

Chapter 52 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I swallowed a hard lump down my throat as our eyes met. One of the reasons it was so hard for us to still communicate was because of everything that happened in the past. I really wanted to put it behind me, to forget about all the trauma but that's the thing.

I don't think the trauma really ever leaves you. I think it stays.

And though for so long it may seem as if it had disappeared, it always has a funny way of creeping up on you when you're having a bite of watermelon or singing in the showers or just standing in the winds. It would hit you like a storm and sweep you off your feet.

So really, was there anything like moving forward? Was it possible?

"Where is he now?" Her voice drew to me and I escaped my thoughts. I arched my brows. "Your father?" She added. I looked down at my watch.

"He's at the hospital, with Ivan and the rest of them"

"He's admitted too, doctor says he's getting a lot better but they're still trying to wean his system of the toxins" I replied. She scoffed lightly. "You were so brave that day, what you did—figuring out the truth and getting him out of that house. You were so brave, you are so brave" She said and the validation struck a chord in me.

"He may not deserve it but I really hope you find it in your heart to forgive him one day—" "I have" I replied. "I've forgiven them all, I wouldn't be here if I didn't. It's just that some days, it's hard to forget."

"I understand" She pursed her lips. I looked at her at that moment and a tear escaped my eyes. "I understand you, Eliana" There was just something so comforting about her words and the way she said them.

There was a shrill silence for a while, between these little conversations that fed my heart. My mother and I, we spent the afternoon talking about a lot of things. This was exactly what I needed. This was my escape.

And for once, I felt safe. I felt patient. Like the world wasn't spinning around me and the days weren't sprinting past. I just felt in that moment.

"So why did you keep Elijah a secret from Denver?" After a while into the evening and I laid across the ground next to her, my mother asked. I curled my knees in a fetal position, staring right into her eyes. My words were caught in the back of my throat.

"I guess I was scared..." I whispered. "At first, it was that he would try to take him away from me and God, I hated him for those six years that I was away. Then I came back, and I was scared that he would have to stay with me because of our child. I didn't want him to feel like he had to and then, I was scared for Elijah too," I paused.

"Scared for Elijah?" She echoed.

"I didn't want him to have his heart broken by his father first. You know, when he decides to leave. When all of this is over—the arrangement" I scuffled, sitting up slightly. "Well does it have to be over?" She asked. I scoffed under my breath. "I mean you heard his confession..."

"Fine!" I blurted out.

"I'm scared too!" "I was scared for myself, I still am. I'm scared to love him again. I'm scared that I still do and I will never stop. I'm scared that he'll hurt me again that I can't even picture anything else. I can't even picture a happy ending or a world where we're a perfect family" I said.

My voice broke and tears poured from my eyes. Finally, she heaved a sigh as if she'd been waiting for me to say that. And there was a feeling of relief at that moment when I did. I felt lighter.

"I'm only playing it safe so I don't get hurt again" I whispered.

"Which is reasonable," My mother said. "But you know that being scared is only natural too, especially after everything that happened. But you don't have to let that fear from your past hold you back from the future, especially after he's told you a million times where he stands" She added.

I covered my head.

"Isn't all this supposed to be easy?" I questioned. She let out a hysterical laugh. "Love is never so easy, Ellie. Screw what anyone else says. I already told you how your dad and I did it. By choosing each other over and over again and by going through life together."

Best gifts for your loved ones

"Each hurdle and obstacle was a lesson and we were always never the same person after. But even when we weren't sure of anything else in the world, we were sure about each other. Sure that we had each other."

"Through every step of the way, your father left my side until my very last breath" She heaved and at that moment, the thought of Denver hit me. He hadn't left my side ever since. "But you

see, love isn't always supposed to be challenging too, because it's in the little moments, it's in the laughter and the tears we shed. It's a choice," Susannah continued.

Her pupils dilated as her lips curled with her words.

"It's choosing to stand by each other and support each other and grow together. That's what love is, and I see it a lot between you and Denver. You both only have to show it to each other" She finally said.

"But when that time comes, I want you to make the right choice. The trauma never leaves, it's you that does. It's you who decides to let go of your past, to trust again, to love again and that's the hardest part but it really does easier that I'll tell you." She whispered.

"And instead of worrying so much about breaking Elijah's heart, how about giving him the opportunity to enjoy what a family feels like? What it looks like, to have both your father and mother, alive" A tear dropped down her cheeks as she reached for my hand.

"What a divine luxury."

"So don't, don't rob him of that" My heart stung in my chest and the truth was so clear in my mother's voice. Only she could talk to me like this because only she understood. She nodded and I pushed a hard lump down my throat before nodding too.

"You know, I'm glad you have him." She said. "I'm confident leaving you with him now, Ellie." And my eyes widened. "Leaving?" It only dawned on me just then that the sun was already setting and darkness was imminent.

My mother nodded with a smile. And then she stood up, I did too.

"You're leaving?" My voice fell flat and she squeezed my hands. "Never," She whispered. "I never left you all these years and nothing's going to change now. Do you understand that?" She said. I nodded. Her hands framed my cheeks at that moment.

"You're a brave woman, Ellie. You're everything and even more than I wished for. You're who I wanted to be. And I love you so much" She said, holding back her tears at that moment. I couldn't it. I just couldn't.

Because they just kept streaming down my cheeks, even she couldn't wipe them all. We stared into each other's eyes for a moment.

"So so much" Susannah said. "And I really wish things were better. I really wish this was all normal circumstances. I wish I gave you better..."

"You gave me everything" I assured her. "Everything I needed." I added but she shook her head. "One more thing," She looked at the sun slipping down its horizon almost halfway and then she turned back to me.

"Tell your Grandmother that I love her too..."

"And tell her that I know she loves me, even though she just has a funny way of showing it" She clasped my cheeks. "You could tell her yourself, I could find a way of bringing you back from time to time and she'll see you " At that moment, the thought of leaving her seemed so horrid.

But she shrugged it off.

"You can't," She said. "We, witches are here to balance nature, not complicate it. I'm afraid if you do that, there'll be consequences" She said and my heart broke. "So when am I going to see you again?" I asked just as she let go of my hands.

"I'm always with you." I shook my head. "No, not that mum" I sniffled.

"Not that."

"I must go now" She set her path towards the sun but I inched forward with tears in my eyes. "What am I going to do now?" I asked her. "About the Curse, about Blake" My voice cracked.

At that moment, the fear of returning back to my reality hit me like a storm and I was devastated. At least, she came to a halt to look back at me. "You'll figure it out, just like you've always done" Susannah whispered.

"I can't" I replied. "I can't do it this time"

She shook her head and her eyes gazed into mine from a distance. Her lips parted. "You're a Witch," She paused. "And a Werewolf, you can do anything. You're the only one who can save Blake, who can break the Curse."

My shoulders fell flat and my knees drew to the earth. The evening winds picked up and the sun was nearly out. "And remember Ellie," Her voice strained, echoing further and further.

"Everything leads back to you." Those words settled in my heart and I pondered on them for a few seconds. It wasn't the first time I'd heard it.

But alas, when I opened my eyes again, my mother was gone. Even though I could very much feel her around me now. But I couldn't see her. I stood, with the harsh winds blowing in my face.

The sun had disappeared down the horizon and I was in the center of the Oakland graveyard. My eyes fell to her stone, and so did my hands. The last of my tears dropped at that moment and I whispered softly.

"I love you Mum."

"I love you too" I whispered. And so it happened, the whole day passed and I felt a lot better. Now, it was time to face my reality. I had to. Because this was my destiny. This was exactly what I was supposed to do. I cleaned my eyes, more confident now.

Because my Mother had left me something, she'd left me with an answer.

"Everything leads back to you."

At that moment I had an epiphany, and I knew how to save Blake.

Chapter 53: How To Save A Life.

Chapter 53 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I burst through the door, out of breath and with my eyes searching for Blake. Finally, I saw him. He was a lot weaker while he laid on the hospital bed, clenching around a pillow.

"Blake?" I called.

"What is wrong?" Denver immediately stood up once he saw me. I faced him with a grim stare. "I think I know how to save him" I muttered. Nana was closer to him at that point and her hands brushed against his forehead. "He's heating up" She whispered.

When I threw a look back at him, Blake was shivering too, and he was non-verbal. "You were saying of a way to help him?" Denver's hand fell to my shoulders and I swallowed a hard lump down my throat.

Of course, I wasn't a hundred percent certain but I couldn't just sit there and watch Blake die. He had about a few hours at least. Color had drained out of his face, even his lips and fingertips were purple. His skin was pale and his pupils were deserted. Once he heard the word 'help', he managed to open his eyes and I could see the desperation inside them.

"Fuck it" I muttered. Right beside him was a crash cart, upon which there was a knife and I sauntered towards it. I grabbed the knife and closed my eyelids before slicing across my wrist. The flat cut oozed out with blood and Denver stared with a combination of worry and confusion.

"What the fuck are you doing?!" He questioned but I inched closer to Blake, helping him sit up. "I'm giving him my blood" I replied. "What?" My Grandmother echoed. "I saw Mom," She was even more disheveled when I said that. "I don't know how but that's where I've been."

“I swear I saw her and she told me one thing. She said everything led back to me and that was the same thing that Carys and Elyndra had said. Even you, all those years when I was growing up, you called me special” I turned to her and her lips pressed into each other.

“I can give him my blood, it’s our only shot at healing him. Because look at it, we don’t have enough time—“ “How are you sure it’s going to work?” Denver quizzed and an arch appeared between his brows.

“There’s only one way to find out” I shrugged my shoulders. “But if my blood is strong enough to break a century-old curse and raise someone from the dead then surely it can heal him of whatever this is” I gritted through my teeth, looking firmly into Denver’s eyes.

A hard lump slipped down his throat as he exchanged a glance with my Grandmother and then he stepped away. I nodded, raising a brow and then he nodded too. “Fine,” He whispered.

Without wasting another second, I plunged myself closer to the bed and set Blake’s fragile lips apart with one finger before I placed my wrist between his teeth and my blood flowed down his throat. Gently, he sucked even more with his tongue. Until his eyes glowed red and there were veins shooting up from his neck.

The sensation left my body drained and I was a little lightheaded but Blake didn’t let go. It was as if he was thirsty for my blood. As if he needed it. “Eliana!” Denver called out after a few seconds and he would’ve intervened if I didn’t stop him.

“A little more time” I mouthed, my voice barely audible. I looked down at him and it was like the color was setting in his face again. He drank and drank and drank—until Denver pulled me away. And I fell into his arms.

