

Chapter 116

Chapter 116

Merikh

"Shit, Merikh." Hayes exhales, dragging his hands through his hair.

He turns to face me, his eyes tired and his shoulders slumped. I have asked too much of my brother, constantly leaving him at the helm of things without a thought of what weight I am laying on his shoulders.

"This will all end soon," I assure him, picking at the remnants of the plate we brought with us from the kitchen.

"You mean if it all goes according to your insane plan?"

A chuckle rumbles from my lips as I walk over and take a seat on the office couch, watching him process everything I have laid at his feet. I don't need his approval or his understanding, but I respect him and his opinions on all things. Well, maybe more now than I did before Colette helped shape me into a better version of me.

"What about any of this isn't already insane?" I say and he snorts a half laugh before walking over to me and dropping onto the couch on the other end of me.

"So, you think this will work?" He asks after a minute. "I mean, what does Giselle actually want? First she votes Hybrid's can't be around, then she tries to kill Colette, then she kidnaps her and wants her to join her and now she is leading a war to what? Kill us all. To what end?"

I shrug, not sure how to answer him. This is something I have done nothing but think about since everything has happened. None of it makes sense unless I just go back to the nature of a Phoenix. A creature of chaos, is what Caspian said. Perhaps breeding it gives them life?

"I don't think she knows what she even wants, other than just straight mayhem." I say truthfully.

"How do you know if she will spontaneously combust? Find it in some lost magical book? Educated guess? Talk to someone wise and really old?" Hayes chuckles at the words 'spontaneously combust,' shaking his head. It sounds just as insane to his ears as it does to everyone else's. "Educated guess," I mutter, my body feeling heavy and eyes itchy.

Exhaustion has been chasing me since Lauren's little nick to my neck. It feels as if no amount of sleep truly lets me wake rested, but then again, maybe now that the worst has passed, I will be able to catch some sleep.

"Oh great," Hayes says sarcastically. "A surefire way to win any war is to make educated guesses on how to kill the enemy. Where could this possibly go wrong?"

"Sometimes the best plan is a crazy one." I say, hiding a smirk.

"You, my dear brother," he sighs heavily as he stands and walks over to me, reaching out to help me up. "Have always been the better one with crazy ideas. I have always been the one a little more grounded. It's why our dynamic works so well."

"This will work, Hayes." I try to assure him, but I can see his hesitation.

The flicker of fear and twinge of tiredness behind his genuine smile. My brother has every right to be scared and worried. We all do. War isn't a game, it's a tragedy, one that in this case has become necessary.

"I believe you will find a way to make it all work out," He says with a smile. "Now, let's go find your Luna and get you to bed."

A flicker of panic runs through me, and I clear my throat, shaking my head of sleepiness. The last time I fell asleep, I woke up to absolute chaos. Flames around us, the vehicle in shambles and people missing. What happens if the war breaks out and they yet again can't wake me up? "Yes," I say, giving him a tight-lipped smile. "Let's find Colette."

The moment we step into the lightly light hallway I hear frantic voices of people downstairs. Hayes and I rush forward, not running but moving with purpose as we make our presence known and come closer. The moment I round the corner, I stop in my tracks and grin on my face.

"Alpha Merikh is in a meeting with Beta Hayes." Leandra insists the tall, graying man groans in annoyance.

"Damn it, lycan. I am the King of the damn Sirens!" He roars. "First, you won't tell me where my mate is and now you are telling me my daughter's mate is unavailable to me? What can you help me with?"

"Sir, I mean...your majesty?" Leandra fumbles, trying to address him before she heaves out a heavy sigh. "Look, I don't know what they are discussing, but it is important for our kind that things be discussed leading up to this inevitable fight. I am sorry your mate is missing-"

Her face falls and her eyes grow wide as she looks up at him.

"Y-y-you're Luna Colette's dad." She swallows roughly, closing her eyes as she squeezes them tight.

"Yes, he is." I say, moving from the door frame and walking in. Caspian spins to look at me, and the shock of his appearance hits me in the face. Dried blood is caked to the side of his face, a large gash at his hairline and a burn from the tip of his chin down the front of his neck looks angry and painful. I move to the chairs, pulling one out and motioning for him to sit.

"What the hell happened?" Hayes asks. It is obvious he had the same treatment we did entering the pack, but I want to know his story, who or what he dealt with and how long ago it happened.

