

Chosen 281

Chapter 281 Jane Doe

Lina reached down and touched the pale girl's forehead and gasped. She'd started to heat up, "We need to get her to your place quickly before she comes down with a bad fever," she said, shifting into her white wolf almost instantly.

The decision had come so naturally, the princess already sensing more than she was supposed to from the state of the girl. Honour helped her get the girl on her back and took a step back, "You too, Honour."

"Will you be able to carry us both?" Honour asked her friend with a raised brow mixing into the worried gaze she cast at the unconscious girl.

"I can't leave you behind. I also want you to keep her steady. Have you ever been made to carry someone who was unconscious?" Honour sighed at the question. It was a no-brainer, "It's like the ground is their friend and they just keep reaching for it," Lina was speaking fast through the mind link.

Honour got onto her back, sensing the urgency of the matter and started to take the shirt off the girl as a first aid precaution, "I've never been made to carry anyone, Lina."

Honour pondered on whether Lina had simply forgotten she could shift as well, "Try to keep the ride smooth, Lina. This girl is not exactly light."

"You're telling me about her weight," the wolf's voice came forced through the mind link. Before Honour could get off the white wolf, fearing the weight might be too much, they were dashing through the trees at dizzying speeds.

Honour gripped her friend's fur tightly, her head jerking back with so much force from the sudden burst in speed. The trees were a blur as Lina zipped through the forest.

Her umbrella, however, was lost to one of the branches it got stuck in during the sudden dash. The base of Honour's back hurt from the strain of flexing her muscles too much to keep from falling off, "You should give me a warning before you do that," the girl groaned.

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"Oh, sorry, Honour. I wasn't thinking much after seeing that girl. She doesn't look too good right now," Lina replied through the mind link.

"Yeah, you're right about that," Honour replied, leaning forward to resist the wind that threatened to throw her off the wolf's back.

The backyard belonging to Honour's house soon came into view. Lina stopped to have the girl removed and they both took her inside, laying her on one of the sofas.

Honour's mother came into the living room after hearing the commotion that was stirring within her house. She paused when she saw a random girl, drenched in rainwater and lying down on the sofa, looking far too pale. "Honour, get me the towels," the woman immediately switched into her caring mode that saw past the mud that had been introduced into her house.

“I was going to do that, mother,” Honour replied, stepping away from the girl.

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Lina ended up staying to watch through everything they did to get the girl stable and warm. Honour’s mother seemed to know what she was doing and it was obvious where the girl had learnt everything she knew from.

After setting the girl in Honour’s bed, the two girls returned to the living room, “I’m sorry to have kept you here all this time,” Honour apologized.

“What are you apologising for? We’re the ones that decided to bring her here, remember?” Lina reminded her.

‘I’ll just take that one,’ Honour kept the thought to herself.

“Yeah, but if I had suggested we take her to the hospital, then perhaps we would have both gone home early enough. I’ve also got you into trouble with Crysta,” Honour responded.

“Oh, Crysta won’t mind this one bit. More importantly, that girl. Keep me updated when she wakes up,” Lina said, approaching the kitchen. She quickly entered the door and hugged her best friend’s mother as she washed her hands.

The woman had chosen to help them and stay out of whatever they had gotten themselves into, a decision that would very rarely be taken by an adult and Lina was grateful. Stepping out of the kitchen and to the door, Honour continued.

“That much is obvious,” Honour said, escorting her friend to the door. The two of them bid each other farewell with a heartfelt hug before Lina shifted into her white wolf and was gone. Honour barely had time to complain about her mode of travel.

Lina was gone and dashing through the woods, taking on the appearance of a white blurry streak. This approach meant she would have to take a long route to get to the castle.

With how fast she had gotten, the distance to the palace didn’t bother her in the slightest. Her mind, however, wouldn’t stop drifting back to the girl they’d met. She’d said something about rogues before she went unconscious and it had raised so many red flags within Lina.

Considering her state when they found her, she had been running for a long while. ‘If rogues had been chasing after her in her human form, they would have caught up to her, wouldn’t they? Unless she got some kind of head-start,’ she thought to herself.

The girl reached the castle and shifted back, making her way into the palace, cleaning her feet at the entrance. Because of the endless rain, the palace had ordered an ample supply of doormats to try and reduce the mud getting into the castle. They were also being changed much more frequently.

This, in turn, created more work for the women that had to deal with laundry, but it couldn’t be helped. “Hey little sister, we’ve been looking all over for you,” Drake called out to her while she was approaching the stairs.

“What for?” she asked the man.

“Father wants to meet with us,” he responded.

The two of them went up to the man’s office where they found that their mother had prepared refreshments in the homey part of the office, “I’m glad the two of you could make it here in time.”

“Mother, where is Father?” Drake asked, straight to the point.

“Your father will be here within the next few minutes,” she responded, gesturing for them to take their seats. They helped themselves to the cups of tea their mother had already prepared for them. Knowing the queen, there was no other way.

The king walked in moments later and took a seat next to his wife, “Well, we have a matter to discuss as a family. I would have wished for your sister to be here, but the situation doesn’t allow it.”

“What’s the matter, Dad?” Lina asked, worry seeping into her voice. Perhaps they had got a report on a recent rogue attack to tie the girl she’d found in the woods back to the scene.

Chapter 282 Blood is Thicker than Water

“What’s the matter, Dad?” Lina asked, worry seeping into her voice. Perhaps they had got a report on a recent rogue attack to tie the girl she’d found in the woods back to the scene.

“Well, it has something to do with your uncle. He’s...” the king started only to cut be interrupted by Lina.

“Is he really our uncle? He looks and feels a lot older than that,” Lina complained, her mind quickly switching topics.

The moment she’d realised this was nothing concerning rogues, her mind had moved several miles and caught up with the king, quickly interrupting him in the process. The queen gave her a quizzical look, but soon ignored her daughter’s sudden burst of misconduct.

“No, he’s not your uncle. He’s your grandfather. Although, he’s only my father’s brother which would actually make him your great Uncle. I think you understand what I’m trying to say,” the king explained or at least did it the best way his flustered mind could let him.

The rest of the family could clearly see his mental struggle. And it was absolutely odd for the king to be in such a state which only made the situation look even graver.

“Well, if that’s the case, then why call him our uncle?” Lina asked with a smirk on her face.

Upon seeing the girl’s smirk, the king sighed, “I’m glad to see you’re still cheerful in light of everything that has happened.”

“I’m doing my best to stay cheerful, Dad. It’s not so easy to come to peace with the fact that your grandfather was working for the rogues the entire time you’d known him,” the girl’s smirk fell and was replaced with concern.

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“While that may be true, I ask that we go and have a chat with him. We never got to hear his side of the story,” the king suggested. This, however, seemed to be the reason behind his restlessness.

An act of treason was an act of treason. There was no way to spin it and yet the king was allowing Sean the benefit of the doubt and still delaying his judgement.

“You can’t be serious, Father. You already know that he was the one that had the students sent off to the reserve where an army of rogues was waiting for them. What more proof would you need?” Drake stood up, bewildered by the thought of giving the man in the dungeons a chance.

“Drake, don’t raise your voice when talking to your father,” the queen’s voice rose above Drake’s.

“Forgive me, mother,” the prince took his seat. King Davin sighed heavily, rubbing the bridge of his nose.

“It’s fine, but I have known Sean longer than any of you. He’s not the kind of person to do things without a reason. He wouldn’t have worked for the rogues unless there was a reason why he was doing so,” the king tried. Drake did not look convinced.

“What can you think of that would bring him to act like that? And more importantly, why are we discussing a traitor when there is one walking by my sister’s side?” Drake said, his voice getting irritated once more.

“We agreed that matters concerning Kyle were to be left for Katie to decide. There will be no more discussion on that matter. Is that clear?” the king was starting to lose his calm demeanour.

Noticing he was pushing his boundaries, the man raised his hands in surrender, “Very well, Father. I’ll leave it be. I just hope our negligence doesn’t come back to bite us when we least expect it.”

The king let the man’s comment slide and proceeded to his suggestion, “I was suggesting we go to the dungeon and question him ourselves as a family. He’s bound to tell us something if we approach him that way and even if he doesn’t, we need closure once the worst comes to pass.”

“You don’t want to put him down, do you?” Drake sighed, “What aren’t you telling us, Father?” Lina was almost starting to believe Drake was in favour of killing their grandfather as the laws dictated. His aggressive reaction to the matter had brought down her own voice.

“Well, you might not believe it, but when my father was still alive, your grandfather Sean was every bit the rebel. He would never stay for too long at the palace and went wherever he pleased, whenever he wanted to.

He hated the concept of a family and even more so, that of a mate. There was nothing that could appease him and yet...” the king paused, smiling at the memory.

