

## Owned by the Alphas 2: Claimed by the Alphas |

### The Whispers

LORELAI

I pushed my fingers into the soil, sighing as the magic released from my aching bones. I was so tense with all the magic inside me that it was starting to take its toll.

I still had to have the bite for the toxin to keep me and our baby alive, which was the best medicine every day, but I still felt like crap.

I couldn't have the potion since my body was already full, but it was the only thing that took away the nausea and exhaustion, so now I just had to deal.

It made me a little irritable and more than a little mopey.

The wind was strong, throwing the tails of my coat everywhere, my braid fighting to keep my hair restrained, but I didn't care because releasing even a little bit of the magic made things feel better.

It was still dark, but it always was now, so my eyes adjusted easily, especially with the help of the flame torches my brother and Derik carried.

My alphas surrounded me, a wall of power that had my back, and I smiled at the way that made my heart flutter.

But it wasn't just their eyes that pierced the darkness. My brother stood there too, guarding, his red eyes even more threatening to the other wolves I could feel watching.

But they were staying well away, their control not there. Carden had made sure that every wolf knew they would be destroyed if they came out of their homes while I was in the gardens.

I didn't mind so much. I hated restricting them, but the alphas knew more than I did about the winter wolves, so I left it for them to decide, just glad I had somewhere to get rid of the magic that made me feel constantly pressurized and tense.

In front of our eyes, the crops grew healthier, green, springing to life with magic and vitality.

I grinned and pulled my hands out, letting out a deep sigh that felt amazing since I actually had room for it within me.

I rested my hands on my stomach and leaned into Brax, who was the closest to me.

"Thanks." I smiled, my eyes closing, and he kissed the top of my head.

"Let's get you back," he said, his voice tense, his eyes darting to the walls of the city.

I touched the link and frowned at the wariness there.

"What's wrong?" I asked, and that had all of them frowning.

Brax hesitated a second before he answered.

"Something feels off. My shadows don't want us out here. More specifically, you. They're urging me to get you inside, but they can't communicate why. That's...worrying," he admitted quietly.

Derik stepped in closer then, Kai bringing himself to cover my back as my brother led the way back through the cobblestone streets, all of them watching every single corner of the buildings and shadows.

A howl ripped through the air moments later before there was roaring and screaming.

Everyone froze and turned to the sound.

Humans were scaling over the wall with axes and swords, full armor, ready for the fight.

Derik stepped away from me, narrowing his eyes at the humans before snarling. "Wolves! Weapons! Take them out!" he roared into the night, and then they were all running from their homes.

"East wall! Don't let them through!" Derik snapped, then handed his torch to Kai. "Get her inside," he ordered.

Kai hesitated, looking at the humans coming over, then back at me, and I knew he wanted to go. Their wolves were locked inside them too, but their need for violence and vengeance was as alive as ever.

“Go. I’ll be okay, I’ll get back to the mansion,” I said, knowing I had no part in this one.

I still had a very low range of movement and needed to take it easy. I wasn’t headstrong enough to defy doctor’s orders when it came to this baby.

Galen had agreed with Cain: no strenuous activity, including sex, until the baby was out. And with the pain that came in bursts along my stomach every day, I was guessing that would be soon.

Kai looked to Brax, who had me curled into him.

“You’ll need my shadows,” he bit, shaking a little as he tried to hold back the anger that polluted our link.

“Then I’ll get her back.” My brother stepped forward, and Kai snarled, forcing him back.

“You are not to be left alone with her,” Kai said, and I sighed.

“You both want to go fight, so go. Help the pack. My brother will get me back,” I said, my uneasiness toward him just because he was a vampire not outweighing the fact that I needed to get back.

“I don’t trust him either, Spitfire. Our shadows don’t bristle because he is a vamp, they do it to warn us not to trust him,” Brax said lowly for me to hear, and I shrugged.

“Either you let him take me back or one of you do it. There are no other options here,” I bit back, and they looked at each other, my brother holding his hand out.

I shrugged out of my alpha’s hold and took Lucas’s hand.

“I’ll link you when I’m back safe. Go,” I said, blowing them a kiss before taking off with Lucas, who walked as fast as my pregnant waddle could go, keeping our way lit with his torch.

A second later my alphas' howls ripped through the air, and then they were in the fight. I could feel it in our link, the tug on our strength.

They couldn't turn, none of them could, and I hated that I couldn't help.

I had magic, but Cain didn't think I should use it on the humans. Not until we knew what their magic was.

We had no idea what protection they had thanks to their magic ace card, so if I used it on them and it was a trap, it could siphon completely out of me. It could bring the border down fully or take out the wolves too.

