

## Chosen by Fate 221

### Chapter 221 - Reece - After Her (VOLUME 2)

Reece

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Trinity had just done something I never thought was possible. Of all the things I imagined to happen in this fight, that was definitely not one of them. I don't think I will ever cease to be surprised by her anymore.

I watched as she floated ten feet off the ground and sent thousands of arrows out in several directions at the same time. Each arrow landed with perfect accuracy. The beasts around us all began to fall instantly. It's amazing the kind of power you find yourself capable of in such dire moments.

After the initial barrage of arrows I noticed that she was calling even more to her. She was gathering so much power in that moment that I didn't know why. She had destroyed them all. Our field was clear.

But there were other fields as well.

Was that what she was doing? Was she targeting all the other creatures that were too far away for us to see?

As I watched her, I knew my answer. There were a few things different about her appearance. Her skin covered in ice, the bright, sapphire blue glow all over her body. Those things were easy to notice and had not escaped my gaze. But, as I looked closer, I saw something else.

My Little Bunny's eyes were spinning the way they had done so long ago. It almost felt like a lifetime since I had seen her eyes making those motions that reminded me of a camera lens trying to focus.

If it hadn't been for the intense look of concentration on her face I would have been worried for her. The last time I had seen her eyes do that, she had passed out in my arms immediately afterwards.

"I hope you know what you're doing Little Bunny." I whispered as I just stared at the large number of arrows she had summoned.

Just as she looked like she was about to send the arrows out to attack I saw her head whip to the side.

"Shawn!" She screamed in desperation. Did something happen to Shawn? How would she know?

The thousands and thousands of arrows were sent flying and they all went much further than before. Almost as soon as she had sent the attack she spun and seemed to run out of the tornado she had been riding inside.

Her feet touched the ground, silently, and she was off running before I could even blink. I didn't even wait to think, I just started running after her. And I nearly slipped doing it.

Everywhere Trinity stepped, the ground turned to ice. Large, thick circles of magical ice began to sprout behind her as she ran. Was it because she herself was covered in ice? I had a suspicion it was.

Watching where I stepped a little more carefully than I had thought I needed to, I ran after her. She was a few hundred feet ahead of me, but that wasn't insurmountable. I was faster than she was and had longer legs, I would catch up in no time at all.

Or so I thought.

As I watched, I saw that the purple smoke that had brought the enemies was back. This time, only five people stepped out of the swirling purple smoke. But as I looked past the haze in front of me, I noticed that it began to swirl again. This time near my mate.

The problem here was that it didn't release an enemy at all. Instead, the swirling smoke, or fog, or whatever Edmond called his magic gas, the purple cloud swirled in a circle around my single minded mate. One second she was there and the next she was gone. It had taken her away.

"TRINITY!" I screamed at the empty clearing beyond the five warlocks standing before me. "Where is she?" I yelled at the one closest to me.

"She's gone to have a family reunion." The man's sneering voice made my skin crawl with anger and nerves.

"Where did he take her?" I demanded.

"You won't live long enough to find out."

"Wanna bet?" I growled at him.

I watched as the man who spoke grinned. His long purple hair, like an amethyst, was unnatural enough, but the pure black eyes that dripped venom made things ten times worse. His complexion, which should have been a rich brown based on the undertones, looked sickly with it's pasty, pallid pallor.

The others around him were just as unnatural looking. Their hair was the same amethyst purple and their eyes were the same lifeless black. The only differences were their skin tones, but they all still looked pale and pasty. In total there were four men and one woman in the group and they all felt powerful.

I knew that I needed to fight them, and none of the others were close enough to help me. That's fine. I wasn't named the alpha king and warlock king for nothing. Nehalennia knew what she was doing when she chose me for Trinity's mate. If I wasn't up to the task then that would mean the Goddess had made a mistake. I trusted in my Goddess the same way I trusted in my wife.

"Before I rip your head from your body, you will tell me what I want to know." I snarled at the man in the lead.

"If you can manage to win, then that would mean she wouldn't need to be saved. It would mean that our master isn't strong enough to defeat a mongrel like her.

"Don't fucking talk about my mate like that you bastard." I snarled again.

"You finally grew feelings for that little slut then. Isn't that great." His condescending tone was about to make me see red. I needed to get myself under control so I could think my way through this fight.

"Enough talk." I snapped at him. "I will kill you all, and you will tell me where my wife is before you die."

"HAHAHA!" They all seemed to laugh at once and it sounded just like Edmond laughing instead of them. He was definitely controlling them.

I didn't want them getting the chance to run away just yet. It would be no fun for me if they got scared and ran away before I got to do what I wanted with them. Killing them would be just the beginning of it all.

With little effort and just a quick thought, I felt myself hovering in the air. I knew that I was flying in front of them, as a phoenix. The look of shock on their faces, the fear dripping from their eyes, that was definitely worth the shift. And thankfully, I would still have clothes afterwards since the warlock shift like this didn't destroy my clothes. If only all shifts were the same.

I used their temporary distraction to fly a little higher. Soaring in a quick circle I summoned my fire to me. I was a being tied to flames, both as the wolf and the warlock king.

My plan was to create a barrier around them all. Not to trap them so I could leave. No, it was to trap them into the fight. I didn't want them turning tail to run away when they were about to lose.

I concentrated on my fire very intently. I made sure it would only burn them. Not my warriors or any ally. It wouldn't burn the ground, and it wouldn't burn me. We would all be safe, but if they tried to leave the red, all consuming fire would destroy them in an instant.

I landed just outside the fire. I wanted to walk through it, to show them I had control here. I shifted once more before I started forward.

This time, when they saw me, I would be in my lycan form. Both of these new forms I had gained in France, and both marked me as special among the shifters but it also marked me as the Warlock Queen's mate. They wouldn't be able to win if they were all too scared to move, and that's what I planned when I became the lycan just now.

Slowly, with deliberate steps, I walked into the roaring, raging flames. The flames licked and tickled harmlessly against my flesh and fur. When I finally stepped out of the flames, my pants still untouched by the fire, I saw them all take a step back. Their eyes were opened wide and their mouths were hanging in disbelief.

"This can't be." I heard the woman cry. "He can't be a phoenix and a lycan." She was shaking in fear.

"Worry not, it's all illusions. They have traitors on their side. Warlocks working with the enemies to fight against their own. They have granted him these illusions. The fire, his two forms, neither of them are real." The man who seemed to be their leader spoke again.

"Vox, attack him." The man pushed one of the other men forward, causing him to stumble with fear.

"Come at me." I spoke slowly, finding it difficult to speak with this new mouth of mine.

"Y-you're just illusioned." He yelled as he took a few more steps toward me. I watched as he raised his hand to begin casting an attack.

Faster than their eyes could follow I leapt across the circle, pinning the man to the ground. First, I closed my large jaws over his wrist, snapping his hand off with one quick bite. He screamed as his blood began to pour into my mouth.

"Ahhh! No, no, no." He pulled his arm away from my mouth and held it against his chest. I didn't give him more than a second to recoil and show his terror. He had just looked me in the eyes, locking his gaze with mine, when I leaned forward and placed a razor clawed hand against his throat. The next second I ripped his throat out with my lycan hand.

The woman among the group screamed long and loud. The fear was so intense in her eyes that it was clear she was not thinking at all. She turned tail and bolted toward the twenty foot tall wall of flames that encircled us.

She clearly thought she could pass right on through but she had underestimated me. She ran with her arms outstretched like she was going to push a door open in front of her. As soon as she touched the wall of flames she began to burn. Her entire body was instantly set ablaze and she dropped to the ground, an endless scream emitting from her now molten throat.

"They're real." One of the men in the back gasped. "We were not prepared for this." It seemed like Edmond's mind control had its limits when it came to them burning to death.

"Don't underestimate me." I growled at them.

"We will not lose to you." The man in the lead spoke. "Get him." This time the other two were pushed forward.

I didn't hesitate this time either. I summoned my whip of flames and flung it out to meet the first man. It wrapped around his middle and with a yank, the man was pulled into two pieces. He didn't even have the chance to scream. He just looked down at the whip wrapped around him and by the time he registered the weapon blood was pouring out of his mouth.

The other man tried to run away, but he would not escape me. I flung the whip out toward him and it wrapped several times around his throat. Another flick of my wrist and his head was soaring across the clearing, spraying the last man standing before me with a ruby red splatter of blood.

"Scared yet?" I taunted him with a chuckle. "Now, tell me where my wife is and I'll make your death quick. If you don't I will torture you slowly until you talk.

"You will get nothing out of me you monster."

"That's rich, calling me a monster. Have you seen what your master has done to those people?" I pointed in the direction of the battlefield that was strewn with monsters.

"That was a necessary sacrifice." His voice shook as he trembled. "He needs to rid the world of scum like you so we can all be safe."

"Sorry to burst your bubble, pal, but your leader wants us gone because we're stopping him from taking over the world and killing anyone who opposes him. He longs for a world ruled with darkness and magic. He doesn't care about anything but power."

"That's not true. That can't be true." He seemed to be wavering.

"It's true and it's why we're going to stop him."

I slowly stalked forward, closer to the man trembling before me. As I walked I shifted into full wolf form. This fight would be best won with my natural fighting style. And like Trinity, I had learned to finally talk to others in this form.

"This is your last chance to tell me where she is."

As I stalked closer to him I noticed something that seemed to be off. The ground around me was catching fire. Just like my Little Bunny's steps had turned to ice, mine were turning to molten flames, but they weren't spreading. The flames stayed in place awaiting a command from me.

Another glance told me I was now glowing bright red, not quite the flames but the ruby glow shining all throughout me. If I moved just right the red was hidden and then it would reappear just moments later as my body twisted or shifted in some way. I could also feel the power surging through me, stronger than ever before.

I leapt forward, landing on the man's chest. My large forepaws were holding him in place, and his clothing around my paws began to burn.

"No, I don't want to burn to death."

"Tell me where she is." I demanded. "Tell me and I will kill you quickly."

"He took her to the shadow plane."

"What?"

"She is here but not here. She is in the land of shadows beneath this one. She can only get back if she defeats him."

I roared. The loud sound piercing through the sky and causing the man to shiver.

"Please, please don't let me burn."

"I should." I growled at him. Then, after seeing the fear in his eyes I bent down and bit his head off, silencing his pathetic whimper.

## **Chapter 222 - Trinity - Edmond (VOLUME 2)**

9-12 minutes

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Trinity

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I didn't know what had happened. I was running across the field, running to check on Shawn who had been hurt by those spider creatures. One minute my feet were pounding away on the blood and gore

covered grass, and the next I was swept up in that fast moving purple smoke that brought the monsters to attack.

I felt the smoke not just swirl around me, but into me. It filled my lungs and choked off my air. I couldn't move, I couldn't draw a breath.

Before, I would have been afraid, scared that something like this was happening to me. But now, I was just pissed off. I knew who that purple smoke belonged to. I knew who was behind this. I knew and it made me angry enough to see red.

Edmond had interfered when I was trying to help my friend. He had stopped me from helping someone who was in trouble and needed me. I would not let that slide. I would kill him and get back to help my family.

When the smoke cleared around me and I could finally see, and breathe, again I was able to finally see where I was. I felt the shift in the air, the unmistakable sense of movement so I knew that I had gone somewhere else but I didn't know exactly where this was.

