

Chapter 81 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Marco's POV

Although she tries to hide it, I can hear Lily's hammering heart as it pounds away in considerable fear as the others filter in behind me. Tanya, Claire, Vivian's Family. I even called Eric and Oliver to come over and they now join us in the room.

'I've got you,' is the only thing blaring in my mind, I've finally caught her. Finally, I'd expose her for who she really is.

"You were trying to steal Tanya's necklace. Weren't you? Tell us what you were going to do with it. Tell everyone," my hand gestures to the group behind me, and their attention is clearly on Lily. She initially shrinks back from my accusation, and I see the panic sway in her eyes.

But only for a moment. Just a moment.

And then like the convincing woman that I have come to realize she is, her posture changes. Her shoulders roll back, trying to display some semblance of confidence. She arches her head saying with an innocent façade. "Oh no, you've got it all wrong! I just happened to see it lying there, and I was just curious and wanted to have a closer look. That's all. I swear," her lips display a sheepish smile, trying to appear embarrassed as she holds up the necklace.

However, I have been preparing for her attempts at deception. She isn't going to win. Not this time. I scoff. "I've installed cameras in this room, I recorded everything," and as I take out my phone, I see the subtle shift in her disposition. Her hands shake as her eyes widen in disbelief, realizing I've set her up to fall into my trap.

The others peer over my shoulder as I show them the video. It's apparent that she's desperately searching for the necklace, rummaging around my room trying to find it. I then hand the phone over to Tanya in case anyone else wants to take a closer look, freeing my hand to pull out a set of documents, unfolding them and flinging them onto my desk to reveal the truth behind Lily's lies. "So, are you really Vivian's daughter?"

She squirms under my intense glare, but I don't give her a moment to speak. "Twenty-three years ago, Alpha Richard of the Blackhide Pack was desperate for a boy who would be the heir to his pack, so he took the surrogate's childbirth very seriously."

Now everyone is paying attention to me as I elaborate. “He spent a lot of money and sent her to the best hospital in the capital to give birth. But in the end, the surrogate gave birth to a girl. And from all the evidence, I believe, because of knowing that Richard would be furious, the surrogate decided to switch her baby with another.”

I can hear a few gasps from behind me, but I don’t falter in my efforts to tell the full story. “From the collected evidence, I find out that the surrogate and Vivian’s delivery room were right next door to one another. And Lily and Tanya were born on the very same day, with only a few hours between them. After they were born, both babies were placed in the same nursery next to each other.”

My hand points to the documents as I say. “Although Oliver and I weren’t able to find the selected nurses who monitored the infants at the time due to how long it’s been since then, we were still able to collect medical records. They show that on the first day, Vivian’s baby’s health tests were excellent, yet on the second day, the little baby suddenly became sick. On the contrary, the surrogate’s baby was originally sick on the first day, however, the next day, her baby returned to having a full dose of good health.”

And there is the kicker. “I don’t think the nurses at the time thought much of it and may have just assumed it to be a natural flu that both of the babies received. But I think that the babies were switched!”

The room falls incredibly silent as everyone is in complete shock and disbelief. But my eyes are only on Lily. I bare down a heavy glare and she remains evidently startled by my findings. And yet she still tries to disprove it. “That- no. That’s all just speculation. There’s no direct evidence here to prove anything you’ve just said.”

I can’t help the scoff that leaves my lips as I utter darkly. “Then why don’t you take off your diamond necklace that your always wear?”

Tanya’s POV

I can’t believe everything that I’m hearing. It all sounds insane, yet Marco has so far proven every bit of it. To wonder, to even consider the fact that I might be Vivian’s child and not the child of a surrogate seems unfathomable. My entire life, my existence was a lie?

When Marco suggests for Lily to take off her necklace, I watch as it cracks her walls of decisive deception. Her façade crumbles as her hand rests protectively on top of the piece of jewellery, cradling it close as if it would save her.

She hesitates for what feels like centuries. But in the end, she shuts her eyes, inhaling a deep shaky breath, before she opens them again, and finally chooses to speak. “Since I was born a girl, my mother feared the way I’d be treated by Richard. She knew that he’d be cruel and despicable

towards me simply because I was the wrong gender. And because of that, she decided to switch me with Tanya at birth. So, I could have a better life.”

Her voice cracks with every sentence, and she fumbles over her words. Yet she still tries to maintain her composure as she explains. “At the same time, my mother coincidentally obtained two ruby necklaces, both having magical properties. The one I received could make my body display Tanya’s attributes and emit her Alpha scent. Whilst Tanya’s necklace would suppress her own werewolf abilities and eliminate her wolf’s scent all together, making her appear to be an omega. And hence her inner wolf couldn’t manifest.”

All this time, Lily has been avoiding eye contact entirely, but for a second, I watch her glance in Vivian’s direction, before shifting her gaze back down to the floor. “The only thing I couldn’t inherit was the Montenero family’s genes of having an enhanced sense of smell and their talent for perfumery. So, when my mother came to see me before she passed, she told me the truth, and I bribed Brandon to help steal Tanya’s perfume designs.”

My eyes widen. Now realizing that that was how she got a hold of all my ideas, and why Brandon had been trying to steal my designs! It was Lily. My startled disposition by the weight of reality setting in is mirrored in the others that surround me. Everyone is stunned by the prospect of me being the true princess, and Lily has been the fake all along.

As my gaze wanders to the others, my eyes can’t help but land on Eric. And I’m somewhat confused by his reaction. He doesn’t appear very surprised or angry towards Lily revealing her true identity. On the contrary, his eyes seem to keep staring at the diamond necklace in Lily’s hand. He looks like he’s caught up in a daze, but whatever is on his mind, there’s a strange glint in his eyes that appear infatuated with the piece of jewellery.

But I don’t have time to ponder on Eric’s emotional state or his strange interest in the necklace. Because whilst everyone has believed Lily has resigned her fate, we have probably let our guard down.

The cracking of bones is impossible to miss. And my eyes grow wide as Lily has taken the opportunity to suddenly shift into her wolf form. Bright golden fur cascades over her body as her skin and clothes slip away and disappear. Sharp canine ears erect, and wolfish claws clack eerily against the flooring. Her growl splits through the stunned silence, as her lips draw back to show malicious teeth.

Her wolf form is smaller and scrawnier than normal alpha wolves, they lack size and muscle mass in comparison to strong werewolves. However, that doesn’t necessarily mean they aren’t capable of inflicting harm. As a werewolf, they still are much larger than any normal wolf seen in the wild, and as indicated by Lily’s menacing body language, still very much capable of inflicting death on a human.

And no matter how many people stand in the room, it’s apparent who Lily focuses on. Her eyes sit squarely on me with dangerous purpose. Something within me must’ve known this was coming. Lily wouldn’t go down without a fight. She has been caught, and she is ultimately going

to prison for all her lies and years of deceit. This is the final act of her revenge. If she is going down, then I would bet she wants me going down with her.

She launches herself at me with outstretched paws and jaws wide. In the seconds that she closes the gap between herself and me, I feel like time stops as something within me snaps. The barrier hidden deep within me shatters, and from beneath it, my wolf arises to meet her challenger.

Chapter 83 Joseph Was Poisoned By Black Magic

Chapter 82 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

My skin feels like it's on fire. But the sensation doesn't hurt me. No. It's like an adrenalin rush racing through my body at lightning speed, triggering chemical reactions that I can feel. Mini explosions erupt in my system as the werewolf gene sprouts its way through my system.

My body shifts and morphs with exponential speed, as fur black as the night with silver streaks running through it, sprouts across my skin in impressive patterns. I feel my canine features extending into the forefront and taking over my body. And my human consciousness is forced to draw back as Freya takes the steering wheel.

We tower over Lily's wolf exponentially. My body feels well-toned and built for war, and around me, I hear the gasps of the surrounding beings. The word Alpha is whispered into the wind by multiple voices.

Freya is finally free, and her wrath is rampant. She roars with full strength at the mere sight of Lily who has finally reached our position, barrelling into us hard, bashing us into the flooring as she tries to pin us down.

But Lily's no match for our strength. Freya's paws jolt up in a sudden motion, throwing Lily off and she skids to a halt. Freya leaps back onto her paws and the wolves begin circling one another. Jaws snap in a threatening display, growls escalate as tensions rise.

Lily is obviously sizing us up. She hasn't expected me or Freya to have been so strong. And I see a flicker of concern in her wolf's eyes as she stalks her body low, like a snake weaving through grass, stalking its prey.

But Freya is no snake. Not a predator willing to be hidden. She's a warrior ready for battle and without warning she launches herself with another roar. The wolves clash as their body masses

slam against one another. Rising on their back legs every now and again to try and get the upper hand over the other. Teeth shredding fur and trying to latch onto flesh.

Suddenly, Freya throws her weight against Lily, using her neck and chest to bash into the other hard. Lily can't compete with the force and loses her footing, dropping beneath us on her side. My wolf and I hold her down with our paws before jaws lurch forward, teeth snapping hold on Lily's diamond necklace and wrenching it back. Snapping the chain, and shattering it into billions of pieces.

