

My Hockey Alpha #Chapter 281 - Read My Hockey Alpha Chapter 281

Chapter 281

Chapter 281: The Watcher

Enzo

Nina screamed while I was fucking her.

I instantly pulled out, terrified that I had hurt her. I had thought that we were just having kinky sex, and I didn't mean to do anything that would have made her uncomfortable or caused her any pain.

"What? What is it?" I asked frantically, helping her up off of the motorcycle. "Did I hurt you?"

Nina shook her head and pulled her skirt back down with one hand while pointing shakily at the trees with the other. "Someone was watching us," she said. "I saw yellow eyes in the forest."

I furrowed my brow and looked out toward where Nina was pointing. Nothing was there. "Are you sure it wasn't a deer?" I asked. "I don't see anyone." But Nina was vehement, and just kept pointing. I planted a kiss on her forehead and decided to walk over there just to make her feel better; surely it was just a deer, but if it would make her feel safer, then I didn't mind checking.

However, as I approached the treeline, a familiar scent slowly came to my nostrils. It was fading quickly, but it was there. I recognized it immediately as Lewis' scent.

My eyes widened. I used my night vision in the dark trees, but he was gone now. He must have been watching us... But why? And how did he know we were here? The only possibility that came into my mind was that this cliff was, after all, located close to my father's house. I hadn't gone there since he died, as I had assumed that Lewis and his followers were hiding out there and I didn't have time to deal with it. But something told me that it wasn't just that; he was intentionally stalking us.

"I'll be right back," I called out to Nina, who was still standing by the motorcycle with a combination of terror and embarrassment drawn across her face.

"Wait!" she called. She came running up to me and grabbed my arm. "Don't leave me out here."

I nodded slowly. "Alright." If Lewis was stalking us for whatever reason, I supposed that it was best to stay together in case he tried anything. I was already fairly certain that he was working with the Crescents; and if he wasn't, then he was, at the very least, up to no good. He clearly wanted my father to not come back, and he may have already heard about my father's death now. Either he was working with the Crescents all along or he was just trying to usurp my father so he could become the next Fullmoon Alpha.

With Nina tightly holding onto my arm with both hands, I stepped into the woods. The thick pine trees made it much darker inside the forest, and the sun had almost gone down so it was even darker now. It didn't affect me though with my night vision, and I kept going. I looked down to see what looked like two imprints in the underbrush where Lewis had been standing. Nina saw them as well.

"Do you think..." she whispered, pointing. I nodded slowly and put my finger to my lips to indicate for her to stay quiet, which she did. We then quietly walked further into the forest, following what looked like a very faint trail of footprints in the layer of pine needles on the ground.

Up ahead, there was a slight clearing in the trees where a light dusting of snow had fallen. I walked up to the snow, sniffing the air. Lewis' scent had long since dissipated, but when I looked down, I could see that there were footprints in the snow. They looked like large boots, which only confirmed my suspicions. Nina was right when she said that someone was watching us, and there was no doubt in my mind that it was Lewis.

But I still needed to know why he would do something like that. Lewis wasn't a pervert; I knew that much. If he was working for the Crescents, then that meant that he was potentially following us. How long he had been doing that, though, was still a mystery to me. Just thinking about it made my blood run cold; I imagined him watching us through windows, around corners, and through the trees for who knows how long. It made me sick to think that my father's Beta, the kind and caring yet gruff man who I

had known since I was a child, would have turned into someone who was perfectly okay with stalking us.

I decided then that I needed to check my father's house. I hadn't been there in a long time; for all I knew, it was completely ransacked by now. It wasn't as if there was anything that I wanted in that house, and I didn't care much about it since we only moved there after my mother died. I hated the way that cold, modern house looked with its enormous windows, gray appearance, and boxy shape. I hated everything that it stood for. But I still needed to know what happened to it since my father died, and if Lewis and his followers were there, then I wanted to see what they were up to.

Nina and I stared down at the footprints in the snow for a few moments. I could feel her trembling slightly beside me, although I wasn't sure if it was from fear or just from the cold. Either way, I gently put my arm around her and rubbed up and down her shoulder as I turned around and guided her back toward the motorcycle.

Once we were out of the trees, we were able to speak freely. The sound of the ocean rushed up on us the moment we stepped out from the deafening treeline, masking our voices.

“Who was it, do you think?” she whispered as we hurried back to the motorcycle. “I got some bad energy from those eyes, like I’ve seen them before.”

I swallowed hard and stared down at the ground. “I think it was Lewis,” I finally admitted. “I’m not exactly sure what he’s up to...”

“What if he’s working with the Crescents?” Nina asked. “While you were gone, I spent a lot of time talking to your cousin, Myra, while the Fullmoons were stationed in Mountainview. She said that Lewis was up to no good, and she even thought that he might be working with the Crescents.”

I raised my eyebrows. Nina hadn’t mentioned that bit of information before, but now it was all making sense.

“Do you know where Myra is?” I asked, figuring that if I could just talk to my cousin, then we could get to the bottom of this.

But Nina shook her head solemnly. “The last time I talked to her, she said that Lewis was making them pack up to leave Mountainview, but she and some of the other Fullmoons disagreed with his new power and were planning on splitting off from the group. I don’t know what happened or if they were able to accomplish that. For all I know, Lewis...”

Nina’s voice faltered. I knew what she was going to say, though; she was going to imply that Lewis may have possibly killed them. At this point, I wouldn’t have been surprised. Lewis may have wanted to kill off anyone who dared to challenge him. I hoped that wasn’t the case, though. Now I only wanted to check on my father’s house more than ever.

“Come on,” I said, handing Nina her helmet. “We’re going on another ride.”

Chapter 282

Chapter 282: Once a Home, Now Empty

Nina

“Come on,” Enzo said as he handed me my helmet. “We’re going on another ride.”

I raised my eyebrows as I took the helmet. “Where are we going?” I asked. Enzo didn’t answer. He just got on the motorcycle, and then started it up once I got on behind him.

We started driving back out onto the main road. A few minutes later, I realized where we were going.

We were going to Enzo's father's house. I felt a lump rise into my throat when I saw the square silhouette of the modern home rise in the distance; I hoped that Enzo wasn't planning on confronting Lewis that night with no backup.

But as we pulled up into the driveway, the house looked dark and empty. There were no cars in the driveway. Enzo parked the motorcycle and we climbed off and headed up to the door, which was cracked open and creaking in the breeze.

Quietly, Enzo pushed the door open and poked his head in. He looked around for a moment before throwing me a nod and then headed in.

A gasp caught in my throat as we walked in through the door. The house was dark and empty. Things were strewn about as though the place had been ransacked, and furniture was tipped over. I looked up at Enzo with wide eyes, but surprisingly he didn't seem fazed in the slightest.

"Do you think that Lewis did this?" I asked quietly.