Everything around me was gray. It was like this was a scene from an old black and white movie. The entire scene looked familiar but somehow different. I saw gray grass swaying in the breeze that tickled my cheeks. I saw a gray sky with lighter gray clouds floating above me.

It all looked just like the clearing I had just been in, but it was completely devoid of color. Aside from the lack of color, there was no one else around. I was alone in this clearing. There were no people, no animals, no sounds or anything. It was just gray and silent.

I nervously stared around me. This place had an ominous feel to it and I didn't like it at all. This whole thing felt wrong, like I wasn't supposed to be here. I felt like, even though I couldn't see anyone, there were several pairs of eyes on me. That feeling made my skin crawl.

As I looked all around the gray, shadow looking world I felt like I could actually see eyes looking at me. The phantom glint shining off eyes that weren't really there. I felt people, felt them looking at me, staring at me, but I couldn't see them at all. What the hell was going on here? Were these people in this world or were they back home, in the real world?

"Hello there, daughter of mine." I heard Edmond's voice from behind me. I whipped around to face him, an angry glint in my eye and a firm set to my jaw. There he stood before me in his vivid, striking appearance, not affected by the gray world at all. And I had noticed that I was no longer glowing, but was back to my normal appearance.

"You." I growled at him through my clenched teeth.

"And here I thought you would be happy to have a nice family reunion with your dear old daddy."

"Don't ever fucking call yourself my dad, father, or daddy. I only have one dad and his name is Wesley."

"I hate to break it to you little girl, but I am your father and there is no other one but me."

"You're a fucking sperm donor that kidnapped my mother and ruined her life. Then you tried to kill me as well. That makes you anything but my family you son of a bitch."

"As if you know anything about your grandparents." He scoffed. That actually made me pause. His parents really were my grandparents. But how long ago did he kill them?

"When did you kill your mother Edmond?" I asked him, unable to bite my tongue on that one.

"See, you are my child. You know me so well already. Yes, we both murdered our mothers. Your existence took everything from your mother and drove her to suicide. And me, well, I took her life personally, hers and dear old dad's. I needed their life force to strengthen my magic and to create my coven. Let's see, they died a little over three hundred years ago now." He chuckled to himself.

"You're a fuckin monster."

"You haven't heard the worst of it." He chuckled to himself. "I was the leading force behind the Salem Witch Trials. I was the one who planted it all in the minds of the humans. I told them about the existence of my kind, I showed them my parents as they were practicing their magic. From there it all just took off like wildfire. It was quite fun really."

"You let all those people kill your parents?" I felt the anger rise in me as the words came out on a gasp.

"No, weren't you listening. I killed them myself. I used the hatred of the humans to fuel the witch hunts. My parents were the first to be killed in the trials and I myself set them on fire. Of course I had cast a spell ahead of time and was prepared to take their power into me. The sorrow in the heart of my parents and the hatred from the humans, those delicious emotions blended together to make quite the astounding boost to my power."

"I take back what I said before."

"What's that sweetheart." Hearing him say that word, calling me that name, it made me want to shudder.

"You're not a monster."

"See, all yo-." He began before I cut him off.

"You're a fucking psychopathic murdering asshole."

"You will talk to me with respect." He glowered at me.

"Really? Or what?" I demanded of him.

"You will live a shorter life." He laughed at me.

"You're already planning to kill me anyway."

"Yes, but I wanted to have a nice chat first. Keep acting like that and I will just kill you now."

"Oh no, heavens forbid it, I cannot have that happening now can I."

"Don't press your luck you little bitch. I'm trying to be generous. I thought you would like an explanation before you died. But you can just die now, being as ignorant as you are. If you're content dying ignorant then so be it for me to stop you."

"What makes you think I am ignorant of anything?" I yelled at him. "What makes you act all high and mighty, thinking you're better than me? Why do you think I do not know anything about you or your people?"

"Foolish little girl, where would you have learned about it all?" He looked at me with his eerily light colored eyes and smirked. "I destroyed the Aerie Convento the day you arrived, taking that unborn abomination with it."

"Abomination? Abomination? That abomination was my baby, your grandchild. It would have had warlock blood coursing through it."

"Yes, but it was too tainted with beastmen to be usable to me. I didn't know about, or intend to kill it, but it was an added bonus."

"You bastard. You heartless, demonic bastard." I was shaking from my anger and the gray of the landscape around me was slowly turning a hazy red color. I was ready to kill him.

I just watched on as Edmond laughed about his evil deeds. He got a kick out of the destruction and despair he brought people. It was truly like his life's joy.

"What the hell is the matter with you? What happened to you to turn you into this type of person?"

"What happened you ask, hmm." He seemed to be deep in thought as he pondered my question. He even put his hand on his chin and looked like he was thinking hard. "Nothing happened really. This is just the way I was born. The Goddess Hektate made me in her image."

"The Goddess Hektate was just as evil and sadistic."

"Oh, no, she's even more so. That's why I recognize her as my only mother. I want to be just like her when I grow up." He put on a high pitched voice and spoke like a child, after a moment he began to laugh at his own joke.

I looked at Edmond then. Truly looked at him for the first time ever. I looked into his eyes, searching for the heart I already knew he was born without. I searched his face, his eyes, for some sort of remorse. I found nothing but emptiness and maniacal glee. He was truly proud of himself for everything he had done. For all the lives he had taken.

"How many of your children have you killed, Edmond? How many women did you destroy to get those children? Don't you feel anything for the flesh and blood that you lost."

"If they're not strong enough to survive, then that's on them. I feel nothing for the loss of them or their mothers. They were tools and vessels, and they were all broken. I have no need for broken things."

"Did you ever think that you were the broken thing, you asshole? Did you ever think that they would have grown up powerful and strong if you didn't torment or torture them all to death?" I felt the wind stir around me as I spoke, and those phantom eyes that were staring at me before became just a little clearer.

"Nonsense. They were weak and needed to be plucked from the pool. You had potential, so much potential. But your body chose wolf over warlock so you're no longer of use to me."



"You're the one no longer needed." I yelled at him. "And that's why I am going to kill you."

"Ha, you kill me. That's the funniest thing I have heard in a long time."

"Do you hear me laughing asshole?" I snarled at him, my anger flaring higher and higher. "You're one piece of trash this world never needed, and it's time to clean things up."

"I told you to watch what you said about me, you useless little mongrel slut. I will make you wish you'd never met that mate of yours. That would have been the only way for you to have survived you know. But now you're a tainted piece of mongrel scum."

"You're going to rue the day you decided to experiment on unborn children you crazy fuck." I knew that the arguing was too much. But I also knew that as soon as it stopped, the fighting would start. And lastly, I knew that only one of us would be walking away from this fight, while the other was left to die.

I was ready. It was time to end all this.

"Fuck you, Edmond." I spoke one last time before I curled myself into a fighting stance.

### **Chapter 223 - Trinity - Showdown With My Father (VOLUME 2)**

8-10 minutes

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Trinity

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There was a subtle shift in the air as Edmond drew his magic to himself. I could see the power begin to swirl around him. More of that purple fog swirled around him as he radiated with intense power.

The look in his eyes, along with the jaunty set to his chin it all said that he didn't view me as a threat. He thought he could kill me easily. He thought this would be like a walk in the park as he taunted and tortured me. But he had another thing coming.

If there was one thing that I knew, it was that he didn't know a single thing about me. He might be able to predict my actions to a certain degree, but he would never be able to know what I have put myself through. It was time to show him everything that I had at my disposal.

I felt the rush of power coming off him before the spell actually moved toward me. I shifted my weight and leapt into the air, using reflexes like a rabbit to escape his blast. The swirling black ball of magic he had aimed at me just soared off into the distance and dissipated after a while.

"Such an animal." He snapped angrily as I landed behind him. "This proved how much you've been tainted."

"If you only knew what I have become." I taunted him as I went on the offense this time.

I didn't want this taking forever, but I didn't know how easily it would be to destroy a man who had been gaining power for centuries. This would no doubt be a hard fight for me.

Sure enough, no sooner had I gone for the attack did he swing around with another blast ready to throw at me. I had to jump out of the way to avoid his attack once again.

"Come on, attack me. Didn't you say you were going to kill me? What are you waiting for?" I heard laughter in his voice as he beckoned me after him.

"I'm getting the lay of the land." I offered him in lieu of a defense, all the while watching and learning his movements.

"The land is the same as you're used to, you imbecile." He was shaking his head at me while he clearly thought I was being stupid.

"So it is." And he was right. I was used to fighting, and all I had to do was watch him for clues and indicators. It was no different than learning to fight with all the men back at the Sentinelle. I had been trained to fight in different styles for a reason.

I stopped hesitating, stopped holding myself back. It was time to fight him with everything I had. He thought I was nothing more than a mongrel mutt that would never be worthy of anything in my entire life. I'd show him what a mongrel like me was capable of.

I shifted, taking on my wolf form, something that Edmond hadn't seen since that night of my first shift. His eyes widened as he took in the sight of me but he didn't make a sound, didn't say a single word.

I leapt toward him, My claws ready to dig into him, but he was prepared for that. He shot a length of rope out at me as he countered my attack. The rope wrapped around me several times, very tightly. Tight enough to cut off circulation.

"I knew that was all you had." He laughed.

"You couldn't be more wrong." I laughed right back, drowning his voice with a chuckle of my own.

While he looked at me dumbfounded I shifted again. My mate's favorite form for me, the little brown rabbit, and while I did it I also summoned an illusion of more rabbits. In an instant at least a dozen little furry bunnies were hopping out of the ropes I was tied up with.

"What the hell is this?" Edmond seemed genuinely confused. "Since when could a shifter change into multiple forms? Was your mother even more of a mongrel than I thought? Disgusting."

"Don't talk about my mother you asshole." I said as I spun in place, rising above him in the form of a giant white elephant. In a bout of shock and surprise, to us both, I wrapped my trunk around him and threw him to the ground. Following that action I immediately stepped onto his chest, pressing down with great force.

"What kind of monster are you?" He asked me with shock filling his eyes.

"The kind you underestimated, that's what."

"What are you even talking about?" He actually seemed to be confused at that moment. Like it wasn't clear that he had been wrong this whole time.

"You don't know anything about me or what I am." I shifted again as I spoke, this time taking on the form of a bear, my front right paw holding him in place with long lethal claws poking into his chin.

"What else could you be but a severely mixed breed mongrel? It's clear your family wasn't made of pure wolves."

"That's where you're wrong, asshole." I snarled into his face as I summoned my own bindings for him.

In the blink of an eye and with the flash of my magic, Edmond was lying beneath me, bound with cords of every element. He wouldn't be able to move anytime soon, not unless he undid each individual binding. And before I would let that happen, I would just wrap more around him in an instant. He was going to shut up and listen to me. And so, I pulled myself off him and shifted into my human form, using my magic to form clothes that would cover me.

"If you had just left me alone, just ignored my existence, I probably wouldn't be what I am today. So in a way, I should thank you."

"And what exactly are you?" His sneering voice never failed to grate at my nerves. I just wanted to stop him from talking altogether, but he had to know what he had done.

"I am the Luna of my pack, the daughter of Wesley, Eve, and Lily. I am the mate of the Alpha, the leader of the Red Springs Wolf Pack. But above all that, more than anything else, I am the Luna Queen, the new incarnate of the Goddess Nehalennia, and I have been given the title of Warlock Queen, the chosen child of Thoth. I am so far above you and your paltry little antics that I do not need to justify anything to you, Edmond."

