

## Chapter 71 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

Beneath the canvas of the night sky, Denver's chest was lightly bathed in an ethereal silvery glow. We laid side by side with my head upon his chest and my fingers circling around the tattoos on his skin.

With an arm around my shoulders which fell down my back, Denver pulled me closer to him as if the space wasn't non-existent between us again. I wasn't complaining, like I said I wanted nothing more than to remain in his arms. Forever.

As his distinct raspberry cologne trickled up my nose, the memories from a few hours earlier came flooding back to me. Denver looked down and an innocent smile curled my lips to hide the carnal thoughts sweeping through my head.

"Nothing" I whispered in a light sing-song voice but Denver narrowed his eyes. His hands briskly waved across his face. "Is there something on my face? Is it an insect?" He sat up dramatically and I couldn't help but burst out into laughter. "I said nothing, relax" I whimpered.

"Why are you looking at me then?" He chuckled softly. At that moment, I pulled my eyes to lock into his emerald green ones and it struck me, in a way that it had never before. Like they usually say, when you know, you know. Love isn't something that's forced, neither is it just the big moments alone. You could simply be having tacos with someone you love and then it hits you like a wave just how much this person means to you.

Or in my case, laying naked upon the earth and beneath the crimson moon, love was there, between Denver and I. It was in his warm touch, it was in his making sure I got the much larger length of the blanket so I wouldn't freeze to death. It was his laughing and his innocent eyes as they looked at me and it was then, I knew.

Not just that I loved him because I'd known that for a while now. But that I could get used to this, sleeping and waking up in his arms, nights like this in the woods. I could get used to this. I wanted to get used to this and after the tumultuous years that were my life, it's hard to even know exactly what love is but I'm glad Denver showed me.

I'm glad I look into his eyes and then I see it.

“What?” He asked softly and there was a crack in his voice when I suddenly stood up. Now, we had made our way back to the Pack, even though it was still somewhat at a distance from us but at least we had our stack of clothes safe by the corner of the tree.

And as I ransacked through his clothes, Denver stood to wear his underwear. I just took the blanket, clasping it around my chest. My hands sought through his pants and when I got what I wanted, I turned back to him.

“What is it?” Denver ran his hands through his thick moist hair and there was a smirk across his lips when he looked at me. I twirled my legs with a dainty smile before I crept up to him and in my hand was the ring. The ring he had shown me a few hours earlier while he talked about his grand plan to propose the previous night.

“What is this, Eliana?” He asked as his eyes fell on the diamond in my hands. “Now I know we promised to try again sometime in the future where everything is perfect and everything is I don’t know” I scoffed in a light tone, looking up at him.

“For God’s sake what am I even doing?” I chuckled and Denver buried his face into his hands, restraining himself from laughing even though I could hear his giggles. “I guess what I’m trying to say is, I don’t want to wait”

“I’m not sure I want to wait a second longer without being your wife. Without being yours. I mean why are we even waiting still for the perfect moment when we have tonight?” I gazed at him and my heart was heavy with even the words that didn’t make it out of my lips.

“Denver, you make me feel things that I’ve never felt before, you shake me and you make me feel. You bring out the brave and courageous yet vulnerable side of me. And you made me believe in love, even after everything. I look at you and see love. I feel it and I want to feel that way for the rest of my life” I held the ring in my hands but Denver took it away. “I—“ He stuttered, looking up at me too.

“I couldn’t wait either, Eliana” We both chuckled and the moment his eyes met the ring, they shimmered with tears. “I can’t believe I’m going to do this, now” He joked. “In my fucking boxer shorts and you’re wearing a towel. It’s the opposite of romantic” He said.

My chest exploded with laughter as I looked at the skies and the million stars scattered across it.

“At least we have the stars, and we have the woods. And we had tonight. We have both of us, two people so madly in love with each other and that’s just about enough romantic for me” I said to him. The smile vanished for a second and the air grew a little tense as Denver fell to one knee and I may have already known but it didn’t stop my heart from skipping and stomping like a little girl seeing her crush for the first time.

Except now, it was different. He was really doing this.

Denver's eyes trailed up to mine and they locked into each other. My hand clamped over my lips as I sucked in a bit of air. "Eliana," My name danced out of his lips as he took my hands.

"I don't want to wait anymore" Denver said.

"You're everything my heart has sought after for the longest time and through every moment with you, through every laughter, every joy and even the times you're screaming at me, there's always something there for me to take away and I can't help but fall more and more in love with you each time, each passing day, each second that I live and breath..."

"I don't scream" I whispered. He fought the urge to roll back his eyes as we chuckled. Then, it was quiet for a while. I'd give anything to know what he was thinking at that moment but a tear dropped from his eyes.

"I was stupid looking for the perfect moment when it's every single second that I spend with you. I love you so much, Eliana." Denver said.

"And if I go back in time to six years ago so you never got hurt that night, I would. I would've treated you better, I would've loved you better and showed it nonetheless because that is exactly what you deserve."

"I would've made sure you never got hurt, that you never left" My heart lumped in the back of my throat as the memories came flooding back to me and I pushed the lump down. "But even through everything, I may have been able to love you better but I could not have loved you more."

"You were it for me, Eliana. From the first night that I saw you in this forest, I just knew. I knew it was you. It was always going to be you. I just wish I could've fought a lot harder and a lot sooner" I clenched his hands at that moment. "It's okay, Denver"

"Everything already happened exactly the way it was supposed to" I said.

"All that matters is that I'm standing here and you're here too and regardless of everything, we found our way back to each other. That's all that matters to me" I whispered and his eyes met mine again, the umpteenth time that night but who was counting?

My heart fluttered at his arresting gaze as he gently held my fingers.

"Eliana Jacobs, will you marry me and make me an even happier man?" He stared into my eyes and I could feel my feet float in the air for a second. "Will you spend forever with me? You and I, and Elijah. Please,"

He whispered. "I promise to do it right this time."

I swallowed the lump down my throat before I nodded and Denver slipped the ring through my finger. After which he stood, and his hands framed my face just as he kissed my lips.

“Yes!” I squealed. “A hundred times yes!” He lifted me in his arms and my legs locked around his bare torso. With my arms around his neck, I looked down at him again. Denver smiled at me in a way that moved my world and he whispered.

“God, I love you” I could see the reflection of the moon in his eyes and it felt like the presence of the goddess herself. It felt like an approval, like a blessing. It felt right.

“I love you too, Denver” I whispered.

I raised my hand to get a closer look at the diamond when an exhale suddenly left his lips. “Finally, we can put the past behind us” He said.

“I’m not sure I want to do that quite yet” I teased him before feeling his fingers dig into my sides. I erupted into laughter as he tickled me and somehow, we found ourselves laying on the ground again with him above me. He leaned into my face, heated breaths trailing the ends of my skin.

“Maybe it is time” I muttered and his eyes glimmered in the dark. “But then now what?” I pressed my lips together. “Now is forever,” Denver said. “Forever, Sweetheart.” His voice was deep and his words, soothing.

When I was in his arms, it was hard to think about anything else besides us and that was just exactly what I needed. He kissed my lips softly again and I really could use that forever.

“Now you are my mate and my wife,” Denver heaved.

“I can’t wait to tell the whole world.” Well, me too. After all, the Pack could use some good news after everything that’s happened.

Chapter 72: We’re Getting Married!

## Chapter 72 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

“So when are you going to tell everyone?” Denver asked me as we walked down the stairs the next morning. My eyes remained fixed on my adorned finger before I looked at him.

“I’m sorry what?” I blushed. Denver rolled his eyes to the back. “At this point, you better get married to the ring” He teased under his breath and I chuckled softly. “Don’t give me ideas” I whispered, brushing into his shoulders. “But it really is beautiful, I’ll give you that.”

A smile took charge of his lips just as we came to a halt right in front of the Pack kitchen and he looked at me. It was well into the morning on the next day and I was pretty sure I heard voices, Thelma's especially. I met Denver's eyes.

"I asked, when do you want to tell everybody?" He finally repeated. I just shrugged, biting into my lips. "Maybe later in the evening, I don't know" I replied which was a big lie by the way because as soon as the doors parted and I stepped right into the kitchen, the words escaped my lips.

"We're getting married!" I screamed and everyone's eyes immediately turned to Denver and I. Thelma was the first to run to me, taking me up in her arms as she yelled. "I knew it. I knew it!" She turned to Cory.

"You owe me five bucks!"

"Five bucks?!" I echoed, looking to Denver who shook his head with a smile. "I was up late last night and I could swear the screaming" She pulled away but her eyes still locked into mine. "Ugh, Eliana. I'm so happy for you. Welcome to the team! One more thing I have in common with my best friend!" She sang and my brows arched.

Best friend? That was a first. I didn't think I ever had one until now.

