

# Brother's Best Friends Are My Mates

Rain

We needed help to track down Gabi... this much was true. I didn't know what else to do other than reach out to appeal to the vampires for help. With me being a half-vampire and a registered vampire with the vampire council, I had a good chance to secure their help.

There was just one little problem... I needed to figure out what vampire clan my family was a part of or had past ties to. It was frustrating knowing I could do something but had to jump through these hoops. Time was of the essence!

A werewolf pregnancy only lasted about six months and with Gabi being two months along, we didn't have much time. I reached out to my mom, hoping she could help me.

Hey Mom, quick question. Do you know anything about which vampire clan we belonged to?

-R

Oh, hi, Rain. That's... unexpected. Why are you asking about this now?

-M

Just something I've been thinking about lately. I feel like I should know where we come from. Like, who we are. It's been bugging me.

-R

I understand. It's important to know where you come from. But honestly, Rain, I don't have much information on that. Your father might've known more, but it wasn't something he ever shared with me in detail.

-M

So, there's nothing? No family records or hints about which clan it was.

-R

Not on my end, no. I've always wondered about it, too. But there are no documents I've seen or heard about, no clues that I can think of. It's always felt like one of those things he kept to himself.

-M

Wow, that's... not exactly helpful. So, where do I even begin to look for something like that?

-R

Well, if you want answers, you could try the Vampire Association. They keep detailed records for all the clans, including the extinct or scattered ones. If anyone knows anything about our origins, they might.

-M

The Vampire Association? Do I just... call them?

-R

It's a bit more formal than just calling, Rain. You'll need to file an official request. It's a process, but they're usually good about these things. Be prepared, though-they'll likely ask for proof of lineage or other documentation before they'll give you anything.

-M

Proof? Like what?

-R

Anything that ties back to our family history. Maybe an old heirloom, some documents your father kept, or even something passed down from the generations before us. I don't know exactly what he might've held on to, but it's worth looking through our things. You might find something useful.

-M

Great. Another mystery to solve. Just what I needed.

-R

I know it sounds like a hassle, but don't get too frustrated. The Association can be strict, but they're thorough. If there's information out there, they'll find it. It just might take time.

-M

Yeah, I guess you're right. It's just a little overwhelming, you know?

-R

I understand. But you're resourceful. You'll figure it out. If you need any help along the way, don't hesitate to ask.

-M

Thanks, Mom. I'll look around and let you know if I find anything.

-R

Of course, Rain. Let me know if you need anything. I'm here.

-M

I needed to look through my family's documents. They had a bunch of stuff in the attic that was of importance that I needed to go through. Dad wouldn't mind and would help if he hadn't been so busy with work. At least with Mom working only part-time she had more time to dedicate to helping me find the paper I needed.

But it was going to be quite the undertaking.

Colby came in, seeing the expression on my face. His eyebrows shot up and he frowned.

"What's with you?"

"I thought of a way we might be able to get Gabi back but don't say anything to Michael because it's not an entirely foolproof idea yet."

He blinked. "Rain what the fuck are you talking about? Stop beating around the bush and just explain to me what you mean." "I'm going to reach out to the vampires for help," I explained, causing Colby's face to twist into confusion.

"Rain, this still doesn't explain the situation..."

I groaned. "Colby, my dude, I am going to try to find the vampire clan my family used to belong to because I think we'll be able to appeal to them for help. They'll want to help a fellow clan member with whatever situation is going on-or so I hope..." "Well, it's worth a shot. Do you have any idea how to find out how to narrow down your clan search?"

"I'm going to try to put in a formal request with the vampire association but it's going to be difficult because that takes time."

Colby frowned. "Any other idea on how to get that information?"

"I'm going to try to search through my parent's stuff and see if I can find something that might help me narrow down the search. It seems that either way, I am going to have to wait."

This was something I was so certain was now going to help but now I realized that it was going to take a while. It made me worry about Michael and what he might be tempted to do. My good friend was still spending a lot of time in his room, refusing to interact with anyone.

“We’re still trying to narrow down the search for the Rosewater’s Coven location. The witch association is giving us the run around which is disheartening. They don’t care as long as the Rosewater coven can fulfill the blood oath.”

My shoulders slumped. “This is such a fucking shitty situation. But we keep at it because you know why? We are the Moonveil pack who never gives up!”

“Oh my god that is the corniest thing I have ever heard in my entire life,” Matt muttered from the hallway. Discover more novels at [find\[N\]ovel.net](http://find[N]ovel.net)

“Hey, I say great nuggets of wisdom!”

Colby stifled a laugh. “Rain you say some of the most hilarious things but I don’t know if I would say that it’s wise.”

“I am offended right now.”

Matt snorted. “See you’re saying something funny right now!”

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Lia

I heard the guys upstairs talking and laughing with each other. It filled me with mixed emotions. On the one hand, I was glad that they could find some enjoyment given what was happening at the moment, but I was also angry. Angry at the fact that my brother was able to find the same enjoyment.

He was a wreck, still barely eating and coming out of his room. I had done what I could, trying my best to help him function.

My brother needed to eat, sleep, and survive. Gabi was going to come back with their pup and they needed him at his best. It was only a matter of time before we found them-I was convinced of this.

But seeing this version of my brother was still difficult for me to wrap my mind around. The same could be said for the rest of my mates even if they weren’t saying it out loud.

I shook my head, deciding not to rain on their parade. Who was I to lash out and tell them they couldn’t find small moments of enjoyment? It would be very hypocritical of me.

When I checked in on Michael that afternoon, he was feeling no better. Me and my future mates were taking turns taking care of him, trying to make sure we got him through each day as best as we could.

It was my determination that was going to help us get through all of this.

Michael did talk with me a little, but he went right back into his little nest he had made in the middle of the bed. I wasn't used to seeing Alpha's nest. It was usually something you saw with omegas when they were in heat or pregnant... neither of which my brother was experiencing because it was an impossibility.

He muttered something under his breath, making me freeze.

"What was that, Michael?"

"Nothing."

"Michael..."

"I said it was nothing!"

I winced and turned, not wanting to remain there for the conversation. He didn't mean to lash out. My brother was just hurting, unsure of what to do with himself. It must've been difficult to always be looked at as this rock and pillar of your group, unable to allow yourself to be vulnerable.

There was absolutely nothing wrong with being vulnerable, something I wished my brother would understand. He seemed almost shamed that he was experiencing it now as if he couldn't fully comprehend what was going on with him or didn't want to I should say.

For a second I stood there, waiting to see if my brother would perhaps stop or apologize to me for his outburst, but he didn't say anything. All he did was pull the blanket back over his head, muttering more unintelligible things under his breath.

With a heavy sigh, I left the room knowing this was the best option right now because calling out my brother wasn't going to help anyone.

## Brother's Best Friends Are My Mates

Lia

"I'm telling you, Michael's a wreck," I said, pacing back and forth across the room. I could feel the anger, fear, and frustration bubbling up inside me, and I couldn't seem to settle. Every thought in my head kept coming back to him—Michael—and how out of control everything was getting.

"He's not exactly subtle about it," Rain replied, leaning against the wall with his arms crossed. He sounded more exasperated than anything else. "I caught him snapping at the delivery guy yesterday. Poor kid almost cried."

I let out a frustrated breath. “Yeah, well, I don’t blame him. He’s holding all of this inside, and it’s tearing him apart. He’s been on edge for days, and I don’t know how much longer he can take it.”

Colby shook his head, his voice filled with sympathy. “He’s been through hell with Gabi being taken. I’d be a wreck too if my mate was in danger. I think we all would.”

“No kidding,” Jesse muttered, his tone dark and heavy. “But the way he’s holding it in? It’s like a ticking time bomb just waiting to explode. I’m scared what’ll happen if he doesn’t let it out.”

I turned to Matt, finally. He’d been so quiet for most of the conversation, and I knew something was eating at him. “Matt, you’ve been quiet. What do you think about all of this?”

Matt crossed his arms, his gaze downcast as he thought. “I think we’re all on edge. Michael’s not the only one feeling this. We all are. Maybe we’re just better at hiding it.”

“You think we don’t know that?” Rain shot back, his voice laced with irritation. “We’re all feeling it, but at least we’re not biting everyone’s heads off every chance we get.”

“Rain, stop,” I snapped, my patience fraying. This wasn’t the time for this kind of argument. “This isn’t about who’s coping better. Michael’s struggling because he feels completely powerless. Gabi’s his mate. He’s drowning in that fear, and it’s eating him alive. We’d be the same if we were in his shoes.”

Colby sighed deeply, rubbing his temples. “Yeah, but sitting here doing nothing isn’t helping. The Rosewood Clan made their move, and now they’re waiting for us to react. We can’t just keep sitting here while they control the pace.”

