

TLOA Lycan 531

Chapter 531 - 'THEM'

"We're not in vacation!" Kace knocked Ian's head causing the boy wailed in pain.

"Why did you hit me? It was Hope who said that we're in a vacation!" he felt unfairly wronged. He just told Ethan to shut up, but why did he get hit?

Yet, Kace didn't feel what he did was wrong, the lycan wrapped his arms around Hope's shoulder as they walked along the streets.

Seeing how frustrated Ian was, Hope chuckled, she also wrapped her arms around his h.i.p.s as she knew Kace would treat her no less than this.

See? Wasn't this like how a perfect vacation would be? Hope got Kace beside her and aside from Lidya, she was happy to have people that she cared about being around her. Having the twins there in the journey was like having a mood booster every time, they could be funny but also annoying at the same time.

This street was too packed from people going around. It was hard for the group to come through, but Kace managed to shove those few people around away, from any possibility of getting Hope squeezed inside the crowd.

The lycan became overly protective over his mate and Hope liked it when he showed concern for her. She loved the way Kace showed his feeling and affection.

There was a blush staining her cheeks and she kept glancing over the man beside her shyly every few seconds. action

"Does your back still hurt?" Hope asked softly while glancing through all the pretty necklaces hanging from a string on one of the stands.

"I am fine. You don't need to worry." Kace gave her a dashing smile to assure her.

"I had this vision, it was a dream about you but felt real..." Hope said as she recalled the strange dream where she saw the white lycan.

"Hmm," Kace hummed. "The fireflies."

"You know that too?" Hope turned her head and looked at Kace with her wide eyes. "You had the same dream too?"

Kace gave some thought when he answered her. "You can say so... it was the candlemaiden doing."

"Christal? What did she do exactly?" her guess was right, there was some meaning behind it. "What is that mean?"

Kace glanced at the curious girl and smirked naughtily. "To relay my message that I missed you." He winked at her and earned a slap across his arms and some of her giggles.

They continued to walk until they reached the ship that waited patiently in the water. A ship with this size could board on no less than three hundred passengers and it would take at least a day voyage to the sacred place.

Hope and Ian were madly excited to embark in their journey with this ship, even though Ethan didn't show it on his face, but he also felt the same energy as the other two, his eyes flickered with enthusiasm.

"This is amazing..." Hope murmured, wandered her eyes around her surroundings.

"Don't move carelessly or you will get lost." Kace tightened his grip on her shoulder, to keep the overly excited girl stayed in her place.

The six of them climbed the ship's aisle in two lines, Lidya and Lana walked ahead with Kace and Hope behind them, while the twin right behind the couple.

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"I will be in the room next to yours." Kace patted Hope's head, as they turned towards the door halfway down the ship's second level. There were three in total.

The first, being the upper deck, the second, was traveler quarters and the third, was for the ship's workers and food storage.

Once they arrived at their room, Lana pushed the door opened and walked in, followed by Lidya. Probably, both of them were too tired to even give the men a 'goodbye'. They chucked their backpack and bag a swung across the small room before Lidya closed the door with a flick from her wrist, even though Hope was still right outside.

"Get some sleep, you need it." Kace nudged open the small door with his large shoulder. "Don't be alone with Lidya," he said, barely a whisper.

Hope didn't ask why because she knew the reason of Kace's warning. Only if Kace knew that Hope had made a deal with the witch, Hope was certain the lycan would be incensed.

"Okay," Hope nodded obediently. "But, I just woke up, I can't fall asleep again." she had been sleeping on their way to the harbor.

"Are you hungry?" Kace's eyes softened when he saw Hope was pouting her lips.

"Extremely!" hope said exaggeratedly while rubbing her flat tummy.

Kace leaned over and kissed her temple. "Let's have a breakfast, but give me ten minutes to take a quick bath."

Hope grinned from ear to ear, "Okay! I will wait for you inside the room."

See? This vacation is absolutely perfect! Hope closed the door while humming a song that she knew.

Inside the room there were two bunk beds which the lower bed had been occupied by the two women, thus, the only option left for Hope was to take the bed above Lidya or Lana.

Hope walked towards Lana's bed and saw how exhausted she was. The young female werewolf had curled her body into a shrimp and closed her eyes as her breathe became even.

She must be so tired and as Hope remembered, it seemed that Lana didn't take a single wink of sleep at all when they were inside the carriage.

No matter how jealous Hope was to her, she always consider and think of Lana as her big sister. She took a blanket from the second cabinet near her and put it on her.

Hope was about to take off her cloak when suddenly a warning voice rang from Lidya.

"Don't take off your cloak."

"You scared me!" Hope hissed. "Why?"

"For your own safety," she said simply.

"Why do you think I'd be in danger? The festival is over and nothing happened last night." Hope didn't see or couldn't see anything that was potentially a dangerous threat to her.

"The festival is over, but instead of in your human realm, you are here, in this realm." Lidya shifted in her bed and stared at Hope. "Just because you are able to see the shifters in their beast form, it doesn't mean you could see 'everything', not many eyes could see 'them', you know."

Chapter 532 - OLD MAGIC

"What do you mean with 'them'?" Hope frowned as she glanced at Lana, apparently, she was too tired to be bothered by the conversation between Hope and Lidya.

"We, the witch, believe in the existence of spirits, other beings that have no form." Lidya's eyes stared straight into Hope's. "That is where we got our magic from."

Hope wasn't sure that she understood what Lidya was saying. She knew about spirit, but did not have a deep understanding about it.

"This is an old magic." She added. "And just like human. Not all spirits are nice, consequently, we have this dark witches. All of these are connected to each other."

"Okay..." Hope drawled, "I am confused now."

"You will understand when the right time has come. This realm is built by those spirit, you will need them when you face the upcoming war."

After explaining all that to her, Lidya closed her eyes.

Hope thought she would opened them again and gave her another confusing lectures, yet her breathe became even. She fell asleep.

She fell asleep right after she gave Hope a headache by her half-explained knowledge about those spirit-witch-relation things and this realm. Yeah great!

However, the next thing she knew, there was a knock on the door and Kace's voice sounded from behind the door. action

Forgetting about the puzzle in Lidya's words, she contemplated for a while, whether to take off the cloak or not, but she ended up kept wearing it, just in case.