And I could see the genuine happiness in Thelma's eyes as she hugged me again. Several other members of the Pack, even some grudgingly still came forward to express their gratitude. I didn't blame them. I understood their reluctance to Denver after everything that happened.

But I was certain with time, they'd all see what I saw in him in the first place. That Denver was the furthest thing from a monster.

"Thank you" I muttered for the one millionth time that morning. Cory took Denver aside, taking his hands in a firm handshake and a hug and though I could barely make out their words, I heard, "Congratulations man" Cory muttered. "I'm glad you still went ahead with it."

"The Pack could use some not-so-terrible news" He added and when I looked around, I had no idea just how right he was. Because there was some sudden lightness in the air. A spark of joy that had spread around the Pack. People were dancing, and singing and some of them had left everything to admire the diamond around my finger.

Their eyes would swell up with admiration and love and the name Jaxon couldn't have further from anyone's lips.

At that moment, the door drew open again and my father walked in, alongside Nana with Elijah in her hands.

"Mummy! Daddy!" He instantly yelled the second his eyes fell on us and Elijah scurried with an intense speed into our arms. We hugged him at once until Denver lifted him in the air.

“Daddy you gave her the ring...” Elijah took my finger in his little hands and I turned to Denver. “What? Did you tell him?” I asked. All he did was shrug lightly. “You really think I was going to propose without his blessing?” Denver asked and I smiled at him.

“What’s going on here!” However, my Dad’s voice drifted both of our attention and when I looked at him, my heart dropped in my chest. He stepped closer towards me and it was clear that he had already seen the ring and heard everyone screaming before he walked into the room.

Now, everyone was quiet because of the Alpha’s presence and his eyebrows lined across his forehead, it was hard to read into his face. To figure out what exactly he was thinking. But my heart stomped in my chest as I looked up at him. Denver beside me.

“I’m getting married, Dad.” I said to him.

“And what about my blessing?” He turned to Denver with a stoic, deep voice and he pushed a hard lump down his throat. Then all of a sudden, my Dad burst out into laughter, easing the brooding tension in the room.

“I’m only joking” He blurted out and the Pack eased with a sigh as they carried on with their joy. Denver and I locked eyes. “I couldn’t be any happier for you, Eliana” He drew me in for a lasting hug and while he did, my eyes met my Nana’s who grinned widely at me.

She nodded one of approval and I nodded back at her.

“Thank you” I mouthed because on some level, all of this was happening because I listened to her that day. “And you,” My Father turned to Denver once I withdrew from his hands.

“Don’t let it happen again” He struck his finger at him. “Yes, sir” Denver cupped his chin. “We’re going to still have the talk you know that, right?” My Dad said. “But all I have for you now is to take care of my daughter and don’t hurt her again. Ever” He pressed his lips together.

And my lips curved with a smirk as Denver looked back at me.

“I will never hurt her again” He assured me. “Then, what do you say? Let’s have a party to celebrate this!” The party roared at that idea and I furrowed my brows. “A party?” I echoed.

“The Alpha’s daughter and the future Alpha just got engaged, of course we’re celebrating it.” He replied. “We don’t usually celebrate much around here and now, at that?” I asked him.

“Well, it’s clear that some things need to change around here and,” He paused, squeezing my hands. “Especially now” My Dad whispered. “We need the joy and the happiness now more than ever.”

“Thank you for restoring it, Eliana” He smiled at me and tears brimmed at the surface of my eyes. “And I was thinking of announcing you then as my choice for Alpha to the rest of the Pack” He said.

I nodded, a light wave of anxiety rehashing in my chest but he breathed in through his lips, urging that I do the same which I did and I stared right into his eyes. “You’re going to be just fine, Eliana” He whispered.

And I had no idea how much I needed to hear that until I did.

“And I’m so happy for you and I’m sure that somewhere, wherever she is, your Mother is beaming with pride down at you right now” He said. The tear escaped my eyes as I sniffled. And when he drew away, my hands found the necklace around my neck and I could feel her.

I was certain that she was everywhere and her smile was engraved in the back of my head. I’m not sure I would ever forget it. “Mummy!” Elijah crept up to me from behind and I turned to him with a smile. He clung around my legs, lifting his eyes to me.

“You kept your promise” He whispered and I’m not sure he wanted Denver to hear but he did. And he looked at me. “We’re going to be a family” Elijah added and his grin was so big that his eyes disappeared.

“Yes, Elijah” I leaned forward to him, running my hands through his hair and Denver stepped even closer to hold my hand. I looked into his eyes as I whispered, “We’re going to be a family.” And who would’ve thought?

Maybe not me. But for the first time, it felt like this, right here was exactly where I was supposed to be. And it was the best feeling ever.

Chapter 73: The Dinner Party.

## Chapter 73 - Rejected Mate’s Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I stepped outside onto the balcony, sauntering towards the railings, on which I placed my arms upon. I fixed my eyes into the night sky, wondering how fast the day went by. The news of Denver and I’s engagement had already spread around town and we spent the evening having a large feast with his Pack and mine.

It was one of the very few times when we weren’t thinking about anything really. Most of us were just in the moment, enjoying ourselves.

Me especially.

Throughout the whole day, I had tried my best to not give a single thought to Jaxon or Sienna or being a Hybrid. I was only human today but then night fell and my thoughts returned back to my head. I couldn't escape them this time so I excused myself from the table to go outside.

Here I was, standing with my gaze falling over the Pack grounds. I heaved a deep breath through my lips, taking a sip of the wine in my hands and it was then the doors opened behind me. A part of me instantly thought it was Denver who probably wondered why I left so early.

But when I turned around, my eyes met my Nana's. And she wheeled herself to sit just beside me. Her eyes fell over the railings too and there was a brief silence between the two of us. I sipped my drink again.

"Why did you leave?" She softly asked when she was ready. "Denver was looking for you, and so is your Dad. You know he's still yet to make the announcement." She whispered and I pushed a hard lump down my throat, letting the winds sweep through my hair.

My hands fell to my lavender gown, the perfect for a dinner event like this. Denver loved and so did I.

"What is it, Eliana?" Nana looked up at me and my brows scrunched up with wry. I didn't even know what it was. Just this surmounting emotion in my chest that just had to be felt.

"I don't know" I replied her. "It's just that once he steps down, once my Dad tells the Pack that he's stepping down, it would make a lot more real and it just hit me, you know" I said. Nana heaved a sigh.

"He said you were the one who wanted this. Because if you're not ready, Eliana, I could have a talk with him" My Grandma was always willing to step in but I shook my head. It wasn't that.

"No" I whispered. "I'm ready, make no mistakes, I am. It's just I think I'm just overwhelmed" I said and she nodded. "Ah," A soft exclamation escaped her lips. "That makes sense. You just got engaged, Eliana" She smiled, looking back into the distance and her eyes bore the reflection of the memories that crossed her mind at that moment.

"I remember when your Grandpa first told me he loved me" Nana said. "When I look back, I remember that moment as when everything truly changed. I was no longer a Witch, I was a person. A person who was loved by another in the best way possible and it opened my eyes. Being loved opened my eyes and it changed my heart" She said.

"When I think of him now, my heart breaks a little but the memories we made, it comforts me. The thought, the feeling of being loved by him still remains even now and it's how I've been able to go so long you know. Through everything, I remember him. I remember that love and it lights up my heart and brings a smile to my lips" Nana whispered.

"Is that why you never cared to love again?" I asked.



"How could I?" There was a crack in her voice. "I already had my one great, epic love. Wanting another would be a little selfish, don't you think? Besides, I'm okay with just his memories because they stayed even when he didn't and that's more than enough for me."

"And why I'm telling you this is because I see a lot of your Grandfather in Denver, especially in the way he looks at you. I see that love and it makes me so happy that you have that. That you were able to find that. That one person who loves you in a way that makes you feel alive because I had that and your mother had that. I'm just," Tears streamed down her cheeks as she sobbed.

"I'm just glad you found that too. Eliana"

I felt my eyes sting with some of my own as I looked down at my Nana.

"I'm glad too" I inched closer to her and she reached for my hands. When she looked up again, our eyes met. "I know things may never be the same with us, after everything that happened, after the secrets that I kept but deep down, I really hope that it does. I really hope that you look at me again and you only see your Grandmother who has loved you unconditionally since the day I laid my eyes on you."

"And you find it in your heart to forgive me, Eliana" She whispered. I nodded my head, the tears leaving my eyes at that moment. "I've forgiven you, Nana. I could never be mad at you. Of course I forgive you"

Now, maybe she was right about things never coming back to the way they were but at least I had forgiven her. I could forgive her. And at that moment when I looked at her, all I saw was my Grandma. My Hero.

"I love you so much, Eliana" She said to me. "You have no idea, and I really hope I make it long enough to watch you walk down the aisle" She said. I shook my head. "You will, Nana and you will be there to hold my hands too. Do you hear me?" I said to her.

