

My Hockey Alpha #Chapter 211 - Read My Hockey Alpha Chapter 211

Chapter 211

Chapter 211: Recognition

Nina

When I ran into Enzo on the quad, I thought for a moment as he looked at me with the strange expression on his face that he might begin to remember me.

But he didn't. Not yet, at least.

Seeing him walk up to Selena and hold her made me want to cry, but I managed to walk away and hold it together. I had faith that my scent would make Enzo come to me eventually, so long as I gave it time. In the meantime, I had the antidote to mix.

The infirmary, which had been the last place I wanted to be after Tiffany died, had somehow turned into my safe haven over the past few weeks. It was funny to think about how my internship there was purely coincidental, and how I wanted to choose a different internship; now, I couldn't imagine doing anything else.

At the beginning of the semester, I had chosen surgery as my preferred career path. However, after everything that had happened since then, I knew now what I really wanted to do.

I wanted to follow in Tiffany's footsteps. I wanted to continue her legacy of caring for Mountainview. I loved helping sick and injured students, and I loved being the hockey team doctor. The thought of spending years here in this very office made me smile, and I imagined that Tiffany was smiling down at me as well. And I supposed that she was, in a way, smiling down at me from her picture on the wall. Maybe I would frame more pictures and hang them to remember her, and when students years from now asked who she was, I could tell them that she was the bravest and smartest doctor I ever knew. She was a hero down to her core, and I would never forget her.

Now that I knew the recipe for the antidote, it was only a matter of mixing enough to distribute. Even though it would take me a long time to mix enough for everyone who needed it, it was at least something to keep me busy and to keep my mind off of Enzo.

I got to work first preparing the compounds for the antidote. Then, very carefully, I began the process. It was a lengthy process that required a lot of waiting, but I didn't mind. Before I knew it, I even had the first batch of the antidote finished. Its bright, glowing blue color was a surefire sign that I had made it properly, and after bottling up vials of the antidote, I got to work mixing the next batch.

I was almost halfway through the second batch when I suddenly felt as though someone was watching me. Not only that, but a specific, sweet scent filled my senses.

I froze, and my head shot up a moment later as only one possibility flashed through my mind: Enzo.

He was here.

I had to contain my excitement, as I didn't want him to get freaked out by my insistence again. But I was certain that he was curious when I saw him staring at the antidote through the window, and with a smile, I waved him in.

"Am I interrupting?" he said, almost sheepishly, as he pushed the door open.

I shook my head. "No, you're not. Do you want to come in?"

Enzo paused in the doorway for a moment. He seemed to be considering it, but also seemed to be unsure. Then, with one last glance over his shoulder, he finally stepped in and let the door swing shut behind him.

"What is this stuff?" he asked, walking up to the table. He picked up one of the vials of the finished antidote and held it up to the light, inspecting it curiously. I could tell that he recognized it somehow, but

the spell that Selena put on him must have made him forget the antidote, too.

"It's an antidote," I replied. "For people who've been turned into rogues."

Enzo's eyes widened. It was still strange interacting with him in this disguise that he was wearing, but I had grown somewhat used to his new face. However, I also knew that he would likely change back to his normal appearance once he remembered everything. Before, when he had brief moments of remembering things, his appearance seemed to shift slightly. Even now, his face seemed to be moving a bit, and one of his eyes had returned to its usual soft brown color.

"How did you make that?" he asked. "I've never heard of anything like that. It could be revolutionary."

I shook my head, stifling a smile, and pointed to Tiffany's picture on the wall. "I didn't make it," I replied. "She did. Tiffany. She's the one who came up with it."

Enzo stared over at the photograph, and as he did, I swore his face began to shift just a little bit more as he no doubt recognized Tiffany's face. His scent became a little more powerful, too, and it made me wonder how much of my scent he could smell. Did he follow my scent here?

“What was her name, again?” he asked.

“Tiffany.”

Enzo nodded slowly. He almost seemed to be chewing on this information in his mind, digesting it. He then looked back down at his hand, where he still held the vial of the antidote, and furrowed his brow. I felt my heart race when he then lifted his eyes up to meet mine.

“I remember this stuff, somehow,” he said. “I can’t explain it, but... I feel like we used it to save the school.”

My heart felt like it was going to pound out of my chest. My eyes filled with tears, and I nodded vigorously, trying my best to blink the tears away. “We did,” I replied. I wanted so badly to run to him and hug him tightly, but I knew that I needed to be patient. It was only a matter of minutes now before he would begin remembering more; I was sure of it. “You helped me.”

“Did I?” Enzo’s brow furrowed even further. He swallowed as he gently set the vial down, then glanced over at the supply closet that hid the door to the tunnels. I could see that he was recognizing that door, too, as he looked at it. Maybe, if I showed him what was behind that door, he would remember that, too. I just hoped that those tunnels, even just the entrance, weren’t so traumatic that it would push back the progress he was making.

Quietly, while Enzo continued to stare unwaveringly at the supply closet door, I peeled my plastic surgical gloves off and walked over to the door. He seemed to follow me instinctively, which made my heart swell.

Then, I opened the door to show him the broken tunnel entrance that was inside.

A soft gasp escaped Enzo’s throat. He walked past me and peered into the dark tunnels, and during those silent moments, I could see his body shifting, growing into the tall and muscular guy who I had grown to love. I knew that he recognized those tunnels, and it made me want to cry.

Somehow, through the power of fate, my scent was enough to lead Enzo back to me. And now, I only needed to help him remember the rest.

Chapter 212

Chapter 212: Dusty Memories

Nina

When I opened the door of the supply closet to let Enzo see into the tunnels, I could tell just from the way that his body began to morph back into his normal appearance that he was starting to remember. It seemed that remembering his past made his disguise fade, as though Selena's magic thrived on the fact that he was brainwashed by her. I knew for certain now that if I could only help him remember a little more, then he would eventually break through her spell entirely.

"Do you want to walk in a little further?" I asked, walking up to stand beside him. "I'll go with you."

Enzo peered into the tunnels with narrowed eyes. He glanced at me with apprehension, but upon seeing the genuine look on my face, he seemed to relax a bit and nodded.

I held out my hand. Enzo stared at it for a few moments before tentatively slipping his hand into mine. I felt myself overflow with happiness at that point; to feel Enzo's hand in mine again gave me more hope than ever before.

And then, gently, I led him into the tunnels.

We walked in slowly at first, just taking one step at a time. I slipped my phone out of my pocket with my free hand and switched on the flashlight so we could see, and we walked in a little further.

Enzo was quiet, but not in a bad way. He seemed to be looking around curiously as we walked, and with each step further into the tunnels, I could see his appearance shifting even more. Now, his hair had returned to its original curly, dusty brown state. I couldn't see too well in the dark and I didn't want to stare, but I was also fairly certain that both of his eyes were back to his normal color now.

"These tunnels," he said quietly, his voice echoing around us, "they smell like rogues. What happened here, exactly?"

"When the Crescents came, they turned everyone into rogues," I explained. "I guess the rogues decided to turn this place into their den. That was how we cured everyone; we infused the sprinkler system with the antidote and set off the fire alarms."