“Careful” He whispered, his heated breaths trailing down my neck as he helped me up. Both our eyes glanced at Blake whose lips and tongue were coated with a dark red color. And then he fell to the bed. Asleep.

“His heart is still beating,” My Nana checked his pulse and there was relief across her face. “Maybe we should give him some time but I think it worked” She said. A proud smile curled her lips and a sigh escaped mine.

I looked up at Denver whose eyes said a thousand words that his lips couldn’t. And I was still in his arms for a little while.

“Are you okay?” My Grandma crept forward and once the lightheadedness reduced, I was able to nod. “Yes.” I was. “Are you sure?” She questioned and it didn’t have to be a lie this time. Because I was okay.

I’d just gotten closure from my Mom, Elyndra was dead, Elijah was safe, all signs were pointing to Blake being healed and I was in Denver’s arms.

His safe and comforting arms.

After everything that happened, at that moment, I was perfect.

When my Grandmother finally left, Denver helped me into a chair before sitting right beside me. And for some time, there was a brief silence as he helped me to wrap around my bleeding wrist. But the moment he lifted his eyes to mine, I felt my heart creep into my throat.

“There,” He finally whispered, breaking the silence and sealing the bandaid perfectly. I stared into his eyes as he stood, only moving closer to my chair. While he folded his arms, I wrapped myself in a thick duvet.

His eyes fell to his brother and I could tell how much he was worried and relieved all at the same time.

“He’s going to be okay. You heard my Grandma” I whispered and he then turned to me. “And by the way, thank you for this” I said. At that moment, a scoff escaped his lips and then a chuckle.

“Are we not going to talk about it?” Denver asked with a voice that sent shivers down my spine. I bit my lower lip. “When were you going to tell me?” He questioned. There was almost a crack in his voice.

“God, I feel so stupid that I didn’t catch it a lot sooner. I mean six years, that was such a long time. That was the exact time but I just—or maybe deep down it crossed my mind but I just shook it off like I do a lot of things. It wasn’t possible, I told myself even though the answer was staring me right in the face all this time” Denver said and I kept quiet.

For the most of it, I let him speak. Because there was literally nothing I could say to make this conversation any easier because I knew deep down that it was inevitable. This was a secret I’d kept so long and now, Denver knew another Elijah and it was so surreal as it was a breath of relief.

Finally, there was no longer this tightness around my chest and this burdening feeling I’d carried with me for the past six years. Finally, he knew and I couldn’t even pretend to not be afraid of what he was going to say or do next.

But in as much as I expected Denver to be angry, he really wasn’t. At that moment in fact, he laughed. “All this time, I had a child. A son—all this time, I was a father” His eyes lit up in a way I’d never seen before.

“I—“ I couldn’t bring the words out of my mouth. “I just have one question, how long did you plan on hiding him from me, Eliana?” He finally asked and his eyes set through my soul. “I’m so sorry” My voice broke.

“I’m so sorry, Denver. When I found out that I was pregnant that day, telling you was all I wanted to do. But then I got home and you already had the divorce papers and my whole world came crumbling down—“ “It was that day?” She whispered and I nodded with tears in my eyes.

The memories hit me like a storm.

“It was that day and I have never been more hurt than I was that day. I didn’t know what to do—“ I muttered. “So you left?” He whispered. “That’s why you left,” Denver said. “I needed to get out of your life. You told me to and there was no place here for me and Elijah.”

“I had to leave” I said and the tears streamed down my cheeks. His eyes were glassy too. “I wanted nothing more than to start a family with you, a beautiful family with our child but each time I thought about telling you the truth, I just kept going back to that night. That feeling of being unwanted that shattered me and I didn’t want Elijah to ever feel like that. I’m sorry for not telling you but you didn’t exactly make it any easier.”

Denver pressed his lips together and there was a glimmer in his dark eyes.

“How did you do it?” He asked.

“Do what?”

“The past six years...how did you do it?” His voice was low and delicate and guilt-ridden. “I’d lie to you if I told you that I knew.” I replied. “God, I was such a jerk. No wonder you never forgave me” His words sliced through my heart because that wasn’t true.

“I forgave you, Denver. As soon as the next day, I forgave you because it’s hard to be angry at the one person you love. It’s even harder when the same person that made you feel so alive, that meant so much to you is the one to cause you so much pain” I whispered.

“I forgave you, Denver. I forgive you because as stupid as it sounds, I still love you and Elijah deserves a father, he loves you, I can tell” A tear dropped down his cheeks as he licked his lips. Denver nodded.

“I love him too. Eliana, you have no idea. I love that little boy so much”

“And I’m going to make sure he has everything that I didn’t. I’m going to make sure that he grows up into nothing like me—“ “No, Denver. I want him to grow up into someone like you. Someone who’s brave enough to change. Someone who can defy his own natural instincts. Someone who loves and protects and cares, even though he tries so hard to hide that part of him, he cares. You care, Denver” I whispered.

“I just wish I knew that part of you six years ago. Maybe all of this would’ve been different. Maybe we could’ve had a chance and worked it out” At that moment, he reached for my hands.

“We can work it out, Eliana” He gritted through his teeth. “It’s not too late. You’re right, you’re fucking right. I care, I care so much about you. I love you, Eliana. I’ve loved you for so long, since I can remember even.”

“Since that night I rescued you in the forest and I laid my eyes on you and God, you were so beautiful and strong and I loved you then, I loved you even when you left and I still love you now. So so much” My heart escaped my chest and I could feel it beat in the back of my throat.

“Why then did you let me go?” I whispered. “Why did you reject me and you didn’t even know I was your mate...” “I knew, Eliana. Trust me, I knew. I was just a coward so afraid of the future that I was living in the past. I was dwelling in the hurt because of Aurora. So I raised my walls and promised myself not to trust another person. Not to love another—”

“But who was I fooling?” He shrugged.

“I already loved you.”

At that moment, I let out a light scoff and there was a river flowing from my eyes as they locked into his. Denver squeezed my hands tenderly and he pushed a hard lump down his throat. “I love you too, Eliana” He said.

“And if you don’t believe me, I’ll spend the rest of my life proving that you and that is a really really long time. You have given the greatest gift anyone can and that is Elijah. I’m only sorry for making you feel like you couldn’t tell me. For making you keep him away from me.”

“I’m sorry about a lot of things, Eliana. I owe you my greatest apology.”

“And I’ll never stop telling you that. Not until you believe, not until you can trust me again. Just please...Eliana, please don’t tell me it’s too late for us. Don’t tell me we can’t go back. Don’t tell me that there’s no hope” He whispered and my heart stomped in my chest.

Because at that moment, I didn’t even know what to say to him. These were the words I needed to hear six years ago and they would have meant the whole world to me but right now, I didn’t have a reply and he was waiting. A hurt expression crossed his eyes at my silence.

“I have to go,” I whispered, withdrawing from his hands and then I stood.

He stood too.

“I have to go check on Elijah” I said which was really just an excuse and with his piercing gaze that lingered, he knew that too. I walked out. Deep down, no one wished things were different more than me.

Chapter 54: In His Arms.

Chapter 54 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I brought my feet to a halt right in front of his door. My fingers trailed down my neck as I cleared my dry throat. The hair across my skin stood up with the wave of nervousness that hit me at that moment. Folding my fist, I lifted it to the floor and knocked.

It didn't take long until [Denver](#) opened his door. Once his dark eyes fell on me, a chill went down my spine. He had a stint of surprise in his arched brows but then a snarky grin when I inched closer to him.

I had to do this.

I had to finally give him my response to what he asked earlier that day.

"You asked me whether it was too late to go back Denver, whether all hope was lost for us?" I parted my lips and he folded his arms. All his concentration was put into deciphering my next words. I shook my head.

"Well, we can't go back, Denver" I said. You could cut through the tension in the air with a knife. He swallowed a hard lump down his throat.

"I already got that from when you left earlier, Eliana, there really is no need for you to come here and rip my heart out even m—" At that moment, I thrust myself forward into his arms and sealed his lips with a kiss. His words crashed into the back of my throat.

I could tell Denver was taken aback but he wasted no time in kissing me back. My arms wrapped around his neck as his own snaked around my waist, pulling me closer and closer to him. His breaths were deep and howling and there was this need to have him at that moment.

This hollow space inside of my chest that burned and longed for him. But at that moment, I had to pull away from him. His hands were reluctant to let go from my waist as he looked down at me with dainty, surprised eyes. "Will you let me finish now?" I asked him and he scoffed.

"We can't go back to six years ago," I echoed. "Hell, I don't even want to go back. It's hard enough remembering what happened but it's even harder wishing I met this side of you back then. You don't know how long I've waited to hear you say those words that you said today, Denver."

"I'm such a fool, I should've told you sooner" He grunted and I chuckled softly. "Should've, could've, would've, all the things of the Past. All the things I've never let go of. But I'm tired. I'm no different from you because all this time, I've never forgotten what happened six years ago."

"I want to now," I paused.

"I want to forget about that so no, we can't go back to the past but I want to move forward with you. I can't deny how much I still love you, Denver. I can't deny it anymore. You are my heart, the reason it beats and you gave me the greatest gift ever and that is our son" I whispered.

"And if anything, I would be a fool and cowardice to not give this another shot, to not give him a chance at having a family just because I was scared, just because I was holding onto the past—" His hands slipped into mine at that moment.

"I won't ever hurt you again, Eliana. Never, I promise" His eyes glowed as he stared intently. "You mean even more to me, more than you think. No one has ever had that effect on me. With you, I'm never scared to take the next step. It was so easy trusting you again, you made it so easy, Eliana. So easy to tear down my walls, so easy to make me love again."

"You're going to have to say that a lot of times" I scuffled, brushing my hands against my lips. My cheeks reddened as [Denver](#) chuckled too. Before all of a sudden, there was a brief silence. I lifted my eyes slowly to his and a lump got caught in the back of my throat.

He pulled open his door even further, gesturing that I come in.

"Why don't I prove it to you instead?" His eyes gleamed with desire and passion and my heart swelled in my chest. He was serious. "I'll show you just how much I love you, Eliana" He echoed, taking my hands and slowly pulling me into the room.

The winds carried a wave of intrigue that burst in my face. The door closed and my eyes scanned around the room. But when I looked at Denver, he was tugging at the buttons of his shirt. He let it loose to fall to the ground with a thud.

God this man was perfect. He had the abs and muscles of a Greek god. And he was never afraid to show how much he wanted me through his eyes. The first time this happened, I was a bit nervous but something about this time was so comfortable. He crept up to me, taking me by my neck before crashing his lips into mine.