“Which is exactly what they want,” Jesse said, his tone flat but filled with quiet fury. “They want us to panic, to make hasty decisions. If Michael cracks, if he lets all this break him, we’re playing right into their hands.”

“Jesse’s right,” I agreed, my voice steady but filled with resolve. “We need to stay calm, for Michael’s sake and Gabi’s. We can’t let ourselves fall apart. But we also need a plan. We can’t just keep spinning in circles.”

Matt lifted his eyes to meet mine, and I could see the same fear in his gaze that I was feeling. “Michael won’t sit still long enough for a plan. He’s convinced that he has to fix it all himself. He’s been this way ever since Gabi was taken. He thinks if he doesn’t act if he doesn’t do something himself, she’s gone for good.”

“Then we convince him otherwise,” I said firmly. The words felt heavy in my chest, but I had to say them. “If he tries to go after Gabi alone, the Rosewood Clan will destroy him. He won’t make it. We have to make him see that.”

Rain smirked, but I could see the underlying tension in his face. “Good luck with that. You know how he gets when his mind is made up. You’ll have to tie him down to stop him.”

“Yeah,” I muttered under my breath, the frustration in my voice rising. “Stubborn as hell. It runs in the family.”

Colby chuckled softly, his teasing tone cutting through the tension a little. “You’re one to talk, Lia. You’re no stranger to being stubborn yourself.”

I shot him a glare but didn’t deny it. “Maybe. But this isn’t about me. It’s about Michael-and Gabi. So, are we doing this together, or not?”

The room fell silent for a moment, the weight of the decision pressing on all of us. My heart was pounding in my chest, but I knew what had to be done. We couldn’t sit back and wait anymore. Finally, Jesse nodded. “Together.”

“Always,” Rain added, his smirk softening into something more genuine.

Colby clapped his hands together, the sharp sound breaking the silence. “Then let’s get to it. The Rosewood Clan doesn’t know who they’re messing with.”

Matt gave a small, determined smile. “For Gabi-and Michael.”

“For both,” I agreed, my voice unwavering.

And for the first time in days, despite all the fear and uncertainty still hanging over us, I felt a glimmer of hope. We’d do this. Together, we’d figure it out. We’d take back what was ours, no matter what it took.

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Colby

The search for the Rosewater Coven contains, leaving me at a loss for what to do. We were trying our best to track them down, wanting to see where they were keeping Gabi. As the pack leader, I knew it was up to me to lead the search.

I had made many calls over the past week or so, trying to figure out where the fuck they could be! Once I even drove to the closest Witch Association official building that was about an hour away from where we lived.

They continued to give me the runaround. When they said they couldn’t help me for what felt like the 1000th time, I lashed out.

“What the fuck do you mean you can’t help us?” I growled, slamming my hands down on the desk with a force that rattled the papers and made the man flinch. “If a werewolf pack had taken

one of your own, you know what you would've done? You would've taken your little book of curses and turned every last one of us into a toad.”

Lia and Rain exchanged a glance, their eyes wide with surprise. Their mouths parted in unison, caught off guard by my outburst. I wasn't the type to lose my temper—at least, not like this. Normally, it was Matt who wore his fury on his sleeve, sharp and biting, lashing out as a defense mechanism. But today... today, I had reached my limit.

They had every reason to help, every damn reason. And yet, here they were, refusing to lift a finger. A blood oath wasn't illegal, sure, but that didn't mean it was right. It didn't mean they couldn't do something. Anything.

What would it cost them to just take a moment, make a call, or use their magic to give us a little fucking help? Help to find Gabi.

But this wasn't just about Gabi. It was about us, standing here, helpless. And I was done.

I could practically feel the man behind the desk shrinking away from me. Sweat beaded on his forehead. He probably thought I was going to shift right there, tear him apart, and let my wolf take control.

But I wasn't going to give them that satisfaction. The last thing I needed was for them to see me as some untamed animal, incapable of rational thought.

Lia's voice broke through to me. “You can catch more flies with honey than vinegar,” she whispered, her tone soft but firm, almost pleading.

Rain, ever the joker, added in a deadpan voice, “Yeah, even though I prefer vinegar to honey—“

“Rain!” Lia hissed, her cheeks flushed as she shot him a look that could melt steel. “Now is not the time.”

I didn't want to hear it. Not from Rain, not from Lia. I was past being reasonable. The situation was too dire, and the witches were too stubborn. I could feel the walls closing in, their cold indifference suffocating me.

I fixed my eyes on the man behind the desk, locking onto him like a predator stalking its prey. “We will do our best—”

“Bullshit!” I shouted “You can't even be bothered to try! All I'm asking for is a little help and a little effort. You're all just sitting here waiting for someone else to do the dirty work. You're willing to stand by and watch as Gabi—” Newest update provided by [find\[N\]ovel.net](http://find[<u>N</u>]ovel.net)

I stopped myself, chest tightening, the thought of Gabi trapped in whatever hell the coven had put her in overwhelming my words.

Lia tugged at my arm, pulling me away from the edge. Her grip was firm but gentle like she was trying to bring me back from the precipice. “Let me ask my magic teacher. I haven’t explained much of the situation to her, and I wanted to keep some things private, but I think it’s time I told her. She might be able to help.”

“Are you sure?” I asked, my voice rough, eyes darting to hers. “She’s-she’s not going to be willing to get involved either, is she?”

Lia nodded, her expression serious. “She might be our best option. She knows things, things that could help us. It’s worth a shot.”

I hesitated, not wanting to hope for something that might fall apart just as quickly as the rest of this plan had. But what choice did I have? “Okay, fine. Do it.”

Reluctantly, I turned my attention back to the man behind the desk. He was still cowering, but now, he seemed to realize he wasn’t going to get off so easily.

“We aren’t done here,” I warned, my voice barely above a growl. “If you don’t do something if you don’t try to help us, I’ll make sure this comes back to haunt you. Don’t think we’ll forget.”

With that, I stormed out of the room, pulling Lia and Rain along with me. My anger hadn’t abated, but for now, I was just too exhausted to keep fighting the witches who were too scared to stand with us.

I thought back on the memory, almost proud of myself for how I stood up, refusing to back down when I knew I was right. Lia was the one who convinced me to stop and leave with Rain acting as her backup. It was a good thing they were there with me because I don’t know what I would’ve done had someone not been there to reel me back in.

I muttered under my breath, hoping that Lia could come through for us. She seemed pretty sure that she would be able to get her teacher to find out where the Rosewater Coven was hiding out.

This would be our only way to find out where they were hiding. They were a terrible coven, making me wish they hadn’t ever come here to dark our doorstep.

“Colby?” Lia asked, knocking at the door. I looked up from my phone and smiled.

“Hey, Lia.”

She walked with a twinkle in her eye. “I have good news.”

“Please tell me it’s where the Rosewater coven is located.”

“It is.”

I let out a sigh of relief, feeling hope swell inside my chest. It was about time we located where those witches were. “How far from here?”

“This is what you’re never going to believe!” she cried. “They aren’t very far—only about forty minutes from here.”

My eyes narrowed. “Please don’t tell me they have always been here.”

“No, they haven’t. They relocated in the past few years in their search for me and my brother. The coven knew we were in this area, but that was all they knew until recently... obviously.”

The two of us shared a look.

“Lia, you can’t tell Michael.”

“I wouldn’t think of it!” she cried. “He has a right to know but he might try to do something stupid.”

“

I scoffed. “Might? It’s almost guaranteed that he is going to do something stupid if he finds that out.”

## Brother’s Best Friends Are My Mates

Lia

I hated keeping things from anyone, especially my brother. He was the one who was always there for me, never letting me doubt that he cared for me. If I had been in his position then I would’ve wanted to have the same information, even if it wasn’t something I should know.

But sometimes you can’t prevent someone from discovering something. No matter how hard you try, they will find out and do something stupid.

This is exactly what happened when I got home from school that evening. I spotted my brother in a situation I never expected to see him in.

The moment I stepped into the house, my stomach twisted. Michael was slumped against the couch, blood staining his shirt and dripping onto the floor.

“Michael!” I rushed to his side, my voice sharp with panic. “What happened? Are you okay?!”

“I’m fine.” He groaned, shifting slightly.

“Fine? You’re bleeding everywhere!” I grabbed the nearest towel and pressed it to his side.  
“Who did this to you? What happened?” Chapters first released on find·novel·net

“It’s nothing,” he muttered, his jaw tight.

“Nothing? This doesn’t look like anything! Start talking, Michael.”

“Drop it, Lia.”

“No! Not when you look like you’ve been through a blender. What did you do?”

He stayed silent, staring ahead.

“Michael!” I shook his shoulder gently, careful not to hurt him. “I swear if you don’t tell me,”

“Lia, leave it alone,” he snapped, his voice harsher than I’d ever heard it.

