

Chapter 121 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

"What are you doing here?" Nathaniel croaked.

The winds blew right through my hair as I crept closer to him. He didn't even have to turn around to know that it was me. I had met him hunting, a hobby I figured he'd picked up from all those years in the forest.

Met, that was a choice of words. Because in reality, I had done a locator spell that was able to pinpoint exactly where he was.

I didn't have a lot of options. It was either that or asking Ivan, the latter which wasn't even close to possible. And I had to see Nathaniel, after speaking to our Grandmother, I realized I had to talk to him too.

Finally, he turned around and his eyes were grim and locked into mine. He placed down his bow and arrow, a resenting sigh fleeing from his lips.

"I wanted to talk to you, Nathaniel" I stepped forward. "What more is there to talk about after the last time?" He replied flatly. "I'm pretty much the enemy to all of you now when all I did was all I had to to be able to protect myself" He added.

"If you weren't living in a fancy castle paraded by a battalion of an army, I guess you'd do the same, no?" His eyes looked up at the Guard that had followed me here. It was my father's orders—that his Beta Phil never let me out of his eyesight. So ever since then, ever since Aurora, I never really went anywhere without him.

Nathaniel let out a hysterical scoff.

"Do you see now what I was trying to say?" He muttered, kicking the dirt with his shoe. "Nathaniel, I'm going ahead with the disjunction spell" I interrupted and he stopped in his tracks. Looking back at me, a scoff escaped his lips.

"Is that what our mother did that killed her?" He muttered. "Now you want to do the same thing and go the same way that she did when the reason she even did that was to protect you?!"

“Well I have no other option, Nathaniel” I snapped back at him. “If you do have a way that I’ll be able to protect my kids while also staying alive, then be my fucking guest but I’m sick and tired of everyone who isn’t going through this damn thing having an opinion about it!” I yelled.

At that moment, I was just drained and exhausted from having to explain myself.

“It’s hard enough for me” There was a crack in my voice. “I know it was for her too, I understand why she did the things that she did and you do too. No matter how much you want me to be the villain, you know why she did it and it was because she wanted to protect you too, Nathaniel”

“She didn’t want you to have to run your entire life. The spell, it not only kills her hybrid side, but it does the same for her lineage if it is entirely successful. Meaning, both of you and I wouldn’t have been hybrids” The Darkness once it had taken her was able to reverse the spell that she did.

That was the only explanation, that was the only way Nathaniel and I still turned out to be hybrids after everything.

“She did for you just as much as she did it for me. Because if you were no longer a Hybrid, then the Witches won’t come after you anymore.” I said to Nathaniel but deep down, I could tell he already knew this without a shadow of a doubt. He just wanted to be oblivious.

To somehow justify himself for turning his back on his people.

“And that’s exactly why I’m doing it too, to put an end to this generational cycle once and for all. It’s not only about breaking the hybrid curse, living to see the next day after my baby is born. It’s about the rest of their lives, and how they get to live it. Not like us, not the way we did Nathaniel” I whispered and he folded his arms across his chest.

“And why are you telling me this?” He croaked.

“Because I need your help” I inched closer to him, reaching for his hands.

“I can’t do this alone, I need your help and you need this spell broken too” I added. “Except you want to keep running your whole life” I said.

“That’s the thing, I’m no longer running, can’t you see?”

“I’m in their good graces...the Witches” He argued. “For how long?” I asked him, staring him dead in the eyes. “How long until you become a liability to them and they throw you out like you never meant anything?”

“It’s like you’ve forgotten the people you’re dealing with and the rooted hatred they have for you. Your blood is what’s required to break them free. These same people would rejoice over your death, they’re not your friends. They’re not your family—“

“And you think you are?” Nathaniel’s words sliced through me. I pushed a hard lump down my throat. “You didn’t even know who I was until a week ago. You don’t know anything about me. Eliana. Or is it Alpha Eliana?” He continued with yet another scoff.

“You and I, we’re not the same you know that.”

“Somehow you’re the only one who keeps saying that” I replied to him. “You are the only one who keeps thinking that. There wasn’t a second even after I met you, even after you knocked me unconscious to deliver me to the Witches, there wasn’t a goddamn second that I didn’t think you were still my family. That I didn’t want to protect you at the slightest thought that you might’ve been in danger” I gritted my teeth.

“Remember your first shift and how I lunged myself into the forest without a second thought. I wanted to come to your rescue, well that was before I found out whose side you were really on but that doesn’t matter. Still, I don’t think that matters because I won’t hesitate to do it again. That’s the true definition of family, protecting each other.”

“Helping each other, standing by each other. Deep down, you know it’s what our mother would want” My voice fell into a whisper until Nathaniel looked away. “You know I read about you” I moved closer to him until we were barely inches apart.

“In her journal. I read about you on every other page, how much she loved you, how much she mourned you. You were her perfect little child from a love that she’d lost. If any of those words she said about you are true, then I’d like to think that that same Nathaniel is still somewhere in there. The loving Nathaniel, the one that shows up for family”

“Amidst everything, I want to hope that he’s still somewhere in there.”

“And I want him to decide to help his sister, me. Because I can’t do this without you. Mum was alone, she didn’t have anybody so she wasn’t strong enough. She did the spell but the darkness got to her”

“That’s what killed her, that’s why it didn’t work. I want to get it right this time, Nathaniel and I only have one shot. You can be free, you know that? Once this is over, you can be free. You can come and stay with us, but most of all, you can be free. You can go anywhere you want. Because I remember how you talked about leaving and going somewhere to find yourself. You can do that once all of this is over” I muttered to him.

“You can do that for young Nathaniel, give him the life he’s always wanted.” I lifted my gaze to lock into his and for a moment, his eyes shimmered in the light. That was before he turned away and clenched his jaw. “You’re wrong” Nathaniel shook his head.

“You’re wrong about that Nathaniel, you never knew him. You’d never know him, he’s long gone. He’s dead” He pulled away from me and I sucked in a deep breath through my lips. The wind was cold against my face. I couldn’t even look at him.

“I can’t help you, Eliana. I’m afraid you’re going to have to do this alone”

At that moment, my heart sank in my chest and tears filled my eyes.

“Nathaniel” I called his name with a broken voice and he threw a look over his shoulders back at me. “It isn’t going to work, Eliana.” He replied.

“It will, with the both of us” I whispered.

“I’m sorry but it’s not a risk I want to take” He shook his head. “I’ve seen this before, I know how it ends Eliana. But if you still want to go on with it, I can’t...I can’t help you with it” He turned his back on me.

Literally. And he disappeared into the misty darkness.

With tears streaming down my cheeks, I heaved in a cold, deep breath of the air. The air, heavy with uncertainty, seemed to press against my chest, making each breath a laborious task.

As I stood there, a gnawing sensation twisted my stomach into knots, an insistent reminder of what was to come. And with a gut feeling this unmistakable, something told me that I didn’t have much longer anymore.

With or without Nathaniel, I had to do the spell.

Chapter 122: An Impending Doom.

Chapter 122 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

DENVER.

I walked up to the door.

For a moment, I stood still, looking at the ring in my hand and a sigh escaped my lips. My hands rested on the handle before I pushed it open.

Immediately, Eliana turned her eyes to me, taking them off from whatever she was doing but it wasn’t up to a second, she looked back.

My hand slipped into my pocket as I darted my eyes around the chamber. It was all a mess, like she was ransacking looking for something.

“Found it!” I was right because she chanted not so much later. Eliana turned to me and in her hands was a silver dagger. “Oh my God” I couldn’t help but explain as she tossed it gently upon the table. She let out a slight chuckle. “What do you even need that for?” I questioned.

“For the spell obviously” She shrugged her shoulders. “It’s a long process and you have to come with a few things, the silver dagger there is also a relic of an ancestral artifact that belonged to my Grandma” Eliana explained, rubbing her eyes as she heaved a deep breath.

And I inched closer to her. My hands framed her tender cheeks.

She yawned.

“I’m just getting everything together. You should have seen your face” She said softly, a faint smile creeping to her lips and I rolled my eyes to the back of my head. “It is a silver dagger, you have to be careful.”

“When are you ever going to stop treating me like I’m a fragile baby?” She asked, stepping on my toes. It was the only way she was up to my shoulder’s length and at that moment, she wanted to look into my eyes.

“Never.” I scuffled. Eliana placed a kiss on my lips, her arms wrapped around my shoulders and my hand around her waist. After a moment, she broke away, licking her lips and I cleared my throat.

“You know I brought you something,” I muttered. She smiled as her eyes darted to my hand and I slowly opened my palms to reveal the ring inside of them. Eliana gasped at the gold which wasn’t so hard to tell.

“What is this, Denver?” She whispered so softly as she took it in her hands. “Wear it” I urged, a smirk on my lips and she obeyed. Slipping it around her finger, she tossed my hands and I held firm to her fingers. My eyes shimmered seeing the ring fit so perfectly on her.

