

Chapter 111 - Their Bullied and Broken Mate

LOKI POV

I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw our old friend Hunter Matthews speaking to our mate. Why was he here, and why was he with a group of rogues that were supposed to be attacking us? We made it back to Blood Moon in record time, and we were prepared to join in a battle. From the looks of it, our warriors had handled the situation rather quickly, or so it seemed. When Mel was speaking with Hunter, she started to name who was there for the same reasons, and who wasn't, and I realized she had tapped into another one of her powers. She could not only enter their minds, but could tell you what they were thinking. When the realization of the men Hunter came with not being by his side for the same reasons about coming here, he instantly wanted to get rid of them. He was still our friend, just not the way we remembered him. As he was about to attack his men, I turned to Mel to beg her to go back into the pack house, and she was fighting me every step of the way. I looked at Liam and Jason for support on this, and all I got in return was that she had fought up to this point, and held her own. Liam even waved his arm around to show the dead bodies on the ground and mentioned her and Ruby had helped with defeating them. I was outnumbered, and not happy about it. It was like no one was taking into consideration the fact that she was carrying 3 little girls in her belly. Not even her. I was trying to reason with her and my brother when I heard Hunter let out a war cry and our warriors started to charge forward with him.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw Jason shift, and charge towards the enemy. I once more begged our mate to reconsider. Instead, she shifted to Ruby and followed her brother. I was furious and looked at Liam. He turned away from me and shifted to Rocko and followed our mate. I had no choice but to follow suit, and Zeus followed the rest. Rogues were all over our mate, trying to surround her from each side. She was fighting them with everything she had, and I noticed Tobias was right by her side. The Gamma protects the Luna, and he was doing his best to hold up to his title. I decided to stick by Mel and Tobias and started to tear through the rogues that were attacking her. She had linked me and told me to go and help the others, and I refused and sent Tobias instead. I kept getting distracted while trying to fend off rogues that were attacking me, and making sure she was OK. I was fighting 2 scraggly brown wolves, and was getting the best of them when a larger black wolf decided to jump on my back. His teeth sunk into my shoulder, and I let out a pained yelp. The yelp distracted Mel, and one of the rogues she was fighting took his claw and raked them across her stomach. Her eyes went wide with fear, and I noticed Liam was quickly by her side. He linked me and told me the scratches weren't deep enough to hurt the babies, but she was bleeding pretty badly.

Jason, Liam and Tobias surrounded Ruby, and fought off whatever rogues were left attacking. There were at least 50 rogues who had turned tail and ran away from the fight, but what little was left, weren't giving up so easily. I cleared my area and rushed to be by Ruby's side. I was shocked to see that she was nearly healed from the injury, and looking into Ruby's eyes, I could tell she had found another gift, self-healing. I linked Ruby, and thanked her for protecting our babies during this mess, and she snuggled her muzzle into my neck. I heard Hunter give a victory call signaling that we had succeeded in our task. I sighed a little breath of relief and Zeus laid at our mate's side. I was exhausted mentally and physically. I was completely distraught at the fact our mate held little regard for the safety of our children, but was afraid to voice it anymore than I already had. I felt like I was alone in feeling this way, so I would have to deal with it alone. It was pointless to argue over it. Rocko had already shifted back to Liam and the others were back to their human form as well. Liam ran over some clothes to me and our mate, and we protected her while she shifted back and got dressed. I stared at our mate for just a moment before our eyes met, and I quickly turned away and walked back to the pack house. I wanted to shower and forget about the way I was feeling.

I passed Hunter on the way back and spoke to him briefly. He told me that Jason had guaranteed him and those who stuck by him a place at Starry Moon, and had even mentioned them joining his team of warriors. I congratulated him and knew that Hunter would be a great addition to Jason's team. I shook his hand and continued to the pack house. I could hear Liam yelling my name, and I kept walking. I needed to be alone. As I entered the pack house there were people scurrying everywhere. Those who were inside the safe rooms were leaving to find their families, and those who lived in the pack house were trying to help those who struggled to get around. I saw Meribeth emerge with Maddix, and my little man called out to me, "Daddy," he called. I was covered in blood, but I didn't care. My son wanted me, and I needed him. I took him out of her arms and carried him up to the nursery. I took a washcloth from the bathroom and washed as much as I could while he played. I sat on the rocking chair, and I pulled him up into my lap. He snuggled into my chest and I rubbed his head as I rocked him to sleep. I sang to him softly, and before long I heard his soft little snores. My anger towards his mother started to subside, but I still wasn't happy about her taking that risk. Not only was our little girls in danger, but our son would be left without his mother if something bad happened. I appreciated the fact that she was thinking of protecting our pack, but I was still upset that she didn't consider her family.

Learning Curve

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Melian POV

1 month later

It's been almost a month since the attack. Jason, Rebecca and the kids have settled into Starry Moon with my uncles and Meribeth. He is doing so well with his Alpha duties, and Rebecca is an amazing Luna. They had their swearing in ceremony last week, and Maddix was so excited to see his uncles and aunt. I'm getting close to my due date, so Liam and Loki have me on lock down. They said that the ceremony at Starry Moon was my last bit of excitement for a while because Dr. Flores wanted me to rest as much as possible. I'm so thankful that werewolf pregnancies are so much shorter than human ones, because I don't think I could do this for a full 9 months. Not with 3 very active little ones. It feels like they are competing for who can kick mom the most sometimes. Since the attack, Loki has been slightly distant. I know he is still mad at me for fighting, but as the Luna, it was my job to protect my pack when my Alphas weren't present. During the attack, however, we discovered that I can not only enter people's minds, but can read them without entering, as well as the gift of healing. At first, I thought I could only heal myself, but my son had skinned his knee and while I was tending to it by rubbing on some ointment, my touch started to heal it. Ruby says there are other gifts ready to come out, but won't be able to until I have the babies. She won't tell me what they are, but one for sure could hurt the babies if I tried while pregnant.

