

TLOA Lycan 561

Chapter 561 - THE REVELATION

Kace didn't know that Hope knew what he had done to end up being cursed for not having a mate for his entire eternity, though that curse had been lifted and here Hope was so perfect in his eyes.

Hope didn't have any proof to prove if her theory was right, but from their conversation and the way Kace fidgeted every time Chiron was talking about the past and the war between the two kinds, Hope somehow knew most of her point was right.

The Donovans had killed many creatures' mates, including the centaurs', to expand their territory and one of it was Chiron's mate.

The centaur moved from that realm and came here, guarding the priestess and this land, making this place their new home.

That was why, Kace asked; why they were here when this was not their place.

And now, Kace was afraid that Chiron and the centaurs would do the same thing to him. As if this was a karma that really came for him this time.

If this was a story about other people, where Hope was not included, she would say; Kace deserved it, if those centaurs took his mate.

After what he had done, losing a mate was something he had to experience, feeling the pain when they took the essence of those poor creatures' existence.

However, things were not as simple as that. It would be Hope's life that was put at stake, and she could feel the fear that Kace felt.

Yet, if the centaurs wanted her to die, they didn't have to do what they had done. Chiron just needed to do nothing when Leroy, the hunter, wanted to kill her and the others so bad.

Instead, the centaur helped them and kept them safe inside this house and provided them with everything they needed.

Thus, if it was not about revenge, then what did all this mean?

Hope and Kace stayed in that position until they heard Ian was calling their name cautiously, feeling awkward because he had to interrupt their moment.

"Hope, Kace..."

Kace didn't move, he kept hugging Hope as if there was nothing really interesting to make him move an inch, yet Hope wriggled her body until she could face Ian, who was standing on the doorway.

"What happened?" Hope asked, her voice a little bit twisted, her mind was spinning with the new revelation and other bunch of questions.

"Carina needs Kace," Ian shifted his eyes on the Lycan, who didn't give any reaction upon hearing his name. "She said something about; magic and needs Kace to wake Lana up."

Hope frowned. Why did they need Kace to wake Lana up? Carina could wake Kace up with no trouble at all.

Despite that thought, Hope still talked to Kace. "Kace, we need to go, Lana needs you. She has been sleeping longer than you did," she spoke softly, stroking his back. "Kace, let's go."

At first, Kace didn't give any reaction, as if he had turned deaf, but in another second, he sighed deeply and nodded slowly.

"Stay with me," he spoke seriously.

Hope wanted to argue with him, saying that the centaur wouldn't do them any harm, but she was not sure with that either. There was still the possibility that they had some sort of hidden agenda behind their kindness and what more, this wasn't the right time to start another quarrel with Kace.

Hence, Hope just nodded obediently and let Kace help her stand up and both of them walked to the fresh air of the evening breeze.

Lana was lying on the ground not too far from them with Carina and Ethan squatted down beside her and Chiron, who was standing tall behind them.

Kace looked at the centaur worriedly as he kept Hope close to him.

"What happened to her?" Kace asked Carina in a rigid voice.

"Her soul connects with yours," Carina answered the same way Kace spoke to her and in an instant the atmosphere became very thick with the tension that was surfaced in the air.

Carina still didn't want to look at Kace and focused her attention on Lana.

"What does it mean?" Ethan asked. He looked at Carina and Kace, then back to Lana.

"The vow," Carina said simply. "She has taken an oath to obey him. If something happens to him, her life will be in danger too."

"How could that possibly happen?" Hope asked, she was shocked.

She thought the vow that Lana and Kace were talking about back then was not something as serious as this. In her eyes, it was nothing like a vow to pledge Lana's loyalty to Kace.

On the other hand, Kace also thought the same thing. He didn't know the effect of that oath would be like this, Serefina didn't say anything about this.

But, if Kace thought about this again, knowing Serefina, the witch who would most likely do something beyond their imagination, especially the unexpected like this.

If, at that time, Lana did any harm to Hope, she would indirectly hurt Kace too, and that would affect her immediately. It was very vicious of Serefina to think about this method, but at the same time, this ensured Hope's safety in the hand of strangers.

This must take a great amount of pain from Kace to put Lana in this current state now, since Kace had been injured before, but nothing happened to Lana.

And yes, to see Hope was being stabbed right before the beast's eyes, must be a great pain for Kace's body and spirit.

"What should we do now?" Hope asked again, looking very worried about Lana.

Carina drew a small knife from her h.i.p.s, seeing that, Kace became tense. There was a rumble within his chest, which was ready to explode if Carina made any threatening move. However, she only said, "give me your hand."

"What do you want?" Hope became defensive when she watched the knife in Carina's hand.

"His blood will help." And when Hope's expression showed her that she didn't believe it, Carina added. "Do you prefer for him to kiss her instead?"

This time, Hope blushed as she shook her head vigorously. "No."

Chapter 562 - THE INVITATION

"Your hand." Carina said rigidly. She still didn't want to see the lycan right in his eyes, afraid the anger would force her to do something that she would regret later.

Without a word, Kace stretched his hand and put it under Carina's line of sight and without a single cue, Carina slashed her small knife on Kace's hand.

Hope gasped when she watched fresh blood spurted from Kace's opened wound. Her gut feeling told her that Carina must've done it on purpose. Because, she didn't need to cut Kace's hand so viciously to make such a deep wound when all she needed was only a drop or two from his blood.

"Don't you think that too much?!" Hope was half screaming at the female centaur as she hastily grabbed Kace's hand and pressed his opened wound, where his blood was dripping out.

Hope found out that she was not as sick as before when she saw blood, thanks to her life-and-death moment that she recently experienced, she became more resilient to something bloody like this.

"He will not die," Carina commented casually while Chiron didn't say anything and the sibling just knitted their brows, didn't seem happy to see another bloody scene.

Of course, Kace wouldn't die because of this cut, but it didn't mean he couldn't feel the pain, right?

Hope raised her head to see Kace's expression only to find his face was devoid from any emotion, not even the pain. The lycan didn't even flinch when Carina cut his hand.

