

Cried Wolf 61

Chapter 61

Nina takes a step back, putting distance between us.

Why would you do that to me? Why would you put a curse on me, Magnus?' she yells.

She is cursed?' someone yells.

Nina looks at me with tear-filled eyes and a look of anger and huft in her eyes.

Well, that's one less thing I don't have to tell.' Hank says.

Nina and I glare at him. 'Nina has a curse that affects your dear future, Alpha. He can't shift naturally without severe pain as you all know, but what you all don't know is, it's because of her curse!' he shouts and points at Nina.

Everyone glares and point at Nina.

"No, leave her alone! It's not her fault.' I say, pulling Nina behind my back.

I have the proof that Nina is not what she seems. She has no wolf because she is a witch and cursed you, future Alpha.' he shouts and points a remote up, pressing a button. The projection screen shows a video of Nina and me and the lake earlier today. Nina is casting spells.

There is a sudden uproar of pack members and people from other packs yelling, 'Witch!' 'She cursed Magnus.' 'What is she has cursed others?

Nina clings tightly onto the back of my suit jacket.

My dad stands up and walks in front of us with my mother.

Please, everyone. You must all calm down and take your seats. Nina is not a danger to anyone.'

"See, she has even cursed your Alpha to protect her.' Hank yells.

"She would never.' My mother shouts.

I suppose they haven't told you either that their son Magnus has killed Moss?'

What?' everyone says.

"He kidnapped Nina. He wanted to kill me.' I explain.

'Lies! I have a witness here who witnessed the brutal murder of her son.' He says, gesturing for someone to come forward.

A hooded figure steps out from the shadows and stands next to Hank. She pulls her hood down.

Vanessa!' My parents scowl,

It's true Magnus murdered my son after Nina bewitched him. She made him fall in love with her. She willingly came to our pack, pretending we had kidnapped her. Magnus went straight for my son, who was under a spell and ripped him to pieces. And now I will seek my revenge! She yells.

The hall becomes swarmed with hooded figures Everyone yells and scream. The rogues remove their cloaks and shift into their wolves and attack my people

Mum, Dad, Leon, Seth, Mia, and Amelia instantly shift and fight off the rogues. I step back, keeping Nina safe behind me. We watch as my mother's wolf goes straight for Vanessa Mum lunges at Vanessa and they bite each other, snapping and snarling I have never seen my mother so vicious and put up such a fight with pure intent to kill. This is a fight to the death One that was due many years ago She whimpers as Vanessa nps a chunk of flesh from her side. Mother uses her weight to pin Vanessa down She bites into Vanessa's neck the same way i bit into Moss's Blood pools at her neck as her legs finch a few times before she falls limp My mother lets out a howl of triumph She has won the fight against ter greatest enemy

She spots Alice and runs towards her Alice being old, my mother kills her within seconds. The rogues don't stop fighting, even though Vanessa is dead. Five of them creep towards Nina and me

'Magnus, they're going to kill us?' Nina says

'Use your wand. I need you to teleport out of here

She nods and pulls her wand out

She grabs my arm. I look down at her arm as she says, 'Skedaddle Dash

We disappear together. We reappear in the packhouse at the top of the stairs

"Wait, you could port me too?

'I figured it was worth a try.' She says, marching to my room

'Wait, where are you going?

'I'm leaving Magnus, I need to take the spell book with me' she says, searching through my room

'Wait, what do you mean you're leaving?'

'Even if your parents beat the rogues, the pack will want to hunt me down anyway because if you have forgotten, they think I have cursed you when it's actually you who has cursed me' she retorts.

'I won't let them hurt you. I'll explain everything That it's all my fault

'Yeah, because you explaining it all was going down really well in the ceremony hall?' she says sarcastically 'And how do you suppose you are going to stop our pack and many others from hurting me when you can't even shilt into a wolf quickly enough to even save me?'

I walk over to my backpack and put it on and take Nina's hand.

'What are you doing? Let me go

I stop walking and face her.

I'm going with you.'

'What?'

I'm leaving Shadow Crest; I'm going with you until I break the curse. That way we can both come back and no one will have a reason to harm you.'

'But they know I'm a witch.'

And you can threaten to turn them into a frog if they even try to harm you.' I smile Nina is trying to stay angry at me. I watch her lips slightly curl up as she contains a laugh. She nods and holds my arm and waves her wand. Skedaddle Dash, Skedaddle Dash, Skedaddle Dash.' She says a few times. We appear a thousand metres ahead with a blink of an eye, then another thousand metres. This goes on until we are at least a kilometre away from Shadow Crest. As we come to stop and are no longer teleporting, my stomach churns and nausea takes over. I vomit profusely into the bushes. After ten minutes of vomiting, I turn and face an unimpressed Nina with her arms crossed.

"You have a lot of explaining to do, such as why you cursed me, how you caused it and how you are going to break it?"

'Do you remember the day when we were kids, and you tricked me to stand near the floodgates by the dam and I got washed away?'

'Yeoh.' She laughs.

'That night, after mum told me to go bath, I went upstairs to my room and ran the bath. I was still soaking wet, my clothes clung to my body. I slipped over and laid there on the floor in anger and stared out the window at the sky and yelled these words at the moon

Damn you, Nina, I wish the Moon Goddess herself would curse you and not give you your wolf on your eighteenth birthday and remove your male bond until the day I find my mate and I fall in love. A flash of lightning suddenly hit the roof of the packhouse and thunder roared loudly in the sky. I wondered at the time if it was a sign from the Moon Goddess, but didn't think it was possible. I never thought about that moment ever again until tonight when your wolf never came. Then I remembered this part in the spell book." pull the spell book out and open it and point to the paragraph where it says.

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 curse.

'That was when I realised it was me who had cursed you. I'm so sorry Nina, I am truly sorry.' I say as tears drip down her face. She steps back, glaring at me, as I attempt to wipe a tear from her face.

"And now you're telling me I won't get my wolf until you find your mate and fall in love with her?" she cries. 'Talk about a slap in the face, Magnus.'

I'm sorry Nina, I don't understand why the moon goddess would even take anything I say literally, anyway?'

You have more muscle than brains. Do you know that?'

What do you mean?

