

# **My Hockey Alpha #Chapter 191 Say Yes to the Dress - Read My Hockey Alpha Chapter 191 Say Yes to the Dress**

## **Chapter 191 Say Yes to the Dress**

Nina

Even though I would have much preferred to be going to the dance with Enzo, I agreed to go with Justin — but only as friends. As long as I knew that Enzo could still be out there somewhere, I couldn't bring myself to let things go any further with Justin. Even if something did happen to Enzo and I really wouldn't ever get to see him again, I wasn't sure if I could even live with myself if I moved on. I loved Enzo too much to ever move on.

But, regardless, I agreed to go. Jessica and Lori were right when they said that I needed to rest. The Crescents seemed to be retreating, the town was going back to at least somewhat of a sense of normalcy, and I felt as though I was on the verge of recreating the antidote. I came close to recreating it on the night that Justin asked me to the dance, and I was certain that I could crack the code soon so we could create the antidote in larger quantities and begin distribution to our neighboring towns.

Unfortunately, however, I still couldn't find Luke; and he was my only link to getting to the werewolf realm to bring Enzo home. If Myra couldn't open a portal for me, then Luke was the only other person who could — or at least who would open a portal willingly. I was pretty sure that Lewis could open portals, but he certainly wasn't going to help since he seemed to enjoy being the de facto leader of the Fullmoons too much. I just wished that I knew where Luke was and why he suddenly disappeared. I was getting extremely worried about him at this point.

The next morning, I finally admitted to Lori and Jessica that I agreed to go to the dance with Justin.

"I'm so glad, Nina!" Jessica exclaimed. "This will be good for you. You need a night of fun."

I nodded, staring at the floor. "I just wish it was Enzo," I whispered, blinking back the tears that began to form in my eyes.

"You know what?" Lori suddenly chimed in. "The dance is tomorrow, right? So just take a breather until then, and then I promise we'll all search for Luke again. Hey, maybe he even went to the werewolf realm without you. Maybe he's coming back with Enzo as we speak."

"Maybe," I replied, lifting my gaze to meet my friends'. I wasn't sure if I believed it, but it was a plausible explanation. It was possible that Luke decided he didn't want me to be

in danger, and decided to go without me. But that also could have meant that not only Enzo was in danger, but now Luke, too.

“So,” Jessica interjected, clearly wanting to change the subject and get my mind off of things, “what are you going to wear?”

I could only shrug. “One of my old dresses, I guess,” I replied.

Jessica frowned. Suddenly, she jumped up from the couch and walked over to the door. Lori and I watched as she slipped her shoes on, then grabbed her coat and her purse from the hook. “Come on,” she said, almost impatiently. “The clothing store in town reopened. Let’s go.”

It seemed as though I didn’t have much of a choice, so I agreed to go.

...

When we arrived at the clothing store in town, Jessica immediately began dragging me around to all of the racks in search of a dress. I couldn’t deny the fact that her exuberance made me smile, and soon enough, I was even having a little fun. It felt just like old times, when the three of us would head to town on the weekends and shop and drink coffee together. If I really tried hard enough, I could almost convince myself that things were back to normal and that I could just be a college student again with my greatest worry being whether or not I would pass midterms.

Eventually, the three of us all had several dresses to try on, and we made our way over to the fitting rooms.

“You’d both better come out and show me your dresses,” Jessica demanded, causing me to laugh a little as I stepped into my fitting room and closed the door.

As I undressed, I caught a glimpse of myself for the first time in ages. Lately, ever since my first scar formed from what Edward did to me, I hadn’t been looking in the mirror very often. After Enzo left, I didn’t look in the mirror much at all. I hadn’t even really realized it; it just sort of happened. For some reason, looking at myself made me almost sick. The big, white scar on my belly from Edward’s claws... The scar left by the bullet that James put in my leg... And there were other, smaller scars, too from all of the ordeals I had been through. Not only that, but I had also become a little too skinny from hardly even being able to eat over the past month.

But the biggest scars were the ones in my heart and in my mind.

I took in a shaky breath and turned away from the mirror as I took my clothes off, not wanting to look any longer. I only turned back around to look at the first dress I tried on: a simple blue mini dress.

But I didn't like it.

"Hmm... It's too business-y," Jessica said when I came out. I nodded in agreement, then went back in to try on the second dress. This one was bright pink — Jessica had picked it out — and made me uncomfortable. I didn't like wearing bright colors. I was a lot more like Lori than Jessica in the fashion choice department.

Finally, I tried on the third and final dress. It was just a simple black dress that came down to my ankles. It had long sleeves, perfect for the cold weather, but it also had a low back that scooped down and looked sexy. And when I came out of the dressing room, both Jessica's and Lori's jaws dropped.

"You look hot," Lori said.

Jessica nodded in agreement. "Mhm. It hugs your body so well. And the back... I would date you."

"Hey!" Lori said, smacking Jessica lightly on the arm and causing both of us to laugh. It was nice seeing my friends acting like themselves, and it admittedly made me feel better, too.

But my smile quickly faded when I looked into the mirror, and standing behind me...

Was the new boy.

He was staring at me, giving me that same strange look. I couldn't tear my eyes away, either. As we stared at each other in the mirror, I swore his face began to shift and morph... I knew him. It was Enzo; it had to be. My eyes widened and I whipped around to face him, but that was when my heart sank — because it wasn't Enzo. It was just the new boy, and I had been seeing things again.

Suddenly, before either of us could tear our eyes away, the new girl stormed up to the boy and stood in front of him with her arms folded across her chest. She glared at me for a long, palpable few moments before suddenly grabbing the boy by his arm and dragging him out of the store.

I watched them leave, listening to the sound of the bell on the door

## **Chapter 192 A Little Accident**

Nina

"Nina?" Jessica asked, finally making me tear my gaze away from the door where the two new transfer students had just disappeared through. "Knock knock. Anyone in there?"

I shuddered as I came back to my senses and turned back to face Lori and Jessica, who were looking at me with concern. "Sorry," I said, forcing a fake smile. "Just got a little distracted."

"I'll say," Lori replied, pursing her lips. "You have got to stop staring at that new guy. His girlfriend is gonna get pissed."

I nodded and headed back to the fitting room. "I know," I replied. "I'll stop."

But as I took off the black dress and changed back into my regular clothes, then paid for the dress at the counter, I still couldn't quite get my mind off of what I had seen in the mirror. As the boy and I locked eyes, it really did seem as though his face was morphing into Enzo's. And for a moment, I swore that he recognized me, too. But as soon as I turned around, he looked nothing like Enzo again, and he didn't seem to recognize me at all anymore. Maybe I needed therapy or something, because this was getting out of hand. Lori was right; if I kept staring at that boy every time I saw him, his girlfriend would certainly start to get suspicious — and I didn't need another Lisa on my hands.

After we bought our dresses, Lori, Jessica and I made our way over to the cafe to enjoy some coffee and pastries. It was just like it used to be — if I pushed my strange familiarity with the new boy, my apparent looming insanity over losing Enzo, and the fact that a quarter of the stores on this little shopping strip were boarded up because of the Crescent attack. Then at least I was able to pretend that everything was normal.