"That's impossible. There is no way that any of that is true." He spat the words into my face with a vehemence that was all too clear. "There is no way that a worthless little girl like you would be anything, let alone chosen by any of the celestials. You're lying to me."

"You only wish I was lying to you. Do these bindings not speak for themselves?" That was the first time I saw genuine fear in his eyes. He finally knew that I was telling the truth.

"But how? How did you get to be granted with so much power? How did you get what it is that all we warlocks want? How?" He was hyperventilating now, angrier than ever before.

"Because of you, Edmond. If it hadn't been for you playing at being a god, then there would never have been a need for me. So, as you see, I only exist because of you. You made me into what I am today. Aren't you just so proud of me?" I held a note of laughter in my voice as I spoke, knowing that it would make him angrier the longer I spoke.

"That's impossible. You should have been just a wolf or a witch, it's inconceivable that you would be so equally balanced in both. How did you manage to learn magic?" He was grasping at straws, trying to keep me talking more and more to buy him just a little more time.

"You may have destroyed the Aerie Convento, but you did not destroy the magic council. They accompanied me to train and teach me about my other side. I know all the histories of your people Edmond, because they are my people as well. I was granted the mark by Thoth himself." With those words I pointed to where the ankh mark was on my right shoulder.

"Toth was a stupid man and is an even more stupid god, he is too sentimental and naive, that is why he was unable to accept Hektate's true nature." Edmond seemed to be rambling now, talking would buy him more time after all.

"Toth was a kind and generous man, and a father that cared for his children, but the loss of his wife nearly destroyed him. Hektate was the one who caused it all, she should have been punished further for her actions but Toth loved her too much for that."

"Shut up, you don't know what you're talking about. You're an idiotic little child, you know nothing."

"No, Edmond, you don't know what you're talking about, and I grow weary of your antics. It's time for me to end this."

### **Chapter 224 - Trinity - Destroyed (VOLUME 2)**

14-17 minutes

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Trinity

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"This will end when I say it does!" Edmond screamed at me. "And not a fucking minute sooner you ungrateful whelp. If it wasn't for me and my experimentations, you wouldn't fucking exist. Remember that. Remember that it's all thanks to me that you even have a chance at life. And you need to remember that it's me that can take all of that away from you. I gave you your life and I am more than capable, and definitely more than willing to take it from you." His ranting finally came to an end, along with the holier than thou tone he always used. He was now a rambling moron that lost his proper sounding dialect. Hmm, he did have other faults, that was good to know.

"If you think you're a match for someone chosen by a god and a goddess, then bring it on you psychopathic freak. I don't think you have it in you to beat me. That's the problem with you. You always let other people do the real fighting, the real dirty work, all while you sit there and threaten them like you're someone special." I watched as Edmond's face blanched, he obviously couldn't handle the truth.

"Watch that fucking mouth of yours you little bitch. Shut it, before I shut it for you."

"Oh no, I'm quaking in my boots. Someone help me please." I pretended to shake and shiver like I was afraid, deliberately overplaying the action for comical effect. I was the only one to appreciate it at the moment.

"I regret ever making you. You're the most useless of all my creations. You've been nothing but a damn thorn in my side since day one. The mere sight of you even killed your mother. If she hadn't been destroyed just by the idea of you then I could have used her as a way to control you. She would have been the remote control for me to use wherever I might have needed to. But no, no one wanted you when you were born, not even your good for nothing mother."

"You know nothing about families, Edmond." I had to force the words past my clenched teeth as I bit down hard on my anger. I didn't need to lose control, that's what he wanted. If I lost control I would get stupid and make mistakes. If I made mistakes he might win. I had to bite my tongue and keep my sanity, no matter how hard that might seem right now.

"Families are for the weak and simple. Families hold you down and stop you from reaching your potential. What need would I have for a family? What good would they do for me? I am too ambitious and powerful for a family." These words. The things he was saying. All of this was nothing more than the ramblings of a man who had long since lost touch with reality. He was so far gone that I knew nothing could ever reach him again. There was no point in talking to him anymore.

It was then, listening to this psycho babble of his, that I noticed those eyes around us again. At first they were nothing more than just a feeling, something that made me know that I wasn't alone here. Then, I began to feel like I was beginning to see the eyes, glinting in the light all around me, though still nearly impossible to detect.

Now, as Edmond had rambled and preached his craziness for the last several minutes, it was like the eyes had taken form. And it wasn't just the eyes, I could see faces and bodies forming as well.

When I first caught sight of the face looking at us I was momentarily terrified. I thought that some demons had latched onto Edmond and followed him into this world, this place of gray emptiness. I thought that there might be some new enemy coming after me before I had even dealt with the last threat.

Then, I looked closer at the faces, at the people surrounding us. There were hundreds of them. All young and innocent looking. And all of them looked so much like me. These were the children of Edmond. This was the family that he has said he didn't need or care about. This was his biggest flaw. And they would aid me in his downfall.

"Did you pay any attention to your children Edmond? Any at all?" I asked him. I wanted to buy time now, to allow my siblings time to fully form. And they seemed to be feeding on Edmond's negativity. Come on then, Edmond, feed them, give them the sustenance you never would have spared them while they were still alive, while they still had their whole lives ahead of them. Feed their rage and hatred toward you. It would only help me in the long run anyway.

"What need would I have of looking closely at them? They were mongrel half breeds."

"If you hate half breeds so much, why did you make so many? Why did you put so much time and effort into their creation? The idea of it all simply baffles me." He had to know that his words made no sense at all.

"It was simple really. Like I told you before, I needed spies, agents on the inside. I needed children born from the enemy clans that would have their trust and not be questioned. In a sense they would be sleeper agents."

"Were there ever any of your children that survived your special attention? Were there any sleeper agents that you were actually able to implant for future activation?" This was all starting to sound too much like a bad crime drama to me. Did he know this was the bat craziest shit I had ever heard? My guess would be that he didn't, and that he thought this all made sense. Well, I guess to him it did.

"There were a few that managed to be programmed for future activation. But they seemed to behave differently once they were sent home. So much so that they were noticed."

"Does that mean they were destroyed?" I asked this out of genuine curiosity, and to know if I had to find and deprogram all his little sleeper cells.

"Yes, unfortunately. As of this moment, you are the only living child of mine. The others have all been eliminated."

"That must have been difficult for you." I tried to sound soothing, to give words like you would to any other grieving father. Apparently, my efforts were wasted.

"Yes, it was quite the pain. I spent much of my long life preparing for their missions, only for my tools to be destroyed before I could enact even one step of my plan. It truly was an annoyance."

"You don't feel anything about them being killed? About them having died for no reason beside their affiliation with you?"

"What would there be for me to feel? Why do you keep asking me about this? Why do you keep going in circles with this?" He seemed annoyed now.

It was like all he could feel. The only emotions he was capable of were anger, frustration, and annoyance. Oh, and rage. Let's not forget that little beauty of a reaction. He was definitely capable of rage. Perhaps I had inherited some of my rage from him. Then again, wolves were known for it too. Sucks to be Edmond when I finally released my rage, all of it, and directed it at him.

"You're stalling." Edmond chuckled as he stated the obvious. "You know you can't win and so you're stalling. This is perfect." He was smiling like a lunatic, his eyes full of some form of psycho I didn't even want to come close to analyzing. "Just give me a few more minutes and I will be out of these bindings of yours and I will finish this for you. You obviously seem too scared to even try." His laughing voice seemed to grate against my skin like sandpaper being drawn across my nerves, I felt it most on the back of my neck as all the hair on my neck and arms began to stand at attention.

"Such a delusional dumbass." I shook my head and pinch the bridge of my nose. "How did you manage to live this long being so stupid?" I didn't mean to ask the question out loud, but in my frustration it just slipped out.

"Me, stupid? You must be mistaken you bitch. I am not stupid in the slightest."

"Oh, you must be, there is no other excuse for you being too blind that you think I am scared right now."

"You're stalling for time. What other reason could it be than fear?" He chuckled as he spoke, still so oblivious to his surroundings.

"I was buying time for them." I answered.

"For who?" He looked confused, like he didn't understand a word I said. "None of your little friends can get here, you know. We're completely alone, and that's how you will die."

"We're not alone." I smirked at him. "I have family here with me."

"What family? You refuse to recognize me as family, remember." He looked so cocky when he said that, like he thought there was no one else that could possibly be here. Did he simply not know the truth of where he brought me?

"Look around you Edmond, and say hello to my family?" I did as I told him to, waving to the hundreds of siblings I had never been able to meet.

I watched as Edmond's face fell. The look in his eyes went from cocky and arrogant to one filled with nothing but fear.

"No, this isn't possible." His voice even cracked as he spoke.

"It most definitely is, Edmond. Say hello to your children." I grinned as he finally understood. And, as I looked around, there seemed to be more than before. There seemed to be some among them who looked angrier than the others. Were they the ones that had been killed after being activated? I had the feeling they were.

"How are they here? How is this even happening?" Edmond nearly screamed as he looked around the clearing at all his offspring.

"We have always been with you, Father." The boy who had spoken to me last time spoke again. "We have all been with you and waiting for this opportunity."

"Yes, Father, we've been waiting for you." One of the angry looking girls spoke, her voice turning into an angrier sounding sneer when she said the word father.

"You have played right into our hands, finally." Someone near the back and out of sight spoke up, but their voice was no less loud and could be heard easily.

"Why have you attached yourselves to me, you heathens."

"Heathens? Us? No, Father," another sneer, "you are the heathen. You are the one who takes pride in destruction."

"You are the one who has plotted the destruction and downfall of not only your own flesh and blood but also the world." They all spoke in unison and I could swear I heard the voices of Thoth and Nehalennia mixed in among them. The God and Goddess must be aiding the children of Edmond.

There was nothing for me to do for the time being. I just needed to listen and watch the show around me.

"You were all my tools, my experiments. You wouldn't have lived if it wasn't for me." He tried claiming that stupid logic again.

"And none of our deaths would have occurred if not for you either. You are nothing more than a blight on society, and it is time for you to be eliminated." They were continuing to speak in unison, their voices sounding eerie, but powerful.

"You can't! You won't! I won't let you!" Edmond was screaming now, frantic with fear. I guess he truly was capable of that emotion too.

"It's time to face the music Edmond. Time for you to atone for your sins." I told him as I finally joined my siblings in this conversation. "You have been judged by those who you sought to destroy, and you have been found guilty. There will be no second chances or escapes. It all ends here and now."

"No! I won't let you." He continued to try and change the minds of us all. But it was to no avail. His fate was sealed.

"Prepare to die, Edmond." Those were the last words that I spoke before I called my magic to me. I reached out with a phantom hand, the same type I had used with Reece. I reached out until I felt his throat under my phantom limb.

When I felt the steady, yet rapid, beat of his pulse I knew I was in position. I was ready to do what needed to be done. I hardened the magic of my invisible, phantom hand. Once the magic was stronger and harder, I swiped with it, one quick motion, right across his throat. The spray of blood was instantaneous as the cut nearly severed his head. Once more swipe, this one going in the opposite direction, and his head had been removed.

Almost at the exact same time that I had made my first swipe, the children of Edmond had descended. They had already torn his limbs from his body before I had fully removed him of the burden of his head.