Your mother is from the Moonstone pack. She is a descendant of the moon goddess, which makes you a descendant also! Of course, the Moon Goddess is going to take her descendants seriously! Ergh! Nina stomps her feet and storms off.

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I chase after her

I'm sorry, that never crossed my mind.' I fall on my knees, I'm the biggest idiot to ever exist.' Nina stops running and turns to look at me. 'We were the best of friends once. I thought the pack saw me as one big joke. I pushed you away and ignored you for years because of it. Then I made things even worse, I cursed you and now you don't have a wolf. And you won't be able to sense your mate until I find mine. All I ever wanted was to protect you and keep you safe, but all I've done is cause you hurt and pain. I'm so sorry. Will you ever forgive me?' I cry

Nina morbidly approaches me and falls to her knees in front of me. Our knees are touching. She takes my hands and holds them in hers, I can feel her hands trembling,

We gaze at each other with tear-filled eyes, She bursts into tears and wraps her arms around my neck. I hold her tight and cry into her soft brown hair

"All those years you say you ignored me, you never did. Every day we had breakfast and dinner together, you would stare at me with a longing in your eyes. When you climbed trees and swam through the lake with the others, you would always look to see if I had followed. The times you saw me, your lips would curl into a smile, which you would quickly hide. The days I watched and you couldn't see me. You were miserable and agitated towards the others. Throughout high school, every girl would try to get your attention, but you would still sit where you could be near me and watch me at every chance you got. Even Claire and May were always catching you staring at me, I could sense your eyes on me constantly as if you were caressing me with your own hands. As for the curse, you were only a child venting. If you had have known it would become a curse, then I know those words would have never left your lips I forgive you, Magnus' She sobs.

I squeeze her tighter and press my face further into her hair and neck.

Thank you.' I whisper,

We pan and wipe the tears from our faces.

What do we do now?' I say.

'The only thing left to do is make things right by finding your mate to break this curse.'

"We have to visit all the packs. Let's start with the Starlight pack east from here.'

We wait a couple of hours for the sun to rise

Without warning, Nina grabs my arm. 'Wait...'

Skedaddle Dash, Skedaddle Dash, Skedaddle Dash.' She says.

My stomach churns as we flash one thousand metres east at a time until we reach Star Light territory. I instantly fall to the ground with severe nausea holding my stomach.

Her ture please give me a warning to ready myself, Nina?’

Don’t be such a baby, Magnus It’s not that bad, I don’t feel any motion sickness at all.’

Maybe because you’re the one casting the spell, you’re immune to the effects?’

Maybe warm’s just getting you back for cursing me?’ She smirks,

You forget that waven i cursed you to not have your wolf, ii curses me as well, by not being able to shift comfortably?’

“Well, maybe the Moon Goddess added an extra bit of sugar onto yours.’ Nina says and sticks her tongue out.

I sit up hot everyong has stopped spinning As soon as I stand up, growls are heard around us. I pull Nina behind me to see five Wolvet enclod wound us A wolf shults back into its human form

You we trespassing in Starlight ternitory’ He warns

Tmn Magnus, future Alpha of the Shadow Cresi pack I apologise for trespassing and for the lack of notice of my arrival. It’s urgert that meet every womaled she-wolf to find my male Please escort me to your Alpha.’

His eyes slightly fade, he is mind-linking his Alpha,

‘This way.’ He says. “It will be quicker if you both shift.’

Nina and I give each other a look.

‘Oh, but the weather is just so... lovely, that I think I’d like to walk?’ she says as a question rather than a statement. She subtly shrugs her shoulders at me as if to say, ‘What else am I to say? Sorry, I have no wolf, but that’s okay. I’m a witch and can blink instead?’

“Okay... sure I guess.’ He says, confused..

The wolves walk behind us as we are led to the packhouse. The rest of the wolves shift back into their human forms and enter the Packhouse after us.

‘Beta Ryan, thank you for bringing Magnus to me. Fetch us some wine for our guests, will you?’

‘Of course, Alpha Edward.’ He bows and walks away.

“And who is this beautiful young she-wolf you have with you?’ he asks me.

This is Nina. She is the daughter of my pack warrior’s commandet.’

‘I see.’ He smiles.

“Please take a seat, both of you.’ he gestures his hands to the table. We take a chair and sit at the table. Nina sits beside me as we face Alpha Edward. Beta Ryan fills the glasses up with wine and hands one to Alpha Edward, then Nina and me.

'Beta Ryan tells me you are here to search for your mate?'

'Yes, Alpha Edward. I am.'

'Well, aren't you an eager Alpha to be wanting to find your mate so soon?' he chuckles.

Very eager, Alpha Edward.'

I see, well let's drink and I'll have the she-wolves called up.' He mind-links Ryan to ready the unmated she-wolves.

We finish our wine and follow Alpha Edward out the door.

Two dozen she-wolves blush and twirl their hair as soon as they see me approaching. I walk up to each one. My wolf is calm and I don't feel the pull from the mate bond with any of them. I shake my head no at Alpha Edward. The girls voice their disappointment that Magnus isn't their mate. A pigeon flies over my head and lands on the stone windowsill of the packhouse.

'Hmm, it's a messenger bird.' Alpha Edward says and takes the scroll of paper from the bird's leg.

He scrunches his eyebrows as he reads the note.

'You never told me rogues attacked your pack?'

'On, didn't I?' I say nervously.

'We are sending this letter out to all packs to inform them that Shadow Crest was under attack through the night by a pack of rogues who followed the orders of Vanessa. Who you may all remember as Alpha Zenith's daughter from Shady Crest many years ago?

If anyone sees Magnus, please tell him we are okay and that we hope Nina and he are, okay? Regards
Alpha Ryker and Luna Astrid

I'm sorry Alpha Edward, when we were under attack, Nina was in great danger. I had to leave Shadow Crest to keep her safe.'

'Well, now you can return, now that you know Shadow Crest is okay.' He smiles,

K's not that easy, Alpha Edward, Nina will remain in danger until I find my mate. Until then, neither of us can return

I don't understand how finding your mate is going to keep Nina safe?'

