

His Sunshine Baby Chapter 21 - Tips

“Is there a problem?”

Clark is frowning because of my shocked expression. He can ask me anything but that! Being in the same room as Nate again, I... I have no idea how I would handle that. But I definitely can't tell him the reason!

“Elena?”

“Sorry, it's... I mean, why do you want me there?”

“Come on, I always take you to important events of the pack. And meeting the Blood Moon, the King's brothers is one. I want them to know the faces of my potential successors.”

Moon Goddess, if Clark knew I had actually had se.x with one of the King's brothers... I don't know if he would k!!l Nate or me first! I try to think for a second, but really, I can't tell him any valid reason for me not being there! I find myself nodding to him.

“Alright, Clark, I'll be there.”

“Good!”

And with that, he leans a quick k!ss on my forehead and walks away. Gosh, what did I just agree to? I must be going crazy!

“Elena, let's go?”

Levi and Ben just joined me, and I nod before following the two brothers out. Levi puts an arm around my shoulders while talking to his younger brother, but my mind is elsewhere. I can't believe this. I just freaking agreed to be in the same room as Nathaniel. Again. Next week. Damn it...

This is ridiculous. I should be very composed about it, thinking this is just a meeting and nothing will happen, because this is what we agreed on. Right? You're an adult, Elena, you can stay in the same room as him and be chill about it! And it will be with lots of people, absolutely nothing will happen. Nathaniel and his brother will discuss their business with Clark, I'll probably be somewhere around, and this should be it. Let's not wander to any other thoughts until then.

To try and have a change of pace, I discuss with the two brothers all the way to their parents' house. I basically grew up with the Lewis siblings, with their mom inviting me to brunch almost every Sunday. When we arrive, I can already smell the best apple pie recipe. Ben runs inside to the kitchen.

"Mom! We brought Elena!"

"Oh, welcome, honey! How are you?"

Abigail Lewis hugs me warmly, despite being a head shorter than me. She's a petite, plump and bright woman. The twins inherited their straight ginger hair and freckles after their mom, and she has the same blue eyes as Danny. Wearing her usual blue apron, she takes my hand and guides me to the salon.

"We've missed you, honey, you should come by more often! You and Danny both! Oh, and of course you're way too thin honey! ...Darling, look who is here!"

When I walk into the main room, four pairs of the same green eyes turn to me: Rachel, Bonnie, and Micah, the rest of Daniel's siblings. Of course, Joseph, their father, is there too, and the first one to smile to me.

"Elena!"

I feel a big wave of warmth welcoming me. Forestalling his children, Joseph walks up to me, putting his big hands on my shoulders and giving me a kiss on my forehead.

"Glad to see you, Elena. Abbie is right, you should come more often, sweetheart."

"Thanks, Joe."

He gives me a warm smile in return. Joseph was the one who helped me after my parents' accident. He filled all the paperwork, waited hours with me at the hospital, and made sure I was never alone. He even helped me pay some of the medical fees and insisted on having me stay at their house for a few days, that turned into weeks, so I wouldn't be alone.

He's my father's best friend and was always there when I really needed help. I love all the Lewis, but Joseph's endless support is something I'll never forget. No doubt Daniel takes a lot after him.

He steps aside to let his children welcome me, but winks at me before heading to the kitchen. The first one is Rachel, the energetic eldest sister, then the quiet Bonnie, Ben's twin, and finally Micah, the youngest of the six siblings.

As usual, Micah caresses my face with his fingers instead of hugging me. I guide him to my cheeks, smiling so he can sense it.

"Hi, Elena. You seem happy," he says.

"I am. How are you, Micah?"

"Happy that all of the family is here. And I missed your voice, you know."

Micah lost almost all of his sight to a genetic disease when he was only six. He is seventeen now and got used to it. The youngest of the boys is a bit of a strange boy, but not in a wrong way. Actually, he's good at reading people, despite not being able to see them.

"Is something bothering you?" He suddenly asks.

"Nothing important, Micah."

Sometimes I wish he wasn't so good at reading emotions! I gently grab his fingers to hold his hand instead, and Bonnie takes the other one.

"Is that so. Well, mom's cooking will probably make you feel better."

"Elena! Tell me what you thought of the dress!" Suddenly asks Rachel.

Damn, I forgot about that dress and Rachel's enthusiasm... I answer her endless questions while Levi starts talking with his Dad, Micah, and the twins helping their mom in the kitchen. Catching up with Rachel is nice, but she's such a chatterbox! Within half an hour, I already know all her new friends' name, everything she did last week, her entire plan for next year's collection, the latest gossips of the pack and even her idea for her third shop event! At some point, I just let her talk and look across the room to watch Joseph and Levi exchanging.

Those two really look alike. Well, Levi took almost everything after his dad. They are both a bit darker-skinned than the rest of the family, and very tall

with broad shoulders and lean muscles. But Levi, like Danny, has his mother's blue eyes and strawberry-blond hair, making a beautiful contrast.

Don't tell me you still have a crush on my brother?

"Danny!"

My best friend just walked in, wearing a simple white shirt and a pair of jeans, his hair messy as usual. At least, he shaved before coming. I take this opportunity to escape Rachel's babbling and walk to him. I only meant to welcome him, but he suddenly hugs me, like he... needs it? I pat his back as I feel his face hidden in my shoulder.

Talk later?

Yes. Please.

Ok.

I know my Danny. If he's like this, he won't want questions in front of his family. Indeed, when he lets me go as if nothing happened, he shows his usual smile to his dad and siblings.

"There he is! Son, you should come more often!"

"Danny, you're late, we were starving! And mom made mashed potatoes!"
Says Ben.

"Benjamin, stop complaining and go wash your hands! Bonnie, Micah, you too!"

Abigail sends her three youngest away and comes to hug Danny. She pinches his cheek without warning, and Levi and I have to repress a laugh watching his helpless grimace.

