

The Blessed Ones – A Blessing Or A Curse?

Chapter 26

Nova POV:

Time stands still as I gape at Laurence while he looks at me nervously. Pregnant? I mean I couldn't be..could I? I had had my shot a few months ago and had previously arranged with the doctor to have my next one which wasn't yet due. "P....pregnant?" I stutter in shock. Offering me a small smile he shrugs, his eyes filled with concern for me.

"Yes pregnant. Naomi was the same, very tired and quite emotional" he explains. "Plus the amount of food she puts away amazes me. I mean I know she has two growing pups in there but damn! I never knew watching a woman eat so much would make me so ecstatic."

Letting out a quiet chuckle I sit back in a daze. "Do you think you could be?" He asks again softly.

"I mean...maybe? But surely I would know? I can sense pregnancies really early on, I mean you saw me with Naomi and Alice. Wouldn't I smell different?" I ask him in confusion.

"Well..yes" Laurence admits slowly.

"And I don't do I?" I ask him quietly.

"Not to me you don't no" he tells me. "What has Kia said?"

Pursing my lips, my brows furrow as I realise she has kept decidedly quiet when he asked me. "She's been very quiet recently, she told me she was tired."

"Tired?" He asks with a quirked brow. "She's a Guardian

Wolf Nova."

"And?" I laugh.

"She's stronger than any wolf I know, she fought in that battle against Charles and Cedric like a machine, no one could stop her. For her to say she was tired is strange in my opinion, especially after the bond of true power snapped into place" he explains. "I

thought it was because of the bond, because she came into use of more of her powers." I trail off as I realise the ridiculousness of what I just said.

"Ki...?" I ask her quietly, my mind racing as I try to gather my thoughts.

"Yes" She whispers back to me.

"Yes? I repeat questioningly.

"We are having a pup" she tells me quietly. "I have been protecting us."

"Protecting us?" I repeat, once more questioning her as my heart races at this new knowledge.

"Hiding our true scent was one of the ways I did so" she admits as I gasp quietly in surprise. "With everything that's gone on with Mila I didn't want you to lose focus or to distract you and our mate while we were away. I wanted to tell you.." Seeing Laurence watching me closely, I feel my eyes well up as my hands begin to shake. "Luna?" He asks, his voice barely above a whisper.

"I'm with pup" I breathe as his eyes widen in surprise before his mouth splits into a large grin.

"You're pregnant with our future Alpha" he smiles excitedly as I simply stare at him in shock. "That's wonderful."

Hearing that, my leg begins to jiggle as my worry then begins to appear. Jax and I had agreed that after dealing with Charles and Cedric then we would try for a pup, but learning he was then being geared up to be the next Alpha King along with Mila having been forced to go with Bruno, we hadn't gotten round to discuss when or if now was a good time.

"Is it a good time Laurence?" I ask him, my voice low as I ask him that question. His smile falters slightly as his eyes narrow before he replies.

"Having a pup and creating our Alpha's heir is an amazing thing Nova, I know Jax and you were going to try for a pup once the time was right..but clearly the pup didn't want to wait for you to find out when that would be" he starts softly. "I believe that with everything that is going on, hearing you're having a pup will bring happiness to many, many people."

"But Jax becoming Alpha King will make him a focus of everyone for the next few months especially. There is also the fact that I'm a Guardian Wolf, we have already dealt with one threat and we don't even know if the other witches and hunters are still after me. what if

they are? What if they can use this situation to their advantage and I'm endangering our pup?" I reel off, my voice growing higher in pitch the more I say.

"Stop," Laurence says sternly, his voice quiet but full of conviction. "A pup is a blessing, especially one made from the bond Jax and you share. One thing I can assure you of, is that Jax will do anything in his power to keep you and his pup safe, never mind what we all would do as members of your pack. But also, you're underestimating yourself, you are formidable Nova. Incredibly strong and powerful, I know for a fact that if you throw being a mother in there, you will be unstoppable. A mother's protectiveness of her pup is one of the most powerful things anyone can witness, no one messes with a mama wolf, never mind one that's as badass as you."

"But I won't be able to shift Laurence," I whisper. "What use will I be in times of need?"

"You are so much more than just your wolf Nova. You are our Luna. Your words alone carry a weight a lot of us would struggle to bear, you are the calm in the storm and the light in the darkness. You're our voice of reason and our beacon of hope," Laurence exclaims. "We can shift" Ki tells both Laurence and myself quietly as we both look at each other in surprise.

"We can?" I ask her in confusion.

"Yes" she chuckles. "Have you seen the size of me? Any pups of ours will be safest in my form, the transition will not harm any pup we carry I assure you of that. It may tire us but we can deal with it. We are strong Nova."

"Has hiding our true scent been tiring?" I ask her quietly.

"A little" she admits. "But nothing I can't deal with, it was more the weight of hiding it from you, I just didn't want to drop the news because I wasn't sure of how the past few days would go. So I stayed quiet."

"You need to tell Jax" Laurence says after a moment of silence.

"Of course," I reply immediately. "I also need an appointment with the doctor."

"You do" he smiles. "I can arrange one for you if you would like?"

"Please Laurence, quietly" I remind him as the wide smile stays plastered on his face.

"I have an idea." he says with an excitement in his voice, "one that may bring some happiness to our pack."

"Go on..." I say slightly dubiously.

"Tell them tonight, after the burning. Surprise them all, Jax included" he says with a little smile. "This news is exactly what this pack needs after a time of mourning. It brings hope and a sign of the promising future with the packs heir being created." "Will Jax appreciate the surprise?" I ask him with worry.

"I believe so, would you like me to arrange a doctors appointment now?" He asks.

"No," I reply quickly. "I mean, I think it's something Jax would like to be there for. But I will do a test. that we can then show to everyone tonight. But I would like an appointment tomorrow before we leave, I have some questions. One being I have no idea how far along I am, clearly early but. I need to know more."

Looking down, I caress my toned stomach as the knowledge of new life growing inside me makes a smile spread slowly across my face.

"That's more like it" Laurence beams as he stands up. "Ok, I will go and finish talking to Jax, I need to hear more of Mila and what we are going to go."

"Keep that big ass smile off of your face" I warn him as I stand up, still shaking slightly from the news.

Holding his arms wide, I step forward as he gives me a large hug. "Congratulations Luna, I vow to protect you and our heir with my life."

"Just be there for us all Laurence, like you always are" I whisper as a happy tear rolls down my face.

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Chapter 27

Jax POV:

Walking back from finishing the personal visits to the families that lost loved ones, the mood is somber as the feeling of grief lingers in my heart. Ma walks beside me, silent in her feelings also, but with her head held high as the sense of comfort is emitted from her "How are you doing ma?" I ask her as I gesture for her to take a seat by the entrance of the garden.

presence.

Offering me a sad smile, I see a glimpse of her worry she feels for her lost pup, the sadness she holds for our pack members and the concern she has for me.

"I'm ok Jax" she sighs. "I feel a bit useless, I want to find Mila...I want her home, where she's safe and loved. The thought of her suffering because of Bruno is eating at me."

"Have you spoken to Pa?" I ask her as she nods her head slowly.

"I did" she whispers. "He was furious. Not with me, obviously. But with Bruno...he threatened to go to find him, to bring Mila home."

"Please tell me Henry stopped him" I say with worry.

"Oh yes, he did. I told him you were handling it and I was particularly strong in my words when I told him to let you continue to head this, it's you I trust to get her back Jax. I know he loves her, of course he does, but I don't believe he would handle this in the correct manner" she tells me, her voice strained as she speaks about her ex mate. "I do have to admit something though."

"What?" I ask her, my voice sharper than I intended as she grimaces slightly making me feel guilty. "Sorry ma, what is it?" I ask again, my voice softer this time.

"They are returning to the pack, him and your uncle Henry" she says quietly. "Axel and Evan have been attempting to track Bruno's vehicles that he used, they have looked over every bit of CCTV they could between Bruno's pack and Axtons." "Was there anything?" I ask hopefully.

"No" she whispers. "Whoever Bruno has working for him knows just as much as Axel and Evan unfortunately. They found absolutely nothing."

"Damn" I whisper. "I understand why Pa wants to come back, as long as you're comfortable with it then I am also. I know Henry will do everything he can to help."

"David will stay here while you are gone, Laurence informed me of the Alpha meeting you have to go to tomorrow. He has assured me he will be here to help and if David so much as puts one toe out of line I believe he threatened to put him in the dungeon" ma chuckles.

"Why didn't Laurence say anything to me? I spoke to him earlier once Nova went for a nap about everything that's happened, in detail, but this is failed to mention" I ponder.

