

Chapter 91 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

As our lips finally part again to catch our breaths, I stare into the depths of his ocean eyes, finding myself roaming across the waves of his deep blues. He smiles. And I smile back, and we both can't help breaking out into a chorus of laughter. My giggles and his playful chuckling weave into a glorious happy melody.

"From now on," Marco whispers. "I'm never letting anyone get in between us ever again. You're the love of my life," I find myself staring at him in awestruck, before propping myself up, leaving my lips inches from his as I whisper.

"And I promise, to never let anyone stop me from loving you again," but before, I allow him to lower himself towards me. One of my hands gently grabs his arms, pulling one side of his body towards me, whilst my other hand pushes against his chest. And he soon understands what I'm after.

We tumble again into array of kisses, and the duvet wrestles with our moving bodies. Floating gracefully into the air momentarily as Marco pulls me on top, before the blanket settles back down again over my body and his. I straddle him, leaning forward to let my hair cascade around us like a curtain, shielding our love from a world that can be cruel and despicable.

But our bubble is what is safe.

Without him asking, I lift my top over my head in eagerness, before lowering down again to hungrily kiss his lips. My hand goes to cuff him just beneath his chin to hold him in place. And I smile as a lustful growl edges past his lips.

An Omega, or an Alpha. With a wolf, or without one. None of that matters with Marco at my side. The world can have all the opinions it wants on who I am and what I'm capable of. It can beat me down, pull me under, and tear me limb from limb. But I will fight. I will fight for myself, fight for Claire, and fight for Marco.

Despite him being beneath, my growing desire and renewed Alpha strength, Marco still finds a way to display his dominance. His fingers slip into the crevices of my hair, fisting his hand, and tightening his grip to push my head down and pressing me harder into his lips.

Of course, that's until I find the space to drop my face just an inch. My teeth clasp his lower lip and I gently but firmly and sensually tug with a defiant smile. I sense he's surprised, and another dominant growl edges past me. But I don't fear his authority. I relish in it, finding pleasure with pushing his boundaries and teasing him endlessly.

In reaction to my playfulness, Marco tugs my head to the side, pulling me closer so that he has full access to my neck. I press against him further as my eyes roll back from the pleasure of his lips grazing my bare skin.

But I wasn't done fighting. With his focus taken up by his hand in my hair and his lips trying to find his favourite mark on my neck, my hand sneakily glides down to his crotch, and without warning my hand grips the bulge that sits firm and solid beneath the fabric of his pants.

The pressure I apply is sudden, and a surprise. He jolts beneath me, his groin jerking upwards in a reflex to my sudden touch. He grabs my head harder, pressing my neck further against his lips as his teeth nip my skin.

"Watch yourself Princess," he mutters with a sly smile.

Princess....

Even if I may have been a princess when I first signed his marriage contract so many years ago. I never truly felt like a princess. I felt like an imposter, someone in the wrong body, and all you had to do was peel away a layer of my skin to reveal the horrible truth.

But now... the title doesn't scare me. No... something within me embraces the term. It feels right, but not in the way one would assume. It's not that I really care for being royalty, but rather that I belong beside Marco. I am his princess. And one day... as crazy and as absurd it still seems to be. I will one day be the queen standing at his side.

"Is Tanya still in there?" his playful chuckle brings me back to reality, a beautiful reality. And whilst I have still been hungrily kissing his lips, he can sense I have been away with the fairies for a moment. "Everything okay?"

I smile. "Everything is just perfect."

Without warning, I pull away from his hold and begin planting kisses down his chest. I can feel his eyes on me as I trail down his body before finally coming down onto what I was wanting all along. He helps me undo the button of his pants and I hastily pull them off, tossing the clothing off bed.

I situate myself between his legs.

Marco's POV

Although lying on my back, I prop myself on my elbows so I can watch her. She leans forward on her knees, scrunched up into nearly a ball so all I can see is her head at the base of my groin, her eyes peering into mine as she runs her fingers and nails along my sides, teasing my throbbing manhood.

I can't help the grunt that escapes me, that only fuels her playful display. Before finally.... finally.... her hand wraps round my length. My breath hitches as the touch sparks fires beneath my skin, and I find myself hypnotized by the emerald hue of her forestry eyes, their green shade reminding me of woods, the wolfish safe heaven I knew and loved. Tanya is a forest, sprawling with beauty, with growth, with fauna. Like a tranquil woody landscape, she soothed my inner wolf, drawn to her aroma.

And then my mind blanks as her mouth suddenly encompasses my length. My head tilts back in undeniable pleasure as her head bobs up and down with expertise. I'm blanketed in a wave of pleasure as the soft wet noises coming from her suckling on my length and the mounds at its base leave me both feeling exposed and yet comforted. I know I am safe in her hands, and I let her control the pace.

For a little while.

Though I am in love with her slow and methodical movements, my wolf is hungry. Hasty for more. My hands reach down, palms planting themselves on the back of her head, prepping her. When I can tell she's understood my wants my groin begins to thrust itself, hard and fast. Her gasps and the tight seal of her lips only urge me to pump her face harder.

I release, giving her a moment to let up for air, before pushing her head down onto my manhood, and thrusting hard again, drowning in the pleasure it gives me. I do this a couple more times before I can tell she's eager to have my length elsewhere.

I grab her wrist and pull her towards me, and she obliges. But she stops not exactly where I want her just yet.

“Wait. It's your turn.”

She's slightly confused at first, before eventually I pull her all the way, forcing her to crawl up my body and past my throbbing length crying for her. Soon she understands what I'm after, and I hold her thighs just above my face before allowing her opening to lower it down near my lips.

I lick furiously at her flower. It's already so wet and flush with liquid, driving my hormones up the wall, but I continue to slurp and tickle her delicates, loving how she squirms and quivers on top of me. I have to wrap my arms around her thighs to hold her down as she moans in absolute pleasure.

“Marco please. I want to you. I don't want to cum just yet....”

At first I don't listen to her pleas, continuing to ramp up the intensity of my touch. But eventually her pleas rile up my wolf, desperate to have myself inside her. Finally, I comply. "I want you on top," I command.

She's breathless as I finally break away, trying to regain her composure as she pulls herself off my face. But she can't hide the charming smile. "Typical male," she teases with a giggle, planting another kiss on my lips before going to straddle me.

I let her lower herself onto my length in her own time. But of course, as the head invades her glorious hole, I have to stop myself from rocketing upwards in want and need. To distract myself, I unclasp her bra, letting her mounds hang loose and grip them fiercely. I lower her down so I can devour them whilst she starts to move against me.

I wrap an arm over her back and waist and begin pumping fast and hard. All the build-up has sent me over the edge, and I can't stop myself. But she doesn't complain, rather she screams in unrelenting pleasure as I grunt and moan in ecstasy.

The two of us rock the bed and grip onto one another as the entire world falls away, encompassed in our own curated bliss with nothing but each other, hitting climax and collapsing in each other's arms.

Chapter 93 Cathy Disappears

Chapter 92 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Tanya's POV

I don't really remember how I woke up this morning. All I remember is that I was the little spoon, and as soon as Marco roused from his slumber, he decided to fulfill his role as the big spoon. I girlishly giggle trying to run away, saying that we need to get up to start the day.

Course Marco cares little for my logical arguments. "I don't like to use my royal title as an excuse. But in this case, I will. The world can wait on us for once. We're royals."