I pulled the bloody, dripping head to me with the phantom hand as my long dead siblings clawed and ripped Edmond to shreds. I just stood there, watching the bloody mess form before my eyes. There was no recognizing that pile of red goo as Edmond, nothing of the previous shape remained.

When they were done, they all turned to look at me. The rage and anger leaving their bodies. Those emotions had instead been replaced with a sense of contented happiness. They were finally at peace.

"How did you find us here?" I asked them, curious to know how they had been able to follow us from the real world.

"This is the land of shadows. We ghosts live among the shadows and rarely make it to the land of the living." They all spoke once again, like in death all children of Edmond were the same.

"Did Edmond know that?"

"No, he did not. But it was to our advantage that he did not know." There seemed to be a hint of laughter in that response.

"So you followed him, waiting for your chance to kill him?"

"We would not have been able to kill him without you, sister. It was your conversation with him that gave us form. The negative emotions fed us into being able to attack. Even among the shadows, ghosts are nothing more than a conscious shadow. We could no more hurt him than you could catch the wind." I laughed at that, because I had actually caught the wind, so to speak, but they didn't need to know that.

"So was it just our words, or my magic that you needed?" I asked them, for clarity purposes.

"Both. You are the only one of us to survive, and now there will be no more. Please, sister, use your gifts wisely." As they all spoke this time I noticed a slight glowing around their edges.

"What's happening now?" I asked them, scared as they all seemed to be disappearing.



"We have nothing to tether us to the shadows now, it's time for us to move on and find peace." They seemed to be smiling, all of them were. "Be strong, and be brave dear sister. You are the last of our kind and we will always watch over you from the great beyond." And with those words they all began to quickly fade away.

"Thank you for your help. I will never forget you all, ever."

"Thank you." They spoke again, but it seemed so far away now, like they had traveled a great distance while still looking at me. "Goodbye." With that final word they were gone. I was now alone in the field with a bloody mess in front of me and a head held in my hand.

There was one thing I knew for sure though, Edmond was finally dead.

### **Chapter 225 - Trinity - Going Home (VOLUME 2)**

8-10 minutes

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Trinity

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I gripped the bloody, dripping head in my left hand. The face that was frozen on it was filled with awe and fear. Even in the end, he couldn't accept what was happening to him. He never did accept that I was better than him.

But, it wasn't worth my time to think about it too much. What I needed to do now was get home. I had to get out of this shadow land filled with gray, gray and more gray. The only relief in the color I saw was the bloody mess that was Edmond. Looking at that gooey puddle that used to be a person made my stomach roil again. I had seen way too many disgusting sights today and my stomach just couldn't handle it.

"I need to get home." I said to myself out loud. Once those words were spoken, once the eerie quiet of the clearing was broken, it was like the illusion of this place was destroyed. The air around me became blurry, like I was trying to look at something through a thick hazy fog.

I didn't move, didn't take a step, but I once again felt like I was moving somewhere. Air rushed past my face and I could feel the dropping of my stomach that meant I was travelling at a high rate of speed. This feeling was disorienting and disconcerting, but also a little exciting. It reminded me of how I felt when I travelled on a vortex of wind.

Once the wind began to die down and the sensation of moving was ebbing away I could finally see color returning around me. I had kept my eyes open this time. I had seen everything that had happened, which didn't amount to much. The scene around me never changed but I felt like I was moving. All that happened was the color began to slowly return to the images that I saw. And once the color was back, the people and carnage was back as well.

"Trinity!" I heard Reece's voice as he shouted my name. It took me less than half a second to turn to face him but he had already reached me and wrapped his arms around me with a crushing force. I was enveloped in his warmth, his strength, his love. He was there to protect me once again. And his relief at seeing me was palpable. Goddess, but I had missed him in that short time that I was away from him.

"Reece." I said his name in a sigh as I buried my face against his naked chest. That was when I realized he was standing there, holding me with absolutely no clothes on. "Reece!" I exclaimed as I looked around us. "Why are you naked?"

"What? I shifted, that's why." He looked confused to hear my outburst.

"Geez Muttley, why didn't you get dressed."

"Because I don't have clothes with me." He said it so matter-of-factly that I could literally hear the 'well duh' in his tone. I just looked at him with a piercing gaze as I conjured clothes around him. They were simple, a pair of black jeans and a dark green t-shirt.

"There, now you're not naked." I smiled with relief as I felt the jealousy start to ebb away.

"What, no underwear?" He whispered into my ear as he leaned forward. I flushed crimson red as he asked me that.

"I can't believe I forgot that part." I smacked my empty hand against my forehead. "I remembered my own when I shifted back."

"Don't worry, I don't mind going commando for just a little while." He whispered and winked at me.

"Oh stop it Copper, you're nothing but a hound dog." I wanted to laugh.

"If I'm Copper, does that make you the fox?" He waggled his eyebrows suggestively, he was so unaffected by anything that it was kind of refreshing right now.

"Ahem." I heard someone clear their voice, breaking into our little reverie. "Sorry to interrupt, but-." Noah trailed off as he looked away sheepishly.

"Noah." I said his name with a tone filled with relief.

"I'm so glad to see you're safe Trinity." He wrapped one arm around me embarrassedly as I stepped toward him, Reece still had his hand resting on my left shoulder making the whole thing a little awkward.

"Not to bring up unpleasantries." Reece spoke as he looked down at my hand. "But what the fuck is that?" His shock was clear on his face and in his voice as he spoke.

"Oh, I almost forgot." I smiled as I held it up. "Say hello to Edmond."

"Edmond?" Reece and Noah both exhaled his name like they had been punched in the gut, confusion was written all over their faces, and just a slight amount of fear. What, were they afraid of me?

"Trinity, what happened?" Noah asked me with an awe filled voice.

"I killed him, that's all you need to know for now. We can discuss the rest later when we're back home."

"Are you alright?" Reece asked me as he began to look me over. He ran his hands up and down my arms and felt all over my back. He was clearly worried that I was hiding some kind of injury from him.

"I'm fine. He didn't hurt me at all."

"He didn't?" Noah looked perplexed.

"No, I didn't give him the chance." I smiled at him. "By the way, Noah, why are you here? Weren't you at a different battlefield?"

"When the creatures disappeared we all decided to meet up here. I was the closest so I arrived first. The others will be here soon."

"The creatures disappeared?" That was news to me.

"Yes, just a few minutes before you came back all the monsters, dead and mostly dead, all of them just seemed to turn to ashes and blew away like dust on the wind. I hoped that meant that you had won, that you had killed Edmond, and I'm so glad I was right."

"He won't bother us ever again." I smiled at Reece as I cupped his face in my hand. "He's truly gone now." I was happy to reassure him of that, I would happily reassure any of them of that fact.

"Dude, is that a head?" I heard Shane's voice as the others started to arrive. "Is that Edmond's head?" He added as he looked closer. "Can I kick a field goal with it?" The laughter in his voice was so free and fun that it was making me feel better. But I felt like I was forgetting something.

I watched as the others started to arrive. David came after Shane, his face was smeared with dirt and his clothes were splattered with blood, but he seemed to be alright. Carter came next. Thank the Goddess he looked fine, he didn't seem to be hurt at all. This was starting to look like a great ending. Everything had turned out just fine.

Then I watched as Dietrich came back next, a lost expression on his face as he looked all around the clearing. He looked lonely. He was probably looking for Shawn.

It was with that thought that it finally hit me. I finally remember what had been nagging at the back of my memory. What it was I had forgotten.

"Shawn!" I yelled his name and took off running. With just a slight second thought I turned my head and threw Edmond's head. "Here, David, catch."

"What the hell. Eww, that's fucking gross. Don't throw severed heads at people. That's just common courtesy." I heard his stream of complaints in the back of my mind but they weren't important right now.

"Trinity, where are you going?" Reece took off after me.

"Shawn is hurt." I yelled back. "I saw it before I was taken to the shadow land. I have to go and make sure he is alright." I was panicked now. How could I have forgotten about that? How could I have forgotten Shawn. He was such a good friend, he was almost more like family to me than a friend. How could I have forgotten that he had been hurt so badly.

"Did you say Shawn was hurt?" Dietrich's head snapped up as he began to follow me. "Mein Liebhaber." Dietrich's world seemed to have been destroyed in that moment.

"We have to hurry." I urged them on.

"How do you know? How do you know that he is hurt?" Dietrich seemed to be hoping for a way to prove that I was wrong.

"I saw it. I saw that he was attacked by the spider freaks before I was taken by Edmond."

"Oh Mein Gott, Oh my Goddess, please let him be ok." There was so much pain in Dietrich's voice.

"I will make certain of it, Dietrich. I refuse to lose anyone else. But we need to hurry." I didn't know why the feeling of urgency was so strong, but it was there and it was egging me on. "We've got to get to him." My voice held an edge that I couldn't quite describe. "We're coming Shawn, just hang in there."

## **Chapter 226 - Trinity - Shawn (VOLUME 2)**

10-12 minutes

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Trinity

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As we were running, racing to check on Shawn, I sent a message via mind link. I needed to tell Griffin to hurry. He had been waiting near the edge of town. He was waiting to see if he would be needed. Well, he was needed. I'm sure more than just Shawn needed his help, but Shawn was all that filled my mind right now.

'Griffin!' I nearly yelled into his head.

'Not so loud, Luna, please.' It sounded like he was speaking with pain in his voice.

'We need you, now.' I sent these words back at him with a slightly lower volume.

'Who has been hurt, and where?' He was already in his work mode.

'Shawn has been hurt, he is near the river on the south side of the city.'

'Lana and I will be there soon.' I was happy to hear that they were together and that they could help Shawn and everyone else.

It felt like it was taking a long time, too long, to get to Shawn. I felt like I was running through sand and water, hell even jello. It was like I just couldn't move fast enough, but none of the others were moving any faster than I was. We were all racing to the river, racing to where Shawn was laying, hurt, probably scared. How could I have let this happen?

Finally, after what felt like hours I crested a small hill and could see the river in the distance. Somewhere over there was Shawn. We all started off once more, this time using our noses to search for Shawn's exact location.

It only took seconds to find him this time, but it still felt like an hour. My sense of time was majorly off. I couldn't trust myself with judging time right now.

I was the first to reach Shawn's side, Dietrich hot on my heels. I dropped to my knees next to him and took in the sight of him. There was a large bloody slash that went up his abdomen from his right side all the way to his shoulder, and there was an equally bloody looking slash that ran down the left side of his face from his hairline to his jaw.

"Shawn?" I called out his name at the same time that Dietrich spoke.

"Mein Wolfsliebe." I heard the tears in Dietrich's voice as he reached out to stroke Shawn's face. "Bleib bitte bei mir. Bleib für immer bei mir." The heartache in Dietrich's voice as he begged Shawn to stay with him forever was enough to bring tears to my eyes.

"Shawn, come on, wake up. Speak to us Shawn."

Just as I spoke those words, begging Shawn to wake up and hoping to see his eyes flutter, I heard the approach of more people. Griffin and Lana were here.

"Griffin, hurry." I called out to him.

"I'm coming. Lana, you check the others."

"Reece, get the others to help you find anyone who may be hurt and need help. Also, count the dead and gather their bodies. They deserve a proper burial." I was trying to sound diplomatic and authoritative, but all I could focus on was Shawn.

"Alright." Reece nodded at my words as he turned to leave and begin his task.

Almost as soon as Reece left Griffin was at Shawn's side, shooing both me and Dietrich away. He needed to work and we were in the way. With some reluctance, the two of us rose to our feet and stepped aside.