"I don't know, Eliana" Her voice was frail and uncertain and I fought to hold back the tears in my eyes, failing effortlessly. "I feel it, I'm a Witch so I feel it when my time is nearly over" She whispered.

"That's why I needed to have this conversation with you."

"Nana" I shook my head. "I've made it long enough. I've lived Eliana and most importantly, I've loved. I've loved you especially. You made the rest of my life so bright and happy when you came back" I sobbed into her arms and she held around me. "You're not going anywhere" I whispered.

"Maybe not now, maybe not tonight but soon." She replied.

"Very soon."

"And I would tell you to be okay but I already know that within myself. I already know that you will be okay. That at the very end of it, you're there and you will be okay" She whispered into my ears and when I looked into her ears, there it was—the certainty.

She squeezed my hands. "Remember, I'm a Witch. I know things" She said and I chuckled softly, tears still in my eyes. "But those things, you know them too. I'm glad you do. I'm glad there are no more secrets."

"Just the way I've always wanted it to be" She said with a fixed gaze into mine. I pushed a hard lump down my throat just as the door opened again and I looked back to find Ivan.

"Come on, your Dad wants to see you" He informed and I wiped my eyes, straightening my back. I knew exactly why. "I'm on my way" I replied and when I looked at Nana, she let go of my hands.

"Go" She whispered. "I think I might just stay out a little longer" She whispered. I frowned. "Don't worry," She paused. "I already know how it goes" And that was such a comforting thing for her to say. We both smiled at each other as I walked back into the room.

The door closed to an utter silence.

My Dad was standing while everyone else was seated, hundreds of us. Blood Hounds and Black Mountain too. And I found my way to Denver's side. He was right next to my father but he allowed me to stay in the middle of the both of them.

I looked up at Dad and he smiled at me.

"It's time."

Chapter 74: The Night Before.

## Chapter 74 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

There were a few murmurs beneath the sound of his voice as every eye stared at the both of us, wondering what he was about to say next and I'm not sure any of them would have been able to guess. I nodded at him.

"I have gathered you all here today," My Father started, looking to everyone else and they sat up. "And it is with great service and humility, and pride for leaving this Pack for thirty years that I have now decided to step down as Alpha of the Blood Hound Pack" He paused.

And there was a slight uproar, more like a surprise reaction. They looked at themselves with shock in their eyes. "The last thirty years have been the highlight and the best of my life, leading each and every one of you the best way I could. To see the strength and resilience that courses through your veins fill me with so much pride and joy." He continued.

"And I'm going to carry that, every single day for the rest of my life."

"I may not be your Alpha from tonight, but each and every one of you still mean everything to me. The title nor the crown, not of those are my legacy. I'm standing here and I'm looking at my legacy right now" His eyes turned to me and I swallowed a lump down my throat.

"Our pack was never solely defined by my leadership but by the indomitable spirit that courses through the veins of each and every one of you. And tonight, I step down not in defeat but in the profound belief that you are more than capable of shaping the destiny that lies ahead."

"Which is why I'm entrusting this sacred duty to a worthy successor, one who will guide you with wisdom, strength, and unwavering commitment. I ask not for sorrow to cloud the moonlit path we've tread together but that we celebrate everything that we've been through together. To look ahead of us and to still see that we are right there. In the future."

"That we are together as always, even after me. But for now. I may no longer lead but I will forever be a part of this Pack. More than myself, my flesh and my body but in my daughter. My pride and the one thing I'm certain and confident that I got right..." He looked at me and so did all the eyes in the room.

"I present to you my wish and my candidate for Alpha, Eliana Jacobs" He introduced me and there were as many gasps as there were claps. A first female Alpha. No one had heard that before. None of them has seen that before. And it was a surreal feeling to have every eye staring at me.

Not just staring but actually seeing me. Because they always stared, they always looked but I was never seen. Not until this moment.

"Deep down, I want nothing more than to give it to you, right here and now but I know there are outside forces that would want this" He took off his crown, holding it in front of me.

"That would come for this, hunt for this. Fight for this, Eliana but I'm not just standing here to declare you as my wish. I'm standing behind you and so is everyone else" He darted a look at the people and with reluctance, they started to chant. Until I couldn't hear anything else.

"Eliana!"

"Eliana!" My eyes brimmed with tears as I felt Denver's hands slip into mine. When I looked at him, he smiled down at me and he couldn't have been more proud. I looked back at the Pack and then at my Dad. The tears fell down my cheeks at that moment.

"You see" He whispered. "We're all rooting for you."

"Never for one second think otherwise." His hands held my face and I nodded. "Eliana! Eliana" I could still hear the chanting even though I could not see through my moist eyes. But then as I cleaned them, they darted towards the door and I swear I saw my Mother.

Even if it was for barely a second, I saw her. I saw Elijah too and of course, Denver who had stood beside me always alongside his Pack. This was the moment.

Everything had led up to this and there was no turning back now.

Up until I climbed into my bed that night, I could still hear the echoes of the chanting of my name and it brought a smile to my lips as I laid next to Denver. He held over the sheets and made sure I was close enough to him. His hands went down my back and his eyes fell to mine.

"Hey" He whispered.

"Are you okay?" Well, my mind was still racing from such a crazy night and adrenaline still fired up in my chest but I was okay. Funny how, I was.

"Yes" I replied. "I just put Elijah to sleep and when I told him that I was going to be Alpha, you needed to see the smile on his face" I chuckled at the thought of it again. It was still surreal but only for a moment.

"What is it?" Denver asked, noticing the slightest change in my mood. I heaved a deep sigh. "I know we spoke about optimism and I'm trying my best to be positive about everything but I can't help but feel a little scared, Denver" The smile faded slowly from my lips.

"Because Jaxon, he's surely going to come now and he's going to give it everything he can—" "And you will too" Denver was confident. "We trained. You're going to give it everything you can too and you're pretty strong yourself. Maybe even stronger than me" He said with a smirk.

"Give yourself a little credit. Believe in yourself just as I believe in you."

"Just like everyone does. You saw them out there, my Pack, yours. I've never seen something unite them than their love and support for you" He assured me and my heart eased again.

"I did" There was a crack in my voice. "I saw them"

Denver inched closer to me as my eyes set on the gentle candle flame at a distance from us, warming the room with a crimson glow. "You can do it, Eliana. I'm certain you can defeat him" He said.

"You already did once six years ago" Denver added. I rolled my eyes.

"I just ran away from him" I reiterated. "Well you outran him either way, you outsmarted him just like always and that was six years ago. Surely, everything you learned in Tuscany hasn't gone down the drain" Denver said and I chuckled. It was the first time he acknowledged Tuscany and the commune. And he thought he was clever with his gaze.

As he wrapped his arms around me, I chuckled softly. He placed a soft kiss on my forehead.

"What did my Dad tell you?" I suddenly asked, remembering a time that night when I saw them talking. I still didn't trust my Father when it came down to Denver. "Nothing, really" He heaved.

"He only said he's aware that we may have gotten off on the wrong foot but he's willing to put it all behind him. Behind us" Denver told me and I gasped softly. "Really?" He nodded. "Because of you."

"And also, he promised to see what he can do about my brother, he said even if it's the last duty he does as Alpha" Denver added and my heart melted in my chest. "That's...that's great news" I replied. He smiled.

"Yeah...yeah it is."

I smothered into his shrouding grasp where I felt the safest. I could feel his gentle breaths wave through my hair. Or maybe it was his hands. "It really is" His voice towered over me as my eyes closed tiredly, even though I could still hear his voice very faintly.

"I love you so much, Eliana. You have no idea" He whispered, barely audibly but I heard him and with a smile across my lips, I fell asleep that night. The night before.

And it wasn't until the early hours of the morning that I stumped up from

the bed. My eyes fell on the clock. It was 4 AM. And outside was dark and stormy. Thunder tumbled through the skies as lightning struck.

I felt an easy feeling creep into my chest and Denver woke up too.

"What is it?" He asked, a hand against my back and I heaved a deep breath through my lips. My hands clutched my racing chest. I could sense him. I could feel him. I could see him.

"Jaxon" His name escaped my lips as I looked outside the window. And he was right there. "He's here" I muttered, my hairs standing on end because I knew exactly what that meant.

The battle was a lot sooner than I expected. It was here too. It was now.

Chapter 75: Day Of The Battle.

## Chapter 75 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

The winds coursed through my hair as I dug my feet into the ground. Strands danced across my face and a stint of anxiety pounded my heart. I folded my hands in a fist, looking ahead at the crowd that had gathered.

Every single Pack member, both the Blood Hounds and the members of the Black Mountain Pack were gathered in the massive arena. A ground of about a hundred square feet that was built for only days like this—days of the Alpha Battle.

It had only happened once before, my Great Grandfather they told me. He was brave enough to challenge the Skywalkers.