It's complicated and information I cannot share without endangering Nina any further. In saying that, we thank you for your time and must make our way to the next pack, I'm sure it won't be long until you hear the rumours of why Nina is in danger. If you could reply to my parent's Message and let them know I will return once I find my fated mate? We would appreciate it'

Alpha Edward nods and we take our leave.

Once we are out of sight, Nina grabs my arm. Skedaddie Dash' she says and we port halfway through the woods.

We should set up camp for the night here?’ she says as I vomit in the bushes.

‘Sure.’ I say before heaving again. Nina takes a bottle of water out of my bag and hands it to me.

Thanks.

Once my stomach is back in one place, I collect sticks and bundle them together.

‘Inferno Flamo.’ Nina says, igniting the bundle of sticks into a fire.

‘Are you ever going to warn me before you cast a spell?’

‘Umm, probably not.’ She smirks.

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We sit by the fire and keep warm. I lay on my back and look up at the stars. Nina lies on her back next to me.

‘I miss my mum and dad. Nina says.

I miss my family, too.

Would you believe I’m even missing May?’

‘You, miss May? Never: I smile.

‘What if it’s months or years until we ever see them again?’

‘We have each other. It’s you and me now against the world until I find... the one. I sigh.

‘Yeah.’ Nina frowns and stands up. I’m going to go for a walk,

I’ll come

‘No, please stay. Some time to myself is what I need. I won’t go far. I promise. She says with sadness.

‘Oh, okay.

I watch as she wanders further into the darkness of the woods. Why did she become so sad suddenly? She is going through a lot having no wolf, a curse, and a witch hunt after her. I wish I could hold her and smell her mint and lavender hair and tell her everything will be okay. If I could choose my own fated mate, I would choose Nina in a heartbeat.

Nina returns with red puffy eyes. She has been crying.

‘Are you okay?’

‘No, I’m not. I just want to go to sleep.’ She says and lies on the other side of the fire away from me.

Why is she distancing herself from me? Did I say something that upset her?

I don’t fall asleep until she is sound asleep.

When I wake up, it's the morning. I look over to where Nina slept. She isn't there.

'Nina, Nina!' I yelled. I can't see her anywhere. 'Nina!' | frantically yell.

"What? Why are you yelling like that?" she says with hands full of berries. I race over to her and place my hands on her shoulder and look her up and down.

'Are you okay? Where'd you go? I thought something bad happened to you?'

"You were still asleep, so I thought I'd go pick us some berries for breakfast.

pull her in for a hug, squashing the berries she holds between us. She sighs. 'Well, there goes our breakfast! She says.

We can skip breakfast. Let's just get to the Midnight pack.

Fine Skedaddle Dash, Skedaddle Dash:

I keep my eyes closed longer than usual until we are no longer blinking. After a minute, I slowly open my eyes and was relieved to have no nausea.

That's more like it' I smile,

We arrive near the Midnight Packhouse I can see it further up the road. It's looking worse for wear and could do with fresh paint.

We walk towards the Packhouse As I'm about to knock, I realise Nina and I have been holding hands. When she realises too, she

quickly lets go and her smile fades I want to ask her what is wrong As I'm about to the front door opens

I thought I could smell unfamiliar wolf scents:

Alpha Anslo, it's been a few years since I've seen you' I say

'Magnus, is that you? After I thought you couldn't grow any bigger here, you are, well... bigger.' He laughs.

Come inside and join us for breakfast.

'Breakfast is just what we need.' I smile.

We sit in the guest's seats at the table.

'Grab a plate and help yourselves. Alpha Anslo says. 'Other than breakfast, what brings you to the Midnight pack?'

I've been going to each pack hoping to find my mate.

'I see. You are welcome to wander around and see if any of my pack members are lucky enough to be mated with you!

Thank You, Alpha Anslo.

With full stomachs, Nina and I walk around through the Midnight pack territory. Nina drifts behind me. Every time I look at her, I can tell she is forcing a fake smile, but why?

'Stop staring at me already and go find your mate, Magnus.' She says.

'Is something wrong Nina?'

'No, why would anything be wrong? she frowns.

'I just can't help but feel there is something you want to tell me?'

Nina hugs herself and looks down.

That depends... is there something you want to tell me?' she says with hope in her voice.

I take a step closer to her, T-1 um

There he is. A she-wolf yells.

Half a dozen she-wolves come running up to me. Nina backs away, her hopeful smile disappears again.

They take his hands and pull him towards the houses as more she-wolves come out. Even though I am being dragged away, I turn my head to watch Nina walk away towards the Packhouse.

She doesn't want to come with me to meet the she-wolves. I don't understand why. You would think she would be keen for me to find my mate so I can break her curse once and for all. I really don't get her sometimes.

The mate bond did not go into effect after meeting all the available she-wolves. They were very disappointed that I was their mate. I return to the packhouse.

So, tell me, was any of the ladies your mate?' Alpha Anslo asks.

'No I sigh.

Well, that's very unfortunate. I wish you luck in the next pack!

Thanks, we should get going: I say and look over at Nina. She seems withdrawn. We leave the packhouse and enter the woods.

So, which pack are we going to next?' she asks.

Let's set up camp for the night. We can worry about the next pack in the morning.

We silently collect sticks together and bundle them up.

'interno Flamo She says, lighting the fire.

She sits on the other side of the fire and avoids any eye contact

Nina, I can't help but feel you have been distancing yourself from me? You have been avoiding me and you didn't even want to help Me find my mate today I'm thinking you don't want me to break the curse?

She looks up at the wide eyed, with her beautiful doe eyes. Her eyes well

I scoot over to her

What's wrong? Please tell me?

I don't want to upset you or make the situation worse.

'Nina, seeing you upset is upsetting me. The only time I am ever truly happy is when you are smiling and when we are together?

'Really?'

Yes, really

'It really hurts when I see all the she-wolves swoon over you. I know you need to find your mate, but I really care about you. I always wished as a child you would be my fated mate. She sobs.

"You really wished I was your mate?" I ask as my heart rate rapidly increases. A feeling of happiness washes over me at her words.

'Yes, it's stupid. I know.

I cup her face in my hands and gaze down into her brown eyes and suddenly realise that I don't just love Nina as my best friend, but I'm in love with Nina.