As we stepped into the coffee shop, I felt a wave of relief wash over me. The two new students weren't here, so I was able to just focus on enjoying coffee and pastries with my friends. We ordered our food

and sat down, and I couldn't help but smile a bit as Jessica prattled on about how excited she was for the dance and how good we all looked in our dresses. In a way, I almost felt like I was in high school again and as though it was the day before prom. I also couldn't deny the fact that I was excited as well to have a bit of fun — not to mention the fact that the fundraising from this dance would be good for our campus.

The three of us were sitting together and chatting, however, when I suddenly felt someone bump into me. Something warm and foamy soaked not just my lap, but also the bag that contained my brand new dress.

"Oh!" an unfamiliar voice said from beside me as mine and my friends' eyes widened. "Sorry! It was just a little accident!"

I slowly turned and looked up to see none other than the new transfer student standing beside me. She was staring down at me with a cardboard coffee cup in her hand — which was now empty — and although she apologized, she didn't actually seem regretful at all. In fact, when I looked into her eyes, I could tell that she did it on purpose. There was a hint of vindictiveness there that was almost too familiar. Almost like...

Selena.

I swore, for the briefest of moments, that it really was Selena. I could see it in her eyes. The way she looked at me was too familiar, too full of hate.

But before I could say anything, her appearance quickly faded back to that of the new girl. I blinked a few times, feeling confused. But by then, Jessica had apparently already decided to stand up for me herself.

"A little accident?" Jessica said, standing. "I saw you coming! You totally did that on purpose!"

The new girl pursed her lips and narrowed her eyes. "I did not! There's a rug here. See? I tripped on it."

"Bullshit," Jessica growled. "And you ruined her brand new dress. You should buy her a new one; not only that, but you should also feel sorry, because her boyfriend just—"

"It's fine!" I suddenly interjected, standing and dabbing at myself with my napkin. "Let it go, Jessica. It's just a dress."

"It's not just a dress," Jessica insisted, her hands balled up into fists at her side. "You needed this, Nina. And she just ruined it, totally on purpose."

"Jess," Lori said, nodding her head toward the barista, who was walking our way with an angry look on her face. "Calm down."

The barista walked up to all of us then and folded her arms across her chest. "You four are disturbing the peace," she said. "If you can't break it up and calm down, then I'm going to have to ask you to leave. All of you."

"I'm sorry," I muttered. "We're sorry, I mean. We'll be quiet."

"Thank you." The barista walked away then. The new girl, who now looked nothing like Selena, flipped her hair over her shoulder and stormed out with a hmph, leaving Lori, Jessica and I standing by our table in stunned silence.

Jessica, grumbling to herself, walked around to my side of the table and reached into the bag to retrieve my dress. When she held it up, it was certainly ruined. The coffee left a big, brown stain right on the front. Even though the dress was black, it was still made of silk; and I knew that I would never be able to get a coffee stain out of it.

"That little bitch," Jessica muttered, to which I shook my head. "What?" she said. "I saw that she did it intentionally. She walked right up to you and practically just... dumped her entire coffee onto you. I swear there was even a smirk on her stupid face. You saw her, didn't you, Lori?"

Lori nodded. "It did seem intentional," she replied. "Nina... This is why you can't keep staring at that new guy. We don't know these people. You don't know what they're capable of. They could even be Crescents, for all we know."

"It's alright," I said. I took the dress out of Jessica's hands and put it back in the bag, blinking back tears as I did so. I wouldn't be able to buy a new dress; I didn't have the money. I would have to wear one of my old dresses that I had in my closet, but it was okay. At the very least, I learned something new — and it wasn't just that I learned not to stare at other girls' boyfriends.

That day, when I stared into that girl's hateful eyes, I swore she really looked just like Selena. But I knew that it was a crazy notion, and pushed the thought away; why would Selena even want to come back to Mountainview with Enzo if she was specifically trying to keep Enzo away from me? It simply didn't make sense.

Maybe I really did need help after all. I was clearly beginning to see things caused by my stress and constant exhaustion, and if I didn't get help for these hallucinations soon, I would not only likely have a complete mental breakdown, but I would also piss off the new girl even more for relentlessly staring at her boyfriend.

I had to let go of the notion that Enzo had returned. It was only making my heartache even worse

## **Chapter 193 Mutiny**

Nina

I woke up the next morning feeling somewhat excited to the dance, which was finally happening that night. After everything that had happened recently, Jessica and Lori were right when they said that I needed to relax a little bit and have some fun. Of course, I could only have so much fun without Enzo, but I knew that he wouldn't want me to kill myself with exhaustion, so I decided to take my friends' advice and just try to enjoy the day.

That morning, I woke up to the sound of the birds singing outside and the sun shining through my window. Even though it was a cold day, it was still bright and sunny, and it made me happy to know that the birds would still sing and that the sun would still rise despite all of the horrors that I had been through. In a way, that simple realization filled me with a renewed sense of strength and hope.

I climbed out of bed and immediately made my way to the shower, feeling relief wash over me as the hot water ran across my skin. I even took extra time to thoroughly wash my hair, shave, and exfoliate, as though doing all of these things would somehow cleanse away all of the heartache; because today, I needed to just focus on relaxing. If I didn't do that, then I was certain I would only keep seeing these hallucinations, and I would never manage to find Enzo or recreate the antidote if they didn't stop.

After my shower, I headed out to the kitchen.

Lori and Jessica were already awake.

“Mm,” I said as I walked into the kitchen. “Smells good. Pancakes?”

Jessica smiled as she flipped a pancake on the stove. “Someone seems like she’s in a good mood this morning,” she said. Meanwhile, Lori sat slumped at the counter with a cup of coffee in her hand. Her eyes were barely open, but she gave me a smile nonetheless.

“I’m feeling a little better today,” I said, walking over to the coffee pot to pour myself a cup. “Thanks for taking me out yesterday. It really helped.”

“It’s good to get out and do fun things, even when you’re struggling,” Jessica replied. I watched as she put a pancake onto a plate, then handed it to me. “Enzo wouldn’t want you to sit here wallowing all of the time.”

Suddenly, Lori chimed in. Her voice was still groggy and deep from tiredness. “That actually reminds me,” she said, pulling out her phone and tapping furiously on the screen. “I did a little research late last night. Look what I found.” She handed me her phone, which I took with a furrowed brow.

Somehow, Lori had managed to find some obscure forum — much like the one that I found K on all those months ago — about the supernatural. The particular forum thread that she showed me was a discussion on witches, and there was someone who was claiming to be a witch. When I clicked on the user’s profile, they had a list of services and contact information.

“It could be fake,” Lori said, “but you never know. It might not hurt to give them a call. Maybe they can help in some way.”

I frowned, biting my lip, and handed the phone back to Lori. The thought of meeting another stranger on the internet scared the hell out of me after what happened with K, and I wasn’t sure if I was willing to potentially put myself or my friends in danger again. But if it would help me find Enzo... Then maybe it was a good lead.

