

## **TLOA Lycan 551**

### **Chapter 551 - THEY ARE NOT HUMAN**

Hope could hear Ethan and Ian screaming voice, shouting many things that Hope couldn't hear clearly, because the only thing that she could focus now was the head of the spear that coming down toward her.

This is it? This is it?

Hope didn't believe she would die like this? Seriously! Only if she was not a guardian angel and a witch instead, she would be very glad to turn this man into a frog!

With the last strength that she had, Hope pushed herself to roll over her body, dodging the spear only by a fortune.

The head of the spear stuck on the ground where she was sitting only a millisecond ago. It could split her skull into two if she moved any slower or her brain freeze any longer.

That was a close call!

With a groan, Hope forced herself to stand up. She cursed under her breath when she put her weight on her injured ankle and her back screamed in agony. Hope could feel the wound reopened again because of her movement.

How great! She was stabbed a few hours ago and a few hours later a crazy man, who literally saved her life by tending her wound, wanted to kill her in the same way!

Didn't he think that he had wasted his previous work?!

Ugh! Nevermind!

Hope stopped blabbering inside her head and focused in the matter at hand. She had to find a way to stop him without killing him, which was an impossible task to do.

The hunter roared and started to chase her, throwing the spear, yet Hope dodged it again with the help of the siblings' instruction, as she didn't have time to even glance over her back.

When Hope was trying to think while running for her life, she heard a horde of footsteps from afar. The sound of it was very loud until she felt the earth was shaking.

Out of nowhere, Hope was being surrounded by... Hope didn't know how to name them. She was so shock until she fell on the ground, kneeling. Her eyes pondered at her surrounding and her mouth slightly agap, yet there was no voice that came out.

What are they!? The question was ringing inside her head without being able to escape her lips. action

In this point, Hope failed to notice the danger that still lurking from the last hunter. Seeing Hope dropped to her knees, he used this moment to throw another spear in his hand toward the girl when a harsh voice rung in that gloomy night.

"ENOUGH!" His voice was very powerful until the hunter froze in his place and the birds that perched on branches flew away, too afraid to stay and watched another scene unfold.

Hope swallowed hard, she was circled. She took in the man who was shouting at the hunter to stop him before, the man with a voice that laced with dominance.

However, he wasn't a man at all.

He was very big, probably as big as Kace's beast. His shoulders were broad and they dropped into a ripped torso, his body built with muscle, but the part of him that captured Hope's attention was his waist down.

Because... the lower half of him, from the torso, was horse...

Hope shook her head, she thought she was daydreaming, but she was not. First, because this was not day anymore as the sky as dark as her hair and second, it was hard to say that it was not reality that she witnessed before her eyes. They looked very real!

They are centaur!

"Centaur..." Hope finally could say it even in a low voice that barely a whisper. Her eyes wide with shock. Even after she confirmed it was a real thing, Hope still questioned her sanity.

Hope shouldn't be this shocked since she lived surrounded by supernatural creatures like werewolf, lycan and witch, but she used to think of centaur as imaginary creatures, yet here they were, standing tall before her eyes.

The centaur near her looked amused. "Indeed we are."

Shivers ran down Hope's spine when she heard he talked specifically to her. She didn't know what to say with this turn of event.

Hope started to consider the option that she had; she couldn't run, but even if she could she wouldn't be able to outrun centaurs, especially when there was so many of them.

"I will kill her!!!" the hunter was still hell bent to kill Hope, once again he raised the spear in his hand and rushed toward the girl on the ground.

However, before he could do any harm, the centaur in front of Hope stepped forward and effectively stopped him for the second time. He clasped his hands in front of his bare chest. "I am the chief."

"Step aside, Chiron! She and her friends killed my men! They killed our people!" the hunter didn't seem afraid of the centaur named Chiron.

"That's not how we handle this matter Leroy," he spoke in a deep and shouting tone.

Inside the cage, Ian and Ethan also didn't know what to say as they were as quiet as the gentle breeze.

"I don't care how you will handle this matter!" Leroy spat, "She killed my friend and now I will kill her!"

"As long as I know, it is that beast, who had killed your men." Chiron nodded at the beast, not far from them. "We don't kill human."

"What do you know!?" Leroy was wrathful. "You are not even a human!"

His last statement earned a wave of displeased from the other centaurs.

"We stand together in this land to protect our people. Human or not." Chiron spoke after the chorus died down.

Leroy still looked having a difficulty to contain his anger, but gradually he knew his mistakes. "They killed our people!" yet still stubborn with his argument.

"I can see that..." Chiron spoke in gloomy tone as he gestured to the other centaurs to bring back the dead body. "But, the priestess wants to see them."

### **Chapter 552 - CHIRON**

"What do you mean with the priestess wants to see them?" Leroy didn't understand what Chiron was talking about. "How the priestess knows about this?"

The priestess had not been out of her room since a year ago and only a little girl who served her that was allowed to come and met her.

"The stars that told me," Chiron raised his head to the gloomy sky, which there was not even a single star that could be seen.

There was moment when Leroy thought that he completely clueless about the way centaurs were talking and this was that moment.

Though they had been living alongside each other for years now, but it didn't make them, human, got the idea of the stars that the centaurs often talking.

"The stars told you and you told the priestess?" Leroy shook his head incredulously, he didn't have time to listen to his story about the stars. "You are right." He nodded. "I can't kill her, because she is human, then I will kill the beast, because this despicable creature that had killed our people!"

"No!" Hope sprung on her feet to stop him, but it was not necessary when the other centaurs had done it for her.

"The priestess wants the beast alive," Chiron spoke as he gestured toward the other centaurs to go to Kace's beast.

"What are you going to do to him?!" Hope was about to follow the centaur, who approached Kace when her shoulder was grabbed by Chiron and prevented her from moving.

"Relax," he said in his shooting tone again. "He will check on your mate."

Hope was slightly taken aback when she heard Chiron addressed Kace as her mate. Did he know? Or, he just mentioned Kace was her mate as 'mate' for a fellow friend?

