

My Hockey Alpha #Chapter 171 The Escapee - Read My Hockey Alpha Chapter 171 The Escapee

Chapter 171 The Escapee

Nina

There was a long, uncomfortable silence after we announced our new pack. Not only were the Fullmoons — especially Lewis — both appalled and angry that Enzo apparently planned to leave their pack, but dean Cynthia was also shocked that I referred to us as the New Peacekeepers.

Cynthia opened her mouth to respond, but nothing would come out. Finally, she shut it again and nodded.

“Alright,” she said, somewhat approvingly, “tomorrow morning, we’ll hold a meeting between the Fullmoons and the... New Peacekeepers to discuss our next plans to get things back to normal while the Fullmoon Alpha is away. Everyone, meet at nine o’clock sharp tomorrow morning in the conference room across from my office. Anyone who wants to come is welcome to join.”

...

With the dean and the hockey team taking care of the students and the Fullmoons now patrolling the campus, I needed to go back to the dorm and check on Lori and Jessica. Enzo agreed to come with me, clearly not wanting to take his eyes off of me for even a minute despite the fact that we were pretty much in the clear now. Not that I minded, of course. I didn’t want him to leave my sight, either, because I was secretly terrified that Selena would show up at any moment and take him away from me. Honestly, I was surprised that she hadn’t shown up yet. I just chalked it up to her being afraid to come to the campus with the Crescents and the rogues roaming around. Maybe she would continue being afraid and would stay away for a good, long while.

When we returned to the dorm, however, I quickly realized that this sense of peace and safety was short-lived...

Because Lori and Jessica were sitting on the couch, with Jessica’s door wide open and a big, nasty cut running along the side of Jessica’s face. She was holding it and sobbing while Lori panicked beside her, unsure of what to do. They both instantly looked up with frightened gasps when Enzo and I entered, but simultaneously let out big sighs of relief when they saw that it was only us.

“Oh my god! What happened?!” I exclaimed, running over to Jessica. Up close, I could see now that she didn’t only have a cut on her face, but also on her arms, and there were purple handprints around her neck.

“That asshole James,” Lori snarled, holding Jessica protectively and stroking her hair while Jessica cried. “We heard a thump, so we opened the door to check on him. You know, to make sure he didn’t fall over in his chair and hit his head or something — and he’d somehow gotten out of his restraints. He jumped on Jessica and attacked her like a bat outta Hell. I managed to fight him off eventually, but...” She then gestured with her free hand to Jessica’s appearance.

Hearing this made my heart sink. I felt as though I failed my friends. They were supposed to be safe here, but I instead left them with a maniac who apparently had no morals left. What had happened to the James I once knew? Was that really all just a facade?

“Where did he go?” Enzo asked as he quickly came over. He nudged me out of the way and crouched down in front of Jessica to get a good look at her wounds. She flinched away at first as he went to touch her face and her neck, but once she realized that he was going to heal her, she left him.

“I don’t know,” Lori said. “He just ran. He took my car keys, so I can only assume that he’s long gone by now.”

“Good riddance,” Jessica whispered once Enzo’s healing gave her the strength to speak again.

“I’m so sorry,” I murmured, reaching out and squeezing my friend’s leg as tears began to form in my eyes.

Jessica only shook her head. “It’s not your fault,” she said. “I mean, we all knew that he was losing his marbles, but I guess we still thought that our friend was in there somewhere. Turns out we were wrong.”

I glanced over at Enzo then, who was still solely focused on healing Jessica’s wounds. Thankfully, they weren’t too severe, so there weren’t even going to be any scars. I could tell that Enzo was furious by the way that his eyes were narrowed and his jaw was clenched, but he didn’t say anything until he was finished.

“That’s the best I can do, unfortunately,” he said finally after a few minutes. He pulled his hands away to reveal that Jessica’s cuts and bruises were mostly healed, but the bruises especially were still a little pink and blue. At least she wasn’t bleeding anymore and could speak. I was just glad that James’ strangulation didn’t crush her throat beyond repair; more than that, even, I was just glad that Lori managed to get him off of Jessica. I was certain that James was to the point of pure insanity where he would have killed Jessica at that moment just for being a werewolf sympathizer.

“Thank you,” Lori said. Suddenly, she leaned forward and wrapped her arms around Enzo, hugging him tightly. I couldn’t fully contain my smile as I watched his eyes widen

with surprise from Lori's hug, but eventually, he hugged her back. When she pulled away, there were tears in her eyes.

"I promise we'll do everything we can to find him and get your car back," I said to Lori, squeezing her hand.

She shook her head. "He can keep that hunk of junk. I never wanna see his face again. Not after what he did to Jessica."

Suddenly, Jessica chuckled. We all turned toward her, surprised to hear her laughing. "What is it?" Lori asked.

"I just realized that we were so caught up on the topic of James that we didn't even ask if the plan worked," she replied.

At that point, I couldn't contain my smile at all. Tears of joy welled up in my eyes as I nodded profusely. Lori and Jessica stared at me incredulously for a moment before they both jumped up and hugged Enzo and I, laughing and crying.

"I'm so happy you guys did it," Jessica said, wiping her tears away with the back of her hand as she stepped away. "You guys saved our campus."

It was then that Enzo, who had been mostly quiet that entire time, finally spoke. "It wasn't just us," he said, nervously running a hand through his hair. "It was your idea. Both of you. If it wasn't for you mentioning the fact that the antidote wouldn't need to be injected for it to work, Jessica, then we never would have known. And Lori, it was your idea to use the sprinkler system. Without either of you, we probably wouldn't have succeeded at all."

All of us fell silent. As I gazed up at Enzo, awed by his kind words, I couldn't help but fall even more in love with him.

I only hoped that now, we could tackle the issue of the Alpha King and my estranged twin sister

Chapter 172 The New Peacekeepers

Enzo

That night, I hardly slept. Even though the campus had been saved, there was still so much left to worry about — primarily my father. If the Alpha King withdrew his aid, then that only meant one thing: he thought that I ran away entirely, and he didn't know about Nina. If he didn't know about Nina, then that meant that Selena stopped my father from telling him in one way or another. I couldn't be certain what, exactly, she did until I went back. And I would have to go back because, despite everything, I still loved my father. I couldn't just leave him there if Selena did something horrible to him.

I just didn't know how I would break that news to Nina. I knew that it would crush her for me to tell her that I would have to leave, and there was a possibility that I wouldn't come back...

And no matter how much she cried or begged, I couldn't let her come with me. It was too dangerous.

So, as she slept peacefully beside me that night, I laid wide awake until my body eventually gave up and drifted off to sleep — because I didn't know how I could break Nina's heart like that.

...

The next morning, Nina, our new pack that Nina had dubbed the 'New Peacekeepers', and I all made our way over to the conference room for the meeting.

When we entered, Lewis, a few of the other Fullmoons, and dean Cynthia were already sitting at the table.

"Well, if it isn't the New Peacekeepers," Lewis said, almost condescendingly. I knew that he would be pissed at me for deciding to leave my dad's pack, but I didn't care. To me, my friends were more my pack than the Fullmoons ever were. My dad might be upset at first, but I knew that he would understand deep down.

"Come on in," Cynthia said, standing and gesturing to the open seats around the table. "There might not be enough seats for everyone. Sorry about that."

Nina, Matt, Lori and Jessica, and I all sat at the table while the rest of the hockey team stood nearby.

