

## Payment To the Alpha by Ms.M Chapter 31

James' POV

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I allowed Blade to the surface to keep the others in control. He gave away a growl making all wolves crawl back into their humans except for Stella, my sister's wolf, Amber was an alpha's daughter, and her wolf was stronger than the others. Blade let out a warning growl making even Stella stand down, not to Amber's liking, however.

"WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH YOU!?" Amber growled at Natasha whilst positioning herself in a fight stance.

"Amber, I understand that times are tough right now and that you all feel helpless towards the girl you all love and want to protect, but first of all, Avery doesn't need protection, she needs you to believe in her and to be there for her, second of all if you only focus on every negative thing happening right now, on all the bad, all the uncontrollable things, you will never be able to solve this. Make it a habit to smile more and do fun things; only then will you have the energy and the knowledge needed to win this." Amber took a step back and sat down on her chair. "Don't ever do that again." Lisa said in a low growl.

"Deal. Now can we continue?" I sat back down and stared at Natasha as I explained what had happened. She swallowed hard and looked into my eyes.

"I'm so sorry." I felt it. I actually felt how sorry she was. She had been through something similar, her mate trying to kill her, but she had to see her mate getting killed in front of her. I can still save Avery.

"Why is this wizard so infatuated with Avery? Do you have any clue as to what this is all about?" Trish asked. We were all equally helpless and looking for anything that could help us. Well, maybe not that helpless, I knew something that the others didn't, and so did Natasha. She gave me a knowing look, and I decided to share the facts I knew with the others.

"It can't be just a relative who controls someone's mind. There has to be a direct connection, a connection that is given from the making of the person. The wizard controlling Avery is her father." Gasps were heard from everyone as they stared in shock. I swallowed hard, and my jaw tensed as I continued.

"When we were talking in the conference room the other day, I asked Natasha to stay behind because I saw that she had information, she had information regarding Avery's mother's kidnapping. A witch kidnaped Avery's mother because of a conflict her parents had with him when Madeline was a child, he demanded revenge, and thus he kidnaped her and impregnated her with Avery.

They tried riding themselves of her before she was born, but he had put a protection spell on her rendering their countless tries useless. When she was born, he was already making contact, but he needed to wait for the right moment, and apparently, that moment came when Avery arrived here. He wouldn't be doing this for fun, he has a plan, and Avery is the key to succeeding, which is why we must make sure that he doesn't."

I paused to let it all sink in before continuing. "Avery being in the dungeons is the last thing I want, but it is for the best. That way, she can't harm anyone, whether it be someone else or herself, and also, he has no use for her when she's behind bars, so he will probably be leaving her alone for a while." Alex dragged his hands over his face, Amber's wolf was restless, I could feel Stella's urge to kill, Lisa and Trish were holding each other's hands, Jackson was sitting with his arms crossed over his chest, his jaw clenching, he was trying to control his wolf, and Alvin was tapping his foot making me want to cut it off.

"What does this mean?" Jackson asked, lifting his eyes to meet mine.

"It means we have a wizard to find and kill." Everyone turned back to me, their eyes filled with determination.

"So, what's the order, Alpha?" Trish asked me. I looked over at Natasha because, honestly, I don't have a fucking clue.

"First, you need to make sure that Avery is NEVER alone. That is the single most important thing, and if you leave her alone, her mind could drift and cause more damage. Second, she needs to know that you are all there for her, especially you, James." I nodded my head. Of course, I'm gonna be there for her. I'm her mate. "I'm going to try and find a way to stop or at least block the wizard."

"Isn't that what the barrier was supposed to do?" Alex asked. He was annoyed. We were all on edge, but we needed to control it, or everything would blow up even more.

"It was, but I underestimated his powers, I thought he would be an ordinary wizard, but he's stronger, powerful."

"Well, don't fuck up again." Alex snapped. "Alex!" Amber warned him, getting on her feet. "What!? This fucking mess would have never happened if we had done it right from the start, now Avery's in the dungeon, there's a fucking witch out to get her, and he's probably already planning a war while we're sitting here like a bunch of fucking idiots trying to come up with a plan!"

"What do you suggest we do? We need a plan, Alex!? We can't just go in blind. That's not how we do things." Alvin was also standing now, and so was Jackson.

"WE SHOULD BE OUT LOOKING FOR HIM!" Alex roared, his authority clear in his voice, making Alvin step back, but not Jackson.

"WE WILL, BUT WE NEED A FUCKING PLAN! IT'S NOT A GOOSE CHASE. IT'S A DARK WITCH WE'RE DEALING WITH! WE ALL CARE ABOUT AVERY HERE!"