“Thanks, Lori,” I replied with a smile. “This could be helpful.”

Lori simply shrugged and returned to her coffee. I sat down at the counter and ate my pancake, chatting with my friends as I did so. When I was finished, I decided that I needed to stretch my legs a little bit and think about the witch — so I quickly got dressed in some sweatpants and a jacket, then headed out for a solitary walk.

As I walked, I considered my possibilities. I could try to contact that witch and see what she had to say, assuming she was even a real witch and not just a scam artist. Maybe

she could somehow help me find Enzo, or even Luke, and then Luke could help me open a portal if he hadn't gone to the werewolf realm by himself already.

Or, I could try to talk to Myra again; and I did just that. In the chill of the morning, I made my way over to the cabins.

When I arrived, the camp was in a flurry of activity. They seemed to be packing up.

"What are you guys doing?" I asked Myra as I approached. She was packing some things into a wooden trunk and glanced up at me, then over her shoulder to make sure Lewis wasn't looking, before she replied in a hushed tone.

"Lewis is moving us," she said quietly, sounding a little worried. "I'm not sure exactly where."

I frowned. "What about the campus?" I asked. "The Crescents could come back at any moment."

Myra shook her head; then, glancing over her shoulder one last time, she grabbed my arm and quickly pulled me around to the back of one of the cabins where we couldn't be seen.

"Something is seriously wrong here," she whispered. "I think Lewis is up to something more sinister than just trying to become the new leader of the Fullmoons. He keeps leaving in the middle of the night, and I don't know where he's going. There are only a few of us who feel that something is off, and we're planning on making a run for it."

My eyes widened. "You don't think he's..."

"I don't know," Myra interrupted. "He could be working with the Crescents, for all I know. All I know for sure is that he doesn't give a flying fuck about Mountainview or any of the other towns."novelxo.com

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"Will you at least stay?" I asked, feeling my heart start to race. "The hockey team can't guard the whole town by themselves. We're trying to start distributing the antidote soon, too."

Myra was silent. That was all the answer I needed.

"Listen," she said finally, "I still can't open portals. I've really been trying. I've heard of witches who can lay curses on people to keep them from opening portals, which I think is the case here. Someone doesn't want us traveling to the werewolf realm... And your friend, Luke?"

My eyes widened even further. “Do you know where he is?” I whispered.

“I don’t know exactly,” Myra responded, “but I saw Lewis and a couple of his men roughing some guy up in the woods a few days ago. They were leading him away from the camp with a rope tied around his wrists. He looked a lot like how you described him.”

I gulped. What were they doing to Luke? Why would they even want Luke as a hostage?

Before I could ask these questions, however, someone called Myra’s name. “I have to go,” she said quietly. “I’ll try to keep you updated if I manage to get away. But for now, just promise me that you won’t try to open a portal or anything until Lewis is gone; he’s had his eye on you, and he’ll do anything it takes to stop you next time.”

I didn’t know what to say. If what Myra said was true, then this was all a lot more sinister than I thought. Did Lewis hire a witch to keep Myra from opening portals? Did he take Luke hostage so Luke couldn’t help me find Enzo?

Something here was seriously wrong

## **Chapter 194 The Right Fit**

Nina

I reluctantly returned home after my conversation with Myra. There was an undeniable lump in my throat; if Lewis really was watching me so closely, and if he truly was apparently so hell-bent on making sure that I couldn’t bring Enzo or Richard back that he would even go so far as to take Luke hostage and hire a witch to take away Myra’s ability to open portals, then I didn’t know what to do. I would have to listen to Myra and try not to look for Enzo until Lewis was gone; I only hoped that he wouldn’t do anything horrible to Luke before then, assuming he hadn’t already.

When I arrived back at my dorm, I stopped in the mail room to see if I had received any letters. And, much to my surprise, there were two things for me: a letter from my mother, and a package. I furrowed my brow at the package, as I hadn’t ordered anything recently, but decided to open the letter from my mother first. Maybe she sent me a care package and her letter would explain it.

I opened the letter with shaky hands, trying not to think too much about what Myra had just told me as I began to read.

“Dear Nina,

I just want you to know that your brother and I arrived safely in England, and are now staying with your aunt. I'm sorry I haven't called; I still haven't gotten my long distance phone set up.

I'm not sure if you said something to him, but Richard sent me a letter recently. I was afraid at first to open it, but after a few weeks of it sitting here and staring at me, I finally decided to open it and give it a look. In it, much to my surprise, that old coot actually apologized. Would you believe it? Now, I can never be entirely sure whether he's being truthful or not, but when he apologized for what happened to Taylor and mentioned that he didn't put a curse on him... Well, let's just say that I was reminded of the same boy who I used to know in college, before he went berserk and power-hungry. Somehow, I'm

inclined to believe him; but I want to know what you think. I know that you are incredibly close with Enzo, so maybe you can talk to him.

Speaking of which, have you learned anything about your heritage since I last saw you? I wished that I had more to give you other than that little baby blanket, but that's really all I have. When you were left on my doorstep, there was no warning and no other evidence other than that blanket and the burned photograph. Hopefully, those two things can give you some sort of clue as to where your family might have come from, and what may have happened to your parents.

There have also been whisperings of the Crescents causing trouble. I haven't heard much, but there is a community of werewolves here who seem to be at least somewhat aware of the situation. I hope you're okay. If you need to get out of Mountainview, I'll buy you a plane ticket any time you want. I think your brother and I are going to stay here, in England, because we've found a witch who has been able to help Taylor a lot. His pain is almost entirely gone now thanks to her medicine, and he only has the occasional flare up. I think that being in a new place is helping him, too. The town your aunt lives in is small and located in the countryside. There are rolling fields all around, and plenty of fresh air. I think you'd love it; right now, it's a little bleak with winter coming, but your aunt said that it's beautiful in the Spring when the wildflowers start to bloom. You should try to come and stay for a while when that time comes. Bring Enzo, if you two are together then. I'm sorry that I wasn't more welcoming before, but after seeing how much you loved him, I couldn't help but be reminded of how much I loved Taylor's father in college.

Anyway, just know that we're doing okay here. Taylor is good. I'm good. We're happier here, although we do miss you. I hope that soon, you and I can begin to repair our strained relationship. Even though you may not be my biological daughter, you're still my daughter nonetheless.

Love,

Mom."

By the time I finished reading the letter, there were tears filling my eyes. It was such a relief to hear that my mother and Taylor were doing okay, and that my mother had such a change of heart about Enzo.

If only Enzo were here. Then, maybe we could leave this place and go to stay with my family together. The thought of the wildflowers and the rolling fields made me smile, but at the same time, I knew that it wouldn't be so easy for us to just run away together. I had to find Enzo first, but it seemed that the universe simply didn't want me to ever find him.

However, the letter didn't mention any sort of care package, which made me furrow my brow in confusion. Who had sent me a package, then? There was no return address on it; in fact, there wasn't even an official shipping label or anything of the sort. It only had my name on it, as though someone from campus had just slipped it into my mailbox.