“Come on. Don’t end it there,” Lina lashed out, finally finding her voice in the name of boundless curiosity, “And yet what...”

The king chuckled at his daughter’s enthusiasm. The twinkle in her eyes when she was curious was one he’d come to know all too well, “The king at that time trusted no one more than his brother.

Every time the man came back from his travels, he would talk to the king as if time hadn’t passed at all. Their bond was the strongest brotherly bond I’d ever seen and I grew to trust the man.

When the time came that my father died, he was the one that read his will. As it had turned out, the two men were so close that he knew all the king's secrets and it was said that the king shared his as well. If there is anyone the king trusted blindly then, it was him."

"That sounds like an enormous level of trust for the king to have in one person," Lina replied.

Drake turned to her sister, "Wouldn't you trust me that much too, sister?"

"Forgive me, brother, but it would be Honour before you if I'm being honest," the girl revealed, disregarding the hurtful meaning behind her words, "And you're free to interpret that in whatever way you see fit."

"Wow, Honour means that much to you?" the king sounded surprised.

"Yes, she does," she replied, before quickly attempting to change the subject, "Now can we go and see Grandpa Sean or what?"

"Oh yeah... Let's go and see him. I had Alpha Jackson prepare a security detail just in case he tries to escape. Now let's go..." the king held up a key with a smile on his face...

'You're just happy you get to see him again,' Lina mentally groaned.

Chapter 283 Family Interrogation

The king led them through the castle, past the guards and down into the dungeons where they found the door that to the cell that held their Grand Uncle.

They waited in stiff anticipation as Beta Alpha Phillip worked on the lock of the steel door barring them from Sean. Finally hearing that satisfactory click the door swung open and the king stepped in without any hesitation.

The guards that had come with them almost reached out to keep him from going in, but froze when they realised it was the king they would be offending by doing that. Instead, they got ready to defend him should anything bad happen inside of the cell.

Inside of the room was organised presentation waiting for them. A used set of utensils was set by the door ready to be taken away. The royal within the cell was seated atop his bed, crosslegged and comfortably reading a book with only the soft yellow light of a lamp to aid him peruse through the text.

"It's been raining quite heavily this past week... or weeks. With no direct connection to the moon or some way to see the sun all the way down here, I can't seem to tell when we switch days," the man commented without taking his eyes from the book.

The family entered the room and had the door close behind them. With quiet complaint from the guards, they left the family to themselves, "How are you doing, Sean?"

"I'm doing well... except for a certain ant problem," the man eyed a peculiar crevice too close to his bed for comfort.

Shrugging off the memories that ran through his mind, he placed his book down and looked at his family with warm welcoming bright blue eyes.

He then pointed to the two far corners of his bed, "The young ones can sit there. The adults are more than welcome to remain standing."

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"You don't seem to be bothered by the fact that I put you here," the king commented, ignoring his uncle's obvious attempt at banter.

"I am not bothered in the slightest. I've been preparing for the worst. I'm also disappointed, to be honest. You should have put in one of the ordinary cells where the inmates get to jeer at me and spit... or killed me for that matter," the man responded with a chuckle.

Sean's tone bore no venom towards the king. In fact, it almost sounded as though he was sure to get himself into this situation somehow and was ready for the consequences. Either that or he had a plan to escape the restricting walls.

"Darling, perhaps this was a waste of time," Queen Martha turned to her husband, having noticed the calm demeanour of someone that wasn't going to give them answers.

"No, Martha, not yet. Sean, if there is something you can tell me, just tell me," King Davin's composure was starting to crack once more. They hadn't even spoken that much to the treacherous royal.

Sean was quiet for a bit before answering him, "And here I thought you didn't have any hope left for me. What's wrong with you, Davin?" he sighed.

"My father..."

"Trusted me with every ounce of his soul... I can only imagine that's what made you have so much hope in me. Out of respect for your father, I will at least let you in on something," the family got ready to hear what the man had to say for himself, "I have been working for the rogue king for a much longer time than any of you could possibly imagine. To be accurate, I would say... twenty years..."

The room was quiet for a bit before the king spoke up, his voice rising steadily with trembling rage, "So, it was you that told the rogues of the birth of the children then?"

"I didn't say something of the sort. Although that would have put me on the Rogue king's good side," Sean's eyes glazed over as if considering the option.

"Then what happened?"

"I don't think you'd believe what I have to say. I can feed you any kind of information I would like right now and all you'd have to do is choose to believe me or not. I wouldn't want you doubting me just because I gave you my word," the man replied. This was going nowhere and oddly, they all understood his logic, "In any case, I do have a way to prove what I have been doing all this time."

The king moved back and leaned against the wall. He knew there was nothing easy about this situation and hadn't known what to expect either. The frustration was almost too much to contain. Finally giving in to his wife's recent request, "Martha, you're right. It was a waste to come here after all."

"It's good to see your head's finally working again," Sean fell back on his back and opened the book he'd been reading, "I think this visit is over."

Lina tried to come up with something to tell the man, but didn't know what to say. He kept his gloomy demeanour as he always had, but his reasoning was not flawed. If anything, he seemed to be helping the king come to his senses.

However, that was what had brought them down as a family. To speak to him as a family. It went without saying that the king needed the rest of the family to keep him grounded.

From Drake's point of view, Sean had merely bought himself time to convince the king another time. Or was probably still coming up with a story that he could use to manipulate him. Nothing from this short visit had changed his mind about the man before them.

When the king was about to reach the door, Sean spoke up, "Whatever you do, don't decide on killing me just yet. If you can do that much for me, I can promise you that I won't escape."

"At this point, even your promises feel like lies," the king sighed, "But I will grant you that request for as long as I can hold out. It won't be in my power for that long, you know."

"Can't argue with that," the old royal replied before the door slammed shut, locking him back in the loneliness he was accustomed to. 'This cage and the outside world have always been one and the same for me anyway... empty.' the man's voice echoed through the mind link of the Sirius family.

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Chapter 284 Motivation to Train

After their visit to the dungeons that night, the king allowed them all to return to their chambers where Lina nearly retired to sleep.

Nearly...

Had a nosy delta not reminded her of the notes she was supposed to make research on, maybe, just maybe, she could have slept without thinking about it.

The blue-eyed girl cursed for having suggested it. Fortunately, with the help of her wolf's jumbled memories, the girl caught up fast almost as though she'd been in the class and attentive the entire time.

Waking her up the next morning, sun rays from the rising sun warmly greeted her along with the peaceful chatter of birds in the morning. Her ears almost felt relieved to hear the pleasant sounds of the wood creatures.

Without meaning to, a smile spread across her face as she sat up to look outside the window pane. It was a sight worthy of celebration and one that felt almost plucked out of a fairy tale, 'I never thought I'd miss the sun this much...'

"Lina, hurry up and get down here. Alpha Jackson had decided we are going to have a morning drill to loosen up our tense muscles," Crysta's voice yelled into the girl's head, tearing her away from the angelic moment of peaceful bliss that had graced her morning.

"What is he doing making such an order on a fine day such as this?" the girl asked, resisting the urge to yell back at her friend.

“Well, normally, drills take place even if it rains, but after the death of the king of Lycaon, they were put on hold. The sun today just makes it feel like the right day to start back up again. We’ve not had one of them in a while,” the delta explained.

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“You sound like someone who knows the man’s favourite colour. Honestly, how do you always know so much?” Lina asked, crawling out of bed and into her closet for a change of clothes.

“I make it a point to research before giving you my morning report,” the girl replied with pride oozing in her voice.

“You’re starting to sound like a beta alpha,” Lina whined, getting ready for the morning drill. Her mind rushed back to the girl she had ‘rescued’ from the forest the day before.

“Honour, did the girl wake up?” she called out through the mind link.

“Good morning to you too, Lina. What’s wrong with werewolves and getting up early,” Honour complained from the other side.

“Hey, get up, Honour. Move your lazy bottom already,” Lina urged the girl, realising her best friend had only woken up because of her.

“Fine fine, you don’t have to be pushy about it,” Lina could have sworn she heard the girl yawning. It took her a few moments to get a reply from the girl, “Well, she’s still asleep. I’m just glad mother could help her. She looked much worse than she actually was.”

“Thank the goddess... umm, never mind that. Could you ask your parents to keep her in the house if she wakes up and to contact us as soon as she does?” Lina asked her, grimacing at the mine bomb she’d stepped on.

Still groggy with sleep, Honour barely noticed, “You’re awfully interested in this girl. Was it because she said something to do with rogues?”

Lina tried to find a reason why she was interested in the girl, but couldn’t find one. However, the thought of letting the girl go or be taken care of by someone else made her heart beat even faster in her chest, almost as though the girl was a nexus of danger that she couldn’t let out of her sight, “There is something about her. I can’t quite put my finger on it though,” Lina replied honestly.