"Does it hurt?" Hope asked in a low voice, her hand was still pressing the wound with the hem of her dress, because she couldn't find any clean towel or something similar that she could use to do the job.

"No," Kace glanced at his wound nonchalantly. The moment he said this, his wound started to heal, though it was slower than usual.

Despite that fact, Hope was still upset with what Carina did to Kace. She wiped the blood from his hand with her dress and when she finished, the wound had healed completely. Hope sighed in relief.

"Do you mean, if Kace died, Lana will die too?" Ian brought up the topic again. "And if Lana died, the same thing will happen to Kace?"

Hope's breath hitched when she heard that, as she set her eyes on Carina, waiting for her explanation.

"Since the lycan is the pivot of this vow, the same thing will not happen to him if this girl dies, but she will definitely die if he is greatly injured or if he dies," Carina replied.

Kace narrowed his eyes, he didn't know the vow that he took recklessly years ago, would be so serious. He should have known not to underestimate that witch.

"Why would she want to make a strange oath like that?" Ian frowned and stole a glance at Kace, but he couldn't bring himself to ask the question that was already on the tip of his tongue.

Of course, the answer was because; they wanted to keep Hope safe from a stranger who just joined their small 'family'.

However, Kace didn't say anything about this. His eyes fixed on Lana as he intertwined his fingers with Hope.

No one answered Ian's question and Ethan nudged him to stop talking, thus the chatter Ian didn't address another question.

There was a small movement from Lana, her eyelids fluttered and her brows knitted as though she was in discomfort.

"You can bring her back inside." Carina then stood up on her hooves and stepped back until she was beside Chiron.

For someone who said they were not mates, they shared the same vibe as if they were a lover.

"She will be fine for now," Carina looked away when she said this and found Chiron's eyes staring at her. Both of them were silent for a moment before the chief of the centaur nodded his head.

In tacit understanding, Carina walked back towards the other centaurs nearby to join them, who had been waiting since the beginning.

"Let me," Kace spoke all of sudden, as he let go of Hope's hand and stood up, taking Lana's body from Ian. action

"It's okay, I will..." Ian glanced at Hope, who was also confused with Kace's sudden act.

"Show the way," Kace said sternly. "Hope, stay with me." He carried Lana in his arms, but he didn't let Hope out of his sight too.

The weight of Lana's body meant nothing for Kace, but the burden and remorse that the lycan felt almost crushed him into pieces.

How many more people have to get hurt because of what he did? This feeling was horrible beyond words and Kace felt disgusted towards himself.

"Hope, come here," Kace said in a low voice when Hope didn't move from where she was standing.

Actually, Hope wanted to stay and had another conversation with Chiron, but seeing how the situation turned out now, she couldn't do that. Hence she followed Kace and the siblings, back to the house.

However, when they just took three steps away, Chiron spoke again. "Tomorrow will be the funeral of the hunters that were killed that night," he halted and watched how Kace's body turned stiff. "The village will burn the body after the sunset. If you like it, you can come with Mr. and Mrs. Lori."

No one could decipher the meaning behind Chiron's words, whether he wanted to mock Kace or disparage him. Whatever it was, that couldn't be seen in his expression and the tone that he used.

Would the people, the family of the victims from the brutalism of the beast, would like it? To see the killer of their family member?

Why would Chiron give this kind of invitation?

"If there is nothing else, I will excuse myself and my people." He spoke solemnly as he turned around and walked towards the other centaurs.

The six of them disappeared behind the trees, yet Kace didn't move ever since. His blue eyes clouded with something that Hope couldn't understand.

"Kace," Hope tugged his tattered shirt. "Are you alright?"

Kace didn't answer her, but he said in a deep voice. "Let's go."

Chapter 563 - HOW DO YOU KNOW?

"Kace?" Hope approached him. "I have been looking for you because you are not in your room."

Kace was leaning his tall body against the wall, he was standing on the terrace, staring at the distance where the village was located, surrounded by a wall for protection.

"Why? You miss me?" Kace tilted his head and grinned, just like how he used to be.

If Hope didn't know him better, she would have thought, the lycan had returned to his usual easy-going personality.

However, now she realized that he just returned to his facade.

Hope walked towards him and hugged him tightly, feeling his body against hers as she buried her face on his chest.

"What? What happened?" Kace traced her long black hair while watching the sun finally rise behind the mountain.

This was a quiet morning, so calm and serene as if its purity could wash away all the sins that he had done or cleaned any traces of blood off his hands and his memory.

The dead bodies would be buried when the sun set. The bodies of those who lost their life under his claws.

"Nothing," Hope murmured, "I just want to stay like this with you."

Kace looked at the top of her head and nuzzled her hair. "I didn't know that you miss me this much," he teased her again.

"Just now you know that I always miss you?" Hope tilted her head and rested her chin against his broad chest, staring at him adorably.

"I don't know that you are this bold." Kace raised his brows and kissed her temple.

"Really?" Hope mimicked his tone when he teased her. "But, your beast was bolder." Well, his beast kissed her on the lips while he kissed her on her forehead just now as if she was a seven years old girl.

With his beast being mentioned and brought up accidentally, Kace's body became stiff. He got the wrong idea with what Hope meant.

Kace's expression turned gloomy, though he tried to mask it with an awkward smile, but his eyes dimmed.

"You don't need to smile if you don't want to," Hope said softly. "You don't need to pretend in front of me."

"I don't."

"Yes, you do," Hope said stubbornly.

Kace sighed, "I always want to smile every time I am with you," He grinned.

Maybe this had become a habit of him to hide what he really felt, because he did it effortlessly, all the time. However, Hope could see the big hole that ready to suck him completely whenever he was alone with his regrets.

"Why did you wake up so early?" Hope resumed to lay his head against his chest, listening to his beating heart.

"I can't sleep. Did you forget that I have been sleeping for two whole days?" Kace reminded her, but the actual reason was because every time he closed his eyes the brutal scene reappeared.