My curiosity got the best of me. I quickly slipped my mother's letter back into my pocket and ran upstairs with the box. Lori and Jessica, who were sitting on the couch and playing video games when I arrived, both looked over and gave me a strange look.

"What's that?" Lori asked, nodding her head toward the box.

I shrugged and threw it down on the counter, then grabbed the scissors out of the kitchen drawer. "I dunno," I replied. "It was just in my mailbox. There's no address or anything on it."

Equally as curious as I was, my friends paused their game and scurried over to watch me open the box.

And when I did, my eyes widened.

"No way," Jessica said as I lifted the contents out of the box.

Someone — I couldn't be sure who, exactly — had sent me a replacement of the black dress that got ruined in the coffee shop the day earlier. It was brand new with the tags still on, and it was in my exact size.

"Maybe the new girl felt bad after all?" Lori asked, scrunching up her nose in confusion as I held the dress up with a growing grin on my face.

Truthfully, I had no idea who bought me the replacement. Maybe Lori was right; maybe the new girl really did feel bad and wanted to make it up for me for some reason. It was the only logical explanation, after all. Maybe I was wrong about her sinister intentions. I would have to thank her later.

Either way, despite the recent developments that Myra had told me about, my mother's letter and the mysterious dress were enough to cheer me up for the time being.

Still, I only wished that Enzo could see me in that dress. He would have loved it

## **Chapter 195 The Snow Dance**

Nina

That night, it was finally time for the dance. I put on my new dress and did my hair and makeup with Lori and Jessica, then headed over to the auditorium.

The dean surprisingly put together a lovely dance despite the circumstances. There were streamers and balloons adorning the auditorium, live music being DJ'd by one of the students, and food and drinks being served. As I passed by the big, handmade signs that read "SNOW DANCE" and walked into the auditorium, it almost felt like I was in high school again, like I was just sixteen and going to a winter formal dance. Everyone was dressed up and dancing, and I even caught a few students right off the bat who were secretly sipping out of tiny bottles of alcohol and drinking vodka disguised in water bottles. Even just standing in the doorway and looking around made me smile and temporarily forget all of the horrible things that had been happening recently.

Almost immediately, Justin appeared in front of me with a grin on his face. He was dressed nicely in a pair of trousers and a button-down shirt; I had never seen him wearing anything except sweatpants and hockey shirts before, so it came as a surprise. Seeing him like that made me stifle a laugh, as he looked a little nerdy in his outfit.

"Come on," he said, grabbing my hand and pulling me toward the dance floor. "Let's dance."

I was already tipsy from pre-gaming with Lori and Jessica back in our dorm, so I obliged and followed him to the dance floor. As we began to dance, I couldn't help but smile a bit. Spending a bit of time just having fun and letting go relieved a lot of tension that had been built up lately, and I knew that Enzo would want me to have fun at least once while he was gone. Besides, the alcohol helped, and before I knew it my friends were secretly passing around water bottles filled with vodka and soda cans filled with other various forms of alcohol.

We danced for a long time, only taking breaks to drink more and take food from the buffet. Finally, however, the dean walked up on the stage and stopped the music. She leaned into the microphone with a smile on her face and an envelope in her hand.

"Thanks for coming to the Snow Dance, everyone," she said. "So far, we've raised over five thousand dollars in donations from you guys and our local community."

The dance erupted into cheers, myself included. The dean waited for the cheers to die down with a smile, then pulled a piece of paper out of the envelope.

"Now, to announce tonight's Snow Dance Royalty..."

She opened the paper. From afar, I swore I could see her eyes widen momentarily.

“For Snow Queen, we have... Nina Harper!”

My eyes widened. My friends, however, only grinned and shoved me forward, forcing me up onto the stage. I was rather drunk as I stumbled over to the dean in my high heels, but I couldn't help but laugh as she placed a plastic tiara on my head. When I looked out at my friends' smirks, I knew that they and the hockey team must have voted for me to embarrass me, but it was nothing but a lighthearted joke. Obviously, the Snow King would be Justin.

But it wasn't.

“And the Snow King... Is our new student, Eli Johnson!” the dean announced.

The crowd went silent. Somehow, this new transfer student managed to be voted as the Snow King, but his girlfriend hadn't been voted as Snow King. I saw the crowd part as he sheepishly walked up to the stage, tall and lanky, and walked up the steps. Meanwhile, his girlfriend glared up at me from the crowd. As I looked at her, I couldn't help but wonder if she had planned on being the dance royalty with

him, but my friends' lighthearted prank had voted her out. It certainly seemed that way, judging from the angry stare she gave me.

The dean put a plastic crown on Eli's head; I thought it was over then, but that wasn't even the worst part.

We had to dance together.

The DJ began playing a slower song as we walked down the steps together. I felt everyone's eyes on me as we nervously began dancing, with our hands clasped uncomfortably together and his other hand on my waist while I rested one hand on his shoulder. Aside from the music, the auditorium would have been dead silent. When I glanced over at the crowd, I could not only see Eli's girlfriend seething, but I could see Justin pouting as well.

“So... Um...” Eli said nervously, staring down at our feet as we danced. “Do you... I mean... Does the dress fit okay? I hope I got the right size...”

My eyes widened then. “Wait,” I said, “you were the one who bought me the replacement?”

Eli nodded. “Yeah. I felt bad because Se— I mean, Sadie ruined the other one. You seemed really sad.”

I didn't know what to say. "Th-Thanks," I muttered, feeling my face go red. "It fits perfectly."

"Good," he replied.

Neither of us said anything for a bit. I was not only focused on how he had gone out of his way to buy me a new dress, but there was something else... When he said his girlfriend's name, he almost sounded like he was going to say something else.

Like he was going to say the name Selena.

But I knew that was silly. As I looked up at this boy, I knew it wouldn't make any sense; he didn't look anything like Enzo, and that girl looked absolutely nothing like Selena. And yet... The longer I looked at him, and the longer he looked at me, I swore his eyes changed to that familiar, soft brown I had grown to love.

The song suddenly ended then and changed back to the regular dance music. Around us, the rest of the partygoers began dancing again.

I hadn't realized it, but we had somehow been staring at each other for the entire song, as though we were in a trance. When his girlfriend suddenly came and snatched him away from me, he almost seemed like he didn't want to tear his eyes away as she pulled him into the crowd, and I couldn't look away, either.

There was no real explanation for it. When his face finally disappeared into the crowd, I suddenly felt a sense of extreme, deep sadness wash over me. I felt more alone now than I felt before, as though someone very important, someone I was very close to, had just been ripped out of my grasp. But I knew that didn't make any sense; Enzo wasn't here. Selena wasn't here. Why would they be? If Selena really wanted to keep Enzo all to herself, why would she bring him back here, right under my nose?

Unless... What if she used some sort of spell on him to make him forget about me, and was bringing him close to me to test him?

No. I shook my head, shoving the ridiculous thought out of my mind. It was just wishful thinking; maybe Eli just had one or two similar features to Enzo, and that was it. He wasn't Enzo, and I needed to understand that. If I kept thinking this way, I would only break my heart even more. Not only that, but Lori was right the day before: I didn't know what this girl was capable of, and I was acting oddly around her boyfriend.