"Alright..." Cynthia sat back down in her chair and stared down at her hands for a few moments, processing, before she looked back up and addressed all of us. "Our priority, first and foremost, is this campus," she said. "After that, the town. Now, Lewis and some of the other Fullmoons did a sweep yesterday and did find quite a few residents holed up in their homes. They've been informed that they need to stay in their houses until further notice, but supplies are on the way. We do need some volunteers to help clear debris from both the campus and the town, however. Any takers?"

Matt and the entire hockey team raised their hands instantly, almost in unison, as did Lori and Jessica. Meanwhile, much to my surprise, none of the Fullmoons volunteered at all. I cast Lewis a bit of a disbelieving glance, but he only stared daggers back at me.

"Great," Cynthia continued. "We'll start a cleanup crew as soon as this meeting is over. You guys can use the maintenance vehicles that belong to the school, and some residents offered their trucks to be used for hauling debris. Now... As far as the school goes, I'd like to get things back to normal as soon as possible. Classes will resume in a

week; I know this seems too soon, but the most important thing is for the students to feel a sense of normalcy amongst all of this chaos. Something to keep them occupied and motivated. Outside of class, we'll be holding nightly rallies and counseling circles to anyone who needs them. The Fullmoons have offered to keep patrolling the entire perimeter of the town until Richard returns, so safety shouldn't be a concern, but..."

"We have some extra vials of the antidote," Nina chimed in. Her face went red as everyone turned to look at her. "...Just in case."

Cynthia nodded. "Perfect. Do you have any idea if Tiffany left instructions on how to make more, or...?"

Nina shook her head. "I don't know. I'm sure she did somewhere. I can look."

I could tell that talking about Tiffany made Nina upset. It made all of us upset — even Lewis and the other Fullmoons. I reached out underneath the table and took her hand in mine, squeezing it gently to offer a little bit of comfort.

Cynthia cleared her throat. "Nina, you knew Tiffany well, and you're one of our best medical students on campus. You and James. I'd like you two to take on the task of trying to figure out how Tiffany made that antidote so we can make more if we need to."

At the mention of James, my throat formed a knot. Nina's hand tensed in mine, and the rest of my pack became somber.

"What?" Cynthia asked, her eyes searching our faces. "What is it?"

"It's... James," Jessica interjected. "He's..."

Cynthia's eyes widened. "Is he dead, too?"

Jessica shook her head. "No. But he sort of went off the deep end. He shot Nina and then he—" At this point, her voice choked up. Lori spoke up for her.

"He tried to kill Jessica yesterday," Lori said. "He stole my car and ran off after that."

"What?" Cynthia asked incredulously. "Why? He was such a sweet boy."

"Not anymore," Nina suddenly interjected.

The room fell silent. Cynthia stared down at her hands for a long few moments before finally taking a deep breath and nodding. "Okay then," she said. "Well, Nina... If you think you can take care of the antidote yourself, we'd be grateful. But if it's too much for you, that's okay, too."

Nina didn't speak for a long time. She stared down at her lap, seemingly pondering. I gave her hand another gentle squeeze of encouragement, and she finally looked up and managed a weak smile. "I'll try my best," she said quietly.

"Great. Okay... I think that's all we need to discuss as of right now," Cynthia said, standing. I furrowed my brow, as did Nina; that was an incredibly short meeting for something that involved such a huge project. Even Lewis stood and began to walk toward the door.

"Is that it?" Nina suddenly asked. "What about the surrounding towns? The Crescents spread out — last I heard, all of the towns within a fifty mile radius—"

Cynthia only shook her head. "I'm afraid we can't worry about that," she said. "We need to focus on our school and our town first."

"Those other towns can fend for themselves," Lewis, who had been quiet this entire time, suddenly said. As he spoke, he stared at both Nina and I rather sternly; a far cry from the Beta who I had always known. It was almost as though the power of not having my father around was getting to his head. "If you folks dealt with it on your own, then they can, too."

Nina's and my jaws both dropped, as did the rest of the team's.

"You can't be serious!" I said, standing and not caring that I was raising my voice. "Those other people don't know what hit them! They probably have no clue what's going on, no defenses—"

"Mountainview is our only concern." Lewis was cold, indifferent. It made me sick.

"That's horrible," I insisted. "As the son of the Fullmoon Alpha, I order you—"

Lewis let out a wry, condescending chuckle. "You gave up any right to give orders when you decided to branch off and start your own little pack. While your father is gone, I'm in charge. Go ahead and do

what you want, but the Fullmoons won't back you up."

I was too stunned to speak. And before any of us could even gather our thoughts enough to respond, Lewis turned on his heel and left with the other Fullmoons

Chapter 173 Broken Hearts

Nina

Enzo and the rest of us stared after Lewis and the dean in disbelief as they walked out of the conference room. Were they really not even going to try to help the surrounding

towns? I could understand that Cynthia's main concern was for her campus, but the Fullmoons were the ones who were at war with the Crescents, so I felt as though it should have been their responsibility to mitigate the damages. The excuse that 'we figured it out, so the other towns could figure it out as well' was just pathetic and it made my blood boil.

"What are we gonna do?" Matt asked once we were alone again with our new pack. "They're really just gonna let all of those other people suffer?"

Enzo shook his head as he clenched his jaw so tightly I could see the muscles straining under his skin. He stood abruptly, pushing his chair back.

"We'll figure something out," he said. "Let's meet up again tonight to talk about it. For now... We're gonna help clean up our campus, because it's obvious that the Fullmoons aren't gonna be any help."

I could tell that Enzo was furious that his father's own Beta would just let other people suffer at the hands of the Crescents. Good, innocent people who had absolutely nothing to do with this stupid war. And it was all because of whatever power Mountainview had thanks to its purely coincidental location. To Lewis and the Fullmoons, Mountainview was the only town that mattered; everywhere else was just collateral.

Either way, we spent the afternoon doing what we promised and cleaning up our campus. Quite a few students volunteered to help as well, and we spent the day picking up debris that had been created by the Crescents. By late afternoon, the campus seemed mostly back to normal; some things, like doors and windows, would need to be repaired, but thankfully the damage wasn't too bad.

The only place that none of us could bring ourselves to go into was the infirmary. Going in there only made me think about Tiffany, whose body still wasn't recovered. I wasn't sure what the Crescents did to her body after they dragged her away, but at this point, I didn't want to see it anyway. Days of being left out in the woods — or worse — would have only melted the image of her decaying body into my mind, and I wanted to remember her the way she always was: beautiful, kind, smiling... and alive.

So, we decided to save the infirmary for another day and instead locked it up tightly.

Once we were finished for the day, Enzo and I returned to the dorm to rest for a few hours. We planned to have a meeting with the New Peacekeepers that evening, but we were both so exhausted from everything that we just needed to lay down for a while.

As we laid together in bed, however, I couldn't get the thought of Selena and Enzo's father out of my head.

"Enzo?" I said, sitting up on my elbow and looking down at him. "Can I ask you something?"

“Anything,” Enzo replied. His eyes were closed, but he slowly opened them to look at me. Even though there was a distinct amount of pain behind them, I could still see an even more immense amount of love for me that overpowered the pain as he looked up at me.

“If the Alpha King withdrew support... Do you think that means that Selena did something to your father?”