“Are you going to tell me now?” Eliana asked.

“It belonged to my Mother, it’s one of the only things of her that I still carry around with me” I whispered. There was a crack in my voice. “And I was just thinking, I just want you to have it Eliana” I added.

She let out a sigh.

“It’s too much, Denver” She replied, about to take it off before I seized her hand. “Too much?” I echoed with a deciphering glare at her. “That’s ridiculous, Eliana. Who else would have it if not you?” He asked.

“I pretty much held onto it for good luck all these years and I just think you should have it. You could use all the luck you can get” I continued. A smile curled at the corner of her lips.

“And it worked?” Eliana whispered. I shrugged with a chuckle. She laughed too. “Well, I made it this far” Replying her, I didn’t even know when the tears dropped from my eyes. My cheeks were soaked as I stared at her. There was a shrouded silence for a moment.

I looked around the room, several open boxes and the dagger laying on the table and I turned back to Eliana.

“You’re really doing this, huh?” I muttered. She pushed a hard lump down her throat, this time holding my hands. “I am. The next full moon which is in two days. I’m getting ready now” She said with a tender smile.

A smile I could tell was only a facade so I wouldn’t get so worried but how could I not? She didn’t want me to know how scared she actually was but I could hear her throbbing heartbeat from miles away. But the smile was still there, glaring and deceptive.

“I can see that” I replied her. “Are you ready, though?” I asked. Eliana nodded. “I am. I think I am, it’s going to my Grandmother and I” She said. “And you’re strong enough?” I asked her.

“I am.” She whispered. “I’m here, if you ever need anything, you know that right? I’ll be right beside you or opposite you, just the closest I can. I’m never letting you go, Eliana” I said intently to her and that smile faded off her lips to allow the tears to fall too.

“Never, Eliana.”

“I’m not going to stop you, I know I can’t. I know nobody can but the least I can do is be there for you. Till death do us part, isn’t it? Except it’s not now. We’re not parting now...we can’t” I blurted out, wheezing the words as they came to my head but she inched closer to me.

“I’m going to be fine, Denver” She assured.

“What about Nathaniel?” Her piercing silence was enough of an answer for me at that moment. “He’s not coming” But she replied nonetheless.

“I was going to this without him anyway. I’m not alone, I have the strongest Witch on my side and it’s better I do it now because I’m also at my strongest. Each day brings me closer to when I finally get to meet our daughter” Eliana was merely inched away from my face and she pressed her forehead into mine.

“Our beautiful, beautiful daughter.” “Yes” Our breaths mingled in the air.

I kissed her forehead, wrapping her around in my arms and I squeezed my eyes shut. “I couldn’t do this alone, I couldn’t do this without you” I said.

“Good thing you wouldn’t have to.” She was so confident with every word she said but at that moment, I didn’t need her to be confident. I didn’t need to see the facade, the walls. I needed to

open up to me. To tell me how terrified she was, how scared. She could pretend to be strong for everyone else but she shouldn't with me.

I pulled away to look into her layered eyes and I held onto her.

"You can tell me" I muttered. Eliana pushed a hard lump down her throat as she burst into tears. "I'm scared" She wailed, burying her face into my

chest. It wasn't a sign of weakness, everyone got scared. I just needed her to feel all the emotions coursing through her veins.

I knew she could do it, I believed in Eliana. I had watched her singlehandedly take down her half-brother, Jaxon for the crown. And even though this was nothing compared to it, I still had faith in her.

Because she was Eliana motherfucking Jacobs. And if there was something I loved about her, it was how unbelievably strong and willed she was. The best of both worlds, she had.

"You'll be okay, Eliana" I whispered into her ears. "I'm here, I'm here" After a moment, she sucked in a deep breath to wipe her tears and I could see the relief wash over her face. "It's okay" I mouthed.

"I love you" My hands groped around her elbows as I nodded. "Always and forever, yes? Those were our vows, those were what we promised each other. Always and forever" I said to her and Eliana nodded her head.

"Always and forever, Denver" She muttered. "Always and forever."

Eliana pulled away, letting go of my hands. "I should probably pack all these back but I'll see you upstairs, okay?" She said. I nodded. And Denver," Her voice called out again. "I'm so glad you stayed" She said.

"Of course I stayed. You needed me" I replied. "I wouldn't even think twice the next time. You are my life, Eliana. You're my whole world" I looked into the constellation of stars in her eyes. "I'll fight my hardest to come back to you, Denver. It will never be our end" She replied.

"Never."

But just as I was about to say something, my phone cut through with a ring and I reached into my pocket to see a call from— "Thelma?" It hit me like a wave of surprise because she never called. If anything, it was Cory that usually reached out to me. But now, it was her.

"Pick it up" Eliana urged once she'd caught a glimpse of the worry in my eyes and reluctantly, I did pick the call. But there was so much screaming and shouting in the background that I could barely hear her. The sound of thumping footsteps, I knew belonged to her.

She was running.

“Thelma!” I called out to her and my heart sank in my stomach. My gut knotted. “Thelma, what is it?” I could sense the distress from a mile away. The impending loom. “Thelma!”

“Alpha Denver” She managed to call back but her voice was trembling and filled with fear. “What’s going on, Thelma?” I was at the edge of my seat as my heart pounded like a jackhammer against its sternum.

“Thelma!” Each second she didn’t reply filled me with even more terror.

“It’s...the,” The line kept breaking. “The Pack—“

“The Pack” Eliana echoed. “Something’s wrong with the Pack.”

“What’s wrong with the Pack, Thelma?” I asked, miles away from them and what she said next was enough to collapse my whole world. One word—the worst of them all. “Fire.”

“There’s been a fire, Alpha Denver” Thelma yelled. “Oh my God” Eliana clutched her lips with her hands. “Oh my God, Denver” There was a sharp, numbing sound that pierced through my ears as I held the phone.

“Everyone’s in danger, Alpha Denver. Everyone’s in danger.” Thelma said before the line went static. And the picture of burning Pack flashed behind my eyes for that one second. But that was it. That really was my whole world crumbling down and I wasn’t even there.

“Denver!”

“Denver!” Eliana groped my hands tight enough to whisk me from my thoughts and I looked at her. “Come on!” She grabbed her coat. “Come on, let’s go. I’ll call an army to follow us, okay?” She whispered.

“Nobody’s going to get hurt, I promise.” She gritted through her teeth.

“Not because of me.”

This was Aurora, I just knew at that moment.

Chapter 123: Up In Flames.

Chapter 123 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

DENVER.

I stood still right in front of my Pack, heavy with disbelief as my eyes trailed the orange-red skies, painted by the cracking flames that had engulfed my home. "Oh my God" A soft gasp escaped from Eliana's lips.

My heart pounded in my chest as the heat intensified, matching the anguish that gripped me. The air was thick with acrid smoke, stinging my eyes and burning my lungs. With each step I took forward, the more panic that set in as I caught a glimpse of my people scrambling out for their own safety. Some of them untouched, but the most of them, wounded.

Screams of terror echoed through the atmosphere and their faces were contorted with fear. They rushed out from the inferno as the fire spread with great magnitude through the barns, and the cottages. Through the livestock. The windows had shattered and half the building had collapsed.

In the midst of the chaos, my eyes sought desperately for the faces I knew. That was before I saw Thelma. And she scurried towards me, her hair a mess and black circles beneath her eyes.

"Alpha Denver" She grasped my garment in a tight grip. "What happened Thelma?" My breath caught as I looked at her. I grasped myself out of my head. She was crying. Her eyes were a sore red—she had been crying.

"It just started out of nowhere, no one knows what caused it but it just spread so fast. Before anyone knew what was happening, half the building was up in flames. And we tried, we tried to get everyone out. The women, the kids, the elders, we tried to get everyone to safety. Cory and I" She muttered and I looked over my shoulders.

"Cory" I gasped. He was nowhere to be found. "Where is Cory?" At my question, Thelma burst into tears and she buried her face into her hands.

"Thelma, where is Cory?" I gritted through my teeth. She faced the direction of the building which was now compromised because of the flames and could collapse any time. I gasped. "No."

"Our little girl, she was asleep when all of this was happening, we thought she was out. We thought her brother had her but she was still inside and when Cory found out, he went back in. He didn't even think, he just jumped into the flames to save our daughter" My heart jackhammered in my chest as I ran my hands through my hair.

"No" I clenched my jaw. "No, not Cory" I kicked my feet forward when Eliana grasped my hands back. "What are you doing?" She whispered. "I have to go in," I told her. "Cory, he's devoted his entire life to me. I can't let him die in there. I swore to protect him, I swore to protect my people, Eliana" A hard lump slipped down her throat.

She understood but it didn't make this any less difficult.

My eyes set to the once vibrant garden that was in the center of the driveway which had held the burning debris. There was a thud that came from the corner of the building, a chunk of concrete that hit the ground.

Cory was still in there.