Hope happily walked towards the door and opened it just to find Kace on his black sweater and jeans, smiling at her. The kind of smile that could make Hope grin foolishly.

"Let's eat," Kace tousled her hair and grabbed her hand as they walked to the first deck.

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After breakfast, Kace took Hope to the upper deck to see the sea and got some fresh air. The twin were fast asleep after their head hit the pillow, thus it was only the couple who roamed around the ship.

Actually, Kace felt exhausted. He had not slept since last night. It seemed the three days when he got a long sleep was not enough for him.

However, having Hope there made things different for him. Upon seeing her in person, he just realized how much he missed his little mate.

Kace was leaning against the railing of the top deck, he looked up, staring at the soft ray of the sun with Hope right beside him.

Hope was looking at the water with the color of soft blue with shade of green, glimmered softly under the torch of the sun light.

There were many people in this upper deck, maybe those travelers were as tired as the twins.

"Do you think there are strange creatures that pull this ship?" Hope tilted her head to see Kace beside her. "You know, like the Moxars that pulled our carriage before."

Kace chuckled upon hearing her question. "Your imagination runs pretty wild."

"Why? Is that wrong to assume that?" Hope pouted her lips. "I think we're in a fairytale-like-world, with magical beasts live alongside of witches and vampires. I even thought of seeing a king and queen, is there a king and queen here?"

With the mentioned of 'King', Kace's mind wandered to his brother. Jedrek. He was a King... the Lycan King.

"There is a King, but not in this realm," Kace answered curtly.

"Oh..." Hope knew whom Kace was referred to, and talking about his older brother wouldn't be a pleasant conversation for Kace.

Although, Hope was quite sure even if she asked any questions about Jedrek, Kace would likely answer all of her questions, but she didn't want to see Kace to feel unease by bringing up the topic.

There was a comfortable quiet moment that stretched between them and even the sun was above their head, the heat was still bearable.

And that moment was the perfect thing to have with a company of your soulmate beside you, simply to pass that moment together.

"Come here..." Kace grabbed Hope's hand and pulled her to come with him.

The lycan brought his mate to a long wooden bench as he sat her down and used her thigh as a pillow. Kace put Hope's hand on his hair and asked her to stroke his head.

"Let me sleep for a while..." he murmured and closed his eyes.

"Hey, if you want to sleep we can go back," Hope whispered, she ran her fingers on his long hair, which was so soft in her touch.

"No, that way you can't repay me for landing you my thigh earlier." Kace became stingy.

"What a great man you are..." Hope said scornfully, but ended up smiling after that. Maybe, playing with his hair under the shadow of the pole while looking at the calm sea was not a bad idea after all.

This upper deck was peacefully quiet and Kace had snored softly even before Hope could realize it.

Hope leaned her back against the backrest of the bench and hummed a song that she knew. She didn't have a single clue what would happen in this so-called sacred place where the priestess lived or if this journey would be as smooth as their plan, but she hoped Kace's wounds could be treated before it got even worse.

Hope closed her eyes, relishing this moment, when all of a sudden there was a voice that greeted her.

"There you are..."

The girl opened her eyes and immediately regretted the sight that she was seeing.

"My sense is right that you are here..."

Well, apparently this journey would be interesting.

"Abby," Hope hissed her name. She wanted to ask why she was here when her own mind answered it.

This young witch was there to attend the festival and this was her place after all. Behind her, Leon followed, looking as charming as the last time Hope saw him, yet she didn't feel glad to see them at all.

"Thank you for still remembering my name. But, what is your name again?" Abby smirked, her eyes didn't leave Kace's sleeping face.

"She's Hope." Leon chimed in.

"Thank you for still remembering my name, apparently you've proven nothing but better memory than her." Hope smirked.

Chapter 533 - GET LOST!

"I dare you to say it again!!!" Abby was furious, she strode to approach Hope, but Leon was faster to grab her shoulder and pulled her back. "LET ME GO!"

"Stop it!" Leon warned his sister.

"Yeah, stop it," Hope said in mocking tone. "Don't you see? Kace is sleeping right now. You are bothering us."

One encounter was enough for Hope to reach an understanding of that Abby and her, would never be in good terms. Ever.

"So you prefer someone else than your own sister? Are you on her side now?" Abby was beyond upset by the way Leon treated her.

"Now I know why you wanted to board onto this ship." Leon glared at her. "You're wasting our time, we should've gone back to the southeast right after the festival ended."

Abby knew, but she accidentally heard a conversation between some elder witches about the Lycan. Apparently, there were a few lycans which had crossed this realm, some of them before the festival and some of it during the festival.

Lycans were common to cross the northern coven realm, but since they mentioned about Lycan from Donovan's blood line, Abby knew right away that must be Kace.

His peculiar energy had a strange vibe once he stepped inside this realm, therefore, those eldest witches were able to pinpoint his location.

It was strange to know that the lycan was visiting the candlemaiden house.

But, of course Abby wouldn't mention anything about this to her brother. Leon was never taking her side about this.

"To be late two or three days will not change anything." Abby puffed, crossing her arms in front of her chest defensively.

"If only I knew this, I will not follow you onto this ship." Leon sighed regretfully.

"Then you will taste the wrath of father." Abby retorted defiantly.

"Let's see, who will get the wrath of father once he finds out about the truth, that you have been tailing a lycan?" Leon challenged her.

"Great!" Hope's voice was slightly above a whisper, but her tone was very harsh. "But, can you have this conversation somewhere else, please? Someone here is trying to get some rest." Hope didn't care with the hard glare that Abby threw to her direction as her eyes focused on Leon, this man was easier to talk to.

Frown on Leon's lips disappeared and rather replaced by a tender smile, seeing how Hope handled the situation.

"Sure, I am sorry for disturbing the both of you." Leon nodded his head slightly as gestured to his sister to go with him.

However, it was very silly of her to ignore her brother's gesture and tried to approach Hope again.

"Don't you know that I am his mate!?" Abby squinted her eyes at Hope.

Leon, literally, slapped his forehead. How embarrassing that statement is?! He didn't know whether Hope knew what the meaning of 'mate' or not, but seeing her surprised expression, followed by her chirpy laugh, he realized that Kace had told her about this matter. He felt bad for his sister.