As the diamonds roll away, they disintegrate into their true form, as shiny rubies reveal themselves beneath the exterior. And like her necklace, Lily too disintegrates. The magic gave her body a false power, and now that it has been suddenly taken away, her body is dealing with the consequences of the power's disappearance.

Like an addict going through a sudden and harsh withdrawal, Lily disintegrates physically. Her body thins and her fur greys on the edges of her snout. Finally, her body cannot bear the torment and transitions back into its human form, and Lily appears on the floor beneath me, battered and immeasurable bruised.

Still towering over her vulnerable and weakened state, Freya emits a deafening growl in the face of Lily, teeth just barely edging above our opponent's face, threatening to destroy her completely.

But Freya and I both know we aren't going to end Lily's life. We would never stoop down to the level of evil. So, we step back, head risen high in triumph, and chest puffed in considerable dominance.

It's then that the royal palace guards swoop in and drag Lily away to the dungeons. And I learn that she is imprisoned and to be given ten years in prison, and then banished from the kingdom of Mador. Forever.

Only when the threat is truly gone, am I finally able to shift back into my human form. Vivian immediately runs to me, encompassing me in her warm embrace, holding my hand against her chest as I see tears twinkle in the corners of her eyes. Thrilled by the fact that she now knows the truth and sadden by the years of hardship I had to endure without her. But she is immensely proud that I've perfectly inherited the Montenero family's talent for perfume making.

Thomas comes over and expresses his dismay, saying that he initially thought that Vivian and I looked very similar, and that he should've realised it sooner. Philips pats his brother's shoulder in an attempt to comfort him, and I assure him that this is no one's fault but Lily's and her mother's. None of us could've known the truth.

Even Alexander, although he appears calm, his lips tremble with discomfort. And he expresses his hope that I can come home often and stay with them for a bit, and be amongst my true family. Finally.

When I head home with Marco, a new emotion swirls within me, something I've never felt before or never had any reason to feel. Pride. Proud of who I am, proud of the family I belong to. Proud of who I've become. It's a tremendous feeling that I savour and harbour close to my heart.

Marco is also truly happy for me, and with Lily out of the picture, and my necklace gone, the true nature of our mate bond is revealed. We are in fact fated mates, and I'm ecstatic over the revelation.

However, I notice Marco's mind is slightly preoccupied despite him trying to hide it. "Is everything alright?" I ask, as I brew us some tea in the kitchen.

He sighs. "Oliver not only helped me find out information about Lily, but he also found out where the maid who served my mother is. And I need to leave the capital for a short while to go and meet her."

I nod in understanding and take his hand carefully in mine. "Don't worry about me and Claire. We will be okay whilst you're away. Your mother is important to you Marco, I completely understand, you deserve to know the truth."

After some hesitation, he finally nods his head in agreement before his gaze slips away again as he says. "Oliver also found out something else. He accidentally learned from one of the guards that he had seen Eric enter Joseph's office a few hours before the King was found unconscious five years ago. And although everyone originally thought my father fell into the coma after being distraught over my curse, I think there's something suspicious about the situation."

His eyes draw back to me now as he says. "I'm wondering if you get the opportunity, could you go see Joseph? But be very careful. And don't let Eric know that you've gone to see the King."

I nod in understanding, trying to reassure him. "I can do that for you Marco. Don't worry. I know who I am now. I'm no longer weak and frail. I'm an Alpha, I can do this. I'll be able to get it done."

Several Days Later

Lily's POV

Trying to pretend to be sick is such a pathetic ordeal. But I know it is the only way I can get the guards to come take a look at me, and then I can hopefully convince one of them to open my jail cell so I can escape. I cry and cry for help, but to my surprise, it's not the guard who comes to greet me...

The eldest Lycan Prince steps into the light of the dark and dingy jail house, his royal clothing shimmering in contrast to the grimy cell and clothes I've been left in. His eyes sparkle with interest that leaves me unnerved.

My expression remains guarded, and panic settles in the depths of my bones at his intimidating figure. Strange to think that more than five years ago we celebrated our engagement, dressed to high heavens in lavish clothing and praised by the entire kingdom. Now I shrink in his shadow as he holds the limelight, and I wonder what he desires from me.

I can tell he sees through my walls, able to sense my displaced emotions and he chuckles dangerously. "Don't be so afraid darling. I'm not here to hurt you," I doubt his taunts. "I'm here to make a deal."

My gaze narrows in scrutiny, highly skeptical of this deal, and so he explains. "I've known for a very long time that you weren't the true heir of the Montenero family, that you weren't really Vivian's daughter. But I never said anything because you were of use to me. And now, you can be of use to me once more."

He smiles eerily. "I stole a bottle from you five years ago. It contained poison and I used it on King Joseph, leaving him in a coma to this day," my eyes widen, I had never realized what Eric truly was capable of. He always portrayed himself as the quiet gentleman out of the two brothers, overshadowed by his brother's strength and ruthlessness. But now I can see beyond that as Eric explains his plan.

"The same black magic I saw in the bottle is the same as the black magic I saw in your necklace today. But your mother was an omega, I doubt she was capable of creating that on her own. I know, there's someone else behind the scenes helping you. Isn't there?"

I raise my head in slight defiance, but Eric doesn't bat an eye. "I want to learn black magic. If you help me, I'll ensure you escape."

I scoff. "And who says I can't escape on my own."

He chuckles again. "I never said you couldn't. But on your own, you will remain a rogue, banished from Mador from anyone and everyone. You always be on the run, never to be a noble again. But by making this deal with me, you'll be ensuring the fall of Marco. Together we will eliminate him. And then you and I will become the King and Queen of the Mador kingdom."

I pause in silence, eyeing Eric fiercely and my mind wraps around this proposition. Years and years I've tried to win back Marco's affections, and every time he has denied me. I no longer feel love for him. Only rage. And I'm eager to see his demise.

"Deal."

Eric's smile grows. "I knew you'd make the right decision. You've always been so very smart Lily. I'll be in touch soon. For now, I'm going to see my dear father."

Tanya's POV

As per Marco's request, and with the help of Freya's keen sense of smell, I am able to sneak into King Joseph's ward. The man appears asleep, and I lean over to check his skin for marks. Finally, I reach down to his palm and notice how a black mark that appears every now and again, disappearing and reappearing.

Now I am sure he was poisoned by black magic. But before I can do anything else, Freya alerts me, sensing that someone is coming down the corridor and approaching the room I'm in!

Chapter 84 Lily Escapes

Chapter 83 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Third POV

Eric enters the ward. He's greeted by many of the hospital staff, and he offers them a warm gentlemanly smile. Little did they know that the Lycan Prince's good nature was all just a disguise. Beneath his perfect mask lays a much darker alter ego that he does well to hide.

Upon entering his father's hospital room, his smile straightens into a blank and expressionless line, eyes lacking any true care for his father that lies lifeless in his bed. But before Eric walks over, he notices that the main window in the room has been left wide open.

Something about it rises suspicion within the prince, and he begins checking the various corners in the room. Not totally sure what he's looking for, but something does seem off. As he does so, Tanya is hidden beneath the King's hospital bed. She shrinks as far back as she possibly can into the darkness, hoping, praying that Eric doesn't see her.

Just as he nears, Tanya clasps a hand over her mouth, trying to stop her panicked breaths from escaping into the air. The other hand is pressed against the ruby necklace that sits once again upon her chest. It had been Freya's idea to put it back on since it temporarily hid her scent. Opening the window had just been an additional aid, hoping the breeze from the outside would disperse her scent.

Just as Eric approaches her position, the door to the room opens once more. Tanya is immensely relieved as a nurse enters to do a routine check up on Joseph, and consequentially distracts Eric.

“Why is the window open?” Eric asks in a nonchalant tone.

There is slight fear and discomfort in the nurse’s voice. “Oh, I’m so sorry, another one of the nurses probably opened the window when conducting a check-up and must’ve forgotten to close it,” she sounds extremely flustered. “I’m so so sorry about that. I’ll be sure to reprimand them to ensure the window is closed.”

Eric doesn’t bother to console her, as he only nods his head in approval. But evidently, the nurse’s apology dispels any suspicion previously felt by the Prince, and soon he and the nurse leave the room.

With both of them gone, Tanya hesitates at first, waiting to be sure no one would return before reemerging from under the bed. She quickly leaves the ward and takes off the ruby necklace, thanking Freya for the idea. And without anyone noticing, she leaves the hospital.

Marco’s POV

It’s a day-and-a-half journey, but we finally arrive at the pinpointed location of where the maid who looked after mother lives. Her name is Susan, and she resides in a small insignificant pack. We drop off our stuff at the hotel we’re staying at before going to a restaurant where she’s agreed to meet us.

We greet her and sit down for lunch and Oliver and I explain why we asked to see her. But to our disappointment she shakes her head and says. “Your mother was a wonderful person Marco. She loved you very much, and I know how much she meant to you. I can see that it’s easier to go chasing this mystery than accepting the fact that she committed suicide. But that’s the truth Marco. I’m very sorry.”

The nurse is obviously trying to remain respectful, but her words hit me where it hurts. Something in my gut tells me that my mother wouldn’t have just ended her life. It just couldn’t be true. “Susan please, we’ve collected enough evidence to prove that my mother may have been murdered. And the facts about her suicide just don’t line up.”