In his mind, he was forced to replay every moment the beast slashed its razor claws against their flesh and how the warm blood bathed his body in that battle.

Though that bloody night was not similar like many wars that he had been through but, the feeling was still the same.

Kace could feel their fear and how their last breath was stolen from them or how their soul left their body.

Every moment.

Every touch.

Every feeling.

Everything about that overwhelmed him and didn't let him fall into another slumber or just to rest his tired mind and heart.

And now, Kace had to meet with the centaurs. The supernatural creatures that they thought had gone extinct because of what they had done—what Kace had done.

He was too young and greedy for recognition from both of his parents and his two older brothers, but in the end. He got nothing. He ripped his own soul when he watched how those creatures wailed in pain and agony, watching their dearest one die before their eyes.

Only by seeing them alone, Kace could see the hell amount of pain that they had to go through.

"When Lana woke up, we will go back home," Kace said.

"No." Hope turned her head and stared at him in disbelief. "We still have to find the priestess and if you forget, Lidya is still missing. We need to look for her too."

Kace knew as soon as he voiced out his idea, Hope would turn down this idea immediately. "I don't need the priestess, somehow, my wounds are getting better, I think it just needs some time to heal."

Hope didn't believe it. Was it because of what Carina had done to him? Her magic healed him? Whatever it was, Hope wouldn't believe him until she saw it with her own eyes.

However, there was another reason why they couldn't go now.

"Lidya is still missing. Do you want to leave her behind?" Hope narrowed her eyes when Kace averted his gaze. "Don't tell me what you are thinking now."

The way Kace pressed his lips into a thin line was the answer that Hope needed.

"No, Kace..." Hope frowned. She let go of his body, diminishing the spark between them. It didn't have much effect on her, but Kace felt that something important was missing. "I can understand your beast side that wants to protect me and why you killed those hunters..." Hope ignored it when Kace flinched with her words. "...but, I can't understand your reason if you want to leave Lidya behind."

"Hope, you don't understand." Kace took a step forward, only for Hope to take one step back, avoiding him.

"Then go on, try to make me understand!" Hope looked at Kace in disappointment and this made Kace become anxious and restless.

"Those creatures," Kace sighed. "The centaurs would hurt you." action

That's what he believed, because that's what he would do if he were the centaurs.

Revenge.

Nothing would stop him to make the person, who took the love of his life, writhed in agony before he killed him slowly and painfully.

"Because you killed his mate?" Hope could see the fear that was written all over Kace's face.

"How do you know?"

Chapter 564 - SCRAM!

Hope bit her lips as she spoke slowly. Her eyes locked on Kace warily. "Because I know what you did..." Hope could see how Kace's eyes clouded with fear, shock and all the anxiety that crept in his heart now.

"What had I done?" Kace never spoke so rigidly like this to Hope before, but now, he was talking to her as if Hope was a stranger.

Hope didn't know if she made a right decision to tell him about this, but she wanted him to come clean to her, it wouldn't help him or their relationship if Kace kept pretending there was nothing wrong and if he was okay all the time.

"I know the reason behind the curse that you got before." Hope forced herself to talk more. "You don't have to pretend that you are fine all the time, if you are not."

Kace glared at Hope and this was the first time he did this. Hope was slightly taken aback with what she saw.

A few minutes ago, he was holding her as if she was the most precious thing for him and now he looked at her as if she was his sworn enemy. Was that possible?

"Kace..." Hope's voice slightly trembled under those black eyes, apparently, the beast wanted to resurface, but he held him back like usual. Nevertheless, Hope was afraid of him now, whether he was in control over his beast or not. "Kace... you're scaring me."

Kace gritted his teeth, his body was shivering as his fist clenched and unclenched. "Go..."

He didn't want to do something that he would regret later, though he knew he wouldn't hurt her, never in a million lifetimes would he do that, but Kace didn't want Hope to see this part of him.

He didn't want to ruin his image in Hope's eyes, the Kace who was only sunshine and smile.

"SCRAM!" Kace roared and in an instant his heart broke into million pieces when he watched how Hope ran for her life, as if there was a despicable predator who was chasing after her life.

Kace just needed some time alone, he didn't mean to yell at her.

Now, when Hope was not there anymore and he got what he wanted, the pain and regret suffocated him even more. His heart caved in with remorse.

The regrets for what he had done to Hope.

"ARGH!" Kace punched the wall beside him and left a hole as big as his fist. He really wanted to hurt himself, so he could lift a little bit of pain in his chest.

His hand was bleeding, but it only lasted for a second before it healed again, even though Kace wished to feel more pain.

"You ruined my house."

There was a child-like voice that sounded from behind Kace. He didn't realize there was another creature near him because he was too focused on what he felt.

Kace snapped his head toward the source of the voice and found a little girl, around seven years old, holding an ugly doll, which was only twice as big as Kace's palm, looking at him with her innocent eyes.

"You make a hole in my house," Bree talked again as she frowned at the hole that Kace made. "You have to fix it," she demanded.

The little girl didn't know what she was facing right now. A half insane beast with a crazy mind and an unstable fickle mood, wasn't a good creature to talk to.

Ignoring the danger that lurked her, she kept talking. "Mother said, if you broke something you have to fix it."

However, from inside the room, there was a screech sound that called on the girl's name in panic. "Bree!"

A woman appeared with her panic expression and in no time scooped the little girl into her embrace as she took a few steps back in fear of Kace.

Kace's smile was filled with derision, not because of the woman's reaction, but because of himself.

"What happened?" Ian's hurried footsteps echoed when he approached Kace and Mrs. Lori, who was holding her daughter protectively, staring at Kace with worry.

Behind Ian, Ethan and Lana followed. Despite her face being slightly pale, Lana looked better than yesterday when she couldn't wake up at all.

It proved that Carina's spell did its magic and in other words, it also confirmed that Lana's life was bound to Kace.

Whenever Kace was hurt greatly, Lana's life would also be in danger. This fact made Kace sick. At this point, everything seemed so wrong to him.