Enzo chuckled. It sounded like his own voice, and not some strange, foreign voice caused by his disguise. Just hearing it made my heart leap up into my throat.

"That's really smart," he said, glancing over at me for the briefest of moments before his face turned slightly red and he quickly looked away again. "I think I can sort of remember it. It's foggy, but it's there."

We came to a stop then as the tunnel began to dip downwards. I didn't want to go any further, and I could tell that Enzo didn't, either. Although I wanted his memories to

return, I did secretly wish that his memories of what Edward did to us here would stay hidden forever. I didn't want him to remember those traumatic moments.

"We should head back," I said. "But I can show you more things if you want."

Enzo paused. He seemed to be considering it, but only for a moment before he vehemently nodded and followed me out of the tunnels. I didn't realize it until we walked back into the infirmary, but we were still holding hands — and neither of us seemed very keen on letting go.

Next, I decided to lead him to the one place that I knew would elicit the most emotion: the hockey arena.

I led him over to the set of doors that led to the arena, then opened them and guided him in.

"Do you remember this place?" I asked as we stepped into the cold arena. "Before you came back, I mean."

Enzo furrowed his brow as we approached the rink. I knew that he remembered watching the most recent hockey game here and that he remembered skating on the ice with Selena, but I wasn't sure how much he remembered before that. As he looked at the ice, however, I could see brief flashes of recognition appearing across his face like lightning. They started to become closer and closer, like he was remembering things more rapidly and fluidly. I tightened my grip on his hand to help him focus, and he squeezed back involuntarily.

"Selena told me that I only played hockey in high school," he said, leaning on the rink barrier and staring down at the ice. "But I remember now. I've been playing hockey here for years."

I nodded, blinking my tears away. "You're really good at hockey," I said. "The best. You're literally a celebrity around here."

Once again, Enzo laughed. He seemed to not believe me at first, but then his laugh faltered, and his eyes widened. I felt my heart practically stop as I realized that he was remembering his time on the hockey team.

"I really miss hockey," he said quietly in an almost dreamy voice. There was a slight smile twitching at the corners of his lips. "I love hockey. I love my team. And you're my team doctor... Right?"

I nodded tearfully, biting my lower lip to keep it from quivering. To think about how much I had hated being the team doctor at the beginning of the semester, and now I couldn't imagine doing anything else... It filled me with a strange feeling that I couldn't quite explain. I almost felt guilty now for all of the time I had spent hating my internship. Not

just for Enzo, but for Tiffany. But even then, I knew that nothing made me happier now than being the team doctor, and I was proud to admit it. If only my voice wasn't too choked from my tears to speak.

"I want to see more," he suddenly said, straightening. He was still holding my hand, and now he looked down at me with a new unwavering intensity — the same intensity that I had come to love. The same intensity that he showed me when we first met. At the time, I had thought of it as a predator and his prey, and it scared me; but now, I knew that it was something completely different. It was pure love and fascination. It was a look that I somehow knew only fated mates could give each other.

"Follow me, then," I said, my voice shaking with a combination of fear of failure and excitement. Part of me was terrified that he would suddenly regress again, or that Selena would suddenly walk in here and snatch him away from me. But I pushed on and led him over to the locker rooms.

However, when I pushed open the door of the locker rooms next, Enzo suddenly dropped my hand and stopped in the doorway.

I felt a lump rise in my throat; had I gone too far now? Was he regretting all of this?

"A-Are you okay?" I stuttered as I turned to look at him.

But he didn't answer. His eyes were fixed on the inside of the locker room.

And I knew from the way his eyes widened and his mouth hung open ever so slightly that he was right on the verge of breaking through Selena's spell.

Chapter 213: In the Locker Rooms

Nina

As Enzo stood in the doorway looking into the locker rooms, his mouth hung open and his eyes widened. I knew, in that instant, that he was beginning to remember even more. I wanted to jump on him and hug him tightly, but I contained myself in order not to freak him out again and simply held the door open a little wider to let him in.

Slowly, Enzo walked into the locker rooms and began to look around. I stood off to the side and watched as he paced around through the rows of lockers, completely silent while he processed everything.

Eventually, he stopped in front of the locker that used to belong to him. It still had his things inside, and as though it was instinct, he lifted his hand and began to turn the dial on the lock.

My eyes widened as I watched him. He was completely focused on the combination lock as he turned it one way, then another, stopping at a number each time. And then... The lock popped open.

He swung the locker door open and reached inside. I felt my heart swell as I watched him retrieve his hockey jersey. It was a dark green color with burgundy piping — our school colors — and had a large number “1” on the back with his name above it: “Rivers”.

“Rivers...” he mumbled, holding the jersey up to the light. “Enzo Rivers.”

As he spoke, his voice shifted, returning to its natural cadence. I felt my stomach jolt as his hands changed, then his arms, his legs... His body slowly morphed back into its natural state as the spell that disguised him melted away. He stood there frozen for what felt like an eternity, just holding the jersey in his hand.

And then, he suddenly turned to look at me.

“Enzo?” I whispered, my voice shaking.

He didn’t answer. He dropped the jersey to the floor and rushed at me so quickly it was almost as though he was flying. I felt tears begin to stream down my cheeks as he approached, and suddenly, his arms were around me, touching my waist, my shoulders, my neck and my hair, then he cupped my cheeks.

“Nina,” he whispered, gazing into my eyes as I sobbed in front of him, my entire body trembling with excitement that he had broken the spell, “I’m so sorry. I’m here now. I’m here.”

“Just kiss me,” I murmured.

Without a moment of hesitation, Enzo kissed me. He kissed me deeply and softly, and his lips sent a shock wave through my body. To think that just a few days earlier I had thought that I would never feel myself in his arms again, and now he was holding me once more, kissing me deeply. I could feel the faint presence of my wolf inside of me, growing ever so slightly stronger the more he kissed me.

Enzo wrapped his arms around me and picked me up while we kissed. I wrapped my legs around him, feeling him press me between his body and the wall. His lips traveled across my jaw and down my neck, causing me to shiver all over.

I thought that I would never see him again, and yet here he was. Somehow, my scent drew him to me after everything, and he had broken through Selena’s brainwashing. Even though there was still the threat of Selena finding out and brainwashing him again, I didn’t care at that moment. I just wanted to feel Enzo all over, to touch him and kiss him in those locker rooms.

When he finished sucking on my neck, his lips met with mine again. He held me tightly, never releasing his lips from mine, as he carried me over to the showers. I felt my panties get wet as we entered, the simple thought of making love beneath the water causing my entire body to tingle. When he set me down I could feel his hard cock through his jeans, and without hesitation I began to fumble at his belt so I could take him in my mouth and taste him again after being apart for too long.

But before I could manage to unbuckle his belt, we both suddenly stopped as we heard the locker room door bang open.

“Enzo?!” Selena’s shrill voice echoed into the locker room. “I know you’re in here.”