Enzo shrugged. "Probably." He walked over to the kitchen and peered into a few open drawers, nodding to himself thoughtfully as though he was taking account of what had been stolen. I looked around as well, but as I did, I noticed something; most of the expensive things, such as art and

electronics, were left alone. The whole place was ransacked, but the things that any typical robber would steal were still there. Instead, it was as though they were looking for something specific, which made me think that it really must have been Lewis.

"What do you think they were looking for?" I asked as I walked up to Enzo, who was now staring out the back window that looked out over the ocean. He didn't seem to want to show it, but I could tell that he was sad. Even though I knew that he didn't particularly care for this house and that he hadn't spent much time there, I was sure that it was still sad to see his father's last home completely destroyed like this.

"I'm really not sure," Enzo replied matter-of-factly. "My father may have had something hidden in here that Lewis wanted. Money, probably. Either way, it seems as though he found what he was looking for. Either that, or they just wanted to destroy the place to disrespect my dad."

"Oh." I frowned and touched Enzo's arm. "I'm sorry."

Enzo simply shrugged again, then turned to face me in the darkness. Without a word, he bent down and gently kissed my forehead. "Wait here," he said. "I'll be right back."

Before I could protest, Enzo walked off and jogged up the stairs, disappearing from sight. I felt a bit uncomfortable being there alone when Lewis could have walked in at any moment, but I occupied myself with walking around and picking some things up. I picked up a few dining chairs and set them upright where they belonged, then stooped down to pick up a picture that had been thrown to the floor. When I picked it up, the glass was broken. The photograph inside the frame depicted Enzo's father, a woman who I had never seen before, and a little boy. As I looked at it, I realized that it was a family photo with Richard, Enzo's mother, and Enzo as a child. Enzo's mother was beautiful, with curly black hair that cascaded down her back and a stunning smile. She was holding Enzo and pressing her cheek against his. They were laughing together. Richard stood with his arm around them, smiling at the

camera. I was surprised that I hadn't seen that photo when I came to this house before; I must have missed it.

I decided to pull the photo out of the frame and pocket it. Surely Enzo would refuse to take it at that moment, but I knew that he would want it down the road. And someday, maybe we could come back here and clean the place up. Technically, the house belonged to Enzo now. I didn't know if he would want to keep it or sell it, but I could see its potential as a beautiful house; it just needed a touch of comfort inside, rather than the stark gray furnishings of a middle-aged wealthy widower. Maybe, after all of this was said and done, we could live here together. The thought made me smile, although I knew that it was just wishful thinking.

A few moments later, I heard the sound of Enzo's footsteps coming back down the stairs. I peeked around the corner to see that he seemed to be slipping something small into his pocket; assuming that it was just something sentimental, I decided not to pry. Enzo walked up to me then and wrapped his arm around my shoulder, casting me a weak smile.

"Let's go home," he said.

"Are you sure?" I asked. "I thought you came here to look for Lewis."

"I did," Enzo admitted. "But he's clearly not here, and it's getting late. He's the least of our worries right now."

For a few moments, I stared up at Enzo wordlessly. I was under the impression that Lewis was potentially stalking us, and if he was working with the Crescents, then it could be an issue. But at the same time, Mountainview was airtight. We would be safer going home and dealing with Lewis when we had the chance. Once we took down the Luna, dealing with people like Lewis would feel like child's play.

Finally, I nodded up at Enzo and then reached up to cup his face in my hands. I pulled him down to me and kissed him, feeling the warmth of his lips on mine.

When our lips finally parted, I pulled away and looked out into the trashed living room. Enzo followed my gaze, and as he did, I felt him become tense beside me. I squeezed his hand gently, and for a few moments we stood there in silence and looked solemnly at the place that his dead father used to call 'home'.

"Once we deal with the Luna, I'm personally going to take Lewis down," Enzo said, his voice barely above a whisper.

I looked up at Enzo then to see his sharp jawline in the dim light being cast through the large windows from the moon. Now, in the moonlight, I could see that his face was grim and full of anger. Seeing him like that, and remembering how his father laid lifelessly in his arms, filled me with anger as well.

"I'll help you," I said with purpose as I tightened my grip on his hand. "Lewis will pay for abandoning your father."

Chapter 283

Chapter 283: An Unlikely Ally

Nina

Enzo and I returned home after visiting his father's house. As we drove home, the cold night wind blew in my face on the back of Enzo's motorcycle and the yellow crescent moon shone above us.

Seeing Enzo's father's house ransacked like that filled me with an odd combination of sadness and hope. It broke my heart that Richard's Beta disrespected him like that, but at the same time it made me only want to try harder to bring all of this to an end.

A little while later, we were pulling into the parking lot of the campus. Enzo parked the motorcycle and helped me off, and we were walking back to his dorm hand-in-hand when we suddenly heard the sound of shouting.

"Enzo! Nina!" Luke's voice rang out across the quad, followed by the sound of feet slamming on pavement as he ran toward us. Enzo and I both whipped around to see Luke running at us, his eyes wide and full of fear.

"What is it?" I asked, immediately feeling my heart rise up into my throat just from seeing the look on his face.

"It's Lori and Jessica," he said quickly. "They're gone. Some Crescents came... They took them through a portal!"

I felt my entire body freeze. It felt as though my heart stopped and time froze during that moment, and every muscle in my body tensed as fight or flight kicked in. The world spun around me, and for a moment I thought for sure that I would vomit.

“...took them,” Luke finished. I had been completely absorbed in my own head for the majority of his sentence, and only caught the tail end. Beside me, Enzo was frantic.

“Where were they last seen?” he asked, his hand gripping mine tightly.

“The infirmary,” Luke replied. “I was going to see them, and when I got there, I saw two Crescents manhandling them. One of them opened a portal, and then they all disappeared before I could get there. I tried to go after them, but it was too late by the time I opened my own portal. I don’t know where they went.”

“I think I have a pretty good idea as to where they went,” Enzo growled. I knew what he was thinking: the Alpha King’s mansion. The Luna had sent Crescents to come and take them, and was no doubt trying to use them as a means to lure us there. I wasn’t sure how two Crescents made it past our airtight defenses in Mountainview, but somehow they did it. And now my friends were in danger.

“We have to go after them.” My voice was shaky and thick with fear. “Call the recruits. Meet us at the athletic field.”

Luke nodded and took off running again. Enzo and I ran like hell to the infirmary to prepare. Once we were there, we frantically filled backpacks with the antidote and various medical supplies because we knew what was potentially coming next: a battle. We needed to be prepared for anything.

“You don’t think she’ll kill them, do you?” I asked with terror in my voice.

“I don’t know.” Enzo sounded distant and reserved despite the way that he was running around and grabbing supplies. His hesitance made my heart pound inside of my chest, but I tried to quell it as I tried to focus on preparing for the upcoming battle. I just hoped more than anything that the Luna wouldn’t pull a nasty trick and kill my friends before we even got there... But, like Enzo, I had no way of knowing. The Luna was unpredictable and erratic, and she clearly had no qualms about needless killing.

