

## Chapter 111 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

"He's gone!" I burst through the doors, grasping the attention of both my Grandmother and my Dad. The latter especially who had an arch between his brows as he turned around.

I clenched my fist with an unwavering amount of anxiety and panic and Denver sauntered in right next to me. "Nathaniel seems to have escaped his dungeon" He reiterated and the guards by command stepped forward.

"He's not in here, the windows were left open with fur laying all around and bloody paw prints on the floor" I told my Dad. "He may have left the Pack—" "Well, he's not going anywhere far" He seemed confident as he stood up from his chair. His Beta Phil mounted a stance next to him.

"Relax, when he was unconscious, it was your Grandmother's idea to put a tracker on him" Dad said and I let out a sigh, partially from relief. "You put a tracker on him?" I asked as Phil reached for a phone laying on the table. My Dad collected it before inching closer to Denver and I.

"I mean your brother has been missing for decades, we'd be fools to allow that to happen again" He replied. Denver collected the phone, boring his eyes into the screen when my Nana stepped forward.

"Wait did you say fur was all around?" She echoed, perhaps just realizing what I had meant. "Yes," I nodded. "I think Nathaniel shifted into a Wolf, that was the way he got out" I added. They looked amongst themselves.

"I thought he was yet to see his Wolf, your mother said he was more of a Witch—" "Perhaps, he was triggered by something" I chirped in. "That was how I found mine, I would know" I shrugged my shoulders, sharing a quick glance with Denver and recollecting for a moment the night when I first shifted because of our kiss.

That was usually the way it went, especially for the first time. Your first shift is always accounted for by certain strong and overwhelming emotions, like rage, anger, and even love. When the adrenaline fires in your veins, it's only so long until your wolf finally struggles to break free.

Without those emotions, it's a lot more difficult to shift.

"By what?" A voice echoed from behind and I turned around to face Ivan. His shoulders were flat and his hands were fixed in his pocket. An exhale escaped my lips.

"Ivan" I called. "Where is he?" He demanded in a deep scowl and I think I was the only one who knew something was going on between the two of them—my brother and Ivan.

"We have no idea yet..."

"You locked him up!" Ivan raised his voice and Denver darted him a cold glare. "He struck my wife" He defended. "Enough" I stepped between the two of them and looked deep into Ivan's eyes.

"Ivan please" I whispered. He heaved a deep sigh at my words before turning his eyes away. "You could help us, in fact and I promise you he's not going to get hurt" I reached for his hand but when our eyes met, it was clear how doubtful he was still.

"He's my brother too, Ivan. Nothing will happen to him" I reassured him.

He let of my hands before parting his lips.

"Has Nathaniel ever shifted before?" I asked him. After a bit of hesitation, he shook his head. "How would I know?" He asked defensively and without saying a word, I was able to communicate to him with my eyes. That I was aware, that I knew about the two of them.

And it wasn't a problem, it could never be. In fact, I was just as happy that my brother found someone and Ivan too.

"I—" Ivan stuttered, looking around the room. "I don't think so but then again I'm not even the one you're supposed to be asking. I mean now it feels like I barely even knew him. To hide a secret like that, not only that he was a Hybrid but that he was your brother as well, he just" Ivan paused for a moment. "He just feels different now." He continued.

"The question still is what could have been his trigger?" Nana chirped in.

"He could've been riled up." I suggested. "No one likes being caged" Their eyes met mine. "That's not it" Ivan shook his head. "Something is off. You said there was blood everywhere, didn't you?" He asked.

"Could've been from his shift. The first is usually pretty painful" I replied.

Ivan locked his eyes into mine but undoubtedly, there was some truth to what he said. I could feel it in the pit of my stomach—something was off.

"I've found a location!" At that moment, Denver announced. I leeches towards him, looking into the phone screen. "Where?" I asked. "You're right, he's still close" He turned to my father.

"The woods" I muttered. Everyone disintegrated, bracing themselves to charge into the forest in search of Nathaniel. Once we sauntered out of the doors, Denver held my hands back.

I stopped in my tracks, throwing a look over my shoulder and I met his eyes. "What?" I asked softly. "We're up against a Hybrid Wolf now. No one really knows how strong Nathaniel is. He almost harmed you last time" Denver's words escaped with a trace of concern.

My eyes glistened and a crinkle curled to the corner of my lips.

"Good thing I'm also a Hybrid Wolf" I muttered and suddenly, a soft breeze whistled through the air, weaving all around me. I closed my eyes, surrendering to the magic coursing through my veins and the pressure of my Wolf just beneath my skin. It was one of the very few times that both my Witch and Wolf sides came together in perfect synchronization.

I felt my feet lift up from the ground with a gentle ripple through my bones. A radiant silver light enveloped me and I could feel Denver's gaze, even as he let go of my hands. Those hands now met the earth as limbs.

My silver fur gracefully covered my skin and the air shimmered along the silhouette of my body. I finally opened my eyes and my shifting was completed. Denver was staring at me and his heart swelled with a mix of reverence and love. He extended a hand toward me.

Slowly, I took it, now fully embracing my wolf form and immediately that happened, a harmonious energy enveloped the clearing. With an unspoken understanding between us, he closed his eyes and shifted too. When all was done and we were both in our most primal form, we stood next to each other on the cusp of the forest line.

I mounted the rock with a howl that echoed toward the skies. Denver's growl was much louder and left a thunder through the winds. Right next to him, I was fearless and in times like these, I really was thankful to have Denver by my side. He turned, fixing his eyes into mine.

"Let's go find your brother." Came a barely audible growl from him.

Chapter 112: To Betray Your Own Family.

## **Chapter 112 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby**

ELIANA.

My husband and I strutted into the woods that evening. The sun had almost disappeared from the skies, leaving a gloomy dark atmosphere hanging around us. I kicked my limbs forward, clinging to the earth with my hands and moving further in the direction of Nathaniel's scent.

There was a faint presence in the air that belonged to him. The tracker had led us here but a smudge of his blood enabled me to do a locator spell that pinpointed exactly where he was. And when we had gotten closer to the edge of the hills, Denver and I finally came to a halt.

I breathed out through my snout and mouth, throwing a look over my silver fur back to him. We looked around, everywhere seemed empty and lonely but undoubtedly, this was where the scent had led us.

We communicated with our eyes when suddenly, there was a snap sound from a distance, like a twig broken by someone's foot.

I faced my back against Denver's as we navigated our surroundings. My claws shot into the ground as I glistened my fangs in defense. My fur arose on its ends across my skin and a low growl escaped my lips. Denver stepped in front of me as the echo of the footsteps drew closer.

My heart throbbed in my chest as I looked ahead, expecting Nathaniel but what sprung forth was almost like a slap in the face instead. Literally, because a storm of wind gusted in our direction in the flash of a second.

Denver fell back and I stepped forward defensively. My growl was met with none other than the Witch herself—Aurora.

In a lacy black dress that flowed around her slender legs, she stood to face me and a gnarly grimace crawled to her lips. Denver jerked back to his feet and we shared a glance obvious now that we'd been tricked here.

"Look who it is" Aurora seethed through her teeth as Ivan and Cory sauntered up the hill. So when Denver and I shifted back into human form, they had our robes already waiting for us. I wrapped mine around my body before darting my full attention towards Aurora.

"You know you're nothing like I imagined" I said to her. She was almost stunned by my words. "How did you imagine I was?" She asked me with a smile but a light scoff escaped my lips instead. The only thing distinct about Aurora was the red tint on her hair.

Besides that, I could find a dozen girls in Oakland who looked just like her. I mean to once have had two brothers wrapped around your finger, I expected that she was glorious but in reality, there was really nothing special about her. I inched towards her, sizing her with a glare.

"Where is Nathaniel?" I gritted.

“Why makes you think I’ll answer your question if you don’t answer mine?” Aurora threw the question back at me and I rolled my eyes to the back of my head. “I’m not here to play your stupid games, Aurora”

“Me neither. I’m sure Denver already delivered my message to you from when we first met. If he did, then you should be shaking by the fact that I’m here again. I promised it would be difficult if I had to show up again”

Her eyes then darted to him.

“If you do as much as lay a finger on Nathaniel, I won’t waste a second to send you back to exactly where you came from” I threatened Aurora and a low cackle escaped her lips. “I see it now, Denver” She whispered.