"Oh, really?! I don't know if Kace has two mates?" Hope sneered after she laughed loudly. "Aside from me..." She raised her chin proudly as she threw that fact to Abby's face.

"Mate?" Abby raised her eyebrow questioningly. "Are you kidding me?" she laughed wryly. "Donovans don't have mates."

At least, that was what Abby knew. The curse that they bear was not a secret anymore to anyone. Thus, when Hope said she was Kace's mate, it was a silly joke in her eyes, despite not long ago she was the one to claim herself as Kace's mate.

"Oh, really?" Hope mimicked Abby's expression, "But, you just said you are his mate? So, what is that? A false claim?"

This time, Leon was the one who laughed. "Nice!" he raised both of his thumbs for Hope, disregarding his own sister was fuming mad beside him.

Hope furrowed her brows, staring at Leon in confusion. If Kace didn't tell her, she wouldn't know that both of them were siblings, because seeing how Leon helped her to mock Abby, no one would believe he was the older brother.

"Leon! Shut up!" Abby stomped her feet angrily, but this only made Leon laughed harder.

"QUIET!"

A harsh voice made Abby jerked away and Leon stopped laughing, even Hope shrieked. Kace, who was lying on her laps had sat down and glowered at Abby.

"Ka... ce..." Abby stammered and if Hope was not in shock, she would find Abby's reaction was funny.

"GET LOST!"

Only now they realized that the color of Kace's eyes were not blue, but they were black, pitch black.

Even Leon found Kace's strong rejection was odd. He knew Kace disliked Abby, but he had never acted so aggressive like this and those eyes... they shined with hostility.

"Kace, are you okay?" Leon pulled Abby behind his back as his body, out of instinct, leaned over in defense.

"TAKE THAT BITCH AWAY FROM ME!"

Hope flinched. No matter how angry Kace was, he had never cursed someone like this before. What happened to him?

Leon looked at Hope, his eyes reflected the same confusion like her.

'Go...' Hope mouthed at him, despite she didn't know what was going on with Kace, but it would be the best for the sibling to leave this scene. Apparently, the beast within Kace had taken control.

"Alright..." Leon threw another worry glance at Hope, but the girl nodded her head determinedly. "Let's go."

Leon took Abby along with him on his side, as he walked towards the stairs that would bring them to the first deck. As they walked Leon glanced, a couple of times, over his shoulder toward Kace, who was still had his eyes on their back.

This time, fortunately, Abby didn't struggle to refuse his brother, she was too shocked to discern the way Kace talked to her earlier. He was too harsh!

After Abby and Leon left them alone, Kace turned his body and fixed his black eyes on Hope.

For some reason, Hope feared the way Kace was staring at her now. "Kace...?"

"Yes, my lovely..." Kace smiled as he leaned over and kissed her on the lips.

Chapter 534 - WHO ARE YOU?!

"Kace!" Hope moved away until her head hit the pole behind her and she whimpered in pain because of it.

What was that? Did he just kiss me like that?!

"Let me look," Kace's voice was gruffly as he rubbed the place where Hope hit her head. "You silly girl. Why did you avoid me?"

Surprised, Hope was trying to put some distance between them, but Kace was sitting next to her and held her face firmly.

"What are you doing?!" she couldn't avoid the panic that covered her voice. Hope looked at Kace, but his eyes were still all dangerously black. Why they didn't return to its original blue color as they usually would? That was odd.

Kace's eyes would only turn black if he was furious and his beast came to the surface on a threatening situation, yet, even though that happened. Kace had never acted so strangely like this, as if he turned into something else.

"Kissed you," Kace said simply.

Hope blushed. Well, that was very obvious, but that wasn't the answer to what she wanted to ask! Normal Kace wouldn't do something like that, right? Hope bit her lips, she was not sure too... action

"Kace?" Hope called him softly.

"Hm?" Kace was still in his black eyes, stared at Hope with an obvious admiration dancing in his eyes.

"Is that you?" Hope asked carefully. Maybe there was an alien who entered his body?

"You are so adorable my lovely Hope," He leaned over and pecked her lips again.

"Kace!" Hope pushed him away and covered her lips. Within less than a minute he had kissed her twice! That wasn't a real kiss, but Hope was still surprised by Kace's sudden change of behavior. "Stop it!"

"Why?" Kace chuckled, his eyes still locked on her, as if he could eat her whole right here, right now. They were filled with adoration, devotion, love and... I.u.s.t?

Hope was not sure with the last one, but she could feel his vibe was different.

"You are my mate, why can't I touch you..." he caressed her hair, "... or kiss you..." He ran his fingers on the back of Hope's backhand, which still covering her mouth, "... and do more?"

"Kace!" Hope was mortified, she stood up hastily. "Is that really you!?"

Another laughed from him. However, Kace's laugh died down immediately as his nose scrunched and a low growl vibrated from his chest.

Hope didn't know what the cause of Kace's sudden hostility until she saw Lana walked towards them.

"I was looking for you." Lana approached them, "You were not in your room." She rubbed her eyes, apparently she just woke up.

"I am with... Kace." Hope glanced at Kace as she moved away from him to rush toward Lana. She stopped her from coming closer.

This act made Kace growled a little bit louder than before and his black eyes staring sharply at Lana, didn't like the fact that Hope sought refuge to Lana.

"Kace, what happened with you?" Lana frowned, she stop walking and put some distance between them. Every creature knew, black eyes for shifters was not a good sign. "What happened to him?" she asked Hope instead when Kace refused to talk to her.

"I don't know," Hope shook her head. "He took a nap, but when he woke up, his behavior had changed drastically."

Lana's sleepiness had disappeared into thin air, her eyes became alert when she scrutinized the creature before her eyes. It was Kace, even his scent was him, but the hostility in his eyes was something that was hard to be ignored.

"Kace..." she tried to talk, but he snapped at her coldly.

"Stay away from my mate!" he stalked towards Lana and Hope. "You ungrateful mutt!"

"What?!" Lana was taken aback with the way Kace insulted her, even Hope's jaw dropped open.