They were all talking over each other by now, one saying this and one saying that. So I was sitting there, observing them.

"What the fuck are you smiling for?!" Alex snapped my way. I hadn't even realized that I was, but I was smiling; a warm feeling was spreading throughout my body, Love.

"Last time you all stood around bitching like this was three years ago when we were going on that trip to L.A. It was about where we should visit first. Neither of you wanted to forfeit, so for 1 fucking hour, you stood, just like this, bickering with each other, and in the end, we went to all of the places that everyone wanted to go. And how long has Avery been here? A month more or less? She brought back Christmas, she brought back our family, and she brought back your annoying ass screaming. Only now, it's because you all want to help her, save her, and we will, but first, you need to sit the fuck down and shut up because the first person to give me a headache will have double practices every day for a year." Finally, they all relaxed and went completely quiet. They looked at each other and then back at me, and I saw Amber tearing up, her bottom lip pouting like when she was a child.

"We can't lose her," Amber spoke with a shaky voice and fear glowing in her eyes.

"We won't." I promised her, and they all took their seats. Alex came to stand beside my chair and put a hand on my shoulder. He has done that ever since we were kids. Sometimes it was to calm me, and other times it was to calm himself.

Now that this was all out of the way, we could come up with a real plan.

"Natasha, do you have any idea how to get rid of the wizard?" She looked at me with a sorrowful expression, and I had my answer right there.

"I'm sorry, Alpha, I don't know. But I promise you that I will find a way." That's all I could ask for.

"Natasha, are there any other ways for us to fight a wizard? Any tips that could be useful?"

"Now that you ask, there are a few things that can weaken any witch or wizard you would come to encounter." I looked over at Jackson.

"Gamma, take Natasha to the warriors and tell the lead trainers to teach them everything Natasha says. I want it to be engraved in their bones by the end of the month."

"Yes, Alpha." Jackson gave Trish a quick kiss, and then he and Natasha headed out.

"Trish and Lisa, I need you guys to make sure that nobody talks about Avery. It seems that the entire pack is already aware of the fact that she's in the dungeon, and I don't want any more details being leaked."

"Yes, Alpha." They said in unison before heading out as well.

"Alvin, tell Damon that I want him to stand guard down in the dungeon and that nobody except for the ranked members is allowed down there."

"Yes, Alpha."

Now it was just me, and my siblings left. When Alvin closed the door, I released a heavy breath and leaned back, pinching the bridge of my nose. "Amber, you had some friends that knew some witches didn't you?" "Yes, in uncle Carlos' pack." I had an idea, but it needed to be under the radar. "Contact them and get information about the witches and wizards that they know. I need you to pay them a visit. Ask around about a wizard that may or may not have had a conflict with a werewolf family around forty years ago."

"Yes, Alpha." Amber was about to head out of the door,

"and Amber, make sure that nobody knows. Be subtle." Alex scoffed behind me, and Amber threw him a death glare.

"Of course, Alpha, and fuck you, Alex."

"Hey, if he's Alpha, I'm Beta to you!"

Amber slammed the door shut as she walked out of my office. I turned to Alex,

"Why do you always have to be a dick?"

"Why does she always have to be a bitch? See, there are a lot of good questions but not nearly enough answers."

"You're damn right about that." I said, scratching the back of my neck.

Natasha's POV

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I left Alpha James' office and headed to the training field to talk to the warriors and teach them how to weaken any witch or wizard. This is normally not something I or any other witch would teach, but considering the circumstances, I knew I had to. Things were about to get much worse than any of them could ever comprehend.

"Gamma." One of the trainers greeted Jackson with a head bow.

"Anna, this is Natasha. Please gather everyone. Natasha has some things to announce." The trainer, Anna, bowed her head again and went over to the warriors who were training combat out on the field. They all quickly followed their trainer and came to gather in front of Jackson and me.

"Everybody listen up and listen closely! From now on, every other practice will be about close contact combat with a witch or wizard." They looked around at each other but then quickly turned their attention back to the Gamma. "Natasha here is going to teach you how to weaken them in your human forms so that you afterward can finish the job in your wolf forms. Natasha," Jackson turned to me and gave me the word. I looked around at all their faces. They were truly disciplined. They didn't ask why or anything else for that matter. They were just ready to learn.

"Lobelia, does anyone know what that is?" I asked the warriors. One of them raised their hand, and I gestured for him to speak. "It's a flower." I was impressed, not many have heard of the flower before, and I expected none of the people in front of me to know about it. "Correct."