It was just too unpredictable and risked too much, so I had to let my wolves do what they did best—protect us all.

"You okay?" Lucas asked as I held my stomach, walking fast, breathing hard.

The aches and pains were normal but made moving fast a little unrealistic. I nodded anyway and urged my swollen feet forward. So sexy.

Pregnancy was not the dream my mother had made it, although I don't think being pregnant with a werewolf was what she'd had in mind when she had said it.

"I'm okay, just get us back. I don't know if the humans in the mansion know. We told them once they hear that howl, they need to prepare just in case, so we'll see if they listened," I huffed.

He smiled and nodded. "You have given the humans something they were never going to get from Father," he said, no effort at all in his pace, holding a lot of my weight without so much as a wince.

"Like safety, warmth, and food? Or do you mean the ability to protect themselves, say no, and have control over their own bodies?" I smirked, and he grinned.

"All of the above, little sister."

"We're twins. I am not your little sister."

"I was born first," he teased, leading us around the streets.

I knew what he was doing. He was distracting me from the fighting sounds that tore through the night, bouncing off city walls to reach my ears.

Or he was distracting me from the pain, but that was all internal and not as easily ignored.

“Do you like being a vampire?” I asked, changing subjects as we turned a corner.

He shrugged. “It’s not awful like I thought it would be. Silas is a good mentor.”

I rolled my eyes at that. His judgment on mentors had a horrible track record.

As the thought filtered through my brain, so did something else. A flash of an image.

The one I’d had at the border, the vampires that destroyed everything, the blood, the lifeless bodies of the humans and my alphas, Silas with blood down his fangs, wearing a grin.

I gasped and yanked my hand from Lucas’s, a shiver taking over me. My magic spurred inside of me, coiling through every place, demanding to be let out, to stop the vision from happening.

Lucas frowned and went to step forward, but I stepped back. Was it him? Or was it because he had mentioned Silas?

“What happened?” Lucas asked. “We have to get to the mansion. It isn’t safe here, sister.”

I shook my head. My shadows and my magic were all whispering inside me, showing me what I had to do.

I turned to find the grass and soil that ran along the cobblestone path. I stepped onto it and bent down, purple mist leaking from my hands, swirling around me, ready to do what it needed.

I had never felt so connected to it. Like listening to what it wanted was what it had been trying to get me to do the whole time.

Like trusting it, letting it in had made controlling it as easy as breathing.

“What are you doing?” Lucas asked, his body hovering over mine.

“Fixing it,” I breathed, then closed my eyes and sank my hands into the ground, letting my magic guide everything I did.

I knew my alphas wanted me to keep it inside and I knew Cain was not sure what would happen, but something, a craving deep inside me, told me I could do it, I could help, and the border magic wanted me to.

I had to trust it. It had been good to me so far, lived in my body for weeks without hurting me or the baby. I had to believe it would help me now.

So, I let it out.

It was electric in my veins, livening everything as it went, seeking the darkness of the souls that attacked us.

It found them.

I knew when my magic had a grip on a human hurting my wolves because the screams broke through the fighting.

I hadn’t wanted to kill the humans last time, but because I was protecting my precious feelings, they had exploded in my face.

I wasn’t letting another trick like that get to me or my wolves. I took them out.

One after the other, the humans dropped, my magic reaching up from the ground, finding their dark, infected souls and ending them in a swift crack of the neck, my magic consuming the souls before they could be released.

I felt every single one add to the collective of my magic.

It was intoxicating and compulsive, an urge that made me keep going, moving around the wolves’ feet, avoiding them as they fought the humans until it found the next soul to consume.

A single thought in my head wondered whether that would feed dark magic within me, but as soon as it added to my magic, it disappeared into it, joining it, not tainting it, and I was convinced I was doing the right thing.

My magic filled me with warmth, like that trust in it made it happy, and it moved faster to eradicate the threat.

It moved and killed until it was only the wolves left. Then it hovered, and I frowned, slowly standing from the soil, the purple mist covering every path through the city.

My body was so full, the overdose strong, thanks to the souls, but I was guessing that was why the magic was retreating. It knew I couldn't take that much inside me.

I grinned and looked around as my brother stood tense as hell with wide eyes.

"What the hell have they turned you into?" he demanded, and I shrugged.

"What I need to be," I said, and rolled my hand through the mist, heading away from the mansion toward the wolves.

Lucas grabbed my wrist. "No, Lorelai. We must go to the mansion," he growled, and tried to tug me, but my magic swirled over his grasp on me and released his fingers painlessly.