Oliver tries to appear more intimidating, hoping our good cop, bad cop ensemble might pressure her into revealing the truth. “Susan, you were the last person to see her before she died. You could easily become a suspect in this if you don’t tell us the truth. Just make this easier for yourself, give us the information you need and prove your innocence.”

But again, to no avail. The nurse shakes her head, once again refusing to budge. “But there is no truth to tell,” she reiterates. “Your mother died from suicide after falling into sadness after King Joseph’s rejection. There’s nothing to question.”

Nothing we can say makes Susan budge, and Oliver and I return to the hotel empty handed. Again and again, we return to visit Susan, sometimes at her house or again at a restaurant. And while she entertains us, again and again she doesn't crack.

This nearly seems impossible, but I never doubt my suspicions. I'm sure something happened to my mother. And no matter what, I'm going to get to the bottom of it.

It is another day that we show up at Susan's house. But something is different, we hear a loud scream coming from inside, and the two of us rush in without question. Susan's daughter who is pregnant is lying on the floor, around her is a wet liquid, a mixture of blood and what I assumed to be amniotic fluid.

Susan is panicked, her eyes wide in fear. "Please help! Please! She fell down and she's bleeding badly. I think she's going into labour!"

The pregnant girl is wailing in terrible pain and Oliver and I look to one another. We have to help her. No matter how I feel towards Susan and the secrets she is keeping. Her daughter is innocent and in so much pain.

With little time to waste we hurry and help the daughter get to the hospital. As we called the doctors ahead of time, they knew we'd be arriving and take her into the emergency room immediately. What we learn is that her situation is very critical. And she's at risk of dying and also losing the baby.

It's a terrible situation that appears bleak in nature. And after the doctor explains to Susan how they would try their best but not to hold out for hope, the maid breakdown into tears, muttering to herself. "The Moon Goddess is angry with me. She's enacting her revenge because of my cowardice, because of my reluctance to tell the truth to protect myself. I'm being punished."

She sighs, finally turning to the two of us. "I will tell you the truth of what happened all those years ago. You deserve to know the truth, Marco."

Third POV

Eric quietly works in his office, looking over certain documents and typing away at his computer when there's a knock at his door. One of his subordinates comes in, bowing to the Prince before being allowed to speak. "Your Highness, Susan, the maid who we've been monitoring all these years. Marco and Oliver found her and went to meet her."

Although the Prince appears calm and unbothered by the news, there's a slight twitch to his lips. Something within him stirs, annoyed that his brother has become so adamant in finding out the truth. The subordinate presents photos, laying them out on the desk that show Marco, Oliver and the maid conversing with one another at a restaurant and then out her house.

Of course, to Eric this hasn't changed anything. Marco has only sped up Eric's plans to eradicate him. Everything else is going accordingly. "And how is Lily?"

"Everything is normal. She remains in her prison cell. Although she is growing impatient."

Eric scoffs. "Well, she won't have to wait much longer. It's time," the subordinate only lowers himself into a bow in clear acknowledgment.

"It shall be done your highness," he says before exiting the room.

In a different part of the kingdom, after Tanya has returned from the hospital, she takes Claire to stay at Vivian's house, wanting to spend time with her family since Marco is away. And as Claire plays with Vivian, Tanya opens Margaret's notebook.

She flicks through the pages carefully, looking at each perfume whilst trying to discern what the King had been poisoned with. Finally, she comes across a page that describes all of Joseph's symptoms perfectly. Tanya's sure that this is the poison, and this is the perfume she needs to cure him.

But just as she begins prepping her work station to start making it, she hears loud noises coming from the palace. She, Vivian and Claire step out to see what the commotion is all about. Maids and servants are scurrying back and forth like a disturbed ant's nest, frantic in their efforts.

Finally, when Tanya questions one of the maids, she describes the issue.

"Lily has escaped from prison!"

Chapter 85 Joseph Wakes Up

Chapter 84 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

Something uncomfortable writhes in my gut after hearing the news of Lily's escape. It dawns on me that I have felt uncertain about the whole ordeal, like I knew she'd somehow find a way to escape her prison cell. No matter what victory I had earned, Lily always found a way to come out on top. Even now, even though she is seen as a criminal on the run, she still has escaped her fate once more.

With such thoughts in mind, my hand goes to take out the ruby necklace that I have been keeping in my pocket, studying the glossy crimson stones with intense concentration. When Freya and I snapped Lily's diamond necklace I saw bits and pieces of dark matter floating within the crystals. And now, I can't help but wonder if it was black magic that I had seen.

By tilting the necklace back and forth, and letting it catch the light, I try to see if it too has the same black swirl. But I see nothing, letting out a huff as I put the necklace away. But even if I can't see any black magic in this necklace, something tells me that both necklaces could be directly or indirectly related to Dorian.

Other than Mr. Barlow, may his soul rest in peace. Dorian was the only werewolf I had seen wield such magic, and he in fact himself said that Lily had sent him to kill me. There must be a connection between the two. I just couldn't decipher the what, the why nor could I prove how.

But right now, learning the truth does not matter. Wolfish instincts tell me that something bad and terrible is on the horizon. I must hurry and create the perfume that will save Joseph, surely, he'd know who poisoned him. Or at least he'd answer the questions I can't. We need him awake again.

I leave Claire in Vivian's care and use her perfumery room to make my concoction. Thankfully in Vivian's workstation, all the required ingredients are available to me, and I work quickly to make the perfume. All the while something nags at me in the back of my mind, telling me that something bad is about to occur if I don't hurry.

Marco's POV

I'm really missing home, I'm missing my house, I miss Tanya and my little girl Claire. I want to return to them, to go back to our routines. But I can't, not with the mystery of my mother's death weighing on my shoulders. I deserve to know the truth, my mother deserves that closure, and not for her death to be written off as a suicide.

Hence, I can't explain the relief that expels through my system when the maid finally decides to tell us the truth. I notice that she's trembling, obviously distraught as her hands shake and hair appears frayed as she runs her hands through it. "Sit down Susan. Please sit down. Oliver, get her water," Oliver fills her a glass and sets it down in front of her, before sitting down beside me.

Her breaths are short and hesitant as she finally musters the courage to speak. "I poisoned your mother," she sniffles, wiping streaks from her cheeks. "But not intentionally! I promise you Marco, I loved your mother with all my heart. She was not just my master, but she was also a friend to me. She treated me with respect and looked after my family, and especially loved my daughter.... The Queen... it was the Queen who sought out to poison her."

My emotions writhe uncontrollably beneath the surface. But I try to keep my face neutral, even as the maid puts a hand on top of mine. Whether to try and comfort me or comfort herself I don't know, either way she continues with the story.

“In the weeks leading up to her passing, your mother was very sad after Joseph rejected their bond. So, on this one particular day, I wanted to make her a bowl of her favourite soup, hoping this would make Marie feel better.”

She sighs, and I can see through her eyes, that as she is reciting to us the story, her mind is wandering back to the moment. “But when I went into the kitchen to start cooking, I realized I didn't have all the ingredients. I was going to scrap the idea entirely and cook something else, but suddenly the Queen's maid walked in, carrying a tray food. She had the soup I needed. She was very enthusiastic about it as well, saying that the Queen had made it especially for Marie as a gift, after hearing how much she loved the soup.”

Susan shakes her head, now beginning to frown. “I should've known something was off,” tears well up in her eyes again as she shakes her head more furiously. “I should have known. But I was so naïve. Just so excited that this would make your mother happy, and I rushed to serve it to her.”

Her tears continue to fall. “I came to check on her several hours later- but she was already gone. She was gone...” I try as much I can to soothe the maid, quietly running a hand back and forth over hers to try and comfort her. But emotionally, I feel myself detaching from the rest of the world. Hearing once again about my mother's passing breaks my already cracked heart.

Susan eventually recomposes herself a little, saying. “I suspected that something was wrong with the soup. But when I went to inform someone about the truth, the Queen's maid was waiting for me. She stopped me, saying that if I told the truth to anyone, I'd simply be the one blamed for the crime. Since I was the one to serve the soup to her.”

She curses beneath her breath. “When I tried to argue that I would tell them that I was given the soup by the Queen's maid, she gave me a sickening smile, tormenting me, saying that no one had seen us. It was my word against hers, and no one would dare accuse the Queen or the Queen's maid.”

Something stirs behind her eyes, and she retracts her hand from mine, dropping her head in shame. “I had no choice but to keep my mouth shut. I even had to let the Queen's subordinates in to slit her wrists, to make it look like Marie committed suicide from excessive grief... I... I can never forgive myself. I couldn't even see her after they did it. I- I,” Susan breaks down again in loud sobs. “I'm so sorry Marco. I'm so sorry. I loved her truly. I didn't know what to do. I wanted to protect my family, so I ran away. I'm sorry.”

Despite how horrible it all sounds. Susan portrays true sincerity in everything she says. I believe her. I believe the fact that she loved my mother. And I believe that she ran away out of fear of being framed. “I want to help you,” I blink awake from my daze as she says this, looking into my eyes. “I want to testify about what happened. I want to help you reveal the truth.”