“Shit...” Enzo whispered, looking around frantically as Selena’s footsteps began to approach. He then locked his eyes on the bathroom stalls and shoved me over to them. “Hide,” he said, so quietly I could barely hear him and could only see his lips moving.

I wanted to stay in the open and stay with Enzo, but I knew that he was right. If Selena found him here with me, there was no telling exactly what she would do; but if she thought that he just wandered in here by herself, maybe she wouldn’t be so harsh on him. Enzo shut the bathroom stall door as I climbed up onto the toilet to hide my feet, just moments before Selena appeared in the doorway. Thankfully, I felt my wolf retract herself as though she was recoiling at Selena’s presence, thus hiding my scent. I knew she wouldn’t be able to smell my scent as profoundly as Enzo could, but I was still frightened that she would pick my scent up just a little bit.

“Baby? What are you doing in here?” she asked suspiciously, glancing around. I could just barely see her through the crack in the stall door, which Enzo was standing in front of. “And why is your disguise off?”

“Sorry,” Enzo said. “I had to use the bathroom. I guess I got comfortable being by myself and the disguise wore off.”

Selena was silent for a moment; she didn’t seem to believe him, but somehow I knew it didn’t matter. Because in the next instant, she suddenly lunged forward and grabbed a fistful of his shirt, taking him by surprise and causing him to stagger forward.

“You don’t remember anything,” she said, her voice dreamy and manipulative. “You’re mine. Got that?”

Enzo went quiet. I felt my heart leap into my throat as I saw his appearance begin to shift back through the crack in the stall door; she was dazing him. That was what this was all along. And although I wanted to jump out and get in the way, I couldn’t be certain if Luke put a hex on her yet, and I didn’t

want to risk her suddenly opening a portal and leaving with Enzo. So instead, I kept quiet with my hand clamped over my mouth, and watched with wide eyes.

“Tell me I’m your only girl,” she growled.

“You’re... You’re my only girl.” Enzo’s voice sounded flat, monotone. She had him in her grips again, and before I could do anything, it was too late. With a grin, Selena grabbed Enzo’s wrist and yanked him out of the locker rooms.

A pit grew in my stomach as I realized where they were going: the woods.

I would have to follow them and stop them from leaving before it was too late. I couldn’t lose Enzo again.

Chapter 213

Chapter 213: The Warden

Enzo

When I finally remembered everything, it felt as though I had broken out of a prison. All I wanted in those sweet moments was to feel Nina pressed up against me, to feel her warmth and her love. I couldn’t believe that I had spent the past weeks being locked in a fog by Selena’s doing. Somehow, with Selena’s incredible power, I was genuinely convinced that I had never attended Mountainview, nor had I ever met Nina before; but the power of my love for Nina prevailed in the end.

At least, that was what I thought. But when Selena suddenly found me in the locker room and sunk her claws into my brain once more, I suddenly felt foggy again.

I should have seen it coming, but I guessed that the very first thing on my mind was to hide Nina and keep her protected — protecting myself from Selena’s tricks was at the bottom of my list, and I also got a little too cocky. When I broke through her spell, it was almost as though I forgot just how powerful her abilities were. She was the Alpha King’s daughter, after all, and neither Nina nor I were any match for her abilities. So when she dazed me again, neither of us had any way of stopping her.

But she didn’t daze me fully; she only dazed me just enough to make me foggy and susceptible to her demands. I felt like I was walking through a thick mist as she grabbed my arm and yanked me out of the locker room. I swore that there was some reason why I was supposed to stay away from her... But now, I couldn’t remember why. All I knew was that I should have stayed away from her, and that she wasn’t to be trusted. But even then, I followed her, and I couldn’t explain why I didn’t fight back.

As Selena dragged me out the back of the hockey arena and across the misty athletic field, she babbled on angrily in front of me.

“I should’ve known... It’s too risky... That bitch...” she muttered. It made no sense. Who was she talking about? What did she mean when she said it was “too risky”? I felt as

though there was something I was supposed to know, but it felt like there was a thick bubble wrapped around that area of my brain, and I couldn't pop it no matter how hard I poked and prodded at it. I felt dumb and lifeless, like I had just come out of a coma moments earlier — or maybe it rather felt like I was about to go into a coma, like I was slipping out of consciousness and everything would go dark at any moment.

Selena led us into the woods, which were darker and colder in the chill of the winter air.

"Selena?" I asked as she led us further in, a shiver going down my spine. "What's wrong? Where are we going? Are you okay?"

But Selena didn't answer. She just picked up her pace and tightened her grip on my wrist as she yanked me forward into the dark woods.

Finally, we were so deep into the woods that I couldn't even see the campus behind us anymore. Selena led us on a winding path that seemed to have no end before she finally stopped in a small clearing, where she released her grip on my arm and glared at me with an intensity that I didn't fully understand.

Why was she so angry with me? And why, every time I blinked, did I see another version of her — a version of her that was slightly different, with brown eyes and freckled skin, and a kind heart instead of an icy one? Who was this other version of Selena, and why did I feel the need to run off and find it?

"We're going home, Enzo," she growled, placing her hands on her hips as she glared up at me. "You've been very bad. We can't come here anymore. And it's such a shame, too, because I was having a bit of fun."

I furrowed my brow. "What are you talking about?" I muttered. "What did I do?"

Selena scoffed. In that instant, I swore I saw a flash of someone else behind her in the trees, peering out from the shadows. And for some reason, I swore that that person's name was Nina.

"Selena," I insisted, feeling more confused now than ever, "what's going on? Who's Nina?"

Selena's eyes widened and instantly filled with tears as though she suddenly flipped a switch. There was almost something theatrical about the way her lower lip quivered. "Don't you dare say her name!" she snarled, her face turning red. "If you don't stop thinking about her, I'll... I'll kill her!"

I was taken aback by Selena's words. I still didn't even know who she was talking about.

But then, I thought I saw a flash of that other girl again. She was standing a ways off in the woods, peering out at us from behind the trees. I couldn't explain it, but as I looked

at her, I was sure that I knew her. In fact, the more I thought about it, the more I realized that it was Nina, and I did remember her. I was supposed to be with Nina, not Selena; Selena was putting spells on me to make me forget. I had only been with Nina just a few minutes prior, and yet Selena's magic had already dug its way into my brain again.

I didn't want anything to happen to Nina. At that moment, I decided that I would have to shift and fight Selena off — it was the only way to stop her.

But before I could, she instantly saw the look in my eyes. She was too smart.

"Fuck," she growled. "I'll say it again: forget her."

My brain went foggy again. I blinked rapidly, and suddenly realized that I didn't know where I was; why were we in the woods? Why was Selena so angry with me? I looked around confusedly, then back at Selena, who now had a grin on her face.

"What's going on?" I asked.

"Oh, nothing," Selena replied in a sing-song voice. "I just want to go home now."

I furrowed my brow. I had no recollection of ever even leaving our home — the Alpha King's mansion — but I didn't care to question my mate. I simply nodded, deciding it was best for her to lead the way. Maybe this was just a game, or maybe it was another one of my post traumatic stress episodes. I had been in a war, after all.