"What's this! Daniel Lewis, how come you are so thin! You bookworm, do you even eat at all? Thank Moon Goddess Elena is living with you, or I would come every day to feed you myself, I swear!"

"Mom, it hurts! And yes, I eat! Lots! Ask Elena!"

But she just sighs. Abigail is the typical wolf mom that always finds her children too thin no matter what. Hence, she keeps complaining about Daniel's lifestyle until we are actually seated all together for brunch.

As usual, the table is full of homemade dishes, Abigail and Bonnie made. I really missed their cooking. Most of it is meat, as one would expect in a werewolf family, but the Lewis mother also made every one of her children's favorite dishes, even my cinnamon rolls. I grab one as everyone starts eating loudly. Rachel and Ben are making most of the conversation, but I notice that, next to me, Daniel is unusually quiet. I give him a gentle push with my elbow, but he ignores me and just takes more coffee. He is barely eating, too! I wish we could talk already...

"Dad, did you hear about the Blood Moon Brothers coming?" Suddenly asks Levi.

Everyone stops talking to look at Joseph, except for Daniel, who turns to me, suspicious.

You knew?

I just learned about it!

"Yes, Xavier is quite... Ecstatic about this."

"Why?" Asks Ben. "It's not like it will be any better for him..."

"I think he wants to try and introduce Iris to one of them," Sighs his mother. "Poor girl. She's such a nice girl, but her dad is a bit..."

"Oh, please mom, this is the twenty-first century," says Rachel, rolling her eyes. "She can meet and date whoever the hell she wants. She's twenty already, and smarter than that!"

Next to Rachel, Bonnie nods, looking very serious.

"Please, not the feminist talk now...." Mumbles Ben.

"What? Do you think women....!" Start Rachel, but her father interrupts her.

"Not now, honey, we get it. And I think your mother's right, Xavier hopes we can find some sort of alliance with the Black brothers."

While they keep talking, I can feel Daniel's eyes piercing me.

Tell me you're not going. Tell me you're not even thinking about it, Elena.

Danny, I... I sort of already agreed to it.

"Are you kidding me!"

Everyone jumped at Daniel's sudden yelling. That i***t, can't he control his mind-talking and actual tongue! The whole family is staring at us now! I grab his arm, trying to get him to sit down again, but instead, he grabs my hand and turns to his parents.

"Sorry, Elena and I need a minute of private talk."

"A...Alright, honey..."

And with this, Daniel pulls me all the way to his father's study upstairs. How can he make us leave the table like that! And without giving a proper reason too! Moreover, why is he so angry!

He closes the door behind him, and turns around, glaring at me like a mom about to scold her pup.

"Are you fvcking*g kidding me, Elena!"

"Don't growl at me, I didn't have a choice! Clark asked me directly, and you know I can't refuse him! How would I explain it!"

"Yeah, I guess he wouldn't like you bedding one of them!"

I roll my eyes. Why are we even having this argument!

"Danny, I get it, it's bad, ok? I did it once, and I'm not going to do it again! I... I can't say no to the Alpha, but I can just be there and do nothing!"

"Girl, you better not do anything and be as cold as ice to him! I know this kind of guys, Elena, he'll just use you and throw you out the window when he's bored, and you don't need that kind of sh!t!"

"For the last time, Danny, I get it! Ok?"

He's still glaring at me, and I get why he's so anxious and annoyed about all this, but still! I put a hand on my waist, trying to change subjects instead.

"Where is Bobo?"

His face suddenly shifts from anger to surprise. This time, he crosses his arms and avoids my eyes, looking a bit unsure.

"He... went back."

"But you'll see him again, won't you?"

"...No."

What? Is he kidding me!

"Danny!"

"He belongs to the Blood Moon, Elena! And as a Beta, too! And guess what? He's not even gay, to begin with!"

"...What?"

Well, that's new. I stare at Daniel, waiting for him to tell me more. But my best friend is obviously very uncomfortable with the subject, looking everywhere but my direction to avoid this talk. This time I'm the one doing the questioning, for a change.

"Danny, what do you mean?"

"...He told me this morning. He never had... Been with a man before. He only dated girls. You know how that kind of things end, Elena."

"Alright, he is bisexual, so what? This won't necessarily end like you think, Danny. Bobo looked like he was very into you, I don't think this was just a test, or that he'll change his mind like that."

"It's not even a question of sexuality, Elena! This kind of perfect guy ends up with a girl, two or three kids, and a pretty house with a white fence! Not with a gay nerd like me!"

What the heck with the white fence. That i***t's acting stupidly stubborn right now! Bobo looked like the perfect gentleman, and super in love with him too!

“Stop being such a chicken, Danny! I know you’ve had your bad experiences, ok? But this is no reason to give up on a guy like Bobo!”

“Elena, he’s not even in the right Pack, to begin with! It’s the freakin’ Blood Moon we’re talking about! And he’s a Beta, too! It’s not like he can drop everything to come and cuddle with a nobody from the Opale Moon like me!”

“You know what, I’m done with your excuses! This guy is the cutest, nicest you’ve met so far, and you are just finding excuses not to try it out with him! You don’t want me with Black because the guy is not serious, I’ve got my sh!tty experiences and all, I get that! But you are an i***t for not giving his chance to Boyan, I tell you!”

“Stop dreaming, Elena! This is the Blood Moon we’re talking about, what more do you need to know! The King’s closest people! I...”

But before he can finish his sentence, Levi suddenly opens the door. Oh, Moon Goddess, did he hear us? Daniel’s older brother looks at both of us with an angry face.

“If you don’t want Mom to hear about your passionate se.x lives, I would strongly suggest you tone it down. And then you can explain to me what the hell is wrong with you two! ”

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“SAY THAT AGAIN, I’LL RIP YOUR fvcking*g HEAD OFF!”

“Damian, calm down!”

Damn, he is too strong! I try to hold my brother back, my arms around his waist, pushing him away with Joshua’s help despite the confusion around us. But his Alpha brute force is seriously no joke, we can barely contain him! The guys are shocked, some frozen by fear, others unsure what to do. Those useless ...!