I froze, my chest tightening. “Don’t you dare shut me out? Not when you’re like this. I’m not leaving until you tell me what’s going on.”

He let out a long breath, his shoulders sagging.

“Michael.” My voice softened. “Please. You’re scaring me.”

“It’s Gabi,” he said finally, his voice low and raw.

“What about Gabi?” I whispered.

“I found out you guys know where the Rosewater Coven is,” he admitted. “I went to try and get her back.”

My heart skipped a beat. “You what? Michael, are you insane?”

“I couldn’t just sit here anymore!” His eyes flashed with frustration. “She’s out there, Lia, and they’re-“

“So, you thought you’d go alone and... what? Take on a whole coven by yourself?”

He turned his head away.

“Michael!” My voice cracked. “Why didn’t you tell me? Or anyone? We could have helped you!”

“I didn’t want you involved,” he said through gritted teeth.

“Well, congratulations. I’m involved now,” I shot back, tears burning my eyes. “You could’ve been killed. Do you even care about that? About what that would do to me?”

He flinched. “I care, Lia. That’s why I didn’t tell you. I couldn’t risk it.”

“You couldn’t risk me? Michael, you’re bleeding out on our couch because you decided to play hero!”

“I had to try,” he murmured, his voice barely audible.

“And what happened? Did you even find her?”

His silence spoke volumes.

I swallowed hard, my throat tight. “You didn’t. Did you?”

“No,” he admitted, his voice cracking. “But I will. I’ll find her, Lia.”

“You won’t do it alone,” I said firmly. “Not again.”

“I can’t ask you to-“

“You’re not asking. I’m telling you,” I cut him off. “You’re my brother, Michael. You don’t get to do this alone anymore.”

For a moment, he said nothing, just stared at me with those tired, haunted eyes. Then he gave the faintest nod.

“Okay,” he whispered.

“Good,” I said, my voice trembling. “Now let me clean you up before you bleed out completely.”

I fetched the first aid kit, taking care of my brother’s wounds. It wasn’t as bad as it looked, thank god. Michael didn’t say much, hissing in pain when I started to clean the wound with antiseptic. He was a good sport about it, not saying another thing until I had bandaged it.

“You mad at me aren’t you?”

I glared at him. “What do you think, Michael? Am I going to be thrilled that you took off on your own to go confront an entire witches coven on your own?!”

“You guys were the ones hiding it from me,” Michael muttered, but he didn’t sound angry. He almost sounded like he understood why we had been so insistent on keeping it from him.

I started cleaning the smaller wounds, wanting to make sure they were taken care of. Werewolves did have fast healing properties but it was never worth taking any risk.

“We hid it from you because we were afraid that you might do this,” I muttered, gesturing to his wounds.

He leaned against the couch, swallowing visibly.

“I saw a glimpse of her.”

I paled. “How was she?”

“She looked well. They have been taking care of her but that doesn’t change the fact that they kidnapped my mate. My pregnant mate.”

“What happened when you got there?”

Michael huffed. “I threatened to tear their throats out so they hit me with some magic. They could’ve caused more damage if they wanted to, but instead, they just caused this damage to give me a warning.

It was scarier to think they constrained their powers and let Michael off with a warning. This meant they were capable of so much more.

“I’m still cross with you,” I said to my brother, glaring at him. “You could’ve gotten yourself killed.”

He shrugged. “I had to do something. Sitting around doing nothing was driving me crazy. What else did you expect from me?”

“I expected you to be smart about it,” I told Michael, going so far as to flick him roughly in the forehead. “What if they had decided to kill you?”

“I don’t think they would’ve gone that far because if they killed me then any claim they had to our child would be gone.”

He was right. I think this was the scariest part of it all.

“We do have a plan, Michael. If you had just waited to talk with us then we would’ve been able to tell you about it.”

His brows furrowed, hope flashing in his eyes. I didn’t think I would ever see hope flash in his eyes again. For over a week now Michael had looked devastated, as if someone had let the air out of his tires.

It was the brother I had grown up with—the one who was never one to give up even in times of difficulty.

“Rain is looking for his family clan. He hopes that if we appeal to them they will help.”

“Why would a vampire clan help us?” Michael asked, rolling his eyes. “They have no loyalty to us. Would they even want to help a half-vampier anyway?”

I frowned. “Michael, must you be so negative? You don’t know that they won’t be willing to help.”

“And you don’t know that they will.”

My brother was being impossible. The hope I saw reflected on his face was gone, replaced by anger and resignation. I hated to see that look on his face.

It meant he was accepting things for the way they were, not willing to fight.

“Vampires have magic that is even more ancient than witchcraft itself, Michael. They are also very loyal, even if the person is half a vampire or has 1/3rd vampiric blood,” I said to him. “And before you roll your eyes at me, this is what I learned during my research.”

Michael shifted, leaning a little closer to me. He looked to be a little more interested in what I was saying, willing to give it a little more credence.

“What makes you think they will do what our werewolf association won’t do?”

“Wolves aren’t as in touch with magic as the other species are,” I pointed out, trying not to sound disappointed.

The only reason this didn’t apply to me was because I happened to be part witch. I was able to practice magic and was learning more every day. My teacher remarked every day that she was shocked at how fast I had been learning.

Most times, I took it as a compliment.

“I won’t do something like this again, Lia.”

I reached over to flick him in the forehead again.

“You better not do it again or you’ll be sorry.”

He smiled, even though it didn’t reach his eyes. Michael reached over to ruffle my hair, something he often did when I was young.

“Don’t worry, I won’t do this again. I promise.”

Despite how defeated Michael looked, he did sound a bit hopeful. He kept waffling in between both emotions.

I wasn’t going to criticize him for it. He was going through enough as it was.

# Brother's Best Friends Are My Mates

Rain

My dad's records were what helped me learn the name of the clan my family used to belong to. They were the Nightshade Eclipse, an impressive name for what was a clan that went back centuries. I was shocked to learn that, but thrilled. It was exactly what we needed.

If they were this old then they had to know some ancient vampiric magic that we would be able to use to help our situation. Jesse must've heard me hollering in excitement because he burst into the room, holding... a spiked bat.

"Jesse, my dude, where the hell did you get that bat?"

"I made it," he said, eyes darting around the room. "What is going on? I heard you shouting."

I coughed. "It was shouts of excitement, Jesse. I just learned the name of the clan my family used to belong to!"

Jesse closed the distance between us, looking me in the eyes. I balked, taking a few steps back until I hit the wall.

Fuck I was trapped with Jesse who looked mad. It was hard to tell with him but when you could tell it meant you should run for the hills and hide out until the end of time.

"Rain, I thought you were hurt. Don't do that again."

"Next time I'll say I'm screaming because I'm excited."

Jesse pinched the bridge of his nose.

Lately, everyone was on edge. We weren't biting each other's heads off, but tempers were short and people on edge. I know that if I had heard one of our pack members shouting my mind would've drifted to the worst scenario possible.

But I was fine, adding to Jesse's frustration and relief.

"Fine," Jesse told me. "Make sure you text everyone on the group chat to let them know that we found the clan."

I frowned. "Should we tell Michael given what happened?"

I was still pissed that Michael had done something so stupid. Around here I was known as the spacey one who tended to react first and then ask questions later, but even Michael's actions were too much for me. He could've gotten himself killed, making an already tense situation even worse!

"Yes," Jesse said simply. "He's not going to do something stupid like that again. I will make sure of it."

My eyes drifted back down to the bat. "Jesse, my dude, have you threatened Michael with that?"

"No, but I said I would if I needed to."

I shivered, trying to force myself to laugh. "Okay, well this was a nice talk. I... think I'm going to go text everyone now so they can learn the good news."

"Go on then."

At least Jesse left before I got to it.

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The next day I called up the clan with the number I found. Everyone had modernized themselves, making for easy contact. "Hello, is this the Nightshade Eclipse clan?"

A feminine voice on the other end sighed softly, sounding like she would be anywhere but here answering my question. "Yes, how can I help you?"

Now was my time to shine. I blurted out everything, explaining my situation in a flurry of words. It was important for me to get everything off my chest so they could know what exactly was going on.

"I see," was what she said after I was finished.

I blinked. "Ma'am, what are you trying to say? I don't know how to take that."

"We appreciate you reaching out to us and if you were a member of the clan, chances are the council would agree to help you."

"But?" I asked the word hanging heavily in the air.

I didn't even need her to say it to know it was there.

"You need to be an official member of the clan."

"I thought I was...?"

“Your ancestor was, but you are not,” she told me. “But because you have vampiric blood and had a family member who was a part of our clan, you are eligible to join.”

I felt a renewed sense of hope. “How do I go about joining?”

“You need to pass a trial.”

My stomach dropped. “A trial? Like a trial by combat?”

“That is one part of it.”

