

Pregnant I left him To His First Love

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Even in their current circumstances, with every breath that he takes, his love for Leila grows deeper, his desire stronger but along with it, a firm hatred for Carmela.

She deceived and manipulated him and his pack members into believing she is the phoenix Luna, robbed him of a childhood he could have spent loving Leila and Leila alone, years taken away from him, away from them, a fucking axe that split their love into two, right down the middle.

Carmela's death will be gruesome and he will make sure it's Leila who delivers the final blow, he will serve Leila Carmela's head on a fucking golden platter and it won't be an act of redemption or absolution on his part because nothing can redeem him or absolve him of the guilt of his actions, it will be because Leila deserves her revenge and he will see to it that she gets it.

Trent is already on his way to the noose to hang, he just doesn't know it yet and after him, his daughter will be next.

A few days later, still in terrible pain, Tatum goes to the old house he used to live with Leila in. It has been his tradition since she left. He'd sit and have drinks and a conversation with the huge portrait of her hanging in their bedroom.

The woman in the picture has been his only companion, his solace when the pain and loneliness took over his heart. Even as he put his plan together, most of the ideas belonged to her, he only just refined them.

"I thought you sealed the place up," Kelvin's voice sounds from behind Tatum in the bedroom where he is staring at Leila's picture. A red off shoulder gown, silver purse clutched in her arms, a sweet, innocent yet seductive smile on her lips with a small shoulder shrug. "She's beautiful isn't she?"

"It's her eyes, something about them, fucking sucks you in in like it wants your very soul and all you want to do is yield to her, just give her the fucking world but that's not what I did, is it?" Tatum says again, not hiding the pain in his voice.

Kelvin looks from Tatum to the portrait but leaves Tatum's question as rhetorical.

"Yeah you messed up, big time but I never would have been able to save her from the cell without the help from you, never would have been able to cure her wolf either," Kelvin replies.

Tatum scoffs, his eyes glistening with pain, his heart heavy with anguish, the sadness in his gaze wanton.

It is his duty to protect Leila, to keep her safe, to make sure she is happy and he failed to do that, everything else that he did was just a piss poor excuse to make up for his original failure. He failed her and there is no glory in anything else, none of it matters.

"She's happy with you, I'm glad," Tatum tries to keep his tone curt but his sadness is louder than his voice.

"Maybe she is but you're not glad or you wouldn't have lured her back, I see your footprints in everything."

Tatum sighs defeatedly, his heart full of sadness. He lured her back, yes, he probably shouldn't have but he could not resist anymore, couldn't wait any longer, he gave them five fucking years.

If only they knew how tough it was for him to be away from Leila all those years, he just didn't know Amara was Kelvin's kid, he always thought she was his.

"Do you know what-" Tatum

hesitates, feeling a pang in his heart

and he turns back to stare at the portrait, fighting back the tears.

pushing against his eyes. "net"

you

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know what happened to my child?"

His heart squeezes in pain as he

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asks and his tips quiver, he arches his head up to blink back any tears from falling. He does not get to mourn not when he practically killed his own child with his hands

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The pain in his heart only grows and the agony makes a mess of him as the anguish cuts him up slowly yet surely.

It was never the plan, the plan was for mother and child to leave and when the time was right, if he got a chance, they would return to him. He thought he made everything safe for her, he really did.

If he feels this much pain over his dead child, How would Leila have felt when it happened, how does she feel right now? No wonder she hates him so much, he deserves it, all of it. A flash of shock runs through Kelvin's eyes but it is quickly gone as realisation hits him.

Leila must have stuck to the story of Amara being his child and Tatum believes her.

"I don't think it's my place," Kelvin replies calmly.

Tatum sighs and turns, puts one hand on Kelvin's shoulder and he smiles at him.

"I'm glad it's you she chose, I know you'll look after her, you're a good man."

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Tatum broke the table and drove the broken leg through his chest to stop himself from abusing and taking advantage of her when she was clearly at his mercy, Leila cannot shake that night out of her mind even if it's been three days. She could feel the urge he had, saw the way he struggled to restrain himself, the way he kept asking her to leave. The desire was not only in his wolf's red eyes, she also saw it in his grey orbs.

She is sure for certain now that Tatum knows they are fated mates, she could feel their wolves connecting that night, Tatum should have felt it too, there's no way he didn't.

"Mama," Amara comes into Leila's room, holding one of the dolls from the doll house that Tatum bought her. "Can I go to the playground, please?"

