

Chapter 111 Soren Met Derek

I rode in the backseat of my car to the location where Thomas had instructed my driver to take me.

“I’m impressed by your little daredevil.”

“What do you mean?”

“I gotta say, had you not told me to keep a close eye, I would’ve been tricked by her.”

I didn’t respond, waiting for him to continue.

“She was selling on the market, and honestly, her products sold pretty well-”.

“Get to your point.”

“Yes, yes, here’s the thing. Most of her customers stopped to talk to her before they picked up their products, except for one. He grabbed a bag from her and walked away.”

I thought for a moment, and asked, “A bag of money?”

Thomas whistled. “Bingo! Impressive, boss.”

I frowned. Why would Rosalie give him money? “You got the guy? What did he say?”

“His name is Derek. He admitted that he had blackmailed her.”

The driver pulled the car to a stop, and I took a few deep breaths, trying to keep my cool.

Whoever that person was, it wouldn’t do for him to see just how agitated I was, not to start with anyway.

I got out of the car, tugging on my cufflinks as I went. I straightened my tie and had a quick look around.

Thomas had picked a great location for this. We were on the outskirts of town, away from houses, in an old warehouse.

Where no one would hear him scream.

A few of my men walked in front of me, others behind, as we approached a side door. The scent of old cardboard hit my lungs as the door whipped open, one of my men holding it for me. It was dark inside, only a bare bulb hanging over the head of our captive.

He stared up into my eyes, and I could see the fear gleaming back at me from his dark orbs. Our footsteps echoed off the concrete floor as we made our way over to where Thomas and a few others stood around him. He was tied to a folding chair, but his mouth wasn’t bound. The stench of his sweat burned my nostrils and stopped me short of the circle of light that illuminated only him.

His lip was bleeding, and his eye was swollen. Other than that, he looked like he’d gotten off easy. This time.

He’d already lost a hand.

Today, he might lose even more.

I observed him for a moment, letting him squirm a bit, letting the anticipation for who I was and what I wanted build.

When I finally stepped into the light, I saw the recognition on his face. An eyebrow raised slightly, his eyes widened a bit.

You and I have a little matter to discuss. Your name is Derek?” I began, keeping my voice even, my tone calm. It was more frightening that way.

“W-we do?” he asked. |... I don’t think so....”

“Oh, I think we do,” I said, “It seems you sent a little note to a friend of mine. And I don’t like it

when people like you send notes to friends of mine. Especially when those notes aren't very nice.”

His eyes widened as he realized what I was referring to. “I'm sorry. I didn't know-”

“Now, now, Derek,” I held up a finger and wagged it back and forth. “Don't start making excuses. It's best not to start making excuses. It doesn't matter that you didn't know that she was my friend, or you didn't realize I would find out, or any of the other excuses you want to spout off to me. The bottom line is, you f*cked up.”

I stepped over to him then, and I watched him lean back in his chair.

But there was no place for him to go.

“And now... you're going to pay.”

I pulled my fist back and let it fly, twisting my hips so that all of my muscle was thrown into the punch. I connected with his cheekbone and heard his eye socket shatter as I made contact. Derek screamed in pain. Hearing him cry out in anguish was exactly why I'd left the gag out of his mouth.

I wasn't done, though. I was only getting started.

Hauling back again, I hit him with a left hook, followed by a right jab and then another. I hit him several more times, blood flying up and sprinkling my men that were standing nearby. None of them even flinched.

“Please!” Derek cried. “What do you want? I'll do it!”

I stopped. “Good,” I said. “That's what I wanted to hear. Now, I'll ask the questions, and you'll answer them. Got it?”

His only answer was a small whimper. That was enough for me.

“Where are you from?” I asked him, giving him a moment to catch his breath with an easy question.

“Tragoria,” he said, spitting blood.

“Uh huh,” I said. “And how do you know Rosalie?”

“She's... my sister,” he said, looking into my eyes.

That response made me angry in a way I couldn't describe. I bursted out laughing, and lit into him again, punching him squarely in the nose and hearing a crack as the bone splintered. How did he dare to insult her?

“Humor me, she's your sister? You ugly f*ck!”

He shrieked in pain as blood spurted everywhere. “No! Please! Stepsister..!” he continued.

“She's my stepsister!”

I tipped my head to the side and narrowed my eyes at him.

“Your stepsister?” I had to seem skeptical. Only then it would pressure him to tell me everything he knew about Rosalie.

“What kind of a man would choose your mother over Rosalie's mother?” I patted his face, “What the f*ck did your mother do to make Rosalie's father fall for her?”

I cocked my fist.

His eyes grew large as he realized I was going to hit him again. “No! No!,” he said. It was difficult to understand him because his mouth was so swollen. “He.. he remarried because Rosalie's mother died...”

I punched him again. “Go ahead to make up your f*cking lies!”

“No, no, it was true!” he explained as fast as he could. “Her mother died due to a rare disease.”

“Ha, how did you know that?”

“Really, really! They said her hair turned white all of sudden, and she died not long after that....”

I leaned back as I thought over what he was saying. In all of my intelligence collecting about Rosalie, I hadn't heard anything about her mother.

"I have no f*cking idea what you're talking about, you a*shole," I told him. "I think you just made that shot up so I'd stop punching you in the face." | glared at him, but in the back of my mind, I decided I needed to have his statements investigated.

I was done with this jacka*s, and my hand was tired from punching him in the face.

"Listen, you b*stard," I said, stepping forward and grabbing the back of his head. I yanked his head backward, hard. He grimaced and stared up at me. "You told Rosalie you needed money, and you have it now. Get your a*s off of this island. You're going to leave, and she is never, ever going to hear from you again."

I pulled tighter on his hair, and his eyes bulged. "If I ever hear from you again, I can guarantee you, the next person who sees you will be trying to identify your body. You got me, slick?"

"Y-yes, sir," Derek stammered. "I understand."

I let go of his head, snapping his neck forward and held my hand out to Thomas. He handed me a wad of cash, and I shoved the money in the breast pocket of Derek's button-down shirt, which used to be white. I hated giving him any money at all, but if that's how Rosalie wanted this to be handled, then I'd let it be.

I recognized at this point, her wishes were my wishes.

I glared at him one more time before I turned and headed out of the building, snapping my fingers as I went.

My men followed me out. As soon as we stepped outside, I told them, "Take him straight to the port. Put him on a boat. I don't care where it's going. Just make sure it's headed far, far away from here. Buy him a one-way ticket. I never want to see his face again. Make sure all of our men know, if he shows up on our island again, he's dead."

"Yes, sir," they replied, and I noticed that Thomas wasn't there.

"Boss!" As I was wondering, I saw Thomas walk from the other side of the door. "Update regarding the supply vessels."

I could tell from his tone that whatever the update was, the news wasn't going to be good, so I gestured for him to create some distance between us and the rest of the group.

"What is it?" I turned and looked at him.

He said quickly, "Not good. The supply vessels were attacked. We lost a lot of ships. Others had to be rerouted."

I swore under my breath. "Ethan?" I asked him. "Why didn't we hear it until now?"

"They blocked our communication. We just restored it."

It seemed that I'd underestimated my half-brother. He wasn't running from my manhunt; he had used himself as a bait!

"He got away?"

Thomas nodded. "Yes, and

he managed to get to the frontline. We lost a couple of cities."

F*ck!

"How the hell did he get away?" I roared.

"A seaplane," Thomas said.

gritted through my teeth, "From now on, feel free to shoot all unidentified seaplanes out of the f*cking sky!"

"Yes, sir."

I took a deep breath and calmed myself. Things didn't go as well as I hoped, but that was why I

always had a backup plan.

I smirked, "It seems like we need to step up our agenda now."

"Yes, sir," Thomas replied,

Ethan might be lucky this time, but his luck would run out.

As I walked back to my car, I realized that I forgot about something. "Also, send men to Tragoria. See what they can find

Chapter 112 How Rosalie Managed To Get Out?

****Ethan's POV**

My time on the frontline was fruitful. We were able to win several victories and reclaim two

bases that the enemy had taken from us. Leading my warriors into battle was invigorating.

Letting my wolf run, sinking my teeth into the flesh of my enemy feeling the thrill of victory. I had missed all of that.

Now, with the enemy's supplies jeopardized and his troops in disarray, many of them breaking ranks and retreating, I decided it was time to leave the frontline and go take care of some of my other pressing matters.

Returning to the capital without Rosalie was heartbreaking, but I couldn't focus on that at the moment.

When I reached the castle, I stayed focused on the information I needed to tell James.

I didn't let my mind slip back to her- I didn't let my mind return to that night we'd spent in the woods together, locked in each other's arms amidst a thousand fireflies...

Soldiers and guards rushed in dozens of directions as I made my way down the hall toward the war room, knowing that's where I'd find King James and the others who were waiting to hear everything that I'd discovered while I was gone.

I hadn't accomplished the assassination I'd hoped to, but then, I questioned myself, deep down inside, would I really kill Soren?

The information James needed, though, I had that.

"Alpha, welcome back!" Talon said, spying me at the entrance of the castle.

It was good to see my Beta. However, I couldn't even bring myself to smile at him, even though I truly was happy to see him.

The carefree, happy version of myself that I had been learning to embrace while I was with Rosalie had vanished without a trace.

I only nodded in response and continued to walk. "How are things?"

"Other than the recent victories, nothing new. Rogues have been attacking sporadically as of late, but so far, we have been able to manage it."

"What about Romero? What has he been doing?" By now, I knew those from the islands were not real friends, and we had been keeping an eye on them.

"I have had someone following him. It seems he has been more interested in making new friends in the capital than worrying about the war."

That wasn't unexpected. The war hadn't impacted the islands much, so he was less concerned about the war than the rest of the group. However, if he ever wanted to establish power on the mainland, he would need to rely on someone else.

Speaking of the devil, I saw Romero and his Beta, Damian, turn the corner and walk towards us.

"What a pleasure to have you back, Alpha Ethan!" Romero greeted me cheerfully. His Beta, Damian, lowered his head to show his respect.

“Thank you!” I simply nodded. I really had no interest in socializing with the cunning bastard who had enabled Soren’s deeds on the islands. “Excuse me, but the King is waiting for me.” Romero smiled understandably. “Of course, of course, carry on!”

I nodded and walked past them.

Those from the islands were not friends; we were already fully aware now.

However based on Romero’s reaction, I doubt he knew I ever set foot on his island. I wondered whether Soren would tell Romero what happened on Papeno.

If I were Soren, why would I alert Romeo about my failure, knowing Romero would work with the side that had a higher likelihood to win?

I sneered. Romero might think he was smart playing games with both sides, but in reality, he was more likely playing with fire on both sides.

“Talon, from now on, keep an eye on everyone from the islands. Not just Romero.”

“Yes, Alpha!”

We stopped talking as we approached the war room.