The kiss felt heavenly, slow and delicate but intense nonetheless. Denver shoved me and I landed on the bed. I looked at him with coy eyes, his fingers teased around my lips before gaping at the entrance of my mouth.

There was a snarky grin across his lips as he whispered.

"Take off your clothes" By order, my hands tugged at my shirt and I lifted the fabric away from my skin anyway. My fingers then battled with the hook of my brassiere but I was finally able to set it free. Denver crouched lower, willing to help me with my skirt.

His hands were more than eager to go beneath than around but he finally had his way through to my panties. The room was slightly dark, only coated by the warm amber hue of the flickering scented candles. With that, I could make out his face and he could make out my entire body, naked and surrendered to him.

His hands pushed back a strand of hair as he just stared for a moment.

"You're so beautiful, Eliana" He whispered. I'd never seen him be this gentle and intimate before and it meant a lot to be perceived by him in that way after growing up being called the ugliest things.

"Don't ever doubt that for a second" He whispered again and I nodded.

My hands fell to his bare skin across his chest and there was a fiery sensation that ignited in my chest as he pulled himself closer to me. I laid on my back and Denver pressed his body against mine.

He didn't even kiss me but the tension between us was just as palpable.

"This won't be like the last time, I don't want to fuck you" He whispered, his heated breaths crashing into my neck. God, I loved it when he talked. When he was so close to my face, my whole body vibrated.

His lips sucked the lobes of my ear.

"I want to make love to you, Eliana" At that moment, his hands tightened around my hips as he slowly spread my legs apart. I was more than willing to let him inside me, especially as I could already feel his hot, hard pulsating cock between my thighs.

As he let go of his pants, [Denver](#) never took his eyes away from mine. There was this feeling of comfort and familiarity, and trust. I surrendered myself to him, completely at that moment.

He pressed down into me and it was then I muttered.

"I want you to make love to me" I echoed. He smiled. That was the first moment I felt him and a moan of pleasure sang through my lips. I closed my eyes but his hands cradled around my neck. His thrusts were slow at first but then, he picked up with a momentum that was just as perfect.

His deep groans pressed into the side of my neck as he kept pounding inside of me. Denver's fingers slipped into mine and with a tight clench, he wasn't willing to let me go. The thin necklace around his neck dropped softly against my skin as he thrust. There was a fire where our bodies met. A sensation inside of me that I had never felt before.

But then again, I'd never been fucked this way.

Denver knew exactly where to touch, where to kiss. Sometimes, I thought he knew my body more than I did. Maybe he paid attention all those fortnights we were together but he knew how to pleasure me. He never made me ask or tell him what to do.

At that moment, I felt the surge of tension ripple through my body and I could feel every inch of his cock inside me. There was barely any space between us, our faces were only meters apart too.

"I love you" He whispered into my ear, pressing his lips against the curve of my neck and I could feel my imminent orgasm. My body tensed at that moment and I wrapped my arms around his neck, bringing him closer to me. Our lips grazed each other for the one-millionth time.

Denver knew better than to stop thrusting, even though I had a feeling that he was close too. My hands fell down his sweaty tatted back as my nails dug into his skin. He sniffed out the exact spot that he'd marked me before, as if his wolf wanted to do it again.

He was driving me mad with pleasure but he was barely holding on himself. "Cum for me, Eliana" He whispered breathily and my body clenched around his cock, anchoring down into him. My lips went wild with the moans that escaped from them.

And at that moment, I was barely myself anymore. It's all gone beyond my control. The orgasm was life-changing, rippling through me like a storm and once I came, Denver jerked into me and I could feel his warm, untamed seed flowing inside of my body.

He lifted his face and I stared at him. This time, I had no regrets. Not a single one. It was the best I'd ever felt.

Slowly, he climbed down to lay right next to me. My eyes were fixated on the yellow ceiling as his fingers still jollied around mine.

"That was good" I turned to him and there was a crack in my voice.

"Good?" He teased and I scoffed, turning fully to face him. Our heated deep breaths mingled in the air between us. "It was the best" I reiterated as he curled my hair behind my ears again.

"You deserve nothing but the best, Eliana" [Denver](#) replied. I blushed slightly at his words. "I already have everything I want" I whispered and then a frown arched his brows. "You didn't say it back," He murmured.

"What?" I chuckled.

"I said I love you and you didn't say it back" Denver said and I shrugged my shoulders. "You're going to have to work a lot harder for it" I teased and his fingers buried into my bare sides as Denver tickled me. I laughed terrifically from my lips before he pulled me closer to him.

Then we kissed, again, and again. And again.

"Well, it doesn't matter whether you say it. It doesn't change a single thing about the way I feel about you. Till I die, Eliana, my heart and soul belong to you. No one else. Absolutely no one else" Denver said.

My heart crept into my throat as I caressed through this beard.

"I love you" I whispered. "I love you Denver"

"I love you more than life itself, Ellie" He kissed my forehead and my heart stomped in my chest.

In a good way, in the best way. Ellie, I love that name now.

And at that very moment, it was hard to think about anything else, not the war we'd just been through nor the war ahead. I just wanted to stay right there in that moment.

In his arms.

Forever.

Chapter 55: The Beginning Of The End.

Chapter 55 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

JAXON.

I toiled the grounds of the deepest part of the forest. Biting into my knuckles, it was hard to control the anger surging inside of me at that moment. For the past few hours, I couldn't still believe Eliana and Denver, Alpha of the Black Mountain Pack had challenged me for Alpha.

Putting a dent through the plan I'd spent my entire life putting together was bound to have serious consequences, especially after they shamed me in front of the entire Pack. I wanted to kill her, my stepsister, Eliana. If I had all those years, this wouldn't have happened.

"Jaxon," A shrill voice called from behind and I darted a cold glare back to my bride. "I brought you some water, you seem so tense" She whispered, stretching the glass towards me. But I snatched it from her hands, throwing it against the brick wall.

"Of course I'm tense!" I screamed in her face and Ingrid flinched, cowering her face to the ground. I panted heavily from my lips as my eyes met Nora's. She was sitting in the corner with her arms folded across her chest. While Ingrid scurried away, my mother sauntered in.

"I heard noises" She screeched.

"I'm fucking angry!" I raised my voice. "Of course you heard noises. I'm here trying to come up with a plan that would put an end to those bastards once and for all and here she comes with a fucking glass of water" I cursed, running my hands through my hair.

"They can't treat you like that and expect to get away with it" My mother, Sienna countered. She was the first to make some sense around here. Because even Nora was quiet at that moment.

"Which is why I have some news" At the beating of Sienna's voice, I turned around to look at her. There was a snarky grimace across her lips and a glimmer in her eyes. "Don't waste any time, what news?" I scowled and she inched closer.

"I followed them last night after the attack—"

"Yes, they're at the Blood Hound Pack, I'm aware. It's the only place I can't attack them" I replied but my Mother shook her head. "Before they got there, they were at the hospital first and I followed them there" Her tone increased my intrigue as I folded my arms.

"Eliana has a son" Sienna informed me and I lifted my eyes up to her, a stint of disbelief in them. "What?" I asked. "And it turns out that Denver is the father..."

"How certain are you?" Was the first question I asked and she chuckled softly. "Have I ever been wrong?" Sienna threw a question back at me and I launched myself at her, grabbing her by her neck.

"I'm not joking Mother!" I growled. "Do you have any idea what that means, it cements them even more in the Pack hierarchy if they have an heir" Bloodlust filled my eyes and a hard lump went down my Mother's throat. She struggled to break free, after which she looked at me.

"I'm certain" She coughed. "Extremely—they have a son and his name is Elijah." Now, my lips curled into a grimace as I turned around. "Not for much longer" I whispered. "Because you must find him and bring him to me." I grunted when my sister suddenly stood.

"And what are you going to do to the child? Kill him? I thought you said kids were off limits" Nora blurted out and I turned back in shock to look at her. Her face was serious and disgruntled.

"You witnessed what happened last night, didn't you? I will stop at nothing to make sure they pay and that not one of them gets to sit on that throne. I must die before I let that happen" I inched closer to her, looking her dead in the eyes.

"And you must decide whose side you're on. Because if you claim to be on mine and you ever question my authority or command, I don't care if you're my sister. There will be consequences" I muttered to her, grazing the side of her pale, cold face. She looked to Mother who didn't dare utter a word then a scoff escaped Nora's lips before she left.

"She'll come back" Mother said and I humphed. "She better," I replied.

"Because don't want to have to kill her too." Mother was shocked by my words but that was what it was now. The war had begun, far long before the ultimate battle. And I was more than willing to take out everything in my way. "Now, Mother—" I turned to Sienna.

"Bring me the child."

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ELIANA.

"Elijah!" I gasped as he ran into my arms. I hugged him tightly but it didn't last long enough before he pulled away to run to Denver. "Daddy!" He clamored, wasting no time adopting the name.

Denver seemed pleased. Oh who was I kidding? He was happy.

I was happy, whenever I wasn't thinking about anything else which was only rarely. A scoff escaped my lips before Thelma walked up to me with her husband, Cory and her kids stuck to his arms.

"You'll get used to it" She muttered. I turned around, grasping her in for a hug too. "Ugh I've missed you" I whispered. She nodded. "I missed you too, so glad you're safe now" She said.

Denver lifted Elijah up in the air and the sound of his raucous giggles flooded back to me. Both our eyes went up and down with every motion.

"He seems excited" Thelma noted. I smiled. "No one in the Pack has ever seen this side of Alpha Denver. Thank you for bringing it out" She genuinely was thankful in her eyes. And I just watched as Denver laughed.

And cheered and laughed with his son in his hands. It was hard not to regret not telling him for so long because deep down—"It was Elijah," I replied. "It was Elijah who brought him out" Thelma looked at me and smiled. I looked at Denver again and our eyes met.

He winked at me, causing my heart to flutter and the butterflies to erupt in the depths of my stomach like a teenage girl.

"Sorry to interrupt," Ivan did interrupt and I batted my lashes at him. He tugged my arms, bringing his lips close to my ears. "It's your Dad" He cleared his throat. "He wants to see you" At that moment, I straightened up my back with my heart lumping in my throat.

The first thing I remembered was when I saw my Mother and how I told her things could never be the same between him and me. That was the reason I've avoided him for so long even after we were able to rescue him. But it was only inevitable for so long.

"Come with me" Because Ivan held my hands and I had to follow him.