Enzo was silent for a long time. His eyes stared thoughtfully up at the ceiling, his jaw clenching and unclenching as he thought about what I said. I think that we both knew what he was thinking: that Selena must have done something to his father. He told me before that he didn’t think that she had the capacity to kill, but I didn’t know how much I actually believed that. And even if she didn’t kill Enzo’s father, she still may have done something horrible to him to keep him quiet about my existence to the Alpha King. Maybe he was even in that same strange cabin that she kept me in.

Finally, Enzo responded. “I... I think she did do something,” he said quietly as his thumb rubbed the back of my hand absentmindedly. “I’m not sure what. And I hate to admit this, but... We need him. I think Lewis is letting the power get to his head, and I know my father would want to at least try to help our neighboring towns. He’s not a monster.”

I nodded, staring down at our intertwined hands. His fingers were cool and rough from years of playing hockey. I turned his hand over to inspect his palm, running my finger along his callouses.

“Are you going to go back for him?” I asked.

As those words came out of my mouth, I already felt myself begin to choke up because deep down, I knew the answer. Enzo would have to go back to rescue his father. Not only did he need to save his father for his pack’s sake, but he also had to bring him back to save our neighboring towns from the Crescents. There was still no telling how much destruction had been caused by the Crescents’ hands, and we needed the help of the Fullmoons. Even though our new little pack had somehow managed to defeat the Crescents on our campus and drive them away, we couldn’t handle all of the other towns on our own. By now, for all we knew the Crescents had hundreds, thousands of rogues to use like pawns. For all we knew, they were already spreading across the country like wildfire.

Enzo sat up, and without a word, pulled me closer. I felt a sob catch in my throat as I climbed into his lap, wrapping my legs around him and burying my face in his neck.

He held me like that for a long time, rocking me back and forth while I cried. The room began to darken around us as the sun went down outside, but I didn’t stop crying for a long time.

Finally, after what could have been hours, the tears wouldn't come anymore. I pulled away, letting Enzo brush a few stray strands of hair out of my eyes.

"I'm really sorry, Nina," he said gently, his hand lingering on my cheek. "I really am. I wish I could stay."

I stared down at my lap, nodding. "It's okay. I know why you need to go."

"But Nina..." Enzo said, placing his hand under my chin and tilting my face up so I met his soft gaze. "I promise I'll come back as soon as I can. You don't need to worry, and I'm not gonna leave you. Okay?"

I nodded. Another, final tear squeezed out of my eye and rolled down my cheek. Enzo caught it on his finger before pulling me closer and kissing me deeply.

But even as we fell back in the bed and began to remove each other's clothes in my dark bedroom, I couldn't help but wonder if he really would be able to come back for me

Chapter 174 Passing the Torch

Nina

Later that evening, the rest of the pack made their way over to our dorm for our meeting. Lori, Jessica and I prepared something for everyone to eat, although we were already beginning to run low on food what with the grocery store being deserted and all. Thankfully, Matt and the others brought along whatever they could find in their own apartments, and Enzo disappeared to his apartment briefly and returned later with a few bottles of wine that he had stashed away.

Finally, we somehow managed to put together a meal that was big enough for everyone. As we ate and chatted around the table, drinking wine, I liked to imagine that Tiffany was watching us with a smile on her face. I knew that she wouldn't want us to mourn over her, but rather to celebrate her life and the amazing antidote she made that saved our school; and we did just that.

There was still, of course, the looming conversation that would have to happen at the end of the party; not only about what we would do about the neighboring towns, but also the fact that Enzo would have to leave in the morning. He decided before the party to not talk about it until the end, and to just let everyone enjoy one another's company instead. I, however, couldn't stop thinking about it. Every time I looked at him, all I could picture was his face disappearing through a portal, never to be seen again. If Selena got her way with him, he could possibly never come back. None of us here knew how to open a portal, and Luke had been missing since he apparently protected Enzo from Edward in the werewolf realm. If something happened to Enzo and he couldn't come back, I would have no way of being able to go looking for him.

As the night went on, Lori and Jessica saw my discomfort and finally seemed to have enough of it. While everyone else was laughing, listening to music and playing card games, I felt a tap on my shoulder and looked up from my seat on the couch to see Lori and Jessica standing behind me with concerned looks on their faces. They both nodded their heads toward my room, indicating for me to come with them.

Once we were alone, they finally asked what was wrong.

“What’s going on with you?” Lori asked, concern drawn across her face. “Are you hiding something?”

I shook my head, staring down at the ground; but they weren’t having it. “Tell the truth,” Jessica insisted, folding her arms across her chest. “Come on. You promised that there would be no more secrets when you first told us about werewolves.”

Finally, I sighed, knowing that they wouldn’t let this go... And admittedly, I needed to talk to someone.

“Enzo is going back to the werewolf realm,” I finally admitted. “Tomorrow morning.”

Both Jessica and Lori’s eyes widened. “What?” Lori half-whispered. “Why? You can’t be serious!”

I nodded. “He has to go back to find his dad. The princess — my twin sister, apparently — may have done something to his father and he needs to find him. And... I’m worried that he won’t come back.”

My friends were silent for a moment, processing. Then, without a word, Jessica stepped forward and wrapped her arms around me. I felt myself relax into her, comforted by my friend’s touch. “I believe that Enzo loves you more than anything,” Jessica said quietly, stroking my hair as I sniffed and stifled my tears. “I know he’ll come back. You trust him, don’t you?”

I pulled away a bit, nodding as I wiped my tears away with my sleeve. “Yeah, I do. But...”

“But nothing,” Lori said, stepping forward and squeezing my shoulder. “He will come back. You don’t need to worry.”

I didn’t know if my friends were right. They could have been dead wrong; for all I knew, Enzo might step into that portal and die on the other side, and I’d never see him again or even know what happened to him. And my wolf was still nonexistent, so I couldn’t even follow his scent or figure out how to open a

portal no matter how hard I tried. I was powerless, just like I was at the beginning of the semester. A human.

But at the same time, my friends' words were comforting and exactly what I needed to hear. Their gentle support was going to be enough to get me through this, and I was sure of that.

...

At the end of the party, it finally came time to have our official meeting. Everyone was a little tipsy from the wine, but it almost felt necessary, in my eyes, in order for us to stomach what was about to come as we gathered around the living room.

Once we were all ready, Enzo stood and addressed everyone.

"Before we start, I have an announcement," Enzo said, looking around at everyone. I could see that his body was tense as he prepared himself to announce his potentially fatal departure. "I'm sorry to say this," he continued, "but I'm going to be leaving tomorrow. I have to return to the werewolf realm to find my dad."

A palpable silence fell over the room. The air felt thick and heavy, and as though making that announcement took the wind out of his sails, Enzo sat back down beside me. I reached out gently and squeezed his leg, but when he looked at me, there was only pain in my eyes.

"But while I'm gone, Matt, I want you to take charge," Enzo finally said.

"M-Me?" Matt asked, his eyes wide.

Enzo nodded. "Your bravery and leadership played a huge role in saving not just all of us, but the campus and the town. I think we can all agree that you're more than capable of acting in my place while I'm gone. I'm naming you as my Beta from here on out."

Matt's eyes widened even further. He looked around at everyone, clearly astonished as we all nodded our heads in agreement. If it weren't for Matt helping everyone band together and taking charge when we needed it, and if it weren't for Matt leading the Crescents away and risking his life, we wouldn't have been able to do what he did.