Talon sniffed a couple times. “Are you... injured?” he asked, coming up beside me.

He probably smelled the blood on my shirt, or maybe I was limping slightly. It didn’t matter. I only grumbled in response.

“You should go to the infirmary,” he said. I turned and glared at him. Knowing what my reaction would be, he added, “After you’re done speaking to King James, of course.”

“That isn’t necessary.” I turned down his suggestion.

“If you don’t get treatment, the wound could become infected, and you could become sick. You don’t want to be taken out of commission.”

I said nothing, though he had a point.

I pushed through the door of the war room but was surprised it was only James.

James’s eyes focused on my face for a moment before I saw both recognition and relief. He extended his hand, and I crossed the room to shake it. “Welcome back to the capital, Ethan. Great victories, well done.”

I nodded to him as a greeting. I wasn’t really that happy to be back though,

“I’ve been waiting for you.” James looked down at the map he had spread on the table in front of him.

“We figured out it’s Soren,” I got to the point, watching James’s eyes widen as he processed what I was telling him.

“Soren?” he repeated. “I thought he was up north... What do you mean?”

“He’s also in charge of the supplies for Kal’s army on the islands. Everything that goes through there is flowing right through him, James.” I looked straight into his eyes, and a moment of unspoken sentiment passed between us.

He understood the gravity of the situation as much as I did.

“So Soren fights for Kal and goes against his own people?” James said through clenched teeth,

“And we confirmed that Romero is working with both sides.”

I nodded. “Talon will sort out the detailed reports later today-”

James held his hand out to stop me. “Then tell me, Ethan, what can we do to turn the war around?”

“That’s just the thing, James.” Once again, I met my cousin’s eyes. “I need to go back to the frontline.”

James’s brow creased as he pointed out. “You’ve just come back, and I need you here.”

“But I’d rather go back to the frontline again soon. I know that I can lead our kingdom to victory

and end this war once and for all.”

James shook his head. “You’re too valuable to me back here. No one else thinks as strategically as you do, and without you here...”

“With all due respect, James, no one else can lead the troops in the field like I can either.”

After a few seconds, James nodded. “All right... i’ll reconsider it.”

I wanted to argue with him, but I also knew there was no point at the moment. Eventually, I would persuade him to send me back to battle.

We both knew it was the best way for us to win the war and put this behind us once and for all.

The rest of the generals were more than capable of protecting the capital.

However, he frowned soon after he said those words, looking at my side. “Ethan-are you bleeding?”

I glanced down at the most serious of the wounds I had gotten from Soren and from the recent battles. Some of them had reopened. I shrugged. “It’s nothing.”

“It doesn’t look like it’s nothing,” he said to me. “Get back to your room, and I’ll send for the doctor to pay you a visit. This is my order.”

Talon had just said nearly the same thing.

James’s eyes went to Talon before he addressed me again. “I think we can do fine for now without you. If I have questions, I will get the information from you later. The war is heating up, and we will need you in your best condition.”

“Yes, King James,” I managed to say before I turned around and left the room.

I walked down the hallway by myself, but I wished someone was with me so that they could drown out the thoughts in my mind,

The further down the hall I walked the closer I got to all of the places that held memories of Rosalie, images of her beautiful face I didn’t want to recall at this moment. I would get her back, I just needed a little time.

Doing my best to shut those thoughts off, I finally made it to my room. Opening the door, I went inside and immediately thought of her, however, she wasn’t there.

I was alone.

I sat down on my bed but didn’t get comfortable. I knew the doctor would be here soon.

I pulled out a small gift box from my pocket. It was stained with dust and blood.

I got it for Rosalie when I was on the island, but would I get the chance to give it to her?

I wanted to leave again immediately. Whether it was to go to the battlefield or back to the islands, wherever it was, I just didn’t want to stay here. However, I was back to take care of a few things.

A knock on the door signaled that the doctor was there to see me. I hardly paid attention as he came in and checked me over, removing my shirt and the old bandages, cleaning the wounds, sewing me up, and rebandaging me, giving me some advice about resting and that sort of thing. Sitting some medication on the nightstand he said, “You should take some of this before you go to bed. It will help with the pain.”

I nodded, but I knew I wouldn’t take it. Pain helped to keep my mind clear.

Plus, the doctor didn’t have anything in his little black bag to help with the emotional pain I felt. Once I was alone in my room again, I settled into bed, thoughts of Rosalie flooding my mind once more.

As much as I wanted to go back to the islands right away, it wasn’t the right time.

We were getting close. I knew what I needed to do to bring an end to the war, and as soon as the

war was over, nothing could stop me from getting her back.

I would do whatever it took to keep her. I would never, ever let her out of my sight again, and I would never do anything to upset her.

The pain I'd fought so hard to get rid of was back, and it settled over me like a wet blanket, making it hard to breathe. However, I needed to force myself to rest and to get better.

Once I was finally able to get a few hours of sleep, I sorted through the items I needed to accomplish in my mind.

Once I confirmed the prioritization in my clear mind, I mindlinked Talon, 'Talon, come to my room. Just you.'

'Yes, Alpha. Anything in particular I need to be prepared for?' Talon responded immediately.

I hadn't told him anything about Rosalie yet, but now it was time. 'I need to find out how

Rosalie managed to get out of Mirage.

Chapter 113 Beta Damian and the Luna Queen

"Alpha! What do you mean? She managed to escape? Did you really mean that,"

As soon as Talon confirmed that we were alone in my room, he blurted his questions at me.

I realized just how close the rest of the pack members were to Rosalie. Why I didn't listen to them while they talked to me about her in the past was beyond me.

However, Talon was hesitant to ask me the question directly. I knew that he was worried about being too hopeful and getting disappointing news. I could understand that. So I told him, "Yes, she's alive."

He let out the breath he'd been holding and asked me, "Do you mind me sitting down?"

I gestured for him to take the couch as I leaned back in my chair.

After he took his seat, he asked, "She's in the Denali Islands?"

I nodded again, knowing what his next question would be

"So why didn't you bring her back?" he asked, as expected.

I answered bitterly, "Because I f*cked up."

He was quiet. I rarely needed to explain anything or admit my mistakes to him. He was probably not used to my blunt answer.

Talon thought for a moment and asked, "Anything to do with Soren?"

"That b*stard tricked her."

Talon was immediately nervous. "Shall we send men to the island to rescue her then?"

"No, not now." I stopped him. "Believe me, I want to get her back as soon as I possibly can, but she is safe at this moment."

Soren wouldn't let anything happen to her now that he knew he could use her as leverage against me. If anything, he would protect her for as long as I was a threat to him,

Talon seemed a little confused, but I knew my Beta couldn't doubt me if I told him Rosalie was safe. He was concerned, though. "Alpha, are you okay? Did anything happen between you two?"

I shook my head. "That's not important right now. I need to understand how Rosalie was able to fake her death and get away."

That wasn't something I would ever ask her, and even if I did, I doubt she would have ever told me.

Talon's focus switched back to the things I wanted him to concentrate on. "You mean someone here helped her?"

"Help or not, I can't say, but if she was able to get to the islands, she couldn't have done that all

alone.”

Talon took a few seconds to sort through his thoughts and came to the conclusion, “If Rosalie was able to get out, the biggest suspects are Romero and Madalynn.”

I nodded, “Yes, but I don’t think Rosalie would ever accept Romero’s help knowing what he wanted from her. And I don’t think Madalynn has the kind heart to go through all the trouble just to help Rosalie.”

Talon shook his head. “You’re right. I also overheard Madalynn talking to her maid once. She was very certain and happy that Rosalie had died. We just don’t know exactly what role she played in the whole thing.”

I felt my blood boiling when I heard Rosalie’s name and the word “died” in the same sentence. I gritted my teeth. “I need to know exactly what Madalynn did. Also, there’s one more person from the islands we can overlook.”

“Romero’s Beta Damian?”

“Yes. Have you found out more about him since I asked?”

Talon nodded. “Yes. We found Damian has been very active, but I’m not sure how it may be related to Rosalie, at least from the surface.”

“Okay,” I acknowledged. “Go on.”

“He has been friendly with James for one, and two, he is rumored to have…” Talon seemed to be searching for the right terms to describe what he wanted to say, “befriended quite a few maids.”

If Damian simply f*ck around, I knew Talon wouldn’t bring this up to me. He continued, “I interacted with Damian in the past, and I didn’t think he was the type who constantly needed attention from women.”

“Your point?” I asked.

He was a little hesitant. However, that didn’t delay his response too much. “I don’t know whether this is useful information or not, but one of the maids serves the Luna Queen.”

That was something new.

The Luna Queen, James’s mate.

Even though James was my cousin, I hadn’t interacted with the Luna Queen often- not that I interacted with any women often, but she was different.

As far as I remembered, she was a gentle and graceful woman. However, ever since she found out she couldn’t bear a child, she rarely showed herself in public any more. I couldn’t remember the last time I had a conversation with her.

She had no interest in politics, power, or even war. It was as if her heart had died many years ago. I couldn’t think of any reason why Damian would want to approach the Luna Queen.

I frowned. “That doesn’t mean anything.”

Talon agreed. “I’ll keep an eye out. If things change, I’ll let you know.”

I nodded.

Talon focused back on our original conversation. “Regarding the investigation, though, I’ll start with Samuel and Vicky to get a detailed report of exactly what happened that night. They were the first ones to notice Rosalie was gone.”

I had been thinking through that heartbreaking night over and over these few days, and I had some ideas. “No,” I told him.

“Alpha, you already have a clue? Want to share?”

I looked him in the eye, “Start with the guard who reported seeing her at the cliff.”

He pondered for a second and seemingly had come up with his action plan. “Yes, Alpha!”

As he got up to leave the room; I called him back. “Talon, I’m not done yet.”

He was curious. “Anything else?”

“Just now, you only mentioned regrouping with Samuel and Vicky. Where’s Georgia? Did she go back to the pack?”

Talon hesitated and reported, “No, she didn’t go back to the pack like she said she would.”

“What?” I asked with an irritated tone. “You didn’t want to tell me that?”

Alpha, I was planning to let you know once you get some time to rest. There isn’t anything we need to do at this moment.

“Then where did she go?”

“She went to the northern villages with Blake-” Then Talon realized that I had no idea who Blake was, so he explained.

“Blake was one of the villagers from the northern border. By the time we found out she was gone, it was too late for me to send men after her.”

“Beta.” I tried to control myself from roaring at him, “great job watching an eighteen-year-old.” I knew my tone was sarcastic, but it was better I did that than lose my temper.

Talon didn’t argue. I could tell that he was upset with himself too, way more upset than I expected. I rarely saw my Beta act this way, and immediately horrible scenarios came to my mind regarding Georgia.

“What happened to her? Talon!”