"I'll be right back" I whispered to Thelma and then Denver before I excused myself. Ivan and I sauntered down the Pack Halls and aimed right for the Chamber, where Das rightfully belonged. "How is he now?" I asked. The last I saw of him, he was making a lot of progress with the Serum especially being administered to him on a daily basis.

"His speech has gotten a lot better although his coordination still needs some work. Nothing a little physical therapy can't help with" Ivan smiled and at that moment, I heard someone call my name from behind.

"Eliana!" It was barely audible but I heard it. And I turned my face to a little girl right next to her Mother. She had a large grin across her face but her Mom fell to her knees.

"My Luna" She whispered. I threw myself to help her up off the ground.

"Please don't" I obliged. "Please don't do that" Her hands lifted to cradle my cheeks and it was then I recognized her. Aisha was one of the women I grew up with who always favored my Stepbrother and sister but treated me like garbage during my childhood.

The familiarity was vague but it hit me like a storm.

"I know you" I whispered. She cupped her chin. "Of course you do, Luna Eliana. I can't bring myself to apologize to you enough, on behalf of myself and everyone in this Pack because of how they treated you all those years" She whispered and I looked at Ivan with tears in my eyes.

"We're so sorry, Luna Eliana" I was so moved immensely at that moment that I wiped my tears. "It's okay," I shook my head. "Mom told me everything about you, the Princess who's about to change everything. She told me you're going to fight for us and make Blood Hound great again!" The little girl spoke up with so much courage and hope in her fragile eyes and when I looked down at her, I scoffed lightly.

"I want to be as brave as you one day, Luna Eliana" She whispered. The tears streamed down my face just then. Never for once did I think I was brave until she said that and there was a sore feeling at the back of my throat. "I want her to be just like you" Aisha, her mother added.

"You will" I leaned forward, brushing my hands through her soft hair. "You will and you'll even be better. Braver" I whispered, just happy to see a little girl in this Pack grow up differently than I had to. Grow up in so much love and hope and gentleness.

And at that moment, I was reminded of what I was really fighting for. Not just for me and Elijah but for little girls like her. For mothers like Aisha and every other Blood Hound. For them to not just have somewhere to place their heads to sleep at night but to have somewhere to call home.

To have a people, a community.

She hugged me at that moment, her little arms groping around my legs and her mother smiled at me. "Thank you" She mouthed. "Thank you for coming back home." She said and she took her daughter before they both went on their way. It took a moment to get myself.

But as I wiped my tears, I turned back to Ivan.

"Well, that was something" I shrugged. He hummed thoughtfully. "So what's going to happen after all of this? Will we all become one Pack, Blood Hound and Black Mountain?" Ivan asked as we trailed further towards the chamber.

I looked at him because that was something I never really gave much thought to. But I shrug my shoulders just then.

"I guess" I replied. "That sounds like a great idea. It's enough with the war already actually. We're all Werewolves, we should live together. It's one thing I liked about the commune in Tuscany" I whispered.

Ivan scuffled with a plain smile. And I remembered Alicia and her little boy, Chester who were so close to us when we were in the mountains. I wondered how they were doing and hoped life was better in Tuscany.

I wasn't sure I missed that place. Although it was exactly what I needed six years ago, it wasn't my home. This place, was my home. And after so many years, it only started to feel that way to me.

Finally, Ivan and I came to a halt right in front of my father's chamber. A hard lump slipped down my throat and a chill up my spine. I ruffled my dress as I fared him a glare.

"Are you ready?" He asked, hands wedged against the door. Maybe I would never be ready actually, to hear a million 'I'm sorrys' but still, they would always sound so strange, so undeserved. I wondered why else my Dad wanted to see me but there was only one way to find out.

So I nodded, heaving a deep sigh.

"I'm ready." Even if I wasn't, there simply was no other choice.

Chapter 56 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

The door set apart and his familiar scent whooshed in my face. Ivan stood behind me as I walked into the Alpha's chamber, a place that I was once forbidden to enter. As the Pack Slave, I'd been forbidden from doing a lot of things that I often forgot I was also the Alpha's daughter.

That Gerald Jacobs was my father.

As I made my way in and my eyes rested on him, it was hard not to remember all the things he had let slide in the Past. He was sitting by his bed and my Grandma was right beside him.

"Come on in" She gestured when I came to a halt. The winds were cold and tense as finally, his eyes locked into mine. He looked like he was doing a lot better. For starters, he'd gotten rid of the wheelchair and could now sit up on the couch.

There was also as much emotion on his face.

In his eyes dwindling amber eyes that stared into my soul and then slowly, my father's lips curved into a smile. He took a look back at the bed as I inched closer to him. Then his hands wrapped something, like a special stone or crystal which he stretched towards me.

I was reluctant at that moment. Mind you, he was still yet to say a word.

I looked up at my Nana and it was when she nodded that I reached for the stone. "You called me here?" I broke the silence, looking back at him.

"Yes," Then he softly nodded. His voice was frail but still audible.

"I have a very funny story" He started, a light scoff making it out of his lips. "Well, if you think about it really deeply, you'd see that all of this is just one funny, unending story" My Dad cleared his throat. There was the remnant of a half smile still across his lips.

And then he cleared his throat.

"You know how your Mum and I met?" He asked. I shook my head and he gestured that I took a seat on the bed next to him. I did.

“It was a Summer morning here In Oakland, we haven’t had that for long now. It’s usually so dark around here but it wasn’t always like that. You see, the sun used to come out and the winds used to fill the trees so lightly that the birds would rustle their features and spend the whole day tweeting so happily. And I was hunting that day,”

“When I felt something strike my feet. It was so painful that I prepared myself to yell at whoever it might slipped from but when I raised my eyes and she was standing right in front of me, I was speechless. I couldn’t say a word, Eliana. Your mother was the most beautiful thing I’d laid my eyes on and with a smile, she fell to her knees and apologized.” Gerald added.

“You know from the moment her hands brushed along my legs, I knew. I knew she was my mate. It was always so indelible and strong, that bond and sensation that winds up in your chest. You can’t mistake it for something else, there’s nothing in the world quite like finding your mate.”

I knew that. From the moment that I met Denver too.

Watching my Dad recollect the memories brought tears into both our eyes, especially after I’d seen with my eyes just how beautiful she actually was. My Dad wasn’t lying. He may have lied about a lot of things.

But not this.

At that moment, even Nana’s eyes shimmered.

“Every day since then, whenever I thought back at that day, I wondered how many more million ways that could’ve gone. How I could’ve never met your Mother taunted me for so long until I realized. Destiny and Fate, two sides of the same coin. I was meant to meet her that day.” He said.

“Even though the stone didn’t strike my foot or I had taken an entirely different road into the forest, I was still meant to meet Susannah that day and boy, did she change my life” A tear rolled down his cheeks as I felt a sting in my chest.

“I fell in love with her in a way I had never felt for anyone else. In a way that was so intense and scary. I loved her like breathing. Like she was inscribed deeply into the roots of my heart. I loved her more than life itself and Susannah, she loved me too.” Gerald whispered.

“After just weeks when we were sure that this was what we wanted, we decided to get married. It was that morning that she told me what she was, which was a Hybrid. Like there was a world where that could’ve changed anything or the way I felt about her. Nothing could, Eliana. I had already dreamed up my entire life and she was at the core of it.”

“She was it. She was my life.”

“And you, you were my life too. I remember when she found out she was pregnant, how happy and elated she was. She always wanted to raise a kid, to birth something of her and to watch it grow. She said it was like a flower but more and she loved flowers. She loved you. Every kick, every noise, every night we laid awake because of you. Every conversation that we had with you. Susannah loved you. I did too” He added.

There was a painful lump at the back of my throat as I sniffled.

“Everything was perfect, everything was exactly how I dreamed. Until the day she was finally supposed to give birth to you and you know...” My Dad paused. “You already know what happened.”

“What you don’t know was that I was right there, I was holding her hands when she passed. And I watched slowly and painfully as the life left her eyes and her body was cold. The sound of your crying pierced the air but I couldn’t take my eyes away from your mother, Eliana.”

“As she just laid there lifelessly, my heart shattered. My world crumbled. I even died. When I look back, I think I died that day that I lost her. The part of me that was so in love and so delicate, the part that was supposed to love you unconditionally and take care of you, Eliana” He said.

“I had to kill it if I wanted to survive.”

“If I ever wanted to move past it because I had a Pack to rule. I had to still be strong even after everything. Even after I lost my Luna, I lost my world. Some days, I wanted nothing more than to kill myself because the thought of reuniting with her was so comforting. It was everything I wanted. I was so stricken and killed by my grief that I failed, Eliana. I failed you and I failed the whole Pack ever since the day I lost your Mom”

I shook my head, cowering it down so he wouldn’t see the tears stream down my cheeks but it was like a sword went through my heart, hearing him narrate everything had happened.

“I changed into this horrible, cruel monster but marrying Sienna was something I never wanted to do. But the Pack Elders made me to. I was just crowned King and I had a long road ahead of me. I couldn’t do it alone, they said. No one respects a King without a Luna by his right hand. So they told me that day that they found another girl just like Susannah”

“And I remember laughing in their faces” Even now, he still scoffed.

“Because there was no one like Susannah. No one in the world like her.”

“Why did you do it?” I whispered. “Marry Sienna? Why did you do it?” I echoed and a hard lump went down his throat. “Because I was forced to, I was forced to be strong and to move on before I ever was ready.”

“And it made me hate myself and my life even more. I didn’t hate you, Eliana. I didn’t hate you for a single day, I just hated myself and I understand now how badly that had to hurt you” He whispered to me.

“It was like my life was no longer controlled by me. Like I had lost every sense of purpose and direction since she died.”

“I lost her too, you know” I said.

“I lost someone too and I was reminded of that every single day of my Childhood. That I killed my Mother and you never did anything...you never defended me, Dad. And you could have” There was a crack in my voice.

“You should have.”

His eyes were a river of tears as he nodded.

“You’re right, Eliana. I should have done something, I should’ve protected you because you were all that I had left of her but at that moment, you were also a reminder of what my life could’ve been but would never. You were a reminder of all the plans, all the love, everything I didn’t want to remember. Everything I fought so hard to forget” He replied.

“But I also hurt you, so much, so unquantifiable that I’m not sure Susannah would ever forgive me. I’m not sure you ever would but I called you here today to at least try” My Dad whispered. “I don’t know how long I have left, Eliana but even the fact that I’m alive now is because of you. It’s because you were brave and strong enough to get me out of that room, to save me and to challenge Jaxon for Alpha.”

“You are strong just like her. You are everything that I could never be.”