“I don’t think you’ve ever been this vague before. You’re crystal clear about wanting to wear questionable clothes, but not clear about wanting me to babysit a stray puppy,” Honour sighed.

“I’m sorry. I had no idea you were so against it.”

“I slept on the sofa, Lina. I slept on the sofa,” this seemed to end their discussion on Honour’s attitude about keeping the girl around.

Comfort came before anything else... which was rather contradictory when Lina considered her helping nature at the end of the day. Perhaps Honour’s helpful side only extended to everything else that didn’t involve her beauty sleep.

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The backyard was full of far more werewolves than Lina could remember ever running with before. She knew it wasn't going to be as hectic as it had always been, but that didn't change the fact that there were far more werewolves present than she was used to seeing.

"Hey, Lina, I'm glad you could make it," Crysta jogged up to her with Bree and Ginger following behind. Once again, Lina caught a glimpse of disgust on their faces. However, the speed at which it was covered up was so fast that she almost felt like she'd imagined it.

"Yeah, I was thinking of skipping today as well, but I had nothing to kill the time," Lina replied, looking through the crowd for reasons of the large turnout.

"Oh, so you've noticed?"

"Noticed what exact..." the girl's question hung in the air when she began to see a few familiar faces. Soon enough she was seeing far more familiar faces than she had at first glance. Most of them were students from her class. They'd all joined in that day, "What's going on?"

"Well, you know how most of the students find it hectic to work for the position of pack warrior even when Alpha Jackson tries to advise them to do it for other reasons like self-defence?" Crysta's question was rhetorical.

"I think you missed a comma somewhere in that sentence," Lina chuckled, "So they all showed up for today's drill. But why?"

"It should be obvious really. They are all freaked out from what happened at the reserve," the girl responded in a proud tone, "Most of the students were totally stumped out when they figured out how useless they were during that fight."

"Oh, that makes more sense," Lina replied in a low tone. Thinking back as well, she hadn't been much help during that battle as well.

She remembered helping Honour get to the field of lotuses, then helping her out when she was giving first aid to the injured, but that was it.

Honour had told her everything that happened while the two of them were safely enclosed in the field of flowers, "I wasn't much help either."

"On the contrary, if you hadn't put Liam in his right place that night, we probably would have lost one of our own. He was far more cooperative and didn't bark at any orders he was given which would have been the opposite if he had defeated you," Crysta was ready with a counter.

"I'll leave it to you to always see the bright side of things," Lina smiled, feeling somewhat less useless. It wasn't long before alpha Jackson had them running through the woods enjoying the dawn of a new day.

Chapter 285 Unbroken

The Rogue king sat in the carelessly crafted wooden chair delving deep into the different memories and plans that he had for the world as he always did when he was bored and in need of some destructive thoughts.

Every once in a while he slammed his fist on the table before him, riddling it with cracks, angry at the recent plan that had been foiled.

He knew he'd done a number on the kingdom and that the number of hunters that threatened him had greatly reduced. However, he was also at a loss as he had lost far too many rogues, not to mention the fact that he couldn't just make more anymore, 'Weaklings, all of them...'

"Your majesty..."

"WHAT IS IT?" he yelled at the voice that interrupted his thoughts. Looking back, he saw Thane bowing to him. The beta alpha was barely fazed by his outburst and merely rose to proceed with his report.

"I only bear bad news with me, not that it's a surprise with recent developments," the bulky man started, taking a seat on the other side of the table.

"It's not like I can force you to turn in good news alone, so tell me what you've found out," the rogue king grumbled. The presence of the beta alpha and his calmer demeanour were enough to keep him grounded. He was also the only person allowed to see him in such a state.

"Well, the rain has made it hard to move through the forests, so I have ordered a few operations carried out at a time. Our first priority was to see if all sources of more forces were done for.

General Samson checked out one of our breeding farms. He was only meant to check if there are candidates that can join the rogues as a whole, but he came back with worse news than I'd asked him to get," the man started.

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"Let me take a wild guess here. He found out that the females couldn't conceive now that the goddess's chosen have been united, isn't that right?" the king rubbed his temples.

"Yes, sire. How did... ?"

"It was all in that damn prophecy. Part of the spell would restrict females from conceiving unless they'd mated with their mates.

Whether it's the goddess's will or not, rogues have never been able to find their mates. I wouldn't imagine that as a possibility now," the king explained.

"Can't we have the woman we have in the dungeon reveal to us the mates of all the rogues we throw at her and have those females abducted instead?" Thane offered.

The king was quiet for a moment, thinking through the man's suggestion. It tore at his curiosities far more than he wanted it to. It meant he would get to know who his mate was as well, but he also knew why he'd kept away from the idea.

Having the rogues find their mates would lead to catastrophic outcomes. If their mates were strong-willed, they would be able to cause an uprising, one of the things he couldn't afford to have at the moment, "It's a tempting idea and a good strategy, however..." he stopped, trying to think over his next words.

“Well, if the fear of rule remains absolute, I don’t see how anyone would go against you. A death penalty for any traitor. Besides, we could take the rogues through a screening process before they were taken to the Seeker,” Thane continued. Debates like this were not uncommon between the king and his beta alphas or sometimes even his generals.

“Your idea is very tempting indeed, but not one we’ll be carrying out. The power of a mate goes against so much. There are many ways for them to rise against us if we go down that path.

Consider a situation where one of the rogues realises their mate is an alpha of a pack and wants to be with them, but because it’s too dangerous to get alphas involved, we end up denying him that luxury, what then?” the king waited for a flash of understanding to appear in his beta alpha’s eyes before continuing.

Leaning back in the uncomfortable wooden abomination of a seat, he asked, “What about that other thing I asked you to look into?”

“Well, the search for that has still led us to a dead end. And not to mention the rain. We can’t seem to get far with this downpour,” Thane replied solemnly.

“Honestly, how long does this rain plan on falling? Let’s pay our prisoner another visit,” the king stood up finally, paying the beta alpha’s expression of defeat no attention as he headed deeper into the compound.

Thane followed his alpha to the room they were keeping the woman in and opened it, letting the king in.

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Held up by chains attached to her wrists. Covered in cuts stained purple, oozing with pus caused by her body fighting the toxins of the wolfsbane.

The strange purple poison emitted an odour that the king had grown used to. After using it for torturing prisoners so many times, he didn’t mind the smell anymore, having grown numb to the stinging pain in his nostrils, “You’re one resilient woman, I’ll give you that. Stubborn too. I would never have thought an old woman like you would cause me this much trouble and one that doesn’t look her age. I saw some of your papers when we searched the house, you definitely know how to keep your looks.”

The woman lifted her head weakly and looked the king in his eyes, shrugging the twisted compliment, “Nothing a little beauty treatment can’t do for you. You’d be surprised how young one can look with a little surgery.” With a scornful look, “So you finally decided to come here yourself. Did you get tired of letting your lackeys do your dirty work?”

“Do not forget who you’re talking to, woman. I’m the rogue king. A name like that is built on mountains of bodies. I have put down hunters more than you can think of counting. I’ve tortured souls much more powerful than you...”

“Trust me on this, ‘your majesty’,” the woman chuckled, lending him her gaze and cutting him off, “You won’t find another soul as strong as I. I promised you this while we were still in that house.

The only way you could have gotten any information out of me was if you had followed the required procedures while we were having that cup of tea.

Believe me when I tell you that you'd be better off killing me," raspy laughter filled the little room as she spoke to the rogue king, "I hoped you would pick a hint while we were there. You lost your chance to earn my assistance. And to think I wasted such wonderful tea." Her sadness towards the tea was almost genuine.

The woman barely noticed the king moved when his fist connected with her gut. She spat blood from the impact and gasped for air, but the cry of pain and plea for help never once left her lips.

His strength was incomprehensible, but the woman's choice had already been made. Amidst her fits, she began to chuckle even more, "It's futile, you know. I might as well be a punching bag for you to take out your frustrations."

The king took the time to take in the woman's appearance. It was clear that she was in a lot of pain. Cuts of wolfsbane, broken ribs and it seemed as though she was not healing at all.

She was ready to die. A wolf's healing slowed down considerably when it lost the will to keep fighting. She was willing to die to keep whatever information she was keeping from him, "Find her daughter."

"You're majesty. Where do we even start with that?" Thane asked.

"Do I look like I care about that? Send a message to every last rogue out there and make sure they spread out. We can't afford to attack anyone at the moment. We don't have that much manpower.

It's no doubt the hunters are going to start sweeping through no man's land in search of the last remaining rogues. We can't have them finding us. Until then, the rogues are to search for that girl until she's found. She's our closest link to making this woman say something if she in fact does know anything."

"Your majesty, don't you think this decision is a little bit too hasty? These changes are far too drastic," Thane tried, however, the king was done listening to other suggestions.

