

Owned by the Alphas |

The Burn

The full moon. A night for werewolves. A night for mystery—and probably pain. But most of all, the night I had been waiting for.

I had to confront Elias with my decision not to be a part of his winter born crusade against the wolves.

I wasn't like him. I didn't want power, I didn't want to use my shadows, I just wanted to be accepted, and I had that. I wasn't about to throw it away.

And if I was being honest about it, the humans had treated me much worse than the wolves ever had.

Sure they had taken my virginity for some blood moon ritual, but technically I had given it. We all had.

The humans were the ones who couldn't accept who and what I was.

It didn't make me want to end them though, so Elias could shove it up his entitled ass because I wasn't buying what he was peddling, even if it could be the only chance I had at a true mating or children with my alphas.

I stood in the wardrobe, plaiting my hair down my back, looking over the dresses that I had been provided and trying to figure out how I was going to fight in the layers.

I didn't mind wearing a dress, I liked feeling nice and I knew how lucky it made me to have all my clothing provided, but I was going to a cemetery where I would probably be fighting for my life, so turning up in something I would also wear out on a stroll seemed kind of wrong.

As if reading my mind (they probably had), my alphas came through to the wardrobe.

Kai was wearing a sultry smirk like he always did, Derik had a hardened stare that only softened in his eyes when he was around me, and Brax was wearing his heart on his sleeve with a big grin as he handed me a pair of black leather pants.

“From Anetta. She wishes you well,” Derik explained, handing me a muslin shirt that was similar to the ones they always wore.

I grinned back, loving that it wasn’t an odd thing for females to wear attire like the males.

I pulled the borrowed clothes on. They fit snugly to my body, and I wondered if they were actually borrowed. Anetta and I were not the same size, and if I didn’t know better, I’d say she had found these for me specifically.

I looked up at my alphas, who had smirks on their faces that told me the answer. I had to thank her later for that but for now, I had to prepare myself.

I felt better, stronger, like I’d never been sick. It was strange, but so was everything about what I was doing.

I put on some black boots, then grabbed my dagger and tucked it in there. I put my hands on my hips and blew out a breath.

Kai, Derik, and Brax were dressed in the same way, almost comically matching.

Except their eyes were flashing red.

“Is that because of the full moon?” I asked, pointing to my eyes.

Kai nodded. “Yeah, we went for a run with the pack before and it’s hard to shift back into human on a full moon, especially before the peak,” he explained, and I nodded.

Derik led us back to the room, and I stared out the windows that were open, with the netting blowing in. The moon was out, still low in the sky.

“And the rest of the pack?”

“They’re remaining in wolf form. Cain is with them waiting on instructions,” Derik said, his hand going to the sword at his side.

“And if it comes to a fight, will you fight as human or wolf?” I wondered, not sure which beast was stronger.

“Brax will use his shadows as a human, that will help yours be stronger and keep us connected to you. Kai and I will be fighting as wolves.”

“You ready to use your shadows the way we’ve been practicing?” Brax asked, and I nodded, rolling my shoulders back.

“Yeah, I don’t know whether it’s the full moon or not, but the connection with them is really strong tonight. Maybe they know what we are going to do as well.”

I shrugged, then followed the alphas out of my suite, downstairs to the carriage waiting at the bottom. We made it to the lobby before the entire plan went to shit.

Derik hissed as his arm burned, Brax next, then Kai, all three of their eyes glowing, their teeth bared.

“No!” growled Brax as their arms glowed behind the oath writing they had there.

The oath they had taken at Tabitha’s, the price they had paid for the spell to link me, was being called on. I sucked in a breath as I realized what she had done.

She had made sure I could go alone. Like I was meant to.

“I knew she’d betray us!” Brax snarled, clutching his arm.

“I’m not going,” Kai bit, his body shaking as he dropped to his knees, howling.

“We have to honor our oath,” Derik spat out, glaring at his arm before turning to me.

“Does it hurt?” I asked, not sure how to help.

“It will burn until we fulfill our oath,” Derik huffed.

I bit my lip and looked toward the door.

“Then go. I was always meant to go alone. You said you would go as soon as you were called. And you said Cain was with the pack. If he needs you, the pack needs you,” I urged.

I knew shit was going to get bad, that after this, trusting Tabitha might not come as easily as before, but I didn’t have time to fix that right now. I had to go.

One problem at a time.

"I'm not leaving you to go alone," Kai growled.

"You don't have a choice, Kai! All three of you made a promise, and if you don't keep it then you'll be in pain, and who knows what else? What if they take back our link? What if we piss off the witches?"

"What if you die?!" Derik snapped, and I flinched at the roar in his voice, but I knew it was just the pain talking. The want not to follow their oath.

But they had to. I couldn't let this night have any more consequences than it was already going to have just because they cared about me more than anything else.

Their pack could be in danger, and Elias had said I had to go alone anyway.

"You have to go to Cain, Alphas. For me and for your pack," I said, moving forward, kissing Derik on the lips. It brought him to his knees.

I put my finger under his chin and made him look at me. "I'll be okay. I'm linked, you'll feel when I need you."

Derik kissed my hand, and my entire body felt it. I went to Brax, running my fingers along his forearm, our shadows brushing, making my skin raise to his.

He claimed my lips, and I barely had the will to pull back. The only reason I managed it was because Kai struggled past us, his feet shuffling like they were glued to the floor.

I turned to him as he grunted, forcing against whatever magic held him to get to the door. I ran over to him, putting my hand on his chest, stopping him from going further. He shrugged me off.

"Don't try that bullshit on me, Lorelai. I'm not letting you go alone. That's final."

