

Chapter 61 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I burst through the chamber doors only to find my father behind his desk. His face was covered low and his arms were crossed. The atmosphere was tenser in here than it was outside.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” He roared. The moment he lifted his gaze, his eyes sliced through me. “Why didn’t you tell me that Denver killed one of my people? You know that’s where I draw the line, Eliana!” He raised his voice and my words got stuck in the back of my throat.

Denver walked in right after me and my Dad fell silent. Both their eyes marked into each other and you would understand if you knew the long-brewing rivalry that existed between the Blood Hounds and the Black Mountain Pack—a rivalry that was supposed to come to an end when either of us would finally become Alpha and the two Packs would merge.

But today, Jaxon had torn us a thousand steps backward.

“You have some audacity sauntering into here?” My Dad darted a glare as cold as ice to Denver and I was the one who stepped in. “He didn’t kill Adam, Dad” I yelled. “Of course you would defend him...”

“No, he didn’t. That’s what I thought before but it’s not Denver that killed Adam that night. Don’t you see what Jaxon is trying to do? He’s trying to turn everyone against us...against Denver and I, even you. It’s what he and Sienna are doing. It’s what she’s done for the past how many years and it has always worked” I lunged myself opposite his table.

“I want you to look at me Dad. And I want you to believe me when I say Denver didn’t do this” I muttered, biting into my teeth. Both our hands clawed into the table as we locked gazes.

“Then who did it?” He asked. At that moment, I turned back to Denver and he shook his head. I knew how much he wanted to protect Blake and that was the reason he didn’t stand up for himself in front of Jaxon and the rest of the Pack.

His brother had only just survived an attack by Elyndra, the chances of him remaining alive after the Pack knew he was responsible for the death of Adam was even slimmer. So I get why he would want to protect him.

But at the same time, my Dad needed a name.

“Don’t” Denver mouthed and I bit into my tongue, shaking my head back at him. “Eliana, I want to believe you. I really do but you’re making it hard to do so. I’m still Alpha of this Pack and to hear from someone else that one of my people was lawlessly killed by another Pack?” He whispered.

“And you knew about it...” At that moment, my throat was throbbing and I was this close to spitting out his name when the door suddenly barged open. And it was Cory, Thelma, Blake, Nana, Ivan and Elijah. Everyone that had come here together had decided to stay that way.

We had no idea what was going on outside.

“Denver!” Ivan called and he was breathless. “Is this everyone?” Denver asked. Ivan’s shoulders collapsed. “Everyone except...” His voice dimmed and my eyes widened. “Where’s Nora?” I suddenly realized.

“That’s true!” Denver echoed. “Where is Nora?”

“She was with us but she somehow got lost when we were leaving the hall. It was so rowdy and chaotic. Thank goodness you were able to leave earlier. Because the Pack is far from pleased” Ivan said.

“Nora?” My Father was stunned that her name even came up among us. “Isn’t she Jason’s brother?” Cory asked. “You don’t understand. We said we were going to protect her. She helped us find Elijah while we were out in the forest. She only followed us because we promised to take care of her.” Denver said, his words spewing out in a haste.

“She was so scared of him. She was afraid Jaxon would kill her” I murmured. “She’s probably okay” Ivan consoled but deep down, I had a gut feeling that she was not. Going outside wasn’t even an option.

I clung to the windows to find the members of our Pack clamoring from

below and revolutionizing their revenge on Denver. Luckily, his people had sought safety in a place only he and Cory knew which left the rest of the angry and bloodthirsty Hounds yelling and throwing things against the building we were in—the building Denver was in.

A lot of them had fire torches and rods. Most of them were screaming and yelling and throwing things. It was almost like the Cold War all over again and this time, it was Jaxon’s fault.

This was what he wanted and it was working.

Only God knew where he was now. But at that moment, it was hard to worry about anything but Nora. There was this stinging feeling in my chest that something was wrong, that she was in danger and there was nothing I could do. After promising her otherwise, nothing I could do.

“He wouldn’t kill his sister, would he?” Thelma asked. I swung the window blinds shut and turned to her. Hopefully, my silence was enough answer to that question. I wanted to think the same thing but it was Jaxon we were talking about. He’d kill everyone in his way, murder everything that he thought betrayed him, even his Mother.

“What do we do now?” Cory asked and it was a question directed at Denver who for the first time, didn’t have an instruction for his Beta.

“Look at what has transpired! Look at the whole Pack, anger and rage have poisoned every single one of my people” My father arose. “And it was never supposed to be like this, Eliana.”

“Gerald!” Nana chastised my Dad’s impatience and then his hands suddenly clutched his chest. His eyes grew wide with fear as he fell into his chair. “Dad!” I thrust to him, holding his head up.

“Dad, are you okay?” He coughed into my hand and I used the other to smother down his back. “I’m...I’m fine” It was a reminder that he was still yet to be fully healed so he ought not to be shouting so much.

“I said I’m fine” He pulled away from me but his eyes still remained fixated on mine. “Tell me the truth, Eliana” My Father whispered. “Don’t make me doubt for a second my decision to make you Alpha.”

“You were always so discerning and you are the one person I can trust, with everything especially now. So tell me, who killed Adam in the forest?” He asked. My heart stomped in my chest as I threw one look at Denver. His face was emotionless and stoic.

He shook his head lightly because he knew the consequences and he was willing to protect his brother. Blake, however, decided to step forward at that moment.

“It was me!” He said.

My Father immediately turned angrily to look at him. I knew by his brow that raised up that he wasn’t going to spare any mercy. “No!” Denver stepped forward, holding him back.

“What do you think you’re doing?” Blake whispered to him. “Trying to take the fall for me? I was wondering why you didn’t say anything back to Jaxon when he called you all those names when you know deep down that you had nothing to do with it.” Blake muttered.

“It was me who killed Adam and it wasn’t an accident. I was on a spree, I’ve killed hundreds of people who never deserved it. Only God knows how many of those are Blood Hounds...”

“Blake” I called his name and he looked at me. There was something dainty in his eyes, like he was both apologetic and he was not. “It was a long time ago, Dad. Blake would’ve never done it if he knew” I tried to defend him. “He would never do it now.” His redemption was something I saw with my very own eyes. Something I could attest to.

“That I’m different now doesn’t mean I shouldn’t pay for the wrong I’ve done” Blake said. “There’s no need defending me, Eliana. You already saved my life and I’m grateful to my brother too” He continued. One hand against the table and the other to the commanding guard on his left-hand side, my father ordered Blake to be taken away.

“Take him to the dungeon.” He croaked. “Don’t do anything stupid, Denver” Blake had to caution his brother and when his eyes met mine, he shook his head. He seemed so cold and void as Blake got handcuffed.

“At least that should buy us some time and some calm. Tell the people we have who killed Adam and even though it’s still the same Pack under scrutiny, at least it’s not Denver” My Dad said to Beta Phil. Now Phil to him was who Cory was to Denver.

He spoke to my Nana too who had been awfully quiet since. Her sympathy was only visible through her eyes as she walked out with Phil.

“Now Eliana,” My Father croaked. “Jaxon has managed to draw us a hundred steps back. I still have faith in you but not so much the people. Gaining their trust back before the battle would be the hardest part” He said and I looked back to find Denver leaving with Blake too. Cory and Thelma as well. Which just left Ivan in the corner with Elijah.

And my Dad and I on this end.

“And Eliana,” He called my name again, this time with a time deadly serious and stoic. “I know I may not have said it before but considering everything that has happened and I’m not just talking about today. I’m talking about the last six years...” He paused.

“Do you really think Denver is the one for you?” My Dad asked that question and it was like a knife went through my chest. “But...” I stuttered. “Nana likes him. I like him. I love him, Dad.” I whispered. All he did was shrug his shoulders lightly.

“That’s different from knowing what’s right for this Pack” He replied and all of a sudden, the Dad standing in front of me wasn’t the one from that day anyone. It was the Dad I knew all those years.

He turned away coldly, leaving me no choice but to leave.

And as soon as I walked out of the room, the wind was cold against my face. I felt a little hand twirl into mine and I looked down at Elijah and then Ivan.

“What are you going to do now?” He asked and a heavy lump slipped down my throat. “I don’t know, Ivan.”

“I don’t know.”

Chapter 62: The Only Crime.

Chapter 62 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

As I stepped out of the door, the first thing I did was look around for Denver. I caught a glimpse of him as he strutted behind Blake and my Dad's Beta Phil alongside some guards who were to lead them outside.

I was just about running towards him when Elijah gripped my hands. I turned to look at my son whose face was scrunched up a bit. And then he folded his arms. "Hey, Elijah" I crouched low towards him.

"What's the matter?"

His lips parted with reluctance before he said, "It's just that you're always leaving every time. You and Dad, you're always leaving" He pouted with a crack in his voice and my heart melted at that moment. I ran my hands through his hair, cradling him closer to me.

"Oh Elijah" I heaved.

"I wish I didn't have to leave, all the time and I'm sorry if it feels like I'm barely around. I wish it was different, I want it to be different. I want to wake up on a normal day with you by my side and we spend the rest of the day together—" His eyes lit up.

"Like in Tuscany" He whispered. "I want it to be like that again."

"And it would," I nodded. "I promise, it would. Everything I'm doing now is so we could have days like that but right here. It's for you, it's so you can have a future and somewhere to call home. That's what your Dad and I are fighting for" I whispered and even now, that name still had a strange tune coming from my lips.