I am still seeing Peter on a regular basis, feeling alone now that my brother is gone has caused some issues to resurface, and we are working through them. I have been helping Chris in the library history section quite a bit, and I have fallen in love with it. I talked with my mates about doing online courses for pack and world history, and they were all for it. I speak to my uncles on video call a lot, and have learned so much about my lineage. Who would have thought that this once abused and lost girl would be Fae Royalty? Chris is also helping me with research on that topic as well. I have a meeting with him in an hour to go over some of his findings at Coffee & Thyme, and I can't wait. They have a new pizza I'm dying to try out, so what better excuse to do so than a meeting.

The past few times I had been here, I noticed that Hazel hadn't been there. I asked the new girl, Christy, and she just said Hazel was taking a short leave of absence and would be back next week. I didn't pry for more information, but hoped that Hazel was doing well. I placed my order and sat at my usual table and waited for him to arrive. He was running late, and that wasn't like him, but I figured I would give him a pass since he was working so hard. Christy brought out the pizza and a pitcher of orange soda, and placed them on the table. The smell of the sauce and dough alone was making my mouth water. It was a hand tossed dough with a creamy marinara, and topped with onions, mushrooms, grilled chicken, jalapeños, and olives. I, of course, had to put some balsamic vinegar on my slices just because that craving hadn't gone away yet. Chris finally joined me, and we sat and chatted about his findings while we ate. "OK, Luna, I have found out some very interesting stuff the past few days. First, as it stands, you and Jason are the last of the Royal Fae adult bloodline. This doesn't include your children, of course. I believe you both knew this already. What I don't think you knew is that only females will carry on the gene for magic." he said. I told him that I believed that was told to us by Gretchen, but couldn't remember, so it was good to know. That is when he surprised me with the biggest finding of all. "It's funny you mention Gretchen, Luna. Because I found this in one of the census books." He said as he pushed forward a book that held the names and dates of every Fae that had been born, until the time that Fae's seemed to disappear. There in red print was the name Gretchen McFarland aka Gretchen Bastille. It gave her parents and children's names, as well as her

husband's name. On the list of children were Pablo and Marcus Bastille. However, in fine print to the side were the names Lily, Jorma, and Leif McFarland. I didn't understand what he was saying, or trying to point out, because my mother and uncles' last names were Rosewood. Then I started to read further. They were born out of wedlock to Gretchen McFarland and Albert Rosewood. So this meant that Gretchen was my grandmother. Did my uncles know that the woman that raised them wasn't actually their mother? I had to talk to my mates to see how to approach this, as well as Jason. This was going to be a tricky one. It also meant that Gretchen was not only a witch, but Fae as well. It would explain a lot about how she knew so much about the Fae, but was she ready to tell the truth about who she really was? Did she know we were related when she came here? So much to process. Chris went on to tell me more about things he had found out, and that he had also come close to figuring out who was leaking information to the enemy. I thanked him for his good work, and told him I would see him tomorrow at the library. I stood to leave and that's when I felt the weirdest sensation. I felt a contraction and my water had broken.

Welcome to the World

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Melian POV

I went wide-eyed when my water broke, and I could see the panic in Christopher's eyes. "What do I do, Luna?" he asked. I placed my hand on the table, and told him to call one of my mates. Christy came rushing over to me, and helped me sit back in the chair. I kept apologizing about the mess on the floor, and she told me that it was more than OK, and she would get it cleaned up, and that I was top priority right now. Within minutes after sitting down, Loki clumsily came running through the door. "Where's the Luna?" I heard him ask, and Trevor, one of the baristas, pointed in my direction. I waved at him with a crooked smile, and he was in front of me within seconds. "Are you good? What do we do now?" he asked. I shook my head and told him the only thing to do was get to the hospital, and he picked me up out of my chair, and started running towards the door. "Slow down, Loki! I swear to the goddess that if you drop me you will regret it!" I yelled at him. I wasn't being mean, but I was serious. He almost face-planted the floor when he ran in earlier, and I didn't want to be underneath him if he fell going out. He slowed down, but kept a steady pace. Liam met us at the entrance of the hospital and had a wheelchair waiting. He pushed me inside and told the receptionist that I was in labor, and she picked up the phone to let Roxy know we were there. She led us to a room and gave me a gown to put on. She left the room, and my mates helped me change clothes. Liam had barely said two words to me, and I asked if he was alright. He gave me a small smile and said he was perfect, just very nervous. I took his hand and kissed his knuckles. "It's OK to be nervous, my love. I am too. Just please don't shut down on me. Deal?" I whispered to him. He nodded his head and pecked my lips. I

asked them both if they thought they would be able to stay in the room with me during the delivery, and both thought it would be good to go. Thankfully, there weren't going to be any male doctors until the end when Dr. Flores came in for the post-delivery check-up, and I told them they would have to leave for that. They agreed and helped me into bed.

My contractions were getting closer and closer, but my dilation wasn't progressing as it should. Roxy started a Pitocin drip to help with the dilation, and the pain was starting to become unbearable. Once the Pitocin started to work, the back pain during contractions made me feel like I could claw the ceiling tiles if it would make the pain better. I was hell-bent on having these babies all natural, but I was quickly rethinking that decision. "Trish, can you ask Roxy if I can still get an epidural please, I don't think I can do the natural thing any longer," I asked. She checked my dilation, and rushed out to ask about my request. Before long, Roxy came in and sat at my feet. "Kiddo, it's too late for the epidural. Apparently, there is a head ready to make an appearance down there. I started to panic, and Roxy placed her hands on my knees and told me to focus on her face. I did, and she spoke to me softly, "Now, Mel, I can see the first head. She is right there. I'm going to go ahead and put your feet in the stirrups. I'm going to need Loki and Liam to help you scoot your bottom to the edge of the bed. Once we are in place, the next contraction you feel, you need to give me a good push. You can do this, love, we are all right here to help you along. OK?" I nodded my head and my mates helped do as she asked. They each had one of my hands and Trish and another nurse had my knees to help hold them in place. I started to feel the contraction and I told Roxy. She flashed me a smile and said, "Good, you know what to do. Give a good push, Mel!" I squeezed my mate's hands and I held my breath as I gave Roxy that good push she asked for. "That's it Mel! Push Push Push Push! We have a head, and she is beautiful, momma!" Roxy yelled. "Now, I need one more good push for this beauty, and she will be fully here mommy." she instructed. I followed her commands and gave her one more push. I didn't hear my daughter cry, and I started to worry. Before my panic could fully consume me, I heard her little cry just as another contraction hit. Roxy quickly handed her off to Abby, another nurse that was in the room, and I was given the same instructions as before by Roxy. After pushing for another 15 minutes, our second daughter was born and cried as soon as she came out. A good, strong set of lungs is what her great aunt proclaimed.