I gasp in laughter. "Marco!"

"Nu uh, I want you. And I will have you," despite my flailing, I finally surrender to his lustful impulse. I allow him to press my body flush against his, spooning me again. And as he fiddles with his boxers, I find my desire rising down below, my wolf growing hormonally impatient despite my initial protest.

Finally, I feel the head of his length press against my hole, and I suck in a breath when he proceeds to push it in deep. “Fuck yes...” he moans. I’m tight, and I find myself clenching round his member, which only intensifies the noises he’s making.

Eventually we both find ourselves in a steady rhythm. And with the curtains drawn, the only sound emitting from the darkened room is the slapping sounds created from Marco’s hard thrusts against my bare bum.

“You’re so hormonal,” I tease. Marco in response only angles himself better, his length touching my sweet spot and forcing another moan to escape me.

“Horny,” I retort.

He throws an arm over my body, claspng one of my breasts in a tight squeeze. “Sexy,” he purrs.

“Feral,” I moan.

“Gorgeous,” he whispers. I smile as he slams into me harder and harder, our moans rising to the same volume of the skin smacking.

Till a voice echoes from outside the door. “Mummy! Daddy!” the handle jiggles, but inevitably doesn’t budge, and I praise the Moon Goddess that I locked it.

“Shit,” As he speaks, his hard on softens with such suddenness. It’s almost comical, if it wasn’t for the fact my innocent daughter is standing outside the door. And someone else now joins her. I hear the maid speaking, trying to prevent my child from forcing her way into the room. But of course, like her father, she’s stubborn.

“Why won’t you let me go in to find mommy and daddy? I’m allowed to!”

I hear the maid only able to awkwardly say that her parents are just busy. But we both know that isn’t going to deter her for long.

“Why is she so insistent?” says Marco, breathing into my ear as he’s still pressed against me.

“Cause she’s stubborn... just like her father,” Marco groans as I chuckle. But we both freeze as the door handle jiggles again, only this time more furiously. Marco slips out of me and the two of us spring out of bed, and rush to get dressed.

Eventually we greet Claire at the door, giving her all the love and attention she desired from us, before sending her off to school. The two of us then end up in the kitchen, and after I brew us some coffee, we sit down to obviously talk about the past couple of days.

“I don’t think that was the last time will be seeing, Dorian, Eric and Lily,” says my husband. “Something tells me they’re prepping for another fight with us. A final fight.”

I sigh, hating the reality. Nevertheless, I decide to provide my thoughts on the previous incident. “That perfume Dorian used must’ve been a prototype of sorts. I guess he wanted my skills to make a special perfume, but I refused. So, they withdrew blood from me instead, so Lily could try and make the perfume Dorian wanted.”

Marco nods. “The perfume obviously was made to try and enhance Dorian’s black magic. I experienced the change as soon as he sprayed it on himself,” I inhale a shaky breath as Marco continues. “Eric wants the throne. So, I have no doubt that their aim is to take down the Kingdom of Mador. I’ll start training the soldiers immediately. We will need to prepare for war.”

A few weeks later

Eric’s POV

Even if I am a Prince, Dorian treats me no differently to his rogue comrades when I’m training with him. He pushes me to go harder, to be faster, forcing both swiftness, and technical power out of me. Today’s lesson ends with me feeling on a high. I brush sweat off my forehead as Dorian speaks.

“I believe that concludes all the powerful black magic that I can teach you within a short time frame. This combined with the perfume made to enhance your powers, and your lycan abilities will be more than enough to defeat Marco. We should be ready to attack the Kingdom soon.”

I barely register Dorian leaving the room. All I focus on is his words and his confirmation that we are ready. I am ready.

All my life, despite Marco’s curse making me the heir by default. I was always reminded of it, would always bitterly overhear nobles and royals talk about how Marco’s power far surpassed mine, and if it wasn’t for his curse, I’d be all but forgotten. It wrenched a hole in my heart and darkened my mind. I had the right to fight for what was also mine. And now, I can finally get rid of Marco for good!

Dorian’s POV

I watch the Prince grow incredibly excited with the prospect of defeating Marco. But when I turn my back to him, I can’t help the wicked smile that creeps onto my lips. I head out of the training room and down one of the halls. I won’t deny Eric’s intelligence. The prince is indeed connivingly malicious, using his brain over his brawn in ways that benefit him. However, his greed and pride leave him blinded to consequences of using dark magic. Not that I’m complaining really.

The truth is. That in this world, nothing, even magic and dark power, isn't attained for free. Especially black magic. The world's magical forces must remain in balance, and if the sides are tipped, then sacrifices must be made to right them. There is no powerful black magic that can be learned so quickly, not without causing harm to oneself.

And so, all the magic I've been teaching Eric, are inferior black magic spells. Even though they do greatly enhance his power in a short period time, the reverse effect they will have on Eric's unaccustomed body will be equally as powerful, if not more damaging. Great magic takes a toll.

With this devious thought in mind, my thought process shifts onto a topic that's much more important right now. Revealing the perfume Lily made for me from my pocket, I casually toss the bottle up and down in my hand as I try to think.

Originally, I had been hoping Tanya would make this perfume for me but since she adamantly refused, and I no longer had any leverage to force her, I let Lily try with Tanya's blood. But of course, Lily doesn't have the Montenero Family's talent for perfumery. Her repeated experiments and continual failures had been a grueling experience. But eventually, to my surprise, she was able to create a concoction. But it itself is barely passable.

Problem is, that its effectiveness is highly inferior to the real solution that Tanya is capable of creating. The black magic enhancement effect is far less than its truer version. And it also has a fatal flaw. Thirty minutes after use, the user experiences thirty seconds of intense weakness, leaving the user extremely exposed to attack.

But I don't settle for less. Never have and never will. And although there is no way to rectify this flaw in the perfume, I have another way to make up for it. With my plan in mind, I can't help the maniacal laughter that escapes me from growing excitement.

They are all blind.

Eric especially. He overlooks, or never cares to wonder if my ultimate end goal is the same as his. Surprise surprise. It's not. Eric desires the death of Marco. I on the other hand, don't just want Marco dead, I want to entirely destroy the royal family, to watch them suffer, to watch them fall from their pedestal of grace and wealth. Marco said he could wipe my rogue pack out of existence. Little did he know I planned to demolish the royals and wipe them from all of history as the ruling family.

I have long known that there is a branch of black magic known as sacrificial black magic, where I can sacrifice the blood and power of a family member in order to grant myself great undefeatable power. But before then, I must do something important first.

Under the cover of midnight, I quietly slip away from my pack's territory alone, reappearing outside of what I believe to be Cathy's room. Peering through the window, I see my stepsister sleeping soundly, unalerted to my presence, nor did she have any knowledge that I existed.

I believe it's time I introduce myself.

Chapter 93 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

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The morning starts off in absolute chaos.

Marco receives a call from the phone by our bedside, and the frantic voice over the line makes it difficult for me to make out the words. But I know it's serious as Marco's face immediately hardens. Knowing not to ask any questions just yet, I rush off to get ready, and he drives us to the palace. In car he explains that Cathy appears to be missing!

I leave Claire in the care of Vivian as I go off to help in the search. The soldiers check the surrounding woods, while police officers roam the streets in their patrol cars. Neighbouring kingdoms are alerted to her disappearance and asked to keep a look out for her. I go with a couple of the maids that knew Cathy well, checking all the places she may have ended up, hopefully on her own accord. But we all can't help but think the worst of this situation.