Nina, I think we can go back home now. I smile.

She gives me a look of confusion.

But we haven't found your mate yet?'

We don't need to find her. I have everything I ever dreamed of right in front of me.'

Magnus, what are you saying?' she trembles in shock.

"Nina, it's you I love. It's you who I want to spend the rest of my life with, even if it means I never shift again and you never have your wolf. We don't need to have the mate bond to know we love each other. I don't need to feel electricity when we touch, but the warmth of your soft skin. Nina, I want to be with you. I love you' I cry.

Magnus. She sobs. I love you too. She says as we stare at each other's lips.

We kiss with the utmost passion. A crack of lightning strikes a tree nearby and thunder roars through the sky. Nina wraps her arms around my neck, and I wrap mine around her waist as the kiss intensifies.

Suddenly Nina flinches back and screams in pain as a bone snaps.

She is shifting. The curse is now broken

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More thunder and lightning flash through the sky above us and turns into a hectic storm raining down on us. As I hold Nina in my lap, I feel the electric static where ever our skin touches. It feels amazing. Our eyes turn black. 'Mate.' We say in unison.

Nina lets out another scream,

'Try not to fight it, Nina. It will hurt less if you let your wolf take over.' I say, stroking my fingers through her hair.

'It hurts,'

'I know, babe. I'm here and I'm going to help you through this.'

She nods and tries her best to relax. Black fur covers her as she shifts into her wolf. My breath is taken away. Her wolf is pure black with a white-shaped star on her forehead.

'Nina, your wolf is so beautiful. You even have a white star on your forehead. I've never seen anything like this.' I say stroking her fur. She steps back and prances around happily in wolf form, then nudges into my shoulder.

You want me to shift too?

She shakes her head.

Well, if the curse is broken, I should no longer feel any pain when shift. Here goes.'

I remove my clothes and focus my mind, closing my eyes for a moment. Topen them to find I have shifted straight away, pain-free, into my large white wolf.

This is amazing.' I think to her.

I can hear you!' Nina replies.

I can hear you too, we can mind-link now!'

'We were fated mates all along. Can you believe that?' she cries.

'We were never cursed, Nina. We had been blessed with each other all along.'

We rub our furry faces all over each other affectionately.

'Let's go for a run towards home'I mind-link.

Nina runs ahead with super speed. I can only just keep up behind her. We run for hours through the night until we are exhausted. We lie huddled together and stare up at the moon.

'Moon Goddess, thank you for blessing me with Nina as my mate.'

Nina nudges me and shifts back into her human form. I shift back too.

"That was amazing, We can both shift now, and we are fated mates! Nina squeals and plonks herself happily in my lap. I nuzzle my face into her neck and breathe her Lavender and Mint scent in.

"You smell so good' I say. She giggles at my nose, tickling her neck.

“You smell like chocolate and freshly chopped wood.’ She laughs.

Really?

‘Yep She grins

My mouth crashes onto hers without warning, and we share a passionate moment,

Shall we skedaddle the rest of the way back home she asks once we break the kiss

‘Yes, let’s go

Embraced in my arms, she waves her wand around Skedaddle Dash, Skedaddle Dash, Skedaddie Dash.’

We blink multiple times until we reach Shadow Crest, except we land in the water of Shadow Crest Lake.

We burst into laughter in the middle of the lake. It’s still dark, but the sun will rise soon.

We kiss and wrap our arms around each other. Nina stops for air and removes her wet shirt and bra and flings it onto the grass. I remove my clothes and do the same. As we explore each other’s bodies, we make love. Our teeth protrude and we tease each other, running our elongated teeth across the nape of each other’s neck, feading ourselves to mark each other. My teeth sink into the nape of her neck and hers sink into my neck. A euphoric sense takes over us as we mark each other. We are officially mates, Nina is officially mine

We lie on the grass as the sun rises; we sleep as we wait for our clothes to dry. It’s almost lunchtime when we wake.

Nina is smiling and flinches when she touches the mark on her neck.

‘Tender?’

Yeah, but that’s expected.’ She smiles.

We better get dressed. I can’t wait to announce that you are my mate.’ I smile.

Holding hands, we giggle and laugh together as we walk through the town of Shadow Crest. Everyone stares and whispers. We arrive back home at the packhouse. Still holding hands, we enter together to see our families at the dining table about to have lunch.

‘Magnus.’ My parents yell excitedly.

‘Nina! her parents yell happily.

Everyone runs over to us, including Zak, Josie, Flint, May, and Pipsqueak.

They come to a stop and look down at our hands holding.

‘Magnus, what is going on?’ Mother asks, confused.

‘We broke the curse, I told Nina I want her, I love her, and want to be with her even if it means me never shifting and her never gaining her wolf and that we don’t need to have the mate bond to know we love each other. We kissed, and she shifted. I can shift without pain as well. And you should all see her wolf!

She is so magnificent and beautiful.' I turn Nina towards me. Just like her human form.' I say and kiss her in front of everyone.

Everyone is crying with tears of happiness. My dad and Leon shake hands and our mothers hug each other.

There is a commotion outside. I open the front door to see half the town is yelling.

'What is the problem?' I yell.

'There she is the witch! people yell, pointing at Nina behind me.

'This witch will soon be your Luna. Be careful what you speak!

'We will never accept a witch as our Luna. She doesn't even have a wolf!' Another person yells.

I smile at Nina to shift. She immediately morphs into her wolf and everyone gasps at her unique and beautiful black wolf with the white star,

"Your Luna is one of us! She may be half-wolf-half-witch, but you will all love and respect her the way I do! Anyone that upsets or aggravates my fated mate that the Moon Goddess blessed me with and blessed you all with, to be your Luna, will suffer great consequences at the wave of her wand.

'What consequences?' Someone asks.

'Nina has my blessing to turn anyone of you into a frog have you disrespect her.' I say,

Nina is trying not to laugh; she knows she can't turn anyone into a frog. Not yet anyway.

The crowd gasps and dissipates, worried Nina will turn them into frogs,

*I see you all at the ceremony announcing Nina and me as your official Luna and Alpha.' I say, waving,

One week later.

Nina and I walk hand in hand into the ceremony hall.