Soon enough, Enzo and I were meeting Luke and the recruits on the athletic field behind the hockey arena. Both hockey teams were with him as well. Everyone looked frightened, but also excited at the same time.

“We’re going to bring half of you,” Enzo said as he somehow managed to calmly address the large group. “Anyone who wants to come, step forward now. If you want to stay here, that’s fine; but you’ll be protecting the town in the event of a Crescent attack. Does everyone understand?”

The group murmured in understanding, then talked amongst themselves for a few moments as they tried to decide who would go and who would stay. Eventually, half of the group stepped forward. Those people included quite a few recruits, some of Jason's team, Matt, and some of our hockey team. Jason and the others stayed behind with the intention of protecting the campus, which I was glad for. I knew that Enzo needed his Beta by his side to fight, so Jason would be extremely helpful in leading everyone else if the Crescents attacked Mountainview while we were gone. At one point, I felt a cool and slender hand slip into mine and looked up to see Luke standing beside me.

"You don't need to come," I whispered to my friend.

Luke just shook his head. "I'm your bodyguard. I'll be with you until the end."

Luke's words made me smile a bit. Enzo then gave his orders to everyone else, who then left with Jason to patrol the town. Meanwhile, the rest of us gathered and Luke began to open a portal.

Suddenly, however, I heard the sound of a shrill female voice floating across the athletic field. I looked up to see none other than Selena running as fast as she could toward us.

"Wait!" she screamed. "I'm coming with you!"

Enzo's eyes narrowed and he stepped protectively in front of me as Selena ran up to us. She came to a stop, breathing heavily with a wild look in her eyes. "I'm coming with you."

"No you're not," Enzo snarled. "You can't be trusted."

Selena's already-wide eyes widened even further. She then looked at me with a pleading expression on her face. "Nina, please!" she begged. "You can trust me! You know that I know that mansion better than anyone. I know how the Luna operates. I can help you."

I froze for a moment, chewing my lip. Enzo slowly looked down at me with a skeptical look in his eyes.

"You really think we can trust her?" his voice echoed in my head as he used telepathy so that we couldn't be overheard.

"I think so," I replied. "I want to trust her. And she's right; we could use her help."

"And what if she decides to betray us?"

Enzo's question made my heart stop for a moment. There was of course a chance that she could betray us at the end... But I wanted to give her the chance to prove herself regardless.

"If she does, then I'm willing to take the blame for being too trusting," I replied.

Enzo looked at me for a few moments. Finally, after some thought, he nodded.

"You can come with us, Selena," I said quietly. Selena's eyes lit up. And with that, Luke opened the portal. The swirling, purple vortex grew in size and filled the air with the electric whirring sound that I had become all too familiar with over the past months. Now, more than ever, I felt ready to get this over with; no one messed with my friends, and now the Luna was going to face the consequences for that mistake.

One by one, we all went through and entered into the werewolf realm for our final battle to save our friends.

Chapter 284

Chapter 284: Cut Loose

Nina

One by one, all of us went through the portal and entered into the werewolf realm.

When we came out on the other side, we were back in the forest. I immediately recognized the location that we came out of the portal as the same spot where my friends and I camped out when we were looking for Enzo. It was incredibly dark the last time we were there due to the spell cast on the forest by Selena and the witch, but I recognized the small sloping hill surrounded by tall pine trees. In fact, as I walked further into the center of the clearing, I was able to find the circle of rocks from our last campfire.

It had snowed since then, and the ground was covered in a light dusting of white powder. Around me, the new recruits who had never been to the werewolf realm before looked around with awe at their new surroundings.

"Where are we?" one girl asked as she looked around at the dark green scenery of the forest mixed with the white of the snow, which was illuminated by the full moon; I quickly realized that the moon here was always full, which I found interesting. At home, it was a waxing crescent at that very moment.

"This is the werewolf realm," Enzo said. "It's... Well, it's where the werewolves live."

"So there are other werewolves here?" one boy asked, sounding curious. Enzo nodded, but we didn't have time for questions. We needed to get moving; and thankfully, we knew where we were. With Enzo, Luke and I at the front and Matt watching the back of the group, we began our trek through the forest.

It was much easier this time without having a pall of darkness cast over the forest. We found our way through the woods easily, and thanks to my newfound night vision, I had no trouble keeping up. The group stayed mostly quiet as well, just in case the Luna's rogues came looking for us. The entire time, we were all on the verge of shifting if we needed to. I was grateful that this time we had an entire army of werewolves behind us. I just hoped that all of the training that we put them through over the past couple of weeks would pay off.

However, at one point the quietness was broken by the sound of someone speaking up.

"H-Hey!" one girl said, her voice sounding alarmed. "Where are you going?!"

Enzo and I shot each other a single glance. We knew who had run off. We quickly whirled around to face the spot where Selena had been walking; and, as I suspected, she was gone. "Where did she go?" I asked, running up to Matt and the girl who had called after Selena while the group froze in confusion.

Matt shook his head and looked out into the trees while the girl pointed. "She just took off in that direction," she said. "She's fast."

"I'll go after her," Matt said. He started to take off, but I suddenly stopped him and pulled him back, shaking my head.

"No," I insisted. "It's not worth it."

Matt furrowed his brow. By now, Enzo was standing by my side silently with an angry expression on his face and with his muscular arms folded across his chest. I knew that he was disappointed in me. I never should have let Selena come with us, and I knew that... But at the same time, I didn't have a bad feeling about it. In the werewolf realm, the power of our twin bond felt stronger. I didn't get a feeling that she was up to something bad; rather, I sensed that she was up to something else. I didn't know what it was exactly, but it didn't feel sinister. Maybe she was just running for the sake of running, or maybe she

had a plan. Either way, even if she was up to something bad, we didn't have the time or manpower to send anyone looking for her. We just needed to get to the mansion, and we needed to hurry. I didn't know what the Luna was doing with Lori and Jessica, but I didn't want to dawdle around for any longer than I needed to.

Enzo didn't say anything about it. We continued moving, ignoring Selena's sudden disappearance.

All around us, it felt as though the forest was pressing in on us the closer we got to the mansion. We must have been walking for an hour, maybe even two. The path became more difficult, and soon we were headed uphill to where the Alpha King's mansion lay. Traveling this route before with only a few people was much easier, but it wasn't so

easy now with a small army of over forty people, many of whom had never been to the werewolf realm before. The closer we got to the mansion, too, the thicker the air felt.

Ahead of the group, Luke continued to lead the way through the forest like our pathfinder. I was glad to have him by my side, and as we walked, we talked in hushed tones.

"I can sense the magic thickening now," he whispered, keeping his voice low so as not to be overheard by the nervous recruits. "The closer we get to the mansion, the stronger it gets."

"Do you know what sort of magic it is?" I asked as I stepped over a fallen tree. Luke shook his head and then fell silent for a little while.