I was so tired, and didn't think that I was going to be able to continue on. Loki and Liam encouraged me not to give up. "We are almost at the home run mark," Liam encouraged. I looked at him like he was nuts. "Who is this 'we'? Do you have a frog in your pocket?" I asked. Loki couldn't contain his laughter and I just shook my head at them both. "Babe, I know you are exhausted, but you are doing so good! The last one is almost here, and then you can rest all you want. We will make sure of it." Loki whispered in my ear. He took a washcloth and wiped my sweaty brow, and Liam stroked my hair. As much as it annoyed me, I let them do it because their touch was comforting. I felt a big contraction coming, and told Roxy I needed to push. She took a peek and felt around a bit, and gave me a flashy smile. "She's ready to come meet her mommy and daddies, I believe. Let's bring this angel into the world, momma." she said. I looked at each of my mates and they kissed my forehead. I gave the biggest push of them all, and Asteria Iris came into the world screaming at the top of her lungs. I felt such relief and joy that I started to cry. Liam and Loki both had tears in their eyes, and kept staring at where our girls were. "Go to them, I have a little more work to do here before they can bring them to me," I told them. Roxy explained what I meant, and they did not want to see the delivery of the placenta. They went over

to our daughters instead. I could hear them gushing over their babies, and it was the sweetest thing ever. Once I had delivered the placenta, Roxy and Trish quickly cleaned me up. I was so tired, but I knew I wouldn't be able to rest until I saw my girls. Abby rolled their little bassinet over to my bed and Loki and Liam handed me my daughters. "Hello my beautiful babies. Welcome to the world. I'm your mommy." I whispered to them. Their names suited them as well. Welcome to the world Adelina Rose, Alette Lily, and Asteria Iris. You are going to do special things in this world.

No Tears Allowed

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Jason POV

"Would you hurry up," Rebecca yelled at me. She was angry because I had caused us to miss the birth of our nieces. I tried to explain that it wasn't my fault that Mel went into labor earlier than anticipated, and she started to laugh. I stood there not knowing how to react. "I'm sorry, you are right. I'm just excited about seeing them, and we were supposed to be there 2 days ago anyway. I miss our family being close," she apologized. I could understand where she was coming from, but it wasn't like we could uproot and leave the pack any time we felt like it. Especially since we walked in to a total mess left over from Callum. I have been doing some research for the twins while trying to get caught up in my Alpha duties here. They apparently had someone within their pack who was giving information to those who took over while Callum was imprisoned before his death. They are hoping there is some kind of paper-trail evidence that will tell them who it was. So far, I haven't found anything other than receipts for books that Dark Star had purchased for Christopher, who is now a member of Blood Moon. We are still going through mountains of documents and papers that were in the Alpha office, so there could still be something here.

I buckled up Trinity in her car seat as Rebecca was buckling up Joel. We said goodbye to my uncles and Meribeth, and told them we would be back in a few days. They were going to go visit after us since we couldn't leave the pack unmanned for that long. Jorma said they would continue to organize the paperwork in the office and if anything of urgency came up, they would call me. I climbed in the car and drove out of Starry Moon. Rebecca started to flip through the music stations because she hated the heavy music I listened to. She said it gave her a headache. I didn't mind, because I could listen to anything, and as long as she was happy, I was happy. She settled on a country station that played mostly 90s country music, and she started to sing along to a Keith Urban song. "And you're always in my heart, always on my mind, when it all becomes too much, you're never far behind, and there's no one that comes close to you, could ever take your place, cause only you can love me this way," she sang. Her voice was amazing, and I don't think she even realized it. I could listen to her sing all day long. This was the first song she had ever

sent me when we first found each other. Neither of us were good at expressing emotions when we first met, especially me, but she always seemed to find songs that would tell me exactly how she was feeling at that particular moment in time. It kind of became our love language for the first couple of months. I would leave her little notes saying, "Listen to this, this is how you make me feel," with the name of the song, and when I got home she would have another song ready for me to hear to tell me how the song I gave her made her feel. Eventually, we were able to just voice it or show actual emotion to one another without music. I miss those days, but I am thankful we were finally able to communicate. Rebecca has changed me for the better, and I never thought that would be possible.

Time seemed to fly by, and before I knew it, I was pulling into the drive at the Blood Moon pack gates. I started to get excited about seeing my nieces and my sister. They should already be home since they were being released today, but Rebecca called to make sure. I looked at Trinity through the rearview mirror and asked, "We're here, are you excited about seeing aunt Mel?" and she squealed with happiness. She loved her aunt Melian, and the feeling was mutual. Rebecca said they were at the packhouse, so we went straight there. I parked on the street, and grabbed Joel for Rebecca. She got Trinity unbuckled and out of the car, and we made our way into the house. Walking in the house brought back so many memories of the past months. Just the smell alone reminded me of how amazing their cooks were, and made me envious that our cooks were still learning. Maybe the twins would let me borrow one of theirs to help train the ones we had recruited. Don't get me wrong, they knew how to cook, but it was the seasoning of the food and baking they needed help with. Meribeth offered to help, but my uncles said only if we had no other option. They wasted no time in getting her pregnant, claiming they weren't getting any younger. They were fully pampering her and I can't say she was complaining. It was sweet how they doted on her.