If it was Abby, Hope wouldn't mind if Kace treated her badly, but it was Lana! How he could call her 'mutt' without a second thought?! Moreover, Kace didn't seem to show some remorse after saying that.

Didn't Kace always treat Lana as his sister?

"Lana, I think there's something wrong with him..." Hope whispered in panic when Kace stood in front of them, his hand stretched out to pull Hope away from Lana, but she was quick to react.

Lana swatted his hand and glared at Kace. "Kace, what do you mean with this?!" she was furious after the insult, but also confused with the man before her eyes.

"Do that again and I will snap your neck." Kace replied in low and cold voice. Though his expression was devoid from any emotion, but the threat in his words was not something to be taken lightly.

"Stop it Kace! This is not funny anymore!" Hope stepped forward, no longer hiding behind Lana's back.

Whether Kace would really do it or not, Hope didn't want to take a risk to find out. Kace was not in his right mind now.

"Don't be mad," Kace tilted his head, a devilish smirk appear on the corner of his lips. "If you don't want me to kill her, you just need to ask."

Kace stretched out his hand again to touch Hope, but she swatted his hand away. "Stop touching me!" Hope grumbled.

"But, I like it," he said in a straight tone.

Hope wanted to slap him! That was an embarrassing answer, especially in front of Lana.

Meanwhile, Lana's eyes slightly darker when she heard that, she could feel her chest burned with something called jealousy.

"Hope, call Lidya to come here." Lana ordered her through gritted teeth.

"How dare you to give an order to my mate!" Kace growled dangerously.

"I'll go," Hope decided. They had to find out what was happening to Kace. "You!" she pointed her forefinger toward Kace's face. "If you hurt Lana, I will never forgive you!"

After saying that, Hope ran away from the upper deck to find the witch, maybe Kace was stroke by strange magic.

"How na?ve my mate is..." Kace chuckled. "I want to know her reaction when she finds out what you were going to do that night..." he gave Lana a sly smile.

Chapter 535 - YOUR NECK IS TOO BARE

What Lana suspected was true, she had seen those eyes before. It was the same eyes that had glared at her that night when she was out of her mind and was about to kiss him.

"You are his beast," Lana was narrowed her eyes. She was sure about this. "How can you take control?"

As long as Lana remembered, the beast in Kace was very weak for Lycanthropes with Donovan's blood, especially after the never ending suppression that Kace had done and the wounds that he endured right now, therefore how could this beast possibly take the control of him now? It didn't make any sense at all.

Kace turned his head up and looked at the sky, the blinding light from the sun fell on his face. "This place... is magical..."

"Give back the control to Kace," Lana said sternly. She was not sure with what this beast wanted and how could he do this, or why Kace didn't take the control back immediately?

"How funny you are." He sneered. "I am Kace."

It was a bit confusing, but what the beast said was true, since they were the same person. However, for shapeshifters, as they had the spirit of the beast, they had this animalistic instinct, which could use as their defense and aggression.

The human side had to learn how to control this animalistic instinct to not to cause trouble for themselves. Some shifters had their beast's side more dominant, but some shifters had their human's side more dominant.

It depended on which side received more training.

Just like warriors, their beast's side was more dominant, especially when they felt there was a threat nearby.

However, as an Alpha or as the descendant of Alpha's blood, like the Donovans, the strength of their both sides were in harmony.

It happened to Kace centuries ago until he decided to turn his back on his beast. That wasn't a wise move to say the least, as shapeshifters shouldn't ignore their other soul.

"Kace was too soft on you when he rebuked you about that time you were hugging him, he was too naive. If only he gave me control that night in the inn, you will not be standing here, glaring at me." Kace spoke in an eerie cold tone. "Now, since my mate would be upset if I kill you, you are once again safe."

Lana couldn't say anything about that. She felt her face flushed in red color, she was ashamed. Despite of all the words that Kace had said. It was not the moment that she wanted to be brought back.

"Talking rubbish about your dedication of raising my mate? If it was not for me, you wouldn't have a chance to survive another minute from the attack of snake shifter..." Kace sighed as he looked at Lana disdainfully. "What did you say back then? Oh, I still remember that..." he hummed.

Lana could feel her hands trembling. She didn't like to face this side of Kace. She could sense the hostility and resentment in every word that came out from his lips.

"Let me refresh your memory, you ungrateful mutt... 'If you leave me I will die'..." Kace blurted out. "And there is another... 'I will do everything as long as you help me'... is that enough? Should I remind you again about your other pleas?"

"Enough!" Lana gritted her teeth. She remembered how desperate she was at that time.

"Good!" Kace nodded in satisfaction. "Even without the vow between you and me, you should know your place and be willing to give your life for me... don't twist the fact and make me look like a fool by saying you had been taking a good care of my mate. That's your words to take care of her the moment I saved you're ass!"

Lana lowered her head, she didn't dare to see the way Kace was looking at her right now.

"Now, you know why I call you ungrateful mutt, right? You shouldn't be angry because of that..." Kace looked at the vast sea, which shined brightly under the sunlight. "Don't take my human side for granted for his compassion." His eyes flickered into red color. "This is the last warning.???"

It was true the beast couldn't hurt Lana or even to touch her, because of Hope. But it doesn't mean he couldn't hurt her in other way.

His mate was way too precious for him and as the silence stretched out in the upper deck, the beast wondered why he had not yet marked his mate? He was upset with this fact.

He wanted his mate to bear his mark. Shouldn't Kace have marked her since she was old enough already?
action

When Kace was thinking about his mate, her intoxicating scent hit his sense. She had come back with the witch.

"Are you alright?" Hope approached Lana, who looked very pale. "He didn't do anything to you, right?"

Kace snorted as he rolled his eyes. "I will not hurt her if that would make you sad."

Hope threw him a glare, even the way he talked also different. "What happened with him? He is not like himself." Hope shifted her attention toward Lidya.

Lidya yawned and stretched her body. She was very sleepy. "It's him," she said languidly. "There is nothing strange."

"But, it's not him!" Hope objected stubbornly. "Don't you see? Kace wouldn't act like this. Not this way."

"It's his beast. Meaning, it's him." Lidya spoke with finality, she seemed bored with the topic and annoyed profoundly because her sleep was disturbed for such boring matter. "You don't need to worry, the Kace that you used to know will come back before we reach the shore."