Selena stared at me intensely for a moment as though she was studying me, searching me for something. Then, as if she was satisfied with what she saw, she turned to the side and reached out with two fingers. She moved her fingers in a circular motion as though she was about to open a portal.

But nothing happened.

"What the..." she murmured, shaking out her hand and trying again. And yet, once again, nothing happened.

Selena's face went bright red. She cursed under her breath and tried once more, but for a third time, the portal wouldn't open.

And then, at that exact moment, I saw another version of her — one with brown eyes and freckles and black hair in two braids — bolt out from behind a tree with her sights set on Selena.

Chapter 214

Chapter 214: Unfinished Business

Nina

When I saw Selena grab Enzo and pull him out of the locker rooms, I instantly knew that she had brainwashed him again; and she was going to take him away to the werewolf realm once more.

I couldn't lose Enzo again, so even though I knew that Selena could easily kill me now if she wanted to, especially without my wolf here to lend me some power, I decided to go after them.

I kept a bit of a distance as they made their way across the athletic field, not wanting Selena to see me. And as I followed, I prayed that Luke had managed to put his hex on Selena already so she wouldn't be able to open a portal again. But seeing as how suddenly they were leaving, only a few hours after I had last seen Luke, I wasn't sure if he had put the hex on her yet.

Eventually, they entered into the forest. I paused before I entered behind them, biting my lip for a moment as I considered my options. I decided then to circle around, so I gave myself a wide berth around them and quietly snuck into the dark and cold forest.

As I walked, I kept them within earshot. I could hear Selena talking angrily, followed by the occasional word or two from Enzo. However, I couldn't quite make out what they were saying — but I could only imagine that she was fuming and berating him, seeing as how she clearly noticed that her spell on him had been broken earlier.

While I followed, I decided to slip out my phone and send a quick text to the pack. If things went poorly, I would need the help of my friends to overpower Selena. I was no match for her, and neither was Enzo in his current state. For all I knew, she fully had him back in her grasp once more and would make him fight against me like he was her pawn in some sick game of chess. For all I knew, she knew that I was following them right now and was already planning something.

"Everyone, come to the forest behind the hockey arena RIGHT NOW," my text read. "Found Selena and Enzo. I think she's trying to leave with him again. HURRY and follow the jogging trail in the woods."

I hit send once I was done frantically typing and immediately slipped my phone back into my pocket, not wanting to waste any more time waiting for a response. I needed to be fully focused on keeping Selena and Enzo close so I could stop them before it was too late.

Finally, Selena and Enzo seemed to stop. I could see them up ahead in a small clearing, so I ducked down even lower behind the trees and stuck to the shadows as I circled around to get behind Selena, where she wouldn't be able to see me. Although I wondered if I should make myself known to Enzo to help him come out of the fog that

Selena put him in, I still wasn't sure if he would point me out to her and reveal my position, so I decided to stay fully hidden from both of them.

"We're going home, Enzo," Selena said with her hands on her hips. "You've been very bad. We can't come here anymore. And it's such a shame, too, because I was having a bit of fun."

Chapter 215

Enzo looked confused, and kept blinking rapidly as though he was trying to wrap his head around it. "What are you talking about?" he asked. "What did I do?"

Selena scoffed. I decided to take this opportunity while they were talking to move forward a little and slowly close in on them; I wasn't sure if Enzo saw me while I quickly darted forward to the next tree closer to the clearing, but he didn't say anything.

"Selena," he said, sounding somewhat panicked now after a long silence, "what's going on? Who's Nina?"

My eyes widened. So he did remember me, at least a little bit; at the very least, he remembered my name and that I existed. He didn't sound trusting of Selena, either. I wondered as I watched the puzzled look on his face from afar and the way that his eyes kept quickly shifting over to where I stood if he did see me, and if it was helping him to keep control of his own mind.

"Don't you dare say her name!" Selena snarled. "If you don't stop thinking about her, I'll... I'll kill her!"

Enzo's eyes went wide with what looked like confusion. My own eyes went wide with fear. I didn't know if I truly believed that Selena had the capacity within her to kill anyone, but she had proven time and time again that she would go to any lengths to keep me out of the picture.

Selena sounded like she was crying, which caused Enzo to stare at her intensely. I decided to move forward again, and now I was right on the edge of the clearing. In just a few seconds, if I ran fast enough, I thought that I could tackle her.

Suddenly, as I moved, Enzo's eyes snapped up again and widened a little more. I knew he saw me now. I froze, expecting him to tell Selena I was here, but he didn't; in fact, he seemed to flash with recognition as he saw me, and his face became serious.

"Fuck," Selena growled. "I'll say it again: forget her."

Enzo began to blink rapidly again. His eyes took on that same foggy appearance as before. "What's going on?" he asked, sounding confused. I cursed under my breath and bit my lip, slipping back behind the tree and out of sight. Selena's magic was too

powerful; there was no way he could get a full grasp on his mind when she was standing in front of him.

“Oh, nothing,” Selena replied in a sing-song voice that made me want to retch. “I just want to go home now.”

Then, as if Selena was satisfied with her work, she turned to the side and reached out with two fingers. She moved her fingers in a circular motion as she tried to open a portal, but nothing happened.

I almost jumped for joy. As it turned out, Luke had in fact managed to put a hex on her; but there was still no knowing as to how long that hex would last. He only mentioned that it would work for a short time, which meant that there was a possibility she could open a portal any minute.

Not only that, but my friends weren't here yet. I quickly slipped out my phone and let out a tiny sigh of relief to see that they were on their way, but I still needed to buy some time.

“What the...” Selena murmured, shaking out her hand and trying again. And yet, once again, nothing happened. Selena's face turned a vibrant shade of angry red. She cursed under her breath and tried once more, but for a third time, the portal wouldn't open.

As I watched her try and try again, I still wasn't sure what to do. Enzo seemed completely dazed by her at this point, and I was worried that he would attack me at her orders if I ran out and confronted her. I also had no way of knowing what sort of magic or other abilities she would use on me; for all I knew, she could even shift and kill me in her wolf form, or maybe she had a weapon.

But when I saw the sparks of a portal finally begin to flicker on the tips of her fingers as the hex began to wear off, I knew that I needed to stop her.

Chapter 216

Chapter 216: Through My Fingers

Nina

My friends still weren't here yet, and it seemed that the hex that Luke put on Selena was already beginning to wear off. I could see the slight flicker of sparks that formed on her fingertips as she tried and tried again to open a portal, and I knew that she would accomplish her goal at any moment.

Maybe I was acting crazy and reckless, but I couldn't just let her leave with Enzo. I couldn't lose him again. I didn't care if Selena hurt me, or even if her spell was so thick

in Enzo's mind that he thought I was insane. All I knew was that I needed to stop her until my friends came to help me.

Without a second thought, I bolted out from behind the tree.

Enzo saw me first. His eyes widened with a mixture of surprise and confusion as I sprinted across the clearing.

Then, Selena saw me; but only a single moment before I collided with her, tackling her to the ground with all of the force I had in my body.