“You do have a type”

“Enough, Aurora” He clamored but she shook her head. “No, no. I’m right, aren’t I? It’s almost as if I’m looking into the mirror when I look at her” Aurora’s eyes slowly trailed down my body.

“She’s nothing like you” Denver said witfully. “Oh I know” She replied.

“A close copy could never be the original” Her words sliced through me as our eyes met with angst. Aurora and I circled each other until we came to a halt. “You seem to forget you’re just an ordinary Witch.”

“I’m a Hybrid” I added. “You’re a dead Witch at that, only alive to execute your purpose and then what happens?” I maliciously laughed.

Aurora shook her head.

“The last thing you want to do and I mean every word I’m about to say—is underestimate me, Eliana.” Her face ran cold, void of every emotion within a second. “I could say the same, Aurora” I muttered.

“I know you have him...Nathaniel. Leave him out of whatever this is.”

“It’s me you want, isn’t it? Why don’t you finally face me?” I stepped forward and Aurora cupped her chin with a shrill chuckle. “You’re joking, right?” She raised her eyes, running her hands through her hair.

“And what if I told you that Nathaniel was only here by free will?”

“What then?” She cooed and I pushed a hard lump down my throat. “I know you made him shift, you triggered him. Didn’t you?” I asked. “It all makes sense now” I nodded.

“Very bold of you with these assumptions” Aurora muttered. “Yes, I did trigger him to shift but it was nothing that Nathaniel didn’t already want. I would know that because I know him. You don’t” Aurora added.

An arch appeared between my brows and my throat went dry all of a sudden. “Or you think because you just found out he was what? Your long lost brother that it automatically means that he’s on your side?” She laughed in my face again and for most of this, I just froze in disbelief.

“What you don’t know is that Nathaniel and the Witches, they share a newfound bond and you, Eliana, are the reason for that. You’re the common enemy, you just have no idea.” She continued.

“No” I muttered. “Nathaniel can never do that. He can never betray his own people.” I sounded so confident. “Shocker, Eliana. Turns out you don’t know who Nathaniel is. It was pretty easy, you know. Convincing him to switch sides against you. I mean after everything that happened with your mother. She was always so selfish and Nathaniel often got the tail end of everything. He found a home with us” Aurora said.

“He’s not that stupid” I argued.

“Well, that’s what happens when you’ve been running your whole life. You get tired, and you just want your safety. We guaranteed him that. Provided that he led us to you and he’s been cooperative, I’ll say. For the last six months, we needed an insider and he was perfect for the job” At that moment, I turned around to Ivan who was just in as much disbelief.

“That’s not possible” He blurted out and his eyes shimmered a bit.

“Oh he’s the lover?” Aurora toothed. “It was my idea, to find someone to leech onto that really makes it believable. That ties it together you know. Don’t tell me you’re that stupid to believe a second of it was real—“

“Enough, Aurora!” I yelled. Because she could attack anyone else but the least deserving of her wrath was Ivan. “Leave him out of this” I warned and she raised her hands in the air.

A million thoughts were racing through my mind at that moment. I was finding it hard to believe what she said. That meant everything was a lie.

Every second that Nathaniel was with us, pretending to be on our side. His stupid study, his sobby backstory. Everything was a lie. We were wrong to trust him. We shouldn’t have.

“Don’t make that face, Eliana” Aurora puckered her lips.

“I already told you, it’s dangerous to underestimate me. You should ask Denver” She looked at him again and Denver stared blankly at her. There wasn’t a lot he could say. I was speechless too at that moment.

“Nathaniel is safe with me, for all it’s worth. He’s at the Haven, recovering from his first shift. You can stop by, not sure he would appreciate it but just in case you want to hear the truth from him then”

“You know you’re lucky, Eliana” She struck a finger at me, inching a few steps closer. “I do see myself in you, an awful lot. So I’m willing to compromise. Some more time, I’m actually enjoying Oakland for a change”

“I won’t like to go back so soon.” She added.

“But it doesn’t mean your grace is endless, in fact if I were you, I would hurry because a lot more is at stake. Failure to find a way to break the Witch’s Curse soon could attract very dire consequences” Aurora whispered through her teeth, locking her eyes into mine.

“We know everything about you, is it Elijah or the baby girl you’re carrying inside of you” My heart leapt into my throat at those words of hers and my heart rate skyrocketed. Denver slipped his fingers into mine.

Of course, Nathaniel had told her everything. Every single thing.

Aurora smirked her lips. “He did” She replied, reading my thoughts. “He told me a lot more in fact. It was quite easy getting through to him, your brother—he’s a rogue. A scavenger, he’d do anything to save himself, even betray his own family. But you, on another hand, you’re an empath.”

“You feel, Eliana. And you feel heavily. That’s what sets us apart, your weakness, the empathy that defines who you are. And that’s why I know you’re going to do everything you can to break the Witch’s Curse. Because if you don’t, I’m going to take every single person you love with me when I eventually leave and you’re going to lose them all.” She said.

Her lips grazed the lobe of my ear and she parted them slowly.

“All of them. No one from your bloodline will be spared.” And that meant Nathaniel too. How foolish of him to actually trust them when they would stop at nothing to destroy us Hybrids. Perhaps, he thought because he was more of a Witch that they were the same but they weren’t.

People say the rivalry is between the Werewolves and the Witches but there are no truer rivals than a full-blood Witch and a half. In fact, at that moment, I was staring right in the eyes of mine.

“Consider this my last warning” Aurora pulled away with her usual grimace on her lips. Denver stood right beside me as the tears welled in my eyes. I held tighter onto my robe, watching as she disappeared.

And that left the four of us, Cory, Ivan, my husband and I, faced with our toughest battle yet. One against a resurrected witch and my own brother.

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ELIANA.

Walking back into my room felt strange.

I couldn't help the million thoughts that raced through my mind. I closed the door behind me as a gust of wind blew into my face. I stuck my fingers into my hair, sniffing my nose as well and then my eyes met Denver for a second. I retired to the edge of the bed where I sat.

I hadn't felt this dispirited and just down in a really long time. Was the weight of a decision I was still yet to make or was it finding out Nathaniel was with the Witches—that my own brother sided against me.

I couldn't even blame him. You know it felt like I shouldn't have been mad. Aurora was right, Nate had been running his entire life, he was only trying to save himself and besides we'd just met. But he was taken away before we even had any chance at rekindling whatever sibling bond we shared. He still thought I was the reason for our mother's death.

That she chose me or whatever the full-blood Witches had brainwashed him into believing. But none of that was true. Still amongst it all, I reasoned with him. With the why—why he did the things that he did.

But then Aurora's words kept ringing in my head, about how I fell short because of my empathy and Carys had warned me once about my kindness.

It was a blessing, I was taught my whole life. But it was also the reason so many people could take advantage of me. The reason I had gotten hurt so many times before. I could change, switch off my humanity like every Werewolf could but what would that mean?

What would it mean for me? And for Denver and our little family now.

I looked at him at that moment and began to tear up. It was then I realized how much I wanted to feel. I wanted to be in a world where I could fall in love with the most amazing man and be loved too. I wanted to be in a world where all of that came easy but it couldn't.

Not even a wish on a shooting star could give me that.



“Hey Eliana” Denver sat right beside me and his hands slowly crawled up my back, holding firm around my neck. I hummed, soothed by his touch. He knew exactly where I needed it, even more than I did.

I closed my eyes, biting down on my lips and a tear dropped.

“Are you okay?” He whispered once I brought my head to rest upon his shoulders and Denver adjusted with his back against the bed. He sat up and drew me closer to him, wrapping a blanket around the both of us.

I sucked a deep breath through my lips as I just paused for a moment. A bit of hesitant reflection.

“It’s okay” Denver said softly and I felt his hands in between mine beneath the sheets. He squeezed them and I looked up at him. “I’m here, It’s okay. I already said we’ll get through this, didn’t I?” He sounded so sure when I wasn’t anymore.

“It’s just a lot, Denver” There was a crack in my voice. “It’s a lot on our plates and I’m not sure I can handle it. I’m the Alpha, everyone is looking up to me but I’m not sure I know what to do anymore” I wept.