"Because I asked to inform you myself, it was my idea" she admits. "I knew I should have checked with you but I just suggested it when speaking to Henry and David."

"Ah," I say quietly. "I understand."

"You're not upset?" Ma asks surprised.

"No" I shrug. "To be quite honest, I haven't thought of Pa much since he left. We have a lot to do to work on our relationship and right now he's not a priority, but he is our father and your ex mate of many years. It's your daughter that is missing and the both of you can share in your concern for her. I know if Laurence was worried he would have told me, he doesn't always agree to personal requests to keep things from me does he. I mean can you remember the time Mila had to get him to pick her up because of how drunk she was? She begged him not to say anything to me but he knew that her getting in that state was not safe for her and was concerned, so he told me. He's a good judge of situations and of what my reaction will be."

"Very true" ma chuckles quietly. "My daughter does love a drink."

"I wonder why" I say rolling my eyes at ma as she chuckles once more. "Like mother like daughter after all."

"Have you got any closer to finding her?" Ma asks, her eyes hopeful as she glances at me.

"We have a promising lead" I admit slowly. "But the situation needs an air of caution. Bruno is a live wire as we know, we have to see what happens tomorrow before we act. But I believe our Luna Queen has been busy, Alex assures me of such." "Why hasn't he told you?" Ma asks in confusion.

"He will when necessary ma" I tell her gently. "There is a lot going on that I can't yet discuss with you, tomorrow I may be able to say more. But for now, please trust that I am doing what we think is right to keep Mila safe. Going after her in a desperate rush may be exactly what Bruno wants..it may cause more harm than good."

"But Mila is in danger Jax" she sobs as tears begin to stream down her face.

"She is strong and she is clever and she will handle the situation like a Luna now. Axton hasn't felt any pains ma" I tell her softly.

"But that doesn't mean she isn't hurting," she sobs.

"I know," I sigh. "But we have to believe in her, she has grown up considerably in the last few months."

"I'm just worried for my pup," she whispers.

"And that is understandable ma I've never said otherwise. If you weren't then I would be concerned" I say nudging her side gently. "I will have her home soon, I promise."

"I know you will Jax" she replies, her voice full of confidence in me.

Hearing footsteps approach us, I turn to see Alex and Ophelia nearing us. "We heard some of what was said," Ophelia says quietly. "I'd like to share what I have planned, I believe it will bring you some hope."

"I don't need to know if you don't wish to share," Ma says quietly.

"I didn't mention it earlier because I wanted to make sure it could go as I hoped, but now I believe you need some reassurance that it is being handled Amelia. I don't wish for you to continue worrying as much as you are, instead I'd like you to be more faithful she will be home soon" Ophelia explains softly. "I have a source who works close by to where there has been some suspicious behaviour. I had someone from our pack look at the footage from outside of my sources place of work and indeed there seemed to be a large groups of vehicles pass by yesterday, around the time frame we would expect there to be if they were travelling from where Milas car was found. Now, I don't know what is at the site in question, so I have my source scouting the area for us. If it is confirmed that Mila is there, then we act.

But until then, we have to wait. I don't wish to risk any more lives."

"But how would it be safe for them to scout the area?" I ask curiously.

"My source is extremely capable of looking after themselves," Ophelia chuckles. "You will learn why in time, but I have my utmost faith in him."

"Thank you for telling us" Ma whispers as her tears begin to slow. "I'm sorry for being emotional."

"Don't be," Ophelia exclaims quietly as she comes to sit beside her. "It is natural and I'm sorry I couldn't tell you sooner, we promise to keep you updated."

"Will you be ok when I'm gone ma?" I ask.

"Of course, I will have your uncle here as well as your Pa.

We may not be seeing eye to eye right now, but I am sure that our shared concern for Mila will take precedence, and we can lean on one another still; not everything is forgotten because of a broken bond," she tells us as I smile at her, my pride in my mother growing one more.

"You're an incredible woman Amelia" Alex notes. "I know for a fact Mila takes after you, and that thought alone brings me confidence as it should you."

Seeing her smile slightly at Alex's kind words, I offer her my arm and gesture inside. "Come, let's go find Nova and eat before this evenings burnings. I know Nova was wanting to see you."

"Thank you, son," Ma says quietly as she takes my arm and allows me to lead her inside. Her upset quickly disappearing as the air of calmness surrounds her once more when we are within reach of pack members. "How is Nova?" She asks quietly as we begin walking upstairs.

"Tired" I reply honestly. "I think everybody's emotions can be draining for her still and of course she worries for everyone. But I've told her she needs to rest, I know everything is catching up to her a little." "That woman is selfless," Ma chuckles. "She would continue till she was dead on her feet if you let her."

"That's what I'm avoiding" I laugh.

"Well, we don't want that. Not if I am going to get any grandpups anytime soon" ma jokes, hinting not so subtly at her eagerness for grandpups.

"Don't worry, ma, it will happen when the time is right," I tell her softly.

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Chapter 28

Axton POV:

"He said what?!" Luca exclaims as I finish relaying everything that the Beta of the Deep Forest Pack had voiced to me. When I'd mentioned his comment about Bruno and I being related I watched as the confusion, concern and then disbelief crossed his face. "But how are you related?"

"I'm not sure, I'm hoping it was just one of Bruno's Lies" I say, my voice quiet as my body feels drained. The longer I'm apart from my mate, knowing she needs me just as much as I need her is exhausting me. My eyes have dark circles under them and my appearance is becoming more disheveled as I grow more tired.

"So what are you going to do?" Luca asks quietly.

"Well I'm going to find out, I think its time I spoke to my mother" I tell him as his eyes widen in shock.

"She's not in the best health remember" he reminds me, his voice subdued.

"I know" I admit as I think of the frail state of my mother.

"I'm not going to visit her, I've already text my aunty to inform her I will be video calling in the next hour. I was due to visit her next week." I trail off as uncertainty laces my voice. Since my father had passed, my mother had withdrawn into herself; she became quiet and unemotional. She was a shell of the woman I remember growing up, I remember her natural ability to converse with anyone, the way her laughter drew people in and the love and life that shone in her bright eyes. In the last 5 years, she withdrew into herself more and more, and now the memory of how she used to be seems distant, unreachable at times I think sadly. She even left our pack to go live with her sister, saying the memories she shared with my father were too painful a reminder of what she no longer has and the pack grounds caused her too much sadness.

I tried to argue for her to stay, saying she was our Luna Mother and I loved her, needed her. But she refused. Once Nova became my Luna, she left two days after our ceremony, saying she no longer felt obliged to stay. I hurt, a lot. But there was nothing else I could say to persuade her to stay. Instead, I regularly visited and checked in, I offered her any help I thought she may benefit from and I constantly asked my Aunt Vivian to let me know how she was once my mother grew further and further away from me. "She still sees my father in me doesn't she" I say gloomily to Luca.

With a sigh he nods and offers me a sad smile, "it must be hard for her, she loved him dearly."

"And what about her son?" I ask him, bitterness lacing my tone. "I told Viv that Mila has been taken, I've updated her with everything that has happened with Nova, that b***h who drugged me, the fights etc. She has told my mother and not once has she checked in to see how I'm coping, her own son...not once."

"I know man" Luca says, sympathy softening his voice. "I know this is difficult for you, I can't imagine having a mother who is there but also feels unreachable."

"I'm sorry" I mutter, guilt hitting me hard as I realise how hard it must be for my Beta, who lost both of his parents.

"At least I still have a mother."

"It doesn't make it easier in this situation man" he says with frown. "My mother isn't here, but yours is and yet you feel like you're losing her each time you speak. I can't imagine what that's like."

"We need to talk about tomorrow" I say wanting to broach the subject before we speak to my mother.

"The alpha meeting?" He checks.

"Yeah" I confirm. "Obviously you need to go."

Sitting back in his chair, he looks at me with a frown. "But what about our pack?"

"That was my concern, how did the conversations go with Alejandro, Mason and Melissa?" I ask curiously.

"Good" he admits. "I feel more optimistic about Mason and Melissa than I do Alejandro I have to admit. Since finding his mate Alejandro has been distracted, his training has taken a bit of a dive and his priorities have shifted. Plus now we lost Zak, he's more wary. While Mason finding his mate has had the opposite effect, his training has improved, his attentiveness is really standing out and during the fight against Charles I was really impressed with the way he motivated the other warriors and helped in the aftermath. I know he was adopted and we don't know his birth parents, but he has been in this pack since he was a baby, he's of Beta blood and to be quite honest I never really considered anyone else for taking over from me if there would ever be a time in need and I had no bloodline.

He has always attended any extra duties I've asked of him and I feel confident in him being my successor."