"And Denver..." Thelma's shrill voice was almost swallowed by the roar of the fire and the screaming of the people. Her eyes fell to the ground as her fingers nervously twirled around each other. "There's one more person in there—" She whispered and there was a crack in her voice.

"Who?" I exchanged a glance with Eliana and Thelma swallowed a hard lump down her throat. "It's...It's Blake, Denver. He went back in with Cory to save the rest of the Pack in there" She said.

And my heart sank in my chest.

"Blake" I echoed. He was only supposed to rule until I got back. Now, he could have something terrible happen to him and it would all be my fault. There was a piercing sound that rang through my ear. I turned full circle to look around. The echoes of the sirens from the fire truck drew closer but there was only little water could do on a fire that much.

"How many people are still in there?" I turned to Thelma and she shook her head, remnant tears glistening in her eyes. "I have no idea" She said.

"They didn't know too."

At that moment, without any more hesitation, I let go of Eliana's hands and thrust through the crowd pouring out. She trailed behind him.

"Denver!" She called. "Denver, I'm coming with you" At that moment, I turned back to her. "You're not." She came to a halt and her hair cascaded upon her shoulders because of the wind. I looked into her eyes.

"You can't do this alone, you can't save them alone, Denver."

"I can help you" She gritted through her teeth. "No" I refuted. "You're staying outside here where I'm sure you're safe. There's already so much on the line, Eliana. I can't be worried about losing you too" I said to her and most importantly, I looked to her father's Beta, Phil who had been tasked to look after her and ensure that she was safe.

"Don't allow her out of your sight" Knowing Eliana, I knew I had to warn him too. There were tears in her eyes as her chest rose and fell. "I'll be safe. I'll get them out of there in no time" I kissed her forehead before pulling away from her. There were no words.

Just silence, and the mutual understanding of the tragedy that had unfolded and why I didn't want her in there.

I paced through the billowing smoke as fast as I could, shifting into my wolf form. If there was a chance at surviving this, it was definitely not as a human. I lunged myself through the passageway, catching a glimpse of fragments of my charred memories.

The halls I grew up in, the rooms I hid in from Blake. The Kitchen which my mother loved and my father's beloved patio. Everything was in flames.

My vision blurred as my chest began to tighten but I pushed further into the fire. The heat was excruciating, burning my fur and my lungs felt as though it was about to collapse any second. The walls began to crumble from the side and with a surge of adrenaline, I darted away from it.

"Blake!" I growled.

"Cory! Blake!" I plunged into the engulfing flames and the very air seemed to conspire against me, resisting every breath, but the thought of my brother and my Beta still trapped inside fueled my determination.

The crackling of burning timbers surrounded me as I navigated through the crumbling interior. Embers danced in the swirling currents, casting an eerie glow on the remnants of what was once a sanctuary. My eyes stung, not only from the smoke but from the profound fear gripping me.

What if it was too late?

What if something had already happened to them?

With every step, I called out their names. The fire didn't hold back and as I ventured deeper into the inferno, the weight of uncertainty bore down on me like a heavy cloak but I still relentlessly thrust further.

"Cory! Blake!" I darted my eyes to the ceiling that was already falling apart with me underneath. Suddenly, all hope was extinguished from me.

My chances of making it out didn't seem so good anymore. I turned around and the passageway was blocked by the quaking concrete. The smoke and the dust filled the air and there was a roar that echoed from beneath. My heart tightened in my chest.

One log stomped my feet and another grazed my head. I fell backward, narrowly escaping the fire but as I looked up, the ceiling gave way to the red skies. A wall broke into two and collapsed right on my legs, pinning me to the ground. While the fire drew closer, I couldn't move an inch.

Even if I tried.

"Cory!" I still yelled from the depths of my lungs. "Bla—" I coughed.

"Blake I'm right here" I sensed a presence from behind and a shadow that crept closer. "Cory, Blake" My vision was a blur and my throat felt like it was closing up. Suddenly, through the dense smoke, I caught a pair of golden brown eyes and an unmistakable white fur.

The concrete broke with me underneath but I was finally free. At that moment, my heart leaped into my throat as I looked up, almost immediately recognizing the wolf before me. She stepped forward, reaching with her paws. I stared in disbelief.

"Eliana" I growled. She'd just saved me but what was she doing here?

"I thought I told you to stay back" I howled at her as she helped me up. "I was right when I said you couldn't do this alone, wasn't I?" Her eyes gleamed in the fire and she roped me in the direction of safety. The path I had come through no longer existed with the debris that had fallen.

Eliana drew me further into the Pack house.

"I heard some screaming on the north side of the building. I think they may be there" She muttered beneath her breath. For just a second, we came to a halt and she rooted her eyes into mine.

"Come on" She seared through her fangs. "Let's go save them."

Chapter 124: This Is The End.

Chapter 124 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

BLAKE.

The room had turned pitch black.

The door was nowhere in sight, I had been trapped by walls and ceilings that had fallen all around me. There was no way to make it past the debris—it looked like the end. Perhaps, it was the end.

I lifted my gaze to the flames which licked the walls hungrily. One second, I was sitting behind the desk, doing as my brother told me and watching his Pack until he returned and the next, there were just thus inescapable flames that had risen out of nowhere.

Of course it happened today. Of course, this had something to do with my bad luck. I thought I could do one thing, I thought I could do this but everywhere I went, the misfortune just seemed to follow.

I watched the whole Packhouse crumble to the ground through my hazy eyes. What would I tell Denver—this wasn't my home, this was his home. These were his people, this was his chambers, his bed, his walls.

Everything he'd built since our parents died, everything was no more.

I just sat there, at the center of the wildfire, the flames rose, casting dancing shadows that contorted the room into a nightmarish carnival. The smoke hung thick in the air, obscuring any semblance of an escape route.

My heart sank in my chest once I realized my reality, I was trapped down here, in the hottest part of the inferno. I felt like a prisoner but also, I had never felt more at peace. It wasn't a burgeoning feeling, it was more of a sinking reality. I could die here today, finally.

It was then amidst the chaos, that a silhouette emerged from the smoke, untouched by the flames and I should've known it was her.

"Aurora" I muttered. It didn't take long before I realized she had something to do with this. That somehow, just like every bad thing, she was responsible for it. Her eyes glistened in the dark as she inched closer.

"Hi Blake" There was a crack in her croaky voice. "Isn't this destiny—you and I here together?" She smirked and I scoffed. "Destiny?" I blatantly echoed, feeling the heat of the fire draw nearer to me.

"What are you waiting for?" I asked her. "I mean you trapped me here for a reason? Why not just rip the bandaid off and just kill me? I mean that's why you're here" I said to her and she blew raspberry.

"I really hate that it had to come down to this. The only crime you ever committed, Blake, was being his brother. I want you to know that this has nothing to do with you. I'm only sending Denver and his wife a message and I'm keeping to my promises" Aurora was inches away from my face and her hands reached to my moist skin. She gazed deeply into my eyes.

There was a sense of familiarity that lingered in her touch, it was everything I had spent my whole life chasing. Everything I once desired.

But at that moment, I looked at her, the one I was convinced was the love of my life. I looked at her and I felt nothing. Nothing for Aurora.

"Just kill me" I whispered to her. "Once and for all, just kill me Aurora."

"I do find it a bit poetic, dying by your hands. There was once a time I wanted to resurrect you because I guess I just really thought you weren't who you were. That you weren't who everyone said you were. I wanted to believe in that so badly. I was really stupid, wasn't I?" I muttered.

And a hard lump slipped down her throat, her eyes reflecting the malevolent dance of the flames. Her fingers traced arcane symbols on my skin. "Aren't you going to fight it? Aren't you going to fight me?" She asked and a chuckle escaped my lips.

"I've already cheated death far more than I deserve to. Maybe it is time, you were the reason I stayed alive all this time but well, you and I both know how that's ending. Maybe it's time, Aurora. So just put me out of this misery, nothing here is mine anymore" I said to her.

"I mean look around, what would I even tell Denver? He trusted me with his home, with everything, and it's just gone and I know you're the last person I should be telling this to because well, it's all your fault. I just need to talk to someone and you're all I got."

"All my life, I just needed someone. I needed the chase, it made it worthwhile. I was nothing without it, just void and empty Blake. I had nothing but my love for you, Aurora. And I could write it a thousand ways but it all boils down to this: I loved you in a way that you never could"

"All this time, that person I fell in love with was a mirage. And in the end, that is what destroyed me—the longing for someone I could never have. I'm at peace knowing that now, Aurora" I pressed my lips together.

"I'm at peace knowing what you truly are. You're a monster. So just do it already. Please, kill me" I grasped the ends of her black lacy garment and for a moment, I caught a glimpse of her shimmering eyes.

"Aren't you going to ask me, Blake?" She suddenly whispered. I arched my brows. The only reason the fire hadn't already consumed me was because she was standing between me and it. Her presence was holding it off, at least for some more time.