"Listen honey, Mama's too busy right now to take you and you know gran gran can't leave the house," Leila replies with a small smile, lifting and putting Amara on her laps as she fiddles with some files in front of her. "Mama."

"Hmmm."

"But someone else can take me, you and gran gran are not the only adults," Amara says and Leila sighs with a smile.

She totally forgot about Kelvin, she'll see if he's free to take her.

She's about to mindlink Kelvin when Amara says. "I want Uncle Alpha to take me, he promised. Please mama, let him be your friend for today."

Leila gazes at Amara for a fair amount of time and something she hopes is not guilt fills her heart, leaving her wondering if she is doing the right thing keeping her away from her father, hiding her identity.

Is she really doing it to protect Amara or is it because of her hatred for Tatum?

If it is for the latter, then she isn't being fair to her child as much as Tatum deserves not to know that she is his child.

How is Tatum even doing with the wound he must have suffered from impaling himself? He hasn't shown up to the house opposite her in days, he's an Alpha and would have healed by now already but still he did out of restraint and respect for her. It wouldn't be so bad to see how he's faring, would it? Just to know how he's recovering from the injury.

"Alright honey, I'll mindlink him and you can ask him yourself," she smiles at Amara.

"I love you Mama," Amara hugs her.

The mindlink barely connects before Tatum's worried and frantic voice sounds in her ear.

'Leila? Are you alright? Is everything okay?'

'You sound like you want it not to be.'

'I'm sorry, it's just-nevermind. To what do I owe the pleasure?'

Leila doesn't reply immediately, realising where Tatum is. Their old bedroom and he's staring at her portrait, She took that picture a few hours to the first time they made love it was on his birthday, everything was magical, the best night of her life.

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Why the hell is she feeling sentimental? She quickly pushes the feeling away.

'Amara has a request to make,' she mindlinks, facing Amara.

"Go ahead honey."

"Uncle Alpha, will you come with me to the playground? Don't worry, mama has agreed for you to be her friend today," Amara says in a hopeful tone.

'You tell that sweetheart that I'll take her round the world if she wants me to and her mama can come too.'

'You don't even enjoy travelling,' Leila rolls her eyes.

'Leila, you're not the only one who can change,' Tatum replies in a very sad and implicit tone and a loud silence follows.

No.

Leila pushes the thought away from her mind before it can even form. A leopard cannot shed its spot and she will not be its prey again.

"So....did he say yes or no Mama?"

Amara's voice snaps her out of it. "Yes, he'll be here," she replies.

A little while later, the doorbell rings and an excited Amara buzzes to the front door and opens it but it's not Tatum standing outside, it's Carmela.

"I know you," Amara looks up and squints at her. "You're Uncle Alpha's future wife. Did he send you to get me?"

Carmela smiles sweetly at Amara and crouches to meet her height. "You're quite a darling aren't you?"

"Honey! Who's there?" Leila's voice

comes from inside and when Amara turns, Carmela quickly circles her hand over Amara's head before she spits on it and hides her hand behind her as Leila steps out.

"What the hell are you doing here?" Leila snarls at Carmela, putting Amara behind her.

Carmela reaches inside her bag with her other hand and stretches an envelope towards Leila who just glares at it.

"It's my pregnancy test result," Carmela smirks, "he's never going anywhere now."

"Get-out-of my-house," Leila seethes, her eyes narrowed at Carmela.

"Take care of your daughter," Carmela chuckles slightly, "she'll need it she mutters to herself with a sinister smile as she walks to her

car Tatum can only have one heir." en

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"How long has she been like this?" Amanda asks in a worried tone, checking Amara's vitals.

The child is white, pale white and immobile and she has a fever, her temperature is high and heart rate is slow.

Amanda looks up at Leila who is looking down at her child in perpetual sadness, nibbling away at fingers, her eyes red and puffy with dark bags underneath her sleep deprived eyes, fear gyrating back and forth in her heart, worry taking command of her mind, she cannot sleep, she cannot think straight, she cannot do anything.

All she feels is anguish and pain. She should be the one lying down on the bed, Amara should be hale and hearty, she will gladly trade places.

She looks away and she starts to cry again. She just doesn't know what is going on, no one seems to know what is wrong with her daughter, three hospitals and four paediatric specialists and no one can figure out what is wrong.

Four days ago, Amara was hale and hearty. She returned from the playground with Tatum and wouldn't shut up about how much fun they had, Tatum even took her shopping and bought her a cartful of clothes and toys.