Eventually, the tall spires of the mansion came into view over the treetops. They looked like the tops of the pine trees in the distance at first, but as we got closer I could see the stone parapets and tiled facades. I felt Enzo's hand slip into mine then, and it was cool and comforting. I didn't realize it until he took my hand, but I was trembling slightly. When he held my hand, however, it subsided; and when I looked up at him, he no longer looked angry with me over Selena. He looked a little frightened, but

mostly strong and determined. Seeing his sharp jawline as I walked beside him, and the way that his broad shoulders sat back proudly, made me feel safe and protected.

Finally, the walls of the mansion came into view between the trees. Enzo directed everyone to keep low, and we began to creep forward until we found a good spot to observe the mansion.

Just as I suspected, the mansion grounds were no longer being patrolled by guards in uniform; rather, those guards had been replaced by dozens of the Luna's genetically engineered rogues. Their eyes glowed brightly as they paced silently back and forth on the lawn, their heads swiveling this way and that as they watched intently for any intruders. There was no way in without being seen; the Luna's defenses were impenetrable now. She had learned from her mistakes and there was not a single weak spot in the patrol. I knew that the only way to get through would be by fighting.

I looked over at Enzo in the darkness where we hid, watching as his eyes darted back and forth, inspecting the rogues. He looked serious and unwaveringly powerful.

And when he looked at me, his face exuded the spirit of an Alpha.

Chapter 285

Chapter 285: The Last Battle

Nina

As we looked out at the scene in front of the Alpha King's mansion, I could already tell that the new recruits were nervous about what was to come. This was the first time that they would ever experience real combat, and I didn't blame them for being terrified. I was even scared, too. The Luna's genetically engineered rogues patrolled back and forth all around the mansion, their large heads set on a constant swivel as they observed the area. Their glowing yellow eyes, huge stature, and vicious claws and teeth were like the stuff of nightmares.

I looked back at the recruits behind us, and my suspicions were confirmed. Many of them looked absolutely petrified. One girl already had tears streaming down her cheeks, and many of the others looked as though they were about to pass out.

Seeing the terrified looks on our little army's faces, I nudged Enzo with my elbow and nodded my head toward them.

"They're frightened," I whispered. "Maybe we should give them a pep talk."

Enzo looked back at the recruits for a moment, taking in their scared faces, and nodded. He then turned to face them and gestured for them all to gather closer so he could talk to them without being overheard by the rogues.

"I know you guys are all scared," Enzo said, "and I don't blame you. But just remember your training, and remember that the person you're fighting today is going to destroy humanity if we let her. You've all trained hard, and I believe that you can all get through this. Those rogues don't stand a chance against us."

Enzo's words seemed to inspire the recruits a bit. I looked over at him in the darkness and felt myself soften for a moment at his strong Alpha appearance. He was a good leader, and I was happy to have him by my side.

"Alright," Enzo said. "Let's shift."

As we all shifted, I felt myself become filled with both overwhelming power and overwhelming fear. My heart pounded faster than it ever had before, but at the same time the wolf in me felt excited to fight and finally end this all. Once we were all in our wolf forms, we gathered one last time.

Enzo walked up to me in his wolf form. His eyes glowed brightly in the darkness, and as he approached I felt him nuzzle up to me.

"I love you, Nina," his voice echoed in my head.

I felt my heart skip. "I love you, too."

I looked over at Luke then, who offered me a weak smile. Nodding slightly, I bent down for him to climb onto my back. He hesitated for a moment, but finally did it, and I felt his fingers tangle into my fur.

And then... We charged.

The rogues didn't expect us to come. We took them by surprise, charging toward the mansion in a mass of teeth and claws. Right away, Enzo and Matt each slammed into two rogues and went tumbling across the grass, fighting viciously. All around me, the recruits fought tooth and nail with the onslaught of rogues that came at us. Luke shot out what looked like lightning bolts as he sat on my back, which collided with the rogues and sent two or even three of them flying at a time.

I tried to dodge the rogues, but it was nearly impossible with how many there were. The air became filled with the sound of howling and snarling as I dodged and weaved through the fighting, making my

way closer to the mansion. My goal wasn't to fight here; it was to get inside and assassinate the Luna.

But my plan was soon proven to be too difficult to pull off on my own.

A rogue charged at me. I tried to dodge out of the way, but it caught me with its claws on my leg, causing me to cry out in pain as I felt my flesh tear. I snapped at it, managing to sink my teeth into its neck. I shook hard before releasing it and watched it skid across the ground, digging up grass and dirt as it slid away. All the while, Luke managed to hold onto my back tightly. I saw another lightning bolt shoot out from his hands just in time before another rogue attacked me, and the force of the lightning bolt sent the rogue flying back several yards.

I charged forward a little more, dodging around a fight between a rogue and one of the recruits. I heard the sound of painful yelping and felt blood splatter on my face as I passed, although I didn't know whose blood it was and I didn't have time to check.

A moment later, I felt Enzo's presence beside me. He knew what I was trying to do; he cleared a small path for me through the chaos, using his massive size and sharp teeth to throw unsuspecting rogues aside.

"Go," he said. "I'll watch your back."

I nodded and pushed forward. The sky lightened again with more of Luke's lightning bolts. It blinded me, but I kept going. Behind me, I heard Enzo collide with another rogue. I whipped around to see the rogue pinning Enzo to the ground, and I let out a while snarl as I raced back and slammed into the rogue, sending both of us flying. Luke toppled off of my back and skidded against the ground, disappearing into a mob of rogues and recruits. I struggled to my feet and searched frantically for him, finally

spotting his hand poking out from beneath. In one swift move, I shot forward with an unimaginable speed and tried my best to gently pick up his hand between my teeth without puncturing his skin, then dragged him out. Thankfully, he was unscathed and clambered back up onto my back.

“Hurry!” I heard Enzo’s voice say. “There’s an opening!”

I looked up to see that Enzo was right. He had created a perfect opening for me, and ahead I could see the door to the mansion. I shot forward, blinded once more by Luke’s lightning bolts, and sprinted up the stairs.

Once we were up on the landing, Luke climbed off of me. I shifted back and took one last look over the battlefield. My heart caught in my throat as I saw the lawn strewn with the bodies of rogues. A few recruits seemed to be injured, and a few of them weren’t moving as they laid lifelessly on the ground.

“Nina, come on,” Luke said, pulling my attention away. “Let’s go.”

But I couldn’t bring myself to leave them like that. They needed their doctor; I had to protect my classmates, my friends.

My hesitation was going to be my downfall. Before I could make a decision, the door suddenly flung open. The hard wood of the door collided with me and Luke and sent us flying. I slid down the steps and came to a stop at the bottom, my head aching from an impact with the bottom step. Luke fell beside me and stopped moving.

Above me, I heard the sound of pained groaning and whimpering. Footsteps approached. I groaned, pushing myself up onto my hands and knees, and looked up to see my worst nightmare.

While the chaos of the battle ensued around me, the Luna was walking slowly down the steps. And behind her were Lori and Jessica, being suspended in the air by magic with terrified looks on their faces.