"Ask you what?" Sweat streamed down my face.

"You know I can see through your mind...it's a question you've had a century now. Was any of it real—back then, you and I. Was any of it real? You can ask me" She said and I swallowed a hard lump down my throat. "Was it?" My voice cracked. "I know it wasn't."

"That's where you're wrong, Blake."

"I did love you, I loved you first in fact. You had a certain sense of darkness around you. Something we shared, something no one can ever understand. I saw that, I saw you. I recognized you. From the moment in that forest, I knew you were my mate. But it was never going to be. It was never going to happen because of who we were."

"I'm a Witch, you're a Werewolf. Look how it turned out with Abigail. Besides that, we were just too dark and too strong, we would've killed ourselves by now" She paused for a brief moment. "I did love your brother Blake, but I loved you too" Aurora whispered.

"I never told you that because it will never change anything. This is how it must end, the both of us, here in this room. At least in this life anyway" I gulped down another lump at her words and our eyes locked.

The walls seemed to press in at that moment, as if the very room conspired to hold me captive. Aurora slowly pulled away and it felt a lot like she was disappearing. Sweat weighed down on my eyelashes and my breaths ragged against the smoky air that filled his lungs.

My eyes blurred. It felt like the end.

I did catch a glimpse of her before she finally vanished. And her words serenaded me. "Maybe in another life," Aurora whispered. "We could have a chance" With that, she just left me to be engulfed by the flames.

I was ready but a fire is no pleasant way to die. The pain came slowly as the fire intensified. I couldn't see anything. My skin burned, my eyes burned. Everything burned.

"This is the end"

"This is the end" I told myself. What an end. I was ready.

I was ready.

But then suddenly, through the dense smoke, a distant cough reached my ears. My heart skipped a beat. I plunged my eyes open, ignoring the searing pain in the depths of my chest. I coughed too.

I could hear his footsteps long before I heard his voice.

"Blake!" Denver called. "Denver!" I blurted out, reaching out in the darkness. "Blake!" "Denver!" "Blake! I see him!" He yelled at the top of his voice. I kicked my feet forward. "Denver!" Our hands met and a wave of relief hit me like a storm.

"Oh brother" I heaved and he gripped my hands. "Come on, let's go" Eliana called out from the hole in the ground. They had come through what seemed like a tunnel. "Go on" Denver said, helping me into the floor but he looked around. "Have you seen Cory anywhere?" He asked.

"I did hear some voices in the other room but not anymore, the fire was so much, I couldn't make it" At that moment, Denver covered both Eliana and I and locked himself out of the tunnel.

"Denver!" Eliana yelled out of the top of her voice, clinging to the metal bars but Denver stood up. "I'm sorry, Eliana. I have to go save Cory and his daughter. You get Blake out of here and I'll be right behind you" He gritted through his teeth. Eliana was in tears.

"No! Denver, No!" She growled but no amount of strength could break through the bars. Denver met his eyes before mouthing. "I'm sorry" He whispered before lunging him away. Not up to a minute later, there was a crash that shook the whole building. At least what was left of it.

And it was an explosion that sounded above us. The fire consumed everywhere and even the tunnel we were in was compromised. I had to grab Eliana. I could die now and be okay but not her.

"Come on, we need to get out of here" I pulled her but she shook her head, tears in her eyes. "But Denver," Her voice cracked. "He's still up there" She wept. "He said he'll be right behind us. He'll make it out, Eliana. But we have to too" I said to her and she looked back and forth.

The concrete quaked. Dust filled the air, the walls were caving in.

We didn't have much time.

"Come on, Eliana" I gritted through my teeth, holding firm to her hands.

"We need to get out of here, before this whole place comes down."

Chapter 125: The Fall Of Black Mountain.

Chapter 125 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

Not only did the tears in my eyes blur my vision but the dust from the earth shaking and quaking did too. Both Blake and I were underneath it, and Denver was above it. There was a loud thud, deafening. There were so many loud thuds and bangs as the building collapsed.

It was only a matter of time before it came down on us. Blake and I knew that so we rushed towards the end of the tunnel to make it out. Each step seemed like an eternity, maybe it was because of how often I threw my head over my shoulders. It felt like I was leaving something behind.

I was leaving something behind.

"Come on" Blake tightened his grip around my hands and I looked back at him. "Come on Eliana, you have to stop looking back. It's making us slow and we still have some distance to go" Blake gritted through his teeth. His face was glistening in his sweat and his eyes shimmered.

"Denver" I could only mutter and there was a crack in my voice. "He's...he's still in there. He came to save you, Blake. He came to save you" At that moment, Blake came to a halt and he grasped the sides of my face in his hands. He gauged my eyes into his icy blue ones.

"Denver's going to be alright but I have to make sure that you are too."

"If you're ever going to see him again, you're going to have to try to get out of here. Do you understand that, Eliana?" The rumbling sounds almost drowned his voice out but I could see the veins popping through his neck.

"Now, come on!" He fastened his grip around his hands. There was a crash right behind us, each one louder and closer than the last. I sniffled through my nose, wiping my tears before kicking my feet forward.

Blake held my hands as we ran, breathlessly, tirelessly toward the end of the tunnel.

When finally, we were faced with a ray of light, I didn't even know whether to let relief wash over my face. We eventually emerged from the tunnel and into the cool, night air. The wind carried the echoes of the sirens around us. I tossed a look over my shoulder until my eyes fell on Thelma. She screamed as she walked up to me.

"Eliana!" Panic surged in her eyes as she gripped my hands. At that moment, the whole building came down with an ear-splitting crash and concrete dust filled the air. My shoulders were heavy with the weight of survival but my mind was racing because Denver was still inside.

"What happened, Eliana?" Thelma's broken voice drew my eyes to her and a tear escaped from the surface. I shook my head. She arched her brows. "Where's Cory?" She asked. "Did you find him?"

"Did you find my daughter too?" She looked around and the moment it dawned on her too, she fell quiet. A hard lump slipped down her throat.

"Eliana, where's Denver?" She asked softly. Blake broke free from my hands as his chest exploded with a deep cough. Blood spilled from his lungs that were affected by how much smoke he'd taken in.

"Blake!" I reached to him. He turned back with blood in his nose and on his hands. "Somebody help!" I yelled out before the Pack paramedics ran towards us, alongside the doctors. Ivan was one of them.

"What's going on?" He gripped onto Blake. "What happened?"

"I don't know he was in the fire for a long time, he was okay a minute ago and then he just started coughing" I frantically muttered. "It's okay" He soothed Blake before handing him over to the paramedics.

"You're okay" He was strapped into a wheeler, an oxygen mask glued to his face but Blake's eyes were fixed on mine. I could almost see the regret, the grief, the loss. He was carried away but I stayed there. I froze.

My feet couldn't move from the ground, not when Denver was in there.

"You need to get yourself checked out too, Eliana" Ivan walked up to me and grasped my shoulder. There was a bruise across the skin on my arm that was bleeding. I didn't realize until then.

It was probably when we were running down the narrow tunnel.

"I'm fine" I muttered to Ivan. When in fact, I wasn't. His doubtful eyes when he lent me knew that. My chest was burning but then again, it could be from the anxiety that something bad had happened to Denver.

My ankles were swollen and there was this searing pain in my head.

I turned back to the building, non-existent now. The flames had completely engulfed it. A chill wind swept through the air as I took a step closer. I watched the flames devour his home, my home too.

Because there was a time Denver those doors to me, the time he rescued me in the forest and I stayed here for two years. Living with him changed my life forever and if there was something I knew, it was how much he loved and cherished his home. But that home was gone now.

So was he.

Tears rolled down my eyes at that moment because no one deserved to lose their home this way. Not him—I turned to Thelma, not her too.

Not the hundreds of his people who were just displaced, wounded with nowhere to go. The facade had now crumbled under the fire's embrace.

I felt Ivan walk up beside me and I could hear his unsaid words even before they escaped his lips. "Denver is still in there?" He cleared his throat. My faith stomped my heart but the moment our eyes met, I was quick to burst into tears. Ivan embraced me while I cried.

"I told him not to go in there. I told him to come with us but you know him, he won't listen. He said he needed to save Cory" There was a crack in my voice as I lifted my eyes to Thelma too. She was in a fit of her own tears. I didn't even have to tell her what had happened. She knew.

She already expected the worst.

I knew too but it was a lot harder for me. Should I just accept that I may never see my husband again?

That he was somewhere buried beneath all the debris.

Tears filled my eyes, mirroring the glistening dance of the dwindling flames. The crackling inferno drowned out the sounds of despair that echoed in my heart. Each flicker of orange and red seemed to sear my soul. I couldn't accept that. There was no way.

"I'll be right behind you" He had said. "I'll see you again" Through the billowing smoke, the winds floated echoes of his voice through my ears.