Loki was the one to greet us by running down the stairs and practically jumping in my arms. I missed Liam and my sister, but Loki has become one of my best friends, not just my brother-in-law. I don't know which one I got closer to, him or Rico. I loved my relationship with them both, and I missed them terribly. He led us upstairs to the nursery, and when I walked in, I quickly turned my head. Mel was sitting in the rocking chair feeding two of my nieces, and I didn't want to see my sister's boobs hanging out. Mel and Rebecca started to laugh, and my mate said, "It's not like you haven't seen nursing boobs before babe." I kept my head turned and replied, "Your nursing boobs and my sisters are two different types of boobs, and I don't need to see my sisters." Everyone laughed and Liam took a sheet and draped it over Mel. She had finished with the two she was feeding and was now feeding Alette. We sat on a couch in the nursery, and the twins handed Rebecca and I each a baby. I was amazed at how much they looked like my sister, and my heart broke. Because, as much as they looked like her, they also looked like my mom. Teary-eyed, I looked at Mel and said, "Mom would have loved her grandkids." She nodded her head and said that she knew she would have also. "No tears, Jason. This is a happy occasion, no tears allowed," she said as she laughed through her own tears.

Broken Trust

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MELIAN POV

I was beyond happy to have my brother here. Jason was being all sentimental and making us all cry happy tears. Who knew he could be such a sap? I loved seeing him this way though, and it was better than the alternative of how he used to be. He took turns holding the girls, and made sure Trinity was able to get her fill of each one. She was so adorable with them. She would rub their little heads as her daddy held them. I was starting to get hungry, and I asked Jason if they wanted to have dinner up here or down in the dining hall. Honestly, I was hoping he said dining hall, because even though I had just got home, I needed to go out of this room for a while.

Thankfully, Rebecca said dining hall, because it would be easier to feed Trinity that way. I called the nanny in and my mates helped me down the stairs to the dining hall. They had called ahead to make sure our table was set family style, and a highchair was available for Trinity and Maddix.

Tonight was an Italian night, so I knew to expect lots of pasta, breads and pizza. Sure enough, as I sat in my seat at our table, the Omegas brought out bowls of different pastas, tons of bread and 4 different pizzas. My mouth was already watering just from the smell.

"This looks amazing, sis!" Jason exclaimed. "What would be the odds of me borrowing one of your cooks to train ours?" he asked. I looked at him weirdly and asked why he would need a cook to train them when he had Meribeth. He explained the situation and I was elated. I didn't know why I was just finding out, but I was beyond happy for them all the same. Liam told him it wouldn't be a problem, and that they would send over one that wasn't mated. He didn't want to separate mates because it would prove to be too hard on them. Jason was happy with that, and so was Rebecca. She said that having food with flavor was going to be awesome. Sitting and enjoying a meal like this with my family made me feel so good, but also a little sad. I know they hadn't been gone for that long, but it felt like an eternity since we had been able to do something like that. Jason's phone rang, and he excused himself to take the call. 'Pack business' he stated. Which more than likely meant that the uncles were confused about how to handle something. He was gone for quite a long while before returning and the look on his face wasn't good. "Mel, we may have to leave quicker than I anticipated. Leif found something that not only concerns Starry Moon, but also Blood Moon in the papers that were piled up in my office." he said with a somber face. The last part got Liam and Loki's attention and Loki asked what he meant by that. With fear in his eyes, he looked at Loki and said, "We found your mole."

"You found our mole?" Loki asked. Jason nodded his head and said they couldn't talk about it here in the dining hall. The men in my life quickly finished eating and left Rebecca and I sitting at the table. I wasn't going to lie and say that I wasn't pissed that they just left us there when we should have been involved in the conversation. I linked Liam and expressed my feelings, and he apologized. He was quick to come back to get us, and we took the kids to the nursery for the

nannies to watch. After we were all in the office, Jason and Loki also apologized, and we waited patiently to hear the news. As soon as Jason received a picture on his phone, he turned it to show Liam. Liam's face went white, and he leaned back in his chair. "Can the secrecy fucking stop already?" I huffed. Liam slammed his fist on the desk, and had Jason show the rest of us what he had received. Loki's face turned red, and I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It was a picture of our head warrior, Timmy, Hazel and Callum at a party when Timmy was supposed to be visiting family when a 'relative passed away' at a neighboring pack. "There are documents and emails that solidify that he is definitely the mole as well. Jorma is sending me the emails and pictures of the other documents. Callum paid him a pretty penny for the information as well." Jason explained. I was completely shocked. Hazel and Timmy were the last people I thought would betray us. Especially Timmy, because he fought beside us against Callum and his people. I wanted someone to help me make sense of it all, and there was only one person who could, and I stormed out of the office to get those answers. "Mel, stop!" Loki demanded. I turned to face him and told him no. Tears filled my eyes because of my anger, and Loki put his arm around my shoulder and led me back into the office.

"We are pissed off too, babe. We have to handle this correctly though. I know you are heartbroken and pissed off, but you just gave birth to our babies. We NEED you to be safe. We are going to bring Timmy and Hazel here, to the office, just to be on the safe side. No surprises that way." Loki explained. I knew he was right, and yes, my heart was completely broken. Hazel was my friend, or at least pretended to be. Then there was Timmy. He grew up with my mates, he has fought beside us, against the same people who he was selling information to. He had some serious explaining to do, because none of this made any sense. I looked at everyone in the room, and I wasn't the only one upset about what was happening. Rebecca was upset about Hazel, she volunteered a lot of time to help Hazel with the bistro. She grew up with Timmy, just like my mates, and saw him as a brother. Liam and Loki were so pissed off that they couldn't even look at each other, let alone anyone else. "Who's calling them in?" I asked. No one answered, so I picked up my phone and dialed Hazel's number. I wasn't sure what to say to get her here, but I would think of something. "Hey Hazel, it's Mel. Is it possible you could come up to the Alpha office? We are making our donations to pack businesses, and we would like to give you a donation for Coffee and Thyme. You guys fed me throughout my whole pregnancy, and you deserve it." I asked her, trying to sound as friendly as I could. She said she would be right up, and we patiently waited. Liam had called Timmy to have him come up, and he got there before Hazel. "What's up everyone?" He asked. "Didn't expect to see all of you," he said in a happy tone. That tone quickly left when the door reopened and Hazel stood on the other side.