I wanted to sink into the ground in despair. Why couldn’t anything ever be easy? It always had to be so difficult!

“Okay, so how do I go signing up for that?”

She laughed. “First you need to give us a chance to confirm that your ancestor was indeed in our clan. This won’t take very long-perhaps only a day or two. Once we confirm it, the council members will give you a trial date. On that day you show up here, complete the trial, and then await our results.”

“It sound so easy...”

“I assure you it’s not.”

It was difficult to not roll my eyes. She may not be on video chat with me but I feel like she might be able to tell I had rolled my eyes at her.

“And if I pass the trial then I become a fully fledged member of the clan, right?”

“Yes and you’ll be able to officially apply for help.”

My pulse started to race. This was exactly what we needed- but there was a downside. It was going to take time and it wasn’t even including the training I was going to have to do.

I couldn’t burst into the Nightshade Eclipse headquarters and just attempt their trial on a whim. This would be foolish. “Thank you, ma’am.”

The first person I wanted to talk to this about was Lia. I shot her a text, hoping she wasn’t in class and had enough time to talk. She would be able to talk me through this, giving me the advice I needed to get through this.

Hey, Lia. Quick question for you. -R

Shoot. -L

How would you feel if I joined the vampire clan? -R

...What? -L

You heard me. The big, scary, immortal, blood-drinking crew. -R

Rain, I know what a vampire clan is. What I don't know is why you're casually bringing this up like you're deciding on what to eat for lunch. -L

Okay, fine, it's not exactly casual. Look, here's the deal: they're willing to help us get Gabi back. But only if I, you know... officially join them. -R

Officially? What does that even mean? Like, they give you a membership card or something? -L

I don't think it's quite that cute. Probably more of a "blood oath" or "ancient ritual" kind of deal. -R

And you're seriously considering this? -L

I mean...yeah. They're our best shot at getting Gabi back. They've got resources, connections, and more power than we could ever dream of. If joining them gets us that kind of leverage, how can I not at least think about it? -R Discover more novels at [OveFind.net](http://OveFind.net)

And you're asking me because...? -L

Because your opinion matters to me, duh. You're my mate. I can't just make a life-altering decision like this without checking with you first. Plus, I figured you'd appreciate a heads-up. You know, so you don't freak out when you see me hanging out with many old-school vampires who probably think they're God's gift to the universe. -R

Oh, so thoughtful of you. Rain, you already have fangs and drink blood. Let's not act like this is a huge leap. -L

Wow. Okay. Rude. -R

It's not rude if it's true. You've been "half-vampire chic" for a while now. This just feels like the logical next step. -L Logical? Do you hear yourself right now? Joining a vampire clan isn't "logical." It's...well, it's complicated. -R

Okay, fine. Complicated. But still, I think you should do it. -L

Just like that? No hesitation? No "Rain, what if they make you their eternal errand boy?" speech? -R

Nope. None of that. Look, Rain, if joining them means we get their help to bring Gabi back, then it's a no-brainer. Gabi is family. We do whatever it takes. -L

Even if it means I have to deal with a bunch of ancient vampires who probably spend their free time brooding and quoting poetry about eternal torment? -R

You already brood, Rain. You'll fit right in. -L

Wow. Someone's feeling extra spicy today. -R

What can I say? I've got a gift. But seriously, Rain, if this is what it takes to bring Gabi home, I'm behind you one hundred percent. -L

I just wanted to make sure you were okay with it. I didn't want you to think I was abandoning you or something. -R Abandoning me? Please. Rain, you couldn't get rid of me if you tried. We're in this together, no matter what. -L

Thanks, Lia. That means a lot. -R

Always. Just promise me one thing. -L

What's that? -R

If they try to make you wear a cape, you have to say no. -L

No promises. -R

I smiled to myself. She was such a great mate and I thanked the gods every day that she had been willing to give me another chance.

## Brother's Best Friends Are My Mates

Matt

It should be a good feeling to know we are one step closer to getting Gabi back and stopping the Rosewater clan for good, but instead, all I can think about is how out of place I feel. I felt this a lot growing up, thinking I never quite fit in with the rest of my family.

My father always made it clear that he thought I didn't live up to his standards. It made me angry, wanting to try to get him to notice me, but eventually I stopped giving a fuck. He was perfectly fine with ignoring me—until it became clear that I might leave the pack.

He couldn't live with the fact that I might no longer be a part of the clan. How dare I, his son, do such a thing? But I pushed ahead thanks to the help of my at the time future pack. They proved to me I didn't need to do anything but be true to myself.

Cheesy advice, but it worked for me.

However, now everything was changing. Gabi was gone and Michael was a shadow of his former self. Rain was off training to join a vampire clan while Lia was learning magic.

Then where was Colby, our new pack leader? I wouldn't want to be the pack leader and never thought of even tossing my name into the ring. Colby was the one who fit the position perfectly.

But it was a change.

Jesse was the only one who remained the same. The thing is when it came to Jesse, he was strong, never letting anyone get the better of him.

I wasn't like that though.

This was why I went for a walk in the backyard that overlooked some woods. Sometimes, you need to go for a walk to clear your mind and I was at that place.

"Matt, I'm joining you for a walk," Jesse announced, catching me off guard.

I jumped ten feet in the air, looking around with wild eyes.

"Jesse, when the fuck did you even get here?"

"I've been following you for the past five minutes," Jesse announced, tilting his head to the side. "How did you not notice me?"

My lip curled wards into the beginning of a snarl.

"I was distracted by my thoughts, Jesse. We can't always be attuned to the world like you are."

Jesse shrugged. "Well, let's go for this walk so you can clear your mind of whatever it's on."

The two of us walked for a while until I decided I'd had enough of walking. My mind was still wandering, the thoughts weighing on me heavily.

I sat on the edge of a log, staring into the trees. "I don't know what I'm doing anymore, Jesse. Rain and Lia are out there training, Colby's the pack leader now, and I'm just... here. Useless. I can't even figure out how to help Gabi after she got kidnapped. What's the point of me being around?"

Jesse leaned against a tree, arms crossed, his expression unreadable. "You're going to sit here and whine about it?"

My head shot up, eyes narrowing. "Wow. Thanks for that. Supportive."

“I’m not here to pat you on the back, Matt. You don’t need it.”

“Oh, don’t I?” I snapped, my voice dripping with sarcasm. “Because clearly, I’ve got it all figured out.”

“You don’t, but sitting here feeling sorry for yourself isn’t going to fix anything.”

I frowned, shoulders sagging. “Easy for you to say. You’re always so sure of yourself. What do I even do? I’m not a leader like Colby. I’m not a fighter like Rain. Hell, I’m not even as good with strategy as Lia. What’s left for me?”

“Then figure it out,” Jesse said bluntly.

“Wow, great advice,” I said, throwing up my hands. “Super helpful. Why didn’t I think of that?”

Jesse pushed off the tree and stepped closer, his piercing gaze locking onto mine. “You want someone to tell you who you are? That’s not how it works. You’ve always been good at keeping everyone grounded. The glue that holds this messed-up group together. You don’t have to be Colby or Rain or Lia. You just have to be you.”

I scoffed, looking away. “Being me doesn’t feel like enough right now.”

“Then stop feeling sorry for yourself and make it enough.” Jesse’s voice didn’t waver. “Gabi’s out there, probably scared and waiting for someone to help her. Do you think she cares if you’re not a leader or a fighter? She needs you, Matt. Not some version of you you’re trying to measure up to.”

I looked down at my hands, my voice quiet. “What if I screw it up?”

“You probably will,” Jesse said with a shrug. “But you’ll get back up and try again. That’s what you do, Matt.”

I glanced up, studying Jesse’s expression. “You always this blunt?”

“Pretty much.”

A small laugh escaped me, and I shook my head. “Thanks. I needed that. You’re kind of an ass, you know.” “Yeah, but I’m right,” Jesse said, smirking. “Now, are you done moping, or do I have to drag you out of here?” This content belongs to Find1Novel.net

I stood, brushing dirt off my hands. “I guess I’m done.”

“Good.” Jesse motioned toward the trail. “Now let’s get moving. We’ve got work to do.”

I smiled, faint but genuine. “Thanks, Jesse.”

“Don’t mention it,” Jesse smirked over his shoulder. “Seriously, don’t mention it. I have a reputation to protect.”

It was always strange talking to Jesse. He could be intimidating one moment, but then give you a pep talk the next. He had been this way since he was young and I doubted he would ever change.

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Jesse

Matt was a mess. I couldn’t understand why he kept letting his former pack get to him, allowing them to control the narrative. They were far behind him in the past and had nothing to do with our pack.

The first time I met Matt’s father I didn’t like him. Even though I was a young child, he stared me down as if he were trying to intimidate me; a child.

I didn’t hesitate. Though I was in the single digits, I kept his gaze, refusing to look away. Matt’s father looked almost impressed, glancing over at Matt and scoffing.