Elijah locked his eyes into mine before he nodded.

"But I promise you, it will all be over soon and I'll be right there with you. You'll even be tired of me" I chuckled. He did too. And Elijah wrapped his arms around me for a second. His lips grazed my ears.

"Will Dad be okay too?" He whispered. "I know I shouldn't have been listening but I heard what Grandpa said. I'm sorry" He whispered. At that moment, I lifted my eyes to catch a Denver at a distance from me. My hands smothered down Elijah's.

"Your Dad will be okay" I assured him.

“Everything will be, in due time” Pulling away from him, I smiled softly and then Ivan stepped forward. “For the time being, Ivan’s going to take care of you. He’s going to give you everything you want and keep you safe here in the chambers so nothing happens to you until I get back...”

“Do you understand?” I stood up, my eyes specifically meeting Ivan’s and he returned a reassuring nod. This was the best place for Elijah to stay, Aside from it being the Alpha’s chamber which Jaxon didn’t have access to, the entire building was also crowded with security.

I wasn’t sure about the state of the Pack outside at that moment but at least it was safe in here. I was sure Elijah would be alright.

“I’ll see you soon, Elijah. I promise” I whispered and my hands squeezed Ivan’s shoulder. “Take care of him for me please” I muttered. He nodded.

“I will.” A smirk crawled to the corner of my lips before I turned around. I scurried hastily to catch up with Denver before he disappeared.

“Denver!”

“Denver!” I called out to him. He was right beside Blake and it appeared that they were standing right in front of the door to go outside. “Denver!” I finally reached out to his arms once I was closer and he turned to me. His eyes were distant and cold.

“What’s going on?” I questioned.

“Your Father is about to feed my brother to the Wolves” He replied and I arched my brows, unsure just how rhetorical that statement was. “What?” I turned to Blake who scoffed and he was seemingly in a good mood after everything that had happened.

“Don’t mind my Brother” He clamored. “This was all my idea. I’m simply only making a confession so they leave the both of you out of this. Your people have the right to know what happened to Adam and who killed him and it was me, not either of you...”

“Blake” I called. “You don’t have to do that. We’ll figure something out” I shook my head. “That’s the thing, you already have so much to figure out. Let me take this, let me take the fall for what I’ve done” Blake said.

And he looked to Denver once the door barged open. The harsh winds blew in alongside the thunderous shouting of the people on the outside, raging with anger and revenge.

“We want Denver!” They yelled. But little did they know.

Blake scoffed, batting an eye at his brother. “Let me do this, Denver. And please, please don’t do anything stupid” Blake said before he was escorted out with Phil. He walked further down the portico until he came to a halt, as if he was about to be sacrificed.

The chanting mostly died down because most of the Pack wondered who this person was, rather than Denver. Blake had his wrists cuffed and his head bowed but make no mistake, this was the most courageous I'd seen him. The doors closed slightly but not into each other.

In a way that we could still partially see what was going on and hear the sound of his voice. At that moment, it was just Denver and I. He was breathing heavily with his fingertips between his teeth.

“Denver” I called his name softly. He had barely said a word to me since my Father’s intervention. It felt like he was mad at me. “Denver, is everything okay?” I was about reaching to him when he backed away and my heart stomped in my chest.

“Did I do something...wrong?” I stuttered and then he heaved a sigh. “No!” He yelled. “The sound of your voice says otherwise” I replied him.

He darted me a glare.

“Look Eliana, I’m not mad at you. You’re not the person I’m mad at okay? I may be mad at the whole world but not you. At least I’m allowed to. Right? Mad at your father? Yes. But not you” He scowled and there was just a stint of sarcasm in his voice.

“I—“ I heaved. “I’m sorry...”

“Did you see the way he treated me? Did you hear all the things he said and now he’s just more than happy to sacrifice Blake for the temperament of your Pack? I wanted the war to be over, for the longest time, this stupid rivalry between us, I wanted it to be over but today, your Dad didn’t even waste a second to throw me under the bus” He raised his voice and a vein popped in the side of his neck.

“He wasted no time in pointing a finger at me being the enemy. But I can’t be mad. Right? I can’t want to start a war because of you, Eliana.”

“And there’s everything that happened with Jason and I’m not saying that it’s your fault. I could never because it’s not but Eliana, I’m just mad and I think I’m right to be. I think mad is an okay thing to be because at least my emotions aren’t shut off which forces me to deal with it” He said and my lips just parted slightly.

“But no Eliana, I’m not mad at you. I just need a moment” He muttered before storming out of the corridor. A wave of breeze hit the tears that brimmed in my eyes and I just pushed a hard lump down my throat, setting my sight on Blake at a distance from me.

It was never supposed to happen like this, that much I knew.

“My name is Blake,” The sound of his voice echoed back to where I stood even though he was speaking to the rest of the Pack. “I don’t have many things to tell you today except my brother didn’t kill Adam.” The chanting reduced but there were some gasps in the air.

“You have the wrong person, you know. All Denver has ever wanted was peace and coexistence between the two Packs, Blood Hounds and The Black Mountain. He was always the right one of the two of us. Which is why when I came, I was angry, I was furious, I wasn’t right. You know I’ve killed a lot of people in the Past who didn’t deserve it” Blake continued.

“And for most of them, I’ve gone scot-free. Which is why I’m placing myself forward here tonight, I can’t let my Brother take the fall for my wrongdoing because it was me.” He said. “It was me who killed Adam that night and I wish I could give you a reason besides the fact that I’m a monster. The only crime my Brother Denver ever committed was trying to cover up that fact. So it’s me you should be mad at”

I stood there with my arms across my chest. The crowds came alive again and a tear dropped down my cheeks.

“And be rest assured that I will pay for what I’ve done” He muttered. Phil took the mic from him at that moment. “He will” My Dad’s Beta cooed. “Until further notice and pending the time a decision is finally reached, Blake would be held as a prisoner to the Blood Hounds” He said.

A gasp softly escaped my lips as he was escorted backward by the guards. “You may be dismissed and be rest assured, Adam’s death will be avenged” Those words were comfort to my Pack. Maybe to Blake himself.

But I could only imagine how Denver was feeling.

Blake walked back through the door and he darted his eyes towards me. “It’s okay” He mouthed and I wiped my tears. I just stood there, watching his face get swatted. I couldn’t do anything now. At least not until I became Alpha. But this was clearly a hurdle perfectly orchestrated by Jaxon himself to buy some more time until the battle.

And after creating this much chaos, he’d only disappeared. He may think he had won but it was only for this round. This, however would be the closest he would come to victory, I promise.

Chapter 63: The Fate Of Nora 1.

Chapter 63 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I placed a hand against the door and slowly, it gave way. The air inside the dungeon was humid and moist and the light was barely fathomable. I heard an echo of his footsteps as I drew nearer to the cell.

“What are you doing here?” His voice was hoarse and deep as his fingers clung around the railings of the cage. And when I finally came to a halt, I pushed the plate of food that I’d brought over to him.

His tainted eyes fell to the ground before raising them back at me.

“I brought you something” I heaved. “And how am I sure this isn’t laced with wolfsbane? How am I meant to trust my captor?” He said and for a moment, the silence was piercing before Blake laughed it off.

“I’m kidding. I’m kidding” He blurted out, diving right into the plate and I scoffed lightly from my lips. “You should have seen your face” He teased with his mouth full and I leaned against his cage.

“For all it’s worth, it doesn’t have wolfsbane in it. I’m not sure of what my Father has his guards feeding you but you should probably be careful” I whispered to him and Blake arched his brows.

“Why are you helping me?” He asked. It had only been a few hours since his confession in front of the front Pack. A few hours in the cell. He was adjusting quite well if you asked me. Or perhaps sarcasm was his well-fit coping mechanism. However, at that moment, I just shrugged.

“Because even though you killed a man, I’m a firm believer that people can change. That you’re not entirely a monster like they think you are. I know that and I’m going to make sure everyone does too” I replied him and he scrunched his nose a bit.

“What? It’s only temporary. I promise.”

“It’s not that” He took another bite of the meat I brought him before scoffing again. “Let’s not pretend the only reason you’re helping me is not just because of my Brother” Blake accused and I turned to him even though there was some truth to his words.

But it didn’t mean there was none to mine. I did believe in second chances and Blake’s redemption was something I saw with my very eyes.

“Relax” He cooed. “There’s nothing wrong with that” Blake added. “And when you see him, can you not let him be mad or let him do this thing where he usually blames every bad thing on himself” Blake shrugged and a soft chuckle escaped my lips.

“Reminds me of when we were much younger and he would always take the fall for every bad thing I did. I always feel like telling him to calm down, the world doesn’t revolve around Malik Denver” Blake muttered. A smirk crawled to my lips as I met Blake’s eyes.

“I can get used to this” He looked around the cage. “Isn’t it all just the consequences of my own actions?” He shrugged. “And he can’t take the fall for this one at least. I won’t let him.” I scoffed.

“You won’t be here for long, Blake” I promised him. He just leaned back against the wall, knees to his chest and arms around them. “You should probably be focusing more on Jaxon if you ask me. I don’t want you taking away your attention away from what really matters” Blake said.

