

Cried Wolf 51

Chapter 51

Claire spends the day following me around at school.

'Boo-boo, I was hoping we could talk?'

'Stop calling me Boo-boo and I'll give you five minutes to talk to me.'

'Oh, okay then B-Magnus...' she trails off.

I lean against my locker with my arms crossed.

'What is it?'

'I was hoping you would reconsider... us? I want us to be together again. Magnus, I miss you. She says and tries to caress my bicep.

'I'm not interested, Claire.'

'But I don't want to be with anyone else.'

'Claire, you say that now, but then you will eventually meet your mate and you will want to be with him. I'm going to be late for class. I'll see you around.'

Claire's eyes well up and she storms off to her class.

At lunchtime, I head to the library and pull Pipsqueak aside.

'I heard about what happened at your wolf ceremony. Are you alright?'

Of course, the entire school would know about it.

'Yeah, I'm fine, but I need to update you on everything else. Nina told her boyfriend, Moss, about the curse. He has told his friend Hank and now Hank is using it against me to choose his sister as my mate. I spoke with his father, Alpha Mason. I stretched the agreement to a year until I have no choice but to choose his sister Addison as my mate, otherwise, Hank will tell everyone about Nina's curse, which puts her in danger of being hunted down and killed. So, I have one year to break the curse, which will also get me out of the mateship agreement.'

'I see.' She says, pushing her thick glasses closer to her eyes. 'And we still have no clue what the curse is? Did you find any relics or symbols in her bedroom?'

'No, we tore the room apart and found nothing.'

'So, we can rule out that type of curse, then? What was another way to curse someone? Didn't it mention by a witch or a Mage?'

'Yes, but I don't think mages exist anymore and there is only one witch I know of and she had never met Nina before the day she came to see me. She has no reason to curse Nina.'

I guess the only thing we can do is wait for the curse to take effect on her to give us any clue or lead to work on.'

'What if that doesn't happen for years to come?'

'Then you will have no choice but to accept Addison as your mate.' She cringes.

I took away and punch a hole in the wall and drop to the floor. My hands cover my face as I panic. Pain sears through my body. My wolf is tuning at the thought of having a chosen mate. He tries to take over and shift

Magnus! Pipsqueak yells. She vies to calm me down, but only growl at her touch. She trembles and takes a few steps back.

I'm going to find someone to help I'll be right back, Magnus Whatever you do, don't shift.'

Everyone is panicking and fleeing the library Pipsqueak disappears into the crowd. The entire school can probably hear my screams of pain There is no use fighting my wolf anymore. I'm exhausted and barely conscious

I stand on all fours and sway for a moment from exhaustion. My wolf exits the library and enters the school corridor. Anyone in the corridor quickly runs into the nearest classroom and locks the door

Dozens of students stare out the windows. They tremble at the fierce size of my wolf with my snarling large teeth on show. I have

no control over my wolf He won't listen to me

'I know you want your mate and we will find her one day, but we need to keep Nina safe'

He lets out a ferocious growl Helios poked up a snarl I realise it's Moss's count

'We can't harm Moss, I know you like them. I hate him 100, but were the future Alpha of the pack We can't go around hating someone just because we don't like them'

lies

Malcolm door and howie 1106619 in the

My wolf ignores me and is now in pursuit following the one the command toom.

My wolf came into the door

Magnus?' Nina says behind me Pipsqueak is next to lie. 'My wolf is a little bit silly, letting her take control

'I know Magnus can hear me You need to give him back control

My wolf growls low

not even Pipsqueak She is so incredibly

Nina slopes down and kneels in front of my wolf, something no one else would need to be brave, facing my fierce, unpredictable wolf like this

Her fingers caress the fure on my face and glide down my back My wolf whimpers and tumbles himself down and rolls onto his back

Nina giggles and she scratches my belly

No one can believe their eyes, we aren't mates, yet she has the ability to have control over my wolf like unheard of and nothing anyone has seen before. I oil up and she wraps her arms around my neck My wolf has completely calmed and completely forgotten Mago is only meters away

My wolf is giving me some control back I lower myself and whip my head back, gesturing for me to hop on my back I want to take her somewhere, do something special for her

With no hesitation, she smiles and climbs onto my back I'm so lingo I like she is on horseback I run back down the corridor and out of the school grounds with great speed, even faster than Nimen could ever I She screams with excitement as she holds onto the thrilling ride. We glide through the woods to the mountaintop To our huge, dominant howl. Anyone that can shift does so and howls in return as a sign of respect, Nina spends an hour on my back I don't stop and I don't slow down. My wolf is so happy to be running free and with Nina with us. He hasn't even thought about our landing into and to content We finish our run by the lake I run and thrash through the water. My fur is soaking wet Nina swims around and laughs when I shake my body, causing droplets to splash onto her

Magnus 'She laughs.

My wolf collapses with happiness on the grass. The sun shines over me and dries my fur Nina wrings the water from her shirt out and sits with her back against my belly

I have never had so much fun, Magnus. You run faster than I could even run Wasn't it the best feeling? It was so thrilling and so much fun?

She turns her head to see my response but sees a giant sleeping wolf, passed out from exhaustion. She snuggles up to me and falls asleep

Hours go by and I wake up dry to find Nina asleep against me, I spend the next half an hour silently watching her sleep until she wakes up

Her eyes open and her lips grow wide with a smile. She sits up and pets me gently

"You're going to have to shift back, you know Did you want to do it now while I'm here or privately back home?"

Even though it will be extremely painful either way, it's easier when Nina is with me I focus my mind and whimper She knows I'm going to shift now

The pain is horrendous, but her touch helps soothe me through the process. I sit up in my human form, completely drenched and weak

Nina throws her arms around my neck and hugs me. I place my hands on her back and make the most of the moment, knowing once I'm mated, I will never get to hold her like this again

'Let's go home.' She smiles

She helps me stand and we trudge home. She has my arm over one shoulder, so I don't fall. As soon as we arrive home, Leon and Seth quickly take me from Nina and help me to my room, where I pass out for the rest of the day and night.

Chapter 52

"He needs to stop shifting. What if one of these shifts kills him?" Mother cries as I come down the stairs.

"Mum please, I had no control over the shift My wolf wouldn't even listen to me, even after we shifted."

You realise if you have no control over your wolf and you are shifting against your own will and your wolf's only agenda is to kill people, the council will demand you to be locked up in the dungeon. Not only that, you may lose your rank as Alpha and they would then give it to Flint.' My father says in a serious tone. 'They have already summoned me to see them today, and it is probably because of your attack against school students yesterday.' He says, slamming his fist on the table. He falls back into his chair and rests his forehead in his hand in frustration.

'But I didn't attack anyone. No one got hurt.'

'You were going to attack someone, though. Students stated you were trying to break down a door to get into a classroom. You terrified everyone at the school. If it wasn't for Nina, you would have hurt or, even worse, killed someone and would already be in the dungeon as we speak. And how Nina could calm your wolf without being your fated mate is an absolute mystery. People are spreading rumors she must be delving into witchery or magic of some kind to tame and ride your wolf. I told them Nina is into no such thing and to not spread misinformation about her, but I fear the rumors will spread, anyway.'

'What do we do? | ask.

'I think Nina and you can stay at home and school here for the next couple of weeks until the rumors stop spreading.'

Seth set up two desks for Nina and me in the packhouse. Dad thought Seth would be best at being our teacher. He was the most boring teacher and would drag on for hours, talking about the same topics. I scrunched up a roll of paper and threw it at the back of his head. Nina and I laughed but stopped when he turned around, unimpressed.

'Which one of you threw that?' Nina and I both shrugged and tried to hold in our laughter.

Later on, we made paper airplanes and threw them in the air. They flew and crashed into the whiteboard.