Kace didn't care about what Lidya said as he gave Hope his undivided attention. "Your neck is too bare, my little one."

"I don't like you call me that, and..." Hope frowned, "what is that even mean?"

But, Lana knew exactly what Kace meant, her body turned stiff. "Kace, you are not in your right mind."

"What does it mean? What is he talking about?" Hope looked at Lana, demanding for answer.

"I want you. To mark you," Kace strode towards Hope.

Chapter 536 - SLEEPY

"NO! You can't do this without her consent!" Lana rejected it immediately, she pushed Hope behind her back and received a mocking smile from Kace, as if he was saying; if I want to do it, no one could stop me. Even though that was true.

Lana flustered, after the beast's warning earlier, she shouldn't have interfered with this, but she found it hard for her to know that they were going to strengthen their bond.

"Little one, come here." Kace stretched out his hand and zeroed his attention only to her. He was determined to do what he had decided.

However, Hope shook her head like a rattle drum. "No, I'm not coming there!" she shrieked.

Hope remembered that the marking was an activity that involved canines, biting and blood, despite what Rossie had explained once, that it is a sacred ritual for shapeshifters who had found their other half—mate—and that it'd cause pain which wouldn't last long, but...

Even Rossie had not yet met her mate, so how could she say for sure that the pain was supposed to be bearable? What did she know about it, anyway to say that? Especially when Kace was not in his right mind, wouldn't it possible for him to make mistake later and eat her flesh instead?

Hope shivered when these ugly scenes played in her head, it would be such a bloody, gory mess. Her imagination was running wild.

Kace frowned, he tilted his head and stared at Hope, as if she was a little girl who refused to eat. "You are my mate, this something that I should have done a long time ago."

Hope pouted, "Lidya!" she called her, asking for someone to back her up in that situation. If Kace insisted to mark her, Lana wouldn't be able to hold him back. "Tell him to not even think about that!"

"Why should I?" she yawned again. "He is your mate, sooner or later he will mark you." With that was being said, she turned around to leave the scene. "Just hang on for a few more hours, he will return to normal."

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A few more hours?!

Hope grumbled internally. It had been ten hours and Kace had not yet returned to normal. His eyes were still dark black as black as dark night itself and he was still bothering her about this stupid marking.

"No!" Hope snapped at him. She had lost count of how much she had shouted at him.

At first, Hope was slightly afraid of Kace, but somehow she realized that this beast could be more childish than Kace and he wouldn't do something that Hope didn't approve of.

"Why!?" Kace leaned his back and crossed his arms, his expression hardened.

They were in the first deck, enjoying their dinner, but all Kace did was bothering Hope and demanding to bite her!

What a great conversation!

"Take off that cloak! I can't smell your scent and this is very frustrating!" If he was not demanding to mark her, then he would ask Hope to take off her cloak and complaining how it covered her scent from him, over and over again.

"Lidya! Tell him!" Hope turned to glare at Lidya.

"Even you can't make the point clear, across and delivered to him, how do you think that I could do better than you?" Lidya shrugged her shoulder and resumed eating. Didn't even bother to involve herself in this mess.

"Lana..." Hope turned to Lana, who avoided looking into her eyes. Meanwhile, the twins buried their nose on their bowl.

"Eat more, you are so skinny!" Kace grumbled, he shoved a mouthful chicken b.r.e.a.s.t onto her mouth. "I don't understand how this Kace took care of you!" action

"You were away most of the time." Lana tried to engage more civil conversation, despite her fear because of Kace's warning earlier that morning.

"And I wonder why did he agree to everything that witch said." Kace didn't even spare Lana a glance when he was talking, he was too busy to feed his sulking mate.

"That's for Hope's safety too," Lana said.

Of course the beast knew very well why his weak human side of him agreed to Serefina's arrangement, but knowing it and agreeing with it were two different things.

"She is safe with me." Kace's grip on the spoon tightened. This female werewolf really didn't know her place and kept crossing his boundaries.

"Hope is—" Lana's words cut short coldly.

"She is safe with me!" Kace growled with finality. When suddenly many people who were sitting three tables from them, turned their head to look at him.

The beast disliked the sudden attention that was given to him, he was about to stand up, but the spark that erupted on the surface of his skin because of his mate's touch, stopped him immediately.

"I am done here, let's get some fresh air." Normal Kace wouldn't seek for a fight every now and then, but his beast was something entirely different. He didn't care who he picked a fight with.

The beast frowned, he narrowed his dark eyes to look at Hope for some time.

"Please..." Hope pleaded. There was no way Hope would let this beast went berserk here.

"Let's go," he grumbled again and took her hand to walk out of that dining hall.

"Don't forget, we will disembark in two hours." Lidya reminded them.

Kace didn't answer to that, thus Hope murmured a reply to the witch. "Okay." She still could hear the twins sighed with relief when the beast chose to leave.

Hope let the beast guided her, but then they turned to go to the second deck, instead of the upper deck, she asked in confusion.

"Where are we going?" Hope looked around, they were heading for their room apparently.

"Sleep with me," Kace said lightly, he didn't slow down either.

"W-What?!" Hope screeched, mortified. "No!" oh, this beast is unbelievable!

But, Kace deafened his ears to her complain and opened the door of his room before he shoved Hope inside and locked the door.

"Kace! You know I'll be so mad if you cross the line!" Hope's voice was very stern in her desperation, especially when Kace pushed her effortlessly to the bed. Hope shrieked in fear.

However, the next thing that the beast did was lay his head on her lap. He closed his eyes and spoke sleepily.

"I am sleepy."

Chapter 537 - LET HER

And suddenly, the monster in him, fell to silence as he rested his head on her lap.

Hope was surprised to see how fast Kace fell asleep. His breath became even and his expression less hostile than before.

Indeed, he looked so tired.

As long as Hope remembered, aside from the short before Kace's consciousness was taken by his own beast, he had not yet slept since last night.

Hope sighed. She moved carefully, so Kace wouldn't wake up, to find a more comfortable position. She reached a blanket and covered his body to keep him warm before she ran her fingers through his long hair and played with them, just like how Kace loved to play with hers.