And even if I wasn’t sure before, it was when he said things like this that I knew he had really changed. Yes, he may have killed Adam and yes, there was a time when I would’ve clamored at the forefront of the lines for Adam’s vengeance but also no, Blake wasn’t that person anymore.

I could see it in his eyes.

“You don’t worry about” I stretched out my hands to collect his empty plate and he stood up. “I’ll get you out of here, I promise. And it’s not just because of Denver” I added. At that moment, his eyes glimmered as he stretched the plate to me. I collected it from his hands.

But then Blake held around my wrists and I looked up to him. A hard lump got caught in the back of my throat as he stared so intensely. “My Brother really hit the jackpot with you, didn’t he?” Blake’s voice caused a chill to go down my spine and then he smirked.

“Thank you” He whispered.

“I mean it, thank you Eliana” He finally let go of my hands and I pushed the lump down my throat. My heart stomped in my chest as I nodded. And then I turned to leave before someone else came in, especially if it was any of my Dad’s guards.

But I could still feel Blake’s intense glare, up until I closed the door and only then did I heave a deep breath. But only for a moment. Just one, brief moment before life crumbled again.

I was walking up the stairs when I heard a faint call of my name.

“El...Eliana”

I came to a halt as soon as I recognized that voice and I threw a look behind me, my eyes stumbling on Nora, slouched against the brick walls with pain etched across her face. She immediately fell to the ground and I tumbled right next to her, straddling her in my arms.

Panic seized my face as I jerked her up.

“No! What happened? Nora!” I yelled. Her eyes were barely open when they met mine and slowly, her hands fell to the side, revealing the part of her body where the blood gushed from—where she’d been stabbed. My heart fell into my stomach at that moment.

“Oh my God” I exclaimed. “He got to you? Jaxon got to you?” I whispered and she nodded her head before choking up even more blood. She was dying. Her skin was turning pale and cold and her breaths more and more shallow and labored.

“I d...I don’t want to die” She choked on her blood as she clutched around my arms. My heart was racing and I searched my head for a way to save her. “Somebody help!” I yelled out.

“Somebody help!” But there was no one around. This was below the stairs. “No no, Nora! Stay with me” I gritted through my teeth, holding firm to her gushing wound. She was losing a lot of blood.

“Nora!” My voice broke and tears streamed down my face. “I know I said I was going to protect you but I failed—I...” And then it hit me.

“My blood” I whispered with a wide eye of realization. “My blood can save you, just like Blake!” I exclaimed, wasting no time in digging my teeth into my flesh and I ripped it open until my blood started to flow.

“Here!” I held her head up, placing my wrist between her teeth. “Drink!” I whispered. There was only so much my hybrid blood could do. Because even as the blood flowed into her mouth, Nora kept coughing it up until she fell into my arms.

“No! No! You have to drink it” I shook her. “You have to drink it for it to be able to work” I said to her but her lips were feeble and her hands were frail and though her eyes were open, her heart had stopped. “No” Tears blurred my vision as I still held around her wound.

“No.”

A lump formed in the back of my throat as the door opened from above and I lifted my gaze to my Grandmother. She let out a gasp as soon as she saw both Nora and I, drenched in blood. Her hands clasped her lips as she found her way down the stairs.

“Eliana!” She called. “Oh my God, what happened?” Her eyes fell on Nora as I cradled her lifeless body in my hands and my voice was gone from my throat. “He got to her,” I whispered with regret and anger.

So much anger.

“Jaxon got to her.” I bit into my teeth.

Yet another unfortunate blow to come out of tonight.

Chapter 64: The Fate Of Nora 2.

Chapter 64 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

For a moment, I just stood there.

My eyes boring into the mirror right in front of me as I washed my hands and my face and every part of my body that was smudged and stained with her blood. Every inch reminded me of my failure to protect my sister. And even after some time had passed, there were still tears in my eyes that went ahead to stream down my cheeks.

I shut off the tap, heaving a deep breath before running my hands across my face. The wet strands of my hair fell across my temples and I took a step back. It stung...it stung a lot.

Because this was yet another life Jaxon had taken and to think it was his blood sister's. It was clear he was going to stop at nothing until he got what he wanted and for the past twenty hours, it just seemed like he was winning and he was taking everything down with him.

Nora didn't deserve to die. Not that way, not in my arms begging me to save her but at the end of the day, I couldn't. She had to drink my blood but she died before she could. And I could only hide in here for so long before going back out. This place was quiet and calm.

it seemed like a different world away from all the chaos. And I was convinced no one knew I was here but then again, I was wrong. At that moment, there was a knock on the door. Once I lifted my eyes, I knew exactly who it was.

"Come in" I whispered, sniffing through my nose and briskly wiping my tears as if the crack in my voice wasn't enough to give away the fact that I had been crying. And that was the first thing Denver noticed when he walked in. I darted him a look before leaning against the wall.

And slowly, I brought myself to the ground. My hands cradled around my knees and when he closed the door, everywhere was quiet again. Denver walked up to my side and he sat on the ground too.

For a moment, neither of us said anything. We just sat there, our deep, heavy breaths putting to words what our lips could not. But we had to speak...we had a lot to say, especially how we left off the last time.

He had sparked in a fury that was strange to me but I understood. My Pack was holding his brother hostage and it was clear my Dad didn't trust him. He had every right to be mad, even at me. Even if he wouldn't say so. He glanced to the side and our eyes met. We had to speak.

"I heard what happened" His lips parted and his words eloped softly. I nodded, the pain still in my moist eyes. "I'm sorry you had to go through that. Hold her in your arms" He muttered, his eyes inching down my soaked dress. No matter how much water I put it under, the metallic scent of blood could hardly wash away.

And a light scoff escaped my lips.

“I’m sorry,” I whispered. “I’m sorry she had to go through all that and I’m sorry I couldn’t protect her from her own brother. Our own bloodthirsty monstrous brother who is the reason for all of this, including Blake” There was a crack in my voice and a tear that fell down my face.

“Eliana, this isn’t about Blake” Denver said and I shook my head. “It’s about everything, Denver. You don’t have to be here but here you are. You are still standing here after so long. After everything. My family is just so messed up and sometimes I just want to tell you to give it up.”

“I want to tell you to leave but I know that even if I do, you won’t. Sometimes, even I want to leave too. Because when Elijah was kidnapped, there were just a lot of things that went through my head at the same time. Jaxon,” I heaved. “He’s just caused so much harm.”

“And I don’t want you to get mixed up in all of this more than you already are, Denver” I said most of the unsaid words and then he looked at me. A soft chuckle escaped his lips as his hands slipped into her pocket at that moment. It was quiet once more, but only for a second.

At that instant, Denver brought a ring which he opened right in front of me and my eyes fell to the diamond before I looked back at me. A chill went up my spine and my throat was full with my heart.

“Denver!” I softly exclaimed and he nodded with a light smirk.

“You want to know why I was really mad earlier?” He whispered and I sat up straight against the wall. He looked at me with dainty eyes. “No” I shook my head softly and he nodded again.

“I wanted to do it” He said. “I wanted to ask you to marry me, to be my wife, my mate, whatever there was in the entire world. My everything. That’s what I wanted and I was going to do it tonight” He said. My heart swelled in my chest at that moment.

“I was sure I was going to do it, Eliana because I was sure there was nothing more coming. No goddamn shoe about to drop. I was sure we were okay but then Elijah got kidnapped and tonight happened and a part of me realized it’s never really going to be okay with us, is it?” He asked softly and I pushed a hard lump down my throat.

“It’s never going to be perfect. Because that’s just what I wanted. When I usually thought about the first time I’d show you this ring, it was never like this in my head. It was perfect. The night was young and blissful and the stars were in the skies. The wind was just the perfect velocity flowing through your hair and it was perfect. It wasn’t supposed to be like this.”

“In a goddamn bathroom, the same day our son was kidnapped, my brother was jailed and you watched someone die in your hands. It wasn’t, Eliana but now I realize it may never be perfect like I dreamed. That there’s always going to be that one shoe about to drop and I may never always be able to protect you and then I got angry. I got mad.”

“I got so mad at the universe, at the entire world, at your Dad and my brother and I think even at the Moon Goddess because all I wanted for tonight was a fucking break and look what happened” Denver muttered.

A scuffle escaped his lips as he withdrew the ring in his hands. I cowered my head, pushing yet another hard lump down my throat. “I...I don’t know what to say, Denver” I stuttered. We raised our faces and our eyes locked into each other.

“I do love y...”

“Shuu, Eliana” He placed a finger against my lips, cutting my words short. “I know you do, and you know I love you too. More than anything in the whole world but even after I got mad, I got calm again” Denver whispered. “You don’t have to say anything now. I’m not even sure I showed you but now you know I want to propose,” He paused.

“I also want to still do it the right way. I’ll never stop hoping for it to be perfect and for everything to be okay” His words brought tears to my eyes and I looked at Denver. “You’ll wait?” I whispered. “Of course I will”

“Will you?” He asked me and without a doubt, I nodded, wiping the tears in my eyes. “I’ll wait, Denver” I said. “And we’re going to be happy. We’re going to get our happy ending” I leaned against his shoulders and slipped my hands gently into his.

“You want to know what perfect looks like to me?” I asked him and he nodded, humming into my ears. I closed my eyes to picture what I wanted my happy ending to be and all of a sudden, I was laying in a garden, blooming with the most beautiful flowers. The sun was out, radiantly shining in Oakland in a way that it had never done before.

