

## Chapter 186 Mousetrap

Moana

“Don’t worry, you two,” Kelly said as she turned around in her seat to look at us. There was a sick, twisted grin on her gaunt face. She looked even more skeletal than before, as though she hadn’t eaten or slept in days, maybe even weeks. “I’m going to take you far, far away. And I’ll make sure that Edrick never finds you.”

“K-Kelly?” I whimpered. I tried the car door again, but it was still locked. And it was too late now; the light turned green and Kelly hit the gas, speeding down the mostly empty street.

“Didn’t expect to see me, huh?” she said, laughing almost maniacally as she gripped the steering wheel tightly. Even in the dim light of the car, I could see that her knuckles were as white as a sheet.

Ella, who had caught onto the danger by now, was beginning to panic. I felt her little arms slip around my waist, and when I looked down, she was looking up at me with terror in her eyes. I pulled her close, holding her tightly, and took her head and buried it in my side so she wouldn’t have to see in case Kelly did anything insane.

“Kelly, what is all of this?” I asked, my heart practically pounding out of my chest. “Do you know Olivia? Why are you here?”

Kelly giggled, sounding almost like a child. “Oh, her?” she asked. She took a sharp turn, causing Ella and I to slide across the seat. I quickly buckled Ella into a seatbelt as I mentally prepared for Kelly to do

something rash like intentionally crash the car. “Yeah, of course I know my good friend Olivia,” she continued. “If it wasn’t thanks to her, I wouldn’t be here right now. She’s been really helpful.”

“Helpful with what?” I asked.

“Well, you see,” Kelly said, speeding through a yellow light, “you’ve done nothing except get in the way of my relationship with Edrick. Both of you, really. First that little snot-nosed brat,” she gestured over her shoulder at Ella with her thumb, “and then you, with your stupid pregnancy.” Her eyes met mine in the rear view mirror then. They looked hollow and pale, like ghosts of what they once were. Kelly was always a bit unhinged, but now she seemed far worse. It had only been a few weeks since the incident in the Rogue district, and already she seemed like an almost entirely different person.

“You never had a relationship with Edrick,” I growled. “He can’t stand you.”

Suddenly, Kelly came to a screeching halt at another red light. She whipped around in her seat, her eyes shooting daggers. Her face was twisted into such an evil expression that she looked like a demon, and I covered Ella’s face with my hand.

“Shut the f\*\*k up,” she snarled, “before I come back there and shut you up myself.”

My eyes widened. I decided that it was best for me to stay quiet, as she seemed so unhinged that I wouldn’t have put it past her to intentionally run the car into a building over my next comment.

The light turned green again, and Kelly hit the gas once more, causing us to lurch in our seats. I heard Ella sob quietly beside me, and I pulled her closer.

“Don’t worry, sweetheart,” I whispered into her ear. “I’m gonna protect you. Momma’s gonna protect you.” In the moment, I didn’t even think

twice about referring to myself as Ella's mother. In fact, now that I knew that Olivia was indeed either an actress or simply a horrible person who led us right into a trap, I felt more maternal over Ella than ever. But at the same time, I felt like a horrible mother for letting her get into this situation with me, all because of things that a stranger told me...

"Anyway," Kelly said, gesturing wildly with one hand while she drove with the other, "I've figured out the perfect way to finally make Edrick understand that I'm the only one for him. I know that we're meant for each other, but it's just gonna take a little extra push to get him there."

"If you let us go right now, you can have him," I begged. "Please, just let us go and don't hurt El—"

"So," Kelly interrupted, "here's my plan: while Edrick is dealing with his grief, that's when I'll swoop in. I actually learned a little lesson from you, believe it or not, and that's that I can lock him down by getting pregnant. I don't even care if it's his baby, honestly. If I need to get pregnant before I ever even sleep with him, then so be it. It doesn't matter whose baby it is, so long as he thinks that it's his. Then, he'll never leave me, and he'll finally realize his true feelings for me."

She's sick, I thought to myself. We took another sharp turn, and by now we were headed into the Rogue district. I felt my stomach twist inside of me as we picked up speed, and all I could do at this point was hold Ella as tightly as possible, as though that would keep her safe from this maniac.