"So Mason is a strong yes then," I observe.

"In my opinion, yes," Luca replies without hesitation.

"I agree," I say with a shrug. "I've always watched him closely as he has impressed me in the past, but I made the same observations and you during the fight. Alejandro however..how do you think he'll handle Melissa being prioritised over him despite it being his birthright?"

Zak had taken over as our Gamma as there was no place for him within his original pack, he had four older siblings and would never become a Gamma in his own right. But I'd been close to him growing up, and when our Gamma, Alejandro and Melissa's dad, had died in the same attack as Lucas parents I'd immediately requested Zak step up and transfer due to Alejandro and Melissa both being too young at the time.

Blowing a long breath out as Luca considers my question, he looks at me with a slightly pained expression. "He won't have a choice will he" he states.

"No, I'm his Alpha and I knew he wouldn't be suitable, I'm even more certain now I've heard your opinion" I state.

"What I say goes, he just needs to accept it, I just hope it doesn't cause much family upset."

Pursing his lips Luca nods slowly, "from what I've gathered they aren't that close since their father passed. I would keep an eye on them."

"I will" I assure him. "So back to the matter at hand, tomorrow..I want to speak to Mason, tell him the news and he can step up in our absence. Sophie and your rogue pack warriors will be arriving this evening, I am going to ask her to stay behind also. I trust her." "Oh she'll keep everyone in check" Luca smirks. "Gone is my shy mate I tell you." Seeing his darkened eyes I pretend to gag as he bursts into laughter, "I don't need to know man."

"I did have a thought that might help tomorrow, just to give the pack extra security in our time away following recent events" Luca says after a moment as I look at him curiously. "As you know Gammas Theo and Florence from Alpha Jax's pack are what Nova classes as family, and by extension I class them as mine. They are extremely skilled warriors in their own right and I trust them with my life. I was going to suggest requesting that one of them comes here."

Pursing my lips I lean back as Luca goes to speak once more, waving him off as I contemplate his suggestion, I know its a good idea.

"I hate how weak our pack seems right now," I admit. "I have never had to rely on other packs like I am at the moment.

Since Nova left everything has just gone to shit."

"I know on paper it looks bad, but we have had to be away from here far more than we'd like. I know why, and I do not mean in any way that us helping Nova against Charles was the wrong thing to do" Luca says passionately. Knowing it was also his way of getting justice for the death of his parents I understand where he is coming from. "But once our Luna has returned, this pack will flourish once more.

We have a strong replacement for me, and Melissa is extremely promising as the future Gamma. It will get better...but asking for help right now from the brother of our missing Luna's pack is nothing to be ashamed of."

"i know" I sigh. "Not good for an Alphas ego though, in fact its feeling pretty battered and bruised right now" I growl.

"It'll get better" Luca says with conviction, and I see the belief in his eyes making me feel more hopefully.

"Well life has to get better at some point doesn't it" | sigh as I stand from the desk and gesture to the large screen on the wall opposite us.

"We also have to discuss Zak once you've spoken to your mother Axton, I found some information out which you will want to know. But it can wait till you've spoken to your mother" Luca says as I sigh at the thought of another problem. "Right ok" I mutter. "Time to call my mother."

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Chapter 29

Axton POV:

"Hello mother" I say, my voice soft as I take in her lifeless eyes. "How are you feeling today? "Tired" she whispers, her eyes gaze through the screen but they are unfocused and lifeless.

When she doesn't go to say anything more, I tighten my hand in a fist as I make sure to keep my face relaxed, not letting her see the hurt coursing through me at the lack of interest in my life. "What have you been up to? Aunt Viv said you've been helping her with the veg garden?"

"Yes, I have" she replies quietly. "It's nice to get some fresh air" she admits as my aunt comes into focus on the screen.

Her eyes showing her care for me as she takes in my tight features carefully, understanding clear in his eyes.

"Your mother has been helping me plant the bulbs for next spring's crop" she explains cheerfully, "it's been nice to have another set of hands helping and some extra company. But anyway, how are you, my dear boy? Any news on Mila?"

At the mention of my mate, my mother's eyes squeeze shut as if she's trying to keep some difficult memories at bay.

"Not yet," I tell them quietly. "But we are getting closer, I can feel it" I say trying to reassure not just them, but also myself. The knowledge of Mila being apart from me is eating me alive, but I'll be damned if let it consume me. I have to stay strong, to find my

mate and keep this pack together so that once she's returned we can build it back up... together.

"I know you'll get her son," Viv says kindly, "I'm thinking of you all."

"Thanks Aunt Viv" I say with a small smile, my eyes once again fluttering to my mother who is looking down at her lap. "So I ah, I actually called to ask you something mother."

Hearing that, she looks up at my briefly in confusion, a look passing across her face so quick I don't have time to register what it meant. "Yes?" She asks quietly.

"I recently visited another pack, and the Beta had something..interesting to tell me" I start explaining slowly.

"Are you familiar with the Deep Forest Pack much?"

When I mention the pack's name, my mother's eyes widen briefly before she freezes making my aunt Viv look at her in concern. "Fiona?" She whispers nudging for my mother to speak. Shaking her head, my mother replies in a shaky voice.

"W...w...why do you ask?"

"That's not an answer" I point out.

Taking a deep breath, her eyes jump about showing her uncomfortableness. "I know the pack yes, I saw them many times at Alpha meetings and events throughout the years with your father."

"Alright," I reply slowly before taking a deep breath. "The Beta informed me of something, I wanted to know if it was true and if it is then why I wasn't aware of it. Alpha Bruno, the man who has taken my mate and previously hurt her, is apparently related to me. Now would you know if that was true?"

Seeing my mother's face drain of colour, my heart sinks as coldness spreads through my body. Feeling Lucas' hand clasp my shoulder in support, I realise he's made the same realisation I have before my mother can even form her words. "How did you know?" She whispers, her voice clearly breaking even through the link.

"Like I said, the Beta decided it was a good time to inform me" I reply rather shortly. "So it's true?"

Licking her lips, she looks to my aunt Viv for support who despite looking at my mother in complete shock, nods her head for her to answer me.

"Yes...its true" my mother breathes as a loud growl escapes me. Flinching, her eyes fill with tears as she watches me through the screen. Her eyes looking at me for the longest she has managed in recent years. "I'm sorry Axton." "Why didn't you tell me earlier?" I ask her, my face hard as I attempt to bury the hurt I'm feeling.

"It was your father's request. It was requested of both parties to keep it quiet, signed agreements were even in place which is why I asked how you knew" she admits.

"So how am I related to him?" I ask with dread. "I've never had any family link or bond or anything felt with him."

"He's your half brother" she whispers.

"WHAT?" I growl as I surge up from my chair to move closer to the screen. Hearing the sob escape my mother, I see the tears rolling down her face as she finally admits something she has kept secret for a long time. "Your son..?" I ask in horror. "No" my aunt Viv replies quickly, my glare shifting to her as it turns accusing.

"You knew?" I growl.

"That you had a half brother? No!" She exclaims vehemently. "But before your mother moved here with me, I saw her every month. I believe the longest we went without seeing one another was three months, there is no way I wouldn't have known if your mother bore any more pups."

"So dad.." I gasp.

"Your dad had an affair" my mother sobs. "Just one night, he gave in to a she wolfs heat when he was visiting another pack. I wasn't with him but I felt it, I felt every pain of that tortuous night."

"And you stayed with him?" I ask in shock. Thinking back at seeing my parents together as I grew up, I can only think of the love that shone so brightly between my parents noone ever doubted they had any trouble in their mateship. "He was trapped into it" she whispers as she continues to cry. "Helen, Bruno's mother, found her fated mate but he was only a warrior. She didn't want him and her father the Alpha didn't approve of the mating at all. So he arranged for your father to visit at short notice once Helen began showing symptoms of heat, under the pretence of something urgent needing to be dealt with regarding a treaty between the two packs. Only once your father got to his room that night, Helen went there and in her full heat your father succumbed to it as he was still unmated. At that point we hadn't yet marked one another you see, we had been getting to know one another and your father was being a perfect gentlemen in courting me. Because of what happened, he tore up the peace treaty between the two packs and refused to work with them any further. He was heartbroken he'd betrayed me, and I nearly left him, but I

couldn't ignore how we both felt towards one another. One month later we found out we were pregnant with you, but only a week after that Helen dropped the news she was also expecting. Your father and his wolf refused to accept her child as their own, so he paid a lump sum to support Helen under the agreement noone was to ever know or he would tell everyone exactly what Helen and her father attempted to do."

Gaping at my mother in shock, as it was the most I had heard her speak in years, I try to wrap my head around what she had told me. "Why didn't father just tell everyone himself?" | ask in confusion.