Just as she says the doctor walks over to us and tells Susan that her daughter has made a full recovery, and has successfully given birth to her baby. Susan weeps with joy and thanks the both of us for helping get her daughter to the doctor in time. She believes this to be a sign from the Moon Goddess that she must join us on our return to Capital and testify as witness.

After her daughter's condition stabilizes, we head for the capital. Just as we near, we stop to fill up on gas. And the three of us decide to just take a walk to stretch our legs. That's when we pass by the mouth of a darkened alleyway.

For a moment I think I see two orbs of yellow light, course, I think my mind is playing tricks on me. Till the alleyway echoes a deep and deafening growl. We all freeze. Then, from the shadows emerges a lone wolf. His hackles are raised, arching his back, whilst his jaw opens to reveal a set of sharp teeth.

Before any of us can react, the wolf pounces on Susan, forcing a scream from her lungs as it growls and snaps, just missing her neck. In reaction to the threat my werewolf senses kick in, my eyes glow and a growl leaps from my lips as I slam a hard kick into the ribcage of the wolf. The force sends the canine colliding with the wall, rupturing the bricks as it whimpers in pain.

"Quick, get behind us," I pull Susan to her feet and force her to get behind me and Oliver as we stand defensively towards the depth of the alley. From it springs the figures of numerous werewolves, all in their wolf forms. Their eyes glow menacingly as they growl and snarl at us, nearing our position as they stalk towards us.

Boots click against the gravel and into the centre of the circling wolves walks Eric, a predatory smile gleaming on his face. "You always have been the strongest Lycan the kingdom of Mador has ever known," says my brother slyly. "Alone, I may not be able to defeat you. But that's why I brought a few helpers along. The kingdom has lived in peace for so very long, no wars to fight, no battles to be won. This would definitely be an exciting endeavour for my warriors."

He chuckles as the wolf sounds grow louder and more chaotic, trying to edge me on. But I know to hold my ground, I try to stay planted by Oliver's side, even as my Lycan rages to be released. But Eric knows this, his carefully chosen words only adding to the fire. "You won't win this little brother. Let alone save the maid's life."

His eyes glimmer with confidence. "Give her to me, and I'll leave you and Oliver unhurt. There's no need for bloodshed."

My heart hammers against my chest rapidly, my nostrils flaring with rage. But I maintain my emotionless expression, coiling my fists, digging my nails into my flesh to try and distract myself from the fury. "No," I say bluntly. "She's not going anywhere with you."

I ready myself mentally, ready myself to fend off the wolves that surround us. I try to count them, and mentally remember their positions so I know who to fight off first. But before any of them can attack, a long primitive howl sounds off in the distance.

It's a warning call. I look at Eric and also notice his surprise. Just then, wolves come up from behind Eric, surrounding him and his men. I recognize the wolves as also being soldiers from the capital. And amongst them in their human forms stand Tanya, Alexander and...

My father, the King.

Chapter 86 Tanya is Drunk

Chapter 85 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Eric's POV

As a child, I was always told I couldn't control everything, that life would happen to us, and we had to learn to react and adapt to the circumstances. But rather than taking that advice, I rebelled against it. I grew up a man who does everything in his power to control everything and anything, ensure nothing surprised me, that I always have the upper hand.

And while this trait has served me well all my life, at this very moment I'm at a loss. I stare into the eyes of my father with astonishment, unable to disguise my shock. My gaze flickers to the left, landing on Tanya. Oh, sweet little Tanya. If only she was the weak and feeble omega that she once appeared to be, hiding in Marco's shadow. Now she stands proud beside the King, a fierceness in her eyes that only heightens her beauty.

Seeing her draws me back to the day I last visited my father at the hospital. My suspicions of the opened window were in fact correct. If only I had listened to my gut, if only I had taken a moment to pay closer attention to the faint wolfish scent that had caught my attention. I was complacent, so fixated on Lily's escape and setting in motions the plans to eliminate Marco I had forgotten about dear little Tanya. I should've killed my father when I had the chance.

But I can fix my mistakes in due time. I would never let this happen again. Never again shall I be caught off guard. No, I will get my crown and my kingdom and all the power I desire, but fate has decided that today is not the day. If I am captured, everything I have worked tirelessly for will be lost. And I, do not lose. I must leave the maid behind. Mother would understand, I can do little to save her. I must save myself, for I am the future. Once I make my return, I'll be able to ensure her safety. But I can't from behind bars.

"Distract them."

I say to my subordinates as I look up at the top of the surrounding buildings. The wolves ignite into fierce brawls as I stand at the centre, my body morphing and shifting as I transform into my

Lycan half. I rise above them with my height, and before anyone can get close, I leap up, launching myself on top of one of the buildings before galloping on all fours to find Lily and Dorian.

Tanya's POV

Despite Eric's escape, the Kingdom of Mador is filled with joy and excitement at the King's return. He's sent out his soldiers to chase down Eric. The Queen has also been placed on temporary house arrest till her trial concerning Marco's mother's death. Of course, as the Queen she's not put directly in a jail cell, but rather restricted to the confines for her chambers.

To celebrate the awakening of the Lycan King, a huge banquet is held in the palace, attended by many royals and nobles. At the banquet, Joseph announces that Marco is the heir of the Lycan King, and everyone applauds and cheers.

After this, the banquet begins. The atmosphere is full of elation and excitement, pretty dresses glistening under the half-moon's light, whilst fire performers dance across the stage entertaining the crowd. Right now, I stand beside my mother Vivian as she introduces me to many nobles, royals, and good friends of hers, introducing me as her real daughter which makes me ever so proud.

She even goes forth to say that I'm the administrator of Eau de Lune Parfumerie.

I look at Vivian with immense surprise. "But- are you sure?" I say to her.

She nods with a broad warm smile. "Of course, I'm sure. You are the true heir to my family business, and you've inherited such outstanding talent for perfumery. I could choose no one better. You deserve this."

I'm touched by her words, and smile, giving her a loving hug as I'm left in awe.

Marco's POV

As the banquet goes on, I notice with each passing hour Tanya is offered a new glass of wine, either from the waiters or from a passing noble showing good faith. Obviously, I don't stop her, she's having a wonderful time, and she never really got to enjoy herself. So, I remain quiet, only idling, watching from a distance.

But by the eighth glass, it's Vivian who walks up to me. She too appears a tad bit tipsy but gives me a smile. "I think maybe it's time you take Tanya home," she says with a chuckle. I mirror her smile and nod my head in understanding before I walk over to my wife.

She's sitting very still, dazing off into the distance, I try and hide my amusement, but I can't help but find her circumstance both comical and adorable. "Come on sweetheart, it's time to go home."

She gives me an absentminded nod before rising to her feet as we start walking back to the house. To begin with, she's very quiet, and the only thing that eludes to her drunk state is that she walks in diagonal lines. She swings back and forth across the road, obviously unbalanced, and every now and again I worry she's about to fall.

But otherwise, she seems okay. That's until. There's a sudden and unnatural shift in her quiet demeanour. She becomes talkative, rambling about this thing and that with no cohesive structure. Her attitude becomes overly cheery and playful, flirting with me in ways that Tanya isn't really known for. And whilst I find the whole ordeal amusing, I do wonder how much she truly had to drink.

Course, that matters little as Tanya suddenly bolts off. The action is so sudden it takes me a moment to realize that she's running from me, and I begin to sprint after her. I call out, but she weaves her way through the streets with little concern before dashing into a shop.

I realize it's a candy store, I rush in, watching her like a needy child desperate for sugar grabbing at all the sweets her heart desires before bolting out again. "I am so sorry. Here, for your troubles," I say sheepishly to the upset boss, paying him the equivalent of what Tanya took.

I then head out again in a hurry, running after her as quickly as I can, concerned about what she might do next. Soon I find her by the side of the road, eyes sparkling with interest at a bright blue balloon held in the hand of a young child. And I'm horrified by what she does next.

Tanya snatches the balloon from the child's hand, and frolics about with an excited pep in her step. The child, unsurprisingly, proceeds to cry. Tears spring from his big round eyes as his mouth pouts in upset. I hurry over to the two.

"Don't cry child. I'm so sorry. Tanya!" she turns to look at me, appearing confused by my sterner tone. "Please give him back his balloon," she looks at me with disappointment, almost astounded that I have asked her to return her source of fun.

"But why?"

"Because it's his."

"But I want it."

"But it's his balloon, you can't take what's not yours."

I feel like she is acting more like a child than the one standing at my feet. But eventually, with heavy reluctance she returns the balloon to the boy, and he hurries away from the both of us, obviously worried it may be stolen again.

I shake my head in slight disbelief. “How can you steal a balloon from a child? Even if you’re drunk?”

She pouts at me. “Well, I’m still a child too!”

It takes me a moment to ponder her words, and I think about her behaviour over the past couple of minutes. Then something dawns on me. “Do you remember your name?”

I prod her with this question, and as I suspect, it seems to stump her. She pauses for a moment, before replying. “Freya!” my facial response makes her pause again. “No... Tanya? Wait no! Freya! Oh, I don’t know! What does it matter?”