“Take that i***t away!” I yell at them.

How could he be so stupid! Suggesting Damian’s mate might be dead! From the corner of my vision field, I see Neal, his Beta, grabbing that imbecile jerk by the collar and dragging him out of the room forcefully. Two more guys who tried to stop my brother are on the ground too, half knocked out. sh!t, Damian

and his damn strength. I put my hands on his torso, grabbing his shirt, trying to get him to look at me and calm down or at least stop struggling.

“Damian, stop! That i***t was talking sh!t! Enough now!”

“Boss, we will keep looking! I swear!” Says Joshua, as desperate as me.

Moon Goddess, I wish Liam was there!

“LET ME KILL HIM!”

“Damian, ENOUGH!”

I used all of my Alpha strength to overpower him. At least he has to hear me now! He growls back at me, reacting to my will force and my wolf. I growl back again, annoyed at him. He’s really lost it!

“Boss...”

“Leave us!” I yell at the rest of the people present, exasperated.

Most of those morons don’t wait for me to ask twice before running out. I’m left with my brother, Joshua, Sean, Isaac, and Neal, in the room. Damian finally looks at me, out of breath and still trembling from anger. I use this chance to try and talk some sense into him.

“Damian, calm down, seriously. Enough. She will be fine. We will find her soon, I promise. Alright? But please, calm down. Your aura is echoing through the roof, you’re scaring the sh!t out of everyone.”

He keeps growling, but quieter. After a while, I let go of his shirt, as he seems in control. Finally... I leave out a deep sigh.

Isaac, you fire that a.ssh0le right away. I don’t want that guy anywhere near my brother, or next time I’m really letting Damian k!!l him.

Sure thing.

Joshua and Sean, two of Damian’s lieutenant, take this opportunity to try and clean a bit of the mess. Damn, Damian really went crazy. He broke some of the furniture, and there’s bl00d on the carpet too. Joshua pushes out of the way a big chunk of wood that was part of his desk, and Neal calls the cleaning services for them to come later in the day.

Damian, not giving a damn about the mess, stumbles and lets himself sag against the wall like his strength suddenly left him. Right when I'm about to talk, Sean, his youngest lieutenant, mind-links me.

He hasn't slept for a while.

I growl at him.

Why didn't you tell me sooner?

...Because he never sleeps well anyway.

If that kid wasn't so devoted to my brother, I might seriously be angry at him. But I know Sean's probably one of the most worried about Damian. That punk b.rat looks up to him so much since we found him in the slums. He even stopped wearing his damn boots and piercings in the office after my brother told him to. I wished he would drop the hoodie and bright red hair too, but whatever.

I don't know what to tell Damian, so I just turn to Neal.

"Is it arranged?"

He nods.

"Bobo came back this morning. The White Moon Alpha agreed to meet you next Friday, on their turf and on a few conditions. Nothing significant."

"I'll go to the west forest."

We all turn our heads to Damian, surprised to hear him. Sean frowns.

"We already searched, Damian, she's not..."

My brother growls right back at him, silencing his lieutenant in a split second.

"I'm not looking for her. I need something to keep myself occupied."

This time, Neal is the one frowning and rolling his eyes. I bet he was hoping my brother would find his paperwork enough of an occupation...

"Whatever. Go punch some rogues if it can make you feel better," I sigh.

It's always better than having him wreck his office or attack employees...

"I'll accompany you, Boss!" Says Joshua, enthusiast.

I should ask Tonia and Bobo to go with them too. Joshua's unit of bikers tend to be over-excited about hunting or fighting, but with Neal's younger siblings in the group, they shouldn't dare to go overboard. And this way we'll have a couple of Betas among them in case Damian goes nuts again...

Damian gets up, and they both leave the office quickly. Before Neal follows behind them, I mindlink the Beta.

Neal, send Bobo and Tonia with them.

Understood.

And with that, I'm left with Isaac and Sean. I cross my arms and lay against whatever's left of the desk with a big sigh.

"We need to find that girl before he really does something he might regret," I grumble.

"You really think she might be in the White Moon?"

"I don't know, but we'll search every pack in Silver City if we have to."

I'm so fed up with seeing Damian like this. If it weren't for our scumbag father, he would have been able to stay with his mate, even grow up with her and never lose her... He would have been spared the agony he's living now.

"Sean. Search the slums again."

"I've already..."

"Don't make me repeat myself," I growl.

He sighs but leaves the room without protesting anymore. I leave out a big sigh again and take out a cigarette. I put it between my lips and take out my lighter, but before I can use it, Isaac walks over and takes it from me.

"No smoking in the Company Building."

“Tss... I swear, the day we find that girl I’m giving a fvcking*g bonus to everyone.”

“You know I’m never, ever letting you forget you said that, right?”

But Isaac’s tone doesn’t amuse me. I keep fixating the mess Damian made, unable to calm down, my inner wolf acting annoyed and restless too. Isaac notices my dark expression and frowns.

“What’s wrong with you? As if we didn’t have enough with one edgy Black brother.”

I growl and take my cigarette away for later.

“I’m just tired of this sh!t. I wish we could find this girl already and be done with all that mess once and for all.”

“...Really? Because usually, when you’re stressed up like that, you just go out and bed whatever woman you can find. What’s wrong? You keep ignoring Narcissa’s calls, too.”

“Why do you care about Narcissa?”

Damn, she can be so annoying sometimes... Indeed, I haven’t been returning her texts for a while, but what does she even insist? And why does Isaac care?

“Since you’re avoiding her and your secretary does a wonderful job of that too, I’m the one she’s been annoying all weekend. I don’t care who you fvck, but she’s still one of your managers anyway, so act like an adult and talk to her.”

I don’t feel like handling Narcissa these days. She’s good at her job, but since I bedded her a few times, she’s been asking for more, and that’s not my policy.