But even then, I couldn't deny the oddly deep connection I felt to this complete and total stranger

## **Chapter 196 Unwanted Attention**

Nina

“Nina,” Justin said, shaking my arm. “What are you doing?”

I blinked, shaking my head as I returned to my senses. “S-Sorry,” I said. “Just zoned out.”

Justin was silent. When I looked at him, he looked angry and jealous, and his lips were pressed into a thin line.

“Did you enjoy your dance?” he asked, folding his arms across his chest.

I wanted to correct him and remind him that we weren’t together as a couple, but for some reason, I was too dazed by my encounter with Eli to speak up. So I simply shook my head and stared at the floor. “Not really,” I replied. “I wouldn’t have danced with him if it weren’t for the social pressure.”

Justin seemed satisfied by this, and before I could stop him, he suddenly grabbed me by the wrist a little too hard and pulled me in. In an instant, he pressed his lips firmly against mine, so hard it almost hurt. Then, when he finally pulled away, he leaned in close to me and whispered something in my ear.

“Come back to my place later,” he whispered, planting a kiss on my neck. “I think it’s time we finally take our relationship further.”

As Justin spoke, I felt myself shudder. And in an odd way, I almost felt scared of him at that moment. I couldn’t explain it, but his sudden shift in demeanor was a bit frightening, and I didn’t know what to say.

“Um... I’m going to use the restroom,” I said suddenly. I just needed to get away.

Justin stared at me for a moment before letting me go. Without a word, I quickly scurried past him and out of the auditorium, into the quiet hallway. As I made my way to the bathroom, I could already feel the

tears beginning to well up in my eyes and I picked up my pace, just barely making it into the bathroom before the tears began to flow.

I didn’t like the way that Justin was trying to coerce me into sleeping with him. It felt deliberate, as though he knew I was vulnerable right now, and I was more drunk than I should have been that night. My hands shook as I pulled out my phone and started to text Lori and Jessica that I was going to go home early by myself so as not to ruin their night, but before I could hit send, the bathroom door suddenly swung open.

I quickly jerked my head up to see who had come in; my first instinct was that Justin had followed me, but it wasn’t him.

Instead, it was the new girl. Sadie.

She had a dark scowl on her face, and I instantly knew that she was deliberately looking for me.

“H-Hey,” I said, backing up against the wall as she suddenly charged toward me, her hands balled up into fists at her sides. “I-I didn’t ask for any of that to happen. It was only a coincidence—”

“Coincidence?” she snarled, coming too close for comfort, so close I could feel her hot breath on my face as she breathed heavily through her nose. “You’ve been staring at him ever since we got here, Nina. I know what you’re after, and I’ll tell you what; he’s not interested. I’m at the end of my rope with you. I should’ve killed you when I had the—”

My eyes widened as the girl spoke. She suddenly stopped herself, her face turning an even deeper shade of red.

She knew my name? And what did she mean when she said that she should have killed me?

“Selena?” I whispered.

The girl didn’t answer.

Suddenly, the door swung open again and in stepped Lori and Jessica. They both had concern drawn across their faces, as though they were looking for me, but that look turned to anger when they saw that the new girl had cornered me.

“What the fuck are you doing?” Lori snarled.

The new girl spun around to face Lori. “Get out of here,” she growled. “This doesn’t concern you, bitch.”

“Um... I think it does concern us!” Jessica shouted. “That’s our friend! What’s wrong with you, seriously? You’re acting like a high school bully over a stupid dance!”

I stood frozen. The new girl chuckled, and her laugh... I swore it sounded too familiar. It really did sound just like Selena’s evil laugh. It was uncanny, and I was certain at that moment that it really was Selena. And if she wasn’t actually Selena, she was certainly connected somehow.

“You’re all pathetic,” the new girl said in a condescending tone of voice. “You three think you’re so special because you saved this rinky-dink little backwater town. But I’ll tell you what—” she turned back then to face me and grimaced as she roughly poked her index finger into my sternum, causing me to wince. “You don’t know even half of how powerful I am. You’re lucky I haven’t destroyed your precious little campus. In fact, when I leave, I might just do exactly that now that I’ve learned what I came here to learn.”

Everything that the girl said made no sense. What did she mean when she said she was so powerful she could have destroyed our campus? What did she come here to learn? Who would say all of these awful things over something as innocent as a coincidental dance with a boy?

But I wouldn't be getting any answers, because all of a sudden, Lori's face went beet red behind the new girl. She suddenly stormed up behind her and reached out, grabbing a handful of the new girl's hair.

"Lori, dont—" I began, but it was too late. Lori yanked on the girl's hair, hard, causing her head to jerk back.

The new girl shrieked and spun around. And in that one swift motion, suddenly...

Her hair came off in Lori's hand.

It was a wig.

"You bitch!" the girl shrieked. She yanked the wig out of Lori's hand, as Lori was too stunned to react, then brushed past Lori and Jessica in a flurry of anger and disappeared from the bathroom.

Lori, Jessica and I all slowly turned to face each other. There was a long, shocked silence at what just happened before a low, amused laugh began to rumble in Jessica's throat. The laugh began to rise in volume, and it was infectious; soon, we were all doubled over laughing there in the bathroom at the complete absurdity of everything that just happened.

"You don't know how powerful I am!" Jessica mocked, imitating the girl's shrill voice and causing all of us to laugh even harder until all three of us were on the floor, laughing until our bellies ached.

We didn't calm down for a while after that, and by that point, I forgot all about Justin's intense proposition. But there was still one thing on my mind, however, and it was something that never left my mind all night.

Was that new girl really somehow Selena in a disguise? And if so, did that mean that the new boy who was with her was in fact Enzo?

I couldn't be entirely sure; but either way, I knew I had to find out the truth before they inevitably left again, and there was no telling as to how long I would have

## **Chapter 197 Say My Name**

Nina

After the new girl, Sadie, ran out with a wig in her hands, my friends and I lost ourselves laughing on the bathroom floor. The ridiculousness of the situation made me temporarily forget about what I had seen in the girl's strangely familiar eyes, as well as what Justin had said to me earlier about taking our relationship to the next step.

When Lori, Jessica and I finally regained control of ourselves, we stood from the bathroom floor and decided to head back out to the dance. By the time we re-emerged, however, the dance was coming to an end — not that I particularly minded. I was planning on going home, anyway.

I didn't see Sadie anywhere when I came out, which was a relief. I thought it was a little strange at first that she was being so territorial over a dance that was out of my control, but I knew now that there was something off about those two. I couldn't quite explain it, but I knew what I saw when I looked at both of them; they both looked too familiar at times to let it go, and I needed to figure out what was going on with them. That night, I decided that I would call the witch that Lori found and see if she could offer any sort of help. Maybe she could help me see the full truth and reveal who these two new students were.

I knew that it was probably just my own wishful thinking, however, that got me hooked on the idea that somehow these two new students were secretly Selena and Enzo in disguise. It simply didn't make sense; if Enzo was here, he would have talked to me already. Even though I felt a strangely familiar connection to the new boy when we danced together, I knew that the real Enzo would have said something to me, something to ease my worries and let me know what was going on. That boy clearly didn't know who I was.