"And why the fuck weren't we notified that someone entered the pack grounds?" I roar, looking over at Leandra, who still stands with her eyes shut, her hand on her chest as she heaves for air, slipping down to her knees. Hayes is next to her in a second, his hands on her shoulders, stroking her.

"Lea, what's wrong?" He whispers, trying to tilt her chin to look up at him. He touches her skin and yanks it back. His body grows rigid, and he looks up at me with sheer panic on his now pale face.

"What?" I ask, reaching out to touch her forehead. I feel nothing as I frown and look at Hayes, confused.

"I can feel her struggling..." He

whispers, his eyes meeting mine, a

flicker of red leaching into his

usually gray eyes. He shakes his

head, slamming his palm to his eye

sockets as he groans and falls

backward onto his ass.

"Hayes!" I say, rushing to him, gripping his head between my hands and forcing him to look up at me.

"What the fuck is happening?" Caspian asks behind me, but I don't even know how to explain what the hell is going on. How the hell can I, when I don't even know?

-Fae King Elm is here to see you, Alpha Merikh-A warrior says through the mind link.

"Elm is here," I tell Caspian as he reaches down and grabs Leandra.

"Good, maybe he can sort this fucking mess." He mutters. "Let's move them to a couch or something."

I lift Hayes with a grunt and carrying him to the living room down the hall, bypassing Caspian, who waits for em to show him where to go. We lay them down on opposite couches, Hayes groaning and trying to get up.

"Lay the hell back down." I order him and he glares at me as he does so.

"There is something in her head, something breeding bad thoughts-" He groans, his eyes squinting as if his head feels like it will explode. "It's not her..."

"Is it possible they didn't get Lily out of her head all the way?" I ask Caspian, who plops into a chair to the side, looking defeated.

"Who knows anymore?" he grumbles. "Our best bet is waiting to see what Elm says when he arrives. It is very clearly Lily's doing or her hold...the eyes are too familiar for it not to be."

-We found her and Johannes-Colette says through the mind link.

-Good. Now get back here, Caspian is injured and something is wrong with Hayes and Leandra-I tell her, not bothering to hide my distress about it

all.

"Colette and Melody are on their way back. We have a location on Giselle." I sigh, moving over to Leandra, who cries uncontrollably.

There is a knock on the door, and I jump up, running to open it. Elm stands there looking fierce in all brown leather, a stern look on his face that seems to hide a sadness in him.

"I need your help." I tell him and he frowns, but nods.

Elm follows me to the living room, and he sighs, his eyes full of knowing as he nods.

"I should have warned you earlier,

but I trusted no one to inform you

but myself" He pinches the bridge of

his nose. "Lily was stripped of her title, which weakened her abilities, but she had grown too strong. I have been hunting for her."

"Hunting her?" Caspian asks, almost like he is disgusted by the term.

"When you make yourself an enemy, you become my prey, Caspian." He frowns. "Lily has been found and is being tortured as we speak."

I furrow my brows in thought.

"Then what is happening to them?" I ask. "Hayes was never under her control."

"Dark magic is unpredictable and

they share a mind link. When they accepted the bond, my best guess is

Hayes also accepted the part of her that Lily invaded...She is desperately trying to cling to any and every hold she has in order to save herself."

I scoff and pace away before spinning to look at him.

"Then kill the bitch already!" I roar.

"We need information from her "

"We need nothing but her hold gone from everyone she has fucking ruined."

Hayes writhes in pain as he falls off the couch, crawling over to Leandra, reaching for her hand.

"If you won't do it, I will." I growl, standing in front of him, no longer asking but demanding. "End this. End her."

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Caspian enters the kitchen looking a little better than he had when he arrived. He rummages in the fridge looking for anything he can find to eat as I sit with a cup of warm tea, waiting for Colette to get back.

"How are Hayes and his mate?" He asks as he closes the fridge door.

I shrug. "As good as can be, I suppose we are lucky that Colette and I arrived when we did."

"Did you have as warm of a welcome as I did?" He asks, walking over with a pint of ice cream and a spoon. I arch a brow, watching him with curiosity. "Ice cream?" I ask him skeptically and he just stares at me as he opens it and spoons a bite in.

"There are many things I love about being up here. This is one of those things." He explains as the front door opens. I stand up, waiting anxiously for Colette to walk through, even though I know with every fiber that it is for sure her. But that doesn't matter. There is nothing better than physically being able to have eyes on her.