“...Is it because of that blonde? Elena?”

sh!t, I hate when he’s acting nosy like that. I roll my eyes and avoid his intense stare, but Isaac knows me all damn too well.

“Really? You’re still thinking of that girl from Saturday! Seriously, Nate?”

“Shut up,” I growl.

“She really did something to you, huh? Man, look at you, one night with her, and you don’t even feel like seeing others anymore? Not even Narcissa?”

It pisses me off, but he’s right. Only a few days have gone by, but I’m still craving for Elena’s body like a dog in heat. Nothing I’ve experienced so far ever compares to the passionate se.x I had with her. Worse is, I don’t even feel like going to other women. I could have tried, gone to anyone else for fun and tried to forget her. But since Liam came up with his stupid idea of visiting the White Moon Clan, that’s all I’ve been thinking about, haunted by the thought I might see her again.

“Why not?”

I look at Isaac, a bit lost.

“What do you mean?” I ask.

“I mean it. Why not? Nothing keeps you from having a regular partner, you know.”

I shake my head, but damn, I know my mind’s already yelling hell yes.

“No, Isaac. I don’t do into long-term relationships.”

“Oh, come on. That worked with Narcissa.”

“It’s not long-term, I just had se.x several times with Narcissa because it’s convenient, she’s good and supposedly, not clingy.”

For that one, I really hope she only wants to talk about work and is not getting ideas.

“And she’s from my pack, so who cares if I fvck her? Elena’s not one of ours.”

“True, that’s a bit problematic... But then again, one can work that out.”

“Are you being fvcking*g serious right now?”

“Language, man. I’m just mentioning a possibility. Come on, Nate, don’t tell me you haven’t thought about it. You’re an Alpha, a pack leader. The King’s brother. Who would dare to say a thing about who you’re seeing?”

He might not be wrong about that... I do have a status to do pretty much whatever I want. I don't think anyone really cares about whoever I fvck anyway. They're all about Damian, and I only act as his stand-in whenever the situation calls for it. Moreover, as long as it's nothing serious, it might...

I stop thinking and turn to Isaac.

"Why are you suddenly suggesting this?" I ask, suspicious.

He shrugs, untying a bit of his necktie.

"Well, I think you could use a bit of fun and stress relief, for one. Moreover, I'm only talking about what I can witness, and that is you being obsessed over one girl. I don't know whatever she did to you, Nate, but if it's good for you, I'm all for it. That and maybe a little bit of hope you might actually find someone that can make you change your mind about love."

There we go again. Isaac and his stupid talk about love and all. I growl.

"I thought you understood me."

"I do, Nate. Doesn't mean I think you're right, though. Everyone deserves a second chance, man."

I roll my eyes. What the hell with second chances. I thought we were over that conversation already, but there he goes again, nagging me about this.

"Don't start preaching now, Isaac. If anything happens with Elena, or anyone else, it will be only physical. Got it?"

"One can always hope..."

"Oh, shut up!"

With this, I leave him and my brother's office, annoyed. Isaac may not get it, but this is not happening, ever. As I drive home, I finally smoke out all the stress from today. I mind-link Liam quickly too, making sure of whatever that i***t brother of ours is doing and telling him about what happened. I really hope we can find Damian's girl sometime soon.

It makes me think our upcoming visit to the White Moon again. I already find myself hoping Elena will be there. Damn, I want her still. I keep thinking about what I should do, what I should say if I meet her...

His Sunshine Baby Chapter 23 - Tips

I just can't stop playing with my hair, so restless. I'm anxious beyond words, yet I have no idea what it is exactly. This is stupid. Levi is eyeing me intensely from across the room, but I try to do my best to ignore him.

It's Friday, the big day, and Moon Goddess, everyone is on edge. About a dozen people are standing in the room, waiting. Clark is talking to his Beta, Isabel, and to a couple of their lieutenants behind them. The rest of us are standing around with nothing to do.

I recheck the clock. Only a few minutes left... I shouldn't be so nervous! It's nothing, just a dinner with the Black Brothers, maybe a walk around our turf and that's it. I should barely have any occasion to talk to Nate, right?

I check the expressions around me. Aside from our Alpha, his Beta and a handful of lieutenants, there are only me, Levi, my uncle Xavier, my cousins Iris and Chris, and Clark's two godsons, Eric and Orpheus. Everyone looks serious, some impatient, some nervous.

Among them, I notice my cousin Iris looks prettier than ever. Her lavender hair is styled into a complicated braid, and she is wearing a gorgeous white dress. She's even wearing a pink quartz necklace and matching earrings. I guess the rumors about my uncle wanting to introduce her to the Black brothers were true... Compared to her, my outfit is rather casual. I picked a red leather skirt and a denim shirt, the right balance between adequately dressed and not too much. I only hope I won't have to stand for much longer, those damn heels are klling me...

Aside from us, all the guys are wearing shirts and dark pants, which I think is more than enough for a simple dinner. I mean, I do believe the whole silverware, and the large table is a bit too much, but...

We finally hear a car stopping in the street, and people coming out. As they said, a few of their people are in their wolf form. Nothing alarming, though, when they come in, I realize their group is smaller than I expected. I count five wolves and six humans.

Of course, I notice Nate right away, leading the group. He only walks a few steps, and I miss a heartbeat. Damn, why did he have to look so good...

He put his blond hair back, showing off his mature traits and mesmerizing blue eyes. A magazine-worth face, handsome and attractive. He's wearing this terribly tempting white shirt again too, slightly open on his chest. Inevitably, memories of this perfectly sculpted chest under my fingers come back to me. Damn, if only he wore a necktie or something... I try to look away while Clark salutes him politely. Right behind him is his younger brother, which he introduces as Liam Black. The two brothers do have some similar features when I really look for it, but very few. Their faces look different, they stature as well. Liam's hair is pitch black, and his eyes are more of a blue-ish grey. Moreover, the teenager didn't put in as much effort as Nate, wearing only a grey t-shirt and denim pants.