Hope was puzzled.

Now, the other centaurs, except Chiron and one, who has very tanned skin, with bow and arrow on his back, stayed with Hope and the incessant Leroy.

"YOU WANT TO SAY THAT WE WILL LET THAT VILE BEAST LIVE?" Leroy's chest rose and fell when he couldn't hold back his anger.

"That was what the priestess wants." Chiron nodded solemnly.

Hope was getting lost further. She didn't understand how these two creatures with different personalities could be in the same community. She could feel there was zero understanding between them and this was not their first time to have their argumentation clashed.

"I don't believe this!" Leroy threw his hands exasperatedly as he glowered at Hope, who was standing behind Chiron's horse body.

"I will have my people to bring back your men to the village." Chiron's voice didn't falter even a bit under Leroy's menacing glare. "I think their families want to bury their body."

Hope could hear how Leroy gnashed his teeth when he heard that. "What the priestess want with them?!"

"I don't know," Chiron answered truthfully as he tilted his head toward his fellow centaur, who checked on Kace's beast. "How is him?"

"I need him to return to his human form, chief." the other centaur replied to his chief.

Chiron lowered his head to look at Hope. "Girl, do you think you can ask him to shift back?"

"I don't think so," Hope glanced at Kace. "He is unconscious. I can't talk to him."

Chiron nodded in understanding. "Why don't you go back? The centaurs will accompany you until the gate," he talked to Leroy.

"I don't need you to tell me what I have to do!" Leroy turned on his heels, still fuming. "I will ask the priestess what she will do with those vile beasts! You better be there when we burry these people!"

"I will be there for the funeral," Chiron still answered him politely, despite Leroy's attitude.

Hope became more and more confused with the situation that she faced now. There were so many thing that happened within a day, she was overwhelmed.

"Can I go to him?" Chiron had proved that he meant no harm toward her and Kace, thus, Hope could relax a bit, though she wouldn't put her guard down. She had not fully trusted these centaurs yet.

"Of course," Chiron nodded solemnly, "Your mate needs you."

There, he talked about 'mate' again. However, Hope didn't want to have another questioning session when her body and mind was too tired to think about another mystery.

Limply, Hope trudged toward, where the beast was still lying down, its fur had turned into dark red with no sign he would wake up soon.

Chiron followed behind her closely. The sound of his hooves against the muddy ground, somehow, relaxing. action

Hope crouched down beside the beast's body. "Is he alright?" she ran her fingers on its sticky fur.

"He will be fine," Chiron said in deep voice.

After a few minutes, Hope whipped her head toward the cage while saying. "My friends!" she totally forgot about Ethan and Ian.

However, when Hope saw the cage, there had been three centaurs, who were trying to open the padlocks.

Only then, Hope sighed in relief and shifted her focus at the chief centaur. "Why did you help me?"

The centaur just gave her a warm smile and looked up the sky. "It's been written on the stars."

The corner of Hope's lips twitched, at this moment, she agreed that the centaur had a different way to communicate with each other.

"You are here now, that's what important." Chiron lowered his head again and looked at Hope tenderly, as if she was his muse or something.

"Do you know that I will be here?" Hope frowned, she knew about the myth that centaur was reading the stars and constellation or whatever that was, since Hope didn't pay much attention to it.

But, to know that the chief of the centaur had known beforehand that she would come to this place... what he was? A clairvoyant?

Yet, the answer of Chiron was beyond Hope's best guess. "I know that you will be resurrected."

### **Chapter 553 - WAS THERE SOMEONE INSIDE?**

Hope woke up with a start. Her head was dazed when she looked at her surroundings. She was not familiar with this place and she panicked for a few seconds before she started to remember what had happened last night.

All the memories flooded her mind without being able to stop it. That was not a pleasant flashback to say the least.

Hope laid back down again and sighed deeply while staring at the ceiling. She needed to get up, but her body was screaming to take another minute to rest.

Last night, the centaur took her, Ian and Ethan to this house. The house, where a family of three were living at the outer village.

Meanwhile, because Kace was still in his beast form, they placed him inside a barn, a building that was beside this house. They made sure that Kace was fine there before Hope was willing to leave him alone.

Hope thought that she would have a hard time to sleep after what had happened, but the reality turned out otherwise, once her head touched the soft pillow and warm blanket was dr.a.p.ed over her body, her mind shut down almost immediately.

She was exhausted and in pain.

When they reached this house, a woman who looked like in her thirties, that Hope assumed was the mother of the young girl, had put a new bandage on her wounds, on her back, and treated her injured ankle.

On the other hand, thanks to their healing ability, Ian and Ethan didn't have to be bothered with their wounds, because they had healed even before they reached this house.

Hope turned her body and found Lana was still sleeping, on the second bed near the door. There was a frown on her forehead.

Why was she still not awakened? If it was because of the thing that those hunters had done to her, to put her to sleep, why Ian and Ethan were fine?

Or, maybe those hunters put different things on her system?

Hope jumped from her bed, which was a wrong decision, she forgot that her left ankle was still in pain. Hope grunted while clenching her fist when the wave of pain sucked out her breath.

She regretted her reckless action immediately.

Limping, she trudged towards the bed where Lana was sleeping, she nudged her finger on her cheek while calling her. "Lana. Wake up."

No response.

Hope had expected this, but for some reasons, she kept doing the same thing over and over again until someone pushed open the door.

"Ah, you are awake!"

A little girl around the age of seven, waltzed into the room. Her voice sounded like a chirping bird, her eyes were big and she had a pair of long eyelashes. She was so beautiful, and looked like a living doll.

When she walked, her curly hair bounced on her shoulder.

"Mother and father went to the farm, and your two other friends had their breakfast, only you and your sister who haven't had breakfast." She brought a tray that looked bigger than her tiny hands with two bowl of porridge on it.

In an instant, Hope took the tray and smiled at the little girl. "Thank you."

"You are welcome." She grinned and showed her missing tooth. This reminded Hope when she missed her front tooth as well, and the memory brought another bright smile on her face. "I am afraid your other two friends would eat all the food, they had eaten three bowls of porridge."