"The Lobelia flower is a flower that causes one to lose concentration, and for a witch, that's lethal. Our magic is only as strong as our concentration and our emotional stability. An emotionally unstable witch is either very weak or very dangerous. However, what we are going to be concentrating on today is the Lobelia flower." I opened my bag and took out a glass container of the Lobelia flower extract.

"You can use it in syringes and hope that you can get close enough to inject them with it, however, the chances of that happening are low. It is nearly impossible. You can also dip a dagger into the extract, and the smallest cut will affect them gravely.

Only your own imagination sets the limits for how to inject them with the extract. But be wise in your decision because the slightest hesitation or misstep could lead to your own demise."

I put the container on the table and moved aside so that the warriors could come up and do what they're supposed to. Jackson looked at me and nodded his head with a smile; I returned the gesture and made my way back to the house, to my mate. Carlos came with me and left his Beta in charge.

For which I am very grateful, being away from him is definitely not good for my own emotional stability.

I felt a cloud of doubt in the pit of my stomach, a nauseating feeling was building up. I knew why. I had lied to James and the others, told them that there was no way to help Avery with the wizard yet, but there was. However, it wasn't one that they could know about, I will tell Avery, and it will be her decision what she chooses to do with the information.

James' POV

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Everyone was away at my orders, and I was sitting on the concrete floor in the dungeon outside Avery's cell. She was still sound asleep. I couldn't help but feel guilty for some reason. I can't help her, I have never felt helpless before, but right now, I felt completely and utterly helpless.

'What are we gonna do?'

I honestly don't know Blade.

'We have to kill him.'

I know.

' I want to kill him.'

Me too.

' We need to protect her.'

We will.

'James, we need to protect her. Something is coming, and we can't leave her alone.'

She will never be alone.

## **Payment To the Alpha by Ms.M Chapter 32**

Avery's POV

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Trees were swaying, dancing with the wind. The wind was humming through the tree branches, and beautiful, soft green grass was tickling my toes.

If I could only use one word to describe the feeling of being here, it would be peaceful. I feel at peace.

The moon was big and bright, and it looked like I could touch it if I just reached out my hand. It looked like I could graze the surface, admire the beauty of the moon with a single touch if only I stretched out my hand.

My hand reached up, I closed my eyes, and I let my senses take control, I let my hand show me the way, and sure enough, I touched the moon. A powerful surge of energy, of light and warmth, speared through me, a feeling of home and love. I opened my eyes slowly, savoring the moment and feeling and seeing that it isn't the moon that my hand is touching, it's her, it's the woman from my dream.

"Hello, Avery. Welcome back." My hand was lying in hers, and for some reason, I never wanted to remove it. I felt safe and cared for, It felt like home, and at the same time, it felt like an energy field that was about to burst.

"I have been waiting for you. I am truly sorry for the things that are happening to you." I slowly pulled my hand away, feeling the energy surge break and the coldness once again sending a shiver ran through my body.

"The warmth doesn't come from another, my child; it comes from within. Search for it, and you shall find it." How did she know? "Because words are sometimes only a distraction from what really matters." I looked at the beautiful woman standing in front of me once again. How could she radiate such light? How could she be at such peace with herself? "Who are you?"

"I am very much to very many. But mostly, I am referred to as the moon goddess." My eyes widened; I don't believe it. "You don't have to." "Would you stop that?" I snapped, not because I'm mad, but because I'm frightened. She's reading my mind, I don't even know what my own mind is saying, but she does. "My apologies."

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to be rude. It's just, are you really the moon goddess, the one that all wolves refer to whenever they say, pretty much anything?" She smiled at me politely, and I felt all better.

"Yes, I am she. I know you must have a lot of questions for me, Avery, and I'm going to answer them to the best of my ability." Okay, then, I really need some answers.

"Avery, the first thing you need to know is that you are an extraordinary young woman. Don't be fooled by the appearance of others. There is much more than meets the eye. Who we are is embedded in our core, in our genes, and our DNA. Nothing, not even magic, can wipe that away."

Is she saying that my abilities weren't taken from me? Am I a wolf? But I'm weak, I can barely run, and my hits have the strength of a feather when punching a werewolf.

"You are so much more than you could ever begin to imagine. Every ounce of doubt and self-loathing you have needs to be pushed aside. How can you ever rise when you

keep beating yourself down? Avery, the things that are happening to you see them as a test that will show whether you are or aren't capable of handling the number of powers bestowed upon you. It is not an accident that it was you who was born into this world under these circumstances, you were chosen, and it was fate."

