Owned by the Alphas
Jen Cooper

## **The Stories**

I woke up with the worst headache I'd ever had. It pierced my brain so strongly, I winced as I tried to open my eyes.

"Here, have this," Braxton's voice said through the dark in my mind.

I blinked my eyes open to see him handing me a steaming mug of something.

"It's lavender tea, it'll help with the headache," he said, and I sat up, grimacing at the grogginess in my mind.

I leaned against the headboard and took the mug, sniffing it before taking a sip. The heat was soothing, the smell

calming.

I sighed and put it on the wooden bedside table before looking up at Braxton in the dimly lit room, the drapes drawn,

the lantern next to me the only thing giving any light.

"How long have you been talking to those shadows, Lorelai?" Braxton asked, and I blew out a breath.

"That was the first time they've actually talked to me, or manifested in any way other than red eyes. But I've been seeing those since the blood moon, the night of the offerings." I shivered, and he listened intently

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"And what did they say?"

He clenched his jaw, then shuffled closer, his voice quieter but even more intimidating as he spoke. "The ones you were speaking to were not your shadows."

"Why? I thought you said the shadows I had were good," I asked, hoping to get answers out of him since I was giving

That had me frowning, reaching for my tea to cure some more of the headache pounding away against my skull.

"Who were they then?"

"I was hoping you could tell me."

He waited patiently, and I sat up straighter. I had no fucking clue.

him mine.

"I have no idea what they were," I admitted, and that had him frowning, but I was getting more and more frustrated with the pounding in my head.

"What the hell did you do to my head?" I snapped, rubbing my temple.

He leaned forward and kissed my temple, then the other where my finger had been.

"Sorry. They were burrowing. I had to push them out or they would have gotten too deep inside you, corrupting the

shadows that are loyal inside you.

"I'm guessing that's what they want. The ones in you are more powerful and if they can harness them, they control

you," he murmured, and I clenched my eyes shut, my head falling back as I blew out a breath.

I wasn't ready for the shadows and whatever they wanted with me. More than ever, I wished I was normal.

"Is this because of the winter born thing?" I asked, even though I knew the answer. It was obvious, since my brother and I were the only ones I knew of with them, and Brax's nod confirmed it.

"I wish I could tell you no, but winter borns seem to be susceptible to them. We haven't had any in a long time. Last

I nodded. I had. Everyone had.

Those stories of Elias Cardinal, the last winter born human, going on a murdering spree through the villages, fighting the wolves, turning into some skeletal thing that nightmares were made of thanks to the shadows ripping him apart

from the inside, talking to him, making him believe he had to.

becomes ..." He hesitated before continuing, "

a grip on the corporeal world.

opposite.

time there was a winter born, their shadows corrupted them. You've probably heard the stories."

"Why are winter borns susceptible? Why does it even matter?" I snapped, frustrated that it was another part of my curse I couldn't change.

"There's no moon in winter. Three months of no moonlight. The city gets locked down, and the magic in our territory

...unbalanced. The shadows, we call them shadow demons, have more of

He was the reason for the winter born curse, for the stigma I lived with. There had been no winter borns since then.

But either way, they are powerful, and our world is full of creatures who want more power," he explained, and I sat forward, sipping my tea, my headache finally starting to edge away.

I was enthralled with what he said. Being from the women's village, we learned nothing of the wolves or the world

"Being born in that time somehow comes with shadows inside you that can either become loyal like yours or corrupt.

I wanted to know more.

except how to grow crops and look after animals to produce trade and supplies, half of which went to the wolves.

"I've never noticed that there is no moon in winter," I admitted, and he smiled.

"Yeah, not something we advertise. The days are shorter, the wolves scarier, but don't worry, we'll send you back to the humans when winter comes. It won't be safe for you here," he admitted, as if that's what I was scared about.

And maybe I should have been—but I wasn't. I was more disappointed that I wouldn't see them for three months. Winter fucking sucked.

I grew uneasy at the idea of him saying yes to them and needed to find out what that meant without telling them that he had.

I trusted them to an extent, but I wasn't delusional. I knew the wolves would protect themselves, and if they knew my brother was walking around with the shadows inside him, they'd probably do something I couldn't forgive them for.

"So the shadows, the ones talking to me, they can't be trusted?" I asked, thinking of my brother, who had said the

I didn't want to get to that point without knowing what it meant.

"No. Not those ones. Trust yourself; the ones you have will protect you. They called to me when they felt the others trying to get in, but you have to be more aware if they appear to you, Lorelai.

"They are leeches. The longer you talk to them, give them your full attention, the longer they distract you and suck the

life out of you, literally," he urged, and I swallowed hard, remembering Nikolai's comments about my blue lips.

Brax sighed, looking over me like he was trying to figure out how much to tell me before leaning closer.

him. I stayed silent, and Brax narrowed his eyes.

"Don't be. I don't want them in my head."

"Shut up," I said, and that made him pull back and laugh.

back to kissing him.

like it hurt you too."

throughout my body.

tightened.

I moaned into him.

"So fucking good." I trembled.

grinned, his eyes closed.

sucked in a breath.

him to see me blush.

to worry."

breakfast."

How close had I been to death?

"But they asked me for permission to get inside, why would they do that if they could get in anyway?" I asked, and

"The others don't think you should know this much until we get to the bottom of how they are accessing you. It could be dangerous for us wolves to have them so close to us," he admitted, and I kept quiet.