My parents await us on the stage. We walk up together and stand facing my parents.

"It is with great honour I hand over my status as Alpha to my first-born child, Magnus.' My dad says.

"And it is with great honour I hand over my status as Luna to my son's fated mate, Nina.' Mum smiles.

With that said, I announce to you your new Luna, Nina, and your new Alpha, Magnus.' My dad says.

The hall erupts with cheers.

I stand behind Nina and wrap my arms around her and place a kiss on the top of her head. She leans back against my chest and looks up at me, smiling.

"You can let me go now.' She blushes.

Nina, I'll never let you go.

The Alpha's Mate and The Vampire King

Book Three of The Alpha Series

Chapter 65

Nina kisses my cheek and takes a seat at the desk beside me.

'Magnus, is there anything else I can do for you?'

Could you please hand me the Shady Crest status report?' I say as I set aside a pile of paperwork that I had just finished signing on the desk.

Rolling up her sleeve, Nina waves her wand 'Lifto Levitatus', she says. The paper rises and swirls in a circular pattern, one page at a time, before settling in a neat stack in front of me.

'Nina, it was literally in front of you. You could have just reached for it, you know?'

'Well, where's the fun in that?' she gives a warm smile.

'Do you suppose you could conjure me up a mug of coffee, by any chance?' I grin.

'Magnus, you realise I'm not capable of doing that?'

'Honestly, I'm not sure what you are capable of yet. You read that spellbook each night and refuse to tell me what you've learnt.

Well, you have to admit that seeing me cast the spell rather than listening to me explain it is far more interesting.

That's true, but it is a shame there is no conjuring a coffee spell in that book. I chuckle.

We hear a disturbance coming from downstairs.

'Where is he? Where is Alpha Magnus?' A man demands.

Hank storms into the office and slams his fist on my desk before Nina and I can even get up.

He cries, 'You, you liar, you cheat!'

I smile as I cross my arms and relax back in my chair.

'Hank, it's great to hear from you. How may I assist you?'

He steels himself at my words.

'How can you assist? I'll explain how you can assist! My sister Addison was supposed to be your Mate and the Luna of Shadow Crest. Instead, you betrayed our agreement and sought your soul mate.

Are you referring to the contract you blackmailed me into? Where you threatened to reveal Nina's secret to everyone, knowing it would put her in grave danger?'

Nina rises to her feet, her hands on her hips,

Hank, are you aware of how ridiculous you sound right now? She growls, 'You're lucky we didn't toss you into werewolf jail for blackmailing an Alpha! You are exiled from Shadow Crest. Now get out and don't return.

Or what?' Hank squints,

Nina casts her spell with a flourish of her wand. She exclaims, 'Repeliate!' Hank is pushed back against the wall with an unseen force. Nina approaches him as he rises from his seat on the floor. 'Or I'll transform you into a frog, she cautions.

Hank shakes and bolts out the door,

I walk over to Nina, Repellate, they? I say to Nina I give her a high-five and remark, I like that one

Me too

It must be lunchtime for sure? my tummy grumbles with hunger

Nina smiles as she says, 'Yep, the last one downstair is a rotten egg

Game on. I say, and then I hear Nina behind me as I rush out the door Skedaddle Dash; she says. When I turn around, she's gone.

My mouth hangs wide in surprise at her deception. I make my way downstairs to see Nina sitting in her seat with the biggest grin.

Nina chuckles, Oh, look, it's the rotten egg.'

Zak, Pipsqueak, Giannia, Flint, May and Josie try to keep their giggles to themselves.

Nina, you can use your magic and blink to win the race,

She shrugs, picks up her fork, and eats her lunch.

We should have a bonfire tonight?' Flint proposes.

That sounds like it would be a lot of fun, Nina says.

Till bring the marshmallows, Josie squeals.

Well, that settles it, a bonfire it is.' I say.

I grasp Nina's hand after we complete our lunch. 'Let's go for a run with our wolves,

'Great!' My wolf has been pleading with me to let her out all morning.

We leave the packhouse and remove our clothes outside the woods. Nina shifts into her black wolf while I shift into my white wolf. When I get close enough, I lick the white star symbol on her forehead. The race begins when she nuzzles me back.

As the wind whips through our fur, we leap over logs and fallen branches. We sprint in and out of the trees, trying to outrun each other. We don't stop running for hours until arriving at our favourite area, Shadow Lake. We both dive in and swim back to the surface in human form. My heart is bursting with

happiness as I gaze into her eyes. I'm so lucky she is my Mate. I could never be happier than I am right now.

Before drying off and returning to the packhouse for the bonfire, I give her a soft kiss.

While Flint rolls a few logs closer for everyone to sit on, Zak has gathered logs and branches in a half metal barrel.

Til go inside and get the marshmallows.' Josie says.

May appears with Josie, and the two of them sit together.

Well, I guess I'd better get this fire going. Flint says.

'Inferno Flamo!' exclaims May, igniting the fire.

Or I suppose May will get it started, I guess...,' Flint replies nervously.

Nina is cuddled on my lap, staring at the fire with me. I wrap a blanket around her. Her head lies on my chest.

The fire crackles, and embers hover above it.

Nina murmurs, Inferno Flamo. The flames coalesce and develop into a dynamic image of a galloping horse.

'Wow, we all exclaim,

May says, 'Inferno Flamo, embers mix to form the image of a dolphin leaping out of the flaming ocean.

How does using these spells work? 'How do you have such control over the flames and embers?' I enquire.

'Well, we say Inferno Flamo for fire spells, then we picture what we want it to do, and it does it.' The Aqua Bedew spell and any other spell related to an element work the same way

'Ah, I see what you and May are capable of is truly incredible,

'It certainly is:

Suddenly thousands of more embers appear, creating a spectacular light show.

That's amazing, Nina!' Josie expresses herself,

Nina responds, 'That's not me doing that

'I thought that was Nina? Josie asks May

'It wasn't me, May says.

If it wasn't either of you, then who is it?'

Steps approach from behind us. We all spring to our feet and prepare to shift.

Five people in olive green hooded cloaks come to a standstill. The individual in the centre takes a step in front of the others. I can't help but notice a Smokey coloured cat sitting beside one of the hooded people at the back.