And Elijah was right beside me, he was reading a book on the picnic mat.

“You’re up ahead,” I whispered, still with my eyes closed. “I see you and you have steak in your hands. It’s like you made lunch” I narrated. “You’re walking towards the mat with your steak—“

“I hate steak” Denver muffled with a chuckle and I tapped him lightly.

“Shuu. This is my happy ending.” I whispered and a smile curled my lips as soon as his face popped into my mind. And he was smiling too. Gently, Denver leaned into my face and he stole a kiss from my lips.

In my dream.

And in reality. I only noticed when I opened up my eyes. I smiled.

“And I was wearing the ring” I said. He looked at me. “For all it’s worth, I love it Denver. And I love you and I can’t wait to be married to you” I said. “When all of this is over” He added, squeezing my hands.

And I nodded.

“When all of this is over” I turned around but still leaned my back into him. His arms crossed over my chest, holding me closer to him. And there was a brief silence again while I went through the many scenarios in my head. I assumed he did the same too.

This was a moment that was the calm, after such a chaotic night.

“And Denver,” I called his name again. “I am sorry for my Dad and what happened to Blake” I whispered. I felt his eyes fall on me. “I saw him. He told me you stopped by. He also said they’ve been slipping wolfsbane into everything they’ve given to him. One even stabbed him with an injection into his system. Another werewolf...” Denver whispered.

“They’re torturing him” He added but at that moment, I jerked forward with a sudden idea and my eyes grew wide as I turned to him. “What?” He asked. “What is it?”

“They injected him...” I echoed.

“That’s another way to get my blood into Nora. She wasn’t able to drink it but what if I’m able to inject her with it?” I asked, standing to my feet and Denver did too. “But Eliana, isn’t she...isn’t she dead?” He arched his brows and I swallowed a hard lump down my throat.

“Not if I’m able to bring her back” I muttered and though it was something I’d never quite done before, there was this surge of courage inside of me and Denver was bewildered as he looked at me.

“Eliana” He called. It was me who reached out for his hands now.

“I can’t let him take him another life, Denver. We need one win tonight. I can do it” I gritted through my teeth and his eyes wavered with doubt.

“Are you sure?” He questioned. And I felt the hairs across my skin stand.

“I am.”

“I can bring her back.” After all, I am a Hybrid.

Chapter 65: Land Of The Dead.

Chapter 65 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I grasped the last candle remaining, lighting it and placing it full circle around her body just like the rest of them. I needed the whole room which I paced back and forth to do the spell.

And it was a race against time because every second longer Nora stayed dead, the harder it was going to be for me to bring her back.

"Eliana" My Nana called from behind and from her tone, I knew exactly what she was about to say next. I stood up straight and her brows curled with wry. "It's a really difficult spell, Eliana. I myself can't even do it" She muttered. I pulled out the spell book.

"Well we're different. And I have exactly what I need" I replied, leaning over to remove the fabric from Nora's face. Her eyes were closed and her skin was a pale blue-black color. Luckily it hadn't been so long.

I heaved a deep breath, bringing my eyes to meet Denver's after I made him promise me to not interfere with this. And even though he remained quiet and folded his arms, I could see the worry and concern in his eyes.

I was worried too, but my determination to help Nora surpassed every emotion in my body. It felt like I had to do this, after all, I was going to face Jaxon in a fight. After all, I was a Hybrid.

As soon as my eyes met his, Denver nodded and he did step forward to hand me the blindfold.

"I'll pull you out as soon as you start bleeding" He whispered, turning me around before inching closer to my back. I felt his heated breaths trail along my skin as he tightened the blindfold around my eyes. It would be easier for me to concentrate with this. Without any distractions.

The spell basically meant a journey to the other side, where the dead people go and as soon as I'm able to locate Nora, hopefully not so far, it wouldn't be so hard to bring her back. Not a single witch was able to do a resurrection spell like this except the Queen herself, Elyndra.

And a Hybrid, whose unique blood was a perfect catalyst.

"There" Denver hissed but his arms fell around my waist before he tugged me closer to him. "Be safe" He whispered" As he pulled away, I raised the blindfold for a second but only to look at my Grandmother. The admittance was clear in her eyes. She'd seen how much I wanted to do this and that there was nothing really that could stop me.

"I have to ma," I whispered, shaking my head. "Jaxon has taken a lot of things from us tonight, we can't let him have this too. We can't let him win when we need one ourselves" I whispered. "But it's a dangerous spell—" That was her fear. "What if something happens to you?"

"What if you reach the other side and you're unable to come back?" She said. I pressed my lips together with a scrunched nose. "A lot of things could go wrong with a spell like this, you have no idea" She muttered and I inched closer to her. "Actually," Not outside the circled candles though.

"I do have an idea but rather than focusing on what could go wrong, I'm choosing to focus on everything that could go right. A spell like this would not only bring Nora back but it would prove that I'm finally ready to take on Jaxon. This is well within my abilities, Nana"

"I'm a Hybrid and I think it's high time I started acting like one." I said, garnering enough courage as I could in that single moment. One nod from Denver and I was good to go. As I sat in the center of the flaming circle, I pictured Elijah as I closed my eyes and a smile curled my lips.

That was my reason to keep going and my reason to come back.

My hands placed the blindfold over my eyes again and I heaved another deep breath, crossing my legs beneath me. My lips parted with the beginning of the incantation.

"Aqua vitae, lux et umbra" I whispered. In tenebris tuum est potentia, Ignis ardeat, ventus ferat." And so suddenly, I felt the heat of the candle flames against my skin and soft bristles of the wind. I felt a drop of sweat form along the bridge of my nose.

"Magicae vires, surge et adiuva." And I felt the surge of magic that circulated my body, brimming at the tips of my fingers. At that moment, it felt as if I was slowly lifting into the air and my legs were no longer crossed on the floor. It was an outer bodily experience.

Literally, my soul escaped my body and I could see myself sitting right there alongside everyone that was still in the room. And puff, everywhere went dark and not a single light was here now. The wind was cold and the atmosphere was deathly eerie. I felt a presence fill me and even with the absence of my legs, it still felt like I was floating around.

"Hello!" The voidness returned an echo for my voice. "Is anyone here?" And then a light glimmered. A single candle at a distance from me, flickering with a flame so light but a fire strong enough to light my path.

And I could see a door some steps away from where I stood. Walking towards it, the winds came alive with an unfamiliar vibration and the wish-whoosh voices of the dead. I looked around, not sure whether I was in the right place or not.

For a land of the dead, it was pretty empty here.

Finally, I reached the door after what seemed like forever and I slowly pushed it open to a light so blinding that I had to shield my eyes. My breaths got caught in the back of my throat as I opened them again.

Slower this time, to take in the magnificent landscapes and the sharp air that wrestled up my nose. The sun was brightest from here and it was more of a white light, a bright hue. There was a garden filled with endless roses and flowers and the air was sweet.

I took a step forward, grappling with my first look at the afterlife. Then, a butterfly softly landed on my nose. I darted my eyes to the colorful yellow wings before giggling softly. I looked down and I was in a white dress, so was everyone else here even though I couldn't place their faces.

Even though I wasn't sure they could see me.

I hopped forward, waving my hands in the air but no one took notice. It was like a ghost here until I heard a voice from behind. "Eliana!" It was a masculine voice that drove a chill up my spine. Not until after I turned around to face him. "Adam?" His name escaped my lips with shock.

He folded his arms and a smile ravaged his lips.

"Oh my God!" I exhaled, sure now that I was in the right place. "What are you doing here?" He asked, grazing his feet against the evergreen grasses and I stuttered a bit, still taken aback.

"Don't tell me you came here to take someone with you" He shook his head, a fancy phrase for saying I came here to resurrect someone. "Of course" He obliged at my silence and I batted my lashes.

"Adam!" I heaved. "I still can't believe it's you. How are you? I mean you're dead but...how are you?" I whispered and he smiled softly. "You said it, I'm dead" He replied. "But I've never been happier, Eliana" I arched my brows and he scoffed, turning around him.

"Look around, this place is heaven. It's everything I wished it to be. It's home, Eliana. There's no worry here, or sadness or even death. You just get to exist and dance and exist and dance. And as ironic as it sounds, you get to live" Adam said and with one look around, I was convinced he was right. When I looked back at him, he nodded.

"Why can't anyone else see me?" I asked. "Because they didn't know you in the past life. I did and that's why I'm able to see you." "Eliana!" Another voice called from behind and I turned to see Carys.

"Carys." I exclaimed. She tugged her arms around Adam's. "You two, you know each other?" I beamed and they looked at themselves softly. "We do" Adam said. "So who are you here for?" He asked the inevitable and I curled my lips. "My half-sister—"

"Nora?" He was surprised. "I have missed a lot" He said.

"Yeah," I pushed a hard lump down my throat, bearing my eyes away. "Yeah you have" "I'm only kidding, you do realize I can see everything in your world" Adam's words forced me to look back at him and my heart melted in my chest. "Adam, I'm so sorry" I whispered.

"I'm so sorry for what happened and I would bring you with me but—"

"No!" He exclaimed. "I want to stay here. I like it here" He whispered and most of his eyes settled on Carys whose hands he squeezed tighter.

