

# Arch-Enemies

## Chapter 1: Leana

\*\*This is Book 4 of the Guardians Next Generation series and Book 8 of the overall Guardian series. References will be made to events in other books and may not be fully explained in this novel.

My phone rings unusually early in the morning.

“Hello.”

“Hey, Leana. Want to go on a road trip to Araphyra with me?” Lily, my best friend for my entire life, asks through the phone.

Lily is the oldest child of Rik and Cara Forte, the Alpha and Luna of Canyon Ridge Pack. I am the oldest daughter and second child of Liam and Angel Holstin, the previous Alpha and Luna of my pack, Shadow Falls. The third pack in our alliance, Safe Haven Pack, is run by Alpha Eli and Luna Grace, that is, until their oldest son, Emerson, takes over in a few months.

Lily and I were born about six months apart and we are both Guardians. My mother and our Aunt Grace have wolves that were blessed by the Moon Goddess with a Guardian spirit. The Guardian spirits had been transferred from generation to generation, creating new Guardians every time one of the two Guardians died.

That all changed when Lily’s mother, Cara, was born out of a fated mate bond between the two existing Guardians at the time, Clint and Lily, my friend Lily’s namesake. When Aunt Cara’s parents died, their Guardian spirits went to my mother and Aunt Grace. None of us are actually related, but our mothers consider themselves Guardian sisters, so we call them Aunt, their mates Uncle, and we’ve all been raised together as family.

In my parents’ generation, both Guardians were able to mark and mate with their fated mates, rather than greedy Alphas that previously forced the Guardians into mate bonds because of the power that we wield.

Now, in our generation, every Alpha female born to a Guardian parent has the powers of a Guardian, making us as strong or stronger than our Alpha brothers and every other supernatural being.

Since I know that Lily has been having issues with her mate, the Elf Prince, Aolis, I know that something is wrong.

“What happened, Lily?”

She tells me she'll fill me in on the way and after finding out that she wants to leave today and in wolf form, I quickly pack a bag that I can wear while in my wolf, Kella's, form and then go to find my brother. Rich is the Alpha of our pack, having taken over a year ago from our father.

I've been his acting Luna for the past year, but since he's been messing around with another Guardian, Emlyn, I'm pretty sure he won't be too terribly upset that I want to leave. If he's smart, and he usually is, he'll see about making her his acting Luna.

I find Rich and let him know that I'm going with Lily to Araphyra, the land of the elves.

"Why now?" he asks me.

I grit my teeth. He's my brother, but he's also my Alpha. I may not want to tell him, but he would never betray me, not as my brother and not as my Alpha.

"It's a good opportunity for me to find my mate, Rich. It's been six months and I haven't found him. He's obviously not in any of our three packs. Maybe....maybe if I go with Lily, I'll find him. Who knows, maybe he's in Araphyra," I say with false bravado.

He looks at me a long moment before moving around his desk and coming to sit with me.

"If you need anything, anything at all from me, you call me, I'll be there in a moment. I know I'm your Alpha, but I'm also your brother and I love you, Lea. So, you take care of yourself and keep in touch. Have you told mom and dad?"

I pluck at my shirt. "No. You know how Dad is, he won't want me to go, even if I'm going with Lily."

"I'll let him know, but you'd better call him in a couple of days or it's possible he'll burn the world down to find you," he says, making me smile. My father is a good man, and a good father, even if he's overbearing. I may not be his only daughter, but I am his first daughter.

"Thanks, Rich. And, uhh...you know, Emlyn might be able to fill in for me while I'm gone," I say as casually as I can.

Because I'm watching him closely, I see the quick narrowing of his eyes before he schools his features.

"I don't know what she's got going on. She may have found her mate by now, but...I'll think about it."

"Yeah, I bet you will," I say, standing.

He pulls me in for a hug. "Seriously, Lea, if you need anything, you call me."

“I will. Promise.”

I head outside and just as I reach the pack borders, Lily arrives. We shift quickly and take off running. We head toward Araphyra for a couple of hours before we stop to eat. When we do, I make Lily tell me what’s going on and I find out that some Alpha she went out with kissed her, and her mate, Aolis, felt it. He has given her one week to come to Araphyra and claim him as her mate or he’s going to go find someone else to be his queen.

Personally, I don’t understand why Lily wasn’t willing to accept Aolis right away when she turned 18 and realized that he is her mate. She’s known her whole life that he was her mate and from everything I’ve heard, the mate bond is incredible. But according to Lily, Aolis felt like a brother, not a mate.

She feels too close to her mate, and I can’t even find mine.

I know we have a long way to go and several pack lands and the vampire’s clan, King Urien’s lands, to pass through, but if all goes well, we shouldn’t have any problems getting to Araphyra on time.

“If we have time, and only if we have time, I’d like to stop by the council on our way. It’s past time that I take up my seat on the council and release mom from her tenure,” I say.

“Where will you live? Will you commute to and from the pack?” Lily asks me.

“No, I’ve already been searching for a condo in town, near the council chambers. I can live there when the council is in session and return home when it isn’t. That is, unless I meet my mate and have to move to Araphyra like some people,” I say, smiling at her.

“I’m so nervous, Lea. What if I hate it? What if I’m terrible at being a queen?” she says.

“Lils, you were born to be a queen. The Moon Goddess wouldn’t have mated you to the elvish prince if you weren’t. You’ll be amazing, but don’t expect me to call you Your Majesty or something like that. You’ll always be Lils to me,” I tell her.

“Good, I wouldn’t have it any other way,” she says as we finish eating. “Come on, let’s get going.”

We run for a couple more hours before we come to our first pack border. When we arrive, we run into a delay as the Alpha asks us if he can use our Guardian gifts to tell if a rogue is lying. Since that’s a Guardian gift that I got from my mother and we have plenty of time, we agree.

We quickly realize that this rogue was part of a group that recently attacked Rich’s pack in Shadow Falls in an attempt to kill the Guardians. They lost, of course, Guardians aren’t easy to kill, but there are still some out there who would prefer that our kind of power didn’t exist.

Worse than that, we find out that this rogue is second in command to a vampire which means that at least some vampires are once again fighting against the Guardians.

The vampires call us Custos Regni, or Guardians of the Realm. It's an apt description, but the problem is, there is something in our blood, something so appealing and addicting that when a vampire tastes our blood, they can't control themselves and they try to drain us dry.

My mother, as a teenager, was captured by vampires and taken to their King. There, she was kept for seven years as a blood bag, forced every night into a 'feeding room' where humans were brought in for vampires to feed on, rape and kill. She was forced to watch as the humans were drained dry while the vampire king fed off of her, night after night. It wasn't until the vampire coven was raided by hunters that my mother escaped. The hunters thought she was a human and got her out of there. When she realized she'd gone from one bad situation to another, she ran until exhausted and near death, she fell across my father's pack lands. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Now, this werewolf, who is a Beta of sorts, has let us know that he's working for the vampires which can only mean that they are once again turning against the Guardians.

Lily and I decide to take this information to the council, knowing that it is important and valuable information, especially in light of the recent attack on Shadow Falls. The Alpha gives us a place to stay overnight and then we head to the council.