Together, Selena and I grappled on the forest floor for a few moments. She snarled and shouted obscenities as she tried to claw at me with her fingernails, but I quickly grabbed her wrists as hard as I could and wrenched them back, pinning them against the ground and causing her to yelp in pain. I sat on top of her and kept her pinned there, my eyes wild with determination.

"You bitch!" Selena growled. "Enzo! Help me! Get her off!"

"No, Enzo!" I shouted, whipping my head around at him to stare into his eyes in the hopes that he would recognize me and break through her spell again. "Don't listen to her!"

Enzo's eyes were still wide. He stared at both of us with confusion, his eyes darting back and forth between the two of us. I could tell that Selena's spell had dug itself even deeper into his mind this time, and it seemed as though he didn't even really know where he was. No matter how hard I pleaded with my eyes, he only looked back at me with a confused expression on his face.

"Baby!" Selena insisted. "Help!"

Finally, Enzo stormed toward us. I thought for the briefest of moments that he recognized me and was going to help me again... But I was so, so wrong in that assumption.

"Get off of her," he said, his eyes beginning to glow red with anger as he towered over me.

I already felt tears beginning to well up in my eyes.

"Enzo," I begged, "it's me. Nina. You have to break through her spell. Selena is—"

Before I could finish, Enzo suddenly grabbed me by the back of my shirt and yanked me off of Selena. He tossed me to the ground, not even caring that he might have hurt me, and then helped Selena to her feet.

“Are you okay?” he asked her, his eyes searching her face with worry while his hands rubbed her wrists gently where I had been holding her down.

I scrambled to my feet, my face caked with dirt and tears. “Enzo, please—” I began, reaching out for him, but he slapped my hand away and glared at me with those angry, glowing red eyes. Meanwhile, Selena only smirked behind him as he looked at me, but her face quickly returned to a twisted sob as he looked back at her.

“Baby, I don’t know who this crazy bitch is, but I want to go home,” Selena sobbed, throwing her arms around him.

I wanted to fight back. I wanted to tear them away from each other, but Enzo only glared at me angrily over her shoulder, his eyes burning with a territorial urgency. I knew that if I tried to get in between them now, he would only get even more angry and Selena would get her way.

All I could do instead was plead with him, with my eyes and with my words.

“Enzo,” I murmured, shaking my head as my vision clouded with tears and my heart sank in my chest, “don’t you remember me? Can’t you see that she’s tricking you?”

But Enzo didn’t answer.

“Let’s go, Selena,” he said, his angry eyes fixed on me. “Let’s get away from her.”

A sob caught in my throat. I couldn’t stop my knees from buckling beneath me, and I fell to the ground, digging my hands and my knees into the dirt as another sob escaped my mouth.

I heard the unmistakable sound of a portal opening in front of me and jerked my head up. Luke’s hex had fully worn off now, and Selena had succeeded in opening a portal. But I knew that there was nothing to do now; Enzo hated me. Selena had sunk her claws so deep into his mind that he didn’t even remember me as anything but an evil doppelganger of someone who he thought was his fated mate. Now, more than ever, I wished that my wolf was here to prove him wrong; but with Selena right in front of me, my wolf wouldn’t come out, and I wasn’t even sure if she could come out again.

“Please... Enzo...” I begged through my sobs. The tears in my eyes were so thick that they fully clouded my vision, turning Selena and Enzo into nothing but two vaguely human-shaped blobs.

But then, I heard the sound of crunching leaves underfoot, and Selena’s face suddenly came into view. She grabbed my face with her hand, digging her nails into my cheeks and my neck, and scowled at me with eyes that burned with hatred.

“Can’t you see that he doesn’t even know you?” she growled, bits of her spittle flying into my face. “You’d never even be his first choice if he did know you. I could just kill you, you know. Save everyone the trouble.”

“So kill me, then,” I replied. “If you’re going to take him from me, then just kill me.”

Selena threw her head back and laughed, releasing her grip on my face with a final shove that was strong enough to send me back onto my butt on the forest floor.

“Killing you would be too much of a kindness, I think,” she said.

Just then, I heard the sound of feet pounding through the woods, and voices shouting.

But Selena heard it, too.

“Come on, baby,” she said, storming over to the portal and grabbing Enzo’s hand. She cast me one last glance over her shoulder, the smirk on her face undeniable. “Let’s go.”

And then... They were gone.

A cry escaped my throat. My friends came just split seconds after the portal closed. If they had only been there just moments before... But it didn’t matter now. It was over. Selena had won.

“Where did they go?” Matt said, looking around frantically while Lori and Jessica fell to their knees beside me, cradling me in their arms as I sobbed uncontrollably.

I could only shake my head. No words would come out through my sobs.

“They’re gone,” Jessica said, her voice low. I nodded. Jessica pulled me closer, wrapping her arms around me and pulling me into her lap while Lori rubbed my back.

But I couldn’t even feel any of it. I was completely numb, as though I was an outside observer looking down at the scene.

And as I saw myself spread out on the forest floor with my friends huddled around me, my face caked with dirt and tears, there was only one word that would come out of my mouth.

“Enzo.”

Chapter 217

Chapter 217: Together

Nina

When Enzo disappeared with Selena, I felt my heart begin to shatter into a million pieces. For the second time in the past few weeks, I had lost him again and now I wasn't sure if I could ever get him back. Selena's claws had sunk deep into his mind, and it seemed that her spell had taken a strong enough hold on him that even looking at me and seeing my pain didn't cause him to recognize me in the slightest.

Lori and Jessica held me tightly as I sobbed on the forest floor. I could hear Matt shouting, but I couldn't make out what he said over my sobs; but he sounded just as angry as I felt, and when I cracked my eyes open, I could see that tears were streaked down Lori and Jessica's faces as well.

"Don't worry," Jessica said, sliding her hands under my back and helping me to sit up. "We'll find him. I promise."

I shook my head as I sat up and pulled my knees up to my chest, wrapping my arms around my legs in an upright fetal position. "It's too late," I said, my chest heaving with silent sobs as tears continued to stream down my dirt-caked face. "I can't open a portal. And Selena's magic is too powerful... I won't stand a chance against her."

Lori frowned. She opened her mouth to say something, but before she could, another familiar voice called to me from behind her, causing all of us to jerk our heads up.

"You're giving up already?" Luke said. He was standing at the edge of the clearing. His hands were balled up into tight fists at his sides, and as he stormed closer to me, I could see that his face was red and he was shaking slightly with what looked like anger. "You can't just give up like that."

I stared up at him with an open mouth, still clutching my knees to my chest. "What the hell am I supposed to do, Luke?" I responded. "He's gone. Selena took him. And she'll just kill me anyway if I try to take him back again."

Luke silently stared at me for several long, palpable moments. The air between the five of us was so thick it could be cut with a knife, and I felt as though my lungs couldn't even take in any oxygen from the weight of it all.

"I can open a portal for you," Luke said finally, his face softening and his hands uncurling. "I can get you there before it's too late. You still have time."

I stood then, shaking my head vigorously. "Your disguise," I said, gesturing to him. If he opened a portal, it would ruin his disguise, and I knew how important it was to him to feel human again. I never wanted to take that away from him.