I shook my head. "No, it's not, Kai. I have to, and the sooner you go and fulfill that oath, the sooner you can get to me when I need you," I said.

He glared at me. I didn't mean to be on anyone else's side but theirs but I had to believe there was a reason Tabitha had done this. She saw things we didn't, things I believed were meant to help, and I trusted that.

“Go to the cemetery then, wait for us there.” Derik winced, and I nodded, but we both knew I wouldn’t, which is why I promised nothing.

Kai still glared at me, but when I met his gaze that disappeared and he pulled me into him, pressing a searing kiss against my lips. A hot, demanding kiss that stole the fear and anxiety surrounding what I was about to do.

“I’ll be there soon. Stay alive,” he warned, and I nodded.

“I’ll do my best,” I breathed against him as he released me.

I backed away from them. Kai tried to take another step, but whatever force was binding the oath planted his feet to the floor, and this time, he couldn’t fight it.

His fists clenched at his sides, and I blew them all a kiss, running out the door and heading toward the carriage that was waiting. I got inside, and as soon as the door closed, the panic hit.

I had never been anywhere else in the realm on my own. I had always been with others, always distracted from my own thoughts, but now I was by myself and I could hear my own heart beating.

It was so damn loud, the throbbing in my head more intense as I thought through every possible scenario of what was about to happen.

Was I about to kill my brother? Was Elias about to kill me? What if I never made it back to my alphas? What if that was the last time I saw them?

My breaths came harshly through my tight chest as I tried to summon some kind of bravery. It was hard when the silence was so loud around me.

My shadows moved within me, slow and caressing like they were trying to soothe my panic, but my thoughts were intrusive and all I could think about were the worst things.

Until I felt my alphas in my head.

“You’ve got this, Little Human. You’re a fucking winter born,” Kai said, and I could just picture his smirk.

"We're here with you, beautiful," Derik's soft voice said, and I could almost feel the way his intense eyes bore down on me, convincing me he was speaking only the truth.

"Your shadows will protect you, and so will we," Brax soothed, the power of his shadows lightly brushing mine.

I smiled, closing my eyes, listening to them through the link. I didn't open my eyes the rest of the ride, I didn't focus on anything but the feel of them and the link we had.

It was only when the carriage came to a stop and the door popped open that I had to bring myself back out of my own head and try to get my shit together.

I climbed out into the darkness, the moon covered in clouds, the rays only just peeking through enough to light up the gravestones and packed dirt of the cemetery.

It was an eerie, ominous place, as creepy as it was meant to be. So creepy it brought goosebumps to my skin and a shiver to my spine.

The wind was light but ice cold. I ignored it and stepped over the frosted grass toward the power I could feel pulling me in, calling me.

It could be a trap, but I had known that from the start. Elias wanted me there for a reason, and now I had to find out what it was—the hard way.

I looked over the graveyard with wary eyes, but I knew I wouldn't find anything. Elias wanted me in the crypt, which was exactly where I was being pulled to.

I found it at the back of the cemetery and didn't hesitate going in, following the lit wall lanterns down the cracked concrete steps.

My fear was still there, but every step closer to Elias meant another step closer to ending the part of my life that was a shadow on the rest.

And I wanted that more than anything. I wanted to be able to be with the alphas and my family without having to worry about missing humans or the shadows destroying everything I loved.

If I was the only one who could stop him then I would try, and if my life was the price I had to pay so my mom and my alphas lived out their lives, then I would pay it.

That brought a dull growl to my head, and I smiled. They were still with me. Despite the power ripe in the crypt trying to suffocate the link, it was still there. Just.

I took a deep breath as I reached the bottom of the stairs and rounded the corner to a lit crypt room with a roaring fireplace in the stone wall, a huge blood pentagram laid out on the floor, and my brother, pale and sickly, his undereyes dark, a shadow within them that made my stomach turn.

His smirk grew, and so did my uneasiness. I hardened my stare at him, trying to see past the face of my brother, one so similar to mine, to Elias underneath.

My shadows grew restless within me, thrashing in my stomach as I tried not to show how terrified I really was.

I felt my alphas trying to reassure me, but I had no idea where they were or if they were on their way. The link was too weak, like something was making it dull, but as long as I could feel them, I knew I could draw on them.

“A blood pentagram? How original.” I snickered, prompting him to speak instead of just stare creepily.

His grin grew, and it was Elias’s eyes I saw in my brother’s face.

“I didn’t think you’d come. You’re either very brave or very stupid.” He grinned.

I shrugged. “Both.”

“Hmmm. And have you come to a decision? Are you willing to join us?” he asked, his voice echoing in the crypt.

“You and I both know I was never going to say yes, that’s why you made me come here,” I said, and he chuckled.

“Very true. I was hoping we could have some fun before I add your shadows to my collection,” he said, and I frowned.

I still didn’t understand why he needed sacrifices.

“Why do you need sacrifices? You already have my brother and his shadows.”

“You’ll find out.”

He grinned, and I gritted my teeth. I wanted to know what his plan was so I could stop it, but he seemed more interested in inching closer, his greedy eyes looking over me.

His shadows were sending power waves over me, like an aura, poking and prodding me. One I refused to acknowledge or give in to.

“So that’s the plan? Kill me, claim my shadows? And then what?” I demanded.

“And then I make humans the top of the food chain, where they belong...and werewolves extinct, where they belong.”

My blood boiled at that, and so did my shadows. I almost hissed at him the way he talked of erasing an entire race just because he was scared of them.

And that’s all it was. The werewolves had the power he wanted, and he was trying to take it instead of earn it.

That wasn’t going to work for me, so I knew what it was going to come down to. A fight for my life. A battle of wills and power.

I just hoped my will was stronger.