"And, you know," Kelly said as she drove, her voice raising in pitch, "it's been really hard lately. Ever since you survived the Rogue district — which you weren't supposed to, by the way, in case you already didn't know — my parents have been punishing me. I'm sure you remember how hard it is to be a peasant. I've been miserable. Edrick had them cut me off from the money; but once I marry him, it won't matter anymore. I'll never need to worry about money again."

While Kelly spoke, I began to subtly look around for anything that I could use to defend Ella and myself or escape with: a heavy flashlight, an ice scraper, anything that could have been in the back of the car. But there was nothing. Outside the car, the streets of the entry of the Rogue district were lined with hungry Rogues who looked at the car as if it were their next meal.

Kelly ranted for a long time about her parents' money and how she had been cut off. All the while, I desperately searched for ways to escape. I even pleaded with my wolf to see if I could shift once the car stopped, but I couldn't. It was too early, and she was too weak. I was certain that Kelly somehow knew that, and that was why all of this came together on that night.

Eventually, the roads darkened and turned from brightly straight city streets to dark and ominously twisting alleyways, and soon the city lights were nothing but dots in the distance. Even in the car, I could feel the weight of the darkness and the silence all around us as we went further and further into the Rogue district.

At least, I told myself, Ella could shift when we got out of the car and make a run for it. At least she could stand a chance.

Finally, we pulled down a long, narrow road. Eventually, a large brick building came into view; I could tell from its square shape and large paned windows with broken glass that it was an abandoned warehouse.

And it was likely to be the place that I would die that night.

“When the car door opens, I want you to shift and run away,” I whispered into Ella's ear as quietly as I could. She looked up at me with wide eyes and shook her head, but I squeezed her shoulders and looked at her intensely, mouthing only three words: I love you.

Kelly came to a stop and got out of the car.

The car door opened on my side first. I gave Ella one last look, wishing that I could tell her that I was sorry, before I got out.

“Give me your hands,” Kelly said. I complied, only because I wanted her to be distracted with tying me up while Ella ran.

Behind me, I heard a scuffle as Ella leaped out of the car and made a run for it.

“S\*\*t,” Kelly said.

And then, something hit the side of my head, and everything went black.

## Chapter 187 The Hunt

Edrick

When I picked Moana and Ella up from school that day, I could tell that something was off. Moana seemed distant and cold, and stiffened under my touch. Was she really still that angry over what I had said the other day? I was only worried about her, and I didn't want her to get hurt by going out by herself. Moana was normally a level-headed person, so for her to be so angry over something so simple for days was out of character for her. But I just figured that it was pregnancy hormones, or maybe the potion that the Mother Witch gave me to keep her wolf from emerging was making her a bit cranky.

Moana stayed in her room for the remainder of the day. She said that she wasn't feeling well, so I figured that it really was the pregnancy after all. I decided to give her plenty of space to rest, but by the time I put Ella to bed that night, Moana still hadn't come out of her room.

I thought about going into her room and checking on her. But after a few moments of standing silently outside her door, I decided against it, and instead went to bed without her.

A few hours passed after that. I tossed and turned the entire time, and finally I couldn't take it anymore. I needed Moana by my side in order to sleep; maybe if I talked to her sincerely and apologized for making her angry, she wouldn't be so cold toward me. I still hadn't apologized for what I said during our last argument, after all.

I made my way over to Moana's room and raised my fist to knock on the door.

But when I did, the door just swung open. And Moana's bed was empty.

Figuring that Ella may have had a bad dream and that Moana was sleeping with her, I decided to go over to Ella's room. I slowly cracked the door open and peered inside, not wanting to wake Ella up.

What I saw made my blood run cold.

Ella's bed was empty.

"Ella?" I called into the room, frantically looking around as though they would both suddenly appear out of thin air. "Moana?"

There was no answer. My first instinct was to check the closet and the bathroom, which were, of course, both empty. My heart pounded then as I flung the window open and looked down at the street below, praying that I wouldn't see their bodies laying on the sidewalk. But I couldn't imagine why Moana would have jumped, and there was nothing down there anyway.

I flew into a rage after that. My wolf almost completely took over; I didn't shift, but I went into pure instinct mode, and began frantically searching the penthouse. Selina and the maids were all woken up by my shouting and banging, and when they came out of their rooms and I explained the situation, they all flew into a frenzy as well.

