

Chapter 38 – The Haunting

"Somehow we all are burning ourselves as we constantly thinking about our past." — Bunny Naidu

Neron

I shot up from my bed in a cold sweat. Rapid resonating beats of my heart pounded in my ears, blocking the deep heaviness of my breathing. I did not know of the wetness that coated my cheeks until I brought my hands up to my face. Lo-and-behold, my hot tears covered my fingertips. My eyes darted around the space, expecting that rainy void of grey. Imagine my relief when I found that I was no longer in that nightmare, but in my bedroom. I threw my head back on my pillow, my hand over my heart as if it would help calm me down.

This must stop. I can't take any more of these nightmares.

The nightmares were becoming more frequent. Every night is the same thing: Halima tells me how much she hates me before ending her life. Nothing I said would change her mind. How could it? I was a monster back then, born from misplaced hatred. Her ghost haunts me as I sleep, tormenting me with its sickly flesh covered in welts and empty eyes filled

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with an undying hatred.

How long must this go on?

Halima, what do you want me to do?

“It’s those nightmares again, huh?” I turn to my right to see Odessa shuffling awake. The pink slip dress she wore rode up on her supple flesh as she stretched, exposing her bare curves. “They’re killing the mood, baby. You need to do something about them.”

I know, I don’t know what I should do. There is no one I could talk to about this. The guilt about what happened to Halima was as real as the bed I was lying on, a palpable sense of loss. I feel like I was going mad. Everywhere I turn in this house stirs up a distant memory of how I treated her. A simple walk down the halls reminded me how I would trip her as she mops or push her down the stairs when she got in my way.

Every fucking thing I did to hurt her lingered like a restless ghost, their dead eyes imprinted on my flesh.

“Who were you screaming for this time?” Odessa crossed her arms underneath her chest, watching my

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every move. She was expecting an answer. How the hell do I tell her? That I was dreaming about my dead mate? Odessa's jealousy held no bounds, especially with other women. I rubbed my face once, throwing the covers off my legs as I walked to the bathroom.

"No one."

"It sounded like someone." My lady in bed retorted. "Neron, this can't go on. If you're not yelling in your sleep, you're thrashing all over the place. Or you can't wake up. Whatever the issue is, you need to deal with it. You're killing my sleep, too."

"You're more than welcome to sleep in one of our guest rooms if it bothers you so much." I splash my face with cold water, feeling the exhaustion dissipate. The bags under my eyes were an attestation to my well-deserved suffering. The water droplets cataract down my face, dripping into the sink below me. My eyes lost their shine, now hollow in the depths of torment. I looked like a shell of my former self—a once-mighty Alpha now haunted with past sins.

The memories of Halima were ruining me.

And it was what I deserve. Anyone with brain cells

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could agree with that.

“You know, Neron. I don’t know what’s up with you.” From the mirror, Odessa leans against the bathroom doorway, hands on her hips. “You’ve distanced yourself from me. You don’t talk to me anymore and bury yourself in paperwork constantly. I try to help you, and you blow me off. You have yet to mark me, to make me your Luna, and you ignore me when I need you the most. You’ve changed! Babe, did I do anything wrong?”

“It’s not you, Odessa. Not everything is about you.” I snapped. “I have a lot of things going on in my mind, as you can see. What is it you want from me?”

“I want you to be with me more!” She yelled. “I’m your mate and your Luna, we’re supposed to be together. We’re supposed to be the power couple that everyone rages over. You and I, against the entire world, that’s how it’s supposed to be! You still love me, right?”

I exhaled, bowing my head. Yes, I still love Odessa. She is and will always be my first love. But I’ve made a huge mistake that cost me my destined lover, and I don’t know what to do. No matter how much I focus on Odessa and the pack, my mind always wanders back to Halima. What would she have been if we didn’t destroy her? If I didn’t destroy her.

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But the mate bond is dead. Everything about Halima is dead. I need to focus on the now and not what could have been, as Dad would always say.

I walked to Odessa, pulled her to my body, and kissed her sweet lips. Her arms loop around my neck as she kissed me back with the same vigor. I love her. This matters more. I cannot keep focusing on a ghost when I have a tangible, beautiful woman in my hands.