He snapped out from his thoughts, and explained, “She is safe! She sent a letter letting us know she was safe.” Taking a deep breath, he released it. He looked at me apologetically. “Sorry, Alpha!”

“Then why the f*ck didn’t you say it the first time?” | spouted, as I watched him clench his fists. I raised a brow. Talon seemed a bit off today. It was rare.

Seeing him this way, my anger dissipated. He had a lot on his plate, backing me up when I needed him most, and honestly no one could’ve done a better job than him.

| softened my tone. “You’ve done your best. If Georgia was able to sneak out without you knowing, she should be able to protect herself.”

Talon was surprised at my comment. I wasn’t sure whether he was surprised by my calm tone towards him or by my comments. towards Georgia.

I pinched the bridge of my nose. I actually could understand Georgia and could put myself in her shoes if needed, just like! could foresee what Soren would do. After all, the three of us were the closest relatives we had left in this world, and some traits we shared were carved in our blood.

Tasked another question, “Did she say why she went there?”

“She mentioned that she went to look for someone, but she didn’t accomplish finding that person. However, she found something else. I believe her initial goal was Soren. She didn’t explain the new information she discovered though. However, I just had a guess.”

“Go ahead,” I nodded.

“A while back, Georgia showed me a book. She tried to tell me that the woman in the book looked like Rosalie. Georgia isn’t the type that easily gives up on something when she has a firm belief, and I’m not aware of any of her other new interests lately. So I wonder whether she found something related to Rosalie.”

Rosalie. the mention of her name made my heart ache, but at the same time, knowing that she was out there, still alive, and I would get her back sooner or later, made any suffering worthy.

Towed her. However, I reminded myself to stay focused.

“Okay, how’s everyone else doing?”

“Overall, well. Vicky has been helping to arrange the displaced citizens and allocate the supplies like before. Estrella arrived back at the pack. Rex is holding up strong back in Drogomor. So far, there’s nothing concerning.”

“Very well. One last thing,” I got up from my seat

“Of course, sir.”

“I don’t care how you do it, I do not want to see Madalynn until our investigation is over.”

He didn’t immediately respond to my request.

“Any problem?” | arched my brow.

My Beta’s brow was furrowed. He asked, “You want to hear my honest opinion?”

I thought for a second and gave him a flat answer. “No, I don’t.”

“Alpha,” Talon’s expression was... priceless. “Ethan, that wasn’t very kind.”

I shrugged, “As you can see, I need to rest and get better.” |

“Okay, then please tell me that I won’t need to hear about the wedding preparations from her any more?”

“Talon,” I stared at him and snarled through my teeth, “Why not? If she wants a wedding, she gets a wedding.”

Chapter 114 Punishing the Stepmother

****Soren’s POV**

Thomas was waiting for me, and I could tell by his expression that he had updates.

I walked into my office with him behind me. “What is it, Thomas?” I asked as I sat down at my desk.

“Two things,” he began. “First of all, Derek’s all taken care of,” he said. “I received word earlier today that he’s reached his final destination.”

I nodded. I expected nothing less from my people. “Good. What else?”

Thomas continued, “Secondly, we have confirmation that Ethan has arrived back in the capital.”
Where Madalynn was.

I could certainly use this to my advantage.

Thomas sat down across from me and said, “I believe there may be some other loose ends we need to tie up, though?”

Knowing exactly what he was talking about, I agreed. It was time for me to address a previous ally, one who needed to make sure he stayed in his lane.

Letting out a sigh of annoyance, I opened a desk drawer and found a piece of stationary, pulling it out and grabbing a fountain pen off of my desk.

“You’re not going to call him on the burner phone?” Thomas asked, clearly surprised by my choice of communication method.

I shook my head. “This is safer. I know everyone who will handle this. No chance of anyone interfering.”

With Thomas keeping his comments to himself, I began to write.

Once I was done, I folded the paper and gave it to Thomas. “You will see that this reaches him? I want to ensure that no one else has the opportunity to read it.”

“Of course, sir,” Thomas said, tucking the envelope into the inside pocket of his jacket.

“So it sounds like you also have a third piece of news?”

“Yes, regarding Miss Rosalie’s mother.”

Thomas’s last report greatly intrigued my interest. “I’m listening.”

“Based on the preliminary report, she might be the last survivor of the...” he leaned over and murmured the last name in my ear.

My eyes widened, and the room was silent for a few moments.

Then I couldn't help but start laughing.

The Moon Goddess was on my side this time.

“Thank you, Thomas. Great news! Let's head back,” I suggested, slamming my hands down on the table in finality before I stood up.

It wasn't a long drive to Rosalie's. The whole way over, I anticipated seeing her face.

She had been very nice to me lately, and even though I was still fearful she might leave, I was also beginning to think that she might be able to see a future with me.

When we arrived, I headed to the door, but Thomas stayed outside with the guards. I knocked and waited, finding myself restless, shifting my weight from one foot to the other.

Rosalie opened the door, her skin slightly flushed, breathing a little hard like she'd been exercising or something.

I was immediately concerned.

“Hi, Ro. Are you okay?” I asked her.

“Yeah, yeah, I'm fine,” she said. “Just moving around is getting harder,” she said, laughing, but it was clear that she was bothered.

I wasn't sure if that was all that it was. Her eyes looked a bit red and puffy, like perhaps she had been crying.

I gently grabbed her arm to stabilize her. “Walk carefully, watch your step.”

“Thank you, Soren,” she grinned at me with appreciation:

Once we got inside, I helped her sit down in her chair and leaned forward to kiss her cheek.

Before she could pull away, I crouched down so our eyes were at the same level, “I have something for you.”

I reached into my pocket and pulled out a golden bracelet with a wolf charm on it.

“Soren,” she wasn't super excited, and I didn't expect her to be, knowing how exhausted she had been lately. “You didn't have to do that...”

I shrugged, I never came over without giving her something. “Can I put it on for you?”

“I am worried that I may lose it,” she shook her head. I was a little disappointed that she turned it down, but I wasn't just going to give up. “Please, I insist. It'll bring me lots of joy.”

She finally nodded and held up her wrist, and I clipped it on. Just being this close to her was distracting. She smelled so lovely, like a garden after a fresh rain shower. That dream I'd had was still in my mind, even all these days later.

Once the bracelet was hooked, I held up her hand and placed a kiss on the back of her hand. Her skin was warm on my lips, and the scent of her had me twitching against my pants.

She looked down at the ground, shyly, and then looked at me through her long eyelashes.

I could see it. I could absolutely see it. She looked like a princess. Even in her pregnant state, in casual clothing, standing here in her living room, she was regal and poised.

She had grace and beauty like no one I'd ever seen. Her eyes were bright and twinkled like starlight. Her hair gleamed even in the faintest light and hung around her shoulders like a robe. She held her shoulders like a statue.

When she sang, it was magical. The notes that floated from her lips touched the listener's soul and moved them like nothing I'd ever heard before.

How could that be anything less than royalty?

I realized I was staring when Rosalie said, “Soren, are you going to sit down, or do you need something? Are you thirsty?”

“Oh, sorry,” I said, shaking my head to clear my thoughts. I left some space between us to try and keep my hands off of her.

“Listen, I have some news,” I began, hoping to ease her mind. If I was right, and she had been crying, perhaps part of the reason she’d been upset had to do with her horrific stepbrother.

“What is it?” she asked, and I saw her entire body tense up.

Before I could respond, we heard a commotion outside.

A woman was shouting in the yard. “Come here, you filthy whore! You b*tch!” Rosalie and I both perked up, our eyes wide as we turned to the window.

“What the!?” I murmured. “Stay here.” I ordered her, my military commander voice taking over, But Rosalie didn’t listen.

As I moved to the front yard to see what in the world was happening, she was with me.

I knew that my guards were outside and that I could protect her if I needed to, but when we walked outside, the guards had their hands around a middle-aged woman who was struggling to get away from them.

“There she is! Murderer! You f*cking b*tch!”

“Isis?” Rosalie gasped, her voice a cold whisper next to me.

“You know this woman?” I asked her.

The woman began to cry as she said, “You caused all of this misery! You made them kill him! My boy! My boy!”

Rosalie was shocked and didn’t respond.

I looked at the woman like the piece of filth I knew her to be, now that I had identified who she was. She was screaming and kicking, cursing the most filthy and horrible words at Rosalie.

Rosalie stood there without a word and I was worried. Was she too terrified?

“Ro, are you okay?” | checked on her, and then scolded Thomas “What are you guys waiting for, get her out of here!”

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The woman screamed, “You whore! You don’t even dare to talk to me?”

She spit as she continued to scream out her filthy cursing, “You’re just a whore! You hide behind your filthy sugar daddy and sucking his,”

“Now!!” I roared.

“Wait a moment.” I heard Rosalie say.

I looked at Rosalie worriedly. Her face was pale and she was biting her lip. She was too quiet and I didn’t want her to get too close to that woman. “Ro, it’s okay. Don’t be afraid, let me handle it.”

Rosalie shook her head and said, “No. Soren. I’m not afraid. I need to speak with her. Please.”

“Wait, she’s dangerous!”

Rosalie replied calmly, “I have you and so many guards around me. There’s no way she would be able to hurt me.”

Seeing how determined she was, I sighed, “Just be careful, okay?”

Rosalie nodded her head and gestured for the guards to let go of Isis, who immediately was charging towards her.

“First of all, if I were you, I wouldn’t do anything reckless now. You wouldn’t be able to get to me before the guards get to you, you know that.” Rosalie’s voice was calm and assertive. “If you want revenge, you need to first make sure you don’t die.”

Isis obviously didn't expect that, but it was effective enough to stop her in her tracks. Rosalie continued, "Now, you said I made them kill him... If what you said is true, I can have them do it to Derek, I can also have them do it to you."

Isis's eyes were filled with terror. Rosalie smiled, "However, I can tell you right now, I didn't, whether you believe it or not.

Isis stared at Rosalie viciously, but Rosalie didn't move her gaze away from Isis. She looked back at Isis calmly and confidently, which seemingly surprised Isis.

Finally, Isis reevaluated her situation, and decided it probably was not in her own interest to continue being aggressive with Rosalie, so she decided to change how she should approach the whole thing.

She looked around, and when she realized who I was, her tears changed course. "I beg your forgiveness, sir, I'm so sorry, Miss Rosalie. Please forgive me," she said, "It's just.. he's gone. Derek is missing and I-"

I frowned and was disgusted by her. However, I didn't say anything, because I was intrigued to see what Rosalie would say this time.

Rosalie looked Isis in the eye. Her voice wasn't loud, but when she spoke, everyone quieted down. "Isis, everyone suffers through the consequences of their own deeds in this life. It's not for me to take your life or Derek's."