"Um... Thank you," Matt said, standing. "It's an honor."

"Thank you, Matt," Enzo replied. They shook hands, then sat again. "Now... As for our neighboring towns..."

Now, I was the one who spoke up. "I'm going to do everything I can to replicate Tiffany's recipe for the antidote," I said. "We'll need a lot of it if we're going to cure more people."

Enzo nodded. "That sounds like a plan. Hopefully, by the time that's ready, I'll be back. But, if not..." He paused, licking his lips and staring down at the floor. And suddenly, before he could say anything, Jessica chimed in.

"You will come back," Jessica said, sounding somewhat stern. "So when you come back, we'll discuss our next moves."

It was a bold thing for Jessica to say, but somehow, it made sense in the moment. We couldn't accomplish anything if there was a fear that Enzo came back; and if he didn't come back, then we knew that Matt could help guide us along with everyone else's input.

Enzo, much to my surprise, nodded. "Alright," he said, his voice sounding solemn but hopeful nonetheless. "When I come back, we'll do whatever's necessary to save our neighboring towns from the Crescents. In the meantime, Nina will make more of the antidote so we can be prepared."

With that, our meeting came to an end. None of us slept that night until the wine eventually made it too difficult to resist, because we wanted to enjoy this brief moment of peace before Enzo left. And that

night, as I sat beside Enzo, I could only pray that he would return safely to me

Chapter 175 Last Goodbye

Enzo

I hardly slept at all that night. Even as I held Nina, feeling her sleeping peacefully in my arms, I couldn't seem to relax for even a moment. My mind raced nonstop over what was to come; what would I do when I returned to the werewolf realm? I couldn't just walk into the Alpha King's mansion, but I knew the only way I would find out what happened to my father was by going there in one way or another. But if Selena found me, I was certain that she would do something horrible and vindictive to force me to stay. It made me almost sick thinking about the prospect of becoming her mate.

It was a relief to know that the two sisters would share the same fated mate, which explained why my bond with Nina was so strong, but Nina's wolf had also been missing since Selena put her in that strange prison. I couldn't pick up Nina's scent, and Fio couldn't sense her wolf at all. Not only that, but she'd lost her powers entirely and couldn't even heal herself. I knew that James' claim that the silver bullet had killed off her wolf was most likely a lie, as it wasn't anything that I had ever heard of before, but I couldn't shake the feeling that Selena did something to make Nina's wolf go away so that I would have no choice but to mark Selena in the end. If I did somehow manage to save my father, I would also have to be sure to do it in such a way that Nina would get her wolf back when this was all over. There must have been some sort of spell on her, but spells could be broken...

Or at least, I hoped they could.

As the hours ticked on and the sun slowly began to rise over the mountains, I finally couldn't sleep anymore. Taking care not to wake Nina, I quietly climbed out of bed and got into the shower to at least try to relax a little and enjoy some comforts just in case something bad happened. However, even the scalding hot water couldn't ease my anxieties.

When I got out of the shower, Nina was awake and sitting up in bed with a somewhat scared look on her face.

"I thought you left already," she said, letting out a sigh of relief. She almost looked like a little child who had a bad dream, and it made my heart ache to leave her like this.

"I wouldn't just leave you like that," I murmured as I quickly walked over to her and sat down on the edge of the bed, still in my towel. I wrapped my arms around her and pulled her closer.

We sat like that for a little while, just holding each other. But then, as I felt her hand travel up inside my towel, I looked down and saw a hint of mischief in her eyes.

"One last time?" she whispered, stroking me beneath the towel with her sleepy, yet sultry, eyes staring up at me.

Of course I couldn't resist. In one swift movement, I pushed her down on the bed and pulled the blankets down, climbing between her legs. She was only wearing my t-shirt and a pair of panties. I moved her damp panties aside and watched her face as I began to stroke her clit.

I didn't want to take my eyes off of her. If this was going to be the last time I would ever see her, then I wanted her face to be burned into my memory. I didn't want to ever close my eyes again without picturing her with her head on the pillow, her eyes rolling back as I pleased her.

I kissed her down there too, relishing in the sounds of her quiet moans as I swirled my tongue around, tasting her. She was soft and wet, and when I looked up, I saw her gazing down at me with her lips parted and her hand up her shirt, cupping her breasts.

Eventually, I couldn't contain myself anymore. I had to fuck her.

I moved up between her legs and rubbed a bit of spit on my cock before thrusting into her. She took me now so easily compared to the first time we slept together, and I was able to work myself in without any struggle. As I felt her tight pussy wrap around me, I felt myself throb. I took a deep breath, willing

myself not to come. The wolf inside of me wanted to breed her instantly, but I pushed that feeling down for the sake of making Nina feel good one last time before I left.

The sounds that came out of Nina's mouth as I thrust myself into her already left me on the verge of finishing, but I held myself back as I began to work my way into her, just focusing on making her feel good one last time. With each twist of our hips together, I felt her become more wet, as though her body was begging me to go deeper.

"Enzo," she moaned, digging her fingernails into the flesh of my back as I thrust myself into her, her eyes rolling back in pleasure, "I love you."

"I love you too, Nina," I whispered. I leaned down to suck on the soft skin of her neck, relishing in the feeling of her wrapped around me and the feeling of her nails digging into my back. I just wished that I could stay like this forever. I could live inside of her.

I scooped my arms under her arched back then and pulled her up, lifting her shirt off over her head so I could see her slender waist and her plump breasts. She held onto my neck as we moved together, twisting against me until we were both on the edge.

Finally, I couldn't hold it in any longer. "Come with me," I whispered, fucking her harder and more deeply as I felt my cock begin to swell.

We came together. I watched her intently as I came inside of her, letting the image of her face, with her eyes rolled back and her lips parted, melt into my brain.

I knew, as we collapsed in a tangled mess beneath the sheets, that I would hold onto this last memory until I could see Nina again.

...

A few hours later, it was time for me to leave. I said my goodbyes to my new pack in the apartment.

"We'll see you soon, Enzo," Matt said, clapping me on the back. "Real soon."

I nodded. Even though a huge part of me still felt as though I would never return, my friends seemed firmly set on the idea, and it brought me a bit of comfort. With that, we said our final goodbyes, and Nina walked me to the woods. One of my father's pack promised to meet us there to open a portal for me; someone who didn't particularly sympathize with Lewis' sudden power trip. It felt good to know that I still had some members of the Fullmoons who didn't see me as a total failure for wanting to break off and make my own pack.

Just as promised, the Fullmoon was there when we arrived. Myra.

"Are you ready?" she asked, leaning against one of the big pine trees with her arms folded across her chest.

“Just give us a minute,” I said. Myra nodded and turned away to give Nina and I some privacy.

There were already tears in Nina’s eyes as I turned to face her.

“I don’t want you to go,” she whispered, her voice choked.

“I know.” I wrapped my arms around her and pulled her close, shutting my eyes as I felt her body pressed up against mine and her quiet sobs into my shirt. When we finally pulled apart, I leaned down to meet her tearful gaze and held her firmly by both shoulders. “I promised I would come back, wouldn’t I?” I asked

Nina nodded. “Yes. But... What if you don’t?”

“I will,” I insisted, although I didn’t know if I quite believed it myself. “I promise I’ll be back before you even notice I’m gone.”

“Let me come with you,” she said, her face twisting into a sob.