"Why is your human side and your monster side are so different?" Hope mumbled. She had to admit it, that the beast side of him was not as scary as she thought it'd be, yet she still missed the gentle and caring Kace the most. She also missed to stare into his blue ocean eyes.

"Bad wolf," Hope nudged her forefinger onto his squishy cheeks and smiled softly. She hoped after this everything would go according to their plans.

The wounds on Kace's back seemed getting uglier, though Hope didn't see it clearly, but the last time the opened part of his wound was not as long as this.

Kace, who was lying on his stomach, gave an easy access for Hope to see his back when she pulled his shirt slightly.

The wounds were getting bigger, longer and darker.

Hope made a side note to herself to ask about who had hurt him so bad like this, Kace didn't seem to be weak enough to be hurt until he suffered a great lose.

She ran her finger on the surface of his deep cut opened wounds and grimaced when she imagined how painful it would be for him.

If it was her, Hope would be wailing in pain every night and day if she had those kind of wounds.

"Get better soon, please..." Hope leaned over and kissed Kace's temple as the beast sighed in satisfaction in his sleep.

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"Why are you following us?!" Hope roared angrily as she turned her body and faced Abby, who shamelessly followed behind them.

"Why?" Abby feigned innocently. She hid behind Leon, as if Hope would bite her off. Well, if she could, she would. "The ship will return every two weeks, so I don't have any other choice except to follow you."

"Why do you have to follow us?" Lana disliked the idea of having an addition of people that she didn't know into the group. "You can just stay and rent a room."

"Honestly, I don't know this place, this is my first time to be here." This time, it was Leon who was talking.

He also didn't have any options left, because they had never have such plan to embark into that ship if it was not for his sister's crazy idea to tail on Kace.

Meanwhile, the lycan, who had attracted the witch girl's attention, seemed didn't care for the world as he put his arms around Hope's slender waist.

He couldn't be bothered about who came with them or what their concern, as long as his mate was with him, he had nothing to complain.

As if being stared at the whole time was not awkward enough, all of a sudden, Kace carried Hope bridal style with his expression that devoid from any emotion.

"Kace! Put me down! What are you doing!?" Hope shrieked and then she added in a hiss. "This is so embarrassing, you know! Put me down!"

Despite Hope's dangerous glare, Kace didn't consider onto granting her wish. "You are tired."

"Says who?!" Hope could feel her cheeks were getting warm as well as she could feel the stare that she got from the rest of the people in the group.

Lana, who witnessed that, turned her face away to avoid the painful scene before her eyes, her fists beside her body clenched and unclenched as her long finger embedded deeply onto her skin.

The twins also did the same, but their face showed that they didn't want to see this sudden public display of affection.

Why does this beast become more shameless than the normal Kace? Or, maybe she just didn't know that Kace, actually, was this shameless?

Meanwhile, Leon and Lidya could only sigh helplessly.

"Stop struggling, will you?" Kace frowned at Hope's futile attempt to get down.

Pouting, Hope huffed her irritation. Well, actually, after walking for two hours, Hope was at the point of exhaustion, her legs cramped and she was slightly hungry.

However, when she turned around and looked at those supernatural creatures around her that didn't even break a sweat, she felt ashamed if she asked for a break. They were in a rush and she didn't want to slow them down.

Regardless, Kace noticed her erratic breathing and knew immediately that his little mate was on the verge of breaking down.

"She can walk just fine, why do you have to carry her like that?"

From behind Kace, Hope could hear Abby was grumbling. The witch girl was staring sharply at her.

Abby was so upset and in her right hand, she conjured a blue flame. Leon, who was walking a step away in front of her, didn't realize what his sister was going to do, but Lidya did.

In a blink of an eye, Lidya had stood right behind Abby's back and caught her hand. The flame extinguished with her touch as she whispered at the young witch.

"He will rip you apart if you hurt her, you know that," Lidya spoke languidly. "Be wise and cherish your life. The beast doesn't have compassion for an irrelevant girl like you."

A few meters away in front of them, Hope watched everything unfold, but she couldn't hear what Lidya was saying to Abby.

Nonetheless, Hope wrapped her arms around Kace's neck and rested her head on the curve of his neck while staring at Abby provokingly.

Hope was aware that she was protected by those people around her, thus if that witch girl insisted to come along with them, let her be...

Chapter 538 - WORTH YOUR LIFE

However, she wouldn't be so careless to let her guard down, after all, she had no real power to go against her head on.

While Leon and Abby still didn't know what their purpose was to come there, though Hope could see the confusions on Leon's eyes clearly, he was so wise not to ask.

Meanwhile, Abby was busy following Kace like a headless chicken. In fact, she didn't care where they were really going, because as long as she could be near Hope's mate, she would absolutely be satisfied.

Silently, Hope was grateful that Kace's beast had taken control at a time like this. The beast could bite off Abby's head without a second thought if that witch girl were even trying to do something harmful to her. Let alone on trying to seduce Kace her way.

Well, if the beast did that horrible thing to Abby, there was nothing that Hope could do to stop him, right?

They had been walking in this small town for two hours already since they disembarked off the ship and, out of the blue, Leon and Abby had joined their small group.

At first they thought, they shared the same direction as the witch siblings, but after some time, it was quite obvious that they were following them after having no idea of where to go.

However, since Lidya was in charge in this journey, Hope believed she would do something about them.

She was not imaginative enough to have Leon and Abby to follow them, right?

Being carried by Kace was convenient enough for Hope. She didn't need to overwork her short legs to catch up with those supernatural creatures' speed and in the other hand, she could enjoy the view that was offered by this small town comfortably.

Since the sun had risen above their head, this town was drowned in the warm ray of the sun, and glimmered under its light.

Since the sun had risen, the bustling town came to life and the sight of Kace was carrying Hope, was really something to behold.

"Kace I think I'm fine now, you can put me down," Hope whispered at him and glanced at her surroundings, those people didn't hide their intention to look back at her and this was really awkward.

"We will take a rest here." Kace indeed put Hope down, but he led the group into an old bar. His little mate needed something to eat, this was almost eight hours since the last time she ate something. action

The beast didn't even bother to see if the other people would follow him or not, because he knew, they would definitely do what he told.