"I'll see you again" That was a promise. His promise, it wasn't the first time he had said those words but whenever he did, I did see him again. I trusted Denver so much to know that he would never leave me. He would never die on me. I will see him again. I will see him again.

In this lifetime.

Two hours had passed. Almost three now, the flames had danced into exhaustion. The building still burned—what was left of it, although not so much anymore. I still stood there, my head upon Ivan's shoulder.

He had stayed with me. Everyone left to mourn from a distance, they had all heard Denver was still in the building when it came down and their loose faith had already accepted a tragic demise. I rejected it.

I rejected that fate.

"Eliana," But at that moment, Ivan called my name too and when I looked into his eyes, I knew exactly what he was about to say. My heart sank in my chest. "No" I muttered. "He's still alive" There was a crack in my voice. "Denver's still alive."

"It's been three hours, even Thelma's gone. You need to get to the hospital and fast" Ivan said. I shook my head, clenching my jaw tightly.

"He's still alive" Those words burned the back of my throat as Ivan and I looked at the crumbled building. And he shook his head. "I don't think so" Who knew those words were all it took to unleash the unending downpour of tears from my eyes?

My hands fell to the ground, and so did my knees and I started to weep. So much for a strong faith, so much for rejecting a fate like this. But I could only handle so much. I could only be strong for so long.

“Eliana,” Ivan squeezed my shoulder but at that moment, my tears seized. A faint scent dashed past my nose. I lifted my gaze with sudden.

Rising to my feet, I looked ahead.

“I can smell him” I gritted through my teeth. My eyes were wide open and my heart skipped a beat. Ivan looked at me like I was crazy but I was not. I could scent him. Denver, a woodsy smoky scent that drew closer.

And then a figure staggered out of the building. I leaped forward. It was dark at first, through the flames that still danced around us but it was a figure, and then another. And then another.

Suddenly, I heard a scream from a distance.

“Cory!” Thelma yelled at the top of her voice as she ran towards the debris. I kicked my feet forward too, and so did everyone else as they inched closer to take a look at who that was.

“Cory! Cory! It’s them!” Thelma screamed and I burst into tears as I ran towards them, him especially. And the moment our eyes met, my heart sank in my chest. It was all slow for a moment as I inched closer to him.

He was standing there, with a silhouette that wavered through the haze and as I ran, my hair cascaded upon my shoulders. My breath caught, suspended in a surreal blend of disbelief and overwhelming joy. He was carrying Cory in one hand and Cory’s daughter in the other.

But when he had handed them over to the paramedics, Denver himself limped towards me. The moment we were close to each other, I embraced him and he carried me in the air.

“Oh Denver!” My heart cried out of joy as my fingers found his dirty hair but I couldn't care less. At that moment, my lips crashed into his and he held tightly around me. Time seemed to be suspended all around us, even the chaos, the hundred mutters and thousands of eyes that stared at us.

Nothing else mattered for those seconds I remained in his arms.

“You’re okay” I could hardly believe my eyes even though he was right in front of me. There were other times when I thought I’d lost him but nothing could be compared to this one. I had really thought this was it.

“I’m so glad you’re okay” I pulled away from him before our lips met once again in a desperate and passionate kiss. “I told you I’ll be right behind you” He replied and I scoffed. “Three hours” My voice cracked.

“It was almost three hours.”

A faint smirk crept to his lips as he swiped a strand of my hair behind my ear and with his other hand, he reached for something inside of his pocket. “I went back in search of something that I wanted to save—“ My eyes fell on two photographs in his hand.

“Two things, actually” Denver added. One was a photo of his parents on our wedding day, and the other was a photo of the both of us, on ours. I looked up at him and my eyes shimmered in tears. We stood right in the center of the building where everything else had burned around us.

“I couldn’t let these burn” He whispered. And I buried my face into his chest. I could hear his throbbing heartbeat synchronize with mine. What was I going to do if I had lost him? What could I do without him?

A million questions raced through my mind at that moment but fortunately, these were questions I would never know the answer to.

At least not for now, anyway.

Chapter 126: Remember Me.

Chapter 126 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I sat up in the hospital chair, wrapped in a blanket next to Thelma. The sterile scent of antiseptic hung in the air as the sound of the machines hummed in the background.

The rhythmic beeping, the occasional drips of his intravenous and voices echoing from a distance, including Denver’s. He was speaking to the doctor right outside the room while I stayed here to comfort Thelma. She needed it in that moment more than she realized.

It was Cory laying in the bed. Although Denver was able to get him and his daughter out in the nick of time, Cory was badly injured. Not only was he trapped inside the burning building where he inhaled so much smoke but some of the broken debris had fallen on him.

On his legs for that matter and his back, which had left several bones broken. It was where Denver had found him, alive although severely injured. It was a sight for a sore eyes for Thelma, seeing him again but her heart broke even more when she realized the measure of his wounds.

My heart throbbed steadily in my chest as I brought my eyes to rest on him. He laid so peacefully in the hospital bed, eyes closed, unconscious. A lump of bandages wrapped around his entire body except his eyelids.

I could see his eyelids which fluttered for a moment, slightly but still did.

And I immediately stood from the bed. "He's awake!" I chanted. Thelma drew towards me and let out a labored sigh from her lips. She marched to his bed, her hands clasping his cheeks.

"Cory," She whispered.

"Cory, my love."

His eyes slowly parted, moist and dull with pain. He attempted to sit up but couldn't. But his lips parted as soon as he recognized who was in front of him.

"Thelma" He called her name softly. "I'm right here" Her voice broke as a tear streamed down her cheek. As she inched closer to him, it was an intimate moment they shared, a vulnerable one.

This was someone she thought she would never see again, someone she thought she would be forced to live without, a tragedy she'd painfully accepted. But here he was, he was alive, right in front of her and right within her grasp but it wasn't the same.

He wasn't the same.

"Where...where am I?" He stuttered, looking around the room. Thelma held his hands. "You had an accident, Cory. You were trapped in a fire so you got pretty hurt. You're in the hospital now but you're okay" She said.

"You're alive" His eyes distorted as they fell on me. There was something strange about the way he stared. That was before he asked anyway.

"Who is this?" And those were the three words that caused my heart to sink into my chest.

"Cory" Thelma called his name. "That's Alpha Eliana, she's Denver's wife. Do you not remember her?" Thelma asked and he stared blankly for a moment. She forced a hard lump down her throat.

"Denver," His words slurred and Thelma took a step back. "Oh my God!" She exclaimed from her lips before turning back to me. "Can you call Denver, and call the doctors please. Cory's alive but something is wrong."

"Something's wrong" Tears streamed down her cheeks but brimmed in my eyes as I turned around. My hands opened the door and I walked out. For a moment, I leaned against the closed hinges and heaved in a deep breath through my lips. This was all my fault.

Aurora attacking Denver's Pack was all my fault. Cory would've been trapped in there if it wasn't for me.

The tears escaped my eyes soon after but as soon as I saw Denver walking down the hallway, I wiped them. "Hey" He called out to me. I briskly turned the other way but his hand held me back.

"Are you okay?" It didn't take him a second to recognize the tears in my eyes. "Eliana" He softly called. I pointed back to the room, struggling to hold back further tears but I was failing at that.

I just couldn't stop them from flowing down my cheeks.

"What's that?" Denver asked.

"It's Cory."

"It's Cory, he doesn't remember me. I don't think he remembers you too, Denver. He's not okay from the fire, he was badly hurt. I can't—" "It's okay, Eliana" Denver interrupted, holding around me.

"I'll go call the doctors, it's okay. We'll figure this out." He whispered before leaving. My heart sank in my chest as I turned to the door, looking through the transparent glass in the center. I watched the both of them.

Thelma and Cory, whose lives had just changed.

She held tightly to him, tears filling her eyes as she cried. I think deep down, she knew. She knew that although her husband was alive, he was no longer the person she knew. He could never be that person anymore.

And knowing that this was somehow because of me, filled me with as much sorrow as did anger. As rage. I couldn't wait to finally put an end to this—all of this before someone else gets hurt.

Aurora crossed a line tonight but it would never happen again.

Chapter 127: Home.

Chapter 127 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

“I regret to inform you that Cory suffered a fall inside the building, and on top of that was almost crushed by some of the debris that had fallen” The doctor explained with a piece of paper in his hands. His eyes fell to Thelma especially whose hands held up her chin in a tragic manner.

The remnant of all the tears she had cried clung desperately to her lashes and at that moment, a hard lump slipped down her throat.

“With a fall like that and everything that happened, it’s not uncommon to be presented with some signs of head trauma which would explain his partial loss of memory and inability to do the things he was once doing.”

I folded my arms across my chest, dashing a glare at Denver. His face was filled with unease and an emotion I couldn’t quite decipher. Like every word that came out of the doctor’s mouth was a thorn poking him in his chest. I saw the way he looked at Cory laying there.

That was his best friend. His person. His brother when Blake wasn’t.

And he was just laying there with his eyes closed. I’m not sure he could even hear the doctor’s voice, none of us was.