"And it's okay." He said. "It was an unfortunate situation but it brought me here and it wasn't your fault too" Adam said. "If anything, I'm pretty sure you would've saved me if you had the chance" He added.

"That's what you do, Eliana. That's what you are. You're a savior and a forgiver and there's no one in the entire world with a heart like yours" He continued. Carys nodded herself with a smile. And I looked around them.

It really was beautiful here.

"Unfortunately, we can only stay so long" Adam broke the little silence and I arched my brows. "What could you possibly have to go do?" I asked and he chuckled softly. "I told you already, exist and dance" He shrugged his shoulders. I was the one who laughed this time.

But before they left, I had to ask.

"Do you know where Nora might be?" They looked around. "It was today she died, isn't it?" Carys asked and I nodded. "Then she must over there," Her fingers pointed not so far down a hollow path that led to yet another door. "Eliana," She called as I turned around.

I looked back at her.

"Be careful" She whispered and I nodded. Straddling forward, my hands reached for the door and when I looked back, they had disappeared. A smile did crawl to my lips as I faced forward again.

Now, I pushed the door open and though it was as bright, it wasn't entirely dark either. I floated in, looking around the room until my eyes fell on a figure crouched in the corner. And I recognized her. At that moment, it was as if she had scented me because she suddenly stood.

"Eliana!" Nora called my name softly.

"You came?"

I nodded. "I did say I was going to protect you and I usually mean most of my words" I whispered and her lips curled into a smile.

"Of course I came."

Chapter 66: Let's Get Out Of Here.

Chapter 66 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

“Spectra et umbras, aperite portas”

Nora’s eyes were brazen with surprise as they fell on me. She stood up to her feet and could barely contain her words. “You came” She said. I nodded my head. “I said I was going to protect you...”

“Of course I came” I replied and she pressed her lips together. By that time, I inched close enough to her. “Now, let’s get out of here.” With a hand stretched out to her, Nora looked back and forth doubtfully. “Get out of here?” She echoed, a little bewildered with an arch between her brows and I nodded. “I know a way. I can get you out of here”

“You mean resurrect me?” She echoed as I pulled her arms. At that moment, I looked down at the dress she was wearing which was the exact one she’d died in. It was a good thing she wasn’t in white yet. Even the blood stain was still lodged in her sides but it was fading away quickly.

“It’s not too late now” I heaved.

“Just come with me, I’ll tell all you about it later” Nora slipped her hands through mine when all of a sudden, there was a quake that rumbled that dimension. My legs quivered and for a moment, I forgot I was only an entity. It didn’t mean I did not fall to the ground at that moment.

“What was that?” I asked, the first time I felt such and then I felt a presence creep up to me with an eerie witchy scent and a callous laughter that drove a chill up my spine.

“Where do you think you’re going?” Recognizing that voice may as well have been my death sentence. I stood up to face Elyndra again in a shocking turn of events. Of course she would be here, she died after all.

I should’ve considered that or maybe I thought the chances of running into her were slim in this world. However, knowing Elyndra, I should have never thought so. She leaned forward, aiming for Nora before throwing her across the room. I arose from the ground, twirling my fingers.

“Spectra et umbras, aperite portas” I incanted and a chuckle escaped my lips. “You can’t use your powers in here, dummy” Elyndra muttered and her eyes darkened. “However, I can” With one swipe, she poured out a gust of air that swung me into the wall.

I fell to the ground and for a moment, there was a glitch. I could swear I saw Nana and Denver. Elyndra crept up to me. “You know it won’t be so hard killing you in this world and the necklace won’t work here just your powers and if you die here, you die in real life too” She scowled, taking my chin in her hands while her fingers pressed into both of my temples.

She closed her eyes, summoning some kind of dark energy that swirled inside of me. “Who knows, killing you might just be the thing to bring me back and I’m willing to take my chances” She gritted through her teeth.

And at that moment, I felt all the magic and strength leave my body. It was suddenly windy and I was jerking forward as if I having a seizure. And I saw Denver again. I saw that exact room and I swear I could hear them.

“Something’s happening to her!” He yelled as panic surged in his eyes. His voice was dainty, searing through both worlds. I had no idea what was going on but I could feel him shake me.

“Eliana!” He yelled. “Eliana, come back to me!”

“We need to bring her back!” I caught a glimpse of my Grandma as she flipped through the spell book. “I..I don’t know” She whispered. Then, I saw myself. I was sitting there, seizing and there was blood oozing from my nostrils. It was whatever Elyndra was doing.

She was killing me.

Then I saw Nora and one thing kept echoing to me. “It’s not too late” I heard my exact words. “It’s not too late.” “It’s not too late” I heaved in a deep breath because I refuse to die like this. I refuse to die here.

Not when I had Elijah waiting for me in my world and the second his face popped into my head, it filled me with as much strength to fight Elyndra, again. After all, I had done it before and I didn’t need the necklace.

Because if my powers wouldn’t work here, it sure as hell will work down there. And once I was able to connect back to my physical body, I jerked out of it, parting my lips.

“Claves astrorum, secretorum sort” I muttered and I heard Denver. “What is going on? What is she saying?” He asked my Nana. “Inluminato noctis, invocatio arcana, Elementa, obsecro, ad me veni” I carried on and slowly, I felt the magic fill my body again.

This time, I opened my eyes and jerked Elyndra’s hands away. She met my bloodlust gaze just as stood up. “When are you going to give up?” I asked her. She fell back. “You can’t kill me. You can’t use your powers” She clamored and it was me who chuckled this time.

“How about you don’t pick fights with a Hybrid” I stepped closer to her while she staggered backwards. “One would think you already learned the last time” I muttered. At that moment, Nora sauntered to my side and she held firm to my hands. I threw a disgusted look at Elyndra, mentally binding her to the ground so there was no way for her to move.

“I have what I came for so I’m going to leave,” I paused. “And not even you can stop me, Elyndra” I added. I turned to face the door before throwing one last look back at her.

“And I do hope this isn’t where you spend the rest of eternity, for everything you’ve done, I hope and pray every day that you burn in hell.” I stared her right in the eyes before taking Nora’s hands and walking towards the door.

“This won’t be the last you’ll see of me!” She yelled from behind, struggling to set her free but I scuffled at that moment, pulling the door open before walking through it. “Oh it is” I whispered. And Nora was allured by the beauty of this place.

“Where is this?” She whispered, looking around. “Is this heaven?” She questioned but I only drew her hands back to that dark room, where I was sure of a way back. I wasn’t sure how much time we had left which was why I needed to be fast.

“Where are we going?” She asked as I drew her into the room and darkness encapsulated our vision. Luckily, I didn’t need the light. “We’re going back” I muttered, turning to hold her two hands firmly and I squeezed her fingers. “Close your eyes.” I whispered before closing mine.

A deep breath filled my lips.

“Spectra mundi, umbra lux, Magicae vires, in me flux.” I whispered softly from my lips, the spell to bring us both back. “Ventus ardeat, terra tremat, Aqua vitae, ignis flammat” I could feel the surge of ancient magic around me but I was strong enough to contain it.

“Arcana verba, sonus astrum, Porta ad astra, ad infernum” I carried on.

“Say this last part with me,” I urged. *Corpus et animus, unum fiat*” Nora echoed exactly my words. “Say it again” “*Corpus et animus, unum fiat*” And there was a bright light that shone at the back of my eyes.

“In magia eternam, volo ut nascatur” And at that moment, I felt my hands leave Nora’s as I journeyed back to the land of the living and a whirlwind of emotions and memories filled me. For the last time, I saw a lot of faces, including Adam’s and Carys’. And my Mother.

It was for a second but I caught a glimpse of a proud smile across her lips. Before I whisked into a kaleidoscope of colors that enveloped me. I floated into the unknown with the air cracking and vibrating with an unseen energy. I allowed myself for the spell to work.

Knowing after all this, I would return to my body and behold, that was exactly what happened.

A deep gasp escaped my lips as I jerked myself back to reality and I looked around me, almost as stunned as Denver. “Oh my God!” He didn’t waste a second in pulling me in a hug but there was only one thing on my mind as I stood up.

“Where is Nora?” I crept to where her body laid and I immediately hefted out the syringe filled with my blood. As I leaned into her, I pressed the needle inside her skin, injecting her with it. After which I raised her up, the hard part was already over and that was bringing her out.

Now, she was stuck between both worlds and it was up to her to wake up now. “Come on” I hefted her up. “Come on, Nora” I whispered. “I did everything right. I did everything right” I muttered.

“Come on.”

At that moment, my eyes brimmed with tears as I clenched my hands around her body. The tears fell and my heart was jackhammering against its sternum. I held her hands. “Come on” I tirelessly whispered when I felt a hand on my shoulders and it was my Nana’s.

When I looked up, there was just so much doubt in her face and I remembered her words. “A lot of things could go wrong” She’d said, That I could do everything right but it would still not be enough. Enough to bring her back.

I looked back down at Nora, her eyes closed and her skin that same pale blue-black color. There wasn’t an emotion that could describe how I felt in that moment. As the tears streamed down my cheeks, I brought my head to rest upon her chest as I made peace with the fact that she was gone.

And I failed in bringing her back.

But it was then, so suddenly that I felt her fingers twitch against mine. It was a light, barely noticeable sensation but I felt it. I felt it and I jerked backwards, watching her eyes slowly open. I wiped the tears in mine, my heart dancing with joy as Nora slowly sat up.