Eventually, I, Marco and couple of other well-known and well-trusted royals gather in the council room with the King. There is bickering for hours as they try and decide what's the best course of action, but in the end Marco overrules them. I knew he had already decided when he first found out Cathy was missing, but now that she has not turned up anywhere, he is resolute in his decision. He is going to attack Dorian's rogue pack.

Eventually, all the royals disperse to ready their men, and the king too ventures off, leaving just the two of us. "Are you absolutely sure Eric would have been the one to take Cathy?" I ask softly, very unnerved by what is about to happen.

He furrows his brows. "I thought I knew my brother. Even if he's desperate for the throne and my downfall, Cathy is still his sister; he was always good to her. They share the same father and mother. Would he really be so heartless as to kidnap Cathy?"

I blink. "So, are you saying Dorian kidnapped Cathy?"

Marco shrugs. "I really hope that's the case. But either way, this all still doesn't make any sense. Dorian and Cathy have never met, they've never even crossed paths. So why take her?" he shakes his head, frowning immensely. "But it doesn't matter what either of them wants with Cathy, I still believe they have her, and I'm going to get her back."

I step towards him, taking his hand. He can sense my nervousness, but runs his hands over mine, trying to soothe me. “Even if Cathy is sometimes arrogant, she’s a good person. She’s kind and honest, she doesn’t have a very wide social range, and the people of the Kingdom do adore her. It’s just way too coincidental for her to disappear exactly at the time we are at war with Dorian and my brother. There must be a connection.”

Eric’s POV

Dorian hands me the final version of the black magic enhancing perfume, and I take it from him eagerly. But not before I eye its contents, noticing a strange spell mark at the bottom of the perfume bottle. “What does this mean?” I know part of me should have been more concerned than I am about using black magic. Magic can be unstable, sometimes unpredictable as told in the books I’ve read here and there when I first did my research. But I couldn’t let myself focus on those things. This is my one chance to defeat Marco, and I am going to risk everything if that’s the only way to take back my throne.

Still, I can’t help but ask. In response, Dorian gives me a mysterious smile, saying. “Oh, it’s just a little something that will help make the perfume’s effect even more powerful!” he draws me in with the ambitious glint in his eyes. “With the black magic, the perfume and your Lycan powers, trust me, Eric. You’ll be unstoppable.”

I mirror his gaze with growing excitement. I want to know more, but I’m suddenly interrupted as we begin to hear yelling from outside. The phrase ‘palace soldiers’ can be heard from among the commotion and I realize it’s Marco!

Hurrying outside, I shove the perfume in my pocket. I had planned to attack the capital soon, but instead Marco chose to come right to our door. How convenient. It’s finally time I end his reign.

Marco’s POV

We sound like thunder, like ominous booming thunder rolling into the forestry as we gallop towards Dorian’s pack. Lighting slashes its way across the sky above us, lighting up the darkness to reveal the mass of wolves I have gathered. A howl erupts in the distance as the call to arms as we race towards our opponents.

I knew the best chance we would have would be by taking the pack by surprise. I can see them now through the trees as they rush and scramble to create defences, grab weapons or shift forms. But my army is already upon them.

I stand at the centre as my wolves rush past me in the thousands. Fur brushing past my skin, as dirt kicks up around me as they charge. The moon huddles behind the clouds as blood starts to

drench and soak the forest floor, and rain begins to pommel down as if trying to block out the screams and wash away the awful stench of death.

I stand at the edge, watching, searching. At the corner of my eye, I catch one of the rogues sizing me up, thinking he could take me. He bolts at me and lunges, teeth bared. Barely looking in his direction I step back, arm jolting forward, swiftly grabbing the scruff of his neck as he's still in motion, before slamming him onto the ground. My hand grips the bottom of his jaw and... snap.

I don't care to register much else, nudging the limp body out of the way as I march forward, my black coat breezing behind me. I don't have time to entertain squabbles with lowly rogues, I am here to fight a more worthy opponent.

All my life I knew Eric secretly despised my existence. I was the brother that would forever threaten Eric's right to the throne. And so Eric did everything to prove his worth in all other aspects other than power. He became a brilliant diplomat, a perfect royal, poised and calm in comparison to my ruthlessness and less than social nature.

But in the end. Political wit doesn't win wars.

I see him, amid the chaos, my gaze zones in and I march over the fallen bodies and through the colliding mass of canines. He clocks me now too, and I can tell he sees the fury in my eyes. No more silly games.

Before he can even get within range, I launch a frontal kick to his stomach. No more talking. As he stumbles, I throw a roundhouse kick to his side to change the direction of his falling body. In a swift blur, I close the gap, hooking an elbow around his neck and kneeling him repeatedly in the gut, before slamming an elbow into his jaw. No more playing around.

I release Eric's bruised body from my hold, and he stumbles backwards, wheezing, littering the ground with his coughed-up blood. All those times I've fought Eric, I held back, I withdrew my strength because after all he is my brother. But now... after he's taken Cathy, I'm holding nothing back. And Eric is starting to realize the difference.

Not done with my attack I march forward again, and Eric attempts to swing at me as he disorderly steps backwards. But I side-step each swing, calmly moving left and right to avoid his weak blows before I suddenly snap hold of his arm as it jabs at me again. I jerk his arm forward and twist it in a hold, pulling him up close so I can repeatedly strike him in the face. One punch after another I go at his jaw and nose till trail tracks of blood appear beneath his nostrils.

I forcibly shove Eric backwards, sending him tumbling to the ground. "This isn't a fight you can win brother," I say brutally as I tower above him. I don't know what I'm truly hoping for, do I really think Eric is going to surrender? Probably not. But I would continue to beat the shit out of him till he did.

As I expect, Eric only glares back at me, before a malicious smile creeps onto his bloody lips. Before I reach his position, my brother takes out a perfume bottle from his pocket and begins to

profusely spray himself with it and then he begins shifting. Dark misty swirls of magic shadow his body as it transforms, there is nothing natural about his transformation, nothing normal. This is far beyond what the Moon Goddess sought for when she created us. This is heresy.

But I don't have much time to consider the sacrilege of my brother's actions. I transform into my Lycan appearance, matching his height as the rain continues to drown us in its sorrows over lost family values. Thunder erupts in the night sky as we both roar and collide. Eric slashes at my chest in a swiftness that I'm not ready for, before biting down on my shoulder.

I roar again as my claws dig into his back, and I chomp at his arm. We move as a blur, tumbling and rolling across the soil, trampling the plants and grass as we taint them with blood. With the perfume Eric becomes faster, swifter, his slashing quicker than I can deflect, and his bite much stronger as it rips at my skin. Not that I leave him unwounded, I do just as much damage, ripping into his shoulder, and tearing open a seam on his right thigh. Course Eric returns the favour, as my left arm throbs terribly.

Somehow, we eventually untangle ourselves and I skid to a halt and he rolls to the other side. Not giving my brother time, I gallop at him, ready to launch, but he blurs out of my sight. Instead, a mass of black mist meets me with such force I'm thrown off my paws and tumble to the ground as pain relishes its way through my body.

I don't see Eric. Again, I get up, but once again a force of shadow magic shoots into my chest and sends me knocking hard into a tree. My body aches as I force myself to stand but I don't even get a chance, as a bolt of blackness surges at me and thrusts me into the ground, igniting more pain.

