

Untouchable (The Moonlight Avatar Series Collection)

Chapter 27 The Truth

“There are so many things that I want so badly to tell you, but I just can’t.”—Nina LaCour, Hold Still

Neron

After the **fiasco** at my ceremony five years ago, I’ve learned that Halima had jumped off the treacherous cliff, five stories to her death. She accepted my rejection and ended her life. The soldiers spent weeks scouring the river below our territory for her corpse, but it was never found as if she **disappeared** in **thin** air,

I was elated back then. I broke our bond, so I felt nothing. I didn’t have to worry about someone I’ve considered worthless. Sure, I was **pissed** at Kwame for body–slamming me, the Alpha, in my ceremony, but I felt free. Free from the burden of housing someone my father and I believed is responsible for the death of my mother and sister.

I blamed her for everything. For leading my sister out to the pond against permission, forcing my mother to look for them, and forgetting about the rogue sightings her father warned about. For not mind–linking anyone about the disaster, not holding onto my sister tight enough, and for not screaming loud enough for the help.

Oh, how quickly love could turn into bitter hate...

I blamed Halima for being ignorant and irresponsible. Everyone did. We, collectively, believed she deserved the abuse she got. It is our own twisted way of exacting justice for our fallen Luna and her daughter. She was guilty in my eyes. She was nine **and** knew right from wrong. And I believed her selfishness caused their deaths.

But it didn't

The Gamma Family had been working secretly on Halima's exoneration, working day in and day out to track the bastard responsible for killing my mother and sister. It was only three years ago when the spikes of rogue attacks first began, that was when I was smacked with the truth.

The Rogue King, he called himself, though I knew him better as Uncle Zain, was infuriated with my father for being given the Zircon Moon pack, even though Zain was the eldest son. My uncle was considered unfit to rule and the title was passed over him to my father. Enraged, my father's elder brother set out, breaking his bond with the Zircon Moon pack and plotted revenge ever **since**. I suppose he finally got what he wanted after so many years of waiting.

We hunted him down like the mutt he was, not without difficulty from his hounds from hell. Upon his capture, he confessed **to** slaughtering my mom and sister with a smile as big as the planet itself. He laughed right in my face, at my father's face. He sniggered at the fact that it unintentionally liberated **him** from all crime and was smart enough to **cover** his tracks.

"All I had to do was wipe the blood on that stupid child, and then I was free! I had to avert suspicion away from me, and why not make the child look responsible? Amazing how things turned out, huh?"

That comment haunted me since that day. Even after my father snuffed his life out in revenge. It forced me to face the truth **that** Halima isn't the one responsible. It was that monster who placed the blame on her.

How many more wolves did he kill? How many died because of our negligence?

We broke Halima because of him. We **all** maimed, tortured, and starved her because of his **crimes**. We all killed the soul of the Beta's youngest daughter without a second thought. We all hold responsibility for how we treated an innocent pup because we were too deep in our grief to see the truth.

But I...I'm the true **criminal** here. I've beaten her, starved **her**, and marked her for death. I marked my mate for death because I was blinded with anger and grief. I rejected our mate bond and chose another she-wolf over her, just to see her suffer.

And I pushed her to suicide. She jumped off that cliff because of me.

"I accept his rejection of our mate bond. May you all burn in hell."

I killed her. I killed my mate. No wonder Onyx hates me. We've lost the one person the Moon Goddess destined us to be with, and it's my fucking fault.

Big, red letters stamped diagonally on her file.

EXONERATED

The news of her innocence spread like wildfire amongst the pack. Much felt heavy remorse for their part while others didn't care. They were swiftly dealt with. But it hit her family the hardest. Raina's wailing could be heard for miles, Ashley lost all light in her eyes, and **Steven** shut everyone out. They were there that night to see Halima jump to her death. Nothing they said changed her mind.

How could it? We treated her like shit until she had enough. A werewolf kills themselves if they have nothing to live for, and with Halima, which couldn't be farther **from** the truth.

Her big, brown eyes haunt me in my dreams. The fear, the hopelessness, the loneliness—so many terrible emotions swam in those eyes, **We**, as a

community, put that terror in her and I smiled back then, relishing in it. But in my dreams, **they** torture me to no end. Sometimes, she would speak to me, asking me why I did what I did to her.

Did I have an answer? I didn't. In every nightmare, she died, and I couldn't save her. The pack had everything while she had nothing. She was alone and she died alone.

The picture in her file is the last photo taken of her as a joyful child. Bright brown eyes sparkling, her cute lips widening into a big smile, her brown skin rich with life, and curls bouncy like springs. It is the only photo I had left of her. It fills **my** memories with not her beauty, but her brokenness.

I **hate** myself every day for what I did to her. I **ruined** the one thing the Moon Goddess blessed me with: a mate. My other half. The yin to my yang. My soulmate. My eternal lover. Rarely **does** she grant second chance mates, and I highly doubt she would grant one to this stupid dog.

But even so, I pray. I pray for forgiveness. I pray for redemption. What I've **done** is inexcusable. I deserved to be punished with the broken mate bond, never to rekindle again. I could never have my true Luna or the love that all **werewolves** yearn for. This is the Moon Goddess's way of punishing me for hurting one of her children.

I shut the folder, settling it back on my desk. Hot tears pricked my eyes as my heart pounded madly in my chest. It hurt so bad. It hurts **every** time I think about Halima and her final days. But I needed to stop focusing on her, she was dead and never coming back. I hope she is happy in heaven with my mother and sister.

Expelling a deep **breath**, I blink back my tears, shaking away those thoughts as I pick up the phone sitting at my desk, dialed a number. This was an enormous bruise to my ego, but my pack needed help with these fucking rogues, and I cannot afford to lose anyone else. No mate or family deserves the heartbreak of losing a **loved** one.

“Alpha Anthony speaking.”

“**Alpha** Anthony, **this** is Alpha Neron from the Zircon Moon Pack. I request an audience with you to discuss potential aid.”

Kiya

The guards hate us. We rolled to the front gates, screeching at the top of our lungs, shooting finger guns at them. Their looks of annoyance and indifference only made 3/4ths of us laugh while Darien is a **hair** away from blowing a wolf gasket. I’ve never seen his face get so red! Then again, we haven’t pushed his buttons far enough.

In **five** minutes, we arrived at the garage, now doubled in size to accommodate the number of cars we have. We ceased our awful singing and unloaded the suitcases from the back, one dropping on Galen’s foot.

Everyone in the yard had to wonder if we brought home a screaming seal.

Walking towards the packhouse, I took in a deep breath of air. Earth’s perfume along with delicious food wafting from the packhouse is nostalgic. A smile broke out on my face, excited to be back home with my family for the summer.

Nothing’s changed,” Sapphire spoke, eyes darting across the territory.
“Nothing except the leaves are full of color.”

“We’ve only been gone for the spring semester,” I remarked. “The last **time we** were here, snow blanketed the grounds. Now, I could hear the pups in the pool behind the house.”

We passed by the training grounds, ducking quickly when a warrior went flying above us. The shirtless wolf landed on the ground hard, holding the small on his back.

Poor guy!

His whimpers nearly tugged on my heartstrings until a familiar voice bombarded the surrounding air.

“And that’s what you get for underestimating my mate, you dirty mutt!”

My head quickly jerked to see the culprit who punted the wolf—like a football. Her scent of orange blossoms kissed my senses, widening the smile present on my face. Flaunting in black leggings and a sports bra, the woman’s emerald eyes lit up when she saw me. Immediately I dropped my items, leaping into her arms with my arms and legs locked around her waist.