Amara insisted that he stayed behind for dinner and when she refused, Amara refused to eat, she went to bed on an empty stomach but the next morning she woke up and has remained like this ever since. Amara couldn't have fallen sick because she did not eat something to bed, right? Or was it when she went out with Tatum? Did she eat something perhaps? Was Tatum watching her at all times? Did he pay her enough attention?

"Katrina is on her way here with Curtis, if this isn't medical, we'll find out, she's my Uncle's pack witch," Kelvin says, his eyes full of sadness and worry.

"She'll be fine Leila," Liana goes to hug Leila and Leila breaks down in her mother's arms.

"I hope so mother, I can't lose her, I can't lose my daughter."

She grips her head with both hands before slowly running her hands down to cover her face and she sobs deeply, her heart throbbing in pain, engulfed with fear.

The last time she felt this amount of

fear and worry was in that prison cell when that blood dripped down, her legs, when she thought she had lost her child but this time the fear is stronger, the thought of losing her daughter comes with such a brutal pain that she is not sure she can bear, that she doesn't want her heart to bear.

Her daughter will be fine, she will not lose her, she cannot lose her.

She will not survive if anything happens to Amara, she will not, her baby is her life, her joy, her comfort through everything.

how sad

No matter how sad she feels, no matter what pain she is in, one look at Amara and everything goes away, she draws hope from her little smile, like a reassurance that everything will always work out in the end as long as she has her.

"I'd like everyone to leave the room," Katrina says as she hurries into the room with Curtis in step.

Leila was expecting a woman but Katrina is a girl that looks barely above fifteen, lanky and short but her eyes are completely dark with no other colour in them.

"I'm not leaving my daughter," Leila says, wiping her eyes and folding her arms.

"We all carry different spirits and energies, I need to deal with hers alone," Katrina replies as she lifts Amara's limp body and places it on the floor as Liana wraps a hand around Leila and they all file out of the room.

Katrina gets to work. She draws a

star with a special black chalk around Amara and places five red candles, one each at each point that the stars connect before she draws the drape close to usher in darkness and she sits at the head of the star with her legs folded into each other.

"Fiat lux," She mutters and immediately, the candles are lit. A strong wind begins to surround the room but the candle flames burn still, unaffected by the wind.

Katrina begins to chant and the louder she gets, the more colour returns to Amara's body but all of a sudden, the candle flames go off, the wind stops and the drapes are thrown open.

"No!" Katrina screams as she is blasted back by a strong invisible force and thrown into the wall, face first.

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The sound of her scream makes them all run into the room just as Katrina struggles to her feet, her forehead torn open and blood covering her face.

"Maledictio," Katrina mutters with fear rapt in her dark eyes as she points at Amara, "tenebris maledictio."

"What is she saying? What is she saying?" Leila asks frantically, hugging Amara on the floor. "What have you done to my daughter? I can barely hear her heartbeat."

Leila lunges from the floor, ready to tear the scared witch to pieces when Kelvin blocks her path.

"I think this is beyond her Leila. What she said was latin, she says it's a curse, a dark curse."

"A curse?" Leila's heart throbs in fear as shock grips her. "Who would curse a child?"

This has to be when she went out with Tatum.

She should never have allowed them to go out together alone, what is wrong with her? What was she thinking? Everyone in this pack hates her, they see her as their enemy and they know Amara is her child.

What if one of them cursed her daughter?

What if it was Carmela?

She did come to visit for no real reason that day.

She will never forgive Tatum if anything happens to her child and she will kill them, all of them, whoever fucking has a hand in this. They tried to take her child away from her before and failed, they will not succeed this time as well. Liana's eyes narrow at her daughter and granddaughter on the floor.

"We have to call your grandmother, she is our best bet if this is a curse."

"No," Leila shakes her head, terror in her eyes, "there has to be another way, father said-"

"Your father is no longer here and we cannot lose your daughter as well. She severed her bond to the pack with magic a long time ago, only the Alpha can invite her back, we need Tatum."

Leila frowns deeply, looking down at her child in her arms and back up at her mother.

There is a reason why her

grandmother is not a member of this pack anymore, a reason why she never met the woman, why her father kept his family away from her, she is a wraith-kon, a blood

daughter, a member of a sect of sorceresses who trade their wolves

in exchange for magic powers.

It is a well kept secret within their family, only a few people are aware of this secret but it is not just bringing her grandmother here to heal Amara that scares Leila, it is what happens after.

Amara has always had dreams since she could dream and in the dream, an old woman with golden eyes like her always comes to her and calls her a daughter of the Kon, the very same sect her grandmother belongs to.