I chuckle light-heartedly, before urging her to walk with me. I carry her on my back as I notice she’s growing tired. Eventually she falls asleep, but only for a little while, eventually I hear her faint voice coming near my ear.

“I’m sorry for what I did to you five years ago... But I promise that I didn’t abandon you for the money. I had other reasons.”

My eyes grow wide as she continues to speak. “But no matter the reason, I know I hurt you. And I’m very sorry that I did.”

I realize it’s Tanya’s mind once again back in the driving seat of her mind and body. I want to know the truth. “So why did you leave me five years ago? Please tell me.”

“I...” But before anything else can be said, we both hear a grumbling noise, evidently coming from her stomach. “I... I want to throw up.”

We are so close to home, despite her protest, I tell her to hold it in. I rush us to the house and into the bathroom. She drops off my back and onto the floor of the bathroom and throws up all the wine she’s consumed into the toilet.

Once she’s done, I help her clean off, rinsing her face and helping her brush her teeth, before I go to clean up the bathroom and flush the toilet. Finally, when I’m finished, I return to her, wanting to take her to bed. But before I can do or say anything, Tanya hazily opens her eyes, taking hold of my face in her hands, and pulls me in deep for a kiss.

Chapter 87 A Drunken Kiss

Chapter 86 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Marco's POV

My heart rate accelerates, every inch of my skin trembles at her touch, and my body buzzes with desire as she pulls me in. But I only get a quick taste. Her soft kiss only lasts for a couple of seconds, before she pulls away again.

Not that I'm interested in ending it now. My thoughts are erratic, and the only thing I can focus on is her, my mate. My wolfish need for raw sex and my primal possessiveness override everything else. Fisting the collar of her top, I yank her towards me, causing a hitch in her breath before I begin sucking on her lips hungrily.

With her drunken state, there's less rigidity or shyness in her movements. She doesn't stop me, lacing her fingers round my neck as she kisses me back. I press my throbbing member against the fabric concealing her female parts and she reciprocates, slowly moving against me, forcing a growl to edge between my lips.

"Mine," I whisper.

I can feel her smile against my lips. My dominance only escalates, and my hand finds its way into the strands of her hair. My fingers slide up through to the roots of her long locks and I scrunch hold of them, gently tugging her head to the side. She obeys my silent demand, exposing her neck to me.

I drop my head into the crook of her jugular, kissing and licking at her flesh, swirling my tongue over my visible mark, making her moan at the sensations it causes. I mouth at her neck before returning hungrily to her lips before backing her up against the wall behind us.

"I want that skirt and those panties off. Now," I say, almost speaking into her mouth as our lips still touch.

She complies, and in an instant her skirt and underwear drop to the floor, surging my arousal. My hands race to clasp her butt cheeks, squeezing them hard enough to make her wince. I can't stop myself from slapping them once or twice for good measure, before my fingers suddenly slip back front.

She gasps as I push through her folds and into her. At first, I swirl gently, and her moans are soft and subtle. But I soon grow ravenous and begin to pump her quicker. Her body trembles and shudders with the motions. I feel her hand wrap over mine to enforce the thrusting, moving her hips in rhythm.

Her screams grow louder, and my wolf and manhood crave more and more to be inside her. She's warm and tight. Soon she can't keep herself standing, Tanya has to lean against me for support, body falling limp from pure desire as I finger her to climax.

She shakes when she finally reaches her peak, and I groan in greater need to have her. She easily folds into my arms, and I carry her towards the bed.

And just as I get there, snoring emits from the female werewolf in my arms. I can't help but sigh, and I can almost feel my manhood wail in sadness. But I smile, nevertheless. Careful not to wake her, I tuck her into bed and crawl in beside her, falling asleep with her wrapped in my arms.

Eric's POV

Due to my speed and strength I manage to evade my father's men. Following the trail Lily left me, I travel beyond the border of the capital, heading deep into rogue territory, never stopping for breaks. Leaving the world of royalty behind. For now.

Finally, my keen nose picks up the scent of another pack, and not long after stepping past their borders, a couple of scouts come to ward me off. But my size is intimidating, as a Lycan, I am triple the size of any werewolf. I snarl at them with an air of dominance, standing on my hind legs, outstretching my claws and baring my chest in a show of force.

They glance at each other, but they must've known who I was. There are only three living Lycans, and the other two wouldn't have known Dorian's pack existed. Once they display that they aren't going to attack me, I shift back into my human form, and they take me to Dorian and Lily.

I knew the rogues had it rough, my father made sure they had difficult lives, always keeping them on their toes and frightened by the ruling family. It was the only way to prevent any sort of uprising, but I never realized how poor their lives were. Hush little campfires, crumbling abandoned buildings, camping trailers and tents... My royal attire is a stark and harsh contrast to my surroundings. Yet I care little, I'm here for one thing and one thing only.

I'm escorted into one of the buildings and Dorian is sitting in a chair whilst Lily stands beside him. Her escape has brought light back into her eyes. The dangerous fiery spirit now sparks in her gaze again as she stands dressed in a sporty outdoor attire, obviously given to her by the rogues to replace the prison rags.

"Prince Eric," says Dorian with a grin. "How kind of you to join us."

Lily's eyes finally lock with mine, and she speaks before I do. "Thank you, for helping me escape, for giving me my freedom," Lily isn't known for her sincerities, she must've truly been desperate. But I avoid making a mocking remark as she continues. "And as promised, I've led you to Dorian, he's the one able to wield black magic."

My eyes redirect to Dorian. "So, you'll teach me then? You'll teach me how to use black magic?"

I watch Dorian give Lily a playful glance that doesn't particularly comfort me. Something about him sets me on edge, but only a straight line sits on my lips as he speaks. "Five years ago, I told

Lily flower that I returned the kindness her mother offered me, all my debts to her are paid. If she and you, want my help now, then we need to make a deal.”

My lips twitch slightly but I maintain the confidence in my expression. “If you teach me black magic, that in combination with my own Lycan power will give me more than enough strength to defeat Marco. Once he’s eliminated and I become King, I promise I can give you anything you desire.”

Dorian eerily chuckles, leaning his elbows on the table, intertwining his fingers as if in thought. He shakes his head. “Although that is a compelling offer, the future is too uncertain for me to bet on. I have very little patience you see, and teaching you will take time, it may take years if you’re not a fast learner. Not forgetting the fact that you’ll still need to come up with a viable plan of infiltrating the capital and attacking Marco,” he tuts. “No, I can’t wait that long. I want to make a deal where payment is a guarantee.”

“And what sort of deal is that?”

He smiles. “I want Tanya. Bring her to me, and I will teach you Black magic.”

Tanya’s POV

I awake the next morning with a pounding headache, and I curse under my breath in protest to the blinding sun as I groan, forcing my sore body to sit up. What on earth had I drunk last night? To my surprise, I’m encased in warmth, and I look over to see Marco, his body pressed against mine.

He’s awake, and he looks at me with a playful smile.

“Why are you looking at me like that?”

He chuckles, realising his playful attitude catches me off guard. “You were full of energy last night. Might I say even, slightly mischievous,” he teases.

I blink at him, as confusion flashes across my face, before embarrassment creeps in. “What happened?”

To my horror, Marco tells me that Freya took over my body, that she grabbed and stuffed her face with candy. And that she also snatched a balloon from a child. I slowly drag a hand across my face as I groan in despair. “Oh god...” I mutter softly.

Marco then adds. “You also said you wanted to tell me something yesterday, but you never finished telling me.”

I look at him confused. “What did I tell you?”

To my surprise, Marco jokingly flicks my forehead and says with a light-hearted chuckle. “Well, since you don’t remember. I can wait. But I hope you’ll remember soon, and finish the remaining half of your sentence.”

Despite my pleading, Marco doesn’t break his silence concerning what I told him last night. In utter confusion and slight frustration, I decide to take a walk, hoping the fresh air will help me recall my memories.

It takes me about an hour, but I finally piece together last night, and I realize I was about to tell Marco about what happened five years ago. Unknowingly, my thoughts have walked me into a deserted alleyway. But just as I’m about to turn to leave, an individual appears, walking towards me swiftly.

Eric smiles at me.

And my eyes widen in fear. I don’t have time to call for help or even shift into my wolf form. Eric rushes at me in full force, cuffing his hand against my neck and slamming me against one of the walls.

“No!” I scream.

I try and fight him off, but even with my newly attained Alpha abilities, Eric’s Lycan power far surpasses my own. He uppercuts a fist into my gut, and my body hunches over from the pain. I whimper as he slams my head back into the wall. Again, and again and again. I feel the world beginning to spin as the edges of my vision blacken.

My head hurts dreadfully from the impact, but I have enough consciousness to loosen the wedding ring on my finger. I let it drop onto the ground without Eric noticing so that Marco would know I was here. I even have the chance to secretly drop my hand into my pocket, discreetly holding my perfume and pointing the valve at my pocket’s opening, spritzing it into the air. It’s a perfume that will amplify my scent and be highly detectable by my fated mate. Hopefully Marco would catch onto it, and be able to follow it, wherever I’m taken.

This is all that I can do however, as Eric once again slams my head into the wall, and the force darkens the world completely. His devilish smile is the last thing I see.