"Are you two going to listen to the lesson and learn something or not? This is the last semester of the year until you both graduate.' He huffed.

Almost two weeks after Seth's gruelling home-schooling goes by. It's now the weekend of Zak's wolf ceremony.

I think it will be okay for you to both return to school on Monday,' pad says.

'Thank goodness Dad, I don't think I could handle any more lessons from Seth.' I laugh.

"Me either.' Nina says. I'll see you at the ceremony tonight.'

"Wait, where are you going?' I ask.

Ium..I'm going to see Moss...'

"What! But why?

'We haven't spoken to each other ever since your ceremony. I was going to talk to him at school that day about some things, but you ended up shifting and we haven't been back at school since. He has been wanting to speak to me and I want to talk to him before I see him at the ceremony tonight'

"Do you want me to come with you?

Nina bursts into laughter,

"Because that would go down so well, wouldn't it?'

Fine, I'll see you at the ceremony tonight'

She hugs me goodbye I decide to hang out with Josie, Flint, and Zak

I can't believe it's my first shift tonight

'You must be thrilled I still have to wait another year' Flint mumbles,

'At least you don't have to wait two years like me.' Josie pouts.

'That's true.' Flint replies.

'Zak, are you okay if I invite my friend Pipsqueak to attend the ceremony?'

"Sure, although I don't know who that is, though.'

'Cool, thanks.' I say.

It's time for the ceremony. Pipsqueak is running late and I haven't seen Nina yet.

The banquet is ready, and we all take our seats.

'Mum, dad have you seen Nina?'

'Not since around lunchtime.' Dad says.

'No, I've been busy helping prepare the ceremony all day.' Mum says.

Leon and Amelia join us at the table.

'Is Nina on her way?' I ask them.

They give each other a morbid look.

'No, we thought she was here with you already?' Amelia says.

'She was with me at lunch and said she was going to meet up with Moss to talk things out, then she would be here for the ceremony.'

Maybe they are busy making out?' May jokes as she sits next to her mum. Everyone gives her the 'really?' look. 'What, I'm serious. They were pretty chummy when I saw them at the park earlier today?'

'What do you mean?' I ask.

'They were sitting at the park bench talking and Moss had his arm over the back of the seat where Nina sat.' I didn't stop to chat though. I figured Nina would accuse me of spying on her and she still hasn't been talking to me, anyway.' Nina frowns.

'We will give her a little more time then until we send out warriors to search for her then.' Leon says.

We have finished eating and are becoming worried. Zak takes his spot under the light of the moon and begins his shift.

His shift is much quicker and smoother than mine was. Within a few minutes, he is in his wolf form and lets out a howl. Seth and Mia shift and race through the woods. Pippa finally arrives, panting and struggling for breath. I quickly catch her before she falls.

'Nina, gone, taken, tried to help her, got here soon as could.'

"What?" Leon and I say in unison.

"Did you say Nina has been kidnapped?" Leon asks.

She pushes her glasses up towards her eyes, nodding.

'Yes, Moss took her.'

The colour from Leon's and my face drain.

Zak returns from the run, sniffing the air and wagging his tail. He shifts instantly into human form and runs up to Pipsqueak, panting for all and lifts her up into the air, then holds her tight against his chest,

Marel' he says, squeezing her so tight she whimpers and her glasses fall to the ground

Zak, I need to speak with Pipsqueak urgently' I tell him.

'Miner he snarled, holding her tight

Pipsqueak? Pippa says. That's Pippa, you idiot

Whatever, we don't have time for names. Moss has kidnapped Nina and we need to know which way they have gone.

'South. Pipsqueak manages to say

Zak kisses her face and neck a hundred times, causing her to blush as red as a beetroot.

T-that T-tickles.' She laughs at him.

Leon and I both run from the ceremony hall, then stop to brief each other.

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You can't shift into your wolf, Magnus. I suggest we go south by car, otherwise, you won't be able to keep up.'

He is right. I nod and we run towards the packhouse.

Seth, mind links the pack warriors to head south and begin tracking Nina.

While I jump into the passenger seat of his car. He speeds off into the distance. We can see the warriors in the distance in their wolf forms, all spread out.

If he lays one finger on my sister, I'll kill him.' May growls in the back seat.

Leon siams on the brakes.

May, what are you doing here? Go back to the packhouse.'

"No, I've never been there for Nina when she has needed me. I've been a terrible sister to her, to the point she doesn't even talk to me anymore But she needs me now more than ever and I'm going to help save her whether I come with you or go on my own. She growls at her dad, Leon,

'You better buckle up then.' Leon says and speeds ahead.

Chapter 53

It's 3 am, we have driven all the way through the major city. We have been driving with the windows down to keep track of Nina's scent. Leon is growing weary and tired.

"Leon, maybe I should drive for a while?"

'No, Nina's scent is becoming fainter. We don't have time to pull over, not even for a moment. You know last time I came through this city to track down a scent, it was to find your mother after Alice the cook threatened to kill her.'

Why would the cook threaten to kill my mother?'

"Her daughter Vanessa, was in love with your father and was to become his chosen mate and Luna. He didn't love Vanessa though; the council was forcing the arrangement onto him and then everything changed when he met your mother. He was so happy to have found your mother, Astrid. I remember when she wouldn't believe we were werewolves or that they existed. Jim from the diner shifted in front of her and boy, did she cry wolf! The Diner was a mess after that. We had found your mother in Shady Crest. Alpha Zenith had been keeping her prisoner in the cells and was going to make his son mark her. He had captured Seth when he was looking for her in the city and placed him down in the cells with her, too. That's where I met Amelia, my mate. She was down there too.'

'Mum was a prisoner at Shady Crest?' May says bewildered.

Yes, she was. We were able to free them all just in time, as Astrid had her first shift. Any longer and it would have been too late, as Alpha Zenith's son would have marked and mated her.'

Dad had an arranged mateship against his will, just as I currently have, but then he met Mum just in time to break the arrangement. Now, ironically, I'm in the same boat. I just have to break Nina's curse.

'Shit, I can't smell her scent.' Leon says.

He pulls over and shifts into his wolf and sniffs around. May and step out of the car. Although we can pick up scents, it is much easier to do so in wolf form.

He mind-links the warriors.

'They have also lost her scent and have spread out further to cover all tracks.' He tells us.

Should we spread out too?' May asks.

'No, if we continue south, we will eventually hit snowy weather and we won't be able to pick up anyone's scent, and may become lost. Let's follow this road South for now and hopefully we will pick her scent up again along the way.'

By 8 am we are half asleep. Leon swerves the car as he falls asleep.

'Leon! I yell, grabbing the steering wheel. He wakes up and quickly puts his foot on the brake.

'We are no good, dead to Nina. We have no choice but to sleep, then continue searching for her.' May yells.

Neither of us argues with her. She is right.

Leon pulls over and we sleep in the car and wake in the afternoon.

"We should eat' May says

'No, we should get drying and find Nina'

Dad! You need to eat, we all do what good are we if we are weak when we find her and need to fight?'

Leon stays silent as he drives to a diner

fast quickly.' He says

We bod, watkin, and place our order

I literally whale my massive pile of eggs and bacon down. While Mav inhales a stack of teen pancakes swimming in golden Syrup

Leon eats the breakfast platter with baked beans, bacon, toast, and mushrooms,

As soon as we finish eating, we head to the car. I take over driving while Leon sticks his head out the window and tries to pick up Nina's scent. We spend all afternoon and half the night driving. Panic is building up inside me as I fear for Nina's safety.

pull over just in time as my eyes turn black and yell in pain.

His wolf dad! We have to stop him from shifting.' May yells.