The Explanation

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LIAM POV

When does it stop? The best thing in the world just happened to us, and here we are, back in the midst of some drama. I never in a million years would have guessed Tim to be part of the whole mole situation. I keep telling myself to hear him out, but looking at him right now, pretending everything is fine makes me want to end him. His happy-go-lucky tone with us is quickly about to end, and he has a lot to account for. Once the door opened again and Hazel was on the other side, Tim's demeanor quickly changed. "Come in Hazel, you are just in time," I told her. She tries to back out of the door to leave, and Loki prevents that from happening. "Have a seat, both of you," I command. My tone is monotone for now, but if needed, I will use my alpha tone. Jason goes to sit next to his sister and mate, and I motion for them both to take the seats in front of the desk, and Tim finally asks what is going on. I had already printed out the evidence against them both, and I tossed the pages across the desk to them. He picked them up, and his face dropped. He looked at Hazel, who sat sobbing, and kept her head down. "Liam, I can explain." Tim started. I slammed my fist on the desk and told him he was to address me as Alpha. He took a deep breath and started again. "Alpha, like I said, I can explain. I know what this looks like, but I didn't do what you think I did," he said. I cocked my head and said, "What is it you think we are thinking? That you took money to tell our enemy everything going on in our pack? That you made sure to let the rebels know that my pregnant mate was in the pack without us, so they could attack while we were gone? What? What is it, Tim? We fucking trusted you bro! Tell me what the hell you think we are thinking?!?!?" I bellowed. My patience was growing thin, and I wanted answers quickly.

"It wasn't Tim, it was me," Hazel admitted. Her sobs were more intense, and she couldn't even look at us. "Hazel, don't.." Tim pleaded. She finally looked at him, and shook her head. "No, I can't let them hate you for something I did just because you are my mate," She said. His face softened and he took her hand. "It's just as much my fault, I didn't try and stop you once I found out. Liam..I mean, Alpha. Yes, the information was given, but not what you would think. They were only given half-truths, and we didn't give the rebels anything. Callum and his people had things hanging over Hazel's head. Callum is related to her, and helped her at one point with money. She put it in her business, and he was demanding cuts of her profits. When she couldn't afford to do so, he demanded repayment in the form of information about the pack and the Luna. We have known we were mates for a while now, but fought the bond because she didn't want anyone to know what she was doing. Especially with me being so close to both of you. There for a long time, I thought she was going to reject me. I made her tell me, and the picture you saw with us both at one of Callum's parties, we were there to confront him and tell him she wasn't going to give him any other information. I was going to pay off her loan, but he refused the payment. We gave him false information on many occasions, and he was starting to catch on, so we had to give him at least one factual thing, or he was going to kill her." Timmy explained. I didn't know how to feel about it all, and I felt like he was talking in circles. It could have been just nerves, but I could relate to trying to protect his mate. "You could have come to us, Tim. Either of you could have. Hazel, you were good friends with Melian, you knew you could trust her to help you." I stated. She finally looked me in the eye and said, "Alpha, I care deeply for Mel. I wasn't sure what to do, especially when she became pregnant. I didn't want any danger to come to her. Then, when you captured Callum, I thought it was over with. That's when his rebels started trying to extort me. I honestly thought I could handle it myself, but that proved to be

wrong. I swear to the goddess that we did not give the rebels any information about you being away from the pack when they attacked. I stopped all communication with Dark Star once he was captured. I had to leave the pack briefly to attend to my aunt in the nearby human town, but that was it. She lives with my sister who was mated to a human, and my sister needed me to stay with her for a couple of days," she expressed.

I looked around the room, trying to read the expressions on everyone's faces. I sat back in my chair and closed my eyes. Running my hands through my beard trying to calm myself. If what they were saying was true, it would make sense. I didn't like it, but it didn't change the fact that she was afraid. I just wish Tim would have trusted us enough to come to us with it. I understand it was her business, but it essentially affected us all. A tiny voice entered my head, and told me she loved me. I opened my eyes and looked at her, and she had a small smile on her face. I linked her back and asked her what we should do, and she said to give them grace. Give them grace? Was she serious? She closed her eyes and gave me a slight nod, and I looked at Loki. He gave the same motion. I couldn't allow them to go without punishment, but like my brother and mate, I understood their plight. I started to pull at my long curls and then leaned forward to get closer to them both and said, "Here is what is going to happen. Because our trust has been broken, Tim, we are going to have to demote you for the time being. You will be a regular warrior with the opportunity to earn that head position back. You can keep your lodgings where you are, because I have no doubts you will work your ass off to regain our trust. Hazel, although I understand your position and hardship, I cannot allow you to go unpunished either. You, willingly or unwillingly, put our pack in danger. That isn't acceptable in any way, shape or form. The punishment for being a traitor is death, but given the circumstances, I think my mate wouldn't be happy with that punishment, and honestly, neither would we. So, I am going to have to discuss your punishment with my brother and mate, and get back with you on it. Until we come to a decision, you should not leave pack grounds. If you do, don't come back."