Chapter 286

Chapter 286: The Luna’s Ultimatum Nina

As I came to a painful stop at the bottom of the steps, the battle around me continued to rage on. Luke fell beside me, motionless after his tumble down the stairs. I slowly pushed myself up to my hands and knees and looked up to see that the Luna was walking toward me.

And behind her, Lori and Jessica were suspended in the air by magic.

“Let them go!” I growled.

The Luna just laughed. "You and your little friends are putting up quite the fight," she said, her voice low and almost sultry sounding. "It's such a shame that I can end all of their lives with a single snap." She raised her hand and twisted her wrist. The battlefield fell silent. I looked up frantically to see that all of my friends and recruits, and even the rogues, were frozen in time. Behind me, Enzo stood frozen as well. He was still in his wolf form, and was stalking toward the Luna with his teeth bared. Now, the only things moving were his eyes.

"What have you done?" I asked, scrambling to my feet. "Why are you doing this?"

"Don't you know already?" the Luna said, walking further down the steps to come face to face with me. "Do I really need to explain it again?"

I shook my head, trying to stay strong beneath the piercing gaze of her red eyes. "You won't get away with this," I whispered. "Let my friends go, or I'll kill you." I pulled the knife out of my boot that I had been hiding and brandished it, pointing it at the Luna's face. But she just laughed again and swatted it away with an unexpected amount of force, causing it to clatter to the ground. My hand and wrist rang out in searing pain where she had hit me.

"We can make this easy, you know," she whispered. "I have a proposition for you. A proposition to end this all... to save your friends."

"I don't believe you." I took a step back. Suddenly, the Luna's hand shot out and grabbed my wrist. Her grip was like steel, and she gripped me so tightly that my skin burned beneath her touch. I cried out in pain and felt my knees buckle beneath me, but she held me so firmly that I couldn't even fall to the ground.

"Join me," she said. "You're powerful. You're smart. You're everything that your useless sister isn't. If you join forces with me, I promise I won't hurt your friends. The town of Mountainview will be treated like royalty, if that's what you want. Just join me."

In an odd way, I could sense what sounded like a hint of desperation in the Luna's voice. She seemed desperate for my help... Or maybe she was afraid of what I might do to her if I didn't join forces with her.

"No," I snarled.

The Luna sighed. She raised her free hand and snapped, causing Lori and Jessica to squirm and writhe in pain. Neither of them could speak, as some sort of magic was keeping their mouths closed. But I could still hear their groans of pains through their closed lips, and I could see the tears streaking down their faces.

"How do I know you're not lying to me?" I said, gritting my teeth through the pain of the Luna gripping my wrist even more tightly. "How should I trust you?"

“That’s a valid question,” the Luna replied with a bit of a wry chuckle. “But it doesn’t matter. You have two choices: help me end the human race and your friends will live, or don’t help me and they’ll all die. Either way, you’re going to become my puppet. The choice is yours.”

I groaned again from the burning pain of the Luna holding my wrist. “I’d rather die than let you take over the world,” I snarled. “Someone will stop you. You can’t go on like this forever.”

“Really?” the Luna scoffed. “We’ll see about that.”

She finally released her grip on me. I immediately fell to the ground, holding my wrist where a deep red handprint was burned into my flesh. The skin bubbled up around it, still burning. Beads of blood started to fleck on the surface, but I didn’t care. All I saw was the Luna walking back up to Lori and Jessica, and with a flick of her wrist, they writhed in even more agony. Not just them, but everyone. Even the rogues. The battlefield became filled with the sounds of screaming.

I turned to see all of my friends writhing on the ground, screaming bloody murder. Right in front of my eyes, Enzo trembled and groaned with pain. He tried to stand, his eyes still fixed unwaveringly on me, but soon the invisible pain forced him to the ground. Beside me, Luke screamed out mercilessly.

I couldn’t bear it any longer. If I didn’t do something, everyone would die.

“Wait!” I shouted. “Don’t kill them!”

The Luna slowly turned back to face me. There was a sick, twisted smile on her face as the screaming around us continued. “You changed your mind, then?” she said, looking down on me from where she stood on the steps. Her all-white, calm appearance stood in stark contrast against the pain and agony around us. “You’re going to join me?”

I swallowed the lump in my throat and looked around one last time. Luke’s eyes began to bleed beside me, like red tears streaking down his face. Enzo, still in his wolf form, started to cough and gag, sending spurts of blood out onto the muddy ground as he continued to struggle to stand. Even in his pain, his eyes were fixed on mine.

“Don’t do it,” I heard his voice say in my head. “Let me die. I love you, Nina. But don’t do it...”

I stared at him in abject horror. Everything in me was torn in two different directions; let my friends die and still become a puppet to the Luna, or willingly join the Luna so my friends could live — if the Luna even stayed true to her word. As I stared at Enzo, the sounds of the screaming around me filled my ears, filled every part of me. I couldn’t let it go on for any longer.

“Yes,” I said, looking back at the Luna once more. “I’ll join you.”

Suddenly, the screaming and agony around me stopped. Everything fell silent again, and once more everyone around me froze in time.

The Luna held her ghostly pale hand out to me with a dark and twisted grin on her face, her long white hair billowing in the wind while her red eyes flashed with excitement in the moonlight. “You’ve made a good decision, my child,” she said.

I reached out to take her hand.

But suddenly, behind her, I saw movement. Someone wasn’t frozen in time. The Luna had forgotten someone when she cast her spell.

I saw a flash of dark hair and blue eyes. A knife glinted in the moonlight.

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Chapter 287

Nina

The Luna held her ghostly pale hand out to me with the promise of letting my friends and the town of Mountainview survive so long as I agreed to become her puppet. I reached out to take it despite the fact that everything in me was telling me not to do it; but I had to try to save my friends. I couldn’t bear the screaming and agony that surrounded me; I couldn’t live with myself knowing that I hadn’t at least tried.

But suddenly, I saw a flash of someone behind her. Dark hair, blue eyes, the silver glint of a knife in the moonlight. The Luna had forgotten someone when she cast her spell.

I heard the sound of the knife piercing flesh. The Luna shrieked and whipped around, clawing at her back where the knife protruded. She faced Selena, and in one swift movement, she thrust her hand out and made a motion that blasted Selena backward, against the stairs with a thud.

Everything that happened next happened all at once. The Luna ripped the knife out of her back with another shriek. Blood spurted everywhere and she fell to the ground. At the top of the stairs, Lori and Jessica fell, no longer suspended by the Luna’s magic. All around me, my friends started to move again. The rogues writhed in pain, in unison with the Luna as she died in agony at the base of the stairs.

I leaped to my feet.

“Selena!” I shouted. I ran to her; the Luna’s spell had bored a hole into her chest. It would only be a few moments before she bled out, and there was nothing that I could

do. As I fell to my knees beside my twin sister and scooped her up into my arms, I could hear the sound of her chest squelching and a soft whimper escaping her lips.

