

## Cursed Wolf Chapter 8 - Tips

Luna expected a text from Cursed Wolf instantly. From what she understood about shifters, most were extremely keen on finding their mates. She stared at the app on the phone, anticipating something popping up any second now.

She bit her lip as the minutes ticked past. Nothing happened. Her finger hovered over the message now button on the app, but she couldn't bring herself to press it. It wasn't that Luna was super old fashioned or anything. She'd reached out to guys before.

Not only was this demigod a shifter, he was also the hottest man alive, in Luna's opinion. Her personal experience with drop dead sexy men was limited, but she would swear to the end of her days that Cursed Wolf was hotter than the sexiest movie star and fitter than the most highly trained athlete.

Her mouth watered just looking at him. Who was this guy? Was it even legal to be that perfect?

Maybe this was a fake picture, and she was being catfished. She couldn't believe she hadn't thought of that sooner. She shook her head at herself. She was being stupid. No man that gorgeous and perfect would be matched with her.

She was boring bookstore manager Luna Linwood. The most interesting thing about her was her slightly hippie name, which her mother had apparently insisted on. Otherwise, she wasn't anything special at all.

She had shoulder length mousy blond hair, too many curves, and a dimple in one cheek without a second to match it. She was the most imperfect, average human alive.

She sighed at herself. Her insecurity was getting the better of her. Shifters were known to be ridiculously good looking compared to the average human. But she was an average human, even if the shifter she was matched with was this Adonis of a man.

Luna growled and set down the phone, turned off the light, and pulled the covers over her shoulders as she snuggled in to sleep.

There was no way she was going to fall asleep with that man on her mind. She could see the muscles bulging against the too-tight t-shirt. His faded blue jeans also had a substantial...

Luna rolled over in bed. Her body hummed with awakened desire. She couldn't even remember the last time she felt this way. But she was bone tired. She'd been in Selkie less than one day, and her world had been totally turned upside down.

The moments ticked away to the grandfather clock in the hall. Unfamiliar sounds whistled and rumbled outside her window. She turned over on her back, her imagination running wild with images of her match.

His strong jaw, his flashing feral eyes, the wolf inside him gleaming just behind the surface of his irises. Luna ran her hand between her legs and sucked on her tongue. A surge of energy shot up her belly on contact.

She groaned and cupped her sex over her flannel pajamas. She imagined him running his hand under her shirt. His gleaming chest. Hunger in his eyes. Hunger for her.

Her phone beeped and flashed from the bedside table. She gasped and grabbed it, reading the notification on the screen. It was a message from mate.com, but it was not the sexy introduction she'd expected.

It was something else entirely.

"Luna. This is Rebecca Dolittle. We need to talk."

Luna sat up in bed and turned on the light, her mind whirling. What was going on? Why was Rebecca on mate.com, sending her messages from Cursed Wolf's profile?

Curiosity and a quick sharp jab of jealousy shot through her mind.

"What's going on?" Luna replied, not knowing what else to say.

"I am contacting you on behalf of Rex Winter. He currently resides on my property with his five brothers."

The pack.

The wolves from the oracle card. And the Alpha. That must be Rex. His name was Rex. It suited him perfectly. The fantasy she'd just left came back to mind, and she smiled. Rex the Alpha? That sounded just about right.

Luna's phone rang with Rebecca's ID and Luna answered. "Why are you contacting me on his behalf? Is he okay? Is he hurt?"

Suddenly she was terrified. Then she remembered his screen name. Cursed Wolf. And she knew what Rebecca would say before she even said it.

"There is a lot to explain. It might be better if we did it in person."

"Now?"

"It's late. You've just settled in here. It can wait till morning."

“Just tell me what’s wrong. Does this have to do with the curse?”

“Yes.” There was silence on the other end of the line. “I understand that you are human, and you haven’t been initiated into our world. But the curse isn’t just a metaphor for a personality issue. It is very real.”

“As in...magic.”

“Yes.”

“I am Louisa Pleasant’s granddaughter.”

“So you understand.”

“I’m beginning to,” Luna sighed. There was still so much to learn, and she felt like everything was happening all at once. She was months if not years behind in all of this. And she would obviously have to play some quick catch up. “I found her journal.”

“Good. Louisa wanted you to discover the truth about magic in fate’s allotted time.”

“Fate’s timing feels a bit like chaos.” Luna laughed.

“This must be overwhelming. To arrive in town and learn that you are the direct descendant of the most powerful line of witches on the continent, and that you are matched with a cursed wolf shifter.”

Most powerful witches on the continent? “It’s a bit much to take in. My biggest concern two hours ago was running the shop effectively.”

“I’ll text you my address. You can come over any time tomorrow. I’ll be here all morning, and my husband will be here all day. He works from home. I know it will be a rough night, but try to rest.”

“Thanks, Rebecca,” Luna said, getting off the phone.