Chapter 66

Who are you? How did you get into my territory without us noticing?' I snarl.

The person in front lowers their hood.

Yiselda?' I enquire.

Alpha Magnus,' she murmurs before turning her focus on Nina. She acknowledges Nina with a smile and a nod. The four hooded people behind her all bow their heads to Nina.

Nina and I exchange a troubled look.

What brings you here, Yiselda?' Nina inquires. A mouse sits upon her shoulder and begins to clean its whiskers.

'After all, Magnus, it's fantastic to see you were able to break the spell, she replies, dismissing Nina's query.

I did, I admit. 'But I can't help but think that's not why you're here.'

Alpha Magnus, I would like you to meet the Midnight Coven's members.

Introduce yourself to Fern, Ela Ria, and Lilac.' As their names are called out, the women drop their hoods. They are all stunning women. Fern is a woman with brown hair and blue eyes. Ela has brown eyes and blonde hair. Ria has red hair, green eyes and numerous freckles. There is a cream-coloured snake around her neck. I try not to squirm thinking about the snake. Then there is Lilac, her hair is black, and her eyes are brown.

'It's a pleasure to meet you all. Please have a seat, I say, motioning to the wooden logs.

They warm themselves by the fire and make themselves comfortable.

'So, The Midnight Coven?' I question.

That's correct. We are the last known coven, although only a few people are aware of us. We learned about Nina and her sister. They are half-wolf, half-witch hybrid.' Yiselda looks at Nina.

I knew there was something special about you when I saw you, but I couldn't put my finger on what it was, but I can see it now, all around you. The curse must have been shadowing your power from everyone. The rumour that Nina and her sister are witches quickly spreads across the packs. There's a reason we're the only witches remaining and why we've remained hidden from the rest of the world

Can you tell me why?' I enquire.

Yiselda inhales deeply. 'Witch hunts, She whispers, sending eerie shivers down my spine.

But now the eggs are out of the basket, werewolves are aware that witches still exist, and Nina is your Mate, making things quite interesting. So, my midnight coven sisters have become hopeful that they may be able to come out of hiding and live peacefully among the pack, your pack.

Zak and Josie take a step back in surprise, tripping over the log. We all exchange glances as we hear nothing but a croak, followed by another croak and another. As the croaking comes from Ela, we all look at her oddly. She giggles and reaches into her pocket for a slimy toad.

Everyone, it's fine. That noise isn't coming from me. It's simply Todd, my familiar. He's a toad,'Ela exclaims as though it's the greatest thing ever,

I try not to cringe and instead frown.

"So, you all want to live here in Shadow Crest? | ask.

They all nod and smile except for Yiseida,

I'm afraid I wouldn't be able to stay' The four ladies would be the only ones residing here. Perhaps if the other packs see that we can coexist peacefully in this pack with you, they will rethink their ideas about witches and allow us to live freely without fear?'

This is a significant decision that Nina and I can't make right now. Tomorrow, we'll have a meeting and seek counsel from our

elders.

'We would appreciate that, Alpha Magnus.'

'Why wouldn't you be able to stay, Yiselda?'

The Covenstead we live in is more than just a house. Some beings have been sealed for all eternity and can never be released. So at least one of us must remain at the Covenstead to ensure that the seals are not broken, or the ward spells are not removed.

'What kind of beings are they?' I ask.

Things you hope you'll never meet, the darkest things you can envision, such as Grimghouls and Shadow Reapers, that come from your deepest darkest nightmares. It would be like opening Pandora's box if they were set free. Because of this, it became the name of our Covenstead:

"Your home is known as Pandora's Box?' | grimace.

Fern, Ela, Ria, and Lilac chuckle and nod, amused at the situation.

'Yes, if only your species could understand that witches are here to protect everyone, to keep the world free of demons and dark forces. It's our duty to keep them trapped by having wards and spells in place. We also create potions to help heal the sick.

'Won't you be lonely staying in Pandora's box?' Nina asks.

Yiselda laughs, 'I wish. But unfortunately, the Vampire King never shuts up. I've already put up with him for a few centuries as it is. Fern, Ela, Ria and Lilac can come by anytime if they are able to reside here. They could teleport to Pandora's Box easily enough each day if they wanted to.'

"Vampire King? i mind-link to Nina.

"Never knew vampires existed, let alone a king?" she mind-links back.

Chapter67

However, enough with Pandora's Box. We want to invite Nina and May to join our coven as sisters. Joining us also means that it will be our responsibility to protect and keep each other safe in times of peril,

'But Nina and May are part of the Shadow Crest pack.'

'Because they are half-witch, half-wolf, they can be part of both. This would also unify us as one prominent coven or, as you call it, pack'

I appreciate it, Yiselda.' At tomorrow's meeting, May and I will discuss it. Let's get to know each other a little better in the meanwhile and roast some marshmallows?' Nina proposes.

We're all holding our sticks, placed above the fire with marshmallows. Then Yiselda works her magic and puts on a performance for us to enjoy. We are watching a fire display put on by a little bird who is still unable to fly like her siblings. On the other hand, the little bird does not give up and continues to attempt every day. She eventually learns to fly and flies past her siblings.

We applaud Yiselda for the charming story.

Thank you for your kindness, but we must depart.' 'We'll be back here at midnight tomorrow, Yiselda adds. She then draws a circle on the ground with a star within and sets five stones at each point of the star.

Fern, Ela, Ria, and Lilac vanish as they enter the circle. Yiselda sends out one more wave before stepping in and disappearing.

That was just as entertaining to see as the show she just created. According to Flint.

"How do you feel about joining as one pack?" I ask Nina.

it wouldn't feel right to dismiss them. It must be disheartening to have been in hiding for so long. Magnus, I sympathise with them.

It's the same for me.' Ultimately, as Alpha and Luna, the decision is ours, but I believe some assistance and advice from our parents wouldn't hurt?'

I agree, she adds, gently kissing my cheek.

The next day we arranged a pack meeting.

Leon and Amelia are the first to arrive. Ever since Nina and I became the Luna and Alpha of the pack, all our parents relocated. They still live in Shadow Crest but are now all in their own homes closer to the woods. With our parents sitting at the table and Nina by my right side, and my Beta Zak by my left, I begin the meeting.