"He knew the fact that him and his wolf refusing to acknowledge Bruno as their own would hurt him in the years to come and I suppose it was his way of softening the blow if Bruno ever did find out who his father was" my mother whispers. "He was never supposed to know" I repeat.

"Noone was, either Helen or her father must have told Bruno. I know for a fact it was a secret your father took to his death" mother sobs as she rests a hand over her heart." I know it troubled him at times that he refused to acknowledge him, but in his heart he thought what he did was right. The anger he felt to Helen and her father was too much much."

"You forgave him?" I check.

"I did. Although I struggled at times, I knew he loved me.

Everybody could tell that, he was terrified to lose me and then the joy he felt when he learnt I was pregnant was overwhelming. He showed me how much I meant to him every single day we were together, and I never doubted him.

Although it still pains me to remember what happened, it was the past and we never let it effect our future" my mother tells me. Her eyes bloodshot from her tears as she looks at me clearly through the screen.

"How long has this been weighing you down?" I ask her quietly as she flinches from my question.

"Without your father and without the mate bond to help keep me strong, it has slowly been wearing me down. It's hard when I see your eyes. they're just like your father's. I miss him" she admits.

"I wish you'd told me, I would have understood" I mumble as I collapse back in my chair, staring at the ceiling.

"I'm sorry son" she whispers as I look at her carefully.

"I know" I reply simply. "Aunt Viv, could you run mother a bath, help her relax and make sure she has something to eat and plenty of rest?"

"Of course Axton" Viv replies holding my mothers shoulders in comfort.

"Thank you for telling me now" I say quietly to my mother as she offers me a teary smile.

"I hope you find Mila" she whispers.

"Me too" I sigh. "And mother...it was nice to hear your voice again. I've missed you."

"And I miss you" she sobs before our video link closes.

Continuing to stare at the blank wall in front of me, I growl as I realise just how closely related to that fucker I am.

"Half-brother. f**k my life" | growl before I throw an empty vase across the room, where it collides with the wall and shatters into hundreds of pieces.

"Alpha.." Luca says with panic in his voice. Spinning to look at him, I see his hand shaking as he runs it through his hair.

"Yes.?" I ask, "what's wrong?"

"You and Mila aren't marked, and you met almost 3 weeks ago now..." He tells me slowly as I look at him in confusion.

"That gives her, a week at best..."

"What are you on about Luca?" I ask impatiently.

"You have roughly a month after meeting if you're not marked before the female experiences her first heat" Luca snaps as I feel all the colour drain from my face. With my heart pounding loudly in my ears I barely hear what Luca next says. "Mila will be going in to heat soon"

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Chapter 30

Nova POV:

"I'm fine Amelia honestly" I reassure her as she waits patiently while Jax and myself get ready for the evenings events.

"I'm sorry, I'm fussing, aren't I?" she chuckles as she helps me finish my hair. Knowing she is busying herself and her caring side is coming out more in the absence of her daughter, I'm embracing accepting her help.

"I like you helping, its also nice to spend some time together" I tell her, my voice soft and understanding as she smiles gratefully at me through the mirror.

Seeing the silver moon on my bicep glinting as the evenings sun shines through the window, my breath hitches as I once again am reminded of the bond that Jax and I share. "Jax" I call to him softly.

"Yes love?" He asks as he emerges from our closet, my eyes raking over his figure through the mirror as he simply smirks knowingly.

"We need to find out everything we can about our bond, I know its been referred to as ancient and blessed but I want to know of any others in history that shared it also" I tell him quietly as he walks over to lean on my vanity table so we can see each other clearly. "We have a lot to discuss" he admits.

. "A lot and not much

time. We need to visit your mother tomorrow, I want to see how she feels about undergoing hypnosis and see if we can get any more details from her. If she is happy to accept the treatment I was going to suggest it take place while we are away at the council building. I believe Laurence will be a good support for her, from what he's said she seems to trust him more than many and its improving every day."

"We have to ask her" I agree. "I know finding Mila is a priority, but once we find her we need to focus on the bunkers, where they are, how many are still there and if they are still operating the same."

"True. We also need to speak to the witches, see what they have to say about the ones that abandoned Cedric" Jax adds on.

"Are they all still here?" I suddenly ask, completely aware that my brain hasn't been functioning as normal the last few days and some information is escaping me.

"They are all staying close by" Jax informs us as your mother smiles at us.

"I spoke to Esmerelda and Cara while you were gone. They are different aren't they, but they are lovely and made me feel at ease" she compliments them.

"They decided to stay a little bit away from the pack house and nearby houses to not unsettle any pups or other pack members who didn't see them during the fight. Since pa's decision to have the witches leave our pack, some aren't quite used to their presence. It was Esmerelda's suggestion, and they are happy where they are; they're just on the far side of the lake," Jax says quietly. "Oh that reminds me, your uncle Johnathon is going to travel with Sophie. He wants to be there to help with her wolf and also spend some time with his niece."

"She's coming by soon, I invited her up before she travels to the White Mountain Pack tonight" i tell him as he smiles happily. Suddenly my phone rings and I see Lucas name flashing up on the screen.

"Luca!" I answer with a smile, "miss me already?"

"Always sis" he says, but his voice is solemn.

"What's wrong?" I ask him, my voice turning serious as I switch the phone to loud speaker.

"It's about Mila" he starts as I hear Rex snapping and growling in the background.

"Should I be here?" Amelia's asks quietly as I look to Jax for his answer.

"Maybe not ma I'll speak to you after, though. I promise" he assures her as she stands slowly before kissing both of our cheeks and promptly leaving.

"What's happened Luca? I can hear Rex, what's made Axton flip" I ask worriedly.

"There's no easy way to say this, so I'm just going to say it," Luca says, taking a deep breath. "Mila will be due her first heat soon."

Gasping in horror, I turn to look as Jax who doesn't look too surprised by what Luca is saying. "I didn't even think of that" I cry as I mentally kick myself for forgetting something so crucial.

"I did" Jax admits, his voice heavy with emotion. "I have actually spoken to Alex about it. It may have been the wrong decision but Alpha Axton was so worried as it was, I didn't want to upset him further. Mila was taking heat suppressants after finding Bruno was her mate and then leaving him. The only problem is, she wont have continued taking them since having left...unless she took them with her but the pack doctor has told me she never picked up her most recent prescription. He assured me she has a minimum of 10 days from now until the risk of her first heat, but we aren't going to risk that. Our Alpha King and Luna Queen have made sure of that."

Looking at Jax as he speaks, I see the worry for his sister in his eyes, but his voice remains calm and strong for the sake of all of us. "Alpha Axton.. Rex, I'm asking you to hold on. Until after the meeting tomorrow, then we can move forward," Ja calls through the phone as I hear Rex growl in the background. Although not detailed, Jax's meaning is clear.

There is a plan.

"He wont risk Mila" Luca says calmly. "But he's on edge after the conversation we just had with his mother."

"You spoke to her. what was said?" I ask quickly as the cracking of bones follows shortly followed by Axtons angered breathing.

"Axton...are you ok?" I ask quietly as I hear him swear under his breath.

"No" he grunts. "Alpha Bruno is my half-brother."

"WHAT?!" I exclaim as I stare at the phone in surprise.

Hearing his dark chuckle, I turn to look at Jax who is frozen where he is stood. "Your mother?" I ask.

"No, my father" Axton replies bluntly. "Gave in to heat of Bruno's mother when he had just found my mother. They found out they were pregnant with me soon after and as a result of being tricked into being with Helen, that's Bruno's mother, my father ripped up all treaties with them." "You never knew" Jax sighs as he collapsed in the chair beside me, grasping my hand.

Never" Axton growls. "My father paid them off, both he and his wolf refused to accept or acknowledge Bruno as their own, to him Bruno wasn't his pup."

"Oh my..." I whisper as Axtons news sinks in.

"Helen was the Alphas daughter of the Deep Forest Pack, I've looked at the pack histories and her mate ended up being a chosen mate. Her fated never returned after leaving her. Helens chosen was the son of another alpha and they mated to form an alliance but never had any pups of their own" Luca explains quietly.

"So Bruno s father wasn't the rightful Alpha of the Deep Forest Pack" Jax comments.

"He wasn't" Luca agrees.

"Interesting" Jax mutters as he leans forward deep in thought. "But he's supported him as if he was his own. I wonder if he knew about Bruno's biological father from the start."

"That we cant confirm, but we intend to find out" Axton growls menacingly.