"I don't know that Kace has this side of him. He actually takes the lead," Ian whispered at Lana when they followed him to enter the bar.

"No wonder, it's only natural. He was born an Alpha after all," Lana replied casually, but the fact that Kace took the lead made him seemed more mature than of all those time she remembered him.

Lana tried hard to pry her eyes from his back, as she didn't want Hope to notice her over attention on her mate, but it was easier said than done.

The sight of overbearing Kacemade the young female werewolfoverwhelmed.

Kace intentionally took a seat with only two chairs there and when Ethan came closer while dragging an extra chair, instead he got this vicious threatening growl from Kace that forced him to back off.

Ian immediately came to rescue his dense twins. "Don't disturb them, come here." He glanced at Hope, who threw them an apologetic look, she also didn't have any idea how to handle the beast in front of her.

Lana took the twins to sit with her and ordered the best food that the place could offer, yet it still wasn't up to their standard.

Meanwhile, Lidya plopped down on the chair, on the table next to Leon and Abby.

This place was actually bigger than its appearance from the outside and inside there were only a few people, who were eating and drinking. From the clothes that they wore and the simple backpack that they carried, apparently they were also in a long journey, just like Kace's group.

Not only for those voyagers. From the look of it too, this town turned out to be a transit place for those vagabonds.

"So, I will talk straight to the point." Lidya opened the conversation without beating around the bush. "I don't wish to see both of you in our next move. You can choose to stay here or—" She shrugged her shoulder. "—do whatever you want."

Abby frowned, "Listen—"

But, her word was cut short by Lidya. "I don't want to hear it."

Upon listening to the blunt rejection, Abby's expression turned to an unpleasant look. She turned her head towards her brother.

"And I don't want to hear anything from you either." Lidya didn't give Leon a chance to say anything.

"Look—" Leon tried.

"I don't want to."

Ignoring Lidya's repetitive rejection, Leon continued his explanation regardless. "I know we were in the wrong to follow your group without permission in the first place, but I have told you that we have never been in here, in this part of this realm."

"This is your realm, what is it that you are afraid of?" Lidya rolled her eyes.

"This is yours too." Leon emphasized his words. "And we are from the Southeast Coven, not here." Though they were from the same kind, but every realm has its own dangers and unspoken rules.

This land was part of an ancient place of the Northern Coven. At first Leon was not aware about this, but since they were here for a week until the next ship came to take them back to the mainland, it was not a wise move to act arrogant.

"We could help." Abby offered with her brilliant eyes, she didn't care that her hidden agenda to follow this group had been exposed. "We are more capable than the human that you bring." She was referring to Hope, because she was the only human here.

The cloak, indeed, hid her scent well, but Abby had met her before. She was ignoring the fact that she was Kace's mate, because simply she still didn't believe it. In her mind, Kace was one of the cursed Lycans.

Lidya chuckled when she heard that and said, "A strand of her hair is worth your life."

Chapter 539 - YOU KNOW I AM RIGHT

Lidya's statement was like an insult for Abby and she should have known that the witch was indeed trying to insult her.

"Can't we go together with you?" Leon ignored Abby's displeasure, nothing went well whenever his little sister opened her mouth. "Is there a way for us to join your journey?"

"Do you think, I will waste my time talking to you here to do a bargain?" Lidya mocked Leon's attempt. "And for you lady," she directed her eyes at Abby. "Watch your mouth."

After saying her piece, Lidya stood up and walked away to join Lana and the twins' table, leaving Leon and Abby. action

"Why are they protecting a human like her!? She is nothing but a burden!" Abby gritted her teeth, her expression turned unsightly, but she didn't dare to say it out loud. "What is so special about her?!"

"She is Kace's mate." Leon sighed deeply as he gulped down his drink. "That's what you get when you belittle someone else's mate." Leon didn't have any intention to defend his sister.

They had never been in good terms and Leon didn't want to fix it either. They were coming here together just because it was an order to attend the get-together in this Northern Coven realm.

"The Donovans don't have mate, they are cursed Lycans." Abby crossed her arms stubbornly.

Leon sneered as he rolled his eyes. "Whatever that could help you sleep at night."

Meanwhile, not so far from their table, a certain beast was in an argumentation with his little mate, who seemed very upset.

"Can't you give the control back to Kace!?" Hope stabbed her chicken b.r.e.a.s.t angrily, as if the poor chicken had committed a sinful action before it was grilled.

"But, I am Kace!" The beast growled. "We are the same!"

"No..." Hope wanted to cry. She had had enough with this beast and was fed up with the situation. "I don't care! I want to eat with my friend!"

"No, you eat with me!" the beast grabbed Hope's wrist and forced her to sit down again. "I want to eat with you!"

"You are annoying!" Hope hissed viciously at him.

"I just want to eat with my mate. What's wrong with that?" Kace pulled Hope's chair closer to him, so the girl couldn't move freely. "I have never eat with you, why don't you just finish this damn chicken peacefully?!"

"Why don't we eat with them, so I can stop complaining?!" Hope crossed her arms and leaned against the backrest chair, annoyed. "It's not like you have never eat with me before."

"I have not." Kace stared at Hope with his dark eyes and his expression was devoid from any emotion. "My human side had been suppressing me for more than decades."

There was a small frown between Hope's brows, but she still refused to look at him.

"You don't know how it feels, little one," Kace propped his elbow on the table and put his fist under his chin while tilting his head so he could see his little mate. "Being suppressed for decades, until my instinct became dull and what do I get? Wounds that don't heal on my back?" he mocked himself.

Hope glanced at Kace for a second, and she could see the despair in those eyes.

"My human side abandoned me. If he doesn't want his beast," Kace chuckled and shook his head. "If he hates his beast so much, at least he should have done a better job of taking a good care of his mate and his being." He rephrased.

"He takes a good care of me," Hope retorted.

"He left you for years," Kace said sternly as he stared deeply into Hope's eyes. "You can't argue with me with that fact."

"He has his own reason for that." Hope murmured.

Somehow, Hope felt ridiculous for defending Kace against himself.

What is wrong with his human side and his beast? Why they were poles apart? Can't they be in the same page at least for once?

Kace despised his beast and in the other hand, the beast resented his human side.