"We came as fast as we could." She says, a soft exhale when she meets my gaze, her body relaxing as she moves to me as I lift my arms. She melts into me, her embrace feeling like home as I fill my lungs with her scent.

"Are you okay?" Melody asks Caspian as she moves past me.

My lips find the top of Colette's head before I look up to watch Caspian look up from his ice cream with a look of surprise on his face, spoon in his mouth.

"Me?" He asks, removing it and swallowing roughly.

"Yes,"

"Uh, I'm okay. Nothing I couldn't handle." He says, sounding like he is trying to boast. I shoot him an amused look, and he clears his throat. "Elm is here, Colette."

She breaks our embrace too soon, as I slip my arm around her back, seeking her touch at every turn.

"Is he still here? What did he say" She asks, looking around for him.

"He will be back." Caspian says. "Right now, he is with Hayes and Leandra, trying to help them."

"What is wrong with Hayes and Leandra?" Colette breaks in, her eyes wide with concern.

I exhale, shooting a look at Caspian. [Search the website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"To make a long story short, Elm has captured Lily and they are apparently torturing her. Lily still has a fragment of a hold on Leandra and through the mate bond that extends to Hayes as well. She is struggling to hold it together." I explain.

Colette's face grows pale and I can feel her worry through the bond as it grows.

"What about Percy?" She whispers, as if it is a thought for herself she didn't realize she spoke aloud.

"The healers would have told us if something was wrong with him." I reassure her, though it would be a lie if I said it didn't unsettle me to think he was struggling, like Hayes and Leandra.

"So, what do we do now?" Colette sighs heavily. "We know where Giselle is, and now we know where Lily is and heavens willing, she will soon be dead."

"You need to make the first move," Elm says, entering the kitchen with a grim look on his face as he meets Colette's eyes.

"We have the element of surprise right now." I remind him. "With you having Lily under lock and key-"

"Lily's abilities far surpass the power of a dungeon or pain." Elm scoffs. "She still has control over the wolves in the area. I do not mean to be rude, but wolves are much easier for her to control and since she has had them under her spell for so long, it is easier for them to give in rather than fight her presence."

"Hence me saying she needs to be dead, Elm." I grit out, striding toward him with a glare. Elms scowls at me as he crosses his arms over his chest as if challenging me..

"It's not as simple as slitting her throat." He shoots back at me, his eyes filled with annoyance. "There is a process when it comes to magic." "You all were so fucking opposed to a hybrid existing and yet you can maintain this level of magic and power with no one checking in on your kind?" "Our kind has never been one with temperament issues or need for control." He hisses at me.

I roll my eyes, done with the excuses and the blame. This whole fucking war started because of Colette's existence, or so everyone keeps saying, but the truth is his own queen is the one who began all of this, not mine.

"Says the Fae King with the traitorous-" Colette steps between us, stepping me back away from Elm as she turns and looks between us, frustration growing.

"Enough." she says with a firm tone. "What matters is defeating Giselle and restoring everyone who needs it from Lily."

"The moment Lily is gone, Giselle will panic." Caspian says. "The hold on those under her spell will release, and she will lose the majority of her forces."

My lips press together as I think and look around the room.

"Let Lily go, have Ezra follow her." I say after a moment of silence.

No one says anything, but their eyes skirting around to each other clues me into their thoughts. They all think I am crazy, but what we need right

will look for Lily eventually,

now is time to recuperate cont

especially as we get closer to the big fight that is inevitable. If releasing Lily can buy us just a few hours, then we need to take what we can get.

"Why?" Elm asks, but he seems less hostile, more receptive.

"To buy time." Colette murmurs, "So we can maintain our element of surprise and then, when we are ready, launch our own attack?" "Aren't we better off with her coming to us?" Melody asks. "Isn't the whole plan to make her go berserk and panic until she explodes?" "What better way than to surprise her where she is?" I tell her.

"And why do we need Ezra to follow her?" Elm asks, arching a brow in interest.

"I want eyes on the enemy." I say with a scoff, "There is no way in hell I would let her go and just allow her to be free. When the moment comes that, we need her dead so we can win, Ezra will be the one to execute it."

"I will be the one who ends her." Elm argues. I see a flicker of panic and anger on his face. "She's my queen, my problem."

"I thought she was your ex-queen?" I say, and he rolls his eyes, scoffing.

"I do not have the time or energy for your games and hidden meanings, Alpha Merikh. You think I will allow her to live or that I am not trustworthy, correct?" He asks, and I shrug.