“Why can’t you be more like him?” Matt’s father asked, gesturing to me.

After that day, I tempered my reactions a bit because I didn’t want Matt to look bad due to my actions.

Matt never held it against me or blamed me for anything. I respected that, but would understand if he was angry enough with me to lash out.

Seeing him that afternoon during our walk was no surprise. He was bound to experience this level of downturn after everything he had experienced.

I told him how it was, refusing to sugarcoat anything. My advice could be harsh and straightforward, but I felt this was the best thing for Matt.

“We should train together,” I told Matt during our walk back to the house.

Matt balked. “Are you going to use that bat with the spikes on it? I don’t think I’m ready for that, Jesse.”

I threw my head back and laughed. The effect was quick; Matt jerked away from me, staring at me with wide eyes. A smirk flashed across my face. It was good that I could strike fear into people by just laughing,

“No, noi spiked bats will be involved. We’ll do hand to hand combat. It’s not like we haven’t sparred before,” I pointed out to him, tilting me head to the side. “Are you afraid to fight with me?”

He huffed. “I am not afraid to fight with you.”

“Trust that I wouldn’t kill you. Hurt you yes, but never lill or seriously injure you.’

“Jesse, that is not as comforting as you think it is.”

I tilted my head to the side. “It’s not like I was trying to be comforting. Don’t think I have it in me.”

“Come on, Jesse, don’t sell yourself short. You do have it in you. What you do is deny it.”

Now I was even looking more forward to kicking his ass.

“Why don’t we spar now?” I asked, smiling at Matt.

Matt didn’t take the bait this time. He didn’t shiver and kept my gaze, which wasn’t that difficult. We were practically the same height.

“Fine, let’s go,” he said, eyeing me up and down.

I grinned.

This was going to be fun.

## **Brother’s Best Friends Are My Mates**

Lia

I’ve been working my butt off at school and magic lessons, barely having time to breathe. My usual time I wake up is now well before the crack of dawn. It’s strange getting out of bed before the sun has even risen in the sky.

The last time I got up this early... well, I don’t think I ever did! Even when I was in my last year of high school I stayed in until the sun started to rise. There was just something unnatural in being awake before the sun has risen.

But this time I don’t have this luxury.

All of us have been pushing ourselves. With Michael still recovering, it’s up to us to get Gabi back.

I thought Michael would heal faster, but the witches must’ve put something in the spell to specifically affect lycan blood. Sneaky coven, I thought.

My teacher said that a good witch considered everything when they were creating a spell. Nothing was off limits because if it was then they could risk dying. She was tough and didn't fail to pull any punches if I screwed up, but I appreciated her candor. It was helping me learn magic at an ever faster right.

A yawn escaped me as I rolled out of bed, heading downstairs. I bumped into Rain who looked to resemble a zombie. "Rain... are you alive?"

He blinkerd slowly, heavy black circles under his eyes. "Huh?"

"I guess your not alive. Are you a zombie now?"

"Mmh."

I stifled a giggle. "Let me go get some human brains for you. I hear they are all the rage for zombies."

"Wait, what?" Rain cried, looking at me with a horrified expression. "I don't want ot eat human brains, Lia! That seems a step to far!"

"Rain, I'm teasing. I was just trying to gauge how aware of everything you are right now."

He groaned. "I hate getting up this early. "It should be evil to be awake this early-do you think I should just give up training this early?"

My eyebrows shot up. "Rain, wouldn't that defeat the purpose of you joining the vampire clan?"

"Okay, that's true," he muttered. "How is your magic training going by the way?"

I sighed. "It's going."

The two of us eventually did go our separate ways. With all my mates being busy, Simone offered to drive me home and even stay around for awhile so the two of us could spend some quality time together.

"It's bullshit!" I snapped, pacing the room so hard the floorboards creaked under my feet. "They're just washing their hands of it because they can hide behind the legality of the blood oath. That's all this is a convenient excuse to do nothing."

Simone leaned back against the wall, arms crossed and her expression annoyingly calm. "Yeah. But honestly? Fine. Let them sit this one out. It just means we handle it ourselves."

I stopped mid-step. "Are you serious? You're okay with this? Do you even realize what we're up against?"

“Of course I do,” she said, her tone even. “And that’s why I’m saying it’s fine. We’ve always had to handle things on our own.

What’s one more fight?”

“One more fight?” I repeated, laughing bitterly. “This isn’t some schoolyard scuffle, Simone. This is centuries of entrenched power and tradition, backed by people who’d rather see us dead than let us challenge them.”

“Yeah,” she said simply, pushing off the wall and stepping closer to me. “So what? We’ve dealt with worse.”

“How can you say that? Worse? Name one thing worse than this.”

She tilted her head, a faint smirk tugging at the corner of her lips. “Lia, you’re standing here, alive, after everything we’ve been through. Do you need me to list it? We survived betrayals, ambushes, people trying to take everything from us-and every time, we came out stronger.” The rightful source is [OvelFind.net](https://www.OvelFind.net)

“Those were different.” I shook my head, fists clenching at my sides. “This... this feels impossible.”

Simone rolled her eyes. “Nothing’s impossible. Hard? Sure. Risky? Definitely. But impossible? Not with us.”

“You’re too calm about this,” I muttered, my voice tight with frustration.

“And you’re too angry,” she shot back. “Channel it. Use it. But don’t let it control you. Because here’s the truth, whether you like it or not: no one is coming to save us. So, we save ourselves.”

“This isn’t just some noble fight we can take on alone, Simone. This... it’s not just a fight, it’s...” My voice wavered as I struggled to put it into words.

“It’s a mess,” she said to me. “A massive, terrifying, overwhelming mess. But it’s our mess, and that means it’s ours to clean up. And we will. Just like we always do.”

“You believe that?” I asked, my voice barely above a whisper.

“I do.” She smiled, soft but sure. “Because I know us. And when we decide to do something, there’s no stopping us. Not the werewolves, not the witches, not anyone. It’s just a matter of whether you’re ready to stop pacing and start acting.”

I stared at her. “You make it sound so simple.”

“It is simple,” she said, stepping closer. “Not easy. Never easy. But simple. It’s us. And we don’t stop until it’s done.” A shaky laugh escaped me as I rubbed my temples. “You’re ridiculous.”

“And you’re stubborn. It’s why we work so well together.”

I sighed, finally letting some of my anger seep out of me. “Fine. We’ll do it ourselves. But if this goes to hell, I’m blaming

you.”

“Deal,” she said, grinning as she turned toward the door. “Now let’s stop wasting time and get to work.”

## Brother’s Best Friends Are My Mates

Lia

Even though Simone and I said we were going to get to work, we also realized that there was such a thing as a break. Myself, in particular, needed a break. I was working so hard and could barely breathe.

The only thing on my mind was Gabi and the pup. They needed to get back home before she gave birth because then there would be no chance of getting the babies back.

I can’t imagine how my brother would react to not having the baby. Hell, how would Gabi react knowing she is giving birth and can’t keep her own child?

It’s sick as what it is, but this is exactly what I’m not supposed to be thinking about. I am supposed to be thinking about more pleasant things... such as relaxation.

When I walked down to join everyone for breakfast, I was surprised to see my brother there. He was almost fully healed... physically at least. Emotionally he was a mess so I thought he would still be in bed, refusing to leave the nest he had created for himself.

With a shaky breath, I cleared my throat... only to get no response.

Everyone kept going on with their morning routine, eating and talking amongst themselves.

“Guys, I have something to say.”

Still, nothing. My left eyebrow twitched and it was difficult to hold back my anger.

“Do I need to scream?”

Again nothing.

Wow, this was not something I was used to. Usually, these guys were hanging on my every word, always willing to give attention to what I was saying. Perhaps I was being a bit self-involved, but this was how the guys had been since it was discovered we were mates.

Still hard to believe how much time had passed! I looked at all four of them, adoration swelling up inside me, but if they were going to keep ignoring me then it was going to get dicey.

“Guys!” I shouted, slamming my hands down on the table.

The plates and glasses clattered from the force of my hitting the table. Everyone turned to look at me, eyes wide. Michael looked a little startled to see his normally quiet little sister reacting in such a way.

I took a deep breath, trying to keep my voice steady. “I know this sounds ridiculous, but we need a walk. All of us.”

Rain gave me one of his trademark raised eyebrows, arms folded as he leaned back in his chair. “A walk? You do know Gabi’s still missing, right?”

The weight of that reminder hit me like a ton of bricks, but I stood my ground. “Of course I do!” My arms crossed tightly over my chest. “But we’re no good to her like this. We’re exhausted, snapping at each other, and making dumb decisions. If we keep going like this, we’ll screw everything up.”