I stared at Rosalie in awe. She was amazing, standing there so calmly and confidently speaking to this horrid woman. I'd never seen this side of her. She had always been sweet, but I had forgotten that she was an Alpha's daughter, after all,

"However, I also have no obligation to help you. You and Derek both caused me pain over the years. While I've learned to let go of my past, I haven't forgotten about it. Now, I've told you that I do not know where Derek is, and I must ask you to leave."

Isis didn't move, and I heard Rosalie say firmly, "Leave, now, Isis. I'm no longer afraid of you, and you won't get what you want from me."

Then Rosalie turned around and walked back towards me without looking at Isis any more.

The guards didn't take Isis away, they didn't need to, After a few moments, Isis left the scene on her own. I could see resentment in Isis's eyes, but I also saw shock and fear..

Thad a feeling she would leave Rosalie alone after that.

I followed Rosalie back inside, and I told her, "I'm so proud of you, Rosalie." "Thank you," she said, but she looked a bit apprehensive. "Soren, what did you do to Derek?"

Chapter 115 Madalynn Was Nothing To Him?

Soren smiled innocently, "I was just about to tell you that when Isis interrupted me."

I couldn't force myself to smile this time, and I heard him say, "I wanted to let you know, I found out the issues you had with your stepbrother, and I wanted you to know that you don't have to worry about him anymore. It's taken care of," he smiled. "However, now I figured you probably would've handled it yourself. Very well done just now."

Instead of thanking him, I only stared for a moment before I got a little worried. "You said you handled Derek?"

"Yes, Ro. He's taken care of. You don't ever have to worry about him again," Soren replied. My eyes widened. "What do you mean by 'taken care of...? Did you, did you kill him? That's why Isis came?"

Soren laughed, "No! Of course not. I just made sure he knew to never mess with you again and

then sent him far, far away.”

Although I didn't particularly like Derek, I was relieved that Derek wasn't dead.

“Soren, I appreciate you trying to help me, but you didn't have to do that. The last time someone tried to take care of Derek for me, they just ended up creating this bigger problem for me later on, like with his recent demands you apparently found out about...”

Deep down, I had a bigger question-how did Soren find out about Derek?

“Of course I found out, Ro,” Soren said. “I told you. I am in charge here. But I can assure you, this won't happen again. Derek won't pop up into your life again. When I say I've handled something, I've handled it.” Soren looked into my eyes and raised his eyebrows to emphasize what he was saying to me.

All I could do at this point was to nod and say, “Okay, thank you, Soren,”

However, thinking through what had occurred, I was getting unsettled. There were way more guards than I anticipated-even when I was back at the castle in Mirage, I didn't remember having this many people watching me.

“I didn't realize that there were a lot of guards in the yard.”

He shrugged, trying to make it seem like it was no big deal. “I guess they were following Isis from town.”

I felt they were not protecting me. Instead, they were watching me.

When we finally got back into the house, Soren glanced at the blanket and teddy bear I crotched earlier.

“Wow! It's amazing what you can make!” he replied in his usual, casual tone, watching me.

As much as I wanted to appreciate his comments, I couldn't stop thinking about the things that had happened recently. Ethan and then Derek.

How was I supposed to just act like everything was okay?

“Thanks, Soren,” I whispered with my back turned towards him as I smoothed the fresh blanket out in the crib.

“You have been really quiet lately... is something the matter?” he asked, his footsteps approaching me slowly.

“No.. I'm okay.” I gave him a weak smile and stepped around him and moved towards the dresser to put away a few pieces of clothing that Seraphine had grabbed from town for me.

“It doesn't seem like you're okay. You don't even play the piano anymore.”

“I do,” I commented quickly. “I have just been so tired lately.- the pregnancy.”

I looked towards Soren as he pushed his hands into his pockets and nodded with a small smile.

“Alright. Well, why don't we put the kettle on and take it easy for the rest of the afternoon?”

I nodded. I didn't want to make it seem weird between us, even if I wasn't sure about him constantly being around,

“Of course, that sounds great. I could use a break.”

He stepped closer to me, his hand pressing against the small of my back. “Well, let's go get your feet up, then.”

Moving towards the living room, Soren motioned me towards the sofa. After I took my seat, he pulled the footstool over and lifted my feet upon it.

His movements made me slightly uneasy, but I reminded myself that he was just being kind to me.

However, in the back of my mind, more and more, I knew he wasn't as harmless as he appeared to be.

He had gotten rid of Derek so easily and acted as if it was just another ordinary thing to do. Was it possible that all men of power like him and Ethan could do things like that? Were they all able to just snap their fingers and make people disappear?

Placing my hands on my stomach, I rubbed circles around my kicking unborn babe as I watched Soren move towards the kitchen, grabbing the kettle and filling it up at the sink.

“So, other than working on your projects, what else have you been up to?” he called from the kitchen as his eyes drifted back towards me.

“Nothing really,” I replied as a sigh left my lips.

I couldn’t help but notice that every time Soren came over, he was in such a good mood. The more he came over, the more I felt like I was constantly under his watchful gaze.

“I was thinking...” Soren replied as he walked back towards me with a cup of tea, “perhaps we can go get dinner one night.”

“Um, okay,” I replied hesitantly.

“You don’t seem to be sure about going. Are you sure you’re okay?” Soren asked again.

“Yeah, no. dinner sounds amazing. I’m sorry. I’m just so out of it today,” I covered, trying to get out of the depressed mood I was in.

Soren nodded slowly before taking a seat across from me and giving me a sad smile.

“I found something out today that I want to tell you, but I don’t want to upset you,” he whispered, giving me a small smile that made me wonder what had happened.

“Did something bad happen?”

Shaking his head, he scoffed, “No, no, sweetie. Not exactly.”

The affectionate word he called me caught me off guard, but my interest in what was wrong took precedence over the moment. “May I know?”

He adjusted the way he was sitting and clasped his hands together.

“I got word today that Ethan had gone back to the capital, and he and Madalynn are pushing forward with their wedding...”

A rush of emotions flooded me with Soren’s words.

Ethan had told me that Madalynn was nothing to him, and that he wouldn’t marry her. That he loved me and wanted a life with me and our baby

“He said he wasn’t going to though,” I mumbled, trying to wrap my head around what he was saying. “When is it supposed to happen?”

“Rosalie,” he said softly, don’t do that to yourself.”

Closing my eyes, I took a deep breath, trying to understand why I had believed Ethan before. My heart broke all over again as I tried to grasp the fact that everything Ethan had said before were lies.

He just left.

Left to marry Madalynn as if I wasn’t a second thought in his mind.

“When are they getting married?” I asked again as I looked up at Soren with tear-filled eyes.

“It’s okay. Just tell me.”

“I’m not sure the exact date, but I heard it would be soon,” he said softly. “I’m so sorry, Rosalie.”

Soon.. he didn’t even want to wait until the end of the war.

“Soren, you don’t need to apologize,” I said calmly trying to remain passive as I blinked back my tears.

“Rosalie, don’t let him get to you. He isn’t worth it,” Soren replied, trying to reassure me and make me feel better.

“You’re right,” I said flatly as I stood to my feet. “He isn’t worth it.”

I tried to reassure myself that what I was saying was true. I wanted to believe he wasn’t worth it, but yet, I found myself having to fight hard to not let my tears drop.

“Shall we find something else to do?” Soren asked, as he stood and met me at eye level. His hands caressed my shoulders as he tried to comfort me.

I shook my head and forced a smile upon my lips. “I appreciate it, Soren, I think I just want to take a nap. I’m exhausted.”

Soren paused, and he gently lifted up my chin. “I don’t like to see you like this.”

“I know, sorry.– but I just need a little time,” I replied, trying to show him I would be okay.

“Okay, pretty. You take all the time you need. Stressing isn’t good for you or the baby.”

Leaning in, he gently kissed my cheek. He brushed his hand against my hair, pushing it behind my ear.

“Soren, could you please do me a favor?”

“Anything for you, pretty. What is it?” he replied without hesitation.

“Going forward, I don’t want to hear anything about Ethan, could you please do that for me?”

He didn’t seem to be too surprised. He simply nodded and gently squeezed my hand.

“Thank you, Soren.”

“There is no need to thank me, Rosalie. I will always be here for you and the baby. No matter what, you will never be alone.”

Inodded in acknowledgement and rushed back to my bedroom and closed the door.

When I was finally alone, the emotional waterfall almost burst through the dam I had held together. However, I told myself not to cry.

He wasn’t worth it.

I told myself that I was emotional because I was angry at myself.

How could I be so foolish in thinking that things had changed with Ethan? Why did I allow myself to fall into his trap once more?

I loved him more than I had ever loved anyone, and yet, I was never good enough. He only took advantage of my love, lied to me. used me.

At the end of the day, I had become nothing more than a passing memory to him.

However, I was the one who fell for it all willingly.

If there was anyone to blame, it was me.

Never again would I allow anyone to hurt me like that.

I needed to be strong for myself and for my baby.

I couldn’t control what Ethan would do, but I could control my own actions.

Chapter 116: Wedding Day Confirmation

****Madalynn’s POV**

Who did Talon think he was, anyway?

He was a Beta-not a Luna! He couldn’t tell me when I could see my fiance!

I rushed over to my father’s suite, determined not to let what happened yesterday happen again today. Talon hadn’t let me see Ethan when I’d wanted to speak to him yesterday, but he wasn’t going to stop me now.

Not if I could help it, anyway.

As I turned the corner near my father’s room in a rush, I ran into someone. She gasped, and almost lost her balance.

It was unbelievable how those b*tches could be so clumsy. I scolded her, “Do you not know how to walk?!”

She looked at me, wide-eyed, like a doe, staring into a bright light. Then I recognized her- the awful maid who used to serve Rosalie. Her name. whatever that was.

Rosalie

that d*mn Rosalie! If it wasn't for her, Ethan would've already been mine! And this b*tch served her!

“What the h*ll do you think you're looking at, b*tch?”

“N-nothing,” she stammered, dropping her gaze.

Snapping my fingers at my guards, I insisted, “Bring her.”

“No, please!” she screeched, but they had her in their grasps and dragged her harshly the last few steps to my father's room.

We burst through the door. He wasn't in the sitting area, which was just as well. It would give me a few moments alone with this wh*re before I went to talk to him.

“Please, Miss Mad-” she began, but my open palm connected with her pale cheek before she could get the words out.

The slap left her face red, her head snapping to the side as tears rolled from her eyes. She didn't fall, though, because my men were holding her.

I liked the sound of a good slap, skin on skin. “Shut up, b*tch,” I told her as I let loose again. “I know who you are. I know where your loyalty lies.” I hit her again. This time, I used my fist and made her pretty pink mouth a shade of crimson.

She whimpered, but it was hard to hear her over my guards' laughter. I hit her a few more times before I grabbed the top of her hair and yanked her down to her knees twisting her neck so she was forced to look up at me. “Listen, b*tch, if you don't want to become my permanent punching bag, no one hears about this, got it?”

