eyes on her. He ordered, "Sit."

"Yes, Alpha," Kate answered and hastily sat on the chair before Sebastian.

"You wanted to talk?" Sebastian questioned. "Let's talk. I'd rather that you ask me than go around questioning others."

Kate pursed her lips. She realized that the doctor, Cassandra, must have told him. She replied, "I was just hoping to find answers. I have every right to know, considering I will be your wife, regardless of our plans to separate in the future."

"Fine," Sebastian conceded. "Before anything else, I want you to know I contacted your parents. I have told them about your witch predicament. They want to see you as soon as possible, but the suitable place to meet is within Vottara's capital, the palace. We will be leaving in three days."

"And, I take it you need help tracing down this witch, Glinda," Sebastian recalled.

Kate nodded, saying, "Very much. I was trying to track her whereabouts when I was still at the South Moon Pack. She was my ticket out of there, but -"



She paused, looking Sebastian in the eye. She resumed, "But instead, you saved me."

"Hmmm," Sebastian responded plainly.

"My last update on her location was at the Spratzie Islands," Kate said. "I need her to undo the seal."

"I'll send people to look for her," Sebastian said. He leaned back, lifting his chin in her direction, and waited. "Well, ask away."

"Um, how is Gus?" Kate probed.

"He is fine. I'll take you to see him later today," Sebastian said. "He wants to see you."

"You know, since the other day, you seem calm," Kate suggested. "You are not mad at me because of Gus?"

"The attack on the caravan over a year ago had nothing to do with you. I know that now, so let's say I no longer blame you for losing my men," Sebastian revealed.

When Kate's brows met, Sebastian explained further, "There was a traitor within my warriors. The betrayer was the one who sold your information to Alpha Peter; thus, the attack happened. Gus told me everything. He found out about it while in captive at the Dunswick Pack."

"I had also sent men to the Blue Bandits headquarters. Their leader said they were only trying to get more



money from you. They never really sold your information, fearing that I would find out," Sebastian supplemented.

"Really?" Kate sighed in relief. She rested her hand on her chest, saying, "Somehow, that makes me feel a little better."

"But because of a traitor's actions, I am the one who owes you. Because your guard, Dolores, died in that attack," Sebastian said. He knitted his brows and added, "Now, I must explain that to your parents."

Hearing Dolores' name, Kate felt low. She took a moment to respond, "We can't always control the actions of others, but I'm glad you told me. I don't blame you for her death. I'm sure my parents won't blame you either."

Following Kate's words, there was silence between them. Each of them took opportunities to study their expressions. Too bad for Kate, though; all she could evaluate was Sebastian's stiff posture, leaning against his chair.

"So," Kate finally found the courage to say. "Are you really not going to tell me why you wear a mask?"

"I have my reasons," Sebastian said. Kate waited for another few seconds, but nothing more came out of his mouth.

"So, that's it? Don't you feel suffocated wearing that thing?" Kate asked, referring to Sebastian's bronze mask.

"Haven't you heard what other people say? Who knows, one of them speaks the truth," Sebastian suggested.

"But -"

"Enough about the mask. I have something to hide, so I wear a mask. End of discussion," Sebastian asserted, his jaws clenching at the end of his sentence, and his voice raised. "If you bring this up again, we will end up in an argument, and you don't want that."

"Fine, then, tell me about the curse," Kate finally asked.
"What makes you the cursed alpha of Vottara?"

"Because I am... cursed," Sebastian admitted.

"Cursed, how?" Kate asked.

"Cursed," Sebastian replied.

At that point, Kate was frustrated. She thought, 'How long was this man going to drag this out?'

Kate frowned, and her lips twitched. Then, she heard the most impossible thing in the world; Sebastian chuckled!

'Oh, so he has a human side of him, after all!' Kate mused.



"Your angry expression amuse me," Sebastian remarked.

Kate was about to react when Sebastian explained further, "My family had been cursed for generations. And the funny thing is, your kind caused it."

"What?" Kate was taken aback. She clarified, "My kind?"

"Particularly, your mother's kind," Sebastian revealed.

"My mother's kind?" Yet again, Kate was stunned. She raised her brow and confirmed, "By a winter-grey wolf?"

"Yes, by a winter-grey wolf," Sebastian responded. "They say winter-grey wolves are direct descendants of the Moon Goddess. They could wish for anything, and the Goddess would grant it, including a curse."

"I will tell you what I can about the curse, but you must promise that whatever we discuss will not leave this room. I will trust you, being your father's daughter," Sebastian added.

Dead air fell upon them. Kate was slowly taking it all in.

Yes, Kate's mother, Alexia Reed Stone, was a winter-grey wolf. However, unlike her mother's white-greyish werewolf coat and extraordinary ability, Kate got most of her father's qualities. Thus, Kate never considered herself to be a winter-grey wolf. Her mother was, but not her.

Kate did not know for how long she was in a daze, but



recalling how she had already agreed to marry Sebastian, she weakly replied, "I promise not to break your trust as long as you are not in the wrong."

"I had no choice about my family's curse. It was passed on to every offspring in our family," Sebastian revealed.

"Let me hear it. I need to know as much as possible if I am to marry you," Kate answered.

"Very well," Sebastian said. He sucked in a deep breath and said, "There are many versions of it, and it's because the rumors of our family's curse had gone on for more than a century. The last indication of its existence was with my father, which happened twenty years ago when I was only eight years old."

"It all began with my great-great grandfather, Bernard Armstrong," Unhurriedly, Sebastian narrated. "Many years ago -"



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