"Who did this!?" Ian almost screamed when he watched a big hole on the wall.

Bree, who wasn't affected by the tension in the air, raised her small hand and pointed her tiny finger at Kace. "He did it," she said innocently.

Mrs. Lori hastily grabbed her daughter's hand, stopping her from pointing at the angry lycan. She looked at her guest with wide eyes.

"Why did you do that?" Ian tilted his head, so dense to understand the situation.

That question earned a slap behind his back from Ethan and Lana stepped forward when she was aware of the hostility that radiated from Kace's being.

Lana was not sure about what was going on, yet she had her own guess. There was something that triggered Kace for being very hostile like this.

For someone who just woke up a few hours ago, she missed many information about what was going on when she was not around.

"Kace, do you want to talk?" Lana took one step at time, she didn't want to rush him or make him feel cornered. "You can talk to me."

Kace glowered at Lana when she came closer to him.

He and his beast didn't need her, they wanted their mate. Kace wanted Hope. The way Hope looked at him before she ran away, didn't settle well with him.

That was Kace's biggest fear, for having Hope to hate him.

Lana received the cue as she stopped walking and just stood there.

"Where is Hope?" Ethan asked, they needed her in times like this.

Chapter 565 - THEY SHOULDN'T BE HERE

Kace frowned, he turned his body and stared at the direction where Hope was running to. Only then he realized what a big mistake that he made.

Cursing under his breath, Kace rushed towards the lushes of trees and bushes, where the centaurs were going last night, the same direction where Hope disappeared. action

Kace didn't think about this before as he indulged himself with remorse and regret, but now another fear shot his body, this was more intense than before.

If something happened to Hope and it was because of him...

Kace leapt highly and landed on all four, he shifted into his white beast and dashed towards the other side of the forest, ignoring Lana and Ethan, who were calling his name.

His body didn't feel well, as his beast clawed on the edge of his mind, asking to be released, upset because of what its human side did to their mate.

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Hope was running towards the dense of the trees, she herself was confused as to why she was actually running into this direction, instead of entering the house.

At first, she was afraid of Kace's sudden outburst, but then she was afraid of getting lost here, yet now, when Hope realized how relaxing it was being lost in this forest, she started to enjoy her surroundings.

Chirping bird, velvety grass, ray of the sun light that peeked through the leaves and the sound of the wind that brushed against the branches of the trees.

She had never felt so relaxed like this before. Hope loved being here after the tension between her and Kace.

To think about it, she wouldn't be lost for so long since there were four shapeshifters that were gifted with remarkable sense of smell, and amazing tracking ability, they would find her in a matter of minutes once they realized Hope was not around.

Especially the certain Lycan.

"Hmph!" Hope crossed her arms in front of her chest as her expression turned sullen. How could he growl at her?!

Hope knew Kace was not in his right mind when he stared at her with hostility, but she was still upset knowing Kace treated her that way.

She walked slowly into the deepest part of the forest while relishing the scenery before her eyes and when her ears caught the sound of a stream, thoughtlessly, Hope followed the source of that sound.

She hummed a song that she knew when she got closer to the sound of the stream until she found a small river there.

The sunlight that fell on the surface of the water, sparkling beautifully. A smile was brought onto her lips because of that sight.

However, before she could walk further to the river, there was a voice that warned her.

"You will trespass our territory if you take another step towards the river." This female voice spoke in a flat tone.

Hope turned her head, she was familiar with her voice, and when her eyes caught the sight of her, the smile on her lips broadened.

"Hi, Carina..." Hope waved her hand and walked towards her without hesitation.

The way Hope approached her brought a frown on her stoic expression. Shouldn't she be scared or run away? There was no one here who would protect her if she wanted to hurt her.

"I haven't thanked you for what you did to Kace," Hope stopped walking in front of her and looked at the female centaur, whose height was passed over her head, warmly. "Thank you for what you did to Kace and Lana."

Hope didn't know whether Lana had woken up or not right now, because when she left her room, she was still sleeping, but she looked so much better now.

Carina nodded her head rigidly. She didn't know how to respond to that or why she engaged a conversation with her when her original intention was to shoo her away from their territory.

Chiron had been preparing the funeral later, together with the hunters.

"Go back to Lori's family." Carina spoke as she turned around and was about to leave the girl there, but Hope followed her.

Honestly, Hope was still fascinated with the centaur's feature, she really wanted to stroke their skin, but wouldn't that be rude?

For a moment, her annoyance towards Kace was forgotten as there was something more interesting for her.

"Carina, how many centaurs are there in your pack?" Hope asked while following her.

Carina glanced at Hope direction, contemplating whether to answer her question or not, until she spoke curtly. "Not many," then she added sarcastically. "Thanks to your mate."

Hope grimaced when she heard that. It reminded her with their fight.

"Why did you help us?" Hope blurted out. She knew what Kace had done was despicable, she would understand if the centaurs were hostile and despise them, but the way they treated them was totally different. "You could have just left us when the hunter tried to kill me the other night."

"We followed our chief's order and didn't question him." Carina walked a little bit fast and Hope had to run to catch up with her.

"Can I talk to Chiron?" Hope really wanted to know more about Kace's past since Kace never let her know anything about it, and of course, the true motive of their kindness. Was this all just a trap?

"He is not around," Carina leapt gracefully over a dead trunk on the ground and landed like a cheetah.

"Can you walk slowly please?" Hope was panting when she had to jump a trunk.

As the reply, Carina stopped all of a sudden. Hope, who was running behind her, bumped onto her legs and whined.

"Why are you—"

"Sssh!" Carina hissed, her body tensed as her eyes looked at her surroundings worriedly.

"What happened?" Swallowed down, she complained, Hope crept closer towards her when she felt there was something amiss with the way Carina acted.

"They shouldn't be here—" Carina mumbled. "How could they be here?" She glanced at Hope and frowned.

"What?" Hope looked around her surroundings, but couldn't find anything. "What do you mean?"