“But he’ll get it back, right?” Denver gritted through his teeth. “His memory, he will get it back?” His voice was landslide into a whisper. The doctor cleared his throat. “His scans show nothing out of the ordinary. For all we know, this kind of memory impairment could be temporary.”

“I’ll just give the same advice I always do, surrounding him with people he loves, or things he once loved doing. Showing him pictures could help too and having conversations from time to time. You know keep him engaged and also well rested. I’m pretty sure he’ll get better” He said.

“But until then, I’m not sure how long it will take or how soon. The only thing we can do is be optimistic” The Pack doctor added, placing his hand on Denver’s shoulder. He nodded, clenching his jaw.

“We’ll do all that” Denver replied. “Everything, we won’t stop until Cory is back” He fluttered his lashes in a way that showed he was holding his tears back. At that point, Thelma burst into tears inside the palm of her hands where she buried her face.

I sat right next to her, holding out my arm around her shoulders and I comforted her, gently, easy. “It’s going to be okay, Thelma” I whispered in her ears and she just cried on my shoulders. Her tears soaked through my shirt. I understood what she was going through in that moment.

“It’s going to be okay, Thelma.”

My eyes looked up Denver, meeting his for a second as he walked past with the doctor. They both halted on the way out where I could still hear their slight murmurs.

“And Blake?” Denver asked of his brother.

“He’s in his ward, everyone else is doing better and responding to treatment, even the elders. The fire wasn’t a small one” The doctor said.

“If it were humans, there would be way more casualties from tonight.”

“I’m glad no one else got hurt” Denver muttered. I could hear the echo of the lump that slipped down the doctor’s throat before he asked, “And the Pack house?” He said.

“What happens to it? What happens to everyone else?”

“People are asking questions, they’re worried about where they are going to sleep and recover. Where their families are going to live, Denver” Dr. Henry told him in a whisper. One I had heard from a distance.

Denver was hesitant with his response before he said, “I’ll figure something out. No one should have to worry. I’m the Alpha, I’ll make sure everyone has somewhere to sleep before myself” He assured Henry. At that moment, I threw a look over my shoulders.

Once the door opened, my eyes fell on Ivan at a distance from where I was. He was taking care of all the children in one corner of the tent. When he lifted his face and our eyes met, I nodded proudly at him. Surviving a fire was as chaotic as it could get but the aftermath, as it reeled in the air.

And how we were somehow able to get it under control, with everyone’s help. It was unimaginable how we were able to do it, but we did.

“Thank you” Henry whispered to Denver but Denver held his hands. “No, thank you. You did this” Denver said to him. And with a smile at the corner of his lips, Henry walked away.

Once the doors closed, Denver looked back at me.

“I should go wash my face” Thelma suddenly stood up. “And prepare to stay the night you know until we take him home tomorrow” She whispered and before I could even utter a word, she scurried out of the room, closing the door to only Denver and I.

Slowly, he walked towards the chair and sat right next to me. There was a brief, overbearing silence in the room as he looked at Cory. His eyes were still closed but his heart monitor was still beeping, rhythmically.

Hopefully.

Besides, a few burns on his arms and the memory lapses, Cory was still Cory and I chose to see him that way. He was alive—that was all that mattered. “I can’t believe it” Denver sobbed.

There was a crack in his voice.

I shifted closer to him, placing my hand on his thigh and he looked at me. His eyes shimmered with tears yet to fall.

“That’s...that’s Cory” He muttered beneath his breath and I nodded. “I can’t believe I almost lost him. I can’t believe we almost lost him” He said. “But we didn’t. We didn’t. He’s alive, he’s here.” I shook my head.

“You won’t understand, Eliana.”

“Cory has dedicated his entire life to serving me, doing everything I told him to. Hell, he was even in there because I asked that of him. When I was with you, he was the only one I could trust to look after the Pack. I know I asked Blake but I asked Cory first and you know what he said?”

“He didn’t want to be Alpha, that was never his plan. You know some betas, they gain their Alpha’s trust just to challenge them in the end but that was never Cory. He said this was exactly all he’s wanted. And he was okay just being Cory. The Cory to Denver” He scoffed lightly and I did too. Both our eyes fell on him again.

I knew it was something he could say. He was like Denver’s brother but to him, Denver was his brother.

“And then I asked Blake but still, I made sure Cory went with him. I could entrust the whole Pack in his hands. That’s how much I trust him, that’s how much I rely on him so fearing that I might lose him today, you should understand why I wasn’t hesitant to rush into that building to save him.”

I nodded. I understood, I did.

I was scared but I did.

A tear rolled down Denver’s cheek and I squeezed his thigh. “He’s going to be okay, Denver” I whispered. When he looked at me, he nodded. “Oh, I know. Cory’s strong, he would never leave Thelma heartbroken like that”

“I know he’s going to be okay. But what I realize is he’s been everything to me, he’s dedicated so much to serving me but I’ve been nothing to him. That’s going to change now” Denver said.

“He deserves a Cory too and I’ll be just that. Until he gets better, I might as well be his Beta” Denver joked and I let out a soft chuckle. He drew nearer to where I was and I rested my head upon his shoulder. “Come on” I teased. “I mean it, I’m going to help him every step of the way.”

“Just like he’s helped me.”

“Besides, with the Pack house gone, it’s not as if I have so much to do anymore or where to stay” He said. At that moment, I rolled my eyes to the back of my head. “As long as Blood Hound exists, you’ll always have a place to stay, Denver” I said softly but he shook his head.

“I know but I can’t have a roof over my head while my Pack suffers in the woods” He pulled away for a moment and I parted my lips. “I can’t believe you’re actually making me say this, Denver” I said. “What do you mean you have no idea where they’re going to stay?” I asked him.

“Of course they can stay with us.”

“There’s plenty of rooms in Blood Hound, more than we can fill anyway. And even if there was no room, then they’ll still come and we’ll figure it out. Denver, we’re married” I whispered to him. “Have you forgotten our vows? In sickness and in health, for better or worse” I added.

“I know this may feel like worse but there isn’t anything we can’t overcome together. You and I” I reached for his hands. Denver looked into my eyes with his glistening ones and his lips quivered.

“What would I do without you, Eliana?” He asked. “You don’t have to do anything without me. As long as I’m here, it’s us” I muttered. “And I knew when I was walking down that aisle, how much you love your Pack. I knew I wasn’t just marrying you, I was marrying into your family too.”

“I don’t know what to say” He whispered. “Thank you, Eliana.”

“Thank you?” I echoed with a light scoff. “Years ago, I was homeless, on the cusp of being rogue in the forest but you took me in” I reminded him. “You were somewhat of an asshole but you took me in. Your entire Pack did. I’m only returning the favor now” I continued.

At that moment, a snuffle ran through his nose as he held my hands.

“Who would’ve known that decision all those years ago would change my life forever?” He asked. Tears brimmed at the surface of my eyes. “Who would’ve known that meeting you in the forest that day was everything I needed. And I found you, I found someone I didn’t even know I needed.”

“Oh Denver” I heaved as his hands softly caressed my cheeks. My face was bright red with tears streaming down my cheeks.

“I’m sorry” I muttered. “I’m sorry you lost your home because of Aurora. I’m sorry it even has to come to this, I can only imagine what’s going through all their heads right now” He held firm to my cheeks as I spoke.

“I know how many memories it holds for you. I know how much it means to you, Denver. And I’m sorry” I said but Denver shook his head. “My home,” He echoed. “That wasn’t my home.”

“My home is you. My home is wherever I’m with you.” He muttered, grazing my forehead softly with his and I wedged myself closer to him. I slept that night in his arms, only to wake up the next morning to Thelma readying Cory’s wheelchair to take him home.

Doctor Henry said we could. He had given us some medication for his memory but as far as his burns and broken bones, his werewolf healing ability would heal those in no time. So there really was no need keeping him in the hospital, he and Blake.

Blake was so much better too. I saw him when we came out.

It was the morning after a big tragedy, we were all just happy and lucky to be alive. Ivan helped everyone onto the loading bus that was to take us back home. Until it was remaining only Denver.

For a moment, he stood in front of his crumbled Pack house, just taking it all in. It was a long night, a really long one.

“I’ll be right back.” I whispered to Ivan before walking up to Denver. As ironic as it was, the sun was out that morning, shining brightly after the darkest night, literally.

I halted right next to him and Denver cleared his throat.

“I’ll be right with you.” He whispered. “You can take all the time you want” I replied him. He looked at me with a scoff, unfolding his arms. “It’s okay, I’m ready to go” Denver’s tone was bittersweet.

But I held his hands in mine. drawing him in for a soft passionate kiss.

And when he pulled away, I stared into his emerald green eyes from below and I whispered, “Let’s go.” I paused.

“Let’s go home.”

Chapter 128: The Night Of The Full Moon.

Chapter 128 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

"Tonight is the night of the full moon."