Colby tilted his chair back on two legs, balancing precariously as he frowned at me. “And you think a walk is going to magically fix all that?”

“No,” I admitted, locking eyes with him, “but it’ll help us clear our heads. A reset. We need it.”

I turned to Michael, who sat silently with his arms crossed, his gaze fixed on some invisible point on the wall. “Michael? You’re coming too.”

His frown deepened, and he didn’t even bother looking at me. “I don’t need a walk.”

“Too bad,” I shot back, planting my hands on my hips. “You’re coming. No arguments.” Rain snickered, his lips twitching into a half-smile. “She’s bossy when she’s stressed.” “She’s bossy all the time,” Matt muttered under his breath, just loud enough for me to hear.

I turned my glare on him, sharp and cutting. “I heard that.”

Matt raised his hands in mock surrender, grinning despite the tension in the room.

“Now, get up. All of you,” I ordered, my tone leaving no room for argument.

To my absolute shock, Michael stood up first, his movements slow and deliberate. “Fine. Let’s go.”

The rain froze mid-snicker, staring at Michael like he'd grown a second head. "Wait, what? You're agreeing? Just like that?"

Michael shrugged, his tone flat and unbothered. "Do you want me to argue?"

Colby let his chair drop back to all four legs with a loud thud, smirking as he stood up. "This might be the first time I've seen you voluntarily do something that isn't work or punching something."

Michael's jaw tightened, and he turned to Colby with a sharp look. "Don't push it."

Matt groaned dramatically, stretching his arms over his head as he stood. "If Michael's in, I guess I don't have much of a choice. Let's get this over with."

I couldn't help the small grin tugging at my lips as I opened the door. "Great. Let's go."

The cool evening air hit us the moment we stepped outside, the crisp breeze tugging at my hair. For the first time in days, the suffocating tension that had wrapped around my chest seemed to loosen just a little.

We walked in silence for the first few minutes, the only sounds coming from our footsteps crunching on the gravel and the faint rustle of leaves overhead.

"You know," Rain said finally, his voice breaking the quiet. "This isn't so bad. Kind of nice."

"See?" I said, glancing over my shoulder at him with a smug smile. "Told you."

Michael, walking a few steps behind me, gave me a sidelong glance. "Don't let it go to your head."

"No promises," I replied, the tiniest hint of a grin playing on my lips.

Colby slowed his pace, his gaze drifting to the horizon where the sun was beginning to dip below the trees. His voice, softer than usual, cut through the quiet. "We'll get her back, Michael. You know that, right?"

Michael didn't answer immediately, his jaw tightening as his hands balled into fists at his sides. For a moment, I thought he wasn't going to respond at all. But then he gave a small nod, his voice low and steady. "Yeah. I know."

The weight in his tone hung in the air, but it was lighter than before.

Rain kicked a rock down the path, his expression unusually thoughtful. "When we do, she's probably going to give us hell for taking so long."

I chuckled softly, my heart aching at the thought. "That sounds like Gabi."

“Yeah,” Matt added, his voice surprisingly warm. “She’d probably yell at us for wasting time on a walk instead of finding her.”

Michael let out a quiet huff of air, almost a laugh, but not quite. “Then we better make it count.”

For the first time in what felt like forever, there was a flicker of hope among us. And as we continued walking, the air seemed just a little lighter, the horizon just a little brighter.

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Colby

My joints ached. Hell, parts of my body ached that I didn’t know could ache.

I had been helping Rain train because as alpha of the pack, I felt it was my duty to help. Plus, he specifically came to me and asked if I would be willing to help him.

Rain threw himself down onto my bed, causing the mattress to bounce. I glared at him, not appreciating the sudden movement.

“Rain, what the fuck?”

“I need to ask you a favor.” Newest update provided by [find·novel·net](#)

My right eyebrow shot up. “Okay, what kind of favor?”

“Will you help me train?”

“Train... how?”

Rain blurted out the entire situation, explaining everything that had gone on with the vampire clan he reached out to. Or his vampire clan. I remember how excited he was when he found the clan. Then they wanted him to go through some sort of trial, but I didn’t know what that meant until now.

“So it’s a fight.”

He nodded. “Basically. I wish it was like Fight Club where you just kick each other’s asses but chill out afterward.”

“Rain, have you ever seen Fight Club?”

“... no.”

“Yeah, I didn’t think so. That’s not the point of the book,” I said, shaking my head in disbelief. “Anyway, of course, I’ll help. When do you want to start?”

“I... don’t know. We can start now if you want?”

I sighed. “Rain, we have to go to rugby practice.”

He winced, his face scrunching up dramatically. “I don’t know how you guys are juggling being on the team right now. For me, it feels like I can barely keep my head above water!”

“You’re not even on the team,” I said, rolling my eyes.

“Exactly!” he shot back, throwing his hands up. “And yet, I’m drowning in stress. How do you two do it?”

“Years of practice and sheer willpower,” I said dryly. “How about tonight?”

Rain groaned loudly and threw himself onto his stomach dramatically as the world had just ended.

“Yes,” he mumbled into my blanket. “I suppose that will work.”

“Suppose?” I asked, yanking the pillow out from under his face. “Do you want my help or not?”

He flopped onto his back, tossing an arm over his eyes. “Yes, yes, I do. You’re a lifesaver. My knight in shining armor. My-” “Don’t push it,” I warned, smirking.

Rain peeked at me from under his arm. “Too late. You’re already committed.”

I tossed the pillow back at him, smacking him in the face. “Committed to kicking your ass in training later, maybe.”

He laughed, catching the pillow and hugging it to his chest. “Good. I could use a good ass-kicking. Builds character.”

“Keep talking, and I’ll make sure it’s extra thorough.”

Rain grinned, his eyes gleaming with mischief. “Can’t wait.”

Rain had come a long way since we started practicing. But Lia had been right. We did need this break.

If only it could last for more than just a few hours.

## **Brother’s Best Friends Are My Mates**

Rain

Fuck I was a nervous wreck.

I had been training for... what felt like weeks. Bulking up and trying to make sure my skills were sharp and fresh.

It brought me to this point; waiting in the lobby of the clan's headquarters waiting to be called up for my trial. Everyone had come with me and was sitting beside me, wanting to make sure I had support. I kept flashing nervous smiles in their direction, hoping they wouldn't pick up how nervous I was but they had to see it.

Everyone always loved to tell me I was the type of person who wore their heart on their sleeve. It was exhausting that I lived that way, but I didn't know any other way to be.

"Rain, you're sweating bullets," Lia whispered to me.

I paled. "Am I?"

"Yes and you look pale," Colby pointed out. "If your goal is to look more like a vampire; good news. You've done it!"

The laugh bubbled out of my throat before I could stop myself. I threw my head back and started cracking up laughing. It drew the attention of several people nearby, causing them to cast me some dirty looks.

"Hey, I find enjoyment in life! Why is that a crime all of a sudden?"

Lia shook her head. "It's not a problem if you want to showcase your joy but you are causing a bit of a scene, Rain."

"It's helping me calm down," I admitted, sinking further into my seat. "If I don't express joy then I'll end up babbling about pointless shit and Jesse will tell me to shut up. You know how he can get when I babble--"

"Rain?" Jesse asked, tone flat.

I whimpered. "Yes?"

"Be quiet."

"See?!" I exclaimed, even going so far as to jump to my feet and glare at him.

But I realized the scene I was making so I sat down, trying to ignore the looks that even my packmates were giving me.

The five of us sat there, trying to pass the time until they called out my name. I shifted., unable to think of anything else except the impending trial I was going to have to complete. Lia reached out to pat my hand, running her soft thumbs over my knuckles.

“It’ll be okay, Rain. Just think positively!”

I paled. “I think if I try to think positively I might try to psych myself out or something.

Then they called my name. I stiffened, looking at Lia. She smiled, giving me a thumbs-up gesture.

“Go on. You can do it.”

With a shaky breath, I decided it was time to get up and attempt this trial.

I could do it.

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I couldn’t do it.

With tears in my eyes, I walked back out into the waiting area and was unable to meet anyone’s gaze. They looked at me, somber looks on all their faces.

“I didn’t get in.”

Lia pulled me into a gentle hug, rubbing my back.

“It’ll be okay, Rain. Can’t you try again?”

I nodded. “I can, but I was supposed to do it the first time!”

What if I were to fail a second time? That meant I only had one last attempt and if I failed the third time there would be no more attempts for me.

I stared straight ahead, refusing to look at anyone but the wall.

Shame was mostly what I was feeling now. A hell of a lot of shame, but there was nothing I could do about it.

I had to tell my mother. She was the one person who would understand.

The other people who had tried got in, but I didn’t. It was... more than a little embarrassing.

“Did you see everyone else who attempted the trial?” I asked in the car.

Everyone gazed at me with different expressions. Jesse’s was natural as usual while Lia and Colby looked sympathetic. Matt looked angry on my behalf.