He frowned at it, then stepped back.

"No, I don't. I get it now, what I am meant to do. It's telling me to trust it, and I do." I grinned, and my heart swelled.

My alphas were freaking out with worry, running to find me, but they didn't need to. I could fix it all.

Lucas followed me as I moved through the mist toward the east wall, finding my alphas running at me two streets over.

Kai ran into me, picking me up in his arms, spinning me like I wasn't overly pregnant. He brought me down, grinning and kissing me.

"You weren't meant to use your magic," he breathed, and I grinned.

"Yes, I was. Don't you see? It was putting pressure on me, not too much, just enough to warn me. It wanted to help, and it needed me to let it," I said.

He looked for the lie in my eyes, then he kissed me again.

I pulled back and turned to Derik and Brax, who were looking around at the mist that was waist-high. It really liked them, clinging and swirling around them.

I laughed and stepped back from them, seeing through the mist to the wolves that were covered in blood with desperate, angry eyes.

“Step back,” Derik warned, but I shook my head.

“No, it’s okay. I can help,” I said, the magic whispering in the air.

I thought only I could hear it, but they could too this time. It grew louder as the mist moved around each of them, and I felt every part of it.

My magic was an extension of me, a conduit for it to do what it needed, and I wish I had listened to it earlier. I thought the pressure was normal, but it was begging to help.

It had helped at every turn, and I had put it in a cage. I shouldn’t have, but I was making the right decision now. I could feel it in every part of me.

The magic filled every single member of the pack, finding everyone in their homes and out of it, and I closed my eyes as the alphas stood, wary and watching.

Brax’s hand grabbed mine then, and I looked up at him.

“You feel it?” I asked, and he nodded, leaning down to me, whispering words only I could hear.

“I feel the promise in their whispers,” he breathed, and I frowned.

“Promise?”

“You will be mine, Spitfire. I’m sure of it now. We just have to be patient, but our mating is written,” he said, kissing my neck behind my ear, and my entire body shivered with a warmth, a searing heat that filled me with the same promise.

My grin widened, and I kissed him back. “See, you’re not broken, Brax,” I said, holding his face.

He kissed me again, but the gasps of the wolves interrupted us.

I turned to them, smiling as their fangs grew, their eyes turned, their claws extended.



“They’re turning?” Derik said, looking between them and me with wide eyes.

“The border magic fed their ability to turn. The moon just activated that, but my magic is the same.

“If I activate it myself by putting the magic directly inside them, then they can turn too,” I said, explaining what my magic had whispered to me, not in words, but in feelings and imagery that had pieced together what it needed for me to trust it.

Kai howled, grinning as his canines dropped. He licked them before eyeing me.

“Impressive, Luna,” he said, and I did a curtsy, a teasing one with a grin.

“Wolves, let’s run the perimeter, check for weaknesses in the wall, any stragglers, although I am sure our luna has taken care of those.”

Kai winked, and the pack howled together before they all shredded their clothes, turning into huge wolves that towered above me, and taking off to run.

Derik stepped forward then, wrapping me in his arms before running a hand down my stomach. “And you feel okay? You’re not in pain?” he asked.

“No, I feel stronger, like using the magic means it is filtered out for the fresh stuff constantly, not all caged and seeping into my bones,” I said, feeling it in my arms and legs, but not as a weight, as a strength.

“The new eyes look good on you.” Derik smiled then, kissing my cheek, holding me against him still.

“New eyes?” I asked, and he pushed the image of what he was seeing in his mind into mine.

My face was there, but it looked different, my skin so perfectly clear it almost looked fake, with bright purple eyes that glowed in the darkness.

I clenched them shut, reopened them. They were still there.

“Woah,” I breathed, a little enamored by them.

“Exactly my thoughts,” Derik said, then let me go and put my hand in his.

Brax grabbed my other one. "No word on Tabitha?" he asked.

Derik shook his head. "Not yet. Let's get back and check in on the humans, then we'll see Cain about it," he said, and Brax nodded.

They led me back to the mansion, my mist dissipating as it seeped into the wolves and settled in there, giving them all the ability to turn as they wanted.

It only solved one problem, but it was something. It meant they would be more in control when the humans finally showed their hand.

It didn't solve the issue of the rogue witch though. That was terrifying.

Going up against humans was something I was handling, but going up against a witch? I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to magic my way out of that one, even with the wolves' help.

A witch had magic too, and they had proven they were quite strong already. I had no idea whether I was stronger, but I had to hope I was.