“N-Nina...” she whimpered. Her trembling hand reached up and touched my face. I held it there with my hand, feeling the sensation of my own hot tears streaking down my face. “I-I...”

“Shh,” I whispered. “It’s okay.”

Selena shook her head. She swallowed hard, and as she did, blood bubbled out of her mouth. It stained her teeth and ran down her chin, and her eyes started to turn glassy. “I’m sorry,” she croaked. “For everything... I’m sorry.”

My vision became clouded with tears. “I’m sorry, Selena,” I replied as a choked sob caught in my throat. “I wish we could have had more time together.”

Selena let out a tight laugh that turned into a cough. “It’s my fault,” she whimpered. “I was such a bitch.”

I shook my head. At that moment, I didn’t care anymore about what Selena had done. She had changed. It was clear to me now that the Luna was dead, now that I saw the clarity on my sister’s face, that she had been under the Luna’s spell. And now, she was free. She had saved all of us by killing the Luna... I wished that I had time to tell her that.

But she was already dead.

As I held my sister, I started to rock back and forth. A sob escaped my lips, then another. My chest heaved as I watched her face relax, and her eyes stared lifelessly up at the full moon. Her hand, which I still held pressed up against my cheek, suddenly became incredibly heavy.

“Nina!” I heard someone shout. I didn’t know who it was; everything sounded so distant, so foggy. I heard footsteps running toward me. Someone grabbed my shoulder and turned me so that I was looking up at them; it was Enzo. His face was full of fear as he looked back and forth frantically between me and my dead twin.

Behind him, the battlefield was still and silent. The rogues were all lifeless, unmoving. The Luna’s white dress was turning red, and her white hair was matted with blood as she lay in the dirt at the bottom of the stairs. I could see the recruits getting up and moving, although I couldn’t tell through my tears how many had survived. Had all of them survived, or only a few?

I felt more hands on me and looked up to see Lori, Jessica, Matt, and Luke crouching over me, circling around me.

Someone tried to pull me away from my sister, and that was when I snapped back to reality.

“No!” I snarled, clutching Selena more tightly. “Don’t touch me! Don’t touch her!”

“Nina, you’re in shock,” Enzo said gently, holding me firmly by both shoulders. “We need to check you. Your sister... The twin bond... Remember?”

I furrowed my brow, feeling confused. The twin bond... My mind felt too foggy to comprehend what Enzo was talking about at first, but finally it began to dawn on me.

The twin bond.

If one dies, then so shall the other.

Was I going to die now that Selena was dead? I didn’t feel any physical pain... I felt fine. But the prophecy said that it would happen. Surely it had to be any minute now.

Enzo hauled me to my feet and began to inspect me, his blood-stained face wrought with worry. I felt limp as he turned me this way and that, like I was just a lifeless doll with bundles of straw stuffed in where my limbs would go, like a scarecrow. Empty inside... Just straw and dirt and muck.

But I wasn’t. I was alive, somehow. I looked back down at my sister as Jessica hunched over her body, checking her vitals.

“Is she alive?” I whispered.

Jessica touched Selena’s neck with her forefinger and middle finger, feeling her pulse. She touched her wrist next and closed her eyes, counting. After a few moments, she looked up at me with horror and slowly shook her head.

I felt even more numb than before. All I could do was turn around and stare wide-eyed at Enzo as tears streamed down my face. He pulled me in tightly, his arms wrapping around me like a blanket. I buried my face in his chest and sobbed.

I was going to die. That was what the prophecy said. One twin could not live without the other... It was what saved me from being assassinated by the Crescents when I was an infant, and it was what was going to kill me now.

At least I could be happy that Selena had saved everyone. Even if I died... I was just happy that it was over. The Luna was dead; her genetically engineered rogue army was dead right along with her. The Crescents were weakened, and my father...

My father had to have been released from the Luna’s spell.

I wanted to talk to him one last time. I wanted to have a chance to meet my father and talk to him, just once, but I didn't know how much time I had left, and I didn't want to leave Enzo's embrace.

But as Enzo held me, I still didn't feel any pain. My heart continued beating, and my lungs continued to draw in air. Slowly, I tilted my head up and met Enzo's gaze. I wasn't dead.

Why wasn't I dead?

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Why wasn't I dying yet?

Selena had died at the Luna's hands. The prophecy foretold that one twin must not live without the other... But I felt fine. Selena was dead, and I was still standing. I looked up at Enzo, who looked back down at me with an equal amount of surprise, confusion, and joy.

Suddenly, I heard a booming voice thundering across the battlefield.

"Where is my daughter?!" a loud, male voice called. I whipped around to see none other than the Alpha King staggering through the doorway of the mansion. He leaned his hand against the doorframe, and as his eyes scanned the scene before him, his face became wrought with worry. His eyes then flickered down to see his dead daughter, Selena, laying on the steps with a gaping hole in her chest.

The Alpha King let out a wild yell and rushed down the steps, falling to his knees beside his daughter. He didn't even care to look in the Luna's direction; he knew what she had done. Now that he had been freed from her spell, there was no doubt that he remembered everything. All of her manipulation, her evil deeds, her murders.

Slowly, the Alpha King then looked up at me and Enzo. His eyes flickered with recognition and he stood, walking over to me. As he did, I felt my heart catch in my throat. Would he blame me for this? Did he even remember me from the last time that I saw him, or did the Luna's spell wipe it out of his memory?

For a long time, we just stared at each other. The air fell silent. Everything else fell away, leaving nothing but the two of us staring into each other's eyes.

"Nina," he whispered. "Is that you? You're alive?"

I slowly nodded my head. All at once, the Alpha King threw his arms around me and pulled me in tightly. "All these years," he said, "I thought that the Crescents had killed you... But you were alive. Yes, I remember now... I remember you coming into my throne room, not long ago..."

"The Luna had you under a spell," I said through my tears. "You didn't recognize me. You didn't recognize anyone."

The Alpha King froze, then slowly looked down at his dead wife. He didn't seem sad in the slightest. In fact, he just seemed free. "Ah, yes," he said, taking a step back. "She did have me under a spell. She had all of us under a spell. And Selena..." He looked over at Selena's body. Luke had begun covering it with his jacket, but looked up when he noticed the Alpha King staring at him, and froze. "My wife did this, didn't she?"

I nodded. No more words would come out, but the Alpha King — my father — knew what I was going to ask.

"You won't die," he said, his voice low and even-toned.

My eyes widened. "But the prophecy..."

"The prophecy is poppycock," he said. "Just before you were taken, your mother put a protection charm on both of you. She knew that the Crescents were going to come; she had seen it in her visions. The prophecy was fabricated to keep you safe."

Suddenly, I felt a massive weight lift off of my chest. And then... Everything began to go dark. My knees buckled beneath me, and the last thing I felt was the feeling of Enzo's arms catching me.

...