Chapter 88 Dorian’s Dream

Chapter 87 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Marco's POV

As my eyes attentively glance at the clock on the kitchen wall, I notice Tanya hasn't returned home yet. I've been waiting for her, even brewed her a cup of tea that sits cold now on the table next to mine. Up to this point, I have been rather excited, warm, and bubbling with apprehension that she'd come home remembering what she planned to tell me.

But instead, now I'm slightly displaced. This is very unlike her. Tanya would message me if she is running late for whatever reason. My chair screeches back in protest as I rise to a stand, as my thoughts try to create a logical argument for her lateness.

But the logical conclusions can only last till around midnight. Now my heart races with uncertainty, she's still not answering her phone and I know I need to kick into gear. I immediately call Oliver, tell him of my worries and that I want soldiers to be sent out in search of her.

Throughout the night Oliver and I go looking, going door to door asking if anyone's seen her. We check all the places she might've gone. Vivian's house, the perfume shop, the stores she likes. We ask everyone and anyone, and I continue to fear the worse as time continues to pass.

My chest tightens as each person we come across sadly says they haven't seen her. Despite their promises to keep an eye out, I'm barely comforted. My head just spins with millions of assumptions of what might've happened to her, until finally a soldier runs up to me.

"Someone said she was seen near Carol's flower shop yesterday!"

We don't hesitate to question the tip. Oliver and I rush to the area, and just as we near the mentioned shop, a wave of smells suddenly hits my nose. Not ignoring the instinct, I inhale deeply, and my wolf stirs in dire longing. I recognize her scent immediately, and hurry after it, Oliver follows me without question.

Eventually we find ourselves in a dark and narrow alley. And while no traces of a struggle can initially be seen, I notice a piece of metal glinting against the moon's light. But as I kneel down, I realize it isn't metal, but Tanya's silver ring. I press the piece of jewellery against my lips, closing my eyes, drowning in the thought of where she might be now.

But when I open my eyes again, they narrow with focus and sharpness. I am going to find her. Using the intense scent she's left behind I follow it with urgency.

Dorian's POV

I know I am dreaming. I must be dreaming. Because my mother died years ago, yet now I see her...

Still, the pain feels so real. Her favourite belt stings my skin even as I lay asleep dreaming, and I cry out in heartbreak. My dream has taken me to some of my darkest childhood memories. And I once again become that small little boy, useless, pathetic, and helpless, crying out for his mother's forgiveness, as she mercilessly whips me again, and again and again.

By then, mother had drunkenly told me one night, that she was a witch who had a brief love affair with Joseph. But when Joseph learned that my mother could wield magic, he left her, seeing her as an abomination. Even when she told him that she was pregnant, and begged him not to leave, Joseph only believed that it was a lie. A ploy used to keep him with her.

And so, I was born, half witch, half wolf, and despised by all.

The hurt my mother experienced from Joseph's rejection, she took out on me, spending most of her days of life drunk and alone, beating and whipping me when she grew restless, cursing my existence.

Sometimes she cursed me for being a hybrid and ruining her life, other times she cursed me for not being strong enough. She'd justify her beatings as a lesson, a lesson to make me stronger and more resilient. Sometimes she'd whisper into my ear, telling me I had to be strong so that one day I can take revenge on my father and his family.

And as she used Joseph as the reason to hurt me, and I used her acts of abuse as a reason to one day inflict pain on my father. He was the true cause of all this. My thoughts grew more disturbed with time, as I'd think of all the ways I would torture my father as well as his family and make them feel all the pain that I felt.

On the rare occasions that my mother was sober, she'd shower me in an obnoxious amount of affection, whispering sweet nothings and gracing me with hugs. But moments like those were far and few in between, for the most part, my mother was an angry drunk who couldn't look after me.

The only smart thing she ever did was hire a maid to look after me. An Omega called Linda, Lily's mother. If it hadn't been for her, I probably wouldn't have survived past the age of three. She was of the few people that showed me true kindness and made sure I was safe and looked after. Soon I grew unbothered by my mother's emotional absence and became independent and self-sufficient with Linda's guiding hand.

I was eight when it happened.

I heard a loud bang come from the living room. I rushed in to find my mother drunk and having a seizure. She must've mistakenly used her witchcraft, causing the ceiling chandelier to fall from its hook and smash itself to pieces atop of her. She was bleeding profusely, and foaming at the mouth from brain damage, all the while still cursing Joseph and me.

Linda was around at the time, and rushed in, terrified at the scene. She wanted to call the emergency services, wanted to help my mother. And while my mother's mind wouldn't have survived, physically she probably would have made it with the right treatment.

But I stopped Linda just as she was about to pick up the phone. Despite her confused protests, I stopped her, conviction in my eyes. And that was probably the first time I ever murdered someone.

My mother.

The scene in my dream starts to fade, shadows blurring out their faces and swirls of colour undoing my surroundings. When it clears again, I'm dressed up in neat clothing, following Barlow. He was going to teach me black magic that day.

Barlow did in fact treat me like a son and liked me very much because of my intelligence. And despite his strict rules, he treated me well, and cared about me.

The dream blurs again, and I reappear for a last time in a different scene. It was my birthday, Barlow was sitting beside me with a cigarette between his lips, dressing me in the new clothes he had especially made for me. Then he looked at me with a smug smile.

"Now aren't I terrific at making the best clothes," he laughs playfully. "I bet I could even make a living being a seamstress!"

I still remember the feel of the fabric against my skin. They didn't feel delicate like clothes made by a woman, but they made me feel warm, and reliable. Protected.

I suddenly jolt awake. My pillow is soaked from my sweat, and I feel breathless. I calm myself, slowly rising from bed as I rein in my confusion and shock over the strange dream. My stunned expression retracts, and I mask my thoughts with a thin straight line across my lips.

It is just a dream.

A dream about my childhood memories with my mother and Barlow. Course my mother I cared nothing for, Barlow on the other hand... we fought, and that relationship is now over. How I feel about it doesn't matter anymore.

The dream is all about meaningless days. It is nothing.

I'm just slightly surprised that it's Barlow that I see in my dream. Thinking of him leads me to wonder where he may be now. Course I don't order or ask my subordinates, and they don't dare mention his name around me.

But that's not important, right now, I'm going to meet lovely little Tanya.

Tanya's POV

I awake, hungry and cold. My heart hammers in my chest as I blink at my surroundings, trying to discern where I am. But nothing looks familiar, not the room, not the bed, nor the table or chairs in corner. Everything is foreign.

My mind traces back its memories to Eric. Why did he attack me? Where has he taken me? But before my thoughts can delve any further the door to the room unlocks. And in steps Dorian.

Chapter 89 Marco Comes

Chapter 88 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

Dorian's sinister smile prickles my skin with a sense of unease and discomfort. To once again face the man who was first sent to kill me unearths a primal fear within me. He's like a predator, and I'm the prey, a wide-eyed doe, helpless and alone, away from my herd.

"Don't be afraid darling. I'm not here to hurt you," his remark is sly, and he knows that his statement barely lessens the panic he's induced, but he continues speaking anyways. "I only asked Eric to invite you here."

I scoff breathlessly. "Invite isn't the word I'd use."

His lips upturn into a smirk. "But I've been so desperate to meet you. I need a favour," I remain silent as he explains his request. "I would like you to make a bottle of perfume for me. It's all I ask for, nothing more and nothing less. And you won't be harmed."

It's his final sentence that sticks out the most. Either way, something in my gut tells me that this simple perfume -knowing Dorian- must be something destructive. I can't imagine him asking for anything else other than something that can inflict pain or harm another. And I will not be involved in that.

"And if I refuse?"

The hybrid quirks a brow, almost as if expecting my refusal to grant him his wishes. He slowly steps towards me with a patient smile. I flinch as his hand moves, but he only reaches up to stroke strands of my hair away from my face, before lightly caressing my chin. My skin shivers

at his predatory touch, and he tilts my head back to look up at his towering figure as he changes the topic entirely.

“You are as beautiful as I remember. And I can imagine that gorgeous face of yours has charmed many on-lookers. I’m sure even Marco is drawn to your grace and beauty,” my body stills into frigidness as he stares into my eyes. “What would happen if I took that away? Hmm? What if I carved a scar across this untouched beauty?” he places a finger at the right corner of my forehead and draws a single long line down to the bottom of my chin.

“Would Marco still love you? Would he still want an ugly wife with a face covered in scars? Scars that would forever remind him that he failed to protect you?”

I stare up at him with frightened eyes, and I watch this arouse confidence and smugness in his expression. “I will count down from three to one. And at the end, if you still refuse to make me the perfume, I will carve my claws down your face,” but he doesn’t stop there. “And even after that, if you still don’t agree, I will continue to count, and after every three counts I will make another slash across your face.”

He chuckles darkly. “So much skin, so much beautiful, gorgeous skin for me to mutilate. Show me if you really cherish it.”

And just like that, Dorian starts counting down. His intentionally long pauses give me seconds to decide. But I knew already, from the moment he threatened me, I had already decided. Marco would love me no matter what, and I couldn’t aid evil. I would sacrifice everything if it meant I was stifling Dorian’s plans. Whatever they may be.