May jumps out of the back seat and opens up the driver's side. It's dark, but being werewolves, we can see well. May holds my hand,

Think of Nina, think of all the fun times you had. The swims in the lake, the trees you climbed, the time she filled the washing machine with bubble bath.'

My wolf calms and I burst into laughter at the memory.

'It wasn't Nina who filled it with bubbles, it was me. It was always me doing the wrong thing. Yet she always took the blame. She was always protecting me.' I confess.

'Nina got into so much trouble because of that.' Leon growls.

I suppose now is the time to confess. I also broke May's window and hid in her closet. Nina was with me, but she didn't hide. Instead, yet again she took the blame.' A terrible feeling washes over me.

'Nina, please be okay.' I cry out to the moon.

Something whacks my head.

*Ow!' I look up at May

'That's for breaking my window.' She whacks me again.

Ow!'

That's for letting Nina take the blame.'

She goes to whack me across the head again.

"And this one is for you to snap out of it and pull yourself together,

Leon grabs her wrist in time.

That's enough May, it's obvious he has learned his lesson and feels guilty for it.'

May sighs 'You're right, let's get some sleep and continue our search when we wake.'

We fall asleep and wake up mid-morning

Seth Mind-Links the warriors and my dad. There has been no sighting of Nina or Moss

ad warns frie to return home

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ungong back home until Nina is safe' I block the mind-link before my dad can argue with me

wie siop al penal slation and fill up the tank. May and I grab as many packets of chips, snack bars, and water as we can carry and

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the other packa know Moss has

kidnapped Nina. They will let him know if there are any sightings of Nina or Moss.

Your father is ordering us to return home. I won't be returning until I find Nina. Perhaps you two should...'

"No! May and I shout.

We are staying. We won't go back either until we find Nina.' I growl.

'Let's drive to the next town and ask locals there if they have seen Nina' May says.

We spend four hours driving to the next town. It's just as cold as the town we had come from.

May and I are in the back seat, hovering our hands over the car heater. Our breath is foggy from the cold air.

"Do you think Moss is looking after her?' May sobs.

"If he truly cares for Nina, he would not have kidnapped her. I just hope she is okay, and that she knows we won't give up on her.'

'It's her eighteenth next week. If we haven't found her by then, maybe she will shift and be able to fight Moss and free herself?'

'May, I don't think I could go another day without her.'

Chapter 54

As soon as it's daylight, we hit the streets and show the group photo of my ceremony with Nina in it.

'Excuse me, sir, have you seen this girl by any chance?'

'No sorry.'

'Excuse me, miss, have you seen this girl?'

'No, I haven't

We are just about to call it a day when an older lady looks harder at the photo.

'I haven't seen the girl you are looking for, but I have seen him.' She says pointing to Moss standing behind Nina in the photo.

'Are you sure? When and where did you see him?' | ask.

'Moss, I think his name is. He is the future Alpha of a pack of ruthless, mongrel rogues that formed years ago.'

'He's a future Alpha?' I say, in complete shock.

'Yes, his mother is well known around here too, and not for good reasons either. Their pack members are always stealing from all the surrounding towns and villages. They have even kidnapped she-wolves and force mateships between those she-wolves and their rogues.'

May, Leon, and I look at each other in shock at what we are hearing.

"We have to tell Alpha Ryker.' Leon says and mind-links him immediately.

'Where does the pack live?' | ask.

'They live in the woods amongst caves that link. It's about a one-hour drive south from here.'

A few she-wolves walk past us giggling, one winks at me.

'Shoo, shoo! May yells and chases after them.

I try not to laugh, but I appreciate her scaring them away. Finding my mate is the last thing on my mind. The only thing that could make me truly happy right now is finding Nina and bringing her back home.

Alpha Ryker said he will organise Warriors from packs near here to help us free Nina and any other She-wolves that have been taken.'

"That could take hours, days even!' | growl. 'We need to go now.'

The woman laughs.

"Finding her isn't as simple as it sounds. You will need to bring someone with you that knows where their hidden traps are and which caves are the right ones to go through. You will be lost forever if you go down the wrong cave.' she cackles.

Couldn't you come with us?' May asks.

'I could, but I might be growing too old for these kinds of adventures.'

May looks her up and down and takes her arm.

"You don't look a day over fifty-nine she smiles. 'Now hop in, you're coming with us.' May says.

'What's your name? | ask

'Mabel' She smiles

'I'm...'

'Magnus, May, and Leon. Am I right?'

"How do you know that?

Mabel ignores my question and points up ahead.

Take the second left from there.' She says.

Leon takes the left turn and drives for roughly twenty more minutes.

The rest of the way will have to be on foot. No car gets through those trees.' She says, pointing towards the woods.

May grabs a backpack from the car and puts a few snack bars and bottles of water inside.

'Alpha Ryker wants us to wait for backup.' Leon says.

'We need to at least find Nina and assess the situation. If it's not safe, we will wait for backup.' I say.

Everyone nods, including Mabel.

Once we enter the woods, Mabel picks up a thick, long branch.

'You will all need one of these.' She says.

What for?' Leon asks as she uses it in front of her as if she were blind. We hear a snap sound; she pauses.

This is why.' She smiles.

A log tied to rope comes swinging down, missing Mabel by inches.

'Woah! May says.

'Use the branches to activate any traps. Stop as soon as you hear any kind of sound and step back until the trap is active. Then you can continue around it.'

'Clever.' Leon says, finding himself and May a branch.

I look around and take a perfectly placed branch off the ground. As I pick it up, I'm yanked back by the old lady just as wooden spikes pop up from the ground in front of me.

'Not that branch.' She smiles.

I stare back at the branch that had a rope tied around it. As I had picked it up, it pulled the rope, activating the spikes that were supposed to penetrate through my chest. I take a less obvious branch and begin gliding it across the ground in front of me. We follow Mabel's lead. It's obvious she has been here before.

'This way. She says for the fiftieth time.

At this rate, the warriors will be there before us.

Mabel laughs

'What's so funny?' I ask.

'Nothing, nothing at all. She says with a bemused look on her face.

'There's a cave over here.' May says

Not that one, dear'

But it looks sate and there's plenty of light down there'

'Ahto be young and naive 'Mabel says,

And what is that supposed to mean, lady?' May hufis

de means you're young and dumb, my dear

I cover my thouth and cannot for the life of me contain my laugh The look on May's face is priceless

Why you old oronel Mey says, about to throw a stone at her

Her dad grabs her what just in the

May, she's old You know to respect your elders' Leon growls at her

But she started it

"May, I don't care. You are proving her to be right, acting like a child.'

Well, I am sixteen dad, technically I'm still a child so I'm only acting how I should act!'

Leon rubs his head.

'The day you find your mate, I'll worry about him. That's for sure.' Leon says.

'Dad! How can you say that? You're just as bad as the old crone, you know!'

Leon holds his hand up to silence May.

'Shh, you hear that?'

May stops her tantrum and we all listen.

'What do you hear, dad?' May whispers.

I hear silence, and that's all I want to hear. Now be quiet so we can focus on finding your sister.

Again, I have to cover my mouth with my hand to contain my laugh. May turns and glares at me. I gulp and swallow my laughter down, but keep the smirk on my face.

Mabel has a grin as wide as the Nile River plastered on her face.

We continue to follow Mabel quietly until she comes to a stop in front of a dark cave.

'The other cave looked much more welcoming than this one.' May pouts.

You wouldn't last five minutes in that cave, dear. Looks can be deceiving. This one here may be dark and gloomy, but I guarantee you it leads to the ruthless rogue pack.' Mabel says.

Leon shifts into his wolf to see better. I want to shift too, but it will take too long and the rogues will hear my screams of pain, which will give us away.

Mabel flicks a stick, and a tiny ball of light appears like a flame but invisible. She hands it to me and Nicks her finger against the tip of another stick and hands it to May.