“Then I’ll show you. I’ll guide you, Eliana. That’s why I’m here, right beside you. Wasn’t that what you wanted?” His eyes glowed and I nodded my head. “I’ve been used to this my whole life you know—“

“Two curses following you?” I blurted out and Denver scoffed lightly.

“Well not exactly but I’ve been in similar situations” He drew me closer to him and I felt the tears dry up after a brief moment. Our eyes locked into each other’s before Denver pressed his head against mine too.

“You’re not alone, Eliana. You never will be, I’ll make sure of that” He promised and Denver had no idea how much I needed to hear those words from him. To know he was right there, that I could always count on him from the very beginning, it was a luxury.

Looking back, Denver had been the one person who never left my side through it all since I arrived from Tuscany, he’d been there. Even when he had a whole other Pack to rule on the other side of town, he was there.

Till now he does, but guess what—he’s still here.

I rested my head upon his chest, circling a heart with my fingers and he pressed a kiss into my forehead.

“Thank you” I whispered. Although my voice cracked, I knew he’d heard.

“I love you so much, Eliana”

I swallowed a lump down my throat, lifting my eyes to him once again.

“You have no idea” Denver added. “And as for the Pack, I think they know how lucky they are to have you as their leader. Trust me, there is no other person that could be doing this better. Not even myself” He added and my heart melted in my chest.

“To still have these duties while fighting for your own life is a strength and bravery I’ve never seen before” Denver turned to me fully and I could see the truth in his eyes. He wasn’t holding back—everything he thought, he made sure I knew.

“I look at you every day and I’m like ‘God, how did I get so lucky’. I hope you know that’s why I get so scared whenever I have to think even for a second that I could lose you” He whispered.

“I can’t do it. I can’t imagine a life where you’re not there with me, Eliana. It’s not one worth living” Tears welled in my eyes as I looked at Denver at that moment. “But someone has to stay for the kids...” My voice cracked. He readjusted himself.

“You will” Denver muttered. “You will stay, Eliana.”

“Just...if I don—“

“No!” He yelled. “There’s no if, you’ll stay Eliana. You have to. If it means me giving up my life to save you, you know I would’ve in a second—“ “But you can’t” I said. “And you don’t have to.”

“This is a battle only I can fight, you heard her. You heard Aurora.”

“They’re always going to keep coming back, the Witches. As long I’m a Hybrid and Elijah—“ I forced the tears down my throat at the thought of even the slightest thing happening to my son. I fought to hold it back.

“As long as we’re still alive, they’re always going to keep coming. I have to do something, Denver. I have to save if not my life but everyone I love. Everyone that’s in this, everyone that could get harmed” I added.

“I have to do the spell to kill my Witch side. I’m afraid it’s the only way” And now as I looked at him, I saw it all drown out of his eyes. The emotions, replaced with a pale look of fear and something I couldn’t decipher but it was there.

His blood ran cold in the hands he held me with.

“I’ve just been thinking and after Aurora, I think I’ve made up my mind. And I think it’s the only way we have a shot at getting through this. I’m sure I could do it, I hope, Denver just like you do but at some point, you do have to prepare for the worst” As my voice grew lower, the tears surfaced in his eyes even more until they streamed down his cheeks.

Denver still held me but I could see in his eyes. He already knew I had made up my mind and there was going back. I had to do it—it's not as if I had a lot of options but that. So, I had to do it.

“No” He shook his head with a devastating whisper and I reached to hold his face in my hands. “I'll fight, I promise. This is me fighting for us” I pulled his hand to my slightly protruding belly so he could feel her—our little girl. I looked into Denver's glassy eyes and echoed.

“This is me fighting for us, you have to let me” I said to him. “Being an Alpha, it comes with the hardest decisions like this one. Decisions you have to make and I'm choosing to save the lives of the people that matter to me and my own” I squeezed his face, resting my forehead into his own and Denver squeezed his eyes shut.

I did too.

My heart throbbed in the depths of my chest as I blurted out those words. “I love you, Denver” I finally replied to him. Not for a second could he doubt that. All the empathy I had, the love, it belonged to him first before anyone else.

“So so much” I wept with my arms around him and for some awful reason, there was a bit of nostalgia in the air that made it seem like a goodbye when it wasn't. And even if it was, it wasn't even now. I just owed it to him—to my husband, this moment that we shared before I was about to make the ultimate decision.

I owed this to him. All I just needed was for him to be there.

Right beside me as always, holding my hands, whispering in my ears that I could do this. All I needed was him and he was enough in that moment. He drew me into him, squeezing around my ribcage as tight as he could.

And his tears soaked the ends of my hair.

“I love you” He mouthed for the umpteenth time and I nodded. For a moment, we just stared there. I was quite fortunate to have this in my lifetime, someone that made it all worth it. Someone who made the toughest of decisions even tougher.

Someone who loved you selfishly and unconditionally that he refused that you belonged to anyone else, even after letting you go. Someone who stopped at nothing to win my heart back.

I'm fortunate to have found Alpha Malik Denver. Someone that made me want to fight so hard to stay. Because even if it felt an awful lot like a goodbye, I would give everything in me to make sure that it really wasn't.

God, I loved him and he loved me and that's something not many get.

At that moment, I pulled away from him once I remembered one more person that I owed so much. And that was someone who had also been there for me. Now, I knew how much he needed me after tonight.

“What is it?” Denver arched his brows and a sigh escaped my soft lips.

“Ivan” It broke my heart to say his name. Everything Aurora had said and coming to terms with the fact that a person you were in love with wasn’t who you thought they were all along and that hurt. I would know.

“Oh” Denver exclaimed softly, unarching his brows without me having to say a word. So it wasn’t just me that had noticed that Ivan was in love with Nathaniel. “I should go” I squeezed Denver’s hands.

“But I’ll be b—“

“Go” Denver nodded, pressing his lips together. “He needs you” He added. I clutched my chest with a last look back at him and I kissed his lips before finally turning away. I was headed to the door when I finally came to a halt and I was wrong. You see then, that was the last look.

Our eyes graced each other and in that brief collision of gazes, the echoes of a million unspoken emotions reverberated through the silent chasm of our souls.

“I love you” Denver mouthed inaudibly. He’d said it a million times already, not once could I not believe him. Not once did I not say it back.

“I love you, Denver.”

Chapter 114: Stay.

## Chapter 114 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

As soon as I closed the door behind me, I paused to heave in a deep breath through my lips. The winds were gentle against my face and for a moment, I ran my fingers through my hair. It took a lot more to dry the tears in my eyes but I didn't move until I had done that.

Kicking my feet forward, I headed up to Ivan's room. I knew he was just slightly away from above my chambers when suddenly, the gust of that familiar scent filled my nose.

Almost like a slap in my face, his presence was pungent. Unmistakably haunting. I stopped in my tracks with my heart falling into my stomach. I knew it was him even before I turned around.

And that only cemented my assumptions.

"Nathaniel" I echoed. He had a lot of balls showing up tonight but he really was standing opposite me. I stared at him with disbelief and he was still with his hands rooted in his pocket. There were blood stains across his temples and his clothes appeared rumpled and drenched.

"What are you doing here?" I questioned and the halls returned an echo of my cracked voice. He inched closer but reflexively, I took a step away from him. Pushing a hard lump down my throat, I stretched my arm between us. He came to a halt, a scoff escaping his lips.

"Are you scared of me?" He croaked. I shook my head. "That's the worst part, I'm not sure if I am or if I should be. It's like I don't even know you" I replied to him. He nodded slightly.

"Well, that's because we only just met you know." He hummed.

"Do you think this is how Mother pictured it? Us finding out about each other from her little journal?" His voice went low and I forced a chuckle out of my lips. "Well I'm just knowing, turns out you knew all this time."

"You were only playing dumb for points, huh?" I hissed.

"I know about your truce with the full Witches. I've been racking my head about how foolish you have to be to put your trust in the people who desperately want you dead" I said to him and Nathaniel shook his head.

"You just will never understand" He whispered.

"Are you kidding me? I'm not even sure I want to, Nathaniel. You're willing to betray your own family for what?" I asked. "For me!" He snapped. "You'll never understand, Eliana. You'll never understand what I had to go through to survive in that forest. Being a rogue from birth is something I won't even wish on my worst enemy but that me."