"No, they aren't. The Chase family can detect us because of our blood lust towards humans and the rest of the wolves that turned away from our goddess' original commands.

If the rogues can get rid of that blood lust, the Chase family won't be able to detect them even if they tried. They won't be able to tell whether they are normal wolves or not. Until we find a way to reverse what the moon goddess did, we cannot afford to get sloppy," the king explained his plan.

Thane was silent for a bit, clenching his fist, "I've never seen you taking the cautious means to overcome anything, your majesty. You crash all your enemies with your fist. No one has the power to oppose you, your majesty."

The king smiled at the words his beta alpha said, "Believe it or not, Thane. Up until the last group of generals we had, I didn't have that kind of power. I've always been powerful myself along with you and Aidan, but the three of us weren't enough.

Those generals were going to lead an empire, unlike anything the world has ever seen. Our plans just happened to collide with the wrong generation of hunters as well. I've been playing it cautiously this entire time. Don't make that misjudgment."

"Understood, your majesty. Can I ask something?"

“What is it, Thane?”

“What are we going to do about my partner? Aidan stays in custody of the hunters,” the beta alpha asked.

“That’s part of the mission I’ll be giving the rogues. We don’t know where they are holding Aidan and they are no doubt holding him the best way they can.

They know that I’ll get another beta alpha if they kill him, so their best move would be to keep him alive and to also keep him from killing himself as I’m sure he would have already tried to do,” the king ordered.

Thane had kept one question for last. The king hadn’t said anything about what he was going to be doing during that entire time, “What about the two of us then, your majesty?”

The king smirked at the question, “Well, you and I, my dear Thane, have a special mission of our own. We shall be following the Great Sirius river... downstream,” the king smirked.

“You don’t mean?” a look of fear flashed across the beta alpha’s face.

“Yes, Thane. We shall journey beyond the known world and find the place of our Origin. It is said the two kings purged everything beyond the two rivers and that there isn’t a trace of humanity left there, but that’s where we are going. To find the Origin of werewolves,” the king announced.

The woman before him opened her eyes in shock as she heard the man’s plans, “Oh! Did you happen to hear what I said?”

“Oh, she did...” a voice interrupted them as someone walked into the cell, “And there is another power the Seeker is capable has and that happens to be the ability to find the Origin.”

A glint of excitement shone in the rogue king’s face as he looked at the woman’s face, “Would you look at that? You’re not so useless after all.”

“You know I won’t be saying anything,” the woman smirked in return. Even in her battered state, she didn’t seem to show any fear toward the rogue king. The king lifted her head by her chin and stared right into her eyes.

The cold gaze of the rogue king along with the power that radiated off him seemed to wipe the smirk right off her face. The king’s smirk got wider, satisfied by the result.

“Oh, we’ll see about that...”

Chapter 286 Her name is Madeline

Lina could barely keep the girl from her mind while the day slowly and painfully went on. The best part of their day was the clear sunrise. While Crysta and Honour did their best to distract her, Lina couldn’t find it within her to keep her thoughts away from the girl they’d found at the edge of the woods.

When the final bell that ended the school day rang, she was the first to react to it, despite her absentmindedness. She packed her bag, but still had to watch the students filing out. Struggling along

with the numbers was simply not how she wanted to go about leaving the school, "Honour, you're normally faster than me when leaving the classroom."

"And I would ask that we keep it that way, Lina," the amber-eyed girl chuckled. Crysta was already waiting for them when they walked out and Lina had expected nothing less.

"Where are we going?" the delta's voice had a skip to it when she spoke.

"How did you know we were going somewhere?" if there was ever a time she wanted to lose the delta, it was now. Even when Lina knew that was more of a challenge than she was ready for.

"At first, I was just messing with you, but now I know you are going somewhere and I want in," the bouncy tone was gone and Crysta had now matched their pace, Bree and Ginger falling behind her while she did.

"You're so persistent, Crysta. You don't have to follow me everywhere I go, you know," Lina snapped at the delta. A pang of sadness crushed through when she turned to the delta. She'd done nothing to deserve the cruelty and yet Lina didn't seem to find another way.

"Ouch, that hurts, Lina, but I'll let it slide. I'm still coming with you though," unfazed by Lina's tone, Crysta stood firm.

"You don't even sound hurt at all. Honour, wish her away or something," Lina turned to her friend for help, however, the goddess simply raised her hands up in surrender and backed away from the two girls.

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"My hands are tied, Lina," she responded. Crysta smirked at the girl's pained expression.

Seemingly defeated, Lina responded, "Fine, you can come, but on one condition."

"What would that be?"

"You come alone," she replied, eyeing the two girls behind them. Bree and Ginger still gave Lina the creeps. Not to mention how she kept catching glimpses of scowls on their faces when they had to deal with her.

Crysta looked to Bree on the right and Ginger on the left. They both looked at her expectantly, neither of them willing to speak up on the matter.

Interpreting their expressions, Crysta felt the need to defend her friends, "Wait, what? That's not fair," this time Lina was not listening to anything she had to say and merely held her gaze. Tapping her foot, Crysta finally sighed, "Fine fine."

"Crysta, you're kidding, right?" Bree was the first to speak up, rage on her face.

"Bree..."

"I don't want to hear it, Crysta. We've watched you get out of your way for this... I don't even know what to call her. And all for what?" Bree argued. Crysta was tongue-tied, "I thought so. Let's go, Ginger."

When they were finally gone, Lina spoke up, "You don't have a reason for what you're doing, do you? My sister is gone. You have nothing to fear anymore, you know."

"Not you too, Lina," Crysta sighed, "Let's just go. It's not like I'm going to change my mind about going."

Lina hesitated for a bit, once again stunned by the girl's resolve to stay by her side before leading them out of the school building and onto the most direct path to Honour's home.

While they walked, Lina couldn't help but notice Crysta's silence. Her bouncy mood had simmered down to an almost neutral calm even though Lina wasn't fooled by the delta's effort to hide her sadness.

Curiosity bared its claws at her, but she fought the urge to ask the girl what she had on her mind, "You are not to tell anyone what you see unless I decide it's safe to do so."

"Huh, is it something illegal?" Crysta almost sounded worried.

"No, that's not it. I'd never do something illegal. You'll see once we get there."

And they finally did get to Honour's house. Knocking at the door, it swung open and admitted them in.

"The girl woke up. Now, what have the two of you gotten yourself involved in?" Honour's mum whisper-yelled once they were inside and the all windows had been closed.

"What do you mean, mother? What's going on?" Honour replied in the same manner.

"I'm talking about the girl you had me lock up in your room. What in the world is wrong with you girls? What are you doing with 'her' daughter and what has that poor girl been through?" the woman's tone was vindictive as though they were the ones responsible for whatever state she was in.

"What do you mean by 'her'? Who is 'she'?" Lina asked the woman, the curiosity she'd only managed to suppress came barreling down on her once more.

"Oh, for goddess' sake, just follow me," the woman groaned, leading them up the stairs and to Honour's room. Inside the room, the girl was coiled up on Honour's bed hugging her knees close. She tried to hide her face as much from view.

The girl looked up at them and inched away from them, "Who are you people?" her amber eyes glowed in the dark. A glimmer of emotion flashed through her eyes when she locked eyes with Lina, but it only lasted a second and was replaced with a look of fear.

"We are..." Lina paused when her eyes flickered from amber to grey and back, "... the ones that found you passed out in the woods. What's with your eyes?" At the mention of her eyes, the girl flinched and tucked her head back behind her knees. She used the covers on the bed to try and vanish even more from view. Lina was almost certain Honour would explode with anger, but the goddess remained calm.

"There is nothing wrong with my eyes," the girl squeaked, shuddering violently from the memories that roared through her mind.

Lina noticed this and chose to put the subject away. Looking at her friends, she gestured that they stay back while she entered the room. When she was halfway through the room she spoke up.

“This is as far as I’ll go unless you let me,” Lina’s tone was soothing, a tone she’d learnt from her mother. It was the same tone she’d use to stop her from crying and comfort her whenever something bad happened. She got used to hearing it, particularly during the time she’d shifted. Ridiculed for her odd slender white wolf, she was almost always crying.

Surprised by how close the royal had come, the girl tried to move further, but her back was already tightly pressed against the wall and she’d already reached the corner. Slowly, she lifted her head from beneath the covers to look at the royal who’d ventured further than the threshold of the door.

The blue-eyed girl before her took a seat on the ground, “Would you tell me where you’re from?”

The girl remained silent, “Very well, I will introduce myself first. I’m hoping that will make you feel safer.” The girl nodded and Lina proceeded, “My name is Lina Sirius, what’s your name?”

The girl was shocked by the name. It was similar to one she knew... Similar to another royal that had once shown her kindness, “M-Madeline,” the girl’s hoarse voice shakily, “Are you...” her question stopped halfway before she started coughing uncontrollably.