"No mother, we have to find another way. We can get another witch, this Katrina is inexperienced, look at her, she's young, maybe she's not strong enough," Leila counters frantically.

A fear deep inside her wants her to keep her daughter as far away from her grandmother as possible. Blood sisters only get their golden eyes when they attain their powers, usually after getting their wolves and trading it but Amara was born like that.

If her hunch is right that Amara may have been born with certain powers and with her being the daughter of the phoenix Luna, there's no telling what would happen if her grandmother's sect gets their hands on her.

"Listen to me Leila, Amara's life is

more important than anything else right now, your father had his reasons and while they may be justified, it was him being a hypocrite. He is my mate and I love him but it is the truth. Without her, none of us would be here today, what she is, is why this family still exists, we have to get her. You have to request for Tatum to invite her, without the Alpha's permission, she cannot come to this pack."

"When the moon reaches its full in three days and the lone wolf howls no more, your daughter's life force will be taken and she will be reunited with the goddess," Katrina says in an otherworldly voice and when Leila looks at her, the blood that covered her face is gone, her torn forehead completely healed but the fear is still rapt in her dark eyes.

Leila moves the hair covering Amara's eyes and kisses her face as her heart breaks in agony.

She wants to protect her daughter, wants to keep her safe but first she needs her alive.

"I'll go to him," she turns to her mother and replies.

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How could anyone curse a child, a child so sweet and harmless?

Leila questions herself as she gets into her car, her vision blurred in tears, her heart soaked in fear as she drives to Tatum's office.

The first name that comes to her mind is Carmela, she once tried to kill her baby in the womb and she cannot put this beyond her even if she has no proof.

Carmela is as vile and as wicked as they come and goddess help her, if she finds out that Carmela has anything to do with this, she will no longer seek revenge the proper way that she plans to, no, she will rip Carmela's heart out and spit on her fucking dead body.

She doesn't know where Tatum is but she has to find him, he keeps blocking her mindlinks. She pulls up to the packhouse, ignores the people staring at her, breezes past the ones who try to walk up to her to make small talk, skips fucking protocol and procedures to see the Alpha and she goes into Tatum's office but he isn't there, it doesn't even look like he has been here in a while.

In her anger and frustration, she slaps one of the frames with their backs to her on the table off and it flies to the floor, the glass covering breaking on impact.

She sighs defeatedly and bends to pick it up and to her utmost surprise, it is a picture of her but that is not the most shocking thing, it is a picture of her from her birthday party two years ago. She remembers the day very well, she remembers the dress, one of the luxury stores had it delivered to her address as a gift for her patronage even if she had only bought like two items from them and it was a really expensive dress?

Why would Tatum have this picture?

What does it mean?

Has he been keeping tabs on her over the years?

Didn't he want her and her child to die, so why would he have her picture from two years ago, framed and displayed on his office desk?

Curiosity gets the better of her and she stares at the other two frames sitting on the table. She circles over so she can see them and one is a picture of his mother but the other one makes her heart race and her brows furrow in confusion.

This was taken barely six months ago, on a solo hunting trip and—

No way.....

She drops into Tatum's chair, staring at the picture, feeling really confused.

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The stranger who took her this picture, she never saw his face, he had a mask and glasses on, underneath his hoodie but many people dressed like that in the cold but now that she thinks about it, it was Tatum, she can see his physique now, how he only gestured and never spoke and he must have concealed his smell to make her think he was one of the humans on the trip.

She drops the frame on the table, not knowing what to do with or how to feel about her new and sudden revelation.

She still has to find Tatum to get that permission to invite her grandmother, their child is dying.

"Alpha are you-" the door opens and Carmela steps in, sneering the moment she sees Leila, "what are you doing in my fiance's office?"

She wants to taunt Carmela with the pictures of her on Tatum's desk but Amara's life is more important than these petty games.

"I was just leaving," she replies, walking towards the door when Carmela blocks her path and shoves her back.

"That wasn't the answer to my question, you bitch. What the hell are you doing here?"

Leila glares at her, wondering if the sweet funny girl she once used to know is hidden somewhere in this sad and vain woman.

"I don't answer to you, now get out of my way," she shoves Carmela aside.

"How's your little girl?" Carmela asks and Leila halts, just as she is about to turn the doorknob.

Carmela's out of nowhere question heightens her suspicion and she turns with fury as her wolf takes over.

Carmela sees the shift in Leila's eyes from blue to a burning amber with yellow and red flames and she backs away in fear, recognizing those eyes.