“Yeah and they probably cheated or something,” Matt grumbled. “How is it fair that you are held on the same level they are when you’re the one who just found out he was a vampire?”

I huffed. “Yeah I think that’s a good point but there’s nothing I can do about it now. Either I pass their trial or I don’t get in the clan.”

During the drive, I texted my mom hoping to get her input and support.

Hey, Mom. I tried the clan initiation today. Didn’t make it.

R

That’s okay, sweetheart. I’m so proud of you for trying. These things take time, and it’s all part of the journey. Every step is progress, even if it doesn’t feel that way right now.

M

It doesn’t feel okay. I let everyone down. I trained so hard, and I thought I was ready for this.

R

You didn’t let anyone down, Rain. Not a single person. The fact that you put yourself out there and gave it your all is something so many people wouldn’t even dare to do. That courage you showed? That’s what matters. The outcome doesn’t define you.

M

It just feels like I’ll never get there. Like I’m stuck, no matter how hard I push myself. I thought I was better than this, but maybe I’m just not good enough.

R

Rain, listen to me. You are not stuck, and you are more than good enough. This is a challenge—one of many you’ll face. But challenges aren’t walls to stop you; they’re mountains to climb. And every step you take, even if it’s hard, is bringing you closer to the top. You’re not failing—you’re growing stronger, whether you see it or not.

M

They said I could retake the test as many times as I wanted, but it doesn’t feel like it’ll make a difference. What if I just keep failing? What if I never get there?

R

What if you do? Rain, the only way you fail is if you give up entirely. Every stumble, every misstep-it's all part of the process. It's not a straight path; it's a winding road. And guess what? You're walking it. That's what counts. Success isn't about never falling-it's about getting back up every single time.

M

But it's so embarrassing, Mom. Everyone else passed on their first try that was there.

R

Rain, you've never been a joke, not once in your life. And comparing yourself to everyone else won't do you any good. They're on their journeys, and so are you. You're not meant to follow in someone else's footsteps; you're meant to create your own. And you're doing it, even if it doesn't feel that way right now. Gabi, your dad, Uncle Jace-they'd never laugh at you. They know how hard this is. They've been where you are. You're not alone.

M

I still feel like I'm behind, though. No matter what I do, I'll always be playing catch-up.

R

You're not behind, sweetheart. You're climbing higher than you realize. The reason it feels so hard is because you're pushing yourself beyond what you thought you could do. That takes real courage and strength. It's not supposed to be easy, but that's what makes it meaningful.

M

But what if I fail again? What if I'm just not cut out for this?

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And what if you don't fail? What if this time, you pass? Rain, even if you stumble, that doesn't mean it's the end. It means you're one step closer. Each time you try, you're learning and growing. And if you keep going, you will get there. I believe in you with all my heart.

M

Thanks, Mom. You always know what to say. But it still feels so hard. Like... like I'm not where I'm supposed to be. Like I'm stuck.

R

Rain, you're not stuck-you're growing. And growth doesn't always feel like progress. Sometimes it's messy. Sometimes it feels slow. But it's still progress. Stop looking at where you think you should be, and take a moment to see how far you've already come. That's what matters. Every step forward is a victory.

M

It's not easy, though. It's so hard.

R

Sweetheart, it's not supposed to be easy. Nothing worth having ever is. But I know you, and I know how strong you are. I've seen you face challenges head-on, even when they seemed impossible. You've got a fire inside you, Rain. Trust it. Let it guide you, one step at a time. You're going to get through this-I'm sure of it.

M

Thanks, Mom. You always make me feel a little less like a failure.

R

That's because you're not a failure. You're a fighter, Rain. Fighters don't quit when things get tough. They dig deep, find their strength, and keep going. And that's exactly what you're doing. I'm so proud of you, and I always will be.

M

Okay. I'll try again. I promise.

R

That's all I needed to hear. And remember, sweetheart, this is just one chapter in your story. You'll pass that test, and when you do, it'll be because you earned it. Not for anyone else for yourself.

M

Thanks, Mom. I love you.

R

I love you more, Rain. Now get some rest. You've got a mountain to conquer, and I know you will-one way or another.

M

# Brother's Best Friends Are My Mates

Rain

Three days later I had recovered enough to call the clan again to book a second attempt. I had a long talk with my mates about it. They said I should do it not just for Gabi, but also myself.

That was part of the reason I was doing this. I wanted to see this through so I could explore my vampire identity. For so long it felt like I didn't fully fit in with the werewolf world.

Now I knew why! THIS CHAPTER IS UPDATE BY find◆novel.net

I asked Lia if she felt the same when it came to her magic. She nodded, telling me that she felt the same way.

Lia was sitting beside me right now, holding my hands and trying to silently urge me to call the number. With a shaky sigh, I dialed the number and hoped for the best.

"Hello, this is Rain. I'm trying to reach someone from the Nightshade Eclipse Council."

"You've reached one of the council heads. How can I assist you today?"

"I wanted to talk about my trial. I know I didn't pass, but I was wondering if there's any way I could attempt it again. I've been thinking about it a lot, and I want another shot."

"Ah, I understand. First of all, let me reassure you that failure in the trial is not the end of your journey. Many before you have faced similar setbacks, and in fact, it's common to falter during the first attempt. The trial is designed to do more than test mere physical strength; it pushes your patience, adaptability, and resilience. It's a process, not a single moment of judgment. You are not the first to inquire about a second chance, and I can guarantee you won't be the last."

"So... you're saying there's still a chance for me? I can still try again?"

"Absolutely. Each member of the council is allowed up to three attempts to complete the trial. No more, no less. The reason we allow three chances is because we understand that growth doesn't happen overnight. Sometimes, a person may need time to reflect, adjust, and make the necessary changes before they're ready to take on the trial again. The road to success is rarely linear. We see potential in you, Rain, and we want to help you realize that potential fully. The fact that you're reaching out now is a step in the right direction."

"Three attempts? That's good to know. I'm relieved that I haven't used them all up yet. I thought I might have missed my chance after failing the first time."

“You’re far from missing your opportunity. There’s no need to feel rushed or pressured. The trials aren’t about impressing us or proving anything to the council—they’re about proving to yourself what you’re capable of. If you’re ready to face the challenge again, we’ll be here to support you every step of the way. But I urge you to take your time. Don’t rush into your second attempt out of impatience. Reflect on what happened during the first trial, and think about how you might approach things differently next time. The second attempt, while challenging, can often be the most rewarding. It’s when true growth begins.”

I hung up the phone and looked at Lia.

“That guy is extremely profound,” I whispered, causing her to laugh. “Are all vampires profound like that?”

She laughed. “I think it’s always been a trait that people associate with vampires. They are wise because of how long they can live.”

“Holy shit do you think my life is going to be extended because my vampiric blood has been awakened? I think that means I might be able to stay sexy.”

Lia made a face. “Rain, never say that again.”

“Sorry, I got a big overboard.

“That’s an understatement.”

And so the training began.

No trial was the same so the vampire attending it couldn’t know what to expect. There had to be an element of surprise otherwise everyone would know how to cheat the system.

Everyone was helping me train this time, even Michael who seemed to have this renewed sense of hope. But he made sure to tell me that there was no pressure. If I couldn’t get into the clan then we would find some other way to get Gabi back.

He said that but I still felt like there was pressure on me, something I was putting entirely on myself.

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The trial was a blur to me. One moment I was standing up and the next I was knocked down, unable to comprehend what was happening.

But I heard that little voice in my head shouting at me to get up.

Fuck, I couldn’t let this trial end like this. I had to get up and fight through this!

With a groan, I stumbled to my feet. My body protested, but the adrenaline was helping me push through it, making me determined to fight until the very end.

The other vampire launched himself at once. I rolled out of the way, dodging effortlessly. He attempted to get in a punch but I caught his fist. Grinning, my foot connected with his side.

This time it was the other vampire who fell to the ground. He grunted in pain, clutching at his side.

“I yield!”

Holy fuck.

I did it. I... I did it! I was able to pass the trial!

When I was in the clinic getting my injuries taken care of I started to draft up a post to the group text.

**GUYS. GUYS. OMG. I JUST HAVE TO TELL YOU THIS. LIKE RIGHT NOW.**

Okay, okay, so remember how I told y’all about the vampire clan trial? You know, the one where they test EVERYTHING—your strength, your wits, your endurance, your ability to NOT make a fool of yourself in front of the Elders (which, let’s be real, I flopped at the first time)? WELL, I PASSED IT. I FREAKING PASSED IT. ON MY SECOND TRY!!!

I CAN’T EVEN BELIEVE IT. I’m shaking. My hands are shaking, my voice is shaking—if I still had a heartbeat, that would probably be shaking too. I think I’m gonna cry. Like, do vampires even cry? Is that a thing we do? I don’t care. I’m a disaster right now, and you don’t understand how much this means to me. Seriously, y’all.