"But what if I don't want this? Can't it be given to someone stronger and braver in all of this because I'm not? I'm scared. I'm so scared of the things that could happen, that will happen, when the wizard is back in my mind. I lose all control. I think that fate has made a mistake."

I felt a stray tear leave my eye and roll down my cheek.

Whether it be fate or the goddess herself who put me here, I want to resign from my position.

"Avery, fate doesn't make mistakes. This is yours, and you can either run from it or embrace it as I told you last time. I understand that this must feel like a heavyweight to carry on your shoulders, but it is your weight to bear.

You will soon make a decision. What you choose will affect everyone gravely, so think with your heart and not your head."

"Isn't it usually the other way around?"

"Not when it comes to love and family, my dear. The heart always wins, even if it means shattering it." A sense of fear struck me upon hearing her words, shattering it, shattering my heart, again.

"Who is the wizard in my head?" The million-dollar question, to which I knew she had the answer.

Her eyes gazed into mine, she would answer my questions to the best of her ability, and I think this one was beyond that ability.

"Blood doesn't make family, Avery. However, it bonds you. It's thick and can cause just as much damage as it can create love. But remember, not all those with whom you share a bond are worth protecting. You can choose family, Avery, and sometimes family chooses you, and you dear have been chosen.

You are much loved, and sometimes we do irrational things for those we love, things that harm us in the end, think with your heart, and don't stray from the truth. Protect your family, Avery, not your bonds." So cryptic, I feel more confused than I did before our conversation started.

Blood makes bonds, and love makes a family. I just need to focus on that. She looked at me as if she was searching for something, scanning my eyes.



"Avery... oh darling, you have no idea of the things you will accomplish."

I heard noises coming from within the woods. Behind the trees, a shadow was lurking. It felt familiar, I could sense its energy, and it was strong, powerful, and majestic even. I kept looking, not being able to remove my eyes, until the shadow showed itself, in the form of a wolf. It was grand and white as snow, and she was large, larger than any of the other wolves I had seen, except for James, of course.

Her paws were silver, and her tail had silver stripes that glistened in the moonlight. Her eyes had the color of the moon, with flecks of black in them. Wait a minute, I have seen her eyes before, in my last dream I was here, I was looking at the moon, and it had flecks of black on it.

"Yes, the moon behind me is a reflection of the wolf. Whatever you feel when looking at the moon, is what this wolf holds within herself. However, the moon is also a symbol of what is to come."

I looked back at the wolf. Why did she feel so familiar? I gently reached out my hand and held it close to her snout, and she pushed her face onto my hand I began to stroke her.

"She's beautiful."

"She is, and powerful, just like you." I smiled at her kind words without averting my eyes from the wolf. I gave her another few strokes before she pulled away and looked at me with saddened eyes. Dropping her head, she turned around and walked back into the woods.

"Wait, where is she going?" I asked the moon goddess.

"She's leaving, she asked me for a favor, and I granted it to her, for both your sakes."

"What favor?"

"To comfort you, to show herself and be there for you at least once. But it's not time yet, soon, however."

"What do you mean?"

"Avery, what did you sense when you touched her?"

"I felt a sense of familiarity, it's hard to explain, but she exuded power and grace."

"Like a Luna should, wouldn't you say?" She was right. That wolf was the embodiment of a Luna. Everything about her is what I believe a Luna to be.

"Yes."

"Well, when her human is ready, she will be Luna, and Xena will get to show her true self."

"She doesn't have a human?"

"Not yet. Her human still has some way to go." She looked at me expectantly. Am I missing something? She doesn't have a human and is going to be L-

"Wait are you saying...Is that my wolf?" I asked her, tears once again escaping without permission.

"Yes, my dear, Xena is your wolf, and she will be waiting for you."

A loud howl was heard from within the woods, and through my tears, I started laughing because I understood her. She was just as excited as I was.

I looked back at the moon goddess, but my eyes diverted to what was happening behind her. The moon, the black flecks they were growing, almost half of the moon was now covered.

"What is that?" I asked, and she turned around, looking at the moon.

"That is like an hourglass," She turned back to me before she continued.

"Of your soul. Avery, this is not only about defeating a wizard and reaching your full potential. It is about doing these things while still keeping your soul intact. There will be many situations where a decision could blemish your soul. The price of this war isn't land or money. It is you. The wizard wants you, and he needs you to accomplish what it is that he is planning, and if he gets what he wants, you will lose yourself completely, and all you know will be lost."