“And I’m sorry for everything I put you through. I’m sorry for not being there, for not protecting you, Eliana. I’m sorry for failing you as a father” He wiped his tears, about to fall to his knees when I reached out to him.

“No!” My voice cracked. I held his hand, looking into his eyes.

“I hear you Dad. I forgive you but please, don’t ever kneel down for me” I said. He however, shook his head with a hand that caressed my cheeks.

“There will come a day that I will have to” He replied and an arch came between my brows. “And that day is nearer now, Eliana” He added.

“What?”

“What are you saying?”

“I’m saying that I’m stepping down as Alpha—“ “Dad!” I interrupted, knowing exactly what that meant but he shook his head. “I’m not done.”

“I know Denver has already challenged for Alpha and stepping down would draw the battle only nearer but I have to do the right thing, Eliana. I have to do the right thing now even though I fear it’s too late” His hands wrapped around mine as he squeezed them.

“But you’re still alive?” I whispered. “You can rule” All he did was shake his head. “You do a better job at it than me. You’ve proven yourself, Eliana” He said and it took me a while to get it. When I did, I looked at my Nana and then back at him.

“Wait what?” I questioned.

“I don’t want Denver to be Alpha. I know you trust him and I do too but I want you, Eliana. I want you to have everything, I trust you. And the whole Pack does as well. You can rule the Blood Hounds. You can lead”

A chill went down my spine.

“But I’m a woman?” My voice quaked. There was even a law that went against having a female Alpha but I guess it didn’t matter because my Dad shook his head. “You are Eliana Jacobs” He whispered.

“You are strong, you are fearless and you raised yourself while I was being a terrible person. Grew into this amazing, fierce and compassionate woman—“ “But that would mean I have to fight him...Jaxon?” I said.

“It’s just Jaxon” My Dad scoffed. “You were always so stronger than him and so much smarter. My greatest regret was birthing a monster in the first place because if I could go back in time which I can never do, I would’ve never married Sienna. I would’ve chosen you because you were enough, Eliana. You were always more than enough” He continued.

And at that moment, my heart melted in my chest as I looked at my Grandma. She smiled at me with an approving nod. I could barely believe it. I could barely believe what my Dad just asked of me.

To rule a Pack was something I never thought I would do and all I wanted to do at that moment was to tell Denver. I wasn’t sure how he was going to take it or whether or not I was going to take it.

I stepped back for a moment. But even that wasn’t enough.

“You can take some time, Eliana. But the paperwork is already drawn up. The only left is for you to accept. And if this has anything to do with fear, you better know this. Because you’re the strongest person I know.”

“You’re a fighter, especially when it comes to your people. The Pack needs that. The Pack needs a fighter and quite frankly, I think you would even do a better job at defeating him than Denver would” He scoffed lightly, tugging my hands again. I lifted my gaze to him and he smiled.

“Your Grandmother told me about Elyndra...” I got up to walk away but at that moment, I came to a halt. “One more thing,” I said, throwing a look back at him. “I saw Mom and she told me to tell you she loves you”

His eyes narrowed with a smile as he fixed his gaze into my eyes.

“Eliana,” He whispered before saying the words I never thought I would ever hear from my father. “I love you.” His words hit me like a storm and it was hard to hold back the tears in my eyes.

“And thank you.” My Dad nodded. “Thank you so much for everything.” A half smile curled my lips as I made my way out of the room. And as soon as my eyes met Ivan, he asked.

“What happened?”

At that moment, a soft gasp escaped my lips.

Chapter 57: Love Of My Life.

Chapter 57 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

DENVER.

“Daddy, Daddy!”

Elijah screamed, thrusting his body through the bushes with full force. When he made it out with leaves in his hair, a grin appeared on his face as he tugged onto the ball in my hands.

“Throw the ball!” He clamored. “Throw the ball and let me catch it” He jumped into my arms relentlessly but I maneuvered my way around the six-year-old boy. Turning my back to him, he clasped around my neck tightly as he mounted from behind.

“I told you already,” I replied him with a chuckle. “I’ll release the ball when you come up to me with a catch!” I said. “But the animals are so fast” He pouted. “I tried to hunt down a squirrel earlier but he was much faster than I was. Maybe I can’t be a hunter” At the sound of Elijah’s voice, I fully turned to him.

And his face was disheveled and disappointed so suddenly.

“Hey” I crouched to my knees, holding up his face. “I can’t do anything, you must be so disappointed in me” Elijah whispered but I shook my head so vigorously. “That’s not true” It was far from it.

“I don’t think you can ever disappoint me Elijah. And as for hunting which is a primary Werewolf skill, that’s why you have an Alpha as your father—“ I ran my fingers through his thick hair.

“I’ll show you the ropes until you get a hang of it but I promise you, it’s not so hard you know” I smirked. Slowly, his lips curled into a smile too.

“Really?” Elijah’s eyes twinkled in a moment that I let slip away from me because just then, he came at the ball again, this time ready for a ferocious attack and I had no choice but to release it to him.

“There!” He yelled before throwing it to Cory. I stood up to see mischief in both their eyes as I clapped my hands. “Well played!” I chuckled. My Beta Cory threw the ball back at me.

“I want to play in the woods now! Maybe I’ll bring back a catch!” Elijah, restlessly scurried into the woods. “Not so far unless your mother will kill me!” I yelled out to him but with his speed, I’ll be glad if he heard a single thing I said. Breathlessly, a smile crept to my lips.

“Man, that boy has a lot of energy” I said. Cory nudged my shoulders before handing me a bottle of water. I downed it in an instant before settling down on the bench.

“Well he reminds me of someone I know myself” Cory sat down next to me, a hint of sarcasm in my tone. “Eliana?” I asked even though I knew he was referring to me and he gave me the ‘You can’t be serious’ eyes which we ended up just laughing off.

For a brief moment, there was quite the silence.

Nature can be really beautiful when you’re happy. And caught up in the moment, I happened to bring out the box from my pocket. It was something I’d had for a while now but I was yet to show anybody. It only made sense Cory knew about it first.

“What’s that?” His eyes fell to what was in my hands and when I opened it up, a soft gasp escaped his lips. “No!” He snatched the diamond ring from my hands before looking back up at me. I shrugged my shoulders.

“For Eliana?” He questioned. Who else?

I nodded my head.

“It’s just something I’ve been thinking about for a while now” I whispered. “It’s never been really official with the two of us. It was always one deal or another but I think I’m finally ready. If Eliana taught me anything, it was to break down my walls. It was how to trust again, and love

again and I could be the happiest man in the world but at the end of the day, my life still feels like it's missing something."

"She is that something because when I'm with her, it's complete again. Everything is good and all I want is for her to never leave my arms again. And I know it sounds crazy but I'm utterly and gut-wrenchingly in love with her. It's something I've never felt before and I know I should be scared, I know I was scared before but not anymore" I whispered.

Cory fixated his eyes into mine and a smile crept to the corner of his lips.

"That was beautiful, Denver" He whispered. My eyes darted to the woods where Elijah had run off into. "And that little guy," I chuckled, my heart swelling in my chest. "He's all I've ever wanted. I didn't know how much I wanted a family until I met him. He's the greatest gift anyone has ever given to me and I would spend the rest of my life giving him everything my father couldn't give me. I would spend my life making sure that he's loved and cherished and cared for. Because he's my heir. He's my son,"

"One day, he will rule too. As a Hybrid just like his mother" I muttered.

"And I'll raise him so he'd do a better job at it than I did" I said but Cory brushed his shoulders against mine. "I think you did a pretty good job if you ask me" He said. "You're only saying that because you're my Beta, Cory" I muffled a laughter but his face went dead serious.

"I mean it" He nodded. "I'd rather have you than anyone else lead the Pack and I'm pretty sure if you ask any other member, they would say exactly the same thing" Cory said. "Look around you," My eyes trailed the Pack grounds across which were a few of them.

"You built this, from nothing" Cory said.

"You were only nineteen when tragedy struck and we lost our Luna, your mother but you, Denver—" His finger struck my chest. "You stepped up"

"You stepped up as King far before you were even crowned and you made sure while your father was grieving and your brother had run away, that there was someone to take care of the Pack. That was you" Cory whispered and his words warmed my heart at that moment.

"So when I tell you that you do a pretty great job at being Alpha, you better believe me. Because I'm sure you'll lead the Blood Hounds just as well as you led us" Cory stood up, handing back the ring to me.

"Are you sure about this?" He asked softly.

"I've never been more sure about anything in my entire life. I know how she makes me feel and I want to make it real this time—" "And Eliana?" His voice deepened. "Do you think she's ready...to make it real?" Cory's voice stung me with an unfamiliar feeling of anxiety.

And I lifted my eyes to him. “I hope so.” Those were the words I decided to clinch onto until I was finally able to propose to her tonight. It would be right here, in her Pack. Our Pack. Beneath the starry night skies and the gentle winds. I would take her hands softly.

It was hard not to blush at that moment. It was the effect only Eliana had on me. For now, she went with Ivan to see her Father but when she’s back, I knew regardless of everything, I still had to ask for his blessings.

And of course, Elijah’s.

The thought of starting a family filled my heart with a sudden bliss and I found myself smiling. Clenching the ring in my hand, I knew I wanted to do it today. Now, if I could. I was only just excited to spend the rest of my life with the love of my life.

But little did I know what was coming...

“Cory!” A light voice called out to him. We looked back at Thelma before looking at each other. He appeared to want to excuse himself with his eyes. Then, I just brushed it off.

“You can go” I muttered. At my command, Cory sauntered all the way to meet his Mate and they journeyed back to the Pack. In the meantime, I brought my eyes to fall on the ring once again as the winds swept through my hair.

However, I threw my head over my shoulders the moment I smelled him.

His footsteps echoed in the winds and the sound of his breathing was egregiously unnoticeable. That was before he said anyway, “You know Alpha does really look good on you” I recognized my Brother’s voice before I turned back to look at Blake.

He stood at akimbo, with his eyes narrowed and his hands against his hip.

“Is that supposed to be a compliment?” I asked. He shrugged his shoulders before inching closer to me. “Take it however you want, brother” His voice went low. We were meters away from each other and the air was tense. But that was before Blake did the unexpected and he hugged me.

Taken by surprise, a soft gasp escaped my lips. His arms smothered along my back as he hugged me tighter. “I’m sorry” Blake whispered. “And I know it’s not a lot after everything I did but I really am” He backed away from me and our eyes locked into each other’s.