"How did you do that?" May says in amazement.

I look down at Mabel.

You're a witch?

'Shh' She smiles, 'This way.' She waves.

We follow her through the shallow, murky water.

I can hear the sounds of frogs and rats. May is shaking like a leaf at the number of cobwebs and spiders we pass. The one cave now has three different wunnels. We stop and stare at the three tunnels.

"Which one is the right way?" I ask Mabel.

Always keep to the left on the way in and keep to the right on the way out.'

I turn to thank her as she vanishes into the shadows

How did she disappear like that?' May asks

Magic' I shrug

So, which way do we go?

Left, let's go

Chapter 55

We trudge down the left tunnel, holding our magically lit sticks in the air that illuminates the cave. Leon, still in wolf form, grabs a rat and eats it.

'So gross, dad! May says.

Leon ignores her and finishes his meal. We continue through the tunnel to find another two tunnels.

We go left.' I say before May even asks.

The tunnel becomes smaller. I have to bend my head down to fit. After what feels like hours of being in here, we finally see light at the end of the tunnel.

We can hear yelling in the distance and approach with caution. Peeking our heads out, it is almost nightfall. I touch the end of the lit stick. It's not hot, so I tuck it into my pocket to hide the glow. May does the same. We follow the sound of people yelling. There are some thick bushes nearby. I signal for Leon and May to follow me. I crawl into the bushes and inspect the commotion.

There is a large circle of stones with sticks and branches in the middle, waiting to be lit. A large stone chair carved out of what had once been a boulder was now in its place. It has a throne-like look to it.

There is a she-wolf with her hands tied together with rope. A rogue approaches her from behind and kicks her down to the ground.

"Hurry and fetch the wine, wench!" He yells.

A dozen rogues appear exiting from another cave nearby. The she-wolf, with her hands tied, runs into the cave. After a few minutes, she exits the cave with a jug and places it by the stone chair. Another she-wolf exits the cave carrying a jug. She looks to be around my mum's age. As the moon rises, more rogues appear and gather around the circle of stones.

The rogues chant 'Moss, Moss, Moss!' He enters the ceremony, chest out, with a pompous look on his face as if he is ultimate and superior to all.

'I can't see Nina anywhere.' I say.

I can't see her either.' May says.

Moss approaches the stone throne and sits; he takes a chalice from the ground and looks at the poor girl on the ground with the jug of wine.

"Hurry and fill my damn cup. You're probably the most useless slave yet.'

"Yes Alpha, Sorry Alpha' she says, kneeling and filling his chalice.

'Is everyone ready for my wolf ceremony?' he yells.

Yes! Everyone cheers,

'Someone, bring out our future Luna so we can get this party started!' He cheers.

They dragged Nina out of the cave. Her hands are tied, she is unkempt, with a few scrapes and bruises on her lower legs and knees. It's obvious they have kept her in a dirty cell all this time.

My eyes are black with rage. My wolf wants to kill every rogue celebrating. Pain surges through my body as I'm about to yell at my pain. May covers my mouth with her hand tightly.

Don't you dare make a sound! I swallow my pain and focus to control my wolf. Once I'm calm, I watch as someone forcibly places Nina on the ground on the other side of the stone throne.

The slave and Irina give each other a sympathetic look.

Smile Nina, it's my wolf ceremony. At least pretend to be happy. Moss says.

Nina spits at his feet.

I'll smile when I turn your wolf ceremony into your wolf's funeral. She yells.

'If you weren't my chosen mate, you would get ten lashes. Instead, I'll give your punishment to Gianna for your insolence.'

Gianna must be the slave; she bursts into tears.

'No, you can't punish her. Leave her alone, punish me instead.' Nina cries.

Moss nods for two rogues to take Gianna to a post and loops her tied hands over it. Nina runs to Gianna and hugs her tight.

'No, get away from her!' Nina screams.

Another rogue approaches and drags Nina away back towards Moss.

We need to do something; we can't just sit back and watch.' I say to May.

'They outnumber us. What do we do?' she asks.

Moss grabs Nina's wrist, and she tries to punch him in the face a few times. He laughs and pulls her onto his lap and holds her arms down. He is going to force Nina to watch Gianna receive ten lashes.

My eyes are black again. I yell in pain as the rogue gives Gianna her first lash.

She screams, but they stop the lashing and turn towards my yells of pain.

This isn't good. They know we are here.' May says.

I'm going to shift; I can't control my wolf.' I tell her.

'Dad and I will distract them for as long as we can while you shift.

Inod and yell as a few bones snap.

The stick in May's pocket glows brighter. We all stare at it in awe as rogues approach.

I wonder?' May says as she pulls it out and holds it up in the air. 'The spells we read in the book of spells and hexes, Magnus! She says.

I'm confused. I give her a strange look before another bone breaks.

May steps out from the bushes and holds the stick high in the air and yells 'Tumultuous Volley!'

Thunder erupts, and dark clouds appear and swirl around high above the rogues.

Tumultuous Volley is one spell in the book I had read. It summons a storm and strikes enemies down with lightning.

The rogues pause and look up at the storm brewing above them. One by one, lightning strikes them down. She-wolves scream and scatter.

Moss and the others look on with horror.

'May!' Nina screams.

The rogues spread out to avoid the storm and run towards May.

Oh no, M-Magnus, what was the flame spell?'

'inferno Flamo'1 yell.

Inferno Flamo.' She repeats loudly.

A ball of flame appears. May aims and flings it towards a rogue, then another ball of flame appears. She knocks down as many as she can, as they run towards the creek to put the flames out.

I've finally shifted I let out a fierce howl Leon stays by my side as we attack the rogues. We lunge and bite into them and fling their bodies away An elderly she wolf comes out of the cave with a furious look on her face. The rogues that can shift into a wolf do so and run towards Leon and me

We are getting closer to M068, who is dragging Nina towards the old lady and the other woman As they take Nina's wrists, he falls to the ground and yells as his bones snap Mis fusi shit has begun

Within a couple of minutes, he has shifted His wolf is large and brown with a grey tail and grey ears Not a handsome wolf at all. must be twice my size as well

He lets out a terrible howl, not the least bit intimidating, and runs towards Leon and me fighting his rogues. Moss lunges at Leon and bites his leg. Leon whimpers and tries to fight off another rogue already attacking him. I lunge at Moss and knock him over with ease. Balls of flame are shooting past us and thick fog appears everywhere as May yells.

Tremendous Nebulus!

The only person I can see is Moss, who is snarling and snapping his teeth at me. I can hear Nina yelling my name.

Magnus!

Moss lunges at me. I snap my teeth over his front leg, breaking it. He lets out a howl of pain and snarls back at me. Before he makes his next move, I lunge, knocking him onto his back. I press my front paws on his chest to keep him down and rip ferociously into his neck. He falls limp as a puddle of blood forms on his torn open neck. As the fog dissipates the woman around my mother's age lets out a horrific scream and runs towards Moss's dead body.

"No! Not my son, he can't be dead!" she screams cradling his head. I take a few steps back. She looks up at me with a fierce stare.

'You, you will pay for this. I should have killed your mother long ago and now I will kill you too!'

Chapter 56

The elderly woman grabs the younger woman's shoulder but stares at me.

'It's over for now, but this won't be the last you see of us.' She hisses.

I growl and step towards them. May places her hand on my back.

'No, let them go. We need to find Nina. We can worry about them later.'

She says as the two women quickly shift and run away. I shift back and yell in pain. After a few minutes, I'm in my human form. Leon shifts back as well.

'Nina!' I cry out. 34

There are dead bodies everywhere. Gianna is sobbing. May approaches her and unties her from the post and the rope from her wrists. I hear a moan and a mumble and run towards the sound. Pushing a couple of bodies aside, I find Nina.