I mean, Elm isn't wrong. Trust is something that is fostered and earned, and though he has done good things and my mate trusts him, I am not sure I feel the same way.

"Maybe."

"Well, I don't trust Ezra," Elm says with a frown. "Think about it. He is everywhere all the time. In everything and he has carried all the plans out with his messages he has delivered, he is the bridge between all of this."

"Ezra has been a friend to me, someone I trust and respect." I shoot at him.

"So then you see my point? He befriended an outsider of the council. Someone deemed the enemy he took as a friend. Perhaps he feels the same way about Giselle or even my Lily?" Elm says.

"Merikh," Colette says my name softly, walking to me and taking my hand in hers. "I don't know that I fully trust Ezra, either."

I see the turmoil on her face, that she wants to trust him, but she just can't.

"Then who the hell do you think we send to follow her?" I scoff. "Or do you think we should just let her panic and charge on her tonight?"

She looks away and clears her throat before looking back.

"I think we take three hours to rest, and then we surprise her. Elm will head back to where they are holding Lily and he will finish her. It is his right, it is his duty to all of us and his people." I huff in anger, though I see the wisdom in her plan. "As hard as it was for you to do it with Lauren, you needed that closure."

"Fuck." I groan, my eyes itching with exhaustion. Her hand glides up my cheek and took into her tender eyes, reassuring me that this is the right way. And for yet another time, I defer to my wise and strong Luna to lead us while I struggle with my recovery.

"We got this, Merikh." She whispers. "You don't have to trust them. Trust me, only me."

"I do, always." I reach up and cover her hand with mine, removing it to kiss the inside of her palm. Then I turn to the others and drag my free hand through my hair.

"Elm, you do what you must with Lily to make sure she is incapacitated. The rest of you all, in three hours, we will go hunting for a rare bird. What you do with that time is up to you. I plan to spend it with my mate."

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Chapter 118

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Colette

I lean back against Merikh's warm bare chest, the water from the tub tinkling with the soft movement as he wraps his arms around me. My stomach flutters at his hold, his hand splaying across my water covered stomach, a soft stroking of his thumb right below my belly button. I close my eyes, relishing the way the bond seems to electrify my entire body.

"How are you feeling?" I murmur, my voice groggy as my head falls to his shoulder and I tilt my chin up toward him.

Merikh leans to the side slightly, looking down at me, his eyes scanning my face with a ghost of a smile. Then he leans down, and presses a tender kiss on the tip of my nose before he presses his cheek to mine and releases a heavy sigh.

"I am tired," He admits, though the throbbing part of him at my back says the exhaustion hasn't completely shut off all parts of his brain. Then again, perhaps that is less of a brain response and more of a physical one.

"Mmm, understandable." I say, sighing contentedly. "Once the water grows cold, we can get some sleep."

"Hmm," his chest rumbles and I grin to myself, knowing exactly where his mind is going. Sleep sounds glorious. It always does when I am in his arms, but the thought of him slipping in and exhausting ourselves a little more is always one that's alluring.

"Hmm, What?" I tease, biting my lip as my cheeks grow heated.

"Sleep." he whispers. "Is that all you are thinking about, my little luna?"

"There is a lot on my mind." I say, wrapping my hand over his wrist as my left arm snakes up behind me and around the back of his neck.

My fingers slip down his smooth skin, entwining with his, as I creep his palm down my belly, lower and lower. Until I stop and allow his movements to take over. Merikh slips his hand right where I crave it, my breath hitching as he growls in my ear, nibbling on my sensitive lobe.

I nearly jump out of my skin when his thumb strokes me, a gasp tearing from my lips as I writhe into him, my buttocks, bucking back into him as he chuckles and lowers his head to my neck, his lips sucking and teeth teasing as he slips a finger in and I grip his neck harder, a moan on my lips as I whisper his name.

"I've barely touched you, my love," He murmurs, amused. I let out a raspy chuckle and wiggle against him, making him groan once more as he deliciously assaults me below.

"It never takes much with you," I breathe and he hums in delight.

I can feel the cusp of my enjoyment rising. Every stroke, ever deep plunge with exploring fingers driving me toward that edge. Instead of allowing it to come, I tear away from him, whipping around water splashing all over the floor as I hammer my lips into his. His needy fingers don't miss a beat as they move to my ass, gripping me tightly and pulling me flush to him as I slip my tongue between his plush lips.