He was sincere at that moment and even though I was always so reluctant to trust him, for some reason I believed him when he said those words. “When I thought I was going to die,” He paused, turning away for a moment. He was okay now. He looked okay anyway.

“One thing kept going through my head and it was how much I deserved it. How much I deserved to die because of everything I had done. But at that moment, I did have one regret and that was leaving while I was still on bad terms with you, Brother—“

“We were never on bad terms” I replied and he scoffed lightly. “There’s no reason to lie, Brother” Blake smirked and he nodded at me when I lifted my gaze. “I’m just glad you’re alive” I muttered. His hand stretched to my shoulder for a brief second.

“You make a great Alpha and that’s something I could never be” Blake’s voice went low and I arched my brows. “Why does this sound like a goodbye?” I asked him and there was a crack in my voice. “Because it is” He replied, pressing his lips tightly into each other.

And I pushed a hard lump down my throat.

“Only this time, I may never come back again. There’s nothing here for me in Oakland” Blake said and I shook my head. “There’s always something for you here, Brother” I argued but he shook his head with a scoff. “You don’t understand, I meant that as a good thing.”

“I need to leave. I need to leave the past behind and finally move on.”

“Aurora was the only thing that kept bringing me back anyway” He added and I cleared my throat. “You’ll find someone” I assured him and not so much that he believed but Blake nodded.

“Thank you” He grunted while his lips folded in a smirk. Pulling away, his eyes remained marked into mine. “Thank you so much, Brother.” And he was supposed to leave at that moment. It was supposed to be Goodbye.

But suddenly as he turned around, a shrill scream pierced the air and I heard that name. “Daddy!” My ears rang on alert as I threw my head back to the bushes. “Elijah” I whispered, immediately sensing that he was in danger and it all happened in a split second.

While I thrust myself forward following his scent, Blake trailed right behind me. My blood was boiling, and my heart was pounding against its sternum as I searched everywhere. That was the last thing I heard.

Daddy.

That was the last time I heard his voice.

And after we’d searched the forest, Blake and I circled back to each other. His eyes were daunting as he shook his head. “He’s not there. He’s not anywhere here” His voice rang a piercing sound through my ears as I clutched my chest with his hands.

“Did you see him?”

“He’s not…” I looked around. “He’s not here.”

“Someone took him” Blake said the obvious and as the rage spilled in my veins, I knew exactly who this was. I called Eliana without wasting a second and when she showed up in the woods, I really wished I could’ve hidden the wry in my brows.

I really wish it was different. That it was beneath the starry skies and the winds and I was going to propose her. Not to tell her that Elijah had been kidnapped. She looked up at me with her hands fallen to her side.

And an arch between her brows.

“What?”

And then to Blake. I could hear her heart stomp in her chest as she looked around. “Where’s Elijah?” She suddenly asked. There was a wrecking silence between the two of us as I shook my head.

“Denver,” There was a crack in her voice. “Where’s Elijah?!” Her eyes welled with tears as Eliana fell to the ground. I reached around her as she wept, muttering beneath my voice. “We’re going to find him.” I assured.

“And I’m going to kill anyone who has him, even if it’s Jaxon,” My voice growled with vengeance.

“Most especially, if it’s Jaxon.”

Chapter 58: Time Is Running Out.

Chapter 58 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I shut my eyelids, merging my hands together and as I began to mutter my incantations, the winds picked up with the sound of my voice. There was a spearing light that struck the back of my eyes and it was then I suddenly backed away with a force that threw me to the ground.

“Oh Eliana!” My Grandmother reached out to me, helping me up from the floor but I stubbornly wanted to remain there, even as the candles dimmed and the wind had come to a halt.

“I’m going to try again” I muttered. “It’s clearly not working, Eliana” She whispered but I shook my head. “I’m going to try again and I will not stop until I find my son. Until I get a lead. There’s no way I’m half-witch if I can’t do a simple locator spell?!” There was a crack in my voice.

“Eliana, listen to your Grandma” Denver stepped forward and I only let go of her hands when she shook her head. “I’m trying it again, with or without you!” I grunted, struggling to light the flames again when Denver suddenly knocked it over. I looked bewildered into his eyes.

“What are you doing?” I scorned.

“Maybe we should take a break, you’ve been at this all day” He dared to say and I arched my brows at him. “A break? A break, Denver?” I asked.

“Our son is out there—“

“Don’t you think I know?!” He flared up, arms stretched out. “Don’t you think I’m worried sick too,” “You should be on my side!” I yelled at him, and a scoff escaped his lips. “I’m on the side where you don’t unnecessarily kill yourself” He replied.

“But,” I paused. “But I have to find him.”

“And I said we going to, together. The both of us, we’ll get through this Eliana. You alone can’t do it, you’re already bleeding from your nose and you’re terribly weak. I assure you your mind isn’t even in the right state to a fucking locator spell” He added and one finger beneath my nose drew blood. He was right, I was bleeding.

And I had been at this for so long, so long for it to be futile.

Denver’s arms stretched out to me and immediately, I broke down into tears. He didn’t understand, no one did. “I know you’re worried, Eliana. I know it’s hard but we’re going to find him. Okay?” Denver assured.

“Your father already totaled two armies to go search the forest and Cory and I would be leaving soon too. I made sure to block all the exits leading out of both Tombsdale and Oakland so wherever they are, wherever they’re keeping him, Elijah is not so far from here.”

“They wouldn’t be able to get out” Denver said and he was so confident. I, on the other hand was so stricken by fear that it had consumed me. It was a mother’s nightmare. That even if he’s still in the forest, what was going through his mind? Was he safe?

It was hard to stay calm, and even harder to stay positive. Sometimes, like in that moment, I had to remind myself to breathe.

“Elijah was never supposed to be involved in this.” I said to Denver, shaking my head. “He was never supposed to get hurt. I said I was going to protect him” Tears streamed down my face as Denver pulled me into him. My chin grazed his shoulders and my tears soaked his shirt.

His hands smothered along my back. I could hear his heartbeat for a second and it was fast. I guess he was scared too, even though he didn’t show it on his face. But he was terrified. Who wouldn’t be?

“It’s not your fault” He whispered into my ears. “If anything, it’s mine. I was supposed to watch him. I was supposed to...” Denver halted. His words got caught in his throat. It was obvious he was trying to stay strong for me and I was just a discombobulated mess.

I had to pick myself up and tie myself back together. Even if hope was the hardest thing to do at that moment, it was necessary. So I looked into Denver’s eyes, hands framing his face.

“Maybe I’m not as good of a father as I thought” He murmured and I shook my head. “No” I muttered. “No, we’re not doing this. Not right now. We can’t do this. We have to find him” I sniffled.

“You’re right, we have to find him and we’re going to.” I clenched his hands tightly with fire in my eyes and Denver nodded back at me. “Come on, we’ve got to go now. They’re waiting for us” He roped my arms toward the door but my Grandmother called me back.

I stopped in my tracks when Denver let go and I turned back to her. Her eyes were dimly inquisitive and although her lips parted, the words were reluctant to come out. “I know this isn’t the right time like at all...” She whispered. “But have you told him about the discussion with your father?” Nana asked and at that moment, a sigh escaped my lips.

“Now?” I questioned.

“What? You still think the battle is so far away?” Nana’s voice went low and discerning. “Jaxon took your kid, if that isn’t waging a war, I don’t know what is” She muttered, looking me dead in the eyes.

“The truth is even when we get Elijah back, the battle won’t be so far anymore” At that moment, a chill went up my spine. Nana was right, more than I’d like to admit. However, it was hard to think about anything else besides finding my son.

So I left the room, finding my way downstairs. The car was already there, which was meant to take us into the forest. We were surrounded by troupes from the different armies—both Blood Hounds and Black Mountain. It was perhaps one of the very few times both Alphas decided to merge Packs to fight one common enemy.

And that was Jaxon.

One look at my father, I could tell it was still a hard pill to swallow that his son had grown to become this atrocious monster that he was. Denver and I climbed into the vehicle at the forefront where Cory geared his gun.

“What if he resists when we find the both of them?” He asked. “Should we do everything within our power to get the child back—even resulting in hostile action?” I knew what he meant, far beyond those words and I instantly looked at my father.

“Kill him, if necessary. No one hurts my family and goes scot-free. If you don’t, I will anyway” Denver wasted no time in answering him but Cory was a bit hesitant, the only reason being he was now headed by two Alphas.

By this time, all eyes pointed to my Dad.

“What’s it going to be?” He asked after which he cleared his throat. “You heard him” Dad nodded. “By all means necessary, I want my Grandson back here, safe and sound” That was all they needed to hear.

At that moment, the engines of the car roared and the conveyer picked up behind. We reached eastbound of the forest before we eventually split. Thousands of acres of land to search through and it was barely midnight, although darkness had completely blanketed the skies.

The good thing however was that all exits out of the forest were completely blocked by even more troops. So I doubt Jaxon made it out with Elijah which meant they were still somewhere around here.

The car came to a halt, and Denver and I alighted. I strapped the torch to my forehead while he bore the gun in his right hand. We picked up our pace further down the path. “I need a weapon” I turned to Cory. His eyes darted to Denver and I was sure what they communicated.

“I mean it—“

“Don’t worry, I wouldn’t let anything happen to you” Denver croaked and I rolled my eyes to the back of my head. “This isn’t the time, Denver. It’s not the time to be all protective and whatnot. Elijah is my son too, I should be able to do everything within my power to save him”

“If anything, it increases our chances of defeating Jaxon” I argued on our way down the steep hill, although neither of us came to a halt. It was only after a while of his brief silence that I reached out to him. Denver stopped in his tracks once I held him back and his eyes locked into mine.

“I can protect myself” I whispered.

“I can fight Jaxon” An arch came between his brows just then and like I said, Denver was always so good at reading me. It was like he knew exactly what I was trying to tell him even before the words slipped out.

His eyes geared to Cory for a moment and then he nodded. The next thing Cory did was hand me a gun, after which he went the opposite way around the hill. Denver and I kicked our feet forward, roaming deeper and deeper into the forest.

“Elijah!” I called out, jerking the gun in my hands. The forest returned a vast echo of my voice. “Eli—“ “Are we not going to talk about it?” His voice suddenly interrupted mine. I narrowed my eyes back at him.

“I just spoke to my father. It’s what he wants” I said. Denver scoffed.

“Is it what you want, though? To become an Alpha?” He asked and for a moment, a wave of anxiety flustered my face. The back of my throat stung a bit. “I...I don’t know” I stuttered.