'Nina, I'm here. You're safe now.' I say, untying her wrists. She squints her eyes, letting them adjust. The look of relief shows on her face. She sits up and lunges into my lap, wrapping her arms around my neck, and cried into my chest.

'You came for me, you found me.'

'Of course, we came for you, Nina. I would search the ends of the Earth for you.'

She cries even louder and holds me tighter.

'I thought I'd never see you again.'

Leon approaches.

"Dad." Nina stands up and runs into his arms.

'My baby girl, I was so worried.'

Nina looks over to May, who is looking at the whiplash on Gianna's back.

May, Gianna.' She says, releasing herself from Leon.

May and Nina hug.

'I thought you hated me?' May asks.

'Although you have been a horrible sister to me all my life, I'm glad you're here.' Nina checks Gianna's back.

'It's already healing.' She says.

I've had my wolf for a month now, which means I heal quickly.' Gianna says to me, May and Leon.

'Are you okay?'" I ask Gianna.

'I will be now that Moss and his rogues are dead.' She says, forcing a smile.

"How long have you been captive here for? | ask.

"Over a year. I think so anyway. They would never tell me what day or month it was.'

'What pack did they take you from?

"I was never a pack I lived in an orphanage and they kicked me and anyone else who turned sixteen years old out I spent a year uying on the streets until one night, when I was about to fall asleep, a man approached me, sniffing the air. He smiled at me and said she wolf and took me away to join them. They wanted me to join them for you know and I didn't want to be used. I didn't want to be there i was better off in the streets than here. She frowns

Gianna, we would love you to join our pack, a real pack where you will have freedom and friendships?' i offer

"You would really want me to come with you?' she says with a raised eyebrow

'Yes, we would.'

She looks at Nina, who smiles and nods her head yes at Gianna.

Gianna cries and hugs Nina.

'If it's not too much trouble, then I would love to come with you all

'Well Gianna,' May smiles. 'We must introduce ourselves. I'm Nina's younger sister May and this is our father Leon and our future Alpha, Magnus.

I'm so happy to meet you all.' She smiles.

Nina takes a step back in thought.

'Um May, how did you summon a storm, fireballs, and fog?'

'Well, you see. We can across a witch who led us here. She gave Magnus and me a stick and made it light up like a torch. When we were in trouble, the wand illuminated more and I had the sudden urge to say a spell out loud from the book of spells and hexes Magnus showed us. Then I realised they weren't just sticks but wands. So, I shouted one spell out loud and it worked.'

'But only witches can use wands, so how is this possible?' Leon asks.

I take the wand from my pocket and whirl it around and point at a shrub, 'Inferno Flamo.' I say and we watch as nothing happens.

I pass the wand to Gianna. 'Inferno Flamo?' she says. Again, nothing happens.

'Why does it only work for May?' | ask.

Nina takes the wand. 'Inferno Flamo.' She says, and a gigantic ball of flame appears and flies fiercely through the air over a mountain. We hear the impact in the distance, causing a touch of smoke to rise into the sky.

Everyone has a look of shock on their faces as we all turn to stare at Nina.

'Umm oops, a daisy?'

'Oops, a daisy?' May says. "You just summoned a ball of flame the size of a house and made it fly a kilometre away! And all you can say is "Oops a daisy?'

'Well gee May, ever think I might be just as shocked as you all are with what I just did? What do you expect me to say?'

'I just want to know why you girls can use wands? This is not normal for a wolf to wield magic.' Leon says, confused.

Maybe it's just temporary?' I suggest.

'It's going to take us a week to get back to Shadow Crest. This is very dangerous. We mustn't mention this magic to anyone in the pack other than Alpha Ryker and Our Luna Astrid. Got it?'

We all nod in agreement and enter the cave we came from.

Keep to the right.' I say as we reach two separate tunnels. Nina and May hold their wands up, illuminating the cave. We step out of the exit and into the woods. The only light we can see is from the wands lighting our path. Nina and May yawn.

'Let's make a fire and sleep here the night. We are all exhausted and it must be around 2 am.' I say.

The girls sit down next to each other while Leon and I gather sticks and bundle them together.

'Inferno Flamo.' Nina says, pointing her wand at the bundle of sticks. A flame the size of my hand shoots from the wand to the stick, setting them alight. Leon and I give her a look.

'What? she says

I sit next to Nina on the end as she hovers her hands close to the fire, warming them up. She leans her head on my shoulder. I can feel her body shaking from the cold. I drape my arm over her shoulder to give her my body warmth.

As I wake up, i can feel something warm covering me. I open my eyes and look down to see Nina asleep with her hand and head on my chest

My hand strokes her arm until she wakes Her eyes flutter open and we smile at one another and sit up.

'Let's wake the others.' I say.

Nina nods and wakes Gianna and May up while I wake Leon up.

I'm so thirsty' Gianna says, stretching her arms out..

'We have bottles of water and snacks in the car. You can help yourself as soon as we are there.' I tell her.

"How far away is the car?'

'About an hour's walk.'

"Okay.' She smiles.

Nina and I walk side by side as the others walk ahead.

What does it feel like to wield magic?" I ask her.

'Honestly, it feels amazing. It's a shame I won't be able to show it off back at Shadow Crest.' She laughs.

Josie would think it's the best thing ever.'

"Until I turn her into a frog.' We both burst into laughter.

'Was that spell even in the book? I don't recall reading it in there.'

"No, but I'm going to have to study the book thoroughly, so I can learn all the spells I carr cast.'

'If my parents learn about the spell book, they might take it away from us. It's the only thing we have that can help us break your curse.'

'Then the book can remain a secret then.' She smiles.

Chapter 57

We arrive at the car.

T'll mind-link Alpha Ryker and let them know we have Nina and that we are safe.'

I open the back passenger door. Gianna steps in, then Nina. May sits in the front. My heart rate increases as I get to sit next to Nina. I unzip the bag at my feet and pass out a bottle of water to everyone. Nina and Gianna scull the water down before I hand them snacks. They moan as they eat the food, especially Gianna. She ends up eating a packet of chips, a muesli bar and three chocolate bars.

This is so good; I've never had food like this before, not even when I was at the orphanage.' She says with her mouth full of food.

We will get you a proper meal when we reach the next town.' Leon says to her while adjusting the rear-view mirror.

As we reach the town, we park outside the diner. We raced inside, causing a lot of attention from the diners and staff. We sit at the nearest table and wave the waitress over. She takes the pen from behind her ear and the notepad from her pocket.

What would you like to order, please?' she smiles.

T'll have pancakes with syrup and ice cream on top, a cherry pie, fries, bacon, and eggs on toast, and a milkshake.' Nina blurts out.

We all look at her, then at the waitress and all say at once.

T'll have the same.'

Very well then.' The waitress says.

We eat as if it's our last supper and waddle back to the car.

'We can get a motel in this town or if we get back on the road, we can reach the next town by nightfall?'

'I think the sooner we get back home, the better, so let's get back on the road and get to the next town.'

As long as I get a bath today, then I don't care.' Nina says looking down at her dirty arms and legs.

We reach the next town just on nightfall and enter the motel. I pay for two rooms next to each other. They both have a single bed and a double in each room, with a bathroom attached to each room.

"May, are you able to go see if you can find some clean clothes for Nina and Gianna while they freshen up?'

T'll see what I can do.' She says and leaves the motel room.

"You girls can take this room and Leon and I will be in the room next door. Nina, while Gianna baths in here, you can come and use the bath in my bathroom?"

Sure, that would be great'

Gianna walks into the bathroom and locks the door behind her, while Nina and I walk into my room. I open the bathroom door and close it behind her.