"Welcome, M. Black, to our humble turf."

"Your Clan is very esteemed and with good reasons, M.Hamilton, thank you for having us. I know it was an abrupt request on our part, but we deeply appreciate," replies Nate with this angelic smile of his.

A wolf in a sheep's clothing...

"Our pleasure. We are not used to having visitors, but please make yourselves comfortable. First, can I introduce my Beta, Isabel..."

With this, Clark starts introducing the lieutenants one by one to Nathaniel and his suite. They greet and shake hands, all of this is terribly ceremonial and somewhat awkward, but everyone is going along with it. Behind Nate, no one else is talking. Only a guy behind him is smiling amiably, but everyone else is silent and expressionless so far. I stay quiet and as composed as I can. Clark introduces Xavier quickly as the Opale Moon Alpha, and Iris and Chris as his children then moves on to us.

"And finally, those three are my godchildren. Eric, Isabel's son, Orpheus, our most promising hunter, and Elena, our best fighter."

"Nice to meet you all."

While saying this, Nathaniel's eyes meet Eric's, then Orpheus' and finally, mine. For a second, I feel a wave of heat rising in me. Is it me or his pupils suddenly got darker? His intense stare on me only lasts a couple of seconds, but he has this slight smile on while looking at me, and all of a sudden, I'm thrown into a turmoil of emotions.

Moon Goddess, I try to hide my feelings, but I'm so shaken right now. If it wasn't for all the people surrounding us right now, I might run away! Runaway from him, his tempting eyes and devilish body! But I don't say a thing and just nod politely. Ignore his eyes, Elena, just ignore it...

"Well, let me introduce my party. As you know, this is my younger brother, Liam. My Beta, Isaac Graves. And here are three of our lieutenants, Joshua Hale, Vanessa Lockwood, and Tonia Mura."

Clark politely salutes them. They have two women accompanying them as well. Both Tonia and Vanessa are obviously fighters, judging by their lean body, practical leather outfits, and serious expressions. My inner wolf is curious to see how good they are, though they appear as weaker. Tonia is Beta, and Vanessa is a natural Alpha... Not that I observe them more intensely, it seems everyone in their group is either Beta or Alpha, like us. But the King and his Beta are not here, and I can tell Xavier and Clark are a bit disappointed about that.

They keep chatting, some basic information about the Packs hierarchy and turf. Meanwhile, I can't help but notice Nathaniel's eyes sometimes shift from Clark to look over his shoulder, right at me. And every time, I feel my wolf reacting, like a magnetic attraction, some spell I can't help but answer to. I try to avoid his stare, but even while looking somewhere else, I feel those two blue eyes piercing a hole through me.

"Well, we have a nice dinner waiting for us! I don't want to brag, but we have some of the finest cooks, and I heard you were quite a gourmet, M. Black."

"I plead guilty. And I'm all the more curious about your cuisine, with all these cultures you have mixed here, Clark."

Looks like I missed the moment when he started calling our Alpha by his first name... But Clark doesn't say anything and invites everyone to sit. To our surprise, Liam Black picks the seat right next to Clark, while Nate seats at the opposite. For a few seconds, no one is sure where to seat, until that woman, Tonia, suddenly offers me the seat right next to hers.

I would probably have said yes right away if it wasn't also the one right next to Nate. But everyone is watching, and I just can't say no.

Trying to focus my attention on the female warrior, I sit down, and almost immediately, she starts chatting with me about fighting techniques.

Apparently, Clark introducing me as the best warrior caught her attention. I'm only too happy to chat with her and do my best to ignore Nate sitting on my left.

Moreover, he is talking about cuisine with Clark and doesn't seem to pay any attention to me. That's alright with me so far!

The starters are served, and Nathaniel exchanges a few comments with Isabel, who did most of the cooking for today. He really is a gourmet as he said, talking about each dish with expertise. He stays surprisingly polite and friendly towards our Beta, though, complimenting her menu.

I reach out my hand to help Chris serve wine around us. However, I suddenly freeze halfway. Did he just...? I turn towards Nate, but he is still talking with Isabel. I swear I felt his fingers on my leg. Maybe he didn't do it voluntarily? I mean, the seats are quite close to each other. I decide to ignore what just happened and pour a few drinks. When I put down the bottle and reach for my glass, though, I feel it again.

This time I know for sure. Nathaniel's fingers brushed my knee again under the tablecloth, and it can't possibly be by mistake. His whole body is turned towards Isabel! I frown. What the hell is he playing at! There are about twenty people around this table!

But as I look around, it's obvious nobody noticed. Actually, it would be hard to. The table is large and rectangular, with a dark tablecloth, and all of the seats are very close to one another. Even if Nathaniel's hand ventures under the table, it would take someone sitting directly behind us to notice, and there's nothing but a wall and an old chimney. Moon Goddess... And everyone is busy with their own conversations, too. Tonia is exchanging with one of our lieutenants facing her, and she has no idea. No one does!

I take a large gulp of red wine, hoping to conceal my emotions somehow. But Nathaniel's hand come to my leg again, and I stiffen up a little, anxious. I feel his fingers gently brushing my skin, right where my skirt stops... Why the hell did I choose to wear a skirt! I feel myself blushing, and his fingers go back and forth on my inner thigh, tracing invisible lines and making me crazy. He's barely touching me, yet I'm hot like a furnace. I want to run away, but... Damn, this is also terribly electrifying. I don't even think of pushing his hand away. I bet he would if I did anything. I know I should, but I can't bring myself to do anything.

His full hand is now caressing my thigh, and I just don't move an inch of my lower body. I'm so hot... I drink more wine, and suddenly catch Levi's eye. He's in a conversation with Eric, but he just looked at me naturally.

What is it?

Nothing.

He slightly frowns, but I smile the most natural and turn towards Tonia as if I was following their conversation. Moon Goddess, after the scolding Levi gave Daniel and me, if he knew Nate is actually caressing my leg at that very moment... I did notice him frowning when I sat next to him, but Tonia was the one asking, so he couldn't possibly have said a thing. Moreover, technically Nate and I didn't exchange a word since our introductions.