"I'm sorry, my love," I whispered against her ear, kissing down her neck. "I'm sorry that I made you feel neglected. I still love you, and that won't change. You're mine and I promise, I will mark you soon."

Odessa sighs against my neck, pressing her body more against my own. "And I love you too. Could we spend the morning together, please? I miss you..."

"And I miss you." And just like that, we spent our morning reaffirming our love for one another. Through our bodies and our hearts. Odessa was mine, and nothing will change that. Nothing will come between us again. The ghosts can continue to haunt me all they want, but as an Alpha and as a man, I must move forward. ¹

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I must.

“Have the rooms been set up for our newcomers?”

Lead Omega Cassandra nodded, standing on the tips of her toes to dust off a wall lamp. “Yes, on the third floor as you requested.”

“Excellent.” I walked past the other Omegas who were cleaning the hallways, taking great care to step over the collected messes they swept up. After Alpha Anthony accepted my request for an alliance, we’ve arranged an exchange. Since my pack had lost our best Deltas, he offered to send his best Deltas and warriors to help train ours. It would be a temporary stay until training is complete and my warrior wolves could test for the Delta positions.

The loss was a brutal blow. Premature-trained wolves did not make a reliable defense for the pack, and since all the best trainers have died, this was the next best solution. My hopes for Garnet Moon to pass their combat knowledge to my wolves would prove useful whenever rogues strike again.

I’ve also debated if I should allow the newly shifted pups to train. Sure, their enthusiasm and vigor

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would prove to be their best assets, but approval must come from their parents. I've already received a few responses from families who wish for their pups to start as soon as possible.

"Alpha." Valerian entered my office, shutting the door behind him. I didn't miss little Adonis zooming by with a toy airplane in his hands. "Alpha Anthony and his warriors will arrive by mid-afternoon."

"Good. Once they've settled in, I want you to give them a tour of our territory to get them accumulated to living here. Kwame will draw up plans and records of our soldiers for them to look over, as they will decide their new training regimen." ¹

"Will the induction party tonight go on as planned?"

"Yes. It will be a chance for the pack to know their new trainers. No need to worry about the details of it, they've been taken care of."

I do not know who would arrive on the territory or what they were capable of, but I figured the party would be a good idea to know who the pack would work with for the next few months.

"Is it wise to have a party amid rogue attacks, Neron? Surely, many members would question this

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sudden decision.”

“I have given it some thought.” I leaned back in my chair. “But this pack needs a break from the death and desolation around us. They deserve to have some fun for a night to bring back those smiles I miss seeing around. As for the rogue attacks, I’ve increased border security around the territory and armed the guards with added weapons. I ordered them to link me to any sudden suspicions.”

Valerian seemed satisfied with the answer, for a relieved smile appeared on his face. “That’s good news. I can’t help but be curious who will train our soldiers. Garnet Moon only sends out their best, and if they can whip these sorry dogs into shape, we’d all be sleeping easy for the rest of our days.”

“That’s the plan.”

And that’s the hope.

Third Person POV

Kiya zipped up one of her large purple suitcases in disbelief that she had to pack again so soon. The morning sun peeked through her curtains, greeting

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her with a brand-new day. She believed she would spend her summer with her family, but fate had different plans for her. Today, she, along with her other friends, were setting off to Zircon Moon to help train their soldiers for the next couple of months. If she was lucky, she'll return home in late July. If not, then it would be late August when she had to prepare to go back to university. ¹

"There. I think that's everything." She mutters to herself, setting that suitcase near the door. The young Delta is about to face her toughest challenge yet, and it had nothing to do with training or fighting rogues. Confronting the past had never been a simple thing for anyone to do, human or werewolf. Many ran or bury the pain so deep in their psyche that it would never be reached again.

But Kiya didn't have a choice to run or bury. Deep down, she knew it had to be done. The woman wanted to prove something, not just to herself but to her old tormentors. She wanted to prove that she rose above all adversity. She was strong, and she was not the one to be fucked with. She is a better person, faster, stronger, and not easily thrown down.

Halima Lane was dead, never to return. Kiya Guerrero was here to stay.

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