“I thought this might happen. I brought her some tea,” Honour’s mother interrupted, stepping into the room with a cup on a tray.

The girl eyed the tray longingly for a moment, tears stinging her eyes as memories painfully resurfaced, “Was it something I said? Do you not like tea, miss?”

“Mother, why do you treat her with so much respect?” Honour asked, tearing through the tense atmosphere in the room.

“That will be a discussion for another time. For now, let’s try to get Madeline as comfortable as she can get. We won’t ask you anything you don’t want to answer, Madeline.

We also ask that you approach us on anything you would like for as long as you intend to stay with us,” the woman asked politely, bowing to the girl as she held out the cup for her to take.

The girl reluctantly reached for the cup the woman was holding, “Do you know her... m-my grandmother?” the girl asked. It seemed the two had gotten more acquainted despite her fearful demeanour.

“Unfortunately, I didn’t get to meet her, but I did meet someone else related to you and they told me so much about her,” the woman replied with a sad smile.

Only one other person could come to Madeline’s mind when she phrased it like that. She took the cup from her and took a sip of the tea. The taste was identical to the one her grandmother prepared.

The girl was surprised by it and looked up at her, “Is this...”

“Yes, she taught me how to make it. I must say, the instructions were rather strict. The sugar has to be just right and measured to perfection. I always found that part to be the most troublesome, but your mother wouldn’t let me get it wrong and I got accustomed to preparing it that way,” the woman replied, her eyes seeming to glaze over while she relived past memories.

“Personally, I used to sneak a little more sugar into my own cup when my grandmother wasn’t looking,” the girl replied and for the first time since she’d woken up, allowed a smile to grace her face.

“A little secret just between me and you,” the woman said, bringing her hand so that she could whisper to the girl, “I also do that every now and then, but pretend to be the tough mother.”

The girl burst out laughing that she nearly spilt the cup she was holding, “Mother...” Oddly enough, the others had not heard what the two were talking about. Lina was surprised the woman had made even more into the room than they’d noticed. She was practically next to the girl and she hadn’t reacted with the same fear she had for Lina.

“Honour, is it okay if Madeline stayed here longer?” the woman turned to her daughter. Honour didn’t need an interpreter to know her mother was asking her to give up her bed a little longer. Lina turned to look at her conflicted friend.

“Hey, Honour, can I stay as well?” Lina asked.

“W-What’s that supposed to mean?” Honour asked, taken aback.

“Well, it’s been long since we last had a sleepover. So I was hoping we could have one,” Lina asked.

“As will I,” Crysta spoke up proudly, leaving no room for discussion.

Lina... was not amused.

Honour’s mother chuckled at the three girls, “You girls are so kind. Well, Madeline, is it okay if the four of you spend the night? It might help you relax. From what I can tell, you weren’t that injured, but you do need to get your mind off whatever horrors haunt you. So, what do you say to a slumber party?”

“Well, I’ve never had one of those before,” the girl replied shyly. Lina eyed the two of them with a suspicious gaze... Was this what jealousy felt like...?

“Oh? Then there is no way you’re turning down this opportunity then, Mady. Wow, this is going to be so fun,” Crysta yelled, skipping over a nickname for the girl like it was nothing and also being the first to break the silent and tense air that had plagued the room since they had arrived, “I will go out and get supplies. Lina, can I borrow your driver?”

“I don’t know how borrowing a driver is a thing, but go on ahead,” the girl replied. The tension in the air seemed to dissipate.

“Yesss...” the girl continued and was out the door before anyone could stop her.

“How nostalgic...” Lina hummed, trying to push back the dam of past memories that she’d been keeping away for years.

Chapter 287 Slumber Party

With the help of Honour’s mother(who wouldn’t let Crysta do all the shopping by herself), the three girls got extra sleeping bags and were able to shop for ‘appropriate’ snacks and treats for their slumber party.

The enthusiasm radiating from the three girls brought a smile to the woman's face, compared to the doom and gloom that had graced their house ever since they told their daughter that she was a goddess.

Honour had done her best to put the topic to rest and hadn't brought it up again. Fortunately for her, no one seemed to be bringing it up again.

They all acted normal around her. It was fun... with a tinge of sadness to it for those who knew what the girls were trying to keep away from their minds.

It wasn't going to be long before she'd have to address the issue and come to terms with it, but for the time she had left, she could at least have fun with her friends.

Shaking her head, the woman banished the thoughts from her mind and got back to shopping to help Madeline get comfortable.

Lina rushed through the supermarket getting everything she thought would be necessary only to have most of them turned down by Honour's mother.

As it had turned out, Crysta had brought a completely wrong menu. Tequila and all the other versions of alcohol she was trying to get were simply unacceptable.

Turns out, she didn't have to do that much with Honour and Lina around. The two girls let loose and went wild once they were inside the shopping mall, "Come on girls. Are you trying to give the girl a stomachache?" the woman tried.

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"She's supposed to enjoy herself. It's a slumber party and honestly, I haven't had one myself in quite some time," Lina complained, watching yet another box of snacks get shelved by the overly cautious woman, "I could cover part of the expenses or all of them if that's the problem."

"No, Lina. I don't think the king would like it if his money was suddenly being drained by his teenage daughter out for a slumber party he doesn't even know about. I hope you know what you're doing," the woman rubbed her temples, taking out the extra box of chocolates the girls had just added to the shopping cart.

"Oh, come on. He doesn't let me do a lot as is. This is completely within the guidelines he's set for me," Lina giggled, her face beaming at the sight of gummy bears.

"I want to believe you, but..." the woman looked at the shopping cart with a worried expression. Even with her filtering the cart, they had somehow managed to fill it up, "The number of chips alone is enough to feed an orphanage of starving children." she chuckled, taking out yet another thing the girls really didn't need.

"At this rate, we are going to buy food that will be done before anyone has gone to sleep," Crysta pitched in, holding up a bottle of champagne for the woman to verify.

Honour's mother looked at the brand and lit up, "Oh, that's a nice one."

"I know right," Crysta mirrored her enthusiasm, the faint glimmer of hope shining through her eyes.

“No. Quite sneaky of you,” the woman cut her off before she could even think of putting it in the cart. Laughing at the disappointed girl walking away from her, “Is there anything else you would like to place in here?”

Honour finally walked back to the cart and went through the things they had placed in it, “None that I can think of.”

“I think that concludes the shopping part of the slumber party. Honestly, shopping is much more fun when you’re not the adult in the group,” the woman whined.

“Well, maybe tomorrow you could bring her to buy clothes,” Lina mentioned while they got the cashier to go through everything. The woman looked back at the pleading royal, “At least, let me handle that one, please.”

Sighing, “You’re one persistent royal. I’ll give you that.”

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Madeline took some time to get used to what was happening around her. The storm of enthusiastic girls prepared the sleeping bags in the living room.

On the table, the food had been arranged in an enticing manner that had the girl salivating. She was almost tempted to start without them.

When Honour’s mother had made sure they didn’t need her anymore, she warned them to keep the noise reasonable so the neighbours would be bothered and let them have their fun. Or at least, she got out of their way and watched them for about an hour from the top of the stairs.

“How is she doing?” Honour’s grandmother asked the eavesdropping woman.

“Oh, Mother, you scared me. The girl’s doing alright. Lina and Selene are doing their best to make her feel comfortable. We have nothing to worry about... for now,” the woman said to her mother, turning back to the four girls having fun in the living room.

“That’s good to hear. Now would you stop listening in and leave them to themselves?” the old woman chuckled, “It sure would be nice to be young again.”

“I’ll watch them a little bit longer. Honour has never had this many friends over,” tears welled up in the woman’s eyes as she watched her daughter never lose her smile.

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The girls spent the night doing everything and nothing at all. Music, series, games and food were the large variety of activities they had to choose from and it was Madeline they made pick each activity. Finally passing out at midnight.

Honour was the last one to fall asleep, having witnessed her friends at their craziest without the influence of alcohol. ‘I wonder what they would do if they were drunk,’ she chuckled to herself before letting her eyes wander to the girl sleeping beside Lina.

When Madeline had finally warmed up to them, they'd started noticing her true nature. She had eyes that flashed between amber and silver although they had chosen not to ask her for fear of ruining the fun.

She was incredibly honest and almost incapable of lying. She loved to eat and could barely hold back that it was funny. It was soon apparent that her cheeks were not in the right shape because of her time in the woods. Honour was sure this detail was hard to notice. The girl didn't show signs of any malnourishment, after all.

Honour envisioned a girl with a round face and full cheeks that made her look even younger than she was. Her hair flowed down slightly below her shoulders and was wavy in nature.

She was also one of the first people Honour had ever met that were so true to themselves. There wasn't an ounce of deceit or pretence behind everything she said or did... much like the royal that was sleeping right next to her.