He resumes his conversation with Eric, and I try to blend in with Tonia and the little group discussing her. Nate has moved on to talking with Orpheus and Clark, but his hand won't leave me.

Actually, his fingers are playing with the end of my skirt. I want to move badly, but I'm too afraid I would give anything away. I really, really shouldn't, for Moon Goddess' sake...

"Elena!"

I turn my head and realize Isabel was calling me.

"Sorry, Isa?"

"I was asking if you were ok, sweetie. Is the wine too strong? You're a bit red."

Oh sh!t. Isa's words suddenly bring me down to earth, and Nate's hand is gone too. I smile at her, looking a bit sorry.

"Can I excuse myself for a second? I want to refresh myself..."

"Go ahead, Elena. Can you bring a new bottle on your way back?"

"...Sure, Isa."

I try to control my steps and not leave the room too fast. It's so hot in there, and I need to get as far as I can from Nate and his hands! When I finally reach

the bathroom, I rush to splash my face with cold water, clearing up my ideas. You stupid, stupid girl! What the hell was I thinking!

I catch my breath, looking at myself in the mirror. Calm down, Elena, calm down...

But then I suddenly catch a glimpse of two electric blue eyes in that reflection.

“I really like that skirt.”

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What the...! What is he doing here! I turn around and walk up to him, pushing him away. Is he crazy!

“What are you thinking! You shouldn’t be here!”

“Don’t worry, I told them I needed to get to the bathroom too,” he answers me calmly.

I shake my head. What kind of stupid excuse is that, this guy is way too confident and full of himself! And I hate that stupid grin of his, too! I look behind his shoulder in the doorway, but I can hear the muffled sounds of the group still discussing. Looks like nobody’s paying attention to our absence, for now.

“Seriously, Nate, if someone sees us...!”

He steps aside and closes the door, looking finally serious.

“I needed to talk to you, alone.”

“I can’t. I mean, we can’t be seen together like this. You’re just...”

But before I can finish my sentence, he steps forward, and grabs my waist, pushing me against the wall behind me. I lose my breath under his electric-blue stare, as our faces get dangerously close. My whole body is tensed up by Nate’s touch, burning hot already. I gasp, his lips only an inch away from mine. I can’t avoid the lusty look he’s giving me, I have no choice but to look at him.

“I want more.”

His three words make my heart skip a beat. Oh, Moon Goddess... Think rationally, Elena, rationally. But before I can formulate any decent thought, I feel his hand going down on my leg, and he starts whispering.

“I mean it. I liked it, and I know you did too. I want to take you again, Elena. And don’t you say no.”

Why the hell can’t I? I glare at him, frustrated. The inner battle is raging inside me, and he has no fvcking*g idea how I’m torn right now. I try to think of Danny, and every good reason I have to refuse him. And damn I have a lot.

“I don’t want to be involved with you. I can’t afford it. You’re from the Blood Moon, and I’m from the White Moon. Even if this dinner is happening by some miracle, this doesn’t change anything.”

This time, he looks angry and frowns.

“I don’t give a fvck about the packs, or your Alpha. I do whatever the hell I want, Elena, and I don’t answer to anyone about who I’m seeing.”

“Well, you may not care but I do! If my Alpha finds out about us, I may be punished or banished! Don’t you realize I’m the one at risk here?”

His expression softens, and his hand gently caress my back, venturing under my blouse to give me delicious chills. I can’t hold a shiver, and this fever rising under my skin.

“Is that why you’re refusing me? Do you think I would let you be banished? And your Alpha, no, your Clan doesn’t need to know in the first place.”

Damn him and his overconfidence! Can’t he understand the place I’m in right now! But it’s even harder to oppose him when his hands are quietly caressing me at the same time, one under my top and the other on my leg, and his whole body is cornering me against the cold wall.

I look for something to say, but his lips suddenly swoop on my neck, and my breathing goes more erratic under the kisses he lays there. When did he even undo my first button? I put my hand on his chest and, after a second of gathering whatever strength I have left, I push him away, forcing him to look at me.

“Weren’t you the one who wanted a one-time thing, to begin with? You said we would be done after doing it once! One night and that was it, remember?”

He stays silent and expressionless for a second, and in that short while, I have the illusion he might have gone back to his senses. But all of a sudden, his hand suddenly ventures under my skirt and I gasp involuntarily, grabbing his wrist by reflex. That doesn’t stop him one bit, though, as I feel his fingers venture underneath and start playing with my most vulnerable parts. He smiles upon feeling my moistness, and I blush unconditionally under this sweet t*****e.

“Who is it that doesn’t want more?”

I bite my lip, annoyed at him. How dare he...! Of course I would be excited after he played with me like that! But he doesn’t care about my frustration, and suddenly starts an intense, deep kiss.

I know I should fight him off, push him and his lips, his fingers away, but I don’t. My body isn’t acting rationally anymore. I’m overtaken by the pleasure, the sensations this man is giving me. I hold onto him, giving up to my desire and letting him do whatever he wants. Nate just keeps going, both with his devilish kisses and fingers moving actively under my skirt. I feel my legs going numb, and my hand tensing around his wrist. I try to keep up with his intense kiss, his lips playing, his tongue flirting with mine. When he switches from my lips to my neck, I try to catch my breath, but it’s erratic and messed up by the pleasure he’s giving me.

Moon Goddess, he is insane... I close my eyes, trying to control my voice. But I feel it coming, and soon enough, the movements of his fingers get more intense, driving me crazy. I whisper his name uncontrollably, again and again, like a quiet prayer. When I suddenly feel this familiar heatwave brutally hitting me, my whole body tenses up, and I relish in a muffled cry against his shoulder.