Hope chuckled, Ethan and Ian most likely would do something like that when they were starving.

"Thank you for saving my breakfast from them." Hope put down the tray and took one bowl for her, she just realized now that she was also starving. She couldn't remember when the last time she had a proper meal.

"Why don't you wake your sister up?" the girl sat down on the bed where Hope was sleeping last night.

"I already woke her up, but she is still sleeping." Hope frowned at the tasteless bland porridge, but she was hungry, so she kept eating. "What is your name?"

"Bree," the girl said in her childish voice. "What yours?"

"I am Hope," Hope said. "Nice to meet you Bree, I like your name."

"I like your name too," Bree smiled. "My mother always says that we must always have hope."

Hope grinned. She had to ask Kace why he gave her this name, there must be some story behind it, right?

"Bree, I have another friend inside your barn. Do you happen to know if he's already awake or not?" Hope swallowed the porridge without tasting it again, so she could finish it faster.

"Mother and father don't allow me to come near the barn," Bree pouted, wiggled her legs.

"Oh," Hope hummed. She understood, maybe Mr. and Mrs. Lori were afraid that the beast would harm little Bree.

A little while later, Hope put down her bowl and glanced at Lana's sleeping face. She had to ask the centaur about Lana. Why wasn't she awake? And also Lidya...

There were so many things that Hope needed answers for, but there was nothing she could do for the meantime.

First thing first. "I want to go to Barn, would you like to come with me?" Hope stood up.

"But, mother said not to go to the barn." Bree wanted to go, but she couldn't and since Mr. and Mrs. Lori were on the farm, she couldn't ask them to give her permission.

"Okay," Hope walked towards the door. "Can I leave my sister with you?"

Bree nodded, but her expression told Hope that she wanted to come with her. "Okay..." action

"Thank you."

After saying that, Hope walked towards the living room, but couldn't find Ian or Ethan, yet she didn't want to waste her time by looking for them. The siblings could be anywhere.

Hope strode across the living room and opened the door to the foyer. The barn was right beside the house.

From here, Hope could see that the barn's door was opened.

### **Chapter 554 - HE WAS CRYING**

Hope walked slowly towards the barn, she was alert of her surroundings. There were too many things that happened yesterday, than her seventeen years of life. It was never in her wildest imagination, that she would be able to handle more than that.

Afraid there was another hunter would jump before her eyes, with cautious steps, she peeked her head to inside the barn.

However, what she saw then put her in relief immediately.

"If you were going to come here, why didn't you come and get me first?" Hope strolled inside the barn where Ian and Ethan were sitting next to the white beast.

Last night, Hope made sure to clean the beast from the blood that stained its fur, so he could rest more comfortably.

"We thought you were still sleeping," Ian answered without raising his head from looking at the sleeping beast.

"Yes, I was. An hour ago." Hope crouched down between Ethan and Ian. Naturally, she stretched out her hand to touch the soft fur of the beast. "Lana has not woken up," she said to no one in particular. action

"Yes, I saw her when we came to your room while you were still sleeping," Ethan mumbled. "Do you think she got some kind of brain injury? That somehow put her into a coma?"

Hope and Ian snapped their head to look at Ethan. "Do you think werewolves could get brain injury?" Hope frowned.

"Don't be ridiculous. Even if she got it, she should be healed by now," Ian mumbled and shook his head to get rid of Ethan's nonsense idea.

"So, why do you think she has not woken up yet?" Ian grumbled while caressing the beast's fur. "Kace also has the same condition as her."

"You are right..." hope just realized it. "We need to ask Chiron."

"Who is Chiron?" Ian looked at Hope, puzzled.

"The centaur chief from last night." Hope ran her fingers on the back of the beast's ears, she knew the beast like it when she touched him there. Still, there was no response.

"You made friends with him, how nice." Ian concluded, there was a sarcastic tone in the way he spoke, yet Hope and Ethan didn't pick on him. They didn't need another unnecessary argument right now.

And also, Hope didn't know whether she should tell them, about her being a guardian angel or not. She wanted to know how Chiron found out about this. As long as she could remember, there were not many people who knew about it aside from Kace, Lana, and Serefina.

Well, Lidya knew about this guardian angel's thing.

"We still don't know where Lidya is, now." Hope felt restless. She was afraid that something bad happened to the witch. Lidya would've come to find them if she was fine, right?

The fact that she was still missing made Hope became even more anxious.

"I think we need to talk to the centaur," Ian spoke.

"We need to ask Mr. or Mrs. Lori how we can talk to them." Ethan suggested.

They spent another few hours inside the barn with the sleeping beast, talking about this and that occasionally, but most of the time, they were busy with their own thoughts.



When the afternoon came, Ian and Ethan decided to go back to the house to check on Lana's condition, but Hope insisted that she wanted to stay with Kace.

Because Mr. and Mrs. Lori would only go back in the evening, since there was nothing Hope could do inside the house. Thus it would be more convenient for her to stay next to Kace, just in case, an unbelievable thing would happen, like he woke up by miracle or something.

After many futile attempts to persuade her, Ian and Ethan decided to let her be. Maybe the two needed their moment alone.

With that thought, the siblings walked out of the barn, leaving the mate alone.

Hope laid down next to the beast, staring at him. The charred wound from the silver had almost completely healed and his old wound on his back, still looked the same.

Maybe it was just Hope's imagination, but the claw marks didn't seem so frightening than the last time she saw it.

"Why don't you wake up? I miss you..." Hope kissed the beast's front leg and used it as a pillow for her neck and she fell asleep.

The sound of the wind from the afternoon breeze and chirping birds from the distance helped Hope to relax as the scent of chocolate from the beast drifted her to her slumber.

There was some point when Hope was aware that she was asleep and knew this was only a dream, but she just couldn't force herself to wake up.

Because there was this sudden urge to walk down this path.

There was a long road in front of her, the kind of long road that you would only see in a desert, with nothing on her left or right.