“Nina... You have to stay here,” I replied. “Someone has to be the school doctor. Someone has to make Tiffany’s antidote. And besides... It’s too dangerous. We don’t know what Selena will do if she sees you again.”

Nina was silent as she stared at the forest floor, but she finally nodded after a while.

Neither of us spoke as I pulled her close again. We held each other for several long minutes, just swaying back and forth with the breeze, until Myra finally shot me a look over Nina’s shoulder. It was time to go.

I pulled away again, leaning down to kiss Nina one last, sweet time. “It’s time,” I whispered.

Nina nodded. I took her hand and walked over to meet Myra, who opened the swirling portal in one fluid, circular motion. Nina and I stared into it for a few moments, my heart pounding in my chest, before she turned to look up at me with a stern look on her face.

“Enzo Rivers,” she said, her voice quivering but fiercer than ever, “if you don’t come back... I’m gonna come after you and you’re gonna get it.”

I couldn’t help but smile at Nina’s words. But the portal was beginning to close, and I had to go.

With one last kiss on her forehead, I stepped through the portal, holding onto Nina’s hand until the last moment

Chapter 176 The New Doctor

Nina

Enzo held my hand until the last moment, only releasing it just moments before the portal closed. I wanted to hold onto him and jump through the portal with him, but I knew that it would never work. And he was right: I needed to stay here. There was still much to do.

“Are you gonna be okay?” the Fullmoon girl, Myra, asked.

I nodded, blinking back my tears. “I’ll be fine,” I said. “Thank you.” I couldn’t bear to have anyone look at me, however, so before anything else was said I quickly turned on my heel and walked away.

A mist had settled on the forest that morning. The air was cold and almost damp, and the sound of the leaves crunching underneath my feet was a comfort. As I painstakingly walked back to campus, I just kept focusing on that sound to keep my mind off of Enzo.

He would be okay. At least, that was what I kept telling myself. But if he wasn’t okay... I didn’t know how I would get to him. I knew that he told Myra not to open any portals for me in case I got any grand ideas, and she was loyal to him as his cousin and as a follower of his father. She wouldn’t budge if I asked; I was sure of it. Therefore, if anything happened and Enzo didn’t come back, I would have no way of finding him. Even Luke was still missing after he saved Enzo from Edward. I didn’t even know if Luke was still alive. For all I knew, he was a pile of dust somewhere. At least his curse would be over, but it still pained me to think about that.

When I finally returned to my apartment, Lori and Jessica were waiting for me. They instantly saw my puffy face and my red eyes, and stopped me before I was able to go and hide in my room.

“We’re not letting you lock yourself in your room and cry in bed all day,” Lori demanded, folding her arms across her chest. “Come on. We’re going to the infirmary.”

My face went pale. “The infirmary?” I asked. Even just the thought of going there made me sick. It reminded me too much of Tiffany.

“Nina, we have to go,” Jessica said, sounding a bit more gentle than her girlfriend. She reached out and rubbed my arm with a sad look in her eyes. “Students are injured. They need their school doctor.”

“Plus, we can’t waste any time looking for that antidote recipe,” Lori added. “Don’t worry. Jessica and I will stay with you.”

I took a deep breath, then nodded reluctantly. Even though the infirmary was the last place I wanted to go right now, they weren’t wrong. There was still much to be done. I

had promised Enzo that I would work hard to keep the infirmary running and to create more of the antidote.

"Alright," I said, trying my best to hide the tremor in my voice. "Let's go."

Together, the three of us made our way over to the infirmary in the cold morning air. When we arrived, the main window was still shattered, so the first thing we did was sweep up the broken glass on the inside and outside of the infirmary. After that, we slowly began to make our way around the infirmary and pick up scattered supplies, putting them back in their rightful places.

Lori and Jessica chatted the entire time, even joking a little to make me smile. Jessica played some music on her phone for us to listen to, and after an hour of cleaning, I had to admit that I was feeling a little bit better already.

Around noon, we opened the doors to the public. Lori made a large sign to put outside directing anyone with injuries to come in and have them looked at, and unbelievably, students began filtering in rather quickly. I found myself focusing entirely on the task of tending to students' injuries, checking their temperatures, and handing out medicine, and eventually realized that it had been a few hours and I had been so busy that I hadn't even thought about Enzo. Perhaps keeping me busy was really a smart move on Lori and Jessica's part.

By the time the stream of students slowed to a trickle, and eventually stopped, it was already almost dinnertime.

"You did good today," Jessica said gently as we finished cleaning up. "You're a good doctor, you know that?"

I couldn't help but smile a little bit at my friend's kind words, and without saying anything, I wrapped my arms around her neck and hugged her tightly. Lori came over too and hugged both of us at once. When we pulled away, there were tears in all of our eyes.

"Thank you guys," I said as I wiped the tears away with the back of my hand. "I needed this."

"It's what Tiffany would want," Lori said, gesturing around at the cleaned-up infirmary. "She's probably watching us right now with a smile on her face."

I stared down at the floor and let out a deep sigh. If only Tiffany were here... Her death had been so sudden, so quick. I didn't think she suffered in those moments, thankfully, but it was such an unnecessary death. Tiffany was the sweetest, kindest, most caring person I ever met; she didn't deserve to die so young.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. Lori, Jessica and I all jerked our heads up to see one more injured student standing in the doorway with a sad look on his face: Justin.

"I hope I'm not too late," he said.

"N-No, not at all," I replied, waving him in. "Are you injured?"

Justin nodded and made his way over to one of the infirmary beds, where he sat down with a bit of a wince. "It's my leg," he said. "I think something must have happened at some point. I'm not sure. I don't remember."

I grabbed my medical bag, already back into full doctor mode, and went over to him with my brow furrowed. He tenderly rolled up his pant leg to reveal a gash on his calf. It looked like it was beginning to get infected, judging from the green pus and the redness around it. I nodded to myself and sifted through my medical bag for gloves, which I put on, then retrieved a bottle of rubbing alcohol and a large tube of antibiotic ointment and crouched down in front of him.

"Is it okay if I touch it?" I asked.

Justin nodded and gritted his teeth while I dumped a good amount of the rubbing alcohol on some gauze and dabbed it on his leg. I then smeared a bunch of the antibiotic ointment on the gash, and wrapped his leg with clean gauze and an ace bandage.

"It should be okay," I said, standing and peeling my gloves off. "Just a little infected. Here." I retrieved a bottle of penicillin from the shelf and handed it to him. "Take one of those twice a day, preferably with a meal. Keep me updated, okay? If you get a fever or anything, come and see me."

Justin nodded once more and stood. His face was a little flushed, but his eyes were warm. "Thank you, Nina," he responded. I managed a weak smile as he made his way over to the door.

But just before he left, he stopped and turned to face me.

"Nina..." His voice faltered for a moment, and his face got even more red. "I do remember one thing from when I was stuck as a rogue."

"Oh?" I asked, raising an eyebrow and feeling intrigued. "What is it?"

Justin's eyes averted to the floor. "I remember your face," he said. "Clear as day. The whole time, all I could see was your face, smiling back at me."

Chapter 177 The Witch's Curse

Enzo

I let go of Nina's hand just moments before the portal closed. The last thing I felt was her fingers reluctantly slipping out of mine, and then... I was alone.

Even though I wanted nothing more than to stay in that spot and mourn over having to leave behind Nina, I knew that I needed to act quickly and waste no time. Without spending so much as another second standing there, I turned and began running in the direction of the Alpha King's mansion.