It takes a few seconds for me to get out of this trance, and calm down. Nate supports me and my numb legs while I go back to my senses, but neither of us says a thing. I just need to catch my breath, calm down and realize what the hell just happened. I must be crazy. In a few minutes, maybe five or ten, I let him give me a damn orgasm in the bathroom!

“I hate you...” I mutter, with a voice less angry than I would want it to sound.

“Is that a yes?” He asks with a smirk.

“No.”

“No to what? My question, or...?”

“I did not say yes.”

He sighs and helps me walk next to the bathroom sink, as I want to rinse my face, and he washes his hands. I’m still not really thinking straight, half scandalized by what happened, and half lost in a post-org*asmic daze. He crosses his arms, staring at me with a complicated expression.

“What would it take? For you to say yes?”

“What would it take for you to give up?” I sigh.

“Oh please, Elena. You liked it. We both enjoy se.x with each other, why won’t you admit it?”

“I enjoy the se.x, alright. What I don’t like are all the risks that come with it!”

“What risks? We are not going public or having anything serious. Just strangers having fun once in a while. No need to let anyone know whatever is happening between us. No strings attached, no obligations.”

He looks very composed and serious. I sigh. His arguments are starting to get into my head and I hate that. I have a hundred reasons to say no, yet I can’t bring myself to refuse him, how insane is that? I put my hair back and check my appearance in the mirror while he waits. After a while, I just leave the bathroom, him following right behind me. I walk to the wine cellar, looking for any bottle. But Nathaniel grabs one first, and comes to face me again. My whole body reacts to his proximity again, and I step back.

“So?” He asks, finally getting impatient.

“Let me think about it, ok?” I blurt out.

He frowns, but he seems balanced about it.

“How long?”

“What?”

“I’m not as patient as I look. When will you give me an answer?”

“Look, I’m not having this discussion in my Clan’s basement, ok? Give me time to think about it and...”

“Sunday evening. Dine with me.”

This time, I’m the one frowning, a bit surprised by his proposal.

“Dinner?”

“Yes. I’ll show you I can keep your privacy and we can discuss this calmly. Isn’t that what you wanted?”

“Yes, but...”

“Then it’s settled. You’ll be free to give me the answer you want, as long as you come to diner with me the day after tomorrow.”

And with that, he turns around and leaves the cellar first. I can’t believe it! When did I even agree to that idea of his! This is so frustrating!

I just swallow my anger and follow behind him, trying my best to conceal the hurricane of emotions overtaking me right now. When we walk back to the main room together, Isabel spots us first.

“It took you a while!”

Crap, I don’t know how long we were gone for... How do I explain this? But Nathaniel actually speaks out first, very composed.

“My apologies, I run into miss Whitewood as she was going to your wine cellar and my curiosity got the best of me. Quite a nice selection you have down there!”

“Oh, really? Well, I do have a hobby of collecting fine bottles... Do you have a preference, M. Black? Personally, I have a soft spot for Portuguese ones...”

I can’t believe he got away with such a lie! I’ll have to remember how good he is at lying, that’s for sure! I get back to my seat and decide to ignore him, hoping I don’t look odd or anything. Thank Moon Goddess I checked myself in the mirror first. Aside from being a bit red on the cheeks, I should look fine. However, I notice Levi’s intense stare from across the table.

Was that the truth? You only showed him the cellar?

sh!t, why does Levi have to be so suspicious now... I try to keep myself as composed as I can. For a second, I wonder what would happen if I told him the truth, if I told him I actually had five minutes of intense pleasure with Nathaniel in that tiny bathroom... Just thinking about it makes my heartbeat go faster, so I settle on an answer before it becomes too obvious.

That's right. He was just acting curious about Isa's collection.

Awesome.

Now I'm a shameless liar as well.

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I don't know if Levi believed me or not, but after a minute, he went back to discussing with Eric and Orpheus without adding anything. I don't even dare look towards Nathaniel's direction after that. Levi already scolded Daniel and me yesterday...

He had heard a bit too much of our conversation, and neither of us felt like lying to him. After all, he was Daniel's older brother, and practically mine too. So we told the truth, or most of it: that Daniel had met and slept with Boyan, one of the Blood Moon members, and that I had se.x with Nathaniel Black. Despite the shock, Levi actually contained most of his anger, but only because the rest of the family was close. Other than that, he still gave us one hell of a scolding. Levi made use of his oldest brother voice to call us irresponsible and reckless, among other things. He was shocked that I had the nerve to willingly sleep with the King's brother, or that we even ventured outside our borders. Daniel and I didn't get to say a single word to defend ourselves, and I don't think we would have been able to give any anyway.

Moreover, he reminded us what the risks were: if we were discovered to have relationships with people from the Blood Moon Pack, we could get punished or worse, banished from the Pack. I already knew that, of course, but hearing it from Levi's mouth, a Beta close to Clark, made it even scarier...

"Nate, are you going to ask or what?"

Liam Black's voice suddenly brings me back to the present moment. Everyone else, surprised to hear the teenager's voice, stopped talking at the same time.

Ask what? Next to me, Nathaniel nods and turns to Clark with a solemn expression.

“We came here with a motive. We are actively looking for someone on behalf of our older brother.”

I exchange a glance with Levi. It’s exactly as I had told him. Clark frowns, a bit surprised.

“Do you think this... Someone would be in our pack? Can I ask who it is and why are you looking for them?”

“We cannot give you our reasons. This is our brother’s will. But be assured this person is not to be harmed in any way by us. Moreover, we are not in any way sure they might be in your pack, or in any other.”

This is so intriguing... If they have no ill intents toward this person, why are they looking so frantically? And for the King, no less? I look at our Alpha, but Clark is still looking hesitant. Of course, he wouldn’t be able to trust them so easily... If the person they are looking for turns out to be from our pack, who can guarantee they won’t actually go back on their words and do anything they want to them?

“Does this mean you plan to visit all the packs? Isn’t it unusual for the Blood Moon Clan?” Suddenly asks Isabel

“Indeed, but we thought this might be our best way to deal with this. This is an important matter to our brother, and we are running out of options,” says Nathaniel.