"What kind of animal attacked him?" Griffin asked almost immediately after beginning his examination.

"These wounds are deep.

"It wasn't an animal." I told him. "It was another human monster created by Edmond."

"Will we never be rid of him?" Griffin's voice sounded tired and sad as he spoke.

"We are." That was all it took. The light that lit inside Griffin's eyes was like a rising sun.

"Are you sure? He's really gone?"

"I have his head as proof." That should have sounded dark and sinister, but it really didn't. It was like a joyful chorus that needed to be sung to the world. Edmond was really truly dead.

Dietrich could not seem to get into the conversation. Tears rimmed his eyes that had turned red in his extreme emotional state. I tried to put my arm around his shoulders, but he was too tall for me to do that. What I managed instead was an arm around his waist. I pulled Dietrich toward me, taking his weight onto me, letting his head rest against the top of mine.

"He will be alright Dietrich, I know he will. He's strong."

"He's stronger than I am." Dietrich's voice held all the emotions he was trying so hard to hold back.

After that, the two of us stood together, leaning on one another for support as we watched and waited for Griffin to give us some sort of news. We watched as Griffin tore away what remained of Shawn's shirt so he could inspect the deep gash across his chest.

Griffin then pushed aside Shawn's hair, revealing more of the slash down the side of his face. With more of the two wounds finally revealed I was able to see that they were lined with a deep purplish bruising. Long thin red lines had begun to snake from the sides of the wounds and were making their way across his chest and arms. And on top of that some sort of thick, yellow pus was oozing from the sides of those two deep cuts.

"What is that Griffin? It looks like he's been poisoned."

"That's exactly it. Those creatures must have been venomous. He's been infected and it's spreading fast."

"What does that mean? Can't you stop it? Can't you use your power to heal him?" Dietrich's seemed desperate as he asked these questions.

"I'm trying, but the venom is spreading faster than I can heal him. I'm worried it will reach his heart before I have the chance to rid his body of it all."

"What can we do? What are our options?" I was scared now, more scared than I was when I faced down Edmond.

"I don't know." Griffin looked like he was at a loss. "I don't know what to do."

"Would having two of you help? Should we get Lana?" It might have been worth a shot.

"I really don't know. It might, but I don't know if he would make it, he might not last that long."

"Why did I have to send them away?" I would beat myself up my entire life if I couldn't find a way to save Shawn.

"I might have an idea." Dietrich's voice was filled with apprehension. "But it is not something I had discussed with Shawn yet. I do not know if he would accept it, even to save his life."

"Dietrich, whatever it is, I am sure that Shawn would choose to stay with you instead of dying. He loves you and he would want to be with you."

"It's not that simple, he might reject what it is when he wakes. And I admit, I do not know what all it will entail."

"Will it save his life?" That was all I needed to know from him. "Will it stop him from dying?"

"I believe it will, yes."

"Then do it. If Shawn takes an issue with it, then have him talk to me. I will explain everything to him."

"Alright." Dietrich was nodding as he made his decision. "I will do it."

I watched as Dietrich knelt next to Shawn before pulling him into his arms. He wrapped his arms around him, cradling him close.

"Ich liebe dich Liebling." Dietrich whispered before he kissed Shawn's forehead.

I felt like I was invading on a personal moment, but I was too worried for Shawn to look away. I just kept praying to the gods, all of them, that Shawn would live.

I watched as one lonely tear streamed down Dietrich's face. Whatever he was about to do was very emotionally hard for him, apparently. He kissed Shawn one last time, on the lips before he pulled Shawn closer to him.

As I watched on, I saw Dietrich's eyes shift. His usually almost white shade of light blue had turned red and had begun to glow with a faint light. Then, I saw his fangs descend past his top lip so they were visible even with his mouth shut.

In the next second I watched as Dietrich lowered his mouth to Shawn's neck. He sank his teeth into the soft flesh at the curve of shoulder and neck. He bit him right where a mate mark would appear.

For nearly a minute Dietrich kept his lips pressed against Shawn's flesh. I just watched on in awe, not really understanding what was going on. But before long he pulled his mouth away, with a sigh and a gasp for air.

But Dietrich didn't seem to be done just yet. The next thing that Dietrich did was bring his own wrist to his mouth. He bit down on the soft, tender flesh of his right wrist. The fangs broke into the skin bringing blood to the surface immediately.

Dietrich slowly tilted Shawn's head back and placed his wrist against his mouth. Slowly, but with a steady stream, the blood poured into Shawn's mouth. I saw the muscles in his throat move as he swallowed reflexively.

I had finally figured out what it was Dietrich was doing. He was turning Shawn. He was giving him a vampire's healing ability. I just hoped it would work in time.

As I watched on I felt a slight breeze begin to stir all around us. The breeze picked up, stronger and stronger, but I seemed to be the only one affected by it. There was a slight red glow in the corner of my eyes that was soon followed by the whisper of words within my head.

"I do not choose you as my successor, but I acknowledge your strength. That is why I will aid in this endeavor. I will help the wolf boy to become a hybrid." The voice spoke to me inside that wind.

"Who are you?" I asked reflexively.

"I am the Goddess Selene. The mother of vampires. I will aid your allies and help them. And I choose the vampire before you as my chosen one. He will be my Vampire King."

"Thank you Selene. Thank you so much." I felt the tears begin to run down my face.

"This road will not be easy for your friend, but he has a strong one there to aid him. I only ask that you never turn your back on my people."

"I won't, I want to unite the world, bring peace to all those that walk in the shadows."

"I know that, child, that is why I am choosing to help you. Keep this alliance going strong, always remain true to your heart."

"Thank you again Selene." With my last thanks I felt her presence beginning to slip away and the wind started to die down. No one else even seemed to have noticed what had happened. But I was now smiling. Shawn would live.

## **Chapter 227 - Both -Dietrich's News (VOLUME 2)**

11-13 minutes

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Trinity

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After Dietrich bit Shawn things began to happen quickly, it was like time was making up for all the slowing down it did earlier. Things seemed to be moving at hyperspeed now instead of a snail's pace.

I watched as Dietrich pulled his wrist away from Shawn's mouth and Shawn immediately began to spasm. His body jerked with a sudden violent motion. But there was a bright side too, Shawn took a deep, shuddering gasp as he drew in a breath and his eyes fluttered.

"Liebling." Shawn seemed to whisper as he looked into Dietrich's eyes.

"Wolfsliebe." Dietrich's voice was relieved when he saw his mate wake up. "How do you feel?"

"I think I'm fi-." That was as far as Shawn got before he was hit with a sudden spasm of pain and he jerked violently in Dietrich's arms. "Ahhhh!" He screamed in pain, his head thrown back with the long, loud cry.

"Shawn?" I ran forward, my voice cracking.

"Shawn, my darling, what is wrong?" Dietrich looked scared.

"It hurts, it all hurts." Shawn was shaking uncontrollably.

"It's the changing." I said looking into Dietrich's conflicted eyes.

"I did not know it would be this painful." Shawn seemed too far gone, wracked with too much pain to even hear what we were saying.

"Selene told me it would be hard, but that he had you there to help him."



"Selene?" He looked shocked. "You spoke with the Goddess Selene, the mother of vampires?"

"Yes, while you were giving Shawn your blood she came to me and spoke to me. And she told me something else."

"What? Will it help Shawn?"

"Yes, Dietrich, I think it will. She told me you are her chosen one, you are the Vampire King."

"I didn't know we had such a thing." It looked like Dietrich wanted to laugh but couldn't bring himself to do it while Shawn was hurt.

"But this means you are Goddess blessed the same as I am, you will have new abilities now. And you can use them to help Shawn."

"I hope you're right."

From there we all quickly moved back to the estate. Dietrich went quicker as he shadow walked with Shawn in his arms. Reece and I hurried back as quick as we could in more traditional methods. I must admit that I wished we could have gone faster, but as long as we got home and found out that everything was actually ok I would be fine.

When we got back to the estate we found that Dietrich was already in his room with Shawn resting on the bed. Shawn was still wracked with pain and would likely be like that for a while. I would go visit him when it was all over. For the time being, however, I had to explain a few things to more than a few people.

The rest of the guards met us all in the usual conference room. They all wanted details on what happened during my time with Edmond. Reece seemed to want those details more than anyone else.

"What happened?" Carter started the bombardment of questions as soon as Reece and I were in the room.

"Are you alright?" Vincent, ever the caring one added.

"How did you kill him?" Shane asked in true laid back fashion.

"Is it all over?" David asked hesitantly.

All those around me were worried about me. Reece and Noah knew that I was safe, Dietrich and Shawn weren't here, but the others had nothing to stop them from asking their questions. I would answer them all and ease everyone's worries.

Slowly, methodically, and with as much accuracy as I could manage I told them all what had happened when I was taken from this world to another one entirely. They all seemed to be curious about the other plane of existence I was taken to, but above that and all else, they were just happy that I managed to kill the man who had caused us all so many problems.

They asked their questions. They wanted to know about the ghosts, the things Edmond told me. They were all quite angered when they learned that Edmond was the one who started the Witch trials. No one could quite understand how one man became so twisted. How did people like him even exist?

Once my report was given it was time to receive one of my own. The list of those lost. I didn't want to hear that report, but I needed to. The bad parts are part of the job too, after all. I needed to sit there and take this news responsibly, I was their leader and I would sure as hell act like it.

When all the casualties were counted, there were less dead than I expected. Three dozen total. With all the carnage I had seen, with all the monsters that had attacked us all, with everything that had happened it was only thirty-six people lost. On the flip side of that coin was the sorrow that I felt at the loss of so many lives.

Among that list of dead, there were only a few names I recognized, Zeek from the gate who was always ready with a smile for me even before I became the Luna, Kenny from Riley's pack, one of his omegas but he was a good guy even though I only met him once. The names of the others all blended together in my head. Wolf, wolf, bear, lynx, lion, tiger, tiger, warlock, vampire, vampire, warlock, bear, the list continued on in that fashion with names and species like they were some sort of supply order.

I was happy it wasn't more but I was still aching inside because there were so many. There were many people who had been hurt, those who nearly lost their lives but were saved when Lana showed up with Reece and the others during their check.

I had regretted sending Lana away earlier but now I was so happy that I did. Lana did amazing work saving the lives of so many people who were gravely injured. She helped to heal and save shifters, wolves, bears and others, she saved warlocks that were nearly lost in the chaos and distraction caused by the fight, she saved vampires who were unable to heal on their own due to too much blood loss. She did a great job, and I was so happy she had come back with us.

This day started out horribly, and it didn't go completely our way, but I was glad that no one I was close to lost their lives. We would all live to see another day, and we would never forget the sacrifice made by those who had died today.

I wanted to do something special for them all. They deserved a special place of recognition, somewhere they could continue to protect us all with their strong spirits. So, I began to plan a group funeral that would end with their sacred burials in key points around the city. They would receive places of honor like they deserved.

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Reece

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Once we had concluded the meeting there was only one thing on my Little Bunny's mind. She wanted to see Shawn. I should have felt jealous that she was so focused on another man, but I knew that she was just feeling guilty. She cared about all her guards and almost losing one in that fight had nearly broken her. It was like she didn't grasp that he was there to protect her more than anyone or anything else. Well, aside from Dietrich.