"But why is it already darker than before? What has changed?" Once again, she looked into my eyes as if she was scanning them for answers.

"You will know when you wake up."

Have I done something?

The moon goddess turned on her heels and started walking away when a thought hit me.

"Wait! Moon goddess, the voice in my head, the woman who helps me, is that you?"

She stood with her back towards me and slowly turned only her head to show her profile. She was smiling.

"That would be cheating, Avery, having the moon goddess guiding you, don't you think?" She turned her head more and winked at me.

"No, it would be common sense." I replied while smiling at her.

"War is coming, Avery, and ultimately the outcome lays in your hands." She walked towards the moon with those words, and slowly light covered her, and she disappeared. Her words repeating themselves in my head,

'War is coming, and ultimately the outcome lays in your hands.' Fuck me...

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I woke up to a smell of sewer filling my nostrils, making me hurl. I opened my eyes, and dizziness hit me, making the world spin around. I quickly closed my eyes again and tried to regain stability.

My hands were touching something soft, it was a mattress, but I wasn't in my room. I opened my eyes once again, and the dizziness had eased up. I made sure not to move my head too quickly and used my hands to steady myself. Where the hell am I? It was chilly and drafty. I looked around and realized that the walls were made of concrete, and there was no source of light except for a lightbulb hanging on the other side of the-

Bars? What the hell. I quickly got up, noticing it was a mattress on the floor that I had slept on. I ran to the bars and started pulling them.

"Hello!? Hello, is anybody there!?" What's going on? Have I been kidnapped? Where is James?

James... oh no...NO!

Like a flashback, everything came playing back. The training with Alex, what I had told him, going up to our room and seeing James there except he wasn't, he wasn't there, there was nobody in the room...The classroom, the knife... oh no the knife, I had taken it to James, and I was going to—I—I was going to kill him with it. "No...NO NO AAHH!!" An immense pain came crashing down on my brain,

I tried to kill him

I tried to kill James.

"NO!" I was panicking. My heart was about to jump out of my chest. I couldn't breathe, what have I done... I tried to kill him. My hands took a firm grip on my hair, wanting to pull it all out.

This can't be...No, this isn't real, but it is, what have I done?

My heart was aching terribly. I was lost in a state of panic and pain that I didn't realize someone coming into the cell and grabbing my shoulders. No god no,

"NO!" I quickly pushed the person away and saw that it was James. Alex was standing outside looking terrified, or maybe he was sad.

"Avery, It's okay. I'm right here." James tried to comfort me, but no, no comforting could make this better, and why was he even trying? I tried to kill him. Seeing his face only made everything much more vivid as the memories came pouring back,

"NO, stay away!" I pushed myself up against the wall at the furthest end of the cell, away from him.

"Avery, it's okay, you're okay,"

"I TRIED TO KILL YOU!... I tried to kill you-I—No," I was panicking and sobbing, shaking my head, not knowing where to look. I wanted to die. That's what I wanted right now.

"But I'm okay. Hey, look at me, please, Avery, it wasn't you. It was him." James carefully took a step closer, not wanting to startle me.

"But I was there! I saw everything! WHY COULDN'T I STOP HIM!?" My hands were clutching my chest as I was heaving. I didn't want his comfort. I didn't deserve it, I wasn't the one that almost got killed, yet it felt like someone had dug a knife into my heart...

"Baby, please, there was no way for you to stop him," I held out my hand to keep him from getting any closer. Why is he doing this? He must leave me alone. He can't touch me.

"I- I almost killed you —I can't, I can't..." My hand dropped as I bent forward, too weak to stand. James used his speed and was in front of me in half a second and took hold of my shoulders. I used the last of my strength and started pushing him away again. I don't want him to touch me. I don't want him to make this all better. This can't get better! I can't allow it to...

"Don't! Please, please stop, no!" He didn't budge, he didn't even move, I pushed at his chest as hard as I could, but he stood still, his head held high, he just stood there and didn't do anything, and slowly but surely, the sobs were stopping, the tears stopped

streaming and my heartbeat wasn't as irregular, it was slowing, steadying, and all because of his touch.

No...I want to feel it. I want to feel all of it. I deserve so much worse, not better. Why James...

I felt my legs give in, but I didn't fall. Instead, James wrapped his arms around me, engulfing me in a hug.

"What did you do..." I asked him, my voice raspy and tired, defeated.

"What I will always do, stand by your side, and make you feel better." He responded while stroking the back of my head. I grabbed onto the back of his shirt with my hands and pushed myself further into the hug. Still, I felt like I wasn't close enough to him.