Changed for the better

Chapter 117 - Their Bullied and Broken Mate

LOKI POV

I was thankful that Liam chose to take the lead in this situation with Timmy and Hazel. Here lately, I'm the one with the level head, but I don't think I could have been anywhere near level-headed with this. We have known Tim since we were in 1st grade, and growing up he practically lived with us. It was always Rico, Nick, Timmy, Liam and I. Sure there were other friends, but the five of us were thick as thieves always. I'm staring at my childhood friend as he explains

what's going on to my twin, and I don't recognize the man I am seeing. I understand that the mate bond will make you do things you normally wouldn't, but I guess I overestimated the bond to the pack in comparison to the mate bond. As I'm listening to the conversation, and Liam is about to give them their punishment, my twin looks over at me. I didn't understand why at first until I heard a little voice say, "I asked Liam to show them grace. What they are telling him is the truth." It was my mate explaining to me why Liam was looking at me like he was. I closed my eyes and gave him a slight nod, and I heard him make the decision. Tim would be demoted, effective immediately, and would have to earn his title back. No other perks would be taken from him, like his special housing situation. Hazel, he wanted to talk to Mel about, but she wasn't allowed to leave the pack grounds without an appointed escort, or she would be banished and cast out as a rogue. That alone was enough in my opinion. We knew she would have to go to town to check on her family, and get supplies for the bistro, but she would have a warrior escort with her to make sure there were no secret meetings with anyone else looking to extort her on the name of Callum Starr.

Liam ended the meeting and excused everyone. The three of us were ready to get to our children, and rest for the rest of the night. Rebecca was last to leave, and commended us for being fair and hearing them out. She said it showed that we had grown, and didn't act on impulse anymore. Before, we would have just sentenced them both to death without hearing them out. A traitorous act was a traitorous act, no matter the reason why. Melian explained that she didn't see what they did as traitorous, because they never fed the full truth to those who were threatening Hazel. However, I didn't see it that way. They could have come to us. Any of us. Especially if they were afraid for her life. Then there was the whole fact that she was related to Callum this whole time and never said a word. I mean, I guess I can understand, but there's just so much that makes no sense to me. Maybe it isn't supposed to, but damn I wish it did. "You guys ready to head up?" Mel asked. I shook my head and told her that I needed to grab some stuff out of the kitchen first, and Liam closed his laptop after sending an email to the Royal Council. "Yea, I want to go see our girls and our boy." Liam said. The two of them headed out to go to the nursery, and I went down to the kitchen. I always get the munchies when I'm stressed out, and I made up a bunch of sandwiches and grabbed a couple bags of chips. We had drinks upstairs, but I grabbed a 6 pack of beer anyway.

I dropped the food off in our room, and went into the nursery where my brother and mate were. Mel was feeding Adelina and Asteria, while Liam was changing Maddix and getting him ready for bed. I picked up Alette and grabbed her bottle off of the counter and fed her. I know the girls are identical, but they each have their own personalities to set them apart. For example, Alette sleeps with her little left hand tucked under her chin. Adelina's brow was almost always furrowed, like she had the weight of the world on her shoulders. Then there was our runt, Asteria. When she slept, her little arm was usually tossed across her forehead. Then there were little things like Adelina had a little more hair than the other girls, and Alette had a birthmark on the back of her left calf. If it weren't for little things like that, I wouldn't be able to tell them apart. They would have to wear name tags all their lives. People used to say that until Liam and I got older, they couldn't tell us apart if we were dressed the same. Thankfully, that didn't happen very often. My dad was totally against the idea of dressing us the same once we reached a certain age. My mom said it was because he definitely couldn't tell us apart no matter how hard he tried.

They would have loved the kids so much, and it breaks my heart that they never got to experience being grandparents.

Speaking of grandparents, Mel told us what she had found out about Gretchen. We are letting her deal with that situation in her own time. She hasn't even told her brother or uncles yet. I just find it crazy how our lives have become so intertwined family wise. My cousin is mated to hers, and our sister is mated to her brother. I'm just thankful she found her way to us, and that the Goddess chose her just for us. Our lives have been chaotic ever since, but at least it hasn't been boring by any means. Alette finally finished her bottle, and I lifted her up to my shoulder to pat her little back so that she could burp. I sing to her softly as I pat and rub her back, and I catch Mel staring at me. I smiled at her and whispered, "What?" and she simply shook her head with a smirk. With all the kids changed, fed and tucked in safely asleep, the three of us retreated to our own room. We each ate the snacks I had brought upstairs and watched Mel's favorite Roseanne re-runs. Our lives have changed so much in such a short period of time, but I wouldn't change it for anything in the world.

Facing the past

Chapter 118 - Their Bullied and Broken Mate

MELIAN POV

It's been almost 3 weeks since the girls have been born, and they are growing so quickly. I'm starting to recognize little personality traits coming out in each of them, and I can't wait to see how they are when they get older. They are all three relatively good babies, only cry when they need something and are rarely cranky, but when they are, Goddess be damned if they don't raise the roof with their cries. Loki swears that Alette is fully his, Adelina is fully Liams and Asteria is a beautiful combo of them both. Liam and I just laugh when he talks like that, but who knows if he could be right? I asked him once where I fit in to that equation, and he just chuckled and said that they had a piece of me in each of them. I guess that is fair. I have been thinking a lot about how to approach Gretchen about being my grandma, but I think that there isn't going to be an easy way to do it. I'm just going to have to rip the band-aid off and tell her I know. When I think about it though, I get a little angry. She was literally right in front of her sons during the whole Callum demon debacle, and said nothing. NOTHING. She had to know it was them. Their full names were given in the book, which means SHE named them. I decided to go to the old Mill House and talk to her, and see what she had to say.