Moana and Ella were nowhere to be found.

I called the police. Thanks to my status, several of the city's best police and investigators were at the penthouse within thirty minutes.

"Does your fiancée have any enemies? Anyone who would kidnap her or give her a reason to run?" one of the investigators asked while the others searched the penthouse thoroughly.

At first, I shook my head. But then... I remembered the Rogue district.

“Kelly,” I said, my heart pounding so fast that I felt as though I would be sick. “Kelly hates her. She already tried something once.”

The investigator furrowed his brow and scribbled something in his notebook. After that, the police set up a phone tracer. Since I knew Kelly, I would be easy to contact her; but if she did kidnap Ella and Moana, then we would need to trace her call so we could find them. I just hoped that we could find them before it was too late.

“They’ll find them,” Selina said, her voice shaking as she squeezed my arm tightly. “They’ll find them.”

I couldn’t speak. I could hardly even move. All I could do was stare numbly at the wall in front of me, praying that nothing horrible would happen to my mate and my daughter.

I wished that I had told Moana how much I loved her... And if we did find them, I would never let her go another day without knowing the extent of my love for her. Now, more than ever, my fear of commitment felt so silly. I should have married her on the day I met her.

Suddenly, my phone began to ring. The investigator waved me over, where my phone was hooked up to a call tracer.

“Just try to keep her on the phone as long as possible,” the investigator said. “Just keep her talking. We’ll let you know once we’ve traced the call.”

I nodded numbly, then swallowed and shakily picked up the phone.

“Hello?” I answered.

“Hey, handsome,” Kelly’s voice croaked on the other end. “I’ve missed you.”

Her voice sounded strained and nasally, like she had completely lost her mind. I didn’t know if it was drugs or what, but it didn’t matter. I just needed to keep her on the phone. I decided to play dumb to keep her



talking for longer, as though I hadn't found out yet that Moana and Ella were gone.

"Hey, Kelly," I said, resisting the urge to growl obscenities and threaten her life. I wanted so badly to reach through the phone and rip her to shreds, but I knew that I had to stay calm. "It's late. Is everything okay?"

Kelly giggled, then fell silent for a moment. Her giggle almost seemed to echo; she sounded as though she was in a big, empty room. "Have you noticed that anything is missing?" she said, then laughed again. "Of course you have. I know you're trying to keep me on the phone, but I can make this easier for you so you don't have to go out of your way to save the nanny and your little b\*\*\*h of a daughter; I'll release them if you promise to marry me. Deal?"

Really? I thought to myself. That's why she's doing this? Because she still can't get over me?

"How do I know you're not lying?" I asked, watching with wide eyes as the investigators gestured to indicate that we were almost there, and we almost had her location. "What if I promise to marry you and then you do something to them?"

Once again, Kelly let out an insane giggle. She really did sound as though she had gone completely mad. "I guess you'll just have to find out," she said. "You have two choices: you can either refuse to marry me, and then they'll definitely die, or you can promise to marry me and they'll only maybe die."

Suddenly, the investigator gave me a thumbs up to indicate that they had successfully traced the call. I opened my mouth to say something to Kelly, anything to placate her long enough until we got there so she wouldn't hurt Moana and Ella; but then I heard the sound of a scuffle. I heard Kelly let out a yelp. And then... Silence.

My eyes went wide. Had Moana knocked her out? I hoped so... More than anything, I hoped that was the case.

“It looks like she was calling from a location on the outskirts of the city,” one of the investigators said. “But that’s not all.”

“What is it?” I asked, feeling my heart stop in my chest.

The investigator swallowed, then looked at me with concern written across his face.

“It’s located in the Rogue district.”

## Chapter 188 Return to the Rogue District

Edrick

“It’s located in the Rogue district,” the investigator said, his face pale and his eyes wide.

The Rogue district was such a dangerous place that even the police were terrified to go there. But I wasn’t; if I had to fight a thousand Rogues to save Moana and Ella, then I would do it.

“Let’s go,” I said, storming over to the door.

“Mr. Morgan, are you sure it’s safe for you to come—” one of the cops began, but I whirled around to glare at him intensely. I could feel my eyes beginning to glow, and my stare alone was enough to make the cop fall silent and shut his mouth. The rest of the cops nodded, and we left Selina and the maids standing in the foyer.