"Why?" His hold around me tightened,

"I think you know why, but I will give you some time to come to terms with it. In the meantime, don't push me away, please." I dug my head into his chest,

"I don't deserve it," I said

"That's not your decision to make." He responded, meaning every word.

## Payment To the Alpha by Ms.M Chapter 33

James' POV

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I was sitting on the mattress, watching Avery sleep peacefully.

Yesterday I hugged her for over ten minutes before Alex broke it off by opening his mouth, telling me he was leaving, and rendering mind linking utterly useless.

I refused to let go of Avery, however. I walked her over to the mattress. Her face was void of emotions. There was nothing showing, she looked like a shell of a person, and it broke my heart. She laid down, and I held her hand, drawing circles on it until she fell asleep. She's been sleeping for over an hour now, but I can't find it in me to leave her, to let go of her, to not see her. No, I was staying by her side.

'Alpha, Amber has some news regarding the wizard.' Lukas, one of the warriors, mind-linked me.

I released a breath and closed my eyes. Of course, she does.

'I'll be right there. Tell her to meet me in my office.'

'Yes, Alpha.'

I took one last look at Avery before slowly pulling my hand away, she squirmed, and a frown showed on her face making me smile. Any emotion is better than no emotion at all.

I gently caressed her cheek and laid a kiss on her forehead before standing up.

Blade started growling in the back of my head. He had been awfully cheerful the past couple of hours, so this behavior change came as a surprise.

What the hell are you doing?

'Nothing.'

We'll be back. We have to find out what Amber knows. The sooner we end this, the sooner we don't have to visit our mate in the dungeon.

'I know.'

There's something else that you know, isn't there?

'Would you be okay if Avery were to follow her heart, even if it meant breaking it?'

That's what a Luna does.

I felt my jaw tick. What the fuck kind of question was that?

'But would you be okay with it?'

No, no, I wouldn't be.

'Let's talk to Amber.'

Blade, what the fuck is going on?

'I can't tell you,'

I'm your human!? We share the same body and mind, why can't you tell me?!

'The moon goddess orders.'

What? Did you talk to her?

'Yes, quite often since Avery got here actually, she has big plans for her, but there are also many obstacles that she needs to face first.'

Like what?

'Nope.'

Oh, come on, I thought we were friends.

'We're not, we're family, but I still won't tell you.'

I snubbed Blade into the back of my mind and made my way to the office.

Does the moon goddess have plans for Avery? And what was that about following her heart? Why did Blade sound so angry? He made it sound like we won't be there to help her, I won't let her face this alone, and I know that neither will Blade, so why did he make it sound like she's going to face this all by herself?

With all this confusion, I really hope Amber has a few answers.

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"Alpha." Lukas greeted me with a slight head bow when I entered my office.

"Thank you, Lukas; you can leave. I need to speak privately with my siblings." I went and sat by my desk. Lukas bowed his head once more before exiting. Amber and Alex were sitting in front of me, and I was really hoping to hear some good news. "So, do you want the good news first or the bad?" Amber asked, looking a little fuzzy.

"Ugh, I was hoping for good news only."

"Really? What world do you live in?" Amber asked, her voice laced in sarcasm. I rolled my eyes and leaned back in my chair.

"Bad news first, please."

"It seems like this 'conflict' between a certain witch and a werewolf family is over one hundred years old. It started when a werewolf pack ambushed a half-moon pack for the land that the pack had, which was massive.

The Half-moon Pack knew that they couldn't handle the attack on their own, so they reached out to a witch who built a shield around the pack. Although that is illegal, they didn't see another way they could solve this without losing all of their pack members,"

"Who was the pack that attacked?" I asked Amber.

"Nobody knows. All they know is that the pack is ruthless, not like us, but in the sense that they will kill anyone and everyone, even for the fun of it, and then leave the territory alone. However, the problem was that the Alpha of the Half-moon Pack had a daughter, she was five years old, and she went outside the shield and was immediately taken by the enemy pack, the Alpha told the witch to take down the field, and their warriors were ready for the attack. The Alpha told the witch to protect his daughter by any means necessary, and so she did. She did a protection spell on the girl but had to maintain it during the attack constantly, she wasn't all that powerful, and finally, her powers ran out. She ran to the girl to protect her but was attacked in the process...She didn't make it. The witch's name was Alena, and when she passed, her husband went insane and tried to eliminate the entire werewolf population in America. He was killed by a werewolf only two years later, but his son was ten years old at the time and promised to carry out what his father began. He promised to avenge his parents. And the pack that was attacked was the one of Avery's mom. Avery's grandmother was the little girl, and Madeline paid the price, and now Avery is the final key. "

"So the wizard doing this is the son of the witch that was killed?" I asked, trying to piece everything together in my mind. "Yes, and his name is Crow."