The lights dimmed in every step she took, but Hope didn't feel afraid with this odd situation. Neither had she panicked when she saw someone crouching down at the end of that road.

It was a man, burying his face between his knees while he hugged his legs tightly.

"Hello?" Hope approached that man. Somehow she knew him. His scent was something that she would always miss. "Are you okay?"

Hope crouched down in front of that man, staring at him, waiting for him to raise his head, yet he didn't do it, neither had he replied to her.

As if it was natural for her to do this, Hope stretched out her hand and patted the man's head. "It's alright." She didn't know why she said it. "Everything is alright."

There, Hope felt it. The spark that erupted from her touch. The man also felt the same as he raised his head and stared at her with his deep ocean blue eyes.

Hope held her breath when she saw him.

It was Kace. Looked younger almost like a teenager, as if he was the same age as Ian and Ethan. And the thing that caught Hope's attention was that he was crying.

### **Chapter 555 - THE DEMON WOMAN**

"Hope..."

There was a voice, but it didn't come from the young Kace in front of her. The young version of Kace was still crying silently pressing his lips together into a thin line.

"Hope?"

There, the voice could be heard again. This time the voice sounded closer and when someone shook her shoulder, Hope turned her head to look behind her.

"Hope, wake up."

Ian's face came to her sight. Hope frowned. Ian was also in her dream? However, when Hope turned her head again to see the young version of Kace, all she could see was only the beast, still lied down beside her.

"What happened?" Hope groaned, a little bit upset because her dream was interrupted.

"Mr. and Mrs. Lori returned. Do you want to come and ask them? Or, Ethan and I tell you about it later?" Ian asked. Hope looked tired and reluctant to leave Kace alone inside the barn, thus he thought maybe she wanted to stay there.

However, Hope shook her head. "No, I'll go too." She stretched her body and sat down.

"Are you sure, you want to leave him?" Ian nodded at the beast.

"He will be fine," Hope caressed his fur tenderly before she stood up and patted her clothes to get rid of the hays off of her, Ian was helping by picking out the hays from her hair.

"Let's go." Ian waved his hand and walked towards the door.

With a heavy heart, she took the last glance at the sleeping beast, then left him alone there, while talking to herself; 'I will come back soon.'

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Hope knew that wasn't only a dream. There must be something. Just like her previous dream about Kace's beast, which turned into fireflies.

Unfortunately, neither the first dream about the beast nor the recent dream about the younger version of Kace, Hope understood. She just went with her gut feeling, that something was wrong and those dreams had special meaning.

Hope's line of thoughts were interrupted when Ian opened the door for her, and then her eyes caught a sight of Mr. and Mrs. Lori, who were sitting on the sofa in the living room.

"Good evening Mr. Lori, Mrs. Lori." Hope nodded at each of them politely and sat down beside Ethan, who was talking to them when they entered the room. "Thank you for helping us."

Ian sat down beside Hope, sandwiched the girl in the middle.

Outside, the sun was almost set. Yesterday, it was around this time, when the carnage was happening. The beast went berserk and killed more than three dozens of hunters.

"Please, don't mention it." Mr. Lori waved his hand, diminishing the rigid atmosphere among them as he leaned his back against the backrest. "Chiron needed us to help you, of course we will do it gladly."

They were human, no doubt about that, yet they acted as if seeing a half-human-half-horse creature wasn't something out of ordinary. Probably, Hope also would act the same way, if only she stayed a long time there.

But, she would love to go back to her world as soon as they had done whatever it was needed to be done there.

"Can we meet him?" Hope asked straight to the point. "We also need to see the priestess." Hope added.

"Our friend needs her help," Ian chimed in.

"We lost one of our friends too." Ethan remembered that they had not heard anything about Lidya since they were separated yesterday.

Mr. and Mrs. Lori looked at each other, this time Mrs. Lori who answered them. "We can help you to meet Chiron, but about the priestess..." then she took another glance at her husband. "It has been a year since the last time we saw the priestess."

"What happened to her?" Ethan asked.

"A year ago there was a demon woman who trespassed our land. The hunters, the centaurs and all the supernatural creatures were looking for her and then there was a fight." Mrs. Lori looked at her husband.

As if it was on cue, Mr. Lori continued the story. "The priestess fought against the demon woman under The Mountain of Uzu." He raised his hand and pointed at the shadow of a mountain that they could see through the glass of the window. "They fought for two days and two nights."

Hope and the siblings looked at each other, but didn't say anything as they listened to Mr. Lori when he tried to remember the event from the past.

"When the priestess came back from Mount Uzu, she was greatly injured, but the demon woman was defeated," Mr. Lori said.

"Ever since that day, the priestess has been too weak to come out of her chamber. And only one person who could see her—a young maiden who was appointed to take care of whatever her needs was, and relays her messages to the young maiden, if ever she had something to say to others." Mrs. Lori wrapped the story.

"But, I think Chiron had talked to her," Hope remembered the reason that Chiron had told Leroy about, when he stopped him from getting Hope killed yesterday.

"No one has ever really talked to the priestess since that day." Mrs. Lori watched as her daughter walked towards her with a doll in her hands. "However, the priestess and the centaurs have their unique way to communicate with each other."

"Just like what the centaurs are good at, they read the stars." Mr. Lori added. "And the priestess is the protector of this place, her spirit is so strong that they both have a common way to see things."

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"What do you think?" Ethan asked Hope when he helped her to clean the dining room. action

They just had their dinner and Hope and the siblings insisted on cleaning up the mess after their meal as a token of their gratitude because Mr. and Mrs. Lori were nothing, but very nice to them.

However, that was not the only reason they adamantly wanted to do it. It was rather because the three of them needed some time to discuss something, before the centaur came to see them. The centaur usually would come out of their den when the night fell.

Hope took out the candle, which flames were still blue, indicating that the priestess was not nearby.

#### **Chapter 556 - NOSY QUESTIONS**

"I don't know," Hope said languidly while holding her candle.

The Candlemaiden said that the small candle would guide them to see the priestess, and they would know if she was nearby if the flames turned red.