When I walked into that trial today, I was already ready to fail again. I thought, “Rain, you’re going to trip over your cape, miss the target, and accidentally insult the Head Elder’s hair.” (WHICH, by the way, would’ve been a HUGE deal because have you seen his hair? It’s like perfectly gelled immortality on his head.) But then... something clicked. I don’t know what it was. Maybe it was the dramatic lighting in the hall or the ominous chanting echoing around me—because, you know, classic vampire vibes—but suddenly, I was ON FIRE. Well, not literally, because, you know, vampires + fire = crispy disaster. But you get me, right?

I swear, I’ve never moved that fast or looked that cool in my whole undead existence. I nailed the combat round, outsmarted the maze, and didn’t even flinch during the Bloodstone Ceremony, which is TERRIFYING, by the way. And then... THEN... when they called my name at the end and said I’d passed, I thought I misheard them. Like, there was no way, right? But nope, it was real. I almost fainted right there on the spot (do vampires faint??? Someone G\*\*\*\*e this), but I managed to keep it together. Barely.

You guys, the Head Elder SMIRKED at me. Do you know how rare that is? That's basically like a full-blown standing ovation in vampire culture. I wanted to bow dramatically, but I thought, "Rain, don't push your luck." So I just stood there, trying to look all cool and composed while my brain was screaming, "OMG YOU DID IT!"

I'm officially part of the clan now, and I'm NEVER letting anyone forget this moment. Like, I'm gonna bring it up at every opportunity. "Oh, you're drinking coffee? That's cool. Did you know I passed my vampire clan trial?" Or, "What's that? Are you cold? Wow, I was cold too when I crushed my second try at the trial." Get ready to hear about this for the next century.

I'm so happy right now, I could... I don't know, drink a celebratory chalice of blood or something. Is that a thing? Ugh, whatever, I don't care. I LOVE YOU ALL. THANK YOU FOR BELIEVING IN ME (and if you didn't, that's fine-just pretend you did).

Okay, I'm done. But also, I'M NEVER DONE. Someone hug me before I start sobbing like a newborn fledgling. Or better yet, someone framed this moment. I'll pay you in eternal gratitude.

I received a litany of responses. Lia was the most excited for me, saying how proud she was of what I did. Jesse was more subdued while Matt said I needed to tone down the usage of caps. It just made me laugh.

Colby responded last, telling me he knew I could do it. It was just a matter of time before I succeeded.

Even though every part of my body was hurting, I didn't care. I had finally succeeded and this meant we were one step closer to getting Gabi back.

## Brother's Best Friends Are My Mates

Lia

I nudged Rain to move his head out of the way so I could read the email he had up on his laptop. He grinned sheepishly, moving his head so I was able to read the email he received from the council this morning.

Subject: Welcome to the Pack, Rain

From: Nightshade Eclipse Council

Dear Rain,

It is with immense pride, honor, and great anticipation that we officially welcome you as a member of the Nightshade Eclipse clan. This moment signifies more than just an addition to our

numbers—it marks a continuation of a legacy, a strengthening of bonds that transcend generations. The veins of your ancestry intertwine with ours, and your acceptance into this family is a reminder of the unbreakable threads that connect us all.

Your presence brings more than strength; it brings renewed purpose and hope. Together, we stand not only as individuals but as a unified force, bound by loyalty, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to one another. By joining the Nightshade Eclipse, you have become part of something far greater—a family that will defend and uplift you through every trial and triumph that lies ahead.

We know that the path you've walked has not been without its trials. The pain and uncertainty caused by the recent kidnapping of your fellow packmate weigh heavily on us all. Such a cruel violation of trust and safety is a wound no one should bear alone. Yet, in times of darkness, we find strength in unity. You are no longer alone, Rain. You now have the backing of a clan that will stand shoulder to shoulder with you, facing whatever challenges arise with courage and determination.

However, matters of this magnitude demand caution and forethought. A rescue mission of this nature is no small undertaking. Success hinges on our ability to balance courage with careful planning and resolve with precision. While our hearts urge us to act swiftly, we must temper that urgency with wisdom, ensuring that each step taken minimizes risk and maximizes the chances of bringing your packmate safely home.

The Nightshade Eclipse is no stranger to adversity. Our history is rich with stories of resilience and triumph over seemingly insurmountable odds. We possess a wealth of resources, seasoned tacticians, and skilled operatives who stand ready to assist. From crafting strategies to executing plans with precision, we will draw upon our collective knowledge and experience to face this challenge head-on.

To begin, we ask that you confirm your readiness to move forward with preparations. Once we receive your confirmation, we will convene a private council meeting to discuss the rescue mission in detail. This meeting will include key members of our planning team, who will work closely with you to address every aspect of the operation. Together, we will forge a path that ensures the safety of your packmate while safeguarding the well-being of all involved.

Rain, this is more than just a turning point in your journey—it is a pivotal moment for the Nightshade Eclipse as a whole. Your integration into our clan is a beacon of strength and hope, a reminder of what we can achieve when we stand united. We are honored to have you among us, and we are committed to supporting you not just in this mission, but in every step of the road ahead.

Welcome home, Rain. May this new chapter bring strength, healing, and the promise of brighter days.

Strength and Unity,

## The Nightshade Eclipse Council

“It’s smart that they want to take it slowly. Rushing in there could hurt not only us but Gabi and the pup.”

Rain nodded. “Yeah, exactly what I was thinking. But you know what is truly fucked up?”

“The fact that they are helping where our werewolf association won’t even lift a claw.”

It still filled me with rage to think they wouldn’t help us or get themselves involved. The Witches association I understood in a way, but the werewolf association? Gabi was one of their own and carrying a pup! They always claimed they cared especially about the pups, but they weren’t living up to their principles.

“Lia, you look angry, and you’re clenching your fists. Could you possibly move them away from my laptop keyboard?” he asked nervously. “I just would rather not have to buy a new one so soon.”

I blinked, his words snapping me out of my anger. “What do you mean a new one so soon?”

“I dropped the other one in the bathtub back when I lived with my parents.”

“Rain... I’m not even going to ask.”

He grinned. “That’s for the best.”

Slowly, the rest of the household learned that the clan was going to help us. I looked at Michael as I told him and thought he was going to cry. He cleared his throat, turning his head away so I couldn’t see his face.

“I’m going to go for a walk,” he announced suddenly, taking us all by surprise.

I reached out to grasp my brother’s wrist. “Michael, is everything okay?”

“Yeah, I’d just like to be alone for a bit,” he assured me, giving me a teary-eyed smile. “And don’t worry I’m not going to run off and try to attack the coven again so don’t worry.”

It would be a lie if I didn’t admit this was on my mind.

“I’ll tail him,” Rain whispered but before he could get anywhere Jesse grabbed his arm.

“Rain, leave him be. He’s telling the truth and isn’t going to do something stupid... Again.”

Michael glanced over his shoulder, shooting Jesse a glare. “I heard that!”

“It was meant for you to hear.”

I smiled. It was starting to feel like it was before everything got all stressful with Gabi being kidnapped. Discover more novels at [find-novel.net](http://find-novel.net)

We were going to find her and rescue her. It was only a matter of time. I hoped she would be able to hold on a bit more. Time was ticking because her pregnancy was progressing.

At the very least I knew the witches were taking care of her but this wasn't exactly comforting.

\*\*\*

Colby

It was a relief to learn that the clan was going to help us but they weren't going to help us right away. They wanted to research the coven and then start to work with us to come up with a plan.

This was going to take time... time I wasn't sure Gabi had.

The closer she got to her due date the less chance we had to get her out of there safely with the pup. Once it was out of her that was it. We would have no chance of getting her back.

I... felt a lot of pressure, but it wasn't as strong as it used to be. It was to a point where I was adjusting to my role as a pack leader. At first, I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to do it, but now I accepted this as my role.

Michael had been the first to tell me he thought I would make the best pack leader amongst them. I wasn't in agreement back then because I had convinced myself I wasn't the best choice. Anyone would be a better choice than me-except Rain. He was a great friend and fellow pack member but would be too much of a wreck to lead the pack.

Even Rain told us this when we discussed pack leaders in the past so I knew I wasn't hurting his feelings.

I bumped into Michael as he was coming back inside. He looked like he had been crying, causing my eyes to soften.

"Happy tears I hoped?"

He smiled and it reached his eyes.

"Yes. I know we're still not out of the woods yet but I'm happy to know that we have a good chance of getting Gabi back," he murmured, voice barely above a whisper. "And I want to thank all of you for putting up with my bullshit."

"Michael, you never have to apologize for that," I told him firmly. "If it had been Lia in Gabi's place, I would be reacting the same way."