Lina had taken a shine to the girl almost immediately and the girl had responded in kind. The two of them were far too familiar with each other for people that had only just met. 'Even after everything you went yourself through mentally, you still managed to pull through unscathed,' Honour stared at the sleeping royal tempted to brush the hair on her forehead.

Her eyes further scanned the room to Crysta, the oddball that wouldn't give up on fixing her friendship with Lina.

Trying to figure out what went through her head when she ignored Lina all that time was nearly impossible. However, Lina wasn't letting her in as easily as Honour would have.

After all, the two of them did have an odd relationship even before Lina had regained her confidence, "The two of you were always meant to be best friends," Honour whispered to herself.

"I guess..." Lina's voice tore through the silence, "You might be right about that." Honour was stunned to see one of them still awake. The royal turned away so Honour couldn't see her face.

"I know you're awake, Lina," Honour tried, but the girl wouldn't reply, "Crysta won't hold on forever, you know. I know what she did to you. But eventually, she will get the feeling you don't even want her in your life anymore.

I'm not speaking for her, but I know I wouldn't stay around if I got the idea that someone wanted nothing to do with me... especially after showing her my weak side." After a moment of silence, "Good night, all of you."

An hour after the girl had already fallen asleep, Lina let out a deep sigh, pulling her covers tighter around herself, "Don't you think I know that, Honour?"

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The next day was announced by a yelling mother who seemed more than happy to rip the younglings out of their cosy sleeping bags, "Get up, get up. Alpha Jackson already announced today's drill. You're all late and no, of course, I'm not talking about you, Madeline dear. I'm speaking to the rest of these freeloaders."

“Mum, you choose the worst methods of waking children,” Honour yawned, covering her mouth with one hand and unconsciously pulling her covers back up with the other.

“Well, you better be grateful I didn’t choose water to wake you,” the woman chuckled. This joke drained the rest of the sleep from the three girls. Madeline, on the other hand...

Remained sound asleep like a rock.

Lina was astounded by the girl’s sleep, “She’s in for a world of pain when... if she starts attending the drills.”

“Aren’t the drills optional?” Honour asked her.

“Well, they are meant to be optional, but after what happened in the reserve, the king is thinking of making the compulsory,” Crysta responded, stretching her muscles to wake herself up, “Honour, can I use your shower?”

“Sure, but wouldn’t it be better if you used it after...”

“Just show me where it is,” the girl cut her off.

“Sure,” Honour got to giving directions and stopped questioning the delta.

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Madeline got up that day with no one beside her. Her voice was raspy from exertion the night before and she cringed at the craziness that had happened the day before. Looking about her, “Someone finally decided to wake up,” Honour’s mother approached her, holding a cup of tea.

“Thank you,” the girl thanked her, taking the cup from her.

“Don’t mention it. We’re family... or at least that’s what my mother has told me,” the woman responded. Madeline found her presence so calming that she was nearly convinced she cast a spell with her sweet voice.

Lina and Honour had similar charms to them, but the woman before her just seemed to know the right things to say all the time.

The girl found that she nearly spilt her entire story the day before just because of how safe she felt when she spoke with her.

“What do you mean by us being family?” the girl asked her, curiosity shining in her eyes.

The woman chuckled at her enthusiasm, “Well, I will explain it all to you when we go shopping later today.”

“Huh, what do you mean? Am I going to be living here?” Madeline asked, now shocked to hear.

“Of course you are. Where else did you expect to live?” the woman asked her, going back into the kitchen where she returned with a plate full of various confectionaries and placed them on the table.

The girl took a seat on one of the sofas while the woman went about fixing the disorganised living room.

"I don't want to cause you any trouble," Madeline replied, "I can already tell Honour wants to sleep in her own bed again."

"Honour is more intuitive than you might think and the kindest person you'll ever meet. Well, Lina rivals her when it comes to that, but I will assure you that she likes this arrangement better than anything else," the woman said.

"I could tell she didn't like the idea of me taking her bedroom. I don't want to be a bother," Madeline replied, miraculously skipping over everything the woman had just said.

"And we wouldn't want to send out a girl with no place to live. Not to mention a relative of ours," the amber-eyed woman took hold of her hands, maintaining eye contact, "Honour can tell you will be here for a while, so a more permanent arrangement would put her at ease."

"Are you..."

"Stop worrying already. I've already told you we are more than happy to have you stay with us," the woman replied, taking note of how the girl's eyes flashed grey every once in a while. It was the furthest thing from normal. "When someone thinks it's normal for people to move about with glowing eyes, they meet one that flickers between colours."

The girl hid her face at the comment. Honour's mother rushed, "No, you don't have to do that. Don't cover them. They're beautiful."

"They are also dangerous," the girl cried from under her palms.

Chapter 288 Busted

Lina's boredom increased exponentially the more school went on. After getting acquainted with the new girl, she was only trying her best to stay attentive to the teacher.

However, her mind wouldn't stop wandering to the different things she wanted to do once school was over. Her wolf didn't help her this time either. She was equally excited to take part in these post-school activities.

'Wolves are more intuitive than their human counterparts,' was what the girl could think of when she felt the wolf get a little more excited than she was. 'But that only means neither of us is focusing today,' she almost cried out loud. The teachers' words seemed to come from someone in another room... completely muffled...

'Blah blah blah...' they'd go. One after the other.

That was until one of them happened to mention the most feared topic in school, "Your finals are coming up next week. Use the weekend to prepare for them.

As I said yesterday, the timetable has been pinned to all the noticeboards and for those of you that prefer the use of technology, check your emails."

Everything concerning extra-curricular or the werewolf empire was wiped from the girl's mind the moment she heard the news about their exams. 'This world hates me...'

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Madeline, after a lot of discussion with Honour's mother, gave in to be taken to the mall to procure new clothes.

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The woman put no limit to what she could buy, but as someone who was raised in a family that wasn't blessed with so much, the girl was inclined to get clothes she was sure were within an average werewolf's price range.

"You said you would tell me how our families are related," the question that had been lingering on her mind finally surfaced.

"Oh yeah, I said that, didn't I? Well, for one, I know your family bears the power of the Seeker. Your mother, unfortunately, didn't have that gift. She said the power would skip a generation and only appear in the females of your family," the woman started.

"You seem to know a lot about me. It's unsettling," the girl's painfully honest voice from within the changing room.

"You misunderstand, Maddy," the woman replied, "We merely agreed that it was best if our parents stayed apart, but in truth, the two of us would have met a long time ago."

"Why did you choose to keep the families apart?" It was like every question brought even more questions.

"I'm pretty sure you know how risky it is for someone to know that you are the Seeker, don't you?" the woman replied.

"Yeah, I know that. We also have the power to find the Origin and it would be bad for us to find such a thing," the girl replied nervously.

"Exactly. Our family has something we keep secret as well. We don't have odd eye colours, so we don't really have to do much to keep ourselves hidden. No one would be able to know who we were unless something triggered the one we protect."

"What is that supposed to mean?" Madeline asked, still milling over her newfound nickname.

"Well..." she lingered for a moment, "I mean Honour. She's special and the reason the two families were separated," the woman replied, "I have questions, Mady. I can't imagine what you've been through to get here and I thank the moon goddess that it was my daughter and Lina that found you.

Fate could not have been any kinder to you. I will wait for you to get comfortable before telling us what you have been through.

How to say this... We are related through our ancestors. Somewhere along the way, the families were separated and for some reason, an ability manifested in yours. It's probably because of the divine energy that's unique to our bloodline.

Eventually, I met your mother. The two of us didn't know much at the time, but we bonded so quickly that it was too much of a coincidence. One day, I went to visit her in the Golden Moon pack and that's when your grandmother revealed everything about our past."

The girl remained quiet in the changing room for a longer interval that worried the woman, "Maddy!"

"Fate hasn't been kind to us," the girl quietly replied before stepping out of the changing room to reveal her new outfit. The woman clapped her hands enthusiastically at the transformation she was witnessing. Her smile proved contagious enough to wipe the worried expression off the girl's face.

"We are definitely buying that one," the woman said to her, adding it to the growing pile she'd already gathered.

"Don't you think they are too many?" Madeline asked, frowning at the pile of clothes.

"Not in the slightest. Besides, the bill is not on me this time, so don't worry," the woman said proudly, bashing the guilt that tried to claw its way into her conscience. "Would you like something to eat? All this shopping has me tired."

The question was met with a stomach growl from the girl, "I would normally be really embarrassed by that, but I'm too hungry to care."

"Perfect, let's just pay for this and head over to the restaurant across the street. The place is amazing."

Madeline followed the woman and watched her retrieve a blue credit card from her purse to pay for their clothes. On the card were the names Lina Sirius. 'Royals can be filthy rich,' she stared slack-jawed. They'd spent so much on a random stranger already.