“I don’t want it to feel like I don’t need you, Denver. Because regardless of everything, I do. I still want you by my side every step of the way” I added and his eyes fell on me again. “I’m sorry that I’m contemplating this after our five-month plan. After you set your mind on being Alpha.”

“I don’t care about all of that, Eliana” He suddenly said. “I don’t care about whether I’m Alpha or not. It’s been my whole life since I was nineteen. What I care about is your safety and that this is what you want. Not your father, not your Grandma. Not anyone but you” He said.

My lips parted slightly.

“Somehow, it feels like that’s exactly what I’m supposed to do. It’s why I’m so conflicted but deep down, I know I want to make a change. I know I want to help people, these people. My people. I know I want this” I replied and then he took my hands in his.

“Then unequivocally, I’m going to be right beside you every step of the way. If you’re sure it’s what you want, then I’m okay stepping down. I just need to know that you’re going to be able to do this.” He muttered.

I nodded even though I couldn’t hide the fear in my eyes.

“You would do that?” I whispered because of all the million ways I thought this would go, seeing him this supportive wasn’t one of them. He squeezed my hands. “I would do anything for you, Eliana. Anything” And there was still a sense of safety when he pulled me into his arms.

This calmness that seared my chest, that everything was going to be okay at the very end, regardless of all this and it was something to hold onto. “Come on, now let’s go bring our son back home” He whispered, although withdrawing from me, Denver didn’t still let of my hands.

It was then suddenly, a rustle erupted from the bushes behind us and fear sliced my heart as I turned around. “Did you hear that?” I whispered, back against Denver. He raised his gun in one direction and I raised mine in the other. The sound was as unmistakable as it was uncanny.

“Do you think it’s him?” I whispered beneath my breath, a chill crawling down my spine. “If it is, I better shift” Denver echoed, unconsciously stepping in front of me as the rustling grew louder and more erratic.

“It’s coming nearer” I muttered, clenching down on my teeth as my heart jackhammered in my chest. Then the leaves sprung through and almost immediately, my jaw fell wide open.

“It’s you.” I echoed.

“What are you doing here?” I could hardly believe my eyes.

Chapter 59: An Unexpected Alliance.

Chapter 59 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

"Nora?"

Even the winds couldn't blow the shock out of my face as I stood face to face with Jaxon's sister, my half-sister. She wrestled out of the shrubs with leaves in her hair and deep, halting breaths from her lips.

But Denver didn't waste a second in attacking her. He pulled the trigger and a bullet through Nora's shoulders. "Ah!" She fell to the ground, using a hand to wedge the blood gushing from her joint.

"Where is he?!" Denver scowled. "Where is my son?!"

"You tell that dumb bastard Jaxon to never show his face again or else I'm going to kill him. And I'm going to kill you if you don't tell me where he is now?" Denver crept to her and while Nora lifted her gaze, her eyes were subtly filled with terror.

She gasped, trying to let the words out of her mouth when Denver picked her up by her collar, lifted her in the air and threatened to throw her into a tree and it was then she exclaimed.

"Fine, I'll tell you!" She whimpered. "I'll tell you. I'm on your side, that's why I came here" Nora said and an arch came between my brows. She looked at me, both she and Denver.

"Please, Eliana. I'm sorry but you have to believe me now. I didn't come here to fight or anything—"

"And why should I believe you?" I asked. "Only a few days ago, you tried to kill me" I added and a scoff escaped her lips. "But you saved me, didn't you? You pulled me out of that building just when it was about to crumble. You saved my life, no matter how undeserving I was of your mercy and I want to help you now" Nora pleaded and she was right. I did save her that day but she disappeared after I pulled her out.

I guess I thought she just stupidly went back to her brother like she usually did. But at that moment, there was a part of me that wanted to believe her. All Denver did was look at me as if it was my call.

My call whether to trust her or not, but his hands were still around her throat. "Why come here now?" I inched closer to look her dead in the eyes, a witchy instinct I usually got when someone was telling the truth.

"Because I know where Elijah is and I want to help you. I want to help you get him back, just like you helped me," "I call bullshit" I grunted. "You had a fight with your brother?" It was just a guess but there was this strong feeling that I was right.

Nora's voice fell flat after my accusation.

"That's because I realized what he did wasn't right. What he's been doing and I dared to confront him. Kids were always off limits, all this time I thought that it was only about becoming Alpha but he won't stop at anything until he gets it. And it has made my brother into a monster. One I don't even recognize anymore and I don't want to be a part of that."

"Then where is he?" I questioned. "Where is Elijah?" Silence fell as she looked at Denver who looked back at me. I nodded and he let go of her. She still held around her wounded shoulders but it was only a matter of time until it healed. At least the bullet wasn't made of silver.

"Fuck" She groaned in pain.

"That's for telling Jaxon about Elijah in the first place." I scowled at her. "It wasn't me, it was my Mother. She followed you to the hospital that day and saw Elijah. Then she came to tell him" Nora confessed.

"And we're meant to just believe whatever you tell us?" Denver asked.

"She's telling the truth" I interrupted, heavy with that instinct. "Fuck, Sienna" I cursed. "Are you going to tell us where my son is now?" Denver's hands to his hips as he sniffled. Nora's eyes met mine slowly.

"She wants something" I guessed.

"Of course." Denver rolled his eyes. "It's not...money or anything. I just want you to promise to protect me when Jaxon comes. Because he will come, he will know I came to you guys and betrayed him and he's going to want to kill me. He's going to try to kill me"

"And I don't want to die, Eliana. Please, all I want is protection from him" It took one glance at Denver before I blurted out. "If you help us, we may be able to protect you from Jaxon" I muttered.

"Now tell us for the last time, where is Elijah?" I said.

"How about I take you to him instead?" She replied and just like that, Denver and I were trailing behind Nora down the forest path. We were right, turned out they never left. They weren't able to.

"Shouldn't we call the others?" I whispered to him as we towed down the hill. "There's no time" He responded. "I'd rather we show up in just small numbers" Nora seemed to have heard because she added.

"How close are we?" I grunted. The more steps we took, the thicker the forest got and we'd been walking for about an hour and a half. Then suddenly, she came to a halt. And we were standing right in front of an abandoned cabin. One whose lights still shone through the windows.

I gazed up ahead before looking back at Denver.

"He's in there?" He questioned. Nora nodded. Almost immediately, he cocked his gun, gearing it firmly in his hands before he pounced his way into the building. Denver kicked the door down and let his eyes roam around. Though the lights were on and the room was warm for a building right in the middle of a forest, it didn't appear like anyone was home.

Or anyone was here.

"Shit" Nora cursed once we made our way in. "Shit?" I echoed. I didn't like the sound of that. "They're gone" She regrettably whispered. "Gone?!" It was Denver who flared up this time.

"You thought you could play us huh? Lead us off track, was that the plan all along?" He inched closer to her and Nora backed away in fear. "No, I swear. This was where he said he was going to bring him. This was where we stayed after the Masquerade Ball and ever since then" She blurted out.

"But Jaxon must have gotten a hint. So he left" She said. "I swear, it really was here" She looked at me. "If you're the only one that knew, then how else could he have gotten the 'hint' that we were coming?" I asked and then a light scoff escaped her lips.

"You lot really do underestimate my brother" She replied.

"You have to believe me because my luck is looking just as bad as yours right now. If Jaxon knew we were coming, how long till he figures out that it was me? How long till he desires my head on a plate?" She asked.

"How are we going to find him now?" I muttered. And just then, my phone buzzed in my pocket. I didn't even realize I had with me up until then. "Who is that?" Denver asked as I pulled it out to see an unknown number across the screen.

"I don't know" I said and although it wasn't really something I would've done, I picked up the call.

"Hello Eliana" It was his voice.

"It's Jaxon" I whispered as a hard lump slipped down my throat. I put the phone on speaker and Denver inched closer. "Where is he?" There was a crack in my voice. "Well, that's why I called." His voice was hoarse and deep and malicious.

"What do you want?" I asked him and he cackled. "You know for the first time, I don't really want anything. It feels like everything I wanted has been handed to me on a silver platter. So I'm going to do you a favor, Eliana. I know you're at the cabin and you're looking for your son"

"I would've done it there but I wanted an audience to witness my noble good. In the spirit of gift-giving, I would like to give you back your son" Jaxon said and I knew him well enough to think this was all sketchy.

"What?" I asked him. "Aren't you done with the games?"

"I should be asking you that. Because I am, Eliana. I've attached the location you should come to collect him alongside a photo to show he's in excellent condition. He's playing video games right now. Elijah!" Jaxon called. "Say hi to Mommy."

There was a silence that sliced through my heart at that moment before I heard. "Hi Mommy!" He called. Tears welled in my eyes. "Oh my God" I softly exclaimed. "I'm coming, Elijah. Okay—"

"Now that's enough. You should be on your way now. I'm not saying there's a ticking clock on my generosity but well...I pride myself in my unpredictability" He added and just then, a message popped up.

It was the address we were supposed to come to.

"I swear to God, Jaxon!" Denver gritted through his teeth. "Relax, I have nothing up my sleeves this time" He replied. "I'll be waiting for you. We will all be waiting for you. The whole Pack's going to be there so I can't exactly back down now" Jaxon continued.

"And I have a feeling it will be the last time we'll all be gathered in the same room. I should go now. Elijah just beat me in a racing game. And it won't happen again. I'll see you soon."

"And one more thing," He paused. "Send my regards to my sister." At that moment, the line suddenly cut and my hands clutched my flustered face. Nora was struck with terror and there was just silence in the cabin.

I rested my back against the wall, face in my hands as I cried. Denver crept up beside me and his hand squeezed my shoulder. I looked up at him. "We should go" My voice quivered.

And he pushed a hard lump down his throat.

"Do you trust him?" He asked. That was a question we all knew the answer to. "But he has Denver, you heard him..." I replied. "We have to go, and the Pack's going to be there."

"You can't trust Jaxon" Nora interrupted. "You can't trust my brother."

My eyes darted to her with a blank, tearful glare and I stood up.

"It's not like we have any other choice." I said. "I'm going. I'm holding onto the faintest glimmer of hope of even seeing Elijah again. No matter the cost, no matter what happens" I added and the three of us stood in a circle, glancing at each other.

"You already know I'm coming too" Denver muttered and then our eyes turned to Nora, our enemy turned an unexpected alliance. And although she was terrified in her face, she swallowed a hard lump and nodded.

"You're coming with us. We'll protect you" I said and her lips curled to let out a croaky, "Yes." We were going to need all the hands we could get for that night because only God knew what was coming.

And even if we did, we wouldn't still have been prepared.