I growl, pulling myself up and behind one of the boulders to shield myself. I shift back into my human form and call out to my brother. "Stop this bullshit and face me like a man Eric! Face me like a Lycan! Not a cowardly witch!"

What I say must've hit a nerve, cause I hear the squelching of boots against the wet ground, and I peer over the boulder to see Eric beholding a terrible smile. He speaks as I limp out of the cover, able to see he too is littered with wounds. "Marco... why are you so eager to die?" he chuckles. "I mean, it makes my life easier, but I do wonder why attack now? If you were smarter, you would have used the palace walls as a defence. I never knew you too be so foolish."

I snap. "How can you stand there and talk about war tactics when you kidnapped Cathy! How dare you bring our sister into this! Why did you take her? I thought you at least cared about her. And I never knew you to be so heartless towards your own flesh and blood."

Despite my anger, to my surprise, Eric suddenly drops the malicious act. He appears stunned, and instantly confused. "What are you talking about?" he snaps. "What do you mean I kidnapped Cathy?" his breathing escalates. "Tell me exactly what happened. Now!" he hastily commands.

Chapter 94 Fight Between Marco And Eric

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I stand at the edge, watching, searching. At the corner of my eye, I catch one of the rogues sizing me up, thinking he could take me. He bolts at me and lunges, teeth bared. Barely looking in his direction I step back, arm jolting forward, swiftly grabbing the scruff of his neck as he's still in motion, before slamming him onto the ground. My hand grips the bottom of his jaw and... snap.

I don't care to register much else, nudging the limp body out of the way as I march forward, my black coat breezing behind me. I don't have time to entertain squabbles with lowly rogues, I am here to fight a more worthy opponent.

All my life I knew Eric secretly despised my existence. I was the brother that would forever threaten Eric's right to the throne. And so Eric did everything to prove his worth in all other aspects other than power. He became a brilliant diplomat, a perfect royal, poised and calm in comparison to my ruthlessness and less than social nature.

But in the end. Political wit doesn't win wars.

I see him, amid the chaos, my gaze zones in and I march over the fallen bodies and through the colliding mass of canines. He clocks me now too, and I can tell he sees the fury in my eyes. No more silly games.

Before he can even get within range, I launch a frontal kick to his stomach. No more talking. As he stumbles, I throw a roundhouse kick to his side to change the direction of his falling body. In a swift blur, I close the gap, hooking an elbow around his neck and kneeling him repeatedly in the gut, before slamming an elbow into his jaw. No more playing around.

I release Eric's bruised body from my hold, and he stumbles backwards, wheezing, littering the ground with his coughed-up blood. All those times I've fought Eric, I held back, I withdrew my strength because after all he is my brother. But now... after he's taken Cathy, I'm holding nothing back. And Eric is starting to realize the difference.

Not done with my attack I march forward again, and Eric attempts to swing at me as he disorderly steps backwards. But I side-step each swing, calmly moving left and right to avoid his weak blows before I suddenly snap hold of his arm as it jabs at me again. I jerk his arm forward and twist it in a hold, pulling him up close so I can repeatedly strike him in the face. One punch after another I go at his jaw and nose till trail tracks of blood appear beneath his nostrils.

I forcibly shove Eric backwards, sending him tumbling to the ground. "This isn't a fight you can win brother," I say brutally as I tower above him. I don't know what I'm truly hoping for, do I really think Eric is going to surrender? Probably not. But I would continue to beat the shit out of him till he did.

As I expect, Eric only glares back at me, before a malicious smile creeps onto his bloody lips. Before I reach his position, my brother takes out a perfume bottle from his pocket and begins to profusely spray himself with it and then he begins shifting. Dark misty swirls of magic shadow his body as it transforms, there is nothing natural about his transformation, nothing normal. This is far beyond what the Moon Goddess sought for when she created us. This is heresy.

But I don't have much time to consider the sacrilege of my brother's actions. I transform into my Lycan appearance, matching his height as the rain continues to drown us in its sorrows over lost family values. Thunder erupts in the night sky as we both roar and collide. Eric slashes at my chest in a swiftness that I'm not ready for, before biting down on my shoulder.

I roar again as my claws dig into his back, and I chomp at his arm. We move as a blur, tumbling and rolling across the soil, trampling the plants and grass as we taint them with blood. With the perfume Eric becomes faster, swifter, his slashing quicker than I can deflect, and his bite much stronger as it rips at my skin. Not that I leave him unwounded, I do just as much damage, ripping into his shoulder, and tearing open a seam on his right thigh. Course Eric returns the favour, as my left arm throbs terribly.

Somehow, we eventually untangle ourselves and I skid to a halt and he rolls to the other side. Not giving my brother time, I gallop at him, ready to launch, but he blurs out of my sight. Instead, a mass of black mist meets me with such force I'm thrown off my paws and tumble to the ground as pain relishes its way through my body.

I don't see Eric. Again, I get up, but once again a force of shadow magic shoots into my chest and sends me knocking hard into a tree. My body aches as I force myself to stand but I don't even get a chance, as a bolt of blackness surges at me and thrusts me into the ground, igniting more pain.

I growl, pulling myself up and behind one of the boulders to shield myself. I shift back into my human form and call out to my brother. "Stop this bullshit and face me like a man Eric! Face me like a Lycan! Not a cowardly witch!"

What I say must've hit a nerve, cause I hear the squelching of boots against the wet ground, and I peer over the boulder to see Eric beholding a terrible smile. He speaks as I limp out of the cover, able to see he too is littered with wounds. "Marco... why are you so eager to die?" he chuckles. "I mean, it makes my life easier, but I do wonder why attack now? If you were smarter, you would have used the palace walls as a defence. I never knew you too be so foolish."

I snap. "How can you stand there and talk about war tactics when you kidnapped Cathy! How dare you bring our sister into this! Why did you take her? I thought you at least cared about her. And I never knew you to be so heartless towards your own flesh and blood."

Despite my anger, to my surprise, Eric suddenly drops the malicious act. He appears stunned, and instantly confused. "What are you talking about?" he snaps. "What do you mean I kidnapped Cathy?" his breathing escalates. "Tell me exactly what happened. Now!" he hastily commands.

Chapter 95 Fatal Flaw

Chapter 94 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Marco's POV

“What do you mean she's missing?” Eric has to yell over the rain, but his eyes are wide with disbelief.

“She's missing! Taken from her bed last night, there's no evidence that she even left her room. And even if she did leave, she took none of her possessions, not her purse, nor her clothes, nothing! It just doesn't make any sense.”

I relay to Eric everything with regards to Cathy's disappearance in detail. About how she was seen the night before but could not be found the next morning. That we checked all of Cathy's usual places, and that I sent soldiers to every corner of the kingdom. And how even other kingdoms hadn't seen her. “The only explanation is that you took her!”

The rain pours and drenches us. But with my wolfish eyes I can see through the fog and dark mist, noticing how Eric is visibly shaken by the news about his sister. However, I notice something different about his previous strength and black magic power.

The shadows around his body are dissipating. He sags and flinches as if only now he's beginning to feel the pain from my inflicted wounds. It's as if the black magic's power is leaving his system. He stumbles, and he has to use a tree for balance to keep himself upright. I realize.... Now's my chance.

I launch myself at him, the two of us tumbling and rolling down into a large ditch. The ground is slick and wet, turning into mud that laces our clothes and faces. I pin him so I'm on top, and begin swinging punches at his face with one hand, whilst the other holds him down at the neck.

