

The Alpha's Captive Matew by Taylor Caine Chapter 8

CHAPTER 8

The children had been the worst.

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I was the only one who'd survived, and only because I'd been so small, my parents had managed to hide me somewhere Ian hadn't been able to reach.

He'd known I was in there.

He'd tried to kill me too.

I remembered the terror of his reaching claws and snapping fangs trying to get into the tiny space I'd crammed myself in. Time held no concept for me at the age of five. I still didn't know if it'd been hours or days that Ian had lingered there, waiting for me to come out.

When he'd eventually left and I'd crawled out, weak from dehydration and lack of food, I'd been confronted with the sight of pretty much everyone I knew torn to pieces.

I shoved those memories away.

Usually, I had better control. Usually, I wouldn't let those

memories touch me.

But Harper-the half-witch, half-wolf who shouldn't have been left to survive childhood, let alone find her way to Ellisville where she now stood in front of me like she even deserved to be breathing the same air as me-had drawn

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those memories out of me, sharp like broken gla*s slicing up my insides.

Like it'd happened last week, not twenty some years ago.

I'd heard growing up that a half-witch, half-wolf offspring of

Ian Crawford existed, but I'd a*sumed the witches would have taken care of it long ago.

I'd never imagined I might actually run across her.

Put a face to the cursed child that monster had a hand in

creating.

How could I have not recognized her wolf side?

Even now, my senses were telling me witch and human.

"Why couldn't I sense what she really was?" I demanded of

Maryanne.

The older woman raked a considering glance over Harper

and then strode up to her.

She reached to the collar of Harper's sweater and grabbed

the necklace sitting against her skin.

"No, wait-" Harper protested weakly, but when she went to resist Maryanne, I tightened my hold on her arm and growled

her into submission.

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She went meek then, trembling under my hand.

Maryanne gave a vicious tug, and the necklace broke away from Harper's neck.

As soon as it was gone, wolf flooded my sense, though it was obviously muted with the witch side.

It was this confusing scent of evergreen and snow melting in spring, making my insides clench in a way I didn't like one little

bit.

However, that wasn't even the worst of it.

Harper was omega, and the wolf within me was suddenly

sitting up and taking notice in a way that only made me

angrier.

"This was masking her wolf nature," Maryanne explained,

holding up the trinket. "Made by her grandmother, it feels like.

Violet Nolan was a powerful witch back in the day, before she fled the covens to hide her granddaughter."

Maryanne sneered at Harper, though the girl didn't notice because she still had her head down, her honey-blond hair

hanging like a curtain, hiding her face.

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"And you didn't bother trying to find them?" I demanded. "You just let this half-breed grow up and wander around the human world?"

I felt Harper flinch under my hold, and somehow, beneath all my rage, my inner wolf didn't like that I'd made her fear me.

I tried to shake it off. To tell my inner wolf to get a grip.

It was an unsettling feeling.

I'd never been at odds with my wolf nature before.

"The worst punishment a witch can endure is being cut off from the coven and their ancestral magic," Maryanne said with a careless shrug. She held out the necklace, so I took it and slipped it into my pocket. "It's a fate worse than death. I could sleep easy knowing that was the girl's fate. And if a wolf, rogue witch, or even a human happened to finish her off, then the world wouldn't have been worse off for it."

"So what are you going to do with her now?"

Would they just send Harper on her way, thinking exile was a good enough punishment for who and what she was?

"I don't care what happens to her," Maryanne confirmed. "She's barely got enough magic to boil water, let alone do anything of note. She's pathetic. No threat to anyone. The only

thing I know is that I don't want her presence to ever soil my home again."

"Then you won't mind if I take her," I said, the idea coming to me all at once, before I'd even thought it through properly. "She might be half witch, she's also half Crawford. My pack is owed a blood debt. And this girl is how it's going to get paid."