Hitler-like Alphas that once ruled the Blood Hounds and that fight that day, even though it was centuries ago was meant to secure the Jacob's right to the throne and crown. But today, Jaxon had challenged for that rite. Not only that, he had challenged me to a fight.

And so here I was.

If you asked me how we got here from last night, I'm not sure I'll be able to tell you but all that mattered was finally, we were doing this. I, was doing this. The Alpha battle is one where only one person will come out as victor, only one person will come out as Alpha.

And only one person would come out alive.

And at that moment, I couldn't even pretend that I wasn't scared. That a million thoughts weren't racing through my mind but his warm touch was what grasped me out of my head and back to reality.

"Hey" Denver whispered and I looked at him. The chanting echoed behind his soft voice and his hands swept through my hair. "You've got this" He whispered. "I believe you. I've always believed in you. And if I still could, I would drop everything without wasting a second to take your place."

"To kill him myself—"

"But you can't" I interrupted, shaking my voice. "I'm the one my father crowned Alpha, I'm the one he challenged so I'm the one he fights" There was a crack in my voice as our eyes locked into each other's.

“Where is Elijah?” A hard lump jerked in the back of my throat. “He’s with your Grandma” I immediately darted my eyes to inside the arena where he actually was with Nana. I made her promise to keep him inside there, regardless of what happened.

And even though I told him of the battle, the one mistake I made was not telling him that it could go either way. That there was a probability that he could lose his mother today. I looked him in the eyes and I couldn’t tell him that. No seven-year-old should have to hear that they might lose their parent.

But one thing about Elijah, when I told him about the battle, his eyes remained unwavering. He was so confident that I would become Alpha. I could use that much faith that he had in myself. I looked in his direction but my eyes met my Grandma’s.

And she nodded back to me, a combination of worry and acceptance in her grim eyes and I felt a bit of tears well up in mine. Eliana!” It was at that moment that someone sharply called my attention.

And I looked at Nora, who held two thick robes in her hands.

“Are you ready?” She asked. The sound of the microphone booming across arena grounds. I turned to face her. “I was thinking you would like the purple robe better” She said with a half-smile. And I arched my brows.

“You know, for when the battle is over and you shift. I would be right there for something you could change into” She added. I looked at Denver who shrugged his shoulders. “She’s right” He added. They both had that much faith in me, even when I did not.

But it was good to know at that moment. It was exactly what I needed.

“Now, the reason you’re all here!” The voice of the officiator thundered and there was a rumble that sent dust particles into the air. Chanting that increased more and more with each step I took forward. Until I had reached the brazen end and the starting line of the field.

Then my eyes marked Jaxon who was standing on the opposite end, dressed lasciviously in a silver jacket which he took off. His body shimmered with oil and muscles. Veins popped out of his skin like he’d just gotten out of a fight himself.

And his eyes were filled with rage and thirst and bloodlust when they settled on me.

“The moment we’ve all been waiting for” I cracked my neck a bit, muscling my fingers. He jogged on the spot. The people roared. The sound of the trumpet which would begin the battle was imminent and it was a tense second as I stood there.

I really wish it didn’t have to come down to this but it did. It had.

And we were here, everyone was here. There was only one thing left to do. “Fight!” The thunder of the trumpet rang in my chest as I closed my eyes for just a second and a deep exhale fled my lips. It was time.

I found my way forward and Jaxon was right opposite me. The first seconds of the battle, we spent circling ourselves with the reluctance to shift even though the hunger was in both our eyes. I clenched my teeth as our eyes met in a malicious gaze.

“You’re really about to make a mistake” He warned. “It’s not too late to back down. The second this starts, you sign your death certificate. And you know I’m mostly thinking about poor young Elijah” Jaxon cooed.

“Keep his name out of his lips” I scowled. “How old is he again?”

“Five, six?” We circled one another. “Isn’t that pretty young to lose a mother? I mean you of all people would understand that. Right, Eliana?” He asked and my heart stomped at that moment. I shook my head.

“I know what you’re doing and I’m not going to allow you to get into my head” I lifted my gaze to him and then he halted. I did too, in a defensive stance. His eyes fell down my body.

“Who’s going to throw the first punch?” Jaxon asked and my fingers struck out with claws. My eyes narrowed at him. “I’ll do the honors” With a giant leap forward, I slashed my nails across his face. And his blood spilled to the ground once he turned to the side.

A cackle escaped Jaxon’s lips because when he turned back around, his eyes were now red with blood and anger and he thrust at me, throwing me against the ground. As I rolled, I felt my wolf emerging from the surface of my skin just then a howl escaped his lips as well.

He wasted no time in shifting into the big, black wolf that he was. But for a second, I crouched low, summoning my wolf to make it out a bit faster. At that moment, Jaxon lunged himself at me and he threw me to the ground again. His saliva coated his sharp ivory teeth as he circled around my human body. His claws slashed my eyes, and my face.

And I stumbled to face the earth, a searing pain shooting up my spine.

There were gasps in the crowd, preceding a tense silence as I clenched my fist tightly. “Come on” I urged, blood spilling from my teeth. “Come on” Jaxon pulled away, readying to pounce on my body with full force. He latched himself to the end before sprinting towards where I laid.

I shut my eyes because at that moment, I felt the surge within me. The air grew thick and with each deliberate breath that made it out of my lips, I was certain the earth hummed back to me. I got up from the ground, my eyes shimmering with an ethereal luminescence.

I clenched my fist, from where my claws sprouted from. And as the moonlight embraced me, my form began to shift. Fur, like strands of the moon itself, unfurled across my skin and as the winds



grazed my body, there was this sudden source of strength that filled me. Jaxon came to a halt and the rest of the crowd marveled at something never seen before.

The shifting of a Female Alpha.

As the painless transformation continued, I covered my head with a howl escaping my gritted teeth. And the sound was a lot more different than all the other times that I had shifted. When I was done, completely wolf now, I breathed in the fresh air through my snout.

And my eyes met Jaxon again, for the fight was only just beginning and it was a relief to finally let my wolf take over.

“Now,”

“Where were we?” I growled.

Chapter 76: Our Last Hope.

## Chapter 76 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I felt more powerful now that my Wolf had taken over.

Like a strength I knew nothing of before now coursed through my veins and I brought my eyes to face Jaxon's stone-cold face but for the first time that night, I wasn't afraid of him.

It didn't take him so long for him to attack again but this time, as he lunged himself forward at me, I twisted my neck to sink my teeth into his back. Jaxon let out a wounded growl of agony and to the shock of the rest of the Pack, he fell to the ground.

I breathed out, a piece of his skin hanging from my teeth which I spat out before proceeding to circle around him. He turned back immediately to match my eyes and it was clear that I'd gotten him. It felt so good to see him in pain even though it meant that he was probably going to be even more ferocious now.

But that was a good thing, because I was too.

Now that I had gotten the upper hand, it filled me with the desire to take the lead. I pounced on him on the ground but he was quick enough to dodge my attack this time. His claws groped into my back as he pulled me roughly into him. His limbs wedged against my neck.

And I choked on my saliva. But at that moment, my eyes met Denver's. From a distance from me, he was standing at the edge. His arms were folded and his eyes were staring intensely. I could only imagine how much self-control he had to muster for him to not move an inch.

Or perhaps, he just believed in me so much. He believed that I would make it out alive. I saw it in his crystal clear eyes and he nodded at me, exuding his pride with only his gait.

And that was exactly what I needed to overthrow Jaxon's attack. I pulled him to the ground, maneuvering my way above him. The moment our eyes met, a heavy breath escaped my lips. Beneath the sacred moonlight, the arena became my canvas and this looming battle unfolded like a dance of destiny. Like it was predetermined from the beginning of time.

That there would come a day when a female Alpha would have to fight her stepbrother for her rightful place in the Pack and I would be that female Alpha. I would be the people's last hope. They were all around me, chanting my name especially. I heard a few.

"Eliana! Eliana"

I wedged against Jaxon in a compromising position, one that allowed me to be able to kill him at that moment. The fight might as well have come to an end but I didn't do it. I held off. And sensing my reluctance, Jaxon escaped from my grasp.

I lunged to my four feet again as our fierce gazes met from a distance.

My heart was pounding intensely against its sternum and I could feel it reverberating in my paws as they struck the ground defensively against Jaxon's attack. He launched himself at me again but this time, I was able to dodge him. He rammed himself into a tree, staggering with pain.

It was good to see him that way, wounded and bleeding. He deserved it.

And when he looked in my direction again, bloodlust had filled his impatient eyes. I could tell he wanted nothing more than for this to be over and to be over quickly. I sensed that and I decided to use that to my advantage—to wear him out as much as I could.

So at the end of the day, it would be easier for me to defeat him and stupidly, Jaxon had put all of his strength and momentum at only the beginning of the fight and when he would lung himself at me, I would only dodge without even striking him back. That way, he got angrier but most importantly, he was getting weaker.

The sound of his labored breaths gave it away.

