

## Chapter 4.2

"Who are the Hidden Ones?" Layla asked.

"The what one?" Questioned Nuru.

"The Hidden Ones," everyone said at the same time.

"Oh," he paused and asked, "who are they?"

Layla just hit him on the back of his head, causing him to yell. Trust Nuru to make a joke out of everything. But it was a valid question.

After Megan's biting question, they all laughed. Breaking the tension surrounding them. They went back to the inn to explain what had happened.

They were once again in the kitchen. Rena was making at least two Filipino dishes, and Rooka was fixing some fruit shake for everyone. He used the groceries in the car to make the shakes. Once they were done, each got their own, except Rena, who he gave a cup of hot peppermint chocolate.

She just smiled and continued to cook adobo, a classical Filipino dish made up of soy, vinegar, garlic, bay leaves, some peppercorn, and whatever meat a person likes. For her dish she used beef. She was also making *sinigang*, a savory and sour soup. She is using some tamarind paste for the main broth of the soup, with carabao meat. R\*\*\*\*h, eggplants, taro corms, and okra. For dessert? Homemade ice cream sandwiches.

"Any idea what those men are talking about, Lem?" Rena asked. Lem and Lily were on the table, a plate full of grapes, cheese, and some sliced bread was the Sparks' food.

"When you were born, princess, it caused a ripple in the cosmic plane, changing the Alter beings." He started, "before only the male can carry the gene, now female offsprings can have it too. But, like you, they are unable to change. In the span of seven years since your birth, Alter

babies, especially girls were killed. No one knows why, and up until your powers were sealed, the numbers continued to grow."

"They had to do something about the death, bhe," Megan softly said. Lily gave her some healing powder to hasten the recovery. All eyes swung on her, it was a statement none of them were expecting. "I know about your people, Rooka," there was a sad smile on her lips when she said that. "My dad was bitten a year after I was born. I guess I wasn't supposed to know, but when I saw him do impossible things, he had to explain what happened to him. I never saw him change. I asked him that one day, he just gave a sad smile."

"Councilman Mido is your father?" Asked Wayne. His eyes sharp, there was an odd note to his voice. Megan thought something was wrong.

"No wonder your face looked familiar," said Kaz. "You have your father's eyes." He smiled at her. "But why is he in the Council of Werewolves?"

"They needed a human liaison," it was Rooka who answered. "I have never met your father. We don't travel in the same circles. The people in the council are more for political gain, so I stay away from the stronghold. I would only be there when I'm summoned." Then he put the empty glass on the sink, washing it too. He looked over Rena's shoulder to see how the tamarind soup was going along.

"Taste," she commanded, holding out a spoon with some soup. He raised his eyebrow and took the offered food. "Too salty? Too sour? Or just right?"

"Why not you taste?"

"Never liked sour soup, unless I will be making it too salty for me. Bhe!" She called Megan. "Taste." Megan tasted the soup and nodded. "Okay everyone grab a plate and let's eat. We can ask questions later."

Everyone in Rooka's pack got their plate of rice with either the adobo or the *sinigang* or both. Megan had the *sinigang* and some rice, while Rena had a bowl of cereal and a medium-size saucer with some beef adobo.

*Uncle Mido is part of the Were council. I wonder if he knows dad is dead.* Rena and Megan's dad have been friends since they were in high school, and have been ever since. Serena always thought of her uncle Mido as her second dad, and she knew that he would be devastated by their demise.

"How long have you known about the Weres?" Nuru asked.

"Ever since I was in high school." she looked at Serena apologetically it was clear that it was hard for her to keep the secret. "I wanted to tell you so many times but I was afraid that you will leave me.

"Leave you? Why?"

"Well, my dad is a were and he cannot change"

"So?"

Megan just smiled. Rena had that straight outlook in life. It will take time for her to understand things, but the way she treats people always depends on how she is treated the same. "Nothing."

Once everyone finished eating, Rena put in three tubs of ice cream on the table and a tray of homemade brownies. The men groaned in delight. It was rare for them to eat sweets and it looked like Rena liked to feed people.

When everyone got their fill with the food, they were quiet. Each lost in their thoughts.

The twins were mostly bickering on their mental link.

Kaz was trying to figure out how the black men knew of their location.

Wayne...he was looking at Megan. Why? He doesn't know.

Rooka? He was studying his mate. Megan and Rena were washing the dishes they used, talking about books and food. He smiled, hearing his name from Serena's lips, and when Megan looked back at him, he gave a two-finger salute.

"Cripes sake, bhe! Don't encourage him!" Megan just laughed out loud.

Rooka closed his eyes. Hearing the smile in her voice calmed his wolf. His mother was right, with Rena near him, the aggression he felt lessened. What he needed to do now is to help her heal. How he is going to do that is still a mystery. But one thing is for sure, he will be there when she breaks down.