I'm going to get us some takeaway food from up the road. I'll be back soon.' Leon says.

The sound of water filling up the tub while I lay on my bed in silence

Magnus? Nina calls

"Yeah? | stand up and walk to the bathroom door 'Is everything okay?"

"Yeah, um, I just want to make sure I wasn't alone

"You're not alone, and you'll never be alone again I say, with my head leaning against the bathroom door

Do you promise the same after a moment of silence

I open the door and walk out to the tub, on the floor

The bubbles are up to her neck. She most likely poured an entire bottle into the bath. I smile to myself, thinking of the washing machine incident

We turn our heads facing each other.

I'm scared, Magnus. Moss's mum is going to come after us. I just know it.'

I won't let her harm you.'

'But what if she finds a way?'

'Mark my word, Nina, I will kill her before she ever lays a finger on you again.'

I wish if it was something else you could mark.' She whispers and stares sadly into my eyes.

Just like I have powerful feelings for Nina, she has practically just confessed her feelings to me. Our faces lean in slowly, our lips brush as we are about to kiss. Then she quickly sits back, taking in a deep breath.

'Magnus, we can't do this. We aren't mates. It would be wrong of us. It's forbidden for us to even consider being together.' She

sobs.

I want to hold her; I want to kiss her and make love to her and never let her go. Seeing her so sad like this is breaking my heart.

I reach my hand out to caress her cheek.

Magnus, please, don't. I need you to stop. I need you to go.'

'But...'

'Go!'

I stand up and immediately leave the bathroom. As soon as I shut the door, I hear Nina burst into tears. I'm overwhelmed and confused; I need some air. Leaving the room, I bump into May, causing her to drop the clothes she carries. I don't stop to help pick up the clothes, instead; I speed walk out of the motel altogether as she yells after me.

Magnus, is everything ok?' I ignore her.

Running up a hill, I sit on top and stare up at the moon.

What's wrong with me? Why do I have feelings for Nina when she isn't my mate? Why does it have to be forbidden to have a chosen mate instead of a fated mate?' I cry into my hands and remain there for hours.

I return to the motel to find a frantic Leon.

Where have you been?' he says and takes in my morbid-looking face.

'What happened Magnus? You look worse than Nina does.' He frowns.

I don't answer and walk into our room, kicking my shoes off and pulling my shirt over my head, and tossing it aside. I climb into the closest bed and cover myself, including my face with the covers, and sleep.

Leon wakes me up

I know you have had little sleep, Magnus, but we need to go so we can get through a few towns.'

Leon passes me my shirt I take a quick shower and get dressed, and walk straight to the car. May is already in the front passenger

seat, which I was hoping to take. Gianna is in the back seat and Leon is in the driver's seat. I notice Nina isn't in the car yet. I open the back passenger door and sit beside Gianna, and we wait for Nina

As ever young okay Magnus? You seemed a bit upset last night I noticed Nina was upset, too. Did you two have a night of

anything? May asks

I struggle my shoulders and exhale back. Nina exits the motel wearing clean track pants and a plain shirt

The following day

I look in the first compartment which had lots of clothes the manager told me to help myself. May explains.

Let's go. She mumbles

After a few hours of driving, we stop for a toilet break and to stretch

Sitting at the table eating, everyone speaks, except for Nina and me. We sit as far away from each other as possible. It was obvious to everyone something was up, but they also knew not to get involved and say anything.

“How much longer until we get to Shadow Crest?” Gianna asks,

At this rate, two more nights. Which would be the night before Nina’s wolf ceremony, which the Alpha and Luna are already organising.’ Leon says.

Nina looks even sadder now that Leon mentioned her wolf ceremony. She abruptly stands up and walks away from the table and to the car.

“I guess that’s our cue to get back on the road then.’ May says.

The silent drive is almost deafening. I can tell May is struggling to not say anything.

It’s nightfall and we arrive at a motel. They only have one room available with two double beds.

“Who is going to sleep on the floor?’ May asks.

T’ll sleep in the car. You all go in.’ I say

‘Are you sure?

No, I’m not alright. I want to be by Nina’s side, even if it means sleeping on the floor. I’m upset Nina rejected me and that it’s forbidden for us to be together, but I don’t tell May that.

“Yes, I’m sure’ I grizzle and walk back to the car.

No matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t sleep and I couldn’t stop thinking about Nina. I felt like it was almost killing me. The thought of never being with Nina was almost too much to bear

Chapter 58

As soon as the sun rose, Leon came out to the car.

‘You look worse every time I see you, Magnus.’

“Are the girls ready to go? I want to get out of here.’ I say, ignoring his observations of me.

‘Yeah, I’ll tell them to hurry it up.’

“Good.’ I say and sit in the front passenger’s seat.

The girls climb in the back, talking to one another as I stare out the front window. I pull the visor in front of me down and slide the panel across, exposing the small mirror. Leon wasn’t wrong when he commented about my appearance. The bags under my eyes have only gotten bigger and darker. I notice May give Nina a look and gesture her head at me. She was hinting to Nina to say something to me. Nina gives May a glare and shakes her head no and looks out the side window, avoiding me.

Leon enters the driver’s seat and puts the radio on to break the silence.

May sings along to half the songs throughout the day. We stop for petrol and Leon buys snacks for everyone while we are there. The girls tell Leon they are going to the lady's room. Leon offers me to take some snacks but I refuse. I haven't really eaten much since Nina told me to go.

We all get back to the car and continue the drive.

'One more night at a motel and we should arrive at Shadow crest mid-morning tomorrow.' Leon says.

The girls are thrilled and excited. I look forward to seeing Flint, Josie, and my parents. I wonder how Zak and Pipsqueak are going? He is so lucky to have found his mate straight away. I've been through dozens of towns searching for Nina with no traces of a mate along the way. I would have smelt her scent if she was in the towns or villages. My inner wolf would have forced me to follow her scent.

"My wolf is aching to get out for a run.' Gianna says.

'Mine too, but I've been trying to hold it off for as long as I can. When we reach a rural area, we can shift and go for a quick run.' Leon says.

"That would be great.'

Half an hour goes by and Leon pulls over by some fields. He shifts behind the car and runs through the field. Gianna shifts and follows him on the run.

I can't wait until I can shift.' May says, watching them.

"You only have a couple more years to wait and at least in the meantime you can cast magic.' Nina says.

'That's true Let's go practice while they are having their run.'

Nine mods and exits the car. I'm the only one left in the car. I can't shift without it causing unbearable pain to join the others and Nine doesn't want me near her. I feel like an outsider, that I don't belong here. My inner wolf whines and whimpers, but I ignore him He doesn't like my thoughts, but I don't care

"What was the spell to casi waler? May asks Nina

w

was aque something?

"Yes, that'ng

i walch Moy swin bei wand around Aquabeadot nothing happens Aqua shaou again nothing Aqua burst

I sementer feeding the spark Aqua tedew" but I decide not to say anything and keep watching instead

"What are you guis dangt Leon

"Trywing lo

w

cost water' May swys wat lantly

“Girls. I don’t know how I feel about you doing magic. Just because you can do something doesn’t mean you should. You know magic is forbidden. Why do you think, the last remaining few witches, are in hiding? I want you girls to promise me no more magic until we have spoken Alpha Ryker and our Luna?”

‘Yes, dad.’ They both groan.

May and Nina begrudgingly get into the car and we drive for the rest of the day with no more stops until we reach the last town for the day.

Leon pays for two rooms again. One for the girls and one for us. Leon has a shower as I flick through the channels on the tv. The girls are giggling and carrying on in the next room. Frustrated with the tv I turn it off and remove my shoes and climb into bed. I’ll be happy to be home tomorrow and everything can go back to normal and I’ll finish the last few weeks of school graduate then mum and dad will probably tell me to hurry and find my mate so I can take over and become the next Alpha.