And she looked into my eyes.

“Oh my God!” I exclaimed. “Oh my God! Nora! You’re alive” I clenched her shoulders. “You’re alive, Nora. You’re alive...” This time, the tears that fell were of complete joy as I hugged her.

“Eliana” She whispered. “What happened?” I pulled away to look back into her chestnut-brown eyes. “I’ll tell you everything later but for now, I’m just glad you’re okay” She looked up at Denver before looking at me.

And I hugged her again. He did too.

But our eyes met just then and a smile curled Denver’s lips. “You did it” He whispered. My heart could finally heave with relief when his hands reached to my face and he pulled apart a strand of my hair.

“I wasn’t doubtful that you would for a second you know” Denver said and I smiled. “You’re the strongest person I know, you just brought someone back from the dead, Eliana” I gazed into his eyes, a reflection of my self-realization as well and if it hadn’t quite dawned on me before that I was a Hybrid, it did at that moment.

And then something shifted.

“Denver, I think I’m ready” I said. He arched his brows a bit.

“I’m ready to fight Jaxon. And I have what it takes to defeat him” His lips curled with a half-smile. “You’re really becoming Alpha, huh?” He whispered and a wistful breeze brushed my skin.

I nodded.

“Well for all it’s worth,” Denver looked right into my eyes. “I think you’re ready too” And I had no idea how much I needed to hear those words until he said them. Denver cradled my face, wiping a tear off my cheeks.

“I think you should go meet your father.”

Chapter 67: The Crown.

Chapter 67 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

It wasn’t until after I walked out of that room and past the corridor that I realized it was daylight outside the window. A deep breath heaved out of my lips, beyond glad that the tumultuous night had come to an end. As I reached the door to my Father’s room, I came to a halt.

A gust of air blew into my face and I went over my lines in my head before finally raising my hands to knock. It was his guard who opened the door and the next eyes that met mine were Phil’s.

“Where is my Dad?” I breathed heavily. The air inside his chambers was already cold and somewhat tense and Phil brought his eyes over to the desk right in the corner and my father was seated right behind it. I sauntered towards him and he took his eyes off the paper in his hands.

Our eyes met, it was nice to see him easing back into normal pack duties and documentation after everything that happened but this conversation had been long overdue.

“Eliana” He called out as I came to a halt in front of him. “To what do I owe this pleasant surprise this early in the morning as well?” He asked. I looked down at my dress which was drenched with both sweat and blood.

And I wondered what exactly about this morning was pleasant. Not when my eyes had been gauged open the entire night from one to another. Maybe it was the adrenaline that pumped from so much energy, maybe that was what fired in my heart at that moment.

“I’m ready” I blurted out to him. My Dad closed the papers completely with an arch coming between his brows. “What?” He asked softly. “You offered me a decision that you said I should think about and I’ve thought about it and here I am, standing in front of you telling you that I’m ready. You think I would make a great Alpha, I think so too” I said.

“But Jaxon?” I understood my father making sure I was well aware of the risks and I nodded. “I’m pretty sure I can take him in a fight—“ “A fight where you won’t be allowed to use magic, Eliana...I hope you understand that. Being a Hybrid doesn’t guarantee you victory in this one” He replied and I narrowed my eyes at him.

“Do you not trust me, now?” I asked.

My father arose from the chair. “Of course I do. Of course I’m aware of how strong and fierce you can be. I’m only making sure you know the dangers. I want you to be Alpha but most of all, I don’t want you to get hurt” He whispered. A hard lump slipped down my throat.

“And I won’t. I won’t get hurt.”

“Just like I also won’t allow another soul to get hurt by Jaxon. I’m done wasting time, all that does is mess things up and complicate it even further. You saw what happened last night but more so even things you didn’t see. We can’t let that happen again” I gritted through my teeth.

“He wants to steal time and so I say, we don’t give it to him. I’ve thought about everything, the dangers and the risks, everything and I’m still standing here telling you that I’m ready. What else are you waiting for? What else are we all waiting for?” I asked him.

My father looked at me for a second before a soft sigh escaped his lips.

He covered his head.

“Oh” He exhaled. “I’ve prepared myself for this day for so long but now that it’s here, it just feels so surreal” He whispered. “My entire legacy has led up to this moment, Eliana” He lifted his face up again.

“Do you know what this means?” He asked and finally, I backed away with a breath hitched in my throat. I realized in the silence that it meant him finally stepping down as Alpha. For there to be a battle, for him to name a predecessor, a candidate, he had to retire.

“You know immediately I thought I was getting better, I told myself I couldn’t wait to come back here, right into this office, flipping through the gazillion pages of whatnot. Returning to this chamber was all I looked forward to, was all I thought I needed to be completely me” My Dad said.

“But since last, it’s all felt so strange. I mean this used to my entire life, my legacy, my work, my title. It was very easy to put my whole self into my duty after your mother died and it worked. It

worked for all those years. However, not so much now” His voice went low and a smirk crept to his lips. “Now it feels like I don’t even belong here anymore.”

“Dad” I muttered. “No no” He shook his head.

“It’s just as much of a good thing as it is terrifying. I didn’t know anything outside of this, outside of being Alpha. Some days, I think about how I didn’t even know myself, discover myself and who I could’ve been in a life that wasn’t this and then I realize how much I missed out on.”

“Including raising a beautiful girl, and having a beautiful family. Now, I sit in the chair with resentment for my lost life. I think it’s taken everything from me, all those years that I wouldn’t get back. And it’s just something I’ve been thinking about. Being a vegetable the last few months allows so much time for you to be in your head you know” He chuckled.

And I did too.

“Now, I wish I was able to find that balance between being an Alpha and being a person. Being a father, being literally anything else but it’s too late for that. Now, I don’t even know what type of person I am” He said.

I reached across the table to his hands and he looked up at me.

“It’s not too late” I whispered. “If there’s anything I’ve learned, anything I’ll hold onto, it’s that it is never truly too late. Because as long as there is life, as long as you’re breathing, there is hope” I said to him.

“Hope to love, hope to become a better person, hope to grow and figure out yourself, hope to live. So it’s not too late, Dad” I nodded and he let out a soft chuckle. “See what I’m talking about” He heaved.

“You’re already better at this than I was” He said. I scoffed lightly. “We all have our flaws” I replied. “We just have to make sure that they don’t define us” I added and my Dad darted his eyes back to the table, upon which was a crown he’d seldom ever worn. It was his titular crown, one that sealed his fate as Alpha ever since he was little.

And he picked it up in his hands.

“I’ve let this define who I am for so long. I was afraid to be any other thing but this, that is my flaw” My Dad whispered. “But not anymore” He added, turning his eyes to me and he handed the crown over to me.

“You’re right.”

“What else am I waiting for?” He echoed my eyes fell to the Gold crown, adorned with several diamonds at its tip and I was even afraid to touch it because at that moment, it felt a lot more real.

“Don’t make the same mistakes I made, Eliana” He whispered. At that moment, I took a step back with a hard lump in my throat. “One more thing,” His voice drew my attention back to him.

“Have you thought about what I said?” My father asked and I furrowed my brows. “About Denver? About whether he really is right for you?” He added and a sour breath escaped my lips. I looked him dead in the eyes.

“You know I may not be a hundred percent sure about everything else, Dad but the one thing I am is of Denver. He has stuck beside me through everything, since the very moment I came back here. He has reassured me, loved me, yelled at me but only from a place of love. Hell, he has even laid down his life several times for me...”

“Through everything, he has been right there, right beside me.” My eyes stung a little as I continued. “And I want that, Dad. I want to have that forever. I love him, in a way that I could never love another man. So, to answer your question, yes, yes I believe Denver is right for me” I said.

“And that means putting aside every shitty and stupid rivalry you have with his Pack since only God knows when. That means putting aside everything because you have no idea how much we’ve been through to end up right here. He’s willing to fight for me, he’s shown it a million times and I would be a fool not to do the same” I looked at my Dad.

“I don’t know what happened between you two but Denver is staying. He is staying right here because I love him and once the whole Pack sees him for who he truly is which is an amazing person, they’re going to love him too, including you, Dad. Including you.”

“You want me to be Alpha, here I am doing just that. Because one thing I know is that an Alpha stands up for what is right, for who they believe in and I believe in Denver. I love Denver and when I become Alpha, he’s going to be right there beside me with the rest of Black Mountain...”

“Blake too, because if there’s anyone who knows about forgiveness and second chances, it’s me” I pressed my lips together and for a second, it was hard to read what exactly was going through my father’s mind. I couldn’t believe I had just said all that.

He couldn’t either.

But at that moment, he stepped out from behind his desk and he walked towards me with the Crown. Gently, it was my father who placed it upon my head and though it seemed heavy and wide from a distance, it still fit perfectly. I looked up to meet his wide eyes which beamed with pride.

“Of course it suits you better” His lips parted and his words were soft.

“Alpha Eliana” And the tune to that melted my heart. “I just wish your mother could’ve been here right now. And I wish there wasn’t some stupid battle to determine who gets to wear the crown because that’s no way to tell who truly deserves to wear it. I look at you and I just know.”

“I just know you deserve it.”

“But Pack traditions?” I shrugged. He sighed with a finger brushing against my face. “Your brother won’t give this up without a fight. I just need to know that you’re ready, Eliana. Before I step down and announce you to the Pack.” He whispered. My heart was pounding in my chest.