"While we are on the phone, I thought I'd mention about Zak. I've looked at his phone, bank statements etc, that sort of thing. I can explain Bruno's comment of "amazing what money buys you". He transferred Zak a large sum of money, over £30,000. Zak immediately transferred it to his family and since looking into it I can confirm it was spent on his sister and her three pups, to aid them after their father died last year" Luca tells us.

"So it was him that betrayed you" I whisper.

"He should have come to me, I would have helped. I'd offered to help him in the past" Axton growls in frustration as we hear him pacing through the phone.

"He should have" Luca agrees quietly.

"I know that's hard to hear, but at least that's one question answered" Jax says, his deep voice resonating calm.

"On the subject of gammas." Luca starts before Axton clears his throat.

"This is difficult for me to ask, but I have to. We have Mason who will be replacing Luca as my Beta once he has become the leader of what is still known as the Rogue Pack. For our Gamma, we have Alejandro who is the next in position for it, he is the son of the Gamma before Zak, but Luca and I both agree he isn't ready for the position and we aren't sure he ever will be. His sister however. Axton says.

"Melissa!" I say proudly.

"Melissa" Axton confirms. "She is 18 soon and we believe once it has been her birthday, despite being young, she is ready to take on the position of Gamma.

"She definitely is" I agree voicing my opinion as I remember the little spitfire as I used to call her.

"Until then, we are lacking in ranked members as you're most likely aware. Luca has to accompany me tomorrow which leaves the pack relatively lacking the security it needs. Sophie is going to stay and help alongside their future pack, I know members of each will respect her, she has also informed us elder Johnathon will be joining her also. But..." Axton quietens for a minute before continuing.

"Can we ask for one of your Gammas to please accompany Sophie for the duration of time we are away at the council building?"

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Chapter 31

Jax POV:

Definitely" I reply immediately. "I will also send 25 warriors along with Florence to provide added reassurance to your pack members. It's the least we could do."

"Thank you" Axton replies in relief. A wave of sympathy flows through me as I realise how tough that must have been asking for help, but after signing an alliance with him and him being a worthy mate of my sister I would never have refused him. "As Alice is pregnant I suspect Theo would prefer to be close to her after she had to go away during the fight, that's why I've chosen Florence to travel to your pack, her mate Andrew is a warrior and will accompany her also" I explain as I hear both Axton and Luca thank me once again as they say they understand. "They won't be able to travel till after this evening's burnings though. It is time to honour our fallen warriors."

"Of course" Axton agrees immediately.

"Sophie and the others can travel beforehand though" I tell them. "I'm sure Luca is eager to see his mate."

"You have no idea" Luca growls as I see Nova chuckle quietly before palming at her face.

"Great" I chuckle.

"Well that settles it then. We will see you tomorrow"

"Thank you Alpha Jax" they both say before bidding Nova a good night and ending our call.

"Life is so eventful" Nova mutters as I wordlessly guide her to straddle me and she buries her face in my neck, breathing in my scent as I do hers.

"Understatement" I mutter making her laugh quietly against my chest. Staying there for a few moments, I enjoy the peace with my mate held close to me for as long as I can allow us before seeing its time for us to go. "Come on love, its time for the burning." "Lets go" she says quietly as she slowly stands and then links her arm with mine. "I haven't got

nearly as much done today as I wanted" she stresses. "I wanted to speak to the witches and my mother."

"You can see Lizzie tomorrow before we go love, and the witches will be here when we are back" I reassure her as she leans on me.

"You're right" she replies with a small smile. "I never feel like I do enough."

Hearing that I let out a short bark of laughter as she looks up at me in amusement. Trust me love, you do far more than anyone else I know. Don't under estimate yourself. Remember there is only so much time in a day."

"Wise words Alpha" she smirks at me as we stepp outside of the pack house. Seeing the wooden plynth in front of us, 9 in total, each with the families of the fallen laying their send off tokens on top to be burned, our faces drop as we walk quietly down to meet the pack.

"Nova!" I hear Sophie exclaim as my mate turns to launch herself at her sister. "I haven't got long."

"I know" Nova says with a sad smile as she pulls away from her. "One day soon we will spend more time together, but for now at least I can be happy knowing you are going to be with Luca."

"I'm ready to see him" Sophie admits as I see her eyes glaze over slightly.

"Have you been ok since we've been gone Sophie?" I ask her quietly.

"Yes I have" she reassures us both. "The Rogue warriors have been a great help and everything has ran smoothly, some are desperate to get back to their families but I've assured them with each passing day we are getting closer to that happening. Father though..we um, we had to perform his burning Nova."

Hearing my mate's breath hitch, I hold on to her as her body falls limply into my side.

"I missed it?" Nova sobs.

"I'm sorry, within the Rogue Pack it is custom to perform the burning within a week. Its tradition and as their future lead female I couldn't break something our father implemented" Sophie says apologetically.

"You should have told me" Nova says quietly as she looks at her sister with tears dripping down her face.

"I didn't want to distract you" Sophie says with a frown.

"I still deserved to know" Nova counters, her voice calm now but strong in her belief.

"I'm sorry Nova" Sophie says quietly as she takes in Nova's upset. With a trembling breath, Nova smiles tightly before stepping forward and embracing her sister briefly.

"Inform us when you have reached The White Mountain Pack Soph, look after yourself" Nova says with a small smile before she turns and begins walking to my mother. "I messed up didn't I" Sophie says to me quietly as I hang back.

"I get why you did it, and I believe Nova does also. But she hasn't had a chance to say a proper goodbye to her father. it may take a little time for that to sink it" I tell Sophie. "But she didn't even spend much time with him" Sophie exclaims as I growl quietly in warning and look at her in utter shock..

"He was both of yours father Sophie" I tell him, my voice deep and clear as she takes in my words.

"That was insensitive of me" she acknowledges as she sighs deeply. "I'll see you soon Alpha Jax, look after my sister."

"Always" I promise as I watch her go.

With a sigh, I walk to where my mate is waiting alongside my Beta at the front. Taking her hand I squeeze it gently before lifting it to my lips and kissing her fist softly. Turning to face the gathered pack, I raise our joined hands to gather their attention.

"Good evening everyone" I call out, my voice carrying over the stillness of the night. "Tonight we are gathered for the final stages of our fallen warriors journey with us. Ben, Mark, Calisto, Nirvana, Hiro, Anita, Samuel, Briana and Drew. 9 warriors who died a truly honourable warriors death, fighting to protect those they loved and cherished while doing us all proud. They were much loved by the pack and their presence has been missed since their passing. Tonight we honour them, we send them to greet our ancestors and from here on out they will be looking down on us and guiding us through life. As their Alpha, I am proud and as their friend I will miss them greatly. We will honour their memory by remembering them daily. The Goddess blesses you." With that, the pack all repeat my final four words as a member from each family steps forward and sets the wooden frames alight.

Standing, we all watch as the flames quickly take hold, the night silent apart from the crackling of the growing fires.

Watching silently until the flames have taken hold completely, we all whisper our quiet messages to the fallen.

Some whisper memories while others whisper how much they will be missed.

Fifteen minutes later with the fires continuing to burn, Laurence steps forward and gathers everyone's attention, avoiding my confused gaze as he does so.

"A sad but beautiful sight" he calls as everybody turns to listen. "For those lives lost due to this attack we suffered through, our Luna came up with a beautiful idea. If you could all look to the side of the pack house where gamma Flo is currently waiting I'd be most appreciative." Turning to look at Nova, I see her nervous gaze as she stares across to Flo where my Gamma pulls away a sheet of plastic to uncover a mosaic wall. One where the names of every fallen warrior are proudly on show, making the pack members collectively gasp and the families of the warriors all smile at the names of their loved one who will permanently be up for all to see.

"You did it" I whisper in shock as I look down at my mate.

"They fought a war that was brought to them because of me, it's the least I could do. But I hope it can be a tradition, a way to remember the fallen" she says emotionally as I gather her tightly in my arms, kissing her fiercely as I pour all my appreciation for her through the bond.

As the pack all slowly turn to look at us, shouts of appreciation and thanks are directed at Nova as she holds her heart and offers a teary smile. Seeing Laurence offer his hand to Nova, she moves forward out of my grip.

"Thank you everyone. I knew from the moment I stepped foot in this pack that it's where I belonged, I hope you all like my memorial wall. The warriors that fought for me, for us and for our future are on my mind every day. Words cannot express my gratitude for not only the ones we lost but for all that are here today. However, I have one more gift for you all, one which I hope shows you just how much this pack means to me" her soft voice calls out as the crowd listens to her every word. Turning to look at me, I look back at her in confusion as she steps forward with a nervous smile.

"Shut your eyes"

she whispers as I hesitantly do as she asks. "Now hold your hands out, palms up" she whispers as I hear an excited chatter start up in the crowd.