As I passed through the forest, I eventually came to the spot where I had last seen Luke. I took a few moments to stop there and search for any sign of Luke or Edward, but there was nothing; thankfully, there was no sign that anything sinister had happened to my friend, but on the other hand, I couldn't exactly be sure if Edward was still out there either. I only hoped that Luke sent Edward limping off with his tail between his legs, never to return — but I knew deep down that that possibility wasn't very likely.

Still, I had no time to waste. I needed to find my father and get back to Nina as soon as possible, so I had to get moving.

Eventually, by the time night began to fall, I made it to the Alpha King's mansion. I stopped a little ways away and hid in the forest, watching the mansion from afar; I didn't know if it was safe for me to just walk right up to the front door, so I needed to observe the guards' patrol patterns and see if there was any way to get in without being seen. If Selena saw me before anyone else, I was certain that she would get in the way; and if the Alpha King was furious enough to withdraw support in the war on the Crescents over my escape, then I couldn't be sure that he would exactly listen to me if I just waltzed in there and told him that I knew where his lost daughter was, and that I intended to marry her instead of Selena. No... I had to be careful about this. For now, I just needed to find my father and get out of there. We could deal with Selena and the Alpha King later.

The night began to grow darker. I pulled my hood up and shivered beneath the tree where I hid, feeling the bite of the cold wind against my face. The guards were still patrolling, but I had memorized their pattern by now, and began to prepare to sneak up to the side entrance of the mansion while they changed shifts, which would happen any minute now.

But then, something unexpected happened.

The side entrance to the mansion opened. I moved further into the shadows, crouching down behind the bushes as my mind raced with the possibility that someone had seen me. But they hadn't. It was something else entirely.

Selena stepped out.

She was wearing a black cloak with her hood up to conceal her hair and her face, but I could tell instantly from her scent that it was her. She paused then, sniffing the air. If I could pick up her scent from here, could she pick up mine?

Cursing under my breath, I searched for Fio and urged him to retract his scent, and he did. Selena froze for a moment and stopped sniffing the air, then looked around confusedly before she continued forward. I watched from the shadows as she crouched by the side entrance, watching — just as I had been doing all this time — until the guards began to change their shifts. Then, like a wraith in the night, she bolted toward the treeline with her black cloak billowing out behind her. My heart raced, thinking that she was coming for me, but at the last moment she veered to the left and leaped into the darkness, unseen, just before the new guards came out to their posts.

I cursed under my breath. Selena had just wasted my opportunity to sneak up to the side entrance, and I would have to wait here for another three hours in the cold to get another chance. But, as I stared toward where she had disappeared to, I realized something: maybe she really gave me a golden opportunity after all. She was clearly up to something. Could it be that she was going to see my father?

If it was going to be hours until my next chance, then I decided to take the risk and follow her to see where she was going. I knew that this very well might have been a trap, and Fio was furious with me for falling for it, but I didn't care. I needed to know where she was going.

Selena's scent was getting faint, so I decided to go with my gut and follow her trail before it disappeared. Quietly, but quickly, I made my way through the forest and followed Selena's scent from a distance, using my night vision to help guide my way.

Eventually, her scent grew stronger and I knew that she was no longer moving. My heart caught in my throat as I tentatively approached, prepared to shift in case this was a trap, but then something came into view: a light.

A dark amber light emanated from the darkness. I approached slowly, squinting against the bright light, until the shape of a small house came into view. I knew instantly what it was.

A witch's hut.

They were rare, but they could be found scattered around in remote areas like this. They all typically had the same appearance, and could be distinguished by the protection runes painted or carved into the doors. As I came closer, I could see the runes and all doubt was now removed; Selena was seeing a witch. But for what?

As I came closer, the sound of voices began to carry across the air. I pricked my ears, taking a bit of Fio's energy to enhance my hearing ability, and crouched in the bushes as I listened.

“Is it working?” Selena asked. “Can you see her?”

“Hmm... Yes,” the witch responded in a dreamy voice. “Her wolf is gone.”

“But for how long? For good?” Selena’s voice sounded urgent.

There was a pause before the witch replied. “Until I lift the curse.”

Selena let out an almost evil chuckle. “Good,” she said. “Don’t lift the curse. Now... As for my herbs...”

“Yes, of course,” the witch said. There was another pause, then the sound of coins clinking together. It sounded like Selena was purchasing something. “Remember, just like I told you: only use the recommended amount. Too much at once, and you’ll hurt him.”

“Yeah. Whatever.”

My brow furrowed. A curse? Someone’s wolf? Were they talking about Nina? They had to be; that would explain why her wolf suddenly disappeared. That was easy enough, though... I could get the witch to lift the curse once I found my father. But I couldn’t help but wonder what sort of herbs Selena was buying. Had she used them on my father somehow, or was she planning to?

Suddenly, the door opened. Light spilled out into the forest, and Selena stepped out.

I was careless. I knew I was too close, and in such deep thought as I angrily wondered what she was up to, my eyes must have been glowing — because she looked right at me

Chapter 178 A Horrible Dream

Nina

I woke up that night with a start. My back and forehead were both caked in sweat, and my entire body was shaking as I sat up in bed.

That night, I had had a dream about Enzo; a horrible dream, at that. I was searching for him, running through the forest as fast as I could and calling his name. I could hear his voice coming from far away, calling for me. Just a little further, and I would be there. So much joy filled my body as I knew that he would be safe with me.

But when I found him, he wasn’t alone. He was sitting on a chair, and behind him stood... Selena. His eyes were closed and his body was slumped, but she was holding his head up like a puppet. There was a sickening grin spread across her evil face, and then she opened her mouth...

And she called my name with Enzo's voice.

After that dream, I knew I wouldn't be able to sleep. It felt like an omen, and although it had been less than a day since Enzo left, I knew I needed to find him — and Myra was the only one who I knew that could help me. Without wasting a second, I quickly climbed out of bed and threw my clothes on, then quietly slipped out of my dorm and headed toward the cabins where the Fullmoons were staying.

When I arrived, several of them were sitting around the fire and chatting. Lewis wasn't there, but thankfully, Myra was. She looked up as I approached and gave me a strange look.

"Nina?" she asked. "It's one o'clock in the morning. What's wrong?"

"I need to talk to you," I said, shivering in the cold beneath my sweatshirt. "Please."

One of the other Fullmoons moved to escort me away, but Myra shook her head and stopped him. She walked up to me with a confused look on her face, but followed nonetheless as I led her a little ways

away.

"What is it?" she asked once we were out of earshot.

"It's Enzo," I whispered, pulling down my hood. "I... Had a nightmare. It was too vivid, and I'm worried it might be some kind of omen. Please, I really need you to—"

"If you're going to ask me to open a portal, then the answer is no," Myra interrupted. She then sighed and placed her hand on my shoulder. "Nina... He's fine. You're just anxious, but I promise that he'll be okay. If he doesn't come back in a week, then we'll go searching for him, okay?"

I gulped, but I knew that Myra was right. It had only been less than a day. Surely nothing horrible could have happened to him by now.

It was just a dream.

...

The next morning, I picked up my phone to a campus-wide announcement from the dean instructing everyone to gather in the auditorium for a meeting. I hadn't slept at all since my nightmare and was still wearing my clothes from my walk through the woods, so I decided to go with Lori and Jessica.