I slide my wet body up his, landing him at my entrance, but the tub is too small for me to straddle his massive frame and I frown up at him. Merikh shakes his head with a sexy grin, creating the most glorious dimples on his cheeks. Then he lifts me, spinning as he places me where he had been resting before he raises me up and places me on the edge.

I rest my back on the marble wall behind me, as he rises to his knees and, with a single finger, he presses my knees apart, revealing me to him. I shudder in embarrassment and anticipation. A flush on my cheeks burning hot as I try to look away.

"Eyes on me, Colette." He insists in a gravelly voice. "I want to see what this does to you."

I snap my brown eyes to meet his emerald orbs, nothing but sheer need and adoration in those green eyes for me. Then, without breaking our gaze, he lowers down into the water and places his head between my legs.

"O-oh...oh f-f-fuck" My voice quivers as he works magic and my head falls back, my hips tilting forward, needing more searching for the warmth of him desperately. He chuckles against my flesh and it nearly sends me into a spiral of ecstasy before he slows down and I look down to catch him watching me.

"You like this?" He asks, pulling away before biting the inside of my thigh as he presses his fingers into me.

"Hell yes." I gasp, "Yes.... please don't stop,"

I am a begging puddle of water in need of more of him, all of him, and he knows it. His fingers disappear and his hands glide up my outer thighs, gripping me tight as he yanks me into his face, a ravenous sound coming from between my legs as they shudder.

My hand reaches for his beautiful head of hair, twisting into his brown locks, holding him in place. Then he stops, tearing away, wiping his face as he tugs me down from the ledge, leaving me blinking and distraught. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"What happened? Did I do something wrong?" I ask, reaching for his face, searching him for anything, then he grins mischievously.

"I want you to ask me if you can come." He whispers, and I scoff. Recalling the way I made him beg me for it when I was punishing him.

"And what did I do to deserve such punishment?" I ask him and he lets out a laugh.

"I am not punishing you, my love. But I am asking that we can redo our mating. We finish together at once and we remark each other." He says.

I knit my brows together, reaching out and stroking his cheek, my heart filling with unbridled love. Our initial mating, though satisfying, was less than what it should have been. We have come so far from then, grown so much as a pair, as an alpha and a luna.

"Why?" I ask him, needing to know his answer.

"Because I love you." He shrugs,

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rising from the tub with me in his arms. He sets me down, grabbing a towel and wrapping it around me before he turns and looks me in the eye. "trust you, and in the off chance that something happens when shit goes down, I want to feel your fresh mark, not Lauren's bite, on my neck."

"Say no more." I whisper, taking his hand and pulling him to me.

My hands fly up over his neck as I pull him down and close the gap between our lips. I consume the words he spoke, hungrily devouring every breath he gives me as I slip my tongue into his mouth.

He growls, the towel he has just placed on me slipping away as he lifts me up and walks me to the bathroom counter, pressing my ass onto the cold granite.

My legs wrap around his waist as he lines up, and then he presses my shoulder back as I lean into the wall mirror behind me. He eyes up my bare breasts, his tongue flicking out to lick his lips like a beast's eyes up its. Then he grips my hips and thrusts into me with a roaring grunt.

"Fuck!" I cry out, the pleasure and surprise of him filling me suddenly overwhelming as I gasp and my hands fly out to hold me up.

"Look at me," He says, driving into me again, his hand slipping between us as he strokes me and gently rolls his hips, grinding up and into me. "I am yours."

I tilt my head, a small smile on my lips before he hits a glorious spot and my face contorts in ecstasy.

"You are mine." I whisper, my eyes closed.

He lifts me, holding me close to his

chest as I bounce gently while he moans and carries us to the bed. He crawls onto the bed, his back hitting the comforter as he holds me on top of him I sit up, straddling him and I drop onto him, rolling my hips. My hands slip up to my wet hair as I twist it up and hold it above my head.

"Let me know when you are close so I can mark you," I whisper to him. His hands explore my body, the zip of the mate bond flying through my

nerves.

"You are in charge, my queen." He says, his eyes full of passionate blaze when he gasps and strokes my center as I ride him. "Make me when you please."

The second the rods leave his mouth, I lean forward, my teeth sinking into his neck as he returns the favor. Our bodies convulse his arms, pulling me impossibly close as we both shudder and moan. As I pull away, I feel lightheaded, a darkness dotting my eyes as I slump to the side.