"You bitch!" He howled, running again in my direction but this time, he was smarter, catching me by a hair's breadth but I pushed him off, shoving his body against the ground. He fell with a thud and dust of the earth encircled him. This time, I don't waste any time in grabbing him by his stiffened tail and even with his low growl, I didn't let go.

I could feel his struggle which only made me grip on tighter until I felt his teeth sink into my teeth. Only then was I forced to pull away and Jaxon stood back on his limbs. I screeched in pain, watching my blood spill to the ground. That was probably not my wisest decision.

Now, we were both injured but only one of us was the most tired. I circled around him but then jumped at me, catching me by surprise. He shoved me into the ground but I locked my teeth around his neck. However, Jaxon doesn't let go. I feel his hands around my neck tighten.

"There's no way I'm letting you win today" He scowled and I pulled my teeth out of him only to breathe through my choking lips. His eyes went red with fury as his grasp tightened. My eyes blurred for a second and I became dizzy with memories. Suddenly, I was brought back to when I was eleven years old, when he first touched me.

When Jaxon first laid his hands on me and it was just like this. His hands were around my neck as he plunged my head into the ground. And recollecting a hurtful memory like that filled me with so much anger and rage. He pressed further into me but I wasn't going to go out like this.

I fought with every last strength that I could garner, especially as Elijah's face flashed in the back of my head. This was for him. I couldn't let him grow without a mother. I couldn't die.

Not now, and most certainly not at the hands of Jaxon.

He had already taken so much from me and he wasn't about to rob my son. So I wedged my body against his fierce gasp, closing my eyes shut and with as much strength that coursed through my veins, I was able to push him off me. He fell backward and I turned my side.

I was able to pivot back on my feet and I flung myself at him with a piercing howl. All the anger, all the rage and all the hurt from all those years that was fueled by my loss, and grief. Every emotion that I had felt at least once in my lifetime came flooding back to me.

And I knocked him face-first into the dirt. Jaxon struggled to scramble to his feet but I held him firmer to the ground. Though he managed to kick me off, it wasn't until I was able to get a deep bite into his skin again.

His bitter-tasting blood on my tongue filled me with nothing but the desire to have more. Was this what it felt like to be an Alpha—not just wanting more but wanting him dead?

My eyes were set ablaze with rivalry as Jaxon stood up once again and now, he was hesitant. I could tell he was weak and wounded just as the battle intensified. And I darted my eyes to the Pack once again, this time sighting Aisha, Thelma, Cory, Ivan and most especially, my Father.

Every single member of the Pack had the same look in their eyes, like I was our last hope and it filled me with a sense of purpose as it did vengeance and the desire to finally put this to an end. I looked back at Jaxon whose blood was spilling out of his lips.

"I will kill you" He was breathless. "I will fucking kill you, Eliana" His claws dug into the earth as he readied himself for his final attack yet. He launched forward and the ground trembled beneath the both of us.

I wedged my feet backward and I could've either stayed there and waited for his attack or I could have met him midair. Chances are, with a collision of that force, only one of us would make it out alive.

However, if I was careful, employing every technique Denver had taught me in training, I could ensure that one person was me. I had only a second to think about it but at that moment, a second seemed both longer and shorter.

I could do it but the risks were evident. They were dangerous.

I shook my head off my lousy overbearing thoughts and I just drifted back into that very moment, zoning out everything else. And so I did it. I decided to leap into the air too and meet Jaxon. It was all in slow motion, my limbs jerking backward in the air as I sprouted forward.

And his eyes widened because this was an attack he didn't see coming. That was my advantage, that singular moment and decision was what led me to my victory. Because the moment our bodies collided like heavy boulders, Jaxon and I fell to the ground.

There was a searing silence that deafened my ears as I hit the earth, unsure whether or not I was even still alive. I felt a stinging pain radiate from my sides. That was a good sign—pain.

I was alive.

But Jaxon—my eyes fell to him below me and I watched his jaw slack and body go limp—not so much. He didn't seem like but the reality didn't hit me until I staggered off the ground to see his wolf laying across the ground, bleeding and lifeless and still.

As I stood over him, I felt not just the weight of victory but the responsibility that came with it. The crowd screamed and chanted with an uproar that echoed through my chest.

"Eliana! Eliana!" They yelled my name as Denver immediately rushed over to me. His hands wrapped my mane as he brought me closer to him. He stared into his eyes, holding me still. I was a little dizzy myself but I could hear the whispers of the Elders that crept forward.

"Is he dead? Is he dead?" Everyone inquired. At that moment, Denver just forced my eyes to remain on him. And Nora walked up beside him. "It's okay" He whispered.

"It's okay. You're okay" He held out the purple robe.

"I'm here."

"I'm here. You can come back to me" He pressed his face against mine as my eyes still darted around in a state of rush and confusion. And in his arms, I was finally able to shift back into my human form.

My hair was drenched and soaked, falling across my sweaty skin. He immediately wrapped the robe around my naked body. I clung tiredly onto him as heavy, quivering breaths escaped my lips.

"It's okay" Denver whispered. "You're okay." He said.

Chapter 77: The Day I Died.

## Chapter 77 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

"It's okay" Denver whispered. "You're okay." He said.

At that moment, I lifted my gaze to my father who stood amongst the Elders as they crept closer to Jaxon on the ground. Then the verdict thundered throughout the arena.

"He's dead!" They announced to an uproar but my heart fell in my stomach. I looked at Denver. "Jaxon is dead" The realization hit me like a wave as tears welled up in my eyes. "You did it" He whispered to me but as soon as they fell down my cheeks, I shook my head.

"I killed him" There was a crack in my voice and Denver arched his brows. "Yes, Eliana. Yes you did" He didn't make it any easier. Because for some reason, while everyone clamored with victory, it was a strange feeling for me. It was guilt and anger. Still anger.

After all this while, I thought seeing him dead would fill me with resolve, that it would be the one thing that would make me finally get over every terrible thing that he did to me but he was dead and still, nothing changed.

I burst into tears in Denver's arms and he held me closer to him. His words were soft through my ears and I heard the echoes of light sobbing coming from behind him. It was when I looked up that I saw Nora. She was perhaps the only person besides me that wasn't rejoicing. But rather, there were tears in her eyes. Although they didn't drop, it was still there.

And she looked at me, garnering pride in her eyes but it didn't change the fact that he was her brother. That he was our brother. When I stood up, she was the first person that I hugged and her hands smothered down my back. "You did it" She whispered.

And I was already tired of everyone saying that. ‘You did it’ ‘You killed him’ I just couldn’t bear it but hugging Nora at that moment certainly eased the pain.

“Where’s Sienna?” I looked around to find her mother nowhere to be found.

Nora shrugged her shoulders, using her fingers to clean her eyes. “She probably just ran off. She’s nothing without my brother and now that he’s dead...” “I’m so sorry” I muttered to her but Nora shook her head.

“Sorry?” She blurted out.

“I meant to say that now that my brother is dead, we can all move forward as a Pack and you can finally be crowned Alpha. Not only is it a destiny bestowed on you, you have made sure to earn it. To earn that right, Eliana” Her hands held my face softly.

“The first Female Alpha of the Blood Hounds” Nora whispered and a chill went up my spine. She swept her hands through my hair. “You have no idea what good you’ve done tonight, what mark you’ve carved in history. That for centuries to come, every generation would remember you”

“And they will remember you as fierce and strong and highly courageous, they will remember you as Queen and Alpha. Just like your name,” Nora smiled. “The goddess has answered us with you. You’re the answer to our prayers, Eliana. You’re the reason we can hope for a better tomorrow.”

“You’re it.” She said, taking a step back. “Alpha Eliana, I mean” Nora corrected herself, taking a bow but I held her up. “Please” I whispered, not that she even listened until her back was fully arched and she touched the edge of my garment before standing up.

“Thank you, Nora.” My heart finally eased. “You have no idea how much you’ve helped me” I added, smiling at her and she nodded. “Always happy too and I’m happier that I’m on the right side of history today.”

“Alpha Eliana” I heard Ivan call from behind and when I looked at him, a light scoff escaped my lips. I could never fully get used to hearing that before my name but it did have a knock to it. His hands fell to his hips as Ivan smiled. “Your father is asking for you. Everyone is” He told me.

“Go” When I turned back to Nora, she stepped aside. “I’ll be right behind you” She said. I walked up to Ivan and we both sauntered across the fields. “Could I say it now?” He nudged my shoulders lightly.

“What?” I scoffed at him. Ivan was another person that had been here since the very beginning. “I never doubted you for one second” He said.

I pushed a hard lump down my throat before he directed me to the side.

“You should probably change out of the robe” He brought out fresh clothes before handing them over to me. “I brought you some things” My eyes fell to the lascivious gowns and I looked up at him.

“What is this?” I gasped. “Come on, they’re Alpha dresses.”