"I don't accept any reasons for that. Leaving our mate behind and let that bitch witch controlled us, is not acceptable." His voice was slightly harsh as if he reprimanded no one in particular, since it was himself who he hated.

And this time, Hope agreed. She was tongue-tied.

It didn't matter for those years when she was only a child, she knew nothing about this bond. Yet, for the last three years when she didn't even get a single call from him, it was truly upsetting.

There was a silent that stretched out between them, until Hope mumbled something. "He couldn't come because there was this creature, who could read his mind... he just wanted to keep me safe."

In the end, Hope was still defending him.

"But, he ended up not killing this creature and instead let him go. What a waste of three years, don't you think?" Kace pointed out the fact.

Yes, Kace didn't kill the creature, who had separated them for three years.

"That creature could return and what is he going to do? Leaving you again for another year because he thought that was the best for you? To keep you safe?" The beast confronted her. "For me, that doesn't make senses!" he grumbled in the end.

And for the crazy part, Hope agreed with what he said. Kace should have killed the creature, but he didn't do it because of... what? Compassion? The guilty feeling that he couldn't bear because of what he had done almost a millennia ago?

Kace stretched out his hand and put his fingers under her chin, "You know what I am saying is right."

Hope looked at the beast in the eyes. Everything that she believed falter with his new standpoints. She agreed with him.

Not only that, in those black eyes, she could see how much the beast was hurt to be treated that way by his own self.

"Are you trying to make me hate the other part of you?" Hope whispered her question.

Chapter 540 - THE HUNTER

"No, of course not." He shook his head. "No matter how incapable my human side is, he's still and would always be a part of me." With the tip of his fingers he caressed Hope's cheeks lightly. "I just want you to know my point of view."

The beast had been shutting out for a very long time, which his voice and his instinct were being neglected.

Hence, since he came to the surface, he wanted his mate to know this side of him.

Shapeshifters were indeed a complicated being, but shapeshifters who were not in a good term with their beast was arduous.

"You are confusing me." Hope frowned. It was Kace in front of her, but for some reason, she felt different. It almost like she was facing someone new with different personality.

However, no matter how insane it all seemed; she liked both of them.

Kace was warm and a teaser with his goofy smile, but his beast's side was nothing like that. The beast was more frank and he was steadfast with what he wanted, he didn't care about whatever reason that was thrown to him, if that meant opposing his desire.

"I have a complex personality Hope, because both of our sides are not getting along quite well." Kace blinked his eyes when sun ray fell on his face. "But, aside from my human's ridiculous and stupid decisions, we both equally love you and want nothing but to see you happy."

Hope gulped hard, she could feel her face heated because of his words. Well, at least they had something common. Both of them were such a smooth talker.

When they were in the middle of their conversation, there was a noise coming from the entrance of the bar and blocking the sunlight behind them, as they walked in.

There were five men in their travel robe, which color had worn out. They looked like travelers, but there was something in them that gave off a sinister vibe.

Their build were bulky and tall, as if there was nothing beneath their clothes except muscles.

Hope wanted to say something, but stopped herself when she caught a sight of them, and when one of the men was staring back at her, she could feel the chills ran down her spine as she crept closer towards Kace.

"Who are they?" Hope mumbled. Their entrance drew people's inside the bar attention.

Kace closed his eyes and his nose scrunched in disgust. "Human." He said in a low growl.

"Human?" Hope was about to turn her head again to take a better look when Kace held her jaw to prevent her to take the second glance. "What are they doing here?"

Instead of staring at those five men, Hope fixed her eyes on Kace.

"I don't know," he said nonchalantly. "But, maybe your witch's friend know." The beast nodded at Lidya, who was approaching them.

At the same time, two more people came to the bar, this time women.

The two of them placed themselves between the bulky men and started to talk in a low voice, but Hope could feel their eyes were staring at the back of her head secretively.

"It's time for us to go," Lidya said rigidly.

The beast could see the urgency on her eyes as he held Hope's arms and stood up. "We are leaving." He declared, loud enough for the other two to hear.

Ian and Ethan acquiesced in his command while Lana had carried her backpack and walked to approach Kace.

"I want to go with you too!" Abby exclaimed, she stood up hurriedly. "Leon, let's go!"

However, her brother didn't move an inch as he drank from his mug. "Didn't you hear her before? She didn't want us to come," He spoke casually. "We will rent an inn here until the next ship come."

"No!" of course the young witch refused the idea immediately. "We don't know this place and the danger here. It will be safer for us to go with them."

"First of all, you are the one who brings this upon us," Leon reprimanded her. "Second of all, you have rubbed Kace and Lidya the wrong way. I don't want to make the situation worse than it is now."

Ignoring Leon's words, Abby walked forward. However, before she could take the third step, Lidya had lifted an admonitory finger and there was an invisible barrier forced her to stop in her track, preventing her to go further.

Abby glanced at Leon, but he did nothing to help her.

"Coward!" Abby hissed, yet she didn't dare to go to Kace's group alone without the protection of his brother.

In Kace's current state. He would claw her heart out without a second thought. No matter what, Abby didn't have a plan to be killed by the hand of someone that she loved.

Despite knowing Kace was not like his usual self, also Leon and Lidya's warning, she stubbornly wanted to be close to him.

"This place is so strange. You can feel it too, right?" Abby plopped down on her seat again.

Leon didn't answer her, but he agreed with her.

In the distance, they watched Kace's group walked out of the door with Hope walked so close to Kace. The beast seemed like he wanted to hide the little girl from the eyes of the other people here.

Meanwhile, Hope glanced at those strange people for the last time before Kace ushered her out of the bar, because they kept looking at her.

"What are they?" Hope asked Lidya, who walked beside her.

"The hunter." Lidya mentioned it almost like she was cursing. "How lucky we are... the first thing that happened when we arrived, is running into them."

"Why? Are they dangerous? What do they hunt?" Hope kept asking.

Now, they were walking on the bustling street again with the sun above their head, fortunately for Hope, she could take a shelter under Kace's shadow.

"Everything." Lidya scanned her surroundings, "But, one thing for sure, our kind is not in a good term with them."

"Your kind is not getting along with many creatures," Hope mumbled.