It was exactly how they looked when Leila struck her even though Leila was unconscious and she lost her wolf for two years and had to leave and right now those eyes are looking at her with rage.

"Get away from me, get away from me," Carmela protests but it's too late.

Leila grabs Carmela and slams her on the table, sending a sharp pain shooting through Carmela's body before Leila extends her claws and plunges her hands straight into Carmela's chest.

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Leila wraps her other hand around Carmela's throat and squeezes in a tight grasp.

"Do you feel that, my claws grazing your heart, the air being cut from your lungs?" She asks, her voice blended with her wolf's, cold as ice, her aura blazing around her, suffocating and powerful. Carmela nods gently, fear in her eyes as tears stream out of them.

"Good," Leila replies, feeling Carmela's heart pound with fear in her hands. "Remember this feeling, because if I find out you have anything to do with the curse on my child, this is the last feeling you're going to get before I kill you."

"I don't know what you are talking about," Carmela grunts in pain, "I was only asking for her welfare, she's a sweet girl."

Leila plunges her hand deeper, slicing into Carmela's heart and Carmela yells in pain, hot tears flowing down her eyes.

"And if I ever see you anywhere near my house again...I better not see you," Leila snarls, retracting her claws and she pulls her hands out of Carmela's chest, wipes the blood clean on Carmela's cloth, all the while glaring at Carmela who is too stunned to move or fight back. Clearly, she is no match for Leila.

Leila storms out of the office, feeling different emotions hammer at her at the same time.

Anger, sadness, worry, fear, she doesn't know which one of them is causing the discomfort in her chest, which one is twisting her gut, she wants to yell and punch something and at the same time, she just wants to break down and cry.

This is all happening to her because of Tatum, because of that damn man.

Why did their paths ever cross? Why did she ever fall in love with him?

That's right, she knows why, he was the sweetest, kindest, most intelligent boy she had ever met. He looked far wiser and more capable than other boys his age, the sense of responsibility he carried from a young age made him different, attractive. His interests were different. He did not talk about the things other boys his age talked about, did not play their sports or games for entertainment.

When other boys were in the field playing, she would find Tatum reading or training, she was often his companion and would bring him fruits and snacks. He would talk to her about things far beyond both their ages, things that she had no alie about at the time, history, philosophy, economics, fighting tactics and what not.

She looked forward to spending everyday with him because she would always learn something new, do something fun and it was always just the two of them, no one else, he had no friends, he gave her all of his attention and he wasn't shy of it. Her little heart could not understand the excitement she got when she was with him, the goosebumps he gave her when he would say he wants them to be like this, together, forever.

That day when he took her to that

cave where they had promised forever to each other, when he

kissed her and told her he loved her she believed him with her heart and soul, she believed he would choose her over Carmela, over the prophecy, over everything, it made it all worth it all her suffering, the humiliation, the abuse, none of it mattered, just his love, just that she had gotten what she always wanted but then, that day at the cliff.....

She jumps into her car and bursts into tears.

She could not recognize the man who said those words to her, who condemned her and her child to death, she looked for the boy who would talk to her about guns while he braided her hair, who would climb to the apex of trees to get her the ripest fruits because in his words, the only thing she deserved is the best but he wasn't there that day, who she saw was a monster.

A monster she spent the better part of the last five years trying so hard to forget, to let go of her feelings for him and just when she feels finally free, ready to move on, he comes back into her life and once again, she is in turmoil because of him. All these pictures of her, him spying on her, spending time with her when she did not even know, staking himself to stop him from touching her, she hates that it makes her feel there is more to his actions but she cannot allow herself to fall into that trap, not again, never again.

A knock on her car window startles her and she looks up with teary eyes.

"Hello kitten," The mysterious man from that night waves and smiles at her.

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Leila quickly wipes her face with the back of her hands and rolls down her car window.

"Hi," she says sharply, fruitlessly trying to put some cheer on her face, "I never got your name the other day."

"Antonio," he smile widens, "but you can call me whatever you like kitten."

He winks at her.

"Can you not call me that? I don't even know you," Leila's brows furrow as she squints at him, a small frown on her face. "But I do know you little mate," his smile remains plastered.

Leila suddenly feels the involuntary change in her emotions just like last time when she could no longer feel fear.

Her sorrow drowning, the anguish bleeding away, the pain in her heart dissipating and she knows it's not her doing.

Why does that happen in his presence? Is he the one taking away these emotions or does it have something to do with this whole second chance mate theory?