“Now Ivan, there is no such thing as Alpha dresses” I chuckled softly and he laughed too. “Well take that up with your father. He’s the one who made the choice. He wants to crown you officially now and an occasion like that calls for a dress like this” He picked up the shiny silver one before clenching it into my hands and reluctantly, I took it.

Ivan turned around while I found a nearby cabin and in there, I changed. It only took me a few minutes to put the dress on. No makeup or anything, and still, it was still perfect.

“Here” I climbed down the cabin steps, flipping the hemming and Ivan turned to me with a smirk. His eyes met mine for a second. “You will make a great Queen, Alpha Eliana” The words escaped his lips so softly.

And I took his hands. “Thank you, Ivan” I whispered.

He led across the arena to where the rest of the Pack was and with every step I took closer to them, the louder their voices chanted. “Alpha Eliana!” “Alpha Eliana!” Goosebumps erupted across my body as I looked up at the hundreds of bright faces smiling down at me.

“Alpha Eliana” A chill went up my spine as I walked towards my father. In his hands was the large royal crown and the circlet, a special kind of necklace for only a Queen.

I came to a halt right in front of him and his eyes dilated with pride. With one hand on my shoulder, I bowed my head. Denver was right beside me, every step of the way and he was the one who wore the necklace on me, the second around my neck.

“Thank you” I said to him before looking at my father who looked to the Pack. “We are all gathered here today to witness the swearing-in of your newly proclaimed Alpha” He started.

“Eliana Jacobs,” His words towered over me. “I hereby name you as my successor as Alpha of the Blood Hound Pack and from this day onward, the Pack shall know you and call you its Alpha. The pack shall yield to your every directive and ascend when you beckon.”

“And you shall lead them pride and dignity and love” My Father said and he placed the crown on my head. I bowed down. “I accept” I whispered out my lips, already familiar with how this went.

And the next time I lifted my gaze, they met my Nana’s. She was weeping in the corner and he was right here—Elijah. I darted my attention but only for a second as I waved at him.

My Dad's hand grazed my chin as he turned my face to him. Then, he smiled. "Your mother will be so proud" He said. "Alpha Eliana" And just like everyone else, he bowed too. I looked around with tears in my quivering eyes. This was the moment that sealed the whole ceremony.

And to think this was all merely a plan a few months ago, and we were right here now. We had accomplished everything we set out to do. The tears streamed down my cheeks as I looked at Denver. He looked at me too, deep into my eyes and a smile curled his lips.

"Thank you" I said to him because there weren't many things I could actually say but that. "Thank you for everything" He reached for my hands before squeezing them softly.

"Thank you" He brushed over my ring and there was a shiny glimmer in his eyes. When my Dad directed, the ceremony was over and Thelma and the rest of them came running towards me.

"Mommy!" Elijah too, sprinting into my arms and I lifted him into the air.

"Hey you!" I scrunched my nose against his. "And Daddy!" He stretched his arms towards Denver who pretended to bite into it and Elijah's chest exploded with laughter. His hands hooked around the both of us before he brought us closer to one another.

"Mommy and Daddy" He whispered and I nodded. "That's right" I said.

"Mommy and Daddy" I echoed, looking at him once again. He smiled. "Now what?" I looked around and my Dad shrugged his shoulders.

"You're Alpha, it's all your call now" He said to me. "I say we party!" Ivan cheered and there was an uproar to his suggestion. "We celebrate" He added but at that moment, I felt a bit tired and dizzy.

So I handed Elijah to his father.

"I should probably go clean up before any party" I said and Denver nodded. "I'll be waiting for you when you're done...Alpha Eliana" He called and I threw him a look over my shoulders as I walked back to the Pack House. Once I made my way in, a sigh of relief echoed back to me.

And it was quiet and peaceful here.

I marched up the stairs, heading towards my little room and I knew it was the last night I would stay here before moving up to the chambers. It was one of the many things that was going to change now that I was Alpha.

But was I truly ready for all of it?

I asked myself as I pushed through the door and I stood in front of my mirror, the crown still atop my head. And as I stared at my own reflection, a smile crept to my lips. My hand grazed the



necklace around my neck—the two of them and there was this sense of comfort that filled me. This sense of purpose and genuine happiness.

I had never felt this way before.

Like right here was exactly where I was supposed to be.

But alas, alas. Happiness isn't something that lasts around here. Because at that moment, my door creaked open. I threw my head over my shoulders and a gasp escaped my lips when I saw her.

“Sienna!” I called out of surprise as she staggered towards me. Her eyes were swollen like she'd been crying. Her hair was a mess and she was bleeding out of her head.

“Oh my God. What happened to you?” I asked, my first instinct was to help her but then she grabbed my neck by surprise. “Sienna” I struggled with her. “Let me go!”

“You killed him!” She croaked. “You killed my son. You killed your only brother and you took Nora too. You took everything from me” She said in a gritty voice but I shook my head. “No, Sienna. I didn't.”

“There's no reason to live anymore” She whispered. “You don't have to leave, we can work something out” At that moment, she ripped my necklace from around my neck and I gasped. It was the one Nana gave me—the one that was supposed to protect me.

“I'm going to kill myself” Sienna gritted through her teeth. “But before I do that, I'm going to kill you” She said and although I quickly tried to push her away from me, her hands were faster. It all happened in a split second and when my eyes fell to my chest, there was a knife sticking out of it. A gasped deeply, clenching around the bleeding wound.

I staggered backward, falling against the wall and then to the ground. My crown crashed right beside me and my whole life flashed before my eyes, all the memories, all the people. My people.

Everything. And I just laid there, blinking slowly with my last life.

I bled out onto the ground until I could barely keep my eyes open and as they slowly closed, only one word was able to make it out of my lips and that was his name.

“Denver” I breathed before my eyes closed and my lips sealed and I just laid there. That night I became Alpha, that same night, I died.

Chapter 78: In Between Life And Death.

## Chapter 78 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

DENVER.

It had been half an hour since Eliana left the arena. She said she'd needed to clean up which was understandable after her bloody victory over Jaxon. But now, the party was imminent where she was supposed to deliver her first speech as Alpha of the Pack too but she was nowhere to be found.

I pushed through the doors of the Pack house and the hollow echo of the emptiness was what first hit me in the face. I looked around before straddling the stairs and it was almost as if no one had come here. That was the first time I felt the sting in my gut feeling.

That something was wrong.

But then again, it couldn't be. I shook it off. I told myself that it was better to relish in the good moments like tonight's victory. Not everything had to go horribly, right? There was no other shoe...

At some point, there was supposed to be a happy ending, right?

I threw one look over my shoulders as I made my way first to the Alpha Chambers but Eliana wasn't there. So I went ahead to her room which was wedged shut, tied to its hinges. I pushed it slightly but it wouldn't budge and then I knocked.

"Eliana" I called out to her. "Eliana."

But there was no response. Not even a sound on the other side of the door but I was certain she was in there. Besides our mate bond, I could swear I was able to scent her even with the distance.

"Can you just hurry up? Your Dad is already asking of you. Everyone is waiting as well" I called out to her again and still, no response. My hands pressed against the door as I covered my head.

"Eliana?" My tone was ridden with doubt this time and that was the second time that the thought passed through my head, again. "That's weird" I muttered beneath my breath, using my weight against the door.

I pushed it but it appeared to have been locked from behind and that was something Eliana never did. She would never lock herself in. It wasn't until I inched closer that the metallic scent of blood pierced through my nose.

And I jerked backward.

"Eliana" Adrenaline fired up in my chest as I jeered my feet to kick down the door. This time, when she didn't respond, I was certain something had happened. So I did the only thing I could at that moment and I broke down the door to meet a scene that shattered my heart into pieces.

The moment I saw her laying there, an ominous stillness greeted me.

"Oh my God" I gasped, my stomach twisting into a tight knot and I clamped my hand over my lips. There were two bodies, one was Sienna's and she was dead in the corner of the room in what appeared to be a suicide but then there was, "Eliana" I called with a crack in my voice.

Once I could move, I threw myself to the ground, reaching around her limp body and pressing against her wound to hold in as much blood as I could still conserve but she had lost a lot in the last half an hour. She could barely move. Her eyes, once lively were now cold shut.

"Somebody help me!" I yelled out to anyone at all that could hear me but the chances were slim because everyone was already in the arena and I couldn't take her all the way there. I couldn't waste that much time.

So I did the only thing that I could. I took my hands and pressed them into her chest, jerking back and forth. The tears in my eyes streamed down my cheeks as I stared at her.

"No, Eliana!" I yelled. "You stay with me!"

"You stay with me, Eliana" I shook my head, biting down on my teeth as I just kept giving her CPR. Then I lowered my face to her lips to catch her usually soft breaths but there was nothing.

She wasn't breathing.

My eyes immediately fell to her neck to find that the necklace was gone, the one thing that would've been able to protect her was gone. And it was in pieces across the ground, the amulet soaked in the pool of her blood. I shook my head, tirelessly pressing into her chest.