“Y-yes, Miss Madalynn,” she said, coughing blood.

“Luna Madalynn,” I corrected her.

“L-luna,” she managed.

I laughed again and then shoved my knuckles up into her chin before I heard my father's office door open. “Madalynn, what are you doing?” he asked. “Let her be.”

Sighing, I let her go and waved my hand so the guards would take her away. My father walked back into his office, and I took a moment to recompose myself. I'd had my fun, but now I needed to get my thoughts back together.

All of this waiting around was really starting to get to me. I didn't know how much longer I could wait for Ethan to finally make me his Luna. The longer he waited, the more likely that he might change his mind.

I couldn't let that happen.

Now that he was back in the capital, I knew I needed to do something. I decided it was time to take matters into my own hands

But I likely couldn't do it on my own. I needed an ally. Someone I could trust.

Without knocking, I pushed my way into my father's office. He had returned to his desk and was working on some boring paperwork. I let out a loud sigh, attempting to get him to look up, but he just sat there like he didn't hear me.

So I did it again. This time, he grunted and looked up, setting his pen aside and looking at me like I was interrupting something important. “What is it now, Madalynn?”

“I want to marry Ethan, Father. And I want to marry him now.” I folded my arms and looked

down at the floor between my heels. I couldn't help but pout a bit. I thought that, by now, I'd be the Luna, his Luna, standing proudly next to him, and calling the most gorgeous man my mate. "You need to be patient, Madalynn," my father said. "You have to give Ethan a chance to get back into the routine of being here. He's only just returned from his time at the front."

"But what if he leaves again, and I haven't even gotten a chance to have the wedding?" I turned around and headed to the balcony that overlooked a garden. It was a nice day, but I couldn't even enjoy it. Every day may as well be cloudy and overcast without Ethan following through with his promise to make me his wife.

The screech of my father's chair across the floor told me he was abandoning his precious paperwork and coming to his little girl in my time of need. At least someone cared about me. I felt his heavy hand on my arm and turned to look at me. "He'll go through with it, Madalynn. He has to. King James has given him the order to."

I knew my father's words were meant to comfort me, but they didn't. "It would be nice if he wanted to. He hasn't even come to see me since he's returned."

Father patted my arm a few times and then withdrew his hand, leaning on the railing next to me.

"Listen, you must understand. He was under the impression that he would be the heir to the throne. He was so proud, thinking he would be the next king. Now, you, and we, mean a lot more to him if he were to maintain his influence in the Eastern kingdom... If you're so worked up about having the wedding moved up, why don't you go speak to Ethan about it? Perhaps he will agree to have it earlier, before he goes back out to the field."

I raised an eyebrow as I listened to my father's words. Imagining Ethan agreeing to that made my heart flutter, but then, I visualized the opposite. Shaking my head, I told my father. "I don't think I want to do that, Father. A cold, hard refusal from Ethan would be devastating, and I've had enough disappointment to last me a lifetime recently."

My father took a deep breath and looked away, and I got the impression there was something he wasn't telling me, something important.

"The situation is fluid, Madalynn. It continues to change. I think you may be surprised at what Ethan has to say. The only way to know for sure is to find out. Just go speak to him. Be demure. Perhaps he will agree."

"Demure?" I repeated. "Are you implying that I'm not always demure?" My eyes widened at the slight insult.

My father chuckled under his breath. "Good luck to you, Madalynn. Let me know how it goes." He turned and walked back to his desk.

"Now?" I asked. "Do you mean for me to go now?"

"Why not?" my father asked. "I believe he's in his room at the moment. They are taking a break from meetings about the war... Just be sure to knock this time." growled at him, and he laughed again.

With a deep breath, I headed out the door, wondering if I could seriously ask Ethan such a thing.

"Demure," I said to myself. "Of course, I'll be demure..."

It took several minutes for me to arrive at Ethan's door since our rooms were nowhere near his, something that had always irritated me since we had arrived at the capital.

D*mn it! That f*cking Talon was just exiting Ethan's door and glanced at my direction.

I just didn't have the time to argue with him, so I retreated back to hide around a corner.

Hopefully, he didn't see me.

After a couple minutes, I peeked out and was pleased that Talon was no longer there guarding Ethan's door.

Finally, I got to Ethan's room and knocked on the door.

"Yes?" Ethan called from within, and even the sound of his voice had me giddy inside.

He was an extremely attractive man, after all, besides all the other benefits of marrying him.

I poked my head in first, remembering my father's advice. "Hello, Ethan," I said, smiling sweetly at him. "I hope I'm not disturbing you. May I come in?"

He stared at me for a moment, his dark eyebrows crinkled. "Yes."

I smiled and walked into the room, noting that he was alive. He was sitting on a couch in the living room area, putting on his shoes. When he bent forward, he cringed a little, like it hurt.

"Were you injured in battle?" I asked him. "I hadn't heard."

"I'm fine." He finished with his shoes and looked at me. "What is it, Madalynn?"

"Oh, well, I'm sorry to disturb you. I know you're very busy since you've returned. I just wanted to see you. I've missed you so much."

"Okay." He looked at me with those heavy eyes-and that's all he said.

What did he mean by okay?! Not, "I missed you, too." Not, "Come here and let me hold you, my fiancée." Not, "I thought about you every day while I was gone." A simple, "Okay."?!

But then. I knew he was a man of few words, and I tried to keep that in the forefront of my mind as I continued.

you

"Well, then..." I said, pressing on, "I assume that you'll want to return to the front soon, and since that's the case, perhaps and I should go ahead and get married while you're here. Right away. Without waiting."

I froze, my hands on the back of the chair across from where he was sitting, holding my breath, praying to the Moon Goddess that she'd make him say yes.

Ethan stared at me, his expression unreadable. I thought I saw a flicker of something in his eyes, but I couldn't tell what it was-a mix of passion and... anger?

Surely not... And then, he said, "All right then."

It was my turn to stare at him. "What's that now?" I asked, thinking there was no way that I had heard him correctly.

He stood and tucked his shirt in, and I realized he was getting ready to leave the room. "I said fine, Madalynn. How many days do you need? Two? Will that be enough?"

"Y-yes," I stammered. He'd said yes?

He'd said yes!

He had his back to me now as he gathered up the items he needed off of the coffee table, but as he stood, I couldn't help but launch myself at him.

"Oh, thank you, Ethan!" I said as he grunted from the contact. I had forgotten he'd been injured.

"Sorry." I backed off, but I still had my hand on him. "I am just so excited!"

"All right, Madalynn. Just go get busy planning." He took a few steps away from me, acting cold and aloof-like usual. Not the way a man who was about to marry someone should act.

But then, this was an arranged marriage.

"Yes, I will," I said. He could learn to love me later. Still, I stood there, staring at him. He was so handsome. And he was going to be my husband soon. I couldn't help but smile. My plan had actually worked.

"Go, Madalynn... before I change my mind."

"Right!" I said, turning to go. "We'll have the most beautiful wedding anyone has ever seen!" I gushed, I had lots of work ahead of me.

He didn't respond, which shouldn't have surprised me.

My husband-to-be was a man of few words.

It didn't matter. I was about to be the Luna of Drogomor pack.

I was rushing so quickly back to my father's room to give him the good news, I rounded a corner too quickly and ran into a maid coming toward me with a stack of towels. She fell to the ground hard, and the towels went flying.

What the f*ck was wrong with all the maids keep getting in my way?!

"Watch where you're going!" I shouted at her as she lay there on the ground, grimacing. I stepped over her and kept going. I had important news to share with my father.

I flew through my father's office door again, and he groaned at me, looking up from his desk again. "Didn't I tell you to knock?" he asked.

I ignored him. He didn't say I had to knock on his door. Clapping my hands together, I declared, "He said yes!"

My father's eyes widened, and he stood, dropping everything he'd held in his hands. "He did?"

"Yes!"

"Alpha Ethan?"

"Yes!"

"Said you could move the wedding up?"

"Yes!" Why was he doubting me so immensely?

He came around the desk and wrapped his arms around me. "Well done, Madalynn. Well done!" Damian appeared at the door, and my father patted me on the back as he squeezed me. "All right, now you must get the planning started. Carry on."

"Yes, I do."

As I left the room, I heard my father talking, "Damian, Ethan agreed to get married sooner, so I guess those rumors about the queen must be true..."

I frowned. What rumors?

However, I only had two days, so I for now, filed that information about the queen in the back of my mind.

I had a lot to get done and not a lot of time to do it.

This was going to be a wedding no one would ever forget.

Chapter 127: Bad News Times Two

**Soren's POV

The war was not exactly going as planned, and it was starting to p*ss me off. It seemed like Ethan was a ghost like he was somehow everywhere and nowhere all at once. Whenever I turned around, he was there, attacking. Yet, somehow, he was also behind me.

It was getting really f*cking annoying.

So... I had gone to the front myself. With Ethan cutting off our supplies, I knew we wouldn't be able to hold him off for long. However, I just needed to distract him a bit longer.

I cursed under my breath. D*mn it, Damian, you'd better be quick!

Sitting in my makeshift headquarters, an older home we'd confiscated in one of the villages we'd been holding for a while, I looked at the information that had been brought to me and tried to come up with something. Even my most intelligent commanders were at a loss, and my eyes were beginning to cross from staring at the data for so long.

"F*ck Ethan!" I mumbled to myself.

A knock at the door had me turning around as Thomas came in.

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“What is it?” I asked him, not wanting another update about how Ethan and his ghost brigade had managed to take another shipment of supplies before they reached our troops.

Thomas had a look on his face that told me that whatever it was he was about to tell me, it wasn't good. In fact, his wrinkled brow and the way his mouth was drawn down at the corners told me it was perhaps the most grave of all of the reports I'd gotten so far.

“Just tell me, Thomas,” I implored him, trying to keep my composure.

“I have two pieces of information to tell you, sir, and neither of them are good,” he said.

“Then you may as well just spit them out,” I replied.

He cleared his throat. “I've just received word from Commander Edgar that we need to move. It's no longer safe for us to be here as the line is beginning to buckle. If you stay here much longer, you're likely to be taken prisoner.”

I stared at him a moment before I said, “I can fight, you know? I'm fully capable.”

He nodded, “Of course, I know that, så. All of us are capable. It's only... the enemy forces far outnumber our own, and many of our warriors have already retreated to a point south of here, abandoning this position.”

I squeezed the bridge of my nose for a long moment, cursing every single one of those cowards before I said, “Fine. We'll make preparations to move somewhere else. For now. Until we can figure out how to take this position back and hold it. What else?”

Thomas stared at me unspeaking, and it was confusing to me.

You did say you had two things to tell me, did you not?”

“Yes, I did,” he finally said, dropping his eyes to the ground before he lifted them slightly. “I received a phone call from Lola earlier.”

“A phone call?” I repeated. “I thought we weren't calling because of the lines of communication being compromised.