"While you lived in your big castle as a princess, I was out there, fighting for each day that I got to survive. It changed me, Eliana. That sort of thing, it changes one. Because when all you've known is a life of survival, it takes a lot to break out of it" He said to me.

"But I'm here. I knew I had to see you because Aurora told me you already met and I owe you an explanation—" "You don't owe me anything" I spat. "You deserve an explanation, sister" He reiterated and my skin crawled at that word.

"Don't you ever call me that again" I gritted through my teeth, striking his chest with my finger whilst holding back tears in my eyes. "You don't get to call me that. What do you think she's thinking right now—Mum?" There was a crack in my voice.

"Because you're not just betraying me you know, you sure as hell are betraying her too. And if for one second, you think I lived as a princess growing up. That I had everything, that I didn't suffer every day and live a life of survival too, then you couldn't be more wrong, Nathaniel."

"You really have no idea. I had my family around me, I had a house but I was still a rogue for most of my life. You tell me, if that sounds like bliss to you" I looked him dead in the eyes and Nathaniel fell silent. He pressed his lips into each other. When the tears fell, I nodded at him.

"I thought as much." I clamored, turning around and once again my hands found my hair. "I told her!" Nathaniel echoed after a brief pause and his voice cracked too. I threw him a look over my shoulders back at him.

"I told her it was risky. I told her not to do the spell. I assume you know everything already" Nathaniel added. "Of course I know everything" I shrugged at him. "All this time you knew there was out, you knew that Mother found the solution but it was just one of the many things that you chose to keep from me while acting dumb like the rest of us—"

"Well there was a reason" Nathaniel replied.

"There was a reason I didn't tell you because I know it's not a solution. I know it's not going to work and I didn't want history to repeat itself" He continued. "Don't do that" I muttered.

"Don't you pretend to care now?" I said.

"Do you think I want you to have the same fate as our mother? Do you think I want to lose my whole family?" Nathaniel arched his brows. "You're already siding with the enemy. You don't owe me any loyalty."

"I'm siding with the enemy to save my life, Eliana. It doesn't mean I want anyone dead. I literally was about to get killed by Aurora and that was the only way that she could spare me. I had to prove to her that I could be of use and that's why I came to Oakland." He said.

"It was like killing two birds with one stone because she knew you and I didn't. I thought for a moment about meeting you. I couldn't even picture how you would look like, who you were and whether you had it as hard as I did growing up without our mother but then I heard you were an Alpha"

"The Alpha of the whole Pack. You just seemed to have it all together, you just seemed to have won and I was still the same miserable runaway than I was my whole life. But that slight resentment that I felt, that was long before I knew you. You were nothing like the Witches said." He said.

"Of course" There was a crack in my voice as I looked up at him. "They lie, they brainwash and manipulate and compel." I grunted. "But it was true what they said, mother, she chose you" Nathaniel whispered.

I inched closer to him with tears in my eyes.

"You really think it was a choice she wanted to make, Nathaniel? You really think she had the luxury of options because I know for a fact that you won't ever have to make that choice and you better thank your stars each day because of that. Because you would never know how it feels to have to choose to save your life or your unborn child's."

"I would know because that is my reality now. And as if I don't already have enough, I also have the Witches fucking breathing down my neck and—" I paused. "You too, Nathaniel. You too because you should be here. You should be with me, helping me. You're a Hybrid too you know."

"You're no longer just a Witch. Or do you think Aurora had no idea what she was doing when she made you shift?" I asked him. "You're just as much at risk as I am. It's only a matter of time before you realize that."

At that moment, a hard lump slipped down his throat and his eyes remained locked into mine.

"All we had to do was stick together because we're really all we have."

"I wanted to help you, Eliana. I want to help you." He stuttered and I reached for his hands. "Then stay. Help, Nathaniel" I whispered to him. He withdrew away after some time, turning his face to the ground.

"I'm tired" Nathaniel mumbled and when he looked up, his eyes were filled with tears. "I'm just tired, Eliana. I'm tired of having to run all the time and constantly looking over my shoulders. I'm fucking tired. I just want to be alive without feeling selfish for choosing to save myself." He cried and my heart sank in my chest.

"I don't think I can stay." He muttered.

I pressed my lips as our eyes met again. A smirk crawled onto it.

"You know I keep thinking, was any of it real?" I asked Nathaniel and a furrow appeared between his brows as he sniffled. "I really have a study. I really wanted to find another way, a safer way to cure us of all of this."

"I knew if I could help you, then I could help me. And I could actually live a life far away from here. I could finally make it out, you know" He added but at that moment, I shook my head. My heart leaped into my throat.

"It was real, Eliana."

"Except I'm not just talking about that" I said to him. "I'm also talking about Ivan. Because at no point in time did you ever have to lead him on. At no point in time did you ever have to break his heart" I gritted through my teeth and Nathaniel cowered his head.

"I loved him" He said.

"You don't know anything about love. You have no idea what it means to fall in love. All your life, you've been starved. You've been hungry, chasing. Most of it isn't your fault because you were robbed of your empathy. Of your heart. So you can't know what love is." I whispered.

"Otherwise you won't leave. Even if it's not for me, then for Ivan."

"I think love is enough to make you stay, Nathaniel" I muttered and his brows curled with wry as if pondering on the hardest decision on the face of the earth before he replied. "I can't." He said. "I'm sorry."

"No" I bit down on my lips. "I'm sorry because you have no idea what you just gave up on—" And at that moment, a voice called out from behind me.

"Leave him, Eliana" My heart swelled in my chest as soon as I recognized the voice and I turned to face him. "Ivan!" I called and the color drained out of my face as he walked towards me. Finally, he halted when he was near.

"How long have you been standing there?" I whispered to him.

"Long enough." He replied flatly, darting a cold glare at my brother. Nate just covered his head, he couldn't face him. "You can leave" Ivan gritted through his teeth. "In fact, please leave."

"Ivan—" He tried to call but deep down, he knew there was no point.

"I want you to fucking leave, Nathaniel."

"I'm sorry" They looked at each other for a moment, the way that past lovers do and Ivan smiled for a second as he walked towards the door. His hands held it open for Nate and when he'd walked out, Ivan nodded.

"You can rot in hell for all I care" With that, he closed the door. Looking back at me, I could tell how much he was trying to be strong at that moment. Clenched teeth, closed fist. Eyes squeezed shut and the bulging vein along his forehead. The heavy gulp down his throat.

"Ivan" I softly called before he burst into tears a second later. I wrapped my arms around him for a hug and he sobbed on my shoulders. "Oh Ivan" I comforted, tears streaming down my face as well.

"It's going to be okay" I whispered in his ears even though I wasn't really sure about it. But it was something we could both hold onto for now. It was something we could hope for and sometimes, that's all we need.

Chapter 115: What Could Have Been.



# Chapter 115 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

“Are you going to be okay, Ivan?”

I broke the silence in the room. He was seated by the edge of his bed and I was in the chair right opposite him. When he lifted his gaze to me, a light scoff escaped his lips. Most of what he was feeling to be honest was disbelief, but there was also the heartbreak.

In a way, by walking away, my brother had broken both our hearts but I couldn't even pretend to understand what Ivan was going through. At that moment at least.

Because there was a point in my life where I had to watch the man I loved walk away with another woman too, right in front of me.

It was clear Ivan loved Nathaniel, or at least he felt something which was why he was that hurt, even though his eyes said otherwise, I could tell.

“There's really nothing more that I can do” He replied me. I sat forward.

“He chose to walk away, all I have to do now is move on and continue living my life just as I was before I met him six months ago” Ivan added.

“You don't have to do that, Iv—“

“There's nothing, Alpha Eliana. You know I'd rather you put me to good use than me wallowing all day in my bed” He arose, sniffing through his nose and wiping his eyes. I stood too, but with an arch between my brows. I parted my lips about to speak when Ivan interrupted.

“Please, Alpha Eliana” There was a crack in his voice and his glassy eyes because you can only hold so many tears back when you're hurt. Before I could say anything, there was a knock on the door.

I threw a look over my shoulders as Ivan sauntered to open it. When he held the door apart, I was met with a surprise. “Thelma!” I exclaimed. Deep down, some part of me hoped that it was Nathaniel. That his conscience or love had somehow made him turn around back to us.

But it was Cory's wife instead. She had a wide smile across her lips as she entered the room. Grasping me in for a hug, she kissed my forehead.