The Mill House was bustling with activity considering the winter solstice was close, and I found Gretchen pretty quickly. "Melian, my dear! It's so good to see you!" she exclaimed. She looked around to see if I was alone or had the girls with me, and when she realized I was alone, concern

spread across her face. "Is everything OK, sweetheart? Where are the little beauties?" she asked. I sighed and shook my head. "No, I'm not alright. I need to speak to you about something important. In private, please." I told her. She took my hand and led me into her bedroom, and sat me on the bed. She brought me a bottle of water, and pulled a chair near where I was sitting. Her room smelled heavenly, and I instantly relaxed. It was a mix of lavender, vanilla and sage, just like the sachets she brought me to the nursery for the kids. "So, what's troubling you my dear girl?" she asked. I had a hard time looking her in the eye, but I pulled the book out of my bag and handed it to her. She opened it where the bookmark was, and I could see her demeanor change just as quickly as it had earlier. "Whe..where did you get this?" she asked. I explained to her how Christopher was helping me learn the history of the packs, and helping me find information about who I am and my mother's family were. I also told her that he had found it while he was in Dark Star, and brought it to me when he saw my mother's name listed next to hers. "Gretchen, I know this is probably painful for you, but I need answers. I'm begging you. Mammon had questioned you in the cell house about whether you had told me who I was, and you avoided the question. I would like to know why. I care a great deal about you and your family. If we were family, I would feel honored, but I would still have questions about events leading till now. I hope you understand." I informed her. She became very quiet and stood up and turned away from me. I knew I had upset her, but I was sincere with my words. I needed answers and I hoped she understood.

"OK, I will tell you everything, but please understand this is a very painful situation for me. Would you like some tea or cookies? This is going to take a bit to tell you." she stated. I nodded my head with a smile, and she stepped out of the room. While she was gone, I started to look at the things she had set out around her bedroom. There were beautiful figurines and crystals. Candles and bowls of herbs were everywhere. She had a shelf in the corner with many old pictures, and I started to look at them intensely. On the second shelf there were 3 pictures in particular that caught my eye. One was of 2 little boys and a beautiful little girl who looked a lot like me. Another was just of the boys playing with their trucks in some sand, and the last one was the little girl with her doll sitting on a swing. I knew that they were my uncles and mother, but if the timeline added up, it was after she had left them with their father. Did she keep tabs on them? Was she forced to walk away from them? I almost felt like she may have led a double life somehow, because my mother and her oldest son, Marcus, were very close in age. She came back into the room, and I moved back over to the bed to take my seat again. She poured the tea and sat a tray of cookies on her bedside table. "Get comfy, sweetie. This is going to take me a little while. I hope you have time," she said. I sent a text to my mates and the nanny telling them where I was, and that I would be there a while. I put the phone away, and told her I had all the time in the world.

"Alright then, let's begin. When I was around 15 years old, I was sent to a boarding school in Seattle. My parents were concerned because I wasn't picking up as quickly as I should with my magical abilities. They thought sending me away to a boarding school for witches would be a good opportunity for me. They obviously didn't do enough research on the place because it wasn't just for witches. There were many different walks of life there. Fae, witches, wolves, and other shapeshifters, and a random vampire here and there. I was there close to 2 weeks before I left my dorm room, and tried to meet people. When I finally decided to socialize, I met Albert

Rosewood. He was a wolf/Fae hybrid, and extremely handsome. It was definitely lust at first sight," she said with an ornery look on her face.

The Hard Truth

Chapter 119 - Their Bullied and Broken Mate

Gretchen POV

When Melian showed up at the Mill House out of the blue, I had a gut feeling about what she wanted. Was I ready to face those memories? I wasn't sure, but knew it was time to face the past. I started to tell her about how my parents sent me away to boarding school and that I had met her grandfather, Albert, shortly after. She was listening intently, and I slowly verbalized the memories from way back then.

"He was incredibly handsome, and it was definitely lust at first sight. We became friends pretty quickly, and eventually we became intimate. We weren't mates, but the relationship was worth the risk of heartache. Albert was a good man, or at least at the time he was. We dated for almost a year, and I fell pregnant with your uncles, Jorma and Leif. We were both on cloud 9 and decided that we were going to be a family, no matter if we found our mates or not. I believed that wholeheartedly until your mother was born. When she turned 2, things changed. He was sent to a conference by his father, and he found his fated mate. All the promises of being a family and choosing to stay with each other and reject our mates became empty. He came home and sat me down and told me that he was taking my children and leaving to be with his mate. She would raise them as hers, and I would never see them again. I begged him not to destroy our family, and he, in not so many words, said that we weren't a family anymore and to forget I was the mother of his children. I was devastated. I pleaded with him to at least leave the kids, and he refused. He had become distant and cruel towards me, and when I looked at him, I didn't see the man I had fallen in love with." I explained. I had to take a break for a moment to fight back the tears that threatened to release and slide down my face. "He had brought some of his father's guards with him, and they came in that night and took my children and all of their belongings. I can remember Leif crying for me, and Albert yelling at him that I was no longer his momma. My heart shattered. I moved out of the house I shared with Albert, and back in with my parents. I fell into a deep depression about being stripped away from my kids, and wasn't sure who to turn to for help. I finally asked my mother to contact her friend's son, Tomas Bastille. He was a notorious lawyer in the Portland area, who specialized in family law. When Tomas showed up at our house, I knew the second he walked in that he was my mate. I understood the pull, and why Albert abandoned me for it. It didn't excuse the fact that he took my children, but it helped me understand the situation. Tomas and I fell madly in love, and he promised to help me get my kids back. He wanted to raise them as his own, and we fought for a long time in the courts to get them

back. Albert's father was a ruthless alpha, and had more money than we did. He funded his son's court fees and lawyer, and no matter how many times we went in front of the judge with massive evidence that I was fit, and that they would be safe with me, the judge would rule in Albert's favor. The last hearing we had, Albert had paperwork of adoption for his mate to officially become their legal mother. The judge, once again, ruled in Albert's favor. I had officially lost my kids at no fault of my own." I explained.