And so, when Dorian reaches one, his eyes unnaturally widen when only my body trembles in apprehension, while my lips still remain tightly sealed. And I can’t help but sense some form of anger and frustration as he laughs at me. “Fine. Then we will see how willing you’ll be once your face is littered in scars.”

I shrink back and close my eyes as Dorian raises his hand, I feel the slight draft as his arm swings forward. But instead of pain, all I hear is a loud ‘ding’. Instinctively I open my eyes to find something glowing on my chest through the fabric of my jacket. Whatever it is has blocked Dorian’s magic and protected me from harm. That’s when I remember the badge Mr. Barlow gave to me before he died!

If the hybrid was angry before, his nostrils flare with rage now, glaring at the glowing object. “Take off the jacket!” he snaps but doesn’t give me time to react. Harshly he pulls off my jacket, before roughly snatching the badge, snapping it off my sweater. “Barlow gave this to you?!”

He looks at me with disbelief and snorts. “That old man even cast a protection against black magic on this badge for you?” is it jealousy I’m hearing? I can’t really tell. All I know is that Dorian isn’t happy that I have Barlow’s badge.

Of course, his displaced appearance is quickly masked. He breathes in deeply and returns to having a guarded expression, and asks me way too casually. “What sort of wretched corner of the world is the old guy hiding in anyway?”

I can’t help the incredulous look on my face as tears spring from my eyes. “You were responsible for poisoning the water, weren’t you? Shouldn’t you already know that Barlow died protecting us?” is he just trying to hurt me by bringing Barlow up?

But something shifts in his expression completely. No longer does he have on a relaxed façade. Dorian appears shocked, as if Barlow’s passing is news to him. He mutters coldly beneath his breath. “That old guy is so powerful, how could he have died so easily?”

His gaze snaps to me. “You must be lying to me. Yes! You must be lying!” I’m completely stunned, but Dorian doesn’t give me a chance to speak. Obviously wanting to verify the truth, he fiercely throws my badge to the ground and storms towards the door.

But just before he leaves, he turns back towards me, saying coldly. “Even if you’re unwilling to make the perfume for me, I still have ways of getting what I want. I always get what I want in the end,” the hybrid then slams the door shut, leaving me locked up and alone once more.

I’m left feeling terrified, wondering what his last words mean. And my fears are only confirmed over the next couple of days. Not only am I locked up, but I’m barely given any food to eat or any water to drink. But that isn’t even the worst of it.

The day after my confrontation with Dorian, and every day after that, a person would come into my room, silent, ignoring my pleas, not conversing with me, barely baring me a glance. And I’m either ordered or forced to provide them my arm, using a syringe, they extract a tube of blood from my veins.

Days past and I grow weaker and weaker. My throat dries, leaving my voice croaky and scratchy as I’m parched for water. My body gets to the point where it no longer growls for food as its cries have been continuously ignored, choosing instead to eat away at my muscle and fat as a last resort. And even Freya, who usually converses with me with her lively joyous attitude, fails to surface. And it makes me wonder if I am close to dying.

As more blood is taken every day, I feel my will to live grow less and less. And now I barely even lift my head as the door to my room opens. Although my werewolf senses have been nearly erased, something awakens my sense of smell.

Something familiar.

I weakly lift my head, my eyes widening as Marco quietly enters the room, shutting the door before rushing to my side. His eyes look drained and tired, but nevertheless grateful to see me.

“Oh Tanya, my beloved Tanya...”

He cradles me in his arms, and like you would with a baby, he rocks me back and forth to soothe me. “What have they done to you?” he kisses my dry and cracked lips in desperate longing, whilst my glossy eyes peer up at him. I smile.

“You found me,” I whisper.

“I looked everywhere. I’m so sorry I didn’t find you sooner.”

I shake my head, patting his arm to comfort him. “You’ve found me now. And that’s all that matters.”

We sit huddled together for what feels like decades. Marco caresses me softly, whilst I hold his hand in mine, cherishing his touch. If only we were not in this retched place. If only we were far away, back home, with my sweet little Claire.

If only.

But reality eventually hits us like a ton of bricks. I can barely stand on my own two feet, and Marco is trying to pick me up so he can carry me and help me escape. But those few short minutes of joy are inevitably shattered as the door to the room opens once more. And Dorian, Eric and Lily stand on the other side.

Chapter 90 | Love You, Marco

Chapter 89 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya’s POV

Fear infects my insides as the three of them stand there with devilish glints in their eyes. Marco immediately releases a warning growl, and stands defensively to block me with his body, guarding me. I have to move slightly to the side to see past him.

It’s Lily who speaks first, releasing a conniving giggle. “You’re wanted dead Marco,” her eyes shine with terrible mischief. “I knew it would be hard to get to you when you were still at the palace. But look! You delivered yourself right to our door instead,” her gaze narrows. “How perfect.”

I see Marco’s shoulders tense, with only being able to see his back, I watch his muscles shift with each breath before finally hearing him speak. “Even if all three of you fight, you’re still all no match for me,” I doubt Marco is trying to bode them into combat, he’s instead trying to ward

them off, making them second guess trying to fight him. If Marco has to fight, he'll be pulled away from me.

But his warning does nothing, Eric launches himself at Marco, and the two Lycan Princes battle in their human forms, throwing blows and taking punches as they clash with terrible snarls and growls emitting from their human lips. But as expected, Marco has the upper hand, his taller frame and more muscular body have Eric at a disadvantage.

Seeing that Eric alone is no match for Marco, Dorian jumps in. They tag team, hitting Marco from either side. But Marco's reflexes are sharp and quick, he splits his focus between them, blocking and attacking each correspondingly. In the midst of this, I watch Lily's gaze grow more desperate and concerned. And soon she too jumps in to help.

The third member increases the workload for Marco, and whilst he's still able to maintain control over the situation, he's slowly growing overwhelmed, and is drawn further and further away from me. And yet still, the three cannot take him down.

Eric's gaze is hardened in anger and frustration. "Lily, we need to use the perfume!"

"No!" Dorian snaps. "It's still not ready yet! It's only a prototype with multiple defects!"

But Eric doesn't drop the topic whilst they continue to fight off Marco's blows. "We have to risk it! Marco is alone, this is the perfect time. If we let him retreat back to the kingdom of Mador it may take years before we get another opportune moment to attack him in the open like this!"

Despite his disapproval, Dorian eventually gives in to Eric's logic. Lily hastily takes out the bottle of perfume from her pocket and tosses it to Dorian. He then quickly sprays himself with it, and the concentration of black magic around him seems to get stronger, a thick black mist surrounding him, swirling with danger and animosity.

I notice Marco's steps falter slightly as his gaze shoots to Dorian, clearly trying to calculate and analyse this new strategy the three are using. But he's given little time to react, as Dorian erupts, and lets out a flurry of blows at Marco.

The perfume seems to have increased his strength, and he darts and attacks in multiple combat combinations, that halt Marco's forward attack. Dorian moves with terrible grace and efficiency, as the black swirl follows his body and movements with deadly precision.

However, I begin to notice that Dorian's gaze every so often flickers to me. With Marco distracted I start to be left exposed. And I begin to wonder why Dorian is more focused on me than on his opponent. Till I realize his ploy. He's forcing Marco to move further and further away from me!

Suddenly Dorian's feet shift positions, and his form turns towards me. Marco then suddenly realizes his mistake. I can barely move. My body is so weak that I'm even unable to save myself.

I feel myself almost surrender to whatever attack Doran has planned, and I close my eyes in fear and hopelessness.

Even with my eyes closed, I can feel the powerful black magic coming at me. Dorian must have used all power he had accumulated and delivered his strongest blow.

Till the blows never come.

I open my eyes to see Marco's as he faces me. He cages me against the bed and wall with his strong arms leaving his back vulnerable to the onslaught from Dorian. My eyes well up in tears as his face flinches in hurt. The scent of blood is now prominent in the air and Marco is losing a lot of it.

Eventually, his injury is too much, and he collapses beside me, and passes out from his injury formed by the black magic. Exactly as he does so, Eric's eyes widen in surprise, somewhat puzzled that Marco has been taken down by them so easily. But then his breaths are fast and rapid as he comes to realize that he has in fact defeated Marco, finally. Dorian on the other hand also stares at his hands in surprise, twisting and turning them to study the black magic that swirls around them, before the mist eventually disappears.

Eric then lets out a malicious laugh, satisfied with the outcome. He then looks at me with a devilish smile and proceeds to laugh again before saying. "You know, we have no one else but you to thank Tanya. You helped us take him down. This is all your doing."

I cannot stop the tears that rush down my face as I huddle in my own shame and guilt, completely at a loss and mortified that I caused this. Marco would have still been safe if he hadn't come looking for me. I am the one that put him in danger.

As the three approach, I push myself to stand, wobbling slightly from weakness. But my willpower to protect Marco overrides everything else I feel. I push myself despite the pain and discomfort. I go to stand in front of him, willing to fight if it came to it. But I won't allow them to hurt him anymore before I die. I know my strength is weak now, but I will do all I can to protect Marco.