I have seen my mate in a life threatening situation on more occasions than I care to think about so I knew exactly what Dietrich was feeling. He came close to losing his mate and had ended up doing whatever it took to save his life. I would have done the same thing.

It was with these thoughts that I followed behind my wife as she walked to the bedside of another man, though my hand was still placed protectively and possessively on her hip. I didn't want her out of my sight after what had happened today. I nearly died when she disappeared from the clearing in front of me, my heart literally felt like it had stopped.

"Thank you for coming to check on him." Dietrich smiled as he stood up from his chair next to the bed. He looked ready to stand guard for eternity if that was what it took.

"I'm so sorry for what happened." Little Bunny's voice trembled as she spoke, guilt lacing through every word.

"You have nothing to be sorry for, Trinity. We had so much to deal with. We all did." He was trying to soothe her guilty conscience, knowing that only Shawn waking up and accepting what he has become would make her feel less guilty.

"Will he be ok?" She was looking at Shawn as she asked this question.

"I believe so. While I was waiting at his side I had a conversation with Selene. You must be powerful, Trinity." He grinned at her.

"What do you mean?" She sounded and looked as confused as I felt.

"That conversation felt like it drained every drop of my energy. If it weren't for my love for Shawn I would already be asleep. Yet, you spoke with her and other gods several times. The power you must possess to be able to survive so many and such lengthy talks, it's simply amazing and so enviable."

"I don't know about that." She blushed and turned her head to the side with embarrassment.

"I do." He smiled at her, true awe in his eyes.

Just then, Trinity swooned on her feet. It only lasted a second but she nearly fell to the floor in that moment.

"Whoa." I cried out as I caught her and held her against my chest for balance.

"I'm sorry. I'm just really tired." And as she spoke her stomach growled loudly causing a blush to stain her cheeks a deep red color. "And hungry I guess." She was laughing now. "Now that I think about it, I haven't eaten anything today."

"You need to make sure you're eating properly, it's not good for the babies."

"Excuse me?" I exclaimed.

"What did you say?" Trinity seemed just as shocked as I was to hear his words. Dietrich looked embarrassed now, like he thought he had done something wrong.

"I'm sorry, I assumed you knew. I didn't say anything this morning because of the impending battle but I noticed the change in you immediately. Did you not already know?"

"No, the day started with bang, so to speak. We were literally awoken by the call that the enemies were coming. I admit that I didn't pay as much attention." It was my turn to take the embarrassed helm I guess.

"Wait, Dietrich, did you say babies?" My Little Bunny was still stunned as she asked that.

"Weren't you paying attention. He said he's noticed you're pregnant again." I felt the grin spread across my face, it felt like my face was going to split in two already.

"I heard and I know what he said. But he said babies, Reece, not baby."

"Wait, you're right, he did." In unison we both turned to look at Dietrich who was grinning at us.

"I was asked recently if I could tell the difference between single and multiple pregnancies and I said I didn't know." He just smiled for a second while we stared at him. "Well, I guess I can."

"Twins?" I asked with a shocked look before I grinned again, wider than before. I ignored the pain that smile caused in my overly stretched cheeks.

"Twins?" Trinity echoed my question.

"Yes, twins. Congratulations." He clapped us both on the shoulder at the same time, squeezing gently as he finished driving home the news he had just shared with us.

Well, that was one hell of a way to find out that my wife was pregnant. But I would never regret sharing that moment with a close personal friend. I was going to be a father, and this time I would make sure nothing happened to them.

## **Chapter 228 - Trinity - And So It Begins (VOLUME 2)**

12-15 minutes

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Trinity

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My head was still reeling. This information was hard to process. Dietrich just told me that I was pregnant, again. And that I was having twins. I didn't know that I was pregnant until he told me. Last time it was Reece who had told me after I was sick for that whole day. But now it was Dietrich who informed me of this. Why hadn't we noticed? We were really paying that little attention to ourselves today to not notice something like that?

Now that Dietrich told me though, it made a lot of sense. I mean, I am not normally a squeamish person and the things I saw today made me want to vomit. Hell, I actually did vomit once.

Well, I guess I was just getting started with that whole nausea thing. I wasn't looking forward to that. But I was looking forward to being a mother and having my little family with Reece. This time, I would make sure that nothing bad happened to my babies.

"Come on sweetheart, let's leave them alone. Dietrich looks tired." I could feel Reece tugging on my arm as he started pulling me toward the door. The problem was, I didn't seem able to respond. I was too

busy thinking. "I'm ordering out for dinner, I'll send some your way when it arrives." I heard the words Reece was saying but I didn't process them.

"Thank you bruder."

I didn't know how, but the next thing I knew I was sitting in my room and Reece was standing in front of me, pizza boxes in hand.

"Come on, snap out of it already, you need to eat." His tone was filled with laughter, and when I shook my head and looked at him I saw that he was smiling. "You're tired, hungry, and spacing out way too much. I can only help with two of those things so that's what I am going to do." He was grinning happily, like he was floating on cloud nine and it was saturated with happy juice.

"When did you get those?" I asked him as I heard my stomach rumble greedily when the smell finally hit me.

"I ordered them after we got to the room."

"Wow, what was it, warp delivery." I laughed at him. "It's only been a couple minutes right."

"No, you've been sitting there like a zombie for almost an hour. Same delivery time as usual."

"What?" I was shocked to hear his words. "You're joking right?"

"I'm afraid not. But I wish we could have gotten warp delivery, that shit would be awesome."

"Stop joking around. You ordered those before we went to Dietrich's room, right?"

"No, I didn't. I didn't order them until after I carried you back here."

"You carried me?" That was news to me.

"Well, you weren't cooperating very much with the whole walking thing, so I had no choice."

"Well, what do you expect, Odie? I've kind of had my fucking mind blown today, in several ways really. But only one thing has rendered me speechless and nearly catatonic."

"Is the idea of having babies with me that bad?" His mood dropped and a sheet of depression settled onto his face, the light in his eye diminished and his features were dark and brooding.

"Where the hell did you get that idea, Fido? Seriously, what's the matter with you? I'm overjoyed."

"Really?"

"Yes, really. I was so upset when we lost our jelly bean before. I still miss that little glow of life that was inside me and I'm reluctant to feel that same joy just yet but I can't help myself. I am so happy and excited at the thought of us becoming a family." I had grabbed his left hand in mine, the one not holding the boxes at the moment, and cradled it to my chest.

"You have no idea how happy that makes me." His smile was back and the light was returning to his eyes. "I love you Little Bunny, more than life itself. And I will love any part of you I get to have in my life, these babies and any more we might have."

"Slow your roll there, Benji. I don't know what you're thinking, but I need to see how this pregnancy thing goes before I even decide to let you touch me again."

"So I better get all the touching that I can in before you have them." He grinned mischievously.

"You're a perv." I laughed at him.

"But you love me anyway."

"For reasons even I don't know sometimes. But you're sexy as hell, so it's an even trade off."

"Uhh!" Reece fake scoffed in a high pitched voice. "You only want me for my body, you monster."

"Not just your body." I laughed as I jumped to my feet.

"Really?" He smiled happily as I came closer, he even leaned down anticipating a kiss.

"That's right, I also want your pizza." I chuckled as I stole the boxes from his hand and twisted out of his way to head to the table.

"You're so mean." He pouted before turning to follow me.

"But you love me anyway." I used his words from before as I set the boxes on the table. "You know it." He kissed the top of my head.

We ate our dinner in the room together, talking the whole time. We talked about the battle. We walked about Shawn's condition and Dietrich's revelation. And we talked about the future.

We talked about how it was going to be when the babies were born and how happy we would all be together. We talked about how Nikki's baby was due in just a month and our babies would be less than six months apart in age, they would grow up together and could play together.

We talked about the things that could go wrong, and what we would do to prevent them. We talked about how happy our families were going to be then they heard the news. We talked about how we wanted to tell everyone.

But, we decided that we didn't want to tell anyone until after the group funeral. We wanted to have a big celebration after the funeral to commemorate us all being alive and well. And, conveniently, Reece's birthday was coming up in just over two weeks on the fourth of July. That explained his little mister independent attitude he always had when I first met him.

Our plan now was to hold a massive party for his birthday and the independence day celebration all at once. And it was there that we would let everyone know about the babies. The pack had not been fully informed last time, but there were still a lot who had known because of word of mouth. We would lift their spirits following this difficult time with joyous news for the entire pack.

Also, we had to gag the only other person who knew about the babies. But when Dietrich answered his phone and heard what we wanted, he had no problem agreeing to the secret.

"It's not my news to share, Mein Freunde. Do not worry, your secret is safe with me, even from Shawn. I will tell no one."

"Tell no one what?" I heard Shawn's voice in the background.

"Liebling, you're awake." Dietrich's voice was full of happiness in that moment.

"What happened, Dietrich?"

"I will tell you. I will tell you all of it, but not the Luna's news, that you must wait for." Dietrich giggled happily. "Excuse me, Trinity, I must go now."

"I know Dietrich, take care of him. We will come see him in the morning."

"Yes, yes." He agreed as he rushed to get off the phone. "Goodnight."

"Goodnight." The words were barely out of my mouth before Dietrich ended the call. "Well, he was in a hurry." I joked as I put my phone down.

After all that was settled and I set my phone aside, Reece stood up looming above me.

"What?" I asked him curiously.

"Now that you've been fed, it's time for a bath." He didn't wait for a response, he just scooped me into his arms and started walking toward the bathroom door.

"I can walk on my own Reece, you don't have to carry me." I squealed as I felt myself become weightless.

"Well, I feel like doting on you, so deal with it." He said it as if that ended the conversation.

"Reece." I smacked his shoulder as I said his name, just for emphasis. "I am not a china doll, I will not break. Put me down."

"Nope. You'll be lucky if I let you out of my sight until the babies are born. If I have to wrap you in bubble wrap and put you in a padded room for the next six months, then so be it. I will do whatever I have to do, whatever it takes to keep you and our babies safe."

"God, you're so over the top." I sighed with resignation as I slumped back into his arms.

"Oh, so you want me on top of you." He said the words suggestively.

"OH MY GODDESS!" I growled. "You're such a horny slut dog. I swear." I was only pretending to be angry while I laughed at him.

The bath was lovely. Reece cradled me to him until he was able to set me on the edge of the sink. He stepped away only for a minute to set the temperature of the water. Soon, all the faucets were going at one and a pleasant fruit scent was coming from the water, it held notes of apples, oranges, and lemons.

After the water was ready he came back to, slowly, help me out of my clothes. I didn't know if he was treating me like a child or trying to turn me on with his slow sensual movements. With his crazy ass way of thinking it was probably a bit of both.

After we were both stripped of all our clothes, Reece gathered me in his arms again and carried me into the tub. He set me on his lap, like he had done before. Slowly, methodically, and with meticulous care Reece started to wash me.

Slow strong hands massaged the soap over my back, across my shoulders, and down my arms. Then it was time to get more private. He washed across my chest, up and down my legs. He cupped my core in his hands as he gently cleaned me, but he didn't go any further, bathing was all he had planned apparently.

Next, he massaged my scalp gently with shampoo, his strong fingers working out even more tension from my body. Then he massaged my head again, this time with conditioner. He seemed intent on making me feel relaxed.

While I sat there, conditioner doing its magic with my hair, he grabbed my hands and started massaging them with slow circles. His fingers were working a magic on me I never knew he possessed. It was like heaven as I sat there on his lap.