"I'm not going to ask why you are crying but I'm going to get in your car, we're going to go for a drink and we are going to cheer you up," he smirks at her coyly, his voice gentle and smooth, "what do you say?"

"Yes," Leila replies almost immediately, like the words are not her own.

It doesn't make sense to her that she is agreeing to go for a drink with a stranger who saved her one time and claims to be her second chance mate when she should be looking for Tatum to get that approval as soon as possible so her grandmother can come and save Amara's life but she really, really, wants to have a drink with Antonio and she doesn't even know why.

"Thank you," Antonio says to the waiter who brings them their drink before he turns to Leila. "I hate to see this sad look on your face, kitten, what ails you, maybe I can help."

Leila studies him for a moment. He is just too perfect. Handsome, charming, sweet and today, his aura is silent and comforting but she can feel its power.

"My daughter's sick, I don't think you can help unless- You smell like a wolf today," Leila squints, suddenly picking up his scent, "you didn't have any scent the other day, what are you?"

"What am I?" Antonio scoffs with a charming smile. "Well, I am a lot of things, little mate, but what I really want to be is yours."

"I see you're one of those guys with a silver tongue," Leila chuckles. "But I don't even know you, how can I be yours?"

"Then go out on a date with me, a proper one."

"I can't."

Antonio sighs, then pours out their glasses and pushes one to her, holding it up for a chink, Leila watches him carefully, her eyes full of curiosity as she takes her glass and chinks it against his, taking a little sip while he chugs his entire glass and slams it gently, his voice taking a tone of seriousness, going an octave lower before he replies.

"Would you go on a date with me if I found a way to cure your daughter's curse?" Leila's heart races at his words and her eyes widen in surprise.

"Really?" she asks, leaning forward as hope fills her heart and coats the tone of her voice but she suddenly realises something and she recoils, squinting her eyes at Antonio with a suspicious gaze.

"I never mentioned a curse, I said she was sick."

"Ah..." Antonio keeps his mouth agape, his face holding the look of someone caught red handed in a criminal act but it quickly vanishes as he regains himself and smiles calmly at her.

"I did mention I was a lot of things, didn't I?"

He takes Leila's glass in his hand and closes his eyes briefly before pushing it back to her. "Drink it."

Leila looks from the glass to his face and back to the glass, feeling quite uncomfortable and weary, as charming and as sweet as he looks, he is beginning to give her the creeps, in a bad way. "C'mon, take a sip, I won't poison you."

Not breaking her gaze away from him, Leila takes a sip from the glass and then empties the entire glass.

"It's water you turned the gin into water, you have magic," she looks at

the empty glass before her shocked filled eyes land back on him. "How is

that even possible, you have the smell of a wolf."

Antonio places his hand on top of hers, his deep dark eyes staring into her ocean blue ones.

"I'm special, just like you are, so it only makes sense that you give us a chance to be special together, don't you think?"

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Leila is about to reply when she gets a mindlink from Tatum and she looks away from Antonio to the cars driving past the window outside as she hears Tatum's voice. For some reason, she doesn't want Tatum to see her mysterious second chance mate.

'I was told you came by the office, I'm there now.'

'I'll be on my way,' Leila replies and drops the mindlink, turning back to face Antonio but he's gone and in place of him is a note on the table.

[I'll see you soon, kitten. Antonio.]

Leila picks up the note and gazes around but there is absolutely no sign of him and she smiles.

There is something about Antonio that scares and excites her at the same time. She puts his note in her purse and heads to Tatum's office.

The moment Tatum hears Leila coming, he pulls open the drawer on his table, frantically putting away the drugs he just took and tosses the syringes into the trash can, simultaneously increasing the blow rate on his air freshener to hide any smell of medicine that may linger in the air.

He winces in pain as he sits upright, just as Leila steps into his office and he stares at her, in awe of her beauty as always, keeping a calm face on the outside but in truth, every breath he takes feels like a silver dagger being plunged into his heart.

He is yet to fully recover from the incident at the house the other day. The wolfsbane he drank was a rather concentrated one and it has not only slowed down his healing, it has mixed with his bloodstream and now the wound in his chest is beginning to rot.

He has already been to his herbal doctor Alfred who gave him the drugs to take and inject himself with at periodic intervals but it will take a while for him to heal fully.

He spent three days down in that bunker before he had enough strength to crawl out and as he laid there on the floor for those three days, the pain and agony that rocked his body and mind was nothing compared to the pain in his heart. The fear Leila had in her eyes as she went away hurt more than anything the wolfsbane was doing to him.