That night was the most fitful of Luna’s life. She couldn’t remember ever sleeping so badly. She tossed and turned so much, she finally just got out of bed at four in the morning and took a long hot shower.

Updated by Jobnib.com She tried to do something with her face. She was going to meet her match today. She hoped. Rebecca hadn’t told her what was happening with Rex, but she had her doubts that she’d actually meet him today.

She wasn’t sure why. She should have pressed harder about the curse so she would be more prepared.

She dressed in a pair of stretchy jeans and a long, knit sweater in a dark gray. She made coffee in her grandmother's kitchen and drank it while watching the light of dawn slowly fade into view outside her window.

The deep shadows of the park across the street mellowed into dusty browns and greens. The sky turned a sweet shade of yellow gray and then a foggy blue.

She knew she was zoning out looking at the view outside her window. When she looked at the clock it was almost seven. She rubbed her face, and then remembered she'd put on makeup to meet Rex.

Her body and mind were in a dreamlike state, where she wasn't sure if she was awake or not. Maybe this was all a dream. The apartment, the store, Alaska, Rex. All of it. Some fantastic dream she was having in her lonely apartment back in Oakland.

She pinched the bridge of her nose. She knew she was awake, but she was terrified of what was going to happen next. Rex looked like a dream man. A total god. She'd only imagined him in her life for a few minutes. She hadn't gotten attached to the idea of him being hers. But still... To have something that amazing snatched away would really hurt.

She had to think positively. Rebecca didn't want to tell her what was wrong over the phone. She would have to go over there and find out.

She finally downed the last of the coffee in the pot, pulled on her jacket, grabbed her purse, and texted Rebecca that she was on her way.

It was still early, and her lawyer would still be at home. Luna followed the GPS, which thankfully worked all the way to the Doolittle's door, up the hills and into the dark forest above Selkie.

She pulled down a gravel driveway and parked in front of a two-story, elegant log home with a second story wraparound balcony and massive windows.

Luna knocked on the front door, her heart slamming in her chest. She half expected Rex to answer himself. She bit her lip so hard she was afraid it left a mark.

The door swung open, and it was Rebecca. "Come in. Would you like some tea?" Rebecca led her into a modern cabin interior where a handsome redheaded man poured tea into handcrafted tea mugs.

"That would be great," she said, even though she'd just downed a pot of coffee.

"This is my husband Patrick," Rebecca said, handing Luna an earthen glazed mug.

She cupped the mug in her hand, smelled the spicy herbal aroma and took a sip. It was a heavenly mixture of orange, cinnamon, and some other exotic spices she couldn't place. Rebecca had added a nice dose of cream and the concoction was delicious. Almost as good as River's tea.

"Hello, Patrick. This tea is good."

"Thank you. It's one of Louisa and River's blends," Patrick said, taking a seat on the brown leather couch.

"I didn't know they made tea together." She could hear the panic in her voice. It was just one more thing she had to learn.

"I'm so sorry that all of this happened to you so quickly, Luna," Rebecca said, with a sympathetic tilt of her head.

"No. It's fine. I'm fine. Everything's fine."

"Of course you are. You're Louisa's granddaughter." Patrick winked at her.

She smiled. "Right. I'm her granddaughter."

She wished she'd known the woman who seemed to be the embodiment of awesome among the shifter population in Selkie.

She guessed the Doolittles were shifters from the photographs of massive grizzly bears, sitting together in a way that could only be described as a family portrait, staring at her from the walls. They were interspersed with human family portraits, which made the effect even more surreal. Plus, Rebecca's law firm logo was a big bear paw. That should have been her first clue.

"I'm a grown-up. I'm ready to hear what is wrong with my mate. What is the nature of this curse? Is he mute? Is he in a coma?"

"He's a wolf," Patrick said without preamble. Rebecca shot him a look and then sighed.

"I wanted to introduce the idea slowly. You've already had so many shocks."

"He's a wolf. As in a wolf shifter. Okay? What's wrong with that?"

"Rex and his brothers can only shift into human form on the night of the full moon. They've been under a spell that's prevented them from leading normal human lives for over seventy-five years. The only way to break the curse is to claim their fated mates."

The world spun. Luna put down her tea so she wouldn't drop it and sank into the couch.

“Patrick...” Rebecca stated and then sighed. “It’s a lot.” She patted Luna’s hand.

“Sometimes it’s better to just rip the band-aid off. I learned that with the kids a long time ago.”

“You’re right, Patty. She needed to know.”

“I... Wolf...” Luna’s world tilted. Seventy-five years? “How?”

“They stole a flower from a very powerful witch in order to save their mother’s life. She destroyed everything they had but a tiny hunting cabin, killed their dying mother, and cursed them to their wolf forms.”

“How are they still alive?”

“The Snow Queen’s magic is powerful. She is full of rage and resentment. A single lifetime wasn’t long enough to punish them. That is all we and the brothers have been able to reason,” Rebecca said.