I stand in front of him, arms out wide as I block the rest of them from getting any closer. "Go away! Just leave us alone! You've already got what you wanted!" I plead in desperation.

Dorian slyly smiles at me. "Not quite yet little Tanya. I still need one more thing."

My gaze snaps to him, unsure of what more they could want.

"Marco must die. It's the only way our plans can go ahead. But you... you have a chance. If you want to live, you will live as our slave, making all the perfumes I will ever need. You will willingly do as I say and there will be no consequences. After all... you have inherited the Montenero family bloodline. You're still of some use to us," his head tilts eerily, gazing at me, curious to see my response.

My gaze flickers to the rest, and I notice Lily's frown. She's obviously not happy that I'm being kept alive. But she doesn't question or go against Dorian's decision. I guess that Dorian granted her sanctuary after she fled the capital, and therefore she must submit to his ruling, no matter how much she hates me.

Of course, that doesn't mean she can't continue to berate me with her malicious words, she grins at me and says. "I mean... you did abandon Marco five years ago for the money. We won't blame you if you choose to abandon him once again to save your own skin. He's going to die anyways. You might as well survive."

I'm still encased in fear, however, her words spark anger in my system. How dare she mention such events that were all but a lie. She used me against Marco for her own sick benefit. I snap from grief and pain, staring into her eyes fiercely. "If you didn't force me to leave Marco five years ago, I never would have left him. You threatened me! You lied to me. You gave me no choice, that you would only cure Marco's curse if I left. And I couldn't tell him the truth. How could you be so cruel?"

Course Lily didn't expect me to retaliate, but I ignore her hardened gaze as I continue speaking, now looking back down at Marco. "What I regret most in this life was leaving Maroc when he was at his lowest point, even when I thought it was for the best. I never should have left. But I won't make the same mistake twice. This time, I will never let him go, no matter what happens."

I brush the strands of his hair away from his face and smile at him. "I love Marco. With all my heart. I love you, Marco. And I'd rather die," my gaze snaps to Dorian. "Than live for eternity being your slave."

The trio don't truly know how to react to my refusal. But before any of us can say anything, I feel Marco's body twitch beneath me. And I look down in surprise and astonishment to see his eyes flutter open to look at me. He's smiling!

I stare down at him in awe, but before I can say anything, he speaks through a light-hearted chuckle. "My beloved. Did you really think I was that weak?"

Chapter 91 Pretend To Be Sick

Chapter 90 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

I'm completely stunned and drift into silence as I find Marco smiling back at me. I've never seen Marco smile so brightly, even his eyes glistening with a radiant glow.

But I don't get a chance to say anything. Suddenly, Marco moves to stand, I watch as his body takes on a new form. The muscles on his back flex and shift as golden and black fur rush to cover skin. A growl rumbles over the noise of cracking bones as he rises to stand at his full height, the wooden floor creaking beneath his weight.

As the three others stand watching in silence and shock, and before they have time to react, Marco starts stalking towards them dangerously. He outstretches one of his arms and drags his claw across the wall, embedding deep claw marks into the cement as an uncomfortable scratching noise emits from this motion.

But he doesn't give them a chance to make the first move, Marco launches himself at Dorian, and the hybrid has to shift forms mid attack. There's a confidence in Marco's movements that I realize is from him understanding the best way to fight Dorian. Dorian relies heavily on black magic. But up close, he is physically weaker than Marco, and couldn't keep up with Marco's strength and raw power. Dark red blood taints Dorian's pure white fur as Marco litters his body in claw marks, before battering him into the ground.

By now the other two have transformed. Lily gallops towards Marco, attempting to attack him from behind. But upon sensing her nearing presence, Marco swivels round, and his arm in a forkful swing connects with her body while she's in mid-air. Her weak omega form is no match for Marco's force. And what is equivalent to a slap from him, sends her flying into one of the walls. I wince upon hearing the undeniable breakage of a couple of bones, and her body drops to the ground with a thud.

Probably well aware of the odds, Eric is the last to engage in combat with my husband. But his pride is what indivertibly overrides any logical thought. The two Lycans battle it out in a violent clash of claws, teeth and snarls. Blood splatters the walls and ceilings, and torn fur falls to the floor.

Despite knowing Marco's capabilities, part of me is still afraid for his safety. Yet I trust his strength, and he proves me right. Marco swipes at Eric's face, the prince stumbles back, before Marco barrels into him, pinning him to the floor whilst snapping down on his arms and near his neck, whilst continuing to slash at his chest.

Finally, satisfied that Eric is no longer going to fight back, Marco sits back on his haunches, before shifting back into his human form. Blood that isn't his now tainting his skin and clothes. But he approaches me, lifting me into his arms bridal style and silently carrying me towards the door.

Just before we reach the door, both of us sense movement to our right. Marco and I tense and he turns us to see Dorian shifting back. The hybrid's breathing is ragged and uncontrolled as he repeatedly coughs up blood, before speaking to us in a weakened voice. "You really think you

can escape us?" even when weakened and defeated, his pride and terrible ambitions don't remain silent. He still believes he somehow has a chance at containing us.

Dorian eerily grins at us with bloody teeth. "Even if you've defeated us, you still can't leave. I have an entire pack of rogues that are ready to demolish you. You're outnumbered by the hundreds. All I have to do is say the word and they'll attack you. They'll rip you to shreds!" he says in a desperate attempt to threaten us.

Despite me being concerned with this threat, Marco heeds it no mind, and swings open the door. And as promised, on the other side stands a group of savage looking fighters, some in their wolf forms, some not. But all stare hungrily at my husband and me.

To my surprise and confusion. Marco only snorts in laughter. "Really?" even Dorian appears confused.

Just then, multiple wolf howls sound off in the distance, clearly a pack showing size and strength as they erupt into a deafening chorus. Marco smiles. "Did you really think I'd come alone? Let us go, or I'll have my soldiers attack and wipe out your entire pack. It'll be like you never existed," Dorian seems torn, but Marco only hammers home his point. "You're brutally injured, do you really think rogues will stand and fight for you when you're a lost cause? They have a better chance running than facing the capital's soldiers and finest warriors."

For the first time ever I watch Dorian's face grow pale with surrender. And with no other choice, he lets us leave.

I'm still in utter shock as Marco walks us out of the makeshift camp grounds of Dorian's pack. We walk through the woods towards the position of Marco's soldiers. As we're finally alone for a moment, I look to Marco curiously. "But if you were okay, why did you faint?"

Marco smiles at me. "I was only pretending to faint. I wanted Eric, Lily and Dorian to lower their guard. I wanted to also have the time to identify their weaknesses when they weren't paying attention, so I knew where to strike," he then pauses for a moment before adding playfully. "And if I hadn't fainted, how could I have heard the truth about what happened five years ago. If I didn't do what I did, I may have never gotten to hear your sincere confession. I'm so glad I pretended to faint."

I don't know whether to cry or laugh. But nevertheless, I smile back at him with tears in my eyes. Still in his arms, I wrap my hands round his neck and pull him close to me. "Oh Marco! How could you pretend to faint at such a scary time just to get my confession! I was so worried!"

Marco laughs and pats my back to soothe me, till he suddenly releases a muffled grunt. With surprise and concern, I force Marco to put me down, as he finally admits, through bared teeth. "Okay... maybe I got hurt just a little."

Whilst muttering apologies I lower him to the ground to try and help ease the pain. Just then Oliver and a couple of soldiers show up. But they aren't the entire army the way Marco depicted

to Dorian. I look at him in confusion. And he cheekily smiles back at me. “I was in hurry to find you; it was quicker to take a smaller group. But it was a good enough lie to scare our opponents, don’t you think?”

I roll my eyes laughing, before I and Oliver help take Marco home.

Upon returning to the palace, many days pass where I continue to take care of Marco. Every day I would clean and redress his wounds to ensure they were healing. And although they were healing, the process appeared slow, too slow. And I had to look after Marco every day.

I would also make him food. And Marco would explain that his back was hurting and ask me to feed him. Which I had no problems with, and I happily make sure he was well fed. However, today I’m feeding Marco and my hand accidentally slips hold of the bowl of soup. But before the bowl touches the ground, Marco, who is apparently lying weakly in bed, swiftly catches hold of the fallen bowl.

I blink in surprise and look at Marco with astonishment. Suspicion arises in my gut as I look at him curiously. “Are you pretending to be sick?” Marco jolts in surprise and inevitably drops the bowl, spilling its contents on the ground. Blinking feebly and veering away, daring not to look into my eyes.

“Marco...” I press.

Although slightly annoyed, I playfully poke his shoulder and arm, comically teasing him as I say. “Marco.... Tell me the truth. Are you really sick? Or are you just pretending so you can have me take care of you and be with you every day? Are you that childish?” I say in laughter.

At first Marco pouts at me with his big round eyes, before suddenly pulling me into his arms. I squeal in laughter as he rolls me onto the bed and pins me beneath him. “And who’s the one who confessed her undying love for me, in front of everyone.”

I look away in embarrassment, shyness reddening my cheeks as Maroc nears his face to mine. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” I say jokingly.

And in response, he playfully growls and kisses my lips, making the world around me fall away completely.