Chapter 566 - UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER

And then, Hope heard it too. A howl. It's dark, murderous. It was close, nearly there.

Afterward, Hope could see it, those red eyes and sharp teeth all molding into one, black mass. A mass of howling reverberating through the clearing and Hope's head.

The dark mass swirling around Hope and Carina, who became more and more tense. She reached a small thing from her h.i.p.s and put it on her lips. Maybe it was a trumpet? Hope didn't know what it was, as she was too worried at the black mass around them.

As soon as Carina put that small thing on her lips, there was a melodious sound that could be heard, rung through the clearing for a few seconds before Carina put it down and stomped her hooves aggressively, as an attempt to scare them away.

It brought nothing but another failed attempt, as the massive black cloud-like started to break away into individual shadows with four legs, barbed tails, long fangs and red eyes.

"What are they?!" Hope asked Carina in panic mode. She took staggering steps backward, afraid she would be kicked by Carina, but not far enough from the female centaur, for the shadow to reach her.

"Demons," Carina answered her without averting her eyes from those wolves.

Those shadows slowly turned into wolves, with the size as a normal wolf, it was just that they had the barbed-like tails, which looked sharp enough to cut their skin.

There were around ten demon wolves there.

Hope's eyes widened in horror as one ran towards her direction with a vicious growl pulled from the creature's lips. action

"KACE!" unconsciously, Hope called Kace, in her desperate situation, it was only his name that flashed in her mind. She held her hand up in front of her, as if that action could actually shield her to safety and stop the demon wolf from attacking.

It bared its fangs, its red eyes glowing under the sunlight as the talons on its feet sank into the ground. Stalked towards Hope, hunting her like a prey, which was true.

However, before that demon wolf could lunge onto Hope, Carina moved fast as she pulled Hope away and used her hind legs to kick the demon.

The demon wolf flew a few meters above their head before its body slammed into a tree nearby. That demon wolf whimpered before it disappeared like a smoke.

One down and there were nine more that circled them. It was the infamous deadly circle that most predatory creatures did to their prey.

"Ah!" Hope let out a loud, ear-splitting scream as another demon lunged towards her, its fang reflecting the light from the morning sun and its talon was poised to tear her body apart.

Hope threw herself to the ground, flung her arms over her head in some form of protection as she heard Carina did the same thing to the second attacker.

"They are after you," Carina spoke after a brief analysis. Those red eyes locked onto Hope's, who was currently curling her body on the ground. They didn't even spare Carina a glance, as their focus was only on the girl.

Carina could break free from their siege if she wanted to, especially if her assumption was right that their target was Hope, not her.

However, if she left the girl behind without protection, she would be torn into pieces in no time. Carina didn't know why those demon wolves were after Hope. But, she couldn't leave her here, right?

Slowly, Hope opened her eyes when she heard Carina's voice and stood up immediately, skimming her surroundings with her wary eyes.

She would like to have something to protect herself, but she didn't have anything, moreover, how could she stand against these demon wolves? Even though she was given a knife or sword? Or, maybe a gun would do?

Unfortunately, Hope didn't have anything with her now, except the female centaur.

"What do you mean they are after me?! I don't even know them!" This was the first time for Hope to see those vicious creatures.

"No," Carina shook her head, trying to concentrate with those wolves' next move. "They are not supposed to be here too."

Those demon wolves wouldn't go astray to the centaurs' territory. However, these ten were actually here and put a threat to them.

Hope was not sure that she understood what Carina was saying as she was too worried with their own safety.

However, before there was another attack, there was a loud, vicious growl from behind those demon wolves, Hope recognized this howl as a smile graced her lips.

They are safe!

Hope turned her head towards the direction of that earth-shattering sound, just in time to see a demon wolf flew over her head and slammed into the other demon, only inches away from Carina's shoulder.

A white lycan ripped viciously into the demon, sending the black wisp-like smoke to every direction. The white beast was massive and even more terrifying than the last time Hope saw it.

When those demon wolves had disappeared, the beast let out a loud, vicious, snarl towards Carina, treating her as an enemy.

"No," Hope jumped in between the white beast, which was ready to lunge onto the female centaur, and then Carina, whose expression had turned unsightly. "No, you can't hurt her! She saved me!" She said hastily.

The white beast didn't listen to her as her body was shaking in absolute anger. Those red eyes glowed in fury as he continued to growl, demanding Hope to move away from Carina, so he could claw the centaur.

"Kace! She saved me!" Hope shouted at the beast in desperation. The enemy had gone, but with Kace acting like this, they were not safe yet, Carina was not safe yet.

"Kace..." Hope's voice softened and as their gazes locked, she slowly reached her hand out onto him, asking him to come to her. "Kace, I am fine."

Those red eyes were hard, furious as they flickered over every inch of Hope's feature, before he slowly lowered his head and took a step towards his mate.

Chapter 567 - A LIVING DESTRUCTION

A relieved smile was brought to Hope's lips when she watched the white lycan was approaching her slowly, though his red eyes still glanced at the female centaur behind Hope. But those eyes softened when they found his mate's obsidian black eyes.

The beast eased slowly towards Hope and nuzzled her palm when he got close enough, his large paws sinking heavily into the damp grass.

However, an arrow was shot at lightning speed toward the beast, he howled viciously when the arrow, tearing his fur and skin, was stabbed deeply on his front leg. His eyes once again ablaze in fury.

"No!" Hope screeched when the thick, red blood began to pool on the ground. Kace was hurt and he was bleeding again.

They were, once again, being circled. However, this time it was the centaurs that surrounded them with their bow and arrow, which were ready to shoot the beast.

"Carina, are you okay!?" One of the centaurs asked Carina, but his eyes were still on the beast, there was nothing that Hope could see from them, except hostility.

They were in another episode of misunderstanding the situation!

The sound that Carina made earlier must be the sign for the other centaur to come and help her. However, they were late as Kace had arrived before them and killed all the demon wolves.