I appreciate everyone's attendance at this meeting. You're probably all wondering why you're here. We received an unexpected proposal last night. I'm sure you all remember Yiselda?'

Everyone nods

"Yes, she helped rid you of your fever.' Mother says,

She came to see us last night, bringing four other witches with her: They desire to unite with the werewolf society and join our pack now that word of Nina and May being half-witch has spread!

Ryker and Leon exchange worried looks

Did you say anything to them? My father inquires

I told them I'd call meeting and talk about it, and here we are,

Personally, son, I don't have a problem with it. We love them, Nina and May, regardless of their status. My only concern is how the other packs will take this information and how they will handle it. I won't surprise me if most packs are against the idea.'

We haven't considered the ramifications from other packs Yiselda hopes if they can see us living in peace, they will perhaps adjust to the idea and realize it's not as dangerous as they have always believed

I'm with you, too, but I'm concerned that might backfire and endanger Nina and May's safety' Leon explains.

It's only been a few weeks since we became Alpha and Luna. It will be another month before all of the packs learn of Nina and

May's half-witch status, even if Yiselda's coven joins us. If they don't like that Nina and May remain in our pack, it will be a safety issue for them anyway!

You're right, son. That is something we will have to be wary about

If they join us, Nina and May will also join their coven, which means the midnight coven will protect them. If the wolves come for Nina and May, we'll need the witches' help to protect them. We can fight most packs, but we wouldn't stand a chance if they all fought simultaneously

Everyone agrees with a nod.

It has been determined that the Midnight Coven will join us, I announce.

Before departing, everyone rises and bows to Nina and me.

// By

Chapter 68

Nina and I walk into town to meet up with Shadow Crest's local pack members. Although the majority of the group has accepted Nina's half-witch status, a few members remain concerned about her abilities,

Mrs Tumpot is squatting in her vegetable garden as we come to a halt at a small picket gate,

Nina pokes Mrs Tumpot over the fence and says, 'Hello, Mrs Turnpot.'

When Mrs Tumpot notices Nina, she glances up at us and falls back.

Oht' she trembles and retreats.

Mrs Tumpot, what are you planting today?' Nina is overjoyed.

C-Carrots,' she replies, 'but they haven't been growing:

Nina takes a look around the garden. 'Perhaps I can assist? Revito Sprouto, she says.

Mrs Turnpot's carrots are sprouting and growing right before our eyes.

Thank you, Luna, thank you. Mrs Turnpot says as she vigorously shakes Nina's hand.

No problem, Mrs Turnpot, I'll see you later, says the narrator. We resume our walk when Nina waves farewell.

"How long have you known that spell?' I enquire.

'A few nights ago. You're the first to see me cast it.' She smiles. I'm excited the Midnight Coven will be joining our pack. Imagine all the spells I'll learn? I can't wait to see how they make their potions too! And those little pets, they seem to all have one? I must ask them tonight if having a pet is part of being a witch?'

However, I'm concerned about that snake.' I'm shocked the toad and mouse haven't been eaten. I'm curious whether it's been tempted too, though.

Are you really going to ask them that, Magnus?'

'What? 'I'm curious,

"Yeah, and you know how curiosity killed the cat?' We both burst out laughing.

"Hey, since we are near the library, I have a surprise.'

'A surprise for me?' Nina exclaims.

Come on, I say, taking her hand in mine. I escorted her into the library.

As we stroll past everyone, we say, 'Hello, good day!

Miss Smith, the librarian, is who I approach.

Miss Smith, it's great to see you again. I'd like to borrow the library keys,' She gives me an odd look and takes her keys off her belt.

She hands over the keys and adds, 'Sure, Alpha Magnus.

Thank you, I say as I recapture Nina's hand, head to the forbidden door, and unlock it."

"Alpha, Magnus, Alpha! You are not permitted to enter' Miss Smith expresses her anxiety by saying, 'No one is allowed in the restricted area'

I'm the Alpha, Miss Smith. I'm free to do whatever I want, and I'm in charge and responsible for this place I explain

She gives me a timid nod and moves back, not daring to look into the forbidden room

I shut the door behind us, and it's as gloomy as it was the last time

Do you think you could do the honours and provide us with some light so we can see? I ask Nina

She takes her wand from her pocket and flicks the tip, causing a small flame to appear. Unfortunately, seeing the entire room is not

possible

Miluminil' she exclaims as the flame bursts into flames, filling the room with light. 'Wow! This is incredible. I had no idea this room existed. She runs her fingers across the spines of the books and exclaims, 'These books must be thousands of years old. Then, she sets her wand in an empty candle holder on the vast stone table in the centre of the room.

Surprise," I say, folding my arms and leaning against the stone wall as she surveys the room. 'I was hoping you'd want to take a look at the books and bring one home to study? 'Until now, no one has been allowed to access or read these texts because magic has always been prohibited, I add, endearingly, looking at Nina.

Magnus, thank you so much, she says as she rushes over to me and softly kisses my lips.

'You're welcome, I say, beaming.

Nina selects ten books and carries them to the stone table, where she begins scanning them. Finally, she sets aside the sixth book, returns the others, and delivers me the one she desires.

I read the title aloud: 'A book of potions.' I smirk and say, 'Why am I not surprised?'

Nina laughs and shrugs her shoulders, amused. I return the book to her and then raise the keys. As I remove the key to this room, she keeps an eye on me. There's a slender chain amongst the other miscellaneous stuff on the disorganised stone table. I step behind Nina and hook the chain through the loop at the top of the key. As I carefully wrap it around her neck, she gasps.

This room is now yours, and you can use it whenever you want,

Magnus, I'm at a loss for words:

"How about you say I love you?' I offer with a chuckle.

Magnus, I love you, she says as she holds my face in both hands and kisses my lips. She gives a kind smile.

She says, Dimulous, while holding her book in one hand and recovering her wand with the other. Her wand goes out, and the room becomes dark once more. We walk out the door, and she reaches down to lock it with the key dangling from her neck.

Magnus, this is incredible. We're forming an alliance with witches I'm going to join a coven, and I've got my own secret room with all the magic literature I could want, she exclaims.