Chapter 60: What Happened To Adam?

Chapter 60 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

DENVER.

"What is going on here?"

Ivan was the first to speak out what was in all our minds because the moment we arrived at the address Jaxon had sent, even a crowd was an understatement to describe the number of people that were already there. "It's everyone in both Packs," Cory whispered to me.

A low grunt escaped my lips.

"What the hell is he up to now?" I cursed. "Thelma!" Eliana's voice echoed from a distance and I looked to see her at the door with Cory's wife. We marched forward, coming to a halt for a bit.

"Why is everyone here? Did Jaxon say anything? Where is he?" Eliana's million questions started to gush from her lips. "We don't know why he summoned us here too. He just showed up for the first time since the Masquerade Ball and ordered everybody here, both Packs" Thelma replied.

“We had no choice but to follow. From the looks of it, the Blood Hounds seem to fear him more than anything” She added. “Well, have you seen Elijah at least?” I stepped forward, my breath hitched in my throat and my patience running extremely thin.

Thelma’s eyes lifted to mine as she parted her lips.

“Yes,” She muttered. “I did see Elijah but you're going to have to get through Jaxon first” She added. I heaved a deep breath from my lips as my hand folded into a tight fist. “Well that's not exactly a problem” I tore down the door, the loud creaking wood drawing all attention to me.

“Denver,” I heard Eliana’s soft voice echo from behind. “Please take it easy. He still has Elijah” She said but as soon as my eyes met the bastard on stage, a hard lump went down my throat.

I was done taking it easy. Jaxon had crossed a line—in fact, multiple lines when he took my son. And though I understood Eliana, I was done taking it easy. It was high time I showed him not to mess with my family again.

“Look who it is!” His voice echoed suddenly through the room. Jaxon was holding a mic, sauntering capriciously across the front stage.

“If it isn’t our guests of honor” The hall buzzed with whispers and mutters as the crowd ended up parting to the side, creating a path for us to walk through. Anger wasn’t even enough to describe the surge of emotions that boiled in my blood the moment I saw Jaxon.

And it took everything, even as I paced towards him to not stick my fist into his face. The only thing stopping me were the Pack members who I unfortunately didn’t want to have to witness that. Something told me that was exactly the reason they were here.

He was trying to play it safe. Someone as cowardly as Jaxon could only be so bold when he had people around.

“Where is my son?” My knees grazed the edge of the podium as I came to a halt and a nasty grimace curled his lips. “Come,” He whispered. “Come on” Jaxon said. And I was reluctant up until I heard Elijah’s voice.

“Daddy” It was coming from backstage and it ignited some sort of fierceness inside of me. “Where is he?!” I climbed up, charging at Jaxon. I grasped him by his collar and pressed him against the wall.

“Don’t think for a second that because you have an audience, I would hesitate to have you killed because if you know me, you’ll know there’s barely anything that holds me back” I scowled beneath my breath.

“Now, for the very last time and I mean it this time, where the fuck is Elijah?” My eyes grew grim with fury and bloodlust when Eliana suddenly shouted. “Denver!”

“Mommy!”

“Denver he’s here!” She gasped, running across the stage and I darted my eyes to where she immediately grasped him for a hug. “Oh Elijah!” With tears in her eyes, Eliana hugged our son like she never wanted to let go. I then looked at Jaxon’s pathetic face.

A smirk crawled to the corner of his lips.

“I told you. I’d like to think I’m a man of my word” He wrestled himself free from my hands, smoothing his shirt and collar. “Whether you choose to believe it or not” He muttered.

Jaxon circled around me, his eyes never left the crowds which only made me wonder why he would choose to do this in front of hundreds of people. Why he would rather them know that he kidnapped my son instead of handing him over in private?

There was a curious sting in my chest that I couldn’t quite place a finger on. “You know, it was never really about Elijah to begin with in the first place” Jaxon muttered and then he turned around.

“You know I was just discussing with everyone minutes before you got here. Do you know it’s been five months since we lost Adam?” Jaxon turned to me and I sucked in air through my lips. My eyes instantly met Eliana’s and she had an arch between her brows as she stood.

“Sure you must know him, Adam Raymond. He was about yay big, a large smile, a cheerful heart. Screw it, how about I show you instead” He took the remote in his hands and put on the large tv in the back. It beamed with a photo of Adam across the screen.

“If you don’t mind me asking, does this face ring a bell to you, Denver?”

At that moment, my heart stomped.

What was he driving at? What did he know—surely, he didn’t know.

I shook my head at Jaxon and he twisted his tongue. “That’s a shame, you didn’t really stop to see his face before you mauled him into pieces” And as soon as he said that, the whole room roared with murmurs again.

“What are you doing, Jaxon?” Eliana gritted through her teeth and he chuckled softly. “What am I doing?” He echoed. “I’m making sure that people know the truth. The truth about what happened. The truth about what you did” Jaxon replied with a glare as cold as ice.

“You don’t even know the truth” I stepped forward. “I agree. I didn’t”

“I was just as fooled as everyone in this room, everyone except my Mother. It’s how she always finds out these things that I don’t know but I’m glad she did because now, everyone will see you for the monsters you both are” Her gaze struck Eliana and I thrust myself at him with a fist.

“Careful” He took a step back. “You don’t want to show that side of you here” He whispered. “You don’t know what you’re saying” I bit down into my teeth and he held the remote again.

“How about you tell me?” And as soon as he pressed a button, another image came up. And this time, it was of Adam’s body how we found it that night on the roads. Skin shredded to pieces, eyes out of his sockets.

His bones piercing through his skin.

The room echoed a deep gasp and staring at that picture flooded back all the memories to me. I tore my eyes to the ground, pushing yet another hard lump down my throat.

“You want to tell the people what happened, Denver?” Jaxon asked. “You want to tell them or you want me to...because there are pictures. Dozens of them, from that night and the night after” He scanned through the gory gallery before settling on one final one.

“I think we all underestimate the power of surveillance cameras, don’t you think?” Jaxon cooed. “Is that him?” “Is that Denver?!” Whispers echoed from the crowd as I raised my eyes to see my picture on the screen.

“To answer your question, yes. Yes it is Denver” Jaxon replied the people. “And here he is, dumping Adam’s body for us to just accidentally find the next morning and think it was an animal that did it. A monstrous bear maybe, a mountain lion but we haven’t seen those in a while...”

“I should have known then” Jaxon shook his head.

“I should have known that the only monster I knew has been standing right in front of us” “Enough, Denver!” Eliana raised her voice and there was a vicious crack in it. “What?” He shrugged.

“You want to tell the whole Pack how your boyfriend killed one of us and how you helped him cover it up?” Jaxon flared up at her. Eliana’s face went crimson as she shook her head.

“He didn’t do this”

“Well the evidence says otherwise” He then turned to the crowd. “Doesn’t it? And these are the people who you want to rule you?” He asked them. “An Alpha of a rival Pack who would waste no second in killing any of you without mercy. You know all about him, besides you saw when he attacked me today again. So ask yourselves,”

“Do you really think he’s capable of change?” Eliana looked back at me at that moment and there was a bitter taste at the back of my throat. The reality stung, the fact that a part of what Jaxon said was true.

The part that I could try my best to change and rewrite my whole life but none of it would matter because when people still looked at me, they still saw the old, ruthless and cruel Denver. The one who killed, the one capable of this. I saw that look on all their faces when I looked at them.

“He killed one of us!” Jaxon roared.

“And what do we want to do? We want to hand him the crown and full control of both Packs as if he hasn’t done enough already. He is the one you want to trust?” He clamored. “They’re the ones you want to trust?”

“Eliana herself, who traded every single one of you for love. Who traded her people for a man that doesn’t care about any of you” At that moment, I caught her eyes meet her Dad’s from a distance. Alpha Gerald shook his head with a disappointing glare.

Almost everyone did.

And I just stood there, mostly because of the shock but then again because I didn’t exactly know what I could possibly say to make them think otherwise of me. The evidence was glaring, the photos. The rumors.

Everything they knew of me.

“Only God knows how many more people he’s taken. And you know what...I may not be a saint, I may have made some mistakes in my life before but one thing I know is that not a single drop of blood is on my hands. Now Denver, can you say the same?” Jaxon threw a look at me.

And then back at Elijah.

“It was never really about your son you know. For the most of it, I just wanted him to hear of the monster his father truly is” Jaxon turned around and my fist was pulsating. My eyes had blurred with rage. At least it wouldn’t matter if I killed him now.

Everyone already thought I was a murderer.

There was no use trying to change, trying to be different. No use trying to suppress my emotions and rage and everything beyond my control. God, I was so stupid.

I wanted him dead. I wanted to kill Jaxon.

But the second I stepped forward, I felt a hand soft against my chest. It took looking into Eliana’s eyes to finally calm down. “Denver, no” She whispered. “Look at me, he’s trying to get a fight out of you. Don’t give him that. We’ll figure out a way to get through this.” She said.

“We’ll tell the truth. You didn’t kill him.”

“You don’t understand. What does it matter when everyone already thinks I’m a monster?” I seared through my teeth and Eliana inched closer to me. “I don’t think you’re a monster” She replied. “For all it’s worth, I don’t think you’re a monster, Denver.”

“And everyone will see it too” She looked me in the eyes and slowly, I backed away. I threw one last look at Elijah before I stormed out of the room. But at that moment also, I caught a glimpse of Sienna and Jaxon in the corner of the podium with smiles across their faces.

This was their grand plan—to turn the people against Eliana and I.

I walked out of the room, amidst the dozens of intense stares that pierced into mine. It was as if I could hear what they were thinking. They weren’t hiding it—they hated me now. Far more than they hated Jaxon.

The thought of him winning left a sore taste on my tongue and regardless of everything, I knew I was going to fight even if it was until my dying breath. I’d rather die than watch the day Jaxon becomes Alpha. This was not a fight for only me anymore, it was a fight for those that mattered.

A fight for Eliana. A fight for my son’s future.

“Denver!” She called out and the doors opened to Eliana just as I thought about her. She arched her brows, holding Elijah firm in her hands. Our eyes met with a lasting glare before she bit into her teeth.

“Jaxon crossed a line today and I don’t just mean taking Elijah” She said.

“So I’m going to do it,”

“I’m going to take up my father’s deal and I’m going to challenge him for Alpha. I’ll fight him if it’s necessary and I’m going to kill him.” It was probably the first time I saw Eliana so angry and fierce. Her eyes glazed at me as I took a step closer to her. “We…” I reiterated.

“We’re going to kill him.”