"So my gift to you all is this..." Nova calls while I sense her moving to stand in front of me. "Open your eyes....she whispers to me.

Slowly opening them, I look first at my mates nervous yet beautiful eyes before slowly moving my gaze down to what's in my hand. What I find takes my breath away, i stare wide eyed at the stick with two strong pink lines on show. "Congratulations daddy" Nova whispers as I move my gaze up to her once more, a large grin spreading across my face.

"You're pregnant.?" I whisper. Seeing her nod as a smile stretches across her face I lunge forward as I swing her round in my arms.

After a few seconds I lower her down before kissing her lips gently and turning to address the crowd.

"Our Luna has given us the greatest gift we can have" beam.

With a loud roar I lift her up into my arms as the pack bursts into cheers, "AN ALPHA HEIR!"

The Blessed Ones – A Blessing Or A Curse?

Chapter 32

Nova POV:

"You're pregnant" Jax beams as he pulls me into another tight hug. Dropping down to his knees not caring for our company, he lifts my top before gently kissing my still flat stomach. "We're going to be parents" he whispers in amazement as his green eyes look up at "Nova!" I hear Alice squeal as she comes running towards me. "I'm so happy for you" she sobs as she wraps her arm round my neck. Feeling her growing bump press against my stomach, I chuckle as I step back.

me.

"Wow, we wont be able to hug like that for much longer" I say as she bursts into a fit of giggles while caressing her bump. "How are you feeling?"

"I'm great" she assures me. "Being around Theo and the pack has really helped my energy levels in the last few days, I have an appointment next week, I thought if you're here then you could come?"

"I'd love to" I reply happily as Theo finally catches up with his mate.

"I'm going to be an uncle" he shouts happily as Jax chuckles next to me. Leaning down and wrapping me in his large arms, he kisses my head before pulling away and looking me

over. "How are you feeling? When did you find out?" Seeing his eyes a bit watery, I reach my hand out to caress his cheek in a sisterly fashion.

"Are you crying on me Theo?" I whisper playfully as he clears his throat and looks away.

"You always spoke to Flo and myself about the importance of family, we've always known how much you'd like pups of your own. Knowing that time is here..it's made me emotional, he explains as he rubs his neck in embarrassment. "You're always the emotional one" Flo says rolling her eyes as she joins us. "Congratulations sister" she squeals.

"Thank you both" I say quietly as a happy tear escapes my eye. "You're going to be an amazing father, and now an amazing uncle as well Theo, and Flo you're going to have double aunts duties now! But back to your questions, I'm feeling good. I have been quite tired, and more forgetful than normal as a result but with everything that's happening that's to be understandable. Laurence has spoken to the doctor for me, I literally only found out this afternoon because of him." "Laurence knew?" Jax asks in surprise.

"Um...yes" I reply sheepishly. "He offered to walk me upstairs this afternoon for that reason. Laurence and I share a bond it turns out...it explains his fierceful protection of me as his Luna, and his never ending support which I'm unbelievably thankful for. It turns out Ki has known for a few days but didn't want to distract me or you."

"Is that why she was quiet?" He checks.

Nodding in answer, I see relief cross his eyes before Zeus moves forward. "My mate is strong, caring and kind" he purrs as I feel Kias happiness flood through me.

"That she is" I agree before Jaxs green eyes return.

"He's going to be upset he can't run with her for a while" Alice comments as the others nod in agreement. Seeing Laurence look at me, I giggle nervously.

"About that, I can still shift" I shrug trying to sound casual about it. "Ki has assured me its safe, probably more safe.

So we don't have to worry about that."

"Wow" I hear Naomi exclaim as she appears by my side.

"Sorry, I overheard. That's amazing Nova, congratulations the both of you!" Hugging me sideways to be careful of her protruding bump, I rest my hand on hers as the pups kick her strongly.

"Still as active as ever" I chuckle as Naomi moans uncomfortably.

"I still have a while" she mutters. "I'm going to be a whale."

"You're beautiful and you always will be" Laurence tells her softly as everybody awws at his sweet words.

"Was that the right time to tell the pack about our news" I asked Jax.

Instead of Jax replying, Lawrence does instead. "It was the perfect time Luna, I promise, it has brought new hope to the pack following our losses. Your idea of the memorial wall also went down amazingly, I've heard many members tonight express how wonderful of an idea it was."

Hearing what Lawrence has to say my shoulders slump in relief as I let out a long sigh. "Thank the goddess for that" I whisper.

Have you told your brother the news yet? asks Jax. "Or even Alex and Ophelia? I'm sure they will be absolutely over the moon for us" he says.

"Not yet no" I say shaking my head although a small smile plays on my lips as I think of how ecstatic Luca will be when he hears the news. "Luca will be very excited to be an uncle as well, he has been on about it ever since thinking we were mates. I haven't seen Alex or Ophelia yet, I will when I see them."

"Oh my goodness, I'm going to have grandpups" I hear Amelia's excited voice squeal as she approaches us. "And here I was casually mentioning grandpups to my son this is afternoon when all along you were pregnant!"

"Ma, there was nothing casual in the way you mentioned grandpups" Jax says playfully as he rolls his eyes. With that the group explode into loud laughter which is a welcome sound after the stressful few days we have had.

Hearing how happy everybody is for me I can finally relax and think that perhaps a pup at this time might not be as worrisome as first thought. Looking at my mate I can see the happiness radiating from him, his eyes are bright and his stance relaxed, something I've been missing since his sister was taken.

"Mila will be so happy for you" Amelia say softly as if reading my thoughts.

"I'm sorry she wasn't here when I told everyone. Laurence and I agreed that the pack could do with a nice surprise" I say softly.

"Oh don't worry dear, you most definitely did the right thing.

Can you see all the smiles on all the pack members faces, the future of the Pack is now certain. A child as a result of the true bond from both you and my son will be an incredible alpha one day. Mila would have wanted you to tell the pack tonight, just because she isn't here doesn't mean people can't experience joy. But I can't wait for her to find out she's going to be an aunty" Amelia says with a gentle smile.

"We're going to find Mila, Amelia" I said quietly, yet the seriousness in my voice shows my certainty behind my words.

"I have no doubt about that. When you and Jax put your minds to something, you can achieve anything" she whispers in my ear as she pulls me in for a hug.

"Now I'd like to steal my mate away if I may ma" I hear my mate say as he wraps an arm around my waist possessively.

"Of course son, you two had best go celebrate hadn't you"

Amelia giggles as she waves us away.

"Ma!" Jax moans as he shakes his head walking away. "I swear if I took her words to heart she would be such a mood killer all the time, nothing worse than your own mom commenting on your s*x life."

"I can imagine" I smirk. "Now how about we go upstairs and you show me just how happy you are that were having a pup" I say in a low suggestive tone to my mate as soon as we are out of earshot.

Seeing his eyes darken as his gaze turns hungry, I wink at him as he leads me to our suite. Tonight is going to be a long night I think to myself, one that's far overdue.

The Blessed Ones – A Blessing Or A Curse?

Chapter 33

Mila POV:

As I sit staring out of the double windows, looking out to the forest stretching in front of me, I sigh deeply. My mood has soured dramatically considering the circumstances, not only did Bruno not come back for the agreed walk, but when I attempted to knock on the door to speak to my guard i was clearly ignored despite my continuous attempts: As a

result, my patience was running extremely thin, my eyes were narrow with the fixed scowl | had on my face and my lips felt sore from me having bitten down on them so much throughout the day in an attempt to keep my annoyance unheard. The only silver lining was the fact Alia was speaking once more, having apologised to me numerous times, I'd eventually told her to not dare apologise one more time to me. I understood why she was struggling, what she has endured for me since we left Bruno is something I cant imagine carrying the burden of.

As the morning progressed we finally reached a quiet agreement to stop apologising to one another, instead we had to focus on our situation at hand. But what a gloomy situation that was.

As I sit in the darkness of the cabin as the evening turns to night, I stare aimlessly out the double glass doors letting the moonlight soothe my body. The trees surrounding the cabins are dense, and even with my sharp eyesight, I can't see further than about 30 meters past the treeline. As I

continue staring, I catch a glimpse of movement before something silver catches my eye. Freezing as I continue to look at the same spot, I see nothing and with a dark chuckle I shake my head, settling on the fact I must be imagining things in my boredom. "Or desperation" Alia pipes up.

"Or that" I chuckle.

Suddenly the door slamming open makes me startle as my head swings round to meet Brunos angry gaze.

"Mila" he growls as he stalks towards me.

Frowning as I'm unsure of why he is now angry towards me, I purposefully still and look down, forcing myself to play the submissive.