"Come on, Eliana" I whispered. "Come on. This is not how it ends. This is not how it goes" I added. Never, for once did I picture this night to come to this. And I was so disoriented and devastated and...feeling everything all the same time.

"Eliana, come on!" Time stood still as I looked at her, a cascade of memories flooding my mind. "I can't lose you" I whispered. "My life is nothing without you, Eliana. I can't lose you. They can't lose you" I said.

"Elijah," I could barely continue with how heavy my heart was at that moment. It just hurt. It hurt seeing like this. It hurt holding her like this. Every second that passed, that her eyes were still closed. That her lips were still sealed and her heart wasn't beating.

Every second, it hurt so much.

I sat up, beating against her chest with every last strength that I could garner, though I was still careful. As careful as I was relentless. Because I wasn't going to stop until she opened her eyes.

Fuck Sienna.

She was the one who did this. She was the one who stabbed Eliana.

"Come on," I wheezed, a sob escaping my lips when suddenly, the door pulled open and I looked back at Ivan. "Where is s—" His words immediately vanished from his lips the moment his eyes fell on her.

"Oh my God" She gritted through his teeth. "Help me" I cried out to him. "She's not breathing. Eliana isn't breathing" I threw him a look over my shoulders but my hands never left her chest.

"What do I do?" I asked Ivan because if there was one person who could help right now, it was him. And though he was frozen for like a second, he was able to jerk himself out quickly from his sentiments and his head.

"I'll be right back. I'll go get a crash cart from the Pack clinic but you," He struck a finger at me. "You don't take your hands off her, not even for a second. You don't stop the CPR" Ivan instructed before zooming right out of the room as fast as he could.

And I looked down at her again. This time, I pressed my lips against her cold ones and blew air right into her mouth. I clamped my hands over each other as I kept pressing into her chest. My hands ached until they grew numb and my heart was pounding in my chest but I didn't stop.

I couldn't stop.

Not when her life was hanging in the balance. Not when she was between life and death. And I wondered at that moment what if I didn't come upstairs when I did to find her laying there?

She was still breathless but there was just something that pressed me to keep going on. It was the fact that I knew I couldn't lose her. I couldn't tell Elijah and the rest of the Pack that she was gone. I couldn't handle it.

There was no way I would be able to carry on.

"Come on, Eliana" I whimpered. And just then, Ivan came sweeping with the cart. He inched closer to her with a syringe that he stung into her arms. I never left her. "Come back to us, Eliana" I whispered.

"Come back to me." Ivan's finger pressed against the side of her neck for a pulse but a hard, labored lump slipped down his throat. He shook his head but then he brought out a defibrillator. Something told me he was also not about to give up hope so easily on saving her.

Chapter 79: The Moon Goddess.

## Chapter 79 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

DENVER.

The machine came on with a wheezing noise as Ivan tore her shirt open.

Her skin was pale and cold and still. And I had never seen Eliana that way in my life. I finally took my hands off her but I was still shaking. "Charged to one hundred" Ivan echoed from his lips, holding the machine with his two hands before he pressed it against her chest.

In a second, it sent an electric current throughout her body and she jerked forward roughly before falling back down. I bit into my fingertips, pacing around the room nervously. "Come on, Eliana. Come on" I kept repeating beneath my breath as he placed the machine again.

"One-fifty" He charged it and you could hear the current fill it up. "Two hundred" "Three hundred" He kept jerking her forward but still nothing.

"Two hundred and fifty, charged" He placed the machine on her chest again and I shook my head with tears in my eyes. "No" I cried. "No, Eliana. Please no" I muttered. She jerked forward again before falling flat.

Then Ivan looked up at me.

"Go on. Fucking go on!" I yelled at him. "Three hundred" I nodded. "Do it!" And he wasn't going to if I didn't yell at him. The thing was, even at three hundred, her heart still wouldn't beat.

"Denver" He called in a tone that suggested the one thing that I didn't want to hear and so I pushed him away, taking the machine in my own hands. "How do I work this goddamn thing?!" I cussed through my lips before charging it up myself and I placed it on her chest over and over.

Over again.

"Come on, Eliana" I gritted through my teeth until the veins through my neck were so visible. "Denver!" Ivan called but his voice drowned in my ears. All I wanted was to wake her up.

"Denver, listen to me. You're only hurting her" He struggled to hold me

back but I held tighter to the machine like it was my last hope. It was my last hope. "You don't understand, I can't lose her" I cried. The tears were like a river from my eyes as I wailed.

"I can't lose her, Ivan" He reached for my hands and subtly collected it and I just broke apart in that moment. "She's gone, Denver" He whispered. "She's already gone."

And that sounded awfully lot like "You have already lost her". The thing was for the longest time, that was my greatest fear. This was. This, right here. There was just no way that I could carry on.

The hurt and the pain was so immense that it felt like I couldn't breathe.

My heart was barely in my chest and my lungs felt so weak like they were about to collapse. Yet as I turned to her for the final time, all that came to my head was our little boy, Elijah.

And now just like her, he'd lost his mother too.

"I can't do this, Ivan" I muttered to him. "I can't go on" I fell back, leaning against the wall but my hands still held her fragile fingers, across which was the ring I had given her. A promise of forever.

A promise of a lifetime well planned and well shared but that had just been whisked away from me forever.

The moment I looked at Sienna on the ground too, there wasn't a quantifiable measure for the hate I felt, even though she was already dead. It was like I should wake her up myself and rip out her heart all over again. Because she had taken the one thing that mattered to me.

She had taken Eliana.

I closed my eyes, squeezing her hands and there were a number of things that raced in my head at that moment. But the one thing that stood out, was my prayer for a miracle.

I had never asked the Moon goddess for anything before now. I wasn't sure I'd ever asked anyone for anything but all of my life, I was required of so many things. So many things I did. So many things I gave.

Which made me question the higher entity herself. Because if the goddess was out there, if she was real, then surely she was fair. She could never be as heartless as to give Eliana back to me after so many years and when I'm finally happy for the first time in my life, she would take her.

Why give only to take?

"I don't accept it" I shook my head and Ivan arched his brows. "I'm sorry, but I don't accept it!" I yelled specifically at the universe or maybe the goddess herself. "I can't accept it!"

"She just defeated Jaxon to be the first female Alpha, everyone is out there and they're waiting for her to come downstairs, they're waiting for her to lead. And not to talk about me, to talk about us. We had all these plans, for the rest of my life and you're telling me that I won't ever see it through because you're heartless enough to take her away from me?"

"Denver," Ivan reached out to me but I shoved him to the side, shaking my head. "I'm sorry, I just can't accept it" There was a crack in my voice and tears in my eyes.

"I have never asked you for one thing until now" I lifted my gaze.

"If you are real and you are fair," I faced the goddess and that is one thing not a lot of people could dare to do but I didn't care at that moment. Not when Eliana was laying there.

"And you claim to even half as much as care about us, about me, then you would give me back the love of my life" I continued. "I know I've done a lot of questionable things in my life. Unforgivable things that make me not even deserve a love like Eliana's. But she changed me."

"She came and she came with all her light and joy and patience, and she brought me out of the darkness. She made me feel, she gave me a heart. And that was something I never thought I had. She's the reason I live, she's the reason I breathe so please," I fell to my knees, holding her hands in mine.

"Please, give her back to me" I whispered, covering my head. Now, I wasn't a firm believer in miracles but I believed in the Moon Goddess and if there was anyone I could look up to at a time like this, it was her.

Like I said, I wasn't a believer in miracles but that was all about to change. Because softly, I felt her fingers graze against mine. I whipped my head back, gazing down at Eliana as she took a long, sharp deep breath.

A gasp escaped my lips as I stared at her. My lips fell wide open with disbelief and this was something very few people would believe happened. Luckily, Ivan was right there to see everything.

There was no way to quantify the immense joy and relief that radiated through the body the second she opened her eyes. "Denver" She called my name so softly and perfectly. I can't believe I had to bear the thought of never hearing her call my name again.

I can't believe I had to bear the thought of a world where she wasn't there.

"What happened?" She asked softly and I inched closer to her, tears welling in my eyes. What could I even say? My hands just grazed through her hair softly as our eyes met. "You're okay, Eliana. You're alive" I whispered, sniffing through my nose.

I looked back at Ivan and only he could understand.

"You're alive" I said again, blinking away my tears and I pulled Eliana in for a lasting hug. I heaved a deep breath and beneath it, I muttered a thank you to the goddess or whoever was out there that had heard me.

My hands clenched around her and all of a sudden, I never wanted to let go of her again. The thing was, I knew I loved Eliana but until the reality of her being gone slapped me in the face, I had no idea how much I did.

How much I loved her like breathing and how much she meant to me.

