

Cursed Wolf Chapter 18 - Tips

Luna pored over her grandmother's journals with Teal all morning. They researched and discussed every possible next step. Louisa had outlined a plan: She had two possible next iterations of the potion.

One idea was to let the existing brew steep for another month, which would mean they would have to recreate the previous recipe. The other option was to try a completely new recipe made of some rare ingredients.

Louisa had prepared for both iterations, and upon looking through the apartment and the shop, the two of them were easy to find. The required herbs were all stored and neatly labeled. The two witches stared at the bundles of herbs and the potion in the large bottle on the kitchen island in Luna's apartment.

"I think we should try both," Luna said.

"What if we do them both?" Teal suggested.

"Hmm," Luna said, tapping her lip. She needed Rex to be with her sooner a month from now. She needed him right now.

She read over Louisa's recipes, racking her brain and trying to put the puzzle pieces together.

She needed Rex healthy long enough for him to claim her. Then his curse would be broken. There would be time for the other wolves later. She was destined to help all of them, not just Rex, but she needed Rex by her side to help her and carry her through until the end.

"I need to bring Rex back to me." Luna nodded slowly and their eyes met. "First, we need to make Rex human enough to be in the same room with me."

"Rex's brother said the wolves are having to take three vials every three hours. What if we doubled the strength of the current potion using a quick brew, and then added the additional ingredients?"

"What is a quick brew?"

"We're going to need the distillation equipment," Teal said, pulling glass beakers and a Bunsen burner out of Louisa's pantry.

Creating a distillation was very different than an alcohol extraction like the previous potion. They hoped it was the best way to speed up the process—at least for now.

After the first batch was distilled, they used a tiny portion of the rare herb recipe for a second distillation. When both were complete, they combined it all with the potion Louisa had created. When they were done, it late at night, and both were exhausted.

"I hope this works for you," said Teal as she bundled into her coat at the door.

Luna hugged her tight. "I have to bring him back to me."

Teal hugged her back. "I can feel it in my gut. Louisa is with us. She's helping us right now."

"I can feel it too."

After they said their goodbyes, Luna collapsed into her living room chair, too tired to make herself a cup of tea. The doorbell rang and she hurried down to answer the door. River was standing on the other side with a white boxes and a to-go cups.

Luna enthusiastically invited her friend in and brought her upstairs. They settled in at the dining table. River unpacked the boxes next to the bouquet of pink roses from her date.

It hurt just to look at them. River's ham and cheese croissants and potato broccoli soup somehow dulled the pain.

"I've been working on the potion all day," she said, her voice weary.

"How do you feel about it?"

"I think it will get us to where we need to be," she said with a weak laugh.

"And where's that?" River asked, sipping her tea.

"I need him to claim me to break the curse. But he won't be around me until he can control his rage."

"What about the others?" River asked.

"I don't know. I can't break their curses like I can break Rex's. He's my mate and I'm his. We shouldn't have waited. It's something I already regret."

"I'm sure you two had your reasons."

"We did. He wanted to court me in an old-fashioned way. But that didn't exactly go as planned," Luna said, rubbing her stomach.

"What do you mean by that?" River asked.

“We made love without protection more times than I can count,” she said with a laugh. “But I was on the pill just a few weeks ago. So, it’s probably wishful thinking.”

“Luna, I’m so sorry this is all happening to you.”

“The curse is breaking my heart. It’s tearing me apart because of what it’s done to Rex. But it’s only because I love him so much.

“I never imagined I would feel like this about someone else. I haven’t loved so much since my mother passed away. Rex sees me. The true me, right to the very bottom of my heart. It’s hard to explain. I probably sound stupid.”

“You don’t sound stupid. You sound incredibly lucky and incredibly blessed. It saddens me that the two of you have to go through this. You should be together.”

“We will be together. The potion we’ve made, I know it will work. It will bring him back to me. I love him too much to lose him now. To lose something so perfect in such a short time? Fate would never do that to me. Rex and I will be together, and we will have our family.”

“You will. But for now, finish eating your food and get some sleep. You’re exhausted. Are you going to take the potion out to him in the morning?”

“I want to take it to him now, but you’re right. I’m exhausted. If it didn’t work, I would keel over and faint dead away on the floor. And I wouldn’t do that to the Doolittles.”

River stood up and kissed Luna on the forehead, patting her shoulder.

“I’m lucky to have met someone like you, Luna. You are strong and brave and kind. It’s an inspiration to see you fighting for your happily ever after. You make me believe that it’s possible that I’ll have mine.”

Luna felt so much gratitude for River bringing her pastries and tea, for being her friend, and for believing in her.

“Thank you, River. You are the best friend I could hope for.”

After River left, Luna got herself ready for bed, brushing her teeth and hair before climbing under the blankets. She fell asleep quickly, drifting off into dreams that cycled between blissful and frantic. When she woke in the morning, it was to the sound of her grandmother’s voice.

Everything will turn out all right, dear. You are on your way to being the woman you were meant to be.

Luna's eyes opened and she took a deep breath before letting it out. She was learning to follow her gut; learning to believe in herself. Learning to listen to the whisperings of the guidance in the back of her mind. Her grandmother was here to teach her and guide her. The reassurance was exactly what she needed to take the next step in her journey.

After she prepared for the day, she called the Doolittles to let them know she was on her way over with a new potion.

"How is Rex?" she asked.

"They have devised a system, but only Rex and Felix have chosen to stay in human form."

"Is it that bad?" Luna asked.

"It is painful, but you've brought them hope. Don't let yourself be discouraged."

"I want to see him. Will he let me?"

"I'll have Patrick go ask him."

A moment later, Patrick returned, and Rebecca gave her the news. "He doesn't want to take the new potion in front of you in case it makes it worse."

"I understand." Luna felt a tear slide down her cheek.

The idea that she couldn't see the man she loved for an entire month while he lived in torturous pain and torment cut her like a knife. All the way out to the Doolittles' property, she had to keep herself from crying.

Her grandmother's words replayed in her mind. She was on the right track. She would save her man. She would take him home, make love to him, be claimed by him, and they would live their blessed life.

When she arrived at the Doolittles', she felt lightheaded and weak in the knees. The roller coaster of emotions was starting to materialize as stress. But she had to soldier on. She had to be there for Rex. He was counting on her.

She brought the potion into the house. She'd made vials for all the brothers so they could test the effects. She hoped that her lack of alchemy knowledge wouldn't kill them all, but she had to believe that Louisa had known what she was doing when she left the responsibility on her shoulders.

"Patrick will take it out to them," Rebecca said, making Luna a cup of tea.

They sat at the kitchen island together sipping chai tea with cream and honey. It was a comforting taste on her lips, but she couldn't help but shiver, even with the warm cup between her hands.

"It's going to be okay, Luna." Rebecca said. "Rex is a good man. He's a strong man. Just as you are good and strong. If there are any two people in this world who can break this curse it's the two of you."

"Thank you, Rebecca. I can't believe how much my world has changed in the last week. I left California such a short time ago. I was a completely different person."

"You weren't a different person. You just hadn't seen this side of yourself yet."

"You're right. It was here all along. Rex was here all along. Louisa was here all along. My birthright, my place. Now I'm finally here. I just hope I don't screw it up."

You are on the right path. Louisa's voice whispered to her just as Rebecca said the same words out loud.

Luna took a deep breath and let it out. "It's going to work," she said. "It has to."