“How terrible.”

Luna’s heart broke into pieces. To think something so horrific had been done to the man who was supposed to be her mate. He and his brothers had stolen a flower, yes, but surely the punishment did not fit the crime.

A tear welled in the corner of her eye and then slid down her cheek. She wiped it away and sniffed, steeling her strength.

“Can I meet him?”

“Today is not the full moon,” Rebecca said.

“His wolf. I want to meet his wolf.”

“We hoped you’d say that,” Patrick said.

“I don’t want you to be traumatized, Luna,” Rebecca said.

“She’s not a baby. She’s an alpha wolf’s mate! Come on, Luna. I’ll introduce you to your future husband.”

Rebecca sighed. “If you’re okay, Luna, I need to get to the office. I trust you’ll be okay here with my mate?”

“You’re so cute when you get all protective,” Patrick said, hugging his wife and kissing her on the lips near the front door.

“Grrr. Don’t mess with a mother bear,” she said.

The two started to make out and Luna’s eyes widened. They were probably in their forties and had children in their teens. Such passionate displays were common among twenty-somethings at clubs, but not grown adults in the living room.

Luna looked anywhere but the middle-aged couple making out near their well-appointed front door. She heard the sound of a hand slapping flesh and a sharp gasp, giggle and purr, before the door opened and closed again.

“Sorry about that,” Patrick said. “Reba and I rarely disagree on anything. We needed a quick makeup session.”

Make out session was more like it. Luna wondered if all shifters’ relationships remained so passionate for so long.

“The curse is broken when they claim their fated mates?” Luna asked as Patrick led her through the Doolittles’ massive granite and stainless-steel kitchen and out the back door and onto the deck. There was a large pasture, a small barn area, and a big industrial workshop.

“Yes. And luckily for you, the full moon is tomorrow night.” Patrick winked.

“What does claiming a mate involve?” Luna asked.

Patrick laughed. He was very different from Rebecca and her carefully chosen words.

“Maybe I should let Rex tell you about that.”

She pursed her lips and followed Patrick down the patio steps and along a stone path toward the shop.

“The boys are in here. I think you should just meet Rex at first. He knows you’re coming. I’m sure he’s going mad by now.”

Patrick carefully opened the entry door on the side of the shop. He only allowed a small opening. Luna stood back, not wanting to interfere. She could see and hear the other wolves prancing and yipping to get out.

Then there was a low growl and the yipping ended. A tingle went down her spine at the sound. It was him. Her mate. Rex.

The most beautiful creature to ever live stepped out of the shop and into the early morning chill. The wolf’s eyes were as blue as Rex’s in his human form, and his white coat shimmered gold as it caught the sunlight.

Her breath caught in her throat. The creature walked toward her. It was far larger than a natural wolf. Its head came almost to the height of her shoulders.

It stopped several yards away. Foggy breaths puffed out of his fanged mouth. His tongue lolled as if he was tasting the air. Luna felt weak in the knees and had to sit down on a dry stone bench under an ancient fir tree near the porch.

The wolf stopped in his tracks. He seemed to be studying her. She could see the fire in his eyes. Churning, intelligent flames of desire popped and sparked for her.

Luna lifted her hand as if in a dream. She reached out to him, her heart pulling him closer as if on a golden thread. She opened her hand, palm up, fingers splayed.

He stepped forward, slowly, carefully, and he smelled her wrist. The wolf howled and stepped back, its eyes wild. Its teeth bared. Luna felt a momentary surge of fear before the wolf's tongue slid up her wrist and coated the arm of her jacket with saliva.

He stepped closer, licking and licking her wrist and palm like he was starving for her. It tickled and tingled. She knew there was a man inside there. This was no ordinary canine, but it still felt strange to her.

He moved closer, slowly moving his nose into the crook of her neck. She gasped as he took a long draw of her scent, his tongue sliding out to taste her.

She reached up, her arms embracing the furry beast. She could feel his warmth, his strength, his tightly coiled power. As she ran her hands through his fur, she knew that he was holding back his need for her. His primal desire to take her, even now, radiated through his blood. It was as if every cell in his body called out for her, and she could hear the cries.

"Okay, Rex, save it for tomorrow night," Patrick said, sliding his big arm around the wolf's neck. The bear shifter pulled the wolf back a few paces.

Rex's eyes turned crazed, and he snarled and snapped at Patrick. The bear shifter held up his hands. "We agreed about this, Rex," Patrick said to the wolf.

Rex growled again, turned, and darted away toward the forest.

"You okay?" Patrick asked. "Rebecca will kill me if you're scarred for life."

"I'm fine. Totally... fine."

She was anything but fine. Her body was alive, singing its response to Rex's call. Hot, wet desire flooded her every crevice. Which was disturbing, considering she was covered in wolf slobber.



“The full moon is tomorrow. Thank Fate. You two can get to know each other for real then.