But there was one possibility on my mind: what if Selena sent these two for some reason? It was possible that they were set up to be a distraction, or even some kind of test. They could have been

spies that she sent to see if I was still trying to find Enzo. They also could have been Crescent spies, which wouldn't surprise me considering the fact that Selena had worked with Crescents in the past.

Either way, the entire situation was fishy. I knew that my friends wouldn't believe me until I had solid proof that something was awry, though, so I decided to wait and see what the witch would have to say about it.

"Sounds like they're gonna play one last song before the dance is over," Jessica said as we approached the auditorium. It was a slower song, and she took Lori's hand. "Let's go and dance."

Lori shot me a concerned look. "Are you gonna be okay?" she asked.

I nodded and forced a smile. "I'll be fine. You guys go and have fun."

I watched then as my friends disappeared into the auditorium, but I had no desire to dance anymore that night. By then, the altercation with Sadie in the bathroom made me sober up, and I no longer felt in the mood to party. However, when I felt a tap on my shoulder and turned around to see Justin, I knew what he was going to ask.

“Well?” he said, taking my hand. “Did you get a chance to think about it? We can go back to my place right now, if you want.”

I froze for a moment, my heart racing in my chest. Justin’s sudden change of demeanor earlier was a red flag, and it scared me a little. We weren’t even dating again, and yet he had shown these subtle signs of jealousy that made me uneasy. And now, he wanted to have sex?

“Um...” I paused, swallowing, and gently pulled my hand away before shaking my head. “I don’t think so, Justin.”

Justin’s eyes narrowed. “Why not?” he asked. “I thought you’ve been giving me signs all night. In fact, when I kissed you at the hockey game, I thought you liked it.”

“I... I don’t know,” I muttered. “I’m just a bit confused right now. I need some time before I jump into anything. Enzo—”

“Oh, it always comes back to Enzo, doesn’t it?” Justin snarled, his face darkening. “I should’ve known you’d never get over him.”

I was taken aback by Justin’s harsh words. “Justin, it’s only been a few weeks—” I began, but he scoffed and cut me off.

“Three weeks is plenty of time to figure out that he’s not coming back,” Justin replied with a scowl. “How long will it take you to figure out that he’s gone for good? He probably realized that he’s sick of you following him around like a lost puppy and decided to do everyone a favor and just disappear.”

I opened my mouth to speak, but nothing would come out. Justin’s cruel words struck me to my core. Tears began to well up in my eyes, and I could only shake my head and take a few staggering steps backwards as the tears began to spill out.

How could Justin say something so cruel? All this time, I thought that he was trying to change and be better, but now I realized that it was all just a ruse to get me emotionally attached while I was still grieving over Enzo... All so Justin could sleep with me. I felt disgusted, used, and heartbroken.

And Justin didn’t even stay for another moment.

Without a word, he turned on his heel and stormed out, leaving me sobbing there in the middle of the hallway.

I decided then that I couldn't be there any longer; Lori and Jessica would understand. I just needed to go home and get some sleep... And in the morning, I would call that witch and have her open a portal for me, no matter how much it cost. Even if I never returned, I knew now, more than ever, that I needed to find Enzo.

Before I could make it out of the building, however, I felt another tap on my shoulder. I spun around, expecting it to be Sadie, coming back for another fight — but it wasn't.

It was Eli.

I quickly wiped the tears from my eyes and folded my arms across my chest. "Do you need something?" I asked.

"Are you okay?" he replied, taking in my appearance with a furrowed brow. "Why are you crying?"

"It's none of your business," I growled. Maybe I was a bit too harsh, but I didn't care at that moment. I just wanted to go home, and I turned on my heel and began to walk again — but Eli followed.

"I have to ask you a question," he said. "Please." He then stepped in front of me, blocking the door. I froze and looked up at him slowly, feeling his concerned eyes focused unwaveringly on me.

"What is it?" I whispered.

Eli stared at the ground for a moment, chewing his lip, before he looked back up at me. "Why were you two saying my name so much just now?"

## **Chapter 198 Fated Attraction**

Nina

"Why were you two saying my name so much just now?" Eli asked quietly as he blocked my way to the door.

I furrowed my brow. "We weren't. What are you talking about?"

Eli shook his head. "I heard you. You kept saying the name 'Enzo'."

My eyes widened. His name wasn't Enzo. It was Eli... Right? For a moment, my heart skipped a beat as I looked up at him, searching his face for some sign that he really was Enzo; but unlike before, his face never shifted or changed. He stayed looking just the same as he was now: an unfamiliar face.

It must have been some sort of sick prank.

"That's not funny," I growled. Eli stared at me with wide eyes, but I just pushed past him and through the door, out into the cold night air.

"Wait!" he called, running after me. "I'm serious."

I scoffed. "Sure you are," I replied, holding my arms as I walked briskly through the cold night air. "Did Sadie send you? Is this some sort of prank to get more dirt on me?"

Eli stopped in his tracks, but I kept walking. "No one sent me," he said quietly. "You just look too familiar to me."

Now, I was the one who stopped. For what felt like an eternity, I just stood there with my back turned to Eli, my arms folded across my chest as I shivered in the cold. Part of me wanted to turn around and run to him, as though Enzo would be standing there when I turned to face him, but I knew that wasn't the case. All of this was just some sort of nasty prank; either Selena had sent them both to mess with me,

or they had simply heard rumors about my relationship with Enzo and wanted to bully me. Either way, I didn't want to get involved any longer. If Selena did send them to get under my skin, I didn't want to give them the satisfaction.

So, without another word and without turning around to look at Eli, I began walking again.

By the time I arrived back at home, I ran to my room and ripped off the dress that Eli had given me. Without thinking, I shoved it into a plastic trash bag at the back of my closet, pulled on some pajamas, and promptly threw myself down onto my bed, sobbing into my pillow.

I wasn't sure how long I laid there, crying inconsolably and soaking my pillow with my tears. At some point, I thought I heard Lori and Jessica come home. They must have heard me crying, because my door quietly clicked open, and the next thing I knew someone was rubbing my back gently while I cried. I wanted to tell them everything, but I just couldn't. I felt too weak and helpless to even speak. But the way my friends sat with me and gently rubbed my back eventually comforted me, and soon I found myself being lulled into a dreamless sleep.

...

I must have been asleep for two, maybe three hours. I couldn't be sure.

But one thing was for certain: when I woke up, I was not in my bed. In fact, I quickly realized from the feel of the freezing cold biting against the side of my face, that I wasn't even inside.

My eyes shot open. I sat up abruptly, looking around wildly; I was on the forest floor.

I didn't recall coming out here, but as soon as I got my bearings, I knew where I was. I had come to know it all too well.

The place where I last saw Enzo stepping through the portal.

A choked, dry sob caught in my throat as I scrambled to my feet. The moon was full and bright, but the forest still felt dark and ominous, and I was all alone out here in my pajamas. My hands and my feet were freezing; when I looked down at them, they were bright red from the cold. I quickly shoved my hands into my armpits and shivered, looking around frantically as though a Crescent, or even Selena, would suddenly burst out of the shadows and attack me.