But the moment my hands touched the crown, it just stopped. Like all my anxiety disappeared at that moment and I parted my lips.

“Yes,”

“I’m ready.”

Chapter 68: I’m Glad I left.

Chapter 68 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

By the time I finally rested my eyes and opened them, it was already afternoon and I was lazily slouched beneath the thick silky sheets. I yawned the moment I sat up on the bed to face Denver who stood right beside me. He folded his arms with a cursive smile.

And I had no idea how long he’d been standing there, watching me sleep.

A soft chuckle escaped my lips as I turned to the side and he sat on the bed. "It's about time" He whispered. I yawned again. Damn, I was really tired. I had no idea I needed that much sleep.

The last thing I remembered was standing opposite my father with the crown on my head after what really was a chaotic night. My eyes gazed out of the windows. I could hardly believe this was only the day after.

"I was so tired" I whispered to Denver and he ran his hands softly through my hair. "I was about to force you to sleep after your meeting with your Dad" He joked, the last of his words reinforcing some necessary silence. Our eyes met at that moment.

"How did it go?" He whispered, the inevitable question. "The talk with your Dad..." He added. I paused to feign a little tension after which I broke into a laugh when I couldn't hold it anymore.

"He said yes" I told Denver whose eyes lit up immediately. "He said as long as I'm ready and I told him I am. He will find the best time to address the Pack but all in all, he was just happy that I took up his decision to become Alpha" I added and there was a wave of doubt that crossed Denver's face at that moment that he covered his head.

"I can't believe it. For the first time, the future seems so bright. It seems so..." "And where will I be?" Denver paused. I pressed my lips together.

"Where am I in that future? Because if there's one thing your father has made known, it's the fact that he hates me as a person and hates me even more for you" Denver added. I shrugged my shoulders.

"And what does that matter?"

"I love you, and I told him to his face just like I've done to you a thousand times. I love you Denver, and I want to do this with you. All of this, I want to fail and win with you by my side, regardless of what anyone thinks" I said to him. "And my plan for when I become Alpha is to have both Packs merge, now maybe completely because I don't want you to have to give up your title too and I know you already said it's something you could do but I don't want that."

"For all I care, there could be two Alphas, you and I."

"Eliana" He scuffled but I shook my head. "I mean, I'm going to flip everything over. The traditions, the laws and everything we consider normal, I'm going to change because they're really not. The rot of this Pack runs deeper into the foundation and I'm going to start all over" I said to him. "And I'm going to start all over with you."

"That is non-negotiable, Denver" A smile curled to his lips and he heaved a sigh. "Is your stubbornness what qualifies you to be an Alpha?" He teased leaning towards me and I rolled my eyes to the back of my head.

"Call it whatever you want, I only came here as a woman with a dream."

Denver's arms wrapped around me softly as he gazed into my eyes. There was barely any space or boundary between us and I could feel his heated breaths against my neck.

"Well, I'm in love with this woman with a dream" He whispered. But just as I was about to kiss his lips, Denver pulled away with a snarky stare and he hopped out of bed, taking the sheets with him. I laid there, bare to the cold winds that poured in through the windows.

"But that Dream won't come true without sufficient training" He muttered. I groaned beneath my breath. "Now come on, we already talked about this. You have a battle to prepare for and I have a lot of free time so I've taken it upon myself to prepare you for the Grand fight" Denver literally roped me out of bed and I grudgingly stepped into his arms.

"But I'm too tired" I grunted. "Plus I already trained with the commune back in Tuscany" He let out a laugh before yanking me onto his shoulders. I burst out laughing because of how ticklish it felt as he carried me out of the room, all the way down the stairs.

"Please don't mention Tuscany" He teased and even though I couldn't see his face, I'm certain his eyes rolled to the back. I'm not sure what he had against that place or what he had against me being there but I could tell he hated my stories. I, on the other hand, didn't.

Some days, especially recently, I found myself thinking about my life if I'd never left. Definitely not out of regret, mostly because of nostalgia. And I found myself thinking of Alicia, my best friend there and Chester, her son.

Life would've been so much different if I'd stayed. Not better, not this.

But different. On those days however, I'm happy I left. Days like this with Denver that I would've had if I didn't leave. A family which was everything Elijah wanted. He came out immediately he saw Denver, screaming with me in the air. "Daddy! Mommy!" I'm happy he had that now.

I'm happy I didn't spend the rest of my life in anger and resentment, hating Denver for all those years. I'm happy I know the truth now. I'm happy I came back. But those thoughts would only last for so long before my mind is poisoned again by Jaxon and the impending battle.

I realized with each passing moment, the less anxiety I felt. It was more like just a stomp in my chest when I remembered. The only comfort was the knowledge of the life that came right after.

"Come on" Denver placed me on the ground, in the middle of the woods. Elijah was hopping around us with Cory and Thelma's kids. Everyone seemed to be outside. But he didn't care.

He leaned forward into me, grasping my hands firmly. "Let's do this!"

Chapter 69: Going For A Run.

Chapter 69 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

DENVER.

"Here!" I sliced the air with a sword and Eliana met me halfway. She wedged her body against the weapon and a proud smile crept to her lips.

“See, I got it this time” She whispered softly but the moment her eyes darted away, I swung my arms again, slashing her weapon out of her hands. She turned to me with a gasp as her sword hit the grounds.

“You” She gritted through her teeth.

“I never said the fight was over” I shrugged. Her hands fell to her hips as she narrowed her eyes. I placed my weapon down now. “Well, it is now” I told her, a smirk creeping to my lips.

“I told you to be mindful of the enemy’s next move. As long as you have no idea, the more careful you ought to be” Brushing past her shoulders, I reached for a bottle of water before tossing her one more.

“Jaxon is very sneaky but you already know that” I muttered. She was breathless from her lips as she downed the bottle of water. We had been at this since afternoon, training tirelessly for her fight. And don’t get me wrong, Eliana was strong, stronger than I even thought.

She just needed more concentration if she was going to make it out of there unscathed. I didn’t just want her to win, I didn’t want her to get hurt too. As she heaved a deep sigh and my eyes met hers, I reconditioned my mind into thinking this was the right decision again.

I had to force myself to take a step back, convince myself that this was the right thing and it all came from a place of fear. Fear that the moment Eliana stepped on that field, it would be the first time I wouldn’t be able to protect her. The first time my hands will be completely tied.

It wasn’t just about trusting her. It was Jaxon who I didn’t trust.

And I just swallowed a hard lump down my throat, pretending that wasn’t my biggest worry. But she was settling in good and like I said, Eliana was already strong. Now, I just had to be stronger and let her go.

At that moment, I felt someone suddenly latch onto my back and she brought me scrambling to the ground. Her hands laced over my eyes and I could feel her heated breaths along my neck.

“Be mindful of the enemy’s next move, you said” She teased. She had gotten me good that moment I was in my thoughts but somehow, I still managed to flip her on her back.

As she dropped to the ground, Eliana giggled with her arms around me. Her luscious amber eyes locked into mine and I just shook my head. “Got you” She whispered. My hands fell right beside her as I wedged my body in the air above where she laid. Though there was some distance between us, the air was still palpable when our eyes met.

“Just kiss me already” She rolled her eyes to the back of her head and I licked my lips, restraining myself even more. It was a tough battle, withdrawing from her. “Not until I’m satisfied you’ve learned something today” I bellowed at her. She sat up with an arched back.

“Is that some sort of punishment?” Eliana asked. I scrunched my nose.

“Think of it like some sort of reward.”

“Don’t flatter yourself, Malik Denver” She blurted out with a chuckle, making it seem like she didn’t care but her lustful eyes said otherwise.

“Call it what you want” I shrugged my shoulders, throwing a look back at her. “I already told you. We still have a long way to go in training” I stood up, smothering my shorts and she did too.

“But it’s already late” Her eyes darted to the setting sun. “And everyone has already gone in” “Good” I replied. “We could use the space and the serenity” I said. “No more sword fighting please” She groaned.

“Who said anything about sword fighting?” I removed my feet from my shoes and my eyes glinted with mischief. Eliana looked at me with an arch between her brows as I took off my shirt. More than she’d like to admit, she stared down at my body. I didn’t mind.

I liked it when she did that, after which she’d roll her eyes like she wasn’t impressed. Like she didn’t care. I wasn’t sure what other long game she was playing like we weren’t over that already. I don’t think she’d ever stop though. We could be married with three kids and it wouldn’t still stop her from rolling her eyes at me.

I guess I liked it. God, I liked her. I love her.

“Come on” I pulled my leg out of my pants and stretched out an arm to her. “Let’s go for a run” I urged. Eliana looked over her shoulders with a color-drained face. “Now?!” She blurted out.

“Of course” I shrugged. “You said it yourself, everyone has gone in. It’s minutes away from being completely dark. We have the world and the woods to ourselves” I convinced her and she sucked in a deep breath.

“Come on, Eliana. Don’t be such a downer.”

“I am not!” She snapped back at me and I just kicked my feet forward. “Prove it then” I sprinted slowly at first without looking back but I did hope she was coming behind me.

“Can you slow down?!” The sound of her voice was restive and distant and when I finally looked back, she was wrestling out of her clothes. And a smirk crept to my lips as I jogged backward. It took a while for her to catch up to me but only when she did, did I increase my pace.