Carina walked forward, ignoring the white beast that snarled at every centaur there. If it was not because of Hope, who was holding the beast's neck tightly, he would have lunged onto them and tore their flesh.

"Kace, don't..." Hope was struggling to make the beast stop his way from endangering their lives even further. action

If Kace kept being like this, those centaurs would think it was really him, who had threatened Carina and made the female centaur ask for help.

Fortunately, Carina stepped forward and stopped her fellow centaurs' aggressiveness. "It is not him." She used her body to shield the beast and Hope, bravely gave her back towards him, as if she didn't think that the beast could snap her neck into two in a blink of an eye.

Probably he would have done that if it wasn't because of Hope. The beast was still afraid to hurt his mate if he moved all of sudden, or let his mate be exposed to further danger with that many arrows being directed towards them.

"The threat was gone," Carina spoke again and stared at the centaurs with her hard gaze. "Put down your bow and arrow, you have shot the wrong creature."

Upon hearing that, Hope sighed in relief. This way there wouldn't be another bloody battle. She had had enough to see blood for these last two days.

"Put it down," Carina spoke again, this time more stern than before when she watched there was no one who averted their aim.

Reluctantly, they put down their bow beside their body and looked at the beast and Hope with puzzled looks.

"Why were you calling us?" a centaur with a yellow stripe on his hind legs stepped forward, his eyes still locked on the beast warily, just in case the beast is plotting?another idea to attack them all of a sudden.

"Demon wolves," Carina told them as she waved her hand to the tree nearby. On the surface of the three, there was a black char, which the demon wolf was slammed by the white beast before it disappeared into an unusual black smoke.

"Impossible, those demons are not supposed to be here," the centaur mumbled as he inspected the black charred on the three. "Wait, this is really the demons!" He confirmed it. "But, why are they here?"

The demon wolves' habitat was in a deserted place near the Uzu Mountain, which was very far from the centaur's territory; they rarely left that place.

Thus, it was beyond strange for the demon wolves to reach here.

"I don't know," Carina turned around to face the beast, who was still snarling. "We have to find out what happened. Tyrox, could you go to the village and tell Chiron about this?"

"Will do." the centaur, with yellow stripes on his hind legs, nodded his head and went to the direction of the village.

"Now," Carina put her focus on the white beast. "Can you ask him to shift back into his human form?" she talked to Hope. "I have to pull the arrow before I can heal him. I don't want to risk my life for being clawed as we--centaurs don't have a healing ability like the lycan does."

This was another piece of information for Hope. She just learned a new thing, that not all supernatural creatures had a remarkable healing ability.

"Kace..." Hope stroked his fur and grimaced when she watched the place where he was being shot. He couldn't heal if they didn't pull the arrow from his body. "Can you shift back please?"

As reply, Hope earned a menacing growl from Kace. It was enough to tell her that he wouldn't shift back. They were surrounded by many centaurs, which unfortunately, in the beast's eyes were a danger. There was no way he would put his guard down by shifting back, especially when he had his mate with him. His instinct wouldn't allow him to do that.

"Carina, can you ask the other centaurs to move away, please? I don't think Kace would want to shift back when we are being surrounded like this." As if Hope could read the beast's mind, she told Carina what exactly the beast wanted.

"No!"

"We will not leave Carina!"

There was a wave of protest from those centaurs.

"That beast will kill her!"

"Of course not!" Hope snapped at the centaur who spoke carelessly about Kace. "He saved us! You can ask Carina! Don't talk like that!"

"The beast saved you, he will not give a second thought on saving our kind! He is a living destruction!" The centaur's expression turned unsightly as he glowered at Hope and this only made the beast snarled back at him and showed his razor-sharp canines.

Once again, the situation became tense.

Chapter 568 - THERE IS NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT

"Enough!" Carina's voice rang through the clearing as she watched how this situation would unfold, once both parties were not willing to back down. "Step back!"

"Carina! You can't do that!" The centaur, who was standing next to her grabbed her upper arms and glowered. "Don't you remember what that beast had done to our kind?!"

The white lycan took a defensive stance as he tried to wriggle his neck from Hope's tight hug, if his mate kept doing this and the battle broke out, he wouldn't be able to move freely.

However, that was not the thing that Hope wanted. Whether the beast Kace could handle those centaurs--despite his injuries, or not, the aftermath of this battle wouldn't bring benefit to either the two of them.

"You don't need to remind me." Carina swatted the hand that grabbed her. "But, we oblige to our chief's rule and perspicacity, and that's what exactly I am doing now."

Chiron didn't wish to kill the lycan or his mate. Thus, despite her objection to such an idea, Carina would trust her chief's judgment regarding his decision.

Hope sighed in relief when she heard what Carina said. If she didn't step forward, the situation would turn really ugly.

"Step back Zerrn," Carina spoke solemnly, and didn't leave any room for further argumentation.

They were staring at each other's eyes for a while before the centaur named Zerrn nodded his head rigidly and raised his hand wordlessly, as a gesture for the other centaurs to follow him.

Their hooves stepped on the ground heavily as they turned around and left that place, leaving their female centaur near the beast that had ruined their kind centuries ago.

When there were only the three of them, Carina turned around and faced Hope once again. She still averted her eyes from the beast.

"Now, can you ask him to shift back?" Carina talked calmly, but the light in her eyes said more than what she showed.

Hope nodded and stroked the spot on the back of the beast's ears. "Kace..."

The beast's hard gaze softened when his mate touched him and those centaurs were nowhere to be seen, but he still, stubbornly, didn't listen to Hope.

"Kace, we need to treat your wound." Hope frowned when Kace didn't give the response that she wanted. "Your wound keeps bleeding."

His wound wouldn't heal if the arrow wasn't pulled.

Throwing a wary gaze at Hope and slightly snarling at Carina, the beast finally took a step back when it felt everything would be alright once he shifted back to his human form.

Hope watched how his bone cracked and his fur dispersed until it only left Kace's human form with an arrow stabbed on his upper arms. It looked painful to see.