But the forest was silent, aside from the lonesome call of an owl.

It almost felt as though this location was pulling me to it, and part of me wanted to stay, as though Enzo would suddenly come through a portal and hold me in his arms. But I couldn't stay here — not if I wanted to keep all of my fingers. A light snow had even begun to fall, leaving a light dusting on the crunchy, dry leaves beneath my feet. If I didn't get home now, I would freeze half to death.

As I began to walk home, new tears began to stream down my cheeks and coat the layer of dried tears that were already caked on my skin. This wasn't the first time I had somehow managed to sleepwalk out into the middle of the woods and wake up next to the portal, and somehow I knew it wouldn't be the last. I would have to tell Jessica and Lori to lock me in my room at night, otherwise I really would freeze to death out here one night. But even then, I couldn't deny the strange attraction I had to that spot, and wondered if a locked door would even stop me in my sleep. Maybe I would simply wake up in excruciating pain one night after jumping out my window in my sleep in an attempt to get to the spot.

Suddenly, as I walked, I felt the undeniable feeling of being watched. The hairs on the back of my neck raised, causing me to stop in my tracks and spin around, looking for the source of the feeling.

And there he was.

Eli.

He was walking away with his hands in his pockets. Sadie was walking a few paces in front of him, gesturing wildly in an angry manner and speaking loudly. Although I couldn't make out what she was saying from this distance, I somehow knew that she was probably complaining about me. She was probably still fuming about my purely coincidental dance with Eli.

But Eli wasn't looking at her. As he walked, he had his head turned over his shoulder, and his eyes were fixed on me.

Neither of us looked away at first. I felt as though our eyes were locked on each other, like they were glued together. And the longer I looked at him, even as he became smaller in the distance, I swore...

I swore that he really did begin to look like Enzo.

But I knew that he wasn't. It must have been the exhaustion and the effects of being out in the freezing cold causing my brain to feel foggy. I knew I was seeing things; Enzo wasn't here.

Eli slowly faded away into the distance with Sadie, and I eventually lost sight of them. I felt another sob catch in my throat, but I wasted no time in picking up my pace and running home at a full clip. As my hair flew in the wind behind me and my feet slapped on the cold pavement, I knew that I had to find that witch as soon as possible.

Maybe the witch would have answers for me. Maybe she could help me find Enzo for real

## **Chapter 199 One Wish**

Nina

The next morning, after managing to get a few hours of sleep following my stint in the forest, I woke up with one goal in mind: to contact that witch that Lori found and see if she could offer any help.

I knew that it could be a scam, but I had to try. So, after finding the forum thread that Lori showed me, I finally found the witch's profile and decided to send her an email.

Although it took me a long time to finally formulate my thoughts enough to get them out, I did eventually manage to write an at least semi-coherent email to the witch. I begged her to help me, and although I did keep the details vague just in case it was a scam, I told her that I needed someone to open a portal for me. When I was finished and finally hit send, I let out a sigh of relief and shut my laptop.

That afternoon, I went to work in the infirmary. Since no students came in, I was able to work more on Tiffany's antidote. And I was pretty certain that I was coming extremely close to figuring out the formula.

Lori and Jessica, who tagged along to keep me company, sat on the other side of the lab table while I worked. I still hadn't told them about how I sleepwalked out into the woods the night before, and I planned to keep it that way so as not to scare the hell out of them.

"How are you gonna test to see if this actually works?" Lori asked, her chin resting in her hand as she sleepily watched me while I worked.

"The only real way to find out is to just try it on a rogue," I responded as I carefully dropped two drops of hydrochloric acid into the solution inside a glass flask.

Jessica furrowed her brow. "What if it doesn't work?" she asked. "Won't that be a waste of time and resources if we take the antidote all the way to one of the neighboring towns, only for it not to work?"

Now that I thought about it, Jessica was right. I hadn't thought much about how we would test it, and with the Fullmoons planning on leaving, it could be risky to leave the campus unprotected.

Suddenly, Lori spoke up again before I could answer. "This might sound crazy, but... What if someone volunteered to be bitten, and we tested the antidote on them?" she asked, causing both Jessica and I to stare at her with wide, disbelieving eyes.

"Lori!" Jessica exclaimed. "That is crazy. And dangerous!"

"I guess you're right..." Lori's shoulders slumped defeatedly and she stared down at her coffee with a bit of a pout.

"You might actually be onto something," I said. "We could do it in a safe, controlled environment; only when I'm ninety-nine percent certain that it would work."

Jessica frowned. "And if it doesn't work? What, we'll just let a rogue hang out on campus?"

Suddenly, I turned to look at the supply closet. The doors had stayed firmly shut since everything happened, but of course the tunnels were still there; and there were still plenty of rooms down there that could easily house a rogue safely, away from other students. If the antidote didn't work, then our volunteer could stay in there until we did figure it out... And I was certain that we would figure it out.

Jessica, seeing where I was looking, groaned. "I guess you guys are right," she said. "But it will have to be a willing volunteer."

"Of course," I replied, turning back to my workstation. "Don't worry. We'll figure this out soon, and then we can begin distributing the antidote to anyone who needs it. I promise we're almost there."

...

That evening, after having spent the entire day in the infirmary, I finally closed up and began to walk home. Lori and Jessica had already left a few hours earlier, so I was alone; not that I minded. It felt good to be alone with my thoughts, and I knew I was right on the verge of a breakthrough with the antidote. I just needed to try a couple more

things, and I was certain that I would have it all figured out. I was extremely close to getting that same glowing blue color from before, which was a good sign.

As I began to walk home and passed by the hockey arena, however, I heard the sound of laughter emanating from inside. The door was propped open, and as I passed, I couldn't help but stop in my tracks and stare.

Inside, skating around in circles on the ice, were Eli and Sadie.

I immediately felt a tear come to my eye as I watched them. Eli was leading Sadie around by her hands, helping to keep her from falling on the ice, while he deftly skated backwards. And then, at the last moment, he pulled her close and spun in a circle with her, causing her to laugh.

Finally, they stopped spinning. They both seemed out of breath, their faces red from a combination of the cold and their shared passion, and for an instant I felt a pang of jealousy in my chest. But when they started to turn in my direction, I knew I needed to leave before that jealousy turned into something more.

Before either of them saw me, I quickly walked away with my hands in my pockets. It was too painful to watch any longer, and I wished I hadn't watched at all; it reminded me too much of myself and Enzo. I wished so badly that it was Enzo and I who were skating together in there instead, and not Sadie and Eli.

When I got home and locked myself in my room, the tears finally began to flow once again. I stifled my sobs in my pillow, banging my fists on the mattress as I begged the universe to return Enzo to me...

But as I laid there, sobbing into my pillow, my hand suddenly brushed against something soft and familiar. I picked my head up and sniffled as I grabbed onto the fuzzy thing that was wedged into the crack between my mattress and my wall, and when I pulled it out, another wave of agony washed over me.