Denver's voice hit my ears softly as I rolled onto him. I fluttered my eyes open to the little sunlight that poured in through the curtained windows. I couldn't help but groan tiredly even after the nap I had just taken.

It had been the busiest morning, from helping Denver's entire Pack settle in to preparing for the spell tonight, fyi I didn't need a reminder because only then did I feel the tension weave through me. And I was barely even awake. My hands wrapped around Denver as I laid on his chest.

There was this comfort that came from hearing his heartbeat and being that close to his skin. Perhaps, he knew which was why he stayed still. I felt his hands wrap around my waist too.

A deep sigh escaped my lips.

I ended up lifting my gaze to him and I caught him already staring down at me. "Ugh please don't remind me" I groaned softly. "It's almost like I should just stay here forever" I whispered.

Denver's palms weaved into my clothing as his hands soothed gently across my baby bump. He was silent for a moment but as our eyes were still locked into one another, it was like I could hear what he was thinking.

Tonight is the night of the full moon.

The echoes of his last words came flooding back to me with a stinging reality. I felt a chill swirl up my spine at the thought of having to do the spell so soon. It was either that or wait another month for the next celestial event. But that wasn't an option.

The sooner I did it, the better, I realized. I was a lot stronger now that the baby was still little and I was still about five months off. I would take all the chances I could get.

Tonight is the night of the full moon.

It echoed again and this time my heart sank.

"Are you ready, Eliana?" Denver asked, using his hands to sweep through my hair. I exhaled softly. Ready for the night that would change the rest of my life...the night that could either go well or be what kills me in the end? How could I be ready for that?

In that moment, it seemed too easy back then when I had come to this decision. I was so brave, so certain, so strong. But the nervousness was already getting to me. But I had to keep a straight face because I couldn't have Denver worrying about me now.

Not when he still had so much on his plate.

I couldn't also waste time because of Aurora. It was clear why she burned down Denver's Pack house. It was to send me a warning that time was running out. She said it herself that if I wasn't

able to find a cure to the Witch's Curse, that I watch my entire loved ones as their lives crumble one by one. I couldn't allow any other person to get hurt.

I would fight her one-on-one if it ever came to that.

"You haven't answered my question" Denver heaved softly and I batted my lashes, realizing how far drawn into my head I was. "I am" I blurted out to him. "I'm ready. I've been preparing for weeks now, Denver."

"My Grandmother's helped too, she's certain we have everything to do the spell—" "And Nathaniel?" I really wished he didn't ask that but he did at that moment. "With or without Nathaniel" I forcibly gritted through my teeth. I had my entire life almost without knowing I had a brother.

I fought Jaxon and came this far without him. If he wanted nothing to still do with me, then I couldn't force him.

"I'm just worried about you" Denver's hands slipped into mine and I swallowed a hard lump down my throat. "I know" I heaved. "I'm acting like I'm not too but I would lie if I said I wasn't having cold feet" My eyes looked out of the windows.

Though the sun was still out, it was only hours till the full moon hit the apex in the skies. Hours until it was time to perform the ritual.

"Hey" Denver called my attention. "Look at me" His hands framed my cheeks as he gazed into my eyes. Clenching his jaw, he muttered. "You're Eliana, you're the strongest person I know. The only person I have faith can pull this off. I believe in you, Eliana."

"The risks are there, so are the dangers but remember what you said huh—there isn't nothing we haven't overcome together. You and I" Denver whispered. At that moment, my eyes began to sting with tears.

"Even if it's against the world, it's still you and I" Denver said. A tear escaped my eyes. Deep down, I knew whatever happened that night could never be the end. I would fight until my dying breath to come back to him—the love of my life, my family. My entire Pack.

They were the reason I was doing this. Elijah, my daughter. Nathaniel.

And Denver. Because we deserve it, we deserve a happy ever after just like anyone else does. We deserve to have one big beautiful family. It was what he wanted, it was everything I wanted.

Even if I had to sacrifice a part of myself for that happy ending, then I would. Being a Hybrid has taken from me much more than it has given. It has done far more worse than good. Tonight, it comes to an end.

Tonight, I'll be exactly what I was supposed to be, a Werewolf. Just a Werewolf. Elijah would too and my baby girl could have a life better than I did. They will be cured of this curse because at the root of it, it was exactly what it was. We would finally be free.

From the Witches, from everything. We would be free.

And freedom is something I've never really had through my entire life.

Denver pulled me closer to him and crashed his lips on mine. My arms wrapped around his neck as I drew him close. A passionate deep breath escaped my lips as he turned me to lay on my back. Denver climbed over me and there was desire pulsating in his eyes.

My heart throbbed in my chest as I looked into his eyes.

"We should uhm...we should probably get downstairs" I whispered. The look of disappointment waved across his face but I knew Denver understood. I slipped away from his grasp and brought my feet to the ground. Denver reached for his shirt and pants before standing up too.

Before walking out of those doors, I halted right in front of the mirror. I could see the lines of wrinkles scarred into my forehead. I looked different over the past few weeks, it was clear as day. All the worries, the stress, the anxiousness and preparations, it all led to tonight.

I gulped a hard lump down my throat as Denver inched closer to my sides.

"Come on" He whispered, as if knowing exactly what went through my head. And he pulled me by my arms, placing a kiss on my forehead. We walked out of the door and down the stairs.

Blood Hound wasn't always this lively but today, it was.

"Oh!" A Black Mountain kid running across the hallway jammed into my legs and I exclaimed. "Ashley, be careful!" Denver yelled. "I'm sorry" She yelled back and at that moment, I chuckled softly. I could feel the tension slowly ease seeing all the children playing all around, settling in.

"I'm so sorry" Denver scoffed but I rolled my eyes to the back. "Don't yell at her, let her have fun. It is her home too" I said to him. "I'll hear you say that in a week" Denver grunted and I laughed again. Loudly.

"I will" I replied. "I will say that in a week" It was something to look forward to, the hope that I would be here in a week, that I would survive tonight. The laughter faded from my lips a moment later but Denver held my hands. "It's okay," He whispered.

"You've got this." I looked around the busy halls and the sight of everyone around just brought me a sliver of peace. I didn't know how much I wanted this. Mine and Denver's Pack just cohabiting together. This way, he stayed. He was right here and so were his people.

“I could really get used to this you know” I didn’t know when I blurted it out but when I looked up at him, he returned with a smile. “Yeah, I could too” His voice was giddy, although deep but I heard it. I heard the giddy.

At that moment, I sighted my Dad from a distance and Denver did too.

“I should go check on Cory” He excused himself because the way my Dad looked in my direction, it was almost like he wanted to speak to me. I let go of Denver’s hands, nodding at him. “I’ll see you later” I said before walking up to my father. He led me out to the balcony.

The breeze was relentless, flowing through my hair as I closed the door behind me.

“So Denver’s Pack is here now?” My father asked, more like stating the obvious. “Uh hum” I heaved a reply. “It was a hasty decision but I’m glad I made it. They didn’t have anywhere else to go, so opening the doors to them was all I could do” He looked at me with a faint smile.

“You’re already a better Alpha than I was you know that?” I could sense a tone in his voice. Like he knew what tonight was, although desperately making it out to be a normal conversation, it really wasn’t.

“Well, I try” I replied him.

“So what’s the plan? Are we going to have two Alpha now? Will the merger happen or that’s a thought for tomorrow?” My Dad asked and I let out a light scoff. “A thought for tomorrow” I nodded.

He smiled at me.

“I haven’t really figured it out yet but we have all the time” I whispered. “I’m sure you do.” He responded. From the corner of my eyes, I watched the sunset and the night arrive.

“Have you seen your Grandma?” He asked. “I was on my way to her, actually” I pulled towards the door but my Dad called back to me. “One more thing, Eliana” I halted in my tracks, throwing a look over my shoulders and he pushed a hard lump down his throat.

“Good luck tonight.” The tears were there, stinging the back of his eyes before he looked away. “Thanks Dad” I said to him. I knew I needed all the luck I could get as I walked out of the room.

I was headed straight to my Nana’s and I knocked on the door before pushing it open. She was seated on the floor, inside of a circle drawn with ashes and the dagger was right in front of her.

“Nana” I called her and she opened her eyes to look at me.

“What are you doing?” I asked her and she stood to her feet just then. “Nothing, just—“ She looked around. “Practicing?” She replied. As she drew closer, I could hear her heartbeat through her chest.

“Are you sure you can do it, Nana? Tonight?” I asked her. She walked across her wheelchair with a faint scoff. “Of course” She replied. “I was actually looking for you, Eliana” She inched closer to where I stood.

I arched my brows, awaiting what she wanted to say. But still, nothing could have prepared for it.

“Actually, I wasn’t just preparing—“ My Grandmother paused. “What is it?” I asked her and she parted her lips again.