I woke up at some point later in a soft bed. The room was dimly lit with a fire crackling in a nearby fireplace. I tried to sit up, but felt a hand on my shoulder pushing me back down.

"It's alright," Enzo said gently. "Just rest."

"What happened?" I croaked through my dry, cracked throat. "Last I remember..."

"You passed out." Enzo reached over to the side table and picked up a glass of water. He held it to my lips and I drank, relishing in the feeling of the cold liquid moistening my sore throat. "The battle took a lot out of you. It's okay, though."

"Where is everyone?" I asked. "Lori, Jessica, Luke, Matt..."

"They went home yesterday," Enzo replied. "To Mountainview, with the recruits and some of your dad's men. The Crescents tried to attack the town, but failed once the Luna's rogues suddenly dropped dead. They retreated."

I sat up suddenly, ignoring Enzo's hand this time. "Y-Yesterday?" I asked. "How long have I been asleep?"

Enzo looked at his watch. "Two days." My eyes widened, but he just chuckled. "It's fine. Your wolf must have put you into a bit of a coma. Everything that happened was just too much for your brain and your body to handle, so your wolf did what was best. You didn't miss much; I promise."

I sat there for a few moments in a state of shock. In the darkness, I saw Enzo stand up from the chair he was sitting in next to the bed and come around to the other side. He climbed onto the bed with me and pulled me close, pressing his lips gently against mine before leaning my head into his chest.

"I'm sorry that I didn't trust your intuition about Selena," he whispered. "She did right by us in the end. You were right when you said that she had changed."

My mind was still foggy, but I remembered holding Selena's dead body. The Luna had bored a hole in her chest just after Selena stabbed her in the back. She died for us, for the whole of humanity. I could never repay her for it. As I thought about her, I felt tears begin to stream down my cheeks. Enzo, seeing this, kissed them away gently and smiled at me.

"Everything is okay now," he said quietly. "You're safe. Everyone is safe."

Enzo's words made me smile a bit, but I knew that they weren't entirely true. The Crescents were still out there. Lewis still hadn't been taken care of yet. Even people who I hadn't thought about for some time, like James, were still out there somewhere with a lust for my blood. But Enzo was right, to a certain degree; the main threat was gone now, and my father had been released from his decade-long spell. With his help, we could take care of the Crescents and restore peace.

A few minutes later, I heard a soft knock on the door. The door cracked open, and I saw my father's head poke in.

"Nina?" he said quietly, smiling when he saw that I was sitting up. I waved him in, and he walked into the room. Now that he wasn't under the Luna's spell, I could see that he was large and muscular, and looked strong and healthy. He no longer looked sick and frail.

"Hi... dad," I whispered. It felt strange to call him dad, but it also felt right. All my life, I had been without him. And now we were reunited, albeit under sad circumstances.

My father smiled and walked over to me. Enzo, who was still sitting on the bed beside me, instinctively tightened his grip on my hand for a moment; I knew that he wasn't actually threatened by my father, but after everything that had happened, he was no doubt wary of everyone. My father, seeing this, took a step back to give us some space.

"When you're feeling well enough, I'd like for us to talk," my father said. "We have a lot to catch up on."

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I planned to talk to my father the next day, when I was feeling better. But for now, it was late and I needed to rest.

Once my father left, Enzo relaxed beside me. He seemed a bit territorial after everything that had happened, and I didn't blame him. But at the same time, it made me wonder if he had been sleeping at all since I went into my miniature coma or if he had been sitting up by my bedside the entire time.

"When was the last time you slept?" I asked, looking deeply into his brown eyes, which came alive with the fire that was flickering in the fireplace.

Enzo shrugged. "Don't worry about it," he said, standing. "You hungry? I can get you something to eat."

I shook my head. "You need to rest, too, you know," I insisted. I pulled the covers back beside me and patted the bed. "Sleep with me."

For a few moments, Enzo just stood there and looked at the bed. I could tell from the dark circles under his eyes that he was indeed tired, but at the same time he was fighting it. "Look," I said gently, "it's over. You don't need to worry anymore."

Enzo shook his head solemnly. "It's never over," he whispered. He was talking about Lewis; I was sure of it. Lewis was still out there, along with the Crescents. Sure, their leader — the Luna, I assumed — had been killed and the genetically engineered rogues that she sent for them died along with her, leaving their forces diminished. But at the same time, until all of them were accounted for and true peace was accomplished, it would always be dangerous.

"We're safe here, though," I whispered. I patted the bed again. Finally, with a sigh, Enzo nodded and sat on the edge of the bed. I watched as he pulled off his boots, then began to lift his shirt off over his head. Before he could do it himself, however, I quickly sat up on my knees behind him and helped him remove it. As I did, I let my hands run along his skin, feeling his muscles. There were still faint scars on

his back from Edward's beatings, and I ran my fingertips over them, feeling all of the bumps and lines. Enzo didn't seem bothered by this, and actually relaxed slightly under my touch.

I leaned forward and began to kiss along Enzo's neck as I reached around and unbuttoned his pants. His breaths became heavy as my lips trailed down his neck and over his shoulder. He stood, letting out a soft sigh, and pulled off his jeans. With a smile, I laid back on the bed and held my arms out for him, spreading my legs. Even though Enzo's face looked drawn and weary, he still managed a slight smile as he climbed onto the bed and laid on top of me, pulling the blankets up over us.

For several minutes, I held him on top of me with his head on my chest as I ran my fingers through his hair. His breathing became slow and steady, and his fingers trailed absentmindedly up and down my thigh, causing shivers to run down my spine.

"I have to ask," I whispered, unable to contain my curiosity, "at the battle, did anyone..."

Enzo knew what I was going to ask: if anyone had died, aside from the Luna and her rogues. Enzo grunted slightly and shook his head, causing me to let out a massive sigh of relief.

"Thankfully, no," he responded. "Quite a few injuries, but they'll all live. Jessica used her medical skills to help people after the battle, at least until they could get home to the infirmary."

His words made me smile. I imagined Jessica running around and helping people; I knew how much she hated blood despite being a pre-med student, and it must have been hard for her, especially after being in the Luna's clutches. The more I thought about it, though, the more that my smile eventually faded. I could only imagine the horrors that the Luna put my friends through when she kidnapped them. I hoped that it wasn't too bad. Lori and Jessica had seemed physically fine when I saw them, but the Luna's style of inflicting torture was through an invisible sort of pain. Maybe the scars that she left couldn't be seen on the outside.

"Don't think too much about it right now," Enzo said, almost as though he read my mind. "Everyone is okay." He looked up at me then and reached up to brush a strand of hair out of my eyes. As he did, I suddenly felt tears beginning to well up; tears over the battle, my sister, my friends, everything... I tried to blink them away quickly, but Enzo saw them.

Without a word, he kissed me gently. His lips were soft and sweet, and eased my pain like medicine. When we finally pulled away, my tears had dissipated and were replaced by pure love and lust.