I sigh at the thought. If only it was going to be that easy.

The girls have become quiet. They have probably gone to bed. I switch the bedside lamp off and go to sleep,

As soon as I wake, I have my shower and dress. Leon hands me a plate with an egg and lettuce sandwich.

You need to eat something, Magnus.’

I don’t argue with him. I accept the plate and eat the sandwich.

Can you knock on the girl’s door and tell them to meet us in the car?’ Leon says.

‘Sure,’ I sigh.

I leave our room and knock on the door. Nina answers and we stare at each other in silence for a moment.

‘Your dad wanted me to tell you, girls, we are ready to get going.’

Oh, okay.’ She says and shuts the door.

Feeling defeated, I hop into the front passenger side of the car. Leon is already in the car. After twenty minutes, the girls all climb into the back seat.

After a few hours of driving, we drive past the Welcome to Shadow Crest sign. As soon as Leon parks the car, I jump out and run inside the packhouse. My mum is the first one I see. I wrap my arms around her tiny body and lift her off the ground-hugging her tight

‘Magnus, my boy. I missed you so much.’ She cries.

‘I missed you too, mum.’ I say and wipe her tears from her face.

Josie and Flint come running down the stairs. Josie flies into my chest first. I hug her tightly, then Flint and I hug each other.

Leon, Nina, May, and Gianna enter the packhouse. Mum hugs Nina.

I'm so glad you are back home.'

"Me too, Luna'

"Nina? Amelia yells running out from the kitchen. 'Nina.' She wraps her arms around her and kisses her face a hundred times.

I was so worried,'

Mum I'm okay now

My dad ellers and bringe me in for a hug

Gianie stands were awkwardly

Mum Dad, i Gianna They torced her to be a slave in Mosa's pack. My mum and Amelia gasp

's

okay #

jume au pack?

Of courte,

okay You poor Wang Mum &

wd pulls her in for a hug

Thank you to tenung we stay Gw

swy

*Tll show you to your room.' May says and takes her hand.

You must all be hungry. Let's have lunch and you can tell us everything.' Mum says.

Leon explains how we met Mabel and she led us to Moss's pack.

Magnus was trying to fight his wolf from shifting. They heard his fries of pain and that's when... May summoned a storm, balls of fire and fog saving us all.' Leon says, then nervously laughs.

Mum, Dad, Seth, Mia, Josie, and Flint burst into laughter. Except for Amelia, whose face becomes suddenly pale.

Good one, Leon, so continue. Tell us what really happened.' My father says.

Leon and I give each other a nervous look. Nina won't even look up from the table and fiddles nervously with her fingers.

Well, Alpha.. that's what actually happened.'

The room grows silent as they all stare at Leon.

it's true dad, Nina can cast the magic from the wands too.'

“That’s impossible. May and Nina are wolves, not witches.’ He says in a serious tone.

Nina gives me a worried look.

It’s okay Nina, show them.’ She hesitantly nods and stands up

She pulls the wand from her back pocket and swirls it around.

Aque

Bedew’ whisper

Slue gives me a small smile

Aqua Bedew. She says and swirls of water appear, and she directs it into a cup on the table.

Wie so quiet that I can hear everyone’s heart rate rapidly increase

Chapter 59

‘This is impossible.’ My father says, standing up. This can’t be happening. Magic has been long gone and forbidden for many years. We only found out that a few witches still exist when you had the terrible fever, Magnus.’

‘Nina, you and your sister cannot experiment with this. You are already in danger. If everyone finds out, you are cursed and that it affects Magnus and now to know you can cast magic. It will cause mass panic. Everyone will hunt you and May down. The only way to keep the secret safe is to not cast magic at all.’ My mother says.

I know how much being able to cast spells meant to Nina. She was trying hard to hold back any tears and hid her feelings from everyone.

We need to figure out how this is even possible.’ Dad says.

We all look at Leon and Amelia. Leon shrugs his shoulders.

I’m in just as much shock as you all are. I swear I do not know.’ He says, then looks at Amelia, who has the look of guilt written all over her face. ‘Amelia?’ Leon says.

Well, you see. There is something I have told no one before. I didn’t really see the point until now.’ She takes a deep breath. ‘My grandma was a witch.’

‘What?’ Everyone shouts in shock.

‘My grandfather was a wolf. It turned out my grandmother was a witch. They knew it wasn’t right, and it was unheard of, a witch and a wolf being fated mates. They tried hard to stay away from each other, but found it impossible. My mother and another child were born to them. Neither of them could wield magic, but both got their wolves at eighteen. My mother had me, and I never could wield magic. We all figured the wolf gene must have been stronger and having two generations without magic thought it would never happen to future generations. Now it seems it happened... two generations later. Nina and May are half-witch, half-wolf.’

We all look at one another, taking it all in.

'None of this information is to leave this room. Nina, I will leave it to you to tell May she is to no longer cast magic.' My dad says.

Nina stands up and runs up the stairs without saying a word, I know she is upset.

There's something else you and mum need to know, dad.' I say.

What's that?

Moss... is dead. I killed him. He shifted and came at me, intending to kill me. He would have taken Nina back.

"You did what you had to do to protect our pack members. I'm sure the wolf council will understand.'

"That's not all. His mother was there. She said, "You will pay for this. I should have killed your mother long ago and now I will kill you 100th You must know who she is?"

Mum and dad give each other a worried look.

Did you see her wolf? Any of their wolves? What colour were they?' she asks panicked,

Moos't wolf was brown with grey ears and a grey tail and when his mother shifted, she was small brown and scruffy with a grey patch on her side

'Vanessa' tum and dad, say together in shock My dad looks at Leon

Have double the warriors at each post in case Vanessa tries to attack us'

I dont w

Vanessa would be capable of much fatini on her own, though? I say

Don't underestimate tio bon Knowing Vanessa she will have more rogues somewhere Mum says

I leave the utile and go up to my 1006 May

medioom door is ajar I can hear Nina informing May that they are both banned from

"Tus is bountaut Way bayu I contre to iny roarn and close the door

I fall backwards onto my bed and stare up at the roof.

After a while, there was a knock at my door. It's May..

'Um hey, so I was wondering. Well, Nina was wondering if she could borrow the spell book from you... please?'

'She knows you are both banned from casting magic and spells. I can't loan either of you the book. Even I shouldn't have the book.'

'Please Magnus, at least let her borrow it just for tonight?'

I sigh and walk over to my school bag and unzip it and take the spell book out.

'I will give it to her, though.'

"Okay.' She smiles and follows me.

| stop and face May.

'Alone. 'I say.

"Oh... I'll just be going to my room then.' She says, annoyed.

I knock on Nina's door. It surprised her to see me, but she sees I'm holding the book in my arms.

'Come in.' she says, stepping aside.

I hand her the book, but I don't let go. 'Promise me you won't get caught casting magic?'

I'll try my best to not get caught.'

'That's not really a promise, Nina...'

I suggest you study as much as you can tonight from the book because I'm only letting you borrow it for tonight.'

'One night?' she protests.

'I'm not risking you being exiled or hunted down, Nina. If you need to study the book in the future, then we will do it together so I can at least keep a watch out for anyone snooping around.'

She looks at the spell book in thought and looks up at me and nods.

'Deal

'Tomorrow is your wolf ceremony, it's going to be a busy day. Read what you can now and get some sleep. You will need all the energy you can get for your first shift tomorrow night.' I smile.

She walks me to her door and closes it behind me. My wolf wants to shift and go for a run. He is very restless all night. I struggle to get any sleep. Everyone is having breakfast. I'm surprised to see Pipsqueak at the table but then remember she is Zak's mate, so it's only natural she lives in the packhouse with him now. We give each other a smile and a wave. Zak enters the dining room with a growl and pulls Pipsqueak from her chair.