“Stay here and call me immediately if Moana happens to show up,” I told Selina as the elevator doors closed. The last thing I saw was her nodding grimly with tears in her eyes.

The police had their cars parked outside. I climbed into the passenger seat with the police chief and then we were on our way. As we drove across town, I couldn’t stop thinking about what Kelly had implied... How she thought that I would actually marry her in exchange for Moana and Ella’s lives. But the sound of whatever happened at the end seemed promising...

I could only hope that Moana had broken free and knocked Kelly out. Hopefully, we would arrive to find both Ella and Moana safe, and Kelly restrained so she couldn't cause anymore trouble.

What surprised me, though, was the obvious lack of a struggle. Neither Moana nor Ella's room seemed to have anything out of place; it was as though they simply got up and walked out. Although, I supposed that I wouldn't have been terribly surprised if Kelly had threatened them and forced them to leave quietly. For all I knew, maybe she gave them something to make them sleep, and had her men take them away. Honestly, the latter was preferable in some ways, at least for Ella; I would have preferred if she could have just been magically asleep for everything so that it wouldn't haunt her later. But deep down, I logically knew that that wasn't going to be the case.

The squad of police cars made their way through the city, using their lights to make traffic move aside so we could get quickly through the city. It wasn't long before we finally arrived at the entrance of the Rogue district.

"You ready?" the cop who was driving asked me as we drove into the darker part of town, where Rogues lined the streets and stared at us as we drove past. I nodded grimly, just trying not to look out the windows too much in case any of the Rogues got pissed off and decided to attack.

As we drove, the streets began to get narrower and darker. The cop had a map on his console with the location that Kelly's call came from pinged on it, and as we got closer, it felt as though the tall buildings were caving in on us. The darker the Rogue district became, the heavier and more sickening it felt. On either side of the street, I could see Rogues wandering aimlessly. They looked at the cop cars with suspicion, and I knew that if we ran into the wrong group of Rogues, they could easily block us off in these narrow streets.

And, eventually, that was exactly what happened.

Up ahead, a group of Rogues came out of an alleyway and blocked the street.

“s\*\*t,” the cop murmured. He pulled out his radio and contacted the other cars behind us. “Looks like we’ve got a Code Purple up here,” he said. “I’m gonna slow down and see if they move.”

The cop slowed down, but the Rogues didn’t move. He came to a stop and sat there for a few seconds, then clicked his radio again, this time using the speaker on the car to address the Rogues.

“Move out of the way,” he said firmly. “We need to pass. This is an emergency.”

But even then, the Rogues didn’t move out of the way. In fact, they only began to walk closer to the car. More Rogues came out of the alleyway then, and by that point there were at least ten, maybe even twenty of them blocking all exits.

“God dammit,” the cop said.

Suddenly, all of the Rogues shifted at once and descended on the line of cop cars. The car shook violently as two Rogues jumped on the hood, barking and snarling. The cop and I looked at each other in shock for a moment before he radioed something that I couldn’t understand to the other cops, then got out his gun and got out of the car.

Gunshots fired all through the alleyway. The Rogues and the police erupted into a violent fight. I couldn’t just sit there and hope that the police would fight through the Rogues; I needed to help. I quickly jumped out and felt myself begin to shift.

As I shifted, several Rogues circled around me and began to snarl and claw at me. I clawed back with more intensity, slamming myself into their sides and sending them flying with a chorus of yelps while gunshots rang all around me. Another Rogue came, this one bigger, and bared his teeth at me.

“Who paid you?” I asked, snarling back at him.

The Rogue’s voice echoed in my head. He was laughing. “I’ll never tell,” he replied. “But I’ll say this: it’ll just be easier if you lay down and accept your fate.”

I stifled my own laugh. “Like hell I will,” I responded. Then, in one quick movement, I darted forward and collided with the large Rogue. We grappled on the ground for several long moments, rolling back and forth in a ball of claws and teeth. At one point, I managed to pin him to the ground and snapped my teeth at his throat.

But he got his legs under me somehow and kicked me off, throwing me back against the brick wall of a building. I felt the air get knocked out of my lungs as I got slammed into the wall, but I wasted no time in scrambling back to my feet and making another charge at him.