"The shadow demons can take over your mind, slowly and painfully, getting information. Like riding shotgun, seeing

and spying. But they can't take you over or control you until you give them access," he said, before leaning back.

I had no idea how his powers worked but if I could read a lie, I'm sure he could too.

I knew they had access because my brother had said yes. That link I could feel. The pressure, the bond that I had with

"Has your brother mentioned the shadows?" he asked, and I knew he was suspicious.

"The shadows could be spying now?" I asked, ignoring his question about my brother.

"No. I pushed them out. That's why it was painful, because they were already so deep. Sorry again," he said, grimacing as I emptied my cup of tea and put it down.

"Good." He smiled. "Keep thinking that, and it'll be harder for them to get in there. Try not to interact with them, and if you feel them, tell me," he said, grabbing my hand and rubbing his thumb over it.

The touch tingled along my cold skin, and I sucked in a breath, looking up at him. He smirked and leaned over me, kissing me tenderly, his hand sliding up my face, cupping the back of my neck as his mouth moved with mine.

It warmed me instantly, my body changing lanes from intrigued to horny in an instant. He chuckled against my lips, and I scowled.

"Now I've been in your head, I'll be very connected to what you're feeling for at least the next twenty-four hours."

He smirked and I rolled my eyes, climbing out of the blankets to straddle his lap, holding his face close to mine.

He tensed and I pulled back.

"A story for another time, Spitfire," he said softly, and I loved that we were back to my nickname.

I still wanted to know though, but he had told me a lot and I was still processing, so I stowed the question and went

"Why are you connected to the shadows and the others aren't?" I asked, before kissing him.

He sighed into the kiss as I ran my tongue along his, wrapping my arms around his neck as he wrapped his along my waist.

"Thank you," I whispered against him as he lifted my skirt so it flared out around us, "for getting them out. It looked

He undid his pants, then found my panties between us and ripped the crotch off before sliding his finger along my

folds. I gasped as he slipped a finger inside me, kissing into my neck.

"It did. But I'm okay, and so are you."

My head fell back as he yanked my dress down, finding my nipple and clamping his mouth over it, his rough tongue caressing it before he bit down.

I yelped as he shoved another finger inside me. I rocked my hips against him, my pussy drenching him as my core

"Perfect," he breathed before pulling his fingers out and lining his cock up to my entrance.

He smirked, and I grinned down at him, grinding myself against his fingers as he stroked my walls, sending pleasure

He slammed me down on him before I could take a breath, and I cried out as he filled me so deeply, it had sparks igniting within my core.

He found my mouth, stroking my tongue with his as I moved on his lap, riding him hard as he lifted his hips to meet

mine with harsh slaps. He was fast, hard, aggressive when he fucked, and I loved it, couldn't get enough.

I pulled his hair band out, running my hands through the loose blond strands, kissing him harshly as I did.

It was just what I needed, and with my headache finally gone, all I had to worry about was not being able to walk once he was done with me.

"Good girl, Spitfire, ride my cock, tell me how good it feels inside you," he whispered against my lips, pushing my hair behind my ear as my breath hitched.

My thighs were burning, trembling as he rolled his hips up and hit my G-spot so hard I gripped him tighter, yanking as

blankets behind him.

My pussy clenched around him, my entire body exploding as it let go around him, not handling the pressure of the pleasure.

He slapped my ass, urging me faster as he groaned, the bed shaking with our movements, his fist clenched in the

He released his own rough groan on the next stroke, drilling his hips hard in three sharp thrusts that emptied him as his body shook with the force.

"Brax!" I screamed out with a hoarse voice, my back arching as I clutched him to me.

"If I ask you a question, promise not to laugh?" I asked breathily, and he shook his head.

"Not promising anything, but ask away." He chuckled.

I rolled my eyes and climbed off him. My legs gave out, and I clutched him as he caught me. My head spun and I

I leaned against his forehead, both of us damp with sweat, as he flicked my nipple. I gasped, still too sensitive, and he

That had me laughing, considering we'd just fucked—not exactly "taking it easy."

"Yeah, sure. Anyway, my question ...," I said, turning away to adjust my dress back on my body, but really I didn't want

wives were done having children, whether they were allowed the herbs that helped stop them having them.

ladies in the village?" I asked.

I probably should have asked earlier, but I hadn't been expecting to come back, and husbands decided whether their

"Take it easy," he murmured, kissing my head and standing me up straight.

I spun to him and he coughed to hide his laughter, but his huge body was shaking with it, so I smacked him playfully and spun away, heading for the door.

"Wait," he said, and pulled me against him. I looked away. "Werewolves can't reproduce with humans. You don't have

"I wanted to know about wolves and the whole pregnancy thing. Do I need to take some herbs or something like the

If I hadn't been so hungry, I would've told him to fuck off for laughing at my question, but I was starving and followed him out, not sure how I felt about the answer he had given.

I was glad pregnancy wasn't an issue, but I also wondered what that meant for later on.

He kissed my blushing cheeks, then let me go and went to the door, opening it up. "C'mon, we'll go get some

Werewolves had children; it was how the next alphas took over. If I couldn't provide them with any, then they would have to find a female wolf to reproduce with, and that had my stomach turning.

I was being greedy, wanting them for myself, but I did, and I hated that they might stray. I had to find out what we

were, what it meant that I was here with them and theirs.

I was going to find out—as soon as I got some food in my stomach.

Did they have others? Or was this short term and I'd be cast aside during winter, with no husband and even more of an outcast in my village?