A girl could really get used to this.

Once the hand massage was finished and he washed himself and rinsed us both he pulled the plug on the water and stood with me in his arms again. After grabbing a few extra large towels he wrapped us up and carried me to the bed.

I sat on the edge of the mattress, where he had set me down, as he began to towel the water from my hair and body. He wasn't saying anything, he was just working with determination.

After I was thoroughly dried Reece stepped over to my vanity. He came back with the bottle of lightly scented vanilla lotion that I had gotten as a gift. Reece rubbed the lotion onto my skin starting from my shoulder and down my back. Next, he moved slowly down my arms to my hands for another quick massage there. Then he rubbed it across my chest, cupping each breast for just a moment as he applied the lotion. When he reached my hips he gently pushed me down so he could wrap around and apply a thin layer of the creamy substance to my bottom.

He continued his massaging application of the lotion down each of my legs. Once he got to my feet he gave me the most relaxing foot massage I could ever imagine. His hands seemed to know exactly where to move so that I wouldn't be tickled by his touch. The gentle movements of his hands and his skilled, masterful fingers were mind blowing.

By the time he was done I felt like nothing more than a pile of goo that had melted onto the bed.

"Mhmm." I moaned from the pleasure of it all. "That was amazing Reece. If I didn't know any better, I'd say you knew exactly what you were doing."

"Baby, I always know what I'm doing." He chuckled confidently. "But when it comes to your body, no one knows it better than I do. So, of course I would be able to make you happy like this."

"You can do that anytime you want, I won't object." My words were sounding like moans as I talked.

"Anytime you want me to, just ask."

I felt spent, and unable to move, after that massage. I just laid there on the bed until Reece leaned forward. He pressed his lips against the flat of my stomach, his hands cupped along my hips as he held me.

"Hello you two." He cooed at my belly. "I'm your daddy."



"Reece, they can't hear you yet." I giggled at him.

"You don't know that for sure." He laughed right back. "I'm going to talk to them every day so they know my voice by the time they're born, and so they know how much I love them, and their mommy."

"I love you, Reece." I couldn't help it, I had to say it at that moment. Reece was being so sweet and caring that I just felt overwhelmed.

"I love you more, Little Bunny." He crawled up into the bed and carried me to the pillows. We just laid together, spooning, until we fell asleep. It was still one of the best nights I had ever had. And I woke the next morning with Reece's hands wrapped protectively around my stomach. He was going to be unbearable, wasn't he?

## **Chapter 229 - Trinity - The Funeral (VOLUME 2)**

16-20 minutes

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Trinity

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Things were still moving very fast even after the battle ended. It was time for us to prepare for the funerals. I knew that everyone would want to have their own private funerals, and I both expected and respected that, but I also wanted to hold a massive funeral, something where we could all get together and console each other on the loss of the people we knew and cared for.

The preparations for the funeral went quickly, we all seemed to be in agreement for it all. Everyone also agreed to my idea for the remains. They liked the thought of their loved ones protecting us all forever, after all they died protecting this city. They gave their lives for something they believed in, and giving them places of honor and protection around the city would be the most respectful thing we could do, in my mind at least.

Being that it was almost the end of June, the weather was nice and it would be perfect for the large outdoor funeral. The atmosphere was slightly subdued to what it was during the wedding, but everyone still showed up to our place in large groups. There were just as many people, if not more, that came to the funeral. There were a lot of people from the fealty and treaty packs that came that were not at the wedding.

We wanted to focus on everyone's lives, who they were as a person. There would be different speakers that would come up and tell us about the people, celebrating who they were and what they were likely to miss the most about them.

I know that funerals are hard for people, that they bring that final blow that the person is gone. But I am a firm believer that a funeral should be a celebration of life, the life that was lost. I don't think anyone who dies wants anyone to cry over them. I think that the person who died would prefer that the people left behind were able to smile over the good memories instead of holding each other as they cried over the bad ones.

I wanted this funeral to be the celebration of lives lost. I wanted everyone to get a chance to share good memories and bring smiles to our faces. We would all, inevitably, be sad regardless, but we could keep it from getting too bad with some hard work and luck.

It had only been five days since the battle, and the heartache was still fresh for all those who had lost family, friends, and loved ones. Reece and I went around and greeted every leader and at least one representative for every person who had been lost. Being that there was a variety of species not everyone had family left to mourn them.

As I made my rounds, consoling loved ones and friends, and introducing myself to the alphas and other leaders of packs and clans, I felt my heart aching and my body weighing me down. I could feel their pain, their sorrow, and their loss. But there was something else I could feel as well, and I had an inkling, a minute suspicion, that this new feeling was caused by me. What I felt was hope.

I felt that everyone I met, every crying face I saw, had their spirits lifted when I shook their hands and spoke to them. Was this something that came from being so touched by the celestials? Was this the doing of Nehalennia and Thoth? I felt like it was, and that made me smile, it meant that I had another way to help my people.

After the introductions were over, it was time for the pack and clan leaders to give speeches, announcing the names of their lost members and for them to say something positive about them. But before they started, Reece was going to open things up.

"Friends, family, allies, I would like to welcome you all to my home. I'm glad you have all come to celebrate the lives we lost so recently. The threat that we faced wasn't just one for my family or my pack. The threat that Edmond posed was to the world and I am so glad that we could all come together and work so well together. All of us, Vampires, Warlocks, Wolves, Bears, Lions, Tigers, Lynxes, Jaguars, Leopards, Eagles, Falcons, and Hawks, all of us came together and fought with honor. The fighters we lost will never be forgotten, they will live on in our hearts and memories forever. As you all know, my wife has been blessed by not one but two celestial beings. She is marked by the Great Mother of Shifters as well as by the Gracious Father of Magic. The thing that Nehalennia and Thoth are both hoping for is that together, we can unite the shadow world, unite all the species within its collective borders and bring peace to us all. When I look at all of you gathered here I believe that the future they desire is just that much closer at hand."

When Reece's speech was done there wasn't a dry eye in sight. It was like everyone, including me, felt his sincerity filling his words. The words spoken, the heart behind them, it touched them all deeply. I felt the pride for my husband swell within me.

After Reece left the clearing open for the others, the first up was Crawford. He was there to honor and represent the warlocks that we lost. These were people that were mine now as well. They were part of my collective pack.

"Thank you, Reece." Crawford nodded to Reece and I before he began his speech. "I am the elder, the leader, of the Warlocks. For the longest time I was the highest authority among them, but now I happily give that title to my Queen, and friend, Trinity Gray. From the moment I met her I knew she was special, so did every member of the Aerie Convento. Not a single one of us thought twice when we were asked to go to war with them. That was a decision we all made with ease. We would fight for our queen no

matter what the odds were. Maria Shepherd, Sylvester Carmichael, and Ferdinand Bennos, were the ones we lost last week. Maria was a woman with a kind soul and a determined heart. She was strong and willing to stand up for what was right. Sylvester was a fighter through and through. He protected people no matter the cost and he died doing what he loved the most, saving people. Ferdinand preferred books to fighting, but even so he was a strong man with good morals. He never doubted his ability to fight at all. These three lives lost, these three that fell during the Battle of Edmond will be immortalized as protectors of this city and the world and I cannot imagine a more fitting remembrance for them." Crawford was teary eyed but held a smile through his whole speech. When he stepped down and walked past me I clapped him on his shoulder and squeezed it gently, offering just a little comfort.

Dietrich was next. I watched as he kissed Shawn on the cheek before taking a steadying breath. Slowly and solemnly he walked toward the opening in the clearing where both Reece and Crawford had given their speeches. With one last calming breath, Dietrich began his speech.

"Friends, allies, brothers and sisters. I am honored that I am the one to give this speech to you all today. I have been the leader of the vampires for a very long time and I have had a chance to meet nearly all of my compatriots. We all lost people we knew, people we care about during the Battle of Edmond. Just like Crawford, it didn't even cross my mind to not fight alongside the Grays and the Red Springs pack. I had never met Edmond, but I have met men like him and they are never a good thing for this world. The ones that we lost to that fight were good people, but I know that they would not regret fighting to stop a man like Edmond. All we can do now is remember them with grace. The men and women I lost didn't have family that could mourn them, they had been nearly immortal for so long that their families, were they still alive when they turned, have all long since passed on. Leon Marx, Anaheim Titan, Alec Mazor, Julius Silva, and Marion Nexus. They were good people and I am happy that there are so many people out there that will help to keep their memories alive and honor their sacrifice."

Dietrich wasn't crying like Crawford was, but he was still so filled with emotions that you could see them weighing him down like a lead weight. He walked slowly like he was carrying the world with him as he walked out of the clearing and allowed Trevor Jacoby, the bear alpha, to take his place.

"I have never really been good at this whole speech thing." Trevor Jacoby, the man I met at the wedding said as he ran his hand nervously through his hair. "I've known Reece since we were kids. He was almost like a brother to me at one time and that friendship has never gone away. When I met his wife at their wedding and learned that she was the Luna Queen, my Queen, I knew that it was right. Reece is a strong and worthy alpha, and I recognized him as my king immediately. I was proud to fight in this battle and so was every bear in the western states. I didn't lose as many as some did, but I lost one very important to me among them. Every bear I lost that day was like a blow to me physically as well as emotionally. I lost three from my pack. Brain MacKenzie, I'm not going to say he was a great man, he had a lot of attitude for someone so low ranked, but he was a good guy and a great father. He will be missed so much by his three kids. Corey Bleu, he was a world class ass, but he was one of my best friends. And lastly, Evan Jacoby, my little brother. He had just mated and fathered a cub of his own. I will make sure that my niece or nephew will always know what a great man my little brother was. They will know that even though I was the alpha, my brother was the better man among the two of us, and I am a big enough man to admit that. I'm too brash and ill mannered at times, but I am going to work hard to live up to his memories. I will make sure that my pack remembers all of them and all the others lost last week."

As Trevor left the clearing Reece hugged his friend. Trevor, the man who seemed so big and brutish when I first met him, was now crying softly. This was not the celebration of life I was hoping for, but I still felt like things were going well. Next was a man I had just met, his name was Landon Clayton, and he was the Alpha of the felines. Like the bears there weren't as many felines for them to have that many alphas. Landon, a tiger shifter, was the only feline alpha in the entire country. Every feline lost that day was a member of his collective pack. Landon was tall with emerald green eyes and blond hair, and he had the typical athletic build of a shifter.

"I will give this speech because I have to, but know that I really don't want to be here. I respect my people, and I pay tribute to my king and queen. I understand that and acknowledge them, but I am not this kind of person. Felines are not the type to roam in large packs, we travel small. I lead them all, yes, but I don't know them very well. I will admit that we lost a lot of fine people, a fair few when you think of how little of us there are. I will name those we lost by species and that will be it. Among the tigers were Nick Berry and Yvette Smith. The lions were Max Allman, Eli Peters, and Simon Tidwell. The lynxes were Tilly Smalls, John Alexander, and Jesse Tiberius. The jaguars were Diego Cortez and Matthew Jury. And lastly, the leopards were Domino Jacksly, Ronald Sticks, and Freddy Jayson. These men and women fought bravely as did everyone else. They will be missed and honored."

That was all Landon had to say. He was unemotional when he spoke but he didn't sound disrespectful at all. He just seemed straightforward and to the point. As he stalked out of the clearing a tall, exotic looking woman took his place. Her hair was black with differently colored strands streaked through it, the strands looked like feathers from a distance but I saw that they were indeed her hair. Her eyes were a beautiful amber color that seemed to glow with the light.