But, seeing how blue the candle between her fingers, maybe they were not close enough?

"This is very confusing and those people who are supposed to guide us, currently cannot do anything," Ian commented as he put a dirty plate on the sink.

"Right," Hope mumbled as she washed the plate that Ian put on the sink, carelessly. "Let's focus on the most important thing first."

"Everything is important now," Ian wiped the plate and after it dried, he gave it to Ethan, so he could put it inside the cabinet.

"We can't handle everything at once," Ethan chimed in. "Let's focus on how to make Kace shift back to his human form or how to wake Lana up. They know more about this world than we do."

"Right," Hope agreed as she dried her hands with a towel.

"I would be so upset if we stuck here forever," Ian didn't stop grumbling. "I truly hope that there'd be no more surprises in the near future."

"We hope the same thing," Ethan nodded as he sat down on the dining chair.

Their Dinner was not as bad as their breakfast and lunch, but for the twins. Though the food was not as good as what they had back home, the portion was definitely not enough for their stomach. Yet, they couldn't ask for more since there was nothing left for them to eat.

Apparently, this family didn't have any idea how big the appetite of these young werewolves.

Rapid sound of footsteps let them know that little Bree was running towards the dining room. Her voice echoed in the corridor before her small figure appeared.

"Hope! Ethan! Ian!" she screamed and in the background they could hear Mrs. Lori who warned her little girl to not run along the corridor, which, of course, was being ignored. "They're coming! The centaurs are here!"

Little Bree was being picked by Ethan before she could run around the kitchen and bumped into something.

Since the siblings also had a sister, they both got along pretty fast, not to mention the little girl was the kind of child who was full of energy and would smile or grin all the time.

"Higher! Higher!" Bree squalled and giggled when Ethan raised her within his arm length.

"Let's go, we'll see the centaur!" Ethan carried her in his arms as Bree clutched onto him like a baby koala. "Do you like centaur?"

"I like them, they are very kind!" Bree beamed when she talked about what the centaur had told her.

Apparently, Bree had been in their den and occasionally, they would bring her to see the sky while telling her a story or two.

From Bree's standpoint and the way Mr. and Mrs. Lori depicted the village where the priestess was living, it seemed like those centaurs didn't involve themselves with whatever the things that the hunters would do.

It is almost like the centaurs were the advisor while the hunters were the guard of the village, along with a few other shapeshifters that were living in their community.

Both siblings seemed a little bit brightened up when they teased little Bree, as Hope followed behind them.

In the front yard, they could see Mr. and Mrs. Lori talking to Chiron. Aside from the chief, there were other four centaurs that came with him, they just stayed a few meters away from them. Above, the moon light fell on their bare chest and tall figure.

"Good evening everyone..." Chiron slightly nodded to Ian and Ethan, he gave a big, warm smile when he saw Hope followed behind them.

"Chiron!" Bree stretched out her short arms, asking to be carried by the centaur, which he gladly granted.

"How are you little fellow?" Chiron touched her nose while smiling warmly at the little girl in his arms.

"I am good. I am friends with Hope, Ian and Ethan." Bree reported this news to him.

"Wonderful," Chiron nodded and then he averted his eyes towards Hope and the siblings. "I guess all of you have many questions to be asked."

"Yes—" But, before Ethan could talk further, Chiron had interrupted him.

"But, I think let's see the lycan first, shall we?" Chiron handed Bree to her mother and caressed her cheek lightly before he turned around and walked towards the barn, without waiting for the three people behind him to answer his rhetorical question or to check whether they followed him or not.

Definitely, Hope and the siblings would follow him, what other choice that they had?

"Don't you want to come with us?" Hope turned around to look at the family of three, she remembered Bree wanted to see the beast, but was not allowed to come near the barn.

However, Mr. and Mrs. Lori gave strange responses as they were visibly startled. "No, we will wait here."

Hope frowned, but didn't ask why they looked so afraid of her suggestion. "Alright."

The other four centaurs followed them, but there was one that came forward and walked alongside Chiron.

"Do you think Centaurs also have a concept of mate?" Ian whispered at Hope, who just caught up with them.

"How would I know?" Hope threw him a look. She was not a shapeshifter.

Ignoring Hope's comment, Ian started to talk again. "Do you think the female centaur beside him is his mate?"

To answer Ian's question, Chiron stopped in front of the barn's door before he opened it and said in his deep and shooting tone. "Yes, we have the concept of mate and no, she is not my mate. My mate was killed centuries ago."

There was no hostility in the way Chiron answered Ian's nosy question, but it managed to shut him up. He glanced at his shoes awkwardly.

He thought the centaurs didn't have a remarkable hearing ability like they had, yet his assumption had been proven wrong.

## **Chapter 557 - FRESH AIR**

"This is Carina," Chiron introduced the woman beside him as she smiled politely towards the three teenagers. "She is our healer."

Hope and the twins nodded their head like children who had been reprimanded.

"Nice to meet you Carina." Hope waved her hand and earned a nod from the female centaur.

After that, the three of them followed behind Chiron and Carina solemnly when they entered the barn, and didn't dare to address another question as the atmosphere became awkward. Thanks to Ian previously.

Inside the barn, just like the last time they saw it, Kace's beast was lying motionlessly on a stack of hay, covered with a warm blanket that Hope dr.a.p.ed on his body before.

The rise and fall movement of his chest was the only thing that indicated he was still breathing, alive.

Chiron and the woman approached the beast quietly, even their steps couldn't be heard in this quiet place.

"This is magic." Carina bent his front horse-legs, so she could touch the beast's head. Her long fingers traced the wounds behind the beast' back.

"Witch's magic?" Chiron asked.

Carina didn't answer immediately, she halted her fingers an inch away from the wounds and expressed her uncertainty, "No, this is old magic, not from the witches. I think this is fae's magic."

There were a lot of types of magic asides from the witches' and one of them was fae's. Lana, who was a half-fae, had proven that she could cast certain spells, though it was not as powerful as the witches.