They waited for the clothes to get packed before taking the clothes out. Madeline was grateful for having followed the woman on this trip when they got to the restaurant. The scents of food made the girl crave it more. "The weather finally got better," the girl observed.

"Yes, it stopped raining yesterday, but you spent most of the day sleeping," the woman replied, "What would you like to order?"

The girl lifted the laminated menu in front of her and started scanning through the different items on the menu. Most of what she saw was familiar to her and in the end, she went with what her nose told her and asked her to pick.

The scents coming from the restaurant kitchen were not doing her any justice. Honour's mother hit a bell at their table when Madeline confirmed she had made a choice and a beautiful blonde waitress was at their table in no time.

The woman directed the waitress on what they wanted and the blonde dutifully noted down their orders on a pad. Madeline thought the waitress lingered too long staring at her before leaving their table.

"While we wait, would you mind telling me what you've been up to? Well, before whatever it was that brought you here?" the woman asked her.

Madeline managed to skip past the blur of terrifying events that hung in her head and looked back to times that were much happier, “Well, before all this, I was actually working hard to be able to run my own restaurant one day.”

“Wow, looks like I brought you to the right place. Am I to assume you know everything on the menu then?” the woman asked her.

“Yes, I do know everything on this,” she chuckled, “Although half of them are considered rare delicacies back in the Golden Moon pack. It’s not so easy to transport some of the ingredients. It was hard for me to even learn how to prepare some of those dishes because of it.”

“Wow, okay... Now I know I won’t be making dinner by my lonesome today,” Honour’s mother smirked.

“Wait, what... That wasn’t... Oh, the cat’s already out of the bag,” the girl groaned, letting her head fall to the table.

“Hey, if it’s that much of a bother, I could let you skip today. After all, you’ve only just started to know the city. There is so much you haven’t seen yet. It would be a shame to have the day ruined by a promise to cook...” the woman’s voice seized abruptly catching the girl’s attention.

Honour’s mother had her eyes pinned to something behind her. Looking about, so did everyone else in the restaurant. The mood in the restaurant had completely changed. Tension was in the air and no one was saying a word. The sound of screeching tyres filled the air, notifying Madeline of what they were all looking at.

Madeline turned behind her and saw men getting out of a black SUV and heading off to the same boutique they’d just bought clothes from. The werewolves from the car each had green eyes and reeked of strength and power of seasoned warriors, “Of course, the girl didn’t say anything about this. Just how many secrets do those girls think they can keep?”

“Huh, what are you talking...?” this time, Madeline went silent, taking notice of the last person to exit the vehicle from the passenger seat.

He was more relaxed than the other men and didn’t seem to be in a hurry to go into the boutique. His eyes scanned the area surrounding him, moving from person to person, building to building, stall to stall, establishment to establishment. He was scanning for anything out of the ordinary.

Madeline’s heartbeat went into overdrive as the man’s gaze came closer to hers. She’d seen him somewhere... In fact, she’d come in this direction in search of the same face.

The only person she’d known outside their pack to be able to help them, Drake Sirius, the royal that had paid them a visit not so long before everything had fallen to pieces. In the deep silence that felt like it could be sliced through by a knife, their eyes locked if only for a second. Madeline was sure her heart skipped a beat. Drake wasn’t this serious the last time they’d met. His presence was much warmer.

The prince continued surveying the faces before his eyes darted back to Madeline. Scrunching his eyebrows, he rubbed his temples as if hoping he wasn’t seeing things, but alas, the girl didn’t vanish or change face when he looked at her again.

He wasn't seeing things, seated right before him was the granddaughter of the Seeker. The sudden flash of grey in her amber eyes confirmed his suspicions, "You look like you've seen him before... Oh, he's coming this way and he also looks like he's seen you before," Honour's mother rambled, but the stunned girl couldn't find it within her to break her gaze with the alpha.

Judging from her reaction to the royal, the woman made her own conclusions. Adding that to the credit card she'd just used in the cloth shop, she was now quite sure of what the royal had come to investigate.

'Well, this is just swell!' she cursed, putting on a bright smile to greet the son of the king that ruled them all on this side of the globe.

"Madeline, was it?" Distracted by his words, Mady's mind spiralled for a moment.

"Y-yeah, that's me..."

Chapter 289 Lunch with a Prince

"Y-yeah, that's me. I'm glad you remembered," the girl replied, tearing away from the dazed state she'd been in. The prince then took a look at the woman that was with her. For a moment, it seemed as though he would recognize the woman, but later brushed off his suspicions. "Is she a relative of yours?" He asked, taking a seat at their table despite the numerous red flags his wolf was raising.

"Yeah, you could say that," Madeline replied, "I was meaning to talk to you, by the way. What brings you here? Those men don't look like they've come shopping for clothes," the girl asked, skipping formalities. Honour's mother was petrified by how close the two of them seemed.

'Wasn't she avoiding Lina back when they first met?' the woman thought. The spectacle before was unlike what she would have expected. However, the reply given by the prince was enough to wipe the thoughts from her mind.

"Well, we got an alarm that Lina's credit card had been used, yet we're sure she's supposed to be in school. Father thought I should check it out and ensure my sister is still the same one I know. Honestly, how can one girl cause me so much trouble after I just returned?" Drake sighed.

"I'm sorry, your highness," Honour's mother intervened, "That might have been my fault. Or Lina's for that matter."

"Oh? Please do explain," the prince's expression turned serious. The woman reached for her handbag and showed him the blue card she'd used to purchase Madeline's clothes.

Drake stared between the card and the woman, trying to piece together any possible reason for the woman having the card. When his mind came up with none, he sighed, settling deeper into his chair, "I think you have a lot to tell me."

"Yes, your highness, but I would prefer it if you asked your little sister instead. She seems to be the mastermind behind all this after all," Honour's mother was defeated. 'And here I was... trying to keep my distance from royals. I should have known it would be impossible the moment Lina came into Honour's life, but then again, that might just be the person she needed. Trading one thing for another.'

“Little sister, when did you become such a handful? I was only gone a week,” the prince cursed. The pack warriors checking the store finally stopped when Drake sent a message through the mind link. “I’ll take that card from you now, please.”

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The woman reluctantly handed over the card, pouting while she did... ‘That was going to pay for lunch as well.’

“Alpha Drake, you found it. What shall we do with the per...”

“Go back to the palace without me. I’ll catch up when I’m done talking to them,” Drake cut the man short. Without further conversation, they bowed and exited the restaurant. Drake sighed and rang the bell at their table, “I hoped this would be a minor case of my sister entering some sort of rebellious phase and it would all blow over...” he paused, finally taking in the significance of Madeline’s presence, “but I’m guessing that will not be the case.”

“No, it won’t,” Madeline replied, “There is trouble. Something terrible has happened. It took everything I had just to get here,” Madeline replied solemnly, “I get the feeling that I’m too late.”

“So you’re willing to tell him everything?” Honour’s mother exclaimed, “How do the two of you know each other anyway? I know for a fact that the prince has never visited you.”

Before the girl could speak up, Drake intervened, “I met her on one of my trips to find my mate. They have a warm little pack in the South.

She has the cutest of passions that just made her impossible to miss. Not to mention the way her eyes kept flashing grey when she was intimidated or anxious. Who would forget such a person after all that?”

Madeline shrunk back in her seat. ‘Oh please, Mother Earth. Swallow me...’

“Hey, that’s supposed to be private. It’s not like I make them change colour on purpose.”

“I know you don’t, but I do wonder if you have some sort of control over them,” Drake replied questioningly.

“It’s more the other way round really. They are supposed to be grey all the time. Keeping them amber is what’s complicated,” the girl answered sadly, “I was supposed to learn how to keep them amber so that I could pursue my dream without anyone noticing my strange eye colour...” her words stopped there, seemingly hitting a wall.

Drake was stunned for a moment shaking his head as the waiter placed his food on the table. He ordered his own and did his best to contain himself while the food was set for the others to enjoy, “This reminds me. How goes your dream to open up a restaurant?”

“Oh, that... I was doing great. I’m thankful for the support you gave me that one time, but... Now I don’t know where to begin,” the girl lamented, covering her face, her mind flying through the dangers of her returning home.

So much had happened since the prince had left the Golden Moon pack and she was now starting to wonder whether his help was for better or worse. Punishing Victor had clearly made him worse off a person than she'd believed him to be.

"Well, if you're here for long, perhaps you could intern for a bit at one of the restaurants here in the capital. I could recommend you," the prince offered.

"Really? You would do that. It would be great," the girl's eyes lit up, staring at the prince in excitement. There wasn't a hint of her former gloom left in her eyes...

'Such a quick transformation,' Honour's mother grinned. This girl was like a rollercoaster of emotions.