“That's right, sir, but under the circumstances, she thought it best, and we had a code word anyway for this situation. We hoped it wouldn't ever need to be used.”

I felt the blood running out of my face as I tried to figure out what he might be referring to. I swallowed hard, not wanting to hear what he was about to say, though I already knew what it probably was Lola had called to tell him.

Really, wasn't there only one thing the mald that worked in both my home and Rosalie's could be calling to say?”

Wh-what was she telling you, Thomas?” I asked him, trying to keep my lips from trembling.

“She wanted to let me know that Rosalie... is gone, sir.”

The words didn't surprise me, but I needed a moment to digest them, to let them settle around me, before I could respond to them

It didn't seem like it could be true. Why would Rosalie leave? Especially now? Since she'd had the baby, she seemed so happy, and she wouldn't want to put the baby in harm's way, would she?

“She left?” I asked him, and Thomas nodded in confirmation

I took a deep breath and considered the situation.

“Well... she has to be on the island somewhere,” I reasoned. “After all, I know everyone who comes and goes from the island. Have the guards-”

Thomas was shaking his head. “That's been done, sir, and a report of two women leaving the island in a small boat early in the day a couple of mornings ago was taken. Additionally one of our war vessels spotted a boat in the water around the same time but thought it was just a local

fisherman that fishes around there. No one thought that it was Rosalie.”

“So they just let her go?” Anger began to burn inside of my veins as I imagined finding those witnesses and banging their heads together until they exploded like coconuts, spewing their contents all over the beach.

Thomas didn’t answer my question directly. He concluded from his analysis, “Sir. Now, we’re not sure where she might be, but we believe she’s likely made her way to the mainland and could be headed back to her father’s house,” Thomas surmised.

“No,” I said quickly. “Rosalie most definitely wouldn’t be going to her father’s house. But... did you say two women?”

Thomas nodded. “That’s right. Seraphine is with her.”

“Seraphine?” My eyes widened. “So... the midwife has betrayed me, huh?” That explained a lot. In fact, that explained everything. I got up from the chair I’d been sitting in and walked to the nearby window.

In the distance, I could hear howls and growls and remembered what Thomas had said about us needing to leave.

I would-but not just yet.

“That’s the only explanation. D*mn it!” I said, ramming my fist into the windowsill.

“Boss,” Thomas asked. “What do you mean?”

“I mean..Seraphine must have known the truth about Rosalie. I don’t know how, but she did.”

Seraphine must have told Rosalie everything as well. She must’ve told her everything that I did, all of the lies that I told. However, she didn’t know... she didn’t know that I wanted to make up for all of the wrong things I’d done to Rosalie in the past,

She didn’t know the truth, that I really would protect Rosalie care for her and her baby... love her,

“Do you know where she would’ve taken her?” Thomas asked me.

“Show me the map and their route.”

It only took a moment for me to understand their plan. They were heading to the eastern mainland for sure, however, most of the country was at war. Knowing Rosalie and Seraphine, there would be no way they’d go to places where Ethan could find them easily...

“Yes, of course,” I told him, spinning around to look at him. I couldn’t help the excitement building in my voice. “Thomas, get ready!”

I imagined the possibility of a happy reunion between myself and Rosalie in the near future. I’d find her and explain myself to her, and she’d believe me and forgive me for everything.

Rosalie, the baby, and I would be together forever after all.

“Excuse me, what would you like to do?” Thomas asked for confirmation, not looking quite as enthusiastic as I was feeling

“We’ll go after her, of course,” I told him. “We’ll find her, and when we do, we’ll take her back to the islands where she’ll be safe. She’s in danger out here.” Even if I sent out a directive to all of my warriors not to hurt a woman and her baby, there were rogues and all kinds of other heathens and dangerous characters out there.

I couldn’t guarantee Rosalie’s safety out here, and I needed to make sure that I found her as quickly as possible to make sure that she wasn’t harmed.

“Why are we doing that, exactly, sir? What about Commander Edgar?” Thomas asked.

“Edgar can handle this by himself. Damian should have news for us very soon. Just because a few of us are not here won’t really change anything.”

Thomas continued to reason with me and himself, “That is... are we going after her because

you... need her... for the war effort?"

I looked into Thomas's eyes and could see that he was concerned about my motivation.

I nodded. "Of course," I told him. "Yes. We need her and the baby back. It's Ethan's child, and we need the baby because he's collateral. And the mother comes along with the child. That's the only reason."

Thomas only stared at me for a long moment, like he didn't quite believe me,

I told myself that my reasoning was well-founded, that I needed to stay focused on that. Having Rowan would make my efforts to win the war all the more successful."

It didn't matter that I was in love with Rosalie.

I needed Ethan's heir-the kingdom's heir-and his mother was just... an extension of him.

"Come on, Thomas," I said as the howls in the distance grew even closer. "We need to get moving before the war is right on top of us."

"Right," he said. "I believe I was the one who mentioned that, sir."

"Yes, yes, I know," I told him. "Have all of this packed up and moved." I waved at the contents of my office.

Thomas signaled for servants to come in, and I prepared to move out.

"Where are we going?" Thomas called after me, and I didn't hesitate to reply to his question with only one word.

"North."

Chapter 128: Do Not Go North

****Ethan's POV**

My wolf ran over the uneven ground, dodging between the trees and ducking beneath branches lined with thorns longer than my thumb in pursuit of the last of the enemy's warriors. Our forces had gotten them on their heels, and we were determined to keep them running until we pushed them back completely.

If they kept retreating so quickly, at this rate, the war would be over soon.

I had the taste of dirt and blood in my mouth, along with matted fur and torn muscle, but I didn't care. I would run all night until I caught another one of these b*stards, and then, I would fill my mouth again, clamping down and ripping until my opponent no longer struggled.

If that was the only way to ensure the opposition withdrew and never returned, then so be it.

In my mind, I heard the voice of one of my commanders saying, They've been routed, Alpha, we've got them pushed back. They're in full retreat now!

Keep running!' I told him and all of my warriors. 'Don't give up now. We've got them on the retreat, and I'm not about to let up the crushing blow now!

If we could pin them against the shoreline, they would have no place to go, and then, they'd either have to turn and fight us, or we'd be able to take them all prisoner.

Personally, I hoped they'd try to fight so that we could destroy every single last one of them. I was in the mood for more blood. The metallic taste coated my tongue, and as much as it soured my mouth, I hungered for another portion. I wanted to keep fighting until there wasn't a single one of them left to fight.

But if they surrendered, we would accept them as prisoners. We might be wolves, but we weren't animals, not in that sense of the word. If they lay down on the ground and refused to fight or transformed into humans and raised their hands, we would take them prisoner and return them to the capital in chains to our prisons to be dealt with as criminals. Unlike many of the rogues out here, we weren't savages.

I hoped that didn't happen, that they stood and fought, as I wasn't finished ripping them to pieces-not yet.

Up ahead of me, I saw the tail of the warrior I'd been fighting with earlier. He'd gotten away from me when one of his friends had come at me from the side. This soldier had gotten away while his rescuer lay back on the ground behind us with his neck at an odd angle, his unblinking eyes staring at the moon.

He wouldn't be coming to help a second time.

Picking up my speed, I cut to the left and went around a bush, hoping to gain some ground on him. His heart was beating so loudly, I could hear it echoing in his chest even this far behind him.

When he came around the bend, I leaped into the air and hit him in the shoulder, knocking him into a tree, His head hit first, and blood squirted out, spraying up the bark and hitting me in the face. It didn't bother me at all. He groaned, clearly losing his bearings, and I went for his neck, sinking my teeth in as I went for his jugular. A moment later, I finished him, leaving his limp body lying at the trunk of the tree.

Stepping away, I sniffed the air, wondering if there were any other enemy wolves nearby for me to dispatch.

Not smelling any, I contacted my commander via mindlink, 'What's the status now?'

We've started rounding up prisoners,' he told me. 'A few of the warriors managed to escape, but most of them surrendered.'

'Good,' I said. "Send some of our best trackers after those that got away.' I wanted every single one of Soren's warriors who had gone against the king to pay.

We had taken over the territory Kal's army had controlled. It was under my power now. Soon, I'd be able to chase them out of our land.

Rosalie and my baby should still be back on the islands, and they should stay there. At least I knew they were not bothered by the unpleasant chaos caused by the war.

However, in the last day or so, I had felt a shift.

At first, somehow, I felt she was closer.

I had known for certain that it was my child who was pulling me.

Did she come back to the East continent? She had to have figured out at this point that Soren was not who she thought he was, right? So did my, Rosalie finally decide to return to me?

Then... I could follow the pull I was still feeling and attempt to find Rosalie and my baby again.

Once I had her in my grasp, I could go about proving to her that Soren had lied to her, that he had tricked her, that I truly did love her.

When she heard about what I had done with Madalynn, then she would know for certain how much I meant what I was saying.

I wanted to go to her so badly, like a magnet that had no choice but to find its other half.

But I couldn't. I had to take care of the prisoners and secure the territory I'd just gained until some of James's, commanders could take over.

Also, if it was true that Rosalie was back on the mainland, I could comb every square inch of it in search of my family as soon as I chased the enemies out. I had time.

However, just now, the pull faded again.

Something happened-that she had somehow managed to slip away from me... again.

I didn't understand, though, why she was running from me! Did she still think that she couldn't trust me either?

Even thinking about the possibility that I had been close to her and let her slip away from me

again made me sick to my stomach. Although it was still there, it wasn't as strong as it had been when I was close to their location.

'Sir... Richard said in the mindlink, interrupting my thoughts.

By now, we were in the process of moving the prisoners back and were all in our human forms, slightly cleaned up from the battle. At least, I didn't have blood or mangled fur in my mouth anymore.

"What is it, Richard?" I asked him.

He cleared his throat, obviously apprehensive about whatever it was he needed to say. 'I just got word of two women and a baby spotted traveling together. They were spotted the day before yesterday by a villager. The only reason he reported it at all was that he was worried she might be running into the enemy troops that just fled, the ones we are pursuing.

My pulse quickened at the thought. 'Send more of our troops to make sure that they are apprehended before anyone can hurt them,' I told him.

'Yes, sir,' he said.

'Does that mean she's traveling north? I surmised from his description.

Richard affirmed my suspicions. "That's right. They were headed north, and he said they were acting a bit suspicious,

like they were in a hurry and didn't want anyone to notice them.'

North

Was this a coincidence? Georgia found out about the secret of Rosalie's bloodline from the North, and now Rosalie herself was going north? Did Rosalie somehow know about her own secret? Was she headed to the same place where Georgia currently was staying?

If so, both Rosalie and my baby would be in even more danger than she currently was from the warriors. The rogues that were running rampant all over the place throughout the north were extremely dangerous, and Rosalie didn't have her wolf to protect her.