“What if I told you we could break both curses tonight?” My lips fell wide open as I looked into her eyes. “The Hybrid Curse—“ I muttered but she completed it. “And the Witch’s Curse.” In her hands was the Spell Book.

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“Yes” My Grandma nodded. “I mean we’re already tapping into dark magic—“ “I thought you said there was no other way?” I asked her. “There is only one other way and it’s this.” She replied.

“So you’re telling me that,” I scoffed in disbelief. “We could really put an end to all of this tonight?” I asked and she took a step closer to me. Her hands found mine. “We could put an end to all of this, once and for all.” There was a glimmer rooted in her faint eyes.

“And I’ll help you” She added. I could hear her heart race. “I promise.”

[Chapter 129: The Curse.](#)

Chapter 129 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

NANA ABIGAIL.

For the most of my life, I think I’ve been a horrible person.

The mere fact that I was born a witch proved exactly that. I was a traitor, a manipulator, a liar. A liar.

A liar.

But I wasn't always like this. We weren't always like this. Cursed. I was also once a little girl with an older sister she looked up to like a god. A mother that was the best there could have been. I had a family who loved and would do anything for each other.

Family vacation packages

We were Witches. For the longest time, we journeyed across the earth to find ourselves a home. Then we found the haven in Oakland. The people were happy, everyone was happy with my father. He had led us to safety, he had cared for us, all the Witches.

We were the happiest we could have ever been.

But then the Werewolves came, they too had found a home in Oakland. The town itself, wasn't always like this. Nestled in the hills and forest, it was a town away from mortal eyes. Its cobblestone streets were laced with enchantment. We had made this place for ourselves.

That was until the werewolves came and stole it from us. They didn't just steal it, they wrecked it, and destroyed it. When it was clear we weren't leaving, they made sure nobody had it. The ones from those centuries ago, they were ruthless, far more dangerous than none of us imagined.

And eventually, Oakland was destroyed. It became inhabitable, we watched our lives and everything we had built crumble to the ground. My father was heartbroken and he fell ill. Shortly after we moved and we were back on a hike only God knew how long it would last this time, he fell terribly ill. We did everything, we took care of him but nothing could save him.

A lot of us were wounded by the Wolves but my father died from a broken heart. The devastation of watching everything you've built crumble to the ground. The moment he died, everything changed.

My mother followed him not long after and when I look back and reflect, I sometimes think that was the moment the curse of darkness was placed on us, except the first time, it wasn't by me.

Elyndra was destroyed after our parent's death. She reached a point of no return, switching off her humanity to take charge of the legion. It wasn't ever up for debate which of us would eventually lead the Witches after my parents. My mother loved me, but my Dad loved Elyndra more.

I think the moment he died was the moment she changed. She changed into the very monsters we despised—the Werewolves. In my mind, I still blamed them for what happened to my parents. I hated every single one of them and swore by the moon to make them pay for everything.

Which was why when Elyndra came up with the Great Fire plan, I was without a doubt a part of it. Anything to destroy the Werewolves, I thought but that was until I fell in love with one.

Accidentally and unconditionally.

But you know how that story goes. The whole plan to lure at least one Wolf from a family into the church that we set on fire. And I met Matthew, a more than hundred-year-old Wolf then. Charming, and sweet and everything I wanted in a man.

Everything I knew of love, I knew from him.

Everyone loved my sister, Elyndra. She was prettier, smarter, stronger, aced her spell classes. She loved that she was the center of attention. I loved it too. I had someone to look up to.

I remember looking into the mirror and just thinking how much I wanted to be like her. But I never knew how much of the world I was missing out on until I met Matthew. And he swept me off my feet, opened the deepest chambers of my heart and for the first and only time in my life, I fell in love. And it just so happened to be the forbidden kind of love.

Matthew was a Werewolf, a full one at that. I was a full-blood Witch too.

There weren't many Hybrids then but the both of us had no idea we would eventually birth a whole line of them. The plan wasn't to get pregnant. The plan wasn't even to fall in love. I had one job and that was to kill the enemy but instead, I fell in love with the enemy.

And I saw that not a lot of them were like the monsters that destroyed our home. I was stupid, I was crazy but I was also in love. But that wasn't enough to save him. Because I tried, I tried to save Matthew from the fire that day but Elyndra beat me to it.

She had found out about our affair, about our love.

She lured him into the fire herself and burned him alive. I was there, I watched but I couldn't do anything. Standing there after finding out that day that I was pregnant, I couldn't do anything. I was heartbroken, devastated, disheveled. It was the kind of pain that killed my parents.

But alongside it, I was also enraged. And that rage was what impermanently damaged my relationship with my sister, Elyndra. Of course, she never wanted to hear about our love, all she cared about was the power and the drive for revenge. And she loved that more than me.

Because I was banished, carrying so much pain and a two-month-old child in my womb, I was banished to become rogue. Nights and nights, I spent in the forest and as if that wasn't enough, I had my powers siphoned out of me. At least the most of it but they had no idea.

To be treated that way by the people I once called my family, my blood—it hurt. And that was when I decided to lay the curse of them with what I had left of my powers and I told myself that day was the last time I would consider myself a Witch. Without knowing the repercussions of it and how much it would haunt me later on, I cursed them.

And now I look back and reflect on how that made me just like them. The monsters, the Wolves made monsters of us, the Witches and then I became a monster too. And it was this never-ending cycle of monstrosity.

That's the reason I said I was a horrible person.

A traitor, a manipulator, the creator of the Curse that would forever haunt my people. It was the curse of everlasting darkness that would shroud their lives with just as much pain and sorrow and despair that they caused me when I lost Matthew that day.

It was also a curse that withered their souls, sucking their powers little by little, enough to last an eternity. It was like hell but it was much worse, you were alive. The moment Elyndra knew, she knew it was me. So from fighting the Wolves, she turned to me.

My own sister placed a bounty on my head and hunted me down. And when she finally caught me, my protruding stomach couldn't be hidden. So instead of killing me and my child, Susannah, she decided to play into the twisted game and link the Curse to a cure.

That the blood of my child who she knew would become a Hybrid, would be the only to break the Curse. And I begged her that day, that I could try to reverse it. It was me who made it after all, but I had no idea that such a powerful curse like that could only have a cure just as powerful.

And so when Elyndra left me to birth the child, I ran. She and the witches were in Cecina, a forest near Tuscany still journeying for a new home. And I knew when the time was right and she wanted to find me, she would. She would search everywhere in the entire world and as long as I was alive, she would find me.

But I knew one place that she would never.

It should be the first place but Elyndra never thought I was strong enough to return to the place where Matthew was killed. And the truth was, I wasn't. It was just my only option—to return to the Wolves and blend in until I had my child anyway. She would be raised as if she was like them.

A pure wolf—they would never be able to sniff her out. But that also meant keeping her identity as a hybrid a secret. It meant me lying, the first of many that I told throughout my entire life. That was the lie that led to more lies and more lies.

A whole generation of them. But every single one that I told, every lie that I told, it was always to protect the people that I loved. If Susannah herself didn't know she was a Hybrid, then that would relieve the weight of the world on her shoulders. Never knowing that Elyndra was after her.

Never knowing the truth.

I lied to protect her. So for the most of our lives hidden within the Pack, Susannah thought she was only just a werewolf. But alas, I knew someday I would have to tell her. I wasn't prepared for the aftermath but I knew I had to. And so I did and that was the first time I lost Susannah.

She left the Pack, ran into the forest where she met Dante, had Nathaniel, lost Nathaniel and then found Gerald who so happened to be the Alpha of our then Pack. I saw her again after two years and this time, she was by the right-hand side of the Alpha. She was his Luna.

The first Hybrid to become one. No one at that time knew besides us.

When she came back, I told her everything, from Matthew to Eliana, to the Great Fire. She didn't understand until she was pregnant again. Then, she knew that she would have to do the same.

She thought she'd already lost one child. Of course, she was going to do everything to protect this one. So because of me, she lied again. But not just about one thing, not just about one Curse and I lost Susannah. I lost my child. I lost the one thing that I had left of Matthew.

And it was like all those years again, the pain, the agony, the sorrow.

I remember holding Eliana in my hands that moment and just whispering fraily, because I could see, I could see what her future would be like. And it was bright. Further down, there was a light but to get to that light, there was also a lot of darkness, of pain and suffering.

And I was burdened with the realization that I was the cause of most of that pain years ago when I made the Curse. Watching the way she grew up, both from a distance and when I was close, having to keep the secret from her even though it was just to protect her, I was a horrible person.

For the rest of my life which seemed like an eternity until now, I was a horrible person. A traitor, a manipulator, and of course, a liar. For one last time, I was about to lie except I'm not sure Eliana would ever forgive me but I could live with that. Because everything I did, before now and even after, everything I was, it was also to protect the people that I love.

I was the creator of the Curse and ultimately, that made me the only one that could break it. Even though I could never take back all the horrible things I had done, at least I could try to put an end to the monstrosity.

Once and for all.