She was breathless, running behind me. By that time, we were well into the woods and finally, as we approached the center of the forest, I shrug off the rest of the clothes, letting my wolf out of my skin. The winds brushed through my fur as I shifted so effortlessly.

My heels dug further into the earth and I caught a glimpse of a smile on Eliana's face. "Come on!" I bowled at her. "Shift with me."

"I'm not sure I can" She yelled back at me but my snout scrunched up in a way that was disbelieving. "Of course you can" Without a doubt, I replied. And I watched as Eliana came to a halt. She took a deep breath in and closed her eyes and after a moment, her wolf had taken over.

There was a glint in her eyes like she was just as surprised. Maybe she'd spent too long being a witch over the past few days that she completely forgot she could shift. It was about her fourth or fifth time now so it was just as easy and effortless. Like slipping into a costume.

Her bones didn't snap in pain and there was barely any screaming of agony. Her paws just hit the ground and she was anxious to get going. My wolf eyes gazed down at her body and there was this fiery attraction between the two of us, wolves in our most powerful yet vulnerable state.

Eliana hit the ground and paced further into the trees. I followed her, trying my best to match up to her pace. Through the course of the journey, we both exchanged lasting glances at each other as we ran. We just kept running and running until the sun had completely set.

Until the stars were full in the skies and darkness had fallen. Until time meant nothing to us. We ran until the ground felt as if it was falling away from our feet, until our lungs wanted to burst in our chests.

We just ran, not from anything for once but to something. To our future.

After about an hour and a half and I'm sure by now Eliana has flexed every bone and muscle in her body, we finally came to a halt. Eventually, realizing how far we'd come from the Pack House which was miles and miles away. I struggled to catch my breath but she had it a lot easier.

As she stood still, I realized it was the first time I paid that much attention to her wolf form, the intricate lines across her back, her little ears and every single detail that made her unlike any wolf I'd seen before. I could get used to this, spend the rest of my life looking at her.

Admiring her. Loving her.

She was just so beautiful. Eliana—my mate.

My mate.

I liked the tune of that. My...Mine.

She was mine.

The thought made my heart fire up and my blood to race. We were all alone in the middle of nowhere, the center of the forest, miles and miles away from home. I inched closer to her, running my nose along her wavy fur and I clenched down on my teeth.

Her scent drove me mad with desire and I wasn't sure how much longer I would be able to restrain myself. Who was I kidding—I couldn't anymore. I lifted my eyes into her golden-brown ones and I knew at that moment.

I couldn't wait anymore. I simply must have her.

And I must have her now.

Chapter 70: The Perfect Night.

Chapter 70 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

As Denver sauntered closer to me, I could hear the echo and breathiness of his deep growls. As soon as his luscious desire-filled eyes met mine, a chill went up my spine. I could scent his arousal, a mately bond that lingered between the two of us and I was no better than him.

Because at that moment, all I wanted to do was wrap my arms around his neck and draw him closer to me. Wanting him as a wolf felt different, it felt primal and I was filled with this surge and longing for arms to hold him, and lips to kiss him.

Legs to wedge around his perfectly sculpted hips.

I wasn't sure there was a time I'd wanted him more than I did at that moment and from the look in his eyes, I could tell Denver wanted it too. He was having a harder time holding himself back but when his chin met me evenly at eye level, he just gave up.

Slowly, beneath the silvery moonlight, we shifted in unison and slipped into both our arms. My back grazed against the soft forest grasses as he leaned on top of me. A smile captured his lips just as he stared into my eyes. I looked into his emerald green ones too and they were captivating and sexy under his dark brown hair.

Using a finger, he trailed through my hair and although I could barely see him underneath the light, I could feel the weight of his body press into me. He leaned in closer, now inches away from my lips.

“You're done holding yourself back?” I whispered to him. He scoffed lightly. “As if it wasn't hard enough” Denver said and at that moment, as we laid naked in the woods, I felt something hard enough, scraping between my thighs and a soft gasp escaped my lips.

“How could I ever succeed in restraining myself when you're around?”

“When you drive me so mad with passion and desire” Denver’s eyes marked my lips. “I’m a goddamn lucky man to have you, Eliana. You know that?” My heart lumped in the back of my throat as his deep voice reverberated through my entire body.

Denver grabbed my face just then and he kissed me. He kissed me as intensely and deliberately like it was the first time all over again and I just surrendered myself into his arms.

His lips were gracious and heavenly, like kissing the perfect silk, a perfect combination of gentleness and dominance. As his tongue swept into my mouth, Denver held me closer to him.

His soft lips trailed down my neck and behind my ears and I was filled with a sensation that sent my world spinning. I moaned into the winds as my eyes gazed into the starlight skies.

“Fuck, Denver” His body tensed whenever I called his name and I could feel his hands wander every inch of my body with hunger and desire. He cupped my bare breasts, running his lips over my hard nipple. I could hardly believe we were doing this and in the woods at that.

But it was clear Denver didn’t care and besides, we couldn’t have been any further from the Pack-house, so the chances of anyone finding us here were well below zero. I’m not certain whether he put that into consideration or he was just too dizzy with desire to think about anything else but me. But the truth was, I could say the same.

At that moment, I wanted nothing more in the world than him.

He pulled away, raising his breathless lips to my face again and I stared daintily at him. “You want this?” He groaned. “Please” I muttered in a tone that was barely audible but he heard me. He heard the longing and begging in my voice which marked a smirk across his lips.

“I love it when you beg me, Eliana. I love it when you need me.”

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“Let me hear it” His lips softly teased my ears and I felt the hairs across my skin stand. “Let me hear you” Denver whispered. “Please” The words fled from my lips at that moment. “I want you, Denver.”

His hands moved down, trailing down my skin with a spark until they settled between my wet thighs. He jerked them apart and I felt my body tense when he pressed into me. I stared up at his face, a moan escaping my lips the moment I felt his hard cock against my pussy.

Time stopped. Everything else stopped.

Like I only just existed in his arms at that moment. I took control of my hands, wrapping them around his back drenched with sweat and I pulled him even closer to me. A growl escaped his lips as I felt the drag of his cock teasing around my entrance.

Denver's lips curled into his teeth and his eyes were bleeding yellow. That was the only way to know a wolf in heat. And though he was human now, it still felt like I was staring into the eyes of a wolf.

"I'm going to fuck you now." It was more of an order than it was a request and just then, he finally slid in slowly. My lips parted with a gasp as my nails dug into his back. Denver locked his eyes into mine as he buried himself fully inside me. We both froze for a second.

Before he started thrusting. He moved his hips, sliding out of me and slowly sliding back in. I moaned deeply from my lips as he stroked back and forth, keeping a steady, perfect rhythm. And it didn't matter how many times I had him inside me, every inch of Denver's large pulsating cock felt like heaven each and every time.

He glided his hands over my moist body, tense with pleasure. And he knew every inch of it, every part that drove me mad with pleasure, he touched and he kissed my lips again. My hands roamed over his back as I went along with his momentum and after the long day we'd just had, it wasn't long until I felt an orgasm about to crash over my body.

"Fuck Denver!" I moaned his name as he went deeper and deeper, pressing longer and harder inside of me. "Cum for me" He urged, his pace increasing with every thrust. "Cum for me, Eliana" And by his order, I exploded with a ravishing orgasm, shivering beneath him.

"Denver" I called. My body writhed in his arms, bursting with an intense wave of pleasure. But Denver didn't stop. He kept pounding through and through, thirsty for his climax too. He pulled away and I saw in his eyes just how much he wanted it. He had always wanted to satisfy me first, it was only right that I did him justice.

In a split second, I flipped him over and Denver's back came crashing atop the grasses. My hands fell to his sweaty tatted chest as I straddled his cock with every last strength that I was inside of me. I moaned, gliding my hips and back and forth and sliding down over him.

His lips sang with pleasure and every thrust I put him through brought a new look on his face. It was so hot to watch him like that. To know that I had such an effect on him. He growled from his lips, hands attached to my waist as I thrust upon him.

My already feeble body still trembled with pleasure but I wasn't stop until my mate was satisfied. I rode him stallion in heat, hands sticking into my hair as my breasts danced with every motion.

His grip intensified and I felt the passion surging through his torso. He pressed my body more and more into him and I was forced to take down every last inch of his tireless cock. I wailed with pleasure and he groaned intensely, urging me to ride even faster.

He was close, I could feel it.

So I surrendered to his touch, his eyes closed in me as I pounded myself onto his cock. “Now, Denver...” I breathed. “Now, you cum for me” My voice was laced with a heavy moan.

“You cum in me.”

“Fuck Eliana.”

“Fuck, I’m cumming!” His eyes charged open with an intense glare and a loud groan escaped his lips. The next second, I could feel his warm seed flowing inside of me. And then, he pulled me closer to him, holding around my waist as he panted heavily.

“Fuck” He exhaled. My body finally loosened around him and I placed my head gently against his chest. His hand fell to my back and he kissed my forehead. I could hear his heart racing in his taste and the sound of his breathing was like singing to my ears.

“That was fucking good, Eliana” Denver growled. A smile curled my soft lips as I looked up at him. “It was?” I whispered. His chest rose and fell to the sound of his voice. “It was the best.”

That moment, our lips met again for the one millionth time that night and all I wanted to do was stay there, right in his arms, for as long as I could.