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I felt the fear in the sudden stillness in the room, the breathlessness and the tension that made the hair on my arms rise. The fear was thick enough to slice causing my heart to leap to my throat, choking me. Despite the silencing fear, I could not hold back my groan at the sharp, burning pain that accompanied the pot of boiling water dumped on my head.

"We are on another's territory," I heard a strained voice close to me. "Calm yourself." Three pairs of feet stood close to me while I struggled to sit upright through the pain of a scalded face and shoulders.

If there was such a thing as hell, I imagined it could not feel worse than this. The skin on the left side of my face and my forehead peeled from the hot water treatment. I swallowed a groan, terrified of the man standing a few feet away from me. Nothing would make me move an inch for fear of aggravating the man whose anger made the whole room freeze.

"Step aside." A cool voice. Calm and deadly. It carried the force of an Alpha, one who was used to taking what he wanted.

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"We are visitors. If you hurt her – " The other man was saying. His tone rang with anxiety. I could feel the nervous waves wafting off everyone in the room, especially the other man.

"Aristo, step aside." The voice vibrating with power sounded coaxing but it carried a dangerous edge that was solidified when he barked. "Now." I saw the movement of feet, heard a squeak, but I could no longer hold back my pain.

I cried out from the pain boiling me and the tension in the air crackled with my loud wail. The man sucking up the air in the room turned and then he knelt beside me. My breath caught in my throat as he scooped me off the ground.

"Our mate is kind!" Asena cheered but I could not breathe, his aura suffocated me.

"Alpha, you don't have to carry her!" Beta Grace sounded scandalized when my mate raised me bridal style. "She can walk to the doctor herself. The ceremony is half over, Alpha Cahir, and it will be bad for your image if you miss it."

"I will worry about my reputation. Worry about keeping your head." His chest vibrated despite the

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cool words he spoke. "Will you lead me to a doctor or do I have to make you." The threat had Beta Grace moving with speed.

"Alpha –" His Beta followed nervously a step behind him. "Your behaviour will get people talking."

"Aristo, find out who that girl is and everyone related to her," my mate said and the Beta disappeared to do his bidding.

Aristo. Alpha Cahir. Those names were awfully familiar – my blood ran cold when it all clicked in my head. Alpha Cahir Armani, the ruthless Alpha, the man who turned the werewolf society on its head seven years ago. For two years, himself and a few other men waged war against the biggest, most renowned and revered Alpha in the world and they won. They won by the sheer killing madness of Cahir.

Seven years ago, the dynamics of the world changed because of this man. Alphas of large packs who always felt safe because of their numbers and warriors saw what a man with a hundred untrained wolves could do to a man with an army comprising thousands of highly skilled men. The panic that

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gripped the world for two years as people wondered if he would stop. If he could overtake the Alpha Blood pack which stood undefeated in battle since its inception five hundred years ago, then there was no telling what he would do next.

After a two-year calculated massacre, he became the leader of the most powerful pack in the world, and then he disappeared from existence. No one saw his face, no one heard his voice and no one knew his moves. People began to spread all sorts of rumours about him – that war disfigured him to the point where he could not show himself without shame, while few sang of his ethereal beauty that blinded others but none could swear on their lives that their words were true.

Alpha Cahir.

The man whose arms held me leaned towards ethereal beauty more than disfiguration. From what I could see, he had striking dark eyes that felt like bewitching orbs, a slender nose and full red lips complete with a strong, sharp jaw.

"A – Alpha C – Cahir!" I heard a familiar voice. My father. "I am sorry my daughter caused such a racket." Cahir stopped moving. 1

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The pain from my face and some parts of my shoulders had started to fade on the short trip to the hospital before my father blocked our path.

"Who are you?" The cool voice held disdain and impatience.

"I am Beta Markus, her father." My father never hid his shame for birthing a useless omega girl like me but despite seeing me in the arms of such a terrifying man, despite noticing my scalded face, he did not bother to show even a seed of care for my well-being. Only disappointment and shame sounded in his tone as he spoke to my mate.

"Markus, you say? The Beta of this pack?" I did not sense an iota of being impressed in his dry and cold tone.

"Yes, the goddess willing –"

"A redhead did this to your daughter. You will help my Beta find her and everyone related to her. I will decide their punishment." His tone left no room for argument. Another Alpha coming to a foreign pack should not dish out commands like he was their Alpha but he did not care.

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"With all due respect –" My father started in a sharp voice.

"Why are you still standing in my way?" My father did not budge but he shuffled on his feet. "I am feeling particularly murderous right now and if you do not move –" My father moved out of the way.

"You will be alright." He said to me in a soft voice, brushing my hair out of my face as he lay me down on the hospital bed.

I knew my face must be flushed a bright, ugly red from the scalding liquid but there was no way for him to know that a few minutes ago, my skin had been peeling. When he scooped me off the floor, I had felt my healing abilities kick in like a soft, warm blanket being laid around me then I felt the area of injury begin to close up, and the hot, peppery feeling of hot water started to die down and the urge to curl up in a ball and disappear gradually faded.

Healing.

The world had not given me time to wrap my head around this strange power. Only the most beloved people to the goddess were given abilities and they

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were mostly Alphas who lived for their pack. I was nobody.

"Alpha, the ceremony is about to end. If you leave now, you should catch the rest of Alpha Kade's speech before the closing of the ceremony." Beta Grace still hovered at the doorway. 1

"Tell your Alpha to see me and tell the doctor I am waiting." He dismissed Grace with a wave of her hand but she did not go. "Is there a problem?" He half-turned to her.

"The thing is –" She started, her bottom lip caught between her teeth.

"The correct answer is no," he advised in a tone that left no room for arguments. Beta Grace nodded and fled the room.

As I was a useless omega rather than a Beta, I could not succeed my father in assisting the next Alpha as his Beta. My family provided the last five betas in this pack but this lineage would end with my father.

Beta Grace and Beta Adam were the two people likely to take over my father's position as the beta of the pack. It was Kade's duty to choose his Beta and I felt pity for Grace. She was more competent

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than Adam, but what Adam lacked in efficiency and zeal, he made up for in loyalty. He would kill for Kade but Grace's morality would not let her act as the Alpha's Beta without moral guilt so he was less likely to make her his Beta.

"You are a healer." Cahir linked our fingers together. Goosebumps exploded all over my skin and heat spread through my insides.

"N- No -" My first instinct was to deny so I did.

People kissed by the goddess, as those like me who received one or more supernatural power from the goddess were called, were rare. As rare as one in a million wolves. It went without saying that when one was found, they were either revered or exploited. As a member of Silver Moon pack, I had gone through enough exploitation for a lifetime. I did not want to be exploited anymore.

"Belle, I can feel your essence," he said in a gruff voice, "and I have watched your injuries close before my eyes."

"I -" Did not know what to say.

"You will learn to be a good little mate, love, and good mates do not lie."