And since they had never met with any faes, Lana's true ability was still unknown. To what extent could they use their power?

"Fae," Chiron reiterated. "Faes live in different land, most of them are in the mainland."

The mainland that Chiron mentioned was the Northern Coven, where faes, witches and vampires lived together and made their own habitat. Those creatures were powerful enough to say the least and the rumor about their joint force had been spread.

The problem was not because the witches and faes finally entered into an agreement, but the purposes of their union, what they worried about.

There were more activities that happened ever since, and there were a lot more creatures that disappeared in their experiment.

Chiron glanced at the girl, whose eyes shone brightly like the stars above them and then to the white beast, who was lying motionlessly. The prophecy would come true.

"Can you help him?" Hope asked, she walked forward and crouched down beside the female centaur. Even now, she was still fascinated by their feature and when Hope looked at her up close like this, their tanned skin was as smooth as marble stone.

"I can't fix his wound, but I think I can wake him up." Carina nodded to her own words. "He had rested enough."

"Yes please, I was thinking the same thing," Hope replied hastily. She couldn't wait to see Kace open his eyes again. She missed him, either it was his beast or human side, she missed all of him.

"Will do, lady." Carina smiled politely at Hope and she blushed because of the way she called her.

"You can just call me Hope," Hope murmured.

"Beautiful name for a beautiful lady." She stretched out her hand and put her fingers under Hope's chin.

"You have a path that is not easy. I see a beautiful soul with a peerless spirit."

"Thank you," Hope said shyly, but what Carina was about to say next, erased her smile completely.  
action

"But, I see death surround you," Carina said in the same tone she praised the girl.

"Carina," Chiron's voice laced with warning. "Let's finish our business here."

Carina's big eyes shifted to Chiron and back to Hope before she released her chin and focused on the beast in front of her.

Hope could feel the siblings moved nervously behind her, but Hope didn't have time to give them her extra attention after hearing what Carina said.

What did she mean with those unsettling words?

Hope couldn't understand why the more she knew about this realm, the more confused she became and now she was afraid of what Carina just said.

The dream.

The prophecy.

About her being the guardian angel.

The centaur.

The curse.

Hope didn't know where she had to start even if she was given a chance to ask.

The centaurs had their own magic, but not all of them were gifted with such power. Fortunately, Carina did.

She was chanting a spell in a strange language that sounded like a song while caressing the beast's white fur, especially on the surface of his wound.

And now, she had been doing that for ten minutes already, but nothing happened to Kace. Would it work?

Hope was extremely tense while watching what Carina did, but her mind buzzed with many unanswered questions.

When she was starting to bite her nails, someone squeezed her shoulder gently.

"I think you need some fresh air," Chiron spoke, retracting his hand when he already got her attention.

"Let's take a walk and let your friends wait for your mate."

There he was, addressing Kace as her mate again.

Hope was reluctant to leave the beast's side, but there was nothing she could do more here to help. Maybe, taking a walk with Chiron was not a bad idea after all.

And it seemed like the chief of the centaur had the same intention like Hope, since he only offered this to the girl and not to the other two brothers.

"I want to take a walk too," Ian declared, he didn't want to let Hope be alone with this creature.



But Ethan glowered at him while saying. "No, we will stay here, in case Carina needs something." He was sensible enough to catch the hidden meaning behind Chiron's words.

Hope nodded. "Yes, I would love to. I think fresh air is all I need right now."

"I am going to tell you a story about the stars." Chiron stretched out his hand to help Hope stand up and then both of them walked out of the barn.

### **Chapter 558 - STORY FROM THE PAST**

Hope followed behind the Centaur, leaving the barn behind them as they walked under the moonlight. The sound of Chiron's hooves against the grass, somehow soothed the girl's nerves.

She walked slightly behind, so she could stare at him without being noticed, at least that was what she thought. If she could have her phone with her, she would take one or two photos secretly for her personal documentation.

After all, who would believe this honestly? Even if she showed it to someone else in her world. No one would believe the centaur that walked beside her was a real deal, an actual living, breathing creature.

Both of them fell into a deep silence, but this was a comfortable silence that Hope enjoyed. She didn't talk because Chiron said he would tell her a story about the stars and, as childish as it sounded, Hope was looking forward to it.

Knowing that there was someone looking after Kace and Lana, and knew Carina would take care of them. It was only a matter of time until both of them awake, this new understanding helped Hope relax a little.

"Do you know about the saying that the stars tell you stories about the past?" Chiron asked when they walked towards a big tree in the middle of the prairie.

Hope contemplated for a while before she answered, "I think I have heard something like that, but I don't know what that means."

Chiron glanced at the young girl beside her, smiling warmly, and stopped walking. This made Hope stop as well.

"You must be curious how I know about what I said to you." Chiron gazed at the night sky. There were not many stars.

"You mean about Kace being my mate and about the resurrection? How do you know about all of that?" This was Sereфина's trait that Hope was showing to the centaur. She didn't like to beat around the bush and asked away the question that she wanted to know whenever she had the chance.

Chiron raised his hand and pointed to one star that was brighter than the rest. "When you gaze up into the night sky, you are looking into the past. The bright star Sirius eight light years away, it means; the light hitting your eyes tonight has been traveling for eight years."

Hope was never a big fan of astronomy, but hearing how Chiron said it, it sounded interesting.

"There are many stars with ranges from sixty to one hundred twenty five light years away, when you see them, you are seeing the light from before you were born." Chiron put his hand down and gazed solemnly to the night sky. "That's how we know our history."

For Hope this was merely a fascinating theory about how people could see the light from the past, but for Chiron the centaur, they talked about this as if this was a matter of life and death.

However... "That is a beautiful theory, yet it doesn't answer my question," Hope stated carefully.

"There," Chiron pointed to another star in the sky, this one was not as bright as the first one he showed to Hope. "That star is what we call the guardian. The star of the guardian angel."

Hope watched the star with a dim light, this one was the farthest star from where she could see.

"That star had disappeared for centuries, but seventeen years ago, it made an appearance in the north sky," Chiron explained. "Over the years it's getting brighter."