“This is for Tanya!” I slam my fist into his face with bountiful rage.

“This one is for father!” I retract my arm before knocking it into his face again, blood splatters frantically from his nose.

“This one is for Cathy,” I aim for his jaw, hearing an uncomfortable crack as pain ignites from my split knuckles. My fingers would heal, as would his face, but I don't care. He deserves this.

“And this one is for me,” as I go to bash him again, something moves from the corner of my eye, but before I can retract, fur flashes across my face. A mass barrels itself into me, throwing me off Eric and into the dirt ways away.

I rise to my feet quickly into a defensive position, growling and baring my human teeth at the wolf that guards Eric's fallen body. I outstretch my arms, ready to fight this one off, till a line of wolves emerge from above the ditch. They hurry down and circle their fallen prince.

I could have taken them all on, there was enough rage in me to commit terrible crimes. But if I did, I don't know if I'd have enough strength afterwards to fight Eric.

But he's weak. This is our chance!

The voice of my wolf ignites further fire in my system. And I pace the outer boundary of the wolves defence in growing frustration. They snap and growl at me, but never make the first move to attack me, only remaining close to Eric's position. While I grow tired and impatient, wanting to finish this once and for all. I want to drag Eric back to the palace to stand trial for his crimes!

However, my wish is not to be granted today. Eric finally rises, eyeing me in silence. I call out to him, bating him to fight me. But he doesn't, Eric only looks into my eyes one final time before slipping away with his rogue accomplices, leaving me bitter.

Soon I reunite with my soldiers. Making an advance on the pack now is no use until I can be sure Dorian and Eric are still in the area. With the war at a temporary standstill, we hunker down outside the pack to give my men some rest and allow them to recuperate.

But I am restless, I barely sleep. All I can think about it is Eric's surprised look when he heard the news about Cathy. And I am also immensely confused over his sudden unexplainable weakness. And my mind is wracked with infinite doubts as I try to formulate a new plan of attack.

Eric's POV

The news about Cathy's disappearance has caused me considerable alarm. Part of my wants to write it off as a ploy created by Marco to lure me away or distract me... and yet. No matter how much I despised my brother, even if I wanted him dead.

The one thing I know about Marco, is that he is not a liar. Even if it was in his best interest to lie. Marco is always true to his word. I hate to think it, or believe, but he's a man of honour in every way shape or form. He does not play games, does not toy with his pray like me or Dorian. And I knew just from his body language that Marco was telling the truth about Cathy.

But this only stirs more worry and confusion with me. Something isn't right.

My heart is filled with suspicion, added with the fact I haven't seen Dorian at all since the battle began. Knowing something is wrong, I quietly return to the rogue pack territory, looking for any traces of Dorian.

And that's when I notice a bright light flashing from inside a deserted cave on the edge of the territory, which seems abnormal.

I follow the light, slipping into the cave. Wax candles litter the flooring, and symbols are drawn on the floor in a dark red liquid that I hope isn't blood. But my eyes finally land on something much worse.

I rush over to Cathy as she lays upon the cold hard ground. Her body lies on top a large drawing on the ground painted in red with the same demonic symbols I have seen early. "Cathy!" I yell trying to wake her, I want to lift her into my arms, but it's as her body that has been glued to the floor. And I only just barely lift her head with some strange force pulling her back.

My fight with this unexplainable force is what wakes her. But she doesn't look relieved to see me. Instead, her eyes are wide with fear. "No!" she stutters a great deal, and she looks weak and feeble. But she manages to say. "Eric please. Run! You need to leave."

How can I leave her behind? So, I ignore her cries and begin trying to figure out how to free her from the magic boundary that binds her to the flooring. However, I notice Cathy's eyes widen suddenly. "Look out!" I feel a flash of movement behind me.

I just barely dodge the attack, the black magic just grazing my arm, burning the clothing on my shoulder, and scraping the edges of my flesh. I grit my teeth, and turn around to face Dorian, walking towards me with a sly pep in his step.

"What's the meaning of this Dorian?! Why is she stuck to the floor?" I brashly yell. "You wanted Tanya, and I brought you Tanya! Why did you take Cathy? What does she have to do with this? Rid of the magic holding her now."

Despite my curled fists that visibly shakes, and to my order, Dorian just snorts, appearing amused by my vexation. "Who said I only wanted Tanya. I only needed her to help craft the perfume I wanted. But my real target has been Cathy all along. My goal has always been Cathy."

My confusion and disbelief are expressed in my words as I ask. "But why?"

He chuckles. "It's time I let you in on a little secret Eric. I'm the son of Joseph's secret love affair. You have another brother! Can you believe it?" he outstretches his arms mockingly asking for a hug, and when I don't react, he laughs again. "Oh, that's right. I'm the forgotten son. The one he abandoned. Left for dead. The one that nobody cared about. So, now, I'm going to destroy the Mador family. Obliterate all of you from existence. And sweet darling Cathy is going to help me do it."

His smile drops into a frown. "By dying."

A primal roar leaves my lips as I launch a magical attack on him. But Dorian deflects it with ease. Again, and again and again I throw bolt after bolt of black magic as I advance in his direction. And he easily directs each shot away. Eventually I send a build-up of my magic, and

he launches his own, two beams of dark light meeting in the middle, fighting at the centre to overpower the other.

But with each step I gather, I crumble further and further to the ground as Dorian's pure blood magic overwhelms my own. My magic fizzles and I'm hit by his blast. As Dorian approaches, I hurry to take out the bottle of perfume, hoping to use it, till manic laughter leaves his lips.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," I pause. "Do you really think Lily's lack of talent is what makes that perfume so strong? Maybe that mark on the bottom of the bottle will now make some more sense to you," I take a look at it again, realizing it's the same symbol cast repeatedly on the floor around Cathy.

Dorian mockingly whispers. "Sacrificial magic," before laughing as my eyes grow wide. "Yes, that's right. Every time you use this bottle of perfume, what you absorb is your sister's life force. Now she is weak, but at least she's awake. But with every spritz of that bottle, she will fall further and further into the darkness, until finally. She dies."

In shock I throw the perfume away and go to use my Lycan abilities, but only pain erupts throughout my body every time I try. I shake with disbelief and Dorian laughs. "You think great power comes without a price? Course not... you're a Prince, you think everything you want comes for free."

He nears my fallen form. "Sorry Eric. You've been a great help. But you're no longer of use to me," he blasts me with his magic and I'm lost in blackness.

The next time I'm awake I find myself trapped in a prison cell. The only light I see comes from a bared window positioned near the ceiling. I'm left alone with my thoughts, shame, and guilt writhing through me as I regret all what I have done. Cathy is in danger because of me.

And for first the time through the mind link, I contact the one person I know who can save her. Marco.

Chapter 96 Dorian Falls Into An Illusion

Chapter 95 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Marco's POV

'Marco? Marco, are you there?'

I'm sitting with my war council when Eric's voice suddenly infiltrates my mind. My brows wrinkle, and my forehead creases as I can't decide how to respond.

"I need time alone," I say to my soldiers, and they all leave the tent we've been using to conduct tactics for the fight against the pack rogues. Eric is still calling out to me when I sit down.

'You right. You were right. I should have listened.'