I asked for another break and Mel kindly obliged. She could see that I was physically upset, but she had no clue how mentally draining this was for me. I knew Albert's father disliked me because of my witch blood, but I always thought that maybe he would eventually accept me because I was also part Fae. Boy was I mistaken. He made it his life's mission to destroy me at all costs. I finally was able to gather myself, and finish telling my granddaughter about the past. "I later learned that Albert's mate was killed by his own brother for treason. She had been sleeping with George to get pack information and was relaying it to a powerful human in Seattle. Albert found out, and confronted George, and when he had realized his mistake, he killed her right in front of Albert. He later killed the human and caused all kinds of issues for the pack. Albert took my children, and left the pack, and they lived as rogues until he met another woman, a witch. When my kids started to show signs of their Fae traits, the woman became very jealous of your mother, and she fought a lot with Albert about making his children hide who they were. Albert started to become scared about the safety of our kids, and came to me when they were around the ages of 15 and 13. He asked me to come up with a spell to hide the four of them from this other witch. I refused, and told him I would gladly take my kids back, and I would protect them myself. He became angry and left. It was the last time I heard from him, and I had to go the hard way of finding out how my kids were doing. By this time, I had already had Marcus and Pablo, and also had to consider their safety. I had to watch everything happening in their lives from afar, but there was one time that I was able to get closer to all of you. It was right after your mother passed away, and your father wanted to call in a Fae priestess to perform her funeral ceremony. They contacted my mother, but I begged her to let me go in her place. She agreed, because she wasn't in the best of health, and I bravely went to perform the funeral rites for my own daughter. I hung around as long as time would allow me that day, and it was then I learned that you were the most powerful and special of us all. It was also the day that I realized your father, David, was an evil man. I could see the hatred that he held for you, and I vowed to make sure you were safe. I failed, and I'm sorry for that. When I thought he had killed my boys, I stayed away because I assumed that he had already killed you as well. I should have known better, but my grief consumed me. I hope you understand. When I found out you were here, with the twin alphas, and you all needed help with the demon. I was more than anxious to go. I insisted. I should have pulled you aside and told you everything right then, but I was afraid of that rejection and the anger that came with it. I'm sorry, Melian. I hope you and my boys can forgive me." I finished.

Breaking the news

Chapter 120 - Their Bullied and Broken Mate

MELIAN POV

I sat and listened to Gretchen patiently. I had so many questions, but honestly, did they really matter anymore? Her story was full of sadness and tragedy. I wondered if my uncles remembered any of what she was telling me, and I intended to question them about it before arranging the meeting between them all. I do forgive her for not telling me who she was to me. I tried to put myself in her shoes, and imagine how she felt as well. I couldn't imagine being in her situation, and was thankful I had amazing mates. We sat in silence for quite a long time as I processed what she said, and I finally slid off her bed and kneeled before her. "Gretchen, I cannot even fathom the pain you must have suffered. I would have lost myself if I lost any of my children like that. Unfortunately, nothing can change what happened or bring my mom back to us. I know she is watching over us, and knows you tried. I remember the day of her funeral, and I can remember you being there. I thought you looked so much like my mom and a few of my brothers, but I never placed 2 and 2 together, but then again, I was really young. I do forgive you, and I hope to become as close as a grandmother and granddaughter should be. I also want you to be a part of my kids' lives. Not as Gretchen, but as a great-grandmother. I will talk to my uncles and see what they say about setting up a meeting with you. I can't promise you anything, but I will try," I informed her. Her smile spread across her face, and she thanked me for understanding. She pulled me into her embrace and she finally released the tears she had been holding. "Thank you, Melian. I appreciate your kindness so much. I'm not sure if I deserve it, but I will definitely do everything I can to not lose my family again." she cried. We talked for just a while longer, and I took my leave. I needed to get back to the girls and Maddix, and then needed to get caught up on some paperwork for my Luna duties.

Walking back to the packhouse, I took out my phone and dialed my uncle Leif. He picked up quickly, and I asked if he had time to talk with me. He said he did, and I didn't know how to start the conversation other than at the beginning. I told him everything that Gretchen had told me, and I was almost certain he had hung up on me. "Leif? Are you still there?" I asked. He said he was just in shock. He confirmed everything she said, but was flabbergasted that it was Gretchen. "She doesn't look like I remember her," he said. I don't remember much of the woman he was with after my uncle killed the woman I knew as our adopted mother. Dad was always honest about who our mother was, but he never called her Gretchen. He called her Rose. Mel, I hope this isn't rude, but I need to go. I need to talk to Jorma. If you could prepare a room for us, I'll talk with Jason about us coming there this weekend. Thank you for calling me and letting me know. I appreciate it greatly. Love you kiddo," he said and disconnected the call. I didn't want Jason blindsided when Leif went to him, so I called and explained everything to him as well. Shock seemed to be the right feeling for everyone when the news came out. Hopefully, now that things are out in the open, our lives can merge together and finally learn more about our lineage.

When I walked into the nursery, I was surprised to see Grace in there with all the kids. I asked where the nanny was, and she explained that she had gotten sick, so she called Grace. I didn't trust many people with our kids, so I was thankful she called Grace and not some other Omega. I thanked her for coming over, and we sat and talked while I fed the girls. She was playing with Maddix, and started to cry. "Grace, are you alright?" I asked her, and she nodded her head. "I'm great, actually. I'm pregnant, Mel. I plan on telling Rico tonight at dinner. I hope he is happy. I mean he came into a ready-made family. I adopted the twins, and then the 3 boys came into my life. So, I hope more doesn't freak him out." she said. I tried to reassure her that Rico would be elated that she was carrying his pup, and she agreed. She said she knew she was freaking out about nothing, but she still had nerves. I told her to call in her help for the kids, and make it a romantic night. "He will love it," I told her. It wasn't long before my mates, Rico and Tobias came into the nursery and Grace and I started to laugh. Loki looked at me weirdly and asked, "What's funny? Do we have something on our faces or something?" I started to laugh harder and made them more confused. "No, honey. You guys are fine. Grace and I had a bet on how long it would be before you both showed up here. Grace won, by the way. What we didn't expect was for you to bring an entourage. Rico started to defend him and Tobias, "Hey, I wanted to see my godchildren. Tobias was just tagging along." Grace and I started to laugh a little harder at how cute they all were when it came to those little ones. Maddix wobbled over to Tobias and reached up to him, and he was quickly picked up and tossed in the air. I can remember hearing Rebecca say one time that you can always tell good people with the trust of a child. It was in this moment that I realized how truthful that really was.