As I fought the Rogue, I only kept one thing in my mind: Moana’s and Ella’s faces. I pictured their smiles when I would come to their rescue, and that was what helped me to fight. It filled me with strength, and with one final surge of power, I managed to clamp my teeth around the Rogue’s neck and throw him so hard against a wall that I heard a sickening crunch, and then he fell silent.

Around me, gunshots continued to ring out as the police fought against the remaining Rogues. With a nod to the police chief, I charged at another large Rogue and placed a deep gash in his side with my claws, causing him to fall to the ground with a whimper. Amidst all of the chaos, a few more Rogues fell to the ground as bullets pierced their flesh and fur. I shifted back just as a path was cleared, and the cops and I jumped back into the cars and sped off with a chorus of screeching tires.

I’m coming, Moana, I thought to myself as I gripped the car dashboard while the cop sped through the narrow street, knocking more Rogues out of the way with the car. I’m coming, Ella. Daddy’s coming.

## Chapter 189 A Small Sacrifice

Moana

When I came to, I felt myself sitting in a chair with my wrists tied behind me. My head was pounding from the blow that knocked me out, but that wasn't the only thing I felt on my head.

Something cold and hard was pressed up against my temple.

My eyes fluttered open, squinting against the bright light of a spotlight. The light was so bright as it shined down on me that I could hardly see past it, but I could tell that I was inside the warehouse now.

The cold metal thing pressed harder into my temple. And then, a familiar voice spoke out.

“Hello, Moana.”

I jumped at the voice and whipped my head around, my eyes widening as I saw Ethan standing beside me with a gun raised to my head.

“E-Ethan?” I whispered, my voice shaking.

Ethan smiled; it was that same creepy smile that I saw on the night of the banquet, when he didn't think that I was looking. But now, he knew that I was looking right at him and he didn't bother to keep up the facade anymore.

“Didn't expect to see me, huh?” he asked.

“Where’s Ella?” I asked. I looked around frantically, only to see her tied to another chair next to me. She was sleeping. “What did you do to her?”

“Don’t worry,” Ethan said calmly. “She’s not hurt. Just under a spell. That way, she won’t need to experience any of this. She will have just gone to sleep, and she’ll never wake up.”

I shook my head vehemently as tears began to pool up in my eyes. “Ethan, you don’t need to do this,” I begged. “At least don’t hurt Ella. Please. I thought we were friends. Why are you doing this?”

Ethan sighed, but continued to press the barrel of the pistol in his hand against my head.

“You’re both innocent,” he admitted, “but you see... It’s not that simple. It was thanks to Edrick and his parents that my beautiful mother killed herself.”

His mother killed herself? I thought back to the news article that Olivia showed me the other day, and it never indicated that she killed herself. In fact, it indicated quite the opposite; that Michael had killed her. And knowing Michael, I was sure of it. Did he really sink his claws in so much that he convinced Ethan that his poor mother killed herself?

“Ethan, I—” I began, but was quickly cut off by the gun pushing harder into my temple. A choked sob caught in my throat, followed by a whimper.

“Just... Shut the f\*\*k up,” Ethan snarled. “It’s going to be easier on all of us if you just shut up and don’t talk. Now, where was I...” He paused for a moment, still holding the gun against his head, and then his face lit up. “So, as I was saying, I’ve been looking for ways to get back at that godforsaken family. I wanted to make them feel the same pain that I felt when my mother died...”

First, when I was a kid, I tried killing the family pets. It started with a pet bird, then a cat, and a puppy that Michael got for Edrick on his birthday. But although it caused them pain, it wasn’t enough. It wasn’t the same



sort of pain that I felt when I found my mom's body laying in her bathtub. Ever since then, I've been plotting the perfect way to make them all suffer greatly.

At first, I was just going to kill Ella, since Edrick didn't have anyone else that he actually gave a s\*\*t about; but then, you came into the picture. You, with your pretty face, your long red hair, and your hot body..."

Ethan paused then, his eyes traveling down from my face to my neck, my breasts, over my belly and down to my thighs. But even then, as he drank me in with his eyes, he never once lowered the gun. I felt myself trembling violently beneath the cold metal of the barrel. My eyes then caught something in the corner, just beyond the bright light that was shining on me. It was someone's body, laying in a heap. It was Kelly.