Neither of us needed to speak. Enzo reached down beneath the covers and pulled aside my panties. Our eyes stayed locked unwaveringly as he spit into his hand and then rubbed it along his shaft beneath the blankets. When he pushed it into me, our eyes stayed locked on each other. A quiet gasp escaped my lips, which Enzo quieted with another deep kiss as he began to move inside of me.

The air in the room became thick with our breaths. I wrapped my arms around him and gently raked my nails across his back, causing him to sigh heavily and shut his eyes. Below the covers, I could feel the sensation of him moving slowly and gently back and forth, his groin rubbing on my clit as I twisted my hips against him.

Both of us stayed as quiet as two mice. We knew that there was a guard posted not far from our door, and this old mansion was dead silent with high, arching ceilings that

would throw our echoes through the walls. The only sounds in our room were the deep and heavy breathing between us, the rustling of the covers, and the crackling of the fire.

“I love you,” Enzo whispered gently into my ear. He nibbled on my earlobe, sending a shiver down my spine that made me arch my back out of pleasure. As I did, he wrapped his arm around me and pulled me closer, then sat up on his knees and brought me with him so that the blankets fell down around us. We sat up together, moving in unison as I bit into his neck to stifle my moans.

That night, our limbs became tangled together as our worries eased. Everything else fell away, leaving nothing but the two of us, finally making love now that everything was over. For the first time ever, I felt as though I could fully relax into Enzo. There was no one else getting between us, no unrequited feelings, no mortal enemies or physical pain. Just us.

And from then on, no matter what the future held, I knew that it would always come back to just us

Chapter 290

Chapter 290: Breakfast With Dad

Nina

The next morning, I finally met with my father for the first time. Not in a state of dire stress or danger, but instead...

Breakfast.

Enzo and I walked into the large dining room together to see a long chestnut table, at one end of which was a stunning array of fragrant breakfast foods, brightly colored fruits, and steaming cups of coffee. My father was sitting at the chair at the end of the table, and stood when we entered. Without a word, he simply held his arms out for me and walked up to me, pulling me in for a tight hug before I could even say anything. I felt a bit tense being hugged by this man who I hardly knew, despite the fact that he was my biological father, and when we pulled away I stammered to come up with something to say.

“I know it’s a lot to process,” my dad said. “Let’s eat instead of trying to figure it all out.” He stepped out of the way and gestured for Enzo and I to sit at the table, and we did. Enzo sat beside me, his hand resting firmly on my thigh underneath the tablecloth.

We ate in silence for a couple of minutes. The food was delicious and warm, and as I ate I realized how starving I was after sleeping for two days. There was an array of warm pancakes and fresh fruit, juicy sausages and crispy bacon, steaming hot potatoes and bitter coffee; I ate all of those things and more, and my stomach still didn’t feel full. I

thought to myself that if I could eat like this forever, I would. And I had lost so much weight lately with everything going on that no one batted an eye at my voracious appetite.

But at the same time, it almost felt wrong to be eating at the moment. My twin sister had just died brutally, and although I hardly knew her and most of our interactions were filled with her evil nature that

was caused by the Luna's manipulation, I still felt oddly empty. She was my twin, after all, and we had a strong magical bond.

"Um..." I set my fork down and swallowed, feeling my face go red. "Selena..."

My father did the same. I could see his hands gripping the edge of the table so tightly that his knuckles were white, and he stared numbly down at his plate. "There will be a funeral," he said, his voice low and strained. "Tomorrow. I hope you'll come."

I nodded. "Of course," I replied.

My father seemed pleased by this, and offered me a weak smile. He looked over at Enzo then, who sat stolidly beside me. "I know that Selena was a lot of trouble," my father said quietly as he leaned back in his chair. "I hope you can understand that the Luna... My wife... Was a practitioner of old magic. She came from a lineage of witches mixed with werewolves, and her powers were unparalleled. I never wanted to marry her. She ruined my family... She was the one who hired the Crescents that killed your mother and stole you, Nina." He looked at me then, and his eyes were full of sadness. "After that, she sank her claws in. For twenty years, your sister and I have been puppets because of her powerful magic."

It all made sense now; the Luna was behind everything. From the beginning, she had a card in the game. I was certain that there was so much more to learn, but right now, I had more pressing questions for my father.

"My mother," I said, "what was she like?"

As I spoke of my mother, my father's eyes lit up. A soft smile spread across his lips, and he tilted his head back slightly to look up at the ceiling. "Her name was Ophelia," he said, his voice sounding almost dreamy. "She looked just like you. You and Selena could have been photocopies of her. Except for you... You got my brown eyes."

My father's words made me smile. Selena's blue eyes belonged to our mother. I was glad to have had the chance to experience those eyes before Selena sacrificed her life.

"Was Selena like her in any other ways?" I asked, to which my father nodded vigorously.

“Oh, yes,” he said with a grin. “The Luna’s magic was strong, but Selena’s true nature came out sometimes. She was sweet and innocent. A little naive at times, but bravely intelligent nonetheless. I wish that you could have had the chance to see more of that side of her...”

I shook my head. “I saw it,” I said. “A few times. I could tell that it was in there somewhere.” As I spoke, I felt Enzo’s hand tighten slightly around my thigh. When I looked over at him, his eyes were soft and understanding. When Selena was alive, after we turned her into a human, he never really believed me when I said that Selena had some good inside of her, and I still didn’t blame him for that. But now, I could tell that he saw the truth: that she was just a little girl who was manipulated by an evil stepmother.

After that, it turned out that my father had a lot of questions. I explained everything to him, everything that he had missed over the past twenty years while he was under the Luna’s spell: the rise of the Crescents, the Luna’s negative effect on the werewolf realm, Selena’s plan to take Enzo from me, and everything else about my life. I told him about my adoptive mother, my brother and his curse, and I told him about my friends and my career. By the end of it all, it had somehow gotten well into the afternoon. I didn’t realize it at the time, but we had been talking for hours upon hours at that table.

Finally, my father stood. His face was grim, but happy nonetheless.

“I’ll let you rest until tomorrow,” he said. “After the funeral, I have some more questions for you; but let’s wait until then to talk more. Unfortunately, I’ve got quite a lot of work to do. Things really pile up when you’re in a daze for twenty years. And, judging from what you told me, it seems as though I’ve got two realms that need to be cleaned up thanks to my second late wife’s shenanigans.”

For the first time during that entire conversation, Enzo suddenly spoke.

“If you need any help, I’d be happy to be of service, sir,” Enzo said.

My father’s eyes widened slightly. He nodded, clapping Enzo on the shoulder. He held Enzo’s shoulder firmly as he looked at him. “All I ask of you, son, is to take good care of my remaining daughter,” my father said, his voice firm. “Devote yourself to her, and make sure that nothing ever happens to her.”

Enzo looked at my father for a moment before nodding affirmatively. They didn’t speak again after that, but it seemed as though they had said all that they needed to; and something about it made me smile.

Before my father left, he suddenly pulled me in for another tight hug. And that time, I hugged him back.