Hope wanted to go to him and hug him, but she was afraid she would hurt him. "Kace, let Carina treat you, your wound..."

However, before Hope could finish her sentence, Kace had grabbed the body of the arrow and pulled it out viciously. He only slightly knitted his brows when he did that, without showing any other sign that he was in pain.

"Let's go." Kace threw the arrow away and let the blood drip from his wound as he grabbed Hope's hand to take her away from there.

"Kace, but your wound needs to be treated." Hope complained.

"Just give it some time, it will heal," Kace spoke in a flat tone, he didn't even stop to look at Carina.

"Carina, I am sorry," Hope couldn't stop Kace from dragging her away, thus she only could look at the female centaur apologetically.

Carina didn't move, her expression didn't even change when she watched how Kace walked away. She didn't reply to Hope's apology and just turned around to go in a different direction.

"Stop," Hope pulled her hand from Kace's tight grip, not tight enough to hurt her, but it was still impossible for Hope to free herself. "Stop!" Hope almost screamed when Kace didn't even listen to her.

They were walking back to The Loris' house, Hope assumed since she really couldn't remember the way back home, the trees around them looked similar, yet with Kace's remarkable sense there was nothing to be worried about.

"Kace we need to talk! You cannot treat me like a kid forever!" Hope let out a frustrated groan when Kace didn't even budge, that man walked straight like a soldier being called for duty.

In the end, Hope grabbed Kace's shirt and bit his hand as hard as she could. Really, Kace's hand was the hardest meat that Hope ever bit, she felt her tooth fall off upon trying it.

Fortunately, that method worked for the lycan as he stopped walking and glanced down at the top of Hope's head, her black long hair covered her face.

"I stop walking, you can stop biting me." Kace said impassively, but there was a flicker of amusement that crossed his ocean blue eyes. "What do you want to talk about?" He asked when Hope stopped biting him, touching her teeth as if she was afraid she would lose them.

Hope didn't miss the chance to glare at him first before she vented out her frustration. "Why did you treat Carina like that? She just wanted to help you!"

"I don't need her help." Kace showed his left arm, which had stopped bleeding. It seemed he, indeed, didn't need Carina's magic to heal him.

But, still...

"You can talk to her or at least you can treat her better than just walked away without saying anything." Hope complained, she felt bad for Carina, when all the female centaur did was to help them.

"There is nothing that we need to talk about." Kace crossed his arms in a defensive stance. The gesture that could be interpreted as someone who didn't wish to talk about what they really felt. action

Hope narrowed her eyes, "Kace, do you know? When you shut people out, you will just lock yourself in a box that makes you feel a lot worse."

Chapter 569 - HIS HOPE

"You don't know what you are talking about." Kace was still in his defensive stance as his eyes locked on Hope's. He grinded his teeth to hide the thing that he really wanted to say.

"I will never know if you don't want to try to talk to me about that." Hope raised her hands, and cupped his face with her small hands, forcing him to slightly bend his tall body towards her, so she could stare right into his eyes. "I saw you crying."

"I never cry." Kace's gaze became hard when he heard that, though he furrowed his brows, he didn't remember that he had ever cried in front of her, not even once.

"When you were unconscious, I had this dream," Hope said with serious expression.

"So, you saw me cry in your sleep?" Kace's mood somewhat lightened a little bit, as he chuckled upon hearing what Hope was saying. "That was just a dream."

"Yes, just like the dream when I saw your beast disappear, and turned into fireflies.??? Hope's expression still didn't change, but Kace did. "I don't think that dreams are just ordinary dreams. I think there must be a meaning behind it. After all, just like what you said, we are mate. Our souls are bound." at least the last part was what Rossie told her about these mate things, but it didn't mean that there was nothing serious about it, right?

When Hope said about his beast turned into fireflies, he also remembered the last thing that the candlemaiden showed him about his beast was looking for help from his mate. All this time, Kace brushed off that fact, and only thought it was only his dream or something similar.

Kace had never thought that Hope also saw the same thing. Did that mean they met each other around that time? Their souls? It sounded ridiculous, yet there was a small part of his heart, which believed it.

"I think those dreams meant something." Hope continued. "Did you forget? You lost yourself to your beast when we were on the ship."

Of course, Kace remembered that. When that happened he felt like he had turned into another personality. It felt like there was someone invading him, though that 'someone' was also part of himself.

The feeling of his beast that sipped through his being. His beast was like the form of his resentment to himself. The part of him that Kace hated the most.

He detested and loathed his beast, that's why he scorned himself and shunned other people away from him because he didn't want them to see this part of him.

But, when he met with the centaurs, they were the form of one of the greatest sins he had ever committed.

It was his shame that made him treat them like that.

If Hope asked what Carina had done to make Kace treat her like that, then there was nothing wrong with Carina or the centaurs, it was him.

"I am sorry if I offended you when that happened," Kace spoke rigidly while avoiding Hope's eyes.

Hope released his face and hugged him tightly instead, "There is nothing you can do with your past and you have hurt yourself enough."

No.

It would never be enough.

Those sins that Kace had committed.

Those tears, blood and angry roar laced with pain and agony from those creatures that lost their mate.

The sound of their voices and the curses that he heard, would hunt Kace for his entire eternity.

However, Kace didn't say anything about his thoughts as he buried his face on the curve of her shoulder and breathed in his mate scent. The only thing that could calm him...

The only thing which could give him temporary peace that he needed.

His Hope...

His only hope.

The afternoon sun shone above them and made everything crystal clear in Kace's eyes, especially the girl in his arm.

But, he smelled her scent even before Hope gave the reaction. His mate wriggled her body as she spoke her name.

"Lana..." Hope blushed because Lana had been watching her hugging Kace for--she didn't know how long Lana had been staring at them. "You are awake," she said with a happy voice, but she looked at her bashfully as she walked towards Lana with open arms.

"Am I interrupting something?" Lana wanted to make her voice sound nonchalant, yet her eyes said differently, especially about what she actually felt inside. action

She shouldn't have been there, stayed and watched them. But for some reason, Lana couldn't move her legs and saved herself from the heartache that was caused by the scene.