It was the wolf plushie that Enzo had won for me at the fair.

And that night, I fell asleep with it in my arms with one final wish on my mind.

I wished that Enzo would return to me.

...

I swore that I locked my door firmly when I went to sleep. I made sure of it.

And yet, somehow, I found myself standing in the middle of the woods again that night. The wolf plushie was still held tightly in my hands, the last anchor to my sanity.

As I collected my bearings, I realized that I had thankfully fallen asleep in my clothes and even my shoes, as I had fallen asleep so abruptly that I hadn't even undressed myself before bed. I was grateful to at least not have woken up feeling on the verge of hypothermia, but it was still unsettling nonetheless, and I clutched the wolf plushie firmly to my chest as I began yet another trek home.

The campus was quiet as I walked home. It was late — most likely well after midnight — and not a soul aside from myself was outside in this bitter cold.

At least, that was what I initially thought.

But when I saw Eli sitting by himself on the fountain in the middle of the quad, and when I saw him abruptly look up at me and fix his gaze on me as I approached, I realized that there were in fact two souls out in the cold that night

## **Chapter 200 Her Name**

Enzo

I couldn't explain the strange connection I had to this girl named Nina.

She looked almost exactly like Selena; the only differences were that her eyes were brown instead of blue, and she had freckles dotted across her nose and cheeks. She wore her long, dark hair in two braids with bangs at the front, while Selina always had her hair done impeccably by an expensive hair stylist. And Nina dressed in jeans, warm sweaters and beanies, and beat-up Converse sneakers while Selena always dressed in designer clothing that never had any signs of wear.

I had always thought that Selena was my fated mate. And I was happy with that.

And yet, every time I looked at Nina, I couldn't deny the feeling that washed over me. I felt deeply connected to this girl in some way, and I simply didn't have any explanation for it. Was this some sort of way to test my loyalty? Was that why Selena brought me here — to make sure that I would stay true to her before we got married? Was Nina planted here by Selena as a way to see if I would fall for another woman?

No matter what the case was, I simply couldn't help myself from staring at this strange girl; and for some reason, she couldn't seem to stop staring at me, either.

When I danced with her, I had felt so comfortable. It was as though I had known her for ages, every curve of her body as I placed my hand on her waist, the feeling of her small hand in mine, the sparkle in her brown eyes... But I didn't know her.

Right?

At the end of the dance, I could have sworn that I overheard her and that other guy talking about me. They kept saying my name, and I couldn't keep myself from getting curious. While Selena was

primping in the bathroom, I finally couldn't help it anymore and wound up going up to Nina to ask why she kept saying my name, but she seemed to think that I was just playing a practical joke on her.

At first, I told myself that maybe she just happened to know someone else by the name of Enzo — but the more I thought about it, and the more it impacted my sleep, I couldn't help but wonder if there was something else to this.

In fact, the more I thought about it, the more I realized just how hazy my memories were before the battle against the Crescents. I thought that it was just post traumatic stress from the fighting, but I couldn't even really remember the fighting. Instead, when I slept at night, I remembered an antidote. I remembered water raining down on top of me, and the sound of snarling rogues turning to the voices of confused and frightened people. I didn't remember any fighting at all.

Two nights after the dance, with all of these things swirling around inside my head, I couldn't sleep. Selena was sound asleep beside me — even snoring softly — and so I quietly got up and put on a sweatshirt and my shoes, then headed out to go for a walk and clear my head.

I walked around for a little bit, just enjoying the peace and quiet of the cold night, until I finally sat down on the edge of a fountain in the quad. The water seemed to be shut off for the season, so it was completely quiet there.

At least, it was quiet until I heard the sound of footsteps approaching.

I quickly looked up, not expecting to see anyone of importance, but that wasn't the case.

"It's that girl," Fio, my wolf, said inside of me. He had taken a particular liking to Nina as well, but he couldn't explain it either. "Talk to her."

"No," I replied. "I shouldn't. Selena will get mad."

But even then, as she approached, I couldn't tear my eyes away from her. She looked beautiful in the moonlight, but she also looked like she was in a great deal of emotional pain. And as she came closer, I realized that she was looking at me. There was something in her hands, too: a gray wolf plushie. She had it clutched tightly to her chest like a scared child.

Neither of us spoke. It felt almost magnetic; the closer she came, the more I felt the need to stand and approach her as well, and soon we were walking toward each other with our gazes fixed firmly on one another.

When we eventually stopped, I didn't realize it at first, but we stood so close to each other that I could smell her. She had no scent, seeing as how she was a human, but somehow I could have sworn for a brief moment that I picked up a scent that smelled oddly familiar to Selena's — just much, much weaker.

"Um... About the other night..." I began, feeling my heart race as I spoke to her.

Nina just shook her head and took a step back, increasing the gap between us. "It's fine," she said, clutching the wolf to her chest even more tightly. As I looked at it, even the wolf plushie looked oddly familiar, and seeing her hold it gave me a strange sense of happiness. "Sorry I was a bit of a jerk."

"You weren't," I replied. "I shouldn't have bothered you. It was silly of me."

Both of us were silent for a few moments. I watched intently as she bit her lower lip before she finally spoke again. "You said that I was familiar to you. I've been feeling the same way."

My heart leaped up into my throat then. "You... You have?" I muttered.

Nina nodded. Her eyes were still fixed on mine, and the longer we held each other's stares, her face seemed to flash with recognition. In fact, the longer I looked at her, the more I was certain that I did know her, that I loved her...

But then, her gaze shifted up and over my shoulder, and her eyes widened for a moment. The spell between us broke.

"I have to go," she said, turning on her heel and beginning to walk away.

"Wait—" I called after her, but she didn't turn back and only picked up her pace, leaving me standing alone and confused in the dark quad.

But when I turned back to face my own building, I saw the reason behind why she suddenly left. Selena was standing in the window, staring down at me with an angry expression on her face.

I wasted no time in returning to my apartment, where Selena was waiting for me. She was pouting on the couch now when I came in, with her arms folded across her chest.

"Baby, I can explain," I said as I approached her, but Selena didn't seem to want to listen.

Without a word, Selena suddenly jumped up and rushed at me. I thought she was going to slap me at first, but she didn't; instead, she grabbed me around my neck and yanked me down to her level, and began kissing me deeply. I let out a groan as her tongue slipped into my mouth, although I couldn't be sure if it was a groan of pleasure or

discomfort. Her hand traveled down my chest and worked its way into my pants, her fingers wrapping around my cock.

But then, suddenly, she stopped.

“You’re soft,” she growled, pulling away.

Of course I was soft; because every time I closed my eyes, I saw Nina — not Selena.

I didn’t know what to say. Selena just stared at me for a few moments, her eyes full of rage, before she suddenly ran into the bedroom and slammed the door. I heard the lock click, and I knew that I would be

sleeping on the couch tonight.

But it was true. Somehow, I knew that I was supposed to be with Nina. I couldn’t quite explain it, but these past few days, I simply couldn’t deny it. And although it made my heart ache to disappoint Selena, my heart ached even more to not be close to Nina