“It’s been a while, Alpha Eliana” She squeezed around me before ultimately pulling away and I furrowed my brows. “What...What are you doing here, Thelma?” I asked. “I thought you were back at Black Mountain” I continued. She shrugged her shoulders.

“I came to see Cory. Turns out he may be staying a bit longer because of Denver. Denver’s not leaving you anytime soon, he said. He said something about you needing him around” Thelma said and I pushed a hard lump down my throat. “He’s staying?” My voice broke.

The relief was evident in my eyes because in as much as I didn’t talk about it, deep down, I dreaded the day that Denver would leave. Because we were married but he was still Alpha to a Pack on the other side of town. It was a challenge but we were trying our best to make it work.

It wasn’t permanent of course, that was the only silver lining.

“Yes” Thelma squeezed my hands. “I heard about everything, the curse. I’m so sorry, Alpha Eliana” She comforted and I pressed my lips together.

“What are you going to do?” She asked. “If I knew that, I wouldn’t be here Thelma” I teased. A soft chuckle escaped her lips. “I’ve missed you so much, Alpha Eliana. The whole Pack has missed having you around” She continued. “Even if Denver isn’t coming, you have to promise to visit us soon you understand? We deserve a Luna we can see too, and touch.”

“So if Denver is here, who’s overseeing things at the Pack?” I asked the question that immediately struck my mind. “We have a council of Elders running things for now. But Denver told Cory that Blake would be following us back to the Pack. He can be somewhat of an interim Alpha.”

“I mean they share the same bloodline, it’s their father’s throne” Thelma explained. “And Blake is into it?” It would be a surprise if he was. Blake never struck me as the Alpha type. He did have the strength and the command, the stoicness required to rule and protect. But there were also the responsibilities, and the decision-making even I wasn’t prepared for.

But I guess if I could learn to do it, then Blake too. Besides, I’m sure it was more of helping his brother to him.

“Ugh, I’ve missed you so much. I really wish I had the time to catch up” Thelma puckered her lips. “You’re leaving already?” I asked. She nodded her head. “I really just wanted to say hi before I did” She clung back to the doors but then gasped. “And Oh!” She seemed to remember something as she turned around.

“Oh my God, I totally forgot. Your Grandma did say Elijah was asking of you” Thelma continued and I pushed a hard lump down my throat, holding the jacket tighter around my shoulders.

“He was?” I echoed.

“Yes.”

My heart sank in my chest. I hadn't seen Elijah in a while. Well, I snuck into his room every night before bed and watched him from a distance. I had seen him but he hadn't seen me, I made sure of that. Not only was I trying to protect him from the whole mess of things happening right now.

There was also—Thelma's eyes fell to my protruding stomach at that moment and she said, “You're really showing now”—Elijah was a child but he was a pretty smart one. I still hadn't told him about his little sister but how long could I manage to keep it a secret from him really?

All I wanted to do was protect him. I didn't want him to know about any of this so he wouldn't spend his days scared and dreading that something bad would happen to me. I wanted him away from the vicious truth and even now that the Witches were back, I made sure he spent his time indoors under heavy protection.

The only person that got access to him was my Grandma.

I just wasn't taking any chances. I remember when I lost him once like it was yesterday and they're still sometimes that it keeps me up at night. I was paranoid half the time, scared shitless, I didn't want that to be him.

I wanted the most of his problems to be beating my Grandma in Legos.

But now, he was asking of me, so of course I had to see him.

“It suites you” Thelma continued after her brief pause. I looked back at Ivan at that moment. “I'll be okay” He waved. “I promise, you can leave” I arched my brows in a way that asked him 'Are you sure?'

He understood and nodded his head firmly.

“I'll be good. You know where to find me if you need anything” He sauntered towards the door, holding it open for both Thelma and I.

For a brief moment, my eyes met with his and he had a plastic grin across his lips. I remember being just like that after what happened with Denver six years ago.

The hurt, the heartbreak.

The grieving of what could've been shimmered in his eyes. But it did get better, that's all I could hope for Ivan. But for that to happen, he needed to feel and not run away from his emotions like he was doing. That was what I did at first—I ran.

I ran because it felt like that was all I could've done at that moment.

But then I came back and every day since then, I've been forced to feel. I halted for a moment, looking into Ivan's eyes. The Ivan I knew was no longer there. All I could hope was for him to come back too.

And as soon as I walked out, the doors closed with an echoing thud. I squeezed my eyes shut and my heart was tight in my chest. Now, I braced myself to see Elijah.

Because it was about to time I told him about his little sister.

Chapter 116: Your Little Sister.

## Chapter 116 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

“Mommy!”

As soon as I opened the door, Elijah abandoned his legos to run into my arms. He came with such a force that almost knocked me over but I held around him, a chuckle escaping my lips.

“Mommy” He called again in a sing-song voice and I whispered into his ears. “Oh my sweet boy, Elijah” His arms wrapped around my neck before he pulled away. I straightened my knees to look up at my Grandma and when our eyes met, she flashed a tender smile at me.

“He's been asking for you.” When she was close, she did whisper and I nodded, clenching the blanket around me. “I'm here now” I replied Nana.

For a moment, her eyes fell to my stomach and I knew exactly what was going through her mind before she even said it. “I'll tell him soon” I said and a heavy exhale escaped from my Grandmother's lips. Her eyes were burdened with the weight of every word unsaid.

But at that moment, she just squeezed my hands and looked deeply into my eyes. “I'll see you later” Nana whispered. I sniffled lightly as she brushed past my shoulders and walked out of the door.

When it closed behind her, my eyes settled on Elijah again. And he roped my hands, pulling me further into his big room. It was designed to have everything he wanted so that way, he didn't have to go out so much. It was all for his safety.

“What were you and Nana doing?” I asked, sitting by the edge of his bed with the Lego pieces scattered across the floor as it wasn’t clear. “We were playing a game!” Elijah chimed innocently, pulling out a truck he had assembled together while showing me with pride in his eyes.

“I built this” He added.

“It’s beautiful” I clenched my hands together with a smile. “And this” He pulled out even more, showing me everything he’d been up to the last few days. He seemed so happy, a way I’d never seen him before. He seemed so comfortable and without a single worry in the world.

As it ought to be, for him anyway.

“They’re all beautiful, Eli” I smiled at my son and he gestured for me to come to the ground. “Come on, you have to help me put something together before you leave” He whispered. “Oh—“ I exhaled, realizing I didn’t have much time to spend here but Elijah puckered his lips and his eyes mimicked that of a puppy that had been soaked in the rain.

Puppy dog eyes.

How could I ever say no to that?

“Oh fine” I scoffed, sitting on the floor right next to him. He scattered the lego pieces before assembling mine in front of me and his, in front of him. “This is what we’re building” He showed me the diagram like a puzzle piece but for most of the time, my eyes just remained on him.

How lucky I was to have known my little boy in this lifetime? I would do anything for him, I thought. Anything to make his life even the slightest bit easier because although he knew he was different now. He knew he was a hybrid, he had no idea what it meant.

I did and I wanted nothing more than for him to never find out.

“What are you thinking about?” His shrill voice pulled me out of my thoughts and I scoffed when I met his eyes. “What?” I asked softly. “It’s just...your eyes seemed to go away. I could tell you were no longer here, you were in your head Mommy. You’re always in your head” Elijah said.

“I just wish you were here all the time” He whispered and something about the way he said those words broke my heart into a million pieces. I pushed a hard lump down my throat as tears welled in my eyes.

Clutching my lips, I echoed. “Oh Eli, I wish I was here all the time too.”

“It’s just that...”

“I understand,” Elijah interrupted and he spoke so fluently and intellectually that he was just so smart. “You’re the new Alpha of the Pack and Daddy told me about all your responsibilities and duties. He called them chores except you can’t pretend to be asleep so you’d miss them” Elijah joked and a soft chuckle escaped my lips.

“Can you?” His face brightened and I shook my head. “He’s absolutely right. You are too” I replied. Reaching for his hand, I gave it a little squeeze and Elijah smiled softly. I knew deep down that wasn’t the only reason I kept away. He deserved to know, he deserved to know about his little sister. I knew how much Elijah wanted another sibling.