Mine' He growls, glaring at me.

Gee, is it normal for the male bond to make you so possessive? | ask.

Sule is 'Mia laughs

'The mute band is a funny thing to experience' Sule smiles at Mia

It's the most magical feeling Mum says 'e like static electricity when you touch each other. You can't stop thinking about your mate and years to be with them every second of the day you feel broken and empty whenever you are apart. And let's not forget the

and blowing kisses you have 'Mun laughs

'Yeah, exciting.' Nina mumbles.

"Let's hope there is no drama's this time, unlike Zak's wolf ceremony where Nina had been kidnapped.' Mum says with a nervous laugh. Nina leaves the table as soon as she finishes breakfast. She runs upstairs and runs back down, now wearing a backpack.

I'll be back in time for the ceremony.' She yells.

'Okay sweetheart. Leon says.

I decide to sneak out and follow her. She ends up by the lake and pulls the spell book out.

'Aqua Bedew.' She says, twirling her wand. I watch as all the water comes together like a tornado. All the water from the lake is gone and continues to swirl up in the air.

'Cool.' I say, standing behind her. She flinches in fright and the water from the lake drops like a giant blob. The impact causes water to splash onto us

She glares at me, drenched in water.

Chapter 60

You scared me, Magnus! Don't sneak up on me like that again.'

"Sorry.' I say, ringing my shirt out.

Nina moves over to a dry area on the grass. I sit opposite her.

What are you doing, Magnus?'

Monitoring you so you don't get caught.'

I will not get caught, Magnus.'

'What spell are you going to try now?' I say, changing the subject.

'There is one here called The Blinking Spell, which says to focus on an area you can see in the distance and wave your wand and say Skedaddle Dash. This will port you in that area. This spell can make you blink or teleport up to a one thousand metre radius at a time.'

Think of how quickly you can get to school with that spell?' I laugh.

Nina rolls her eyes and stands up. She walks roughly five metres away from me and looks past me into the distance.

'Okay, here goes nothing.' She says, waving her wand. 'Skedaddle Dash!'

She disappears for a split second; I suddenly felt a weight on my lap. I look down to see Nina blushing as I hold her like a baby in my arms.

I burst into laughter. 'I like this spell a lot.'

She shoves my chest and crawls out of my lap.

That's not what was supposed to happen.' She growls.

'Well, you must have wanted to be in my arms, Nina. The magic only ports you to where you want to be within a one thousand metre radius, remember.' I say, waddling my index finger at her.

"You're so stupid Magnus, don't think so highly of yourself.' She blushes. The spell didn't work properly, that's all.'

I'm sure' I smirk.

This time Nina faces away from me and stares at the other side of the lake. She twirls her wand 'Skedaddle Dash.' She yells. Her body blinks and instantly appears on the other side of the lake.

I did

"You did it

I can't believe I teleported that fast

There's rustling from nearby bushes I gesture my finger over my lip for Nina to be quiet. As I approach, a rabbit hops out of the bushes, clearly relieved after sensing someone had been watching us

#just a tad bit, Nina laughs'

me twice in a second Skedaddle Dash She says and instantly appears in front of me, giggling

"Sretandout heutu

She *øyt with a wave of her wand A Duck cloud forms in front of her. She twirls her wand around making it

welcher and out on a day pang opeils troon dve book She seems to grow weary and wed

No, to uke way s way touch

tead, we wiggle wo wo my

e toru stw talis Se* totised she doesn't even try to fight me out of my arms

est epiteld wat diet har steep She has the cutest dumplings and the

sweetest smile on her face.

After a couple of hours, my eyes zone in onto the nape of her neck. My heart rate increases rapidly and my face grows closer to her neck. My teeth protrude and my teeth lightly scrape the spot her mate is supposed to mark. I quickly flinch back and shake the urge to mark her out of my mind.

'What is wrong with me? She isn't even my mate, and I almost marked her.'

I have no choice but to wake her and move away from her before I do something very foolish.

'Nina.' I say rubbing her arm. 'Nina.'

'Mmm?' she mumbles.

'Time to wake up. Your ceremony begins soon.'

She rubs her eyes and blinks a few times. As soon as she realises she has been sleeping in my lap she crawls off of me.

'Sorry' Says.

'Don't be. You needed the sleep.'

Thanks.' She smiles.

"Let's get home and get ready for your ceremony.'

She nods and we walk back home.

As we reach the top of the stairs, she gives me the book of spells

T'll see you shortly at the ceremony.' She says.

'You will.' I smile.

i place the book in my backpack and zip it up and pick out a black suit with a white shirt and a blue tie. As soon as I've showered, I get myself dressed and head downstairs.

'Looking snazzy there, son.' My dad says.

Thanks. Is everyone ready for the ceremony?'

We are just waiting on Nina.' Amelia says.

Moments later, Nina appears at the top of the staircase in a stunning silver sparkling dress with matching heels and diamond Earrings My heart wants to spontaneously combust at her sheer beauty

Fint slaps me hard on the back, knocking me out of my obvious tfance.

Try to be less obvious to your feelings, Magnus. If anyone sees you and Nina staring at each other like that when she isn't your male You know it will cause a lot of problems in the pack.'

"Less obvious of what feelings?' | ask.

'That you clearly are in love with each other?

I give him a weud look 'You're seeing things, Flint Nina and I care about each other as best friends, but we are not in love with each

You keep telling yourself thal' He says with a hand on my shoulder I frown

We all enter the ceremony hall and enjoy the banquet of food, Nina's parents and my parents made speeches. I notice Hank is at a lable, glaring af me from across the room. He is probably angry that I got his dad to agree on a mateship with his daughter at my fineteenth instead of nigha away I do my best to ignore tum, but something seems off. The moon is now centred above the hall it's dire for Nita lo step uito te moonlight and shift Her ded, Leon, takes her hand and walks her to the centre of the hall, and places a kiss on the totesead he walks away and takes his seat next to his mate, Amelia

Minutes go by and nothing happens. Nunna gives me a worried look. I smile and nod my head to assure her not to worry. Hank is smiling while everyone else scratches the heads. Almost twenty minutes have gone by and everyone whispers. Nina is holding her own, trying to remain calm and appear unaffected by nothing yet happening.

My dad stands up.

*Quiet everyone. Another round of drinks while we wait. I'm sure her wolf will appear any moment now.' He assures everyone.

Another twenty minutes go by with no signs of Nina's wolf. Someone from a different pack stands up.

'If she doesn't have a wolf, then that makes her a human.'

Everyone gasps and stares at Nina. She trembles and looks for me to help. I stand up and walk over to her and hold her hand.

Hank stands up and claps his hands. Everyone turns to stare at him.

Bravo, Bravo,' he shouts. Everyone is confused.

Nina and I realise he is about to expose her curse. I place my hands on her shoulders. 'Nina, what if this is the curse? That your wolf is dormant?'

'But that makes little sense of how it affects you, though?'

My face instantly pales as I revise a section of the spell book in my head.

Anyone can also curse someone using their god's or goddess's name. A powerful sign will occur, such as an earthquake, lightning strike, or a loud rumble from the sky if the god or goddess accepts your prayer, wish, or a curse.

Then a flashback of when I was a child passes through my mind.

"Damn you, Nina, I wish if the Moon Goddess herself would curse you and not give you your wolf on your eighteenth birthday and remove your mate bond until the day I find my mate and fall in love," I say out loud.

Then I remember the flash of lightning that suddenly hit the roof of the packhouse and the thunder that roared loudly in the sky. It was the Moon Goddess accepting the curse!

'Nina... it affects me because I am the one who cursed you.' I say in realisation.