I would do anything for you, Nina. I would give you the whole world if I could. I'd even give you the moon," I say, gazing into her beautiful doe eyes,

'Oh, Magnus. To me, you are everything. You are the whole world and the whole moon,' she whispers.

We kiss passionately, only for bystanders in the library to begin clapping and wolf-whistling at us.

Shh, this is a library. 'Everyone needs to be silent, Miss Smith scowls at everyone

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Chapter 70

Nina and May break the circle by releasing everyone's hands. Nina is the first to make her way to the gateway. Smiling, she takes a deep breath and vanishes into Shadowfay Forest, the land of familiars. May is so excited that she doesn't hesitate and rushes in after Nina

Nina

I'm standing in the most enchanting gorgeous woodland I've ever seen. The trees are not just various colours of green but also pinks, purples, and blues. They generate a glow that gives the trees the appearance of being composed of diamonds. A silver mist floats in the air, glistening in the breeze.

May slams into the back of me out of nowhere.

'Sorry, she chuckles as I stare her down. 'Wow! This place is beautiful. She says.

We begin exploring and come across a variety of animals. A sloth climbs a tree slowly as a bat hangs upside down on a branch. A possum pokes its head out of a tree hollow.

"Hello, I say, waving at the animals. May gives me a strange look, then comes to a standstill and casts a glance to the left. 'I need to go this route, she says.

I followed her until she kneeled beside a vast bush. 'Hello, my familiar, I feel you're around here somewhere?'

I'm not sensing anything, I say.

That's because we're not yet close to your familiar.'

The brush rustles, and a Fennec fox emerges.

This is the cutest thing I've ever seen! May squeals with delight. 'Come forth, little one. May reassures the young fox, 'I'm not going to hurt you.'

The fox approaches May and sits down in front of her. She extends her hand to pat the fox. A brilliant light swirls around them both the instant they make contact. I keep watching as they levitate. May's clothing shifts from slacks and a loose top to a dark brown tailored dress with a corset back as she hovers slightly above the ground. The hem and sleeves of the dress are embellished with stunning gold embroidery. Her wand appears to float in front of her. She leans out to accept it, and the wand produces another ray of light. Unlike the elaborate features on the other Witch's wands, ours resemble sticks. May's wand changes. At the bottom, a silver swirl appears, accompanied with jewels and embellishments. The Fennec Fox leaps onto May's shoulder and places its paw on her chest. May flinches and turns to face the fox. 'I can hear what you're thinking, she adds. The fox removes its paw and leaves its imprim.

May grins as she stares at me. 'Did you see everything?'

'Yes, that was the most incredible sight I've ever seen! You look great in your dress, and your familiar is cute,' I say, giving it a scratch behind the ear.

Sabre said she likes you, May says, laughing.

'Well, I like her as well, I say with a smile.

A portal appears out of nowhere. Yiselda can be seen on the other side. She motions for May to come forward,

I think the portal reopened for you to return home?' I say to May.

'Good luck Nina. I'll be waiting for you on the other side,' she says, hugging me,

She hurries back through the portal before I can say anything. It closes immediately behind her.

'Well, I'm alone in the Silvertay forest, surrounded by thousands of creatures' | say to myself.

I approach many of the animals but have no connection with them. So, I decide to venture farther into the woods, I eventually reach a section of the woodland distinct from the others. It's dark and foreboding. The trees look to be lifeless and devoid of colour. It has nothing enchanting about it, but it seems natural, as if I'm destined to be here.

You can do it, Nina, one step at a time, I tell myself as I begin trudging over the muddy dirt, pushing dead twigs from the brittle branches out of my face.

The more I go into the lifeless woods, the more vibrant the blue light becomes. Then, finally, I arrive at the most amazing tree I've ever seen. It has two gigantic branches that curve like tusks, leaving a large empty circle between them where the great blue moon in the sky shines through. It's an incredible sight.

A sliver of black mist flashes through the tree. I attempted to see what it was, but it moved too quickly. It whizzed past like a flash once more, this time closer. Whatever it is, it is as black as night and has wings.

I've been waiting for you for thousands of years, he says in a deep voice, I can hear in my thoughts.

Are you my familiar?' | ask. I already know the answer because I can feel the connection between us like an unseen rope that pulls us closer together

Why bother asking when you already know?' he responds.

Can you read my mind?'

Yes,'

... Are you going to reveal yourself? I'd like to meet you properly, ask.

You're not like the other witches, which explains why you'll be my master. 'The question is, how do you differ from the other witches?' I sense your strength is far greater and also different to theirs.

"Perhaps I should introduce myself properly? I'm Nina, Alpha Magnus's Mate, Luna of the Shadow Crest pack. I am a hybrid. Half wolf, half-witch, I explain.

I undress, shift into my wolf, and let out a massive howl.

incredible, he exclaims. Suddenly, a swoosh of black smoke drops in front of me. I revert to my human shape and gaze at the majestic raven in front of me. He does not appear to be a normal faven, though, since he emits black mist from his entire body.

You are the most incredible raven I have ever seen,'

'That's because I'm not just raven nor just a familiar. I am the rarest and the oldest of them all. I am the Shadow Raven,

'What is your name?' I ask whilst admiring him.

"Reaper' He says, followed by a caw and flaps his wings.

'Well, Reaper, it's a pleasure to meet you, and I look forwards to our future endeavours together,' I smile. I'm ecstatic that Reaper is my familiar

'Likewise, let us unite as one,' he says,

Textend my hand. A dazzling light spreads around us as soon as my fingertips brush Reaper's feathers. I ascend slightly above the ground, my clothes changing from a basic plain dress to a maroon-coloured fitted gown with a corset back. My dress's sleeves grow long, and the hem and sleeves, like the other witches' gowns are decorated with gorgeous gold embroidery. My wand materialises in front of me. When I reach out to take it, the wand emits another beam of light-my wand alters. At the bottom, a gold swirl appears as the wand becomes embellished with jewels and carvings. Reaper lands on my shoulder. The dark mist emitted by him whirls in the air and rests below my collarbone, leaving his imprint. Reaper is now my familiar, and I, now his master.