He’d been pretty vocal about it, even telling my Grandma it would be more fun to have someone to always play legos with. Someone who actually understood. I remember her coming angrily to tell me about it.

Looking back now, it brought a smile to my lips and a chuckle out of it.

“But it isn’t just that Elijah” I paused and his eyes gauged on me. “There’s something I have to tell you and it’s something you’ve always wanted” I added. He arched his brows and stroked his chin.

“A bigger room was what I wanted and you’ve already given me that” He looked around playfully and I chuckled. “Not that, Elijah” I laughed. For a moment, there was a brief silence as I pulled over the blanket from me. I placed it on the table while his eyes navigated what was going on.

It didn’t take him five more seconds before he noticed my protruding belly and a gasp escaped his lips suddenly. That was Elijah, he was so quick and smart, I knew I stood no chance hiding this from him, even though ultimately, it was to protect him.

“Mommy!” He squealed with a smile as wide as half his face. “No,” He exclaimed softly and I nodded. “I’m going to have a brother” Elijah’s eyes shimmered as he moved closer to me. I held around him.

“In fact,” I sniffled. “She’s your little sister.” I whispered and the moment our eyes met, I could see that his joy knew no bounds. “My sister?” Elijah said softly. “Even better” He added. At that moment, I pressed my forehead against his. A tear did drop but for the first time in a really long time, it was a happy tear or something in between.

Now, I’d definitely never seen him this happy. Elijah pulled away to even dance for a few seconds and I laughed until my stomach started to ache. Until I forgot about the terrible things that plagued me and I was just in the moment where my little boy and I were happy.

It should’ve been like this.

But alas, the moment was short-lived. I remembered the decision I was about to make—the hardest in my entire life and the smile slowly faded from my lips. Elijah breathlessly collapsed in my arms and he whispered.

“Thank you, Mommy.” He said.

“I love you.”

My hands swept through his hair as I held back the tears in my eyes. “I love you, my sweet baby” There was a crack in my voice. Hoping that one day, he’d realize that was the reason I did everything I did.

Chapter 117: At What Cost?

## Chapter 117 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

My phone buzzed in my pocket. It took me a while to reach for it but when I did, my eyes fell to my Dad's name across the screen. I lifted my gaze to Elijah, knowing I could either leave or choose to stay with him.

The past few minutes with him, even if it was just spent with the both of us laughing and screaming until it hurt had reminded me so much of how I enjoyed the simpler times. It reminded me of Tuscany, well, besides the nightmares but the other things were just easier then.

For starters, Elijah and I often spent the whole day together. That was one of the many things that had changed. At that moment, I chose to turn off my phone, ignoring my Dad. I chose to spend today with my son instead, away from the Pack's responsibilities and the burdening reality of the decision I had yet to make. I chose to stay here.

"Are you leaving?" Elijah murmured, seeing the phone in my hands but I slipped it into my pocket, drawing him closer to me. "No, I'm not" I whispered. I watched his smile grow across his face.

"Now, tell me how are you enjoying your new room?" I asked, mounting the Legos he'd given me on top of each other to recreate this picture of a pink truck. "What do you do in here anyway?" I inquired.

"Don't tell me you just play Legos every day with Nana" I said. Nana—it was just what we called her even though in reality, she wasn't his Grandma, she was his great Grandma. "No" Elijah blurted out immediately.

"She makes me take these classes with her, it's like Tuscany but she calls it homeschooling. I'm learning math now" Elijah's eyes widened with interest. "It's pretty easy here, mum" He looked around the room.

"I think I like it here."

It warmed my heart to hear him say those words. "Really?" I echoed. He placed his head upon my shoulders. "Uh hum." Elijah hummed before he jerked forward again and there was color in his cheeks.

"So, my sister!" He squealed. "What's going to be her name?"

"Are you going to name her after you so it's like we're twins? Eliana and Elijah?" He chimed and my chest exploded with laughter. "No, that would be way too confusing." I replied.

"I never really understood why people do that, name each other after themselves—" "Maybe they love them so much that they want to remember them even when they're gone" Elijah whispered and I pushed a hard lump down my throat. "You know you're right."

"I've just not...I don't know" I paused, shaking the thought off my head. It only dawned on me at that moment that I was so preoccupied with everything else that I had failed to enjoy all the little joys and blessings that came with motherhood. The little things that do matter.

My mother knew what my name was going to be very early. Eliana, she wrote in her journal. And then I knew Elijah was perfect for my son. This was the first time that I hadn't even given it much thought.

What filled my mind was the fear and anxiety that I may never even spend enough time to give her a name after everything. I was so determined to survive and find a way to break this, for the both of them.

But at that cost?

I looked into Elijah's eyes and he was still waiting earnestly for a name.

"Sarah then?" He suggested, an eye closed. I waved my head in a manner that showed I at least gave it a thought. "Hmm I don't know" I shrugged. "Juliet, Janet...Samantha"

"Samantha?" I echoed, bursting into laughter. "How do you know so many names?" I quizzed. Elijah laughed too. "These were all our friends, Chester and I, back in Tuscany" He told me and it made a lot of sense.



"Especially Samantha" He added. Both our eyes met and I caught a glimpse of his reminiscing for a second. "Do you miss it?" I asked. Elijah moved nearer to me, helping with the Lego truck.

"Miss what?"

"Tuscany?"

"What part exactly?" He asked again. "I don't know, your friends, the mountains, the air. Anything" I whispered and he stroked his jaw. "I do miss Chester sometimes. When I close my eyes to sleep, I still see him you know. Exactly what he's doing. The other day, I watched him play in the fields with another boy. He had no idea. I really wanted to say hi but the spell was a little one. Nana helped me with it." Elijah told me.

"She's helping me with my powers little by little. The only spell I do is to see Chester. He was my best friend—" He paused. "He's still my best friend but I don't think I'm his. He's found someone else" Elijah sounded really heartbroken. I could hear it in his voice.

It was the first time I had seen my son so sad.

Chapter 118: Take Care Of Your Sister.

## Chapter 118 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

It was the first time I had seen my son so sad.

"But besides that, I really do like it here. I meant it when I said that" Elijah said.

I reached for his hand and squeezed it gently. "Maybe we should visit?" I didn't even know when I blurted that out. Something about hearing him talk about Chester reminded me a lot about Alicia. I missed her sometimes so the thought of maybe visiting was just something that struck me and it struck so intensely that the words just escaped my lips.

Bold of me to be making plans when my future itself was uncertain, I thought.

"Oh my God, we could! And Daddy will come with us, we'll take Sarah too and it would be like a big family trip!" He squealed excitedly and my eyes shimmered at the vivid thought of that. "That would be good, wouldn't it?" I whispered and there was a crack in my voice.

Every glimpse I got of the future, of my family—it was good. And it was the reason I was going to do everything I could even if it was for the tiniest shot at getting to see that future. Getting to live it. Live past holding my baby girl in my hands.

Because let's face it, there was already so much stacked up against me. But I was never known to be a quitter, a gene I got from my mother. I could either stay and do nothing and watch the Curse happen or I could take my chances, take the biggest risk and I would still have a chance at living even if it was the smallest one. But it was a gamble, a fight.

"Sarah would love it" Elijah winked and I chuckled softly. "It's not going to be Sarah, give it up!" I pulled him towards the ground with me whilst tickling his stomach and Elijah burst out into laughter. "But I love it" He struggled to catch his breath between his laughs. Alas, when he was able to escape, he laid right next to me with his eyes locked into mine.

"Well, I'll think about it" I reached my hands through his soft hair and he blinked. "Promise you'll take care of her," I paused. "Your little sister."

"Sarah?" He echoed. I pressed my lips together. "Yes, Sarah. Promise that you'll take care of her and that nothing will come between you two even when you grow up. Even when I'm no longer here" Promise you won't be a Nathaniel were the words on my lips but I didn't say that.

I only thought it, broke my heart nonetheless.

"When you're not here?" Elijah said. Those were the only ones he heard and he immediately sat up, crossing his arms. "What do you mean by that?" His brows arched with wry. "Where would you go?"

"No, Elijah"

"Where would you go, mum?" His eyes shimmered with tears. "It's not that, Elijah. We don't get to live forever, you know that. At some point, the moon goddess is going to call us back home—" "But not you, though?" Elijah quizzed. "Why would she call you?"