"Like the bird?" Alex chimed in with furrowed eyebrows. I leaned forward and placed my hands on the table. "Exactly, and the crow is normally associated with deceit and manipulation. Is Crow his birth name?" I asked, turning my head to Amber.

"No, I don't know his birth name. He chose Crow himself as he grew older," Amber looked at me with wonder.

"He didn't learn how to manipulate people's minds; he was born with it." She said as the epiphany hit her. "That's what I think, which means that we have been going about this all wrong. We believed him to be a normal but powerful wizard who had this ability on top of the others, but what if this ability is the strongest one he has? What if his magic is only as strong as his ability to manipulate?" This could be it. This could be the advantage we needed. "Natasha told the warriors earlier about a flower called Lobelia. It makes the person lose concentration which, for a witch or a wizard, is fatal. If we could inject him with that extract, then he wouldn't be strong enough to manipulate Avery, and his other powers would be on hold too, giving us enough time to kill him." Amber said, and we all felt the joy mixed with victory rush through us.

"It's not so simple." Natasha said as she walked into my office and came to stand next to Alex's chair, holding a picture in her hand. "What do you mean? What did we miss?" Alex asked, sounding frustrated, understandably so. "You missed the part where his killing isn't yours to do. There is a reason as to why he hasn't been killed yet because he can't be. Only one person can kill him, and she was born a little over eighteen years ago." Me, Alex, and Amber looked at each other. What the hell is she talking about? Why can't we kill her? Eighteen years ago....

"Avery?" I looked at Natasha wide-eyed, and she looked at me with remorse.



"Yes, Avery is the only one who can kill him."

Avery's POV

\* \* \* \* \*

Where am I?

There is no grass and no green leaves on the trees. Only the tree trunks were standing on the dry ground. It looked like someone had chopped them off.

It looked like I was standing on dried clay, but it was the ground, the ground where the grass once grew. Two stone pillars were standing in front of me, and it looked like it used to be a gate. The numbers 2 and 8 were barely visible on the right pillar, and on top of them, there were two. What is that? It looked like angels, but the wings had fallen off, and their faces looked to have been burnt by something. As I looked further down, I saw a house, it was white and grey, it was made of wood, and the color had somewhat faded, but all in all, it looked presentable.

I walked over to the house, careful of my surroundings, as I got closer I saw a rocking chair on the porch, and it was moving, someone was sitting in it, with a cup in her hand, it was a woman, she had black straight hair. The closer I got, the more familiar she seemed. Then, as I walked up on the porch, I saw one single flower sitting in a vase. It was a rose, a black one. It seemed to be the only living thing in sight.

"Hello, Miss?" I said in a low voice not to startle the woman.

"Please, have a seat." She said and pointed to the stool next to a little round table. So I walked around her and took a seat on the stool, and that's when I saw what she looked like. The black hair framed her heart-shaped face, her grey-colored eyes stood out, and her small button nose made her all the more surreal. She was beautiful.

"Hello Avery, I have been expecting you." She said with a lovely smile. Why do I recognize her smile?

"How do you know my name?" I asked her. "That's not important, dear. Tell me, what do you see?" She asked me and looked out over the land. I was confused by the question, didn't we see the same thing?

"A whole lot of nothingness." I responded, hoping I wasn't rude, but that is what I saw, and honestly, I'm getting kind of sick of my dreams, where everyone talks in riddles.

Suddenly the land changed, flowers grew, the grass came up, and the trees reached the sky with their beautiful green leaves. The sun beamed down over a little lake, and I heard children laughing. "Now, what do you see?" She asked me again. I looked around in awe and saw the birds fly high up in the sky.

"It's beautiful," I said in a gasp.

"That's because I projected an image of your mate into your head," In the blink of an eye, everything went back to the dry, colorless land that it originally was. "What you mean you projected an image of my mate?"

"You already know who James is to you, Avery. So you must only open your heart to him." So James was my mate. How is that possible? I mean, I suspected it after everything I feel for him and what his mere presence does to me, and also the voice in my head that kept saying it was a pretty big clue.

"Why did it change back?" I asked her. "It didn't; you did, you see it's only ever nothing until you make it something. If you believe this to be a paradise, then it will. If your mate had been here with you, everything would look different. However, you see what you project, which in your case, is a whole lot of nothingness." Her words hit me in the core. Is this what I project?