Luke rolled his eyes. "How many times do I have to tell you?" he said. "This is more important. You're more important. I knew that there was something special about you from the moment I met you. You're not just an ordinary human, and you're not even just

an ordinary werewolf. You're the missing daughter of the Alpha King; the daughter that the Crescents were supposed to kill twenty years ago."

"What does my lineage have to do with anything?" I asked.

"You've seen Selena's power," Luke replied, sounding almost annoyed at my incompetence. "You have the same powers. You're possibly even stronger. I didn't want to tell you this until I was absolutely certain, but that witch who helped me... She told me about a prophecy. 'The missing sister will save the kingdom and unite the races together.' Humans, werewolves, undead... All of us. If you give up now, the Crescents will have their way."

My eyes widened. "What are you talking about?" I asked. "If my fate was to stop the Crescents, why didn't they kill me when they had the chance twenty years ago?"

Luke was silent for a moment. My friends shifted uncomfortably on their feet, staring at the two of us as tensions rose. Everything felt like it was moving too slowly and too quickly at the same time; with every moment wasted, Enzo was being taken further and further away from me.

"They couldn't do it," Luke finally said. His voice was low and quiet. "They tried, but they couldn't. All along, I thought it was because they took pity on you, but it was something else. It was as if something was protecting you."

I didn't know what to say. I wanted to ask how Luke or that witch even knew any of this for sure, but I knew that Luke had never been wrong about these things before... And if he was right this time, then I needed to trust him. I needed to not only save Enzo, but I supposedly needed to save the kingdom. And I knew that the only way to do that was to stop Selena, because I had a sickening feeling in my stomach that she had the Alpha King — our father — in her grasp as well.

"Okay." My voice was barely above a whisper, but it still shook with fear. "I'll go."

Suddenly, I felt a hand grip my wrist tightly. I looked up from the ground to see that Jessica was holding me, her eyes burning with fervor. She was about to tell me that she didn't want me to go — I was sure of it. I opened my mouth to tell her that I needed to go and that she had to let me, but she spoke first.

"You can't go alone," she said, taking me by surprise. "I'm coming with you."

I was taken aback. As long as I had known Jessica, I had never really seen her as the type to put herself in dangerous situations. But then, I thought back to the clumsy girl who nearly tumbled down a mountain just a few months earlier over a photograph — during a camping trip that I suddenly dragged her along on with no explanation, in the middle of nowhere, and she went without a second thought. I thought about how she always held my hand tightly, her nails digging into my palm, whenever we went through

the haunted house at the Halloween fair every year; she hated going but she went anyway

because she knew that it made me happy to go. I thought about how she stood up to Selena over spilled coffee on a new dress.

And I remembered that Jessica was a lot stronger than I had always thought; she wasn't just my blonde friend who went to parties and wore pink. She was brilliant and brave, and she had always been by my side.

I looked over at Lori next, who stared at me with the same passion in her eyes. I knew that she would come, too. Lori had always been there for me; she always listened calmly when I needed someone to talk to, and she was always the calm voice of reason, but she never hesitated to stand up for her friends when she needed to. Sometimes she was crazy, and sometimes she said things that hurt people's feelings, but that was because she never withheld the truth.

Then, I looked over at Matt. He was standing behind the two of them, his eyes fixed unwaveringly on me. I hadn't known him for long, but already he had become a rock in our group. When I had met him, he had been an airheaded frat boy who only ever cracked jokes, but he had turned into a brave and strong leader. When we needed him the most, he took charge.

Finally, I looked back at Luke. All I could do was nod, and a smile spread across Luke's face.

With all of my friends by my side, I knew that Selena wouldn't stand a chance against us. She may have been cunning and powerful, but she didn't have what we had.

She didn't have anyone's love.

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Chapter 218

Chapter 218: The Sacrificial Lamb

Enzo

My brain felt so foggy. No matter how hard I tried, it almost felt as though my eyes were constantly out of focus, like I was walking through a thick mist that was obstructing everything in front of me. That strange girl that looked almost exactly like Selena came running out of the woods, and she tackled Selena, sending her to the ground. They grappled there for a few moments in a shrieking, clawing heap while I stood in complete and utter shock, before I finally came to my senses and pulled her off of Selena.

The girl kept saying strange things. She kept talking as though we knew each other, but I didn't know her. I didn't even know where I was. It felt like there was something at the very back of my mind that thought that maybe she was familiar, and that maybe I did know her somehow, but that didn't make any sense.

And so, when Selena opened a portal and took my hand, I went along with her.

When we stepped out on the other side, we weren't far from the Alpha King's mansion. Selena seemed angry, and for good reason; that girl had muddied Selena's clothes and wrecked her perfect hair during their fight, and I knew that Selena didn't like getting dirty. But there was something else that I noticed, too, as she took me by the hand and pulled me toward the mansion. She kept muttering to herself about the other girl.

"That bitch... Thinks she can pull a fast one on me... I'm his mate, not her."

I frowned as I listened to Selena. I thought back to what Selena had told the other girl. She had said "See? He doesn't even remember you!"

It was as if Selena knew the girl, but I didn't know her for some reason. How could this be? I was so confused.

But I didn't say anything. Selena was extremely angry, and when I opened my mouth to speak, her nails only dug even harder into my wrist as she pulled me along. I decided then and there that I needed to give her some time to cool off before I tried to say anything about what happened.

Within a few minutes of storming through the woods, we arrived at the front of the mansion. The guards let us in; it seemed that they, too, realized Selena's anger and decided not to question anything. I didn't even know why or when we had left the mansion, so I was just as baffled as they were.

Once we were inside, Selena led me upstairs and down the winding hallways to my room. She then opened the door and pushed me inside.

"Stay here," she growled, her eyes burning with fury. "I'll be back later."

I furrowed my brow. Now, this was getting too confusing. I wouldn't just sit there and wait for her to come back; I needed to know what was going on.

"Where are you going?" I asked, putting my foot in the way before she was able to close the door.

Selena paused, her jaw moving back and forth as she grinded her teeth together angrily. "I just need to take care of something," she said. "I'll be back soon. I promise." Then, with one final shove, she pushed me into the room and slammed the door shut. I heard the sound of the lock sliding through the bolt, and then her receding footsteps.

I cursed under my breath, my brain still coated in a thick fog. What was going on? It felt as though there was a voice in the back of my head telling me to snap out of it, but I didn't understand why. And when I searched for my wolf to see if he had any guidance to offer, he was fast asleep. It almost felt as though there was some sort of spell on my wolf that was keeping him in a coma. He was there, but he wasn't

conscious. This made me nervous; what if something happened and I needed to shift? I couldn't do that if my wolf was fast asleep and couldn't be woken up.

Suddenly, as the sky darkened outside, I saw a flash of something through the window that caught my eye and broke me out of my train of thought. I bolted over to the window to look out, and I caught a glimpse of what looked like Selena running across the road in a cloak. She was fast, like a bolt of lightning, and she looked over her shoulder as

though she was making sure that the guards wouldn't see her. Then, she disappeared into the forest in the blink of an eye.