"Maybe she needs me" There was a crack in my voice and horror in his eyes. "But I need you more. I need you, mum." He said. "Elijah" I softly called. "You don't have to worry about that now" I lied.

"It won't be for a while anyway. I'm still here, that's all that matters. I'm still here, right next to you" I reached for his hands and Elijah held to it as tight as he could. He lifted his eyes to me and I whispered.

"You haven't promised me though" I said. He had no idea how important it was now and I was going to keep it that way. But eventually, he would.

"I would love Sarah, she's my sister. Of course I'll take care of her like every big brother would" Elijah replied and I swallowed a hard lump down my throat. Now, I didn't know I had a big

brother until recently and you know how that story goes. However, the brother that I did grow up with.

That one was a monster.

I hadn't much luck with family so I wanted to ensure, while I was still here that my daughter won't have to grow through all of that. I had to make sure that she would grow up with all the love and all the care in the world so that she wouldn't miss me so much, that's if this didn't work.

So hearing those words from Elijah, it melted my heart. I healed it and sealed my decision once and for all. I had to do this but at that moment, I knew I had to do this.

He rested his head upon my stomach and my hands soothed his arms. "It's like I can hear her" Elijah whispered and a faint smile crawled to my lips. "You can?" I echoed. He nodded. "Yes" He said so softly.

"I can hear Sarah." He added and I closed my eyes. "Sarah" That was a good name but that wasn't going to be her name. I didn't know now what it was going to be but I was sure whatever name Denver and I would settle on would be nothing short of perfect.

At that moment, my eyes fell on the curtains which blew by the evening winds. The sun had gone down, a reminder that I had spent the whole day with Elijah. It was the best day I'd had in a really long time.

"We should do this more often" I whispered, looking at the Lego truck we'd built but Elijah had fallen asleep in my arms. I looked down at him, placing a soft kiss on his forehead.

His eyes were closed and he was so peaceful sleeping. I could leave, normally I would leave because there was always something calling me but at that moment, I stayed. I chose to stay with my son. To enjoy these little moments before the big ones.

I stood up as carefully as I could, laying him on the bed and placing the covers over his body before I climbed into it too. There, I spent the night.

And for the first time in a long time, it was a really good night. The last good night I had because I knew as the sun would rise up the next morning, so would I. Elijah was still fast asleep when I left and I found my way to my Grandma's room.

I knocked on her door. Of course, she was already up and opened it immediately. "Hey" I slipped my hands into my pockets and before she could even say anything, I cleared my throat.

"I need that spell book. The one my mother used that belonged to you."

"I'm doing it" I looked deeply into her eyes and my Nana dreaded that I had already made up my mind and there was no one who could change it. It was true, I had already made up my mind. I was going to do the spell.

I was going to murder my Witch side.

Chapter 119: The Spell Book.

## Chapter 119 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

"Do you have any idea what you're about to do?" My Nana's voice deepened once she closed the door and I sauntered into her room. A sigh escaped from my lips as I ran my hands through my hair.

"Just please, ma. I really need to do this" I replied. She lifted an uncertain gaze back up at me. Even though she already knew my mind was already made up, it didn't stop her from trying to get through.

"Eliana," Her voice broke.

"It's dark magic, the Witches are warned to stay away from it for a reason—" "But it's my only option. It's the only way I get to save my family and save myself. You, of all people I expect to understand that." I interrupted and a hard lump slipped down her throat.

"It's dangerous" Her eyes grew wet and I rolled mine to the back of my head. "I have no other choice, Nana and I know you would do the same if you could. Being a Hybrid, it's taken from me more than it's given."

"I want it to be all over, I want my children to grow and live happy lives without always looking over their shoulders. I want them to love and to see themselves as more than just a sacrifice to break a Curse. I want to break my Curse—ours, that runs in the family. Enough with the trauma, and the chase and the ill fate. I just want to be a family, a happy family"

"You have to understand that, Grandma" There was a crack in my voice as I tilted my head. Nana paused for a moment with a tear falling down her cheeks. "Eliana" She called for the umpteenth time.

I reached for her hands.

"Help me save them, help me save us. Because I can't do it alone, you're the only Witch who knows the spell book from the front to the back. I need you, Nana. I need you to be on my side. Only then will I actually have a shot at breaking this Curse" I whispered to her.

"I'm just scared, Eliana. I'm scared because I don't want what happened to your mother to happen to you. She kept it from me because she knew I would've never let her go through with it. I can't, Eliana. Not with you."

"I can't lose the both of you to this because at the root of it all, it still circles back to me—" "It doesn't" I muttered. "It doesn't, Grandma. You have to free yourself from the guilt. You did what you knew was best at that time. We should never beat ourselves up for falling in love" I added.

"Because it's something none of us can control. What happened is in the past. I'm here now, you're here now. All we do is find a way to move forward and to survive." I nodded my head, clenching my teeth tightly.

"This is the only way to survive."

"So help me, please. Give me the spell book" I looked her dead in the eyes, watching the lump in her throat rise. Reluctantly, my Grandmother did walk back to her closet, and reaching into the depths of her clothes, she pulled out a brown thatched book.

Holding it in a firm grasp, she turned back to me. A sigh of relief escaped my lips almost immediately as I threw myself at her. But my Nana held onto it a little longer.

"Please" I whispered, taking her hands in mine.

"You and I can figure out why it didn't work for my Mum, you're the only one that I can count on—" "Why else did you think it didn't work?" Nana interrupted. "Because it's a spell that's been banned from all Witches. It uses black magic which could have dire consequences on our world. We're here as balances of nature" She added.

"I'm a Hybrid, I'm not exactly nature's balance" I replied to her. "Deep down, you know it too. You know my very existence is a Curse. Every step of the way, it's been proven to me how much nature herself doesn't me alive but I'm going to fight, ma." I whispered.

"I'm going to do all that I can to fight, regardless of the consequences, when they come and I'm not sure it cannot be as bad as my reality already is but when they come, I'm going to do what I've always done and fight against it too. My whole life, I'm going to fight if it means my children get to live a better life than I did" I looked into my Nana's eyes.

"Now, tell me you won't do the same ma" There was a crack in my voice as my eyes shimmered with tears. Finally, she covered her head to let go of the book. I hefted in my hands, an exhale fleeing my lips.

"Thank you" I heaved.

"You have to be careful, Eliana" My Grandmother nodded and I swallowed a hard lump down my throat. "I will" I replied. "I'll be careful."

“Because your mother wasn’t” She added after a brief pause and I remembered Mum didn’t even tell her about the spell nor about the Curse or what it meant for her unborn child. She didn’t tell her, neither did she tell my Dad, Gerald. I had decided to go about this my own way.

I told Nana, I’ve told Denver.

Even had a little talk with Elijah. Everything was set. My eyes fell to the book in my hands and a tight sensation knotted my stomach. My Grandmother walked around me, lighting two candles at the edges of the table and then she walked up to me.

Her eyes fell to the book as well.

“This is no ordinary book, Eliana” She muttered under her breath. “Not a lot of people can get through it” I furrowed my brows but her hands reached out to mine as she held it in a tight clasp. Nana closed her eyes and I could immediately feel the surge of magic rise from inside me.

I took my eyes off the leather-bound book and closed them. The air crackled around us as the book suddenly but slowly lifted into the air.

“Illusionum Invocatus” Escaped from my Nana’s lips. ‘The Ancient Spell shall be sworn’ was the meaning. I surrendered my hands to her as I slowly opened my eyes and they watched as she steered the incantations from the tip of her lips.

“In regno umbrae ubi saltant tenebrae et somnia efficiunt, Illusionum Invocatus, vetus carmen pronuntiabitur.” She carried on and with each word, the magic soared. It rose all around us, charging a storm that blew right through my hair and I lifted my eyes to the book in the air.

My eyes gleamed as a wisp of ethereal light clouded around it. The pages rustled, turning slowly at first, then with increasing speed, as if guided by unseen hands. It was the most magical thing I’d seen before.

This really was no ordinary book.

It slowly descended back into my arms and my eyes widened in anticipation. The hinges were apart and the pages were already opened to what looked like the spell. My Grandmother then opened her eyes and she let go of my hands slowly. Both our eyes met at that moment.