"So the wolves can turn now?" my brother asked as we moved up the steps to the mansion.

"Yes," Derik said, and Lucas frowned.

"You're sure that won't be too much in the long run? Against a witch?" he asked.

Derik shrugged. "The magic trusts her and she trusts it. We have to also," he said, and that trust made my heart pulse. I needed it more than I thought I did.

I snuggled into him, and he kissed the top of my head.

"My shadows are content. They trust her magic, so I do too," Brax said, and Lucas let out a sigh.

"Well then, I will try to offer the same faith," he said, but his jaw was clenched, like that was hard for him to do, and I suppose it would be.

He was a vampire, but he had been a human intent on ending werewolves. He was probably fighting every belief system that had been drilled into him to be here with us.

I appreciated the effort, but I was not into his doubt bringing down my moment of epic magical problem-solving.

We moved into the mansion, the lobby cold, and I shivered. Galen and my mother came through from the sitting room to the side.

"Ryleigh is not well," my mom said, and I frowned, looking to Galen, who looked expressionless.

"I thought her pains stopped?" I asked.

"They have come back, but her body is not laboring; it is too early for her. Galen is trying to figure out what is causing it, but so far, it is a mystery.

"I was thinking we could go talk to her, have some tea?" Mom asked, and I nodded, linking my arm through hers.

"We're going to go talk to Cain. Don't leave the mansion," Derik said, and I nodded.

He left with Brax as my brother followed us through to where Ryleigh's room had been moved. She had been given her own room for the baby; it had a bassinet and rocking chair already.

It hit me then that I was not even close to being ready for my baby. I had nothing ready. Fear gripped me for a second before Brax's shadows were inside me, soothing me.

"*We've got it sorted, Spitfire, relax,*" he said in my head, and I let out a breath of relief.

"Are you in pain?" Mom asked, and I shook my head.

"No, quite the opposite. I'm...happy," I said, even though the word seemed so weak for what I felt.

I was content, warm, loved, and it was such a good feeling, but behind that was a settling-in warning, like we were almost there, almost at the part of our war where everything would come to a head and our fates would be decided, one way or the other.

"I am glad for it, darling." Mom interrupted my morose thoughts, then stepped into Ryleigh's room.

Ryleigh had her long dark curls splayed out over her pillows; they were propped up behind her as she read a book, her one green and one brown eye scanning the pages quickly as she chewed on a muesli bar.

Her bed had a pot of flowers next to it, with a jug of water.

Vaughn sat next to her on the other side. He looked up when we came in, a smile pulling his frown apart.

"Lorelai," he said, standing to greet me.

I nodded in return. "Hey," I said, then went to Ryleigh.

"Rye," I said, and she looked up, her puffy eyes red from crying. Over the book or the pain, I wasn't sure.

She smiled a wobbly smile, then put her book down, going to sit up farther, but at her wince, I stopped her.

"It's okay, stay comfortable," I said, and sat down next to her.

"Mom and I were coming to see if you'd like some company. We could have some tea?" I asked, and she nodded, her smile wobbling again.

My brother stayed at the door, putting the torch in the holder there. Ryleigh's eyes flickered to him, but I grabbed her hand and gave it a light squeeze.

"He's okay. He's just here since my alphas can't be. Mom said your pains have come back?" I asked, and she nodded.

Mom went to the small bench along the wall with a kettle and filled it with water as Vaughn stoked the fire.

"Yeah. They stopped for a bit, but now they're back and won't go away," she said, her voice weak as she rubbed her stomach.

I looked down at it, not sure if I could help but wondering if my magic could. My magic stirred in me at the idea.

"I can try to help?" I asked, and she nodded eagerly.

“Anything. I’ll try anything. I don’t know what else to do, and I hate lying in this bed not knowing whether I will have this child or not,” she said, tears slipping down her cheeks.

Vaughn left my mom to hang the kettle over the fire and came over. “Wait. Ryleigh is human. Your magic is not safe for her,” he said, and I frowned.

“I’m not going to use it on her. I’m only going to see if it can find out what is wrong,” I said, but Vaughn shook his head.

“No, it’s too dangerous. You could make it worse.”

I could, it was a possibility, but I trusted my magic not to do that. It was up to Ryleigh to decide.

I turned to her and she blushed, looking between me and Vaughn before swallowing hard.

“I think... I think it’ll probably be fine without checking anything,” she whispered.

I frowned at the lie. I felt it in me, but she looked down at her fingers and didn’t change her mind, so I nodded.

Vaughn gave Ryleigh’s hand a squeeze, then went to sit in the chair next to the door, right next to my brother.