"Shit, Colette," Merikh mutters, yanking me to his chest as my breathing grows ragged and I try to look at him. "What the fuck is happening?" "I don't feel very well," I tell him, my hands growing cold, and my heartbeat slowing down.

As quickly as the wave came on, it disappeared. My heart beat kicking up and my body growing hot once again. I shake my head, sitting up straight and heaving for air. Merikh watches me with unfiltered worry.

"What is it?" He asks, and I touch my forehead.

"I don't know, but it's gone now," I mutter. "I feel better."

"I do too..." Merikh says, his brows pulled together as he touches his neck. "I mean, I feel better than I have since Lauren bit me."

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Merikh's thumb rubs up and down my hand as he holds it tight. The air is thick with tension, as if nature knows what to expect. There has not been a single tweet or chittering of forest animals since we set foot here. All life has run from their homes in their desperate bid for survival. And yet here we are, readily marching into what they run from.

"Are you both sure about this?" Hayes asks, walking up behind us with a grim look on his face. "Really, truly sure this is the best course of action?" "Best course of action? No. Only course of action? Yes." Merikh says with a solemn look. "There is no surviving a war against the dragons. We may be able to hold out for a time, but in the end, we will end in ash, like all their foes before them. Giselle needs to die. Today. Or we will all die tomorrow."

My skin prickles at his words. There is no room for failure here, even with what feels like a crackpot plan. Hayes rubs his temple and closes his eyes, breathing heavily before he meets his older brother's gaze.

"Let me go instead." He says, his words soft and pleading. "They need you more than they need me. And if this plan fails...it is you. They would follow into the fire, not me."

I step closer to him, touching his hand gently as he turns his sorrowful face toward me.

"I promise to put out any fires I can and keep our Alpha alive." I give him an encouraging squeeze on his hand.

"He is not the only one I worry about, Luna." He frowns.

"Be ready for when we reach out in the mind link. When we are ready, that is when we will call for everyone to attack. Can you keep the mate bond block up long enough to block out Leandra's pain?"

He nods and takes his hand back, shoving it in his pocket.

"Yes, Luna." Then Hayes takes a step back, giving us a nod. "Be safe brother, you are the only family I have left."

We watch as he leaves, and I glance at the clock anxiously waiting for my parents to arrive, along with Ezra. The moon is high, a sign the heavens are with us, both as a siren and a werewolf. The water in my veins is stronger, more rampant than what it would be during the day. "Colette," I hear my mother say, rushing toward me. She takes my hands, tugging me into a hug. "Promise me you will be safe." "Of course I will be. Truth be told, I am more concerned about you," I tell her and she sighs, a smirk on her lips.

"I am the daughter of an Alpha, mother of the only hybrid in the world. There is no need to worry about me. I want revenge just as much as you do, sweetheart." She tells me. [SEARCH the website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"So you two will sneak up on her from the west. We will hit the east. Ezra has claimed the south and Johannes is already there." Caspian says, moving toward us out of the dark. "What is it you want us to do when we get there? Shall we taunt her with insults?"

I can hear the doubt in his voice, the way he thinks this plan is bullshit. But it is the only way to end it all here and now. I sigh and shake my head, having no time to try to explain it all over again to him.

"All we can do is hope that Lily's death affects her." I tell him.

"Hayes is standing by and ready to draw forces away when we need it." Merikh reminds him. "If it comes down to it, we will fight and take out as many as we can before we get to her."

"And what about the dragon king?" Caspian reminds us.

"I can only hope his son has kept him home and safe." I admit, biting my lip. "We don't have time to sit and wait anymore."

"Colette," Caspian frowns and I shake my head.

"Dad," I say firmly, "This is it. We have to do this. Now is the only time."

He reluctantly nods before he clears his throat and moves over next to my mom. I don't miss the way his arm hangs at his side and her fingers seem to reach out to find his, even if it is for a mere moment.

"Please be safe, daughter." He says softly as my mother throws her arms around me before she breaks away too soon.

"As safe as any war allows," I nod, before turning, grabbing Merikh's hand and sprinting into the trees.

He keeps up with ease, releasing my hand as we run side by side, ducking and weaving when and where needed. My wolf trembles in excitement and my siren side. It feels feral, needy, and hungry for the fight.

The only part of me not entirely excited about the fight ahead is my brain. I keep trying to over think, over plan. But I know more than anyone else that planning anything in life is worthless. Plan the basics, not the details. Because details are useless when it comes to the unpredictable.