"Yeah, I would. Lina will soon be out of school anyway. The two of you can have a grand tour of the town. If you'd like, you could pick whichever place you would want to work from," the prince replied.

"I'd rather you recommend a great place for me to work," the girl mumbled.

"That can work as well," he replied eyeing his food as it was brought almost immediately after he'd ordered it, "The fish here is the best. I'm so glad I came here today."

"Weren't you here to bust your little sister?" Honour's mother asked.

"Of course, I was. I was supposed to drag her back to school. They are supposed to be having exams soon," the man replied, although his attention was completely overtaken by the food before him.

"You say it as if you would have let her off the hook if she wasn't nearing any exams," the woman countered.

"You have me there. While I would hate to change the topic from my adorable little sister, might I ask where you're living while you're here, Madeline?" Drake asked.

"I'm living with Honour at the moment," the name startled the prince for a moment.

"Huh, I don't remember them having a guest house," the prince thought to himself.

"We don't have a guest room, but we are more than happy to host family," the woman replied.

Drake looked at the woman once more and the resemblance between her and the wolf he seemed to care so much about became so clear that it felt like a lens finally snapping into focus. 'Oops...'

"Oh my... I hadn't recognized you without Honour around. You're Honour's mother, aren't you?" the prince asked, bowing slightly in respect to the woman before her.

"Huh, why are you bowing to me? I'm just the mother of any other random werewolf you could find out there," the woman panicked, "You don't have to show me that much respect, your highness."

"Oh, but you're mistaken. You're the mother of my little sister's best friend. The mother to the girl who's stuck by Lina's side no matter what she's been through. That alone demands respect for raising a noble beautiful young lady such as her," the prince countered.

“Honour, what have you been getting yourself into?” Honour’s mother whined. When the prince wouldn’t stop bowing, she calmed herself, “Very well, although I didn’t know just how close she was with Lina,” she lied.

“Huh,” Madeline exclaimed before getting a death glare from the woman that shut her up. Drake missed the small exchange as his food was now a cause for more concentration. Madeline chose to change the subject to something that had been bothering her, “Why did your food get served almost instantly?”

“I’m royalty, little wolf...”

It was that simple.

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Lina walked Honour home that day, stopping at the entrance to the small cottage once they were there, “Aren’t you going to get in?” Honour asked her.

“No, I’m going to head on home. I have a lot of reading to do,” the girl replied nervously.

“You’re worried about, Crysta, aren’t you?” Honour tried.

“She didn’t even come to say anything the entire day. She wasn’t even there at the Den. She has completely vanished. It’s bothering me. Not to mention the fact that she’s closed herself off from the mind link,” Lina rushed out.

“Or she could be simply ignoring you. Have you tried that one?” Honour chuckled.

“I will try to look for her. I’ll also try to get some work in so I’m not completely clueless in the exams,” the girl was just full of excuses.

Honour noticed her discomfort and bid her farewell. The royal was gone before anything else could happen. Honour, on the other hand, rushed to her room expecting to find a certain werewolf and was shocked to find her room empty.

The sleeping bags they’d used the day before were organised and folded in the living room, but from the state of the house, there didn’t seem to be any sign that someone had been around.

Resorting to something she rarely did, she tried catching their scents. Her mother’s, along with the strange yet familiar scent of their guest were faint. ‘They’ve been gone a while.’

The girl rushed to her grandmother’s room and knocked as urgently as she could without startling the old lady before entering. The woman was comfortably knitting in her chair, by the bed. Newspapers that she no doubt had already finished reading and an empty cup of tea lay on the table on her side, “Welcome back, Selene. Your mother has not been around the whole day if that’s what you’re asking.”

“How long do you plan on calling me that?” the girl asked her. This was one of the few times she got to hear that name and it irritated her eardrums.

“Instead of getting angry at me, try to consider that it is your name. Whether you like it or not,” the woman replied harshly. Placing her knitting on her lap, she sighed, “Maybe you will be more comfortable with it... when the memories return.”

Chapter 290 Crisis

Lina reached home faster by jogging or rather running very slowly in her own perspective. The air at the palace was tense and the princess almost thought the other werewolves were intentionally averting their eyes from her, but she shook off the feeling and focused on what had brought her to the castle.

'Hey Crysta, why won't you answer me? I've been trying to get a hold of you the entire day,' the girl tried through the mind link, but once again, nothing came through to her.

'Could something be the matter? Maybe she finally hit the limit Honour was talking about... I thought she was focusing on her books, but I couldn't detect her presence at school either. Did she skip school?' the girl wondered. Nothing seemed to make any sense to her the more she tried.

Lina rushed up the stairs and into the palace, panic starting to set into her mind. She rushed through the hallways and stairs, trying to dig into her memory in search of the delta's room.

The deltas had their own section of the palace, but everything from there was a mystery to the princess. Lina roamed through the Deltas wing in search of some sign of the girl's room.

Just when she was about to give up her directionless search and ask one of the random werewolves traversing the halls, she bumped into a familiar face. Lina stopped her rush when she spotted Bree and then skipped all formalities. "Hey, Bree, have you seen Crysta?" the princess asked amidst her tired panting.

Bree scanned the girl's face and mind link as though looking for some sign of deceit, but when it turned out that the princess was indeed sincere in her question, she revealed her own worried expression, "No, no I haven't. She hasn't been answering her cell phone either. Now that you've turned up looking for her, I'm starting to get worried."

"Where is her room?" the worried Lina asked urgently. Bree turned on her heels and started leading the girl in the direction she'd just come from.

"I tried knocking, but no one would answer," the girl replied, "I figured she probably wasn't in..."

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"What's with all the commotion?" a deep voice interrupted the girl's words. The two turned around to see prince Drake making his way toward them. His expression was a mixture of frustration and relief, which only made sense because of the mind link they shared. Lina was only more curious to know what could cause his brother to be frustrated in the first place, "Father has been looking for you and what are you doing in this part of the palace?" Lina couldn't help but feel the prince still had more to say on the matter.

"Drake, I have no time for explanation, but Crysta has gone missing. I haven't been able to reach her. Not through the mind link and not through her cell phone either," the girl stopped her brother to relay the information.

Finding his calm, the prince thought for a bit before replying, "Have you tried feeling for her location? I know she isn't in there."

“Oh, I forgot about that,” Lina facepalmed, right before closing her eyes to focus. Her nerves made it harder. Despite her now calm atmosphere, the girl’s heart was moving faster than it should have. She was getting more and more worried for the delta and that didn’t help her focus any better, “I can’t do it, Drake. Why don’t you try?”

“Honestly, little sister. I’ve taught you how to do this so many times,” the man sighed. Ignoring the urge to turn this into another training session for the young princess, he focused on his own. It was much easier that way.

Lina waited for his answer as time ticked by painstakingly slowly. The longer he spent silent, the more she was anxious to know what he’d found out. If Crysta was near, the prince would have had no trouble finding her, or that’s at least what she thought was the case. Her mind was starting to lose grasp of what was valid and what wasn’t.

The prince was like that for two whole minutes searching for Crysta through the mind link. His eyes darted from side to side wildly under his closed eyelids almost like he could see something entirely different when he was in this state.

With the power of a royal, there wasn’t anything stopping him from finding her no matter what the circumstances. Another illegal secret of the royals (they could force themselves into the minds of their subjects regardless of how hard the wolf had tried to block them out. This did not apply, however, if they were searching for a royal that had blocked themselves from the mind link.)

Even so, the man’s eyes opened in an expression Lina had feared, shock.

“I can’t feel her...”

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Lina and Bree were silent for a moment, trying to decipher the man’s impossible words. Perhaps he’d misspoken and used the wrong words. Maybe he had found her, but not in the place he’d expected and then said something completely different from what he’d intended to say. Maybe he was simply pulling Lina’s leg so he could get a reaction out of her.

Drake wasn’t one to play pranks, however. And his expression said otherwise.

“What do you mean ‘you can’t feel her?’” Lina’s voice rang with disbelief. Bree was more shocked by the girl’s level of worry. The girl had been led to believe the princess didn’t care one bit about Crysta... ‘Odd.’

“We’re royals, Drake. We should be able to...”

“I know that, sister. But no matter what I try, it’s like she’s not a part of the mind link,” he argued.

“What are you saying, Drake? Your words aren’t making sense,” Lina countered her brother.

“They aren’t making sense because you don’t want them to make sense, little sister. In any case, death is only one of the unlikely reasons this could happen. I’m hoping that’s not the case. She could simply be unconscious or poisoned by wolfsbane,” the man rubbed his temples, “Damn it, it’s one problem after another.”

His last statement seemed to garner more attention from the girls. With everything escalating with Crysta, Lina hadn't expected her brother to say something like that. He had come looking for her oozing frustration and relief. Could he have been relieved that she was okay and frustrated that he couldn't find her or was there trouble that he had wanted to protect her from?