"Hello, Bruno," I say quietly, making him hesitate in his advance.

With an exasperated sigh, he sits down on the armchair opposite where I am on the sofa. Glancing up, I see his eyes still trained on me with a look that shows a mixture of confusion, worry and guilt.

"Are you not going to say anything about today?" He finallys asks, his voice calmer than it was before. With a small shrug and a sad smile, I shake my head.

"No" I murmur. "What good would it do? Doesn't change anything."

"Smart" he comments as his eyes flit around the cabin.

"You haven't done much today then?"

With that a small laugh escapes me. "No" I reply, rolling my eyes slightly. "I did do some yoga, that's it. Your guard didn't seem to want to open the door."

"He couldn't" was all Bruno said as I simply hmm in response. Suddenly he surges to his feet, his broad form towering above my own as I force myself not to react. "We have a visitor tonight, one who wishes to see you."

"Huh?" I ask as my brows furrow wondering who could be wanting to meet me. "Who?"

"I want you to know, Mila, that you are still safe here. I said you wouldn't be harmed if it could be avoided, and right now, you won't be. I think perhaps it would be a good time to remind you of that," Bruno warns me quietly as I hear the sound of footsteps approaching through the still opened door. Seeing Bruno's lips set in a tight line, watching for me to acknowledge what he's said, I nod stiffly as my eyes turn to the door.

Taking a deep breath, I freeze as the fake floral scent assaults my nostrils. "That b***h" | mutter as I turn my furious gaze to Bruno.

"Remember what I said" he hisses before taking a step back and his usual stoney exterior is back in place.

"Mila" I hear the high pitch voice exclaim with exaggerated joy as the person in question sweeps into the cabin as if she owns the place.

Meeting her eyes, my jaw clenches as I take in her wide smile, perfect hair and calculatingly cold eyes. "Rebecca" I say through gritted teeth. Seeing her smirk at my reaction, I allow my eyes to travel over her figure where they come to rest on her slightly swollen belly.

"Ah" she exclaims softly, her hands coming to rest caringly on her stomach as she looks down lovingly.

"You're pregnant" I whisper as my eyes flit to Bruno's never changing gaze.

"We are" Rebecca chimes as she glides over to stand beside Bruno, linking her arm with his as she rests her head on his shoulder. "2months now, its fascinating how quickly time flies."

"Well. congratulations" I force myself to say.

"Oh did you hear that Bruno? Mila offers us her congratulations" Rebecca coos, her eyes never leaving mine. When I say nothing, her smile falters slightly before splitting back

open into a wide grin, showing off her straight white teeth. "You look terrible Mila, is that why you're sat in the darkness?"

"No" I reply simply, not letting her insults get to me.

"I just want to claw her eyes out" Alia growls to me.

"Well lets put them on shall we" Rebecca chuckles as she looks at Bruno expectantly. After a few seconds, he walks over to the switch and flicks the lights on as Rebecca gasps dramatically. "Oh Mila, you need a wash."

"I've had one Rebecca" I answer coldly, knowing i look tired but not as bad as she is making out. 'I'll survive until tomorrow without another" I tell her dismissively.

"So..." I start, looking between the two of them. "Can I ask why I have the pleasure of this visit?"

"I just wanted to see how you were Mila, after all I haven't seen you in a while now and I was concerned that our treatment of you immediately after you left may have done some damage. I just wanted to ensure it hadn't" Rebecca says quietly, her eyes wide as she attempts to look innocent. "Immediately after?" I ask in confusion.

"Well yes, you know...when Bruno and I were a bit, ravenous for one another. I have to say pregnancy hormones do amazing things for your s*x life, don't they sweetheart?". Rebecca asks Bruno cheerily.

"Does it now" I comment dully as I ponder over her words.

Smiling slowly, I lean forward and ask in an overly sweet voice. "So how has your pregnancy been Rebecca? Has Bruno been treating you well? Waited on your hand an foot?"

"He's been great" she replies with enthusiasm. Something I always noticed about Rebecca was the easy way in which I could distract her, all I had to do was get her to talk about herself and I could sit there quietly. I'm glad to know some things haven't changed I tell myself. "Even in his long absence he's had people there to help me every step of the way, and now I'm back by his side it's just wonderful."

Grinning as I snap my fingers, I purposefully dont look at Bruno as he takes a step towards me. "Long absence? Oh how dare he leave you" I gasp dramatically. "For how long?"

"A whole 3 weeks" Rebecca says while shaking a finger at Bruno. "But that doesn't matter right now, what Im here to tell you is that my father will be coming in a couple of days. I unfortunately have to be the one to break the news to you, and I have to say how hard it is for me to tell you" she says, her voice not sounding at all apologetic.

"And?" I ask coolly. "That bothers me because?"

With that Rebecca's smile turns dark, her eyes glint with her icy stare as she steps in front of me. "Because he's coming to kill you" she whispers dramatically.

The Blessed Ones – A Blessing Or A Curse?

Chapter 34

Mila POV:

"Kill me?" I laugh emotionlessly. "Just brilliant."

Staring at me in shock at my lack of reaction, I look up at her with a bored expression. "Anything else or can I be left alone again now? I don't care if I'm told 5 minutes before being killed or 2 days. But nice try for scaring me Rebecca, it was so very upsetting." Rolling my eyes I look at Bruno as he watches me conflicted

"Well I hope it doesn't get to you too much until the time comes" Rebecca says, her voice cheerful as she's unable to hide her glee.

"Seriously?" I ask her with a cold laugh.

"I'll be fine. But

thanks for your concern, if you'd like I could give you something that would upset you.? You know, just to be even?"

"Come on Rebecca, funs over" Bruno growls as he comes to hold her waist as Rebecca seems oblivious to my comment.

"How disappointing" Rebecca sighs before spinning on her heel and marching from the cabin.

"Oh Rebecca!" I call sweetly. "Would you be a doll and turn off the light on your way out? After all, I wouldn't want your mate here to have to see my horrible-looking face."

Hearing her footsteps pause, I hear her huff in annoyance before leaving without turning the light off. "Worth a try" I mutter before standing myself up and walking over to flick them off.

"So I'm going to be killed?" I chuckle to Bruno as his hardened face gives nothing away. "Well, I'd like to say I'm surprised, but I'm not. I knew it would be a strong possibility, now it could be interesting to at least know why I'm being killed? If it's just to please your girlfriend then I have to say that's pretty wasteful. Giving in to her demands despite knowing you've been ****g others in your time apart, although maybe that's why you want to kill me. I suffered through the evidence didn't I?"

With that Bruno growls before storming over to the door and snapping it shut decisively. "Do not mention that" he orders me.

"I would have already if I actually gave a st*t" I shrug. "as much as I hate Rebecca, im not going to cause her any more distress that could potentially have a harmful effect on the pup, the pup at least is innocent. Tell me Bruno, is that why you rejected me? Because you knew Alia would be out for blood if we were still bonded and we saw another female pregnant with your pup?"

Seeing his lips pursed, I nod in realization, "it was," I chuckle.

"Well, im not complaining" I tell him. "Either way I got the outcome I wanted." "You're taking this awfully well" Bruno comments as he watches me closely

"As opposed to what? Fly off the handle, break some s**t?"

Oh no... I had to BEHAVE, didn't I?" I ask him innocently. "So are you killing me to get one back on Axton? To make him suffer a great loss? Or are you doing it to get back at my brother? Or simply to make your life easier?"

Firing off the questions at Bruno, I watch closely for any type of reaction. When his expression stays the same, I slump back as I think about what else may be the reasoning. "It's something to do with Rebecca's father," I muse quietly.

Seeing Bruno's eyes narrow slightly, the movement so minuscule I could have imagined it. "Ah." I chuckle. "Got to keep the father-in-law happy."

Seeing another glint of silver over Bruno's shoulder out the window behind, I freeze as I look around frantically.

"What are you looking at?" Bruno growls, spinning to follow my line of sight.

Recovering quickly, I force myself to talk. "Just how much I wish I had got some fresh air today" I whisper pathetically.

Snapping his head back to mine, he sighs before looking to the sky outside. "Look, Mila, I know it's too little too late, and for that, I apologize. But I do want to apologise for my

actions, although I can't say I'd change them as I am all too aware of the type of man I am, I would like to acknowledge how hard it must have been for you."

"You're saying that before I die?' I ask him quietly.

"I feel I should...yes" he agrees slowly

"Well don't" I snarl, my anger returning with a vengeance." What's done is done."

Seeing another hint of silver behind him, I yawn dramatically before glaring at Bruno. "In fact, I'm quite tired and would like to go to bed. If you could leave, I'd be more than grateful" I say with a sneer.