Merikh slows his speed, adjusting

his gait to move behind me as he continually scans the area, his nose in the air as he listens and sniffs. I don't need my wolf's senses to know we are getting closer as the plant life seems to look dehydrated and in major need of a heavy rain. The air is drier, the foliage on the ground crunching under feet, which makes us come to a halt.

Merikh points to the tree, before he flings his massive frame up onto a high branch and reaches down. I jump with all my might; him catching my wrist as he lifts me into the tree. I bite back a smile as I watch him look around, his alpha presence very much on display as his hunting instincts are kicking in.

I have never had the opportunity to fight alongside him like this, in a war or on a mission. And now that I witness it, I think it may be one of the most single sexiest things he has ever done with me.

Merikh has always been the big bad alpha, known for his intimidation and incredible fighting skills and lack of mercy. But watching him perch and be on high alert so he can protect me.

Well, damn. It makes me want to have his babies. Which is a good thing considering that is the future plan for us. I shy away, not wanting him to see the way I ogle him, until I feel him at my back, his hot breath on my neck fanning over my mark.

"I am going to need you to restrain those thoughts in the mind link," he says in a husky tone. "It is especially hard to run when you are making me as hot and bothered as you seem to be."

I chuckle lightly, covering my mouth as I turn my head, bringing out lips a mere breath away.

"I will try, but no promises." I whisper before stealing a quick kiss and dropping out of the tree.

My hand presses to the ground as I roll my shoulders back and breathe deep, calling to the siren in me for water. It rises to the surface in a slow flow, wetting the parched ground, softening it so we can move without fear of alerting anyone to our presence.

-I planned to run along in the trees-Merikh says in the mind link. I snort a sarcastic laugh and shoot him a 'in what world' arched brow.

-You can, but I would fall out and break a leg-I tell him and he grins.

-I'll race you-he says, hustling back up the tree as I break into a sprint.

pet

There is no way I will beat him. He is not only a skilled warrior; he is a damn lycan. They are, by nature, faster than a regular werewolf like me. But try anyway, a small smile on my lips as we make this a game, enjoying ourselves in the brief

moments we get to ourselves, even in the face of death and despair.

I slow down when I hear grunting and a howl. I slip to the nearest tree, hiding behind its wide trunk as two wolves race past me. How they miss my scent, I don't understand, but I creep along behind them, bringing myself closer as I watch them snarl and snap at each other along the way.

-Where are you?-- I ask Merikh through our mind link. It's when he doesn't respond that the lighthearted moments we just had burst into a dark feeling and I break into a sprint again, pushing my legs as hard as I can.

One of the wolves slows, heaving as

it tries to catch its breath and I leap onto his back, my hand gripping his muzzle to keep him quiet as we

tumble to the ground. I twist onto

my back, my legs wrapping around its neck as I pull back and yank hard to the side. His neck snaps as his body goes limp and I push him to the side, jumping back up and chasing down the others.

-Go wide and let me deal with them-Merikh says through the mindlink, panic lacing his words in my mind.

-No, there are two more coming-I shoot back.

-New plan, You keep going, I'll catch up-He says, his thoughts turning from panic to determination and then a thrill of excitement.

I hate listening to him. Leaving him feels wrong, but as much as I need him to trust me, I have to return that trust. So with an aching heart, I cut to the

right, giving him a wide berth and trusting in his abilities as much as he trusts in mine. Even if I hate it and it feels wrong.

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Chapter 120

Chapter 120 *Merikh*

Warmth spreads over my face, a light misting of blood from the unfortunate wolf that is still being controlled by Lily's shit spell. I know there are more coming, but I can't help but pause and glance around, trying to determine where they will come from next. Like cockroaches, they scuttle around, lurking until they can no longer hide. It's offputting how un-wolf like it feels.

Lily shouldn't have a hold this strong on them now. And if she is close enough to have this type of hold, Elm should have ended her hours ago. My stomach churns at the thought of him being the betrayer. We put too much power in his hands, without Lily and her magical hold out of the way we are in for a long, tiring battle.

Tree branches above my head crack, a wolf falling from above as I step to the side, watching her crash to the ground with zero grace. The wolf wheezes as it stands and her for a moment to behind me.

eyes flicker

It is as if none of these wolves were trained to fight. Even in their zombified state, this should be second nature to them. Yet, she gives away the location of the one I know is now behind

me.