Hope knew the story about the resurrection of the guardian angel, but she didn't know what the cause of their extinction was. "Do you know why the guardian angels are extinct?"

For other people, to know that they had a soul of another supernatural creature such as guardian angel, that was probably a mind-blowing revelation, but for Hope she had gotten used to this kind of information.

Especially since she was talking to a real centaur now, what else would she not believe? As crazy as it seemed, anything is possible from now on.

Chiron didn't answer her question immediately, he tilted his head and stared at the direction of the barn. "The answer is personal. You can ask your mate."

Hope concluded that the centaur knew more than he showed it to her. "I lost my friend, she is a witch."

"Witches hardly accepted here," Chiron said.

"Do you think the hunters captured her?" Hope's expression changed and panic surfaced vividly, overwhelmed her.

"The last hunter that survived from that night was sent home together with his friends' dead bodies, and no, I didn't see the witch among them," Chiron replied, his eyes were still staring at the barn.

"Do you know where I can find her? I came here to look for the priestess. Can you help me to meet her?" If the centaur didn't know how to find Lidya, maybe the priestess did. There was no harm of trying.

"She is there," the centaur pointed at the direction where mountain Uzustood on the horizon.

Hope was puzzled, "She is there?" But, the village was in the opposite direction... "Isn't she in the village?"

However, before Chiron could reply to her question, or Hope was able to demand for another explanation, there was an uproar from the direction of the barn.

It was a loud and vicious growl that Hope had not heard for these past two days.

"What happened there?" Hope started to run when Chiron had been a few meters away from her. With his physic, it was easy to outrun her.

From afar, Hope could hear Ethan and Ian were trying to talk something incoherently.

Chiron had reached the barn's door when Hope was still halfway there, but she managed to hear what the siblings were saying.

"She is here to help!"

"Calm down Kace!"

"Hope is fine!"

"She is fine!"

"Hope!"

Hope was out of breath when she reached the door and watched Kace who was being held back by Ethan and Ian, in his human form.

His bright ocean blue eyes focused on her when he caught the sight of the girl and, somehow, Hope could feel his angst and apprehension only by staring into his eyes.

### **Chapter 559 - I REMEMBER YOU**

Kace was still slightly confused with his surroundings, but the first thing that came into his mind was his mate, Hope. And then the scene of how the beast's wrath was rampant, without him who was not able to control his monstrous side then.

He felt like he had been sleeping for way too long. But despite he was deep in his sleep, he still could comprehend what was happening around him while being out of reach from control, Kace felt like he was being under water, literally.

He felt exhausted, but the thought of Hope and the last thing that he could remember, turned him furious and frustrated. He needed to see his mate, he needed to know that Hope was fine, that she was safe.

When he couldn't see her or smell her scent, everything in him screamed with fear. He was afraid if something had happened to her and if he failed to protect her.

Kace's furious eyes caught a sight of the female centaur and out of instinct, he growled at her loudly, caused the female to rise on her horse-foot and took two steps back.

Afterward, Kace felt there were two people holding him back, prevented him from lunging onto the centaur or did something unforgivable.

Meanwhile, no one warned Ian and Ethan that Kace would wake up with this sour mood. He, literally, woke up with killing mode activated around his system.

"Kace! Stop it!"

"Hope is fine!"

"Hope!"

The siblings started to cry for Hope to come.

Fortunately, Kace was still not strong enough to throw them across the room, or else, they would have been writhing in pain for daring enough upon their attempt on taking him down.

"HOPE!" Ian screamed exasperatedly towards the door when he watched the one who came was Chiron instead of the girl.

The centaur chief placed himself between the angry Lycan and his fellow female centaur. Staring down at Kace without doing anything.

Why would he just stand there?! Ethan thought. Why didn't he bring Hope with him? Wasn't she supposed to return along with him?

When Kace almost broke free from the sibling's grip, Hope appeared. She was panting hard when she talked.

"What happened?" her eyes skimmed the room and it didn't take a long time for her to catch the sight of Kace.

On the other hand, Kace stopped moving. He stared towards the girl without blinking. And then she rushed at him and threw herself to his opened arms.

The feeling was surreal when the spark erupted between them. When this tingly feeling wrapped Hope's body in his safe embrace.

"Hope..." Kace's body was trembling because of relief. "My hope..." he buried his face on the curve of Hope's shoulder, taking the liberty to breathe in her intoxicating scent.

Kace was like an addict and Hope was his special drug that calmed his nerves.

"You are awake." Hope's voice was croaked when she started sobbing and hugged him tighter, afraid he would fall asleep again. He had been sleeping for a long time and she had become worried.

Kace pressed her against him, wanting to feel her more. He couldn't imagine if something bad happened to her while he wasn't there to protect her in this strange land.

Seeing the beast had been tamed, Ian and Ethan slowly moved aside and let the two of them have their own moment for a little while.

Hope wanted to stay like this forever and she could tell that Kace also wanted the same thing, but there was another urgent matter that they must sort out.

When the euphoria had ceased down, Hope wriggled her body from Kace's tight hug. He let her go, but the lycan placed his hand on her waist instead.

Only now Kace realized there was another centaur inside the room and his instinct was to hide Hope behind him as he growled deeply.

"It's alright Kace, they are here to help us." Hope stroked the beast's back.

"Yes, they helped us." Ian chimed in, but still didn't want to come close to the lycan. He and Ethan stayed beside Carina and Chiron.

Kace and Chiron exchanged looks in silence before finally Kace became a little bit relaxed, yet he still kept Hope close to him.

"Bring the other woman that you said has the same condition like him." Carina tilted her head to the twins.

Ian and Ethan looked at each other. "She is asleep, why don't we go inside the room?" Ethan suggested.

"I think Kace also needs a proper bath and meal." Ian added.

However, Chiron shook his head. "We don't enter human's houses."

That statement was a little bit confusing for them. Was that their law? But, Chiron and Mr. and Mrs. Lori seemed close enough to visit each other, why didn't they enter their house?