The storm had died down and the candles flickered but the magic was still in the air. To do a spell with my Grandmother was the best part of being a Witch. Even though her powers were strained, she could always siphon from me just about enough that she needed.

Nana was a powerful Witch which was one of the reasons I needed her especially by my side if I had a chance at breaking the Curse.

“Is this it?” With a final surge of power, the pages of the book slowed down and came to a halt, revealing a piece of parchment delicately placed within the book. It glowed softly, emanating an otherworldly aura.

My eyes couldn't escape it.

“It is” My Grandmother nodded and a faint glimmer filled her eyes. Her voice broke. “It's everything you need to kill the part of me that's still in you” She whispered and my heart sank in my chest.

“Nana” I called but she shook her head. “It's okay” Her hands reached to caress my face softly. “I just want you to be okay, Eliana” A tear streamed down her cheeks. So did mine.

“Please be okay after this” And though it wasn't as certain as a promise, I leaned into her hands and nodded my head. “I will” I said. “I'll be okay.” But little did I know that what was coming was far more than we imagined. Far more than we prepared for.

Far more than we expected.

A Curse like this wasn't about to be easily broken. It would take everything, I knew in that moment. Everything from me. This was unlike anything we'd been through before. More than Jaxon, more than Sienna.

More than Elyndra.

It was more than all of this combined. But those words held me together.

“I'll be okay.” I echoed again and mostly, I was talking to myself.

Chapter 120: A Celestial Event.

## Chapter 120 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I'm going to do it.

My Mother wrote in her journal the day before.

'I'm going to do the Spell and I'm going to try to save the both of us'

Reading through the lines almost felt like I could even hear her. Like I could feel all those emotions that she felt, that led her to make the decision that she did. Heaven knows that was exactly what I was feeling.

The past few days, I had spent studying through the spell and also my mother's journal. In the little time she had, she had documented a bit of her process before she did it too. It was like a way into her mind, and my Nana was around for the most part.

That moment, she was sitting right opposite me on the table when I lifted my gaze and our eyes met.

"Seen anything?" She asked. I shook my head with a sigh of relief escaping my lips. The plan was to find a reason why the spell didn't work for my Mother. Perhaps, it was something she'd missed out or hadn't done so we would avoid a fate like hers.

I wasn't just doing this to save my daughter, I was also doing this for Elijah and for myself. I had to be alive to take care of them, to watch them grow—to protect them. Everyone describes being rogue as when one is away from one's Pack but rogue was also my own childhood.

Growing up without my Mother was rogue. I didn't want Elijah nor his sister or Denver to have to go through that.

"I'm sure we'll find something soon" My Grandmother remained optimistic but I ran my hands through my hair. It had been two whole days, this was the night of the third. I'd gone through both books over and over again but still nothing. I was near giving up but even that wasn't an option.

"What do you think it was?" I whispered, a deep breath through my lips.

"What do you think went wrong? Because the spell is not easy but it's also not entirely the hardest to do. It does require black magic so that's like the hardest part of it. Right?" I turned to my Nana.

"It's a spell that's banned across Witchcraft, you do know that?" She threw a question back at me. "And it is for a reason. Black magic in general is discouraged amongst us. It involves you going into the darkest realm, siphoning powers from dark energies and Witches" Nana explained.

"Could that have been the reason?" I asked her.

"For a spell like that to even have been successful, you need to draw help from your own line of Witches, whether dead or alive. It's their force that pulls you back once the spell is over. So you don't get trapped in the darkness with no way out. Susannah didn't come to me so I have no idea who helped her" My Grandmother said.



“So you think she was engulfed by the darkness?” I pushed a hard lump down my throat. “She did make it out. I mean, she pushed you out days after she did the spell. There’s no way telling whether the darkness got into her. I didn’t notice anything precarious or out of the ordinary but I blame myself oftentimes because I don’t think I was looking” She added.

“I didn’t think she’d ever go through the Spell. Then I had no idea there was a Curse like the Hybrid Curse—“

“I don’t blame her” I interrupted. “For the things that she did or the things she didn’t tell anyone or felt like she couldn’t. I don’t blame her, really because I didn’t understand her until I stepped into her shoes and I’m faced with the same reality, now I get it. Now I get her.”

“It’s funny how they always say it, how you would never truly a situation until you’re inside of it. And ironically, this is the closest I’ve felt to my Mother in a really really long time.” I continued.

There was a brief pause between Nana and I before I flipped through the spell book again. “Hold on” An epiphany hit me. More like something I remembered that I read.

“It says here the spell must be performed during a celestial event” I read through the foreign language like a skill. “A full moon” My Grandmother added without hesitation. “It would suffice. It’s still a celestial event. That way it bridges both your Werewolf side at its apex as well as your Witch side. You’ll be your most feral then, your most dangerous” She explained.

“Did my Mum know that?” I asked. “I have no idea when she did the spell. I’m afraid only one person can truly answer that” She darted a look into my eyes. “Nathaniel” I gritted through my teeth. She nodded.

“He was the only person that was witness to it.”

“Maybe she drew power from him?” I thought about it. “Maybe she did, but you, Eliana, I’m not sure you realize how much you need him too to do the spell. He’s your blood brother, the strongest Witch in your lineage that you could get. You would need him more than me” Nana said.

“He’s on Aurora’s side. I spoke to him, he’s long gone Grandma” I replied.

“You have to find a way to convince him. To bring him back. Because listen, you and I, we can’t do this alone” She said. “And there’s not a lot of Witches alive that would be thrilled to help us given everything” Nana sat forward. “I could siphon from Mum” I replied.

“It is a Black Magic.”

“Don’t you understand, it still won’t be enough. The one grave mistake you can make is undermining the Spell, Eliana” She warned. “You haven’t dealt with dark magic. No matter how strong you think you are, being a Hybrid, the darkness is stronger. Will can get into it but it’s not

enough to bring you out. You need strength, you need to overpower it because it is going to want to suck you into it. You're a Hybrid after all" She said.

My stomach tied into a knot at the thought of everything that could go wrong.

"Maybe that was it" I whispered. "Maybe the darkness did get to my Mum. She didn't have anyone, she wasn't strong enough" I shook my head and tears stung the back of my eyes. "She had no idea" I added.

"And she was already long gone with me when she did the spell, the month before. She was eight months long, surely she couldn't have been strong enough" I pieced it together before a furrow appeared between my brows. "But I don't understand one thing, why didn't it kill her immediately? Why did it wait until I was born?" I questioned.

"Because there's not a lot of things stronger than a Blood Curse, and that includes the darkness. A prophecy must be fulfilled first and you are that prophecy. Maybe Susannah did break the Curse, maybe she was successful in it. But it's the darkness that got to her" Nana muttered.

"It's the darkness that killed my daughter" There was a crack in her voice and that would explain everything. That would explain the reason why she said she no longer felt like a Witch after the spell. The reason her powers left her. Because it had worked. She was successful.

But the darkness stayed with her, even after she was done. It took her.

"I remember her eyes, Eliana." My Nana immediately broke into tears. "I held her hands while they turned cold and her eyes were pitch black. She was just gone. Her soul, her life, everything. It took everything in the blink of an eye" She recalled that day and it was vivid in her trauma-filled eyes. "There was no way I could've known. I just wish she told me."

"I wish I noticed" I reached across to her hands and clenched it tight.

"That's why I'm scared for you, Eliana" She whispered again and my heart leapt into my throat. "Because there's not a lot of things stronger than the darkness. It takes you deeper than you realize, dangerous lengths but you must not let it take you too far otherwise there is no coming back. These are the risks, Eliana." She said.

"And you know them, and I know I can't stop you from going ahead with this even if I tried so I won't, I just need you to be careful" She croaked.

"I need you to come back."

"And I will, Nana. I will" A tear rolled down my cheek as I squeezed her hands. "This is what I do, I fight. I'm a fighter, we've already been through so much you know" "This is unlike anything from before" She interrupted and I pushed a hard lump down my throat.

"Then I'll fight harder. I know what's at stake, ma. I'll fight harder."

“And your brother, Eliana” Her voice broke. “You need him too, more than you know” She continued and at that moment, my heart sank in my

chest. Was Nathaniel already long gone with the Witches? Was it still possible to get through to him?

“You need to convince him to come back to us.” She said and something about the way she said it told me it was more than just a suggestion.

It was something I had to do.