"Of course," he continued, "my half-brother was taken with you from the start. And I don't blame him. You're a gem, Moana. A real gem... But you're too perfect not to kill. You're the perfect key that I've been missing.

Once you and Ella are both gone, then Edrick will finally know what it's like to be truly alone, to be truly heartbroken. After you, I'll take Verona next. I don't think that Michael is really capable of true human emotions, but he'll still feel the sting of loneliness. She is his mate, after all, despite the fact that he betrayed her by f\*\*\*\*\*g my prostitute mother."

"What about Kelly?" I asked, nodding my head toward where Kelly lay. "What did she ever do to you? From the looks of it, she only ever helped you. Did you kill her, too?"

Ethan shrugged. "She's not dead; just knocked out. Honestly, I couldn't care less about Kelly. She was only ever a pawn throughout all of this; her insatiable obsession with Edrick just made her easy to control, to manipulate.

As I'm sure you're guessing now, judging from the look on your face, yes; I did tell her to hire those Rogues a while back to kidnap you. But of

course, Edrick came to your rescue. It's okay, though. Now, it'll be even easier to pin everything on her."

He paused then, and lowered the gun slightly before making an innocent face like a puppy dog. His eyes became big and filled with tears, and his lower lip started to quiver. "Officers, Kelly killed them! I had to knock her out, but it was too late! Look! Look at how their skulls are filled with bullet holes! She's insane!"

When he was finished, his face went cold again, and he let out a wry chuckle before harshly pressing the gun up against my temple again. But this time, I didn't flinch away. Instead, I turned my head and spat on him. A wad of spit landed on the front of his shirt. He grimaced at it for a moment in shock before his cold, emotionless gaze returned to me.

"I trusted you," I growled. "I thought you were my friend."

"Well, you shouldn't have been so naive," Ethan replied coldly. "Maybe you should've listened to Edrick when he kept telling you to stay away." He paused, then, licking his lips, and shot me a toothy grin. "You know, that night that I took you out to dinner... I did want to have s\*x with you, of course. How could I not? I do like you, Moana. But... You refused."

"Would you have killed me anyway?" I whispered. "Even if I had slept with you that night like you wanted, would you have still decided to kill me?"

Ethan stared at me for a moment with a strange light in his eyes. He chuckled grimly, but then his smile quickly faded and he shoved the gun harder against my head.

"Of course I still would have killed you," he said, his voice so nonchalant that it made me sick. "You slipped through my fingers that night, though; your innocence, your devotion, made me hesitate. For too long, I went back and forth on whether I should do it. But I've made my decision now."

He grinned, clicking the safety off on the gun as his eyes glinted in the light.

“And now, I’m finally going to get it over with.”

## Chapter 190 Stalling for Time

Moana

“And now, I’m finally going to get it over with,” Ethan said as he clicked the safety off on the gun.

During that moment, it felt as though everything froze in time. My mind began to race with a million different things, a million different outcomes. In the corner of my eye, Ella continued to sleep peacefully, oblivious to everything around her. Kelly laid motionless in the corner, and the spotlight that was beaming on my face blinded me so that I couldn’t see anything beyond it.

“Mina, I need you,” I thought, searching for my wolf’s presence. “Please... I know you’re scared, but we have to do something. We can’t let him kill Ella.”

My wolf, who had been hiding in terror as it seemed as though Ethan would surely kill me, showed her presence slightly.

“Keep him talking,” she said, her voice echoing in my mind. “Edrick will find us soon. Just keep him talking.”

I swallowed, hard, and suddenly turned my head to stare straight down the barrel of the gun. Upon seeing my face, Ethan hesitated. His finger, which had been on the trigger, moved away. I felt as though something in him softened when I looked into his eyes, as though the sweet and gentle artist who I had come to call my friend was still in there somewhere. It was a tiny spark, but it was there.

“If I’m going to die, at least let me ask some questions so I can die in peace,” I pleaded. “Please. I just want some answers before I die.”

Ethan paused, then slowly lowered the gun after a long time. As he did, I felt as though the gripping sensation around my heart lessened, and I could breathe again.

“Go on,” he said, his voice low and grim. “What are your questions?”