"Of course not," Hope hugged her tightly. "I am happy you are awake!" Hope said cheerfully, missing the expression that Lana made.

"I am happy too." Lana reciprocated the hug casually. "Is everything okay here?"

"Yes," Kace walked towards Hope and caressed her head lovingly. "Let's go back."

The lycan did that intentionally, this made Lana have to lower her head to hide her eyes and face. Actually, Kace knew Lana was around even before Hope realized her, but he let her watch it.

Kace didn't want to make a small gesture that could be interpreted wrongly by the young female wolf.

Lana had known from a long time ago that her feelings wouldn't bring anything to her and that she had to stop it right away. Kace had so much trouble already and he didn't need more things to deal with.

"Okay," Hope was being whisked away by Kace as he held her waist while they were walking back.

"Mr. Lori asked if you'd like to attend the funeral at the village." Lana walked behind them, but she locked her eyes at the trees on her left side. "The centaur asked him to ask you about this."

Hope raised her head and looked at Kace. "Me, Lana, Ian and Ethan can go to the village to ask to meet with the priestess. Maybe she knows where Lidya is. You can stay." She knew it would be hard for Kace to attend the funeral.

However, Kace had changed his mind. "We'll go there together."

Chapter 570 - SIMILAR SCENE

"Kace, are you sure you want to go to the funeral?" Hope asked as she stared at the sky.

The sun was almost set, probably within thirty minutes it would lose its light. For now, the four of them were walking towards the village with Chiron walking a few meter ahead, behind them was Mr. and Mrs. Lori together with little Bree in their arms.

Hope glanced a few times towards that family of three, the distance that they put between them, showed very clearly that they were afraid of them. Mrs. Lori never let Bree roam around inside the house when Kace was there.

Hope became curious with their behaviors since they were fine with Lana and the twins, but how could they act very strangely and differently when Kace was around.

Later Hope knew that they didn't like the lycan because of the rumor about them--about how vicious their beast could be.

Well, Hope couldn't blame it, compared to werewolves, Lycan was a more complicated creature as they held more power among the shapeshifters.

Apparently, in that realm, lycans were famous with their brutality. Plus, with the story about how the lycans eliminated many creatures and shapeshifters. Just like those centaurs, who were forced to leave their original realm--their home, to escape from the lycans' atrocity, which in this case was the Donovans.

"Sure," Kace answered casually, his expression didn't show any emotion, but he had been keeping Hope close to him and didn't let her go since they left the house.

There was something different with the way Kace held his mate. Hope felt as if she was walking with a nervous young boy who would enter an audition.

"You know, you don't have..." Hope wanted to say that he didn't need to attend the funeral. After all, those people were the hunters that Kace killed that night. She was also worried about the people in the village.

They wouldn't be so understanding to accept the killer of their family members, right? Above all that, why did Chiron give them such an offer?

"I will go back to that house if you go too." Kace didn't give any room for negotiation. His intention was clear, wherever Hope would go, he would follow. No questions asked.

"We need to see the priestess to heal your wound and to ask if she knows or has any idea where Lidya is." They had been talking about this over and over again.

"To heal my wound, you will need me, right? So, I will go," Kace said casually.

After saying that, they walked in silence.

When they walked closer to the village, they could see many white flags ruffled by the evening breezes and people from the village were also wearing the same color.

Apparently, white was the color mourning in this village.

Good thing Chiron gave them this white cloak since they didn't have white clothes neither could they provide it for themselves at this moment.

At the village's gate, Hope could see Carina, Tyrox, Zarrn, and along with them a crowd of centaurs-- which seemed like the whole pack of centaurs. She remembered their name, since it was only Tyrox and Zarrn's name that Carina had mentioned when they were in the forest.

Wordlessly, all of them, together with the horde of the centaurs walked inside the village.

There were around fifty to seventy centaurs, who walked beside Kace and Hope. This scene was truly fascinating and stunning, not even for Hope, but apparently those villagers also stopped whatever they were doing to take a second glance towards the entourage.

This village was surrounded by a huge wall with two entrance gates, inhabited by about a thousand people and shapeshifters or any other supernatural creatures that managed to be saved and brought there, living in one big community.

They walked a long road towards the village square where the funeral would be held, where the dead bodies of the hunters would be burned into ashes.

Hope glanced at Kace and she found there was a sign of discomfort in his blue ocean eyes, as if every step that he took, needed a big effort from him to keep going.

Hope squeezed his hands, to remind him that he was not alone, and that it was okay to feel whatever he felt now.

Kace glanced at his mate and found her beautiful smile that brought a warm sipped to his cold heart. He squeezed her hand too, as if saying he understood.

They walked this long road wordlessly, under the eyes of the curious villagers. It seemed this was their first time to see a horde of the centaurs entering their village, since they had never left their territory before.

"Chiron," Leroy, who led the procession of this ceremony, approached the chief of centaurs and crossed his hand in front of his chest while bending his body slightly as a form of formal greeting between them.

"Leroy, my friends. My condolences for your loss." Chiron also did the same gesture while saying in his shooting voice.

Leroy stared at Kace, but his impassive expression didn't give anything for the hunter to see his feelings right now.

Not only Leroy, but the other hunters behind him were looking towards Kace in disdain, hostility and hatred. They knew that Kace had killed their fellow hunters. While talking among themselves, they had this questioning look, wondering why Leroy would let the murderer here.

This was all Chiron's will, he asked Leroy to let them in and watched this whole procession.

After that small talk, all the centaurs blended with the hunters.

At this village square, there was a big podium made of white stone, where the dead bodies were laid on.

Kace stood beside Chiron while Hope was at his other side and then Lana and the twins. Opposite from them, they could see all the families of the dead hunters were crying their heart out.

Since they were right in front of them, of course, Kace could see and hear them clearly. It reminded him of something from his past.

"Don't you feel this scene is similar?" Chiron asked Kace.