This doesn't sound like Eric, not at all. We considered each other rivals since children, we never played together, never trained together. We chose to be as far away from each other as possible. I saw Eric as the son of the Queen who replaced my mother, and Eric saw me as the person who threatened his right to the throne. I don't even remember the last time we've spoken over the mind link. Or, we might have never spoken over the mind link.

'What's happened Eric?' despite how much his actions have angered me, how we're in the shit because of him. Something is terribly wrong for Eric to be this desperate and contact me. I'd give him a chance and hear him out.

'Dorian has taken Cathy, and he's using sacrificial black magic on her!' my breath hitches as I fathom what pain my sister must be in, and I have to forcibly grip the table to stop myself from breaking or throwing something.

'Where is she?'

'But there's something you need to know first-'

'What could be more important than finding Cathy!'

'Listen to me! Dorian is Joseph's son!'

'Impossible...'

'Marco I'm serious. Father had an affair with a witch, Dorian is our stepbrother. He's angry that father left him and now he's coming after all of us.'

'So, he wants the throne?'

'No Marco, Dorian wants to destroy the throne. He wants to kill us all.'

'Listen, Dorian's magic is strong. And the perfume he's using, the one I used, it makes him stronger. But the bottle has a flaw. The user will fall into a state of extreme weakness for 30 seconds after using the perfume for 30 minutes. Use that against him. Find a way to use that against him!'

Tanya's POV

Over the phone, Marco tells me everything that's happened, including how Eric had surprisingly contacted him through the mind link asking for his help. Marco explains to me the defect of the perfume that Dorian has been using. And with the information from him, and then recalling what Barlow told me about Dorian, I suddenly have an idea.

I know that my hallucinogenic perfume can be of use. But it needs to be improved, since when I used it on Dorian the last time, he was able to combat the effects. And I begin to wonder, it must be his black magic that acts as his body's defence mechanism against the perfume's attack.

But what's different from five years ago, is that I now have a notebook that can combat black magic. I immediately grab hold of Margret's notebook and begin reading through it again. I go over the common ingredients that are relevant to the perfumes used to resist black magic. I also try to recall Dorian's type, in which Mr. Barlow pointed out.

I rush to my perfume station and start working on it. It needs to be ready for Marco for when he'd finally face Dorian, and I hurry to finish it. I add the necessary ingredients and stir the mixture so it combines fully, finally the smell wafts towards me, and I know it's ready.

The new hallucinogenic perfume can not only make the illusion become more realistic, but also has a certain resistance to counteract the black magic. I believe it can resist black magic for at least 30 seconds, which is enough.

Marco's POV

Through the mind link, Eric directs us to the cave where he and Cathy are imprisoned. And through the cover of night, my soldiers follow me through the misty forest. Nature too is on edge; Dorian's curse is an abomination. And as I near the supposed cave, the plants surrounding the area have whittled down and died from the foul magic.

"Tanya, shift forms," she insisted that I wouldn't be alone in pursuing Dorian. And whilst I didn't want my wife in the midst of all this, I knew her wolf is capable of holding her own in a fight. Beside me, I hear her body mutating with ease, before a large dark and grey wolf stands beside me.

As we approach the cave, my lover emits a dangerous growl at what we come across. Within the clearing, blocking the entrance of the cave stands a vast number of rogues. Dorian steps out from the crowd and the growls from my men grow louder.

"Ready to meet your end, Marco?" says Dorian with a sly grin.

But I don't answer to Dorian, I speak to my men instead. "We fight to kill. But no one touches Dorian. Dorian is mine," my Alpha dominance emits through my tone.

“Oh, how sweet of you Marco. I feel so special,” says Dorian mockingly as he sprays himself with the special perfume that I am all too aware of. “Same goes for the Lycan. No one touches him. I’ve been looking forward to this battle for years.”

Tanya has told me of how when she was forced to leave me five years ago, that Dorian tried to kill her. But what my mate remembers the most was the spine-chilling image of Dorian’s wolf. And as he shifts, I can see why. His height nearly matches my own Lycan form. He’s lankier in stature, and his white fur gives him a ghostly appearance. Sinister grey eyes stare into mine, waiting for me to shift.

So, I do.

My wolf takes over and my body reshapes its molecular structure to that of my Lycan appearance. My claws glint beneath the moonlight as I below out a rageful roar, signalling the start of battle.

My wolves launch themselves past me, and my eyes catch the silverish grey and midnight colours of my wife’s wolf as she bolts at the attackers. My gaze snaps back to Dorian. Bring it. Like a phantom, Dorian crosses the distance between us in purposeful gallop, and the two of us collide, lost in the sea of fighting soldiers and rogues.

I knew what I had to do. I have to take my time, maintain my strength and wait out the thirty minutes. So, my moves are calculated, sharp but defensive. Tactics I had learned as a child. Defensive moves and counterattacks meant for a tougher opponent, giving them the false sense of security, before later increasing their frustration as I continue to avoid their advances.

‘Dance boy! Dance! Fighting is like a dance’ my fighting instructor’s words replay in my mind like a lost memory. I never understood what he meant at the time. I was only ten. But now, they make complete and utter sense.

Despite my Lycan’s stocky frame, my movements become slick and swift, switching between all fours and two feet, as I duck and swerve out of the way of Dorian’s attacks. Occasionally, I’d run a claw across his back or thigh before flitting away again to avoid a bolt of his magic.

I dance around him with twirling kicks and barrelling into him before leaping off into a different direction, constantly throwing him off balance, but never going for a finishing move. And so I can start to sense Dorian’s growing frustration. I break into a gallop, circling round him, weaving between the trees to avoid his aggressive shots of magic that leave his wolf jaws like fire bolts from a dragon. And they smash and destroy the forestry from his growing rage.

I skid to a halt when he finally stops and shifts back into his human form. But his fists remain encompassed in furious flames of black mist as he speaks. “What is this, a game of cat and mouse?” he scoffs. “I’m disappointed. This is not the cowardice I expected from you Marco. Surely the kingdom of Mador has no future under the leadership of a man like you.”

But of course, ignore Dorian's provocation, my eyes for a moment slip to our surroundings. My trained soldiers are overwhelming the rogues that have had no military training. And I see Tanya nearby, watching as her Alpha form is no match for the rogues as she rips them into pieces. Eventually her canine skull and muzzle covered in blood snaps to me.

I hear the blast before I see it. Dorian's magic sends me backwards and down into the dirt. The pain burns my skin and I roar as my body is forced to shift back. My blurry vision can make out Dorian stalking towards me, but thundering paws can be heard from the distance, and Tanya's wolf suddenly blocks my view.

She stands defensively over my body, growling and snarling in warning, giving me the chance to push my body to a stand. I lean on her for support, as I ready myself for whatever Dorian has planned next. Except, his smile falters. He grunts and winces as he stumbles.

Thirty minutes were up! I've done it!

'Tanya, he's been weakened! This is our chance!'

Knowing what is needed to be done, she leaves my side and launches herself at him with jaws wide. But before reaching his position, another wolf comes from the right, leaping into her and barreling her down and off target. The two of them erupt into a vicious battle, as my gaze shoots between her and Dorian.

He laughs as his soldiers begin to defensively surround him. "You don't think I'd already know about the flaw? I'd be silly if I didn't prepare for this," his soldiers circle him, and create a blockade between me and Dorian.