The idea of her doing this on her own, or only with the help of some woman I didn't know, made me extremely unsettled. Regardless of how she felt about me, I needed to find her as soon as possible and make her understand that what she was doing wasn't safe.

Resolved that I knew exactly what we needed to do, I went to find Richard, who was with Samuel and a group of others.

"I am going to head north," I told him.

Samuel hadn't been told about Rosalie's news yet. He arched an eyebrow. "We are, sir?"

"No, you are not. Richard, you gather five more guys to go with me."

Turned to Samuel, "You finish moving the prisoners back to the capital, but the rest of our men are going to continue to clear the enemy out of the territory."

I could tell that Samuel was a bit confused, but he could only say, "Yes... Alpha."

"Samuel, get the warriors ready. Make sure everyone sleeps well and gets something to eat. And if you don't have enough food... break into Soren's supply train. I'm sure there's plenty there."

That brought smiles to both Richard and Samuel's faces. Samuel responded, "Yes, Alpha! We can most certainly do that. Commander Adler has also arrived. Don't worry about us."

I nodded to Samuel. Then I looked at Richard, and rushed over to a military truck without wasting any more time. Richard appointed five more men, and they all jumped into the truck with me immediately. My men were used to executing all of my orders without question, without delay.

I only needed a couple of days; she wasn't far.

I had no idea why Rosalie had decided to leave Soren or why she thought she could make this

dangerous journey on – her own, but I did know that I needed to find her. With the pull of my child as my guide, I knew she wasn't far and I felt assured that I would find her.

As I cranked up the engine of the vehicle and shifted into gear, Gayla's words echoed in my mind.

“Do not proceed down your chosen path, Alpha Ethan Gray. Do not go north.”

But it didn't matter.

Whether I believed what the seer was telling me or not, I wasn't going to be altering my plans. I had a mission to fulfill. If that meant going north, then that's where I would be headed.

I would do whatever it took to get to the woman that I loved and the baby I longed to meet.

And nothing was going to stop me.

Chapter 129 Someone Was Looking For You

**Rosalie's POV

The crisp morning air brushed gently against my skin.

As we moved north, I could feel the temperature had dropped along the way. The plants in view also changed from tropical trees to pines.

Our destination, the northern territory.

I wasn't sure where we were on our journey, but Seraphine was confident.

I didn't know whether it was wise to trust Seraphine again. At least, among Ethan, Soren, and Seraphine, she was the only one who came forward proactively and told me the truth.

The brothers, on the other hand, neither of them had been completely truthful with me to this day.

Seraphine seemed to know the directions clearly, however, going in the right direction wasn't our biggest concern.

“You're positive that this is going to be safe?” The question was one I had asked multiple times, and with a sigh, she turned to look at me.

“It will be dangerous, but we are near a turnoff” Seraphine looked me in the eyes. “Would you like me to hold the baby?”

I shook my head. At least the little one seemed to be excited about the journey. His bright blue eyes seemed to be amazed by the scenery along the way. Just looking at him gave me strength. Seraphine sighed, “Once we reach the small town, you and the babe can rest for the night.”

Rest sounded amazing in the moment, and as my eyes gazed down at the baby at my chest. I couldn't help but smile. Never had I felt such love until the day he was born. It wasn't earned, but unconditional.

The love between mother and child was like nothing I could have ever dreamed of.

“This way...” Seraphine replied softly as we trudged closer towards a broken down wooden bridge in the distance.

I glanced around at the area. Crossing the bridge would leave us out in view of anyone who was nearby

“Unfortunately, it's not the safest to expose ourselves, but we have to cross the bridge.” Her eyes gazed out from our hidden spot to the road, looking around for any sign of trouble. “We've come this far. Hopefully, that means we've lost Soren's men. The only thing I would be concerned with is rogues, but even then they come out more at night.”

I nodded my head.

“Quickly, we must go,” Seraphine urged, as she moved from the shadows of the brush to the open road to cross the bridge. My feet followed quickly behind hers.

As we stepped onto the wooden bridge, I heard the squeaky sound of the boards accompanying

our steps. I prayed to the moon goddess that no one was around to hear the noise. However, things sometimes just wouldn't go as well as hoped.

"Seraphine-" I whispered, listening to the distant voices of men. "Someone's coming." ; Running towards the tree line, we made cover in the shadows, listening and waiting to see who it was that was coming. With the war on approach, there were warriors everywhere, and on top of those warriors were the rogues.

The rogues were said to be vicious and unforgiving in their venture to wreak havoc in the north. "Stay here." Seraphine whispered. "I'll see if I can get a better view of what we are dealing with."

Nodding my head, I watched her figure move through the bushes, and before long, I watched her back stiffen, and then she turned around to face me.

We have to find a way out.... It's Soren's men," she whispered.

My heart felt as if it dropped into my stomach upon hearing Seraphine's words.

I thought we had escaped, but Soren was more persistent than we expected. Why wouldn't he just let me go?

Seraphine thought over the situation for a moment and said firmly, "I will lead them away."

"No, you can't..." I gasped. "If they catch you-"

"They won't. You must trust an old lady to know what she is doing."

Hesitation filled me while I was thinking over her plan. She patted my hand and assured me, "I promise, I know them way better than they think. I'll be fine."

"Be careful then." I knew I had to agree and trust Seraphine. All the way here, she'd proven she was more capable than I had thought. I remembered Seraphine told me that she traveled a lot, and it seemed that she had a lot of experiences blending herself into crowds and disappearing from the eyes that were searching for her.

"When and where should I meet up with you then?" I asked.

A kind, soft smile passed over her face as she reached up and lightly patted the side of my cheek.

"I won't be gone long. Go up the road and take the right fork. I will lead Soren's men down to the left. Go to the inn, and I will find you there."

I nodded to show that I understood. "Okay, Seraphine. Please, please be careful, and I'll see you at the inn." After all, I still saw her as a friend, and I wouldn't want anything bad to happen to her.

However, before she took off, she added, "If I don't return to you by tomorrow morning, then I want you to follow every direction I have written on this piece of paper for you. Someone else can take you the rest of the way. You would just have to get to that village."

I didn't like the way she said it. It felt like this was goodbye. I shook my head, "No, I'd rather wait for you."

"Listen to me. Even if I am late, it doesn't necessarily mean that they got me. I may just need a little more time to get rid of them. But you shouldn't wait there because they can catch up quickly. Trust me, I'll be fine."

Finally, I reluctantly agreed to let her do what she needed to do.

My hands wrapped around my baby, protecting him from the unforeseeable danger that was lurking nearby.

"Be safe, Seraphine."

"Oh, dear. Don't you worry about me," she chuckled. "I have been doing this since long before you were born."

As the words left her mouth, I watched as she took off through the foliage and made her way up

the road and down the left path. The men passed my hidden position without even a glance in my direction,

A heavy sigh left my mouth as I realized that I had gone unnoticed.

I rocked my boy a couple more times and watched him start to doze off. I whispered as my lips kissed his tiny forehead, "Let's get you somewhere safe."

After taking another moment, I pushed from my hiding place. I moved along the tree line and tried to hide my tracks as much as I could. Finally, when a distant village came into view, I let out a breath of relief.

I moved quicker towards the village seeking the inn that Seraphine had told me about. It was a tall building with thatched roofing and white walls.

The inn was busy, which was good. My arrival didn't draw much attention. With the amount of guests that stayed here,

it was easier for me to blend in.

The friendly staff didn't even ask me any questions. The moment the woman behind the counter saw me, she showed me the way to my room, as if she was expecting me.

The room wasn't lavish, but it was safe and comforting for me and the baby. There was even a crib. I was amazed by how thoroughly Seraphine had arranged everything.

"Thank you for showing me the room!" I handed a tip to the staff member.

"Oh, that's so kind of you. Thank you for your generosity, miss!" She was grateful.

It wasn't easy to continue running in a place like this during war time. The inn helped numerous people, including me, and they deserved to be appreciated.

After the door behind me clicked, I felt a sense of security. Placing down the bag on the chair, I dragged my sweet boy from my chest, and laid him in the crib. My boy was fast asleep with his tiny body swaddled. I decided to take a nice warm shower while he was asleep. After a couple of long days on the run, it felt good to be clean.

When I came out from the shower, it was as if the baby knew I was ready for him. The little peanut was also awake. Therefore, he was treated with a fun bubble bath before his meal.

It was getting dark outside, and I was finally able to put him back into the crib after I saw a yawn from him. Then I laid down on the bed, watching his sweet face..

He was the picture of perfection. Everything I did, I did for him. To give him the life he deserved. I wanted him to have a normal and peaceful life, but day after day, I realized that normal might not be what he was born for. There would always be someone who wanted him, or someone who wanted to use him.

The only thing I could do as his mother was to protect him, love him, and raise him to be a good man.

Finally, I drifted off to sleep, preparing myself for the next day to come.

I was woken up by a soft knock at my door.

Seraphine was here!

I rushed to open the door but was disappointed to find that it wasn't Seraphine. It was the staff member from earlier.

"Miss," she whispered, "I was sent here to warn you."

I felt a knot in my stomach. Immediately, my sleepiness dissipated, and I was wide awake.

"What happened?" I asked.

*Someone was looking for you. They've entered the village, and it won't take long for them to get here."

My heart leaped from my chest.

Were those Soren's men? If so, what happened to Seraphine?!

"What's the fastest way for me to get out of the village?" I asked firmly as I strode over to my son and placed him back into the harness on my chest. I grabbed the backpack and slung it back onto my shoulders.

*To the east miss Here's the map,

Not wasting another moment I made my escape again. I looked out of the window, and from a distance, I saw a truck at the end of the road

I knew that whoever that was that had come after us, they came for my son. I was just a breeder, a nobody. However, my Intle boy, he was the future of this kingdom, the hidden prospective ruler who could change the fate of this country #the wanted to

But I would never allow anyone to take advantage of him I'd do anything to protect him.

"This way, miss. Follow me! There's a cottage in the woods you could use before the night ends." She led the way, and I followed immediately.

No time to think more. They were almost here.

I had to go. Now!

Chapter 129 Someone Was Looking For You

****Rosalie's POV**

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“Oh, dear. Don’t you worry about me,” she chuckled. “I have been doing this since long before you were born.”

As the words left her mouth, I watched as she took off through the foliage and made her way up the road and down the left path. The men passed my hidden position without *even* a glance in my direction.

A heavy sigh left my mouth as I realized that I had gone unnoticed.

I rocked my boy a couple more times and watched him start to doze off. I whispered as my lips kissed his tiny *forehead*, “Let’s get you somewhere safe.”

After taking another moment, I pushed from my hiding place. I moved along the tree line and tried to hide my tracks as much as I could. Finally, when a distant village came into view, I let out a breath of relief.

I moved quicker towards the village seeking the inn that Seraphine had told me about. It was a tall building with thatched roofing and white walls.