It's the first time he is seeing her since the incident and he doesn't know what to say to her. How does he apologise without her lighting up like a fuse?

The other day when he took Amara to the playground and for shopping, he wasn't even strong enough to get her, The did most of the work even if he was present and he did not see Leila but getting that mindlink from her warmed his heart more than any other thing could have.

Allowing him to spend time with her child when he did not ask for it is a sign of progress and he will keep hoping that maybe, just maybe, he might get a chance at redemption.

They stare at each other for a few seconds, eyes full of conflicted emotions and hearts pounding in sync. So many words waiting to be said, none uttered.

Tatum clears his throat. "Forgive my manners, tea, coffee or something-" he winces from the sudden pain that hits him in the chest, shifting uncomfortably in his seat, "something strong?"

Leila squints at him, the curiosity clear in her eyes that are fixed on his chest where he stabbed himself.

"I'm fine," she replies, "Actually I came because I need your help, it's an emergency."

Tatum looks away from her, his eyes flashing with sadness. The Leila he once used to know would ask him if he was okay at the slightest show of pain or discomfort but she obviously doesn't care about him anymore and she should not, he doesn't deserve it, no matter how much he wants her to.

"What's the emergency?" He replies, watching her closely, the worried look on her face giving him anxiety.

"I need to invite my grandmother, a wraith-kon and I'll need your permission," Leila replies. "Please. I know what she is and how you may feel about inviting her into your pack but-" "She is family, that is all that matters," he cuts her off. "I'll have Theo approve it and send you the file."

He should ask why she suddenly wants her estranged grandmother to come to the pack but he'll only interfere with her personal life from now on as much as she allows.

He will go at her pace, follow as she leads.

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"Thank you," Leila replies.

She did not expect him to agree so easily. There is a reason wraith-kons don't live within a pack, they are rumoured to bring death and destruction with them, wherever they go. Tatum should be aware of this, he's the first person who told her about wraith-kons even before she found out her grandmother was one but he doesn't seem to care about that. Does she tell him about the curse on Amara?

She doesn't want him anywhere near her anymore, right? But she is still his child and he is an Alpha, he may have connections to someone who might be able to help as well. "Would that be all?" Tatum's curt voice snap her attention back to him.

"Yes," Leila replies, noticing the way his eyes are completely stoic and unreadable and his demeanour is cold.

Why does that bother her?

How long has it been since he found out they were mates? Has it been a while or did he just find out when she returned?

He is getting ready to marry Carmela, he should be talking of rejecting her.

"Well, if that's all, there's a few things I still have to get done today," his cold voice comes again, his eyes shifting away from her.

He's asking her to leave, yes, she should, but why does she feel bad about it, perhaps it's not her but her wolf just expressing its pain at the lack of interest from her mate because normally when Tatum sees her, he always wants to talk about them.

It's not like she enjoys hearing him apologise all the time but- it doesn't even matter. This is what she wanted right? For him to just be the Alpha, staying out of her business and her personal life, not being an ex-well, technically, husband and mate who is trying to get back into her life.

She stands up, glancing at him with an odd emotion but he's not looking at her, his cold eyes are fixed on the portrait of the pack emblem hanging on his wall. She walks painfully slow to the door, turning back to look at him, feeling the yearning of her wolf for its mate and this time she doesn't try to subdue her wolf or send it to the back of her mind, she lets herself feel it, wondering if Tatum's wolf is feeling the same way, even his stoic, nonchalant look.

"Amara is ill, you can drop by later to see her," she finds herself saying before she leaves his office.

Maybe he can help if he learns about the curse, she needs all the help she can get. Amara's life is more important than her anger towards him.

"That would be all Luna, I'll have it delivered express, she will get it tonight." Theo nods.

Leila has resolved that Theo is not going to stop calling her Luna, not until she divorces Tatum anyway but she is quite taken back that he

offered to help her deliver the nex

letter

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to her grandmother on her behalf.

She thought members of the pack all hated her and would be hostile to her but so far since she has returned, everyone seems nice to her or at least they pretend to be, she cannot forget what they did to her.

She bids Theo farewell, about to step back into the house when she sees Kelvin's car pulling up and she waits.

Kelvin steps out from the driver's side and circles over to open the front passenger door and to her utmost surprise, a lady steps out of the vehicle.

She has long dark hair which she

lets down, brown cat eyes, wearing a black leather skirt that hugs her tightly, she is not very curvy but who needs curves with a pretty face like that, a white blouse is tucked into her skirt and red heels on her feet which match her red hot lipstick.