And today was like a punishment for all those years that I cared less, or that I pretended to because it was never going to happen again. I was always going to cherish every moment, little or big with her. And I was going to love her even more every day until the day that I died.

And that wasn't for a pretty long time.

When I pulled away, her eyes fell around her and I understood her shock when she saw her stepmother. "She tried to kill me?" Perhaps she remembered at that moment but I only wanted to say one thing. I held her face, bringing her eyes to lock into mine.

"I love you, Eliana" I whispered.

"So so much. You have no idea." I added, holding her hands in mine. Now, I was certain that we made it through the night. At that moment, I wanted nothing more than to marry her, not wasting a second longer.

Chapter 80: Alpha Eliana.

## Chapter 80 - Rejected Mate's Secret Baby

ELIANA.

I couldn't move an inch without Denver popping out of nowhere.

You would think that reaching across from the bed to my phone was an albeit easy task but ever since everything that happened, he wouldn't still let me lift a finger.

I had spent the night in the bed up until noon the next day. The party had also been postponed after the Pack heard about Sienna's attack. The only other thing to come out of that night besides my proclamation as Alpha was a second body. A mother and a son whose demise were met.

And of all the emotions I could feel at that moment, I was the most thankful. I had briefly grazed the cold shards of death and it was an experience I wouldn't wish on anyone. So deep down, I understood why Denver was acting the way he was.

But I also needed to get out of bed.



"No, Eliana" He whispered, holding me back softly but I was determined to get my feet out of my bed. "I'm well rested and I can't spend my whole day laying in bed. I'm an Alpha now" I said with a soft chuckle, barely believing it myself. "And that comes with a lot of responsibilities"

"Besides I need to see Elijah and my Dad and Nana" I told him. "They can all come down here" He persisted and I only looked him in the eyes.

"And the responsibilities can wait until you're better. I assure you the Pack will understand—" "I know you're worried, Denver" I framed his face with my hands. "I know you're still worried but I promise, I'm fine."

"You died, Eliana."

"But I'm fine now" There was a crack in my voice. "I promise. I'm okay. I'm alive and I won't die on you next time" A smile curled my lips as Denver heaved a sigh. "I mean it" I whispered.

That moment, my feet softly grazed the ground and I looked at him.

"See" I smiled. Denver scoffed lightly from his lips, knowing he couldn't keep me here for much longer so he accepted his fate with a shrug. However, his hands pulled out the wheelchair which he brought closer to me. I looked down at it and then up into his eyes with disbelief.

"No"

"Yes," He argued. "You want to come out of bed so badly so you get the wheelchair—" "The wheelchair that belongs to my Nana" I screamed.

"And I don't care. Until I'm certain you're perfectly fine, I have no problem pushing you around" Denver winked at me and I burst out into laughter. He tried so hard to restrain his but he ended up chuckling too.

He lent me a hand and helped me into the chair.

"There" He whispered, standing inches away from my face and I narrowed my eyes. "What will I do without you?" I whispered. He pulled away with a low grunt. "Absolutely nothing" His hands found the chair and he jerked me forward like a ninety-year-old frail woman.

He was having fun with this, I could tell. Because the truth was I was feeling a lot better today. The stab wound was healing pretty nicely too.

But Denver wasn't interested in all that.

He just helped me downstairs, wheeling me into the kitchen. But as soon as the doors opened, I was met with the whole Pack screaming.

"Surprise!" They yelled in my face and a gasp escaped my lips. Balloons popped and confetti sprayed in the air and I looked to Denver. "Now, what is this?" I chuckled. He shrugged his shoulders.

"It's a little get well soon party" Ivan stepped forward and I looked at him now. Of course it was his idea. I could see the eyes beaming with pride. "If there was a surprise party, why did you make me have to beg you to let me out of bed today?" I accused Denver and he just scoffed.

"I just do things I guess" He teased and I punched him lightly in his shoulders. "Mommy!" Elijah came squealing towards me with his whole mouth smudged in cake. "Here, taste this!" He jumped onto my legs.

"Careful" Denver cautioned. "It's okay" I said to him. "I'm okay" Now, my eyes fell on Elijah and the combination of whatever cakes he had on his finger. He stretched it out to my lips.

"I hope I don't get diabetes from this" I muttered beneath my breath but I still tasted it so he would be happy. A sharp sugary taste stung my buds so much that I closed my eyes.

"How is it?!" He asked so excitedly and I nodded. "It's...It's lovely" I lied. Denver burst out laughing as Elijah scrambled away. "I'll go get you some more!" He ran before either of us was able to stop him.

I choked on the cake and Denver could not just stop laughing at that moment. It was then my Grandma walked up to me. "How are you feeling?" Her hands swept through my hair and the laughter left a smile across my lips. "I'm okay" I didn't know how many more times I had to say that for anyone to believe me.

My Grandma just nodded with unsaid words hanging by the corner of her lips. "I'm glad nothing happened to you, Alpha Eliana" She whispered and I rolled my eyes to the back of my head. "Please, just Eliana" I muttered.

"And one more thing," She paused to pull out the necklace Sienna had destroyed before stabbing me. And she held it in her hands before handing it over to me. "Here" Her lips parted. "I fixed it."

I collected it from her with a surprised grin. "Thank you so much." I muttered. "Now you know why I told you to never take it off" Nana teased and I didn't waste a second in wearing it back on. Denver helped.

I looked into her eyes.

"Now, I do" I replied. "I should get going but congratulations once again" Nana said. "And I know you've probably heard it a million times already but it's true, your mother would be so proud if she were here right now"

A nostalgic smile crawled to my lips as I watched her walk away. I knew it was only a matter of time until someone else walked up to me. But at that moment, my eyes fell on someone else, in the corner of the room.

The one person that didn't walk up to me.

Perhaps, she was scared. Unsure, perplexed. And maybe the only person that was just about as hurt as I was. "Nora" I called her name and Denver looked in her direction.

"Please, take me to her." I asked Denver who wheeled me across the room and once I was close, she briskly wiped her tears. "Hey, Nora" I called her, only imagining what was going through her head after everything. She was the one who made me feel better before.

So I owed her some comfort after losing both her brother and her mom.

"Alpha Eliana!" She batted her lashes in surprise but just as she was about to take a bow, I stopped her. "Please, No" I held her hands. Her eyes locked into mine just then. "I'm sorry" She whispered.

"I'm sorry, Nora." I shook my head. "I'm sorry for everything that happened and the way it did. You didn't deserve to lose them" I added.

"They were terrible people anyway" She pushed a hard lump down her throat but I squeezed her hands. "They were still your family. And I want you to know that if you ever feel alone, you can always come to me."

"It won't matter now, would it?" She asked me and I arched my brows.

"What won't?"

"I think I'm going to leave" Nora said. "Leave?" I echoed. "Yes, I think I'm going to leave Blood Hound. Maybe go out, find myself" She shrugged but something told me that wasn't the only reason.

"Nora, you can stay here" I said to her.

"You don't get it, Eliana. There's nothing here for me. I need to leave, to make it out of the trauma and the pain and everything." She said. "And it's something I've wanted for so long now but deep down, I was scared because of my mom and Jaxon and now that they're gone," She paused. "It's like I finally can, you know. Like I'm finally free."

"Freedom isn't being a rogue" I said to her and a scoff escaped her lips.

"Let me figure that out myself" She crouched low to look into my eyes. "I'm sorry. I really am but most of all, I'm thankful to you, Eliana. So so much because the reason I can even make this choice is because of you"

My eyes stung with a few tears as she was the one who held my hands this time.

"I've already packed my things. I don't think I would be here by evening" She said and I swallowed a hard lump down my throat. "That means you'll miss the party?" I gasped softly and she pressed her lips together.

"I'll be fine" Nora whispered. "I promise you and who knows, I could always stop by when I'm around here. To see how my big sister is fairing as the first ever woman Alpha" She teased and I scoffed lightly.

"Not now" I muttered, rolling my eyes to the back of my head. At that moment, a tear fell down my cheeks. I nodded. "You will come, right?" I asked and after a brief pause, she nodded.

"I will, I promise."

Letting go of my hands, Nora pulled away. Her eyes met Denver's for a second and he nodded at her too. "Thank you" She said again to me.

"You were everything I could wish for in a big sister."

And as she walked out of the door, I knew those words would stick to me for a really long time. Deep down, I wanted to stop her but a part of me also knew that Nora was right. Only she knew what was best for her.

And if it meant her leaving, then by all means. After all, I had left a couple of times myself. I just hoped that she would come back one day.

"Are you okay?" Denver squeezed my shoulders and I lifted my eyes to him. Clearing my throat, I nodded. "I am" And I said that for the umpteenth time that day. However, I didn't mean it until that moment.

"I really am."

And on queue, Ivan was the next person to walk up to me.

"Now what, Alpha Eliana?" He asked, folding his arms across his chest. A mischievous smile crept to my lips as I said. "It's Party Time!"