I know Tanya would win her fight, but there wouldn't be enough time if I wait that long. This has to be done now. I run towards Dorian, fighting off the soldiers that go to attack me one by one, considering each step as progress as I inch my way closer and closer. I can tell Dorian appears confused by my reckless actions.

But I'm not being reckless. I have a plan.

I fight off two more rogues before I am just close enough that I knew it would work. At the last second, I take out Tanya's perfume and spray an abundance of it in the direction of Dorian. The confusion on all their faces would have been comical if the situation isn't so dire.

Eventually with the aid of the wind, the perfume molecules drift towards the hybrid, and just as he realizes what's happening, his eyes grow wide and he falls backwards into the illusion.

Chapter 97 Dorian And Barlow's First Meeting

Chapter 96 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Dorian's POV

Mist enters my eyes and the world suddenly swirls out of focus. I frantically blink trying to see, but the mist is heavy. Thick clouds darken my surroundings as snow falls like white bullets from the sky. My skinny arms and hands wrap themselves round my body. The tips of my ears sting from the frigid environment as my teeth chatter uncontrollably.

I've been walking for days. But my legs struggle to push through the thick layer of snow that blankets the ground. And behind me I leave a pathetic trail that will soon be erased as more snow falls. I bet I will be erased, blown away from the terrible cry of the wind, or smothered by the ice, or worse, I'll freeze, and wither away and melt into the snow.

I drop to my knees.

I try to stand, but my body is too weak. And the snow feels like a comfy mattress, offering me eternal sleep. But I have to keep going. My life has to mean more than just what my mother has made of me. It's been a year now since I left her behind and ventured off on my own.

My torn scarf and ragged clothing offer little safety from the elements, but I wrap them tight around me in hope. However, when I lift my gaze, the snowstorm cannot hide the movement in the distance. Someone approaches. An unruly man, his long beard and thick brows are speckled with frost. His face appears worn and tired, but his eyes grow wide when he sees me.

I don't know who he is. I've never seen him before, and I wonder why anyone but myself and my childish ambition and ignorance would be out in this blizzard. But something about him is familiar. My mind despite its exhaustion runs through all the memories, but cannot find the face among images. And yet, the one thing that stands out is a name: Barlow.

"Please help me," I can barely manage a whisper.

But the man hears me and rushes over to help me. "What the hell are you doing out here child!" but he doesn't wait for my reply, he scoops up my feeble body into his arms and begins trekking back to where ever he came from.

Like an infant in the safety of their parent's arms, I find myself nestling into his warmth. I find myself finally at ease, finally feeling truly safe. I stare out into the fog, but something shifts. The sky cracks and crumbles, the snow changes colours, shifting back and forth between white and brown. Trees glitch in and out of my field of vision.

Till images flash about in my mind of the past and present and I suddenly realize that I've been here before. This is a memory, not reality! No, it's not even my real memory, there's something wrong, it's an illusion! My eyes shoot open just as something sharp impales my chest and I gasp.

The metallic taste of blood infiltrates my mouth forcing me to splutter out and stare at the red stain I've left on the ground. But the ground isn't brown, nearly every patch of grass and dirt is tinted in red, flowers splattered with blood and trees marked with crimson. My soldiers lay fallen all the around. Some had at least one of their limbs ripped off, others were barely crawling, if not trying to hold on despite bleeding out. And most lay lifeless on the ground.

So astonished by the scene, I nearly forget to look at what's in front of me. My gaze snaps to Marco, his hand having morphed into a Lycan claw, it still remains embedded deep in my chest, just scraping the edges of my heart.

The shock is beginning to wear off and I feel the rush of pain that erupts in my body. Marco only glares at me, and he barely flinches as his claw jolts forward, and is thrust into the depths of my heart. I can't stop my head from rolling back, forcing my eyes to look up at the starry night sky.

The world shifts again, and the clouds form and crowd the sky at an unnaturally rapid pace. Snow falls and crystal flakes fall into my eyes. I'm being carried again, in Barlow's arms. But this time my adult mind remains, I'm well aware I'm back in my memory.

I can't help but wonder if maybe Barlow once described the scene of our first meeting to Tanya. And she created this illusion thinking it meant something to me. But what Barlow knew wasn't really the whole truth. From a young age I knew that in order to gain revenge, I must use all my talents of deceit. That and the fact I'd never be so pathetic or beg for help so willingly.

No, my first meeting with Barlow was all premeditated. I had long heard that Barlow's rogue pack were all hybrids, and that Barlow was very good at black magic. So, I secretly observed him for weeks, being sure that everything told to me was true. I also memorised his daily routine, knowing where and when would be the best place to cross paths with him.

I deliberately placed myself in his path, pretending to be a dying child who just happened to be along his route, begging for protection from the cold. But I was never helpless. Never panicked. I would not allow myself to die so easily. That's right. I fought for my life, fought for my revenge and now...

But then I suddenly see Barlow smile at me, a familiar bright smile, and say to me, "Let's go home, kid!"

I look deeply at him, finally, smile and mutter my last words, "Alright, Barlow. Let's go home..."

Tanya's POV

I shift back. But changing out of my fighting form doesn't remove the crimson body that smothers my clothes and body. Nor does it alter the slow healing wounds that relish across my skin. And my human eyes can still see the sea of bodies that lay across the forest floor, tainting mother nature's soil with their decomposing corpses.

We won. But not without the loss of life.

Marco still stands above Dorian's body as life leaves the hybrid's eyes. The sound of Marco's claws retracting out of Dorian's body is uncomfortably moist as his claws slip slickly out of the flesh wound. He stares blankly at his opponent whose eyes remain open, and even in death, he smiles up at the sky.

"He's gone Marco," I whisper softly as I come up beside my husband, pulling an arm away. But he doesn't budge. "It's over Marco. We need to go find Cathy."

This is what snaps him out of his unrest and he silently leads us down into the cave. What remains palace army follows us. Even with their wounds and their lost limbs, they follow Marco like true loyal soldiers. And we enter the darkness that's only lit faintly by candlelight.

"Find Eric," orders Marco whilst me and him rush to Cathy's side as she lays unconscious on the floor. When Eric joins us we try to release Cathy from the magic circle that's keeping her trapped to the floor.

But there's nothing we can do, the magic continues to bind her to the ground and no strength or power can remove her. So, we have to have the doctor come down into the cave to take a look at her.

When the doctor finally arrives, the three of us are now standing around her body as he explains. "She's nearly been stripped of all life," he says solemnly. "What life does remain is the only thing keeping her breathing. But I'm sorry, she'll never wake up. And eventually, she will die as the magic drains her body."

In the corner of my gaze, I see Eric stumble, and almost collapse till Marco grabs hold of him, trying to steady him. "Hold on brother. She's still with us," he whispers. "We can't give up hope. There must be a way."

With Marco's belief keeping us going, me, him, Eric, and Oliver go to Dorian's now vacated territory. We search through his library, bedroom, office, and all other places we can think of for anything that could tell us more information relating to sacrificial black magic.

Two gruelling days pass, and none of us barely sleep as we're desperate to find something to save Cathy. But finally, I come across an ancient book hidden beneath Dorian's mattress. The entire book is information solely on sacrificial black magic, and hope grows in my heart.

Course, after finding the right page, and skimming the words. The ancient book records that once the sacrificial black magic spell has been cast there is no way of stopping the effects. Even if the witch who cast the spell is killed. Unless...

My heart drops.

‘Unless there is a volunteer, who is willing to give up his or her life to take the place of the person who was originally sacrificed’.