Something was going on here — I was sure of it. I didn't know what exactly was happening, but I knew that something was wrong. And I couldn't help but think that Selena and that strange girl who could have been her twin had something to do with it.

I decided that I couldn't stay here. I had to follow Selena; but she had locked the door.

Once again, I cursed under my breath as I paced the room, trying to think of a way to escape. My eyes fell on the window once again, and I tried to lift the window frame. It slid up easily; in Selena's haste, she hadn't blocked me from getting out this way. I quickly climbed out the window and used a combination of the vines that were climbing along the side of the mansion, an old and rickety trellis, and the corner of the building to make my way down.

As soon as my feet hit the ground, I took off as fast as I could toward the direction that Selena left in. The guards didn't see me in the darkness. I could still faintly pick up Selena's scent, and so I followed it.

I followed her trail carefully through the rapidly darkening woods. She had been in such a rush that she didn't retract her scent, so it was easy to follow it. She had left an obvious trail of crushed leaves and broken bushes as well, so I quickly found where she had disappeared to.

When I saw the little witch's hut in the distance, with its yellow light spilling out from the closed window into the dark forest, I had to rack my brain to remember why this place felt familiar. It was foggy and distant, but as I approached, I remembered that I had been here before. I had found Selena in here once, talking to the witch about some curse... But I couldn't remember much of anything after that. Did the witch put a spell on me? That was the only logical explanation for this strange mind fog that I was in.

I quietly approached the witch's hut until I was close enough to hear voices.

"Hold it still!"

"I'm trying! It's wriggling around too much. Just get it over with."

I could hear the sound of terrified bleating. It sounded like a sheep in distress. A lamb, actually. It sounded too small and weak for an adult sheep.

Then, I heard a strange sound, followed by silence.

I couldn't explain why I did what I did next. That tiny voice that had been echoing in the back of my mind took hold for a moment, and I knew that there was something going on in that hut that needed to be stopped.

And so, I gritted my teeth and kicked down the door.

Just as I suspected... Selena was sitting on the floor in the middle of a circle drawn with chalk. In her lap lay the bloodied body of a lamb, its throat slit. In front of her kneeled an older woman, a witch, who was smearing blood on Selena's face.

They both froze. Selena whipped around to look at me, her eyes wide and her face covered with blood that was painted on her skin in strange symbols.

In the candlelight, she looked demonic.

Chapter 219

Chapter 219: Another Obstacle

Nina

Finally, I agreed to go to the werewolf realm with my friends.

But we needed to prepare first, and we had to hurry. Time was running short; there was no knowing what Selena had done by now. If her spell on Enzo was already this powerful, then I could only imagine how much more powerful it could be within this short period of time. Not only that, but if she had the Alpha King in her grasp as well, things could go south very quickly. I also couldn't help but wonder if Richard, Enzo's father, was being held captive too.

For right now, though, we needed to get Enzo away from her. Once we had Enzo back and we were able to break through Selena's spell again, then he could help us save Richard and the Alpha King.

The five of us quickly ran home to gather some supplies. The sky was darkening quickly, and it would only be a matter of time before it was too dark to even traverse the forest to find the Alpha King's mansion. None of us had ever been there before; only Luke knew vaguely where it was. The rest of us were useless when it came to navigating that place.

While Matt ran back to his dorm to pack a bag, Lori, Jessica and I ran up to our own dorm. The three of us flew into a frenzy, filling the dorm with the sounds of panicked packing and yelling; no doubt our neighbors hated us during those moments. I packed lightly, with only a change of clothes, a hunting knife, and some granola bars in case we took longer than expected. I hoped to get us in and out of there by the end of the next day at the most, but there was no knowing exactly how long it would take us. For all we knew, Selena would catch us and we would never make it home.

I came to that realization as I was zipping up my backpack.

If Selena caught us, then I would be putting all of my friends in danger.

I froze, my backpack still in my hand, as the worry washed over me. My palms began to sweat and my heart started to race, and I slowly looked up at my friends, who were currently arguing over whether to bring weapons or not.

“Nina, settle this for us,” Jessica said, turning to face me. “I think we should bring this.” She held up a big, heavy bat flashlight that we had purchased during our first year living in the dorms. We kept it in the hallway, as if someone would come into our dorm in the middle of the night and kill us. At the time, when Jessica first bought it I thought that it was a silly idea, but now I knew that it was a smart decision. “Lori thinks we should bring a kitchen knife.”

As I looked back and forth between the two of them, however, the decision only set my anxiety in stone. I didn’t want my friends to have to defend themselves like that. Maybe I shouldn’t have let them come after all.

“Are you okay?” Lori asked, noticing the way that my hands were shaking. “What’s wrong?”

I swallowed and straightened, slinging my backpack onto my back. “I... I don’t want you to have to bring either,” I replied, my voice trembling. “I feel like I’m putting you all in danger. Maybe I should just go alone.”

Lori’s eyes narrowed. “Don’t you dare say that, Nina Harper,” she growled. “We’re your friends. And we’re coming with you, whether you like it or not.”

“Besides,” Jessica chimed in, “By saving Enzo, his father, and the Alpha King, it’ll help us stop the Crescents. Right now, that’s extremely important. And you’re gonna need all the help you can get if you want to succeed.”

Lori and Jessica were right; I wouldn’t be able to save even Enzo on my own, let alone Richard and the Alpha King. There was strength in numbers, and I needed as much strength as possible against Selena.

I nodded. Even though there was a lump in my throat and a pit of dread growing in my stomach, I knew that I had to let my friends come with me.

“Bring the flashlight,” I said.

...

Once we were finished packing, which only took ten minutes at the most, we met up with Luke and Matt in the quad.

“Come on,” Matt said impatiently, looking up at the building that contained the dean’s office. “Curfew is about to start. We don’t need anyone forcing us to go inside.”

For the past few weeks, aside from the night of the dance, there had been a strict curfew on both the campus and the town. The dean originally had the Fullmoons enforcing it, but when the Fullmoons left she had employed some students to basically act as glorified hall monitors. It didn’t really work, and people still went out after dark, but the dean was sure to stop us if she found out what we were doing. She had too much faith in the Fullmoons, and she was too proud to let her own students potentially put themselves in danger because the Fullmoons weren’t being helpful.

The five of us took off once more toward the woods, and by the time we reached the edge of the treeline, the curfew alarm went off. Thankfully we were out of sight now.

Luke led us back to the clearing where Enzo and Selena left. He explained as we walked that portals could sometimes leave residue, which could make it easier to open another portal. And, if we used the residue from the previous portal to open a new one, there was a likely chance that we would come out

at the same spot where Enzo and Selena had come out, which would mean that we would be that much closer to the two of them.

Finally, we stopped in the center of the clearing. The full moon was rising slowly above us, and the sky was darkening quickly.

Luke stepped out of the group and took a deep breath. The rest of us watched, wringing our hands nervously, as he began to make the circular motion with his index and middle fingers...