"Centaur doesn't enter other creatures' properties. It shows their respect to them." Unexpectedly, Kace spoke as he stood up, though his movement was a little bit clumsy, but his voice was firm. "Creatures with high morals."

Chiron gave Kace a small nod. "I will take that as a compliment."

That was one of the reasons why the centaurs were rarely seen inside the village. They protected those inside by monitoring potential danger from outside.

"I thought your people are already extinct." Kace shifted his dim blue eyes toward the female centaur, who stood tall beside the male.

Chiron took a step forward and covered Carina from Kace's stern gaze. "We managed to survive." Like usual, Chiron spoke with his calm and deep tone, as if there was nothing that could break his calm nature.

"And all of you live in this realm." Kace concluded. "This is not your place."

Hope could see it, there was a tinge of anger that flashed on Carina's eyes, but she hid it by looking away to the front yard.

All of a sudden the atmosphere became tense again.

"I will carry Lana here." Ian volunteered, he didn't think he wanted to see another outburst, as he walked out of the barn, Ethan followed him.

There was silence until Kace spoke again. "I remember you."

## **Chapter 560 - NOT IN THE PAST AND NOT NOW**

"I remember you," Kace said it again, his blue eyes never left Chiron's as he put on a defensive stance.

Hope, who was placed beside his back, couldn't understand how the situation ended up escalating that quickly, as she watched how things unfolded silently. She didn't dare to ask, yet she didn't need to, because from their conversation she would understand the connection between the two.

Apparently both of them had met, years ago? Centuries ago? This must be the time where those stars came from.

"I am glad you remember me," Chiron answered with the same calm tone, despite Kace who had turned a little bit aggressive.

"You should remember us," Carina said cynically. She still didn't want to look at Kace as she glared at the door.

"What do you want?" Kace breathed deeply, his grip tightened around Hope's wrist. "All of that happened in the past." He became more and more defensive with every word that he said.

"Nothing can change the past." Chiron agreed readily. He took a step forward, but stopped when Kace snarled him a warning.

Carina whipped her head and was about to move forward furiously with the disrespect that Kace threw to her leader.

The situation would have turned ugly if Chiron didn't stop her in time and calmed her down.

"You shouldn't bring me here and help him!" Carina shouted angrily, but her fierce eyes directed towards Kace. "I should have killed him instead of helping him!"

"Carina." Chiron placed his hand on her shoulder and talked sternly. "Wait for the other woman outside."

Carina ignored his words, but she, no longer, forced herself to barrage towards Kace.

"Carina. Outside." Chiron spoke again, his eyes fixed on hers.

After the second order, reluctantly, Carina complied, though the sound of her hooves against the ground sounded a little bit louder than necessary.

After Carina left the barn, Chiron spoke to Kace again. "I will not apologize for how she behaved."

If Kace previously said how centaur had a high moral, this time Hope could see why. As a chief of the centaurs, Chiron held his ground and spoke just like how the leader should.

There must be something in the past between Kace and Chiron, or bigger than that. Something between Lycanthropes and centaurs? Hope was starting to analyze the situation.

"Of course you won't," Kace retorted coldly.

"Just like you, who will not apologize for the thing that you had done centuries ago." Chiron didn't even blink when he said this.

Hope glanced at Kace. Maybe it was because he just woke up from a long sleep, or maybe because he was still injured, but Hope could see how pale his face was right now.

"What do you want?" Kace asked through gritted teeth, his grip tightened even more on Hope's wrist. He could snap her hand by accident at this rate. "I will fight you to death if you dare to lay a hand on her."

Hope shifted her attention towards Chiron, whose expression didn't even change even the slightest. What did Kace mean with that just now? The centaurs had treated them nothing, but with care. If it wasn't because of them, she could have been dead by now and Kace wouldn't have woken up now just to throw a threat and be ungrateful to him like this.

"You don't change even after centuries have passed." Chiron looked at Hope, who was hidden behind Kace's back. "Even after you get a second chance, when your curse is lifted, and finally blessed with your mate."

"I don't need those words." Kace was furious, but at some point, his voice laced with... shame. "What do you want? Another war?!"

Hope was startled when Kace talked about war, but Chiron didn't even flinch when he heard the hostility in his voice.

"You know our kind is not the type who would start a war. Not in the past and not even now." Chiron stood tall and his hooves tapped the ground lightly.

Outside of the barn, they could hear Ian and Ethan were complaining when Carina instructed them to put Lana on the ground instead of bringing her inside.

However, the twins were not good in argumentation, especially with a woman, who was taller and more authoritative than them.

While grumbling here and there, Ian put down Lana's body after Ethan took off his jacket and put it on the ground.

Carina repeated the same thing that she had done to Kace.

Inside the barn.

"When your anger has subsided, maybe we can talk more calmly," Chiron gave Kace and Hope a small nod as a form of respect before he walked out of the barn to approach the female centaur and the other.

"Kace, you shouldn't treat him like that," Hope complained when Chiron was out of their sight. "They did nothing but be nice and helpful to us. They even help you to regain your consciousness. Your hostility doesn't make sense."

"You don't understand, Hope. You don't understand." Kace tumbled and fell on his back while murmuring the same thing.

"Why? What do I not understand?" Hope crouched down, facing him. Her hand was getting numb, but she let him hold her.

Kace raised his head and looked towards the front yard, from their position, they couldn't see them, but they could still hear Ian and Ethan were murmuring something here and there.

The lycan was silent for a moment, as if he was trying to get rid of a bad memory out of his head, fighting with himself again.

"I want to see Lana's condition, would you wait here or..." Hope couldn't finish her words, when Kace pulled her into a tight hug. He held her as if his life depended on it.

"Kace...?"

"Please, don't come near him," He whispered, almost like a plea.

And then, somehow, everything fell into place when Hope put it together.

Centuries ago.

The death of Chiron's mate.

The supernatural creature kind that is almost extinct.

And the younger version of Kace that Hope had seen in her dream; crouching down while hugging himself and crying.