By the time we arrived, many of the students had already flooded into the auditorium. They spoke in hushed voices, still frightened from everything that happened — but I had hope, at the very least, that Cynthia had an announcement that would raise morale.

“Thank you all for coming,” Cynthia said into the microphone once everyone had settled. I was sitting in the back of the auditorium with Lori and Jessica, and felt comforted as Jessica’s hand slipped into mine.

“I have a very important announcement,” she continued with a tense smile. “As I’m sure you all know already, the atrocities that happened here on this very campus have many of us feeling defenseless... But not anymore. I would like to introduce you all to a wonderful group of people who have volunteered to protect our campus and our town from any further attacks: please give your gratitude to the Fullmoons!”

I felt my stomach sink as the Fullmoons made their way onto stage. Seeing Lewis almost made me sick after what had happened at the meeting the other day. Even just thinking about how they were not going to protect any of our neighboring towns made my blood boil. Jessica, seeing this, shot me an empathetic look and squeezed my hand. I shook my head and stared down at my lap, seething.

“The Fullmoons are going to be patrolling our campus and our town for the foreseeable future,” the dean continued. “I can assure you all that these fine ladies and gentlemen are skilled fighters, and will do their best to protect our school. Now, for a few words from Lewis, the temporary leader of the Fullmoons, who will be in charge while their leader is away.”

Away... More like kidnapped.

“Thank you all for being willing to listen to an old man such as myself,” Lewis said, a little too enthusiastically for my liking. “My name is Lewis, and I am the Beta of the Fullmoons. Now, before you ask... Yes, we are werewolves.”

A gasp rippled over the students, and they all began to look at each other, but Lewis continued nonetheless. “I know you’ve all had a rocky introduction to the world of werewolves,” he said. “And I fully understand your fears and concerns. But rest assured in knowing that we wish no ill will toward humans, and only hope for a new era in which humans and werewolves can live in harmony. If you’re still not convinced, which is understandable, let’s take a moment to remember that it was werewolves — your beloved hockey team — who saved your campus from our opposing faction, the Crescents.”

Lewis paused, licking his lips. All of the students slowly turned to look at the hockey team, who were all standing along the back of the auditorium. I heard some hushed whispers, but the students seemed more awed than frightened, which was a relief.

“The Crescents,” Lewis continued, “are not like us. They do not represent the sentiments of all werewolves; in fact, they represent a very small portion of our population, and we will work tirelessly to ensure that their hatred doesn’t have a chance to spread. Students of Mountainview: rest assured that the Fullmoons are on your side, and we are here to help.”

I stifled a scoff. Were they really here to help, or were they only here for their own gain because of Mountainview’s prime location? My blood boiled even harder as I stared at Lewis, watching him step down from the stage with the rest of the Fullmoons; and for an instant, he looked across the crowd and made me certain that he was looking right at me, as though he knew that I didn’t approve of his leadership. As he looked at me, his eyes were cold and indifferent. I wanted to jump up and shout, to accuse the Fullmoons and the dean of being selfish and uncaring, but I couldn’t; I was frozen in time.

“...that’s why we’ll be hosting two fundraising events: a hockey game, and after that, a school dance. Not only will this be a chance to raise funds in order to repair our school, but it will also be a great chance for you to mingle with your fellow students and have a little carefree fun.”

I hadn’t realized it, but while I was locking eyes with Lewis, the dean had returned to her speech. What was this about a hockey game and a dance? As she mentioned it, the crowd began to murmur excitedly. Jessica looked over at me with a smile, as did Lori.

“That could be nice,” Jessica whispered, nudging me with her elbow. “Something to look forward to.”

In all honesty, I felt as though hosting festivities was too soon after what had happened — especially after losing not only Tiffany, but also several students — but I supposed that maybe Jessica was right.

Maybe a little fun was necessary to keep me from worrying nonstop about Enzo

Chapter 179 Through the Fog

Enzo

I knew I shouldn’t have hidden so close to Selena. She saw me instantly when she walked out of the witch’s hut, and her eyes fixed on me in the darkness like a hawk.

“Enzo?” she called out, frowning. “Is that you?”

There was no way that I could have gotten away at that point; even if I did get away, she would have only strengthened her security around my father — assuming he was still alive — and I would never be able to find him if I didn’t play into her little game. So, with a quiet sigh, I stood and came out from behind the bushes.

"Hello, Selena," I said. "Didn't think you'd see me again, huh?"

Selena's eyes were wide, but a smile spread across her face in an almost childlike way. "You came back for me?" she asked, twirling a bit of hair around her finger. From behind her, the witch peered out of her hut at me with a confused expression on her face. I made sure to burn her face into my memory so I could find her later when I needed her to lift Nina's curse.

"Of course I did," I said. "I made a promise, didn't I?"

"I... I thought you left to go be with her," she replied, her voice low and almost bitter. "I was so mad at you."

Of course I left Selena to be with Nina. I would never want to be with Selena; she was batshit crazy. But I couldn't let her know that. I needed her to think that I was madly in love with her so that I could find my father and tell the Alpha King about Nina.

"Selena," I lied, walking up to her and cupping her cheek with my hand, "I love you. Didn't I tell you that already? I only left because I was worried about my friends."

Selena shut her eyes for a moment and leaned her cheek into my hand with a sigh. "Oh, Enzo..." she said in a sing-song voice. "I'm so glad you came back. We can get married now... But my daddy..."

"What about him?" I asked, prying for more information.

"Well... He's very mad at you. He thinks that you ran away from me because you didn't want to get married to me."

"Maybe I can talk to him, then," I said, wrapping my arm around Selena's waist and pulling her closer, resisting her scent. "Can you bring me to him?"

Selena nodded vehemently. "Of course I can bring you to him. He'll be so happy! Come on — let's go. But first..." She paused, biting her lower lip as she looked up at me. I knew what she wanted from me. She wanted proof that I "loved" her. Proof that I really came back for her and for no other reason.

I had no choice.

I kissed her.

Only for a moment. It was a brief, deep kiss. She tried to lean in further, but I pulled away and shook my head, silently reminding her about what I had said before the last time she tried to seduce me: that I was waiting for marriage.

After I kissed her, a slow smile spread across Selena's lips. But there was something else behind it: something cunning. Somehow, I knew that I had to tread carefully around this Princess.

...

When we returned to the mansion, Selena, much to my surprise, marched confidently up to the front gates.

"P-Princess?" the surprised guard said. "Is that you? How did you get out here so late?"

"I was only going for a walk," Selena lied, holding my hand. "Didn't you see me walk past you earlier? I even said hello!"

The guard furrowed his brow. I could tell from the slight swirling in his pupils that Selena was dazing him, and it worked. Without another word, the guard nodded and opened the gate, letting us in without so much as questioning why I was there. The more time I spent with Selena, the more I came to realize that she had quite a few abilities, and all of them were strong. She dazed that guard like it was nothing. I would have to keep my wits about me.

We walked right in through the front doors. The inside of the mansion was comfortably warm after being out in the cold all night, I had to admit. A servant came and took my jacket and Selena's cloak, and then Selena led me down a hallway that was lined with shining suits of armor like something out of a fairy tale. At the end of the hallway, she pushed a set of doors open...

And a weight lifted off of my shoulders as I saw not only the Alpha King sitting by the fireplace, but someone else.

My father.