That’s right, both brothers look very serious about this. I wonder what’s the real issue here, but they won’t give more info. I see Clark hesitate a few more seconds until he sighs.

“Alright. Who are you looking for?”

“A young girl. She should be seventeen now, with black or dark brown hair, and sapphire-blue eyes.”

Sapphire-blue eyes? This is rather unusual... So she’s most likely a werewolf. Why would the king look for a young woman? Clark seems surprised. As far

as I know, no one in our packs matches this description... We do have a lot of dark-haired people, but none with dark blue eyes.

“Most importantly, she should have a large scar on her eye.”

“A scar?”

“That’s right. From what we know, the girl our brother is looking for is pale-skinned, with dark hair, dark blue eyes, and a scar on her eye, around seventeen years old. That’s as much information as we have.”

“What about a name?” Asks Isabel.

But Nathaniel shakes his head. Wow, it’s a lot about her physique and yet, not much to actually find someone... No wonder they are desperate. Once he’s done, I see Clark’s shoulders relax.

“Sorry, but no one from our packs matches that description, either in the White Moon or Opale Moon. Especially not with that kind of scar...”

“We thought that might be the case,” says Nate.

Both brothers look really disappointed.

“Is there anything else we can do for the King?” Suddenly asks my uncle Xavier.

Both Isabel and Clark glare at him. Why does he have to blurt out that kind of things! He makes us sound so desperate to please them, it’s embarrassing. Liam Black considers him with disdain, and Nathaniel doesn’t even respond. But my uncle doesn’t even seem to realize how ridiculous he is acting, and this is really awkward now.

“M. Black, I’ve heard you are very invested in the catering and leisure businesses. Do you have anything interesting going on these days? Our neighborhood as a few famous places as well, have you heard of it?”

Wow, I’m surprised by Iris. Since when does my cousin know so much about the Black brothers’ activities? Did Xavier train her or something ahead of the dinner? Her little Brother Chris looks just as surprised as I am. Since we were kids, Iris has always been a discreet and reserved girl, not one to stand out. Suddenly hearing her speak out at this dinner is a bit surprising.

But Nathaniel answers her, and they start having a conversation about the most popular restaurants around. Iris is polite, but I'm really taken aback by her current behavior, this is totally new, seeing her acting feminine and smart like that. Far from the reserved bookworm I've always know, she looks perfect in her element, talking with ease and smiling politely.

For some unknown reason, I feel very uneasy watching the two of them exchange. Is it because, unlike Isabel, Iris is a young single woman? They talk very politely to each other, but they obviously get along fine and are having a smart and entertaining conversation. I don't feel like b.utting in, so I just start eating in silence, ignoring my unsettled heart. I drink a new glass of wine, scolding myself for feeling this way.

Easy on the wine, kiddo.

Clark is looking right at me with a frown, and I immediately put my glass down.

Sorry, Clark.

You're a big girl but don't overdo it, Elena. ...You ok?

Yeah...

I even make my godfather worry for me... I look around, but Tonia is busy discussing with Eric and Chris, and Nathaniel's conversation with Iris is still going on. I can't even use the bathroom excuse to get out of here. Instead, I eat silently and suddenly decide to mindlink Daniel.

What are you up to?

Catching up some tv show since my flatmate is busy being a naughty girl in the wine cellar with a particular blonde Black brother...

Oh please, Levi already snitched to you?

Yeah, and my brother is not blind nor stupid, you know. Seriously, Elena, did you fvck the guy? There?

Daniel Lewis, you...!

I have a hard time controlling my anger right now. If he were there, I would have slapped him! Even if something did happen, well, more or less, I can't believe how crude he is!

No, I did not! You...

What?

Wait until I get home. We gotta talk.

Don't get home late then. I only have half a season left.

I sigh and put an end to our mind linking. This is going to be another dispute again...

The rest of the dinner goes by, and suddenly learn Tonia is actually Boyan's older sister! It's a bit tricky to follow the conversation after that since she probably has no idea about her brother sudden change of tastes... I'll need to let Danny know, though, this is such a coincidence that his sister actually attended the dinner.

Suddenly, I feel something brushing my fingers on the table. I look down and realize Nathaniel just discreetly pushed a business card under my napkin. I take it quickly and take a look under the table. It's actually his Business Card, but he strokes the phone number to write a private one. Probably his... I take it and hide it in my skirt's pocket. We don't exchange any words. He just saw me taking it, and returned to his conversation with Iris and Clark.

...Why do I feel a bit better now?

I try to not think about the little piece of paper and spend the rest of the dinner focused on chatting, eating, and behaving normally. My mind doesn't follow and wanders somewhere else... In the memories of a luxury suite, with a view on the city night lights and white silk sheets. I get lost in my thoughts for a while before I realize my wolf is growling internally. When I look around, I suddenly spot my uncle, Xavier, intensely glaring at me. What's wrong with him now? I ignore him, and this time, turn towards Nathaniel, talking with Isabel and Chris. My cousin catches his father's glare headed my direction and frowns. I give him a silent look, and we both ignore him to pursue our conversation.

Like promised, Nate actually acts very normally towards me after that, finally allowing me to relax. We talk and enjoy the dinner, various guests joining our conversation. It's mostly business and little talk, but we can't show we are involved in any way. Anyway, many join our discussion until the dinner ends.

Around 11 pm, the Black brothers politely decline a tour of our turf, and without too much ceremony, leave our grounds. Our group watches their cars go and ride away from our streets in silence.

However, at the very second all of them are out of sight, Clark suddenly turns around and grabs Xavier by the collar, growling all his might. Everyone freaks out, and for a second, I think this is about his remarks earlier, until Clark speaks out to my uncle's terrified face.

"This is the fvcking*g last time I ever see you glare at my goddaughter the way you did, Xavier!"

Moon Goddess, this is what Clark is angry about?!