I lean to the side as a black wolf growls, passing me as it flies through the air. He tumbles into her and the two snap and fight for a moment while I watch, waiting for them to remember I am their enemy. A sigh breaks from my lips. At this rate, I will catch up to Colette much faster than I thought I would.

"If we could speed this up, I would appreciate it." I tell them, making sure they can sense my boredom. "I have better things to do than fight you."

A low growl emanates from behind me, the ground rumbling as the two race toward me, but instead of attacking, they move around and circle to my back. I whip around, my eyes flying wide as I look up at the monster before me. Well, maybe this will take longer than I expected after all.

Wolves sidle up to this monster's legs, their furry bodies vibrating before a silver thread from them attaches to the beast's chest and the air seems to shudder.

The wolves whine, then whimper before they fall to the side, their wolves turning to pale, thin, naked, lifeless bodies. The monster shakes its head, red eyes meeting my green as a malicious smile meets its rigid bumpy face. I slip off my pants and shirt as I throw my head back and let out my Lycan's roar, calling him to the surface.

I rise to my full height, the monster still a solid two feet taller than me as a hand made of many wolf's claws come swiping down at me. I avoid its contact with ease, dropping low and swinging my sharp nails up and into its soft stomach. The beast barely groans as it reaches out to grab me again.

There is no world in which that many sets of claws will not annihilate me with one hit. So I drop to my knees, scurrying between its legs and to its back. The more I look at its body, the more I understand that this isn't just one beast, but a beast made of many. With a bouquet of various colored tails and a spine made of many, I understand what I am up against.

Not only is Lily's magic seemingly stronger, but it is increasingly more creative. She has taken a single being and given them every wolf of those who it chooses. A sucker of souls, to create a beast worthy of fighting the Lycan king. My heart aches for the loss of my own kind. The ones who have no control over what they are doing, yet they will not survive. Its head twists to look at me, the chin tilting to the side as if it is trying to anticipate my next move. I take the moment to sprint to the right, which makes it follow me, its lumbering movements make the ground shake as I run directly for a tree. The second I am close, I twist my shoulders and shift my direction just in time for the monster to collide with the enormous base of the red oak tree.

I move behind it as it groans in an eerily echoing cry and I plunge my teeth into the base of its skull, digging my claws in at the lumbar of the spine. My jaw clenches as hard as possible and yank my hands up, slicing through bone and flesh as it goes limp. I don't release my hold until we hit the ground with a rumble and I snap my head to the side, a thud vibrating through my jaw as its neck snaps.

As I tear away, moving back from the magical version of a werewolf mashup, I watch the one body crumble into seven, all of them dead and at my feet. There isn't a second to spare as a howl breaks out and flames shoot up into the sky. My heart thuds in my chest, my eyes focusing on the direction of the chaos breaking out. All I can do is hope that Elm isn't the enemy and he will follow through soon.

The second those dragons take flight, my kind will succumb to the fire by the droves. I turn away from the noise, my stomach heavy at turning my back on the fighting, but I push on. Colette needs me more right now, and the only way to save what we have is to do it this way. It's a crazy plan, but it's the only viable one we've got.

-Merikh-I hear Colette in my head, the panic and question in her emotions that bleed through to me.

-I am fine and heading your way-I tell her through the link, swooping up my clothing and running in my lycan form.

With all the focus being to the south of us for now, I don't need to be as cautious with my noise as I sprint to catch up. I contemplate telling her about Lily and Elm. How Elm has failed to do as he said he would with killing Lily.

-Move faster if you can, looks like I've got some company-She says,-I'm hidden for now, but-

The mind link cuts off and it fuels me to move faster than my lycan body has.

There is no stopping me as I bound over roots and bust through downed logs that try to hinder me. I try to reach out to her, feeling for her emotions or anything I can. There is a shiver

that runs up my spine, a feeling that I am being watched or followed, but I push it aside.

I don't give a fuck who sees me or who the hell tries to attack me. There is nothing that exists on this earth that can slow me down right now. The breaking of branches and the whooshing of air only proves my instincts right as whoever is behind me follows close. Or as close as they can, which only means they are either also a lycan or someone who moves fast like us. [SEARCH THE WEBSITE](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

I tear through bushes and trees, breaking into a small clearing with multiple trees that have recently been toppled, and flames flicker. My body instinctively halts, my nose tilting up as I sniff the air, catching a whiff of Colette beyond the smell of the smoke. My massive head whips from side to side, my chest heaving with the fear of where she is, what might have happened.

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