"It's not an easy task, Avery, but anything can become beautiful if you allow it to."

"How did you do all of this?" She giggled and took a sip from her coffee.

"I'm a witch, sweetheart." She said with a wink.

"Why am I here?" I asked her. "You tell me."

"I don't know, honestly. I remember being with James and everything that happened there and then falling asleep and waking up here." I said as I shrugged.

"I need to apologize to you. You're paying the price for something that I chose to sacrifice." I looked at her bewildered, having no idea what she was talking about.

"I'm sorry, miss, but what do you mean?"

"Please, Avery, the name is Alena." I nodded my head. That's a very nice name.

"Well, Alena, why are you apologizing?" She looked back at the land before us and exhaled, looking lost in thought.

"I gave my life to protect that of a werewolf, a little girl, she was no more than five years old, I had met her before, and she was such a pure soul, she was fantastic in every way, but one day her pack and family were under attack, and I used my powers to shield them. However, she was only a child, and children are adventurous. So she ran past my protection and was captured, I did everything in my power to protect her, and she was protected, but I lost my life while doing so, and my husband never forgave them or me for that." I saw a tear fall from her eye, but she quickly wiped it away.

"He was such a hardhead, always has been, but that day when I died, everything changed about him, he lost his will to love, our son grew up in a home full of hate and revenge, and to this day, my son is still trying to avenge my death by cleansing the country of werewolves.

And you, my dear, is his way to do so, you see he was born with a special gift, a gift to get inside people's minds and control them, but it doesn't work on just anybody,"

"No, I heard that it only works on those with whom he shares DNA, and that's why he can do it to me." I said with a sad smile. Alena looked at me funny, and then something changed in her eyes, some sort of a realization.

"You don't know." She said. " Know what?"

"It's not only about sharing DNA. It has to have been from birth, Avery. My son is your father."

James' POV

\* \* \* \* \*

Natasha had stood silent for a few minutes now. She looked conflicted as to whether maybe she shouldn't tell us what she wants to.

There was more to it than Natasha would admit, the photo in her hand that she was gripping tightly, the fact that Avery is supposed to kill Crow, she's a human, and how is she supposed to go up against a powerful wizard?

"How the hell can Avery fight him, let alone kill him? She's human. She doesn't have the strength or power to harm him or anybody else for that matter, plus the fact that he controls her! So she's not doing this!" Alex stood to his feet shouted at Natasha.

Alex had taken on the big brother role for Avery, and amber acted like an overprotective sister. It was nice to see, but we needed the rest of the information before anyone blew up. "Continue." I told Natasha, and her eyes quickly faltered. This was going to be hard for her. I could see it already.

Natasha handed over the photo to Alex, I'm guessing this is the part that I already know, and now they will too.

"Who is this?" Alex asked her. "That's Crow." Natasha said, her eyes brimming with anger and sadness. "And the little girl?" Amber asked. "That's me." I looked at Natasha and nodded my head. Alex and Amber, however, stared at her like she was a ghost.

"You know him?!" Amber shouted.

"Yes, he's my father." Natasha replied, lifting her head and staring dead into Amber's eyes.

"Are you saying that your father is the one doing this to Avery?! And you've known this entire time?! WHY THE FUCK HAVEN'T YOU TOLD US?!" Alex roared, but Natasha didn't falter. She didn't look too fazed about him losing his temper. She didn't say anything because she had a good excuse not to.

"My father was born with the gift of manipulation. But, as you know, it only works when there is a direct connection to the person he's controlling." Amber and Alex looked close to bursting, they were both frowning, and Alex was pinching the bridge of his nose to calm his wolf. Amber, however, didn't put much effort into calming hers.

"But your dad did this to your mate. How does it work if it's DNA bound, although it isn't still? Damn, I'm confused." Amber said, rubbing her face with her hand. Natasha shook her head.

"That was different. My father had injected Derek with his blood, so the poison ran through his veins. This way, my father could control him only for as long as Derek had his blood in him, which is why everything happened as quickly as it did." Natasha wiped away a stray tear and looked at Amber, who wiped away a tear of her own.

"Wait, it must be done from birth?..." Amber asked.

"It must be done from birth." Natasha repeated. And like a bucket of ice-cold water was poured over their heads, they both took a step back and hung their arms. "You and Avery share the same father. That's why you've been so caring towards her," Amber said slowly. Natasha nodded her head,

"Avery is my sister."