Chapter 98 Sacrifice

Chapter 97 - Pregnant After One Night With The Lycan

Queen’s POV

I’ve been confined and restricted to my quarters for over a month now. No one has come to see me, nor have I asked to be seen. I remain in solitude accepting my fate, so long as my children are able to survive, I care little for my own existence. My children will carry on my legacy, they will live on.

Despite my acceptance of it, this reality still haunts me. And I find myself turning to books as a method to overcome my sadness. At least Joseph allowed me that. He could have easily left me within four walls that are empty and barren. But he permitted my love for reading.

I drown myself in the variety of genres I’ve collected over the years. Books about science, books on philosophy, bibliographies, and my favourite, fiction. But today is no day for reading, for as I sit beside my window, my hands are forced to put down the pages in my hand. My room faces the main gate, and I watch the guards fluster and run about like madmen. Something is amiss.

Even the guards stationed by my door appear distracted, they mutter words I can’t hear to one another in subtle discomfort and tension. What on earth has happened? I wonder. Just then, I recognize the voice of my most capable and faithful maid yelling at them.

“What are you doing here? You know the situation is serious! You’re needed at the front gates!” I can imagine their flustered faces, their armour clatters against itself as they rush off to wherever needed. I smile, knowing how intelligent Penelope is.

I shift off the windowsill, and lift the hem of my gown as I hurry towards the door. I hear shuffling from behind before the little carved window slot on the top end of the door clicks open. It’s so small, I can only see her bright hazel eyes peering back at me.

“Tell me what’s happening!” I hastily whisper, knowing there is little time for formalities.

Without misstep Penelope tells me how Eric has been defeated by Marco. And while immediately I fear the death of my son, she assures me that Eric is alive and has formed some form of alliance with Marco. I appear confused, until she elaborates.

“Dorian is Joseph’s son.”

“What? He’s not my son.”

“No. He isn’t... I’m sorry your majesty.”

It feels like a knife has just been wedged into my chest, and this invisible knife only embeds itself deeper as Penelope explains how Dorian captured Cathy and used sacrificial black magic on her to attempt to destroy the royal family. And whilst he’s dead now, Cathy is in a coma. And the only way to awake her is for one of her family members to voluntarily die instead of her.

My legs want to buckle beneath me, but what stops me from crumbling to the floor is placing my hand through the little rectangular peep hole. My maid understands my pain and she clasps her fingers with mine. “You must find a way to help me escape,” I grow desperate in my plea. “Even if it’s just for a moment. You must help me.”

Tanya’s POV

Every day since we found about Cathy’s situation, I have been worried sick, especially when knowing the promise of survival is so close yet so far. Cathy feels just within our reach, her body lays waiting for us, no longer imprisoned and taken by a monster. But her soul... it sits in a realm I can’t see, slowly voyaging onwards. And if we are not quick enough, we may miss it.

Most notably, when we learnt about Cathy’s dilemma, Eric’s expression still haunts me. I can’t imagine, nor want to imagine the guilt and torment he must be feeling. I can’t help the dark blob of anxiety that sits deep down within me, like a sign that something terrible is about to ensue.

It’s nearly midnight, and I still can’t find myself comfortable enough to fall asleep. As my chest continues to rise and fall with great effort, like something heavy is pressed against my breast. But I try to focus, try to count, try to do anything to bore my mind and allow it to rest.

Eventually, I feel my eyelids grow heavy, only for them to spring up as the bed jolts beneath me!

I turn round to see Marco sitting up in bed, his bare chest pumping at a rapid rate as excessive sweat covers every inch of his skin. I sit up, hold him gently at the arm, and he flinches despite my softness. “It’s me Marco. It’s Tanya.”

I whisper, knowing how waking up from a terrible dream can be difficult. Yet I still brush his arm in slow soothing motions, trying to bring his mind back from whatever horrid place it may have been. I plant soft kisses against his shoulder and arm, being patient for him to tell me what's wrong.

"I don't know why, but I just have a terrible feeling that something bad is going to happen," he says, turning to look at me with a tense expression that feels so unnatural.

I nod. "Me too, I can't fall asleep. I just have this horrible feeling in my gut."

"I don't know what it is..." Marco says. "But something is telling me to go back to the cave where Cathy is trapped. I'm drawn to it in my dream. Over and over again, and it's like I never reach it in time... I think we need to go there, now."

"Then we must go. We must trust your intuition, Marco. Let's go."

Without another word the two of us get dressed and shift into our forms, galloping hastily through the woods as wolves, weaving between the trees and blending in with the dark forest as we move with purpose. Finally, we approach the cave, shifting back and hurrying through its gaping entrance that's eerie and laced with foreboding.

Upon entering it is Eric who is standing within the magical sacrificial circle beneath Cathy's body. His clothes are drenched with sweat, his chest rising and falling so rapidly I can imagine his heart rocketing out his chest. I don't think I've ever seen tears spill from Eric's eyes, and I don't think has Marco either, as my husband looks at his brother in absolute horror.

Eric is holding a knife to his throat. His hand is shaking as he holds the blade sideways to the flesh just beneath his chin, ready to slide it round. "Eric No!" I scream.

"It must be done. I did this. I did this to her. And now, this is the only way I can give back to her. To save her."

I can't help but scream his name once again as Marco bolts in Eric's direction. I can sense Marco's terror as he rushes at his brother at full Lycan speed. But it appears to be too late as Eric moves his arms, closing his eyes in surrender to his fate.

But suddenly, someone else materializes from the shadows, snatching hold of Eric's arm and twisting the blade out of his grip. The weapon suddenly clatters to the ground as a woman's sobs can then be heard.

It's the Queen...

The bags beneath her eyes and frazzled hair starkly contrast to her magnificent robes that she's still dressed in. But she sobs and sobs, cheeks wet and red with tears as she forcibly pulls Eric into her embrace, screaming almost as she breaks down and shakes.

“How could you?! We’ve nearly lost your sister and you thought taking your own life was the solution!”

“It’s the only way to save her,” he says with a stifled sob.

“No! I will not accept that response from you. You are my child, my only boy. There is a way. Marco and Tanya will find another way.”

Despite the fact the Queen is technically meant to be on house arrest, I can’t deny how heart breaking the situation before me appears. I rest a hand on Marco’s arm, knowing he can’t deny that the Queen has prevented Eric from killing himself. As a family, they were already so torn, offering them an ounce of sympathy is the noble thing to do. And so, we leave them be.

The next couple days are immensely stressful and disorderly, as everyone searches for another way to save Cathy. Marco continues having terrible nightmares, he jolts awake in hot sweats, unable to breathe. There are times he wakes and whispers how his dreams torment him. How he feels obliged to sacrifice his own life for Cathy.

But I do my very best to soothe him, trying to coax him out of his despair and remind him that we still have time. That we’d eventually find a way to save Cathy. I of course hide my own anguish, for hours and hours I read through hundreds of books, flipping through pages as I scour the library for any information, hoping, praying, that there’d be another way.

But in the end, our efforts are futile. One afternoon, Marco enters our room with a solemn face, and I rush towards him in fearing the worst. “The Queen has died,” he whispers. My eyes grow wide. Together we rush to the cave, finding the Queen being held in the arms of Eric whose bloodshot eyes look upon her limp body in great sorrow. And as her blood trickles round the circle, the dark magic dissipates, and Cathy is saved.