"Selena, what are you doing up so—" the Alpha King began, but his voice faltered when he saw me and his eyes widened. "Enzo?"

My father looked up then from his book, his own eyes widening. Without a word, he dropped his book and stood. I stormed over to him and pulled him in for a hug.

"Son, I was so worried about you," he said, pulling away and holding me by both arms. "Where have you been?"

I furrowed my brow. "Dad— Don't you—"

Suddenly, Selena cleared her throat. No more words would come out of my mouth; no matter how hard I tried to get the words out, to ask my father why he seemed so confused, nothing could come.

"You must be tired," my father said, patting me firmly on the shoulder with a clueless smile.

"Daddy, Enzo decided that he does want to marry me," Selena said. I looked over to see her grinning at me with that same cunningness from before, but still nothing would come out of my mouth. She must have used some sort of spell on me to keep me from speaking, or at least from saying anything about Nina or the school. What was going on here?

"Well, I'm glad to hear it," the Alpha King said, folding his arms across his chest and looking me up and down before looking at Selena. "Do you trust him, dear?"

Selena nodded excitedly. "Yes, Daddy," she said. "I know he won't leave again."

The Alpha King smiled warmly. For a King, he almost seemed like a fool, being wrapped around his daughter's finger like that. "Well, then I'll allow it," he said. "Tomorrow morning, let's all gather for breakfast so we can discuss what's next. Right, Enzo?"

Suddenly, I felt my throat open again — but I knew better than to say anything out of turn, because Selena would surely only hex me again to keep me from talking.

"Say yes, sir," my father whispered, patting me on the shoulder again.

"Uh... Yes, sir," I said, bowing slightly to the King as my mind raced.

"Good." The Alpha King nodded. "Now... Off to bed, with both of you."

Before I could say another word, Selena suddenly grabbed my hand and whisked me away. I was too dazed to resist, my mind filled with a million questions. Why was he so clueless? What was she doing to him? What was she going to do to me? Was she controlling the Alpha King, too? And, even more importantly, what would she do to Nina if I returned to Mountainview?

But none of those questions would be answered...

Because as soon as we were alone and out of sight, Selena suddenly whirled around to face me with that cunning look on her face. With a grin, she reached up and touched my forehead with her thumb.

Everything went foggy, and then black

Chapter 180 Somewhere Only We Know

Nina

On the night after the dean's announcement, I realized once more that I wouldn't be able to sleep. Even just over the course of a couple of nights in Enzo's warm arms, I already couldn't sleep without him.

I couldn't explain what came over me next. Maybe it was the exhaustion. Maybe it was desperation. But as I climbed out of bed for the second night in a row and got dressed, I almost felt like I was in a daze.

I was being drawn somewhere. Where I was being drawn to was a mystery to me, but for some reason I didn't even question it and simply climbed out of bed without a second thought.

Once I was dressed, I quietly snuck out of my dorm again and made my way down the hallway. My body felt light, like it was a balloon filled with air and some invisible string was pulling me somewhere. I didn't know where that string was pulling me, and I didn't care. Somehow, I felt as though Enzo was on the other end of it, pulling me toward him... But I knew that that was a silly idea.

I made my way down the hallway, then down the stairs and out the front door. The campus was as quiet as a graveyard as I made my way across the quad. The dean had held a candlelight vigil earlier that night for the lives lost during the attack, but that had long since ended and everyone went to sleep.

Before the attack, there would almost always be people wandering the campus at any time of night or day. Night owls, partiers, insomniacs... There was always someone. But now, ever since the attack, everyone disappeared into their dorms as soon as the sun went down. The dean did, of course, implement a loose curfew, but I didn't even think that was necessary. People were too afraid to even really go out during the day unless they absolutely had to. They were too scared.

But I wasn't scared. Or maybe I was, but I just didn't know it in my current state of mind, like some sort of zombie. Even as I stepped into the woods and made my way through the dark trees, I didn't feel much of anything other than that invisible string pulling me into the shadows.

Finally, the string stopped pulling; I knew where I was.

It was the spot where Enzo stepped through the portal. It was almost as if there was some sort of energy here, some residue left over from the portal. Somehow, if I really searched for it, I was certain that I could smell his scent; not his wolf scent, because I had lost my ability to do that since my own wolf disappeared, but the smell of his leather jacket and campfire smoke.

I didn't even think as I sat down next to the tree that was there and leaned my head back, because for the first time in two days, I felt myself slipping into a serene sleep within moments.

But that serenity didn't last for long, because soon I began to dream.

Enzo was standing in front of me... Not a puppet, but the real thing. He was looking down at me.

"Enzo," I called, reaching out for him, reaching up to cup his face.

But he only stared at me with a puzzled expression.

"Who are you?" he asked.

After that, I awoke sometime just before the sun came up. I was freezing, shivering even in my warm sweater and my coat. It was so cold, in fact, that my tears were frozen to my cheeks.

...

It was far too cold to stay outside, and I was clear headed enough now to know that I needed to get inside, so I returned home shortly after I woke up. Lori and Jessica were still asleep, thankfully, so I

slipped back into my room unnoticed and without being lectured and began to peel off my semi-frozen clothes so I could take a hot shower and warm myself up. But, much to my surprise, my phone began to buzz in my pocket before I could do that.

Who was calling me at this hour?

When I pulled my phone out, my brow furrowed. It was Phil: my old boss from the diner. I was of course thrilled that he was alright, but I was also confused as to why he would be calling me so early in the morning.

"Hello?" I answered. My throat was raw from the cold air, so my voice sounded strained as I spoke.

"Nina!" he said, sounding relieved and chipper as always. "I hope it's not too early."

"N-No," I said. "Is everything alright?"

"I wanted to ask you something," he replied. I could practically hear his smile through the phone, and that brought me comfort. "That's why I'm calling you so early: I need to get this up and running as soon as possible. With everything that happened lately... Well, I'd like to do something to help out our community, so I decided to run a free food drive. But, of course, we'll need lots of volunteers as we'll need to cook quite a lot of food and hand it out. Is that something you think you might be able to help with? Maybe you could ask your friends to come along and lend a hand, too?"

I paused, biting my lip. It was genuinely a good idea, and it was something to keep me busy and keep me from overthinking about Enzo. Our students and our community needed free, hot food right now, too, and what better place to do it than the diner?

“Absolutely,” I agreed, nodding. “I’d love to help. I’ll bring the whole hockey team.”

“Oh, that’s wonderful!” Phil exclaimed. “Can you be here by seven?”

I glanced at the clock; it was only four o’clock in the morning, so I still had a few hours to get some rest and tell everyone about the food drive. “Sure,” I said. “I’ll see you then.”

When I hung up, I couldn’t deny the fact that Phil’s phone call cheered me up a little bit. Even with Enzo gone and Tiffany no longer with us, I couldn’t help but feel a tiny shred of hope that everything would be okay. If the people around me were so willing and ready to help our community, then I was certain that we would all be able to spread that kindness to our neighboring towns, even if the Fullmoons never did help. There was nothing stronger than the power of friendship, love, and community; I was sure of that after everything that had happened these past few days, and I was certain that both Enzo and Tiffany would be proud.

And, in a strange way, I felt invigorated from spending the night near the last place that I saw Enzo. Somehow, as though sleeping near the portal filled me with a strange sense of wisdom, I knew that he would return...

But at the same time, I knew now that he wouldn’t be the same when he did eventually return to me