“U-Um...” My mind scrambled, searching for something that would make him talk. Finally, I came up with something. “When I talked to Olivia, she said that I’m the Golden Wolf,” I said. “Is that true? Did you know that?”

Ethan slowly nodded. “Yes,” he replied quietly. “You are.”

“How do you know?” I asked.

“Edrick went to the Mother Witch,” Ethan responded. “She confirmed it. I had an inkling of it myself, and so I went to the Mother Witch after him. Believe it or not, despite her abilities as an oracle, she didn’t seem to realize that I was just using my status and my charm to get information. She told me everything... But, now that I think of it, there is something else that she told me. Maybe you should know before you die.”

I nodded vehemently. “Yes,” I begged. “Please tell me. Whatever it is, I want to know before I die.”

Ethan sighed and passed his hand over his face. I noticed that he was staring at the floor, as though he didn’t want to look at me. He didn’t want to look his prey in the face. There really was still a shred of humanity in there that didn’t want to be a killer; I was sure of it.

“Alright,” Ethan finally said. “She only hinted at it, but I believe it’s true. You see, Michael has always hated humans. The idea of a Golden Wolf, someone who would bring humans and werewolves together in harmony, is something that he despises. So... He killed your parents, Moana.”

As Ethan spoke, my blood ran cold. Michael Morgan... Killed my parents? Was that why they left me at the orphanage? To protect me?

But that wasn't my main concern right now, because in the distance, I could see what looked like the red and blue flashing of police lights through one of the broken windows of the warehouse. Ethan didn't see it, as he was too focused on his story. I just needed to keep him talking for a little longer...

"You're sure of this?" I asked. "The Mother Witch was sure of it? Can she prove it?"

Ethan chuckled. "She can't prove it now, because she's dead. I killed her."

My eyes widened. The Mother Witch was known by all as the most powerful oracle in the world.

"H-How did you do what?" I whispered. "And why?"

"Oh, Moana," Ethan said. He reached out then, finally lifting his gaze to meet me as he brought his hand up to my cheek. His hand was cold and clammy. "You're so naive. So innocent... Don't you know that I couldn't let the Mother Witch live? She was an oracle, after all. My charm and my wit can only take me so far with someone like that, so of course she started to sense that something was wrong. But even though she's an oracle, her neck is still soft and made of flesh, and my knife was sharp."

I swallowed again, trying as hard as I could not to look past Ethan at the approaching lights. Thanks to the spotlight around us, the red and blue police lights didn't show unless he were to look back at them. If I could just keep him talking, keep him looking at me, then he wouldn't notice.

My mind raced for another few moments before I suddenly had another idea.

Trying to hide my fear, I smiled gently and leaned my hand into Ethan's palm. I softened my eyes as I looked up at him, and bit my lower lip. Ethan may have been a monster, but he was still a man... and men had desires.

“You know, I did really like you,” I whispered, noticing as his eyes began to widen slightly. “I only turned you down that night because of the baby, but if I’m going to die anyway... What do you say?”

Ethan stared at me for a few moments, as though thinking. His thumb rubbed along my cheek, then came down and ran across my lower lip. It took every fiber in my body not to tremble in a terrified manner at his touch. I had to keep him occupied, keep him looking at me.

“You had feelings for me at some point, didn’t you?” I murmured.

Slowly, Ethan nodded. His eyes flickered down to my lips and to my breasts.

But then, his hand dropped back to his side and he looked away, then raised the gun again.

“I did,” he whispered. “But not anymore. Your death is too valuable.”

“Get down on the ground!” a voice suddenly shouted. Ethan whipped around, and I almost laughed out loud in relief when I saw several police rush in with their guns raised. My heart leaped when I saw Edrick rush in with them, and his eyes widened when he saw me. I wanted so badly to run to him, to apologize for everything and never leave him again. I never should have listened to Olivia, or anyone else...

“Put the gun down!” the police yelled.

But Ethan only ran around behind me and wrapped his arm around my neck. He pushed the gun up against my head, causing the police to stop in their tracks, unable to go further. Edrick stopped at the front of the group, his hands outstretched for me. Even from here, with the spotlight shining in my face, I could see the terror and fury in his eyes.

“If anyone takes one more step, I’ll shoot her,” Ethan said, pressing the gun into my temple.