"My name is Noir Steelwing, I am the Alpha to one of the smallest clans of shifters there is. We are the Avians, and we make up the birds of prey shifters. Our numbers have been dwindling for years, but that did not stop me from stepping up and helping when I was needed. My people are proud and believe in doing what is morally right. We banded together and fought to rid this world of evil. And while we may have lost a few of our ranks, we saved millions more with that fight. I will forever remember them all. Nathan and Natalie Freeman, the brother and sister falcons that always fought side by side. Gil Manchester and Jerry James, the eagles who bravely stepped up to fight for those who they'd never met. And lastly, Lincoln Thomas and Avery Townes, the hawks who were fearless enough to fly headlong into battle, no matter the cost. I will immortalize them in the memories of my people, I hope you will all do the same."

With that, Noir was finished. She stepped out of the circle and joined her clan at the back. Now, it was my turn to talk. I was nervous, and I could feel my stomach roiling again, but I swallowed the lump in my throat and suppressed the butterflies. I needed to be a leader now, I needed to be the Queen.

I stepped forward, faced the people as I turned slowly to look at them all. And I began, even without a steadying breath.

"I thank you all for coming today. This last little while has been a trying time for us all, this pack more than any other, but we all suffered losses. I was going to have the Alpha of the other two wolf packs come forward and introduce their dead, but as we lost the most among the wolves and given my status, I have been asked to take the lead here. But first, I want to start by thanking each and everyone of you for joining us. Not just today, but last week as well. The battle was hard, and it will live on as a blight in

our memories for a long time, but we succeeded. The cost doesn't always justify the outcome, but I am honored to call you all allies. I am honored and humbled to have had the chance to fight alongside everyone that day. Thank you, once again, for stepping up and doing what needed to be done. Between all the packs, clans, and covens, we lost thirty-six people that day. You have heard about thirty of them so far, so without further ado, let me tell you about the rest of them."

I paused for a moment, taking that steadying breath I hadn't needed earlier. Then, feeling stronger and more emboldened, I continued. "Stephen Rhodes, of the Black Canyons Pack, led by Bryce Evans. I didn't know Stephen but he has been described as kind and caring and willing to help anyone he could. He often put others ahead of himself and was quick with a smile. Harvey Blake and Kenny Phillips, from the Azure River Pack led by Riley Gray. Harvey was a man of few words that was better at expressing himself through actions. Kenny was shy but was always eager to please and very helpful. Frank Willoby, Zeek Wilkins, and Richard Hall, all from the Red Springs Pack led by Reece Gray. Frank and Zeek both worked as gate guards and protected our inner sanctum. Frank was aloof and often hard to get along with, but nonetheless, Zeek was his best friend. Zeek was just the opposite of Frank, outgoing and friendly, he was always ready with a smile for everyone. Richard was a school teacher, a man that loved children. He refused to let a man come into his city and hurt his children. He gave his life to protect not just the pack, but the city and the world. All these men, and all the others who were lost, they fought bravely and with so much honor. Their sacrifices will never be forgotten and their protections will never fade. We have prepared places of honor for them around the city, places the humans won't know the meaning of but we of the shadow world will know, and we will always remember. I ask that you all join me celebrating the good memories and positive things they left behind so they will not spend their eternal hunt in sorrow. Let's remember them for who they were, what they did, and the smiles we shared with them all."

My speech was the only one that got a round of applause, and everyone was once again crying like they did with Reece's speech, but they were also smiling through it all. The speeches were now over and it was time to move on to the part where people mingled and remembered. I watched everyone as they milled about, crying still but laughing and smiling through the tears. When we all left for the night, everyone had learned who each and every one of those lost thirty-six were, not just some pretty words given for a funeral but who they really truly were.

I couldn't have asked for a better night.

## **Chapter 230 - Trinity - Preparing For A Celebration (VOLUME 2)**

9-11 minutes

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Trinity

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With the funeral over, there was one more thing I wanted to do for everyone. I wanted to have a celebration. In just two weeks it would be Independence Day, July 4th, a day that most people celebrate. But we had more reasons than others.

One reason was our lives. We had defeated Edmond and we were all alive. We had won the battle and survived. That was reason enough to celebrate.

But there was another reason too. July the fourth was Reece's birthday. A pack can't go without celebrating it's alpha's birthday. At least I wouldn't let that happen. This was the first time I was spending Reece's birthday with him and I wanted to make it special.

I was also going to take the opportunity to tell everyone about the babies during that party so I needed to make sure it was extra special. Reece and I were both in agreement that we wanted to tell them all about the pregnancy this time, making it a pack thing like we should have done last time.

I wanted to get everyone involved in the party preparations, everyone except for Reece that is. I couldn't let him help plan his own party, that would just be weird.

This made him pout though. He wanted to be part of the planning process as well. He's such a big baby sometimes, it was cute yet annoying. I love him so much.

So, I caved and let him do one thing. When he whined incessantly about the planning I put him in charge of the fireworks. He was a little over eager about it if you asked me, but he was happy and that made me smile.

With Reece properly preoccupied, and me having sent Dietrich to keep him company (hey, I needed to make sure that Dietrich didn't blab to anyone), it was time for the rest of us to get down to business.

"Hey, Astro." I was staring at a book of dessert designs when I heard Paul call out to me. "Are you being a space cadet again and leaving all of us to do the party planning for you?"

"Haha." I pretended to laugh while genuinely smiling at him. "I was just lost in thought. I want this party to be special."

"I know, I get it. It's the 'hey we're alive party' mixed with your hubby's birthday. It's a special day for you, so get your head in the game, will ya."

"Paul, did anyone ever tell you you're an ass?" Juniper asked him while smacking him playfully on the arm.

"Yeah, you, everyday since you married me. But I'm loveable so you all just put up with it." He smiled while putting his hands near his head in a gesture of innocence.

"I think you mean annoying." Cedar joked right back at him.

"Yeah, and conceited too." Shane joined in on the ribbing, it was starting to get fun and I was smiling happily.

"I should probably stop spacing out though, huh." I agreed with Paul just to let him know I appreciated him pulling me out of my own head. "Come on everyone, we got a lot of work to do."

Just as I was about to get back to work the door to the party planning room, which was just my bedroom, opened and Shawn walked in. I noticed that Shawn looked a little down.

"What's wrong Shawn?" I asked him as we all turned to look at him.

"Nothing." His voice was a little down as well.

"Dude, she knows somethings wrong, just tell her." Shane told his brother.

"It's nothing really. I was just going to help Reece and Dietrich, but I was sent away."

"Awww, are you missing your boyfriend?" Shane cooed at him.

"Shut up." Shawn growled back at his brother like he was an annoying insect.

"I'm just joking with you, don't be so sensitive." Shane was laughing hard.

"It's just, ever since he found out he is the Vampire King it's felt like he was hiding something from me."

"That's right I forgot, Dietrich is a King now." Shane had an excited look on his face and a mischievous tone in his voice. "Does that make you the queen?" He cooed again.

"Fuck you Shane, I'm going to kick your ass." Shawn stalked toward his brother with an intense look on his face.

Both Vincent and I leapt to our feet and rushed forward. Vincent grabbed Shawn from behind while I placed my hands on his chest to help stop him and calm him. In the process, Shawn's shirt was shifted and his left shoulder was now fully visible.

"Uh, Shawn, did you get a tattoo?" I asked him, perplexed by what I was seeing.

"Um, no, that's not, I mean, it's not, please ignore it." He was stammering and blushing a bright red when he heard me.

"Dude, you did?" Shane moved forward to look at his brother. "Wait, no, that's not a tattoo, that's a mate mark."

At Shane's words I looked more closely at the thing on Shawn's shoulder. It was blood red, which was why I didn't initially think it was a mate mark, even given the location of the mark. What I was seeing was an endless knot formed from what looked like rose vines. The vines were only outlined in the red and were flesh toned on the inside. And through the lattice work of the endless knot there were blood red roses that were so detailed and beautiful. It was Shawn's mate mark, and it was right where Dietrich had bitten him to save his life.

I knew what an endless knot meant, even though most of the people in the room with me probably didn't. The knot was meant to represent endless happiness. It was a symbol that Shawn and Dietrich would live happily together, forever.

"Shawn, I'm so happy for you." I squealed when it all finally hit me. "This is amazing."

"Dude, he's a guy and he was marked." Shane cut in.

"Shane." I reprimanded him. "Don't forget, I marked Reece. Do you have something to say about that?"

"Uh, no ma'am." Shane sobered right up and stopped his jokes.

"That's what I thought." I glared at him for a moment before I looked back at Shawn. "I'm happy for you Shawn. Your relationship took another step and that is major."

"Thank you, Trinity." Shawn smiled at me as I gave him an approving look.

"Don't ever be embarrassed by it."

"I'm not really, it's just that Shane gets to me sometimes."

"I can understand that." I smiled again. "Come on, let's get this party planned."

"Alright."

After that, we got to work on planning the party for real.

The party was for the whole pack, and Riley's family would be invited because they were Reece's family. And now, the pack included the warlocks that were staying with us and those who would soon be moving into our new community. So there would be a lot of people at the party.

Once again, the party was going to be at our house in the clearing like the funeral and wedding had been. I planned to have a lot of food appropriate for an outdoor party and Fourth of July celebration. Basically it was going to be a giant cookout with lots of grilled food. Most wolves wouldn't say no to that, it meant a lot of different meats.

There were also lots of different kinds of salads, which would be good for the warlocks and the wolves who weren't complete carnivores. We were going to need a lot of food for the entire gathering.

For the birthday cake I ordered a massive cake with many different flavors. The design that I picked out for it was an image with a lone wolf standing on a mountain staring out at a bunch of fireworks. The wolf was also wearing a crown, crookedly, on top of his head. The lone wolf was because he was stubborn and independent, basically, he was Mr. Independence Day.

I will admit, I also ordered a small personal cake that I was going to give him that night, when we were all alone. He was going to love it, I'm sure. I know I was going to.

After all the planning was done, and they were about to head home, I called Juniper over to me.

"Juniper, can I talk to you about something?" She looked perplexed for a minute but didn't say anything, she just walked back to me as the others left the room. I watched as Shane, Shawn, David, Vincent, Paul, and Cedar all left.

"I'll see you at home later." Paul called over his shoulder as he left the room.

"Love you." Juniper smiled at him.

"Love you more." He smiled back.

Now that we were alone and seated near the fireplace, Juniper turned to me and leveled me a knowing look.

"Alright, spill it."

"What?" I asked her, surprised.



"Girl, you think I don't know that you've been hiding something from me. Now, it's time to stop with all the secrets and tell me. I've been dying here, you know that." I just laughed, Juniper knew me so well, she could always read me like a book.

"Yes, I have been hiding something. Something that you need to swear to secrecy for. You can't tell anyone about it yet."

"Oh my Goddess, you're pregnant again." Juniper whisper screamed. She was legit bouncing up and down on her seat and screaming in a whisper so that no one could hear her.

"How the hell did you figure that out?"

"What else could it be? Oh my goddess, I am so happy for you Trinity. This is so amazing. I am going to be the best aunty ever. I am so, so, so excited."

"You're going to be amazing, Jun." I smiled at her. We ended the night with her hugging me to death and smiling happily.