I waited with bated breath, praying that the portal would open. If Selena had just opened one, then surely Luke could open one, too. Surely she had left in such a hurry that she wouldn’t have thought to put any sort of hex on us.

But we waited, and nothing happened. No matter how many times Luke moved his hand around in that circular motion, whispering under his breath, nothing happened.

“Shit,” he said quietly, dropping his arms to his side. “She’s too smart.”

My eyes widened and I stormed up to Luke. “What’s wrong?” I asked. “Why isn’t it working?”

Luke shook his head and shrugged at the same time. “I’m not sure exactly. She must have known I was coming. God dammit.”

I stared at Luke with wide, disbelieving eyes. “Try again,” I ordered him as I felt anger beginning to bubble up inside of me. But Luke only shook his head once more.

"It's not gonna work," he said. "Maybe we can try again tomorrow. The hex is bound to wear off soon enough."

All I could do was gulp nervously while my friends stared at me with shocked, apologetic faces. We couldn't wait until tomorrow... Enzo needed us now. Something in me somehow knew that if I didn't get to him by tonight, Selena's magic would grow too powerful and we'd lose Enzo, Richard, and the Alpha King.

I felt utterly lost and hopeless.

Once again, Selena had placed an obstacle right in our way.

Chapter 220

Chapter 220: a Mate's Betrayal

Enzo

When I kicked down the door of the witch's hut, my eyes widened as I saw the bloody scene in front of me.

Selena was sitting on the floor in the middle of a circle drawn with chalk. In her lap lay the bloodied body of a lamb; they had slit its throat, like some sort of sick ritual sacrifice. In front of her knelt the witch, who was smearing the lamb's blood onto Selena's face with her bare hands.

They both froze when I kicked down the door. Selena whipped around to look at me, her eyes wide and her face covered with blood that was painted on her skin in strange symbols.

In the candlelight, she looked demonic.

"What the hell are you doing, Selena?!" I asked, taking a step backwards. I couldn't fathom the reason behind why my fated mate was in this witch's hut, performing some horrible ritual that involved the sacrifice of innocent baby animals.

"I-It's a fertility ritual!" Selena said, her eyes still so wide I could see the whites of her eyes all the way around her irises. "That's all; just a fertility ritual. I want us to have a baby soon, Enzo, and I've been having problems. I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner."

I shook my head. I didn't believe a word of what Selena had said; something was seriously wrong here. The fog in my head, the strange girl that looked like Selena's twin, the way that Selena opened a portal in a place that I didn't remember going to, and the way that she hastily took me back to the mansion and locked me in my room... This wasn't a fertility ritual. This was something darker, more sinister.

"I don't believe you," I growled. I pointed then at the witch, who was standing now and staring up at me silently through her eyebrows. "And who is she?"

"I'm just a simple witch," the witch replied, her voice floating across the air in a sing-song tone that was surprising for such an old woman. "That's all. Your mate asked me to help her, and so I did."

I believed the witch — to an extent. I believed that she was just performing a service for Selena, but that service was far more sinister than a simple fertility ritual. As far as I was aware, fertility rituals didn't involve the sacrificing of lambs and smearing blood on someone's face.

"Baby, you're really overreacting." Selena sighed and shoved the lamb's body off of her lap, leaving the poor thing in a bloody heap on the floor. She stood, facing me. "I can see the fear in your eyes, but you don't have to be afraid. Why don't you believe me, your mate?"

I shook my head. "If you want me to believe you, then tell me who that girl was in the woods earlier," I said. "Tell me where we were. Tell me why you dragged me back to the mansion and locked me in my room, and tell me why I have this thick fog in my head and can't remember anything before two hours ago."

Selena was silent. I watched as her eyes shifted over to the witch, then back to me. They seemed to have some sort of unspoken understanding, and something about it felt horribly dark. Whatever ritual they were performing... I somehow felt as though it had something to do with the fog in my head, as well as everything else.

"Baby," Selena said, reaching for me with bloody hands. "...What girl are you talking about?" She cocked her head to the side, and as she did, I felt my head get more foggy. I stumbled backwards, shaking my head vigorously as my heart started to pound.

Selena was trying to cast a spell on me.

"Get away from me," I murmured, placing my hands over my ears and gritting my teeth. "I don't trust you."

Selena's eyes widened, but it felt almost theatrical. "You don't trust your mate?" she whimpered, pushing her lower lip out in a pout. "How could you say that? I've never done anything except love you!"

But I knew that she was lying. That voice in the back of my mind, that part of me that was free from the fog... That part of me knew that she had done something horrible. I wished that I could remember all of it, but I could only remember the looming feeling of dread and panic. I knew I was her prisoner somehow, but I couldn't quite remember why.

Selena sniffled and whimpered a little more, but I wouldn't hear any of it. I took another step back, my eyes shifting over to the woods, toward freedom. Somehow, I knew that I needed to get out, and that help was out there. I couldn't explain why, or who, but I knew that I just needed to run and then everything would be okay.

But then, Selena's face suddenly shifted and twisted into a deep, dark scowl. The candlelight flickered across her blood-stained face, making it appear as though she was wearing some sort of horrifying mask.

"Get him," she snarled.

Before I even had time to react, the witch shot forward. She moved way too fast for an old woman, so fast her entire body was a blur. I felt her wrinkled, gnarled hands wrap around my wrists and she yanked me back into the hut with too much force for an old woman.

"Put him in the circle." Selena pointed to the circle of chalk, where the lamb and a bowl of its blood laid.

The witch threw me down. My body felt heavy, like it was full of bricks, and I almost felt as though some invisible force was pinning me down in the center of the circle. No matter how hard I struggled, the force only became heavier, and during those moments I felt like the lamb.

"If I can't have you," Selena said, picking the bloody knife that was used to kill the lamb up off the ground, "then no one can have you."

While the witch stood nearby with a grin on her face, Selena stood over me, the knife glinting in the candlelight. I felt the lamb's blood begin to trickle over to my hand as the pool around the poor little thing grew. Its blood was still warm, viscous, and within a few moments mine would be mixed with it.

"Fio... Please," I begged, urging my wolf to wake up. "I need you."

"Aw, he looks so scared," Selena said as she stared down at me. "It's okay. It'll only hurt for a few seconds. I'll make it quick."

How did it come to this? All along, I thought that Selena was my mate... But she was far from it. She was evil. She wasn't just a werewolf; she was a witch. The most horrible combination... Too much power in one person's hands. That was why supernaturals weren't allowed to become witches. It was too dangerous.

"Fio," I begged again. "Wake up. Wake up now. Please."

Suddenly, I felt a flicker of hope. Fio heard me. As Selena lowered herself over me, straddling me on the floor as she brandished the knife, I felt my wolf beginning to wake up.

Selena leaned down, planting one final kiss on my lips before she would sacrifice me along with the lamb...

But Fio woke up.

I felt myself shift beneath her.

"Shit!" Selena yelled. "He's gonna shift! Stop him!"

But it was too late for them to stop me. My wolf's power was already surging through me. I used my wolf's strength to throw Selena off of me, sending her to the floor with a thud, and I bolted out the door and into the dark night.