Wordlessly, he stands up, looking torn as he opens his mouth. But before any words tumble from his mouth, there is a loud thumping on the door followed by shouting.

Storming over and flinging the door open, Bruno snarls loudly, "WHAT?"

"There are a number of unknown approaching, we also have suspicious activity and scent trails a mile south of here Alpha" I hear a male tell him breathlessly and Bruno swears loudly.

"Stay here, you'll have guards" he orders me as I throw my hands in the air.

"Where the f**k do you expect me to go Bruno? I'm bolted in for goddesses sake. Just f*****g leave" I snarl.

His eyes flash at my attitude, but hearing more shouting from outside he growls loudly and steps from the cabin.

Hearing the bolts slide loudly against the door, I slump back down on the sofa, embracing the quietness of my cabin once more.

"There's still hope Mila" Alia tells me quietly. "Do you think that's Jax coming to us?"

"I doubt it" I whisper dejectedly. "Unknown scents, they would know if Jax, Axton and Alex were after us."

"But Nova can hide scents" Alia says hopefully.

"Can she change them?" I ask her.

"I..I don't know" she answers me.

"Well settle in Alia, for now. We aren't going anywhere" I mutter, not letting my hopes rise only for them to fall and upset me further. Standing slowly, I wander to the fridge and get out some juice, robotically pouring myself a glass and then making some toast. Sighing loudly as I take a bite, I turn to walk back to the sofa but movement catches the corner of my eye. Snapping my head up, I freeze as my eyes meet those of a man stood directly outside of the glass doors. His hair long and silver, his body tall and lean as his pale skin stands out brightly in the moonlight. But what has me frozen is his eyes, his bright red eyes that are staring directly at me.

"Vampire..." I breath as I make no effort to move. As he moves his arms upwards, his eyes glance around before focusing back on me making me flinch. Holding his hands up in a peaceful gesture, he offers me a small smile before slowly pointing to the door. Not relaxing my posture, I slowly shake my head, indicating I can't open it. "Can we trust him?" I ask Alia.

"I don't know" she huffs back, her hackles raised in my mind as she watches through my eyes. As I'm debating if trusting a strange vampire or waiting for the death that Rebecca's father has promised me, I see the man bring his hand down to rest on the handle as a soft gold light envelops his hand. A second later I hear a quiet click as the door unlocks. Swinging it open, he silently steps into the room. His movements slow and deliberate as his hands return to his peaceful gesture. "Who are you?" I whisper as he continues moving closer.

"You're Mila?" He asks, his voice velvety and smooth as his expression stays relaxed and gentle.

Nodding slowly, he smiles widely. "Always remember that life moves on, when times get tough..look up to the stars" he tells me quietly as my body slumps in relief.

"Jax" I whisper before the world turns black.

The Blessed Ones – A Blessing Or A Curse?

Chapter 35

Jax POV:

I wake up early, as the first rays of the morning light begin to filter through our curtains. Looking down, I see Nova still sleeping as her long hair fans out on the pillow behind her, her warm breaths even against my chest. "So perfect" Zeus purrs as his chest puffs out in

Alpha pride, the both of us still basking in the joy of knowing our mate is pregnant with our pup.

Checking the time, I see its approaching 6am, the time we agreed we needed to be up for. First on our agenda was visiting the pack hospital, Laurence had linked me last night after we had shared our news saying he had agreed with Dr Norton for us to go in early so Nova could have a check up before we visited Lizzie. But first, we had to find Alex and Ophelia. They had been noticeably absent last night, I presume it was because they were perhaps visiting the witches and spending some much needed time together while our pack gathered for the burnings. I couldn't fault them for either, after all Alex still has his pack back home to think about, although its in safe hands I'm well aware of how involved both his mate and himself are despite the distance.

"Nova love" I whisper as I gently kiss her forehead. "I hate to wake you, but we have to get ready. We have our hospital appointment remember."

With that, her eyes fly open as a wide smile spreads across her face. "Our pup" she whispers, her voice hoarse from sleep as she stretches adorably. Seeing the swell of her breasts peak above the sheet, my breath hitches as I struggle tearing my eyes away. "Did you not get your fill last night?" Nova teases as she peaks up at me through her lashes.

Breathing out slowly, I force my eyes to look away as I ignore the throbbing of my hardened member. "I'll never get enough" I answer gruffly as I gently remove my arm from under her head and swing my legs off of the side of the bed. "If I didn't know you were so tired and we didn't have such a busy day, I would most definitely be keeping you busy in the bed a while longer." I chuckle as I turn and give her a cheeky wink, loving the way her cheeks still flush lightly from my words.

"Don't give me ideas" she whispers quietly as I smell the whiff of her arousal.

Stiffening, I turn to her with darkened eyes, "Nova" I growl.

"You're not helping."

"I'm sorry," she whimpers. "It's pregnancy hormones, I've heard all about them. I'll go get ready."

"Tempress," I mutter playfully as she giggles before gracefully rising from the bed.

"It's your fault" she retorts as she slips into the bathroom.

Shaking my head at her playfulness, I quickly head to the closet and get myself dressed. As I busy myself waiting for Nova, my thoughts wander back to Mila. Axton hasn't reported feeling any pains suggesting any mistreatment of her by Bruno in that manner, but it doesn't fill me with confidence that she isn't suffering elsewhere.

"Do you think we are doing the right thing, Nova?" I ask her quietly as I hear her walk into the closet behind me.

"With Mila?" She asks knowingly. Nodding at her, I wait for her to reply as she pulls on a pair of leggings and a relaxed jumper. "I don't know" she admits looking troubled. "I don't like the fact we aren't chasing after her, but at the same time I understand how unpredictable Bruno is. I want Mila out of danger, but I don't know how we can do it quicker without risking her."

"Yeah" I sigh as I pull my shoes on. "If you go though, surely we could just command them all or something."

"Then let's find them, we will figure this out Jax. I still don't understand Bruno's game plan" Nova admits. "I've been thinking it over and I just can't understand a plausible reason. Everything seems a bit far fetched, even with him wanting to become the next Alpha King...is Mila necessary for that?"

Pausing as her words suddenly make my mind race, my eyes widen as I come to a realisation. "Is there any way that Bruno would know of Alex planning to put me forward as a candidate for the next Alpha King?" I ask her slowly.

Frowning as she brushes her hair, Nova looks conflicted. "I have no idea" she admits. "I mean, on paper you are a perfect candidate so I imagine that's not too hard to figure out. But the timing? Noone knew Alex was planning on stepping down before he informed Elder Martin shortly before speaking to us. that I'm aware of that is."

"You're right" I admit. "But if he did know, then perhaps the combination of Axton being her second chance mate and her being my sister is the reason."

"We could guess and guess and guess, let's figure that out once we have got Mila home" Nova says softly, her eyes sympathetic as she understands my need to understand.

Lifting my phone, I call Axel as I had sent him a text last night saying I had to tell him and Evan some exciting news.

Listening to it ring, I frown as I realise he didn't even text back last night. For a tech geek who normally has his phone glued to him whenever he's not in wolf form, that's unusual. "Ma, you awake?" I link her quietly.

"I am," she replies instantly. "Struggling to sleep these days."

Blowing a shaky breath, I pause before responding. "I know, perhaps you would fancy joining Nova and I for the check up this morning if you're up already, we are going in 45minutes?"

"I'd love to," she replies, her voice sounding more enthusiastic than previously.

"We will meet you there," I link her. "Have you heard from the twins at all? I've seemed to miss them whenever they're free, and I'd like to tell them our news."

"Oh they said they wouldn't be free until this afternoon dear, something about helping Henry" she replies.

"Ah that explains it, well we will see you shortly ma" I chuckle.

Turning, I see my pregnant mate waiting patiently by the door, a mixture of excitement and nerves on her face. "Are you ready?" She asks eagerly.

"Let's go" I chuckle. Taking her hand, I all but drag her down the stairs, carefully still though as my protectiveness is kicking up a notch. I want to find Alex quickly so we can get to our appointment. "Where are you?" I link Alex, happy that my ability to link anyone is coming in handy. "You better not be sleeping" I joke.

"I'm here man" his deep voice chuckles as he appears from the downstairs lounge looking tired. "I've heard your news...congratulations!"

"Thank you" Nova beams as Alex lands a kiss on her cheek before pulling me into a big hug, the happiness clear in his eyes.

"I actually was looking for you" he admits as he steps back.

"Oh yeah?" I ask intrigued.

"Yeah." he says quietly.

"So..?" I prompt.

He looks at me with an unreadable expression as I wait impatiently, when finally he opens his mouth, the words that he says take our breath away. "We have Mila"