The inn was busy, which was good. My arrival didn’t draw much attention. With the amount of guests that stayed here,

was easier for me to blend in

The friendly staff didn’t even ask me any questions. The moment the woman behind the counter saw me, she *showed* me the way to my room, as if she was expecting me.

The room wasn’t lavish, but it was safe and comforting for me and the baby. There was even a crib. I was *amazed by* how thoroughly Seraphine had arranged everything

“Thank you for showing me the room!” i handed a tip to the staff member.

“Oh, that’s so kind of you. Thank you for your generosity, mine!” She was grateful.

It wasn’t easy to continue running in a place like this during war time. The inn helped numerous people, including me, and they deserved to be appreciated.

After the door behind me clicked, I felt a sense of security. Placing down the bag on the chair, I dragged my *sweet* boy from my chest, and laid him in the crib. My boy was fast asleep with his tiny body swaddled.

I decided to take a nice warm shower while he was asleep. After a couple of long days on the run, it felt good to be clean.

When I came out from the shower, it was as if the baby knew I was ready for him. The little peanut was also awake. Therefore, he was treated with a fun bubble bath before his meal.

It was getting dark outside, and I was finally able to put him back into the crib after I saw a yawn from him. Then I laid down on the bed, watching his sweet face.

He was the picture of perfection. Everything I did, I did for him. To give him the life he deserved. I wanted him to have a normal and peaceful life, but day after day, I realized that normal might not be what he was born for. There would always be someone who wanted him, or someone who wanted to use him.

The only thing I could do as his mother was to protect him, love him, and raise him to be a good man.

Finally, I drifted off to sleep, preparing myself for the next day to come.

I was woken up by a soft knock at my door.

Seraphine was here!

I rushed to open the door but was disappointed to find that it wasn't Seraphine. It was the staff member from earlier.

"Miss," she whispered, "I was sent here to warn you."

I felt a knot in my stomach. Immediately, my sleepiness dissipated, and I was wide awake. "What happened?" I asked.

"Someone was looking for you. They've entered the village, and it won't take long for them to get here."

My heart leaped from my chest.

Were those Soren's men? If so, what happened to Seraphine?!

"What's the fastest way for me to get out of the village?" I asked firmly as I strode over to my son and placed him back into the harness on my chest. I grabbed the backpack and slung it back onto my shoulders.

"To the east, miss. Here's the map."

Not wasting another moment, I made my escape again. I looked out of the window, and from a distance, I saw a truck at the end of the road.

I knew that whoever that was that had come after us, they came for my son. I was just a breeder, a nobody. However, my little boy, he was the future of this kingdom, the hidden prospective ruler who could change the fate of this country if he wanted to.

But I would never allow anyone to take advantage of him. I'd do anything to protect him.

This way, miss. Follow me! There's a cottage in the woods you could use before the night ends." She led the way, and I *followed* immediately.

No time to think more. They were almost here.

I had to go. Now!

Chapter 130 Through My Fingers

*****Ethan's POV**

Finding Rosalie was like chasing a moving target Every time I felt I was close to her and the baby, she would change locations, and then it felt like she had slipped through my fingers again, and I would have to trail her and move again

However, this time, I felt like I was finally getting close enough to her that I was going to catch up to her

She couldn't feel me the way I could feel her, the way I could feel my baby, anyway

We arrived in the village of Rustic early one morning after a long night of traveling. I felt that the baby was nearby. His presence was so strong, I could physically feel the tug of my child on me, and I was eager to have a look around to see if I could put all of this behind us once and for all.

Visions of a happy reunion danced before my eyes, even though I realized Rosalie might not be pleased to see me initially. I would find a way to make her understand that I was there to take her and the baby under my umbrella of safety and make sure that nothing could happen to them.

Not only did I love them and want to be with them, but I also needed to ensure that nothing could ever happen to them

Rustic was a small village. I let Richard and the rest of the men get settled before I went about going to search for Rosalie. I knew she wasn't right here in this small town, but could still feel that the baby was pulling me to an area nearby, and my reconnaissance had told me that there were several cottages in the woods not too far *away*.

Perhaps she was staying in one of those hidden homes?

"Alpha, there's an inn in town. Most travelers would stay there," Richard reported.

My stomach was twisted up so tight, I thought I might be sick. I had done a good job of hiding it all day, but I knew what I needed to do to relieve the pain and discomfort.

I needed to find them.

“Richard,” I said, just as the sun was beginning to dip beneath the horizon, “I’m going to check the perimeter. Will you keep an eye on the situation here in the village and let me know via the mind-link if anything changes?”

“Of course, sir, but....” Richard stopped speaking, but his eyebrows were nearly touching, he was so concerned.

“What is it?” I asked him, not sure I wanted to hear anything he had to say.

“It’s only... you clearly don’t feel well: Why don’t you stay here and rest? You’ve had a couple of very stressful days.” He gestured toward the home we’d commandeered as our headquarters. This would be the first time in weeks we’d actually sleep in a house instead of a vehicle or a tent.

I shook my head. He had no way of knowing that the only way I could ever get any rest was to finally find Rosalie and my child. “I’ll be back soon enough, Richard. Just take care of the situation here, understand?”

He nodded. “Yes, sir. I understand.”

That was all I needed to say, and then I headed out, following the pull within me as it tugged me along as if a cord within me was being yanked by invisible hands, and I had no choice but to march along in a specific direction, my feet moving of their own accord.

I’d seen enough in the war and in the rest of my life not to fear a single beast or man. However, running through the trees in the dark, I was afraid.

I was terrified that she might be gone before I got there, or she might find a way to dissuade me from taking her back

THOLOM couldn’t picture myself leaving this place without that baby in my ore Mel Ronale of my side

A small cabin came into view in front of me, and I got the distinct feeling that my child was in there the tension inside of me was so riveting, I felt like my entire body was being wrenched from inside of me I paused outside to catch my breath and try to figure out what to say to her.

How was I going to make sure she didn’t just slam the door in my face and run away?

It had been over a month since I had to leave Rosalie. Every day and night, I forced myself to focus on what I could do and to bring an end to this war. Everything I’d done was for this moment, so that I could unite with my family again.

Yet here I was, less than a hundred yards from her. I could almost smell her sweet scent. I slowed down and quieted my footsteps

As I was moving closer, step by step, staring at the cabin I was certain contained the very individuals I'd been searching for, a frantic mindlink message from Richard entered my mind. "Alpha! We've just received an urgent message from King James and Beta Talon!"

Richard, hold on, I only need fifteen minutes. I'll be right back.' I tried not to let my irritation come through.

My family was right in front of me; nothing could stop me. Everything else could wait.

I was just about to disconnect from the mindlink before I heard his voice raise and his tone filled with panic, 'Alpha, the capital is under attack. King James, the queen, everyone is in danger!'

What?' For a second, I found myself not able to comprehend the news.

The capital is under attack by Kal, Alpha! We don't know how, but the capital is in danger.'

I hadn't heard Richard sound this panicked before.

My mouth fell open as I finally grasped what Richard was saying.

How was that possible?! We'd pushed the enemy so far, and we were almost winning the war. How the hell did they get to the capital?!

F*ck!

Rosalie was so close, right there in front of me. I just needed a little more time....

Alpha? Where are you?

F*ck, f*ck, f*ck!

I'd come this far, and I was so close to my family, I couldn't possibly turn around right now!

I'm in the woods,' I told Richard. 'Get everyone ready.'

My voice might sound calm, but my thoughts would not be more chaotic. I wanted to rush over and grab the two people who were most important to me and never let them go again.

However, how could I possibly take them with me to the capital, knowing how dangerous that could be?

With a war unfolding in the capital, and everything in chaos, taking Rosalie and the baby there wouldn't be fair,

It wouldn't be right

If King Kal were to get his hands on my child, he might do the unthinkable just to get back to me.

And Rosalie was clearly in danger with some of the people who were at the capital before the invasion, so taking her there now would put her in an more unsafe position.

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there, put them

more than the

At that moment, I felt a shift again

Whether she was fleeing again or had just gone out the back of the cabin to go for a wall, I could tell that Porale and the baby were getting further away from me

Things were changing again, and not for the better

I wasn't going to be able to stand here much longer and contemplate the situation I needed to make a decision I needed to act

"D*mn it," I muttered under my breath. What choice did I have other than dropping everything and going back to the capital right away?

My love and my heart was here, but I also had a full city of people who were waiting for my rescue. I *couldn't* leave them there to die-kind as Rosalie was, she would never allow me to be that irresponsible.

Alpha, we're all back in the truck waiting for you. As soon as you are back, we can leave.'

'Good. I'll be back in the village in a few minutes.'

With a heavy heart, I reluctantly turned and headed back toward Rustic, wishing I would've had more time.

I was so close! Rosalie and the baby were within my grasp, but once again, I just missed them.

If only I would've had a few more minutes, I would've been able to at least talk to her and let her know that everything Soren had told her about me was a lie.

However, I knew I couldn't do that.

I couldn't bring myself to face her and give her hope, and then turn around immediately and leave her behind again. If I did that, and I were her, I would never believe a single *word* from me again.

Rosalie had managed to escape me again, but I knew in my heart I would find her and my baby once more. I had to trust in the Moon Goddess and fate that we would be together again someday.

I just needed a better opportunity to reunite with her. She deserved my full attention for the rest of my life. If I couldn't give that to her right now, I had no choice but to wait.

Just like I had no choice but to hurry back to the capital to protect the king and all of the other innocent lives that were at stake.

I picked up *speed* as I hurried back to where Richard was waiting for me.

"Any details?" I needed to know what the direct threat was and what I could do to stop it. As hard as it would be, I had to get my mind off of Rosalie and the baby and focus on the emergency at the capital.

Richard shook his head, "Not much."

I was surprised that we only had such little detail about the situation. We had no idea what we would return to.

Watching the trees fly past us outside of the car window, I concentrated for a moment and sorted through the threads.

Alpha..." Richard was as shocked as me, "do you think the battles we've been winning at the frontline were just an act?"

"No, I was there. Those *were* not fake. Richard, contact Samuel and have him and his men meet us at the north gate of the capital."

"Yes, Alpha! What about the frontline?"

"Adler can handle that. I doubt that they were able to move all their troops from the west coast frontline to the capital without us noticing it."

"You mean you think the besiege at the capital is only a bluff?" Richard followed my analysis.

"Richard, they came across the ocean to our land. The longer the war lasts, the harder it will be for them, especially now that we cut off their supplies."

"Then I don't understand..."

| sneered, “They are more eager to end this war than we are!”

Richard’s eyes lit up with excitement, “Alpha, do you think this is their last attempt? Once we secure the capital, we will win the war?”

I didn’t answer him.

I hoped so, however, I had a feeling that things were not going to go as well as I expected.