The lady curls her hand around Kelvin's elbow, leaning slightly into him and they walk towards Leila.

"Hi Leila," Kelvin says, "this is Tatiana. Tatiana, Leila."

"Nice to meet you, Tatiana," Leila stretches her hands forward for a handshake but Tatiana slaps her hand away and swarms her in a hug, tight yet tender. "Kelvin has told me so much about you, he says you're like a sister to him."

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"Sister, huh?"

Leila whispers to Kelvin as she ushers them inside.

Kelvin glances at her and the guilt in his eyes tug something in Leila's heart.

Could this Tatiana be the reason Kelvin has been scarce around her for some days now?

Does he like Tatiana? She's the first lady she has seen Kelvin with in a long time and he even brought Tatiana to her house.

"Make yourself comfortable, just want to have a quick chat with Leila," Kelvin sits Tatiana on the couch and gestures for Leila to come with him.

"I know this is going to sound crazy but-"

"You're seeing her?"

Leila cannot stop herself from asking, watching Kelvin's eyes carefully.

"What? No, yes, I mean, look-" Kelvin pauses and heaves a deep sigh. "She has witch blood."

He glances at Tatiana from over the counter before he turns back to Leila and Leila does not miss the admiration in his eyes.

"She's one of the new employees in my firm, we've had a few drinks, nothing serious but today over lunch, I was quite distracted because of what's happened and she asked, long story short, I told her and found out she has witch blood and might be able to help." "And you trust her?"

"Of course I do," Kelvin replies dismissively, patting Leila's shoulders and the next second, he's back to sitting beside Tatiana, like he's restless being away from her. From her open plan kitchen as she makes refreshments for her guests, Leila cannot take her eyes away from Kelvin and Tatiana.

The look in Kelvin's eyes is one that she knows all too well, that soft passionate look and she never thought another woman could make Kelvin smile this much but what bothers her the most is that she doesn't feel that tightness in her chest, there is no rage within her, she doesn't look at it and wants to pull them apart.

She is planning to reject her mate, two mates probably, to be with Kelvin and right now, in front of her, Kelvin has his arms around Tatiana, whispering something to Tatiana with a cheeky smile on his face and Tatiana is blushing and laughing hard but she doesn't feel uneasy about it.

She is not jealous. She should be but she isn't.

Jealousy is one of the ways she first started understanding her feelings for Tatum. After it was announced that Carmela was the phoenix Luna and Tatum became obligated to spend time with Carmela, she would almost want to die when she saw them together. She didn't know what the feeling was until she got older but it was there, it was a sign and it is not here now.

Kelvin catches her staring at them and the smile on his face vanishes and he subtly shifts away from Tatiana.

Guilt immediately grips Leila's heart.

Maybe Kelvin deserves to be happy with someone who is crazy about him and someone he is crazy about, not someone like her who is just trying to see where her feelings could lead to.

If Tatiana is who makes him happy, then he has her blessings.

"Kev, come help me with these drinks," she flicks her fingers at him and Kelvin comes to her, about to grab the tray when she pinches his arm and whispers.

"If you're not seeing her already, you should."

Kelvin looks at her, the guilt still in his eyes. "No Leila, it's not like that, we are just-"

"You'd be a fool to choose old dying feelings for a single mother over something hot and new for a damsel like that," Leila chides him before she smiles calmly and squeezes his arm. "be fine and I'm grateful for everything but you deserve this. More than anyone else in the world, you deserve someone you're crazy about, that's crazy about you too."

"I don't know if she's crazy about me, Leila," Kelvin says in a nervous tone, glancing at Tatiana. "It's just when I'm with her, it's different, I get excited my wolf does too, but

there's no way she's my mate, she's

a witch."

"It's never happened before doesn't mean it can't," Leila nudges him, tapping the tray, "don't keep her waiting too long."

Hours later, Kelvin drops Tatiana off at her house and she watches him with a smile on her lips that slowly morphs into a scowl as he drives away.

She groans in disgust and takes off his jacket that he had given to her, throws it up and it vanishes into thin air before she transforms into a cat and teleports.

The sound of a man grunting and woman moaning fills the room that she teleports into and the moment she turns back into human, she goes on her two knees and bows her head deeply. "My King."

The man turns to face her, withdrawing his cock from the mouth of the woman who was pleasuring him.

"Well, well, well, if it isn't my lost pet. Hello little sister," Antonio smirks sinisterly at her.

